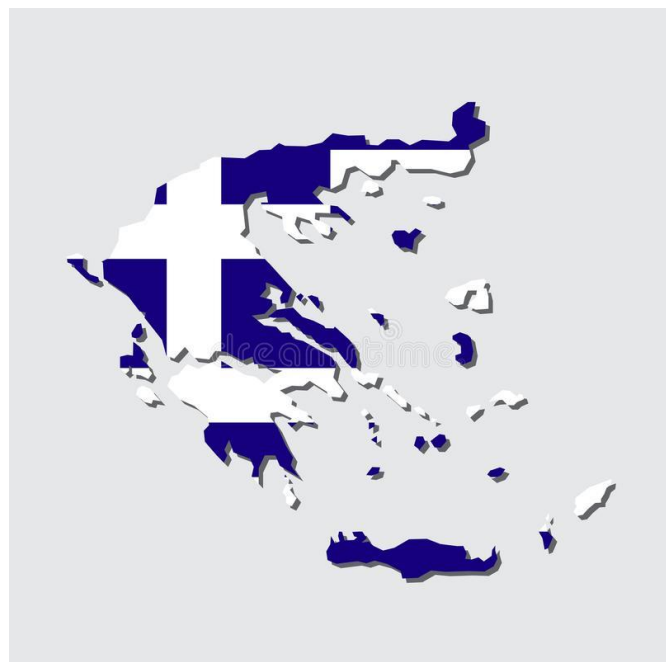




GREECE

Memory, Acceptance, Solidarity
Week II: Greece
September 10-17, 2022

Logbook of



Information

8th High School of Ioannina

75, Dodonis Str, 45221 Ioannina

Greece

Website <https://blogs.sch.gr/8lykioan/>

School principal : Mr. Nick Vranos

Project coordinator : Mrs. Claire Venouziou

Logbook part 1

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Participants

I. STUDENTS

	Greek	German
1	Alexopoulou Christina (female)	Celine Muller (female)
2	Angelis Konstantinos (male)	Jelena Jugert (female)
3	Finou Vasia(female)	Chantal Horbach (female)
4	Gravou Katerina (female)	Seden Inan (female)
5	Dimopoulou Katerina (female)	Julian Schieffer (male)
6	Ioannou Grigoria(female)	Ben Barthel (male)
6	Kostaki Yvoni (female)	Maxim Sander (male)
8	Kosti Mariza (female)	Marius Hofmann (male)
9	Panagiotou Christoforos (male)	Lucas Iselborn (male)
10	Prentza Ioanna (female)	Sevan Mang (male)
11	Psatha Aggeliki (female)	Levin Pitschi (male)
12	Theodorakis Thomas- Alexadros (male)	Andrej Josupeit (male)
13	Tzavela Vassiliki (female)	Luca Forve (male)
14	Tzimas Thomas (male)	
15	Tzouma Anastasia (female)	

II. TEACHERS

Greek	German
Mrs. Claire Venouziou	Mrs. Dr. Doris Lax
Mrs. Maria Kivrakidou	Mr. Detler Lax
Mr. Nikos Zacharakis	

Programme for the Greek week

Ioannina, 10-17 September 2022

Saturday, September 10, 2022

Trip to Greece for **German group**

- 17:30** Arrival in Thessaloniki Airport, Road trip to Ioannina
- 21:30- 23:00** Arrival of German group at Hotel, Check-in, Settling in .
Welcome meeting , joint dinner at a pizza restaurant

Sunday, September 11, 2022

- 8:15-9 :15** Breakfast
- 9:15** **Meeting point:** Hotel Paladion
- 9:30-13:00** Acquaintance with the historical background of the city (**MEMORY**)
- 9:30- 10:30** Visit to the Municipal Ethnographic Museum of Ioannina
- 11:00- 12:30** Visit to the Silversmithing Museum
- 12:30- 13:15** A small tour inside the castle
- 13:30-14:30** Snack (Street food)
- 15:00- 19:00** Trip to the island (Museum of Ali Pasha , Traditional settlement, Monastery of Philanthropinon)
- 19:30 - 20:00** Back to the hotel, Summary and feedback of the day, Free time
- 21:30 -23:00** Dinner at “Gia meze” (Ouzeri, Garibaldi Street)

Monday, September 12, 2022

- 8:15-9:00** Breakfast
- 9:15** **Meeting point:** Exhibition Polichoros Chatzis Hall (Palia Sfagia)
- 9:30-10:00** History Workshop (**MEMORY**)
Lecture of Dr. John Kalef -Ezdra : Nazi occupation in Greece, Resistance and Reprisals
- 10:00-11: 00** Activity 1
- 11:00-11: 15** Break

- 11:15-13:30** Activity 2 **MOG- Memories of the Occupation in Greece (Video & Oral history)**
- 13:30-14:15** Activity 3 **Case study: Liggiades**
- 14:30-15:30** Lunch at LAFI
- 16:00-19:00** Visit to the village of Liggiades, Commemorative monument
- Activity 4 **Meeting with Ioannis Avgeris & Alekos Raptis**
Attendance the documentary of Xr. Konstantinidis “The Balcony”
Discussion of the topic
- Coffee
- 20:00** Summary and feedback of the day, Free time
- 20:30** Dinner(Street food)

Tuesday, September 13, 2022

- 8:15-9:15** Breakfast
- 9:25** **Meeting point:** Exhibition Hall Polichoros Chatzis (Palia Sfagia)
- 9:30-10:15** History Workshop (**MEMORY**)
Jewish presence in Greece and the Jewish community of Ioannina(co-existence & cooperation)
 1. Venouziou Claire(ppt)
 2. Kosti Mariza (ppt)
 3. Kostaki Yvoni (ppt)
- 10:15- 11:30** Activity 5: Rebuilt the Jewish life in Greece before World War II (by texts & photos)
- 11:30-12:00** Coffee break
- 12:00-12:30** **Lecture of Allegra Matsa, General Secretary of Jewish Community of Ioannina « Jewish Community of Ioannina»**
- 12:30-14:00** Activity 6: **The annihilation of the of Jewish Community of Ioannina – Photos & video**
- 14:15-15:15** Lunch at FYSSA ROUFA
- 15:15-17:00** Free time
- 17:10** **Meeting point:** Hotel Paladion

