



April 2014 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Our best wishes for a good Pessach. To our Christian friends, a Happy Easter. In Greek, we use the same words: Kalo Pasca.



Passover in Ioannina 1933-thanks to the Bechoropoulos and Attas families

This newsletter, our 62nd 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 6000 households worldwide, with our community of 'friends' continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

As always, you are all invited to attend our Saturday morning Shabbat services. Just give our Shamas, Sol Kofinas, a heads up (papusoup@mindspring.com) 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.

Passings

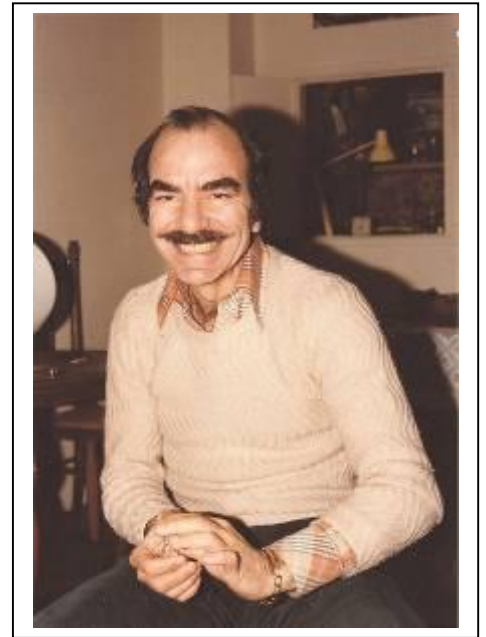
This month we mourn the passing of Dorothea Capon, Jack Meones and Becky Douek. Our condolences to their families.

Dorothea Capon died at the age of 84 in Albany, NY. She is survived by her son, Mark, daughter, Linda and grandson, Adam.

Jack Chaim Meones (b. 11/30/26-3/14/14) was the son of Chaim Solomon Meones and Molly Eskenazi. He is survived by two children, Toni and Delores, and his sister Sarina Meones.



Jack Meones



Becky Douek passed at the age of 88 on Yom Kippur 2013. She was the daughter of Yessoula and Caden Besso (nee Counio). She is survived by her daughters Reine and Sarah and grandchildren.

We were greatly saddened by the sudden death of a dearly beloved member of our community. On March 18th, only a week short of her 78th birthday, Marlene Isaac Baharlias was killed by a motorist as she was walking on the sidewalk in her neighborhood in Brooklyn. Marlene was the daughter of Joseph Ishakis (Isaac) and Anna Solomon, the granddaughter of Jessula Ishakis. She is survived by her husband, Memos, brother, Larry, loving family and friends. May her memory be a blessing.



Members of the Jesula Ishakis family, cousins of Marlene, who all perished during the Holocaust, deported from Ioannina on March 25, 1944

Simchas

We welcome the birth of Gideon Jude Pessa Marks, born March 5 to Lauren and Sam Marks, the grandson of Eric and Leona Pessa.



We welcome the birth of a new member of the Colchamiro family (Isaac Schwaber), the son of Ross and Catherine Schwaber and grandson of Susan and Steven Tregerman.



ikoi Mas, Los Muestrros (our own) come home

We welcomed the visits of Alexander Turney who is a descendant of the Calef Askinazi-Esther (Tedu) Levy Askinazi branch of the Askinazi family tree (Alexander's family lived right next door to Kehila Kedosha Janina at 282 Broome Street), Murray and Susan Steinfink with their granddaughter Rebecca, and Melissa Klepper, the great-granddaughter of Rabbi Israel Hametz. It is always a joy when "our own" come home.



Alexander Turney



Susan and Murray Steinfink & their granddaughter
Rebecca



Melissa Klepper

Visitors continue to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

School groups continue to come to Kehila Kedosha Janina, always curious to learn about our special world.



Marvin Marcus, President of Kehila Kedosha Janina, leads of tour of local school children.

Kehila Kedosha Janina welcomes visitors from all over the world.



Vitor-Hugo Erlich Varella and Renata Rossi from the Jewish community of Rio de Janeiro

Past Museum Events

On March 23rd, we dedicated our new Communal Room/Educational Centre in honor of Ada Finifter of Blessed Memory. Present were Ada's brother Leon Weintraub, his wife Nancy, and Ada's niece Ruth with her husband Evan Katz. Our room was filled with friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina as we showed off our new room with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment. Our eternal thanks to Ada who loved her Colchamiro roots and Yanniote heritage.



Pre-dedication presentation in sanctuary



Formal dedication of our new room



Esther and Debra Colchamiro



Avraam Pengas, Marcia Haddad Ikonopoulou,
Debra Colchamiro and Maurice Negrin



Greek Consul Koubarakis

Opening of New Exhibit of Photos by Vincent Giordano

On April 6th we opened the exhibit "Before the Flame Goes Out" to a private reception. The exhibit will be up in our new gallery through September. All photos can be purchased.

In 2001, while walking on the Lower East Side and photographing synagogues that were in jeopardy of closing, Vincent Giordano found Kehila Kedosha Janina. Thus was the beginning of his project, "Before the Flame Goes Out." In 2002, Vincent presented an exhibit at Kehila Kedosha Janina called "Portraits of Our Own," Greek-Jews who were members of our own congregation. Over the course of the years, he visited Ioannina, photographing and videotaping the community, their synagogue, cemetery and artifacts. A talented photographer and a dear friend, we were saddened by Vincent's untimely passing in 2011.

We are honored that the first exhibit in our new gallery space is a collection of photographs taken in Ioannina by Vincent Giordano. This exhibit has been timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the deportations from Ioannina (March 1944). Vincent Giordano, through his work, has assured us that the flame will never go out.



Reunion of 2013 Tour Group

On Sunday, March 23rd following the dedication of our new room, the 2013 Tour to Jewish Greece group gathered to reminisce. This group got along so well that they want to do a tour (just for their group) led by our Museum Director in 2015.



