



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

August 2020 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

As we approach the High Holidays, we remind our readers of the tradition of Hashkavoth at Kehila Kedosha Janina. We are not yet sure what the Holidays will be like this year in light of COVID19. Our Board is discussing whether we can be open to celebrate or, if not, what we can do in lieu of gathering together. At Kehila Kedosha Janina, we follow the centuries-old Romaniote custom of our people by reciting Hashkavoth (Memorial Prayers) and the individual names of our dearly departed during the Kol Nidre Yom Kippur Eve service. If you wish to honor your family members or friends in this very special way, please email their names as soon as possible to museum@kkjasm.org. It is customary to include a voluntary donation of your choosing. The names and donations may be submitted via PayPal on our website www.kkjasm.org.

We are missing Greece this year. Love to all our family and friends in Greece.



This newsletter, our 137th 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 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

Hopefully, we will soon be open for services again. When we are, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up by emailing info@kkjsm.org so we are sure that our Kiddush (traditional Greek Jewish Kosher foods) is sufficient. If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush for a special occasion or an Adara, contact Sol.

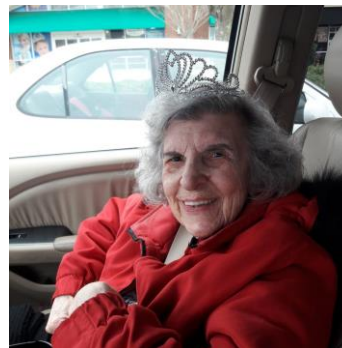
Simchas

We celebrate the birth of Ruth Daniella Choua, the daughter of Isaac and Rachel Choua, born Monday June 22nd.



We celebrate the 92nd birthday of Abraham Matza. Abraham is the grandson of Michael Matza, after whom Mike's Diner in Astoria was named.

Roslyn Vitoulis Honan, widow of Rabbi Bernard Honan celebrated her 92nd Birthday on July 9th. Our best wishes to Roslyn.



We celebrated the 90th birthday of Sami Modiano on July 18th. Sami was born on the island of Rhodes and, as a young man, was deported, along with the Jewish community of the island, to Auschwitz-Birkenau in July of 1944. He made the decision to live in Rome, Italy but visits the island of his birth every summer, often volunteering in the Kahal Shalom synagogue as a docent.



In honor of Sami's 90th birthday, Sami was awarded a special honor by the Italian government.

Rome, July 18, 2020.

"The Italian president, Sergio Mattarella, decided to award the title of Knight of the Grand Cross of the Italian Republic to Sammy Modiano today. Modiano was born and raised until he was fourteen years old in Rhodes. He was then deported to Auschwitz. He managed to survive the Holocaust and devoted much of his life to offering a personal, detailed testimony, in which he explained exactly what caused the Nazi and fascist atrocities. Modiano lives in Rome in winter and spends his summers in Rhodes, in close contact with the small, local Jewish community. He is one of only 25 Jews from Rhodes who came back alive from Hitler's extermination camps. Recently, he told La Repubblica newspaper that when it comes to the state of emergency of the coronavirus 'ultimately fear will not prevail, but brotherhood'."



Our congratulations to Gloria Roche of Australia, a descendant of the Osmos family of Corfu, on the birth of her first grandchild, Rosie.



We celebrate the marriage of Annette Binder's granddaughter, Melissa Binder to Justin Epstein on July 25th. Melissa is the daughter of Richard and Sheri Binder, the granddaughter of Annette Binder, the great-granddaughter of Joseph Politis and Ester Josephs Politis (both of Blessed memory) and the great great-granddaughter of Isaac Politis and Annie Hefetz Politis (both of Blessed memory). We will publish wedding photos when we receive them.



Melissa Binder



Isaac and Annie Politis with son, Joseph



1946 wedding of Annette Politis and Jerome Binder



Binders from Annette's 90th birthday in 2018

On July 21st we celebrated Rose Eskonont's 86th birthday. Rose is not only on the Board of Trustees of Kehila Kedosha Janina but is also the President of the Sisterhood of Janina.



Rose with her grandchildren, Rachel and Robbie Serwetz



Rose 1934



Dora Marash and Solomon Capon (Rose's parents)



Rose and Murray Eskononts at their wedding in 1955

Congratulations to actress Eden Sher on her marriage to Nick Cron Devico. Eden is the daughter of Ivy Sher, the granddaughter of Miriam Askinazi Levine, the great granddaughter of Morris Askinazi and (Rebecca) Betty Coffino, the great great-granddaughter of Joseph and Esther Askinazi and the great-great great-granddaughter of Morris and Rebecca Askinazi, a remarkable Romaniote lineage.



Passings

We mourn the passing of Lucille Berro at the age of 70. Born in South Africa (Johannesburg), Lucille was living in Perth, Australia when she passed on June 28th. Her parents were survivors of the Holocaust, her mother deported from the island of Rhodes in July of 1944. Her mother Sylvia survived the camps and was reunited with her husband who had escaped Rhodes before the deportation.

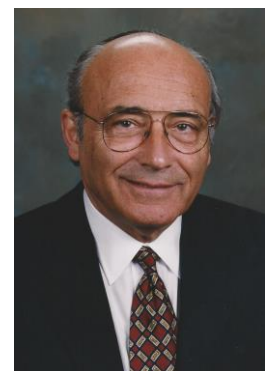


It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Rabbi Arnold Marans of the Sephardic Temple in Cedarhurst.

Arnold B. Marans

JULY 12, 1928 – JULY 12, 2020

“Naflah ateret rosheinu” – “The crown has fallen from our head’ (Eikhah 5:16) With sadness, we announce the passing of our husband, father, brother, grandfather, and great grandfather, Rabbi Arnold B. Marans z”l Founding rabbi and spiritual leader of The Sephardic Temple, Cedarhurst, NY The funeral took place on Sunday, July 12. Burial will be in Israel. Tehi nishmato tzrurah bitzror ha-hayyim. May his soul be bound up in the bond of life. Yehi zikhro barukh. May his memory be for a blessing. Zipporah Marans Israel and Goldie Marans; Hillel Marans and Shirley Kaplan; Zvi Marans and Nina Kampler; Noam Marans and Amy Roth; Aliza and Alan Miller Bernice Weiss (sister).



News from Kehila Kedosha Janina

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. Our latest efforts include research on the Bakolas, Vitoulis, Solomon, and Attas families from Ioannina. If you have family trees you would like to add to our collection or questions on your Greek Jewish families, contact us at museum@kkjsm.org

Our three-part online class series on Greek Jewry Throughout the Ages was so well-received that our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, has been asked to do another series on Greek-Jewish immigration to New York. Our upcoming class series will be "Meet Me on the Corner of Broome and Allen." Join us on Zoom for three Mondays August 10, 17, and 24 at 8pm EST.

The class will include stories of Δikoi Mas, Los Muestrros, Greek Jews who settled in New York City in the early twentieth century. The stories of the Negrins, Ganis, Bakolas, Vitoulis, Solomons, Attas, Colchamiro, Battinos, Barouchs, Coffinos, Naftalis, Calderons, Halios, and the many others who made the long, arduous journey across the Atlantic to give their children the opportunities not afforded them back in Greece.

Sign up for the class here: <https://tinyurl.com/greekjews>

 The Sephardic Jewish
Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi


Kehila Kedosha Janina
Synagogue and Museum

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

**MEET ME ON THE CORNER OF
BROOME & ALLEN**

GREEK JEWS ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF NEW YORK

With Marcia Haddad
Ikonomopoulos
Mondays Aug 10, 17, 24
8pm EDT / 5pm PDT
Online Streaming Via Zoom
tinyurl.com/GreekJews



Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com

While our synagogue remains closed for the time being, join us for Kabbalat Shabbat services online on Friday nights at 6:30pm. Watch via Zoom or Facebook.

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/81774889469>

Facebook Link: <https://Facebook.com/kkjnyc>

KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA

INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR

KABBALAT SHABBAT

ONLINE SERVICES

IN THE ROMANIOTE TRADITION

FRIDAY AUGUST 7

6:30PM EDT

LIVE-STREAMING VIA FACEBOOK AND ZOOM

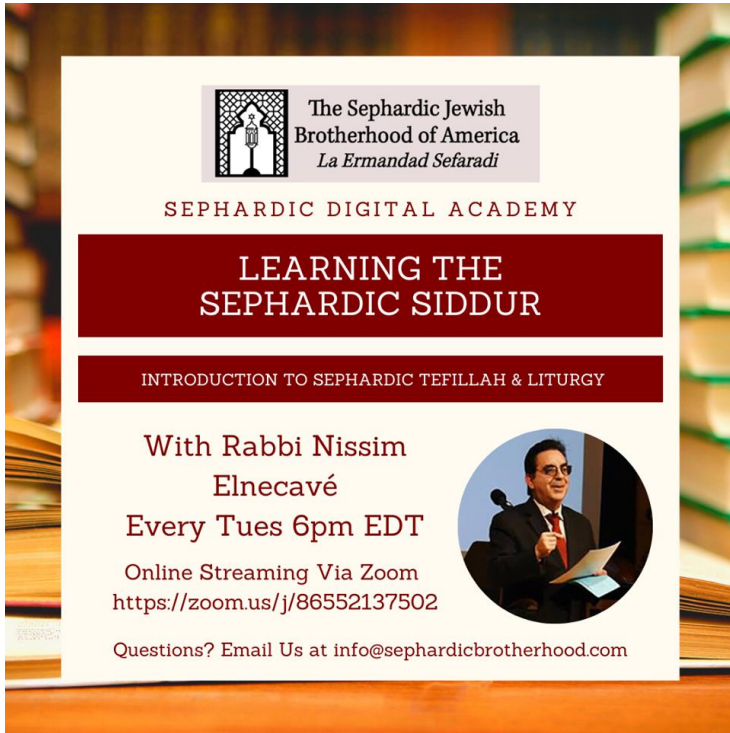
[FACEBOOK.COM/KKJNYC](https://Facebook.com/kkjnyc)

[HTTPS://ZOOM.US/J/81774889469](https://zoom.us/j/81774889469)

**WHILE WE MAY HAVE TO STAY APART TO HELP ONE ANOTHER,
WE CAN STILL WELCOME SHABBAT AS A COMMUNITY. JOIN US
FOR A DIGITAL ROMANIOTE KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE
TOGETHER. LIVESTREAM WILL END BEFORE SHABBAT BEGINS.**

שבת שלום

Sephardic Digital Academy
Free Online Classes from the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America
View the Full Class Schedule [Here](#)



The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

LEARNING THE SEPHARDIC SIDDUR

INTRODUCTION TO SEPHARDIC TEFILLAH & LITURGY

With Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé
Every Tues 6pm EDT

Online Streaming Via Zoom
<https://zoom.us/j/86552137502>

Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com



The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America
La Ermandad Sefaradi

SEPHARDIC BIKUR HOLIM CONGREGATION

SEPHARDIC DIGITAL ACADEMY

SHABBAT IN OUR SEPHARDIC HOME

EXPLORE SHABBAT FLAVORS, STORIES, AND IDEAS WITH A DIFFERENT SEPHARDIC FAMILY EACH WEEK

Every Thursday
10:30pm EDT / 7:30pm PDT

Online Streaming Via Zoom
tinyurl.com/SephardicShabbatTable

Questions? Email Us at info@sephardicbrotherhood.com

News from the Lower East Side and the East Village

Threatened East River Park Buildings Recognized for Architectural Distinction

July 16, 2020 Full Bowery Boogie Article [Here](#)

The following guest post was written by Deborah Wye, a member of the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative board of directors. Two East River Park Art Deco gems were recently deemed eligible for the State and National Registers of Historic Places by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Both the Track House near East 6th Street and the Tennis Center Comfort Station between Rivington and Delancey Streets were recognized for their historical significance.

