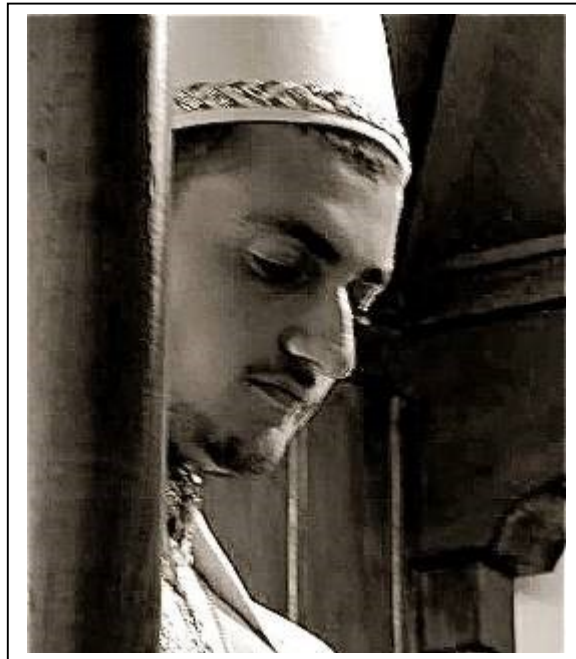




February 2016 e-newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

Every January we stop and remember the victims of the Holocaust on January 27th, the International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust. In this newsletter there will be a series of the reports on the events in Greece. In Athens, our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, was invited to attend the events where Greek-Orthodox Christians who risked their lives to save Jews in Greece were honored and a memorial was unveiled on Melidoni Street. Therefore, this newsletter is dedicated to the Greek-Jewish victims of the Holocaust and to the courageous Greek-Orthodox Christians who risked their lives to save Jews in Greece.



Kehila Kedosha Janina is honored to welcome Rabbi Gabriel Negrin on February 11th at 7:00 pm. See article under upcoming events.

This newsletter, our 84th 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 closed to 8000 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

~ We mourn the passing of Howard Danon, a long-time member of our community, who passed on 12/30/2015 at the age of 69. May his memory be for a blessing.

~We belatedly announce the passing of Sarah Matza Amira, widow of Harry Morris Amira OBM, mother of Genette Simon, Rhonda Saldias and Marlene Hoffman and grandmother of Serena Snyder, Lisa Saldias, Liana and Alissa Hoffman. Sarah was born in New York in 1919 to Joseph (Yousef) Matza and Chanashou Matza, both born in Ioannina, and passed away on June 27, 2015. Her grandparents were Yule and Refkoula Matza and her great grandparents were Nahoum and Toouvoula Matza. She was always proud of her Romaniote heritage from Ioannina. Our sincere condolences to the family. May her memory be for a blessing.



Sarah Matza Amira



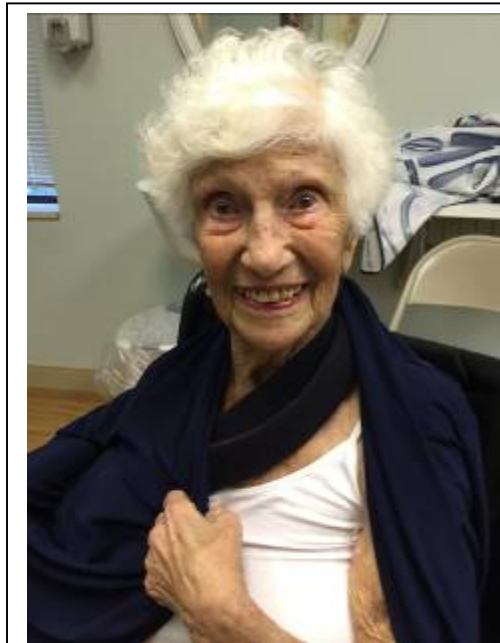
Passover at the Matza's in Bensonhurst

~ We sadly report the passing of Rita Nachmias, sister of Rifkah and daughter of William Nachmias and Molly Levy Nachmias. Rita was born in 1933 on the Lower East Side of New York, her parents recent immigrants from Ioannina, Greece. May her memory be for a blessing.

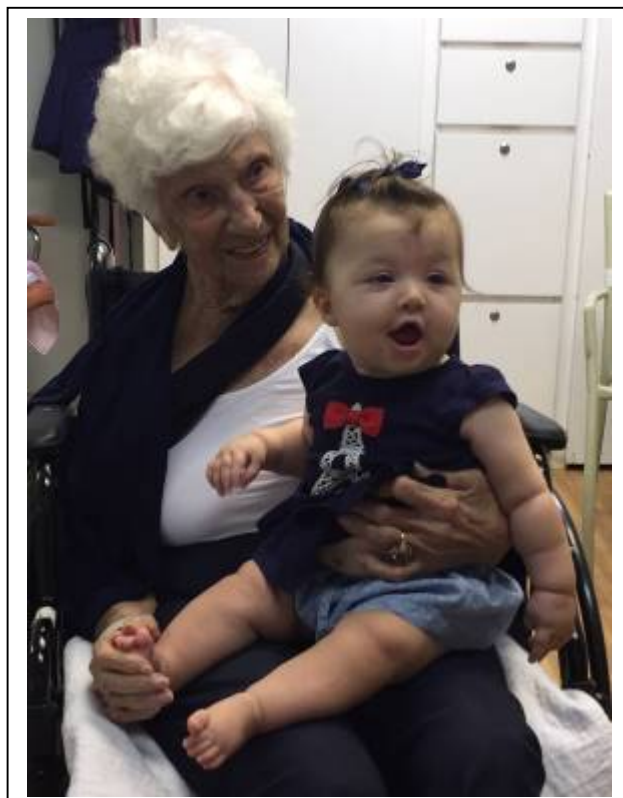
~ It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Jean Colchamiro Saltzman at the age of 102. Jean was predeceased by her husband Murray, her siblings Jesse, Rae, Esther, Sarah, Morris, Oscar, Dinah and Ben, and her daughter Roberta Tepperman. Jean was the last surviving child of Elias Colchamiro (the youngest son of Jessula and Rachel) and Nancy (Esperanza) Matza Colchamiro. Jean is survived by her daughter Audrey Schilt and her sons Phillip and Eddie Saltzman, and many grandchildren and her great-granddaughter Drew, many loving nieces and nephews.



