March 2018 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

We wish Jews throughout the world a joyous Pessach. Do join us at Kehila Kedosha Janina for services (see attachment for schedule). We wish all our Greek-Orthodox Christian friends Kalo Pascha.

Pessach in Ioannina 1925

This newsletter, our 108th 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 close to 9,000 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 museum@kkjsm.org

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

________________________________________

Passings

First: we wish to publish a correction to the information given in our last e-newsletter on the passing of Esther Jeuda. Esther is survived by daughter Madeline Aron, 2 grandchildren & 4 great grandchildren. Her son, David M. Jeuda is deceased.

This past month we lost a beautiful lady, Sarah Besso, at the age of 99. Sarah’s son, Michael, would send Sarah our monthly e-newsletter in large print so that she could keep up with everything that was going on in our community. Sarah will be deeply missed by her family, loving friends and our extended community. Sarah Nachmouli Bessos was the widow of Jesse Besso of Ioannina and was born in Larissa December 20, 1918. She died in Connecticut on Tuesday, February 20th, 2018. She is mourned by her son Michael Besso, 6 grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, nephews and nieces and all who loved her.

_____________________________________

We mourn the passing of Lillian Kaye (Kalmikoff) at the age of 94. Lillian was the first born daughter of Samuel Nahoum. Samantha Lambert, her great niece, informed us of her passing and wanted us to know that the Kehila Kedosha Janina congregation was a huge part of their life. Lillian was the daughter of Samuel Nahoum and Esther Solomon Nahoum, the granddaughter of Nahoum and Leah (Lillian) Myoni Nahoum. The Nahoum family were early members of our community and lived at 132 Ludlow Street according to the 1915 census.
We mourn the passing of Harvey Winthrop, father of our Board member, Marc Winthrop and the widower of Esther Ackos Winthrop (a survivor of the Holocaust in Greece). Harvey Bernard Winthrop was born 5/21/29 and passed away on 2/13/2018. “He was known as the mayor of First Street in Duluth for his popularity and generosity. There is no way to count how many times he gave store credit (he owned a grocery) to those that couldn’t and wouldn’t pay.” He is survived by his three children and his grandchildren.

We mourn the passing of Jack Lichy, prominent New York Radiologist. Jack was a member of our New York community, his mother, Mollie Moses Lichy, a member of both the Moses and Genee families. His grandparents, Abraham Moses and Esther Genee Moses were both born in Ioannina, as were his great-grandparents, Mordechai (Marco) Moses & Malka (Molly) Moses and Avraam Genee and Estrea Negrin.
We mourn the loss of Mark Eliasoff, son of Sarah (Nina) Matza and Alex Eliasoff and brother to Sharon Laffer. Mark was the grandson of Rae Yohanan and Morris Eliasoff and great grandson of Haim Yohanan and Stamo Yohanan. He is mourned by a loving family and community.

Morris Eliasoff and Rae Yohanan Eliasoff

We mourn the passing of a member of our extended community, Alyssa Miriam Alhadeff, one of the victims of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in southern Florida. Alyssa was only 14 years old and aspired to become a lawyer or a professional soccer player. We mourn with the world the loss of this special young lady and all those around the world who are lost by senseless violence.

Simchas

We send a late congratulation to the Sidis family on the birth of Ron Sidis’ beautiful granddaughter, Eleanor Hart Sidis.
Dikoi Mas-Los Muestros

We were honored this past February when the Princeton University Hillel came to visit us. An alumni from Princeton, Mitch Julis, (Mitch’s family came from the Jewish communities of Ioannina, Arta and Preveza), and a member of our community, Ethan Marcus (son of our President, Marvin Marcus), helped organize a tour to Jewish Greece for a select group of students from the Hillel in Princeton. Joining the group at Kehila Kedosha Janina were Dimitris Dondicas, Director of Hellenic Studies at Princeton and Alexander Nehamas, Professor of Philosophy at Princeton. Our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, will be leading the tour from March 18-25.

Visitors

February was an interesting month with old and new friends visiting our museum.

Sam Gruber and Alexander Kitroeff

Our newest docent, Stella Bacolas and our visitor from Italy Spiros Koulouris
We are Excited to Introduce the Newest Members of Our Staff: Stella Bacolas and Isaac Choua

Stella is a member of our community (best known for dancing her way into our hearts at every musical event and all our street festivals). She was born in Larissa into the Yamali family, a traditional Sephardic Greek-Jewish family, and married into the Romaniote world.

Isaac Choua is a Master's Student in Medieval Jewish History with a concentration on pan-Sepharadi Studies at Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. Isaac is currently conducting research on the Middle East and North African Jewish response to the rise of Zionism and Pan-Arabism in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Isaac is involved in a number of diverse projects. He is working on reprinting the 1527 Aleppo Haggada with a colleague, with the goal of translating the entire text into Judeo-Arabic. He is also in the primary stages of launching the ‘Sepharadi Visionaries’ card series, a full set of cards that each depict an individual Sepharadi icon that has been forgotten to history. In addition, Isaac is leading the effort to launch a Sepharadi News Website/Forum in the coming months. He was recently awarded The American Sephardi Federation’s Broome and Allen 2018 Fellowship in recognition of his impressive academic accomplishments. Isaac’s position at Kehila Kedosha Janina will be in the capacity of Associate Museum Curator.
Past Events of Interest at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Purim

We had a packed house to read the Megillah and eat delicious Greek foods. In addition, Rabbi Nissim Eleneave led a class to learn traditional Purim songs in Greek, Hebrew, and Ladino. Listen to one of the Romaniote songs, Kina Glossa, online here.
Upcoming Events of Interest at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Mark Your Calendars!

