



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002

October 2009 e-mail newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Our best wishes for a Happy & Healthy New Year. May 5770 bring you health, happiness and continued productivity. May it be a year of peace throughout the world. As always, we are grateful to our friends who send us news and keep us informed of matters of interest and concern to Greek Jewry. Our e-newsletters now go out to over 4000 households around the world. We inform; we educate and we support 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 21st, will cover news regarding Kehila Kedosha Janina and news concerning Greek Jewry. We will be extending our areas of research and, as always, welcome information from our readers. We hope you find our newsletter interesting. As always, your feedback is of utmost importance to us.

This newsletter is dedicated to Greek Jews who immigrated to Egypt and, then, when leaving Egypt in the 20th century, made their way to our community in New York.

We mourn the passing of Matilda Besso Besca and Lorna Levy-DeCastro.

Matilda was born in Ioannina 86 years ago and survived the Occupation of Greece, fleeing to what was then Palestine. She returned to Ioannina to marry a survivor of the camps, Samuel Besca. Her first son, Joe, was born in Ioannina. The family, finding it difficult to stay in Greece, surrounded by constant reminders of their losses, came to New York, where other family members welcomed them. They became active in Kehila

Kedosha Janina. Matilda will be missed. Our sincere condolences to Joe and Mark Besca, Matilda's sons, and her family throughout the world.

Lorna Levy-DeCastro was the wife of Emanuel (Menu/Cashu) DeCastro, mother of Teri and Nanette, daughter-in-law of "Big" Tica DeCastro of Blessed Memory (formerly of 275 Broome Street). We send our condolences to her extended family in Israel and the United States.

Museum News

September was a fascinating month at Kehila Kedosha Janina. Among the many groups we hosted were students from The Little Red School House. Kehila Kedosha Janina, and our special story of immigration has become part of their Urban Studies Program. Each semester, Juniors and Seniors, Jewish and non-Jewish, in this progressive High School, consider their visit to Kehila Kedosha Janina one of the highlights of their school year. We take our mission of education very seriously. The photo below is of a recent visit of students from The Workman's Circle. As part of their program they learn about the Yiddish speaking world of their ancestors. Now, they also learn about the very different Greek speaking world of our community. If you wish to have your school visit us, do contact us (kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net).



Greek National TV paid a visit to Kehila Kedosha Janina as part of their stories on Greek Americans. We are overjoyed that our story will be included as one of their 8 part series.

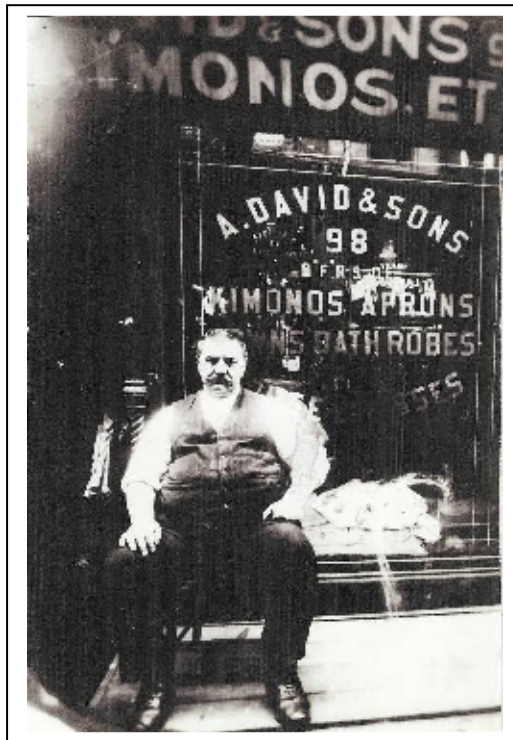
**Filming at
KKJ**



Upcoming Museum Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

Sunday, October 25th: The David Family Reunion 11-3

In 1848, in Ioannina, David ben Elia married Simchu. They had 9 children, producing many illustrious Yanniotes, 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 Yanniote families. One of our early rabbis, Rabbi Davidson was the father-in-law of a David descendant (Sophie Coffino) and many of the David family were founders of our synagogue (Ezra Cohen foremost among them). In honor of the David Family, our Museum will be closed to the general public from 1-3 on October 25th.



