



Kehila Kedosha Janina

Synagogue and Museum

February 2019 E-Newsletter

Dear Friends of Kehila Kedosha Janina,

January was a month of remembering the victims of the Holocaust as we and other communities stopped and paid homage to those murdered. In Europe, most countries, including Greece, have remembrance events around January 27th, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. While Jews around the world stop and remember Jewish victims on Yom HaShoah (usually celebrated around the 27th day of the Hebrew month Nisan, to coincide with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising), in many ways, the International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust, around January 27th, is even more important. Not only do Jews stop and remember, but in many countries, the entire country stops and acknowledges the losses. Speeches are made in Parliaments and, in many instances, wreaths are placed on memorials around Europe. This year, in the United States, Greek Jewry was remembered by the Consulate of Greece in New York, the Greek Embassy in Washington, DC and the US Congress.



Photo taken after the Holocaust Memorial event held in the US Congress on January 31.

From the left, second from left, Ethan Marcus, Jeff Beja, Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé, Afraim Katzir, Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos, Marvin Marcus, and Joe Toledo, representing The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, Sephardic Heritage International in DC, and Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum.

This newsletter, our 119th 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 have now reach over 10,000 households worldwide. What an accomplishment for a little synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City. Our community of 'friends' continually grow with each newsletter. If you know others who wish to be part of this ever-growing network, please have them contact us at museum@kkjsm.org

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

Passings

This month we lost three special people from our community, Hy Barouch at the age of 102, Stella Cassouto Modiano at the age of 87, and Isaac Cohen at the age of 98. Our sincere condolences to their families and friends. May their memory be for a blessing.

Hy Barouch was the brother of Rebecca Barouch Attas, the mother of Rose Attas Ferrara. He spent his early years on the Lower East Side, listed in the 1925 census as living with his family at 271 Broome Street. The son of Rose and Abe Barouch, both born in Ioannina, only one of his siblings, Mathew, is still alive. His sisters, Rebecca (Becky), Esther and Mollie (Millie), preceded him in death, as did his wife, Rose. He is survived by 2 children, a son, Alvin and a daughter, Diane, and 3 grandchildren, along with his devoted niece, Rose. Hy lived a full life, passing at the age of 102.



Rose & Hy's wedding



Hy Barouch



Al's Bar Mitzvah 1949

Stella Casuto Modiano was a woman loved by many.

Stella was born in Greece, in Salonika, in 1931. Her father, Isaac Casuto, was a Rabbi. During the Occupation the family of five (Stella was one of three siblings) were able to hide with the help of Greek Christian. After the war, the family immigrated to the United States.



Stella and Isaac Modiano at the wedding

Stella met her husband, Isaac Modiano, in New York. They had three children and close to 50 years of marriage together before Isaac passed.

Isaac Cohen passed away on February 5th at the age of 98. He is survived by his sons, Nathan, David and Martin. He will be mourned by the extended Greek-Jewish community of New York.



Simchas

On February 2nd, the Colchamiro family celebrated the 100th birthday of Esther Kaplan Colchamiro, born on February 1, 1919!



Esther Colchamiro and Debra Colchamiro

Visitors Flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina

The most interesting people visit Kehila Kedosha Janina. We hope to count you among them. In January, in the midst of a cold, New York City winter, our synagogue and museum was warmed by those who sought us out and made an effort to visit.



Sam, Harrison and Mark Weinberg

Visitors Flock to Kehila Kedosha Janina



Alexandros Billinis with son Yannis



Michael Lychounas visits from Kavala



Jeffrey from LaGuardia College



Julia Camerino and Maggie Nikas
from Montreal Canada

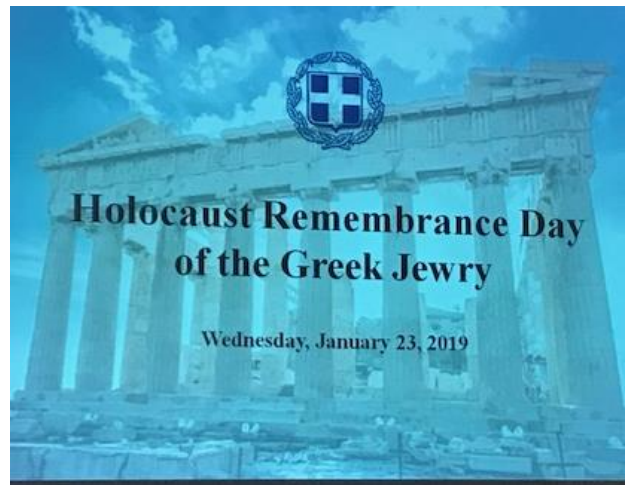
Events Around the World for the International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust

New York

Consul General of Greece Hosts Annual Event

"Never Again" marked the conclusion of Consul General Dr. Konstantinos Koutras' impassioned speech against intolerance and apathy at the "Holocaust Remembrance Day of the Greek Jewry" on January 23, the third commemoration of the International Day of Holocaust Remembrance, Consul General Koutras has organized and hosted at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Manhattan since his tenure in New York began. "We wish this event will, once more, unequivocally reaffirm our common commitment to stand against racism, anti-Semitism, and the instigation of ethnic or religious violence as a criminal act," was this year's theme.

The annual commemorations of Greek Jewry for the International Day of Holocaust Remembrance hosted by the Consulate General of Greece in New York at Hebrew Union College, profound by their very nature, have been deeply bonding events. This time, excerpts from a film, from a letter, and two songs emphasized this emotional historical connection.



Mr. Robert Shaw, who has held many important positions in the Greek American community of New York, one being director and vice chairman of the Hellenic American Cultural Foundation currently, was Master of Ceremonies.

The event brought together His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey, Rabbi Dr. Martin Cohen of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Consul General of Israel in New York, Mr. Dani Dayan, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, Ambassador Maria Theophilis, Mr. Solomon Asser of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece, Mr. David Harris of the AJC – Global Jewish Advocacy, US and Greek diplomats, and distinguished board members of The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America and American Sephardi Federation.

"...What we say, and what we do not say, is what matters," said Consul General Koutras, warning against the danger of intolerance. (Excerpting from his speech): "Whenever we stand apathetic witness to prejudice. When we opt for inaction to preserve an accepted notion of performing, or an illusion of unanimity. Every time we choose silence because speaking out would be inelegant, inadvisable, or simply, inconvenient, it matters. When we refuse to analyze the delusion of our so-called conclusion, it matters. What we applaud, matters, even more than what we condemn, matters. Who we stand with, matters. Who we march with, matters. As Martin Luther King said, 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter.' ...Words we must wield and words that we speak out loud. Shout them from the rooftops if we must, but anything that might sound intolerant we must not, cannot, and will never tolerate. Not on our watch."



