



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

March 2021 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

For Jews around the world, the holiday of Pessah (Passover, Pasca) this year starts on March 27th and ends on April 4th. The Holiday of Easter will be celebrated by Catholics and Protestants on April 4th this year but the Greek Orthodox Easter will not be celebrated until May 2nd. Why the difference? Greek Orthodox Easter is tied into Passover and is always celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon in Spring after Passover. For many, we will still be separated from friends and family due to COVID. Pessah was one of the most popular holidays among the Jews of Ioannina. We hope you can celebrate and enjoy the holiday this year.

מועדים לשמחה
Χρόνια Πολλά
Pesah Alegre



Passover in Ioannina with the Bechoropoulos and Attas Family in 1933
Thanks to Arlene Schulman

This E-Newsletter is sponsored by Linda Baum Kinsberg in memory of her Nona Mollie (Mazalu) Askinazi, born March 10, 1898 in Ioannina and passed on Purim 1977.

This newsletter, our 144th will, as always, cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. Your feedback is of utmost importance to us. If you missed previous issues, they can be accessed on our website www.kkjsm.org.

We now reach over to 10,000 households worldwide. What an accomplishment for a little synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City. Our community of 'friends' continually grow with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at museum@kkjsm.org

We have resumed Shabbat morning services in person on a monthly basis for now. Please email amarcus@kkjsm.org if you would like to attend Shabbat services in person. We will share updates as we resume more frequent services.

If you would like to sponsor a KKJ E-Newsletter in Honor or in Memory of someone, please reach out to us at museum@kkjsm.org.

Simchas

In February, our dear friends in Thessaloniki, Hella Kounio Matalon and Elias Matalon celebrated the birth of two granddaughters. Celine is the second child of Kelly Matalon and Glen de Vreese and joins her big brother celebrating in Belgium. Celine's cousin, Elisa Matalon, the first child of Isy Matalon joins the family. These two beautiful babies are the great granddaughters of Heinz and Shelly Kounio.



Celine



Elisa

We welcome Alexandra the new member of the Rebecca Negrin and Simon Treveza family, granddaughter of Joseph and Greta Negrin and Alegri Frances and niece of Dorita Treveza and our Rabbi Gabriel Negrin.

We celebrate the 96th birthday of Moshe Haelion, born in Thessaloniki on February 26, 1925. Moshe is a Holocaust survivor and writer. He was born in Thessaloniki, Greece, on February 26, 1925. He survived Auschwitz, the death march, Mauthausen, Melk, and Ebensee. He is the author of a memoir, translated into English as *The Straits of Hell: The chronicle of a Salonikan Jew in the Nazi extermination camps Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Melk, Ebensee*. He wrote three poems in Ladino based on his experience in the concentration camps and the death march: "La djoventika al lager", "Komo komian el pan", and "En marcha de la muerte", published in Ladino and Hebrew under the title *En los Campos de la Muerte*. Moshe Ha-Elion has translated Homer's *Odyssey* into Ladino. He lives in Israel. He has two children, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. He has served as President of the Greek Holocaust survivors in Israel for years and annually returns to Thessaloniki to join the commemoration of the deportation of Salonikan Jews. Unfortunately this year, because of COVID, the event could not take place.



Moshe arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau on April 13, 1943 and had the number 114923 tattooed on his arm. According to the Archives of Auschwitz, on April 13, 1943, approximately 2,800 Jewish men, women and children from the ghetto in Salonika arrive in a RSHA transport from Greece. After the selection, 500 men, given the numbers 114875-115374, and 354 women, given the numbers 40841-41204, are admitted to the camp as prisoners. The other approximately 1,936 people are killed in the gas chambers.

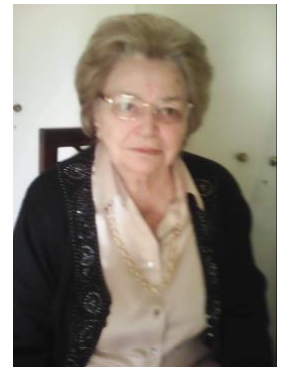


On May 6, 1945, one week after Hitler's death, the American army liberated all the sub-camps of Mauthausen, including Ebensee, where Moshe Ha-Elion was a prisoner. After the liberation, Moshe Ha-Elion decided not to come back to Thessaloniki, and illegally emigrated to Palestine on board the Wedgewood boat in June 1946, after being in the south of Italy for one year. The boat was taken by the English army. Moshe was imprisoned for one month in a British camp in Atlit (located in British Mandatory Palestine).

You can find Moshe's moving poem set to music. The poem was written in memory of his sister Nina who was killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Watch on Youtube [here](#).

Passings

We mourn the passing of Dooly Hassid at the age of 92. Dolly was born on December 8, 1928 in Thessaloniki. She was the daughter of Victor and Lili Menasse. She survived the Holocaust in Athens due to the work of her father in getting the family into hiding. Dolly is the widow of Semtov Hassid. She leaves behind her children: Samuel Hassid and Lily Mordochai, her grandchildren: Solomon Mordochai, Dolyanna Mordochai and Sai Hassid and her great-grandchildren: Beni Mordochai and Neta Hassid.



She passed away on Monday, February 15, 2021 and was buried on Thursday, February 2021 at 12.00, at the Jewish Section of the Nikea Cemetery. Dolly was active in WIZO. May her memory be a Blessing.

We mourn the passing of Michael Negrin at age of 70. Born in Athens he was living in Haifa when he passed.



We mourn the passing of Herb Krumbein, husband of Sarah Naphtali Krumbein. Herb is survived by his wife, Sarah and his children, Elyse and Mark.

News from Kehila Kedosha Janina

Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to be represented at the events of UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture's "**Heritage and Memory: A Focus on Jewish Greece.**" Our Museum Director did a special presentation on January 29th. Moses Eliasaf, the Mayor of Ioannina and President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, was interviewed for the program on January 27th. You can access these presentations, along with those of Leon Saltiel and Rena Molho on YouTube [here](#).

The Museum at Kehila Kedosha Janina has been busy working on genealogical research, compiling family trees and of course, collecting additional photos for our vast photo archives. If you have family trees you would like to add to our collection or questions on your Greek Jewish families, contact us at museum@kkjms.org. Our online Zoom presentations, coordinated by Ethan Marcus, the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, and Kehila Kedosha Janina, have been a great success.

New Online Class Series – Exhibits of Greek Jewry **Mondays March 8, 15, 22 at 8pm** **Register [Here](#)**

We are excited to launch our newest online series led by our Museum Director highlighting some of the past and present exhibits at the KKJ museum. This will be a three-part series featuring "Memories: The World We Left Behind and the World We Found Here." "Family: Los Muestrros, Dikoi Mas" and "Our Gang: the story of Greek-Jewish men and women who served in the US Armed Forces during World War II."

The flyer features a background of bookshelves. At the top left is the logo for The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, La Ermandad Sefaradi. At the top right is the logo for Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum. The central text reads "SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY" in red, followed by "EXHIBITS OF GREEK JEWRY PART I - MEMORIES" in white on a dark red background. Below this, a quote in white text on a dark red background reads: "THE WORLD THEY LEFT BEHIND, THE WORLD THEY FOUND HERE AND THE JOURNEY OVER" A THREE PART SERIES OF MUSEUM EXHIBITS. The presenter is listed as "With Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos" in red text. The schedule is "Mondays March 8, 15, 22" and "8pm ET / 5pm PT" in red text. The streaming information is "Online Streaming Via Zoom" and the URL "tinyurl.com/GreekJewishExhibits" in black text. A circular portrait of Marcia Haddad is on the right. At the bottom, it says "Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com" in black text.

The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi

Kehila Kedosha Janina
Synagogue and Museum

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

EXHIBITS OF GREEK JEWRY
PART I - MEMORIES

"THE WORLD THEY LEFT BEHIND, THE WORLD THEY FOUND HERE AND
THE JOURNEY OVER" A THREE PART SERIES OF MUSEUM EXHIBITS

With Marcia Haddad
Ikonomopoulos
Mondays March 8, 15, 22
8pm ET / 5pm PT
Online Streaming Via Zoom
tinyurl.com/GreekJewishExhibits

Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com

In addition, a number of synagogues have booked Marcia for a presentation on Romaniote Jews and a virtual tour of the synagogue (for a small fee). If your synagogue would be interested in this, contact Marcia directly at museum@kkjms.org.

Shabbat Services at Kehila Kedosha Janina

As we monitor ongoing guidance from health officials, we will host Shabbat morning services on a monthly basis for now. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep our community updated as we plan to resume more frequent services or museum tours.

Please join us for our next Shabbat Service in person on Saturday March 13, 2021 at 10am.

People interested in attending services in person are strongly encouraged to RSVP in advance by emailing Amarcus@kkjms.org.

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA
INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR

SHABBAT SERVICES
IN PERSON
IN THE ROMANIOTE TRADITION

SATURDAY MARCH 13 AT 10AM

JOIN US FOR SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES IN PERSON AND HELP US CONTINUE OUR ROMANIOTE TRADITIONS. WE CONTINUE TO MONITOR ONGOING GUIDANCE FROM HEALTH OFFICIALS TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE AND WILL PROVIDE UPDATES AS WE PLAN TO RESUME MORE FREQUENT SERVICES OR MUSEUM TOURS.

PLEASE EMAIL AMARCUS@KKJSM.ORG TO RSVP

שבת שלום

Romaniote Memories: A Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan New Photo Exhibit by Vincent Giordano

View the Entire Exhibit Online [Here](#)



The International Survey of Jewish Monuments and Queens College Libraries, Hellenic American Project and Center for Jewish Studies, invite you to the **virtual opening reception** of:

Romaniote Memories, a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano

Thursday, February 11, at 5 p.m EST.

Learn more and register for Zoom opening here at <https://qc-cuny.libcal.com/event/7496075>



In 1999, photographer Vincent Giordano made an unplanned visit to the small Kehila Kadosha Janina (KKJ) synagogue on New York's Lower East Side. He knew little about Judaism or synagogues, and even less about the Romaniote Jewish tradition of which KKJ, built in 1927, is the lone North American representative. In this he was not alone. Romaniotes are among the least known of Jewish communities. Beginning in 2001 and guided by members of the KKJ community, Giordano documented the synagogue and its religious art of the congregation using film, video, and audio. This included trips to Greece to document KKJ's mother city of Ioannina, and its small Jewish community.

In 2019 the Giordano family donated the archive of Vincent's work to Queens College, where it is a major part of the Hellenic American Project and is preserved as part of the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library's Special Collections and Archives. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Special Collections and Archives has not yet processed the physical materials in the Vincent Giordano collection. Fortunately, we were able to use scans of Giordano's prints and negatives to create a new online exhibit "**Romaniote Memories, a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano.**" Many of these images have never been presented in public before.

The exhibition is curated by Samuel Gruber, President of the International Survey of Jewish Monuments and designed by Annie Tummino, Head of Special Collections and Archives, Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library.