Abraham David in front of shop on Lower East Side

One of our most successful ventures has been family reunions held in our Museum, accompanied by a special photo exhibit honoring the family. In the past, we have hosted members of the Colchamiro family (our largest reunion to date-numbering 156!); the Matsil family; the Asser family; one branch of the Askinazi Family (for a special 60th birthday celebration), and the Cohen family. In addition to providing us with priceless photos for our archival collection, these reunions have helped to reconnect many of our families to the synagogue. If you are interested in having a family reunion at Kehila Kedosha Janina (or in Greece!), contact us (kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net).

Sunday, November 1st: Book Signing with the author, Joyce Mendelsohn: 2:00 PM
All are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

*The Lower East Side Remembered and Revisited:
A History and Guide to a Legendary New York Neighborhood*
With Joyce Mendelsohn
Autographed copies of the book will available for sale.

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, ketubbahs, invitations, all reminders of this momentous event in a young couple's life. Our earliest photo is of Mazalto Gani and Elia Coffina from 1906!

We are still trying to identify some photos. Can you help us with this one? We know it is a member of the Nachman family, but little else.



United States Events of Interest to Greek Jews

On November 4th and 5th, in Chicago, a series of lectures and panel discussions will take place, all related to the Holocaust in Greece. The keynote speaker will be Heinz Kounio, survivor of Auschwitz and current President of the Committee of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. Mr. Kounio will be coming from Greece, along with other dignitaries including Moses Constantinis, President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, for these important events. Professor Steven Bowman will lead a panel discussion on November 5th.

Wedding of Heinz and Shelley Kounio



The following events are open to the public:

- **Wednesday, November 4, 2009**

"Reflections on the Life of the Jewish Community in Thessaloniki and the Holocaust"

Lecture by Heinz Kounio at 6:30 PM followed by a reception

Cantor Alberto Mizrahi will sing Ladino songs.

The University of Illinois at Chicago
Student Center East Illinois Room
750 South Halsted Street, Chicago, IL. 60607

- **Thursday, November 5, 2009, 3:00 PM**

Lecture followed by panel discussion (open to public)

Keynote Speaker: Professor Steven Bowman, Department of Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati.

"From Selanik to Thessaloniki? The Third Missing Strand?"

The University of Illinois at Chicago,
The Levine Hillel Center
924 S. Morgan Street (Corner of Morgan and Taylor Sts), Chicago, IL 60607

- **Thursday, November 5, 2009, 7:30 PM**

Lecture by Mr. Heinz Kounio on the history of Greek Jews and the Holocaust at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, IL. 60077

Mr. Constantinis will present the book *"Young People in the Maelstrom of Occupied Greece"* published by the Central Board of the Jewish Communities of Greece and the Ministry of Civilization and Culture (Division of Youth)

Events of Interest on the Lower East Side

133 ELDRIDGE STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10002
T: 212.966.3411 F: 212.966.3491 EMAIL: ART@WOODWARDGALLERY.NET
WWW.WOODWARDGALLERY.NET
TUESDAY-SATURDAY: 11-6PM; SUN

This fall, the Woodward Gallery will premiere a playful body of work from Keith Haring's early years in New York. Some unique subway drawings, studio interiors and other never-before-exhibited works of art will further underscore Haring's outstanding contribution, impact and relevance to art today.

During 1978-1980, Haring's first years in New York, the art scene was moving out of established art galleries and museums and into nontraditional public spaces. The then-gritty actuality of NY was more vital than its gallery culture. Haring had adapted a quote



from Artist Jean Dubuffet, "For myself, I aim for an art which would be in immediate connection with daily life which would start from our daily life and which would be a very direct and very sincere expression of our real life and moods."



In 1978, Haring enrolled in School of Visual Arts (SVA) and refined his cartoon drawings. In 1979, he began to participate more in downtown culture, tuning into graffiti writers who spray-painted their tags or wrote with thick markers on the sides of subway cars or city walls. The young urban kids were being pulled into the expanding network of alternative art spaces. Haring additionally became involved with hip-hop culture, break dancers, the downtown clubs and DJs.

Riding the subway from his uptown apartment to the clubs, Haring noticed black paper hanging next to advertisements in the cars, awaiting the next ad. He used this opportunity to draw in chalk on the black paper with all sorts of childlike imagery: barking dogs, babies, unisex figures, spaceships, TV sets, etc. The outline style of imagery could be appreciated individually as cartoon cels or together to form a narrative. The subway drawings magnify Haring's cartoons into a new Pop Art that at once was urban narrative, science fiction and hieroglyphics. These subway drawings initiated his first one man shows.