Excerpts from the documentary film, "Life Will Smile", introduced by the Greek American Producer Steven Provolos featured a Greek Jewish survivor on the island of Zakynthos. Eight years old when the Germans invaded Greece, he talked about his idyllic life on the island, where he felt no social differentiation between Christian and Jew, just harmony, and his friendship with a Christian girl, riding their bikes to picnic on the beach. He recalled the situation of the Nazi Kommandant calling in Bishop Chrysostomos and Mayor Loukas Karrer of Zakynthos and ordering them to provide a list of the Jewish occupants of the island and their holdings. They returned the next day with a list which named themselves as the only Jews on the island—thus saving the entire community from annihilation. He is overcome with the gratitude to the Bishop for this act. At the end of the film, in a stroke of high art, he is shown walking a road above the sea singing the moving, lyrical Greek song, "I Love You Because You Are Beautiful".



Marvin Marcus, Pres. KKJ, Archbishop Demetrios, and Andrew Marcus

Keynote Speaker, Katherine E. Fleming, Provost of New York University and Alexander Onassis Professor of Hellenic Culture and Civilization, who spoke about the strong Greek identity of Greek Jewish individuals, read excerpts of a heartbreaking letter written by a member of the Greek Jewish community of Thessaloniki who was forced to be a Sonderkommando at Auschwitz- Berkenau. In the letter, found on the grounds of the concentration camp, stuffed into a thermos—hopefully to be found and delivered—the prisoner allots his possessions and repeatedly states his pride in being Greek, the honor of dying as a "proud Greek".



Chanter Nektarios S. Antoniou, accompanied on piano by Mr. Phyto Stratis, sang two wrenchingly sad songs from Mikis Theodorakis' The Ballad of Mauthausen: In Memoriam of Liberation (a cycle based on poems written by Greek poet and playwright Iakovos Kambanellis, a Mauthausen concentration camp survivor).

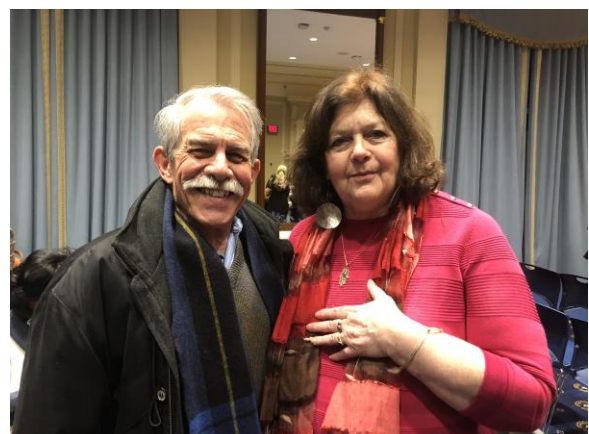
Mr. Solomon Asser, President of the American friends of the Jewish Museum in Greece spoke about the museum. He also spoke of his mother, Rosa (seen in the documentary "Kisses from the Children" about five Jewish children in Thessaloniki who were successfully hidden from the Nazis), and pointed out her close friend, who was sitting in the audience. He also asked survivors of the Holocaust to stand, noting their diminishing numbers.

Rabbi Dr. Martin Cohen of Hebrew Union College, speaking highly of Archbishop Demetrios and of their friendship, talked about the ties of friendship, brotherhood, and truth between Jews and Christians, values that inform both Judaism and Christianity. The act of remembering the Holocaust and other atrocities suffered by humanity, serves to emphasize the importance of saying "Never again", to choices that would cause such tragedies to be repeated, he said. As a cantor wasn't present he said three prayers, one a Kaddish, a Prayer for the Living Dead. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios closed with remembrances of the first 18 years of his life lived among Jews in Thessaloniki with penetrating insight of Jewish wisdom and the necessity to teach tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of differences.



Holocaust Commemoration Events in Washington DC

Kehila Kedosha Janina, along with the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America, was invited to take part in an event at the US Congress, initiated by the organization Sephardic Heritage International in DC, the topic being "Romaniote and Sephardic Narratives of the Holocaust." The turnout was excellent, and it was so important to spread the word of who we are and our story of the Holocaust.



Holocaust Commemoration Events in Greece

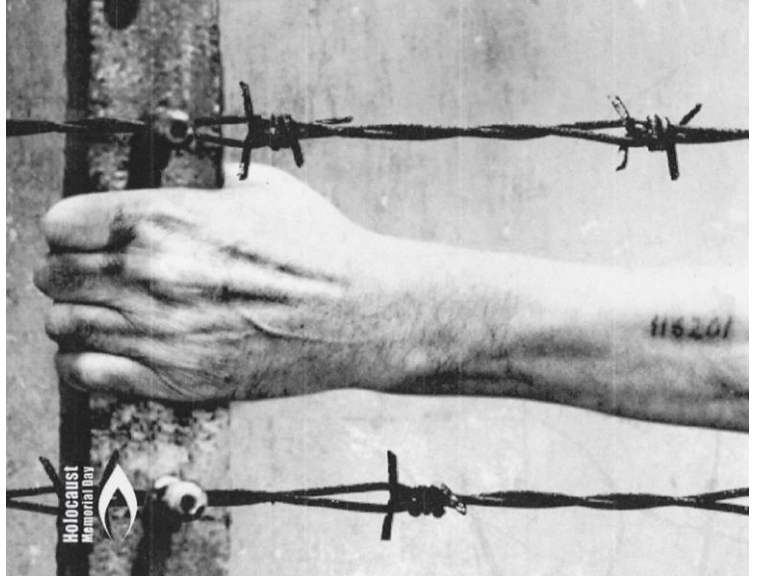
Thessaloniki

This year, the annual event in Commemoration of the Holocaust was overshadowed by a vicious, anti-Semitic desecration of a memorial located on the grounds of the Aristotle University. The memorial was erected in 2014 to remember the vast Jewish cemetery that once stood on these grounds (see article in this issue and the response of the Sephardic and Romaniote Communities in the United States in a letter below).

In Salonika (Thessaloniki) on January 27th, a series of events took place, starting at the port with a performance of the Choir of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, greetings from representatives of the government, the Ambassador of Israel in Greece, representative from the prefecture of Macedonia, the Metropolitan Bishop of Thessaloniki, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, and David Saltiel, President of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece (KISE).

The Keynote speaker was the Ambassador of Germany, Jens Plotner.

The events continued with wreath laying at the Holocaust Memorial, the President of the Republic of Greece addressing the crowd, and a concert.



These events throughout the world, not only remember the victims, but honor the survivors.



From the Kounio family: 74 years later with 3 survivors, their children and their grandchildren.
We still Remember. Never Again.

Corfu



At the Memorial to the Holocaust in Corfu, on January 27, 2019, a group "Against Anti-Semitism in Corfu" commemorated the International Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust. The group was small but felt it was a beginning in bringing the non-Jewish citizens of Corfu to remember their Jewish neighbors who were deported from the island in June 1944.