Just in time for Pesach: Sunday, March 11th

Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum is honored to host the presentation of a newly released cookbook by our dear friend

JENNIFER ABADI
AUTHOR OF
Too Good to Passover

Sunday March 11th at 2:00pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street NYC

Too Good to Passover is a collection of Sephardic and Judeo-Arabic Seder Menus and Memories from Africa, Asia and Europe. Many from our own community!

Author will be present for book signing.
Special autographed books at $30
Refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP to museum@kkjsm.org
or 516-456-9336
Jane Mushabac will present her highly acclaimed book “His Hundred Years: A Tale”

Sunday April 8th

Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum
is honored to host the presentation of a fascinating book by

JANE MUSHABAC
(SHALACH MANOT)
AUTHOR OF
HIS HUNDRED YEARS: A TALE

Sunday April 8th at 2:00pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street NYC

“This fascinating book by gifted writer and storyteller Shalach Manot reflects on the life of an unusual Sephardic man, his childhood in Turkey, and later, his adaptation to life in America. We follow his adventures and come away with a deeper appreciation and understanding of the Sephardic immigrant experience during the 20th century.” — Marc D. Angel, author of The Crown of Solomon and Other Stories

Author will be present for book signing.
Special autographed books at $12
Refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP to museum@kkjsm.org
or 516-456-9336
Join us for a special Yom HaShoah on Sunday April 15th

Kehila Kedosha Janina invites you to our annual

YOM HA\SiHoA\iH
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY
CEREMONY
CELEBRATING
SOL KOFINAS

Sunday April 15th at 1:00pm
Kehila Kedosha Janina
280 Broome Street NYC

This Yom HaShoah, we are celebrating Sol Kofinas, our Shamash, and highlighting his story of being a hidden child in Athens during the Occupation of Greece. Sol and his brother Zino survived with the help of the Greek Orthodox Christian Hatzi family. As part of our Yom HaShoah commemoration, we are honored to show Sol Kofinas’ presentation at the Bronx Supreme Court, where he told his story of survival. Filmed and produced by Richard Solomon.

Yom HaShoah service begins at 1pm.
Video presentation and refreshments to follow.

Please RSVP to museum@kkjsm.org or 516-456-9336
Join us in welcoming talented Greek-Jewish artist Artemis Alcalay to New York City.

“I'll be glad to see you at the opening of the "Half Human" exhibition, curated by Mario Naves. March 3, 2018 at the Clemente Cultural Center 107 Suffolk St, New York, NY 10002.”

Click here for the digital catalogue for "Half Human,” and click here for the Facebook event page.

Best,
Artemis Alcalay
www.alcalay.com

See Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress, from the Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem at the Jewish Museum in New York City. Full exhibit details available here
SISTERHOOD INVITES YOU TO VIEW A FILM

“THE WOMEN’S BALCONY”

IN HEBREW WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

SUNDAY, MARCH 4, 2018 - 2 P.M. TO 4 P.M.

THE SEPHARDIC JEWISH CENTER OF FOREST HILLS – TEL INFO: 718-268-2100
67-67 108TH STREET, FOREST HILLS, NEW YORK 11375
FREE PARKING ON THE PREMISES - KINDLY USE THE PARKING LOT ENTRANCE - ADMISSION $5.00 - REFRESHMENTS COURTESY OF THE SYNAGOGUE SISTERHOOD – SHARE YOUR POINT OF VIEW
RSVP to esthertoledo312@gmail.com

ESTHER TOLEDO AND BRACHA AZACHI, CO-PRESIDENTS, SISTERHOOD
THE GREEK JEWISH & SEPHARDIC
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK
INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR

HOLIDAY CUSTOMS 101
A 5-PART LEARNING AND CULTURAL SERIES

3/7 - PESACH
3/21 - PESACH
4/11 - SHAVUOT
4/25 - SHAVUOT
5/9 - SHAVUOT

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT 6:30PM
299 PARK AVE (BET 48th AND 49th ST)

JOIN US AS WE LEARN SEPHARDIC AND ROMANIOTE
TRADITIONS FOR THE UPCOMING SPRING HOLIDAYS

CLASSES WILL BE LED BY A VARIETY OF GUEST TEACHERS,
INCLUDING YOUNG LEADERS FROM OUR COMMUNITY!

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

OPEN TO YOUNG ADULTS IN THEIR 20’S AND 30’S
RSVP REQUIRED: GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com

RSVP to GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com
Upcoming Events of Interest in Sephardic and Romaniote Communities in the USA

Los Angeles

CONGREGATION TIFERETH ISRAEL PRESENTS

A TASTE OF SEPHTHDARIC PESAH

LED BY SEPHTHDIC HERITAGE INTERNATIONAL, DC
WWW.SHINDC.ORG

FRIDAY, MARCH 9
Shabbat service at 6:30
Dinner and program at 7:30

RSVP BY MARCH 6: WWW.TINYURL.COM/TIMAR18
QUESTIONS? CALL TI AT 202-882-1605 OR EMAIL INFO@TIFERETH-ISRAEL.ORG
Sephardic Heritage International DC
SHIN DC Presents

Annual Purim & Nowruz Program
Raising Awareness of Persian Diversity & Its Expression

'SACRED SEVEN:
Tracing the Cultural Connections between Persian Nowruz & Jewish Purim'

Lecture by
Laurel Victoria Gray

Also Small Photo Exhibit 'Jews of Iran'
Haftseen Table • Persian Sweets
Pomegranate Cocktails/Drinks

Monday, March 19, 2018
6:30 - 8:30 PM

AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN
JEWISH MILITARY HISTORY
1811 R St NW DC