- 17:30- 18:30** Activity 7 Visit to the Jewish cemetery with Allegra Matsa
- 19:00- 20:00** Activity 8 Visit to the Jewish synagogue,
Meeting with the Mayor of the town and the president of the Jewish Community, Dr. Moses Elisaf
- 20:30** Summary and feedback of the day, Dinner(Street food),Free time

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

- 8:30-9:20** Breakfast
- 9:30** **Meeting point:** Hotel Paladion
- 9:30-19:00** Trip to Zagoroxoria/ Aspraggeli
(MEMORY- ACCEPTANCE- SOLIDARITY)
- 10:30-11:30** Activity 9 Visit the martyr village of Aspraggeli, photo exhibition at the cultural center
- 12:30-14:30** Visit & Coffee at Tsepelovo
- 15:00-16:00** Hiking
- 16:30- 18:00** Lunch at Monodedri (Taverna: Dionysus)
- 20:30** Back to the hotel, Summary, and feedback of the day
- 21:00** Dinner (Street food),Free time

Thursday, September 15, 2022

- 8:30-9:20** Breakfast
- 9:30** **Meeting point:** Hotel Paladion
- 9:30-19:00** Trip to Parga **(SOLIDARITY)**
- 10:00- 11:00** Visit the ancient theatre of Dodonis
- 11:00-12:00** Trip to Parga
- 12:15- 13:30** Visit Old Olive Oil Factory

- 13:30- 17 :15** Castle, Swimming, Free time
- 17:30 -19:0** Lunch at Parga (Taverna)
- 20:30** Back to the hotel, Summary, and feedback of the day
- 21:00** Dinner (Street food), Free time

Friday , September 16, 2022

- 8:30-9:15** Breakfast
- 9:30** **Meeting point: 8th High School of Ioannina**
- 9:30- 11:30** Visit school (**MEMORY, ACCEPTANCE-SOLIDARITY**)-
Meet other students-
- 11:30-14:00** Exhibition of Shoah- Yad Vashem – Activity **11**-Workshop
- 14:30-15:30** Snack at school
- 15:30- 17:00** Final evaluation of the week
Putting together results & preparing video clips
- 21:00-24:00** Joint farewell dinner in town (Myrovolos)

Saturday , September 17, 2022

- 8:30-9:30** Breakfast
- 9:30** **Meeting point:** Hotel Paladion
Farewell /Departure of German group

Logbook part 2

Workshop on

Memory(1)

Monday, September 12, 2022

9:30-10:00 Lecture of Dr. John Kalef -Ezdra : Nazi Occupation in Greece, Resistance and Reprisals

10:00-11:00

Activity 1- Workshop:

What to do: (divide into 4 mixed groups.)

1. Attend the lecture and write down **3 major repercussions** on Greek population because of the Nazi occupation in Greece ,
2. Attend the lecture and write down **an imaginary diary page** of a member of the resistance at that time.
3. Attend the lecture and write **a note** about the Nazi retaliation actions at the expense of the Greek people.
4. Attend the lecture and write a **dialogue** between two Nazi soldiers who are against these violent actions

Memory(2)

11:15-13:30 MOG- Memories of the Occupation in Greece (Video & Oral history)

Activity 2- Workshop:

What to do: Watch this short film and two video -testimonies, form 4 mixed groups, choose one text each and write down your thoughts about the Nazi occupation in Greece.

- https://www.occupation-memories.org/videos/en_Projektfilm/index.html
- <https://archive.occupation-memories.org/el/interviews/mog076>
- <https://archive.occupation-memories.org/el/interviews/mog072>

Present your works to the plenary session

13:30 -14:15 Case study Liggiades - Discussion

Activity 3- Workshop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RyN4Q0tH94-->

16:00-19:00 Activity 4 -Visit the martyr village of Liggiades

HISTORICAL TEXTS

The extent of the destruction

When the German troops evacuated Greece in October 1944, the country was devastated. The Greek population had paid a very heavy price. During the winter 1941/42 tens of thousands of people had succumbed to famine and malnutrition. Between 30.000 and 50.000 had lost their lives as a consequence of the partisan warfare, mainly civilians killed in German reprisal actions. About 60.000 Greek Jews had been deported to the concentration camps and murdered. At least 800 villages and towns laid in ruins. The material losses are not to be neglected. Most of Greece was subjected to the side-effects of hyperinflation and the enormous damages to its infrastructures, caused by the occupation policy of exploitation and the systematic destruction of the industrial facilities and the transport network. All railway bridges as well as 80% of the rolling stock was destroyed. 73% of the shipping tonnage was lost, about 200.000 houses were destroyed. One out of three Greeks, especially the children, suffered from epidemics, like Malaria, TB and Typhus; in some regions the percentages rose up to 70%.

Resistance

During the brutal three-year occupation there has been a broad and very active resistance. By far the most important resistance group was the National Liberation Front (EAM) that emerged after months of negotiations between the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and three further small left-wing parties on September 27th 1941.

The EAM quickly became the largest resistance organization and also a serious political player. The organization pursued some directional targets set in their founding convention. The aim was to free the country, to regain sovereignty and to form a transitional government after expelling the occupation forces. The task of this government should be to prepare free elections, so that the Greek people could decide by themselves which form of government they opted for. In February 1942 the Greek People's Liberation Army ELAS was founded as military wing of the EAM and waged war against the occupying army and its allies.

The National Republican Greek League founded in September 1941 by the former colonel of the Greek army, Napoleon Zervas, is considered to be the second most important resistance organization. Those national units of Greek resistance fighters formed by Zervas in the Epirus Mountains and in Western Greece as the organization's military wing received political and material support by the British.

In direct contradiction to other European states the resistance in Greece never became part of the "founding myth" and therefore wasn't part of the national identity, because it was related almost exclusively to the left. Only with the recognition of the EAM as resistance organization in the 1980s this part of history gained access into the national commemorative culture.

