Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

The month of March is one of joyous celebration for Jews throughout the world. The holiday of Purim commemorates the miraculous saving of Jews in the Persian Empire but there are additional “Purims” celebrated in certain communities, Ioannina being one (see article by Gershon Harris in this issue). We wish all our Jewish friends Hag Sameah Purim and send our best to our Christian friends as they prepare to celebrate Easter.

Michael Matsas (center) in Ioannina dressed in a Purim Costume (pre-WWII)
COME CELEBRATE PURIM WITH US AT KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA ON WEDNESDAY EVENING MARCH 7th. SERVICES START AT 6:00 PM. DELICIOUS BOUREKAS WILL BE SERVED AFTERWARDS!

Traditional bourekas

Megilah Esther donated by Henry Watkin (from the Ganis family)
This Megilah dates to the 19th century and will be used this Purim at Kehila Kedosha Janina.

This newsletter, our 50th 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.kkjism.org).

We now reach over 5000 households worldwide, with our community of ‘friends’ continually growing with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

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

Passings

In February we lost two special women from our community.

Mathilda (Attas) Cossuto, daughter of Solomon Attas and Anna Cohen Attas (both born in Ioannina) grew up on Broome Street. She passed at the age of 94. Our condolences to her family...son, Mark Cossuto; brother Calef Attas; sisters Rose Chinsky and Shirley Zetooney and their respective families. Mathilda was a loyal and devoted Sisterhood of Janina member, signing
up many new members, in addition to being a dynamic volunteer at the Sephardic Home, working for many years in the Boutique and their Annual Bazaar.

Mildred Mazza (Asser), 89, of Dartmouth, died Monday, February 27, 2012. She was the wife of the late Benjamin Mazza. Born in Brooklyn, NY, she was the daughter of the late Solomon and Julia (Epstein) Asser (both of Ioannina).

Millie is survived by her children, Elliot Mazza and his wife Sherry of Dartmouth, and Steven Mazza and his wife Silvia of Dartmouth; her grandchildren Sasha, Alex, Brittney, and Erica Mazza; and her brother Manny Asser of New Bedford. She was the sister of the late Jesse, Abe, Edward, and Murray Asser.

Millie Asser Mazza (second from left) standing next to her husband Ben at her brother Edward’s wedding.

Δikoi Mas, Los Miestros come home

Jackie Cohen, Leah Matsil and journalist Amy Shafron

Rena Molho and Naomi Kagan
Descendants of the Lagary family (Alan Kufeld, his mother, wife and son)

As always, visitors continue to flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

Stephanie Vlahakis
President of the Hellenic Museum in Chicago
Upcoming Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum Events

SATURDAY, MARCH 24TH AT 9:00 PM

KOL DODI IS BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

JOIN US AT KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA FOR AN ENCORE PERFORMANCE
SATURDAY EVENING MARCH 24TH
9:00 pm
280 Broome Street (between Allen & Eldridge), New York NY 10002
TICKETS $20

E-MAIL US AT kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net to reserve
ALL CHECKS MUST BE MADE OUT TO KEHILA KEDOSHA JANINA AND MAILED TO
ONE HANSON PLACE, HUNTINGTON NY 11743
Kol Dodi is a talented group of musicians who play a selection of Hebrew and Greek songs.
Yaron Hanoka’s roots are from Salonika.
Avraam Pengas’ roots are from Ioannina.
On March 24th they will bring their music to Kehila Kedosha Janina.
There will be dancing in the aisles!

SEE KOL DODI ON YOUTUBE-SEE WHY YOU SHOULD NOT MISS THIS RARE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THEM IN PERSON
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGYoe3IANQU To Mertiko from the last KKJ concert
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbSP92IERgc Shir Lamaalot
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDyBG7PToQo Im Teheya B’Simcha very Greek with Hebrew lyrics “It should be with happiness”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MnXh9bwMBw To Mertiko - all Greek – Zembekiko
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtZ_MB7-Axo Kali Tixi – Greek – good luck
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6WEq9ghg-I Sephardic medley
Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Our February 26th event (Ottoman Roots) was one of the most interesting and well attended events at Kehila Kedosha Janina. There was standing room only as Dimitra DeFotis told us her story of her journey to Turkey to the village her family had been forced to leave in the 1920s.

We are hoping that Dimitra, an accomplished writer, will turn this into a book. Of course, we look forward to hosting a book presentation when this happens!

