TWELVE

"After the War We Were All Together": Jewish Memories of Postwar Thessaloniki

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THE SECOND WORLD WAR brought dramatic demographic changes to Thessaloniki, a city in which nearly a quarter of the prewar population had been Jewish. In 1943, two years after the German army had entered it, about 48,000 Jews[1] were deported to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. By 1945 the Jewish community had shrunk to 2,000 people, of whom some had survived the concentration camps, some in hiding (in Athens or in smaller villages or islands in the rest of Greece), and some fighting with the *andartes* (resistance fighters) in the mountains. These survivors had to adapt their lives to a totally changed environment. Upon their return from the mountains, from other parts of Greece, and from the concentration camps, they found themselves in a different city, a Thessaloniki without Jewish schools, without Jewish shops, without synagogues, without Jewish neighborhoods, and most importantly, without Jewish families.

Statistics published in December 1945 illustrate that the vast majority of the 1,908 people who were registered in the community in that year were young and single. Among the 679 women, 362 were unmarried and 103 were widows. Among the 1,229 men, 735 were unmarried and 260 were widowers. If we also consider the membership numbers by age group, it clearly emerges that not only was the vast majority of the Jewish population not married, but many were left without parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts. 1,465 people were between the ages of twenty and fifty, 124 were aged between fifty and seventy, and only 17 over seventy. The number of children was also very small: 116 children registered in the community were under the age of fourteen.[2]

The survivors returned to a city where their homes and their shops had been taken over by Orthodox Greeks, and all Jewish synagogues (except one) and other educational and cultural establishments had been destroyed by the Germans. The reconstruction of Jewish life in Thessaloniki and throughout Greece was particularly difficult due to the unstable political climate and the severe economic crisis Greece was undergoing. Immediate help was given by the American Joint Distribution

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Zuo: Mazower, Mark 2000. After The War was over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943-1960.

Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

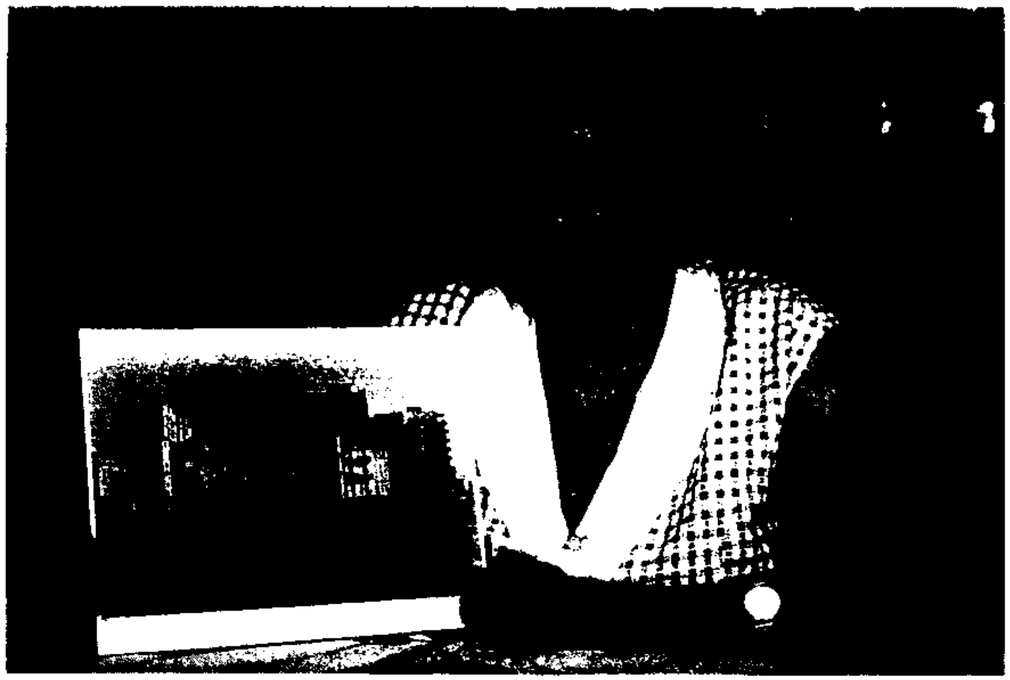

Photo of Mrs. Hella Kounio holding a photo of her old house, Thessaloniki, 1994. Reproduced by kind permission of Bea Lewkowicz.

