



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

November 2009 e-mail newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Greetings from the little synagogue on Broome Street. Certainly, our founding fathers never would have thought that this unpretentious, humble structure would now be acting as a mecca for those interested in Greek Jewry. Such is the wonder of the age we live in and the miracle of the internet. For this we are so grateful. Our e-newsletters are now read by thousands around the world. Our friends are of all ages. They speak many languages. We are bound together by our shared concerns. We are committed in our support for Greek Jews wherever they may be living---here in the United States, on the soil of Greece, in Israel and throughout Europe, South America and Australia. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

This newsletter, our 22st, 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).

This newsletter is dedicated to the David family from Ioannina Greece, a family that in many ways tells the story of Yanniote Jewry in Greece and here in the United States. See the article below on the David family.

We mourn the passing of Colonel Harry Belil, a man who took great pride in being an American and a Greek Jew. The Belils were one of the original families affiliated with Kehila Kedosha Janina and both Harry and his brother Eli were Bar Mitzvahed at the Kehila, living around the corner at 140 Allen Street. We extend our sympathies to the family of Harry Belil.

Museum News

Our Museum was closed for the High Holidays and, in addition, on the 18th of October, for the Pasha Annual Fall Weekend in the Catskills.

The Pashas

The Pashas is a social organization created by Greek Jews of the Lower East Side in 1957. As many moved out of the neighborhood in the 1950's the organization was created to assure that the culture they so loved would not die. Dinner dances are held twice a year (one in New York and one in Florida) and, in addition, at least one weekend in the mountains. The Pashades may be getting older and fewer in number, but the camaraderie is still strong and the dance floor still full. If you are interested in becoming a member, contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net and we will pass your information on.



First Pasha Annual Dinner Dance: 1958



Pasha Weekend October 16-18, 2009



The David Family Reunion

On October 25th, Kehila Kedosha Janina was honored to host the reunion of the descendants of Elia & Simchu David. Over 60 gathered for the reunion, an event that, for many, exceeded their expectations. As Carole Lurie so elegantly put it, "with much love and appreciation for the day, the connections, the love & the impression left on my soul."



In 1848, in Ioannina, David ben Elia married Simchu. They had 9 children, producing many illustrious Yanniotas, among them the poet Joseph Eliyia and the author, Eftihia Nachmias Nachman. Many of David and Simchu's children and grandchildren perished in the Holocaust. Others, fortunately, had found their way to New York in the early part of the 20th century, marrying (for the most part) into other Yanniotas families. The family tree of David Elia and Simchu branches out to include many of the Yanniotas families. Too many of the leaves were torn and shredded in the Holocaust. In sponsoring the reunion and creating the accompanying exhibit, it was our hope to give faces to many who were lost and, hopefully, reconnect distant branches to this important tree. The exhibit will soon appear on our website.

We succeeded in connecting a severed branch, that of Malkoula, a daughter of Elia whose family survived the Occupation of Greece, physically living in Albania. Dr. Anna Koen, an authority on Albanian Jewry, attended the reunion and emotionally greeted her new cousins.

Our research continues. We know that there are family members in Israel and Greece, along with a branch of the family in France. We are now looking for descendants of Joyia David who married a Cohen in Constantinople (before 1895) and had at least one son (named Nissim) and a grandson Zozo who became Director of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, and the descendants of Refkoula (who married Ezra Levy) and had 5 sons (Nissim, Avraam, Jeudas, Isaac and Iakov) and 2 daughters (Simcho & Mazalto). In addition, Elias Matza, the son of Mazalto & David Matza, survived the Holocaust and there is a branch of the family we would love to reconnect. They include Nika Matza who married Zas Cohen, Minos Matzas, Manolis Matzas and Elda Matzas Alkala.

