



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

June 2012 e-mail newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Memorial Day, a day set aside to honor those who died for their country, is commemorated in the United States on the last Monday in May. Among those who died in World War II were two Greek Jews who died at the Battle of the Bulge. Both were of Yanniotte descent. This e-newsletter is in honor of

Nissim Attas, Private US Army and Abraham Matza, Private First Class US Army.



**Both were honored with the
Purple Heart**

**Both are buried at the
American Cemetery at
Henri-Chapelle, Belgium**

**We thank Rose Attas-Ferrara,
Nissim's niece, for these
photos.**



Nissim Attas-died Jan. 23, 1945

Abraham Matza-died Jan. 6, 1945

This newsletter, our 53rd 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 5000 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

We mourn the passing of Abraham Levenstein who was married to Estelle Schinasi, daughter of Yanniotes Anna Hade Schinasi and Abraham Schinasi. Anna and Abe Schinasi worked for the Schinasi Cigarette Company in Harlem. Abraham Levenstein married Estelle on VJ day and had 2 children (Larry and David) who passed many years ago. Abe Levenstein was a Marine who fought in the pacific theatre in the 2nd Marine Division. Our condolences to his family.

We mourn the passing of Judy Myones, (widow of Eli Myones). Judy was the former Florida Sunshine Secretary for Sisterhood of Janina. Our condolences to her family.

We mourn the passing of Irwin Joseph, son of Joseph Leon Josephs and Sarah Hametz. Irwin was an avid genealogist and was instrumental in providing important data to Kehila Kedosha Janina. Our condolences to his family.

Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros (Our Own) come home



Members of the
Apsty family

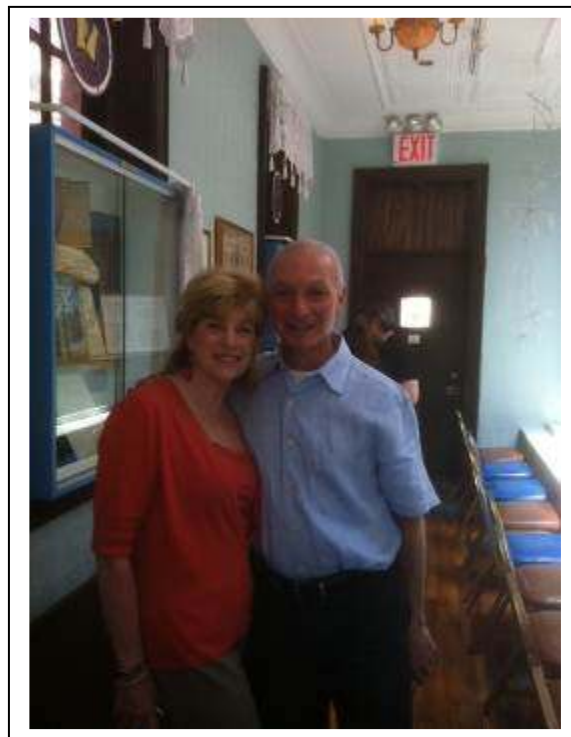


Scott Schlesinger from the Saltiel Family



Members of the Lagary Family

**Sharon Weiss and
Bob Gladstone visiting
Kehila Kedosha Janina before
their honeymoon in Greece.
Bob is from the Battino family.**



The opening of our Memories Exhibit on May 6th was a great success. Our by-invitation-only reception was well attended. It is always a joy to see our community come out in response to a new exhibit. The exhibit can now be viewed on our website (www.kkjsm.org) under exhibits.