REGISTRATION ($8): http://www.shindc.org/reg/PurimNowruz2018

Laurel Victoria Gray is the founder of the award-winning Silk Road Dance Company and teaches
dance at George Washington University. Her scholarly articles have appeared in many
publications, including the Oxford University Press International Encyclopedia of Dance, the

Co-Sponsors with Sephardic Heritage International (SHIN) DC

National Museum of
American Jewish Military History

Aft b COMMITTEE

Dedicated to empowering
Iranian-American artists and art

Register here
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

An Untold Tale: The Holocaust in Greece Series Begins Jan. 14
Full article from the National Herald here

MILWAUKEE, WI – The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago announced a series of educational presentations to be held in Milwaukee throughout January, February, and March, 2018, focusing on the Holocaust in Greece and the heroic effort by the Greek Orthodox Church and citizens of Greece to shelter and hide Greece’s Jewish population from the invading Nazi forces during World War II.

Entitled An Untold Tale: The Holocaust in Greece, the series is co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Center of Milwaukee, the Nathan & Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church of Wauwatosa, and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church of Milwaukee.

One major presentation in this series will be on Archbishop Damaskinos of Blessed Memory, leader of the Greek Orthodox Church throughout Greece during World War II and unique in world history as the first Christian leader to formally protest the Holocaust during World War II. This presentation by His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago, will take place on March 20, during the week we honor the 75th Anniversary of his courageous Letter of Protest against the Holocaust.

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago encourages not only the Greek Orthodox parishioners of the Milwaukee area but the parishioners throughout the Metropolis to attend and participate in this outstanding series that recognizes and honors the heroic efforts of our fathers and grandfathers. All of these events are free and open to the Public. More information is available online at: www.holocaustcentermilwaukee.org.

The March event in the series, An Untold Tale: The Holocaust in Greece: Tuesday, March 20 at 7 PM
Location: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, 9440 W Congress St, Wauwatosa, WI

Lecture by Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos celebrating the Legacy of Archbishop Theophilos Damaskinos, recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations. This special lecture marks the 75th anniversary of the historic letter written by Archbishop Damaskinos protesting the Nazis’ treatment of the Jews in Greece. Archbishop Damaskinos was the archbishop of Greece during World War II and was a leader against the German policy of annihilating the Jews of Greece. He wrote letters against deportation policies; helped facilitate the creation of false identity papers; and encouraged clergy in Greece to hide, aid, and save Greek Jews. Instructor: His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, Chancellor of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago.
News from Jewish Greece
Thessaloniki

Mayor Yiannis Boutaris’ speech in Salonika:
THESSALONIKI, JANUARY 30, 2018 (Translation by Alex Moissis)

At some point in the summer of 1945, Buena Sarfati got out of her house. Jewish, thirty-years old, a Salonikian of many generations, Buena had just returned to Thessaloniki having escaped to the mountains, fighting first with the EDES group, then with the EAM before, finally, escaping to Palestine. Her brother Eliaou, her sister Reggina, her hundred-year-old grandmother Miriam, and her aunts did not have the same fortune. From the wagon of the train that carried them to Auschwitz-Birkenau, they saw for the last time the city they called “The Jerusalem of the Balkans,” on a spring day of 1943. A few hours after their arrival, they were lead to the crematoria along with thousands of others who shared their religion. Their life, along with the life of Jewish Thessaloniki, our very own Thes·saloniki, turned into ashes that were dispersed across the unininviting plains of Poland.

Were Buena’s relatives “martyrs?” Do we honor them by remembering them as such? Is it an honor for us to remember them this way? Today’s “Day of Remembrance of the Jewish Martyrs and Heroes of the Holocaust” invites us to consider these questions.

Buena’s relatives, like all the other Jews of Europe did not chose martyrdom. In other words, they did not choose consciously to sacrifice their lives for some higher ideal, their religious beliefs, or their ideology. They did not choose death, simply because they were not given the right to make this choice. And for this reason, they do not deserve to have us treating them today like saints, all those of us, Christians and Europeans, who for centuries often treated them like devils. They were humans and this is what they wanted to be. Very few, like Buena, were saved. Only a thousand Salonika Jews out of over 45 thousand. They survived the deportation, Auschwitz, the death march, the labor camps. They survived because they were able to withstand the unspeakable violence, the humiliations, the medical experiments, the rapes. And having survived, they returned to the city of their birth. As heroes? Far from it. Jews who had taken to the mountains, hidden in the cities, or escaped to Palestine, treated the men and women who returned from the camps as traitors, collaborators of the Germans or, for the women, as whores. The Christians on the other hand saw the survivors as “unmined pieces of soap” according to the report of an American reporter, a threat from a past that refused to die. Heroes, according to the local newspaper “ELLINIKOS VORRAS” were only those 5 young Jews who, after fighting with the Greek army in the Albanian Front and surviving the crematoria, fell in October of 1948 “heroically in the battles of Mt. Grammos and the other mountains, as they fought against the (communist) gang members.”

For Buena, martyrdom and heroisms were equally insignificant as she tried to pick up the pieces and rebuild her life from scratch. How would she have felt though when even the smallest of pleasures opened wide the wounds of the past? How unbearable must have been her pain when she discovered that the paper cone in which an Armenian street seller offered her on a Sunday afternoon her favorite dried chick peas, that paper cup was in fact a page ripped from her family’s Old Testament book?