Based on research and an application submitted this past winter by the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative (LESPI), the determination means that the SHPO must review any plans to alter the buildings, including current intentions to demolish them under the East Side Coastal Resiliency project.



The buildings were constructed in 1938 for the opening of East River Park, which was planned in conjunction with the new East River Drive. They were designed by Aymar Embury II, the lead architect for Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, during a period of massive construction in New York funded by the New Deal. In fact, the style of these buildings is sometimes called "WPA Moderne," in reference to that era's Works Project Administration. Embury was also responsible for the architectural design of many NYC bridges, pools, and other Depression era structures.

Each building displays remarkable craftsmanship, with colorful terra cotta details that refer back to the maritime and shipbuilding history of this waterfront area. State and National Register eligibility does not prevent demolition, however. Instead, the SHPO works with the project's design team to mitigate the damage to the historic resources in any way deemed possible. With very few examples of Art Deco architecture on the Lower East Side, preservationists believe it is particularly important that they remain for future generations of Park goers. All current photos used by permission from Lower East Side Preservation Initiative.

We Wish Our Community Partners at the Tenement Museum a Speedy Recovery

Tenement Museum Lays Off 76 Workers, Including Entire Staff of Part-time Educators

The group of 71 educators constitutes 92% of the museum's education staff.

Full article by Hakim Bishara [Here](#)

The Tenement Museum on Manhattan's Lower East Side announced on July 22 that it has laid off its entire staff of part-time educators. The group of 71 workers constitutes 92% of the museum's education staff. Five other hourly employees from the retail, marketing, and visitor services departments have also been laid off.

The 76 former employees join 13 full-time staff who were laid off at the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown in March. On April 27, the Tenement Museum received a \$1.4 million loan from the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) which it used to recall 40 full-time employees who had been furloughed on March 13.

In a statement to Hyperallergic, the Tenement Museum's president, Morris Vogel, said, "Our educators make our programs come to life. They are an important part of the Museum's success. We had hoped to avoid this drastic step."

According to a museum spokesperson, Vogel took a 99% salary reduction in March. (He is currently being paid about \$25 a month to be able to retain his healthcare coverage.) Additional salary reductions for senior staff are being currently being considered. The museum estimates at least a 50% budget reduction for the coming year (the museum's annual budget before COVID-19 was about \$11 million) due to the revenue losses caused by the pandemic.



The Birth of the Henry Street Settlement and How its Legacy Lives On

Full article by Jacqueline Cutler in the New York Daily News [Here](#)

She took a house and made it into a home. For everyone.

Lillian Wald was 26 and a nurse when she moved into a tenement at 265 Henry St. Already old when she moved there 125 years ago, Wald could have lived anywhere. Her family had money. Wald, though, wasn't looking for a place to live. She was looking for a way to live. And the organization she began that day, the Henry Street Settlement, would change the lives of thousands, as Ellen M. Snyder-Grenier's "The House on Henry Street" explains.

That day, Wald became a leader in progressive causes, from affordable healthcare to the peace movement. She pioneered public playgrounds and special-needs classes. She changed the city.

But then she had always wanted to make a difference. Born in 1867, Wald was raised in a comfortable Jewish home in Rochester, N.Y. As she moved into her 20s, her parents assumed she would focus on finding a husband. Instead, Wald applied to the New York Hospital School for Nurses.

"My life hitherto has been – I presume – a type of modern American young womanhood," she wrote the school. "Days devoted to society, study and housekeeping duties, such as practical mothers consider essential to a daughter's education. "This does not satisfy me now. I feel the need of serious, definite work."

She found it in medicine. After graduating from nursing school, she enrolled in the New York Medical College for Women. Between classes, Wald did charity work on the Lower East Side. She was teaching an adult-ed class one rainy day in 1893 when a little girl burst in. Her mother was dying. Please, could Wald help?

Wald rushed out, following the girl to a nearby tenement. The child's mother had just given birth. She was lying on the bed, hemorrhaging. There had been a doctor, but he had walked out when she couldn't pay his fee. Wald did what she could to help the woman. And then she did something for herself. She vowed to devote her life to aiding the desperately poor of the Lower East Side.

"Deserted were the laboratory and the academic work of the college," she wrote later. "I never returned to them."

The idea of a settlement house wasn't new. The first opened in 1884, in London's slums. The next year, another began in Chicago. Workers settled among the people they were helping and often dedicated themselves to social reform. And there was much to reform on the Lower East Side. When Wald and a fellow nurse, Mary Brewster, moved down that summer, they were appalled. The heat, stink, and noise were everywhere, and never-ending. Even at 2 a.m., "some of the push-cart vendors still sold their wares," Wald remembered later. "Sitting on the curb, directly under my window, with her feet in the gutter was a woman, drooping from exhaustion, a baby at her breast. The fire escapes, considered the most desirable sleeping places, were crowded with the oldest and the youngest; children were asleep on the sidewalks."





The scene was the same for blocks. Between 1880 and 1919, more than 23 million immigrants came to America. Most passed through New York City, and many stayed, crowded into the Lower East Side. In 1890, reporting his book "How the Other Half Lives," Jacob Riis found a family of 14 crammed into two rooms – plus the six boarders they had taken in to help with the rent.

Adding to the crowding was the fact that entire families worked at home, paid by the piece for the cigars they rolled or gloves they stitched. There were no days off, no lunch breaks, no escape.

"I am working at neckties now," one young girl complained in 1904. "I see nothing before me morning, noon or night, day after day, always neckties, neckties, neckties. Oh, it's a slave's work!"

Wald's plans were ambitious. She and Brewster would be visiting nurses, making house calls. Fees would be on a sliding scale, and in most cases, waived. And the clients would be welcome to visit their home, too, where they could always find conversation and a garden where their children could play.

None of this would be cheap, and so Wald turned to New York's leading Jewish families – the Loebes, the Lehmans, the Morgenthau. Soon, she had enough to buy her first tenement building at 265 Henry St. It opened in 1895, and Wald, Brewster, and a crew of dedicated young women went to work.

But nursing was not enough, so Wald expanded her efforts. She opened summer camps so that inner-city children might get two weeks of fresh air. She put on pageants, spotlighting Russian, Chinese, and Italian culture. Seeing how much the children loved her garden, she pushed the city to open a public playground, Seward Park – the first permanent, municipal playground in the United States.

Wald was a visionary, but also a pragmatist. Many immigrants, no matter how poor, still took out burial policies. Realizing insurance agents regularly visited hundreds of households to collect the payments, Wald reached out to the largest, Metropolitan Life.

Certainly, it was in the company's best interest to not have to pay out death benefits, Wald observed. What if they referred any sick clients to the Settlement House? If the company paid for the first visit, the nurses would see they got better. It was a win-win: The insurance company saved some money, and the Henry Street Settlement saved many lives.

Wald was a force for change in other ways. She hired African-American nurses and opened another Settlement House in a black neighborhood. She was on the NAACP's first board of directors, and joined their protests of the racist film "Birth of a Nation."

Her educational reforms were influential, too. Realizing that many children went to city schools hungry or sick, she lobbied for free lunches and on-site nurses. Noticing that some students had difficulty with standard instruction, she urged the creation of special-needs classes.

And all this before 1915. Typically, Wald kept the spotlight trained on her work, not herself. Although she had romantic relationships with women, her personal life remained private, as she labored for her neighbors decade after decade.

Sometimes this brought criticism. Wald's union activism drew grumbles from the upper-classes; her opposition to World War I left some questioning her patriotism. But she fought on until, on the 40th anniversary of the Henry Street Settlement, she turned it over to others and retired. She died, in Westport, Conn., in 1940, at age 73.

But the Henry Street Settlement lives on, continuing to serve. Generations of new New Yorkers have found a friend inside its doors. Aspiring actors, from Jerry Stiller to Luis Guzman, have found inspiration in its arts programs. Ideas it first floated – like the Visiting Nurse Service of New York – have become institutions.

Over 125 years, the settlement has spread to encompass 18 separate facilities. Its client base has grown too, with more than 50,000 New Yorkers annually taking advantage of its cultural programs, social services, and health care. In some ways, it is very different from what it was in 1895. In the most important way, however, it is precisely the same.

News from Jewish Greece

Rhodes

July 23rd marks 76 years since the displacement and annihilation of the Jewish Community of Rhodes and Kos in 1944. Unfortunately, the Dodecanese have been linked to the tragic events of the history of the Holocaust, with one of the highest rates of annihilation of The Jews in Europe with the losses amounting to 94%. It should be stressed, however, that in the post-war journey of the agonizing effort for reconstruction, Rhodes was one of the first regions of Greece to recognize the sacrifice of their Jewish fellow citizens. Immediately after the liberation, in 1946, the first elected mayor of Rhodes, Gabriel Charitos, renamed the old Prince's Square to "Jewish Martyrs Square". Every year, The Jewish Community of Rhodes organizes events to honor the memory of its victims.

The Management Committee of the Community of Rhodes decided this year, due to the difficult conditions caused by the pandemic, instead of other events, to assist economically weak groups of our fellow citizens by donating food to social welfare structures of our country.

At the same time, on 23.7.2020, the director of the Jewish Community of Rhodes, Mrs. Carmen Cohen, laid a wreath at the Holocaust Memorial.

- Jewish Community of Rhodes



International Rhodes and Kos Holocaust Memorial Event (Online) – August 16

Register Online [Here](#)



THE RHODES/COS MEMORIAL COMMITTEE OF SEATTLE PRESENTS

International Rhodes/Cos Holocaust Memorial

A Commemorative Recital by world-renowned Sephardic pianist Renan Koen presented from the historic Italian Synagogue of Istanbul. Program includes special greetings from the Chief Rabbi of Turkey (Hakham Bashi) Rabbi Ishak Haleva and a traditional 'Hashkavah' memorial prayer for the Sephardic communities of Greece and the Balkans destroyed in the Holocaust.



NEW DATE - SUNDAY AUGUST 16 2020

10:30AM PDT / 1:30PM EDT / 8:30PM GMT+3

LIVESTREAM VIA ZOOM & FACEBOOK

TINYURL.COM/RHODESMEMORIAL

EZRABESSAROTH.NET/RHODES-COS-MEMORIAL-EVENT

Program Co-Sponsors

Congregation Ezra Bessaroth | Lela & Harley Franco | Holocaust Center of Humanity
Sephardic Bikur Holim | UW Sephardic Studies Program / Stroum Center for Jewish Studies
Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America | Seattle Sephardic Network | Kline Galland Community Based Services
Consular Board of the Chief Rabbinate of Turkey | Italian Synagogue of Istanbul



Rhodes Holocaust Memorial Erected by Rhodeslis in the New York Area
Beth Israel Cemetery, New Jersey
Photo Thanks to Marvin Marcus

Thessaloniki

Anniversary of Black Saturday

11 July 1942: When the Germans publicly humiliated 9,000 Jews of Thessaloniki Full Article in Greek [Here](#)

On 11 July 1942 the German authorities called the Jewish men of Thessaloniki, under the pretext of recording. A public humiliation of 9000 men between 18-45 years old followed in Freedom Square, known as "Black Saturday". It was the beginning of the implementation of the persecution of the Jews of Thessaloniki.