Reprisals

The implementation of the so-called collective responsibility was a trait of the German Occupation. Tens of thousand of civilians, including women and children, were killed by members of the German occupation forces in Greece, in a series of deliberate reprisal actions, that were nothing more than war crimes against innocent people, in direct violation of international laws. According to German calculations, about 30,000

Greeks were “killed in action” between June 1943 and September 1944, that means civilians murdered or shot on account of real or imagined partisan activities. According to a report submitted by the Greek government during the Nuremberg Trials, approximately 91,000 Greeks were murdered or shot as hostages by the German occupation forces.

This brutal retaliation policy swept at least 800 villages and towns that witnessed total destruction, mass killings or both. Among many places the following stand out as milestones of the Nazi terror in Greece: Kalavryta, Distomo, Giannitsa, Viannos, Kondomari, Alikianos, Anogia, Chortiatis, Kommeno , Klissura, Mesovouno, Kerdyllia, Paramythia and Lingiades. The most massive execution took place on December 13, 1943 in the town of Kalavryta. All men between 16 and 65 were shot and the town was burned to the ground by troops of the 117 Jäger Division. A total of 700 men, including 22 women and children, lost their lives during the “Operation Kalavryta”, while 24 villages and three monasteries in the whole region were destroyed. The massacre in Kalavryta is one of a series of similar crimes committed by German troops, such as the Czech Lidice, the French Oradour and the Serbian cities of Kraljevo and Kragujevac.

Holocaust

The deportation and annihilation of Greek Jews, as part of the Nazi plan for the extermination of all the European Jews, was carried out from early 1943 until the summer of 1944. Totally, 58,886 Greek Jews from a total population of 71,611 souls (pre-war population) were murdered in the death camps, a destruction rate that exceeds 85%, one of the highest percentages in Europe.

The Jewish presence in Greece had been, until the Holocaust, more diverse than in any other European country because of its different cultural backgrounds. By far the largest community was the one of Thessaloniki. In 1941, the second largest greek city was one of the major centers of Sephardic Jewry, with a population of 56.000 Jews, descendants of the expellees from Spain that had found shelter in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 15th Century. The city had 35 synagogues, eight Jewish schools, two Jewish orphanages and numerous libraries, amounting to a property of 56 Millions Marks. In 1943, as many as 45.000 Jews from Thessaloniki were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

After the war, only 1,950 Jews were counted in Thessaloniki—96% percent perished. At the same time, the world’s largest Jewish cemetery, with 500,000 graves, was destroyed by the municipal authorities in Thessaloniki. The city and its citizens used the tombs marble as building material for decades. The Aristotle University was built on the desecrated site. Between March and August 1944, 8.000 Jews from the remaining communities, including the Romaniotes of Ioannina and the isolated island communities of Rhodes, Kos, Corfu and Kreta, were also arrested and deported to Auschwitz. An equal number survived in hiding or by fleeing to the Middle East or to various partisan-controlled territories.

Despite the fact that Holocaust took such a heavy toll on Greek Jewry, public awareness hardly connects the Shoah with Greece, while the facts were until very recently virtually nonexistent in public commemoration. In the 1980s, the history of the Greek Jews, and especially their destruction, was still not a part of the national narrative. The first book on the genocide of the Greek Jews, first published in 1974, comes from two scholars of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki. The title is dedicated to the memory of the victims: In Memoriam (Molho, Nehama). Greece couldn't reach the level of the

Holocaust studies in West Europe, as it had to prioritize other public history debates, such as Resistance and Collaboration.

Memory(3)**Tuesday, September 13, 2022****9:30-10:15 Presentation of the Jewish Community in Greece.****Study case: Ioannina (co-existence & cooperation before the War)
(Claire Venouziou, Mariza Kosti, Yvonne Kostaki)****10:15- 11:30 - Activity 5**

What to do: (divide into 4 mixed groups)

Each group reads one biography and try to rebuild the Jewish life in Greece at the beginning of the 20th century. (Write a text about it, answering some or all of the questions)

- (1) Where did they use to live?
- (2) Which was their mother tongue? Why? What other languages did they speak?
- (3) What clothes did they use to wear?
- (4) What was their educational status?
- (5) What kind of jobs did they use to do?
- (6) How was their social life?
- (7) Did they keep to religious customs?
- (8) Did they keep to Jewish festivities?
- (9) What was their relation with the Christians?
- (10) Did they feel any different from the others?

Present your work to the plenary session**11:30-12:00** Coffee Break**12:00 - 12:30** Lecture of Allegra Matsa, General Secretary of Jewish Community «Jewish Community of Ioannina»**12:30 - 14:00** Activity 6 -Workshop**The annihilation of the Jewish community of Ioannina- Photos & video**What to do: (divide into 4 mixed groups)

Read at least three testimonies and choose two photos and try to write a story about the annihilation of the Jewish community of Ioannina , including the points below:

- (1) A time line of acts,
- (2) Reactions, thoughts, feelings of Jewish people,
- (3) Reactions, thoughts, feelings of Christian people,
- (4) Actions of Nazi soldiers and Greek police officers
- (5) How was their life in concentration camps?
- (6) How did they manage to survive?
- (7) What happened to them and their families after the war?
- (8) How did they feel returning back?

(9) Your thoughts about the Shoah

Present your work to the plenary session

17:30 - 18:30 Activity 7 Visit the Jewish cemetery

19:00 - 20:00 Activity 8 Visit the Jewish synagogue

Memory, Acceptance, Solidarity (4)

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

10:30-11:30 Activity 9 Visit the martyr village of Aspraggeli

15:00-16:00 Activity 10 Hiking

Memory, Acceptance, Solidarity (5)

Friday, September, 15,2022

11:30-14:00 Activity 11- Workshop Exhibition of Shoah- Yad Vashem

15:30- 17:00 Final evaluation of the week

BIOGRAFIES- THE LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

I. *Roza Benveniste, Thessaloniki*

My family was quite cosmopolitan and didn't wear traditional clothes, with the exception of one of Mother's aunts. She came to visit every now and then and she used to bring us the traditional tajicos made from dough. My father's parents had settled in an apartment in Thessaloniki. I remember we used to go on Saturday night to listen to my grandfather say the prayers. He didn't leave the house often, so I don't think that he attended the synagogue. I don't know anything about their life in Larissa. I didn't meet my maternal grandfather, so I don't know much about him. I met my maternal grandmother, Belissia, who was very nice and used to tell us stories all the time. (...)