Wedding of two of Elias Colchamiro's daughters



Jean Colchamiro Saltzman



Jean and her great granddaughter Drew

Simchas

~ We are so pleased to announce the engagement of Joe Besca (born in Ioannina) to Karen Eve Sheperd on December 12, 2015.



~We welcome the birth of Max Donovan, grandson of Amy Matsil Richer.



**Max with his nona
and big sister Haylee**

We welcome hearing about simchas from our community. It is truly our joy to share your joys. If you lament not seeing your family photos in our e-newsletters, do share them with us. We can only publish them if we have them!

We share the celebration of Nina Matathias' 95th birthday. Nina is the mother of Asher Matathias.



~ We congratulate Joe Varon on the marriage of his son Joshua to Danielle Schuindt.



Aikoi Mas, Los Muestros (our own) come home

We love when our own visit Kehila Kedosha Janina. In January, we were honored by the visit of Ray Topkis, who will be joining our June/July group this summer. Ray's great grandmother, Rosa, was born in Metsovo, a small town not far from Ioannina. We are making Ray an honorary Yanniote.

**Ray Topkis &
Elyse Aroneau**



**Rosa
Avarach
Topkis**



We were overjoyed to welcome Michael Neiderman and his mother, Adele. Adele is from the DeCastro family and when Michael chose to bring his class from Roosevelt Island, Adele was more than happy to chaperone.



In January, Kehila Kedosha Janina continued to welcome visitors from around the world. We love welcoming school groups to our synagogue/museum to learn about our special culture.



JCC from Upper West Side



Temple Israel from Upper East Side



School group from January 10th



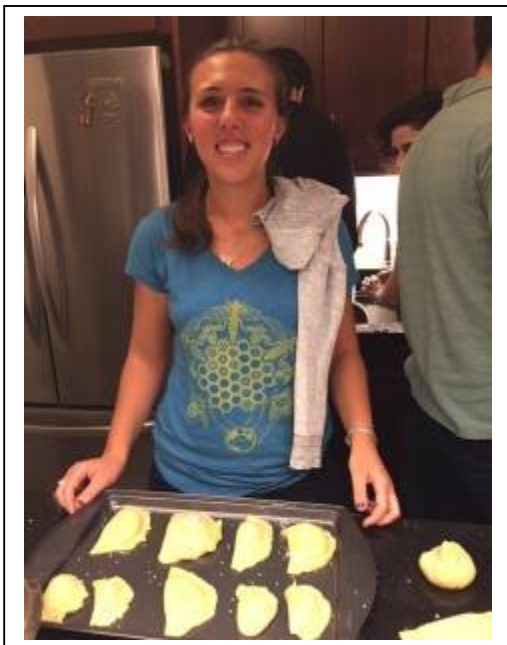
Rabbi Sacha Pecaric



**Sylvia Freund from
El Salvador**

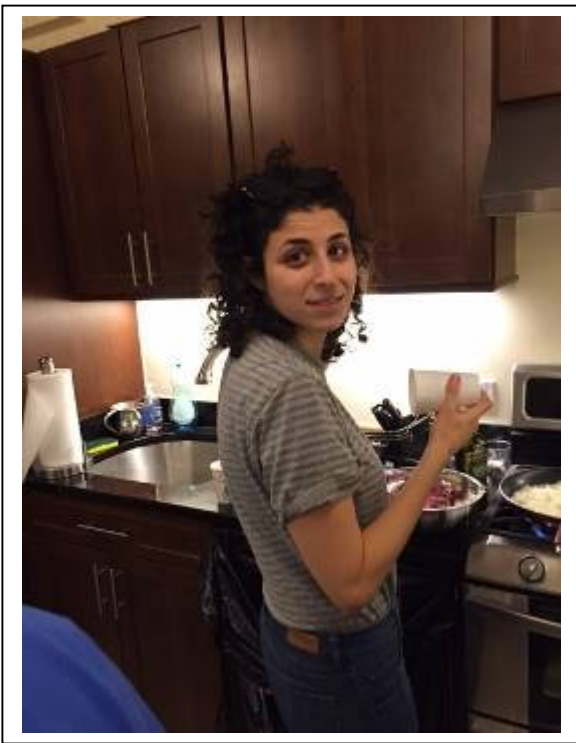
Past Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

The Greek Jewish Young Professionals gathered to make bourekas in our Ada Finifter Communal Room and Education Center on January 31st. If you want to become part of this exciting new network and are in your 20s or 30s contact Andrew Marcus at GreekJewishYPN@gmail.com to sign up.



Elise Mordos





Arielle Angel



Rabbi Nissim Elcenave

Upcoming Events at Kehila Kedosha Janina

We are honored to welcome Rabbi Gabriel Negrin to Kehila Kedosha Janina. When we learned that Rabbi Negrin was going to be in the New York City area we ran to invite him to Kehila Kedosha Janina. To our joy, he was as excited about this as we were. Rabbi Negrin will be coming to Kehila Kedosha Janina on the evening of February 11th at 7:00. We are calling this "Meet the Greek Rabbi." Do come and meet Rabbi Negrin and welcome him to our community. Just, please RSVP, so we can be sure we have enough food (yes, there will be food!). RSVP at kehila_kedosha_janina@netzero.net or 516-456-9336.



**Rabbi Negrin and
Marcia Haddad
Ikononopoulos**

Do become part of this exciting event. So far, the Sephardic Brotherhood, the Kastorilis, the Sisterhood of Janina and the Association of Friends of Greek Jewry have pledged financial support. Add your name to the list!

ב"ה

SAVE THE DATE!

**GREEK JEWISH
FESTIVAL**

**SUNDAY MAY 22, 2016
12PM – 6PM**

**BROOME ST BETWEEN ALLEN ST & ELDRIDGE ST
LOWER EAST SIDE**

**IF YOU OR YOUR BUSINESS WOULD LIKE TO BE A SPONSOR, PLEASE
CONTACT ANDREW MARCUS AT AMARCUSNYC@GMAIL.COM**

WE WOULD BE INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Commemorations of January 27th



International Holocaust Remembrance Day, is an international memorial day on 27 January commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. It commemorates the genocide that resulted in the death of an estimated 6 million Jewish people, 2 million Romani people, 250,000 mentally and physically disabled people, and 9,000 homosexual men by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. It was designated by the United Nations General Assembly on 1 November 2005. January 27th is the date that Auschwitz was liberated. This year marks the 71st anniversary of that liberation.