Our next “Tell Us Your Story” will be on Sunday, April 29th at 2:00 as the founders of the Greek-American Museum in New York tell us their story.

Remember, if you have a story to tell, get in touch with us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.
Upcoming Events on Lower East Side

21 Etchings and Poems
Pierre Alechinsky - Dotremont • Adja Yunkers - Theodore Roethke • Ben-Zion - David Ignatow
Letterio Calapai - William Carlos Williams • Fred Becker - T. Weiss • Peter Grippe - Dylan Thomas
Salvatore Grippi - Richard Wilbur • Helen Phillips - André Verdet • Franz Kline - Frank O’Hara
Jacques Lipchitz - Hans Sahl • Kurt Roesch - Alastair Reid • Ben Nicholson - Sir Herbert Read
I. Rice Pereira - George Reavey • André Racz - Thomas Merton • Ezio Martinelli - Horace Gregory
Attilio Salemme - Morris Weisenthal • Louis Schanker - Harold Norse • Esteban Vincente - Peter Viereck
Willem DeKooning - Harold Rosenberg • S.W. Hayter - Jacques-Henry Lévesque • Karl Schrag - David Lougee

Woodward Gallery presents an in depth, rare exhibition of 21 Etchings and Poems. The complete 1960 limited edition was conceived by Peter Grippe in 1951 when he took over the directorship of Atelier 17, an internationally hailed graphic workshop.

This etching project, possibly the first of its kind in the United States, joined two creative disciplines–art and poetry. Poets and artists invited for this historic collaboration worked in the almost forgotten tradition of the Book of Kells and William Blake’s Illuminated poems. Each print closely integrates text and image, including a poem written in the hand of its author and imagery created through a wide range of innovative print techniques by an artist. For the poets who transferred their poems, in their own handwriting, onto the copper plate, this was an arduous, but exhilarating experience; a slip of tool meant beginning anew as they wrote backwards from a mirror image.

In 1954, the Atelier 17 was disbanded. Mr. Grippe, however, continued to work with the artists in his own studio. The etchings where finally completed in 1960, nearly ten years after its conception. 21 Etchings and Poems is not only a landmark of mid-20th century American print publishing, but is unique in its inclusion of diverse writers and artists from of the 1950s. Many of the poets and artists went on to become leaders in their art forms.

Woodward Gallery proudly exhibits the complete portfolio detailing the great significance of this important body of work. March 3 - April 29, 2012

Please join us at the Opening Reception from 6-8 pm, Saturday, March 3rd, 2012

Woodward Gallery, 133 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002
Phone: 212.966.3411 • Fax: 212.966.3491
art@woodwardgallery.net • www.woodwardgallery.net
Tuesday-Saturday 11-6 pm; Sunday 12-5 pm
Facebook.com/WoodwardGalleryArt
Upcoming Events in New York

AT THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY

16TH NY Sephardic Jewish Film Festival

Do not miss Empty Boxcars: Sunday, March 18th at 3:30pm at Center For Jewish History

EMPTY BOXCARS

Director: Ed Gaffney

Gaffney’s powerful film explores the dark side of Bulgarian anti-Semitism, as well as the saving of Bulgaria's 48,000 Jews. It is not a tribute to Bulgaria’s role in the war. Former president, Petar Stoyanov, pays tribute to the role of certain Bulgarians in saving the Jews, declaring it to be Bulgaria’s “greatest contribution to European civilization.” Yet he also notes the 11,000 murders on the occupied territories (Thrace and Macedonia).

Post-screening discussion with Ed Gaffney and others tba.

USA 2011, 82 mins.
Showing: Sunday, March 18 at 3:30pm

For full schedule: see ASF website for schedule and purchase of tickets: www.americansephardifederation.org
Salonica Stories

The earliest known Ladino memoir, now in translation, sheds light on both Ottoman Jewry and one controversial man’s conflicts with the community.

The preface page of Sa'adi’s soletreo manuscript.(Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Israel)

In the 19th century, Sa’adi Besalel a-Levi was an esteemed (if controversial) journalist, publisher, singer, and composer in Salonica, a Mediterranean port city whose 2,000-year-old Jewish community was later decimated in the Holocaust. He also wrote the earliest known Ladino-language memoir, which was all but lost until Stanford University history professor Aron Rodrigue found a forgotten copy at Jerusalem’s Jewish National and University Library. Now the memoir is available to all, in an edition introduced and edited by Rodrigue and fellow historian Sarah Abrevaya Stein, and translated by Isaac Jerusalmi: A Jewish Voice From Ottoman Salonica has been published in English in tandem with a digital version of the original soletreo, or Ladino cursive. Rodrigue and Stein join Vox Tablet host Sara Ivry to talk about Sa’adi’s life, his obsession with the arbitrary rabbinic authority that led to his excommunication, and the surprising details about Jewish Salonica that find their way to us through his account.

