



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

February 2011 e-mail newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

January 27th was International Holocaust Remembrance Day and this issue, our 37th, will be dedicated in the memory of the estimated 67,000 Greek Jews who perished in the Holocaust. May their names be inscribed for Eternity.



Photo of the deportation of the Jews of Ioannina taken on March 25, 1944

We apologize, again, in advance for the length of this newsletter. Some have suggested we do 2 e-newsletters a month. Please let us know how you feel about this.

This newsletter, our 37th 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.

This month we lost Reba Geik, whose family came from Ioannina. Our sympathies to her family.

We send our congratulations to Jennifer Abadi on the birth of her daughter Sacha Abadi Horviller, born on January 20th.

MUSEUM NEWS

On January 30th we were honored to host the New York Premier of "Empty Boxcars" by Ed Gaffney. The film gives a very balanced view of the role of the Bulgarians, both in the saving of an estimated 48,000 Jews in "Old Bulgaria" and their complicity in the murder of an estimated 13,000 Jews in "New Bulgaria" (Bulgarian Zones of Occupation in Greece and Yugoslavia). There will be a number of upcoming programs (both at Kehila Kedosha Janina and other venues) which we will, of course, publicize in our e-newsletter.



Photos from the screening. The faces of the viewers say everything.

CALL FOR MATERIAL FOR NEXT EXHIBIT

We are beginning to collect photos and documents for our next exhibit on Emigration & Immigration (Due to open the beginning of November 2011).

Send us photos of family in Greece before they came to the USA and photos taken here in the USA as they settled into neighborhoods in New York City (the Lower East Side, Brooklyn and the Bronx). Send us any information you have on immigration (ship manifest records) and where your ancestors lived (census records). It is our hope to create a data base of Greek-Jewish immigration to the United States.

We want to capture what life was like before they left and the world they encountered once they arrived.

Some great photos from 'the world they left behind'.



Athens-late 1920's



Purim in Chalkis-1930s



**Rabbi in Salonika-early 20th century
Old Jewish quarter in Corfu**



The world they came to in New York City



Archival photos of Lower East Side taken in early 20th c.

In conjunction with this exhibit we will be establishing a data base of where Greek Jews lived in the New York City area. If you know the address of where your family lived, send it to us. Pictures of the apartment buildings or homes would be great. We will be arranging neighborhood reunions during the year that the exhibit is up.

ΔΙΚΟΙ ΜΑΣ, LOS MUESTROS (OUR OWN) COME HOME



Sascha Altman DuBrul, son of Anita Altman, grandson of Jack Altman and Sarah Coffino and great-grandson of Anna Matza (Mazza) and Zadick Coffino, comes 'home' to Kehila Kedosha Janina

NEWS OF INTEREST TO GREEK JEWS

On March 1st at 7:00 P.M. at the Sephardic Temple of Cedarhurst, Shelomo Alfassa will be presenting his soon to be published research on Bulgarian responsibility for Jewish deaths. The paper is tentatively titled 'A Whitewashing the Media Perpetuates: The Jews of Bulgaria and the

Holocaust '. March 1st will be the 70th anniversary of Bulgaria becoming an ally of Nazi Germany. The event is open to the public and the lecture will be accompanied by a Power-Point presentation.



King Boris of Bulgaria and Hitler

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE IN ASTORIA

On January 23rd, in Astoria Queens, what has now become an annual event, the Syllagos Nomu Magnisias Argonauts commemorated the Holocaust of Greek Jewry. The guest speaker this year was Dr. Isaac Benmayer, who was born in Salonika and whose father of Blessed Memory, Leon, was a survivor from the camps and a past president of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki (Salonika).



Dr. Isaac Benmayer



Archbishop Demetrios blesses traditional bread

During the interwar period many Greek Jews, especially Sephardic Jews from Salonika, immigrated to France. The facts that many Greek Jews had studied French at the Alliance and that French cities offered economic opportunities were the major impetus for this re-location. During WWII, many of these same Jews and their children were deported by the French. Therefore, this article is of interest to many Greek Jews and others who anguish at the losses of Jewish lives in the Holocaust.

FRENCH RAILWAY WORKING TO CLEAR HOLOCAUST IMAGE

January 25, 2011

"PARIS (JTA) -- A state-owned French railway company is trying to clear its tarnished reputation, marked for delivering thousands of Jews into the hands of the Nazis.

Guillaume Pepy, president of the SNCF national railway, officially ceded a former industrial train station and patch of muddy rail lines to the northern Paris suburb of Bobigny, so the area can be

made into a memorial for the 22,407 Jews who were deported to Nazi concentration camps from there.

The gesture is one of many similar efforts recently by the company -- and at least one government diplomat -- since it has been under increased scrutiny following a bid last year for two multibillion-dollar contracts to build high-speed trains in Florida and California. SNCF has had to face threats from some American lawmakers and groups apparently unhappy with the railway's past and who have pushed to block a deal without further explanation, and possibly an apology, from the company.



In response, Pepy has met with Jewish groups and politicians in the United States to express his "regret" and "pain" on behalf of SNCF. The company says those statements fall short of an apology but express its feelings of sorrow.

Between 1942 and 1944, the company sent trains loaded with French and foreign Jews from all over the country to Drancy and then to Bobigny, which are now low-income suburbs north of Paris. German trains made the final trip from both places to Auschwitz and other death camps. Some 75,720 Jews from France were deported; approximately 2,500 survived the Holocaust. Though the SNCF has initiated seminars and historical research on the company's actions during the war, many claim the group never apologized or recognized the extent of its cooperation with Nazi rulers. The company traditionally has defended itself by saying its employees were under the occupier's control."

We thank Solomon Errera for this article.

FIRST CHIEF RABBI OF ALBANIA REJECTED BY JEWS OF ALBANIA

In the last issue of our e-newsletter we announced the appointment of the 'first Chief Rabbi of Albania. It appeared not to have been welcomed by the small Jewish community of Albania.