Haring's work transcends the barrier between graffiti drawings and the world of fine art. His early chalk art on subway walls and sociopolitical murals were a response to New York street culture. Woodward Gallery will feature work from Keith Haring's initial creative output in NYC.

Research at Kehila Kedosha Janina

The Egyptian Connection

Many of the Jews of Greece immigrated to Egypt (Alexandria and Cairo) during the later part of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century. Reasons were usually economic as these North African communities in Egypt were centers of trade, offering opportunities in various aspects of commerce (textile trade, finance, coral, etc.). Jews from Corfu came in large numbers fleeing the Blood Libel accusations of 1891 but, for the most part, the Greek Jews who would find themselves on Egyptian soil were seeking a better life for themselves economically.



Esther Samuel and
Abraham Negrin; Alexandria

The Jewish communities of Cairo and Alexandria were filled with Jews who had come from all parts of the Mediterranean. Italian Jews came from Livorno, Syrian Jews from Aleppo, along with Jews from Lebanon and Turkey. In addition to Jews, Greek Orthodox Christians settled in Egypt and there was a large Greek-speaking community. One of Greece's most famous national poets, Constantinos Cavafy, was born in Egypt. Among the Greek Jews who settled in both Cairo and Alexandria were Jews from Ioannina, drawn there for the same reasons as Jews from all over the Mediterranean. Most of the Yanniote Jews left for the United States as the New York community grew in size, but others were forced to leave when persecutions set in under Nasser. Did your family settle for some time in Egypt? If so, send us information

Mionis

Seeking information about a branch of the Mionis family. Elaine Lust (from the Eskenazi and Mionis families) is seeking information about her Mioni connections. Elaine's grandmother Mollie Mioni married Benjamin Joseph Eskenazi. Mollie's father's name was Jacob and Mollie (probably Mazalto) had 3 siblings to our knowledge (Samuel, Sarina and Andzelos). We know that Andzelos (Angelos) went to Israel and has descendants there. Elaine's mother Chrysoula (Bertha) received letters from them many years ago. One of Andzelos' daughters (Sarah) married an Isaac Sade and was living in Haifa. Any help on locating this branch of the Mionis family would be greatly appreciated. Please contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

Roza Eskenazi

The question was recently posed how Roza Eskenazi, a famous Rebetika singer of obvious Sephardic Jewish background, survived the Occupation of Greece. One story is that she openly ran a restaurant in Athens. Experts in the field (such as our friend Joel Bressler), have expressed skepticism. We share that skepticism. Does anyone have substantiated information on how Roza survived? If so, contact us at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

As a result of our wide reach in the Greek Jewish world, we are sometimes contacted by other researchers. In this instance, some unclaimed inheritance money might be waiting for someone from the Israel/Belleli family. This is the information we have. If any of it rings a bell, get back to us kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net.

"We are researching a family formerly of Janina (Ioannina) and Corfu. Isaak Israil (Israel) was born 1855 in Corfu and died about 1928 in Brooklyn. His wife was Simihoula (Sophie) Solomon who was born 1869. We have information on the following children:

Leon born September 1882

Solomon born July 15, 1890

Max born May 11, 1896 in Corfu

Louiza born September 15, 1900 in Corfu

Esther born August 3, 1901 in Janina

David born March 8, 1904 in Janina

Rachel Israel Belleli

Isaak, Simihoula, Louiza and David arrived in the United States on August 23, 1914 on the SS Themistocles. Ester arrived August 25, 1915 on the SS Vasilefs Constantinos and says that she was leaving behind her sister Rachel Belleli in Kerkyra, Greece. We believe that Rachel may have died in 1954 in Greece.

We have been able to research the families of Max, Ester and David but, we would like to know if you have information on Rachel and her family. Also, we have little information on Solomon and Leon or their families. We believe that Solomon may have died in New Jersey.

If you have information on Rachel, Leon or Solomon, contact us immediately

Inquiry on amulet placed on baby's crib



One of our readers sent in this photo of a crib ornament that her Yanniotte family used to protect the newborn child. This is the only one we have seen. Any info from our readers would be greatly appreciated.