Recovering Lost Voices of the Sephardic Past: A Discussion with Professors Aron Rodrigue and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, Moderated by Sara Ivry.

In celebration of the release of A Jewish Voice from Ottoman Salonika: The Ladino Memoir of Sa'adi Besalel a-Levi, join a conversation with two leading scholars of Sephardic history about the quest for lost sources and perspectives on the Judeo-Spanish past. As they describe the experience of uncovering, translating, and interpreting the first Ladino memoir known to be written, Professors Stein (UCLA) and Rodrigue (Stanford) will reflect on the challenges and rewards of writing Sephardic history. Sara Ivry, Senior Editor, Tablet Magazine, moderator.

March 29th, 6:30 pm
Ticket Info: $15 general, $10 CJH, ASF members, $8 students
Center for Jewish History • 15 West 16th Street New York, New York 10011 • Tel: 212.294.8301
Purchase Tickets
The history of Judaism in Puglia is a distillation of thousands of stories of Mediterranean Judaism - fragments that across the millennia collectively comprise a powerful identity. Here are stories of wandering, of links sustained across great distances by faith in ancient traditions; and stories of commercial and cultural exchange across the length and breadth of this Mare Nostrum, where Jews have always played a mediating role. The first known deportation - one of a long series of exiles that brought the Jews to Italy - dates back to the forced migration from Jerusalem following the Roman destruction of the Second Temple, about 70 CE.

Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored that we played an important role in making this exhibit a reality.

Lost Voices: Greek Jews and The Holocaust
Opening: Sunday, March 25, 2012
1:00 PM At the Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center

http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/khrca/info.asp?exhibitID=37
UPCOMING EVENTS IN NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA

CONNECTICUT

Sunday 7:00 p.m. on March 11, 2012: Guest Speaker: Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos
The Emanuel Synagogue
160 Mohegan Drive
West Hartford, Connecticut

Sponsored by Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford
$18 per person
Send check payable to JHSGH to
Jewish Historical Society of Greater Hartford
Zachs Campus
333 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117

NEWS FROM JEWISH GREECE

Jewish Agency sending $1 million in emergency aid to Greece’s Jews
Most Greek Jewish communal institutions said to be on brink of collapse

By AARON KALMAN February 27, 2012, 10:49 pm

The Jewish Agency is sending $1 million in emergency aid to the Jewish community of Greece to help it grapple with the crippling financial crisis there. The majority of Greece’s Jewish communal institutions are on the verge of closure, the agency said. Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky convened the organization’s leadership to approve the financial aid on Sunday night.

The agency is also to launch a fundraising campaign for the Greek Jewish community. And it will send Hebrew teachers to the local school and summer camps in Greece within the coming months, in order to preserve Hebrew instruction in the community.
Natan Sharansky of the Jewish Agency

“The funds will enable communal institutions to continue their operations, including programs to strengthen the community’s ties with Israel and the development of unique aliya tracks for those members of the community who wish to immigrate to Israel,” the agency said in a statement. “The aid package will be funded by the Jewish Agency and by its partners, Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal (UIA) and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.”

Some 5,000 Jews live in Greece, of whom some 3,500 reside in Athens and an additional 1,000 in Thessaloniki.

The Jewish community operates synagogues, a Jewish school, a museum, and a soup kitchen. The agency added: “According to community leaders, the majority of Jewish communal institutions in the country are on the verge of closure due to the financial crisis gripping the country, which has led to a dramatic decline in donations, the collapse of income from communal assets, and a series of new taxes imposed on the communal institutions themselves.

“Many members of the Jewish community are now unemployed and falling below the poverty line. Some 70 elderly members of the community require financial support to pay for basic necessities such as food and shelter.” said Sharansky: “The Jews of Greece are known for their tremendous generosity toward their needy brethren in Israel and around the Jewish world. They have contributed some $20 million to Keren Hayesod-UIA over the past decade, a huge per capita sum that has helped support the disadvantaged in Israel and elsewhere. Today, this wonderful community needs us, and it would be unthinkable for us not to come to their aid in their time of need.”