As researched by Maria Kavala, a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Political Studies of the University of Athens, the chief adviser of the military administration in the city, Carl Marbach, wrote ordering the official census of working-class male Jews (from 18 to 45 years old), who would have to work on military projects undertaken by the Miller and Bauleitung companies and the Todt organization.





The order was published in the Afternoon on July 7 and was republished in New Europe shortly afterwards. On Saturday, July 11, 1942 the operation began. The approximately 7,000 – 9,000 men who went to pick up their work cards in Freedom Square ended up being subjected to inhumane treatment for hours.

"They forced men to jump, flip, roll on the ground, crawl into the dust and perform ridiculous exercises ...," writes James Hadali. The above image is captured by many written sources and testimonies as well as the well-known photographs of the official German propaganda.

Photographic footage, found in Germany, came to shed more light on Black Sabbath. Shocking images from the gathering for the recording of the forced work of Greece, imposed by the occupying forces, contained the personal album of a German soldier and even a musician. Almost seventy years later, the images he took with his camera in Freedom Square before and after registration came to add another link to a bitter chapter of Jewish history before the horrors of extermination in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps.

The photos from "Black Saturday" were found by Andreas Assael, in a German bazaar. He bought the photos without a second thought and started to unwrap the thread from the beginning. He turned the clock back, put the material in order along with this diary of the German musician's military life in Greece during the occupation.



Θεσσαλονίκη, Πλατεία Ελευθερίας, 11.7.1942. Η μοναδική φωτογραφία από την πλευρά της σημερινής Alpha Bank δείχνει τη συγκέντρωση από τη δυτική πλευρά. Μπροστά δύο Έλληνες χαροφύλακες συνομιλούν. Ένας τρίτος διακρίνεται πίσω, μπροστά από συγκεντρωμένους που με μαντήλια προσπαθούν να προστατευθούν από τον ήλιο. Στην πρώτη σειρά τέταρτος από δεξιά ο Φρέντυ Ασσαέλ (ο ψηλός με το σκούρο κουστούμι) προσπαθεί και αυτός να ακούσει τι λέει στον αριστερά του σκεπτό ασπροντυμένο άνδρα ένας νέος. Από πίσω διακρίνεται το κτίριο Στάν με την αρχική σκεπή του.



Ο Φρέντυ Ασσαέλ με τη στολή του Αλβανικού μετώπου.

Witnesses point out that those gathered were released thanks to the intervention of the representative of the Belgian Red Cross, who threatened to inform General Von List, the leader of the German forces in the Balkans, if the abuse did not stop. Everything indicates that what was happening was irregular and was more of an expression of harsh anti-Semitism. Others remember that the German sailors who descended from a building in the square were the ones who started the "hazing" on the assembled citizens. It is possible that torture and abuse emerged as an idea at that time or a few days earlier, and even at the expense of the plan to gather labor, as they created obstacles to the continuation of the census while exhausting and terrorizing future "workers."

A few days after the census calls for work began through the publication of the numbers of Greek Jewish citizens in the newspapers. The gathering of those who would leave for the works took place in Aristotle Square. In this same square they had taken their walk with the rest of the Thessalonians so many times; just above the square, in the Modiano market, they had roamed so many times between the stalls with the colorful sweets of the Jewish Purim while so many times, the middle and upper urban strata had welcomed in their homes Christians during the week of Easter, to offer "bobellos" (pancakes made of honey and eggs). This world ended tragically and definitively...

The "workers" are ready to leave, each having a small bottle. Among each group, some gendarmes to maintain order. Right in the corner a summer cinema and the port with many Jewish workers, porters and customs men in the past. On the left is a black German car, perhaps of the company concerned.

3,500 people were recruited for forced labour, 3,000 on the road, 500 in the construction of Sedes airport and 34 in the mines, while another source says there were a total of 5,000 Jews used in road construction and mining by October 1942. In the space of two and a half months, at least 12% of men died. The Community was trying to ransom its people back and, after a series of talks with Max Merten (who had been in the city since August), reached a payment agreement of EUR 2 billion drachmas to the German administration payable by December of 1942.

New Sephardic Center in Center of City

Thessaloniki's Jews: 'We can't let this be forgotten; if it's forgotten, it will die' Full Article [Here](#)

New centre in Greek city will be lifeline for small community, mostly descendants of Iberian exiles
Under the new agreement, the Sephardic community will provide premises, memories, and tradition.

Five centuries after they were expelled from Spain and eight decades after they were almost annihilated in the Holocaust, the small community of Sephardic Jews that lives on in the Greek city of Thessaloniki is looking to its past to help safeguard its future.

On Tuesday, Thessaloniki's Jewish community signed a deal with the Spanish government's Instituto Cervantes to create a small centre where people will be taught modern Spanish while also learning about Sephardic culture and the exiles' still-spoken language, Ladino.

Many Spanish Jews came to Thessaloniki, which was then part of the Ottoman empire, following their expulsion by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492. The community endured and thrived over the centuries but came close to total destruction when the Nazis deported and murdered more than 90% of the city's Jewish inhabitants.

Today, Thessaloniki's Jewish community has dwindled to about 1,200 people, most of them the descendants of the Iberian exiles.

"The community here was built by Jews from Spain – places such as Toledo, Granada and Seville," said David Saltiel, president of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. "It was a community that spoke, ate and sang Spanish. After the Holocaust, only 1,500 Jews were left, but we've always kept that idea of our Spanish past in our hearts and we want to keep our traditions alive."



Under the new agreement, the community will provide premises, memories and tradition, while the Instituto Cervantes – which promotes Spanish language and culture – will provide teachers and academic experts on contemporary Spanish and Ladino, which is also known as Judeo-Spanish.

While the project is mainly aimed at children and young people in the Sephardic community, it will open to those of all ages and faiths.

Cristina Conde de Beroldingen, director of the Instituto Cervantes in Athens, said the initiative was designed to help preserve Sephardic culture and language, and also to stop Thessaloniki losing a piece of its past. After the Holocaust, many of those who survived decided to move to Israel, taking their history, language and culture with them. "With that, Thessaloniki as a city also lost a piece of its own memory," said Conde de Beroldingen.

"But, as the president of the community put it, Spanish is coming back to Thessaloniki after 500 years. We want to recover this legacy for Thessaloniki: there were a lot of newspapers in Judeo-Spanish, so it's a good time to go digging in the archives." Conde de Beroldingen said the idea was to strike a balance between teaching modern Spanish and preserving Ladino. "We want to teach young people to distinguish between the two and learn about the different words for the same thing," she said.

"That's really important, because there's sometimes a danger of standardising things, and that's something we're keen not to do."

Ladino, she added, was a reminder of both the exile of the Iberian Jews and of how people spoke Spanish 500 years ago. "I don't think there's another community that was expelled from a country but which has managed to keep its identity and its language for so many years," she said.

"But Judeo-Spanish is also the language of Don Quixote, of how Spanish was written back then. It's the Spanish of the time, but enriched by words from the countries through which the exiled Jews passed. There's obviously Hebrew, but there's also Turkish, Greek, French and Italian." For Saltiel, the new centre is a lifeline for Thessaloniki's Jewish community and for its language. "We can't let this be forgotten; if it's forgotten, it will die," he said. "But if we carry on speaking, it will live on." The project, however, is about more than the survival of the city's Sephardic inhabitants; it is also about Europe's past.

"The Greeks can learn about our story because it's part of Greek history, too," said Saltiel. "We've been here for 530 years, and that's a long old time. We lost 97% of the community in the Holocaust, but we're still here and we're going to carry on and show everyone that this Spanish-Jewish community is alive, is still speaking Spanish, and is going to keep carrying on."

Holocaust Museum in Thessaloniki

U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt: Holocaust Museum Important for Greece Full Article [Here](#)

During a visit to Thessaloniki, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt said that the plan to build the city's Holocaust Museum is an extremely important initiative for Greece, considering the key role that the Jewish community has played in the city's history.

The ambassador was speaking at the Jewish Museum in Thessaloniki, where he was briefed on the construction work's progress by David Saltiel, the president of both the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece and the city's Jewish community, and by Yiannis Boutaris — former city mayor and president of the Board of Directors of the Thessaloniki Holocaust Museum Foundation.



The U.S. Consul General in Thessaloniki, Gregory Pflieger, also attended the meeting. Speaking to Athens-Macedonian News Agency (ANA-MPA), Pyatt said he was pleased that Deputy Prime Minister Panagiotis Pikrammenos had taken a leading role in the project and expressed confidence for what he called a potentially very strong cooperation between the Holocaust Museum in Washington and the forthcoming museum in Thessaloniki.

Construction commenced on the new Holocaust Museum in Greece's second largest city in 2018. For more than 400 years, Thessaloniki had a thriving Jewish population, which greatly impacted the city's identity and culture. Prior to World War II, Jews made up a quarter of the city's population. But during the Holocaust, 97 percent of the community died in Nazi concentration camps.

The museum will house a memorial to the Jews who were murdered and exhibitions devoted to the culture and history of Thessaloniki's Sephardi community. The museum will also tell the story of the smaller Romaniote Jewish community that has lived in Greece for more than 2,000 years. The German government donated 10 million euros for the completion of the project, with the balance coming from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

Unveiling of Statue at Villa Allatini

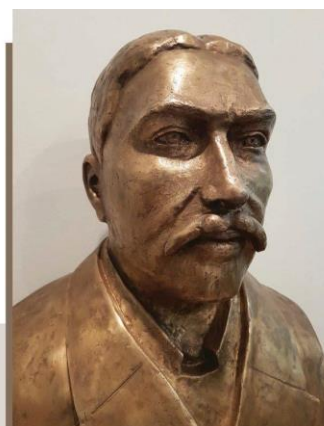
The unveiling of the bust of Moses Allatini at Villa Allatini, headquarters of the Region of Central Macedonia, in Thessaloniki, was held on Wednesday, July 29, 2020, the Regional Governor of Central Macedonia Apostole Tzitzikostas and the Consul General of France in Thessaloniki Philippe Ray, in the presence the descendant of the Allatini family and donor of the bust Laurent Dassault. The unveiling of the bust took place in the gardens of Villa Allatini (B. Olga 198), where the bust of Moses Allatini was placed at 10.00 in the morning.



Le buste a été inauguré
le mercredi 29 juillet 2020
par M. Apostolos Tzitzikostas,
Président de la Région de Macédoine centrale,
M. Laurent Dassault,
descendant de Moïse Allatini et petit-fils de Marcel Dassault,
et M. Philippe Ray, Consul général de France
et Directeur de l'Institut français de Thessalonique.