Photo of Matathia Nachman possibly at the Ames Street Synagogue

Please let us know if you recognize this as the Ames Street Synagogue in the Bronx.



Responses from readers on past newsletters

**On wedding in New Jersey photo in September 2009 newsletter:
From Rhonda Matza Saldias: (note: spellings of names are Rhonda's)**

"Wedding in New Jersey, at the Groom's (parents?) house, About 1915

The directions are from the perspective of the viewer looking at the picture. The name of the bride and groom are unknown. The bride is Spanish, the groom is Greek. I have added each person's father's first name as their middle name just to clarify since there were many Matza's with the same name. The Matza members that I am naming are from the NAATES family.



Bride is a friend of Rachel Eliasof Matza and Eliezer Yule Matza who are sitting down in the front row, third and fourth persons from the right side.

Eliasof Yule Matza is sitting on the right of the bride and Sofie (Simchoola) Matza his wife is sitting to the right of him. They were the best man and matron of honor.

Louisa Israel Matza, wife of Mooshon Eliasof Matza, is sitting to the left of the groom, her husband next to her on the left. Mooshon Eliasof Matza's father, Eliasof Nahoom Matza is standing behind Mooshon and Louisa. He is also Rachel Eliasof's father (mentioned above).

To the left of Mooshon Eliasof Matza is Chaneshoo Pitsrillo Matza, wife of Yousef Yule Matza...

Directly in front of Chaneshoo, the young women on the left, is Mazalo, or Mollie, the daughter of Chaneshoo Pitsrillo Matza's sister, Esther, who lived in Ioannina.

Behind the bride and to the right is a young man. He is Solomon Battino, son of Behora Yule Matza who is standing next to her son on the right.

The little girl with long hair and a ribbon sitting in front of Rachel and Eliezer Yule Matza is Betty Yousef Solomon, oldest daughter of Yousef Yule Matza and Chaneshoo Pitsrillo Matza. The little two year old girl with short hair sitting on the lap of Sophie Matza is Goldie Yousef Matza, third child of Yousef Yule Matza and Chaneshoo Pitsrillo Matza. Goldie married Morris Goldstein in California and Betty married Eli "Sol" Solomon in New York.

We are not sure of the rest of these names, but these are who we think they are:

The little boy sitting on the grass at the end, on the left side of the picture, Milton Toovoola Negrin, Nat Negrin's brother. To the left of Chaneshoo Matza is Toovoola Avram Matza (maiden name) Negrin. The first name of the women on the front row, second from the right, and sitting next to Eliezer Yule Matza is BOLISA. We do not know her last name, her husband is sitting next to her on the right. They both were Sephardic Jews."

Thank you Rhonda! We would love to know the names of the bride & groom.

Comments on photo of Broome & Allen Street Boys (photo was thanks to Annette Binder). For original publication of photo in September e-newsletter see our website (www.kkjsm.org).

Photo of the Broome and Allen Boys. Lower left corner, 2nd man in, was my father Louis Negrin. He was the son of David Negrin and brother of Nathan Negrin.

Best regards, Marv Negrin

Another small "Bingo!" Re the picture of the Broome and Allen Boys, the man immediately to the right of that notation is MY FATHER! And the sixth man seated behind him, with the bushy eyebrows, is Dave David, who was married to Rachel Barouch David who was the sister of Abe Barouch, husband of Rae Colchamiro Barouch.

Again, amazing! Esther Stone

I have that same picture in my collection. My father and my Uncle are in the picture. So is a neighbor - Ralph Bitton and my cousin Sol Amiel. I think my grandmother may be one of the women in the back.

May you and yours have a Very Healthy and Happy New Year.

Besos,

Phyllis (Molho) Modiano

Comments on photo for identification sent in by Sandy Schaaff:

Info from Annette Binder (always a wealth of information): the mother in the photo was Sarah Moses; the man sitting down was her husband Menachem, the older daughter was Betty, younger daughter was Mollie and the son Joe. Sarah's maiden name was Yomtov and her mother was a Joseph, a cousin of Annette Binder's mother (Esther Joseph Politis). Evelyn Klapholtz (another Joseph family descendant) confirmed the IDs.

Again, for original publication of photo in September e-newsletter see our website (www.kkjsm.org).

Articles of Interest having to do with Greek Jews

Jews from the Greek Island of Corfu have an intertwined history with the Apulia region of Italy and will, therefore, find the following article of interest:

European Day of Jewish Culture Traces Jewish Life in Southern Italy.