<http://www.jpost.com/JewishWorld/JewishNews/Article.aspx?id=202415>

Albanian Jews reject appointment of new chief rabbi

By GIL SHEFLER

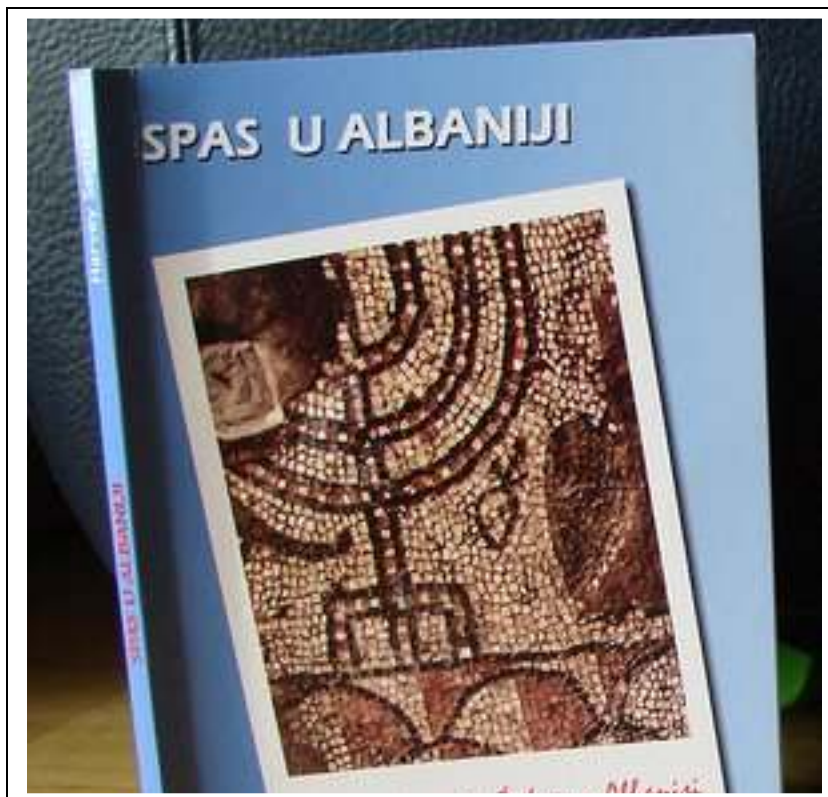
01/06/2011 05:03

"Members of the local Jewish community complain the position created without consultation, and declare that they refuse to recognize his authority.

Last month, the Albanian government appointed Rabbi Yoel Kaplan as the former communist country's first chief rabbi, amid much fanfare.

But in an angry letter recently sent to The Jerusalem Post, members of the local Jewish community complained the position had been created without consultation, and declared that they refused to recognize his authority.

Photo of synagogue mosaics from former Albanian synagogue in Albania



"We completely alienate ourselves from this illicit and incorrect act, which was carried out in total discordance to the historical and religious traditions and principles of our nation," stated the letter, which was signed by 34 of the country's estimated 150 Jews.

"We strongly appeal and urge all the Albanian institutions and the international Jewish organizations to preliminary consult the Albanian-Jewish community before taking any action that would directly impact its dignity and community life, since we do not recognize Rabbi Yoel Kaplan as Albania's Chief Rabbi."

The signatories also alleged that Sokol Pirra, who helped facilitate Sephardi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar's visit to Albania and who the signatories said had lobbied to create the position, was an impostor.

"Mr. Sokol Pirra is not the representative of our community," they declared. "He is not even one of its members, because his connections to Judaism are very unclear at least, not to say inexistent."

Kaplan, who had initially been unaware of the letter's existence, responded to its criticism of his appointment in an e-mail this week, saying his critics within the community misunderstood his mission.

"The people behind the letter fear losing their role as unofficial representatives of Israeli-Albanian commercial ties," he said. "Of course, such fears need not exist. My clear and sole goal is reinforcing Jewish life. Up until now, there have been gatherings for international Holocaust Remembrance Day and, at best, Israel's Independence Day as well. We want to reinforce an active Jewish life throughout the year and establish an active community center."

Jews have lived the area of present-day Albania for at least 1,300 years. Under the communist regime, all religions were suppressed, but when Albania opened up to the world in 1991, the majority of the remaining 300 Jews were airlifted to Israel. Only a few, mostly living in the capital Tirana, where the country's only functioning synagogue is located, remained behind.

Yossi Levi, spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which was also sent a copy of the letter, said on Monday that it wasn't the ministry's position to comment on appointments of rabbis in Jewish communities overseas.

"This is up to local communities to decide," he said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Kaplan said he would continue to serve the community despite the criticism from some of its members.

"The letter is indeed charged, but now the Albanian community has joined other Jewish communities around the world: There are camps in favor and against," he wrote in the e-mail. "A day will come where, God willing, I will bring them together."

CULTURAL EVENTS OF INTEREST TO GREEK JEWRY

NEW YORK

From ASF (American Sephardi Federation)

Tableau Vivant: The Berberisca Ceremony (A Living Picture)

A program of the year-long series, "2,000 Years of Jewish Life in Morocco: An Epic Journey", presented Under the High Patronage of His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, and made possible through the generous support of the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation.



Sunday, February 6, 2011 at 4pm

Join us for a live re-enactment – in ceremonial dress and authentic Moroccan setting – and a discussion of the picturesque Noche de Berberisca or Soirée du Henné. This most traditional

Moroccan Jewish ceremony takes place during the week that precedes the wedding, in an atmosphere full of joy and emotion. It is enhanced with wedding songs, elegant outfits and delicious pastries. The evening reaches its climax when the bride makes her entrance magnificently made up and dressed in the Berberisca gown called Traje de paños in Spanish or Keswa Elkbara (Great Dress) in Arabic. Come see the Berberisca bride and her bridesmaids! Sing along with singer Vanessa Paloma, taste our Moroccan tea and pastries, and much more. Do not miss this magnificent and unique event!