What is different about the January 27th commemoration and Yom HaShoah is that on Yom HaShoah Jews throughout the world stop and remember. On January 27th, it is the whole country, Jewish and non-Jewish that commemorates the Holocaust. This year in Greece there were a number of events (in Larissa, Athens, Thessaloniki and Ioannina) and, as always, in New York City, an event through the Greek Consulate.

The events at the Greek Consulate were organized by Consul General Georgos Iliopoulos and Sonny Asser of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece. The room at the Consulate was packed, most of the guests of Greek Jewish background.

The event began with a greeting by retired Greek Ambassador Loucas Tsilas, who spoke on growing awareness of the Holocaust and how, because of the Holocaust, Greece lost so many of its fellow compatriots, Jews.



His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios



Sonny Asser presenting the Consul General with an acknowledgement of his work with Greek Jewry

The Main Event For January 27th in Athens

With the unveiling of the Greek Righteous Among the Nations monument, at the courtyard of the Beth Shalom Synagogue of Athens, that took place on Wednesday the 27th of January, 2016, as part of the commemorations for Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Greek Jewry paid due tribute to the heroes of the German Occupation, their Christian compatriots, who selflessly saved many Jews by risking their life and the lives of their families.

"Jews have a greater sense of appreciation for the Memory of these Heroes," underlined during his speech Benjamin Albalas, President of the European Council of Jewish Communities and former president of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece and the Athens Jewish Community, who envisioned the creation of the monument. After the ordeal of the German Occupation and their persecution, Jewish survivors actually sought out their saviors to honor them. Moreover, Israel bestowed on them the honorific title and the "RIGHTEOUS Among the Nations" medal, the highest honor awarded by the State, officially recognizing and offering eternal gratitude to the people whose actions imparted to the word "Human" the loftiest and noblest value, endowing it with a transcendent meaning.

The unveiling of the Monument was carried out by the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Prokopis Pavlopoulos, and attended by few still alive Greek Righteous and by many descendants of the Greek Righteous as well as by survivors of the German Occupation. Speeches on the significance and important role of the Monument were delivered by: the President of the Athens Jewish Community, Mr. Minos Moissis; the President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), Moses Konstantini and Mr. B. Albalas.

From the website of the Central Board of Jewish Communities (KIS)





President of Greece laying wreath at Holocaust Memorial



Isaak Mizan, survivor, laying wreath



Gathering at Holocaust Memorial

From the Moving Evening Events in Athens at the Ellinikos Kosmos

The auditorium was filled as the moving program thanking Greek Orthodox Christians for saving Jews in Greece began. Members of the Central Board of Jewish Communities spoke, highlighted by Moisis Konstantini, who was a hidden child himself. The program opened by survivors lighting candles for the six million. Among the speakers were the Israeli Ambassador to Greece and a representative from Yad Vashem. The video shown highlighted some of the stories of survivors and those who saved them. There was also representatives from the Patriarchy in Jerusalem.



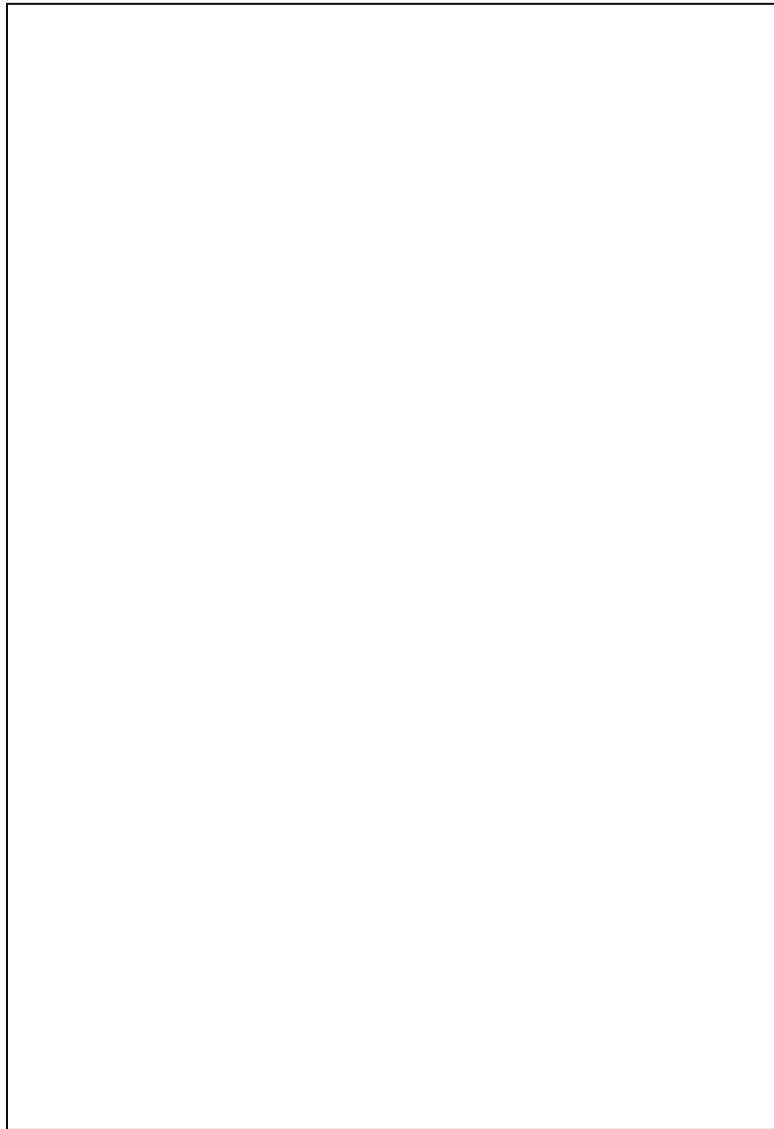
Candle lighting

Victoria Benouzilio and the Iatrous



From Yad Vashem

The representative from Yad Vashem showed the photo from our website, the photo of Fani Haim. Even though she did not realize where they had gotten it from and did not acknowledge Kehila Kedosha Janina, I thanked her, telling her how important the telling of Fani's story was.