Larissa

A unanimous message of condemnation of the most terrible historical crime against humanity was expressed in the most powerful way in Larissa, thereby honoring the memory of the Holocaust, the memory of six million European Jews and sixty-seven thousand Greek Jews who met a horrible death in the Nazi crematoria of the concentration camps.



Teaching and memory are tools to avoid such situations, said Rabbi Elias Sabbetai, while the President of the Central Jewish Council of Greece, Mr. David Saltiel, made special reference to the "seatbelt plain of Thessaly, where thousands of innocent Jews were saved from certain death."



Our responsibility lies in assuring that oblivion and falsification of historical truth will not prevail. That which has happened before can happen again. Our task is to keep the memory alive, especially nowadays that the rise of the forces of neo-Nazism in Europe causes an alarm, said Maurice MAGRIZOS, the President of the Jewish Community of Larissa in his speech.

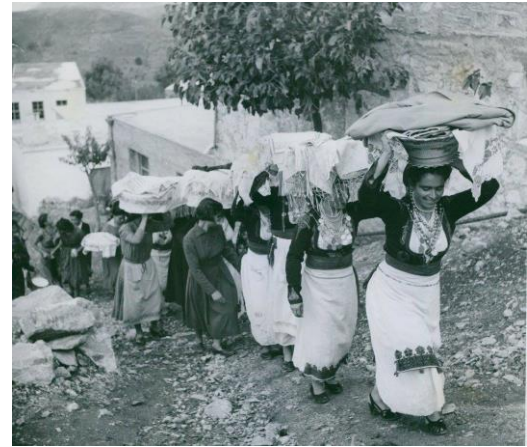
"After Auschwitz the human image can no longer be separated from that of a gas chamber," said French philosopher George Bataille. There is only one solution, one option: Never again!

Crete

The history of the Jews who lived in our city was the subject of the work that was carried out in the 2017-18 school year from Section B4 of the 6th General Lyceum of Heraklion within the framework of the "Project" course. The work aimed at seeking the historical presence and course of the Jewish community in Heraklion until their complete extermination by the German Nazis in 1944.

The supervising professor, computer scientist with MS in Theology, Mr. George Chatzizisis, told "PATRIS" that the children participated with particular interest in the search for information and enjoyed the role of the historical researcher.

He proposed to students to work for a population group that no longer exists in our city because of population or war exchanges such as Muslims and Catholics. The pupils even mourned when they learned. The professor reports that the Jews of Crete were vanquished when the Germans occupied Crete. They were boarded on the Tanais Ship, which was torpedoed by a British submarine, something we discovered a long time later from the classified documents of the British. The British then did not admit it, and the people who saw the boat sinking believed that the Germans had been swept away.



Traditional wedding in Crete

He reports that the Jews of Heraklion were a small community, it was larger by the end of the 19th century and for economic reasons many went to Chania. Shortly before they disappeared, there were 40 to 50 in Heraklion and 300 in Chania. All families were living in the center of the cities and engaged in commerce, belonged to the middle class and were harmoniously integrated into society. As far as we know, only two families managed to leave Chania and go to Athens and today there are only one or two Cretan Jewish survivors from Chania.

We also know that when Apostle Paul visited Crete, there was a synagogue in Gortyn. There were two synagogues in Chania, one was bombed, the other survived, while the synagogue of Heraklion, which was also bombed, was at the foundation of the old Xenia. Today there are fragments of inscriptions at the Historical Museum of Crete.

The work was carried out with the valuable help of Mr. Dimitris Savvas, Head of the Vikelaio Library of Heraklion, and the full support of the library material, Stavros Sfakotakis, MS philologist in Turkish with the postgraduate thesis "The Jewish Community of in 1670 -1760 ", which offered rich and specialized knowledge on the subject of the work, and Mrs. Erofilia Stamataki, Director of the 6th General Lyceum and its full support, assistance and support.

Presentation - event

The pupils' work was presented at an event organized by the Hellenic Literary Association of Heraklion on Wednesday, January 23, at 7 pm, at the Social Hall of the Kalokairinos Institutions (Monastery of Agarathou 9), on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Then, the "May Your Memory Be Love, The History of Ovadia Barouch", a 45-minute production of the Yad Vashem Foundation in Jerusalem, which is the personal testimony of the Auschwitz survivor, Ovadia Baruch, a Jew from Thessaloniki will be presented.

As with all actions hosted in the Social Space, admission is free of charge. The voluntary contribution to packaged foods and grocery stores to support the activities of the Basic Goods Providing Structures (Social Grocery - "Food with Our Love") by the A. & M. Kalokairinos Foundation, which support individuals and families in financial difficulty, is always welcome.

Students presenting the work are the following: Dragaki Kleri 3rd Lyceum, Lyonas Aris 3rd Lyceum, Delakis Nikos III Lyceum, Fenakis Angelos III Lyceum, Takitzis Irene 3rd Lyceum, Chatzizis Maria III Lyceum, Somerakis Eleni I Lyceum, Strilinga Georgia I Lyceum.

Volos

In conjunction with the International Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust, the citizens, both Jewish and Christian gathered at the Holocaust Memorial of the city to pay their respects. In addition to a gathering of citizens displaying signs inscribed with "We Remember," there was also a series of events on February 3rd highlighting music and the artwork of young students. The students were 6th graders at the local school and they had been given an assignment to draw what the Holocaust meant to them.



Athens

In Athens, on January 28th, in conjunction with the International Day of Commemoration of the Holocaust, a series of events took place, including the traditional laying of wreaths at the Holocaust Memorial in Athens.

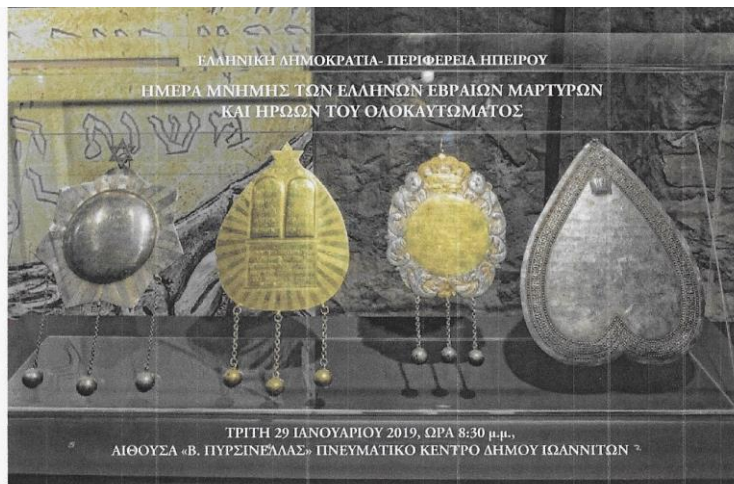


Ioannina

On January 29th, the Jewish Community of Ioannina, the Esther and Joseph Gani Foundation and the Spiritual Center of the Municipality of Ioannina presented a series of talks on how to preserve the memory of the Holocaust for the Greek Community and the Press. Included among the speakers was the Mayor of Ioannina, Tomas Begas, the President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Moisis Eliasaf, and Susan Hasson from the Israeli Embassy to Greece.