Tickets: \$18 General Admission/\$12 for ASF members.

RSVP requested: 212.294.8350 x0; or info@americansephardifederation.org

Location: At the Center for Jewish History 15 West 16th St. NYC ([map](#))

The Greek Cultural Center presents the stage comedy
"Babies are Brought by the Stork"
by Thanasis Papathanasiou and Michalis Reppas.



This contemporary writing duo has numerous stage and film credits and are known by TV audiences for THE THREE CHARITES. The pair has conquered the Greek theater realm with the burlesque hit, "Life in person"; the comedies, "Baba Rum", "In-laws from Tirana" and "Babies are brought by the Stork", and the dramas, "Ebro across" and "Attiki Odos."

"Babies are Brought by the Stork" is a stage hit of Reppas-Papathanasiou which has been performed at Greek theaters for seven consecutive years. According to the writers "It is not farce, it as a comedy of situations and characters with glimpses of drama, emotion and conflict. It comes closer to film comedies such as 'A Hero in Slippers', 'Miss, Age 39' and 'The Germans are Coming Again', all of which have comedic as well as intensely emotional elements." The play takes place in Thessalonica during the German Occupation. A young Jewish man who, hunted by the Germans, finds refuge in the bedroom of a couple who are themselves guests of another couple since their own house has been destroyed by bombing. Both couples are childless and their efforts to conceive come to no avail, with the percussive sounds of the bombings lingering in the background. However, the Holy Mary of Dear Osculation is about to intervene. How are these two women able to become mothers and how do they explain certain ambiguities of paternity? Well, sometimes "babies are brought by the stork."...but is this the case? On the

day of Thessalonica's liberation from the Germans, the two heroines go into labor and are assisted by a Roumelian guerilla from the National Popular Liberation Army. It is a charming humane comedy whose heroes have a spontaneous, natural and bright emotional sense of humanitarianism and a resistance mechanism which is expressed through their daily existence.

This great stage success of Reppas-Papathanasiou is directed by director, actor and founding member of the AKTIS AELIOU of Thessalonica Theatre of Art, Ioanna Katsarou; who invaded the theatre scene of New York's Greek community with her excellent directorial work in "Mommy Mother Mom" by G. Dialegmenos.

The play is performed by a company of seven talented actors who balance on the comedy's fine line between glimpses of laughter and tears.

"Babies are brought by the Stork" premieres March 11th and ends April 17th for only 18 performances.

Every Friday and Saturday at 8:00pm, and Sundays at 4:00pm.
Address: 26-80 30th Street, Astoria, NY 11102

For more information or reservations call at 718-726-7329 or email: reservations@greekculturalcenter.org.

website: www.greekculturalcenter.org

Our thanks to Jim Kyrios for telling us about this event

SINGING THE PRAISES OF GREEK JEWS

As a new edition to our e-newsletter, we are highlighting accomplishments of Greek Jews. We are so proud of Anita Altman (Coffino, Askinazi & Mioni families from Ioannina). Anita has worked for years for UJA and in that capacity founded its Task Force on People with Disabilities. Anita has helped to expand and transform programming for people with disabilities, who are served by the UJA-Federation network of agencies. Anita founded Reelabilities and in what has now become an annual film festival, she hopes to raise the consciousness of the New York community about our common humanity and the value of each person, without regard to his or her ability or disability.



THE THIRD ANNUAL REELABILITIES: NY DISABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY 3-8

**IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT NY
FOR COMPLETE LIST OF SPECIAL EVENTS VISIT**

WWW.REELABILITIES.ORG

NEWS FROM GREECE

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLOCAUST

ATHENS

January 26th: The JEWISH MUSEUM OF GREECE

For the first time the proposals of 16 established artists who responded to the call for creation of a Holocaust Memorial in Athens will be presented in public. The unveiling of the monument was in June 2010 in the green triangle located at the corner of Ermou and Eyboulos Melidoni Thissio.



January 27th: After prayers for those Greek Jews murdered in the Holocaust, wreaths were placed on the Holocaust Memorial. Those placing the wreaths were the President of the Jewish Community of Athens, Presidents of other Jewish Communities and organizations in Greece, the President of the Survivors from Greece, the Major of Athens, representatives from the Prefecture of Attica, representatives of the Greek Military, the Israeli Ambassador, other foreign ambassadors, representatives of the major political parties, a representative from the Parliament and a representative of the Greek Government. This was followed by a minute of silence, the singing of the Greek National Anthem and some final words.

Later in the day, at 18:45, in Beth Shalom Synagogue on Melidoni, prayers were said in the memory of the 6,000,000 Jews who perished in the Holocaust, among whom were 67,000 Greek

Jews. Rabbi Arar officiated. Hagen Fleischer, Professor of History at the University of Athens gave a speech at 20:00 followed by some final words.

THESSALONIKI

David Saltiel, President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece, led the commemoration events in Thessaloniki on January 27th. A major newspaper in the city (Makedonia) not only covered the events but, in addition, dedicated 8 pages of their Sunday edition (January 30) on the Holocaust of Greek Jewry. The articles were accompanied by historical photos. The articles are in Greek. Anyone wishing a copy of the Sunday insert from Makedonia, should e-mail us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

Holocaust Memorial in
Plateia Elefterias in
Thessaloniki



NEW NATIONAL HERO IN GREECE

We thank Gregory Pappas of the Greek American Magazine for this piece of much needed humor.
Greek mayor arrested after bulldozing toll booth barriers

Apostolos Gletsos hailed as national hero as Greeks opposed to austerity measures take law into their own hands

*Helena Smith in Athens
guardian.co.uk, Friday 14 January 2011*

When drivers in Greece began refusing to pay road tolls it was seen as a bit of good-natured defiance, born of economy necessity.