Η προσηγορία εγκαινιάστηκε
την Τετάρτη 29 Ιουλίου 2020
από τον κ. Απόστολο Τζιτζικώστα,
Περιφερειάρχη Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας,
τον κ. Laurent Dassault,
απόγονο του Μωυσή Αλλάτινι και εγγονό του Marcel Dassault,
και τον κ. Philippe Ray, Γενικό Πρόξενο της Γαλλίας
και Διευθυντή του Γαλλικού Ινστιτούτου Θεσσαλονίκης.

Villa Thessalonique, Mars 1919
Απόγραφη στο Οικόσηφο, 14 Μαρτίου 2019



mercredi
29 juillet 2020
Villa Allatini

INAUGURATION
DU BUSTE
DE MOÏSE ALLATINI

ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΠΤΗΡΙΑ
ΠΡΟΤΟΜΗΣ
ΤΟΥ ΜΩΥΣΗ ΑΛΛΑΤΙΝΙ

Τετάρτη
29 Ιουλίου 2020
Βίλα Αλλάτινι



David Saltiel Awarded Spanish Citizenship

In a modest but very cordial ceremony, David Saltiel, president of the K.I.S. and I.K. Thessaloniki, received Spanish citizenship by signing the relevant documents at the Embassy of Spain, in the Office of Ambassador Enrique Viguera Rubio, on 23.7.2020. For Mr Saltiel, this action is both personal and symbolic. "Spain is a charming part of our history and our identity," he says characteristically, stressing the importance of the law by which Spain facilitates the process of regaining Spanish citizenship for the descendants of The Shephardian Jews exiled from the country in 1492 by the Decree of the Catholic Kings of Spain Ferdinand and Isabella. The law was passed in 2015.

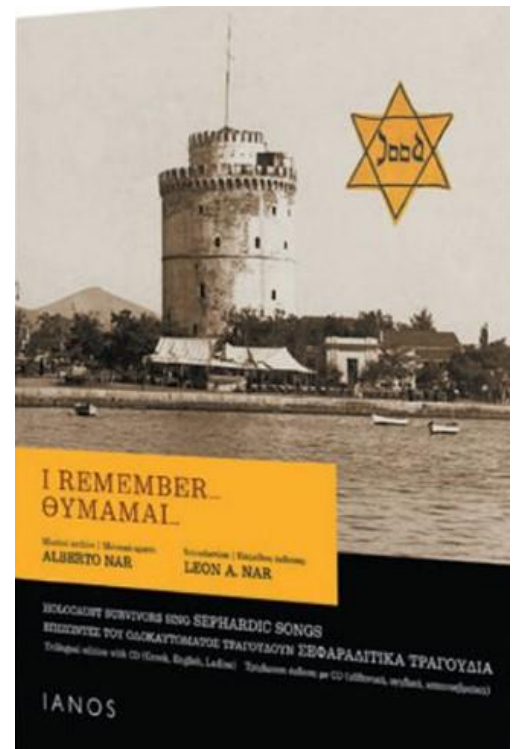
The president of Spain's Jewish communities Isaac Kerub said at the time: "It is always the right time to correct a mistake and do justice. The Sephardic Jews have been waiting for this remedy for a long time." At the ceremony to give citizenship to D. Saltiel, Spanish Ambassador Enrique Viguera Rubio spoke about Spain's historical debt and stressed Mr. Saltiel's role in promoting culture and relations between Greece and Spain. The ceremony was also attended by Cervantes Institute director Cristina Conte de Beroldingen Geier, who congratulated Mr. Saltiel on their constructive cooperation on the establishment of the Cervantes Institute in Thessaloniki. An initiative launched by D. Saltiel and I.K. Thessaloniki and will be culminated in the signing of the relevant Memorandum of Cooperation scheduled for Tuesday 28.7.2020. The event ended with the performance of a commemorative plaque, depicting the façade of the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki, by Mr. Saltiel to the Spanish Ambassador.



New Book by Leon Naar

Full article in Greek [Here](#)

An important book called "I Remember" of Ladino songs sung by Jews from Thessaloniki while they were suffering in the concentration camps, songs that uplifted them and helped them to survived. The contents were researched by Alberto Naar of Blessed Memory, himself the son of a survivor and his son, Leon Naar.



Moses Aelion's Book on His Memories Now Available in Greek

In February 2020, the "camp chronicle" of Mosé Aelion, *Odines of Death*, was released in Greek. The *Odines* were first ed in Hebrew in 1992 and concerned the death camps, but not only. The book was translated into English (2005) and Ladino (after 2000) and was widely expected in Greek. The initiative of Mrs. Aliki Arouch, head of the Historical Archive of the Israeli Community of Thessaloniki, the assistant professor of the Chair of Jewish Studies of the University of Athens, Giorgos Antoniou and the collaboration with Spyros Kakouriotis (translation) and the Alexandria publications gave a profound and valuable result.

It is a chronicle, as noted on the cover, that may have been written many years after the Holocaust – writing began in 1987 – but was based on the narrator's memory and calendar notes. Notes that had started to take just four and a half months after release.

The *Odines* are divided into two main sections. The first concerns the traumatic period 1941-1945, the period-intersection in the life of the author, and the second life in Thessaloniki before the war and occupation. However, the publication is opened with the author's prologues for each edition individually, as well as with the letters of praise from Israeli political and spiritual figures. The latter, together with the very language of the first edition, highlight the identity with which Moses Aelion shaped his post-war life, that of the Israeli military, the military elite, which fought to build the newly created state since 1948. At the same time, the same letters introduce us to the world of the author's multiple ethnic-ethnic identities: An Israeli post-war, Greek-born Holocaust survivor, a Shefaraite Thessalonian Jew, who in the book interwoven and whenever one seems dominant, the other emerges, often redeeming for him. The book closes with Tamar Alexander's comment on the trauma of writing, an academic of Ben Gurion University in Negev, in Bir Sheva, Israel, and with the thank you letter from his children to Moses, with whom he converses throughout the work, especially with his daughter, initiated step by step in the unspeakable, when he manages to express it himself.

Moses was 17 when he was deported with his family to Auschwitz and was the only survivor. The 2.5 years of German occupation in Thessaloniki, the years of his adolescence, were marked by the loss of his father, by his attempt to support the family financially by setting up a small-time stall, in a survival economy, a common practice of child labour for both the occupation and the interwar Thessaloniki; , from the internment in the ghetto but also the belief that in Poland, perhaps, something better awaits them than the ghetto, as the Germans have spread very convincingly and misleadingly. In April 1943 they were deported to Auschwitz... From this point in the book unfolds a unique narrative about the experience of the camps, combined with systematic documentation work, by cross-referencing elements of memory with archival material from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, compared to other readings and testimonies, with a persistent touching search for persons he had met in the camp, with perpetual research and new evidence enriching each new edition of the book. The chronicle is accompanied by photographs, maps, facts, archival documents and their information transferred as such in the flow of the text. It is also complemented by field research, as on his first visit to Auschwitz, in 1987, the author searches for and recognizes the special places of martyrdom, the objects of torture, the places of odines and suffering.

Moses recounts the arrival at Auschwitz, the "separation" from the family, during sorting, the "slave labourers", forced labour in general, thread that permeates the whole narrative and offers important elements on the subject, the inhuman routine of the camp, the individual and collective efforts to preserve human status (reciting prayers in the days of The Pessach, inventing ways to eat the minimum bread in such a way as to fool the on going feeling hungry , teaching Greek to the Polish fellow-patient in the camp hospital and much more). Encounters with death are daily, the realization that work can help you stay alive, the demarcation of time through religious celebrations and psalms and the strengthening of morale through the process, religious

ΜΟΣΕ ΑΕΛΙΩΝ ΩΔΙΝΕΣ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΥ

ΤΟ ΧΡΟΝΙΚΟ ΕΝΟΣ ΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΙΟΥ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥ ΣΤΑ ΝΑΖΙΣΤΙΚΑ
ΣΤΡΑΤΟΠΕΔΑ ΕΞΟΝΤΩΣΗΣ ΑΟΥΣΒΙΤΣ, ΜΑΟΥΤΧΑΟΥΖΕΝ,
ΜΕΛΚ, ΕΜΠΙΕΝΖΕΕ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΠΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΩΣΗ



element that is not often found in other testimonies, communication with other Thessalonian prisoners, friendships, "apprenticeship" in mammary arts, the shocking death march. It is one of the few testimonies in Greek concerning the death marches from January 1945 until the end of the war, the details during the exhaustive movement from one camp to another, self-sacrifice, transcendence of self, humanity in hell. Life in the Mauthausen, Melk, Ebenzee camps, exploitation to the end by the Germans.

Of particular importance is the chapter on the first post-war period in the camp, the transfer to Italy, illegal immigration to Palestine, the initial difficult years there, the establishment of the State of Israel, the first Arab-Israeli war, the officer school, the military career. A chapter deeply autobiographical, resembling a birth after the odines of death and preparing us for the next unity, the return mentally, but also with a true journey, to the roots, 44 years later.

Thus, in the second part, images unfold from the trip to Thessaloniki in 1987 and the search for the lost manuscript of the father and the lost adolescence, images from the pre-war city, the school years, the anti-Semitic incidents of Campbell, images from the Greek-Italian war.

The written testimonies of the surviving Jews of Greece, as Francis Abatzopoulou showed us, can be narratives of an autobiographical nature, short or longer, often in the form of a diary, written during the war but especially after its end. Rica Benvenist noted that in the early post-war years Jewish survivors were not silent and, on the contrary, provided a wealth of information about the suffering they had suffered, in testimonies collected immediately after the end of the war by European and American research centres. However, this material of testimonies and evidence was circulating mainly in Jewish circles. The testimonies were made public from 1970 onwards. In Greece, the first bolder testimonies of Jews in Greece, but also more in number, appeared in the 1980s, and due to the particular post-war political developments here. These multiplied in the 1990s. In the same decade, Odet Baron Vasar introduced in Greek from French the term "camp literature" and separated all the testimonies about the Holocaust from those works "that take off the reflection around the camps, and do not stay in the individual experience", those works that turn the survivor of the camps into a writer, leading the reader to emotional charge but above all to reflection.

Moses' writing attempts precisely this reflection, both mainly on the unspeakable of the camps and on the post-war and pre-war years, in Israel and Thessaloniki respectively. The narrator's personal element significantly interferes with and shapes the narrative tissue, in a simple style, without emotional charges. Emotional can only be done in poetry or in the play written on the subject by Moses Aelion. The narrative in *Odines* takes on the mixed character of historiographical and autobiographical discourse, combining the detailed narrative of events as they emerge in the author's memory, however, maintaining the chronological canvas of the historical context, events concerning the fate of the family, the comrades in the camp, the personal history of the author and are valuable sources for the history of the marginal world of the camps, for the micro-history, the anonymous and the everyday, for the modern history of Europe, Greece and Israel, for the "incalculable suffering, leading to immeasurable knowledge" (Imre Curtis).

**Maria Kavala is a historian, assistant professor in the Department of Political Sciences of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.*

SOURCE: oanagnostis.gr



Photo of Survivors from Thessaloniki in Israel

Alberto Cohen, Joseph Kimchi, Shlomo Cassorla, Anna Cohen, Mary Kimchi, Laura Cassorla

Larissa

Jewish Community of Larissa Elects a New Community Board

The Community Assembly of the Jewish Community of Larissa elected the new 6-member Board of Directors for a three-year term, which was set up in a body as follows: President: Elias Kambelis , Vice-President: Moses Manouach , Secretary: Beatrice (Betty) Magrizos, Treasurer: Simeon (Simon)Magrizos , Auditor: Nina Taraboulis , Member: Isaac (Jacques) Frances .