Yom HaShoah 2014

Join us on Sunday, April 27th, as we stop and remember the 70th anniversary of the deportations of the Jewish communities of Ioannina, Arta, Preveza, Patra, Athens, Chalkis, Larissa, Volos, Trikala, Corfu, Rhodes and Kastoria.

Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street
New York, NY 10002
1:00

This year's commemoration will include a special exhibit honoring those who survived.



Osmos sisters in Corfu after the war

Children who survived celebrate Hanukkah in Salonika

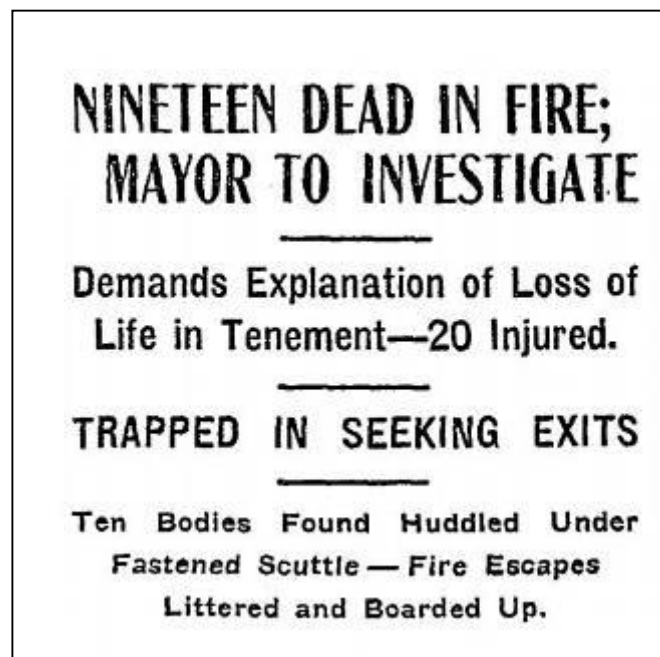
News From the Lower East Side

On March 14, 1905 a devastating fire broke out in the Lower East Side where many Jews from the Balkans lived at 105 Allen Street. None of our community were lost but we can well imagine their horror,

About 3:45 am on the morning of March 14, 1905, Isidor Davis noticed a glare. Davis was a wine maker in one of the two basement stores of 105 Allen Street. The glare was coming from the sink in the other basement storefront, a restaurant owned by Stanifols Lisnik; it was a fire in a painters funnel. Davis took off his coat and attempted to lift the funnel out of the sink and extinguish the fire in the back lot, but as he lifted the funnel, the flames shot through his coat and he dropped it. He ran to his apartment to warn his wife and children and grabbed a quilt to snuff out the fire, but the quilt only caught fire as well. Within minutes, the whole hallway was engulfed in smoke and flames.

The fire would spiral out of control and become a two-alarm blaze that would kill more than 20 people, many of them children. One entire family was killed in their apartment, and there was not one of the twenty families in the building who did not experience a loss or injury. Many of the bodies were burned beyond recognition.

Even in 1905, two alarm fires could generally be contained quickly or escaped from safely, so what made this blaze so deadly? The building was a death trap; the fire escapes were boarded up and blocked with garbage and debris and the door to the roof was locked from the outside, preventing escape. Most of the victims were found near these useless openings.



Headline from the New York Times



105 Allen after the fire

The fire shocked the city, with Mayor McClellan promising to investigate why the fire escapes were unusable despite the fact that the Tenement House Department inspections for 105 Allen Street always came back as satisfactory. The Tenement House Department said that the landlord, Celia Leiner, and the tenants would clear off the fire escapes, only to block them again.

On March 25th, a jury found Mrs. Leiner guilty of gross negligence for locking her skylights from the outside and censured the Tenement House Commission for failing to properly inspect the building, which was unsanitary and had lighting violations. Other than that, nothing changed.

Upcoming Museum Events

Join us on May 4th for a special presentation on the Lemba tribe

Join us at 2:00 on May 4th. In 2011 we initiated a program called "Tell Us Your Story." We felt that we had a special story to tell and had been so fortunate to have the opportunity and the venue to do so. We wished to share this with others. As part of this series, Irwin and Elaine Berg will tell us their fascinating story of living with the Lembas to teach them Hebrew. Far from their comfort zone of the Upper West Side, they transported themselves to Africa to live in conditions quite different from those they were used to. Come and hear their special story.



Events of interest in New York

PROTEUS NY, INC. and NY'S QUADCHENEMA
with the support of THE NEW YORK CITY GREEK FILM FESTIVAL present

FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE AEGEAN:
Expulsion and Exchange of Populations, Turkey-Greece: 1922-1924

U.S. Premiere March 21, 2014
Runtime: 87 minutes / Not rated



OPENS
MARCH 21 - APRIL 3
NY'S QUADCHENEMA
34 West 13th St.
www.quadchinema.com
Screenings: daily at 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10
Opening night additional screenings at 8, 10, 10:15

Writer/Director: Maria Iliou
Historical consultant: Alexander Kitroeff
Music: Nikos Pylarinos
Editing: Aiki Foinis
Cinematography: Alex Moore
Produced by: Proteus & Proteus NY Inc.

Synopsis: After the success of her film *MYNNA - THE DESTRUCTORS OF A COSMOPOLITAN CITY, 1906-1922*, award-winning director Maria Iliou returns to the 1920s with her second in a two-part series, *FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE AEGEAN*, in which she documents the ethnic cleansing and violent expulsion of Greeks from the Ottoman Empire. In the first compulsory "exchange of populations" in the modern world, 1.2 million Greek Orthodox and 400,000 Muslims were forcibly relocated from Turkey to Greece and Greece to Turkey respectively. Maria Iliou and historical consultant Alexander Kitroeff once again gather a remarkable library of archival film and photographs as background to individual histories of Greek Orthodox and Muslim refugees across generations. Iliou brings a new perspective to the story: the film's probing interviews reveal the painful implications of the experience, and inspire hope that the grandchildren of the refugees from both sides of the Aegean Sea can begin to understand and reach out to each other.