Holocaust Commemoration at the Greek Parliament

The 27th of January has been officially established -by law that was passed unanimously by the Hellenic Parliament in 2004 -as a Memorial Day for the Greek Jewish Martyrs and Heroes of the Holocaust.

This year, on 27.1.2016, the Hellenic Parliament -following an initiative of its Speaker, Nikos Voutsis -commemorated, for the first time, the Holocaust Remembrance Day at a special event held in its plenary session hall with the attendance of Holocaust survivors, representatives from institutions of the Greek Jewry, and Israeli diplomats. All political parties were present at the event, except for the Golden Dawn party.

The Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, stated that this initiative honors the Hellenic Parliament and he concluded his speech by inviting all attendees to observe a minute's silence as a tribute to Holocaust victims.

Voutsis also announced that the Hellenic Parliament will co-sponsor the creation of a permanent exhibition in Auschwitz dedicated to the Greek Jews that were exterminated thereat. In his speech Voutsis noted: "...During the Holocaust, the material damages and human losses suffered by the Jewish Communities in many Greek cities were unprecedented. It is estimated that the

Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, one of the most prominent in Europe, lost 94% of its population. Not even Jews that had served as MPs for the constituency of Thessaloniki were able to escape persecution and death, and a commemoration will be held in their honor this Saturday at the hall of the City Council of Thessaloniki. The names of the MPs that lost their lives are: Allalouf Daniel (1881-1943, Insurance Broker), Ventura Jacques (1901-1943, Journalist), Kazes Michel (1905-1942, Typographer), Gatenio Leon (1863-1943), Bensantze Mintes (1881-1943, Publisher, Journalist), Siakki Isaac (1880-1943, Merchant), Soulam David (1880-1942, Professional), Tsenio Albert (1898-1943, Merchant). It is their memory that we honor today, joining the world-wide commemorations held by many countries. We are also paying our deepest respects to the Greek 'Righteous Among the Nations', who risked their own lives to save Jews persecuted by the Nazis and their collaborators."

Next, the Minister of Education, Nikos Filis, took the floor and spoke about the Holocaust, its historical significance, the crime of genocide, and the responsibility shared by today's society and its institutions concerning youth education.

"The term Holocaust signifies total annihilation, the killing of almost six million Jews of Europe by the Nazis. It was a genocide -a premeditated effort to annihilate a whole race", noted Nikos Filis, Minister of Education. And, with educators in mind, he remarked: "If the aim of our educational system is to shape personalities able to think lucidly and with a sense of responsibility, then today's commemoration can serve as an incentive for the cultivation of a historical conscience."

Filis also mentioned a series of specific actions taken by the Ministry of Education in order to "provide educators and students with a chance at better understanding the significance of the Holocaust for Greek and world history alike." According to Filis, "the Holocaust has been included in school textbooks, and each year the Ministry co-organizes training seminars for educators on how to teach it in the classroom, while at the same time supports the annual visit of Non-Jewish students to the Auschwitz Museum. In 2015, a video competition for students was organized for the first time, with the co-operation of the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs and the Jewish Museum of Greece, on the topic: "The Holocaust and the Greek Jews". "The video competition will be held again this year," stated Filis and continued: "Furthermore, we support initiatives of Greek schools seeking to cooperate with those of foreign countries on the topics of the Holocaust and Genocide. Such a cooperation was actualized between the 6th High School of Nea Smyrni and a school in the US."

Filis also lambasted Greek anti-Semites - who, as he said, "do not waste any opportunity to question the patriotism of the Greek Jews in every imaginable and unimaginable way" - by stating that: "The blood of the Greek Jews was spilled like that of all Greek citizens for the freedom of Greece, whenever the fatherland needed it. And how it could have been any different, since the Jews have been residing on these lands since antiquity?"

The Minister of Education made special reference to the Monument of the Greek "Righteous Among the Nations" that was inaugurated earlier that morning at the Synagogue of Athens, following an initiative of the Jewish Community. "The example of the Greek Righteous, those Non-Jewish Greeks, who during the Occupation risked their own lives to save those of the Jewish Greeks, serves as a beacon of hope forever marking the path of virtue and democracy. Let us follow it," the Minister concluded.

The political parties issued announcements commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day 2016.



Holocaust Commemoration in Thessaloniki

Children lay roses at the Holocaust Memorial in Thessaloniki on January 31, 2016, during a ceremony commemorating the persecution of the Jewish people during World War II. Of the 65,000 Greek Jews that fell victim to Nazism, 50,000 were citizens of Thessaloniki and almost 45,000 perished at the Auschwitz concentration camp. Greece officially commemorates the Holocaust every January.

The President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, Moisis Konstantini, the President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, David Saltiel, Representatives of the Municipality including Mayor Boutaris, and survivors of the Holocaust including Heinz Kounio, attended. The most moving moment was when children placed roses at the monument.



Mayor Boutaris





Survivors

Holocaust Commemoration Events in Ioannina

German-born professor of history Hagen Fleischer expressed the hope that the road of German World War II (WWII) reparations to Greece will open, but also expressed his concern about the refugee problem of Europe. He did this in a public lecture in Ioannina. Fleischer has studied extensively the historical events of WWII.

Hagen Fleischer was the main speaker in an event that took place in Ioannina, in honor and in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Professor Fleischer began his lecture by referring to the visit of the President of Germany Joachim Gauck to the nearby martyr village of Liggiades, one year and a half ago, and proceeded to make several references to the “unique” in the annals of human history, Nazi barbarism but also to the messages that emanate from the historical events, stressing that the subject was relevant and remains so, to the events of the present day. Fleischer considers that in the matter of German WWII reparations to Greece, a matter of “enormous importance”, neither side has done anything of substance.

“From the German side this is understandable, because the debtor does not remember, or tries not to remember debts, the moral ones as well as the material ones. The Greek side woke up very late. In retrospect, it is very easy to criticize and to accuse. From the end of WWII—and essentially all of modern times—Greece had problems, while Germany after a lost war, became very fast an economic superpower and unfortunately exploited this position”, he said. However, he said, Greece was subjected to political blackmail when she entered the large European family, and in the name of a new beginning, a painful past had to be written off, while

he added that "when you are not part of the game it is easy to throw stones at those who are in it".



We asked Professor Fleischer if the "forgiveness" asked for from the Greek people, in March 2014, by German President Joachim Gauck, while visiting the village of Liggiades, could open the way, that is contribute positively in the matter of German reparations.