Elections were held on 22/6/2020, in the presence of a judicial representative and a 3-member electoral commission, during which the members of the Jewish Community of Larissa elected the new 25-member Community Assembly for a three-year term.

Athens

Award Announced for the Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece

Announcement in Greek [Here](#)

The Organization Heritage and Museums – World Heritage and Museums, a non-profit organization, under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will in the near future award three heads of museums, who have written a remarkable course in recent years in the field of Museums and Culture.

Among the three winners is **Ms. Zanet Battinou, Archaeologist, Director of the Jewish Museum of Greece.**

The winners will also be: Sofia Peloponnese – Vasilakou Museumologist, curator of the "House of Katakouziou" and Kostas Maniatopoulos, art historian - painter, director of the "Museum and Library Strati Eleftheriadis – Teriade".

H&M aims to promote the global cultural stock through communication, education and research activities.



In addition to their knowledge, the winners have exceeded the usual professional activities by their position, with special dedication and contribution to the museum through their personal time.

H&M's actions are based on cooperation, volunteering and with particular sensitivity to people with disabilities and culturally excluded groups in general, as well as the environment. At the same time, it is in partnership with the EMF of the Council of Europe EMF, European Museum Forum, Council of Europe.

The awards will be awarded by The President of Heritage and Museums-World Heritage and Museums Lila de Chavez-Chronopoulou in a ceremony to be broadcast online.

**Elements from Heritage and Museums Announcement – World Heritage and Museums*

Shabbat in Aegina

Day Camp 2020 by D.E.S.I.E. in Athens - Pictures from the 8th day of activities in Aegina

Yesterday our day campers, with our Rabbi Gabriel Negrin, visited the beautiful island of Aegina. After enjoying their swim and lunch at a tavern on the island, they visited the mosaic of Aegina.

The mosaic belonged to an ancient synagogue of the 4th century A.D. and was discovered in the 19th century near Krypto Limenas. This important monument was later transferred to the yard of the Archaeological Museum of Kolona, where it is exposed today as the Aura hotel was found in the early 60s.

That's why yesterday's Kabbalat Sabbath was even more special, since it took place with the new generation's participation in a place where Jewish presence existed since antiquity.

At the end of the day they shared souvenir t-shirts as a souvenir of Day Camp 2020 in Athens. A 10-day program spent together full of beautiful entertainment and educational activities.



Albania

Dua Lipa courts controversy with tweet backing Albanian nationalism. Full article [Here](#)

Pop star Dua Lipa faced backlash on Sunday after tweeting a flag of "Greater Albania," showing Albania expanding its borders to include some portions of Kosovo, Serbia, Greece and North Macedonia.

Why it matters: The flag represents an ultra-nationalist idea that historically ethnic Albanian parts of the Balkans should be returned to Albanian control. Lipa, 24, was born in the U.K., but her parents are Kosovar Albanians — and Kosovo is central to much of the dispute.

The backstory: Kosovo, which is 93% ethnically Albanian, declared independence from Serbia in 2008 — a decade after rebel Kosovar Albanians fought to break away from what was then Yugoslavia in the Kosovo War. More than 1 million people were displaced in the conflict.

Some nationalists have advocated for the unification of Kosovo and Albania, particularly in the decade since Kosovo's independence, though little concrete action has been taken.



Greater Albanian Flag torn down by Serbians at recent soccer match

Lipa also included the definition of the word "autochthonous" in her tweet: "indigenous rather than descended from migrants or colonists." That definition, too, refers back to the Albanian nationalist argument for expansion.

The state of play: The flag in her tweet was flown by a drone over a 2014 soccer match between Albania and Serbia, prompting the match to be suspended after it brought the two teams to blows and sent Serbian fans spilling onto the field to join in, per the BBC.

Albanian fans weren't even allowed to attend the match in Belgrade, given the already heightened tensions between the two nations.

"If someone from Serbia had unveiled a flag of Greater Serbia in [Albania's capital] Tirana or [Kosovo's capital] Pristina, it would already be on the agenda of the UN Security Council," Serbia's foreign minister said after the incident.

The big picture: Political scientist Florian Bieber, who studies ethnic conflict in the Balkans, called Lipa's tweet "stupid nationalism."

"It claims that one group has more rights because it was there earlier, which is not a credible claim considering that nations are modern. ... It also suggest that migrants should be excluded or less worthy. Hardly a message for anybody who, like herself, represents the ability for the child of migrants to succeed," he added.

The bottom line: The regional tensions will get some international attention in the coming months, as the European Union moved to open formal accession talks earlier this year with both Albania and North Macedonia.

Turkey

Data of Over 61,000 Turkish Jewish Gravestones Online in New Database Full Article [Here](#)

Researchers under the leadership of Prof. Minna Rozen, then of Tel Aviv University, worked from 1988 to 1990 travelling across Turkey taking over 100,000 photos as well as mapping the cemeteries.

An ambitious project has been launched online that documents Jewish gravestones in Turkey. The project, entitled "A World Beyond: Jewish Cemeteries in Turkey 1583-1990" contains the details of over 61,022 Jewish tombstones spread across the country. It is one of the largest tombstone databases in the world – covering over 400 years of Turkish-Jewish life. The project is part of The Turkish and Balkan Jewry Documentation Project of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center of Tel Aviv University. The researchers hope to include cemeteries across Greece, Albania and Bulgaria.

Under the leadership of Prof. Minna Rozen, researchers worked on the database from 1988 to 1990. They traveled across Turkey, documenting the sites by taking over 100,000 photos. They also mapped and cleaned up the cemeteries they encountered.



After spending years digitizing the records, funding for the project has only now become available for the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center to upload the database online and make it accessible to the public. The project is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Bernard Lewis, a British-American historian who specialized in the history of Islam and the Middle East. Before he died, Lewis contributed to the beginnings of the project until it ran into financial difficulties.

The research covers 28 different Turkish cemeteries, including a Karaite cemetery in Istanbul, the Italian cemetery of Istanbul, as well as several smaller cemeteries from communities in western and eastern Anatolia. Jewish communities abandoned many of these cemeteries after the conflicts of the 20th century as well as Jewish emigration in the region. The project's search function allows users to peruse easily through the enormous database with specific criteria to find a specific gravestone. Information on each cemetery is listed.



Sephardic Jews in Turkey were Told to Assimilate. Today's Generation is Reclaiming its Identity with Ladino Full article by Nesi Altaras [Here](#)

In Rodosto (Tekirdağ), a city on the shores of the Sea of Marmara, my paternal grandfather, Nesim, lived life in Ladino. Like most Jews in Turkey in the early twentieth century, his household was so devoid of Turkish that when my grandmother, Gülten, moved to Rodosto from Adana — a major southern city — she had to learn Ladino to speak to the head of the house: her new mother-in-law, Estrula. In spite of my grandmother's necessary adjustment, by the time my father was born, Turkish had become the primary language of the shrinking Jewish community of Tekirdağ. My father spoke Turkish at home, overhearing only the most essential words in Ladino from his grandmother.

Nearly 140 kilometers east, my maternal grandfather, Eliezer, grew up in Kuledibi (literally "by the tower") — the most Jewish area of Istanbul and home to the famous Neve Shalom synagogue. Going to Jewish elementary school and playing with his friends on the streets around the Galata Tower — *La Kula* in Ladino — Eliezer spoke Ladino to friends, neighbors, and family. But when Eliezer's sister was born, he sought to ban Ladino at his home. He wanted his sister to speak Turkish without a Jewish accent; she would face less discrimination and become a "real" Turkish citizen.

My family's rejection of Ladino was part of a critical moment for the broader Jewish community in Turkey — and a moment shaped by the nationalist and racist policies of Turkey's single-party state. After a 1930s tour of Edirne and Çanakkale, two of Turkey's western cities, notorious Turkish fascist Nihal Atsız complained that Jews were flouting their obligation to the new republic by defiantly continuing to speak their own language — Ladino. While he couched his views in particularly racist terms, Atsız's idea that citizens of Turkey — all legally deemed to be Turks — must speak the national language at all times was also the position of the state.



The Turkish Republic, formed in 1923 after the Ottoman Empire dissolved, was founded on a contract of Turkishness with two components: being a nominal Sunni Muslim, and speaking Turkish at home. For Christians and Jews, only linguistic assimilation was possible. Under the promise of equal citizenship, all minorities living in Turkey were expected to abandon their language, whether Ladino, Armenian, Circassian, Kurdish, or Greek, in favor of Turkish.

Of the various tools the Republic used to promote Turkish, one of the most effective was mandating Turkish instruction in minority schools. The Jewish school that my grandfather Eliezer attended had originally carried out instruction in French, but quickly had to switch to Turkish to accommodate new state mandates. In some areas, use of “other” languages even prompted violence.

But perhaps the most visible effort to assimilate minorities into the new state was the years-long Citizen Speak Turkish campaign. Through sponsorship of public events, newspaper articles, and posters, the state endeavored to convince the entire population that to be a citizen of Turkey meant speaking Turkish. Posters declared that “should our fellow citizens falter and speak ‘foreign’ languages, we must remind them to speak Turkish.”

Genocide-surviving Armenians were suspicious of the promise of equality; Greeks, most of whom had been deported, were too proud of their own language. But Jewish elites, harboring a fear of being the state’s next target, were more than ready to become what was known as “Turks believing in Judaism” (*musevi Türk vatandaşları*) as opposed to just Jews (*yahudi*). Some Jewish leaders even became public advocates for linguistic assimilation, speaking Turkish at home and imploring other Jews to do the same — not only privately, but in their synagogue sermons and in the local Jewish newspapers. Ironically, these assimilationist agendas were by necessity promoted in French and Ladino so that they would be legible to the broader Jewish community.

The idea that Ladino was “backwards” or too “Oriental” was not new: By the 1880s, especially middle class Jews across the Ottoman Empire began to adopt French in their quest for modernity and European status (as was the case in my grandfather Eliezer’s Jewish school). The shift toward Turkish, already gaining traction by the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, may have been motivated by a number of possibilities: Some Jews were pursuing economic gain that closeness with the government, via a shared language, would provide. Others were perhaps motivated by fear, or by a genuine belief that Turkish should be their new mother tongue. Sometimes these last two factors could even coexist.

This assimilationism was so internalized over the first decades of the republic that all of my grandparents, Ladino speakers themselves, decided not to teach their language to their children. Many felt that they had no other choice. Some even sought to prevent their own parents from speaking Ladino to the next generation. The ban on Ladino that my grandfather Eliezer attempted to enforce was not completely successful, as the household included two women — Eliezer’s mother and grandmother — who spoke very little Turkish. Yet by the late 1960s and 70s, when my parents were born, families usually lived without Ladino-speaking grandparents and could easily institute Turkish as the home language.

Jews of my grandparents’ generations, and many of my parents’ generation, were convinced of the “backwardness” or “uselessness” of their mother tongue. They had internalized the state discourse that they were Turks of Jewish faith and that as Turks it was natural, if not required, for them to raise Turkish-speaking families.