The documentary was made with the support of the: DODOSIANS FOUNDATION, NICHOLAS I & ANNA K BOBAG FOUNDATION and HELLENIC PARLIAMENT TV. Presented in NYC with the support of THE NEW YORK CITY GREEK FILM FESTIVAL. Media Sponsorship in the US is provided by ANTENNA SATELLITE.



FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE AEGEAN Opens Friday, March 21 - April 3
QUADCHENEMA - 34 West 13th Street / (212) 255-2243 / <http://www.quadchinema.com/>

FILMMAKER MARIA ILIOU AND HISTORICAL CONSULTANT ALEXANDER KITROEFF
WILL ATTEND THE OPENING NIGHT on MARCH 21 at 7:00PM and 8:30PM

GROUP SALES: BOX OFFICE (212) 255-2243 / TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR
PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE FROM www.nytickets.com
<http://www.nytickets.com> search for "From Both Sides of the Aegean" and select a date
BY SELECTING A DATE

OFFICIAL WEBSITE: www.bothsidesdocumentary.org/ / TRAILER ON YOUTUBE: [From Both Sides of the Aegean](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

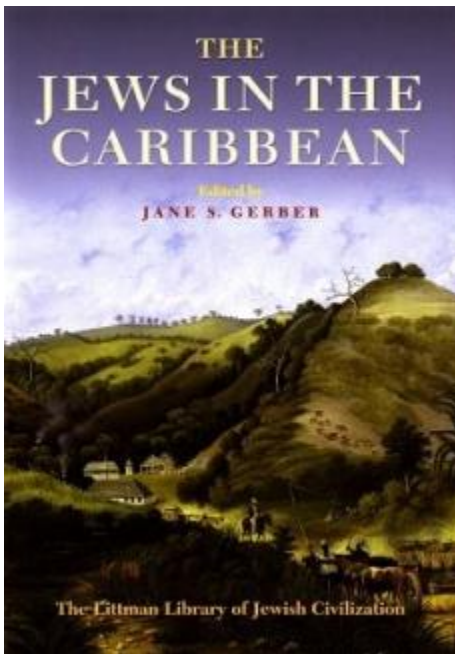


AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION

with Sephardic House

SPRING 2014 EVENTS

BOOKS & AUTHORS



Monday, April 7th at 6:30 pm

The Jewish Diaspora of the Caribbean constantly redefined itself under changing circumstances. This volume examines Caribbean Jewry in general and Jamaican Jewry in particular, from its Sephardic beginnings in the seventeenth century, until the twentieth century. Edited by Professor Jane S. Gerber, contributions to the volume include some of the major scholars working on the Jews of the Caribbean and the Sephardic Diaspora. Join **Professor Gerber** and **Ainsley Henriques**, leader of the 350 year-old Jewish community of Jamaica, for a discussion and book signing.

FREE for ASF Members: \$5 at the door

Reservations requested: (212)-294-8350 x5, or info@americansephardifederation.org.

www.americansephardifederation.org

at the Center for Jewish History
15 West 16th Street, NYC

Italian Jewish Liturgical Music

APRIL 25 | Italian Jewish Studies Project: The Jews of Libya Between the 19th Century and the Colonial Era

Italian Jewish Studies Project – Seminar

The Jews of Libya

David Meghnagi (University of Rome 3)

Mordechai HaCohen: Rabbi and Ethnographer

Mordechai Hakohen (1856-1929) was a Libyan Talmudic scholar and auto-didact anthropologist who composed an ethnographic study of North African Jewry in the early 20th century. Abstract will be posted soon

Barbara Spadaro (University of Bristol)

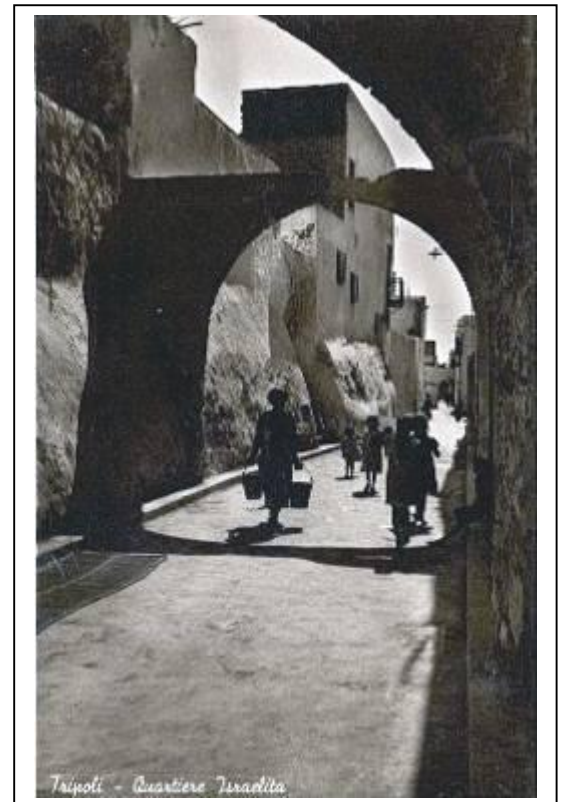
From “Mapping Living Memories” to Investigating Postcolonial Histories. Narratives of the Jews from Libya in Historical Perspective.

Woven into the colonial past which binds Italy and Libya, the histories and memories of the Jews from Libya provide a crucial perspective on the transnational framework where Italian ideas of race, difference and citizenship have been elaborated and transformed over the 19th and 20th centuries. Since the eve of the Italian occupation of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, the multiple modes of belonging and transnational trajectories of these Jews have contributed in shaping representations, perceptions and identities between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Historical changes in a context of colonial and global relations have repeatedly shifted the position of these subjects inside and outside ideas of Italian and European belonging. Such shifts have affected the relations between fellow Jews from Italy and Libya, the memories and representations of the history of this community, as well as their patterns of incorporation in Italian national narratives.