As part of the promotion of this new exhibit there will be a series of online events, the first of which will be a presentation by Professor Nicholas Alexiou of Queens College and Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina on Sunday March 14th at 2pm.

**From the Cobblestone Lanes of Ioannina to the Sidewalks of New York:
The Journey of Greek-Speaking Romaniote Jews
March 14 at 2pm
Register [here](#)**

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES LECTURE

From the Cobblestone Lanes of Ioannina to the Sidewalks of New York: The Journey of Greek-Speaking Romaniote Jews

Sunday, March 14, 2021 at 2 pm on Zoom.

Register at [https://from the cobblestone lanes of ioannina.eventbrite.com](https://from-the-cobblestone-lanes-of-ioannina.eventbrite.com)

Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos and Nicholas Alexiou will discuss the arrival of the Romaniote Jews to the shores of this country in the context of the first wave of Greek immigration to America between 1900 and 1924. Focusing on the connections of language and culture, the speakers will explore the ethnic and religious identity of the Romaniotes, highlighting their interactions with their non-Jewish Greek neighbors on the one hand, and Jewish immigrants of Ashkenazi and Sephardic background on the other.

In conjunction with the online exhibition “Romaniote Memories, a Jewish Journey from Ioannina, Greece to Manhattan: Photographs by Vincent Giordano”

<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/romaniote-memories/index>



Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos is museum director of Kehila Kedosha Janina and president of the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry. As a former educator, writer, editor, and translator, she has dedicated her life to telling the story of Greek

Jewry. Marcia was honored to be chosen a member of the scholarly committee for reviewing, translating, and microfilming the Salonika archives at YIVO and compiled the text and visuals for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s website on the Holocaust of Greek Jewry.



Dr. Nicholas Alexiou has taught in the Department of Sociology at Queens College since 1990 and is the recipient of a President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. His fields of research include political sociology, social theory, ethnic studies, and oral history.

He established the first oral history archive/immigration library and museum for the Greeks of New York and is the director of research of the Hellenic American Project at Queens College. He is also the author of five books of poetry, and many of his poems have been published in Greek and American journals and anthologies. His most recent bilingual book of poetry, *The Silver Sphynx*, was published by Melani Press in 2019.



News from Jewish Greece

Ioannina

Our beloved friend, Moses Eliasaf, has been representing the Jewish Community of Ioannina as its President and as Mayor of Ioannina. Thank you Moses.

Moses Eliasaf has visited with the President of the Greek Republic, Katerina Sakellaropoulou, both in Athens and as his guest in Ioannina. As Mayor of Ioannina he informed her about the issues that concern the city and the wider region, and as President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, he informed her of the special place that Romaniote Jews have in the history of Greek Jewry.



 **Geoffrey Pyatt** @USAmbPyatt · 2 λ ...
Wonderful seeing Mayor Elisaf today. He will always have a friend at US Embassy Athens: we have strong Greek diaspora ties; #Ioannina responded admirably to help migrant communities; as Greece's only Jewish mayor, he exemplifies leadership as it undertakes @TheIHRA presidency.



Μωυσής Ελισάφ - Γιάννενα Νέα Εποχή και Δ...

As part of her two-day visit to Ioannina, on the occasion of the 108th anniversary of the liberation of the city, the President of the Republic Katerina Sakellaropoulou visited on February 21 the historic Synagogue of Ioannina. She was welcomed by the Mayor and President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Mr. Moses Eliasaf, who informed her about the history and cultural tradition of the Romaniote Jews of Ioannina. The President of the Republic toured the Synagogue and accepted the photo album "The Panorama of Nisim Levi" as a symbolic souvenir of her visit, which she completed with her dedication in the synagogue's guest book.

Excellent Presentation on the Jews of Ioannina

The 15th annual lecture in memory of David Tiano on "The Romaniote Jewish Community of Ioannina: A Journey Through Time and Two Nations" was held online last month. A discussion with Ms. Zanet Battinou, Archaeologist, Director of The Jewish Museum of Greece, Professor Mimis Cohen MD, FACS, FAAP, Founding member of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece and Dr. Moissis Elissaf, Mayor of Ioannina, along with US Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt and US Consul General Elizabeth Lee.

Watch the presentation on YouTube [Here](#)



Thessaloniki

Professor Devin Naar has recently published an important paper on a manifesto from 1924 from the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki (Salonika) dealing with unifying the various factions in the city for needs that arose after the Fire of 1917.

Here is Professor Naar's paper and how to get the translation from Judeo-Espanyol (Ladino)

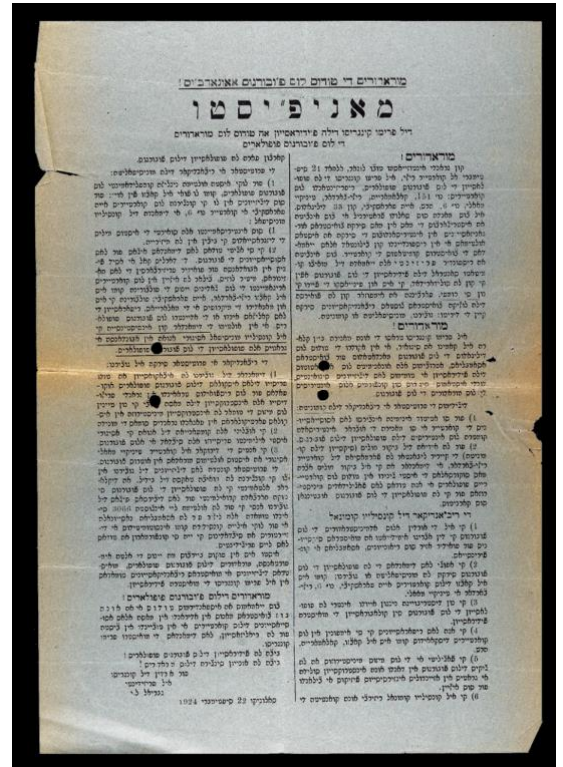
Residents of All the Neighborhoods: Unite! By Devin Naar

Drawing on the rhetoric of the socialist workers' movement, representatives of the Jewish housing projects on the outskirts of Salonica (Thessaloniki), Greece, convened a congress in 1924 demanding justice from the local Jewish community, the city, and the state. In a manifesto in Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), the language of the city's Sephardic Jewish proletariat, the new "Federation of Residents of All the Popular Neighborhoods" of Salonica articulated demands on behalf of the vulnerable, exploited, and unseen that still resonate today: for housing, healthcare, education, access to clean water and sanitation, coal for heat in the winter, and infrastructure like paved roads and public meeting spaces. Organizing across seven disparate neighborhoods, the city's Jewish poor placed their faith in solidarity: "a boulder of iron that cannot be broken" (un penyasko de fiero ke non se rompe).

The rise of industrial enterprise in the late 19th century turned Salonica into a major commercial entrepôt in the eastern Mediterranean for flour, tobacco, bricks, and other goods. A cadre of wealthy Jewish families owned many of the factories, while a vast, mainly Jewish working class—women as well as men—toiled in poor conditions. With the introduction of a new Ottoman constitution in 1908, Jewish workers united with their Greek, Bulgarian, and Turkish counterparts to form the Socialist Workers Federation of Salonica, which initiated strikes and demonstrations and won major concessions in the name of workers' rights. During his 1911 sojourn in the city, David Ben-Gurion characterized Salonica as "a Jewish labor town, the only one in the world."

The transfer of Salonica from the Ottoman Empire to the Greek nation-state during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) transformed the city. In 1917, a fire destroyed two-thirds of downtown, leaving over 70,000 people homeless, including 52,000 mostly poor Jews. The new Greek authorities used the fire as a pretext to remake Ottoman, Jewish, "oriental" Selânik into Greek, European, "modern" Thessaloniki: They did not permit poor Jews to return to the city center, instead relegating them to shanty towns, military barracks, and housing projects. According to the manifesto, the Jewish communal institutions that administered most of the housing projects did not adequately address the residents' own needs. Jews in the popular neighborhoods charged communal leaders with displaying a "hostile attitude toward the associations of the quarters," and called on them to embrace the principles of mutual aid rather than charity.

The housing crisis was compounded by the influenza pandemic of 1918–1919, and then by the arrival of 100,000 Orthodox Christian refugees from Turkey in 1923. Refugees from Turkey settled in districts adjacent to those inhabited by the Jewish victims of the fire. Tensions mounted over access to scarce resources, and rising nationalism provoked violent confrontations. With no other recourse, some refugees began to occupy Jewish schools, impeding their operation—hence the manifesto's demand that the squatters be removed "at all



costs.” This demand reveals the limits of the Congress’s commitment to “solidarity,” as nationalist antagonism trumped class solidarity between these two vulnerable populations.

Jews in the popular neighborhoods organized for their rights until the bitter end. Their efforts help to explain why 39% of Salonica’s Jews voted for the Communist Party in the Greek parliamentary elections in 1926, in a dramatic repudiation of the liberal middle and upper classes in charge of both the Jewish community and the Greek government. The manifesto’s demand that new housing be allocated to Jews in the shantytown of Teneke Maale prior to its planned demolition also bore fruit: In the 1930s, the Jewish community and state authorities transferred many of the families to other districts, including one with new, modern apartment buildings.

The German occupation of the city (1941–1944) resulted in the deportation of a quarter of the city’s residents—nearly 50,000 Jews, the plurality of whom were rounded up from the neglected Jewish districts. Fewer than 2,000 survived. Those who returned discovered that the Greek state had transferred “abandoned” Jewish properties to Orthodox Christians—especially Nazi collaborators. Eventually, some of the Jewish survivors managed to reclaim their properties. While they waited, these Jews—the poor and formerly wealthy alike—slept on the benches of the only two synagogues that survived.

For a translation of the manifesto from Judeo-Espanyol (Ladino) by Professor Naar, contact us at museum@kkjism.org

Devin E. Naar is an associate professor of Jewish studies, Sephardic studies, history, and international studies at the University of Washington in Seattle and the author of *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece*.

Articles about Albert Bourla, born in Thessaloniki and now CEO of Pfizer (pharmaceutical company responsible for the first COVID vaccination) have filled the internet. Needless to say, we are very proud of Albert, uno de los nuestros and print this article from the Forward.

Pfizer’s CEO tells his Parents’ Holocaust Story Full article by PJ Grisar in the Forward [here](#)

The modern miracle of the Pfizer vaccine has an equally remarkable backstory. Dr. Albert Bourla, the CEO of Pfizer who shepherded the vaccine’s development, spoke about the “fantastic luck” of his family history on Thursday. It’s a tale of defying the odds and one whose lessons he keeps with him.

In a Zoom discussion for the Museum of Jewish Heritage, Bourla, the son of Sephardic Holocaust survivors from Thessaloniki, Greece, told Radiolab’s Robert Krulwich how his father, Mois, and uncle Into witnessed their family’s deportation from the ghetto to Auschwitz. The brothers survived the war in Athens with forged papers — courtesy of sympathetic Christians influenced by Athens’ archbishop — and a job at a Red Cross warehouse.