When I was growing up, none of my grandparents actively spoke Ladino: they had just gotten used to speaking — and being — Turks, even while their Turkishness was constantly questioned. Consequently, both my parents, with Turkish as their first language, were not able to pass Ladino onto me. I grew up learning only the most important Ladino words: *lonso*, *vaziyo*, *kalavasucho*; the occasional **dicha**, like “*se alevantaron los pipinos i aharvaron el bahchivan*.” The first two are insults (bear, dunce), the next a zucchini dish, and the *dicha* a saying told to disrespectful young people who might, for example, try to give their mother cooking tips (literally, it means “the cucumbers got up and beat the gardener”). The only person in my life who wanted



to speak his language was my great-grandfather Pepo, who was delighted when I chose to learn Spanish in middle school over French or German.

As time went on I resented that I did not speak Ladino, the language of my community. I was angry at the government for its racist policy, and at the Jewish leaders who internalized the assimilationist agenda and foisted it upon their community.

The desire to recover my language underlines that as Jews, we are not simply Turks of Jewish faith — a conception of identity that assimilationist elites in Istanbul propagate to this day. Our language punctuates our distinctiveness as a people: we are not Turks, but citizens of Turkey deserving of equality nonetheless. A newly popularizing word in Turkish allows us to construct this new identity that includes all peoples of Turkey: *Türkiyeli* (“of Turkey”). But Ladino had already given us this concept in the 19th century: *Turkino*. Last year, after brushing up on modern Spanish in college, and with a Ladino-Turkish dictionary in hand, I began reading Istanbul’s monthly Ladino newspaper *El Amaneser* — the only contemporary Ladino newspaper circulated today — and a Ladino book of essays. I began to speak Ladino with my grandparents without having to switch to Turkish — and they obliged. With the help of Professor David Bunis’ **Ladino Language and Culture** class this summer at the University of Washington, I hope to finally master the language of my family.

*Nesi Altaras is an MA student at McGill University in Montreal and an editor at Avlaremos, a Turkish online publication covering Jewish and minority topics in Turkey. His research projects include the migration of Jews from Van and Hakkari and an analysis of the use of citizenship as apologies by contemporary states. He is a student in the UW’s summer **Ladino Language and Culture** course with Professor David Bunis.*

The Modernization Process of Turkish Jews and Abraham Camondo Full Article [Here](#)

Abraham Camondo was born and raised in Istanbul as the child of a family descending from the Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain and then came to the land of the Ottoman Empire. He would then become a banker and a community leader providing great services to both his community and the Ottoman rule, up until the day he left Istanbul at the age of 83.



In the afternoon hours of November 1861, in Yeniköy, in one of the most magnificent Istanbul mansions, a historic incident takes place.

Rabbi Izak Akriş, who was one of the leaders of the especially poor and uneducated part of the Ottoman Jewish Community, barges in the mansion with his followers, despite the resistance of the servants, also damaging some valuables in the process, and threatens the owner of the mansion saying: “You either shut down the school or I’ll excommunicate you.” The owner of the mansion does not obey the threat and Akriş tells him that he has excommunicated him from the Jewish community. According to some historians, a very important figure, the Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha, is at the mansion that afternoon, and because of this incident, he gives the order to imprison Rabbi Akriş in the famous prison of the time, *İplikhane-i Amire* in Eyüp, Istanbul.

One week later, the most interesting event of the Ottoman Jewish Community history occurs.

Akriş’s disciples who protest his being imprisoned, make scenes in the city, lose themselves as far as attacking the Grand Vizier’s building in Babiali. On Friday night, incidents reach the peak. As Sultan Abdulaziz was traveling from Haliç to Eyüp by sea, he hears the crowds at the coast protesting a dispute shouting and cursing, reciting psalms and prayers, and as he then learns, that they want Akriş freed. Sultan Abdulaziz, thinking that the persistent request of such a big crowd was the general wish of the whole community, lets Akriş go free. Akriş and his followers have won a great victory.

The owner of the mansion Abraham Camondo (Abraham Salomon de Camondo) is disappointed greatly and despite his many years of struggle, a few years later then these incidents, he leaves his country.

Abraham Camondo was born and raised in Istanbul as the child of a family descending from the Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain and then came to the land of the Ottoman Empire. He would then become a banker and a community leader providing great services both for his community and the Ottoman rule, up until the day he left Istanbul at the age of 83. He would play an important role in the Istanbul financiers' conversion from being moneychangers to bankers, make sure that Galata becomes a modern finance center, and bear the financing of a big part of the army expenses during the Ottoman Empire's Crimean War. He would be written in history as a person who regulated the relationship between his community and the Ottoman rule, as a result of his very good relations with the grand viziers. He would be listed as one of the founders of the modern business life, building famous inns in various districts of Istanbul, and would leave his signature on distinct pieces which contribute greatly to Istanbul's city architecture.

Abraham Camondo not stopping there would assume the mission to uplift the Ottoman Jews, who after living their golden age during the Rise of the Ottoman Empire, had started deteriorating economically and culturally and had been left behind compared to West European Jews.

The fact that the Jewish Community, who was way behind the other religious minorities, could not benefit from the Tanzimat reforms and that they could not perform the necessary change and transformation, would activate modernization supporters like Abraham Camondo, and this development would cause a great reaction from the religious and conservative Jews.

Camondo would relate the society's not being able to modernize, to not having secular schools, think of opening schools with curriculums including French-language education to maintain relations with the outside world, Ottoman language, and various classes other than religion, and would for the first time establish a secular school in 1856 called 'Escuela' in Piri Pasha district of Hasköy.



However, this development would receive a great reaction from the ultra-conservative religious people who were against modernization and that claimed in these kinds of schools, Jewish youth would turn to Christianity, and then finally the education in this school would stop in a short time. Thus, the project to integrate the Jewish youth with the world would fail, and Escuela would only be able to reopen 5 years later, with Camondo's compromises in curriculum and management, and his promises to financially aid the religious schools. However, as per some historians, some ultra-conservative rabbis would revolt again with economic motives, but their pretext being "we're losing our religion", so the story that had started with breaking into the mansion in Yeniköy, would result in the defeat of Camondo and modernization supporters.

Though Camondo would resist ex-communication and establish a secular council within the community together with Istanbul's Jewish intellectuals and wealthy businessmen for some time, he would not succeed in overcoming the ultra-conservative atmosphere of many years, and would decide to leave his country after his son's death.

Meanwhile, the 1865 Chief Rabbinate Law accepted by Sultan Abdülaziz with the encouragement of Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha to prevent the chaos in the community, and ensure the modernization of the Jewish Community, would allow the secularists in management, and a new balance would be restored in the Ottoman Jewish Community led by the religious and conservatives until then.

Ottoman Jews with the secular schools established everywhere since 1870, would only then begin to bear the fruits of the Jewish Enlightenment started by the European Jews 100 years ago.

What should be noted here is the reality that the grand resistance the conservative and fanatic section has shown to the community's enlightenment process despite Camondo, was only broken by the Ottoman rule's forcing the community managerial-wise to modernize and the secular education brought to the country by European Jews...

Abraham Camondo would pass away in Paris where he had spent his last years, and as per his will his body would be buried in the mausoleum he had had built in Hasköy, with a big assembly attended also by the Ottoman rulers. This great man deserves more than just to be remembered in solitude on the edge of a road. He is waiting to be remembered, with his life, his contributions to his country, and to Istanbul, with his struggle to modernize the community, in the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews.

Jewish Italy

Mantova (Mantua)

Italian PM Saves Ancient Jewish Graveyard from Being Destroyed Full Article [Here](#)

The request was approved earlier this month, however unintended, on the four hundred year anniversary of the death of Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano.

The Italian government approved a request made nearly a year ago by Chief Rabbi of Israel David Lau demanding that efforts be made to prevent the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in Mantova by a construction project.

The graveyard, in which hundreds of year-old graves are located, was at the danger of being destroyed due to something called the "Mantova Hub construction plan." In light of the danger, Lau sent a letter to Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte nearly a year ago.



The Chief Rabbi of Israel congratulated the prime minister in his letter for the effort to save the Jewish cemetery in a letter to Italian government officials following the approval.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Prime Minister, on the determination and effort to prevent any harm to the sacred deceased buried in the cemetery and to maintain character of this holy place of the Jewish people," Lau wrote.

Though the timing was unintentional, the request was approved earlier this month on the four hundred year anniversary of the death of Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano. In addition to the request, the government allocated a special budget to change construction plans to prevent damage to the ancient cemetery.

"It is with great appreciation and pleasure that I received the news that the government is currently working on making changes to the Mantova Hub construction plan," Lau wrote.

"We also received with great satisfaction the news that the solution was found to protect the deceased and prevent any damage to them as the mass grave – graves from ancient times that were discovered near the Jewish cemetery in Mantova," Lau continued.

Last September, Paul Packer, Chairman of the United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, visited the site, met with the mayor and planning committee and worked with the US embassy and local Jewish leaders to help reach a successful resolution.

"In this day and age when many are destroying and erasing heritage it is very nice to see that the Government of Italy and the local municipality realize that preserving history is the right thing to do," he said.

As mentioned above, one of the ancient graves found to be buried in the cemetery was that of Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano, a Talmudist who was buried in 1620. Da Fano was a disciple of Rabbi Moses ben Jacob Cordevo, and was known for his workings in Talmudic and Kabbalistic studies.

The approval was made with contribution by Italian Rabbis Association president Rabbi Alfonso Arbib; Chief Rabbi of Rome Riccardo Shmuel Di Segni; as well as Union of the Italian Jewish Communities president Noemi Di Segni in addition to the renowned international

Salamone Di Rossi **A Jew in the Court of the Gonzagas of Mantua**

The Italian city of Mantua: the setting for Verdi's opera Rigoletto. The city of exile for Juliet's beloved in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. In the 16th century, Mantua was unrivalled in beauty, wealth, and sophistication. The gardens and courtyards of its ducal palace, each more magnificent than the one before, and its devotion to art, music, and literature, made Mantua, in the eyes of many, one of the most elegant and sophisticated cities in the world.

According to an ambassador from Venice who visited Mantua in 1588, the city had a population of around a quarter of a million inhabitants, and Jews made up one fifth of that population. Special taxes were levied on them for no other reason than the fact that they were Jews. They were members of a segregated population, forced to wear a yellow badge as a signifier of their race, forbidden from most areas of employment. They were subject to having property seized, forced to attend sermons about Christianity, and sometimes burned at the stake as witches for the benefit of visiting dignitaries.

Despite experiencing a deep decline in both the political and economic realms at the beginning of the first decade of the 17th century, Mantua remained one of Italy's greatest and wealthiest cities. This was due in no small part to Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga, one of the most magnanimous patrons of the arts on all of the Italian peninsula.



Salamone di Rossi

The Duke's love for the arts, and acquisition and promotion of them, was due in no small part to his upbringing in Ferrara near his sister Margherita, the third wife of Alfonso II d'Este. Under the House of Este, Ferrara had become an internationally known capital, where economics, philosophy, and religious thought all flourished. The court's elaborate and virtuosic entertainments, the renowned balletto delle donne among them, certainly were a model for Vincenzo, who, on becoming Duke of Mantua in 1587, immediately set to work creating his own court of immense artistic wealth.