This torn paper is Buena’s own past, but also our city’s past: a past that pursues and haunts us. It is a past that is silent, invisible, but present. It is the marble-laid front yard of the Agios Demetrios church, built from hundreds of tombstones from the city’s Jewish cemetery; destroyed by German and Greek Christian
municipality workers; material deemed as “having no value” according to the archeologist who oversaw the restoration, Stylianos Pelekanides; it is the Ahepa Hospital and the Aristotelian University that were constructed on top of one of Europe’s most important necropolises; it is the Jewish tombstones that were laid in front of the Army Headquarters and around the Royal Theater, those that the municipality of Thessaloniki used in November of 1948 for the construction of roads and sidewalks despite the strong protests of the Jewish community; it is those tombstones that were stacked for public view in front of the White Tower and the grounds of the International Expo even until December 1948. It is the silver purse, a family heritage, that Buena Sarfati was shocked to see being held in style by a Christian family friend. It is the family carpet that another surprised Jewish woman saw in the house of Christian family friends. It is the book that was found by accident, only a decade ago, in the library of the Thessaloniki Men’s Charity Brotherhood before it was returned to the Jewish Museum, an act that honors the Brotherhood.

Who mourned in 1945 their lost neighbors? What monuments were raised? Which ceremonies were held? Only the community, decimated and in rags fought to restore its existence and to mourn its dead. The city, the society, the entire country turned a blind eye. They hid behind their finger. They pretended that they did not know what had happened, who did it, who assisted, who protected when others, many tore down buildings, burned, looted, and occupied the spaces and the goods of the many absent and the few present. Mourning in any case concerned individuals. It took almost twenty years, we reached 1962 before a memorial for the victims was created. Where? In the new Jewish cemetery, as if the issue only concerned the members of the city’s Jewish community. And when, 35 years later a monument was finally realized in a public space, this was exiled to the edges of the city center to a location that was barely visible. And when this monument was finally moved to its natural place, Eleftherias (Liberty) Square, this was greeted more with surprise than with satisfaction. We had to reach the year 2004 for the Parliament of Greece to establish by a unanimous vote the Day of Remembrance. We had to reach the year 2011 until an equivalent day of remembrance existed in our city and the year 2014 for the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki to have a monument that recalls the destruction of the cemetery. Perhaps the day is not too far when we will see a similar votive plaque in the yard of Agios Demetrios, the “Agios Demetrios of the dead Jews,” the real Jewish mausoleum of Thessaloniki.

The municipality of Thessaloniki is increasingly aware of the weight of history that the city is called upon to lift. Now that the survivors leave us and pass the baton of remembering to all of us, the municipality intends to continue and to transform silence into word, a comforting word, but also a courageous word. We want the restoration of Eleftherias Square and the Holocaust Museum to become a new axis for remembrance in the city, the start and the conclusion for the great, multi-cultural, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish itinerary of Thessaloniki. Eleftherias Square is a place of democracy, where in 1908 all residents of Thessaloniki, Muslims, Christians, and Jews, celebrated together the declaration of the ottoman constitution. It is also a place of uprooting and emigration, the place where in 1922-1923 the Muslim old residents of Thessaloniki departed and where the new, the refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontus arrived. And it is finally a place of torture, of public humiliation of the Jews of Thessaloniki, where on the Black Sabbath of July 9th 1943, the Germans abused in front of the eyes of Greek Christians 9 thousand male Jews.

It is a difficult location this square. It reminds us that the Holocaust in Thessaloniki is the heaviest link in a long chain of violence and enslavement. It reminds us that its Jews were a core piece of a multicolored mosaic, that the “Jerusalem of the Balkans” was also the “Babel of the Mediterranean.” We wish Eleftherias Square to be a place where the difficult, traumatic memories of all residents of this town do not compete one against the other, but instead coexist harmoniously: they will interact in a lively manner and they will promote a culture of coexistence and mutual respect so that the heavy legacy of the past becomes a springboard for a
better future. The new Eleftherias Square will symbolize the pride of all residents of Thessaloniki for their city, its past, its present and its future.

A few hundred meters further down, the Holocaust Museum will symbolize our shame. For what happened, for what we did, and especially for what we couldn’t or didn’t want to do, those of us locals and refugees, right-wing and left-wing, during and after the war. The Museum is a debt for the city but also a personal gamble for me. It is a debt to its Jews, as residents of Thessaloniki, Greeks, and Sephardim. The Museum extends beyond the city and Greece and reinstates Thessaloniki as the metropolis of the Sephardic Jews of the Mediterranean. It aspires to tell the unknown history of the Holocaust of the Jews of the Mediterranean and the Balkans, the Sephardic Jews of Thessaloniki and Corfu, of Chania and Patras, but also of Belgrade, Skopje, Monastir, Sarajevo, Trieste, and Livorno. It hopes to transform the torn page of Buena Sarfati into historical knowledge. To highlight a portion of the Holocaust that is often ignored due to the emphasis in Central and Eastern Europe and in this manner to establish Thessaloniki as a place of remembrance but also an internationally acclaimed center for research and study. And finally, it aspires to be a place where citizens from around the globe, especially youth, will learn about the outcome when human rights are violated.

Many ask us why. Why this delayed emphasis in the history and the memory of Salonika’s Jews? The vandalizing of the Holocaust memorial only last Sunday and the arson that destroyed the historic residence of a Jewish and Muslim Salonikian woman would suffice as an answer, I would think. However, personally, I prefer to answer by paraphrasing Primo Levi. “Here there is no why,” the German guard replied to him when Levi arrived in Auschwitz. “Here there is no why” I could also answer to those who are perplexed by my insistence. The Holocaust of the Jews of Europe, the Holocaust of our own Jews, tests the limits of reason. And the only way we can deal with it is by accepting that it will always be a part of what we are as residents of Thessaloniki, as Greeks, as Europeans: A torn page written in unfamiliar text, a truth that still awaits to be deciphered.