No less incredible is the journey of Bourla’s mother, Sara. The daughter of a prosperous family in the silk trade, she was taken in as a teenager by her older sister, who converted to marry a Christian government officer, Kostas Dimadis. Sara lived in hiding but was spotted during her occasional walks through town and betrayed by a neighbor. She was transferred to a prison, where a bribe from her brother-in-law to the head Nazi in Thessaloniki, Max Merten, saved her life.

Her sister still checked the prison everyday at noon, when a truck came to transport prisoners to their death. Her caution was warranted; one day, Sara was put on the truck. Dimadis called Merten in a fury for breaking

his word. As Sara was lined up against the wall before a firing squad, a BMW motorcycle carrying two soldiers with a paper of reprieve spared Sara and another woman.

"As the truck was leaving the place, they heard the sound of the machine guns," Bourla said. "Everybody else was dying and they were sitting there just three minutes ago."

Speaking from his office, Bourla had a historian's command of the once largely Jewish port town where he grew up and where his family lived for generations. Of that bustling community, many of whom came during the Inquisition, few survived the Nazi occupation.



"In a city of 50,000, only 2,000 survived," Bourla said. "You make the math, that's 96 percent extermination." But Bourla's parents not only survived, they told him their story.

"The most important thing for me was that my parents spoke to me about that," Bourla said. "But they never spoke to me about revenge. They never told us that you should hate those that did that to us. The way that their stories were always ending was a celebration of life: 'Look at us, we're alive. We were almost dead and we're alive. Life is wonderful.'"

You can access the full interview on YouTube [here](#).

Athens

With a full tribute to the Holocaust, the new issue of the 15-day online edition of the Greek Parliament "BULI – EPI OF ... (t.14, 23.2.2021), with a report on the actions of the Parliament for this year's Holocaust Remembrance Day and an article by Alexander Moses on the Romaniotes of Ioannina.

The tribute includes: - I'm sorry, I'm sorry. 62: THE DAY OF MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST – A condemnation of Nazi atrocities by all parties in the House. The article lists the statements of all Members who spoke at the event which took place on the morning of 27 January 2021, in the context of the plenary 2021, in the context of the plenary session of the House. Those who spoke: The President of the First Vice-President Nikitas Kaklamanis, the President of the "Greek Solution" Kyriakos Velopoulos, the representative of the N.D. Giannis Vroutsis, the deputies: SYRIZA Costas Zachariadis, KINAL Dimitris Konstantopoulos, KKE Diamanto Manolakou, MERA 25 Giorgos Logiadis.



The Mayor of Athens of Athens among those who will attend the first World Conference of Mayors in a Condemnation of the Holocaust

Mayors from all over the world will meet online on 16 March 2021 to hold the first world conference of Mayors to tackle anti-Semitism, organized by the City of Frankfurt and the Anti-Semitism Movement (CAM). The online conference will bring together mayors and local actors from around the world to discuss eliminating anti-Semitism, prejudice and hatred from their cities. Anti-Semitism is mainly tackled at the state or international level. But in reality antisemitism is a problem that occurs locally. Due to the nature of the phenomenon it could be resolved more effectively through initiatives by municipalities in the fields of education, as well as the enforcement of laws. This conference will open for the first time the important dialogue between mayors from all over the world, in order to learn about effective ways of combating hatred. Among the speakers at the conference will be the Mayor of Athens Costas Bakoyannis, who says: "In many cities around the world, the phenomenon of vandalism of Jewish cemeteries, the display of offensive messages and attacks on Jewish places of worship is frequent. Moreover, because modern forms of anti-semitism come from a wide ideological spectrum, there is no single solution to the problem. That is why it is very important for mayors from all over the world to meet and work together to take appropriate measures to tackle anti-Semitism."



From Kavala to California: Sarah Haim and her Family Full article by Kateřina Králová, Ph.D. [here](#)

In late autumn of 2015, one of the research fellows at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) rushed me from a big event—a gathering of donors to the museum, many of them first-, second-, and third-generation descendants of Holocaust survivors—to introduce me to Harry Zinn. The name sounded neither familiar nor unfamiliar; Zinn can be German, Austrian, Czech, Slovak, and of course (but not necessarily) Jewish, and Harry—I don't know precisely why—always reminded me of Hollywood movies. So on the one hand, it came as no surprise when I learned that Harry Zinn arrived in D.C. from Los Angeles. On the other hand, I was struck by his reasons for wanting to meet me: not only was he interested because of my Czechoslovakian origin but also because of my research on the Jews of Greece. I soon learned that these interests reflected his own identity: his father was a Jew from prewar Czechoslovakia who married a Jewish woman from Greece in the wake of the Holocaust. He invited me to visit him in Los Angeles, where I interviewed him and his aunt, Laura, about their family history.

In the years after World War II, Jewish survivors of the Holocaust struggled to rebuild their lives out of unfathomable tragedy and loss. After 1948—with the establishment of the State of Israel and the United States Congress' passage of the Displaced Persons Act—hundreds and thousands of survivors emigrated out of Europe, a period of massive global resettlement during which some 15,000 survivors came to Los Angeles. This period of Jewish immigration was distinct from previous waves of migration in several respects and resulted in many Jewish families, in the USA and elsewhere, severing all their personal ties to Europe. But it also fostered unprecedented interaction and intermingling between young Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. Brought together by overlapping experiences, both during and after the war, once unlikely meet-ups—given the geography of Europe, linguistic and cultural barriers, and the diversity of European Jewish traditions—grew into marital bonds. This was the case for Sarah Haim and Eugene Czinn, the parents of Harry Zinn. The postwar political situation in their countries of origin, the difficulty of reconstruction of postwar life in general and Jewish life in particular, and their traumatic memories took them away from the places they used to call "home" and united them in marriage in Los Angeles in 1959.

Sarah Haim and World War II in Greece

Sarah Haim was born to a Sephardic family in 1928 in Kavala, a beautiful port town on the northern edge of the Aegean Sea, where her father, Eliezer Haim, ran a thriving family business called Solomon Brothers & Co. In the fall of 1940, when the Italian army invaded Greece from Albania, Eliezer packed his wife Henrietta (originally from Salonika), his three daughters, and a Jewish maid and moved them to the apparent relative safety of Athens. He could not yet know how prescient his decision was, nor that his comfortable middle-class life, business assets, and family summers on the picturesque island of Thasos would be lost forever. Soon both the German army and the Bulgarian army invaded as well and nearly the entire northern region of Greece, including Kavala, was engulfed in violent conflict. Athens, by contrast, remained in the Italian-occupied zone with a much more moderate policy toward Jews until the surrender of Rome in September 1943.

Though Eliezer and family followed Sephardic traditions, he was a modern entrepreneur, liberal in his Jewish feelings and not particularly religiously observant. Unlike many other Sephardic Jews in Greece of his age and strata, he spoke not only Judeo-Spanish and French but also Greek and Italian. Thanks to his business and his Greek Orthodox business associates, he had good non-Jewish connections in the Greek capital, which were instrumental in finding necessary aid and shelter.

When the Germans took over the Italian zone (including Athens) and employed severe anti-Jewish measures in late 1943, the Haim family took on false identities and went into hiding. However, Allegra (b. 1925), Eliezer's eldest daughter aged eighteen, was soon captured and deported to Auschwitz in 1944. She never returned. Despite having enough financial means to survive in times of famine—an unprecedented disaster that caused the deaths of 250,000 people in Greece between 1941 and 1943—Eliezer became ill, probably with tuberculosis. Given the persecution of Jews and ongoing deportations, the family was unable to get him proper health care and he eventually passed away in September 1944 near the very end of the German occupation of Greece. After the deportation to Auschwitz of one of the family members, being blackmailed and betrayed, robbed of the last of their valuables, and finally losing their breadwinner, the emaciated mother and her two half-starving daughters lived out the rest of the war under deplorable conditions.



The Ottoman port city of Kavala was home to a culturally rich Jewish community and a vibrant tobacco industry whose factory owners and workers were majority Jewish. Pictured on the left is a bustling street scene in the tobacco processing district of Kavala in 1910; on the right is a current-day photograph of the same street, showing the once vibrant factories in disrepair.

And then the Germans weren't there anymore and then it was quiet, everything was so quiet. Couldn't understand what was going on... nobody on the street. Nothing, nothing, so Sarah and I, oh, we were so hungry, so hungry we decided to see what's going on, we opened the door, mind you, we were living in one room inside of a house like the royal family... Slowly people started coming here from all over. I could not understand where are they coming from? The whole street became like an ocean of people. And we couldn't understand and the bells started ringing."

The next day, both sisters, who could not yet fully internalize that the war was over, walked miles from Piraeus to their pre-hiding flat in the center of Athens, which they found locked but at least abandoned.

While Laura stayed behind in Greece to care for her mother, who was mourning for her deceased daughter and husband as well as for the overall Jewish tragedy, Sarah, a slight, black-haired, bespectacled, and self-confident teenager, decided to leave to help build a new Jewish homeland in Palestine. Her journey stretched, however, over five months. The "Henrietta Szold," the ship she boarded in Greece at the end of July 1946, was denied entry into Palestinian territory by the British Mandate. Sarah and her other 545 traveling companions were sent to British internment camps in Cyprus, where they spent the rest of 1946 until finally allowed to enter Palestine in Haifa on December 11. At the registration camp in Atlit, she declared an early December 25 birthdate, about two-and-a-half years older than her actual age, to make herself an adult. This enabled her to be assigned to the kibbutz HaGoshrim, in the Upper Galilee, which recently had been founded by Ladino-speaking Jews, primarily from Greece and Turkey. There, Sarah received not only military but also professional training as a teacher and childcare provider.

In the early 1950s, after the Greek Civil War ended, Sarah, along with her mother Henrietta and sister Laura, decided to move to the United States with the help of HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), an American Jewish organization devoted to aiding refugees. Only there did Henrietta finally take off her black clothes of mourning. Sarah, by then an Israeli citizen, reluctantly returned to Greece in 1953 to join her mother and younger sister for the journey. Embarking in Piraeus with exactly ten pieces of luggage they reached New York at the end of October in 1955. New York was a just a way station; they had already made up their minds to come to California where two married Greek émigré cousins lived and where, the sisters hoped, they could give their mother "a chance to be happy" again. So, a few days after arriving in New York, they boarded a train to Los Angeles, joining the thousands of American Jews and GIs who flocked to the "Golden Cities" of the Sunbelt after World War II.⁶ From an apartment on Figueroa Street, the daughters commuted daily to the Max Factor cosmetics factory to earn a living. They also attended Los Angeles City College to learn English and complete their educations.