Committee (AJDC, known colloquially as the "Joint"), the Conference for Jewish Material Claims against Germany (CJMCAG), and the Jewish Agency. These organizations supplied general financial, medical, and welfare assistance and helped with the setting up of community offices. The rehabilitation program of the AJDC proceeded in two phases: from 1945 until 1951, the emphasis was on emergency relief care; from 1951 onward the focus shifted to the revival of Jewish communal organizations.[3]

Records show that 4,000 Greek Jews received financial help from the AJDC. Very practical help was given by the "Joint" to young couples. By setting up a dowry fund, the "Joint" provided wedding rings, kitchenware, and kerosene stoves. A census prepared by the AJDC in 1946 estimated the number of Jews in Greece to be around 10,000, most of whom lived in Athens, to which they had fled during the war. Athens thus became the new Jewish center in Greece after the war, and Thessaloniki declined in importance.

Several waves of Jewish emigration occurred after the war. Immediately after the war, many young Jews who were the only survivors of their families headed to Palestine, or to North or South America. The second wave of emigration took place in 1949, after the civil war.

About 2,000 Jews (from the whole of Greece) moved to Israel between 1945 and 1951. Among them were also a number of Communist Jews (sentenced to exile on some remote Greek islands), who were allowed to emigrate to Israel on the condition that they renounced their Greek citizenship. The third wave of emigration took place between 1951 and 1956, triggered by the amendment of the Displaced Person Act, which allowed Greek Jews to go to the United States. By the end of 1956, about 6,000 Jews remained in Greece.

The postwar years were characterized by the painful process of reclaiming personal and communal property. In places with less than twenty families, the communal property was transferred to the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Athens. Unused synagogues and schools were sold in order to create income. In Thessaloniki the most important transaction of this sort was the sale of the Baron Hirsch Hospital to the Greek government in 1951. The 1950s were characterized by the attempt to revive the community's educational activities. In Thessaloniki, all Jewish children went to two private primary schools, which had made a special agreement with the community. In these schools, the Jewish children were taught Hebrew and religion. The community also purchased a piece of land and started to run a yearly summer camp (which now takes place in Litohoro).

There is no clear periodization for communal Jewish history in postwar Greece. The immediate war years were characterized by the process of individual health recovery; the reclamation of property; many weddings, some of them group weddings; a subsequent baby boom (between 1945 and 1951, 402 births were registered in the Jewish community of Thessaloniki); and the above-mentioned emigration. From the early 1950s onward, the focus shifted from individual to communal reconstruction; after 1956, the year in which the last wave of emigration took place, the demographic and economic situation of the community started to stabilize. The AJDC ended most of its activities by the mid 1960s.

When the junta came to power in 1967, the colonels dismissed the community assembly and council and appointed a new council, a process that all organizations that functioned as a "legal entity under public law" had to undergo. The new council undertook significant changes: the size of the assembly was reduced from fifty members to twenty (this measure was put into effect in 1975, following the first elections after the dictatorship), the rabbinical council was abolished, the official language of the council (in which the minutes were taken) was changed from Ladino to Greek, and most importantly, the new council reevaluated the communal properties, which led to a drastic increase in communal revenues. In the decades to follow, the by-now

financially independent community opened a Jewish school and an Old People's Home, and provided welfare, social, and religious services to its members.[4]

Until 1992, the Jewish community maintained a relatively low public profile in the city of Thessaloniki. Since the celebrations of "Sepharad 92," the anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, a gradual development toward a more public profile has taken place, marked by other official commemoration ceremonies (such as the fiftieth anniversary of the deportations in 1993 and the honoration ceremony for non-Jewish Greeks who helped Jews during the Second World War in 1994) and by the opening of a Jewish museum in the city.[5] The low public profile of the community went hand in hand with a general silence (or, more precisely, silences) about the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki. The history of the Jews has not formed a part of the public memory of the city of Thessaloniki, and there is hardly any mention of Jews or the fate of the community during the Second World War in Greek guidebooks or schoolbooks. With the exception of the newly unveiled Holocaust memorial in a suburb of the city, there is no monument or plaque that reminds visitors of the Jewish presence in Thessaloniki. There are no "Jewish sites" that are part of the urban consciousness of its inhabitants. Most community buildings are not recognized by noncommunity members as "Jewish buildings."[6]