Οι φωτογραφίες είναι από την περιοδική έκδοση: ΟΤΑΝ Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΠΙΝΕΤΑΙ ΙΕΡΗ.
Εβραϊκά κειμήλια από τα Ιωάννινα, Μουσείο Αρχαιοεπιστήμης, © ΠΙΟΠΙ, Κ. Μάρκου



European Jewish Congress

Event in the European Parliament on Holocaust Commemoration Day 2019

To European Jewish Congress (EJC), in cooperation with Antisemitism Response Section of the European Parliament, organized at the European Parliament in Brussels on January 23, 2019, ceremony for International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The President of the European Parliament, Mr. Antonio Tajani in his speech stressed that the European Parliament's message is clear: "There is no room for any kind of hatred in Europe. We promise that all together we will fight and we will continue to give meaning and to put into practice the words 'never again'."

In his address the President of the EJC Dr. Cantor Moshe read by vice EJC Ms. Raya Kalenova which highlighted the need of preparedness and vigilance, because Europe is experiencing again the rise of extremes in politics and is considered essential to strengthen the centrist political parties.

Greetings were also sent to the chairman of the Jewish Agency of Israel Mr. Isaac Herzog, who stressed that Israel will not only keep alive the memory of the Holocaust, but also everywhere fight the phenomenon of anti-Semitism anywhere in the world and particularly in Europe.



The event was attended by the Prime Minister of Romania, as EU presiding country for this period, survivors of the Holocaust, EU leaders, Members of Parliament, Ambassadors, Presidents of European Jewish communities, religious leaders and well-known intellectuals and artists.

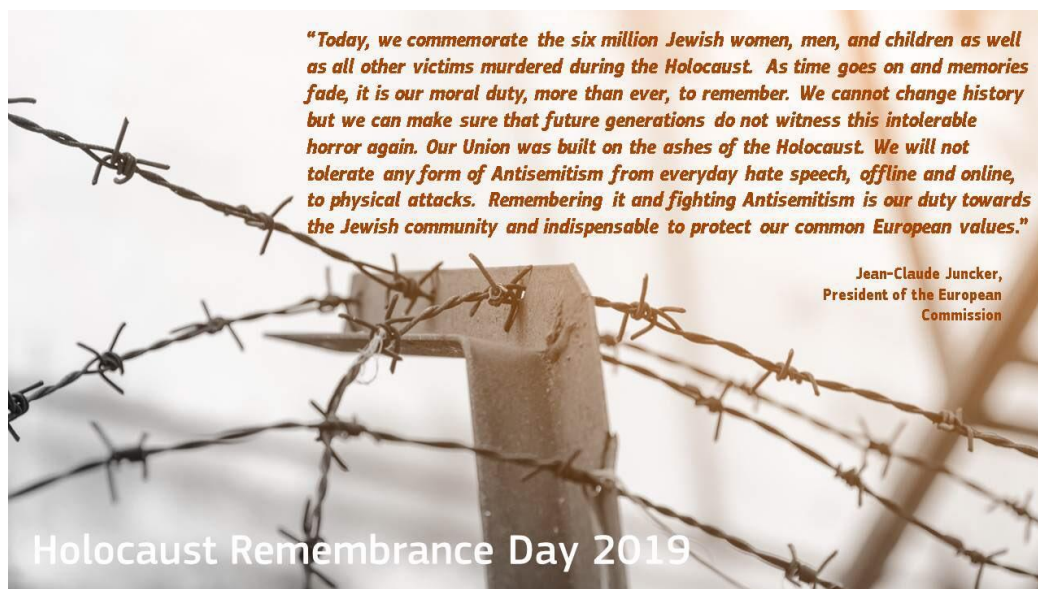
In Greek Jewry was represented by First Vice President of the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece (KISE) Mr. Benjamin Albala, who also participated in the General Assembly of the EJC and the special session of the European Jewish Fund.

European Commission

Statement of the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker on the Day of the Memory of the Holocaust 2019

Brussels, January 24, 2019: "The January 27 is dedicated to the memory of the six million Jewish women, men and children, and all other victims, murdered during the Holocaust. 74 years ago, the Allied Forces liberated the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau and discovered indescribable atrocities. The hatred against "the other" had turned into the killing of "the other".

Today I am highly troubled. It will always be on my mind that, in my day, the Jews were afraid to freely express their faith in Europe. I regret the fact that almost 40% of Jews are considering leaving Europe. Holocaust denial persists in Europe. One in three Europeans declare that they know "little" about the Holocaust, while one in 20 have never heard about it.



Ignorance is dangerous. As time passes memories fade and it is our moral duty, now more than ever, to remember. We cannot change history, but we can ensure that future generations will not experience again this unbearable horror.

We will not tolerate any form of anti-Semitism, the daily hate speech, and that on the Internet, nor physical attacks. The European Commission is working closely with all Member States to combat this threat and to ensure the security of Jewish communities in Europe.

The foundations of our Union were made from the ashes of the Holocaust. It is our obligation to the Jewish community, and necessary for the protection of our common European values to remember this fact and combat anti-Semitism."

Holocaust Commemoration in Turkey



Remembering the Righteous in Albania

"Thanks to Besa, in a little-known story unparalleled anywhere else in Europe, during World War II, Albania not only saved all 200 of its Jews, but sheltered hundreds of others from countries across the continent, even while Nazi soldiers occupied the country. Albanian civilians, the majority of them Muslim, absorbed and hid 2,000 Jews from Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Germany, and Austria."

Read the full article from Tablet Magazine [here](#).



News from Jewish Greece

Thessaloniki

On January 26th, just one day before the annual Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust in Thessaloniki, vandals smashed Thessaloniki University's memorial to Jewish cemetery. The University in northern Greece was built on site of the Jewish graveyard destroyed during Nazi occupation.

THESSALONIKI, Greece — A university in Thessaloniki, Greece's second-largest city, said Friday that unknown vandals smashed a campus monument that marks the site of a former Jewish cemetery.



The University of Thessaloniki issued a statement condemning the significant damage inflicted on the marble monument overnight.

Thessaloniki's large Jewish community was almost entirely wiped out by Nazi forces during World War II.

The vandalism on the campus in northern Greece occurred with the annual observance of International Holocaust Remembrance Day taking place on Sunday. Several Jewish monuments in Greece have been vandalized in recent years.

This Vicious Anti-Semitic Act was Condemned by the Greek Government, The Church, and Sephardic and Romaniote Jewish Communities in the United States

Silent Protest by Citizens of Thessaloniki

Dozens of people held a silent protest against antisemitism at Thessaloniki's Aristotle University following the desecration of a monument marking the site of a former Jewish cemetery.