April 25 | 9:30 am - 2:00 pm
NYU, Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò
24 West 12th Street

Free admission



The immigration, and naturalization, of this community from North Africa – the “Tripolini”, as they are known in Rome – challenge representations of Italian identity as homogeneous, nation-centered, and white European, and raise important questions concerning notions of Italian Jewish and non-Jewish identity. The narratives and feelings of belonging expressed by Libyan Jews reveal how ideas of Italian and European identity have been constructed, negotiated and contested by multiple subjects inside and outside the continent over time. Thus, a whole set of questions over the historical context of the encounters between Italy and Libya raises from the trajectories that members of this Jewish community have followed, calling for further, more inclusive, postcolonial historical accounts.

Greek Independence Day in New York

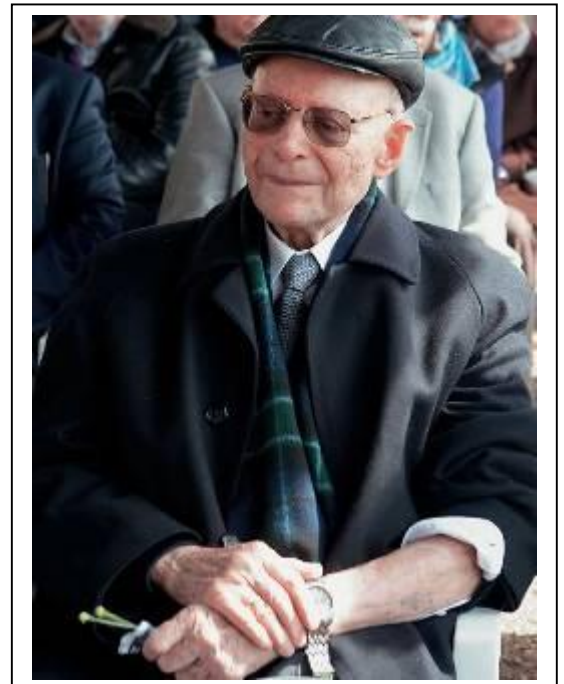


Jewish Greece Past Events of Interest

This March Salonika commemorated the 71st anniversary of the first transport to leave (March 15, 1943) and Ioannina stopped and remembered the 70th anniversary of the deportation of the Jewish Community on March 25, 1944. Years pass. The pain does not diminish.



Heinz Kounio one of the few survivors





Heinz and Shelly Kounio place flowers on the railroad tracks in memory of those who did not return.

Commemoration in Ioannina

The historic events in Ioannina on the 70th anniversary of the deportations took place on March 28, 29 and 30th. We are awaiting photos. Before the events, an emotional meeting took place in Ioannina. The President of Greece, Papoulias, brought the President of Germany to Ioannina. He wanted to meet a Greek Jewish survivor from Ioannina. He met our dear Stella Koen.

After rebuffing calls for Germany to examine Greek demands for war reparations, German president says that Germany bears a 'second guilt' for excluding the victims of Nazi atrocities from the historical memory



German President Joachim Gauck hugs 93-year-old Greek-Jewish Esthir (Stella) Koen during his visit to the Ioannina synagogue, 7 March 2014 (Photo: Reuters) The German president expressed his country's formal apology for the atrocities suffered by civilians in a northwestern Greek village at the hands of German troops during the Nazi occupation of Greece during the second world war.

"I wish to express what the perpetrators, but also those politically responsible over the years in the postwar period, did not want to or could not say: that what happened here was a brutal injustice. With a sense of shame and anguish, I want to say sorry to the families of those who were murdered," he said on Friday in the village of Ligkiades, in Epirus, where he laid a wreath at a monument for 92 men, women and children massacred by German troops on 3 October 1943 in a so-called retaliation operation.

During his speech, Gauck said he was shocked at the "robberies, terrorist actions and murders committed by a country that had become a ruthless dictatorship".

"I bow before the victims of the horrific crimes that were committed here and in so many other places in Greece," he said, remarking that such places made him feel a "double shame", both that people raised within German culture had become murderers but also because democratic Germany, from the moment that it started to gradually process its past with a critical eye, had learned so little from its guilt concerning the Greeks.

"I so wish that those who at that time gave orders or obeyed orders had long ago said 'I ask forgiveness' or 'I repent' or 'I am very sorry for the fact that I obeyed criminal orders'. These are phrases that have not been said, it is this incomplete knowledge that establishes a second guilt, since it excludes the victims from memory," he noted.

But when pressed earlier this week whether the Federal Republic of Germany, which is the legal successor state of Nazi Germany, should pay compensation for these crimes and repay the forced wartime loan, Gauck said that he could not take a different legal position to his government, which since 1990 has maintained that it has no outstanding financial obligations to Greece dating from the war.

While he was in Ligkiades, a local committee unfurled a banner calling for "justice and reparations".



German President Joachim Gauck lays a wreath at the memorial to the Ligkiades massacre (Photo: Reuters) Gauck praised his Greek counterpart, Karolos Papoulias, for his part in effecting a reconciliation through the visit to Ligkiades, thanking Papoulias for having accompanied him there.

"Today, I am deeply indebted to you. The fact that we can face the past together is for me one of

the great things that arise from reconciliation. You have shown, Mr President, that reconciliation is still possible even when grief runs deep ... For you have personally committed yourself for this reconciliation, essentially you are this reconciliation," he said.

Earlier, Gauck visited the Jewish synagogue in Ioannina, where he met with representatives of the city's Jewish community, among them two Holocaust survivors.

On 25 March 1944, the entire Jewish population, numbering 1,850 men, women and children, were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Only 163 would survive.