When Sarah met Eugene

Perhaps it was her fate that, in 1958, it was in California, not Israel, where Sarah went on a blind date with her husband to be, Eugene Zinn (who had simplified his name from Czinn for ease of English pronunciation). Eugene's upbringing was quite different than Sarah's: born in 1924, he was raised in a conservative, German-speaking Ashkenazi family in Czechoslovakia. In March 1942, Eugene was deported to the extermination camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he incredibly endured 33 months, surviving three selections to the gas chambers. He was the only member of his immediately family to survive, as his parents and three siblings all were murdered in the Majdanek concentration camp. All told, over 80 of Eugene's relatives died in the Holocaust.



Eliezer and Henrietta Haim, courtesy of Harry and Helen Zinn.



Sarah and Eugene Zinn at their home in West Hills, ca. 1980s. Courtesy of Harry and Helene Zinn.



Sarah Haim in Israel, ca. 1950,
courtesy of Harry and Helene Zinn.

While the postwar political turbulence in Greece brought to power a conservative, anti-communist government, postwar Czechoslovakia oscillated towards Moscow, eventually becoming an integral part of the Soviet Eastern Bloc in February 1948. As in many other countries, anti-Jewish sentiments did not disappear with the end of the war and so in 1948, two years after Sarah, Eugene too emigrated to Israel seeking refuge. In those turbulent times, he surreptitiously left the Czech army into which he had been conscripted using the notorious "Greek Card." He recalled:

"It was Thursday morning I got released from the army, Friday morning I had a passport as a Greek refugee, that I am a Greek refugee on the way home through Paris. From—I mean this is the craziest thing—from Czechoslovakia to go to Paris to go home as a Greek refugee."

But instead, in June 1948 he boarded the cargo ship "Altalena," which (without Eugene's knowledge) was loaded with guns and fighters to strengthen the Jewish paramilitary units of the Irgun.⁹ This unfortunate entry in his record later obstructed any chance to get a decent job in Israel, from which he finally left for the USA in November 1955.

After some time in New York, he moved to Florida, where he worked long shifts for \$1 an hour as a busboy. Two years later, he moved to join his cousin Ernest, also a Holocaust survivor, in Los Angeles. He studied engineering at L.A. City College and started working for Everest & Jennings, an international wheelchair manufacturer. From a simple draftsman, he was repeatedly promoted, ultimately to manager of engineering. Among other things, in 1987, he invented a mobile footrest unit for wheelchairs making the life of many war veterans somehow more endurable, and designed a line of lightweight wheelchairs which bore the name "EZ" after his initials.

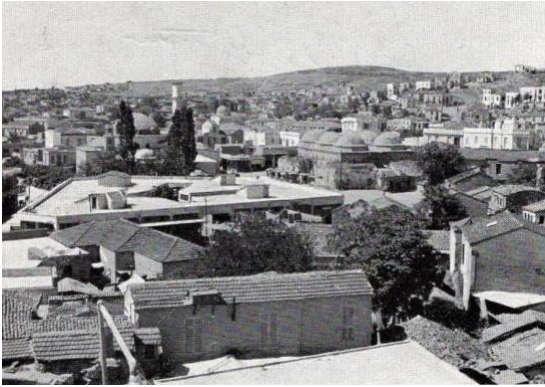
It was Eugene's cousin Ernest who first introduced him to Sarah Haim. Their shared time in Israel helped Sarah and Eugene to get to know one another: while they had been raised speaking different languages, they both could communicate fluently in Hebrew owing to their years there. Both were also learning English and practiced together as they courted. They married in Los Angeles in July 1959.

Serres

In the prefecture of Serres, the presence of the Jewish community has been confirmed since 1162. In 1333 there was, according to Byzantine Emperors, a Jewish community in the city of Zichni.

In the city of Serres and in the area of the fortress lived the Romaniote Jews, who were transferred, after the fall of the queen and, by order of Bayezid II to Istanbul.

A document of the Agioritian Monastery of Vatopedi of 1495 attests to the presence of Ashkenazi Jews in the city of Serres in the neighborhood of the "forty units" which, geographically, is identified with the area around the Church of Agia Marina and Agios Antonios, an area where the site of the horse race of the city of Serres was once located. In 1487-1492 the Sefardim came to Serras from Spain, and later found protection in the city with Jewish families who came from Italy, Sicily and Africa.



Their synagogue "Kal Gadol" was one of the largest in the northern Greek area and around it there was a space for women (Snoga), a seminary, a rabbinic library, important for the number of writings it contained, reading room, hostel and elementary school (Meldar).

The increase in the population of the community was the reason for the creation in 1850 of another Jewish quarter, with its own synagogue and primary school.

The economic soundness of the city of Serres at the time of the Turkish occupation but also, in the years after the rejection of slavery, owes much to the commercial activity of the community of Jewish origin. Cinema, timber, tobacco trade and banking were activities of the Jewish community as part of their circle of economic interests.

With the Bulgarian destruction of the city of Serres in 1913, the Jewish synagogue, like their entire densely populated district, was completely destroyed. Thus, the center of gravity of Jewish activity, was transferred to the district outside the walls, known as Ovraika, where their once thriving primary school, which today houses the 6th and 16th Primary Schools of Serres, is preserved.

On the day of the destruction in the city of Serres, on June 28, 1913, six hundred citizens, writes the historian of the city of Serres, Petros Penas, found refuge and escaped from the Bulgarian knife in the mansion of Serrea citizen of Jewish origin, Menahem Simantov, who bought with hundreds of pounds the lives of his fellow citizens.

The cultural activity of the two Jewish communities, who spoke Spanish in their intra-Community communication, is important. In the years before the Holocaust of Serres there were two cultural associations: "Friends of Progress" and "Lobde Tora" (Torah scholars), who organize theatrical performances in the Spanish-Jewish language, in order to support the needy students of the two communities. After the disaster of 1913

and, in the years of the interwar period, two new Jewish fraternities, "Bikur Holim" and "Fraternity", were active culturally.

In the spring of 1941 the Bulgarians, as allies of the Germans, entered the city of Serres. The Serreans, of Jewish origin, are obliged, in accordance with the provisions of the Law "for the Protection of the <Bulgarian> Nation" of 1941 and the Law on "Bulgarian Citizenship" of 1942, to a general population census.

What is left of the Jewish cemetery in Seres
The Bulgarian occupying authorities, following the accession of the Armenian community to the "Bulgarian nation", called on the Jewish Council of the Community. Their proposal that members of the Jewish community become Bulgarian nationals was immediately rejected, with a brave response: "In Greece we were born. We're Greeks. We don't change our nationality for any reason, for no fee..."

So began the monitoring of their lives, which lasted until the terrible night of the 3rd to the 4th of March 1943.

Much foreshadowed the coming calamity, however, no one believed in overcoming the barbarity of 1913 by the Bulgarian conquerors. First message, the order from the Bulgarians to the Jewish Council, to hand over the community register. This was followed by the change of identities, the painting of the pentagram on the front doors of their houses, the "embellishment" of their breasts with a yellow star, their careful inventory by the conquerors.

NO ONE WANTED TO BELIEVE, SINCE NO ONE COULD IMAGINE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE COMING CALAMITY, NO ONE COULD HEAR THE DEATH, WHICH SHARPENED THE CUT OF THE SICKLE.

They appreciated, even the wisest of the Jewish Community, that, perhaps, there would be a repetition of events, such as those experienced by their grandparents from 1487 to 1492 in Spain, and later in Sicily and Poland, a repetition of events like those experienced by the Serreans in the first Bulgarian occupation. They couldn't imagine how different the terrible night of 3rd to 4th March 1943 would be.

Following the Wannsee Conference (20.1.1942), on the "definitive solution of the Jewish issue in Europe", as well as the agreement of 22 February 1943 signed by Germans and Bulgarians "... for the deportation of the first 20,000 Jews from the newly acquired countries of Thrace and Macedonia", the order was given to arrest the Jews living in Serras.

The Bulgarians, with secrecy and speed in the preparation, with incredible cruelty on that night, gathered all the members of the Serraic Jewish Community in the square of their neighborhood (in the plane trees), formed by the confluence of the streets of Eastern Thrace, Athanasiou Argyrou, Nicomedia, Nigritis and the 3rd Cavalry Regiment.

The voices of the Bulgarian soldiers, who had been stationed early on at every front door of a house in the illuminated neighborhood especially that night, reminded the Serreans of Jewish origin that they have only fifteen minutes available to leave their homes while, at the same time, they banned any gesture of support



from their Christian neighbours. Frightened and unable to understand exactly what is happening to them, some dressed casually but, most, essentially naked in the cold of spring night, without the possibility of asking why so many machine guns around them, because so much hatred in the eyes of soldiers, with their sole concern not to separate families, followed each other on the way to their Holocaust.



Deportation of Jews from Serres by Bulgarians



Treblinka Memorial

The four hundred and seventy-six souls, infants, children, young girls and boys, men and women, as well as elders, were snatched that night from the hands of righteous sleep, to be led into the cold embrace of death. They fled the beloved city of Serres and were led, perhaps without ever reaching, to the Nazi camp in Treblinka Poland, victims of a fascist obsession that wanted the "definitive solution of the Jewish issue" in Europe.

NO JEWS FROM SERRES CAME BACK. THEY WERE LOST IN THE FREEZING WATER OF THE DANUBE AND PERHAPS, SOME, IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN KATOVIC, POLAND.

After their transfer to the extermination camps, their movable property was transported by Bulgarian camels to an unknown destination, while household goods were snatched from the Bulgarian settlers.

The Serrean Jewish Community is the only one in the whole of Europe that has suffered a real holocaust, since not a single member of it has escaped, nor has one of its members returned to their ancestral home.

With a historical presence of seven hundred years, a multi-cultural community, economically thriving and culturally creative, the Serraic Jewish Community, ceased to exist from the dawn of March 4, 1943.

On the occasion of Holocaust Commemoration Day. 27 January, 2021

The Names of the Jewish Citizens of Serres: 1843-1925 Karalambos Vourouzidi

Historical evidence of the presence of Jews in Serres

Chronica: Issue 191 [May/June 2004]

It is not known when Jews first settled in Serres. An historical overview of their community might shed some light. Their cultural and economic contributions to the city of Serres, and their lively and original public presence were strong, but, now that they are gone forever from the city, there are no historical eyewitness accounts to affirm their former presence.

Archeological finds in the area of Serres point to an early Jewish presence dating back to the Roman Empire, at the site of Amfipoli. The next reference to Jews in the area of Serres is by Rabbi Benjamin ben Jonah of Tudela who visited the area of Eastern Macedonia in 1162. In his travel journal, on his way from Thessaloniki, he writes that two days of travel brought him to the village of Mitrizzi where Jews lived. According to studies

on Rabbi Benjamin's work, the village of Mitrizzi is actually Serres Dimitritsi [Σερρών Δημητριτσι]. From then, until 1333, we have no mention of any Jewish presence in the area of Serres. In March of 1333, we learn from writings from the Monastery of the Holy John the Baptist of Serres that the Byzantine autocrat, Andronikos Palaiologos III, published in his chrysobull that there were a small number of Jews given permission to reside within the kastro walls of Zixnis. In 1345, the Serbian, Stephen Dusan, verified the presence of the Jewish community within the kastro walls of Zixnis in his chrysobull.