-----------------------------------------------

**Ioannina**

Our own Nina Negrin, survivor from Ioannina, was interviewed by a Greek Newspaper on her experiences. Full article in Greek [here](#).

Nina displays her number tattooed on her arm (77160). Nina is now over 90 years old and one of the few living survivors in Ioannina (and in Greece). Nina was 18 years old at the time she was rounded up along with the other Jews of Ioannina on March 25th, 1944. Nina related the events to the reporter. “The Germans knocked on our door and told us to go to the molo (walkway on the Lake). My family was large. We were 60 people. We left our homes and went to the molo. From Ioannina they brought us to Larissa, where we stayed for 10 days. They took our jewelry there and whatever we had of value. In a full train, they took us to Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was the last time we saw our parents, our brothers, our sisters, our cousins and our people. They were all lost in the crematoria of Auschwitz. They sent me to work. It was harsh work. “At the end they sent us to other camps and finally to Mauthausen.” Nina was a witness to many of the events at Auschwitz, including the attempt to blow up the crematoria. She was finally liberated by the Americans.
Volos

In Volos, on February 4th, in conjunction with International Commemoration of the Holocaust, the President of the Republic of Greece, Prokopis Pavlopoulos, addressed the packed audience, which included the Metropolitan Bishop of Volos, Demetrios, a representative from the Prefecture of Volos and members of the Jewish Community of the city, along with Ambassadors from both Germany and Israel. The event involved the laying of a wreath at the city’s Holocaust Memorial and the lighting of candles in memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

The President of the Republic started his speech with saying that “humanity” was lost in the Holocaust, enveloped in the flames of the crematoria in Auschwitz. He also said that it was not enough to honor the memory of those lost but, also to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust never disappears.

Anti-Nazi Day in Volos

With the slogan "Nazism, Never Again, Holocaust, Never Again" on February 2nd, in Volos, a demonstration against Nazism was held at the Church of the Ascension, the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias.

The central theme of the event, which was dedicated to the ten year anniversary of the passing Archbishop Christodoulos was "Orthodox Saints: Clergy and People in the War, the German occupation and the Holocaust."

The event was attended by the Secretary General of Religious Education, Mr. George Kalatzis, and the distinguished German anti-Nazi Hans Rainer Hess, grandson of Rudolf Hess and crowds.

The first speaker was the Metropolitan Bishop of Volos who spoke about "Christian humanism towards neo-Nazi provocation."
Alexandroupolis

The decision was made by the Municipality of Alexandroupolis to create a monument in memory of the 150 Jews of the city who were rounded up on March 3rd and taken to German concentration camps, where 146 of them were executed.

As noted by Vangelis Lampakis, the Mayor of Alexandroupolis, this was initiated by the proposal of the Bishop of Alexandroupolis, Bishop Anthimos of Alexandroupolis. The Mayor noted that a monument exists in many cities and it is important that Alexandroupolis have such a monument. The mayor said that the cost and details of the form of the monument will be discussed in another meeting. However, the space for its construction is "locked" and will be in the forecourt of St. Nicholas. Nick Tzanidis noted that we honor the memory of the victims and to strive that such crimes, such as the Holocaust and the genocide against the Pontians, never be repeated again.

Participation of the First Vice President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece (KISE) in the 9th European Forum on Antisemitism

On 1 February 2018 in Berlin the 9th European Forum on Anti-Semitism organized by the Office of the American Jewish Committee (American Jewish Committee - AJC) in Berlin and the Foundation Friedrich Ebert (FES). The Forum was attended by 45 representatives of Jewish Communities and Organizations from 25 countries, and had a strong presence of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) senior executives and members of the European Union Bureau of Jewish Students (EUJS). Greek Jewry was represented by First Vice President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities (KISE) Benjamin Albala, who participated as a speaker at the fourth and last session on "Disappearing taboos against anti-Semitism?" He analyzed the current state of anti-Semitism in Europe in general, but more specifically in Greece.

The themes of the three other sessions were "The rise of populist right-wing parties and the impact on European Jewish communities," "The continuing challenges to Jewish traditions and the protection of Jewish life" and "the means to combat anti-Semitism."

General conclusion of the Forum was that anti-Semitism continues to rise across Europe and in some countries (Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, etc.) concern. The efforts of the International Jewish Organizations, and other European bodies does not appear to reduce the anti-Semitic phenomena, most of which are limited to Jewish monuments vandalized with graffiti and expressions of hatred against Jews (hate speech).

It was announced that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is preparing a manual with educational instructions for addressing antisemitism. Particular reference was made to the value of adopting and accepting the "Operational Definition of Anti-Semitism" that has been adopted by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) and the importance to tackle anti-Semitism. So far eight countries have adopted the definition and its use in such cases. It is suggested that every effort be made for the immediate adoption of the Definition by the Greek Parliament.

Documentary Film Festival in Thessaloniki
March 2-11, 2018
Full details [here](#)
News from the Balkan Jewish World

Bulgaria

WJC Petition Signed by 175,000 and Calling for Ban on Neo-Nazi March Delivered to Bulgarian PM
Full WJC article here.

Feb 2, 2018 — This morning, World Jewish Congress (WJC) CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer met with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov and handed him a petition requesting that the Bulgarian government issue an administrative ban on a neo-Nazi march scheduled for February 13. The annual neo-Nazi march in Sofia has been held since 2003, with dark-clad demonstrators mounting a torch-lit parade in honor of Hristo Lukov, leader of the Union of Bulgarian National Legions. Lukov was a major backer of the introduction of anti-Semitic laws. Lukov supported the deportation of 11,343 Jews from Bulgarian-controlled territories to their deaths Treblinka. The WJC petition calls on the government to use administrative action to enforce a ban on the march, which continues to occur each year despite efforts to sanction it.