Along with founding a court orchestra, Vincenzo, who was, if truth be told, a bit of a spendthrift, collected as many sculptures, paintings, and other works of art as the palace could hold. Soon, Vincenzo's court was a magnet for Europe's leading artists, poets, and musicians: Peter Paul Rubens, Claudio Monteverdi, and Salamone Rossi Ebreo – the Jew – among them.

Vincenzo's relationship to the Jews of Mantua was neither cut and dried nor consistent. Although he had all foreign Jews exiled from the city in order to prevent an increase in the Jewish population, the Catholic Church accused the Duke of leniency towards Mantua's Jewish residents. This led to Vincenzo having to protect the Jewish community to a certain degree, to avoid a violent uprising against them. Yet, it was in 1610 that he established Mantua's Jewish ghetto. Jews already were living in restricted areas, but this new Jewish ghetto had a physical barricade. How then, to explain his invitation of Salamone Rossi Ebreo – Salamone Rossi the Jew – to his court?

Salamone Rossi's skill as a violinist and composer was highly valued at Vincenzo's Catholic court, and he was officially exempted from wearing the yellow badge required of the Mantuan Jewish community. But as a Jew, he still was seen as an interloper. It was solely due to the patronage of the Duke that Rossi achieved the status that he did, precarious as it was. As Don Harrán, Artur Rubinstein Professor Emeritus of Musicology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, points out, "As a Jewish musician working for the Mantuan court, and competing for the favors that its Christian musicians and composers hoped to gain, it was only inevitable for Rossi to have been considered an intruder. His talents as composer and violinist must have been so remarkable that Vincenzo and his successors decided to keep Rossi in their service over the course of almost forty years, from 1589 to 1628."



Jewish Ghetto of Mantua

As early as 1476, Hebrew works had been printed in Mantua. But it wasn't until 1623 that Salamone Rossi's thirty-three Songs of Solomon (Ha-shirim asher li-Shelomoh) became the first composed "songs" to be published in Hebrew. Sebastian Gluck, pipe organ builder and considered the authority on the synagogue organ in America, points out that Rossi "...was the first to write Jewish liturgical music in the prevailing style of the time, without melodic or harmonic influence from Hebraic chant."

The title page of Rossi's "Songs of Solomon," a collection of thirty-three songs published in 1623. Rossi set Hebrew liturgical texts in prevailing music styles of the time

In a page from "Songs of Solomon," it's interesting to note how he solved the problem of musical notation being written left to right and Hebrew being written right to left. This would have been initially confusing for the men of the synagogue.

The songs use texts from the Psalms, Leviticus, and Isaiah, as well as non-Biblical Jewish sacred works. According to Elad Uzan, classical music critic of the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, "Rossi named his composition Songs of Solomon, presumably to link it to the legacy of the Song of Songs, traditionally believed to have been written by King Solomon. Alternatively, the title also might make the reader assume that Rossi dedicated his work to King Solomon (in fact, however, he dedicated this collection of songs to himself)."



Rossi's position in the court was not without controversy in the Jewish community as well. He set Hebrew liturgical text in the prevailing musical styles of the late Italian Renaissance, earning scorn from his fellow Jews. His secular madrigals and instrumental works, his role as court violinist and

director of its 30 piece orchestra (he led the orchestra at the 1607 premiere of Claudio Monteverdi's L'Orfeo), and his encouragement of his sister, known as Madame Europa, the only female professional Jewish singer of her time, received varying degrees of tolerance from within his own community.

Rossi wasn't the only Jewish musician at the Gonzaga court, however. "Musician" was one of the occupations Jews were allowed to practice in Mantua in the early 17th century. The Duke of Mantua's payrolls from the period of 1577 to 1637 show many composers, singers, and instrumentalists with Jewish names, and all followed by the word Hebreo: Jew.

Though Rossi kept his position at the court, conditions in general for the Jews of Mantua continued to deteriorate. No records exist for either Salamone Rossi or his sister Europa after 1630. It's likely that they died during the Austrian sack of the Mantuan ghetto, either by plague or by slaughter.



Israel

On July 11, 1947, more than 4,500 Holocaust survivors boarded an old passenger ship, the **Exodus 1947**, in order to break the naval embargo that the British had imposed on the then Palestine of the British Order, and to rebuild their lives there. Although this operation - organized by Hagana - could be one of dozens of failed similar attempts to bring Jews in Palestine during the decades of the British Mandate, this ship was destined to become an international symbol of the need to create the Jewish state. **Watch the relevant video here.** The British authorities intercepted the ship Exodus 1947, after a week's journey and transported it to the port of Haifa, where they tried to forcibly disembark the passengers. Two passengers were killed and dozens injured in the clashes. The remaining passengers were transported by the British back to France, where they were ordered to disembark. In refusing passengers to comply, the British authorities chose to wait as long as it took until the passengers voluntarily disembarked in order for Britain to avoid public outcry. Instead of succumbing, passengers began a hunger strike, increasing international interest and forcing the British to seek another solution.

The British authorities decided to send the survivors to Germany, namely the British zone of allied Germany. That's where they were locked up in camps. The incident sparked an international outcry against Britain. An American newspaper wrote characteristically: "Back to the Reich." The Yugoslav representative to the United Nations said of the situation: "It is the best possible argument to allow Jews to enter Palestine." Internationally, support initiatives, public protests and hunger strikes by displaced survivors have spread across Europe.

A few months later, on 29.11.1947, the UN voted in favour of the creation of the State of Israel, triggering journalist Ruth Gruber to write her book **"Exodus 1947 - The Ship That Launched a Nation,"** describing the EXODUS as the "ship that brought out a nation."



Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



Only 7 days after the mournful day of fasting and sorrow of "Tisha B'Av" – the 9th of Av, comes a special joyous day of "Tu B'Av", the 15th of Av. But this day is quite mysterious, and often even unknown. Yet the Talmud tells us in the tractate of "Ta'anit" [Fasts] that there were no holy days on the Jewish calendar as happy as Tu B'Av and Yom Kippur! The Sages understand why Yom Kippur is named, because what could be more joyful than G-d's forgiving the sins of His people Israel, but what was so special about the 15th of Av to warrant such a direct comparison? This question is compounded by the fact that this 'holiday' is only mentioned in Jewish law as being a day we don't say penitential prayers – Tahanun – and nothing else: no special mention, ceremonies or even single explanation as why it is considered such a joyful day. The Talmud does mention that on the 15th of Av, unmarried girls of Jerusalem would dress in white and dance in the vineyards, calling on men to find their brides, a kind of ancient "Sadie Hawkins Day", if you will. But it still begs the question: Why was this the one day during the year that young maidens took such action? The Talmud then goes on to cite several reasons why this day is so special in Jewish history. One reason is that because of the tribal structure and land being divided and held by male descendants of the heads of the tribes (except when no male descendants exist, whereby the female offspring do receive land rights), it was customary and even almost mandatory that female orphans with no brothers would only marry within their tribe to prevent the loss of inherited land by way of marrying into a different tribe. On the 15th of Av, this restriction was lifted, and women were free to marry anyone they wanted from any tribe; A second reason is a bit morbid, but is cited more than once: Since all of the "desert generation" of men and women over 20 years of age when the Israelites left Egypt were destined to die in the desert and not enter the Promised Land, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, every year on the night of the 9th of Av, Israelites dug their own graves and slept in them. Those that did not arise in the morning died in their sleep, and this went on until the 40th year. That year, the Israelites did the same thing, but lo and behold, that morning no one had died. Assuming they had made an error in calculating the date, they did the same thing for the following 6 nights. However, when they saw a full moon, they realized that they had reached the 15th of the month, understanding that this was the 40th and final year of wandering in the desert, and that they were part of the new generation that would be entering the promised land; A third, and more mundane reason is that after a horrible civil war and terrible crime of the tribe of Benjamin in the times of the Judges, the other 11 tribes banned Benjamin and would not allow anyone to marry into that tribe or vice versa. On the 15th of Av at a certain point, the ban was lifted and again the tribe of Benjamin was reaccepted as part of the Israelite nation; A fourth possibility is that the cutting of all wood needed for a full year of sacrifices in the Temple was completed on Tu B'Av; A fifth reason offered is that after the split of the nation into two kingdoms: Israel and Judea, members of the 10 tribes who rebelled and formed the kingdom of Israel in the north, were banned from coming to the Temple in Jerusalem (located in Judea), and armed sentries were placed on the road to Jerusalem to enforce this restriction. On Tu B'Av during the reign of the northern Israel King Hoshea, he removed the sentries to allow the ten tribes access once again to the Temple; Finally, after a full year of the Roman occupiers of Israel refusing to allow the hundreds of thousands of Jewish dead from the Bar Kochba revolt at Beitar to be buried, it was on the 15th of Av when they relented. Miraculously, when the bodies were being gathered for proper Jewish burial, they had not at all decomposed, despite exposure to the elements for so long. This miracle is perpetuated in the creation of a fourth blessing in the Grace after Meals, "Hatov vehameitiv", indicating our eternal thanks and appreciation for God's miracles. What unites all these rather different reasons is the fact that wonderful things happened for the People of Israel on this day, and not just individuals or one particular group.

In modern Israel, relying mostly on the tradition of young maidens dancing in the fields in search of their life partner, Tu B'Av has become the "holiday of love", comparable to Valentine's Day, though this is not highly appreciated by the more traditional, because no matter which explanation one accepts, and a clear connotation of love to the day, Judaism sees this in a highly spiritual way and a celebration of a more spiritual, communal and esoteric love on a Jewish people level. And in fact, coming as it does on the heels of Tisha B'Av, the Kabbalists say that, given the tradition that despite Tisha B'Av's mournful nature, it is the day the Messiah was born, and will become the first day of a holiday of redemption, with Tu B'Av being the last day, and the six days in between being like "Hol Hamoed" on Pesah and Sukkot, when we will all rejoice and celebrate the Messianic era in Jerusalem!

Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé
Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America



Parashah of the Week – Vaethanan - Calling on G-d

Moshe Rabbenu in his farewell address, advises the Jewish people not to abandon the words of the Torah and forewarns them of the unpleasant consequences that doing so might bring. Then he states, "In your distress, when all these things are come upon you, in the later days, you will return to the LORD your G-d, and listen to His voice." (Devarim 4:30) Even after we have transgressed and difficult times have come, we can still call out to G-d and He will listen to our supplications. He then says, "For the LORD your G-d is a merciful G-d; He will not abandon you, nor destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them." (Ibid 4:31) A time of distress and hardship will cause many to turn back to G-d and He in His mercifulness will accept our sincere repentance nevertheless.

Rabbi David Meldola (1) notes five rationales that might be used by individuals to turn away from wrongdoing. He states, the first is when one learns or begins to marvel at all the many wonders that G-d is constantly creating for us throughout our lives. The minute and the enormous, the detail or the vast of creation. A second rationale that can turn one away from wrongdoing is when we get to an old age. Rabbi Mendola writes that this is a natural state of affairs, when one sees his or her end nearing, it is only natural to turn to G-d. An elder person has lost many of the desires and even the energy that might have lead him or her astray in earlier days. A third rationale that might be used by some is when they experience success in life in one or in many areas. One might be humbled by the good fortune that he or she might have achieved and turn to G-d in full gratitude. A fourth rationale is when people are in distress and in pain. In their agony and suffering they turn to G-d when they see no other alternative as stated in our Parasha. A fifth and last rationale can be said when a person is influenced by good people. Good friends and well intended companions will serve as protectors for an individual. Their good nature and healthy character, their good advice and support will go a long way. They will surely help, encourage and lead a friend in the path of righteousness.