Greece’s New Democracy Party Leader Reaffirms Opposition to Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial

February 24, 2012 New York

AJC (American Jewish Committee), concerned about the recent inclusion of two anti-Semitic politicians in Nea Dimokratia (New Democracy), one of Greece’s leading political parties, is
gratified that party leader Antonis Samaras has reaffirmed his party’s firm opposition to any expression of anti-Semitism or racism.

The two controversial politicians, Makis Voridis and Adonis Georgiadis, recently resigned from the far-right Popular Orthodox Rally, or LAOS, and plan to run as Nea Dimokratia candidates in April’s elections.

Samaras, in an email to AJC, stressed that Nea Dimokratia’s core values “total opposition to racism, anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial” remain unshakeable.

“We welcome the reaffirmation from Antonis Samaras of his party’s foundational values,” said AJC Executive Director David Harris. AJC first met Samaras over 20 years ago when he was foreign minister of Greece and has stayed in touch with him since.

“It is deep in the ideological DNA of the Greek society and, of course, Nea Dimokratia, to categorically oppose racism in all its forms, to strenuously oppose anti-Semitism and to strongly oppose all Holocaust denial,” Samaras wrote to AJC. “As a matter of fact, these are more than party core values. These are deeply-rooted cultural premises, shared by the Greek people as a whole, from generation to generation.

“Today, there are hundreds of families in Greece, taking pride for rescuing Greek Jews during the Nazi occupation of our country. I know well since my family is one of them. And this tradition of pride is shared by people from all walks of life and of all political affiliations.”

Athens

Greek Foreign Minister Dimas' statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day
Athens, January 1, 2012

“On 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust and National Remembrance Day for the Greek Jewish Heroes and Martyrs of the Holocaust, we honor the memory of the millions of victims of the most heinous crime in modern history, and we reiterate our unswerving commitment to keep such crimes from being committed again.

It is our duty to keep the memory of these crimes alive from generation to generation – crimes that shocked humanity – in order to keep them from being repeated.
Becoming oblivious to these crimes could prove as fateful as the atrocities themselves. As a country whose thriving Jewish community was almost obliterated by the Nazi crimes, Greece recently gave the option of re-acquiring Greek citizenship to those citizens of Israel who had it in the past and lost it in any way during World War II, thus contributing to the revitalization of ties with this historic community.

Each of us – as well as the international community as a whole – has a duty to fight bigotry and prejudice in any form it may take, and to continue to work continuously for the peaceful coexistence of peoples’.

Ioannina

The Prefecture of Epirus, in cooperation with the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Ioannina and the local Israeli Community, organized a commemorative event for the “Day of Remembrance for the Greek-Jewish Holocaust Victims and Heroes” on Saturday, January 28.

The 27th of January has been established by the European Parliament as the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Nazism, and on this occasion, the town of Ioannina paid tribute to the millions of Jewish people that lost their lives in the Nazi concentration camps, and especially, to the 2000 Jews of Ioannina that never returned back to their homes.

The event took place at the “V. Pyrsinellas” venue of the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Ioannina. The event’s program included greetings, a lecture by author N. Daveta, the performance of Mikis Theodorakis’-Iakovos Kambanellis’ work “Mauthausen” by the Municipality’s philharmonic orchestra, and the screening of Alain Resnais’ documentary film “Night and Fog”.

March 25, 1944

Ioannina Jews rounded up for deportation.
**Thessaloniki**

On Sunday, January 29th, there was a formal commemoration of the Holocaust in Thessaloniki, as dignitaries, survivors and citizens stopped to remember the 50,000 Jewish citizens of Thessaloniki who perished in the concentration camps.

In March it will be 69 years since the first transport left Salonika for Auschwitz-Birkenau. Let us never forget.

![Salonika, January 29, 2012](image1)

**Volos**

Holocaust Remembrance Day was commemorated with the Jewish Community of Volos and the presence of Ambassador of Israel to Greece Mr. Arye Mekel.

February 5, 2012 Holocaust Remembrance Day in Volos. The Ambassador of Israel to Greece Mr. Arye Mekel attended the event.