We have no other testimonies of Jewish presence during this period. We do have documents mentioning a Greek-speaking Jewish community [Romaniotes] residing in the periphery of the kastro who were transferred by Sultan Bayezed II to Constantinople in 1456 after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. The ex-patriot Jews of Serres, as all the Romaniote Jews of Byzantium, were called by the Ottomans "surgunlu" [obligated to immigrate] and built a new and important synagogue in Balata, one that existed until the 19th century when it was destroyed by fire.

Rhodes

Son of Greek Jewish Holocaust refugee now one of most powerful leaders in Congo Full article [here](#)

Moise Katumbi has presidential aspirations, is seen as a reformer in troubled country; while he doesn't identify as Jewish, he has a 'warm connection to Judaism and Israel'

Like many powerful politicians in Africa, Moise Katumbi goes by multiple titles. He is widely seen as the leader of the opposition of his native Democratic Republic of Congo, and he's the president of its TP Mazembe soccer team, which is one of Africa's finest.



Now Katumbi is also closer than he's ever been to becoming the first African ruler descended from a Holocaust refugee. Katumbi's father, Nissim Soriano, was a Greek Jew who fled the island of Rhodes from the Nazis and settled in Congo in the 1930s, when it was still a Belgian colony. Soriano built a fishing business empire and married the daughter of a local chief, Mwata Kazembe XIV Chinyanta Nakula, with whom he had two children.

Katumbi, who has said several times that he wants to become president, forged a crucial political union last month with former rival Jean-Pierre Bemba. The union helped Katumbi, a former regional governor, become the second-strongest politician behind only President Felix Tshisekedi.

Katumbi does not define himself as Jewish, "but he has a warm connection to Judaism and Israel," said Menachem Margolin, a Brussels-based rabbi who has become a close confidant of Katumbi since 2018. In public addresses, the African politician refers frequently to his Jewish roots, even calling himself "the Moses of Katanga, back to lead his people." (Moise is the French spelling for the name Moses.) Katumbi was the governor of Katanga, one of the country's 21 provinces and by far its richest in minerals.

Margolin, the Israel-born director of the Brussels-based European Jewish Association, said his relationship with Katumbi started "because I'm a rabbi," but he declined to elaborate, citing his need to preserve the privacy of those who approach him in his rabbinical capacity.

Last week, Katumbi was asked to become prime minister or appoint one of his allies to the post, according to the African Report. Ultimately he threw his weight behind Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, the head of state-owned mining giant Gecamines.

Katumbi wished Sama Lukonde "every success in his heavy responsibilities, among which peace and security for all Congolese remain the major challenge."

Donations from Crete to Bitola

Candia LLC and ABEA S.A. are proud of donating today extra virgin olive oil and other Cretan food products, as well as cosmetics, toys, school supplies, thermometers and clothing accessories to the House for Infants and Young Children in Bitola, which hosts around 40 children, up to 14 years old, with no parents. The initiative was welcomed by the Greek Consul in Bitola, Mr. Achilleas Rakinas, who introduced us to the House and also donated toys.

Our goal was to bring smiles to the children's faces

and assist as we can the "mothers" who have assumed this important role to take care of the children. Candia and ABEA would like to thank all our customers for their support, as their preference to our products enabled us to make this donation. Thank you all for your participation and support.



Turkey

Turkey: concern raised over the state of the neglected, centuries-old former synagogue the town of Çermik, near Diyarbakır in southeastern Turkey. Article [here](#)

The endangered state of a centuries-old synagogue in Diyarbakır province in southeastern Turkey has been raised in the Turkish Parliament. Semra Güzel, an MP of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) from Diyarbakır, raised the issue last month, calling for urgent measures to be taken to preserve the long-neglected synagogue in the town of Çermik, about 75 km from the ancient fortified city of Diyarbakır.

Güzel on January 15 submitted a parliamentary question to Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy regarding the threats and current condition of the Çermik synagogue, which is believed to date from the early 15th century, and demanding clarification of the Ministry's plans for the building.

News stories in recent months had reported that the synagogue, used as a warehouse, was in very neglected condition and in danger of collapse despite the fact that it was listed as a "cultural property" by the Diyarbakır Directorate of Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Back in October, the local news site Çermik Gündemi tweeted about the threats to the Çermik synagogue, saying that it dated from 1416. It still conserves the niche of the Ark.



Çermik Gündemi posted pictures of the building's state, including in one of the tweets the image of a Hebrew inscription.

Güzel posted her questions to Nuri Ersoy on Twitter:

- * Is the status of the historical Synagogue in Çermik district of Diyarbakır within the knowledge of your Ministry?
- * Why are no preventive measures taken for the Synagogue, which is faced with the danger of collapse?
- * Will steps be taken to take preventive measures and maintain the synagogue registered as a "cultural property"?" "



The last synagogue in Amed (Diyarbakir) is in danger of collapsing. Rainwater is seeping through the wooden roof of the Jewish house of worship, which was inaugurated in 1416 in the district of Çermik, alarming cracks are appearing in the walls, and supporting pillars have already had to be inserted here and there. But restoration of this synagogue has been denied to this day.

Although the building was designated - albeit somewhat late - as a cultural monument in 2012 by the Committee for the Preservation of Turkey's Intangible Cultural Heritage, the synagogue is being denied preservation and maintenance. Currently, it is used as a depot by its private owners. There was still a small Jewish community in Amed until the mass emigration to Israel in the 1950s. According to the reports of the Jewish scholar and traveler David D'Beth Hillel (d. 1846), forty families of Kurdên cihû, or Kurdistan Jews, lived in Çermik in 1827. The historian J. J. Benjamin even counted a hundred Jewish families in 1848. As a result of the Armenian genocide during Ottoman rule, Jewish life in the region was also severely decimated in 1915, including in Çermik. With the uprising of Sheikh Said, the community there shrank a second time. In 1949, just one year after the establishment of the State of Israel, there were only fourteen Jewish families left in all of Amed. These left Kurdistan in the following decade. Güzel: This treasure of Jewish culture must be preserved. The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) is calling for the preservation of the Jewish cultural heritage in Çermik and a concept for the restoration of the synagogue.

On Friday, the situation of the house of worship was discussed in the Turkish parliament. HDP MP Semra Güzel submitted a written question to Culture and Tourism Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy (AKP). "This treasure of Jewish culture must be preserved. The synagogue in the district of Sur has already disappeared, and the one in Çermik must be restored and opened to the public," Güzel said. The synagogue in Sur had been shot up and razed to the ground by security forces in 2015 during the Turkish military siege as part of curfews.

Struma

On February 26, 1942 nearly 800 Jewish refugees on the Struma ship drowned near Istanbul while fleeing the horrors of the Holocaust in Romania. Only one person aboard, 19-year-old David Stoliar, survived. Every year, the Jewish Community of Turkey holds a special memorial on the Bosphorus, led by the Country's Chief Rabbi Haham Bashi Isak Haleva. Ke Sus Almas Repozen En Gan Eden - May Their Souls Rest In Peace.



Italy

Italy granted her a pension for Holocaust survivors. Then it asked for the money back.

Full article by Simone Somekh [here](#)

In 2012, Messauda Fadlun received a letter from the Italian government asking her to return all the money she had been receiving as part of a restitution program for those racially persecuted by the fascist regime during World War II. Fadlun, an Italian-Libyan Jew, and her family were shocked.

"We thought there had been a mistake," said Ariel Finzi, Fadlun's son, who is the rabbi of Naples. "Worst case, we presumed the government would stop paying for the pension, but not that we would have to return the money." They were wrong: It was just the beginning of a long legal fight with the Italian government, which claimed she had not been eligible to receive the pension, despite granting it earlier. Fadlun died in 2018, and now her 98-year-old husband, Alberto Finzi, is expected to pay the sum of 76,000 euros (about \$92,000).



Fadlun's misadventure with Italian bureaucracy is not unique. Other Jewish families over the past few years have been asked to return the pensions. Still others had to jump through bureaucratic hoops to prove their eligibility and provide decades-old documentation that's often hard to obtain.

Many of the families prefer to remain anonymous. But after losing a second appeal in court, Finzi decided to share his mother's story, hoping that others would begin speaking up and the government would cease its battle against the survivors. In Fadlun's case, the government claims she was not an Italian citizen during World War II. Fadlun was born and raised in Tripoli, the capital of Libya — an Italian colony in 1938, when the fascist regime passed a series of racist laws that targeted the Jewish community. The discriminatory policies written in Rome were applied to the Jews living in Libya.

At the time, Fadlun had Italian-Libyan citizenship, which was considered "inferior" to regular Italian citizenship. "My mother and her family were victims of the racial laws just like all other Italian Jews," Finzi said. Finzi said his mother recalled that as she was walking out of school one day, a man spat in her face and called her "dirty Jew."

"After the laws were passed, her family traveled to the mountains," he said. "Her little brother was sick, and a doctor suggested that some time in the mountains might be beneficial to him. When they arrived, the hotel owner refused to let them sleep in his hotel because they were Jewish. They were forced to sleep outdoors for two nights, and her brother died." Italy passed a law in 1955 — updated in 1980 — to provide monthly pensions for Italian citizens who were persecuted for racial or political reasons during the Mussolini regime. A different law, passed in 1980, provided pensions for Italian citizens who survived the Nazi concentration camps.

Pope Visits with Holocaust Survivor

Hungarian-born 90-year-old writer Edith Brooke, a Holocaust survivor, has lived in Italy for many years. Last January, on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the newspaper "L' Osservatore Romano" published an interview. Touched by her testimony, Pope Francis visited her at her home in Rome. She read her testimony about what she and her family experienced during the Nazi Occupation and was shocked. So he decided to meet her personally and on Saturday 20.2.2021, Pope Francis visited Edith Brooke at her home in Rome. "I came here to thank you for your testimony and to pay tribute to the people who were martyred by the insanity of Nazism," the Pope told her. "And I honestly repeat to you what I said from the heart to Yad Vashem, and which I repeat to every person who, like you, suffered so much from it: [I ask] forgiveness, Lord, in the name of mankind."



Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



Rosh Hodesh Nisan falls on March 14th this year, with Pessah beginning on Saturday night – the Seder night – exactly 2 weeks later on March 27th. And while Pessah is obviously the most dominant aspect of Nisan, the month itself is filled with time-honored customs that may not be strictly mandatory but are mentioned in the Talmud and codes of Jewish law as an integral part of Jewish law and lore. These include "Birkat Ilanot" – the blessing on [fruit] trees, not fasting or eulogizing during the entire month of Nisan, and not saying "tahanun" – daily penitential prayers in morning and afternoon services. All these customs derive from the nature of the month of Nisan as being a month of joy and happiness for the Jewish people, the month of redemption from Egypt and our formation as the Jewish nation, the beginning of Spring, and the month when final redemption of Israel will occur in the future.