"What I want is to bow before the victims who survived, to bow with a deep sense of shame and grief," he said, adding that "you are welcoming me to a place that awakens painful memories. The fact that you are welcoming me with such kindness is a wonderful gift."

Gauck spoke with two elderly women who had survived the Auschwitz concentration camp. "The atrocities we have suffered should be written in books, and not be forgotten. The new generation has to know. Before we pass away people should know that humans should not become inhuman," Esthir (Stella) Koen said.

The German president hugged the two women and assured them that he will contribute to the effort.

Welcoming the German president, Ioannina Jewish Community president Moses Elisaf said that his visit "is an honour and a gesture of good will aimed at overcoming past wounds and clearing the way to the future and our coexistence in Europe, our common homeland".

But he added: "We are prepared to forgive but not to forget."



93-year-old Greek-Jewish Esthir (Stella) Koen shows the identification tattoo that she received as a prisoner in the Auschwitz concentration camp (Photo: Reuters)

Greece passes law on Right of Return

Greece passes 'law of return' for Jews who fled

By Marcus Dysch, March 21, 2014

Greece has passed legislation allowing Jews who fled the country before the end of the Second World War the "right of return" and to claim citizenship.

Former deputy foreign minister Dimitrios Dollis instigated the new law - which will come into effect within a month.

He said it was unlikely many Jews would claim Greek citizenship, but that he had acted out of principle.

Mr Dollis told Israeli media that Greece wanted to "correct past mistakes".

Around 100,000 Jews lived in Greece before the war, spread across 30 communities around the country. After the Shoah only around 5,000 Jews remained.

Mr Dollis said a trip to Israel in 2010 had made him aware of the seriousness of Greece's loss. He spent almost 30 years living in Australia, where he was close to members of the Jewish community and particularly Holocaust survivors.

The rise of the far right Golden Dawn party in recent years has caused concern for Greek Jews.

The politician said Jews who applied for Greek citizenship would also be able to pass it on automatically to their children.

<http://www.thejdc.com/news/world-news/116760/greece-passes-law-return-jews-who-fled>

Greek court convicts doctor who posted 'Jews not Welcome' sign

March 9, 2014 9:24am

ATHENS, Greece (JTA) — A Greek doctor who posted a "Jews Not Welcome" sign outside his office was convicted and given a 16-month suspended jail sentence for inciting racial hatred. Costas Kastaniotis, 57, a neurologist from Thessaloniki, also was convicted Friday in a court in the northern Greece city of illegally possessing weapons. He was fined \$3,500.

Kastaniotis has appealed the sentence.

The doctor has denied posting the sign, which was written in German. However, police discovered pamphlets in his office linking him to the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party, which is known for its Nazi swastika-like flag and Holocaust-denying leadership.

Police also found three daggers and 12 knives at his home, as well as pills without prescriptions. Two of the daggers were engraved with Nazi symbols.

The Jewish community of Thessaloniki was an important center of Sephardic Jewry for 450 years following the expulsion from Spain. It had a pre-World War II Jewish population of 55,000; now about 1,000 Jews live there.

Read more: <http://www.jta.org/2014/03/09/news-opinion/world/greek-court-convicts-doctor-who-posted-jews-not-welcome-sign#ixzz2veXqcxjv>

Shalom to one and all!

Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



This year, the months of April and Nissan correspond exactly, so Pesah will fall on Monday night, April 14th. In that context, I would venture to say that the most familiar and prominent food and symbol of Pesah is matzah, with the vast majority of us probably assuming that it must be the flat, square, perforated, crispy and dry product with which we are all so familiar. So it will probably come as a fascinating surprise to discover that this form of matzah is not only a relatively recent phenomenon in Jewish history, it is quite distant in form from the original matzah consumed by our forefathers!

In fact, it is clear from Judaism's earliest sources, including the Mishnah and Talmud, that matzah was actually soft, moist and somewhat thick, very similar to pita bread or a tortilla, though strictly baked according to all the stringencies of Jewish law to ensure that the dough would not rise (leaven), rendering it "hametz" and strictly forbidden on Pesah. Halachic discussions in the Talmud make it clear that our Talmudic sages ate a soft and pliable product, like the famous "sandwich" of matzah, bitter herbs and meat from the Paschal sacrifice innovated by the sage Hillel. The wording of the Talmud explicitly states that he "wrapped" everything together, which is not possible with hard square matzah! This always comes to mind when trying to eat today's crispy matzah-bitter herb-haroset "sandwich" at the Seder without losing too much of the matzah as it crumbles and falls with every bite!

So how and when did matzah become flat, dry and so crisp? Turns out that both halachic and economic factors came into play. On the halachic side, already in the 16th century, there was concern that despite all the caution and stringencies, hand-kneaded and flattened matzah dough could still have air pockets and inconsistencies that would not bake properly, rendering the matzah unfit; even the use of special perforating rollers, while very helpful, did not always guarantee halachic perfection, so many halachic authorities began to prefer a very thin and perforated "cracker" form, which better ensured a consistently and complete kosher-baked matzah, though everything was still done manually. It was actually economic and production considerations that transformed matzah to the form we all know. Since baking matzah by hand is a very labor-intensive activity, matzah became a rather expensive commodity, not to mention the fact that it became stale and inedible after only a few days. These considerations were the motivation for a French Jew named Isaac Singer to invent the matzah-making machine in 1838. Though creating a revolution in matzah production, the machine was controversial in its time, with many Rabbis rejecting it, both because they felt that it would be impossible to properly clean small mechanical parts of all leaven, as well as the religious requirement that all matzah for the Seder be baked with a specific and stated intention that it was for the "mitzvah" of eating matzah, something a machine could not do. However, the vast majority of halachic authorities approved the machine, with many even insisting that the consistency of the industrially produced thin, dry and perforated product was even more kosher than the hand-baked version! Most important, such matzah could be packaged, stored and sold well in advance of the holiday. Thus, for both economic and religious reasons, this became the dominant and most popular form of matzah everywhere.