![February 5, 2012 Holocaust Remembrance Day in Volos](image2)

**Holocaust Remembrance in New York**

On February 15th, His Emminence Archbishop Demetrios and the Consul General of Greece in New York, the Honorable Georgios Iliopoulos, invited Greek Jews in the New York Metropolitan Area to join them at the Greek Press Office for an official remembrance of the Holocaust of Greek Jewry. Laura Molho told of her survival as a hidden child and a video of the Jewish Museum of Greece was shown.

![Holocaust Remembrance in New York](image3)
News About Greece

As we all know, Greece has been front page news for some time now, mostly negative commentary on the present financial situation. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that we reprint this excellent article by a dear friend of Kehila Kedosha Janina. Let us never forget what Greece has endured throughout its history and let us always remember the strengths of the Greek people.

Bill Tragos
Retired founder, TBWA

Germany's Fingerspitzengefühl Deficit Risks World Crisis

"Wikipedia defines that wonderful German expression as "describing a great situational awareness, and the ability to respond most appropriately and tactfully."

"Imagine prostrate Greece thinking she deserves kid glove treatment considering her political leaders,' all parties, lying for decades. Her upper echelon citizens demonstrating no patriotism, cheating their government.

Why should the Greeks be granted any leeway?
The country's crushing history.
Skip over the first 1500 years of Greek civilization, we get enough of that from our museum visits or reading what Nietzsche thinks is owed the Greeks; forget stopping the conquest of the west by a despotic Persian empire outnumbered 9 to 1 at Marathon; let's not bother with how Greek culture absorbed Rome's eastern empire making it a Greek-speaking Byzantium that lasted over 1100 years; or how their Christian brothers of the west sacked the Christian capital of the east, Constantinople, hastening her fall in 1453, sparking the exodus of her scholars to western Europe. The happy coincidence of the appearance of Guttenberg's press that same year igniting the renaissance.

Forget Socrates and Alexander and the Parthenon. That's so long ago as to be irrelevant history, right? Let's get to modern times.
The Greeks were the first to cast off the yoke of 5 centuries of Ottoman enslavement of southwest Europe. We recognize the damage to a black man’s psyche in America after 200 years of slavery. Imagine what 400 years did to the Greeks, how normal, necessary lying and cheating and bribing were to survival.

Greece fought against the Kaiser's Germany in WWI, while Turkey did not, and at the Paris Peace conference was awarded much of the 3000-year Greek lands in Turkey. Which she promptly lost because the dumb, vain king (German) went for more at the urging of Lloyd George and Clemenceau.

Greeks haven’t talked about their genocide at the hands of modern Turkey. They lost hundreds of thousands in those well-documented Armenian death marches. And then there was the destruction of 700,000 Pontic Greeks on the Black Sea, and hundreds of thousands on Turkey’s Aegean coast.

As recently as 1955, thousands of Greeks were ethnically cleansed out of Istanbul. World War II. Greece's demolition of Mussolini’s attempted invasion gave the Allies their first victory.

Then the Greeks fought the Germans to the death all the way to Crete and held up Hitler’s invasion of Russia, The Russians know, as does the German military how that contributed to Hitler's failure in Russia.

Greece paid for that dearly. One-eighth of her population starved to death or was executed in reprisals for her relentless resistance. Payback the other way, in the form of German reparations payments for her destruction of that country never materialized. Maybe Greeks should consider the Euro bailout led by Germany as an installment payment on Germany’s debt?

And even as Greece was being liberated from the Nazi occupation, the Communist-led civil war broke out lasting 3 years, killing many more thousands.

Greeks didn't stop fighting after that fratricide ended, sending the first foreign military contingents to join the Americans in Korea.

And all through those years her young people emigrated to chance building a better life as had so many throughout her history. To Germany as gastarbeaters, America as greasy Greeks sling hamburgers or working on the railroads, or Australia as wogs. And yet look at the accomplishments of the children of these diaspora Greeks in each country. Matched only by the diaspora Jews.

And still her western allies think Greece petty when she fights to lose no more of her heritage. There was no Slavic language or people at the time of Alexander. He and his court spoke Greek. His teacher was Aristotle. Greeks are supposed to think it’s OK to give the name of Alexander’s kingdom to a non-Greek state?

Greece has been forced to spend the highest percentage of her GDP on defense of any country in the world, because she cannot be sure of her NATO allies help in the event of a Turkish invasion. Remember another batch of dumb Greek politicians and their Cyprus fiasco, and how Kissinger saw to it that Greece's most important ally, the USA, sat on her hands and did nothing?