Photos From the Opening Reception

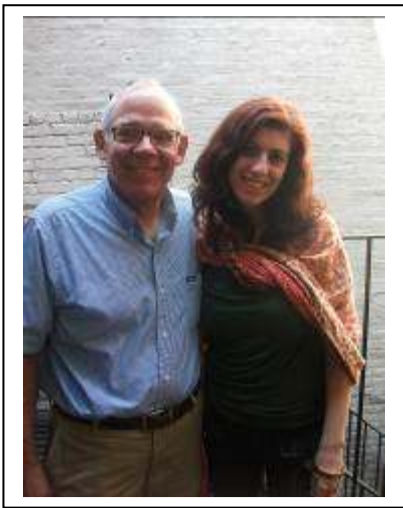
We thank Joe Varon for many of these photos.



Melanie Riggs, Al Barouch and Judy Samuels



Phyllis DeCastros and Rose Eskononts



Marvin Marcus and Melissa Ledner



Joe Halio & Jack Varsano



**Joe Varon and Ethan & Marvin
Marcus**



Artist Douglas Lazarus



**Lainey, Rochelle & Allegra
Members of the Atoun and Azouvi
families**

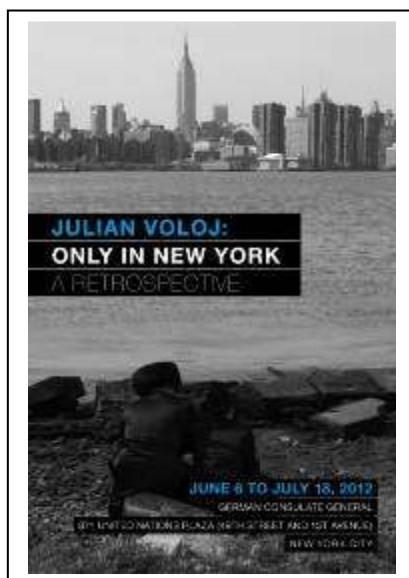
Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

The second concert in our series of live music at Kehila Kedosha Janina was a huge success. Carol Freeman led the group in celebrating the Jewish Women of Rebetika on May 20th.



Upcoming Cultural Events in New York City

We are proud to announce the opening of a retrospective photograph exhibit by a talented young photographer, Julian Voloj, who has become a true friend of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Julian's exhibit opens at the German Consulate in New York on June 6th and will run through July 18th.



NEWS FROM JEWISH GREECE

The recent rise of a Neo-Nazi group in Greece (Chrysi Avgi-Golden Dawn) has brought forth reactions from heads of Jewish organizations around the world and a letter of condemnation

from the President of KIS (Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece), David Saltiel who is also President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki

In addition, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutaris, put forth a resolution condemning the ideology and behavior of Golden Dawn. The resolution was adopted by the City Council of Thessaloniki.

The text proposed by the president of the council, Panayiotis Avramopoulos stressed that the council condemns "the Nazi ideology and behavior of specific representatives and followers of the Golden Dawn."

The ADL sent the following:

ADL Alarmed By Neo-Nazi Party's Election To The Greek Parliament

http://www.adl.org/PresRele/NeoSk_82/6309_82.htm

New York, NY, May 10, 2012 ... The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) today expressed alarm that Greece's neo-Nazi party garnered enough votes in this week's election to earn seats in Parliament, and urged the president of Greece to refuse to appoint any neo-Nazi party members to the cabinet.

The neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn won 21 seats in the 300-seat Parliament after receiving nearly 7 percent of the vote in the national elections this Sunday, a significant gain from the 0.3 percent it received in 2009. Golden Dawn is known for its members' use of violence and radical anti-immigrant policies.

"Golden Dawn's bigotry has not changed, only its popularity has, and the result is a political victory for hate," said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director. "Golden Dawn presents a malignant threat to Greek democracy and its neo-Nazi ideology must be rejected by those for whom liberal democracy is dear. We call upon President Karolos Papoulias to make it clear to the Greek political leadership that he will refuse to appoint a member of Golden Dawn as a minister or undersecretary under any circumstances."

In a letter to President Karolos Papoulias, ADL urged him to send a strong, clear message to the people of Greece that the neo-Nazi party's ideology will not be tolerated in Greek democracy.