When Apostolos Gletsos, mayor of Stylida, took control of a municipal bulldozer and broke his way through the barriers of a toll booth, civil disobedience took on an altogether different hue.

"What I did was within the realm of my duties to defend the legal rights of citizens. I don't regret it and would do it again," said the mayor, who was arrested and charged.

"Locals in Stylida are country people and they should be able to bypass tolls for free."

Until now Gletsos was better known for his roles in seamy TV soap operas.

But his antics on the main highway 130 miles north of Athens have turned him into a national hero as Greeks protesting against unprecedented austerity measures take "social justice" into their own hands.

Supermarkets are also being confronted by shoppers refusing to pay bills as cuts bite, recession deepens and unemployment worsens in a country that narrowly averted bankruptcy thanks to a £110bn bailout from the EU and IMF.

As many as 600,000 motorists refused to pay at toll stations over the Christmas period.

Resistance is expected to mount in the coming weeks following a landmark meeting by anti-toll campaigners in the central Greek town of Lamia tomorrow.

"Our roads should be controlled by the state, not private companies that demand exorbitant fees," said Dimitris Kodellas, a shopowner.

He regularly gets out of his car, lifts the barriers at toll booths and drives through them when he drives from Argos, his hometown in the Peloponnese, to Athens.

"At first toll station staff made a great fuss and demanded that we fill in forms, but the wave is too big for them now ... doing this saves me €14 each way.

"At a time when a lot of us are forced to get by on €600 a month that's a lot of money."

JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ATHENS LOOKING TO HIRE

**Contact Recruitment Manager of Administrative Services of the Jewish Community of Athens
The Jewish Community of Athens wants to hire a Director of Administration with the following responsibilities:**

- **Responsible for the proper functioning of administrative services, the management of staff, and compliance with internal operating procedures of the Community**
- **Answer to the General Secretary and President of the Community Council**
- **attend meetings of Community Board (non-voting), keep records and ensure the implementation of decisions**
- **attend meetings of the General Assembly.**
- **Is responsible for coordinating and resolving planned or unplanned issues daily operation of the Community**
- **Represent the Community at the behest of the Council and is authorized to sign instead of Chairman and Secretary**
- **Monitor the implementation of approved budgets and is responsible for financial management.**
- **Communicate with agencies at home and abroad and provide good public image and reputation of the Community**

The ideal candidates for the position, must have:

- **Graduate degree from a university in Greece or abroad or equivalent foreign institution that offers degree in Greece**
- **Age 30-50 years**
- **have managerial experience at least 3 years relevant post in the private or public sector**
- **Good organizational skills**
- **Have excellent knowledge of English language in spoken and written word**
- **fluent in Microsoft Office applications or similar**
- **have communication skills and skills to handle situations under pressure**

Furthermore, the following qualifications are taken into account:

- **Postgraduate degrees**

- Knowledge of Hebrew language

Those interested in the position should submit a full CV with personal, educational and professional information and other useful information, as well as the names of references and contact information of two people.

All resumes will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

CVs must be submitted online at cv_dirika@dworks.gr to "Director of Jewish Community, no later than February 25, 2011 at 17.00.

In the evaluation of candidates and final selection, the Community will work with specialist firm.

UPDATES ON GREEK-ISRAELI RELATIONS

ATHENS (EJP)---Greece and Israel have agreed to set up within the next two months a joint ministerial council which will be chaired by their respective Prime Ministers and will comprise ministers from both countries, in order to boost their bilateral ties, the Greek news agency ANA reported.

The news came as Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman started a 4-day visit to Athens for talks with the Greek leadership.

He met his counterpart Dimitris Droutsas upon his arrival and was also to have talks with President Papoulias, Prime Minister George Papandreou, Defense Minister Evangelos Venizelos and Minister of State for investment Haris Pamboukis.

He was also to meet with leaders of the Greek Jewish community.

It is the first such visit by an Israeli foreign minister in more than 15 years.

The trip comes after a similar visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in August that underscored a dramatic rapprochement with Greece after decades of frosty relations. Netanyahu's trip was the first time an Israeli head of government had visited to Greece, which has traditionally been pro-Arab and did not recognize the Jewish state until 1991.

During that visit, the two countries reportedly set up a joint committee for strategic and security cooperation to study ways of improving cooperation on strategic and anti-terror issues, Israeli media reports said at the time.



Israeli Foreign Minister in Greece

Israel's Foreign Minister's visit comes as diplomatic ties between Israel and neighbouring Turkey continued to fester following an Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla of activists in May last year in which nine Turks were killed.

Israeli and Greek officials have made a show of saying their closer ties were not tied to the diplomatic crisis with Ankara, a traditional rival of Athens.

According to political observers in Athens, Greece is keen to boost international investment and ease its financial crisis, maintains traditionally close relations with Arab countries but has forged closer military and economic ties in recent years with Israel.

The countries' air forces have held joint drills over the past two years in Greece.

"We will continue efforts to bring the two countries even closer," Lieberman said. "Improving economic co-operation is a challenge for the coming year."

The first joint cabinet meeting will be held in Israel.

Lieberman also announced that the two countries agreed to set up a regional force to deal with natural disasters, after Israel struggled to contain deadly wildfires in the north of the country which killed at least 40 people and forced mass evacuations last month.

"We have agreed to form a group to deal with emergency disasters," Foreign Minister he said following talks with his Greek counterpart Dimitris Droutsas.

Greece has taken on the initiative to organize the regional force and has invited the relevant authorities of the Palestinian Authority and other countries in the region such as Turkey, Egypt and Jordan to join the effort.

**The American Jewish Leaders to visit Greece
(translated and excerpted from Kathimerini:**

http://news.kathimerini.gr/4dcgi/_w_articles_politics_100074_23/01/2011_429877

Following the deepening of cooperation between Greece and the State of Israel in recent months, which included reciprocal visits by their respective prime ministers in July and August, and continues with the establishment of a joint Council of Ministers, which convened for the first time in April, the project is now being completed by new relationship building between Greece and Greek-American community, along with the powerful Jewish lobby in America.