"Asking for forgiveness is not enough, but there is nothing he can do from his position, he does not have, for example, the power that the American president has. Nevertheless, he is the first German official that has asked for forgiveness. This was not liked by many people back in his country. He is the subject of negative comments, and of ridicule. They say a pastor is speaking about the sins of Germans. There are many who do not like what he said. However, I hope that, yes, the road leading to reparations will open".

Hagen Fleischer, a 72-year-old professor who became a Greek citizen 30 years ago, expressed his worries about the several events taking place all over Europe, concerning poverty and immigration.

He said specifically: "I am afraid. I worry about the young people. I may not be alive to see these fears materialize. However, I do worry".

Holocaust Remembrance Day
Holocaust Remembrance Day
Friday, January 29th 2016, at 20.30
Room "V . Pyrsinella "
Free entrance

Speaker: Hagen Fleischer, emeritus professor in contemporary history at the University of Athens
Urban Greek songs of Ioannina. Jewish and Romaniots' songs.

Bayan (accordion concerto): Kostas Raptis

Singer: Maria Thoidou

Organized by: Region of Epirus, Jewish Community of Ioannina, Joseph and Esther Ganis Foundation, Cultural Center of Ioannina.

The Jewish community of Ioannina saw its heyday in the early days of the 19th century when the city was under the authority of Ali Pasha (1788-1822). Many members of the community worked in administration offices, trade flourished and manufacturing was promoted. The Jewish population increased in number, as did the city's population in general, and the habitation was also expanded to the area outside of the city's fortification.

The crisis which struck the Ottoman Empire early in the 20th century with internal political friction, constant nationalistic and autonomist movements, loss of land and population, struck Ioannina too. Financial difficulties, low standards of living and strife between different religious communities in the city affected Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. The 4000 Jews living in Ioannina at that time faced similar, related problems. There was a dire need of up-to-date knowledge and occupational training, and these things were taken on board, with a good deal of success, by schools that the Alliance Israélite Universelle founded in 1904, and by a number of societies that were set up in the community by private individuals. As a result of this crisis, a significant number of Jewish people of Ioannina were influenced by the general wave of emigration from Greece and left for the United States of America and Palestine.



Such was the general state of things in the community when the Balkan Wars started (1912-1913). These wars ended with the liberation of Ioannina by the Greek army on 21st February 1913, whereupon it became part of the Modern Greek State along with most of Epirus. Following its liberation, and despite the problems that racked it, the area was eager to be part of the changes and reformation taking place in the rest of Greece. The Jewish people of the city played an active role in local social and political affairs, and in those of the country as a whole. Like many other Greeks, they gave their support to Eleftherios Venizelos' vision of Greater Greece, and this was made apparent in practical terms when many Jews enlisted for the campaign in Asia Minor.



With the exception of a few isolated incidents, the Jewish people of the city lived peacefully and maintained good relations with their Christian fellow townspeople until 1940. They shared the same joys, the same sorrows, the same problems and hopes. They were fully aware of their Greek identity but also preserved their Jewish identity in certain aspects of their everyday life.
Source: <http://ioanninajewishlegacy.com>

Visit to Cervantes Institute in Athens to See Artemis Alkalai's Exhibit on Survivors

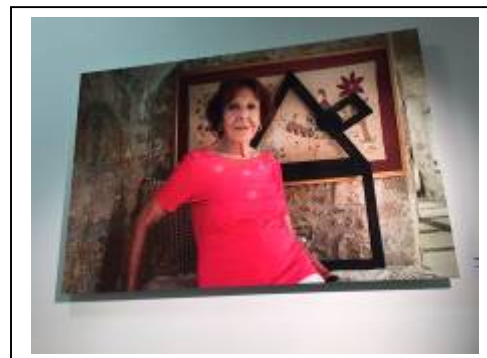


Gani Sisters



Heinz Kounio

**Sammy
Modiano**



Stella Levi

Rome, Italy

Historic visit of Pope Francis to Synagogue in Rome

January 17th. Visit of Pope Francis to synagogue in Rome. He said, "Regarding belief, you are our older brother...We all belong to one family, the family of God."



January 27th marked the commemoration of the Holocaust in Rome and one of the highlights of the events was the story of Sami and Selma Modiano, a love story that began in Rhodes and continues in Rome. Sami was deported from Rhodes on July 23rd, 1944, survived Auschwitz and after living in Rhodesia for a while, chose to settle in Rome.



Last week the president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities Renzo Gattegna and the Italian minister of Education Stefania Giannini signed an agreement with the goal of strengthening the study of the Holocaust in schools. The agreement was signed during a trip that brought over 130 students from all over the country to Krakow and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Joining the students were Shoah survivors Sami Modiano, and sisters Andra and Tatiana Bucci.

The project, as both Gattegna and Giannini highlighted, renews the mutual commitment to continue in the effort of spreading Holocaust knowledge. Among the projects are a summer school for teachers and the creation of a National Observatory for the development of initiatives on the topic together with the recognition of those already developed. The aim is the creation of an online portal for the sharing of information.



"The goal we have set ourselves is to strengthen the awareness of a generation of students about what happened not all so many years ago in Europe. This is a challenge that requires time, but which has a solid point of reference in the cooperation established in recent years with the minister," president Gattegna said.

"The memory of the Shoah prepares us in the defense of human dignity. This is the reason we need to transfer it to new generations," minister Giannini commented.

Among the participants on the trip was the president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies Laura Boldrini. She remembered how the transition from words to violence could be "very short" and stressed the importance of not underestimating racist jokes and provocations.

The two-day trip was very intensive and full of emotions, a step forward to understanding the relevance of the message that comes from that dramatic period. As Rav Roberto Della Rocca highlighted: "We are here not to make you cry or feel pity for us. We are here to teach you how to reject indifference."

In the delegation were also UCEI counselor Victor Magiar, a representative from the Prime Minister's office, Anna Nardini, ambassadors Sandro De Bernardin and Alessandro De Pedys, and historian Alberto Melloni

- See more at: <http://moked.it/international/2016/01/24/news-italian-minister-of-education-commits-to-strengthen-shoah-studies/#sthash.YCY3H4ip.dpuf>

Milan

"If it is almost impossible to educate against Auschwitz, we have to worry about educating after Auschwitz," wrote historian Georges Bensoussan in his "Auschwitz en héritage? D'un bon usage de la mémoire." The question is how to transmit the memory of the Shoah, its inner values and, above all, how to do it without the fundamental voice of the survivors, who are unavoidably passing away. Every year this dilemma becomes most evident during the celebration of January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In Italy all those who are involved in keeping the memory of what happened alive are searching for ways to transmit it.