And yet Greek and Turkish friendship is not a hard sell to the young people of those countries. Check out college campuses in the USA, Canada, England or Germany, in which foreign students
room together, are best friends, Greek and Turkish. We need to understand why that happens and why that must give hope, despite their long, tragic shared history.

You want to cut Greece's deficit? Start by cutting defense spending by 90%.

Give the remainder to Israel and let her station her troops in Greece. Both are prisoners of their geography. Cutting defense would mean she doesn't buy six more German subs or 20 more French built ships. Dumb/corrupt Greek politicians? Or is it a form of blackmail?

Greece needs Europe to be as brilliant and generous as America when the Truman Doctrine saved that country and Turkey from Communism. Because Greece's road to recovery will be long and painful.

Greece needs the strongest economy in Europe to remember its own history, not so beautiful: two world wars and a vicious holocaust.

Germany needs to remember that her economic recovery was not achieved by Germanic frugality and work ethic alone (the average Greek workweek is 33% longer).

Germany owns the record as the default champion of Europe, despite being bailed out after the second world war by its conquerors.

Germany, the country that cost the world so much pain and suffering and loss needs to copy American/Allied attitudes of generosity and compassion in dealing with Greece. Greece's pain inflicted on the rest of us today could be described as what in comparison to Germany's?

There is no stain in the millennia of Greece's history.

Note: the following pictures were not part of the original article.

Greek villagers being led to execution.

Pictures from Greece taken during German Occupation of WWII

Starving Greek children wait for handouts.
In fact it is that track record of accomplishment over 3500 years that encourages her people. And should make it possible for Germany and Europe to be as sensitive in the coming years as if possessing a little fingerspitzengefühl.

Only dumb politicians ignoring history would bet against this old, stubborn, proud people. "The Greeks took Troy because they never stopped trying" - Theocritus 254 BC. Nothing has changed. It's a character trait to be admired and respected.”

Requests

As we prepare for the Jewish holiday of Pesach, it was discovered that while all Greek-Jewish homes had separate dishes for Pesach, this was not necessarily the case with meat and dairy. Many Romaniotes felt that this was a zeegazook custom. Let us know if your Greek-Jewish family (Sephardic or Romaniote) had separate dishes.

New of Interest to All

Bulgaria Called to Account for Wartime Treatment of Jews

By Alexander Andreev

"An umbrella group of Jewish organizations in Greece has called on Bulgaria to acknowledge the deportation of thousands of Jews during World War II. The issue has sparked anger in a Bulgarian society riven by resentment. The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece has called on both Sofia and the United Nations to note Bulgaria's role in the deportation of 11,343 Jews during the war, including around 4,000 from northern Greece and over 7,000 from what is today the Republic of Macedonia.

While Bulgarian troops did play a role in deporting Jews from neighboring areas occupied during the war, the country did not send any of its own Jewish population of 50,000 to the Nazis, despite the fact it had an authoritarian king of German origin and was allied with Germany from 1941. Efforts by liberal politicians, church leaders and the Bulgarian public were effective in the end, and the country successfully resisted German calls to send Jews to concentration camps and almost certain death.

Jewish-Polish-German author Arno Lustiger wrote about the subject in his book on the steps taken to save the Jews from Nazi gas chambers called Rettungswiderstand.

'Most Bulgarian Jews survived World War II and the anti-Semitic extermination policy, but not due to the Bulgarian government or the head of state, who showed no scruples when it came to handing over Jews to the Germans. In March 1943, thousands of Thracian and Macedonian Jews from the part of Greece occupied by the Bulgarians were deported to Treblinka and murdered," Lustiger wrote.

'The role Bulgarians played in these deportations woke the nation up to the possible fate of their own Jewish population. Without the widespread resistance of the church, politicians and sections of society, the Bulgarian Jews would have experienced the same thing as Jews in the occupied areas did. This forceful protest was based primarily on the traditionally close relationship that existed between Jews and Christians in Bulgaria.'
"Historical blinders

As a German ally, Bulgaria never occupied - at least according to the nation's popular myths - territory in northern Greece or the region of Vardar Macedonia, which corresponds with today's Republic of Macedonia.

"Then, and even today, the occupation was and is interpreted by a majority of the Bulgarian public not as a warlike act against sovereign states, but as a kind of national reunification. At the same time, the responsibility for the deportation of Jews from these occupied areas is generally repressed or placed firmly on Hitler's shoulders.