Upcoming Museum Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Sunday, November 8th: Opening of Wedding Exhibit: 2:00 PM

Join us as we celebrate our newest exhibit: *Weddings: Something Old, Something New*

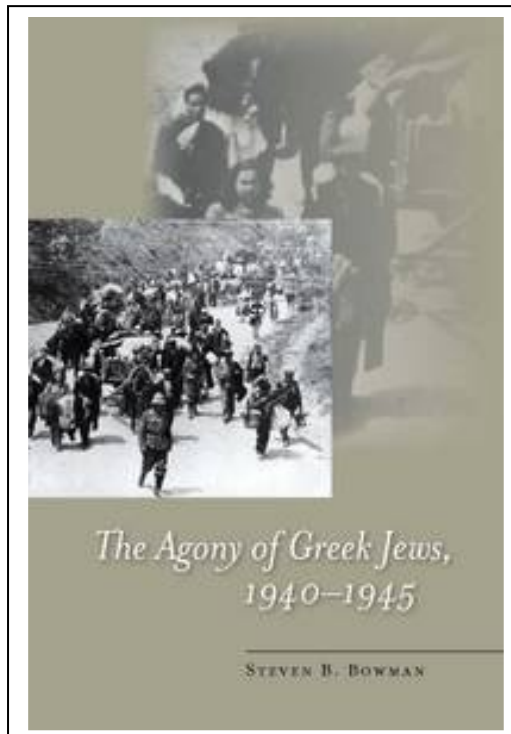
Our exhibit includes hundreds of photos of weddings from our community, some from Greece, most from the community in New York. Memorabilia, artifacts, wedding dresses, ketubbahs, invitations, all reminders of this momentous event in a young couple's life.

These delightful little girls, found in the album of Mildred Barouch Coffina, still remain unidentified.



November 29, 2009: book signing by Professor Steven Bowman: 12:00

Professor Bowman will be on hand to sign (and discuss) his latest book, "The Agony of Greek Jewry." One of the foremost contributors to the story of Greek Jewry, Professor Bowman never ceases to enlighten.



Sephardic News in the United States

We are saddened to report this unfortunate instance of violence at Adat Yeshurun Valley Sephardic synagogue in LA

Thursday, October 28, 2009

Events in Los Angeles Mandate Heightened Vigilance

At 6:19 a.m. (PDT, 9:19 EDT) Thursday two men were shot at the Adat Yeshurun Valley Sephardic synagogue in the 12000 block of Sylvan Street. The two men had just parked their respective cars in an underground garage and were approaching the entrance of the building for morning prayers when they were shot by the gunman. The victims are in stable/good condition and assisting with the investigation. Police are reviewing recordings from the synagogue's closed-circuit cameras. The identity and motivation of the shooter will be subject to the ongoing investigation.

Leon Saltiel speaks at the United Nations

We are honored to reprint the speech of Leon Saltiel at the United Nations. Leon, the nephew of David Saltiel, President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, presently works for the United Nations in Geneva. The following speech was delivered on September 30, 2009. Bravo Leon!

Syria's Sheltered Nazi

UN Watch Oral Statement

Delivered by Leon Saltiel, 30 September 2009

Agenda Item 9: Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance, follow-up and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

"Thank you Mr. President.

The 2001 Durban Declaration against racism recalled that "the Holocaust must never be forgotten." It urged all states "to end impunity and prosecute those responsible for crimes against humanity and war crimes." The Durban Review Conference further urged states "to combat impunity for crimes of genocide."

In this regard, we recall that during the Second World War, one Nazi SS officer orchestrated the mass deportation and murder in gas chambers of 136,000 European Jews, from France, Slovakia, Austria and my native Greece. Among the victims were more than 40 members of my family from the Greek city of Thessaloniki.

Their crime? They were born Jews.

The name of this Nazi officer is Alois Brunner. He remains one of most wanted Nazi war criminals. Unlike his superior officer, Adolf Eichmann, Brunner was never caught, and never made to answer for his crimes against humanity.

Mr. President,

Alois Brunner is wanted by Interpol and by many governments, including Germany,

Austria and Slovakia, to face justice for his crimes against humanity. French courts convicted him in absentia to death several times, the first one being in 1954.

In a 1987 telephone interview to the Chicago Sun Times, he stated: "All of them deserved to die because they were the devil's agents and human garbage. I have no regrets and would do it again."

Mr. President,

This interview was conducted from 7 Haddad Street in Damascus, Alois Brunner's home in the Syrian capital, his last known residence.

In this regard, UN Watch requests that the Distinguished Representative of Syria inform the Council on the whereabouts of this war criminal, and, if Brunner is still alive, that his government extradite him without further delay.

Justice and accountability have waited for too long.

Thank you, Mr. President."

We await a response.