..... My mother didn't know Greek, we taught her the language. Her reward to us was to buy us ice-cream from the ice-cream man who used to come around the neighborhood. My mother had lived for a long time in Paris, where a cousin of hers used to live. She knew French very well and used to wear long green dresses. My father had gone to Paris to learn couture for men's and women's clothes. At some point he returned to settle in Thessaloniki. My mother had come back from Paris with a European style. They met at a dance. My mother was wearing one of her long dresses. When my father saw her he was very impressed. My father was a quite short, while my mother was a stunningly beautiful woman. My mother used to read a lot, but my father didn't have much time for reading. She read mainly literature and newspapers, in French and Spanish; she was able to read Greek only later. There were many Greek newspapers in Thessaloniki, and some were in Judeo-Spanish, written in Latin characters. There were newspapers in Rashi and newspapers in French like *Le Progrès*, *L'Indépendant* ...

There were many Jewish schools which were founded by Alliance Israelite Universelle. They had founded schools everywhere. There were also many schools from different nations in Thessaloniki, like the German school, the American and the Italian. When I was very young, I went to a kindergarten that a cousin of my uncle owned. This uncle had a school for Jews only. The others had schools for their own people. There were so many Jews in the city anyway.

My uncle's school was called the *Ecole Franco-Allemande*, because he taught French and my other uncle taught German. My uncles' school offered a high level of education. With this knowledge I took exams and got my degree from the *Lycée Français*.

At my uncles' school, we were taught Hebrew. We didn't really learn the language, but we learned some prayers that I can still remember. Then they thought that this wasn't a very efficient way of teaching, so they got us a teacher from Israel who taught us literature and another one who taught us Rashi – that is the Judeo-Spanish written from left to right. I learned English at Anatolia College. I didn't learn Greek properly, because at my uncles' school we didn't really learn Greek, and after, at the Anatolia American College, we did everything in English, which was good because we practiced the language more this way. The American school was mixed. It was for girls only but it had girls from a variety of different nationalities. There were many foreign students in the school who lived in the dormitories inside the school. One girl was from Albania, another one from Turkey whose name was Talat. The headmistress was called Miss Morel. We had two Armenian girls, whose fees were lower because of how they had been treated by the Turks. The girls who lived in the dormitories helped out in serving the food and many other tasks.

I didn't live in the dormitories. I was with four Greek Christian girls and the Abbot sisters. I was also with two Jewish girls. I don't know what happened to the one of them, but the other one married Molho, who had the bookshop in Thessaloniki. One of the Christian girls was

Eugene. She was a very close friend of mine who had an old mother and no father. I heard that during the occupation she was taken to Germany. Why she was taken to Germany I still wonder. I was the president of the school when I graduated.

www.centropa.org/en/biography/Rosa-Benveniste

II. *Lily Arouch, Athens*

My parents were called Haim and Eugenie Pardo. They had an arranged marriage in 1928 in the synagogue in Thessalonica. My mum, like her mum, went to a nuns' school, a 'l'ecole des soeurs' as they used to say, so she spoke French and Spanish and some Greek. Her Greek wasn't very good, but she managed.

My father was born in 1898 in Monastir. His mother tongue was Spanish. In addition to the German language, which he probably learnt at the German school he attended, he spoke French fluently and also Greek. I don't know if he went to school for that, I think he learnt Greek by himself, but he spoke and wrote it very well. He was also very keen on learning, he was a philomath. He was tall and thin. He wasn't very talkative, but he was gentle and decisive. He was always helping different charity institutions. I know he was a big patron of the Jewish institutions of Thessalonica, but I don't think he was ever a member of any political organization.

He was a self-made man; he came [to Thessalonica] from Monastir with his parents during World War I, probably around 1916-1918, and started working on his own. I guess his father was sick because he started working and fighting for survival very early on. He started off as an employee and then founded his own business, a commercial shop named 'Pardiko,' on 28 Tsimiski Street. It was an electrical shop that sold electrical appliances and items, wires, leads etc, and even bathrooms and sanitary ware.

My parents' clothes were very European and contemporary for their times. They were no different than other people of that time. My mother was very elegant and chic. I remember that my father used to read a lot. I don't remember my mother reading, but my father really read a lot. He was reading all sorts of books: literature and even political books, but not religious ones; my family wasn't very religious. He didn't use the library. He was working long hours. He used to read at noon when he came back from work. People back then, or at least my father, would come back from work, we would eat and sit and then he would read his newspaper, and then he would go back to work.

At the time they used to work mornings and evenings. He would come home very late at night. He reinforced us to read from a young age. We went to school, a Greek school, straight away, but we always had a French tutor in the house, because we needed to know a foreign language.

In Thessalonica other than the Greek newspapers there were also Jewish newspapers in circulation, published by Jewish editors. There was 'Le Progres' and 'El Messagero' and 'L'Independent' among many others. 'El Messagero' was Spanish. My parents used to read many foreign newspapers. My mother's brother Gastone, who had left for Germany when he was eighteen, left Germany in 1933, when the situation got worse for the Jews, and went and settled in Paris.

So they had good and direct knowledge of the situation. That, along with the information from the newspapers, made the atmosphere in the house heavy, as if we were waiting for something very bad to happen. We knew that in Germany things were bad for the Jews and were frustrated, as we didn't know what to do and how to do it. They were very aware of the situation in Germany and Europe, my parents as well as their friends.

My family lived in the center of town, on 35 Tsimiski Street; this means there was no Jewish neighborhood around us. We were living in a mansion- style house with five apartments, three of the families that lived there were Jewish. One of the families was called Gildi, they owned a big bakery in the center of the town; the other family was called Shalom.

It was with them that my parents were closer; they used to see each other socially once in a while. We lived in one of the apartments: my parents, their three daughters and my grandmother Lea. It had five rooms, my parents' room, my grandmother's room, which is where I stayed because I was the oldest daughter, the living room and the dining room, which were closed at that time, and one more room for my two little sisters.