In a statement, university authorities said, "The desecration and unprecedented destruction of the monument is an affront to [university] asylum law, academic dignity and democracy."

The vandalism, which occurred ahead of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Sunday, was also condemned by Athens Archbishop Ieronymos. A prosecutor has ordered a preliminary inquiry into the incident.



Strong Condemnation by the Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yiannis Boutaris

Yiannis Boutaris, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, after meetings with the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, representatives from the Ministries of the province of Macedonia and Thraki, Central Macedonia, the Greek Police, and officials from the Aristotle University came out with a strong statement and a call for 24 hour security. He stated, "If they vandalize the memorial 100 times, we will repair it 110 times."



Many spoke out strongly against the vandalism. The vandalism of the memorial to the former Jewish cemetery on the grounds of the former cemetery, now on the site of the present Aristotle University, causes those who lost so much in the Holocaust of Thessaloniki Jews such pain that we are printing, in full, an article by Leon Saltiel, which we hope will explain to those who may not understand the depth of our despair on this most recent anti-Semitic vandalism.

The Ghosts of Thessaloniki Are Still Here

June 12, 2017



Thessaloniki's Jewish cemetery as it was before it was destroyed in 1942, during the German occupation of Greece. The cemetery was established in ancient times and on the eve of the Second World War counted approximately 500,000 graves in an area of 350,000 square meters, making it probably the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe and maybe the world.

Seventy-five years ago today, during the German occupation of Greece, began the destruction of the historic Jewish cemetery of Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city. The cemetery was established in ancient times and on the eve of the Second World War counted approximately 500,000 graves in an area of 350,000 square meters, making it probably the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe and maybe the world. Within a few weeks, wrote an eyewitness, "the vast necropolis, scattered with fragments of stone and rubble, resembled a city that had been bombed, or destroyed by a volcanic eruption." According to a report by the US consul in Istanbul, "recently buried dead were thrown to the dogs."

This act was not a purely German initiative. Besides, one can visit Jewish cemeteries today in the center of Berlin. The initiative came from the local authorities, which for a long time had tried to remove the cemetery from its location, close to the city center. "And this damned German occupation had to come, when, with the collaboration of an ironic fate, this old unsolvable problem of Thessaloniki found its dramatic solution," in the words of Thessaloniki intellectual Georgios Vafopoulos. In its place today is the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Its destruction traumatized the Jewish community, which at the time constituted 25 percent of the city's population. It removed the symbolic roots of the Jewish residents from their native city. They were eyewitnesses of the sacrilegious flattening of the tombs of their ancestors. This destruction solidified the

convergence of interests between the German and the local authorities, to the degree that it was described as the “harbinger of the soon total destruction of the whole Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, the most numerous center of the Jewry of the Orient.” In fact, a few months later commenced the transport of the vast majority of the Jewish population of the city, some 46,000 souls, to the extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In 2014, during the inauguration of the monument for the destroyed Jewish necropolis on the grounds of the university, Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris stated that the city “is ashamed of this unjust and guilty silence” and the stance of the city authorities at the time. The late vice rector of the university, Ioannis Pantis, stressed that, “today, however, the Aristotle University, free from guilt syndromes, regards this past, the history and loss of the Jews of Thessaloniki, as part of its own history as well.” Indeed, in recent years, a lot of progress has been made in the context of Jewish memory in the city, as shown by the planned creation of a Holocaust Museum, the re-establishment of the university chair of Jewish studies, the multilevel educational initiatives at Greek schools and the integration of this history into the school curriculum, the annual march of memory and the placement of memory stones.

Nevertheless, there are still issues that remain open: With the destruction of the cemetery, the place became a huge quarry and its materials were used for construction purposes. In Thessaloniki’s Cathedral of Saint Demetrius, one of at least 17 churches in the city for whose construction materials from the cemetery were used, one can still find marbles with Jewish inscriptions, from the “500 pieces of marble” which those then responsible had requested in October 1943 for the “reconstruction of the temple.”

The Royal Theater of Thessaloniki was laid in 1943 with “250 square meters of plaques 50 x 50 cm from marble from the former Jewish cemeteries,” according to the tender of the municipality, which can still be seen today. Vafopoulos narrates that German officer Max Merten “was jumping on them with his boots, saying that he could hear the squeaks from the bones of the Jews.”

The university’s medical school, established in 1943, used tombstones as anatomy tables, “constructed three troughs made of concrete and took bodies from the cemetery which were put inside for the practice of the students.” Unfortunately, notwithstanding how macabre all these facts may be, such examples in the city are many and visible to this day.

This sacrilege was legitimized by the widespread use of the materials by so many city institutions and the deafening silence that followed. The mayor and the university authorities made an important first step – admittedly with a grand delay. Seventy-five years later, in the name of historical memory and in a spirit of respect, brotherhood and humanity, the other institutions have the responsibility to expose this history and the origin of the materials with which they were built.

* Leon Saltiel holds a PhD in contemporary Greek history from the University of Macedonia and is a postdoctoral fellow at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva with more than 15 years’ experience on human rights issues around the world, the majority of which was working with the United Nations institutions in Geneva.

Athens

New Exhibit Opens at the Jewish Museum of Greece

"Good Shepherds. High Priests and the Chief Rabbi Confront the Holocaust "

On Wednesday, January 23, 2019, under the actions of the Jewish Museum of Greece (ALU) for Holocaust Remembrance Day, the inauguration of the new temporary exhibition of REA "The Good Shepherd. High Priests and Chief Rabbi Confront the Holocaust. "

It includes material on the action of the upper Christian clergy and prominent rabbis who decided and acted in various ways to assist persecuted Jews during the Nazi persecution.

The president of REA, Makis Matsas, the Secretary of Religious Affairs, Mr. George Kalantzis, Bishop Thespian, chancellor Archbishop, Simeon Athens, the curator of the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki Mr. Evangelos Hekimoglou and director of REA Ms. Jeanette Battinou, all spoke at the event.

The exhibition was made possible by cooperation of REA with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Athens and will be hosted by the Jewish Museum from 23 January to 04 October 2019.



Hidden Children in Athens During the Occupation The Story of the Cohen Sisters

During the Occupation in Athens, three small children were saved by a series of auspicious events, involving a Catholic nun, a Catholic priest and a brave woman in the resistance movement. Although the father of the three girls did not survive Auschwitz, their mother, Zermain Maralon-Cohen, did. She returned and found her three daughters alive. Zermain lived to over 100, able to enjoy her daughters, their children and her great-grandchildren. Of major importance in the story was a brave young Greek Christian woman, Eleni Toubakari, who was active in the Resistance,



Zermain and Sabi Cohen before the war



The three sisters, Veta as an infant and the twins, Rina and Paulina



Eleni Toubakari



Ioannina

The President of the Jewish Community of Ioannina, Moses Eliasaf, has announced his candidacy for Mayor of the City of Ioannina. We applaud his candidacy and look forward to his election.