As always, our readers have supplied us with information and answers to questions posed in our e-newsletter.

Comment on amulet placed on baby's crib

Laurie Serwetz (daughter of Rose & Murray Eskononts) remembers this:

"My father also put something on each of our kids' mattresses in their cribs, which moved to their beds, it is a red ribbon, coin, and garlic, I think. Similar to the amulet you showed, I would guess. I am going to look at them again!"

In response to our photo possible shot in the Ames Street Synagogue, we received a wealth of information.

From Dorothy David Schulman

"I have information on the photo of Matathia Nachman. He was my uncle by marriage to my Auntie Esther (Atos). It was his second marriage. It is a small photo, but I can see the resemblance to the Ames Place synagogue (Kingsbridge Heights Jewish Center) between Webb and University Avenues in the West Bronx. I lived not a block away at 2701 Webb Avenue. The Yanniotos in the area attended this synagogue with all the other Jewish population, but on High Holy Days we had a separate room at the synagogue for our crew. I believe it was rented. The rabbi of this synagogue was Rabbi Israel Miller. He had a brother David who was my Sunday school teacher. Uncle Matathia was a very wise fellow. I remember having Passover seders at his home that were most enjoyable."

From Joan Ganis Kranitz

"In reference to this newsletter, I am pretty sure I recognize one of the pictures of Ames place synagogue in the Bronx. Most of my family lived right next door and I

remember as a child going there all the time. I did not live far from there (myself) as a child. Still looking for the Gani, or Ganis connection. I remember my grandmother, Sarah Ganis telling me we were related to the Negrins."

From Bob Isaacs

"The Greeks in the Kingsbridge area of the Bronx used to rent the basement of the Kingsbridge Heights Jewish Center which was on Ames Place, and that was their synagogue. Isaac Isaacs was their lay rabbi. My uncle Matathea Nachman used to attend services there. In the photo he is probably upstairs in the main sanctuary. I've been to the basement synagogue several times years ago but was never upstairs so I can't be positive."

We got positive ID on the couple in wedding photo thought to be from the Nachman family They were.

From Marvin Nachman (son of William and Ray (Levy) Nachman

"I am fairly certain the wedding couple you asked to identify is my uncle Meyer and his wife Esther. Meyer Nachman was one of six children: two older brothers - William (Willie) married to Ray Levy and Max married to Rae Dostis and three sisters - Mollie married to Jess Menachem, Chrissie married to Max Menachem and Stella (I have forgotten her husband's name)."

Third Annual New York City Greek Film Festival opens November 5th. The festival runs from November 6-12th. For the full schedule and location of films being shown, access the website: www.prlog.org/10322791-third-annual-new-york-city-greek-film-festival-opens-nov-5-2009.html

"A gala screening and reception will launch the third annual New York City Greek Film Festival on Thursday, November 5, 2009, 7:30 p.m., at the Visual Arts Theater, 333 West 23 Street, just west of Eighth Avenue in Manhattan.

The opening night selection will be the New York premiere of "Guinness," directed by Alexis Kardaras. Also on the bill is the animated short "Mariza," directed by Constantine Krystallis.

Athens born Kardaras studied at the NYU Film School, and he has made a Greek movie with American know how. Inspired by Hollywood gangster films of the 1940s, "Guinness" tells the story of an unlucky gambler who has hit rock bottom. He goes searching for buried gold in a remote Greek mountain village, but the closer he gets to his treasure, the more unlucky he becomes. Will the love of the right woman turn his life around? Will love triumph over gold?

"Metaphorically speaking, the gambler represents everyone who goes digging for happiness instead of looking for it where it really is," says Kardaras who is expected to be among the celebrities attending the gala.

Regular festival performances run November 6 through 12 at the Cinema Village, 22 East 12 St., in Manhattan. The festival moves to the CineMart Cinemas, 106-03 Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills, November 13-19. All films have English subtitles.

Full information will be posted on the festival website in mid-September: www.hellenicamerican.cc (click on festival flag).

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The Hellenic American Chamber of Commerce is a not for profit association devoted to strengthening business and cultural ties between Greece and USA. Major Chamber events include the annual New York City Greek Film Festival which presents works by Greek directors worldwide. The festival's mission is to establish a presence for Greek cinema in New York. Films are carefully selected to show the broad range of work and talent in the Greek film industry. Films are shown with English subtitles and include feature films, documentaries and short subjects."