Montenegro

For Some Balkan Muslims, a Jewish False Messiah Inspires Interfaith Understanding
Full JTA article here

ULCINJ, Montenegro (JTA) — Throughout 1988, Jusuf Lika had debilitating migraines and sensory disruptions that doctors blamed on the chemicals in the darkroom where he had worked. A man in his twenties in what was then still Yugoslavia, Lika consulted some of that country’s best medical experts, but none could help him, citing an irreversible buildup of toxins in his body.

“My world fell apart: As a young man I heard I would be a disabled person,” said Lika, a Muslim man of Albanian descent who runs a music school that he founded in his native city of Ulcinj, situated on the coast near the Montenegro-Albanian border.

But then a friend advised him to place in his bedroom a jar of earth from what many believe is the Ulcinj grave site of Sabbatai Zevi. A Turkey-born 17th-century Jewish eccentric, Zevi was regarded by followers as the Messiah — that is, before his conversion under duress to Islam, when he became known among Jews as perhaps history’s second most famous false messiah. Two weeks after taking his friend’s advice, Lika was cured of his illness, he told JTA during a recent interview in his office. “I am not a superstitious man,” Lika said. “I don't know whether I was cured because of this, I’m just telling you what happened.”

Whatever the cause for Lika’s recovery, it reflects the lasting reverence for Sabbatai Zevi by some Muslims in Montenegro and beyond. Sabbatai is one figure in a tangle of customs, secrets and traditional beliefs belonging to a regional identity that is rooted in mysticism, tolerance and religious cross fertilization.

Regarded by many Jews as a mere historical footnote, Sabbatai Zevi is nonetheless “a symbol for some Montenegrins and Albanians of their distinct identity as well as an interfaith and intercultural bridge to the West and Judaism,” according to Eliezer Papo, a scholar on Balkan Jewish history at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel.
Especially for the secretive Bektashi Shiite sect, Sabbatai Zevi is “an element through which to express their genuine philosemitism, to ‘market themselves’ to the West and to some extent to also draw tourism to Ulcinj and the region,” Papo said. “But I wouldn’t say Zevi is integral to the religious identity of the region. It’s a recent addition.”

The place that Lika believes is Sabbatai Zevi’s grave is owned by the Mani family — a clan of business owners headquartered in Ulcinj’s center. Under the shade of olive and carob trees, the sepulcher is kept closed inside a yard that few visitors dare trespass. Lika stays outside as he shows a journalist a window looking inside the small sepulcher, which has a dark and carpeted interior.

In Jewish history, Sabbatai Zevi — a savant in Jewish texts whose erratic behavior fits the symptoms of a bipolar personality disorder — was a significant figure. By the time of his conversion in 1666, he had developed a huge following across Europe. It split established communities like the one in Amsterdam, dividing rabbis and families in a heated fight for the future of Judaism. Some credit the spiritual upheaval over the “Sabbateans” with the development of the fervently mystical Hasidic movement in the 18th century.

Sabbatai Zevi’s legacy has had a long-lasting effect on the region as a whole, including on the Dönmeh of Turkey — a society of crypto-Jews who for centuries presented themselves as Muslims but continued to consider themselves Jewish, with Sabbatai as their prophet. Today, only a handful of families that describe themselves as descended from Dönmeh exist in Turkey — where they are still the subject of much distrust and conspiracy theories.

Sabbatai Zevi died in 1676 in Ulcinj, where he had been exiled by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire for continuing to practice some elements of Judaism after his forced conversion. This interfaith identity in recent decades has become increasingly appealing to liberal Muslims in the region, according to Papo. In 2015, Papo chaired an international conference about Sabbatai Zevi in Ulcinj. (It was the first time in the city’s modern history that it hosted a conference on Judaism, although the nearby city of Budva annually hosts the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress’ Mahar conference of Balkan Jewish communities.)

Baba Mondi, the spiritual leader of the Bektashi sect, calls Sabbatai Zevi a “dervish” — a Farsi word for a deeply spiritual Muslim (and in some rare cases Jew) who ascetically devotes his life to serving Allah.

“He is a dervish to Jews and he is a dervish to Muslims, and a bridge for our sister religions to meet on,” added Baba Mondi, who is based in Albania. He works at the world center of his liberal sect — a magnificent domed structure in Tirana with 12 arches and jade-colored interior walls.

Elements of the Bektashi tradition and faith may have played a role in the rescue of hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust in Albania and Montenegro, a rare case of popular defiance of the Nazi occupation. Whereas Sabbatai Zevi is a well-known and popular figure in Ulcinj, there is some dispute about where exactly he is buried in this drab and chaotic city with a beautiful beachfront and few hotels.

Many locals believe Sabbatai Zevi’s remains rest inside the sepulcher owned by the Mani family — whom some locals, including Lika, believe are themselves Jewish because of their relative wealth and their name, which is common among Turkish Jews. Alma Mani, a woman in her 20s, was the only member of the family who agreed to talk to JTA. Rolling her eyes when asked about the sepulcher, she insisted the grave inside is not Sabbatai Zevi’s but of “some ancient ancestor.” She declined to say anything about the family’s origin or pose for a photograph.