Cyprus

President of the Republic, Nicos Anastasiades, praised the close and constantly upgraded relations between Cyprus and Israel, receiving on Monday at the Presidential Palace the leadership and a broad delegation of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).



A written statement issued by Government Spokesman Prodromos Prodromos says that during the meeting the President of the Republic praised the close and upgraded relations between Cyprus and Israel and underlined the prospects of the tripartite cooperation (Cyprus, Israel, Greece), which the US consider as a basic pillar of stability and security in the area.

In addition, the President referred to the possibilities for further strengthening the relations between Cyprus and Israel in many areas, and thanked the AIPAC and the Jewish Diaspora for their positive role in upgrading the Cyprus - US and Israel relations.

Turkish Occupation Continues to Erase Cyprus' Heritage

Since the military invasion of Cyprus by the Turkish army during the summer of 1974, countless reports have been published about the atrocities the Turkish invaders committed on the beautiful Mediterranean island.

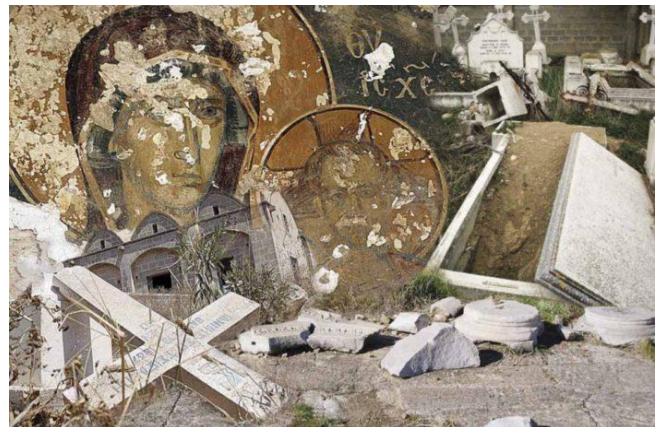
But less known is the continuous effort by the Turkish occupiers to drastically alter the cultural identity of the northern half of Cyprus, an area with thousands of years of rich history.

Since 1974's violent displacement of hundreds of thousands of Greek-Cypriots, the northern part of Cyprus has occupied not just by Turkish-Cypriots, from whom the vast majority were already living in the island.

Tens of thousands of Turkish settlers have been brought to the island from the Turkish mainland in consecutive waves of re-settlements conducted by the Turkish state. These operations by Turkey took place in an effort to completely reshape the ethnic and cultural makeup of the so-called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

An area rich in ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Venetian artifacts, monuments and buildings is undergoing a constant cultural attack, on a both systematic and unsystematic basis.

This has resulted in a de facto ethnic and religious cleansing, in which the Christian and Greek character of northern Cyprus has been almost completely wiped off the face of the map.



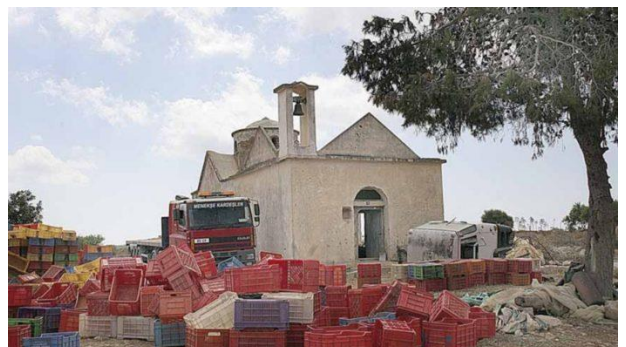
As Michael Jansen wrote in his Cyprus: The Loss of a Cultural Heritage report of 1986, "the political-demographic de facto partition imposed on Cyprus since 1974 threatens not only the unity and integrity of a modern nation-state.

He continued that the partition also threatens "the millennial cultural integrity and continuity of the island which has been the crossroads of the civilization of the Eastern Mediterranean."

Universities, along with the government of the Republic of Cyprus and various non-governmental organizations, have tried throughout the years to shed light onto the constant cultural erosion taking place in occupied Cyprus. Unfortunately there have been no significant successes to report in stopping the Turkish side from continuing these practices.

Churches, monasteries, cemeteries and archaeological sites either lie abandoned and/or have been deliberately damaged throughout the occupied territories.

More striking examples of this situation are the churches of the Apostle Barnabas in Famagusta, Saint Anthony in Larnissa, Saint Irene in Morphou and of the Archangel



Michael Church in Lefkoniko. Most of these structures are either abandoned or have been turned into sheds, where the local farmers store their products and tools.

Church icons dating back to the Middle Ages have been vandalized or even destroyed completely by perpetrators who are rarely caught.

Buildings such as the Prophet Elias Monastery of Maronite Monks and the Antifonitis Monastery, along with the archaeological sites of Salamis and Enkomi, are badly damaged due to the Turkish-Cypriot community's negligence and even willful destruction.

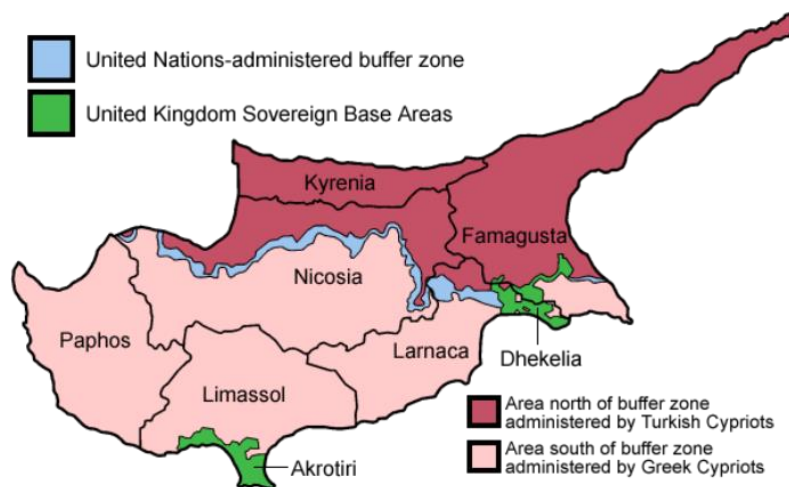
Examples of artifacts from these sites being smuggled abroad are numerous.



In addition, Christian and Jewish cemeteries have also fallen victim to the Turks of northern Cyprus. The cemeteries of Rizokarpaso, Margo and Kontea are just some examples of areas which have been completely devastated.

As shocking as all this is today, this woeful reality is not anything new. From the very beginning of the invasion until the present moment, monuments from the Cypriot past have been looted and destroyed all over occupied Cyprus.

In a recent example, the monastery of Saint Panteleimon in Myrto was completely destroyed, apparently by locals, who also wrote slogans on the walls and even stole the church's 300-kilogram bell, most likely in order to sell it.