The following episode demonstrates very clearly what the word "silence" means in this context. After long negotiations between the community and the municipality of Thessaloniki, the municipality decided to name a square in Harilao *Platia Evreon Martyron* (Jewish Martyrs' Square). The square is located in an area that was known as the Jewish quarter of Ekato Peninda Ena (151) before the war. During my fieldwork in 1994, I set out to visit the square, which is located about fifteen minutes from the center of Thessaloniki. When I told the taxi driver where to take me, he insisted that such a square did not exist. He assured me that he had never heard of it in all the thirty years he has been driving a taxi in the city, and he became offended when I, being a *xeni* (foreigner), insisted on the existence of the square. After ten minutes of intense arguing he agreed to let me direct him.[7] When we finally managed to find the square, it turned out that we were both proven right. The two signposts with the name of the square were covered with black graffiti. The only legible thing on the signposts was *Platia* (Square). During my visits to Thessaloniki in the last couple of years, I have returned to the *Platia Evreon Martyron* to find that the signposts were sometimes legible and other times sprayed over with graffiti. This is the square where a Holocaust memorial was recently unveiled.

Methodology

The interviews upon which this chapter is based were conducted during two periods of fieldwork in Thessaloniki in 1989 and 1994.[8] I collected life histories and conducted semistructured interviews with Salonikan Jews of different age groups on a wide range of topics. In total there are forty-five interviews, which I divided into four groups: Jewish subjects born before the war (group A); those born during the war and in the postwar years (group B); those born after 1956 (group C); and those who are currently not members of the Jewish community (group D), either because they had converted to Christianity or because they had been born as Christians. Among the twenty interviewees in group A are eight women and twelve men; among the eleven in group B are six women and five men; among the ten in group C are eight women and two men; among the five in group D are one woman and four men. Since this chapter is about the postwar period, I mainly concentrate on groups A and B, who experienced this time themselves, either as adults or children.

The interviews varied in length and themes. Some people I interviewed several times, some only once. Consequently, I had different relationships with the different interviewees. The interviews with the older generation tended to be much longer than the ones with the other age groups. While the average interview length with the older group was about three and a half hours, the average interview length with the other interviewees was about one and a half to two hours. Because of the semistructured/conversational interview approach, topics like the experience of the German occupation, the Holocaust, the reconstruction of the community in the postwar years, and the general impact of the war on families and individuals are topics that were discussed in most interviews, but to very different extents. Not only did the content vary, but also my style of questioning. My aim was to ask questions in an open manner to enable the interviewee to offer his or her own "analytical framework;" but in instances where I felt it was necessary, I did conduct more directive interviews, in which I asked specific questions. However, if I had the impression that someone was uncomfortable or did not want to discuss a specific topic, I did not follow it up. This is a relevant methodological remark because it sometimes meant that I shifted the focus of the interview if the evoked memories were too painful. The task of the interviewer in this process is quite difficult, because many times one gets contradicting messages from the interviewee. For example, the first thing Mrs. M. (Af14)[9] tells me after I ask a very open question about her memories of the Jewish community of Thessaloniki

is: "Don't ask me that. Don't make me go back. I can't." However, she then proceeds to give me a detailed account of her whole life in which she talks openly about the prewar time, her experiences during the war, and her return to Thessaloniki. The point I would like to underline here is that the interview might have taken a very different direction if I had reacted to her initial remark by shifting the conversation to "easier" topics.