Thus, we must go beyond the testimonies of the survivors, the concerts, conferences, and exhibitions which are organized all over the country to bring the Shoah to the attention of the public and to open, or to keep open, various opportunities for reflection.

Music, for example, is a tool to open these doors as highlighted by the concert "Toscanini – The courage of Music", sponsored by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and organized by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities for International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome. The example of the famous conductor Arturo Toscanini reminds us how it was possible to choose not to follow fascism. One can always say no to violence as the Italian orchestra conductor demonstrated. And speaking about music, the concert of the Verdi Conservatory of Turin is dedicated to composers deported to the Terezin camp and reminds us how music could become a propaganda tool, but also a strong act of resistance against the horror and dehumanization.



The reflections of hundreds of students on the tragedy of the Jewish genocide and violence of fascism were expressed in various artistic forms, as evidenced by the fourteenth edition of the national school competition 'The Young Remember the Holocaust'.

One tool for young people to understand what happened to the Jews during the war, is the famous Diary of Anne Frank to whom is dedicated the exhibition in Rome at the Casina dei Vallati organized by the Foundation of the Holocaust Museum of Rome. And to future generations – so

as to the current ones – are devoted spaces which feature a strong impact with the terrible past, as the Milan Holocaust Memorial – Platform 21 or the new Memorial in Bologna which will be inaugurated on January 27.

- See more at: <http://moked.it/international/2016/01/24/news-italy-prepares-to-celebrate-holocaust-remembrance-day/#sthash.U8HO8Dhc.dpuf>

Venice

Venice Aims to Restore Shylock's Ghetto

By Tom Kington and Philip Willan*

Five hundred years after it was founded in Venice, Europe's original Jewish ghetto is fighting to preserve its ancient synagogues as monuments to Jewish resilience — and as a warning about intolerance and segregation. The singer Barbra Streisand is among backers of an 8 million fundraising drive by Venice's Jewish community to restore the area where, for nearly 300 years, Jews were locked up at night and forced to wear yellow caps.

Built on the site of an old metal foundry, the small district took its name, Ghetto, from the Venetian word "getar", meaning to smelt. "This place is so important because its name entered the language, right through to the Nazi ghettos and black ghettos in the US," Shaul Bassi, a local campaigner, said.

Venice's rulers set up the ghetto in 1516 and forced all Jews to move there and work either as money lenders or clothes sellers, even making them pay for the guards who locked the gates from midnight to 5am and patrolled the canals circling the area. By the time Napoleon demolished the gates, in 1797, the residents had been forced to add ever-higher buildings to accommodate the growing population. Rising to eight stories, and packed with low-ceilinged apartments, they still crowd the ghetto's central piazza.



About 500 Jewish people live in Venice today, down from 5,000 in the 17th century. The Pope sought to draw a line under centuries of Catholic repression of Jews yesterday, stating in Rome during his first visit as pontiff to a synagogue, that Catholics should no longer seek to convert Jews to Christianity. That stands in stark contrast to life in the Venetian ghetto four centuries ago, when Jews were not allowed to build their own synagogues, and were instead forced to use Christian architects — who created the district's collection of opulent baroque, rococo and

neoclassical places of worship. Now, three will be restored and opened for visits. A museum will teach visitors about the cultural hothouse the ghetto became.

Paolo Gnignati, the head of Venice's Jewish community, said the people had seen their ghetto less as a prison and more as a safe haven. "People flooded here, because elsewhere was worse," he said. "Ironically, they had security they didn't have elsewhere. What started with a fence has ended in liberty, and that is what we are celebrating."

Concerts and exhibitions will be held this year to mark the anniversary, as well as a performance in the ghetto's piazza for the first time of Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice. "Shylock is odious, but he is the most famous Venetian Jew — we cannot pretend he doesn't exist," said Mr Bassi. Shalom Bahbout, Venice's chief rabbi, said the ghetto was a warning against forcing migrants coming to Italy today into isolated communities.

*The articles was published in The Times on January 18, 2016.

- See more at: <http://moked.it/international/2016/01/23/features-venice-aims-to-restore-shylocks-ghetto/#sthash.CKnDK5JO.dpuf>

Venice Commemorates the Establishment of the First Ghetto

By Rossella Tercatin

2016 marks the fifth-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the first ghetto in history, which was in Venice in 1516.

The Jewish Community of Venice, the city and the entire country are gearing up to commemorate the event with dozens of initiatives, starting this coming March.

Speaking at the plenary of the World Jewish Congress, the president of the Venice Jewish Community Paolo Gnignati explained the principles that inspired the Community in preparing the program.



"First of all, we do not want to celebrate neither the Ghetto nor the segregation, giving them a positive connotation. Secondly, we consider this commemoration as a starting point. The next

500 years are equally important and all efforts to transform the area where the Ghetto used to be to a place of artistic, cultural and spiritual encounter must be undertaken,” he said.

A recent issue of the Italian edition of the National Geographic also featured a section on the anniversary and on what the area of the Ghetto is today, with its history and the five ancient synagogues.

“Today the Ghetto, faithful to its’ originally cosmopolitan composition, still represents the union of different nations and traditions, a place where the traditional representatives of Italian Jewry, the Community and its 480 members, live side by side with newcomers such as the ultra-Orthodox group of Chabad-Lubavitch, who arrived in the city about 25 years ago. An interesting ensemble of people of faith, proud of their religiosity and millennial culture that found themselves against their will in inaugurating the first Ghetto in history,” reads the article, authored by Fabio Dalmasso.

Turkey

Ankara

The delegation from Turkish Jewish Community who went to Ankara to attend the Holocaust Memorial Ceremony as part of International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of Holocaust organized a religious ceremony at Ankara Synagogue to commemorate the victims of Holocaust. It was a historic day for Ankara Synagogue since the Synagogue did not host such a crowd for many years. The leaders and officials of Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, Ankara and Antakya Jewish Communities got together in Ankara Synagogue.