Papo, the Ben Gurion University historian, also doubts that Sabbatai Zevi is buried inside the sepulcher. Followers of Sabbatai Zevi wrote that he did not want to be buried in a Muslim cemetery. But he could not be buried in a Jewish one either because of his conversion, Papo said. Sabbatai Zevi’s followers also wrote that he is buried “adjacent to the sea,” whereas the Mani grave site is more than a mile away from the beach. Papo’s research has led him to an alternative location for Sabbatai Zevi’s grave, near the seaside fortress where Sabbatai lived out his final years and where he likely had his study.
The fortress’ tower has a work space that archaeologists now use to prepare exhibits from the site. Mysteriously, that space has two niches, one featuring two Stars of David and another adorned with a painting of a snake descending from a tree. Whereas Stars of David were commonly used in Islamic decorations, the snake painting is much stronger indication of Sabbatai Zevi’s connection to the place. It corresponds with Sabbatai’s unique interpretation of the story of the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis, Papo said.

“The followers of Zevi who became Muslims believed the messiah is destined to help us off the tree of knowledge of good and evil and onto the tree of life,” Papo said. In Judaism and early Christianity, he added, there are strong ties between the snake and the concept of messiah. Additionally, Sabbatai Zevi’s followers called him “Ilan” – Hebrew for tree. Seen together, these elements reinforce the hypothesis that the snake painting is “a distinct Sabbatai Zevi symbol,” Papo said.

The same symbol features on headstones of Zevi followers in Istanbul. As for Sabbatai Zevi’s burial place, Papo traces it to a hill near the fortress. Fittingly for the resting place of a man who personifies the concept of interfaith influences, the hill is sandwiched between what used to be a mosque and a church with a Christian cemetery. “If you ask me, that’s where this Jew is buried,” Papo said.

Cyprus

**Jews in Cyprus - A Conference of Memory and Friendship**

Dedicated to the 2,000 Evreiopoulos born in Cyprus in the three years 1946-49

By Marios Demetriou

Even closer to one another, brought the peoples of Cyprus and Israel, the university community of the two countries, the two-day conference on the historical aspects of the Jewish presence in Cyprus and the Greek area until 1948, and the creation of the State of Israel, which took place at the building of the University of Cyprus Archeology Research Unit in Nicosia on 1 and 2 February 2018. The conference was organized by the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Cyprus and was conducted - in English - supported by the Israeli Embassy in Nicosia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus and with the participation of eminent academic and university researchers from Cyprus, Israel, Greece, ETAN and France. The organizing committee was Yossi Ben-Artzi, Professor of History at the University of Haifa, Giorgos Kazamias, Associate Professor of the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Cyprus and Dr. Evangelia Mathiopoulou, Doctor of History, Deputy Secretary of the Historical Archive of Bank of Cyprus. The conference was essentially divided into two parts. He dealt, on the one hand, with the very unknown to many, the presence of Jewish, rural communities, during the British colonial rule in Cyprus at the end of 19th century and early 20th century. On the other hand, the conference dealt with the also unknown aspect of the incarceration of 52,000 Jewish Holocaust survivors from European countries in camps - detention camps, in Karakolos Famagusta and Dhekelia-Xylotympos, in the three years 1946-1949, as Cyprus was a station on the road of Jewish migratory flows to Palestine / Israel. The conference presented positions on economic, social and political situation of the Jews in Cyprus and the Modern Greek world, from the 19th the century until 1948, with emphasis on relations with non-Jews, to phenomena of anti-Semitism or pro-Semitism, in Greece and Cyprus and in Jewish economic activity in both countries.

The event opened with a brief welcome, the Rector of the University of Cyprus, Konstantinos Christofides, who stressed that the conference is part of the Jewish Studies Project, under the direction of the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Cyprus, "a dynamic and vigorous of our young University, from which we have great expectations," he said. He welcomed the progress of the Program, which began in 2013, "with the active encouragement and support of the Embassy of Israel", as he stressed, thanking him at that point, namely, the former Israeli Ambassador to Nicaragua, Michael Harari. He stated that the Program "is a bridge that unites the
peoples of the two Republics, Israel and Cyprus" and that "as the Rector of the University and an academic, but also as a citizen of Cyprus, deeply believes in cultivating a deeper understanding of the problems and concerns of the two peoples. When one understands the problems we face, it is easier to find solutions that are mutually beneficial." Rector Christofides concludes: "With the agreement of the organizers, I would like to dedicate this academic event to the approximately 2,000 Jewish children born in Cyprus, British prisoners of arrest, children born of parents who were trying to rebuild the their lives after the terror of the Holocaust." The reason was followed by Ambassador A. Kakouris, Director of the Department of the Middle East and North Africa of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who described the program of Jewish Studies as "very interesting" and pointed out that "in recent years,

---

**Plan to Save Europe’s Synagogues Receives High-Profile Backing**

Read full Guardian article [here](#)

---

**Announcing Two New Publications: One in Greek and one in Greek and Hebrew**

**Publication of the Shulchan Aruch (Jewish Code of Law) in Greek**

**Publication of a Hebrew-Greek Dictionary**

---

**New Items for Sale at KKJ**

Contact us at [museum@kkjsm.org](mailto:museum@kkjsm.org) for prices and info for ordering
The March bulletin presents a unique opportunity to wish everyone both a "Happy Purim" and "Hag Pesah Sameah v’Kasher – have a happy and kosher Pesah – because both holidays fall or begin the same month: Purim on March 1st, and Pesah on March 30th (Seder night).

However, this rather technical rarity in the calendar provides an excellent opportunity to review much deeper connections between the two holidays. In fact, our Sages saw many significant similarities between Purim and Pesah on spiritual and temporal levels. At first glance, however, ostensibly at least, the two holidays could not be more different: Purim is in Adar, the last month of the Jewish calendar, while Pesah is in Nissan, the first month; Purim symbolizes a totally physical salvation from physical destruction of Jews, with the Jews taking a very active part in their own salvation, while Pesah celebrates our physical freedom from slavery and our spiritual birth as a nation, by the direct hand of G-d, while the Jewish people basically remained passive and totally dependent on supernatural miracles.