I remember the furniture distinctly, it was very traditional. The beds were brass and very big, my mother's was gold-plated, I think, and covered with very big mosquito nets that we used to call 'baltakina'. The dining room had a big buffet where they kept the silver tray with the silver spoons that they used when we had visitors.

They would take out the silver tray, the silver spoons and glasses and offer three types of dessert. My grandmother Lea was a renowned hostess, so when we had visitors she offered not one but three types of dessert.

We had electricity in our house and running water, we even had a boiler that would heat the water up with wood, and this was fairly sophisticated for our time. The electricity was used for lighting the house. As we didn't have electrical appliances at home, we would cook with charcoal and we had something like a fire cooker, in Spanish we called it 'formaiya' .

We used to have a girl that helped with the household chores and she used to stay with us; she mainly helped with the washing and the kitchen. We also had a teacher, who would take us for walks and look after us. We didn't have a garden, and we had no animals.

As for the town of Thessalonica during the post-war period I remember there weren't many cars, even though we lived in the center. There were a few cars and even fewer taxis but people mainly used horse carriages. There was the tram and this is how we mostly moved around. Where we lived was a very central place, so all streets around were of asphalt.

Near our house was a really beautiful square, Aristotelous Square, which had all sorts of coffee places around, and the cinema was there as well. That is where we would go for walks or play games, with our parents or without. Of course there were neighborhoods in Thessalonica that didn't have asphalt roads, and they were really poor.

We always kept Sabbath; Friday night was a very special night, and the same was true for Saturday. We always had someone over for dinner on Saturday, a close relative, a cousin or a friend. Every Saturday afternoon, [Grandma] Lea's daughters would come to visit her with their husbands and children.

Pesach was a very big celebration. We might not have been religious, but in our house tradition was sacred. First of all I remember that around Purim, which is exactly a month before Pesach, preparations had to begin. In those days we didn't have a mixer or anything like that, so when the sugar arrived in crystals, I remember my mother and my grandmother trying to break it up with a mortar and a pestle in order for the sweets to be prepared. The sugar had to be Pascual [6] in order for the sweets to be proper. After that there was a huge box, it was more like a trunk, where they stored the Pesach pans and pots for the rest of the year.

On the eve of Passover these were taken out and all the rest of the household stuff was put away. The big trunk was sent to the matzah factory. Back then we didn't have the matzah cut in maneuverable sizes, bought in boxes; the matzah came in big pieces of differing size, in the trunk, covered with a white cloth. It had to last for the entire Passover period. This matzah had to be cut down in order for all the sweets to be prepared, like the burmoelos [7], a very traditional

sweet of Thessalonica. We kept the seven days of Passover and the whole tradition of it. For Passover, only one of my father's sisters, Ester, would come; the other three had big families of their own.

... When I was a bit older, about eight or nine years old, I would try and finish my homework earlier, so I could go to my father's shop, which was very close to our house. We lived on 35 Tsimiski Street and the shop was across the street on 28 Tsimiski Street.

I really loved going to the shop because I really enjoyed being close to him and also watching and listening to what they were doing. I remember that we were very busy [at school] and had no free time. We would go to school even on Saturdays, although it was Sabbath and my aunties used to come over.

I clearly remember the headmaster of the school, Ms. Valagianni. When things got worse in Thessalonica she called me into her office and said, 'my child I understand that now you might not be able to come to school, but you should know that whatever you want I am here and you can come to me.' At that time something like that was very important and I still remember; it gives me the chills. People in my school were nice, and I don't

remember any anti-Semitic incidents.

My father always went alone to the synagogue; he never took us with him. Every Sunday my parents would meet up with other couples who had children our age; they had about two or three friends like that. They would talk to the grown-ups and we played with the children, who were pretty much our age. All these friends were Jewish. I didn't do any sport, and then, unfortunately, I was eleven when the war started and I couldn't do anything after that.

I went on a train journey once with my mother; we went to Paris in 1936. It lasted for three days and three nights, from Thessalonica to Paris, and I remember it very intensely. When we got to Paris we were grubby from the smoke in the train.

Our parents didn't teach us anything directly but their example was intense. I mean how nice they were to their friends, how caring they were to the family; my father was always worried about the family and my mother would take very good care of her sister. It was these things that were important for us.

www.centropa.org/en/biography/lily-arouch

III. Victor Venouziou, Karditsa

I was born in Larissa, on 15th September 1929 and soon afterwards we moved to Karditsa near my mother's family, due to financial difficulties. When it was time for me to go to elementary school, I had very good relationships with my fellow students, even though I was Jewish. However, there had always been cases when their anti-Semitism hurt my feelings. For example, when we disagreed over something, their prejudice came forward." What can somebody expect from you? You crucified Jesus! "We had that!

There were around 15 Jewish families, all in all 50 to 60 people. Our relationships with our Christian neighbors were good, very good. We exchanged visits. I remember that the bishop Kirillos visited our house every year during the Jewish Easter and our family had strong bonds with him. I believe that there was no racism on the part of the Christian population, and this was proved by the behavior of these people during the war and the prosecution of the Jews by the Germans.

On 11th March 1943 ELAS (the Greek Liberation Army) liberated Karditsa! The excitement was indescribable. Karditsa was the first community, the first municipality in the whole Europe that was freed by the Axis. Some very few Jews from Thessaloniki who had eluded arrest came then to our town, looking for shelter. When they informed us about the prosecution

and the displacement of the Jews of Thessaloniki, we started being terrified. Karditsa was free and the presence of armed guerillas scattered our anxiety. In the nearby towns, such as Larissa, Volos and Trikala there were a lot of Italians. The richest Jews had gathered their belongings hurriedly and left, some of them going to Athens and others to the villages around.

In June 1943 my family also decided to abandon Karditsa, in order to move to the village Filakti. Before leaving, we entrusted our belongings, wares and household goods to friends and neighbors to keep them. So, we started our journey having only the essentials. When we reached our destination, we rented a place to stay from someone called Papadoulis, following the advice of a neighbor who was from Filakti and had told us about this place. (...) This transfer looked like an adventure to me. We, the children, let our parents worry about everything. We played in the mountains, the plains and the rivers. We didn't know what was going on in the rest of the world. There was a team of guerillas in Filakti, who we had friendly relationships with. I also came in touch with them frequently, although I was not organized and I did not have anything important to offer to them, apart from my insistent questions.