**Gershon
Harris
Hatzor Haglilit, Israel**



G-d willing, this bulletin will come out before the Shabbat when we read the portion "Mishpatim", which is probably best translated as "civil laws", and indeed deals mainly with the entire gamut of the civil law system: torts, damages to person and property, accidental death, theft, supporting the less fortunate, borrowing/lending, cheating, employer-employee relationships and much more. Yet intertwined with the numerous and quite detailed 'civil code' are endless "ritualistic" commandments regarding fear of G-d, prohibition of idol-worship, keeping all the commandments and other spiritual and ostensibly more 'lofty' aspects of formal religious observance and life. In Jewish terms, these two types of commandments are usually called "between our fellow man" and "between man and G-d" respectively.

This intertwining of the two categories of commandments is not coincidental. At the outset, the Torah portion begins with the words: "And these are the civil laws.... The great commentator Rashi explains why the opening sentence uses the word "and", as opposed to simply stating "these": We are to understand that these civil legal principles are to be intrinsically connected and seen as being just as important as the supreme Ten Commandments with all their spiritual and moral implications. Secondly, given the fact that this portion dealing with such 'mundane' human and civil matters follows the previous portion of the revelation at Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments, we are also to understand that the Jewish supreme court – the Sanhedrin – must be housed and operate adjacent to the altar in the Temple in order to better ensure that the rabbinical judges remain constantly aware that they represent G-d, and therefore must be very careful and meticulous in judging righteously and morally, and not just legally.

The overall lesson is clear: First and foremost, the Torah is clearly teaching that we must all obey and respect the commandments between our fellow man with the same zealousness and devotion as we do as those between man and G-d. In short, ensuring a just and moral society and proper conduct in our daily lives, jobs and dealing with our neighbors, adversaries and whatever is no less important than strict observance of the Sabbath, kashruth, prayer and more. Secondly, a clear warning is presented to the legal authorities and especially judges that they must never forget that despite their high position and authority, they must never forget their place under G-d's authority and that they are not ultimately the supreme legal or moral authority when judging any case, whether for relatively "petty" crimes, or the most severe of murder and the like.

But there is another message for the entire world by the Torah's intertwining of 'civil' and 'religious' laws. On the one hand, any normal society would – and usually does - have a civil code of law to ensure social order and the rule of law. In fact, such laws are logical in and of themselves, and ostensibly do not require and divine decree for their legislation and enforcement. On the other hand, if G-d and divine authority and morality are removed from the equation, simple human logic as the only basis for even the most important civil codes of law can lead to the most immoral societies possible. The same human logic that led to a particular civil code of law can also be used to oppress, enslave and even murder individuals or groups that can be easily reduced by that same 'human logic' to subhuman or underclass categories that simply remove them from even the most meticulous legal protection the local or national civil code offers! Judaism was aware of this inherent danger, and therefore insists that there can be no

separation between so-called civil laws and G-dly morality and ultimate authority. By always seeing G-d before us, even in judgment of civil crimes and misdemeanors, we will not fall into the trap of seeing ourselves as a supreme moral authority. And this is no less true for the individual than the state: we are commanded to conduct ourselves toward one another morally, ethically and legally, no less than how we are commanded to conduct ourselves before G-d.

Request for Our Help

Answer's to Penny Santiago's request on the dice game called "fockla."

Regarding the game fokla, all the women used to play this game with dice, especially on New Years day, such as today. All I remember of the game was when someone rolled "1s" they would shout out peep. That's all I remember. Joe Besca

"I noticed in the last newsletter, someone was asking about a game played by Jews from Greece called "fockla". I didn't remember all of the rules as I read that but I do remember playing that with my grandparents long ago when I was really young during New Year's Eve. I remember as a kid thinking it was hysterical because of its resemblance in sound to that wonderful curse word in our language:) The mature mind of an 5-8 year old:) Any way I did ask my parents and sister about it further and they were not entirely 100% certain but do remember the following rules- It was a Dice game played by a group of people sitting around a table and was usually played during New Year's. There were 3 dice and everybody would simply take turns to see who could get the higher score. If someone roles three sixes, they yell "fockla" (not sure why or what the root of that word is) and that person would I guess would win the pot of chips or coins on the table. There may be more to it then this but that is what I can recall and was told by my family. Again, Happy New Year and see you soon. Maurice Negrin"

Louise Rostker from the Atoun (Atun) and Azouvi families is asking for our help in identifying people in these old pictures uncovered while visiting with her mom.

"She says the older woman is Lucha Assael and that she is related in some way to my grandfather Leon Atun. She says the little boy is Isaac Assael but she has no idea who the bridal couples are? Isaac and Rose Assael lived at 144 Attorney Street with their son Alan and daughter Cookie. I went to Alan's bar mitzvah reception at The Little Hungary Hall and remember his mother dancing to Turkish music and collecting money from the band in the top of her dress!"



Stuart Chernin, son of Stemma Cohen Chernin, is looking for info on Astro Koen wife of Moisis Koen. They had a son named Iakov-was born 1873-Iakov 1900. Everyone was born in Ioannina.

We are also looking to identify the uniform worn in this photo. The man in the photo was from Ioannina, from the Koen family but we have no idea which war the uniform was from.



Renee Yomtov Rosenthal is trying to identify possible cousins



We love when readers share their memories and photos with us.

I enjoyed the latest newsletter. As always, a great job.

Annette Binder's story of her grandmother's burnt food brought to mind a funny story that my father told me about a Ioanniote who remarried after his first wife died. The new wife prepared wonderful meals for him, but he always complained, until one night she burned the meal. With great delight, he consumed it and declared, "That's like my first wife's cooking!" (In Greek, something like 'san to kaimenu') My late husband, Murray lived a block away from Annette in Williamsburg and they were school friends. Renee Yomtov Rosenthal

Thank you Asher Matathias for this photo taken in 1956 shortly after you arrived in the USA studying for your Bar Mitzvah in Brooklyn at the Malta Street Synagogue.



Many thanks for the video from Metsovo. Gail and I really enjoying watching and listening to the video. You may be interested to see the attached photo of Betty Elias and Esther Gany dressed in local dresses with six local women. Betty is on the left side standing and Esther is next to her. This photo was taken before the war of 1940's. The Baruch family spent the summers in Metsovo and Ioannina. Best regards. David Baruch



If our newsletter evokes memories, please share them with us. We love them!