Another time-honored custom from the 1st to the 13th of Nisan is the reading in synagogue of the "parshiot Hanisi'im" from the Torah portion of "Naso" in the Book of Numbers. Read in synagogues after the morning prayers, these verses describe the dedication of the Mishcon [Tabernacle] in the wilderness, which occurred on 1st day of Nisan. Each day, a different Nasi – prince, head – of each of the Twelve Tribes (not including the tribe of Ley) offered special sacrifices in celebration of the occasion, which ended on the 12th of the month. On the 13th of Nisan, the description of the construction of the Menorah that appears in the Torah portion of "Behalotcha", also in the Book of Numbers, is read. This is in honor of the tribe of Levy, that is not counted among the Twelve Tribes since they were not allotted land in the Land of Israel. Most Jewish communities read these verses either from prayer books or a regular printed Pentateuch. However, there is a Hassidic tradition to read the verses from a Sefer Torah, which is taken out of the ark specifically for this purpose after conclusion of the prayer service. No one is called up for an aliyah, and no blessings are recited. The Torah is then immediately returned to the ark. The reason for this custom is the importance of the dedication of the Mishcon and the great joy of its dedication. However, many consider removing a Torah from the ark for such a purpose as being problematic in terms of the laws and customs of honor and respect for Torah scrolls, especially when there might not be a minyan present. Therefore, the vast majority of both Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities suffice with reading from printed books. And further attesting to the importance of this custom is the fact that in all Sephardic prayer books, one will find a series of special prayers both before and after each daily reading. In fact, these supplications are much longer than the reading itself! These prayers come from Kabbalistic traditions and are attributed to one of Sephardic Jewry's most prolific and influential Sages, Rabbi Haim Yosef David Azulai of Morocco, the "Hida". The central theme of these prayers is that by virtue and merit of the particular 'Nasi' the Jewish people be protected, and the final redemption occur forthwith. This custom is special tradition during the first two weeks of Nisan is still practiced all over the Jewish world but has also fallen into 'disuse' among many. This is not due to any objection to the custom on principle, nor any intentional belittling of its importance. Rather, since the custom is totally optional even according to its strictest observers, as well as the fact that it is performed after the conclusion of prayers, many synagogues have ceased public readings of the verses because people simply did or would not remain after prayers. This may sound a bit callous in terms of a time-honored Jewish custom but is actually a clear illustration of an important idea in Jewish law, "tirha d'tzibur" – inconveniencing the public/community", which in many cases involves taking up people's time when not mandated by a particular Torah or Rabbinic principle. And while this concept is very relative to each community and its norms, and its use can even be often quite controversial, one cannot fault a particular synagogue or congregation that has decided, within limits, to cease or not institute a particular custom because of the inconvenience it may cause to the community in its own eyes. However, this does not derogate from reciting the verses on an individual basis, with or without the special prayers composed by the 'Hida'. And even if one chooses not to recite the verses altogether, it is still important to understand the custom and its significance and ancient tradition. May we indeed merit the final redemption this Nisan and may we all enjoy a (hopefully) post-COVID-19 Pessah with extended family and friends!

Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé
Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America



Parashah of the Week – Purim Insights
Celebrate the Good

Our sages in the Talmud remind us that Haman, who plotted to destroy the Jewish people, was a descendant of the infamous tribe of Amalek who had attacked our old, feeble and our infirm soon after our exodus from Egypt. They go on to make a distinction between Mordechai and Haman, the good and the bad. But, why is it important to make an emphasis on Haman and his evil plans

Our Sages explain that it is indeed important to teach, and for the people to learn and to be able to recognize evil and to subdue it when it tries to rise. Indeed, the holiday of Purim is the day when evil nearly succeeded in its attempt to destroy our nation. Therefore, at the same time that we celebrate the victory and the miracles of the day, we also remember those who performed the evil against us, Amalek and Haman their descendant.

Rabbi Shem Tob Gagine (1) writes that Haman in the story of Purim brought a different type of evil to the world. In a sense, he was the first anti-Semite. His evil involved inventing a lie about someone else, creating a libel that developed into hatred, and that eventually convinced others to exterminate an entire group of people. Thankfully, Haman failed in his evil plot, but unfortunately, many others have learned from his actions, accusing and unjustly blaming others to the point of endangering innocent lives. Anger, hate, envy, and out-of-control desires, amongst others, are character traits to watch out for when we are on the lookout for this kind of evil. Rabbi Gagine knew quite well about anti-Semitism when he referred to it, writing his comments during the Second World War as Chief Rabbi of England's Sephardic community. (2)

Unfortunately, this is still true even today, when we see evil's character traits resurfacing again, those who stand up to it must be supported, encouraged, and applauded.

By nature, most good people prefer to avoid confrontation, even when presented with an opportunity to confront evil doers and stop their plans from gaining traction. However, when confrontation is avoided and the evil is treated as something sort of benign, it only grows, and then it becomes even more difficult to stop it. The more it grows, the greater the force needed to destroy it. In the story of the book of Esther, the Jewish people are faced with circumstances that grew out of control. When the Jewish people realized and understood their precarious situation, it was almost too late and there was only a glimmer of hope for salvation. The opportunity was to come through Queen Esther, provided that she gathered the courage to stand up and face the wicked Haman. As the Megillah relates to us, Queen Esther did stand up, but the Jewish people still had to fight and go to war in order to save their lives.

Indeed, in every generation, there will be those that will attempt to revive these evils, and therefore it is imperative to learn how to recognize them and their perpetrators. We must learn how to overcome them and subdue them and we must also teach the next generations to be prepared and stand up when they attempt to rise again.

Biva tu i biva yo, bivan todos los Judios, biva la reina Ester ke tanto plazer mos dio.
Shabbat Shalom

1. Keter Shem Tob, Rabbi Shem Tob Gagine (Gagin), Vol. II, P.532, Purim, 1:611.

2. Rabbi Shemtob Gagine (e) (5 September 1884 – 30 July 1953) was a British Sephardic rabbi and scion of a famous Moroccan rabbinical dynasty that emigrated to Palestine from Spain at the time of the Inquisition. He was the great-grandson of R. Chaim Abraham Gagine, the first Hakham Bashi of the Holy Land during the Ottoman Empire, and the son and nephew respectively of Rabbis

Isaac and Abraham Gaguin. He was the great-great-grandson of the famous scholar and kabbalist, Sar Shalom Sharabi. He studied at the "Doresh Zion" College, Jerusalem, and was a pupil of R. Jacob Alfiya. At an early age, he contributed articles to the Palestinian Hebrew Press ("Hahhabbezeleth" et al.) on aspects of Jewish traditional observances, as well as on biblical and philological matters. He was awarded rabbinical diplomas by numerous authorities, including R. Haim Berlin and Chief Rabbis Jacob Meir, C.B.E. and Abraham Kook, C.B.E. of Palestine. In 1911, Rabbi Gaguine was appointed to serve in the office of dayyanut in Cairo. In 1919, he was invited to serve in Manchester, being appointed Ab Beth Din in 1920. In 1927 he was appointed Rosh Yeshibah of Judith Montefiore College in Ramsgate. His major contribution to Jewish scholarship was Keter Shem Tob, an encyclopedic treatise that examines and compares the rites, ceremonies, and liturgy of the eastern and western Sephardim and Ashkenazim, paying particular attention to the customs of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. The first two volumes were published in 1934. The final work comprised a total of 7 volumes, the last 4 of which were published posthumously with the help of his son, Rabbi Dr. Maurice Gaguine. In 1998 "Keter Shem Tob" was republished as a complete set.



**Looking Back...and Beyond: Thoughts for Shabbat Parah
by Rabbi Marc D. Angel**

Shabbat Parah recalls the purification ceremony of the "red heifer" performed in ancient times. As we approach Passover, this Shabbat is designated as a time to purify ourselves for the upcoming observances. Although the "red heifer" purification has not taken place in several thousand years, we nevertheless retain the memory of this ceremony. The destruction of the Temples in antiquity were a serious blow to the Jewish People. But the Jewish religious genius has taught us to overcome tragedies, to remember them, but to dream of better days yet to come. In this spirit, I am offering an interpretation of the first Mishna of the Talmud.

An incident where [Rabban Gamliel's] sons returned from a wedding hall: They said to him, we did not recite Shema. He said to them: If the dawn has not arrived, you are obligated to recite... (Berakhot, Mishna, 2a)

Rabban Gamliel was the Nasi (leader) of the rabbinic academy of Yavne that served as the spiritual center of Judaism following the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. He is credited with restoring central rabbinic authority at a time when the Jewish people was in tremendous distress. The Romans had not only razed the Temple but murdered many Jews and forced many thousands into exile. This was one of the bleakest periods in Jewish history.

The Mishna reports that on a certain occasion, Rabban Gamliel's sons had arrived home very late, after midnight. They had been celebrating at a wedding. The Mishna does not actually say they were at a wedding, but at a *beit mishteh*, a place of drinking. Where ever they were, they were having a joyous time. They were so involved in the celebration that they did not recite the evening *Shema*.

The *Shema* is a short verse declaring the unity of God. It can be recited in a matter of a few seconds. Even if one were to include the three full biblical chapters designated as the *Shema*, this would entail no more than several minutes. How could Rabban Gamliel's sons be so pre-occupied with their drinking and celebrating that they could not find a few moments to say the *Shema*?

Obviously, Rabban Gamliel was concerned about his sons' spiritual life. He waited up long into the night until they returned home. They told him they had not recited the *Shema*; now it was after midnight and it was too late to recite it. Rabban Gamliel instructed them to say the *Shema*, explaining that the rabbinic requirement to say *Shema* before midnight was only to serve as a safeguard to prevent people from putting off the recitation too late. The actual rule is that one may recite the *Shema* until dawn.

Perhaps this episode should be understood in the following way. With the destruction of the Temple and the vast suffering of the Jews, many survivors—including the sons of Rabban Gamliel—were profoundly depressed. The

foundations of their religious life were shaken. How could God allow such a horrific tragedy to befall the Jews? How could one retain faith in God after all that had transpired? Was there any point to studying Torah and fulfilling the commandments, pretending that religious life would continue as though nothing had happened?

The sons went to a party. They drank. They celebrated. At a time when the Jewish community was blanketed with sorrow, these young men chose to cut themselves off from that sorrow. Their rebellious spirit was so deep that they did not—would not—recite the simple verse acknowledging the unity and kingdom of God.

When they returned home, their father was waiting for them. "Did you say the *Shema*?" They replied: "It is too late!" What they may have meant was: the Jewish people has reached the pit of darkness, there is no future, no hope. It is impossible to declare the unity and kingship of God in the present circumstances.

Rabban Gamliel said: No, my sons, it is not too late. We may have reached and crossed a "midnight" in our history, but the dawn will come. Right now, we seem to be in a world where God has vanished, where His power has abandoned us. I understand your spiritual turmoil and your grief. But you must recite the *Shema*. The dawn will come. Rabban Gamliel's sons, at the instruction of their father, recited the *Shema*.