From the Jerusalem Post

A Jew in Greece

By MONI BEN-EZRA

05/30/2012 23:14

Being a Jew in Greece has certainly become different, it has certainly become more difficult.

ATHENS – Being a Jew in Greece has certainly become different, it has certainly become more difficult.

Why? The financial crisis driving the whole country well into a deep recession for more than four years has mainly impacted the private sector. Medium and small-sized companies are the major victims of the crisis so far, with closures or huge drops of turnover, lack of liquidity, soaring unemployment etc.

Jews in Greece, traditionally entrepreneurs, merchants and businessmen or executives of all levels in the private sector, have been hit by considerable income reductions. Moreover, as owners of real estate, they have also seen the values of their investments dropping and respective income showing a sharp decrease if not vanishing altogether.

While some have reserves from the good days and can still afford a good quality of life, the majority follow the general population trends with severe financial problems.

The community of Athens, as an indication, is receiving new applications from its members requesting financial assistance through its welfare net and the number of young members addressing the community's committee for employment assistance has never been so high.

Had it only been the financial aspect, things would certainly have been hard to face, but Jews in Greece have been through very difficult times in the past and they would have found the strength to persevere.

Unfortunately, Jews in Greece are also faced today with an adverse political environment which has direct consequences on them.

Three years ago the Athens Court of Appeals acquitted Costas Plevris, who had been accused of violating the anti-racism law for his despicable book, Jews, The Whole Truth.

The book classified Jews as subhuman and criticized Adolf Hitler for his failure to kill them all.

Unfortunately, politicians, scientists, people of culture, representatives of institutions of this country, the very civil society, supposedly captivated by respect for justice (a la carte in Greece) refused to stand stature and tolerated an irrational decision for which the rationale was based on "freedom of speech and expression."

Why should they care? It was about Jews, a weak numerical minority in Greece, with little electoral strength, it – the court decision – seemed not to threaten many.

Just 18 months later, the leader of Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi party, was elected to the Athens City Council and was greeting Athenians by raising his arm in the Nazi salute inside the City Council's hall. A couple of weeks ago, 450,000 Greek voters have given Golden Dawn an unexpected seven percent and sent to the National Parliament 21 members of this party, who refused to stand – as all other members did – when the three elected Greek Muslim MPs swore on the Koran.

They denied them the right to be Greek, because of their different religion! Of course all mainstream political parties have heavily criticized Golden Dawn and its practices. Democratic reflexes were triggered, alas, too late.

Early signs of Greek society being driven by anger and turning to vote for the extremes did not sufficiently alarm state officials.

And now, nostalgic ghosts of the Nazis, racists, anti-Semites, Holocaust deniers disguised as Greek Nationalists have already gone over the threshold to mainstream politics. They will be part of Greek Parliament and through their hands and especially their sick minds will pass the laws of the state, which are supposed to ensure the constitutional requirement for equal rights of all citizens, including Jewish citizens.

But there is more – and worse. As Greece is now heading for a new election on June 17, the New Democracy party which scored first in the previous election but did not manage to form a government of its own or by coalition with other pro-Euro parties, has invited all center-right forces to join the party and make a united front against the rise of the left.

Three months before elections, Mr. Samaras, the leader of New Democracy, had already welcomed into the party two candidates originating from LAOS, the other ultraright party, which did not make it this time to the parliament mainly because its voters fled to Golden Dawn. LAOS is by consequence dissolving and some of its former MPs are now turning to find a political shelter in New Democracy.

Among the most prominent is Thanos Plevris, the son of the acquitted Costas Plevris, who has also been his father's attorney in court. Other politicians, too, are joining New Democracy from LAOS, abandoning their ex-leader Giorgos Karatzaferis, who had stated in the past that Jews are bloodthirsty.

So the party that has traditionally attracted the votes of the majority of Greek Jews, is now providing a shelter to some of the most passionate anti-Semites in Greece.

And all this is happening at times that Greek-Israeli relationships are of unprecedented extent and quality.