The first visit to Greece of the leadership of the presidents of major Jewish American organizations representing 52 organizations will take place the second week of February. The invitation was extended by Prime Minister George Papandreou at a meeting in September in New York. Mr. Papandreou has many years of communicating with the Jewish community in America and meets frequently with top executives, each time in the U.S.

With the momentum gained by the Greek-Israeli relations in an unexpectedly short time, it is very likely that the Prime Minister's contacts with the Jewish lobby will continue during the next visit to the U.S. capital, which will probably take place in March to coincide with the celebration of Greek independence Day at the White House.

The five-day visit of the leadership of the Jewish lobby will begin in Thessaloniki on the 8th and 9th of February, where they will meet with local officials and Jewish community, and will continue in Athens from the 10th to the 12th of the month. There will be meetings with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Civil Protection and Investment, and the

Archbishop Hieronymus. Subsequently, on February 13th, the group will travel to Israel for its annual meeting with political and business leadership.

The Greek government has stated that the strengthening of relations with Israel will not alter their traditional ties with the Muslim world. However, building trust relationship with the Jewish State would allow Athens to play the role it deserves in the Middle East. . . .

The Chair of the meeting, Alan Solow and executive vice president, Malcolm Chenlain spoke of the increased geopolitical importance of Greece, stressing that "the current Greek government has launched a significant relationship with Israel." They highlighted the many recent exchanges of visits and cooperation. "The visit of Jewish American community leaders will highlight the importance of these relationships and will help build greater understanding and cooperation. It will also promote diplomatic and economic cooperation.

The Mayor of Thessaloniki, Mr. Boutaris will visit Tel Aviv highlighting the fact that many Jews from Thessaloniki settled in the Israeli capital. Boutaris, along with others in the municipal government of Thessaloniki, will visit the International Tourism Exhibition held in Tel Aviv with the participation of ESO to view Thessaloniki as a tourist attraction for Jews everywhere. They will also have talks with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and the mayors of Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem.

Discussions will include making Thessaloniki a stop on cruises leaving from Israeli ports.

By Athanasios Ellis

ADDITIONAL REACTIONS TO ANTI-SEMITIC REMARKS OF METROPOLITAN BISHOP OF PIREAUS

We thank Gregory Pappas of the Greek American magazine for this excellent response to Rabbi David Rosen. Too often we are too quick to condemn an entire nature for the actions and words of a few.

Exclusive to Greek America Magazine, His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, an auxiliary bishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago with extensive experience in interfaith and ecumenical relations offered the following response to Rabbi David Rosen, who claimed that "...anti-Semitism is alive and well within the Greek Orthodox Church." Rosen's remarks were in response to a Greek bishop's televised interview during which he made several anti-Semitic references and accusations.

By Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos

"One cannot combat bigotry and hate by promoting it at the same time. In his reaction to obviously offensive words, Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Inter-religious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, has resorted to the same tactics he regularly denounces. For his protest against the remarks of one Greek Orthodox Christian, offensive to Jews all over the world, Rabbi Rosen has chosen in turn to offend Greek Orthodox Christians all over the world, indicting their Church with an anti-Semitism that is 'alive and well.'

"Rabbi Rosen rightly objected to recent remarks by a hierarch of the Church of Greece made during a television interview last December. The remarks were clearly derogatory to the Jewish people and obviously based on a profound ignorance of history along with conspiratorial paranoia. Indeed, the Jewish people were not alone in their offense, and Greek Orthodox Christians around the world were shocked and embarrassed. Unfortunately, Rabbi Rosen went

too far in his call for "church leadership to condemn and uproot anti-Semitism" when he prefaced this by noting that 'anti-Semitism is alive and well within the Greek Orthodox Church.'

"Fighting fire with fire in this instance, making gross blanket statements attributing bigotry and prejudice to a whole group of people, does nothing but perpetuate the conditions that lead to mistrust, distance and ill-will among peoples—the very conditions that Rabbi Rosen should be seeking to alleviate.

"After all, the Greek Orthodox Church around the world does not routinely indict the Jewish people or faith as "anti-Christian" when the Israeli government or Jewish religious groups and sects in Israel harass or impede the work of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, or cause problems for Orthodox Christians living in Israel or within the territory of the Palestinian Authority. Similarly, when a member of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect literally spit on me during a recent visit to Jerusalem, I did not assume that anti-Christianity was "alive and well" in Judaism. Instead, I recognized the act for what it clearly was: the act of a prejudiced and bigoted Jewish person clearly at odds with the majority, including my Jewish hosts. Such actions on the part of the Israeli government, religious groups or persons do not and should not be the occasion for an accusation against the venerable Jewish faith. Likewise, the pathetic comments of one clergyman in Greece should not be an opportunity to smear the Orthodox Church.

"Rabbi Rosen, in seeking to combat the "outrageous bigotry" demonstrated by Metropolitan Seraphim of Piraeus, called on the Church of Greece's Archbishop Ieronymos II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to condemn the remarks. That would be fine, except to note that Archbishop Demetrios of America, as the Patriarchal Exarch (representative) in the Western Hemisphere, did condemn the remarks immediately in the strongest terms: "gravely offensive and totally unacceptable." Before the end of December, 2010, Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, officially responding to Rabbi Rosen on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, wrote, "You are well aware of the respect and sincere cooperation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and of His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew himself. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to ensure you that such unfortunate comments have no place in our hearts and minds." He concludes, noting, "Incidents such as the aforementioned will unfortunately take place, and the language of hate and mistrust will find ways to be heard. This, however, should not become an obstacle in our sincere and fraternal cooperation."

"Furthermore, since Metropolitan Seraphim is not under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, it is, formally and morally, a matter for the autocephalous Church of Greece to address. Yet, it clearly reveals Rabbi Rosen's misunderstanding of Greek Orthodox Church polity as well as his effort to associate all Greek Orthodox with the unfortunate and offensive remarks of one person.