Finally, we share, with permission, the journey of Michelle Langmeade in trying to connect with her Yanniotte family. We had previously published Michelle's search and are happy to report that the results have been heartwarming and emotional.

Here is what Michelle had to say:

I am writing this and am giving you permission to put all or part of it in your newsletter. Also, any of the photos that I have sent you feel free to use. I will be forever appreciative for what you have done for me.

Dear Marcia,

I am writing you to thank you for helping to provide closure to my family's mystery. My story goes back to almost 70 years ago, when my father was born. When my father was three months old, his biological father passed away. My father knew little about him, just a name and that he was of Greek/Turkish decent. My father spent his lifetime wondering and looking for his family, who we believed to have the last name Matthews. Unfortunately, my father Al Matthews Burak, was killed in a car accident in 2005 and never discovered the answers to his family questions.

Fast forward to the year 2014. I had submitted my DNA to a company who helps you find relatives. I been given the name of someone who was my third cousin. When I could not trace her to any known family members and thought she may have been the link that I was waiting for. Although she did not know any of the names I had mentioned, she did recommend I contact you. This by coincidence happened to be on the day in Cheshvan that was my father's ninth yahrzeit. I telephoned you, Marcia, and told you the story of my family. You wrote down some information and told me you would get back to me soon. Then, you told me to wait a moment. You were in front of your computer and just wanted to try one thing. It was as if my dad's spirit told you to just try to type the name of his father. You said, "Your grandfather was a member of our brotherhood." You rattled off an address. For the next week, you continued to send me information about my grandfather, about his family, his brothers and sisters and his parents. You were able to trace my family back to 1844, when my great, great grandparents were born. The information you gave me helped put together the pieces of the puzzle, to help discover who I am.

For the past year, we have kept in touch. I continued to learn about my Romaniote identity and began to read as much as I can about my ancestors. I teach in a conservative temple in the Boston area, and have taught my students about how I am a unique kind of Jew-- not 3/4 Askenazi and 1/4 Sephardic as I once thought, but 1/4 Romaniote. This past August when we dropped my daughter off for her freshman year of college in Manhattan, we got to visit the shul. Marcia greeted us at the door and gave us a personal tour of the shul. I think my family thought I was crazy as my emotions got the better of me and I cried to be in the place where my father's relatives who he never knew davened. We saw the torahtot my relatives read from, the seats they may have sat in, and the wonderful museum that had artifacts that may have been found in the homes of my ancestors. I bought a cookbook, knowing that my Rosh Hashanah meal was going to be a Greek meal perhaps the foods my relatives ate. You had taught me all you could about my relatives who had passed. Marcia, you told me you would continue to help me in my search; that perhaps we could find a living relative to whom I could communicate. I wrote an appeal for the newsletter and waited.

The call I received last Thursday from you was life changing. Not only did a relative of mine contact you, but two relatives contacted you. The past forty eight hours have been exciting and overwhelming. I can now put faces to the names on the papers. Although all four of my father's

half siblings have passed away, their children are very much alive. They have been able to help me get closure. I have seen photos of my aunts and uncles and cousins. I am getting to know them and know what kind of people my relatives were, what they did for a living, what they looked like, and what were their professions. My father, who was raised an only child with few relatives, actually had a very large Greek family. Marcia, you have taken such an interest in my story and helped me discover my roots. I am forever grateful to you and your ability to do research in ways that I never could imagine. Although I do not live near Broome Street, or even in New York City, I do feel a very strong connection to the Kehila Kedosha Janina family. I look forward to the day that I can get back to New York, daven with the congregation and meet my new cousins. Thank you for helping me find what my father always longed to find, who he was and where did he come from. I am very thankful that you could help me in my journey of finding my roots and my Greek identity. --Michelle Langmead

Recommended sites on the internet.

<http://journals.sfu.ca/jmh/index.php/jmh/index>

Journal of Modern Hellenism is accessible on line now

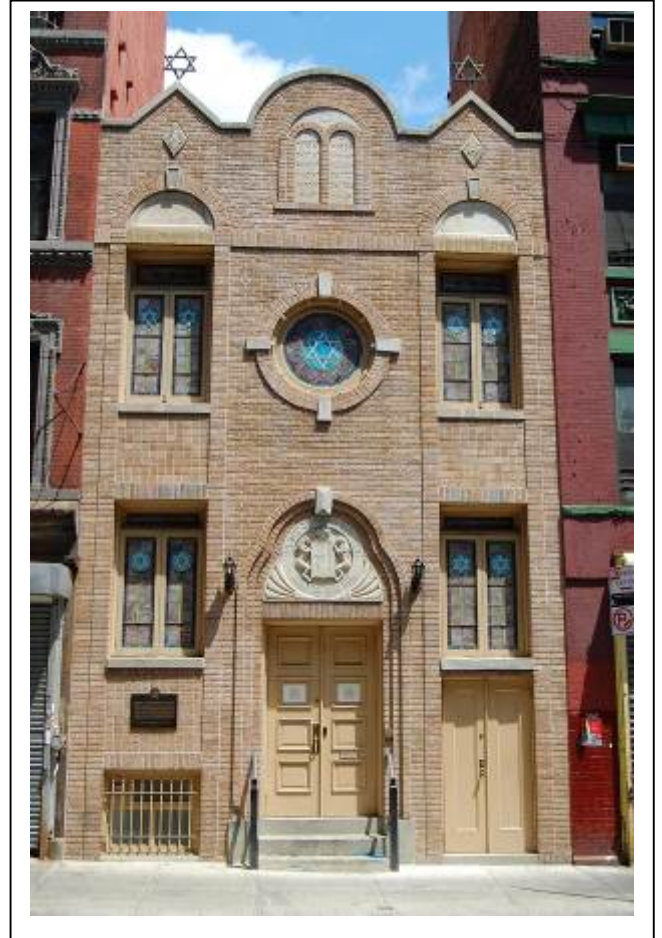
<http://ncronline.org/news/global/morocco-summit-pushes-muslim-clerics-improve-lot-religious-minorities#.VqpQIZkDjVI.gmail>

Moroccan Muslim clerics push to improve relations with Jews

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 and all major Jewish holidays and our Museum is open every Sunday from 11-4 and, by appointment during the week.



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