Is there fear instilled in Greek Jews? This is very personal.

Some do fear, some do not.

However, it is quite certain that Greek Jewry will not have an easy way forward. Community leaders are very worried by these developments. It is certainly time for international Jewry to act and warn that it will not tolerate any harmful behavior against Jews in Greece, a country that lost in the Holocaust a huge percentage of its Jewish population.

Not easy to be a Jew in Greece nowadays....

The writer is a business executive, an active member of the Jewish Community of Athens and a volunteer at its numerous functions since his youth and for over 30 years.

In Athens, a recent event was organized to counter the Holocaust denials of Golden Dawn.

I lived the horrors of Auschwitz

Reacting to the electoral rise of the Golden Dawn, Prof. Hagen Fleischer held a memorial service at the University of Athens.



The Rosine Asher Pardo and Alexander Simcha cannot forget the years spent hiding in friends' houses to escape the Nazis

"The legacy of Auschwitz is the number 182641 which was etched in my hand." Thus began the narration of Isaac Mizan, who at age 16 was arrested in Arta and passed through the gates of the notorious Nazi concentration camp. The audience consisted of hundreds of students at Athens University who attended the event organized by Prof. Hagen Fleischer in response to the rise of Golden Dawn.

Greek Jews, Holocaust survivors, spoke about life during the Second World War and the titanic efforts made to stay alive under inhumane conditions. Mr. Mizan, who faced death on a daily basis, said he had no idea what awaited him when the train departed from Arta at March 24, 1944. "When we arrived in Athens to change train, we were left unguarded, but because I did not know the city and I wanted to be with my family, I did not flee. None of us had any idea what awaited us. "

During his stay in Auschwitz he shared a blanket with a fellow prisoner, watched daily hangings and worked hard to survive. "At regular intervals we looked at by doctors and anyone who was weak or sick was sent to a gas chamber. One day I was very ill, had fever and could not work. He was sure they would kill him. Fortunately, my cousins who worked elsewhere hid me until I was better, " said Mr. Mizan.



Faced with death on a daily basis was Isaac Mizan who survived for more than a year in Auschwitz

For his part, Professor Fleischer said that one reason he decided to organize the event was the appearance of the Golden Dawn, "a new party which has dramatic and scary numbers of supporters." "We are all hoping that their numbers will go down in the June elections. As a historian who has spent 40 years working on this bleak period (the Holocaust), I feel I must act. A first step is to hear the witnesses. What better place than the University" he said.

Alexander Simcha and Rosina Pardo Asher passed the years of German occupation in hiding. The family of Mr. Simcha left their mansion in Kavala and moved into a small apartment in the center of Athens when WWII. "My father knew he had to go somewhere where you would not be recognized in a crowd. The other Jews of Kavala did not realize this and most of them perished." During the occupation the Simcha family moved from house to house, hiding as best he could, and eventually the members separated.

Ms. Pardo is a member of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, which was almost completely exterminated by the Nazis. She and other members of her family, however, managed to escape. "At first my little sister and I escaped from the ghetto of Thessaloniki following an unguarded path. Beforehand, our mother had removed the yellow star that was sewn on clothes. Some family friends gave us shelter. A few days later my parents escaped us and found us. We were locked in an apartment across from our old home, "she explained. Pardo's family, however, found an unexpected ally during those difficult years. "A soldier (I am not sure if he was German or Austrian) told us when there were roadblocks to watch out for." she said.

As far as concerns the rise of the Golden Dawn, Mr. Simcha states that "the Greeks are not fascist. I think the rise is temporary and based partly on ignorance and partly on the problem of illegal immigration. "

Stelios Vogiatzakis

Photo: Polybius Costas

<http://www.ethnos.gr/article.asp?catid=22768&subid=2&pubid=63663527>

Thessaloniki

Join experts in an exploration of Thessaloniki's history



Headlining events for the celebration of the centenary of Thessaloniki's liberation from Ottoman rule, a conference will take place in the northern port city from October 18-21 on the theme "Thessaloniki: A City in Transition 1912-2012."