But, since we felt some kind of security, we returned to Karditsa until March 1944, where my mother's brother who was in Athens escaped from being arrested and came back to Karditsa and alarmed us. The rest of our relatives went to the mountainous village of Mastrogianni (it is called Amarantos today) immediately and my family also followed them. Our stay there gave us what we needed, a safe distance from the Germans and an adequate supply of food. From the very first moment the villagers shared with us their few belongings and accepted us in their houses, and we offered to their community whatever we could. 82 prosecuted Jews, we lived peacefully, until the liberation in October 1944, along with 350 Christians, the residents of the village. None of the 350 residents of the village denounced us, they didn't reveal our living there, despite the fact that they faced hard retaliation from the Germans. None of them claimed after the war any material or moral reward for their actions.

"Remembering the past, I envision the future.", Barbounakis publications, Thessaloniki, 2022

IV. Maurice Leon, Athens

My name is Maurice Leon. I was born in Thessaloniki on 27th September 1918. Similarly to all Jews of Salonica my ancestors' origins were from Spain. I believe that they came to Salonica in 1492. On my father's side, our ancestors came from Leon district [a province of northwestern Spain] and this is the reason our last name is Leon. When I was a child my father Isaac told me that our ancestors first went to Smyrna [today Izmir, Turkey] and then came to Salonica.

My father's father was called Juda and his mother Rahel. Grandfather Juda was involved in commerce. I remember him going back and forth to the city of Yiannitsa. [Giannitsa (or Yiannitsa): a town in Greece's Pella. My father told us the following story about our grandfather Juda: Once Grandfather Juda was coming from Yiannitsa back to Salonica with his horse. But he was late and found the gate of the fortress of Salonica closed. So he stayed out for the night. He was caught by thieves that wanted the satchel with his money. But he managed to hide it so well that the thieves couldn't find it. So he was able to save the earnings of that day. Later on, my grandfather Juda started a soap factory in Salonica. His children continued this business after him. The factory was finally closed a few years after World War II. I don't know when Grandfather Juda died. (...)

My father's name was Isaac Leon. He was born around 1870 and died in 1949. My father's brothers were Jomtov and Samuel and his sisters were Sara, Lea and Benvenida.

My father was very authoritarian. When we sat at the table nobody was allowed to talk. And if somebody was talking a lot, my father would tell him or her to leave the table and go sit in the kitchen. My father Isaac was married twice. His first wife's name was Jamila Sason. One interesting detail of that period of time was that my father's second wife Riketa, my mother, was the niece of his first wife Jamila. So my mother was first cousins with my father's and his first wife Jamila's children. His second wife was my mother Riketa, nee Sciaky. My mother was born around 1900 and died in 1970.

My mother Riketa was like all mothers. She loved her children very much. She was kind and never got angry. She had a very kind character. My mother didn't wear traditional clothes. She was dressed according to the fashion of the time. But she would always wear a hat on formal occasions. I also remember my mother's sister Flor Pinchas, nee Sciaky, and her daughter, our cousin, Rahel Pinchas. My aunt Flor went to live in Israel before World War II. She was the one that saved all our family photographs.

We were a very big family. We were seven siblings. The first four were my father's first wife Jamila's children. The last three were my father's second wife Riketa's children. Although there was a significant age difference between Riketa's and Jamila's children, all siblings had a very close relationship. The eldest was my sister Rahel. She was around 15 to 20 years older than me. She was married to our cousin Alberto Leon, son of my father's brother Samuel Leon. Thus my sister Rahel was called Leon before and after she married. My mother told me that when my sister Rahel got married my youngest sister Berta was about to be born. And something very characteristic was that later on my mother Riketa and my sister Rahel were breastfeeding together! I don't remember my eldest sister Rahel at home, before her marriage. Neither do I remember her wedding. But I remember she was living very close by and we were always together.

We had the soap factory that my grandfather had started. We were producing green soap and sold it to all merchandisers in Thessaloniki. The factory was at 30 Prometheus Street. We had fifteen people working for us. Most of them were men but we had two or three women, too. In the meantime my father had started a business in Skopje and he was going there very often. He was partner in a soap factory there. I still remember the name of that company. It was called Tasha Staits and Company. They were Serbians and were producing the same soap as ours in Thessaloniki.

At our factory in Thessaloniki, apart from my father, were also working my brother Juda and my cousin Alberto Leon, who was married to my eldest sister Rahel. I didn't work there before the war. I was too young. In 1935 we became associates with Vasilis Giakos who had a soap factory, too. We decided this in order to expand our business. Together with Mr. Giakos we formed a company named Leon & Giakos, thus having the monopoly of soap production. We were in business together until 1957 when we shut down the soap factory.

I remember well the house I grew up in. I remember it had a big yard, many rooms, and a cellar, where they had a big barrel with 'alisiva' [oraleshiva: detergent made with ashes mixed with water] that was used for washing the clothes. We had both water and electricity in our house. I remember that my bedroom was very small, but I was sleeping alone. The rest of my siblings were sleeping by two in each bedroom. In the garden were many trees, flowers and a well.

Our neighborhood was Jewish. I don't remember the names of our neighbors. There were also some houses that Christians lived in but the majority was Jewish homes.(...) We knew all our neighbors in this neighborhood.

As children we would play together with the children living in our neighborhood. There was a big yard near a Romanian school where Romanian children were studying. In this yard we used to play football.(...)

My mother usually didn't do the shopping. The shopping was done by my father. He would buy from the market and send them to the house with a 'chamalis' [Turkish: hamal: folk expression for delivery service]. There were also the 'bakalika' [Greek: small general food stores] of our neighborhood where we could do the shopping. We didn't buy kosher meat.

At home we were talking Judeo-Spanish, Ladino , as we were growing up. Jewish life in Thessaloniki was very vivid, both religiously and socially. In our house we didn't observe the Sabbath fanatically. But the Jewish holidays were very meticulously celebrated in our house.

There were many preparations done at home for Pesach. Most of them were done by the women of the house. I remember they wouldn't leave even a tiny piece of bread inside the house. They were checking everywhere. The women of the house prepared food according to pascoal [5] dietary laws. They wouldn't allow any food that wasn't permitted for Pesach.