Nonetheless – in Israel at least – soft and moist hand-baked matzah is still used by many Sephardic and Yemenite communities, and in fact its use has enjoyed quite a "revival" in recent years. Baked by many yeshivot and other organizations for sale to the general public, even many Ashkenazi Jews are more and more willing to "give it a try", since such matzah is 100% "Kosher for Passover" in every way. Obviously, many are still hesitant to use such matzah, mostly because it is so "new" and unfamiliar to them, though quite the opposite is true: This is indeed the original "bread of affliction" that our forefathers ate at the first Seder just before leaving Egypt, as well as for generations afterward, including today! A happy and healthy Pesah to one and all!

News From the Jewish Balkans

Nationalism and unchecked violence in Bulgaria

A rise in attacks against minorities has alarmed observers in Bulgaria. They say the violence is generated by nationalism, and that this aggression is rooted in the way Bulgaria reads its own history.

Releasing a defendant on bail who faces murder charges can provoke protests in any country in the world. But this time, in Sofia, it's a different story. Last week, a man was released who is not only indicted for murder, but is seen as a symbol for a movement of racially motivated violence that has gone essentially unpunished in Bulgaria for some time now.

Last year, Petko Elenkov, a security guard, shot and killed a Roma teenager, who had allegedly jumped over the wall of a refrigerator depot in Sofia in order to steal scrap metal. Elenkov, 50, denies any wrongdoing. A year on, the trial still hasn't begun.

Elenkov was released on a 5000 leva (2500 euro) bail prompting Roma minority groups to demonstrate on the streets, calling for justice. Nationalist and pro-Nazi demonstrations ensued. "Nationalism is on the rise in Bulgaria," Daniela Mikhaylova, who heads the Equal Opportunities Initiative, an NGO based in Sofia's Roma ghetto, told DW. In her opinion, this "new level of violence came as a result of a specific nationalist attitude that has gone unchecked for too long. When such violence happens and people in the media forums write things like, 'Very good, they [Roma] got what they deserved,' people start thinking that this reaction is something natural and even legitimate."

Roma, who number 400,000 in Bulgaria according to official statistics, are the largest and most frequently attacked ethnic group. But they are far from being the only target of hate speech and discrimination. "The nationalists are targeting the Other," said Solomon Bali, President of the Bulgarian branch of the Jewish Organization B'nai B'rith. "These include Muslims, Jews, the gay community, and foreign refugees."

"And the attacks have become more frequent, more aggressive and more vocal in recent years," Bali added. During the last decade, he recalls the profanation of the Kyustendil Jewish Cemetery, the burning of Burgas Synagogue and the "unlimited field for anti-Semitic propaganda and bigotry provided by the Internet and social media."

At least a dozen armed assaults against African or Asian refugees were reported in the press this winter alone. Last month, a nationalist mob attacked a mosque in Plovdiv with stones, smashing the windows of a building that dates back to the 15th century.

"To my recollection, only a few of these cases have been treated by the prosecution as ethnically or religiously motivated. And one of them was a case against a Roma tried for offending Bulgarians," said Krassimir Kanev, president of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

An EU member since 2007, Bulgaria is still subject to special monitoring by the European Commission. Although the prosecution of hate crimes has yet to be explicitly addressed, the problem can be seen by the number of Bulgarian cases brought to the European Court of Human Rights. "One of our latest cases before the ECHR is related to a brutal nationalist assault against the main mosque in downtown Sofia," Kanev said. In May 2011, nationalists jumped over the fence, brutally beat the guard and burst into the mosque just minutes before the morning prayer. Then they attacked the other Muslims with stones, crying out: "Terrorists! Go to Turkey! Don't soil our land!"

Yet, the perpetrators were only found guilty of insulting a police officer. The Bulgarian court made no mention of the crime's overtly religious dimension.

"The failure of Bulgarian state institutions to impose the rule of law is being exploited to turn persecuted minorities into political and social scarecrows," said Hristo Ivanov, director of the Bulgarian Institute for Legal Initiatives.

Many of the state institutions today are influenced by Ataka - a nationalistic party that entered parliament for the first time in 2005, winning close to nine percent of the vote. Today, an Ataka MP presides over the parliamentary ethics commission, and the party has its own representative in the commission for protection against discrimination. "It's no big surprise that their rulings are often supporting the discrimination, rather than fighting it," said Kanev.

"Our estimates suggest about 30 percent of the voters would be happy to see our society turn more mono-ethnic," said Solomon Bali, of B'nai B'rith, with regard to the growing trend of xenophobia in Bulgarian politics and society.

And sociological data can corroborate: There is a clear trend towards forming neighborhoods based on ethnicity, wrote Petya Kabakchieva, who heads the sociology department at Sofia University. "Half of the people said they wouldn't want to live in a neighborhood with persons of African, Romani, Arab or Chinese background."

Less than 30 percent would agree to work at a company where Roma are part of the senior management. Yet, over 70 percent would join a company where Roma work as cleaners. This "clearly indicates racist attitudes," Kabakchieva concluded, calling the data "alarming."

"Openly nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric is made possible by the way history is understood and taught in schools," said Hristo Ivanov, adding that analysts agree that the perception of history in Bulgaria has led to the emergence of nationalist violence.

A decade ago, Bulgaria promoted itself as a country with a unique "ethnic model" of tolerance, commonly citing two examples. In 1943, politicians - together with the Orthodox Church - managed to save all of the 50,000 Jews living in what is Bulgarian territory today. And in 1989, just after the Berlin Wall collapsed, it restored the rights of the Turkish minority, which had been previously stripped by the communist regime.

But those examples are often quoted only partially: Many Bulgarians deny the role of the state in the deportation of Macedonian and Greek Jews to death camps. "Moreover, when people of Jewish origin speak out about that, they are often denounced as ungrateful," says Bali.