The First to Return: Memories of Escape and Return

The first people to return to Thessaloniki had been either with the partisans in the mountains or hidden in other parts of Greece. Among my interviewees, three fought with the partisans in the mountains, five survived under various circumstances in Athens, and one woman and her daughter had escaped to the island of Skopelos. The two men and the one woman who were with EAM/ELAS were in all in their early twenties and were not married. Moreover, they all had some kind of a personal connection to a communist acquaintance or friend, or to somebody who had some connection to these circles, who convinced them that they should leave Thessaloniki and go to the mountains. Mr. B. remembers that the night he was supposed to leave the ghetto with a group of ten other young Jews, only five showed up because the others had changed their mind (Am7). Many were reluctant to leave the other family members, particularly elderly parents, behind. Young men without other male siblings felt a strong sense of responsibility toward the other family members, whom they did not want to abandon (Am13). Some left with the approval of their families, some without it. Mrs. P., whose father and brother had died before the German occupation, was pushed by her mother to leave and to stay with acquaintances in the Italian-occupied zone (Af15). Mr. B., on the other hand, did not inform his family about his imminent departure. Before he left, he wrote a good-bye note and put it under a pillow. When he returned home after a couple of days because the escape from the ghetto had failed, his family was very upset because they believed that he had endangered the whole family. The second time his escape was successful. One night in March 1943, his communist acquaintance took him to a house near the ghetto, where he met some other Jewish men; from there they were taken to the area of Veria.

In all the interviews with people who left Thessaloniki to go to the mountains or other parts of Greece, the leaving behind of family members is often a very traumatic moment in the narrative: "This is one sin that will remain always in my head, when I left my parents. My father was in bed, he could not get up, he was young. My mother when they

took her was fifty, she was sitting by the bed and father got up and blessed me" (Af14). Mrs. M., who made this statement, escaped from the ghetto on 20 March 1943 with her husband and two friends through the help of an Armenian friend who had paid a German soldier to drive them to Athens with a German truck. The German soldier dropped them off in Katerini, and they made their way through the mountains to the Italian-occupied zone. When talking about her escape, she immediately adds that two days later, four people who tried to leave the ghetto were betrayed and shot, and she expresses her anger about how few people were really willing to help and how impossible it was to find somebody to help the parents escape.

Some families managed to escape the ghetto by splitting into smaller groups. Mrs. S., a divorced woman who lived with her daughter at her parents' house, recounts in her memoir how they were advised to escape separately (Af18). "With a painful heart," they followed the advice. She and her daughter made their way to the island of Skopelos, with the help of a communist friend. Her parents and three brothers managed to get to Athens, and from there, via Turkey, to Palestine.

When Italy fell in September 1943 and the Germans occupied the whole of Greece, Jewish families or couples who had gone into hiding together had to split up again. In some cases the women stayed behind in Athens with the children while their husbands went to fight in the mountains or with the Greek exile army in Egypt. In other cases the mothers were also separated from their children. Mrs. M. recounts how she tried to find a hiding place for her two-year-old child. When she left Thessaloniki with her husband, the child had stayed behind with a Christian couple, but after a month they had became scared and the child was sent to Athens. Because the child was a boy (and he was circumcised), most monasteries had refused to take him in, but finally she did find one.

> Then I went to the last monastery. . . . It was September, it was hot, the whole day we walked, from Omonia to Agiou Loukas, where the "Divine Providence" monastery was and there the angel of God was there. She was a tall and beautiful nun, with big blue eyes. Sister Elaine, she was Belgian. She told me not to cry. We will take him and what God protects is well protected. Then she called Mrs. Kalkou, a widow with eight children who lived with the nuns and told her: You have seven children and now you will have eight. That was it. Two children slept on the top and two at the bottom of the bed. They ate whatever Sister Elaine would send" (Af14)

Other mothers with children, who had been able to obtain false papers or who had converted to Christianity, claimed to be widows or deserted wives. One interviewee was left behind in Athens when her mother was

arrested by a Greek policeman who told her that it would be better not to take the child with her. She survived the war in the care of a Christian couple (Bf22).

After the German troops withdrew from Athens in December 1944, fighting between EAM/ELAS and the Greek government supported by British forces broke out, which meant that there was no communication or transport to other parts of Greece. This therefore delayed the return of many to Salonika. There were also other delays. One interviewee who was eager to return to Salonika to be reunited with his father and sister who had survived in villages in the mountains was drafted on the street in Athens into the Greek army for two years.