However, as we begin to check similarities, we see a different picture. First and foremost, many are unaware of the fact, or simply forget, that the events of the Purim story actually occur in the month of Nissan, and during Pesah! Haman’s drawing of lots to determine when the Jews can be annihilated is held on the 13th of Nissan, while Adar is the month determined as being when this horrible deed was to be perpetrated. Second, the original "Fast of Esther" as mentioned in the Megillah, was 3 days long: the 13th, 14th and 15th of Nissan, with the latter being Pesah, which of course is never a fast-day. But due to the severity and mortal danger Jews were facing, we can say that, in so many words, Pesah was "cancelled" that year by Esther’s fasting and call for repentance and prayer.

And despite the differences in the circumstances of each holiday's "redemption", our Sages insisted that they must be linked. In fact, when discussing the Jewish "leap year", and the decision was made to add another month of Adar, our Sages determined that Purim must always be celebrated in the second Adar, because of its closer proximity to Pesah: As explained in the Babylonian Talmud (Megillah 6b), in the name of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, it is “preferable to juxtapose [one] redemption to [the other] redemption.” In other words, the two redemptions – the Exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt and the salvation of the Jewish people from the genocidal designs of Haman in the story of Purim – are naturally related, and require commemoration within the same period of time.

But how are these events related? While Pesah celebrates our redemption from Egypt, G-d’s ultimate goal was to give us the Torah and bring us to the Land of Israel, where we began to live natural lives, implementing the full complement of Torah law that pertains to every area of life. However, the age of open, supernatural miracles of the Egyptian experience, coupled with the passivity of that redemption, was a distant memory, and certainly not a practical guide for modern life. Rather, we built our religious and national home with very temporal means, though belief and worship of G-d, and the presence of the Holy Spirit, were part and parcel of our 'natural' existence.

Then came the destruction of the First Temple, which overnight turned the Jewish nation into helpless refugees, humbled, degraded, persecuted, and homeless. But instead of arousing themselves against the exile,
and to try and return home in accordance with the revealed prophecies, we became complacent, and soon embedded ourselves in the Babylonian and then Persian exiles.

Our Sages, then, saw the Purim story as a wake-up call and realization that exile is meant to be a punishment – though temporary – and that G-d’s ultimate plan is for the Jewish people to find their fulfillment only in the land of Israel. But now, as illustrated in the Megillah, G-d added a new element, which was to help bring about the redemption from destruction in a concealed and even almost undetectable manner, as well as force our leaders and the people to take an active part in their own redemption. We had to demonstrate a desire to seize our own destiny and take the initiative in bringing about the Purim salvation, which is what Mordechai and Esther did, though it was no easy task. Once we realized our share of responsibility for what befell us and initiated our own plan of action, G-d began to intervene, albeit "behind the scenes", as it were. Therefore, having Purim and Pesah celebrated in close proximity to one another was seen as a basic spiritual necessity, so that we would always understand and juxtapose the two redemptions, and learn from both.

There are many more deep and fascinating commonalities between Purim and Pesah, but no more room to write! Suffice to say that it is no coincidence that both holidays are celebrated only one month apart, and perhaps the fact that this year they fall literally at opposite ends of the same month, may inspire everyone to delve further into this fascinating topic.

Happy Purim and Pesah to one and all!

---

**Research**

Professor Hans-Joachim Lang continues his research to find the stories behind the names of 86 Jewish prisoners who were murdered at Camp Natzweiler-Struthof so that their bones could be used for an anatomical presentation. You can access the information and names [here](#).

Please have a look at the 86 names of this gravestone on the Jewish Cemetery of Strasbourg; 45 of these Jewish men and women were citizens of Thessaloniki before their deportations in spring 1943 to Auschwitz. They have been selected in June 1943 by two anthropologists, deported to the Camp Natzweiler-Struthof and murdered in the gas chamber there in August 1943. German scientists were the contractors because they were planning a race policy exhibition at the German “Reichsuniversität Strasbourg”. The plan was not realized.

The mortal remains were buried in the cemetery after the liberation - anonymous because the names were unknown. Several years ago, after intensive researches, I was able to identify all the names (hence the names on the gravestone). To give to the names also faces I am looking for biographical details. I have found some information about more than a half of the 86 victims. For that I had the help of survivors and their families all over the world.

The search is complicated, especially about the Greek victims. The names alone are no help. So I need the support of relatives.

Hans-Joachim Lang

[info@die-namen-der-nummern.de](mailto:info@die-namen-der-nummern.de)
Looking for Help on Information of these Burials in the Athens Jewish Cemetery

Iosef Shemuel Megir (Meir)
Age 57
Born in Ioannina
Died in Chalkis
Tortured by the Germans
January 31, 1944

Solomon Avraam Miskatel
Age 51
Murdered by the Germans
Sept. 3, 1944

Leon Frederiki Koen
Born 1913
Murdered by the Germans
May 3, 1944

We thank Iakov Schiby for these photos
We Need Help in Identifying Those in the Following Photos taken in Ioannina
Looking For Help in Identifying Men in this Photo taken on the Albanian Front
Specifically Looking for any Saltiels in the Photo

Please email information to us at museum@kkjsm.org
New picture in our collection from Neil Cohen Silber

Finally, we thank Iakov Schiby for these beautiful photos of Meggilot Esther from Thessaloniki
So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

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

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