"Undoubtedly, there is anti-Semitism in Greece, as there is in the United States and, unfortunately, elsewhere in the world. What Rabbi Rosen forgets, in his indictment of the Greek Orthodox Church, is that not all Greek Orthodox Christians are within the jurisdiction of the Church of Greece.

"He also seems to forget an important part of history. There are specific examples of courage and heroism among Greek Orthodox clerics during the Nazi occupation of Greece in defense of the Jewish population. Far from demonstrating anti-Semitism, Greek clergy during World War II acted for the defense of their Jewish neighbors.

"Indeed, when asked by the Nazis for a list of Jews on the island of Zakynthos, the Mayor consulted the local bishop, Metropolitan Chrysostomos. He told the Mayor to burn the original

and actual list, then wrote his own name on a piece of paper and submitted it as the list to the German commander. Unable to thwart the Germans' plans, despite his act of defiance, he warned the Jewish residents to hide in the mountains, where they were actively assisted by Greek Orthodox residents. Similarly and shortly before, Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens had denounced the deportation of Greek Jews to the concentration camps though threatened with execution.

"This is not simply anecdotal or legendary. The Jewish organization, Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, specifically awarded Archbishop Damaskinos (1969), Metropolitan Chrysostomos and Mayor Lukas Karrer of Zakynthos (1978), with the honor of being numbered with the "Righteous Among the Nations" for their efforts on behalf of the Jewish residents of Greece.

"Certainly, the Jewish communities in Greece, like elsewhere in Europe, were decimated by the Nazis as part of the Holocaust. Yet examples abound in Greece of Christians warning, hiding or assisting their Jewish neighbors in light of Nazi plans to deport them. There are documented cases of Jews being discovered in Greek households, though some remained in hiding until the Nazis left the country; along with support given to Jews who fled to the mountains, this certainly cannot be the foundation of a widespread anti-Semitism. Could more have been done? Yes, but that does not justify the denigration of the Greek Orthodox Church, and many adherents of the Church—often inspired and actively led by clergy—risked their own safety to assist their Jewish neighbors. These persons lived up to the ideals of the Greek Orthodox Church and her true "head" who taught that we are to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 19:19; Mk 12:31; etc.) echoing the Hebrew Scriptures (Leviticus 19:18).

"One might argue that this is all in the past, and Rabbi Rosen is addressing current anti-Semitism in the Greek Orthodox Church. While I cannot speak directly to the status of relations between Jews and the Church Greece, I can speak with personal knowledge about Greek Orthodox relationships with Jewish persons in the Ecumenical Patriarchate generally and in the United States specifically. The positive working relationship that Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has with Jewish leaders around the world is well known, and hierarchs of the Ecumenical

"Patriarchate around the world typically have excellent relationships with Jewish clergy. Likewise, in the Archdiocese of America, there have long been many examples of common efforts with segments of the Jewish community, religious and otherwise. In the Chicago area alone, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago for many years participated in an annual retreat with Christian and Jewish clergy, and continues to work alongside religious and civic leaders of the Jewish community in the region through the Council of Religious Leaders, with the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

"There is no doubt that there are persons who identify themselves as Greek Orthodox Christians who do not abide by the teachings of Jesus Christ. Anti-Semitism is one of a number of "gravely offensive and totally unacceptable" attitudes that such persons may display, along with a host of other sinful attitudes as well as actions. This is the reality of the broken world in which we live. Thus, the ugliness of anti-Semitism may, indeed, be alive within the formal "boundaries" of the Greek Orthodox Church as Rabbi Rosen suggests. But it is by no means "well." Along with every other form of hate, it is routinely condemned—and never condoned. The shocking statements of a bishop in Greece should not be mistaken as a revelation of Church doctrine, but rather as the sad, ugly and hurtful rant of someone who deviates from what the Church actually teaches. I certainly do not blame Rabbi Rosen or any of my Jewish colleagues or friends for being offended by the rant of the Metropolitan of Piraeus—I was likewise offended, even outraged. Yet it is precisely the practice of judging all persons of a group based on the misdeeds of one or a few—guilt by association—that leads to stereotyping, prejudice and bigotry. This was in the

"background" of very offensive comments by a Greek Orthodox cleric. Unfortunately, it appears to be somewhat contagious, for it prompted Rabbi Rosen to respond in kind."

REQUESTS FOR OUR HELP

From Dr. Anna Kohen:

Can you help: Jakov ,an old friend from Albanian, living in Israel since 1991, is looking for the Kabeli family. He wrote to Janina , but did not get an answer. Can you help?

Thanks Anna Kohen

If there are any members of the Kabeli family in the United States or Greece who know Jakov, please contact us and we will pass the information on to Dr. Kohen

A few months ago a young man, born in the United States but now living in Israel, came into our Museum. He expressed this request and was asked to put it into an e-mail and send it to us. If anyone has information about the events below, please get back to is and we will pass this on to Ilan.

"Sorry it took so long to get the following information to you, I just needed to find the time to sit down and write it out.

Again this is in reference to my wife's mother's family. Just to refresh your memory, the story goes that my wife's maternal grandfather was imprisoned by one of the occupying Axis forces operating in the Monastir region of Macedonia. Whether they were Bulgarian, Albanian, or Italian I do not know, but during his incarceration he met two local Jews one whose name was Avraham (no one in my wife's family knows what his family name was, or the name of the second Jew). What is known is that one or both Jews helped my wife's grandfather escape along with them, and in return he hid at least one of them, most probably the one named Avraham, in the basement of his family's home, perhaps with the individual's family. Alekso Kotevski was my wife's grandfather's name. He was born in 1911, so he would have been in his 30's during the War. He was a farmer from the village of Suvodol, just outside of Monastir, and at the family home there is where he hid the Jew or Jews he met while imprisoned. Coming from a long line of clergy the clan/family earned the nickname Popovski amongst the locals as well. Unfortunately that is all the info I have at this point. Any help in identifying the Jews involved or any other details in general would be much appreciated.