The first Jews to return to Thessaloniki were the ones who were with the partisans in the mountains. Mr. B. found himself near Florina when he heard that the German had left Salonika: "We went on a truck on all kinds of dangerous roads. It took us about a week for eighty or ninety kilometers" (Am6). The first thing he did was to go to his old house:

> I started hitting the door of my house but nobody was there. The door was locked. I am glad nobody was there because I was enraged, I was out of my mind. A neighbour across the street whom I knew before the war, saw me and said: "you come to my home." . . . Well, I did not know if he was from the Right or the Left and I did not care." (Am16)

After a couple of days the people who were staying in his house agreed to give Mr. B. a room. The reclaiming of apartments and shops was of course an experience that many returnees had to face. Experiences of betrayal and friendship are often linked to this process.

Mrs. M.'s husband also came to Thessaloniki quite soon after the Germans had left. He went to see his shop and it was entirely empty, there were "only the walls." His wife joined him a couple of months later.

> On the very first opportunity (after the revolution in Athens) . . . I came with my child on a ship from Piraeus overnight. We were the first refugees who came from Athens. There was a terrific storm that night, everybody was sick. The next day we landed on the quay and my husband was there and we met him. That's how we started all over. It was a terrible time. We were those who had survived either in the mountains, or in the city, or like me in Athens and it was a crazy time. People got in touch with the community." (Af14)

The community, which had reestablished itself with the return of the first Jews from hiding and from the mountains, became an important point of orientation and support for the returnees. Through a certificate provided by the community, for example, Mrs. M. was able to claim a room in her mother's apartment, which had been occupied.

During this time the early returnees waited of course for the return of the deportees, still in hope that their families might return. The first deportees were met with shock and disbelief:

> We were eagerly waiting for the people to come back. We heard that a group was coming from the Vardar. They were saying that everyone had been burnt and that they had exterminated them all. We, the people who were here, were thinking that the people were insane, saying crazy things. It was a very hard time. People started coming between May and July. When I heard that my brother-in-law had come without my sister Marcella and with another wife I went crazy. I did not want to meet him. My people were betrayed. It was a very difficult time. I did not want to live. I did not feel that it was worth being in a city which was like a ghost." (Af14)

The above quotation illustrates the complete sense of betrayal and isolation the speaker felt and still feels. She feels betrayed by the people who denounced the hiding place of her parents and her sister; betrayed by the Jewish leadership, especially by Rabbi Koretz, who convinced the Jews to follow the deportation orders to Poland; and betrayed by Christian friends, or even family members, who were given property or belongings that they did not return.

These feelings of betrayal and shock must have been common to all the Jews who came back to Thessaloniki in 1945. They not only returned to a "ghost city," an image frequently used in the interviews to describe a city empty of Jews and Judaism, but they also returned to a city in which houses and shops were taken over by Christian-Orthodox Greeks, who did not know and did not want to know anything about the previous owners.

Though the group of people who survived in hiding or in the mountains might have experienced betrayal, they also had experienced Christian help and support. For example, one woman who had been with EAM/ELAS underlines how helpful the Christians had been to the Jews, either by bringing them to villages or by buying food for them while they were in hiding in Athens. In this context, she also tells me the story of the beautiful chandelier in the synagogue. The only remaining synagogue during the German occupation was the *Monastirioton* synagogue, which was used as a warehouse (some interviewees say it was used as a stable). Before leaving Thessaloniki, the Germans wanted to destroy whatever had remained in the synagogue. When one priest realized what was about to happen, he asked the Germans if he could have the chandelier for his church. The Germans gave it to him, and after the war, he returned it to the Jews, who put it back in its place, where it is still today (Af15). In the narrative of my interviewee, this is an important story because it proves that Greeks and Jews were "like brothers

and sisters." As in other interviews, the wartime experience (i.e., the perception of one's own and other experiences) almost becomes a measure stone for general questions, about the relationship between Greeks and Jews in particular. To have survived in hiding or with the partisans would not have been possible without the help of non-Jews, and therefore the issue of Greek help, expressed by the attitude of the Church, the partisans, and the ordinary public, is a central theme in all the interviews.