Usually we wouldn't go to the synagogue on Pesach. The first night the whole family would sit around the dinner table. We read the Haggadah in Ladino. First my father was reading and then the children in turns. It was something wonderful how many we were gathered around the Pesach table. We were more than twenty. And if there were people, even strangers passing by, we would invite them in, too.

I remember something very characteristic about Pesach. I was around twelve years old and by that time we were living on Italias Street. It was the first night of Pesach. I was late for Pesach dinner that night. As I was walking from the bus station to our house I could hear from the open windows of the houses I was passing the recitation of the Haggadah. All Jewish homes had their windows wide open and the reading of the Haggadah could be heard out in the street.

I also remember the matzot that we ate. We would buy it from the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. We had a big wooden box and we placed the matzah we bought there. It was in big pieces. We were eager to eat it. But the food that I liked best on Pesach was 'massa en caldo' [Ladino for: matzah in gravy soup or boullion], something like a soup made with matzah.

On [Yom] Kippur we were fasting. We would eat very early in the afternoon and wish each other a good Kippur. That was all. What I remember very distinctively about Kippur, is that very early in the morning someone was passing by yelling: 'Que se alevanta selihot' - Who will wake up early in the morning to go to the synagogue?

www.centropa.org/en/biography/maurice-leon

**THE DISMAL DAY - TESTIMONIES
THE LIFE AFTER THE WAR**

I. Zanet Nahmia, Ioannina

It was a Saturday morning when they knocked our door. It was a week before Easter. We opened the door and they told us: "You get ready in half an hour, because you are going away. We are sending you away". My mum was crying and I remember my father telling her: "Don't cry. We will gather all together and we will see what we are going to do.

"They took those of us who were living in the castle, and we gathered together around the mosque....It was snowing that day, the wind was blowing. After 2 hours or so the cars came and they moved us away from the castle. There were a lot of people...They drove us to Larissa in trucks. The Germans took us from Larissa to the trains for Germany.

II. Esther Cohen, Ioannina

It was early in the morning on 25th March 1944, when Greek policemen following the orders of Gestapo surrounded the Jewish neighborhoods around the castle and the lakefront area. "We were poor people, sir, the majority of us were families; we never harmed anybody; we have been living in Ioannina for centuries. Nobody had loved us..." she says.

Until then the occupying forces had never annoyed the Jews of Ioannina, who were about 2000 souls. Ioannina were in the Italian zone, but when Italy capitulated and went on the side of the allies, things changed dramatically.

"They rushed into the streets, screaming and shooting, knocking on the doors and breaking windows..." Esther was only 17 then." Take a bundle and you have to be in the square within an hour." What could we do first in an hour? We were 7 brothers and sisters and my parents. My sister-in-law was pregnant, ready to have a baby in a month. It was crazy! My mother couldn't understand how it was possible not to go to the Synagogue on a Saturday!" Bring me my child, my shoes to go and pray!" "Don't you understand, mum, we have to go, they are arresting us!" "I will go to pray to God and I will come back. "We were pulling her to take her to Mavili square. The one behind the other, some people with their slippers on, others in their pyjamas, the babies were screaming. A curtain, sir, to open it, to see a tear, nobody was troubled, I am sorry to say that I suffer more, that I went to Germany because of them. Because we begged a lot of them to stay somewhere outside the Jewish neighborhoods until things calm down, but they didn't accept us! We could have been saved..."

The Germans and the Greek policemen would bag them into trucks without tents over their heads and crossing the road of Katara(=curse)full of snow, they took them to Larissa, where they stayed in an inn with no roof and windows.

"Babies and older people died in this inn. We had nothing. 3 times a day they were putting us in a row and they were searching for valuables on us, holding the guns on their hands. Each of us had something to hide, for rainy days. The Germans and the policemen put the jewels in coffins. The ones who came to clean the toilets became rich in one day, because we threw the money and the jewelry in the toilet for the Greeks to find them, not the Germans. They took us to the trains. They put 75 people in a place where only 2 horses could fit. No light in the wagon, no water, old and young people all together. A journey of 11 days without food, water, in the freezing wagons.

One night that was snowing so heavily, and it was so freezing cold the train arrived at Auschwitz and the nearby Birkenau

It was then that she saw her parents and siblings for the last time.

III. Raphael Varsano, Thessaloniki

...We arrived at Auschwitz at night. Some SS officers came, most of whom were drunk, and made a selection. They were ordered that the military camp needed only 250 people out of the 3000 people of our mission. I am telling you a random number-100 women,200 men. And they chose. When they collected the ones they wanted, that was it, finished. I have something personal to tell you. My father was holding me on the one hand and my brother on the other, who was 2 years younger than me. They didn't take children as young as my in the camp. But everybody wanted to go to the other side, where nobody survived, because they went to the crematorium . We wanted to go there so that we can be the whole family together.

IV. Isaak Mizan, Arta

"They took us from the wagons and they hit us. They separated men from women and an SS doctor examined us. They put on trucks the ones who were for the crematories .They took women with children to the furnace immediately. The most tragic of all were the little girls who thought that going to the trucks would be treated in a better way and so they were taking kids in their arms. That was their biggest mistake. The same was with the men who were pretending to have a limb or to be blind. They had the same fate, they put them apart on the trucks and took them immediately to the crematorium" Isaak Mizan says.

"The moment that they separated me from my father I tell the German officer that I am too young and I want to go with my father."Weg, weg" he says and pushes me away. That was the last time I saw my parents and my sisters who along with their kids were put in gas chambers and ended up in the crematorium" he says really touched.

"How did I stand everything? I was 35 kilos in Auschwitz

"I had my faith in God. I was begging HIM every night.

Nothing else afterwards.

I hoped.

I didn't believe , I hoped" Isaak Mizan says.