Purim Holiday Recap

Purim Celebrated Across the Greek Jewish and Sephardic World



USA



KKJ's Online Purim Service



Athens, Greece



UAE

Watch a delightful journey to Ioannina with traditional songs for Purim on YouTube [Here](#)



According to the oral history of the Jewish community of Ioannina, the Megillah was given by the groom's family to the couple on their first Purim. Stephen's question as to the date of the scroll set me off on research into the giving of the Megillot. In families with many children, especially daughters, the dowry was very important and, often painful when the family did not have a lot of money. In the Colchamiro family, where Jessoula and Rachel had 11 children (7 of them daughters) this was certainly a factor in emigration. The daughters would have received their megillah from their husbands' families. Three of the daughters did not marry men from Ioannina. Did this tradition carry over into other Romaniote or Sephardic communities in Greece?

I am going to see what I can find out as to the giving of the Megillah. If given by the groom's family on the couple's first Purim, how does this affect a poor family? Was the tradition continued here in the USA? I am sure many other questions will arise but let's start with these?



Megillah from Stephen Colchamiro
Originally owned by his Grandmother
Steroula Colchamiro, widow of Asser

Mid-15th Century Esther Scroll from Spanish Empire finds a home in Israel [Full article here](#)

A mid-15th century Iberian megillah of Esther - also referred to as the Esther scrolls - has been gifted to the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. The Iberian Esther scroll is one of the oldest surviving renditions of the biblical tale of Esther taking up her noble destiny to save the Jewish people from the evil Haman.

Experts determined that the mid-15th century scroll was written by a Jewish record-keeper around 1465, prior to the expulsion of Jewish populations from Spain and Portugal at the end of the century.



It was the only complete 15th century megillah currently being held in private hands prior to the donation. There are only a few of these complete megillahs worldwide, and those from the pre-expulsion period in Spain and Portugal are "even rarer, with only a small handful known to exist," the National Library said.

It was written on leather in brown ink portraying the characteristics of Sephardic script. The section that appears just before the text of the storied Purim tale contains a traditional blessing recited before and after the reading of the megillah, which corresponds with the traditional uses of this scroll in Iberian Jewish communities prior to their expulsion.



The scroll was gifted by Michael Jesselson and his family. Jesselson's father, Ludwig Jesselson, was the founding chairman of the library's International Council. Curator at the National Library Dr. Yoel Finkelman said that the gifted scroll was "an incredibly rare testament to the rich material culture of the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula. "It is one of the earliest extant Esther Scrolls, and one of the few 15th century megillot in the world," Finkelman added. "The library is privileged to house this treasure and to preserve the legacy of pre-expulsion Iberian Jewry for the Jewish people and the world."

The Esther scrolls detail the miraculous events that took place in Persia 2,300 years ago when the Jewish people were saved by the actions of Mordechai and Esther from Haman and King Ahasuerus' decree to exterminate the Jewish population. Jews across the world connect to the spirit of Purim by reading the megillah, sending gifts to friends (mishloach manot), giving charity to the poor (matanot la'evyonim) and finally, as the holiday draws to an end, participate in a joyous festive meal (mishteh).

UAE Jewish community gears up for Purim and 24-hour megillah reading

"Purim has poignant relevance for Jews of the Diaspora. At times we hide our identities and at other times we reveal and assert that we are Jewish."

Across the Gulf states, from Kuwait to Oman, Jews are preparing for a Purim unlike any other they have ever had.

The Association of Gulf Jewish Communities hosted a virtual Purim event on February 25. It was the first of its kind and the first since the founding of the AGJC this month. It is also taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, giving it added value and resonance. There are hundreds of Jews across the Gulf states, but many of them have had no organized communal public activities until recently, due to a variety of reasons.



Purim in the Emirates

In recent years, however, the Jewish community of Bahrain, which dates from the 19th century, and that of the United Arab Emirates have been more vocal. This was boosted by the Abraham Accords, which led to 130,000 Israelis visiting Dubai and large public Hanukkah events in 2020.

There are Jews who also reside in the Gulf and are in the US military or large, multinational companies. Now, everyone in the Gulf and around the world can participate in the virtual Purim event that will take place at 7:30 p.m. in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and 8:30 p.m. in Oman and the UAE, due to their different time zones.

The megillah (Scroll of Esther) reading will be done by Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie, with a keynote speech by Dr. Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence.

"This historic event is important because, for the first time, the Jewish communities of the six GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries will celebrate Purim together," said former Bahraini ambassador to the US Houda Nonoo, who has been increasingly active on social media promoting the event and is one of the leading lights of the Gulf today and a key voice discussing the Jewish community.

“When we began creating the Association of Gulf Jewish Communities, our vision was to create a people-to-people network of Jews in the Gulf who are developing Jewish life in the region,” she said. “With this in mind, it was important for us to kick off with an event right away – and what better time to do so than for Purim?” “As we prepared for this event, it was very important to us that we incorporate elements of interfaith and coexistence, which is what makes the Gulf so unique and special,” Nonoo said. “We are honored that H.E. Dr. Sh. Khalid bin Khalifa Al Khalifa will be giving the keynote speech,” she said.

She also noted that famed Emirati calligraphy artist Thoufeek Zakriya will create a piece of Purim artwork live, and together with friends from around the world, the Jewish communities of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will all join Rabbi Abadie for a live reading of the megillah. Across the Gulf, many are excited. Michael Sussman, a businessman currently in Dubai and CEO of Sussman Corporate Security, said that it is a real historic opportunity to participate in this virtual Purim. “It is the first time in history where representatives of the Jewish communities from across the Gulf will hear the Book of Esther being read together – it is the founding of something new,” he said.

“In the early days of the State of Israel, people had to be physically present to experience its creation,” Sussman said. “In the case of the GCC, people just need to click a button and can participate from their homes, wherever they are in the world. This is a very exciting time for world Jewry.”

The Holiday of Purim Brought Us Many Treasures

Beyond Hamantaschen: Haman’s Fingers full article [here](#)

Most people think of hamantaschen when it comes to Purim treats, but in Sephardic culture it doesn’t seem strange to eat Haman’s fingers, Haman’s eyes or Haman’s ears. Children really enjoy preparing and eating Haman’s fingers, and I find a little helper in the kitchen makes the prep work go much more quickly.

These treats are not overly sweet, as phyllo-based pastries with syrup often are. There is just a small amount of powdered sugar in the filling and a bit more sprinkled on top once they cool completely.



Ingredients:

1 1-pound box phyllo pastry

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup walnuts

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup almonds, with the skin is fine

6 tablespoons powdered sugar for the filling and a little extra for dusting

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon orange blossom water, optional. Don’t make a special trip to the store if you don’t have it in your pantry already.

1 pinch sea salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ stick butter or margarine (4 tablespoons), melted

The phyllo pastry that I buy comes in 18×12 inch sheets. Defrost in it your refrigerator the night before you’re going to prepare these pastries.

Preheat the oven to 400 F and place the oven rack in the upper third of the oven.

Grind the nuts to a medium consistency in a food processor, or chop them by hand.

Combine the ground nuts, powdered sugar, cinnamon and orange blossom water in a bowl, stirring a few times to distribute the sugar and cinnamon evenly.

Before opening the box of phyllo dough, dampen a clean tea towel. Open the pastry, unfold it, and cut in half lengthwise and crosswise. You can use a sharp knife to cut the pastry, or kitchen shears if that is easier for you. This will create 4 portions of equally sized rectangles. Combine them to create one stack of phyllo pastry, and cover immediately with the damp tea towel.

Take 2-3 pieces of phyllo rectangles out at a time, making sure to keep the pastry you are not immediately working with continually covered.

Measure 1 tablespoon of the nut mixture and sprinkle it evenly near the edge closest to you. Fold the pastry away from you, turning over one time to cover the nuts before folding in each side toward the center. The pastry will stay nicely if you run your fingers gently up the crease. Once both sides are folded in, begin to slowly roll the pastry away from you to form a cigar using your fingers to keep everything straight and even. Phyllo pastry is delicate and can tear. Just keep rolling because it is very forgiving.

Place the seamed side down on a baking sheet and brush the top and sides with the melted butter or margarine. If you have a helper in the kitchen, you can really do this very quickly. One person can roll, and one person can brush the pastries and get them into the oven. I place them about half an inch apart on the baking sheet. It is not necessary to grease the baking sheet. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden brown. Once baked, let cool for a few minutes on the baking sheet, before moving to a wire rack to cool completely. Dust with powdered sugar immediately before serving. Happy Purim! Jessica Grann is a home chef living in Pittsburgh.

Some Light Thoughts

The next recipe looks like burekas but it is full of nuts and cinnamon and above all sugar and lemon sauce. This food is called "Travados" and is from a Salonican Jewish recipe.

For the dough:

- 1 glass of oil
- 1/2 glass of water
- A teaspoon of lemon
- Half a teaspoon of salt
- 4 tbsp sugar
- Cinnamon spoon
- Half a kilo of flour

Mix all the liquids and add the flour, revolt and cut circles with a glass.

La malit:

- Half a kilo of nuts
- 100 gr of sugar
- 3 spoons of water



Fill every circle of dough with a malit and close like a burkettes. Bake in the oven at 180 degrees until it's golden.

For honey syrup:

- 1 cup of honey
- 1 cup of sugar
- A spoonful of lemon
- 3 cups of water
- A teaspoon of cinnamon

Cook in a large pot for about a quarter of an hour until you receive a thick syrup.

Put the baked travodicos into the pot and cook for about 5 minutes.

Bon appetit.

Courtesy of Errika Beja Valensi

Upcoming Events of Interest
Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie in the United Arab Emirates – The New Gulf Jewish Communities
Thursday March 11 at 12pm - Register [Here](#)



The Sephardic Jewish
Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi



Association of
Gulf Jewish Communities
איגוד הקהילות היהודיות במפרץ
رابطة المجتمعات اليهودية الخليجية



*Join the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, Association
of Gulf Jewish Communities, and the Jewish Council of the
Emirates for a special conversation*

Beth Din of Arabia: New Gulf Jewish Communities

THURSDAY MARCH 11
12PM ET / 9AM PT / 9PM DUBAI
REGISTER AT
TINYURL.COM/RABBIABADIE

With Rabbi Dr. Elie Abadie
Senior Rabbi of the Jewish Council of the Emirates



Rabbi Elie Abadie, M.D. comes from a long and distinguished rabbinical lineage dating back to fifteenth century Spain and Provence. He was born in Beirut Lebanon, and grew up in Mexico City, coming to the United States at the age of 18 to study medicine. He is currently President of JJAC (Justice for Jews from Arab Countries) and is the Founder of the Sephardic Academy of Manhattan. He served as the Director of the Jacob E. Safra Institute of Sephardic Studies, at Yeshiva University and college professor of Sephardic Judaism, history, philosophy, and comparative traditional law. He was recently appointed Senior Rabbi of the Jewish Council of the Emirates, the first permanent Rabbi in the nation's history.