The experience of the deportees returning from the concentration camps was very different from that of the Jews who had been in the mountains or in hiding. Because of their different experiences, they formed two distinct groups in postwar Thessaloniki, whose mutual mistrust is expressed in the following quotation: "They thought they were heroes just because they could stay alive after what the Germans did but they were not heroes. They were begging for a place to sleep when they came back" (Am6). Both groups, the partisans and the camp survivors, formed their own political parties in the first elections of the community, which took place in the early 1950s. The more Socialist party of the partisans was called *Partida Renaisainssia* (which translates from Ladino as the "Renewal Party"), and the party of the displaced persons was called *Partida Los Omiros* (literally, the "Party of the Hostages") (Am4).[10] Each party thought that it could better represent the Jewish community, the partisans because they had fought against the enemy, the camp survivors because they had suffered most (Bm25).

The self-perception of the partisans was certainly different from that of the camp survivors. Like the camp survivors, the partisans had been expelled from their homes and separated from their families, but they had also fought for the "real Greece." Their participation in the "heroic struggle" and the bonds that they had formed with fellow Greek partisans during the war helped them to cope with the extreme sense of uprooting that all the returning Jews experienced. The efforts of all partisans, including the Jewish ones, were officially acknowledged by the PASOK government in 1981. Interviewees who had received the medals and a formal certificate by the Greek state took a great deal of pride in showing them to me.

In many interviews with concentration-camp survivors, the interviewees mention their camp experience and the death of their family members very early in the interview, which points to the traumatic nature of their wartime experiences and to the importance attributed to this part of their life history. When asked a general question about his family background, Mr. B. answered one minute into the interview:

> The whole family was from Saloniki, everybody was born here. I had two sisters, one older, one younger. Unfortunately, they went to the concentration camp. They died there. I also lost my aunt with her three children. A young girl my age, a younger girl, and a younger boy. They all died in the concentration camp. I was there for two years. Since I was in Auschwitz I knew that my mother, my father, and my older sister went straight away to the Crematorium. My younger sister worked as a secretary (Schreiber), but later got dysentery and died. I was liberated in 1945 by the Americans. Although I knew that nobody had survived I came back. (Am4)

In contrast to the Jews who spent the entire war in Greece, the concentration-camp survivors who returned on their own knew that they were not likely to find any other surviving family members. Many young men came back without their parents and wives, as the number of widowers indicated above: "I have lost everybody, my wife and everyone else. I came back alone. I was all alone. The situation was very difficult" (Am13). Others had hoped that at least one family member had survived and therefore returned: "After seven days we came to Salonika. We were liberated the 5th of May and we came here 25 September. I came back for my brother, but nobody had survived, nobody. 55,000 people had left and 900 came back from the camp. If I had known that I was alone I would not have come back" (Af1). Mrs. A., who made the preceding statement, had participated in the "death march" from Auschwitz to Ravensbruck and Malchow, near where she was liberated by the Russians. Where the survivors found themselves at the time of the liberation, who liberated them, and their state of health (many suffered from typhus) determined how and when they could return to Greece. Some came from Munich by plane to Athens, some came by bus from Bulgaria, some came through Yugoslavia. Because Mrs. A. had been liberated by the Russians, she came through Bulgaria. With twenty-five other Greek Jews, she was taken to Thessaloniki by bus. She recalls the first moment when they crossed the border: "We all fell to the ground and kissed the Greek soil. That was the first thing we did" (Af1). Once they had arrived in Thessaloniki, the returnees were taken to a Greek army base on the outskirts of town, where they were registered and examined by the Red Cross. Only after the Greek authorities realized that they were not *kataskopoi* (spies) was the group allowed to leave.

Since most concentration-camps survivors did not have anything or anyone to go back to, the first place they went for housing, help, and support was the Jewish community. In many cases the survivors who had come back together stayed together. Many were settled temporarily in the building of the former Jewish orphanage in Faliro. People also

received some money (one woman tells me that she received 5,000 drachmas, another one that she received 2,000 drachmas), clothing, and food (for some time free lunches were provided). Because of the bad economic situation of the community, their support was limited. Other help was provided by the AJDC.

After the experience of the concentration camps and the return to a "ghost" city, void of many familiar references, the Jewish community appeared to many survivors as a shelter and connection to the old world. One man tells me: "Since our return from the concentration camp we are protected by the Jewish community of Salonika" (Am13). The notion of the community as a "protector" reveals the high degree of insecurity that many of the survivors felt (as a result of their uprooting), a feeling that has most likely been passed on to their children. The Jewish community was also transformed after the war into a community of people who have suffered together, as the following quotation shows: "We, the Jews of 1945 Saloniki, came back to a city empty of Jews and Judaism. Our only joy was to encounter another Jew in the streets of Saloniki. A surprise, an embrace with Jews we have never met before and an eagerness to inquire and weep together" (Af18).