"This attitude is reflected in today's discussion of those events. Officially, Bulgaria has taken no position on the letter dated Jan. 26 that the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece wrote to the UN Department of Public Information.

"It stated: 'In the name of the historical memory of our brothers, victims of the Bulgarian atrocities in our country during the Holocaust, we ask you to include this small and 'untold' part of history in your briefing.'

"Touching a nerve

While Sofia has remained silent, the letter has touched a raw nerve among the public, and readers' forums on media websites have been roiling.

"For some, it is the "wily Greeks" who are raising the issue, hoping to distract attention from their current economic woes. Others see it as the fault of the "arrogant Germans," who killed millions of Jews during the war and once again, irate readers say, hope to conquer the world. The saving of Bulgaria's Jews has been recognized internationally by many groups and individuals. It has been a topic for Italian and German authors, American filmmakers, the State of Israel and Jewish communities in many countries, who have expressed their respect and appreciation for Bulgaria's actions.

"'We will never know how many Jews could have been saved if others in occupied Europe had acted as the Bulgarians did. Both Christians and Jews there deserve to be collectively honored,' wrote historian Arno Lustiger who added that as of January 2011, 19 Bulgarians had been honored as "righteous" by Yad Veshem in Israel.
"Selective memory
A majority of Bulgarians would like to have the focus remain firmly on this positive side of their history, and it is not the first time that the country has had difficulty taking a critical look at its own past.

"Be it Bulgaria's aggressive role in the Balkan war and the two World Wars, a relationship to the Soviet Union that was so close that Bulgaria was often referred to as the 16th Soviet Republic, or the dark story of the country's secret police during the communist era, uncomfortable parts of Bulgarian history are generally not talked about or quietly swept under the rug.

"Today, Bulgaria is witnessing the rise of a dangerous strain of nationalism coupled with racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. All together, these have led to attacks against the Roma population, Muslims, dark-skinned soccer players and gays and lesbians.

Given this, the current furor surrounding the letter sent by the Jewish umbrella group is not surprising."

Three Candles: Stories of Women in Exile
Posted: 13 Feb 2012 02:52 AM PST

A documentary film is to shed light on one of the darkest pages in Modern Greek history: Three Candles tells the story of thousands of women exiled to the small island of Trikeri, at Pagasitkos Gulf.

During the 1946-1949 Greek Civil War, thousands of citizens involved with the left-wing Democratic Army, even by mere association, were sent to concentration camps on isolated islands.

Trikeri received thousands of exiled women, many of whom were with their children. The documentary is an account of their struggle to survive, and their desperate efforts to turn an almost deserted island into a place of life and culture.

Years after the camp had been phased out, seven surviving notebooks, written by exiled women of Trikeri and buried under a tree, have surfaced. Filmmakers Stavroula Toska from Greece and Sophia Antonini from the United States and of Argentinean descent used this unique material and
recorded further testimonies and memories for the documentary being produced by the independent film production company Orama Pictures.

The film will be narrated by acclaimed Academy award winning actress Olympia Dukakis, who said that the film tells the story of women "who demonstrated the meaning of self-respect, displaying courage and the will to create, with ethos and knowledge."

*Three Candles* is expected to be screened at international festivals in 2012.

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**Sister Cities: Thessaloniki and Tel Aviv**

Israeli tourism to Thessaloniki increased fivefold last year; 59,000 Israeli tourists stayed overnight in hotels in Thessaloniki in 2011 and more are expected in 2012. This reflects the increase in positive relations between Israel and the city of Thessaloniki (called the "second Jerusalem" because of the large presence of Jews in the city for many centuries. "There has been a significant improvement in relationships and this has been reflected in the increase in tourism," said the chairman of the board of Thessaloniki Hotels Association (EXTH), Aristotelis Thomopoulos, who represented the EXTH at the International Tourist Exhibition «International Mediterranean Tourism Market 2012 »(IMTM 2012), 14 and February 15 in Tel Aviv. The Thessaloniki Hotels Association participated as co-exhibitors and it was the first time that there was great interest in Israeli to Thessaloniki and to include Thessaloniki on the map with other European destinations. "The town of Thessaloniki sistered with Tel Aviv and contacts of official representatives of the Greek state with those of Israel has broaden since last year, giving impetus to a new increase in the fields of tourism, investment and trade," underlined in the statement made by EXTH. An Israeli TV crew visited the Greek pavilion, and a surprise awaited guests, when the Greek basketball player and international star of Maccabi Tel Aviv, Theodoros Papaloukas, appeared and signed autographs.