Was One of Catholic Spain's most famous scholars secretly Jewish? Full article [Here](#)

New research reveals that Alfonso de Zamora remained true to his faith.

For centuries Catholic historians opposed admitting that a prized converso (a Jew who had converted to Christianity) may have actually maintained Jewish identity and practice in secret, regardless of whether he was forcibly dragged to the baptismal font or promised a high post in the Church hierarchy as reward for his heresy. There were certainly Jews who willingly converted to Christianity, even rabbis such as Solomon HaLevi of Burgos who not only became a respectable Bishop, but an ardent promoter of discriminatory laws against Jews.



However, most Jews who remained in Spain, referred to as "Crypto-Jews", continued to covertly practice their religion in some form and pass it on to their children. Generations later, the descendants of these conversos continued to flee Spain and Portugal to other lands where they sought to live as free Jews. Throughout that almost 40-year period, he was employed by the highest Catholic prelates, the archbishops of Spain, right under the watchful eye of the Inquisition.

Indubitably he was famous.

Top clerics patronized him, hired him to copy Hebrew books, the grammar books of Rabbi David Kimhi (also known as "Radaq"), books about the Bible, including various commentaries, and so on. But as a "blemished" Christian, Alfonso was cheated in court when he tried to claim his rightful wages from the "upstanding" publisher.

The Yeshiva-educated refugee Catholic scholar

One of the Spanish "New Christians" most cherished by the Catholic authorities was Alfonso de Zamora (1474–1545/6). A graduate of the famous Campanton Yeshiva in Zamora, he first escaped to Portugal in 1492, but for unknown reasons returned to Spain around 1497 as a converso.

In a few years we find him in Salamanca as a teacher and a scribe until 1512 when he was transferred to the University of Alcalá de Henares. His involvement in the editing of the first Polyglot Bible, his books, scribal and teaching positions raised his esteem and importance at the dawn of the Renaissance.

Alfonso could never become head of his department or immune from being summoned to the Inquisition. All he could do was release his fury in innumerable annotations on the margins of his copied books and in his "diary", preserved at the Leiden University Library.

Over the course of fifteen years, at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem (now part of the National Library of Israel), I examined about 70 manuscripts written or edited by Alfonso de Zamora. During these intense years I could not but conclude that the man's notes, essays, poems, criticisms, bible commentary, historical records, books, and teaching curriculum reflected a tormented, resentful, bitter and penitent Crypto-Jew. He wrote almost exclusively in Hebrew.

**This E-Newsletter is sponsored by Linda Baum Kinsberg
in memory of her Nona Mollie (Mazalu) Askinazi**

Linda has included a poem in honor of her Nona:

Nona's Papoutsia (Shoes)

by Linda (Baum) Kinsberg

In Memory of my Nona, Mollie (Mazalu) Askinazi. Her Adara is on Purim.

When I was five,

I would look at my Nona's shoes,
Boats for Mickey, Minnie, Goofy and Pluto.
Floating across the ocean to Ioannia, Greece
And back to Eldridge Street on the Lower East side.
Sometimes I would walk in her shoes
And pretend I was a Nona myself
Taking care of my grand dolls
I felt powerful, strong and very grown up.

When I was ten,

I would look at my Nona's shoes,
And see the tight challenging holes
For the new shoelaces to go through
My job since Nona couldn't do it herself
Arthritis in her fingers
Onto her feet they would go
She would walk in her shoes
And be a powerful Nona to me
Powerful, strong and very grown up

When I was fifteen

I would look at my Nona's shoes
Seeing old lady's military boots
Ugly and not stylish at all
Leave them for her,
So she can walk in them and
Be a Nona to me
Powerful, strong and very grown up and old

When I was 20,

I would look at my Nona's shoes
Seeing just my Nona's shoes
O.K. and functional
Not for me
Leave them for her, my Nona
So she can walk in them and be Nona to me
Powerful, strong, very grown up and still old

When I was twenty-five

I would look at my Nona's shoes and
Cry
She won't need them any more,
She'll never walk in them again
To be a Nona to me
Powerful, strong, grown up or old

When I was thirty, thirty five, forty, forty-five and fifty

I didn't think much about my Nona's shoes



Mazalu and Ezra Akinazi

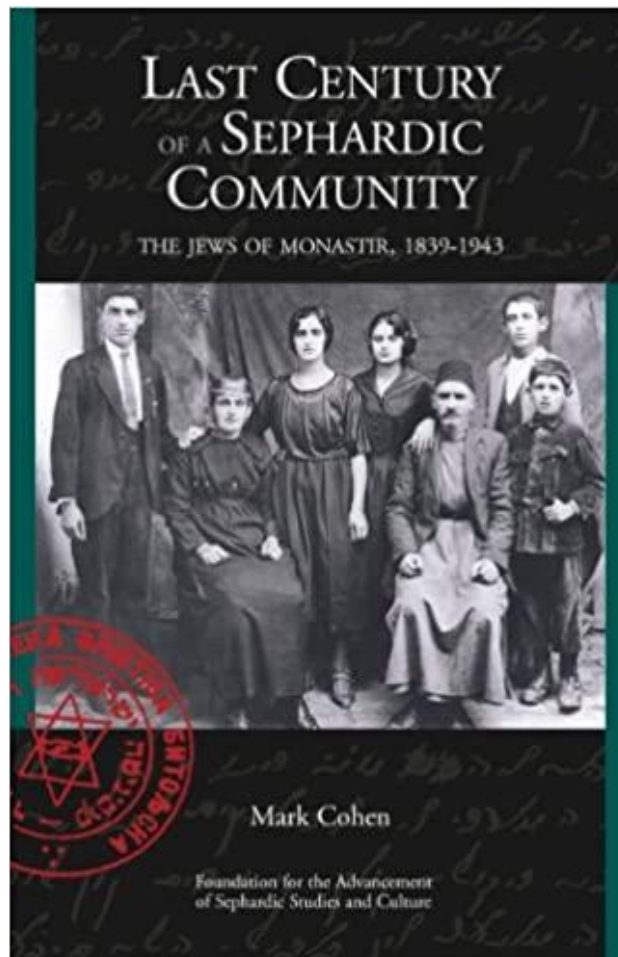
I was too busy
Making boats for my children
Tying their shoelaces
While they wore my shoes
Feeling powerful,, strong and very grown up

When I was fifty five

I would look down at my own feet and see
My Nona's shoes,
My papoutsia
My boats, my laces
My military boots
I'm the Nona now
Taking care of my grandchildren
I felt powerful, strong, grown up and not so old.

Book for Sale

Kehila Kedosha Janina is proud to offer Mark Cohen's book "Last Century of a Sephardic Community: The Jewish Community of Monastir." We once again have this important book in stock. Published by the Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture (FASSAC) we can now offer the book for \$30 including P&H in the USA. To order, email us at museum@kkjism.org.



Looking for Our Help

I so look forward to receiving this newsletter each month. Your presentation is not only a thoughtful reminder of my heritage but it is a commendable historic literary effort on its own right. Keep up the good work.

I am the very proud oldest son of Rose Matza Goldstein. She was born in 1918, on Broome St (2 buildings down from the site of the soon to be built KKJ Synagogue) and is now a rather healthy 102 1/2 years old. Her Grandfather was an original parishioner at the then new "Romaniote Synagogue". She remembers how proud he was when he compared his new synagogue in his new home in America to the historic old synagogue in Ioannina.

Rose is presently on a "mission of mercy" campaign. She is trying to encourage all the world's people to get the vaccine. She was the oldest person in Las Vegas to get the initial Pfizer shot this past Saturday. She was interviewed by the Fox local network news outlet and many of their affiliates throughout America picked up the feed. Please watch it online [Here](#), it was a wonderful and informative important news story. **Rose points out the constant mourning on Broome St. lasting years after the first pandemic decimated the world. She vividly remembers the sadness of the Broome Street adults as they reflected on the loss of so many family and friends in Greece, America, and all over the world.**

There is no doubt in my mind that the building of the KKJ Synagogue in the early 1920s had a lot to do with easing the pain of the lives lost due to that pandemic. I would like to pass on any specifics you may have in the museum about the devastation of that pandemic. It will help Rose emphasize her plea to encourage all to get the vaccine. Rose's words of wisdom: "Just Imagine how many millions of lives would have been saved if only there were a vaccine at that time. Get the vaccine now."

We are looking for information on members of the community on the Lower East Side who may have died or lost family members in the 1918-1919 pandemic.

"I am looking for family of Martha and Elvir Yousach / Γιουσάχ / Giousah who immigrated to United States from Greece after the Holocaust." - Richard (Rick) Goldstein

Men from Thessaloniki who were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and then to Warsaw to work on tearing down the Warsaw Ghetto. We have gathered the following names:

Tzako Aboav	Salvatore Moshe
Iakov Attias	Pepo (Josef) Natan
Isador Azous	Isaac Parente
Eli Benyacar	Liaou Pessach
Yehiel Daniel	Leon Pitson
Leon Hagouel	Moshe Salmon
Mose Halegoua	Solomon Roza
David Halegua	Iosef Salem
Solomon Halegoua	Leon Solomo
David Lea	Mordoh Strougo
Isaac Mevorah	Isaac Termin
Moshe Mordichai	



Salvatore Moshe

There were 800 Salonikli men who were taken so we are missing many names.

If you have any information to share, please contact us at museum@kkjism.org

Photos of the Month



"This picture was taken in 2004 in Rhodes. All cousins of the Amato/Notrica families. Taken on the steps of my father's home where he, his sister, Rebecca Amato Levy and their other siblings grew up."

Back, Stella Levi & Robbie A. Front. Lisa & Pearl Harris Amato & Mati Franco.



Bar Mitzvah Reception of Stephen Colchamiro in 1958



Roulis Bakolas and Mathilda Hadjopoulos.
Post War Purim in Ioannina. Photo thanks
to Anna Garty

So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

If you would like to make a contribution to Kehila Kedosha Janina, please send your check (in US dollars) made out to *Kehila Kedosha Janina*, to us at 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 (attention Marcia). Your donation will enable us to continue to hold services and preserve our special traditions and customs, and to tell our unique story through our Museum.

Some of our major donations have been generous bequests, which have enabled us to complete major work in our synagogue/museum. Do remember us in your will. Your legacy will be present in our legacy. **We need donations more than ever now. You can do this on line on our website: www.kkjsm.org accessing the donation link in the upper left hand corner.**

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We look forward to reopening. Normally, we are open for services every Saturday morning at 9:30am and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11am-4pm and by appointment during the week.



**Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 144
March 2021
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002
Website: www.kkjsm.org
Email: museum@kkjsm.org**

Your donations enable us to continue our work. You can send donations via mail directly to 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002, or you can donate via our website www.kkjsm.org