The aim of the conference, which will bring together speakers from around the world, is to map contemporary trends in the recording of history and to couple these with related disciplines, such as

social anthropology, economics, law, international relations and the arts.

The interdisciplinary character of the conference will be expressed in three thematic units: "In Search of the Identity of Thessaloniki in 1912," "A City in Transition" and "Charting Thessaloniki's Future."

The conference's lead scientific committee is comprised of Athens University Professor Constantinos Svolopoulos, Thessaloniki University professors Vasilis Gounaris, Ioannis Stefanidis and Dimitris Livanios, as well as the acclaimed British historian and Columbia University Professor Mark Mazower, author of "Salonica City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950," which was awarded the Duff Cooper Prize.

More than 2,000 academics, historians, researchers and scientists from around the world have already registered to attend the event, while there is an open invitation for proposals to be submitted by 2 p.m. on Friday, June 1.

Summaries of the proposals should not exceed 300 words and can be sent to 2012conference@thessaloniki.gr, according to the guidelines outlines on the website www.thessaloniki2012.gr. For more information, call 2310.260.322.

News For All

The Olympic torch leaves Greece on its way to England.



Requests

Research on possible heirs

We were contacted by an organization called Heirsearch. They are looking for information that could help them locate the *"potential Paternal heirs of the Decedent, Eric Cohen. Eric was a son of Irving Cohen who was a son of Ralph Isaac Cohen and Rachel N. Solomon. I have a copy of the Marriage Certificate for Ralph and Rachel, which provides that the marriage was performed at the Laurel Carden Hall on E 116th Street and that Rabbi David Davidson performed the ceremony."*

"My research has established that in addition to Irving, Ralph and Rachel had 2 daughters, Naomi and Esther, who were born between 1915 and 1920. I am trying to establish the exact dates of birth for Naomi and Rachel; however, New York birth records after 1909 are not available to the public. I am also trying to establish whether the girls married and had children, as well as the deaths of their parents, Ralph and Rachel."

"It may help to know that from about 1916 to at least 1920 they resided at 1489 5th Avenue, in 1930 they lived at 14 E 120th Street and in 1942 they lived at 1510 Unionport Road, Bronx."

Any help you may be able to provide would be greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Cathy Fletcher
Senior Researcher
International Genealogical Search Inc.

Looking for relative

I wonder if you can help me. I am Tina Castro from Thessaloniki, now living in Holland. I would like to get in touch with my cousin Tzeni (Jenny) Levi married to Nissim Benouziou living in New Jersey. I would appreciate very much if you can put an announcement in your newsletter with the enclosed photos in the hope that someone will recognize them and come forward with more information. Thank you in advance, and hope to hear from you.
Kind regards, Tina Castro



Jenny with her Kastro
Family in Meteora

Nissim from either Trikala
or Ioannina with Jenny
from Thessaloniki



***"This newsletter, as usual, was of interest to me. What a great publication month after month. and such a variety of articles. This time I was particularly interested in the article about Moshe Ha'Aelion and his translation of the Odyssey into Ladino. I am interested in purchasing a copy. Where was it published and how can I get a copy?
Joyce Ben Ezra"***

We would appreciate if anyone can help Joyce with this request.

"My name is Irving Camhi. I am 73 years of age living in a suburb of Los Angeles. I have researched your web site after a presentation of one of your descendants. I have taken the liberty to email you as this is the only email addresses I could identify in your organization. Being first generation American I have had a continuing interest in my Sephardic heritage. I am aware of the close connection of the Jews from Greece and those from Monastir (now Bitola) Macedonia having major family associations in the lower east side of Manhattan.

My grandmother Bulissa Camhi was a resident on Rivington St. And I visited there very often where Greek and Ladino was the household language.