And most Bulgarians fail to recognize the persecution of the Muslim minority that went on through the whole 20th century. Both major negative episodes of Bulgarian history are missing from the textbooks at school.

"In schools and in much of the official discourse, Bulgarian history continues to be the political history of the majority, leaving virtually no place for the minority perspective," said Ivanov. In his opinion, the writing of history is suspended in monolithic "we against them" confrontations. "In this way, we are thought to identify collectively as the victims of different wrongdoings and are left with the option to either fear our neighbors or to hope for revenge."

News From the Sephardic World

It may come as a surprise that this harmonious clash of cultures was not exclusive to Morocco – it also existed in the Middle East for centuries. Before 1948, Iraq's Jewish population numbered over 100,000. With a history dating back to the Babylonian times around the 6th century BC, the Jews of Iraq reportedly perceived themselves as Jewish Arabs, thus fusing two seemingly paradoxical identities – but only for a time. In 1948, as the Iraqi government forced a number of sanctions on Jews, prohibiting them from working in public offices or conducting banking activity, tensions between Muslims and Jews began to rise. Currently, there are almost no people of the Jewish fate in this country of over 30 million, and renewed tensions between Israel's Jewish communities and the Iraqi are palpable. Baghdad, which was once home to 50 synagogues, now only has one: the somewhat nostalgically named Great Synagogue of Iraq. Transformed into a small museum, it is another wistful reminder of a once harmonious coexistence between two faiths.

Most of these gardens of memories, or indeed remembrance, diminish in size and number, making Casablanca's Moroccan Jewish Museum an incredibly special cultural gem. As the museum's director, Zhor Rihhil, argues, similar museums must be erected in the Arab world to preserve a fascinating, and fundamental part of history. 'As museum curators, we regret the heritage we lost,' he attests. 'I believe that any Jewish Moroccan component is essentially Moroccan before being Jewish. Today, we feel that we have lost something of that Moroccan characteristic. It was that feeling that drove a number of Moroccans, regardless of their faiths, to join hands.'

And perhaps his message did reach a substantial audience: in early 2013, to mark the renovation of the Slat Alfassiyyine synagogue in Fez, King Mohammed VI of Morocco called for the restoration of Jewish temples across the country, acknowledging them as 'not only places of worship but also spaces for cultural dialogue to renew the founding values of Moroccan civilization'. And while this is a small step towards a better cultural understanding for North Africa, museums dedicated to Jewish history and culture abound in Europe and the United States. Some of the most recent openings include Warsaw's long-awaited, ultra-modern Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which opened its doors in spring 2013, and the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Center in Moscow, launched just a year before.

And although the Moroccan Jewish Museum is one of a kind in the Arab world, not all is lost; the story of North Africa's Jews is still being told by many. Kamal Hachkar's award-winning film *Tinghir-Jerusalem: Echoes from the Mellah* dove deep into this heritage with interviews, memories and personal accounts, told directly by Jews who once lived in Morocco. More tangibly, the David Amar World Center for North African Jewish Heritage, located in Jerusalem, is a hidden gem and a wonderful tribute to Morocco's Jews – the museum, reconstructed as a traditional Moroccan palace, reminds its visitors of the vibrant heritage which was lost 60 years ago, but which is still carefully preserved in many minds and cultural institutions. By Ewa Bianka Zubek

Recently Acquired Photos

We are always looking for photos and, as so often happens, these photos are accompanied by enquiries. Digging through old family photos, so often the question arises, "Who are these people?" Send us your photos. We will publish them and, hopefully, answer your questions. In this instance, Isaac Dostis, now living in Ioannina, is looking for help in identifying this Yom Tov Family. Please send all information to us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

Η περίφημη οικογενειακή φωτογραφία-κειμήλιο (Η οικογένεια Γιόμ Τοβ, στα Ιωάννινα, το 1930):



Asking For Our Help

Hi , this is Frederic Gattegno from Barcelona, the Gattegno family tree maker... Hoping everything is alright overthere in NY, always reading those Jewish news with interest in your monthly letter... Now I need some help or advice towards some descendants I am looking for in US. The story is the following: Leon Menache (1898-1932)(his mother was a Gattegno) and lived in NY with his wife Margaret Menache (1904- ?) born Algava, they had twogirls Betty (1925-?) and Liliane (1929- ?) and when Leon died, their descendants lost contact with them, after the remaining Menache family in Salonika were all sent to death camps... I am trying to find a trace of the daughters. I know they were living in NY from 1920 to 1940 at least.. in the Bronx , 1277 Morris Avenue...

Which Synagogue can I call for records ? is there any NY Jewish records ? Obviously I am trying to find who the daughters married with ,so I can have a surname to search for... Not easy at all... have you got any clue how to proceed and who I can contact ?