News From Greece

Honorees in Ioannina

On September 30, 2009, in Ioannina, the Jewish Community of Ioannina honored three Yanniotas who presently live in Athens; Eftihia Nachman, Salvador Bakola and Isaak Mordechai. In the words of Moses Eliasof, President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, these three "have never forgotten their roots." Eftihia, of course, is the author of "Yannina: Journey to the Past." Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to sell this important book. Salvador Bakola, who fought in the Greek Resistance during the Occupation of Greece (his picture is on the front cover of Professor Bowman's book, "The Resistance of Greek Jewry," also sold in our bookstore. Isaak Mordechai is a prominent businessman in Athens.

Katherine Fleming to Speak in Thessaloniki (Professor Fleming's book "Greece: A Jewish History" is available through our bookstore.)

The first meeting of the Group for the Study of the History of the Jews of Greece will take place on Friday, November 6, 2009 at 6:30pm at the DEOPS seminar room, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki (3rd floor).

Historian Katherine Fleming (New York University) will speak on:

Leaving Greece and Becoming Greek: Greek Jewish Identity in Auschwitz and Israel

"Over the course of the past century, Greek Jews underwent a gradual, if somewhat paradoxical, process of "nationalization." While other national or proto-national groups (Asia Minor refugees, for example) "became Greek" through assimilation within the physical territory of Greece, Jews "became Greek" in large part as a result of their exile from that territory. They were definitively portrayed as being first and foremost "Greek" largely within contexts that were characterized by mass heterogeneous Jewish populations. In Auschwitz-Birkenau and later in the context of post-war Palestine/Israel, Jews of Greek origin were a tiny minority within Jewish contexts dominated by other Jewish groups. While in the Orthodox Christian-dominant context of Greece Jews had, variously, struggled to establish their status as Greeks; rejected the categorization altogether; or developed complex hybrid identities, in the contexts of Auschwitz-Birkenau and, later, Israel/Palestine, they were understood by others, and, later, by themselves, as uncomplicatedly "Greek." This "Greekness," however – particularly in Israel/Palestine – largely took the form of a stereotype, one that elided the subtleties of Greek Jewish identity as it had begun to take shape in Greece before the Second World War."

All are welcome to attend.

Oxi Day (October 28th) and Greek Jewry

We urge you to read the recent article in the English language edition of the Greek National Herald written by our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos. The article in the October 31st edition mentions the role of Greek Jews on the Albanian Front and, especially that of the Jewish men from Ioannina who fell in battle.

Cohen Battalion



In addition, access the following on the same subject: (note: our Museum Director Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos is mentioned)

http://abravanel.wordpress.com/2009/10/28/jews_15_regiment_ww2/.

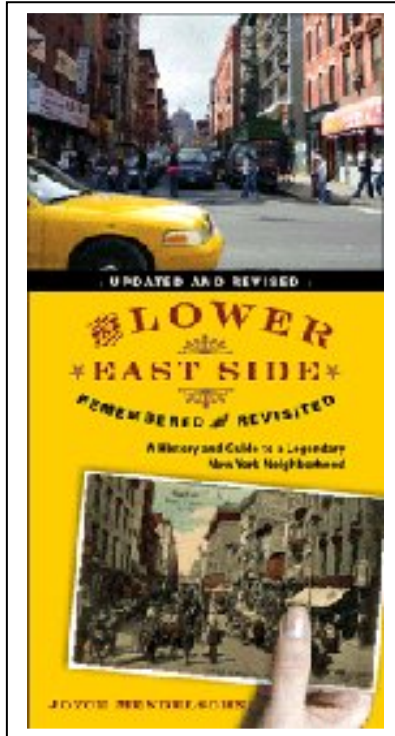


Monument in Memory of Greek Jews who fought & died for their country on the Albanian Front 1940-1941

New Books for Sale

***The Lower East Side Remembered and Revisited:
A History and Guide to a Legendary New York Neighborhood***
By Joyce Mendelsohn

Autographed copies of the book are now for sale at \$18. Supply is limited. Send check for \$18 to Kehila Kedosha Janina, 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002.



There is a beautiful section on Congregation Kehila Kedosha Janina.

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