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**Shalom to one and all!**

Gershon Harris  
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel

If it’s March, it must be the Hebrew month of Adar, and that means lots of joy and happiness and the holiday of Purim. As is well known, this holiday celebrates the miracle of God saving the Jews from the evil Haman’s plan to annihilate all the Jews in the Persian Empire, which, as the "Megilat – scroll of Esther" tells us, consisted of no less than 127 countries! But how many of us are familiar with smaller, local "mini-Purims", which have been celebrated over the centuries by Jews in every corner of the world in order to thank God for a similar and miraculous "last minute" reprieve from a planned and even decreed annihilation of this or that Jewish community. Perhaps more fascinating and inspiring is the fact that these local Purim festivities constitute a real "grass roots" phenomenon, since the local communities themselves saw no other explanation for their salvation than the invisible hand of God, testifying to the Jewish people’s undying faith and trust in the Almighty since time immemorial, no matter what the circumstances or ferocity of events.

So in honor of Purim and Jewish faith, let’s look at one of the more fascinating of these local celebrations of thanksgiving to God’s miracles.
In last month’s KKJ bulletin, there was an advertisement for a revival of the celebration of "the Purim of Siracusa" in Sicily. There is actually wide disagreement by Jewish historians as to where it actually occurred, Siracusa, Sicily or Saragossa, Spain?! Thus, the festivity is also referred to as the Purim of Saragossa. The historians who do insist that the events indeed occurred in Sicily blame the confusion on the name of the king – Saragosanas – which is recorded in a special "Megillah" (scroll) written specifically for this local holiday in the same form and style as the classic Biblical scroll of Esther. In any case, all agree on the sequence of events: For many years, the Jewish community honored a royal visit by the king by taking out three especially elaborately encased Torahs from each of the community’s 12 synagogues to welcome and escort him through town. However, at some point, many objected to this practice as a violation of the Torah’s honor and sanctity, so it was decided to remove the actual scrolls and greet and accompany the king’s procession with very beautiful, though now empty, Torah cases, with the king obviously being none the wiser. This practice went on uneventfully for 22 years, but in 1421, a Jewish apostate named Marcus decided to reveal this well-kept secret to His Majesty. Furious at what he perceived as a terrible dishonor to both his person and the monarchy, the king ordered a surprise "inspection" of the Torah cases the next day, and the execution of all the Jews if Marcus' information was correct. Apparently, however, that night, all 12 synagogue sextons had the same dream, where Elijah the Prophet came to them and instructed each one to return the Torah scrolls to their respective cases. Upon finding the cases with their scrolls, the king ordered Marcus executed and even exempted the Jewish community from taxes for a certain time. As a result of this true miracle, the 17th of Shvat was set as the Purim of Siracusa/Saragossa, still observed today by many Sephardic families and communities.

As mentioned above, one of the more unique features of the Purim of Siracusa/Saragossa, and which sets it apart from other similar "local" Purims, is the beautiful Megillah scroll specifically written for this special celebration. A picture of this exquisite document can be viewed at: http://www.sephardicstudies.org/images/Purim-of-Siracusa1.jpg. Interestingly, many Rabbis objected to the document, which they felt was much too similar in style and content to the classic Esther story and therefore somewhat demeaning. But tradition is tradition, and to this day the Purim of Siracusa/Sarragosa is celebrated in food and song, as well as reading segments of this Megillah, whether in Hebrew, Ladino or Judeo-Greek in the Janina dialect! Happy Purim, and special thanks to Bob Bedford and the Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture website.

Note: Kehila Kedosha Janina Museum has a beautiful copy of the Megilah of the Purim of Siracusa on display, donated by members of the Cantos family of Ioannina.
Don’t forget to mark your calendars for our next exhibit (Memories) opening May 6th. Memories will tell the story of the world they left behind in Greece and the world they found here in America.

Dr. Kofinas of Ioannina with Turkish friend on Lake Pamviotis

Jews in Salonika early 20th century

Jews in Volos 1930s
New York Dinner-Brotherhood of Rhodes 1935

Allen Street Turkish Club 1940s

Page from La America

Jessula Menachem Family
So many of you have applauded our efforts. We thank those who have sent in contributions.

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

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

Note: If you are interested in future Friday night services at Kehila Kedosha Janina, let us know!

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