Thanking you in advance, looking forward to hearing from you.
Regards.
Fred

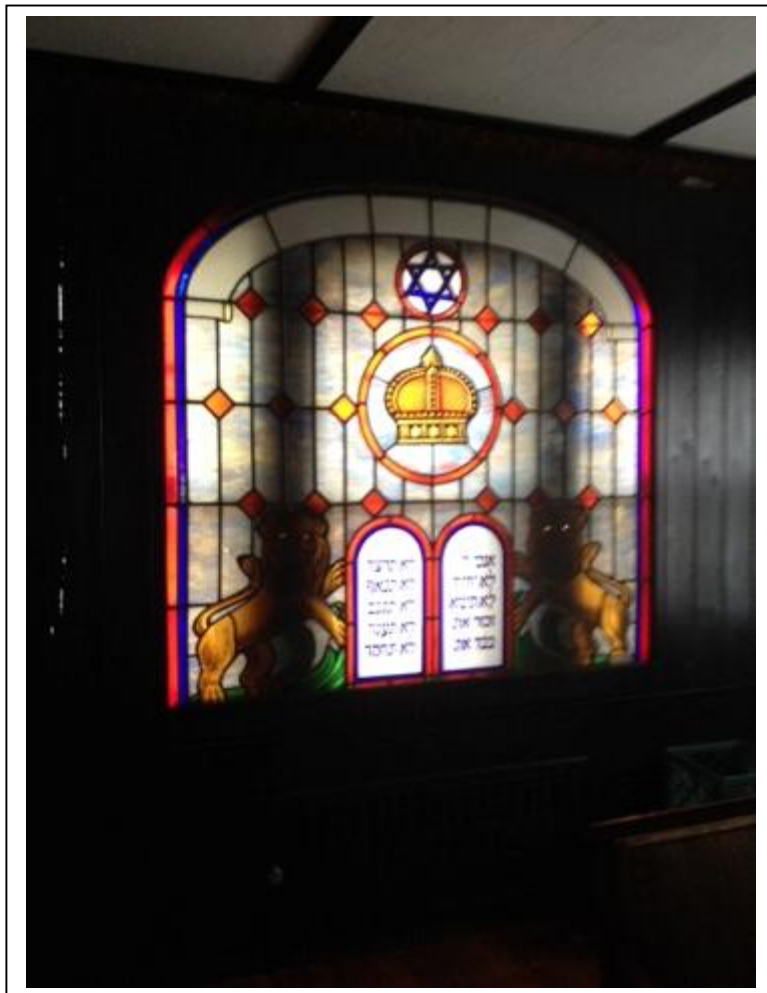
If I am correct, I believe Fred is talking about the Saloniklis community that moved with Rabbi Murciano from the Bronx to Forest Hills. Please send any info to us so we can pass it on to Mr. Gattegno.

Les Shafran <lester.shafran@verizon.net> has a stained glass window for which he is hoping to discover some provenance.

Might you have any ideas? If so, please contact Les at his e-mail or at his telephone number below.

Here's his note: We are selling the Queens house and have a 5'3" by 5'3" very special stain glass window that that was part of a lower East Side Shul. We are trying to determine it's origin in order to decide what our next move would be. Do you have any ideas?

Below you will find a picture of the stained glass window.

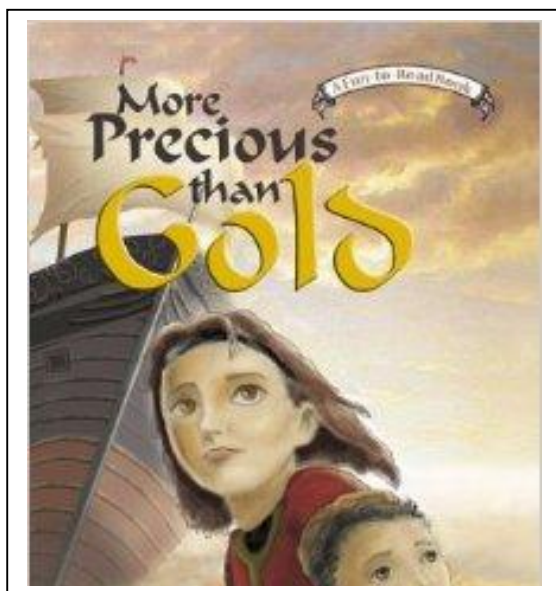


New Book For Sale

We have the most interesting people on our tours. This September, as part of a private tour to Jewish Turkey and Greece, one of our participants, Evelyn Blatt, is an author, and we are honored to sell her delightful children's book: "More Precious Than Gold." This book is a great way of introducing our children to their special culture and history.

Sara's parents will do anything to live and raise their children as Jews. In Spain during the 1490s that means leaving wealth, valuables and a comfortable life behind to set sail for the Ottoman Empire. Sara is reluctant to leave her familiar childhood home until she understands what her priorities really are. Will Sara be able to save her friend from the clutches of the Inquisition? Will she rescue a precious heirloom challah plate from the heartless Spanish soldiers? And will she ever be up to the challenge of baking a perfect challah all by herself?

We are able to sell this book for \$20 including P&H (within the continental USA). Send your check (made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina) to the same at One Hanson Place, Huntington, NY 11743.



Websites of interest:

http://www.paratiritis-news.gr/detailed_article.php?id=165388&categoryid=11

The drama of Dario Nachmias in Komotini (in Greek)

<http://www.eurojewcong.org/bulgaria/10864-bulgaria-commemorates-anniversary-of-saving-of-countries-jews.html>

Bulgaria commemorates anniversary of saving its Jews and, of course, no mention of the Jews from Greece and former Yugoslavia that they sent to their death

<http://www.eurojewcong.org/greece/10894-new-app-maps-ioanninas-jewish-heritage.html>

New app with Jewish presence in Ioannina

<http://www.israelvideonetwork.com/the-revolt-of-the-greek-jews>

The Revolt of the Greek Jews

<http://neoskosmos.com/news/en/the-hidden-children#.Uy8lYREg7tc.facebook>

From Australia

<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=XU7ODIeuQ1Y&feature=share>

Rhodes 1930

2013 - /

www.youtube.com

Ioannina

<http://www.thelodownny.com/leslog/2014/03/eisner-looks-at-building-on-top-of-75-essex-st-willing-to-consider-landmark-protection.html>

Two sefardic songs from Thessaloniki

underground - September 2012 - Thessaloniki

<http://www.thelodownny.com/leslog/2014/03/eisner-looks-at-building-on-top-of-75-essex-st-willing-to-consider-landmark-protection.html>

From the LoDown, an update on 75 Essex.

<http://jaddeyekabir.com/2014/03/15/its-purim-tonight-something-like-a-letter-to-my-mother/>

Nikos Bakos post on Joseph Eliyia's poem on Purim

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) 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.

When you are in New York, visit us on Broome Street. We are open for services every Saturday and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11-4 and, by appointment during the week.



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