*Thank You Again,
Ilan Pomeranc*



Postcard from Monastir (early 20th century)

Tilda Mevorach of Salonika is looking for our help.

My name is Tilda Mevorah and I live in Thessaloniki, Greece. I was born in Volos on 15th May 1959 and I am a teacher of English at the Merchant Marine Academy in Michaniona. My father, Albert (or Avraam) Mevorah [15th April 1915 - 20th October 1992] was born in Kastoria and died in Thessaloniki. My mother, Alegra Kohen, is from Volos.

I was very gladly informed of the existence of the Kehila Kedosha Janina synagogue and museum by the January 2011 newsletter you e-mailed to my very dear American family, and which was forwarded to me. There it was mentioned the passing over of Benny Elias, who was one of the 35 survivors who returned to Kastoria from Auschwitz. My father was also one of the 35 survivors who returned from Auschwitz along with only one of his brothers, Michael Mevorah. The rest of their family was lost in the Holocaust.

The reason for sending this e-mail is that I'm trying to find any people from Kastoria, or their descendants, who knew my father or used to work with him when he lived to NY from 1948 to 1966. My father was a fur worker. He worked for the following companies: ARISTA FURS (TAVANTZIS BROTHERS), GEORGIU & STEVENS, ZIAS & KYRIAZOS FUR CO, SANDUKE FUR CORP, PETER GRAMMATIKOS, KIRATZOPOULOS & POULOS [K&P FUR MFG. CO],TOSKOS L VALLIANATOS. This information may be useful to someone.

His last address in NY was: 242 8th Avenue, New York, N.Y. , apartment 3-F

He last returned to Greece in May 1966. He used to have very close relations with other Kastorians in NY.

I will be visiting NY from 13th to 24th February. I am very much interested in meeting people of Benny Elias family, who might have known my father, as they were both survivors from Kastoria. Are you aware, by any chance, of other Kastorians in NY or people connected with fur workers of that period?

I would also like to be included in your e-mail list and be informed of anything concerning news in Greece or abroad.

**Looking forward for your reply,
Best regards,
Tilda Mevorah**



Jews from Kastoria

LOWER EAST SIDE EVENTS

We, at Kehila Kedosha Janina, have not grown in isolation. We are part of the renaissance on the Lower East Side and have grown with the support of others. In this, and future issues of the monthly e-newsletter, we will try to keep you informed of other events on the Lower East Side.

ELDRIDGE STREET SYNAGOGUE

Sundays, February 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 1pm

Patterns and Paint Family Program



Investigate the exuberant paint patterns that coat Eldridge Street's surfaces. From the 70ft vaulted ceiling to the faux marble walls, this architectural landmark is covered in decoration. Look closely to uncover the techniques used by the artisans and then create your own stenciled wall paper design.

Part of the [Preservation Detectives Family Program Series](#).

\$15 per family

Wednesday, February 23 • 9-12pm

1920s Synagogue Soirée



Dust off your wingtip shoes, flapper dresses, and fedoras and come down to our historic synagogue to celebrate its heyday in the 1920s. Gatsby-esque music, drinks, and nosh will be provided.

\$15



LOWER EAST SIDE JEWISH CONSERVANCY BULLETIN

LESJC Yiddish Theater Brunch Presenting Hy Wolfe and the Music of Yiddish Theater

Sunday, February 6, 2011 11:00 AM
(approximately 3 hours)

Special opportunity for our loyal community: Bring a Friend Promotion!
Get 15% off when purchasing tickets for two!

Join us for a cozy performance of your most beloved Yiddish standards, and some less well known songs too, with Hy Wolfe. He will take us through the pages of Yiddish Theater at this very special event.

Hy Wolfe is an actor, singer and director whose roots are firmly planted in the world of Yiddish. Mr. Wolfe is the Artistic Director of the Yiddish National Theatre, and the Executive Director of CYCO (Central Yiddish Culture Organization) that publishes and sells Yiddish literature.

His twenty-five year performing career has taken him from California to New York to Europe where he has acted and sung on stage, screen, television and in concerts. Mr. Wolfe performed the title role in "Yankl der Shmid" (Yankl the Blacksmith) for the Folksbine Yiddish Theatre, which one of his many appearances for this renown theater. Other performances include "Grine Felder" (Green Fields) for the Yiddish Public Theatre and several musical reviews for the Joseph Papp Public Theatre.

Mr. Wolfe's first language was Yiddish which afforded him the ability to perform effortlessly in both English and Yiddish. The show will be in Yiddish and English - you do not need to understand Yiddish to enjoy this remarkable performance.

There will be an ample, strictly kosher, dairy brunch served including bagels, bialys, spreads, fruit, pastries and more!

Where:

Community Synagogue (The 6th Street Shul)
325 East 6th Street
(Between 1st and 2nd Avenues)

Fees/Info:

Adults: \$35; seniors and students: \$32.

Registration required by

3 PM, February 3, 2011.

15% Discount for groups of 6 or more

TENEMENT MUSEUM

For full information on a series of programs at the Tenement Museum, access their website at
http://www.tenement.org/vizcenter_events.php

NEWS OF INTEREST ON OTHER SEPHARDIC COMMUNITIES

TUNIS (EJP)---Around 1,500 Jews live today in Tunisia where Tunisian President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, who has ruled the country since 1987, fled on Friday for Saudi Arabia after deadly protests over unemployment, high prices and lack of freedom of expression.

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi announced Friday that he has taken over the responsibilities of the president.

World leaders have called for free and fair elections in Tunisia, seeing the end of Ben Ali's 23-year rule as a chance for Tunisians to shape their own democratic future.