Alessandro Cassin interviews Fabrizio Lelli (University of Lecce)

Apulia, A Land of Jewish Arrivals and Departures.

The last Jews left Apulia in 1541. In 2001 Fabrizio Lelli arrived at the University of Lecce to teach Hebrew language and literature, in a city with no Jewish population. This year, from Sept. 6th through the 10th, Apulia will mount the NEGBA, a Festival of Jewish Culture. Note: The Festival of Jewish Culture, named NEGBA - meaning "towards the South" is organized by the Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane and Regione Puglia - Assessorato al Mediterraneo ed Attività Culturali in collaboration with local administrations.

FOR COMPLETE ARTICLE, ACCESS www.primolevicenter.org

Saltiel's Visit Hania

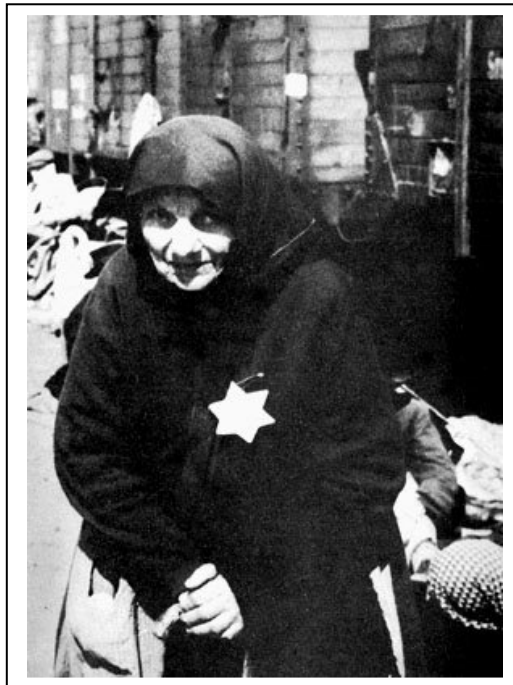
For details on the Saltiel family reunion in Hania this past June, visit:

http://www.shealtiel.com/shealtiel/thereunions/speech_mamalakis.pdf

New Information on losses of Greek Jews in the Holocaust

Under the pseudo name of Abravanel, exceedingly interesting pieces of information have been put on the internet. Do access <http://abravanel.wordpress.com>. Just recently, we were informed of additional information about Jews from Ioannina who were deported from France.

**Jewish woman
Birkenau**



We wish to share this information with you:

Levy, Amedeo: born in Ioannina in 1882. Died in Auschwitz in November 1942.

Levy, Jacob: born in Ioannina in 1898. Died the 30th of March at Lublin-Maidanek (Poland).

Mordo, Michael (Michel): born June 15, 1891 in Ioannina: died June 4, 1944 at Auschwitz.

For additional information on other Jews from Salonika and elsewhere in Greece who were deported from France, do access the Abravanel website:

http://abravanel.wordpress.com/2009/08/29/greek_jews_in_france_shoah/

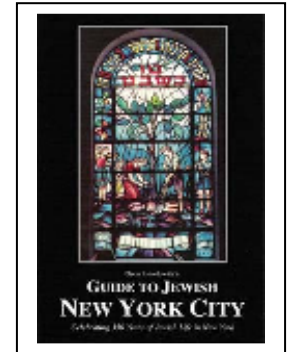
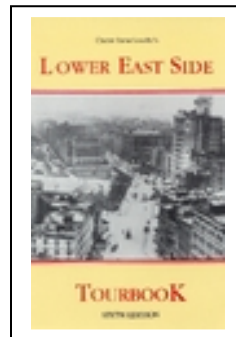
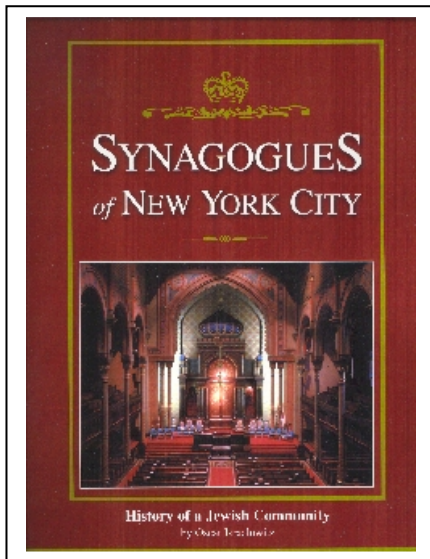
New Books now offered for sale at Kehila Kedosha Janina

As always, send check for books (including P&H of \$4 for the first item and \$1 additional for each additional item) made out to Kehila Kedosha Janina. Mail to One Hanson Place, Huntington NY, 11743 to expedite orders.