V. Moes Amir, Thessaloniki.

...And we went to Birkenau(...). Somebody who spoke English put the number. My number was 118.441. They were hitting us in order to learn how to say our number in German and in Polish. When we heard the number we should say "present"(...)Then they undressed us and we were waiting for about 3 hours. They cut our hair and we went to have a bath. I was shaking from cold. It was half past 3 at night.(...)They gave us an old flannel ,a striped garment. When the factory of Krup was built, then they gave us some clothes that were our size. Then we went to the block. There was a smoke coming out of the chimney ,smelling something unusual. Somebody said that our people were being burnt in there. They gave us 5 potatoes and they advised us not to eat them but to keep them for some time later.

VI. Sillia Sevi, Thessaloniki

(...)They were giving us some soup with some dark bread at midday. That was for the whole day.- and a cup of tea in the morning. The soup was like water, it was nothing; in the beginning we didn't want it, but then we were so hungry that sometimes we gave our bread in order to take some soup -we felt that the soup was better ,our stomach was full(...). They made us destroy houses, carry wagons, dig. These

houses must have been Jewish houses because we found little candles many times.(...). They made us destroy them ,but hitting us a lot at the same time... And the dogs rushed against us and they were bringing 2-3 women wounded by the dogs every night. (...)Most of the times they were taking us to the bathroom. That happened in Birkenau, not in Auschwitz .They took us to the bathroom, we washed ourselves, they gave us clothes and then we went through a selection. We were walking in a row, one by one; there was a whole SS army there- men and women, officers of high rank, very strict, and they were pointing with their finger." Muzulman" they called the ones who were very skinny, and they took them to be burnt. When we were going back to the block, we were half in number. I went through a lot of selections.(...). I was probably lucky, I didn't have lice, I wasn't very skinny.

VII. The return, Esther Cohen

"When I went to get into my house- when I came back from the captivity) a stranger appeared on the first stair and told me "where are you going? "To my house ,I answered.

He says "Don't move on. I will tell you something. Did your mum have an oven in the kitchen?

I said happily," Of course, she did; we were baking our bread. I know my house."

Ok, then. The Germans did not burn you, but I will, if you dare to get into the house!" he said to me.

What was that?

A Greek wants to burn me? he...me? my God!

VIII. Renee Molho, Thessaloniki

We had no contact with the Germans. Somehow, because we were Spanish citizens, we felt protected, since we knew that Spain was an ally of Germany. What did I feel the first time I saw a German? I cannot see meanness; I cannot see it in the first glance. They looked normal, like normal people with nothing special, nothing to make you want to turn your head away.

We heard nothing about the camps, nothing about the concentration camps because they concealed it very well. And our rabbi, who was from Germany, maybe he knew, maybe he was aware of what was going on, but he chose not to speak. Rabbi Koretz. We thought that we were going to work and then come back. People were so fooled that, even the money they had - when they were deported - they gave to the Germans, taking in exchange either Polish zloty or some kind of paper saying it was due to them, and they were going to cash it at the end of the trip. What did we know? We had no idea what concentration camps were. No idea! Some people had come from abroad, from outside Greece, and were saying some things but we couldn't imagine it. Our minds were not able to conceive it. We thought that they were telling stories.(...)

And then the order came to wear a star, and everybody wore a star. I don't know what would have happened if you didn't wear one. I didn't wear one. I was Spanish. Then the Germans gave the order that Jews had to move into the ghettos. In Salonica we had never had a ghetto. At the beginning, when we entered the ghetto, we were afraid. Actually, not exactly in the beginning. Later, when we had to wear the star, when they started picking up people, making them disappear, limiting free movement ...

You could not but feel afraid not knowing what will happen to you from one day to the other.(...) A few days after the death of our mother, it was probably my sister Matilde who had the idea to organize a

white marriage between our father and Aunt Rachelle, our mother's sister, so that she could acquire the Spanish nationality in order to be somewhat better protected.

The decision to leave for Athens was made when we realized that we couldn't take proper care of our father. This Italian guy, Neri, who was working in the Italian consulate, agreed to prepare the proper documents for us to travel to Athens. According to these documents, we were Italian citizens, and these documents were to be given directly to the train commander. This is how our father and Eda left for Athens. Eda and our father left while Matilde and myself left the apartment, we were living in, and went to stay at the place of a girl that was a manicurist. She put us up in a bedroom and we were there all day and all night, with the shutters closed. You see, she was a Christian and her father, who was living in the same house, knew nothing about us. She was bringing us food and we were waiting for when our turn would come to leave for Athens. The girls' name was Angela, simply Angela, no last name. We stayed there more than a week.

Matilde and I were left to leave last(...) We arrived in Athens and went to a house in Magoufana, a suburb of Athens - Lefki today - a house offered to us by a monk from Mount Athos. The area was full of small farms, and this monk was coming every week, and we would open all the doors as he would pray, so that the entire neighborhood would listen. Once an airplane passed close by and I said to Matilde, 'Adio, Mary look!' You see, we were very easy to be spotted by someone who was after us.(...)

After while, we had to move again. With a lorry we went from Athens to the land across from Evoia. It was night when we started out; it was night when we arrived.... We got into the small fishing boat. We arrived early in the morning at a place called Tsesme, and the captain would take each one of us and carry us one by one to dry land by walking in the sea and when he had brought the last of us he told us to walk ten minutes in a particular direction and wait there, as there were people coming to pick us up. The sun had not risen yet when he and his boat were gone. A little later Greek people, representing the Greek state, came and took us to a coffee shop where they offered us breakfast. They were from the Greek consulate and they were there to assist us. I cannot recall if we met any Turks. After we had our breakfast they put us on a train.(.....)

The name of the camp where we were was Halep. Soon after we arrived there was a Romanian family leaving for Israel by car and I was approached with the proposal to leave with this family. So I left with them, and in no time I found myself in Haifa and then Tel Aviv. I cannot recall how long this journey lasted. All I remember is that we left early in the morning and they spoke among themselves in Romanian and I didn't understand a word. When we arrived in Haifa, Sochnut took over and we were taken to Tel Aviv. I stayed about eight days under the wings of Sochnut, which was an organization providing assistance and help to the newcomers. A nephew of my grandmother Saporta was living in Tel Aviv. He had a loan library; his name was Albert Alchek. Finally, after eight days I went to stay with Lina, a first cousin of mine. At the back of my mind I was hoping to find Aunt Rachelle and Elio.(...)

<https://www.centropa.org/en/biography/renee-molho>