Rabbi Meldola goes on to explain, that on the other hand, there are other rationales used by many individuals that never turn back to the path of the Torah. He states that the first is fearing the threats of others. He writes that throughout history there were many righteous man who failed this difficult test. Their fear of other men was greater than the fear of G-d and they ended up abandoning the Torah. There is a second rationale and it is used by great minds who are unable to understand the depth of our existence. They try to make sense of tragedies or calamities that befall peoples, but are unable to accept their own limited understanding when their own explanations do not suffice. A third rationale is used by some who see great success and wealth of all sorts. Happy and content with their lot, they drift and become busy, eventually forgetting and in some ways becoming unthankful to G-d who provided them with it all. Rabbi Meldola then states that there is a fourth

rationale used by those that experience a life of poverty and of great need. In his or her desperation and sometimes even in their anger they turn away from G-d and fail to work on repairing the cause of their state. The fifth and last rationale is said by those that befriend evil people. Bad company will rub off even if completely unintended, a clear warning of the consequences that such friendships can bring. (2)

Moshe Rabbenu in our Parasha forewarns us that there will be times when we might become distressed and even desperate beseeching help from the Almighty. He foretells that in time of need we will turn back to G-d and He will take us back. Rabbi David Meldola, in this outstanding Derasha, expanded on the many rationales that people might use to turn back to G-d and that they are also the same rationales that are mistakenly used to go astray. From this insights, we must remember that as a People, we will never find ourselves alone. Moshe foretells us that G-d in His great mercy, will always look after us. G-d patiently waits and listens for the moment that we call and His infinite mercy, He will always reply.

Shabbat Shalom

(1) Rabbi David Meldola: Third son of Rephael Meldola; born at Leghorn 1714; died (it is said) at the age of 104. He went with his father to Bayonne, left that city in 1735, and settled in Amsterdam, where he undertook the publication of his father's works, as well as some of his own writings. He was appointed Hakam of several of the religious societies and philanthropic organizations. Rabbi Meldola was the author of: "Mo'ed David" (Amsterdam, 1740), an astronomical and mathematical work, including a poem giving the rules of the calendar (first published in the ritual work "Tefillat Yesharim," ib. 1740); "Dibre David" (ib.1753); "Darke Yesod ha-Limmud," on the methodology of the Talmud (ib.1754); "Darke David" (Amsterdam and Hamburg, 1793-95); and many others preserved in manuscript (Nepi-Ghirondi, "Toledot Gedole Yisrael," p. 79). He married in 1739 Rachel Sarphaty (or Sarfatti), daughter of Eliashib Nathanael Sarphaty of Amsterdam and granddaughter of Moses Raphael d'Aguiar, by whom he had eight children, born in Amsterdam. His youngest son, Abraham, born 1754, removed to Hamburg in 1772, and was the author of many works, including "Traduccion de las Cartos Mercantines y Manuales," Hamburg, 1784, and "Nova Grammatica Portugueza," Leipsic, 1785. (Source: Jewish Encyclopedia)

(2) Rabbi David Meldola, Darkhe David, Parashat Vaethanan.

News of Interest to All

Hagia Sofia Turned into a Mosque

Turkish historian calls for the destruction of mosaics in Hagia Sophia. Full Article [Here](#)

A Turkish historian has turned against the Empress Zoë Porphyrogenita, on the occasion of the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque. We are talking about the professor of History at the Sakarya University, Ebubekir Sofuoğlu, who, with his provocative post, asks for the removal – and not only the coverage – of the image of the empress in the temple, considering that she had a “promiscuous lifestyle.”

“Will there be a whore in the mosque? If the icons are not removed, the legacy of Mehmed the Conqueror, Hagia Sophia, along with the prostitute Zoe will have become the first mosque in the world where a whore will be displayed. An end should be put to the nonsense regarding the protection of the idols and the icons that constitute disrespect to the Conqueror should be taken off.”



Zoë Porphyrogenita (“born into the purple”) (c. 978 – June 11, 1050) ruled as Empress of the Romans with her sister Theodora from 1042 to 1050 and as Imperial wife from 1028 to 1042. There is a mosaic of her in the Gynaikeion of Hagia Sophia.

She has been described as the most influential Empress in the 11th century, who appointed the Roman Emperor four times in a row. Today Empress Zoë is under attack after the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque. What will be the case tomorrow?

NOTE: As a student of Byzantine Art and as a graduate of Queens College with a degree in Byzantine and Modern Greek, this is appalling on so many levels. - Marcia Haddad-Ikonomopoulos

Leon Hefetz-Batis – A Holocaust Testimony

My paternal grandfather Leon Hefetz Batis was born in the Romaniote community of Ioannina, Greece in 1910 or 11 or 12 and died in Israel on 10th March 1980

He was deported from Athens, Greece to Auschwitz on 24th March 1944 . He managed to escape one day while the prisoners were out in the woods cutting down trees. He hid himself in a hut and the rest is history. On his way home Christians helped him survive. When he arrived to Salonica, Greece and told people what had happened in the concentration camps, they thought he was insane

His number on the arm was 182464

In the first picture he is seen as a young man, assumingly end of the 20's beginning of the 30's, in the second picture outside the synagogue in Bucharest - after his escape - when deported to Auschwitz he left behind his wife Simchah - Sophie, born on 12th May 1912 in Trikala Greece, and three children, Beckie - Astro, born November 1935, my father Solomon - Makis, born 19-7-1937 and the baby girl Eftychia - Mazaltov, unfortunately she died at the age of two during the war because she fell in hot water and died of her burnings, after the war another son, Isaac, was born to the family in June 1950

His pictures and life story are exhibited at the Athens Jewish Museum.



Asking for Our Help

"My son, Fabrice Mattatia, gave me your mail address
I am looking for information about my grandfather Mathieu (or Mathews or Matéo) Mattatia born in 1873 in Janina and died in Alexandria Egypt in 1925
Is it possible to get some information from your side?
Thank you for your help"

- Ronald Mattatia (Paris France)

We received this request from Israel:

My grandfather's name was HAIM IZCHAK ATTAS

He was born in IOANNINA in 1873 (no birth certificate)

His father ELIYA ATTAS died when he was very young, and he left school and home at the age of 12

He worked for a while with his brother (doing what?) and went off to Istanbul (Constantinople) to study Chemistry (Pharmacology). When he graduated in 1903 (aged 30).

Eventually he marries (we don't know when and to whom) but sadly she dies.

In 1911 he marries a 16 year old girl from the Cohen family (Sarina daughter of Mathia Cohen- my grandmother). In 1912 he is the chief chemist of the Guarba Hospital in Ioannina.

(circa) 1913 the odd couple move to Izmir (once Smyrna) and there he (somehow) opens a chemist shop/ pharmacy

1915- his first son Maccabe is born

1918 - his second son Joseph) is born

1921 - his third son Michael is born (my father)

They flee to Alexandria in September 1922.

There they have 4 more children. He dies in Israel in 1956 at the age of 83

We know nothing of his family: brothers, sisters, mother etc. and we would appreciate any piece of knowledge you might have.

Thank you very much.

I add pictures.

The first 4 are of Haim and the woman is Sarina his wife

The rest are unknown people probably from Sarina COHEN family (of which we also know nothing about)



Haim Attas



Sarina Cohen Attas

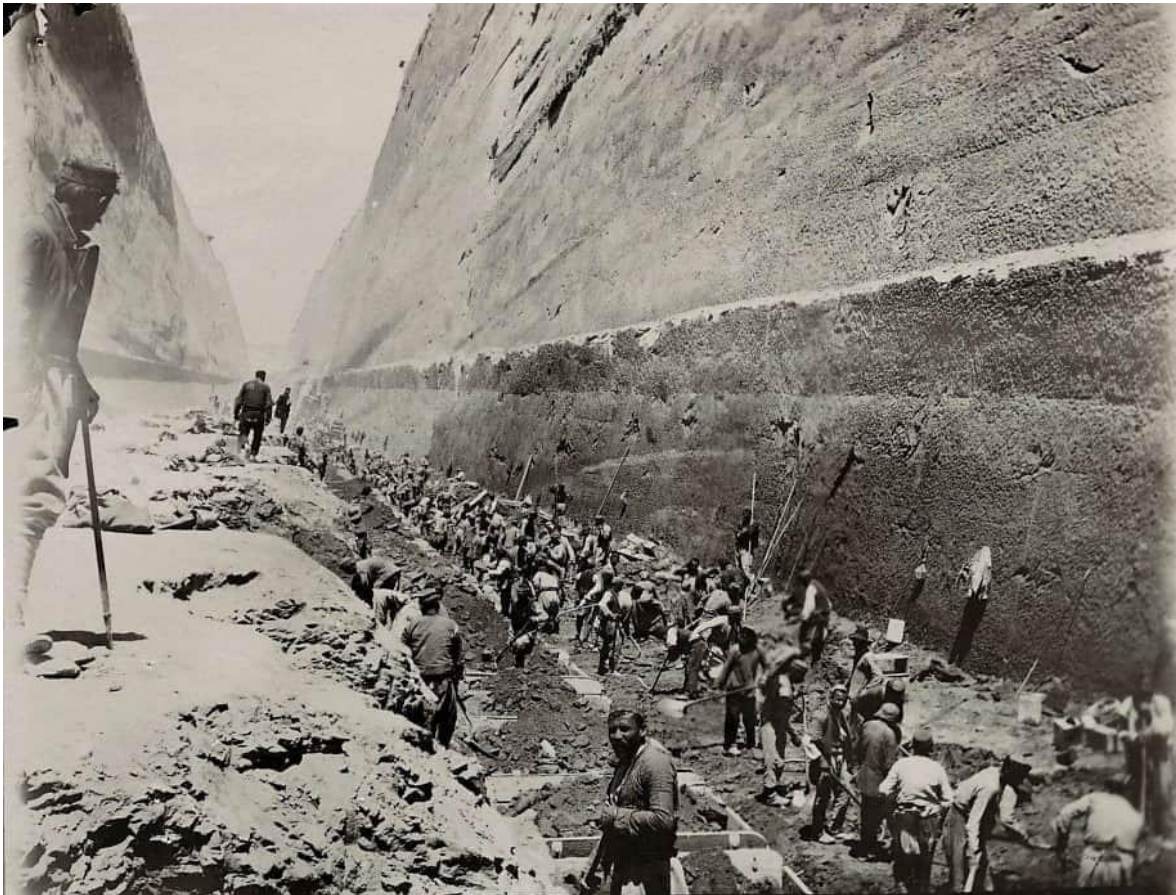
Looking for Identifications of these photos:



Pictures of the Month



Haim Attas working in Hospital in Ioannina in 1912/1913



Building of the Isthmus of Corinth 1882

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 137
August 2020
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