The Jewish community in Tunisia is still one of the largest in the Arab world but its numbers have sharply dropped from 100,000 on independence from France in 1956. Most of the Jews emigrated to France or Israel after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

There are several synagogues in the country together with kindergartens and schools.

The most famous synagogue is the Ghriba synagogue located in the village of Hara Sghira on the island of Djerba. The current building was constructed in late 19th or early 20th century, but the site is believed to have had a synagogue on it for the past 1,900 years.

Thousands of Tunisian Jews from around the world have for centuries made an annual pilgrimage to the Ghriba on the Jewish festival of Lag Ba'Omer.

Archival photo of synagogue
In Djerba



On April 11, 2002, just before the pilgrimage, a truck full of explosives was detonated close to the synagogue, killing 21 people of whom 14 were German tourists, five Tunisians and 2 Frenchmen, and wounding over 30. Al Qaeda had claimed responsibility.

Nearly half of the Jews who remain in Tunisia live in Djerba.

RESPONSES TO LAST NEWSLETTER

Response to the announcement of the passing of Jean Matza Rosenzweig from Dorothy Schulman:

"Wow! Jean was my father's cousin.

My mother and father would take us by train from the Bronx where we lived, to Brighton Beach to visit her and her family, her father, Uncle Joe and mother Aunt Ida. Lilli and her husband used to come over when we visited. I remember Hy having a great sense of humor. I remember Ronnie had red hair; so did I.

We would make the rounds of my father's other aunts and uncles: David and Esther Matza and to his cousin Yetta Behar, her husband and son Alan (Yetta's mother and father were my father's aunt and uncle.)

***Plenty of memories!
My deepest condolences to Jean's family."***

The mention of the Matsil Bar Mitzvah, also, brought back memories to Dorothy Schulman (from the Bechoropolos/David family from Ioannina):

"Bobbie, Eli and Alvin Matsil with their parents were visitors to my Aunt Esther and Uncle Matathia Nachman's home for Passover seders. Sydell grew up on my block - Webb Avenue, in the Bronx.

Mazel Tov to Sam Matsil's Bar Mitzvah. What a sweetie!"

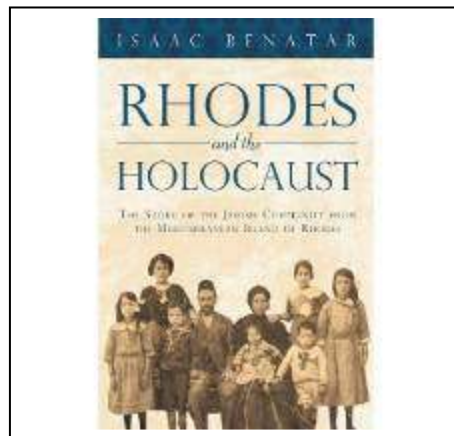
NEW BOOKS

"Rhodes and the Holocaust" by Isaac Benatar

Rhodes and the Holocaust is the story of "La Juderia," the Jewish community that once lived and flourished on Rhodes Island, the largest of the twelve Dodecanese islands in the Mediterranean Sea near the coast of Turkey. While the focus of the accounts of the Holocaust has for the most part been on the Jewish populations of Eastern and Middle Europe, little seems to be known of the events that affected those communities in Greece and the surrounding Aegean Islands during that time.

The author lost members of his own family in the Holocaust of the Jews of Rhodes.

NOTE: Kehila Kedosha Janina will be hosting the author for a booksigning on May 15th. If you wish to pre-purchase an autographed copy, contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.



In French (we do not sell this book but purchase information follows):

"Le-rabbin-de-Salonique" by Michele Kahn

This excellent book researches the controversial story of Rabbi Koretz, the controversial rabbi of Salonika during the Occupation. The book is available at: <http://www.bibliosurf.com/Le-rabbin-de-Salonique> (French to English).

The author is looking for a translator

INTERNET SITE OF INTEREST

Vincent Giordano on youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THNV67u-IH4>

Vincent Giordano's photo of Haim Ischaki in Ioannina



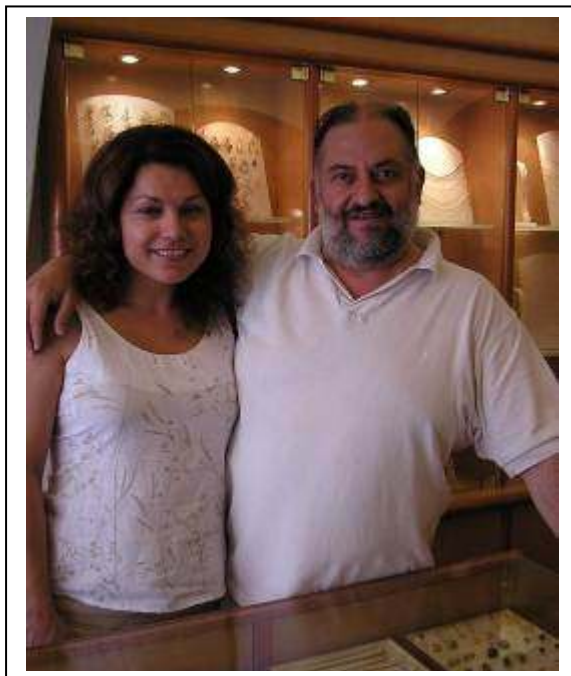
New on our website (www.kkjsm.org)

We now have photos of our marble 'founder's plaques' on our website.



ADDITIONAL REQUEST FOR HELP

We are looking for information on how to contact Isaak & Miriam Kokinos, who used to have a jewelry shop in Plaka in Athens



Finally, in memory of Iakov (Jacques) Strumsa, a survivor from Salonika, who recently passed away and was memorialized in our December 2010 e-newsletter (can be accessed on our website www.kkjsm.org) we are publishing this touching photo taken at Yad Vashem in 2000 when Iakov played his violin for us in the Valley of the Lost Communities.



Kehila Kedosha Janina e-newsletter: number 37: February 2011
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