I had moved to California when she passed away and I believe she was buried at one of the Montifiore cemeteries in NY. My father is Hyman Camhi and his father was Bension Camhi (my grandfather) and he died in the mid 30's. If your staff or records could provide me with any information regarding my lineage, or if you have any members that have acquaintances with the Camhi family whom once lived close to your temple. If you could pass this on so that I may have some family history and connection, it would be most appreciated. In any case some sort of reply would be welcome

***Sincerely
Irving Camhi"***

Response to requests

In our last e-newsletter, we were informed that Rebecca Matza Ganis would be soon celebrating her 96th birthday and her granddaughter Eve wanted to know if she had the distinction of being the oldest Jewish person born in Ioannina. Sorry Eve, but Oriel Jacobs who lives in Bayside just celebrated his 97th birthday March 15th. Oriel is a survivor of the concentration camps. We thank Mae Gabrielides for this information.

Shalom to one and all!

**Gershon Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



Despite the endless persecution and horrors that Jews have suffered for thousands of years, it is amazing to see how our Sages and heritage live on in the form of the vast expanse of Jewish literature that they authored. But this goes way beyond a simple preservation of memories: The study of even the most ancient of texts of Jewish law and lore bring their authors alive and into our study halls, synagogues and living rooms! This is no abstract feeling or symbolism – they are literally right in the room with us, "speaking" to us in their own words that may have been compiled thousands of years ago, whether in the ancient Land of Israel, Babylonia, Spain, North

Africa, Western and Eastern Europe, and of course the Mediterranean basin, including Romaniote Greece.

One example is Rabbi Elijah Mizrahi, born in Constantinople in around 1455 of Romaniote origin who spoke both Greek and Arabic, and already as a young man distinguished himself as a Talmudist. Interestingly, he also studied the sciences, particularly math and astronomy, and some credit him with being the first to derive a method for extracting the cube root. He was appointed "Hacham Bashi" (Grand/Chief Rabbi) of the Ottoman Empire upon the death of Rabbi Moses Capsali in 1495, and held this position for the rest of his life. He died in either 1525 or 1526, leaving his son Israel to publish his most famous and comprehensive work in 1527. This was "Sefer HaMizrahi" – The Book of Mizrahi, which is a comprehensive commentary on the most famous of Biblical and Talmudic commentaries, "Rashi" (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki of France). Often referred to as simply "The Mizrahi", this book is still widely studied, and is considered a basic source for the proper understanding of Rashi that belongs in every serious Jewish library. In addition to this seminal Torah work, Elijah Mizrahi also published Rabbinic responsa to queries he received from other Jews, as well as novella on another important Jewish book on the mitzvot. Finally, he also authored a book on arithmetic, an important book on astronomy, and a commentary on Euclid's "Elements", a fundamental text for math.

A second Romaniote Sage who continues to "live" with us through his written legacy was "the Lekah Tov" (The Good Lesson), which is the name of the most famous work written by Rabbi Tuvia Ben Eliezer, who lived and worked in Kastoria, Macedonia in the 11th century. This is midrashic (homiletic) commentary on all Five Books of Moses and the 'Five Megillot' (Esther, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ruth and Ecclesiastes), first partially published in 1546 and 1564, and then in its full version in 1878. Though long out of print, the book can be accessed on the internet, and is still used by many as a primary source of homiletic commentary on the Torah. These two Romaniote Jewish Sages are only two examples of so many more who may have physically departed this world centuries ago, but who continue to live and speak directly to us through their literary legacies. Am Yisrael Hai! The People of Israel lives – in more ways than one!

Items of Interest on the internet

**We thank Leon Saltiel for this excellent article on a Holocaust survivor from Thessaloniki:
http://www.jewishjournal.com/lifestyle/article/survivor_jack_seror_20120523/**

**Please go on line and read this important article and sign the petition.
www.weareallgreekjews.eu**

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.

**Kehila Kedosha Janina e-newsletter: number 53:
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