Nearly forty-five years after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, it is obvious that the island is still suffering the consequences and deep scars of this dreadful incident. Worse yet, it is an ongoing situation which threatens to erase the history of this ancient European state forever.

The Macedonian Question

ATHENS (AP) — Greek lawmakers ratified an agreement Friday to end a nearly three decade-long dispute over neighboring FYROM's name, a landmark vote intended to clear the small country that will be renamed North Macedonia on the path to NATO membership.

The deal passed with 153 votes in the 300-member Greek parliament, two more than needed. It had faced fierce opposition and cost Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras his parliamentary majority after a right-wing partner in the governing coalition quit in protest.

Tsipras' left-wing Syriza party holds 145 seats in parliament; independent lawmakers provided the votes needed for ratification.

Under the deal, FYROM changes its name to North Macedonia and Greece will drop its objections to the country joining NATO and eventually the European Union.

The vote passed with 153 votes in favor in the 300-member parliament.

Friday's vote came after three days of acrimonious parliamentary debate and numerous street protests, some of which turned violent. Scores of protesters who braved torrential rain and driving wind outside parliament chanted "traitors" as the lawmakers voted inside.

Greece has long argued use of the term Macedonia implied territorial claims on its own northern province of the same name. The issue has been a contentious one for decades, and has whipped up nationalist and patriotic sentiment in both countries.

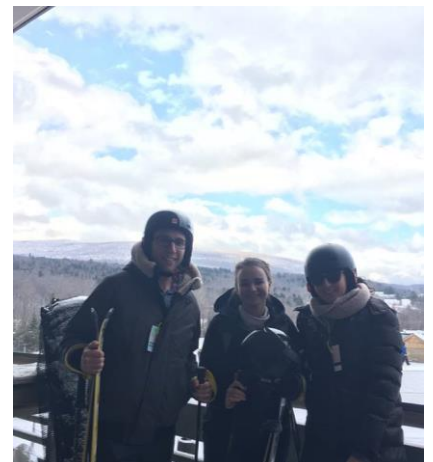
Opposition was particularly fierce in the northern Greek region of Macedonia, which borders the former Yugoslav republic that claimed the same name after declaring independence in 1991. Critics claimed the deal signs away their identity and a cultural heritage dating back to Alexander the Great more than 2,300 years ago.

More than 150 people have been detained for questioning since Thursday following violence at demonstrations against the deal in Athens and two towns in northern Greece. Most were released without charge.

At least two lawmakers from the governing the Syriza party have said their homes were targeted by violent demonstrators, while another was targeting in a firebombing that caused no injuries. Greece's tourism minister, an independent conservative who supports the government, said she had received multiple death threats.

Greek Jewish & Sephardic Young Professionals Network

Winter Ski Trip – Recap



Events in the United States of Interest to Greek Jews

On January 30th, at the Greek Embassy in Washington DC, our Museum Director, Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos presented a program on the Romaniote Jews, Their History, Customs and Traditions. Highlighting the fact of the proximity to the International Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust, Ms. Ikonomopoulos stated that "Jewish history is more than just the exclamation points. Of course, Jews suffered from persecutions, pogroms, expulsions and, of course, the Holocaust, but we also lived our lives, raised our children, celebrated our holidays and passed on our culture and traditions to the next generation. Tomorrow, at the Congress, we will remember the Holocaust of Greek Jewry. Tonight I want to talk about the lives of Romaniote Greek Jewry." Although Marcia comes from a traditional Spanish-speaking Sephardic family with roots in Salonika, Kavala and Monastir (Bitola), she feels a responsibility to Romaniote Jews who founded the synagogue/museum where she acts as Museum Director.



KKJ President Marvin Marcus, KKJ Museum Director Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, and Greek Ambassador to the US Haris Lalacos



A Rescue Story Comes Full Circle

During the Occupation of Greece, after the roundup of the Jews of Ioannina, a Jewish family found a safe haven with a Greek-Orthodox widow. Menachem Ackos, the patriarch of the family was in Beth Shalom Synagogue in Athens on March 24th, 1944, there to get what he thought was matzot for his family for Passover. He was taken with other members of the Jewish Community of Athens to Haidari and then to Auschwitz, never to return.

Almost 75 years later, in Beth Shalom on Shabbat, December 29th, two of Menachem's grandson, both named after him, Marc Winthrop and Mark Ettinger, received Aliyot in the synagogue, along with their sons, Jackson and Simon, both recent Bar Mitzvahs. In the women's gallery, along with Susan Winthrop, wife of Marc, and Elyse Ettinger, wife of Mark, and their two daughters, Kaitlyn Winthrop and Zoe Ettinger, was Haroula Sayanou, granddaughter of Hariklia Sayanou, who saved their family.



Winthrop and Ettinger Families with Haroula



Posing with Hariklia's photo

Gershon Harris Hatzor Haglilit, Israel



There are four Sabbaths during February, and all in the book of Shemot – Exodus. The last Torah portion read in January was "Yitro" (Jethro), of which the central event is Moshe receiving the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, in the presence of the entire people who left Egypt not that long beforehand.

This is followed by the Torah portion "Mishpatim", which In English, this term can be translated as "laws" or "statutes", but in the Torah context usually refers to what we would call "civil law", meaning laws and statutes that govern the relationship between Man and One's Fellow Man", as opposed to other laws primarily aimed at people's spiritual relationship with God, like keeping the Sabbath, prayer, worship of One God and no other, kashruth and the like. Such "Mishpatim" include laws against harming, cheating or misleading others; how to properly treat the stranger, the elderly and underprivileged; monetary matters between litigants, damages,

responsibility for one's action, helping others, charity, etc. The great medieval commentator Rashi, teaches us a powerful lesson from the very first verse, which begins "And these are the statutes....". He explains that when a sentence begins with "and these are..." as opposed to just "these are...", it is to show that whatever follows is a continuation of the previous "list", which in our case were very spiritual laws that come at the end of "Yitro". As Rashi says: "Just as those [spiritual, G-d-Man statutes] were from Sinai, so are these [Man to Fellow Man} statutes" from Sinai. That is to say, being a moral, ethical, honest and righteous person when relating to other human beings is no less, and possibly more, important than how "religious" I am in my spiritual duties to God. In short, to be a good and proper Jew means being as meticulous in my human relationships as I am with God. Keeping kosher, observing Shabbat and meticulous observance of all ritual without being moral and ethical to one's fellow man is unequivocally wrong. Likewise, someone who thinks that to be a full Jew, he/she need not perform any Jewish ritual, but only be moral, ethical and charitable toward others, is no less defective in terms of Jewish meaning.