The following books from Israelowitz Publishing are now available at Kehila Kedosha Janina:

Synagogues of New York City

This lavish volume contains the history of synagogue architecture in America's oldest and largest Jewish community. There are two hundred color and black & white photographs, illustrations, architect's renderings, floor plans and maps. **\$35**



Guide to Jewish New York City

This is the only guide of its kind. It contains complete do-it-yourself walking and driving tours of the unique Jewish neighborhoods of today such as the Lower East Side, the Upper East and Upper West Sides, Washington Heights, Riverdale, Kew Gardens Hills, Fresh Meadows, Forest Hills, Borough Park, Williamsburg, Crown Heights, Flatbush and Willowbrook. There are tours of several former Jewish enclaves such as Jewish Harlem, the Grand Concourse, Jamaica and Tompkinsville. The Guide to Jewish New York City also contains lists of hundreds of kosher restaurants, synagogues (of all denominations), mikvehs, Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) and YMHAs. **\$20**

Lower East Side Tourbook

This guide is the most essential tool a visitor or researcher into the history of this unique neighborhood can utilize. It offers a complete do-it-yourself walking tour plus a list of over five hundred synagogues which served the nearly 600,000 Jews who lived here in the early part of this century. There are also original street maps, dating from 1914, showing every building in the Lower East Side. **\$10**

A new book from Pella Publishing

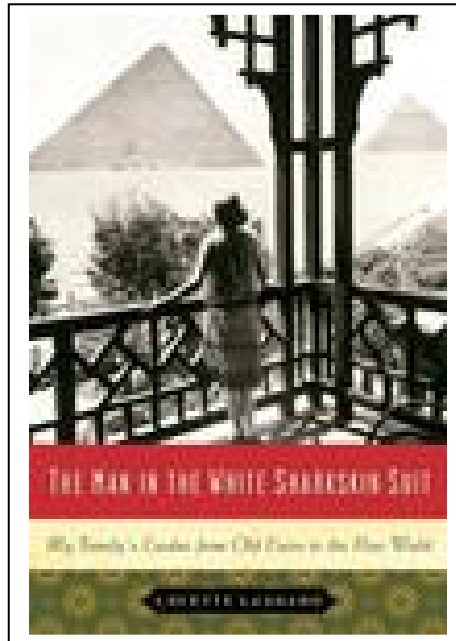
Occupation and Resistance
The Greek Agony 1941-44
by John Louis Hondros

On April 22, 1941, Nazi armies ended the heroic "NO" which Ioannis Metaxas had issued to Mussolini on October 28, 1940. Five days later, the Germans occupied Athens and unfurled the swastika over the Acropolis, yet the resistance to the Axis did not end with the defeat of the Greek army. The brutal Axis occupation generated a second "NO" in the form of the Greek

resistance. This resistance sprang from the spontaneous acts of individuals of different political persuasion, but the Communist-led EAM/ELAS emerged as the only effective national resistance. The political threat posed by EAM/ELAS clashed with the prewar political world, which the resistance rendered redundant, and Great Britain, which supported the return of George II and his government-in-exile. As the prewar political leaders coalesced around Britain and the Greek monarch, Greece moved from polarization to civil war and to the defeat of EAM/ELAS in December 1944. This book, which is based on British and German wartime records, offers a provocative reinterpretation of this period in modern Greek history.

John Louis Hondros, educated at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Vanderbilt University, teaches modern European history at The College of Wooster, in Wooster, Ohio.
\$20

Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to offer Lucette Lagnado's excellent book on the Egyptian Jewish experience.



Winner of the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature and hailed by the *New York Times Book Review* as a "brilliant, crushing book" and the *New Yorker* as a memoir of ruin "told without melodrama by its youngest survivor," "The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit" "recounts the exile of the author's Jewish Egyptian family from Cairo in 1963 and her father's heroic and tragic struggle to survive his "riches to rags" trajectory."

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