The next two portions, "Truma" [Contribution] and "Titzavei" [You command] deal with the specifications and exact design for each and every vessel to be placed in the Tabernacle and the Priestly vestments to be used by the Cohanim. Yet once again, powerful lessons are learned for all times. The portion of Truma opens with God commanding the people they must "take" truma – a donation/contribution for Him from their precious jewelry and valuables. Among other things, our Sages learn the idea of giving of oneself for the sake of the community. I take of myself and give to others, which is based largely on this portion. But it goes further: No matter what the situation, even under the worst circumstances imaginable, Jews always gave and never depended on outside help to create community institutions or even provide for the poor. One can extend this idea to the entire institutionalized Jewish federation fundraising network, which is one of Judaism's greatest achievements. And it all started in the Torah. As for the portion of "Titzavei", it stands out by the fact that Moshe's name is not mentioned even once, though God does speak to him, deliberately omitting his name. The reason for this comes from the final Torah portion of "Ki Tissa" [When you take up...."], as follows. The first phrase "Ki Tissa" refers to taking a population census, but by using a simple half-shekel coin to count each male in the army, without counting actual heads. This in itself is a precedent for not treating human beings like objects, but the main focus of this portion is the horrible sin of the golden calf. Despite having witnessed the amazing revelation of God at Sinai, and having been commanded to build Him a sanctuary and even contributing to its creation, the people sin terribly. God's anger is severe, and even before Moshe descends from the mountain to see the wild and horrible discretion of holiness and God's name, God tells Moshe to stand aside and he will totally wipe out this rebellious, stiff-necked and apparently irredeemable people and create a new nation out of Moshe. But Moshe will not hear of this and doesn't just beg, pray and cajole God to change his mind, he actually confronts God, and insists that He also forgive the people of this sin! Using frank and angry language, Moshe is so adamant that he tells God that if He doesn't change his mind and doesn't forgive the people, "then erase my name from your book [the Torah]", because Moshe would have no place with such a God! As we all know, God does eventually forgive the people – but only later after Moshe ascends the mountain to specifically continue the "negotiations" of the terms of forgiveness for the people. And in a profound essay on the topic, former Chief Rabbi of the UK, Jonathan Sacks, suggests that Moshe even used the term "a stiff-necked people" to remind God that this ostensibly negative quality of stubbornness and incorrigibility would ultimately prove to be one of Judaism's greatest assets, when that same "stiff-necked" attitude would serve Jews well in future generations as they refused to give in to so many persecutions and attempts at mass conversions, "stubbornly" sticking with God and Israel, no matter what the price! But to illustrate to Moshe that his request to be "erased" from the Torah would be respected very partially: he eliminates Moshe's name in the portion of Titzavei!

So as we accompany our ancestors on their further development, journeys and even adventures over the next four Sabbaths, we should also take note of how much these ancient stories and their lessons continue to guide us as a people today.

Joint Statement on the Destruction of the Salonika Cemetery Memorial

January 30, 2019 - For Immediate Release

We, the undersigned, having been informed by both the media and the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece of the devastating destruction of the Memorial for the former Jewish Cemetery in Thessaloniki on the grounds of Aristotle University, publicly condemn this unacceptable act of anti-Semitism.

Our communities in the United States represent institutions originally formed by members of the Jewish communities of Salonika and many other parts of Greece. Our communities still include survivors from Salonika, Ioannina, Athens, Rhodes, and many other cities in Greece. Indeed, some of us undersigned here today have parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents who were born and raised in Salonika. Knowing the experience of Salonikan Jewry in the Holocaust, we were deeply disturbed and greatly saddened by what has occurred, and collectively feel a sense of loss.

When hateful acts such as these occur, all people of tolerance and good will should speak out to condemn them, regardless where they occur and the religion or ethnicity of those who are targeted. We want the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki to know that we stand with them, support them, and pray for their strength and wellbeing.

We look for your guidance on how we can best be of aid in any time of need, whether it be as advocates, raising funds for the reconstruction of the memorial, or in other ways.

We praise the recent condemnations by leaders of the Greek State, including Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos and Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris, of the recent attack against the Memorial. We now call on the Government of Greece to translate those statements of support for the Jewish Community of Greece into direct action and provide whatever assistance the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki may need.
Signed

The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America
Joseph Toledo, President
Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé, Executive Director

Kehila Kedosha Janina
Synagogue and Museum
Marvin Marcus, President
Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos,
Museum Director

The American Sephardi Federation
David Dangoor, President
Jason Guberman, Executive Director

The Sephardic Temple of Cedarhurst
Steven Chernoff, President
Rabbi Arnold Marans

Etz Chaim Sephardic Congregation
of Indianapolis
Alan Cohen, President
Rabbi David Gingold-Altchek

The Sephardic Educational Center
Neil Sheff, President
Rabbi Daniel Bouskila, Director

The Sephardic Jewish Center of
Canarsie
Jeffrey Beja, President
Rabbi Myron Rakowitz z"l

Congregation Ezra Bessaroth of
Seattle
Albert Israel, President
Rabbi Simon Benzaquen

Congregation Or VeShalom of Atlanta
Michael Bouhadana, President
Rabbi Hayyim Kassorla

Congregation Keter Torah of Detroit
Ricky Behar, President
Rabbi Sasson Natan

Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation
Sam Mezistrano, President,
Rabbi Benjamin Hassan

Sephardi Federation of Palm Beach
County
Rose Pappo Allen, President

Temple Moses Sephardic
Congregation of Florida
Robert Behar, President
Rabbi Galimidi-Hadar

Friendship, Truth, Sick and
Brotherly Association of Kastoryalis
Jacob Cohen, President
Rabbi Eliyahu Akiva

Association of Friends of Greek Jewry
Marcia Haddad Ikononopoulos,
President

Sephardic Heritage International DC
Afraim Katzir, President

Congregation Etz Ahaim – NJ
Rabbi David Bassous

Seattle Sephardic Network
Rena Behar, President

The Summer 2019 Italy-Greece Tour and Greek Jewish Young Professionals Tour are both officially closed. There is still very limited room on the last tour that runs from July 17-July 31.

Summer 2019 Itinerary



The Association of Friends of Greek Jewry

Tour of Jewish Greece featuring Rhodes

July 17 – July 31, 2019

Includes Athens, Rhodes, Thessaloniki, Ioannina, & Mykonos

Also includes the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the
Deportation of the Jews of Rhodes

For more information email Museum@kkjsm.org

Free Birthright Israel Trip for Romaniote and Sephardic People Age 18-26
Full details [here](#)



Sephardic Birthright

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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.

Some of our major donations have been generous bequests, which have enabled us to complete major work in our synagogue/museum. Do remember us in your will. Your legacy will be present in our legacy.

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



Kehila Kedosha Janina E-Newsletter – Number 119

February 2019

Kehila Kedosha Janina

280 Broome Street, New York NY 10002

Website: www.kkjsm.org

Email: museum@kkjsm.org

Your donations enable us to continue our work. You can send donations via mail directly to 280 Broome Street, New York, NY 10002 or you can donate via our website www.kkjsm.org