However, the experience of protection and closeness went sometimes hand in hand with the experience of conflict. Mr. B., who immediately after his return from the camp worked in the welfare commission of the community, speaks about these difficulties: "The community did not have much money. All the people who returned needed support and asked for help. It was very difficult. How could I say to somebody: I have no money for you. It was very difficult. Sometimes people got very angry. But all we wanted was to help each other" (Am4). Not all concentration-camp survivors spent their first months in Thessaloniki in communal housing. One of my interviewees shared a room with his cousin, and one was able to return to her old house, which had been requisitioned by her husband. Mrs. K., her husband, and their two children constitute a very rare case because they had all survived the concentration camp. While her husband and son came back through France, she and her daughter went to Yugoslavia, from where they crossed the border with difficulties to Greece (due to the beginning of the civil war). Erika Kounio-Amariglio describes in her book how happy she was to return to her old house.

> Father found our old house on Koromila Street empty and in a bad state. But our old house, empty as it was, was waiting for us. . . . It was our house with its veranda, its garden with white pebbles in front of the beautiful blue and crystal clear sea, the sea I dreamt about in Auschwitz. . . . It did not bother us that we had nothing: we were alive and again all together in our house, only that was important."[11]

This quotation underlines the importance of two aspects of "return": the return to "being all together again," to meeting other family members, and the return to "our house," to the place where one had lived before the deportations. Most survivors' returns though, were characterized by not finding other family members and by not being able to go back their prewar accommodation. This caused a sense of total uprootedness and discontinuity among most returnees.

Mrs. A. did not have anywhere else to go but to the housing provided by the community. She recalls that she was given 2,000 drachmas, one bed, and one blanket. She also recalls that she could not bear to be with the other camp survivors because they were going out a lot, they were singing and dancing, wanting "to live their freedom." She contrasts her own mood to that of her friends: "I had suffered a lot, also from the Russians [she means Russian soldiers]. I did not want anything. My friends were going out and came back at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. I did not want to see this" (Af1). She subsequently found a job as a live-in nanny with a Christian family.

Welcome Home

The memory of returning home is not only associated with the absence of family members and friends and the help of the community but also with the reaction of the Greek Orthodox population toward the returnees. All the interviewees who discuss this topic do so in the context of reclaiming their belongings. People who did not get back what they had left behind with their Christian friends talk about this issue more extensively. In most of these cases, where shop merchandise, furniture, and other valuables were left in the care of somebody else, those entrusted with it that it had been taken by the Germans, or by robbers, or that it had to be sold in order to survive. Mrs. M. received a letter from the Christian brother of her sister-in-law just two weeks after they had left Thessaloniki for the mountains, saying that robbers had taken the entire contents of her husband's shop (material for clothing), which had been left under his care. After her return to Thessaloniki, the mother of her sister-in-law also did not return her piano and the other things she had left with her. Mrs. M. has no doubt that her Christian family members took advantage of the situation. "They became millionaires. This happened within our family. Who knows from how many they have taken?" (Af14). Other memories of an unfriendly welcome by the Greek

Orthodox population refer to remarks made by "surprised" acquaintances and neighbors, such as, "Ah, you survived?" or "What a pity you were not made into soap."[12] When talking about these incidents, the interviewees stress that people who made remarks like that had "taken things from the Jews" (Af18).

Other people were luckier and received some or all of the goods back that had been under the protection of a Christian friend or neighbor. Such people found it easier to reestablish themselves. Although the high number of people who were registered as unemployed in the community—808, according to *Israelitikon Vima* in November 1945—indicates how dire the economic circumstances for most returnees must have been, most interviewees do not talk extensively about their economic situations. Often they summarize this topic by saying: "Slowly, slowly everyone managed to get his home and his shop" (Af15). It is not clear to what time frame "slowly, slowly" refers.

"A New Life Is Beginning"

The topic that clearly dominates the discourse about the period after the war is marriage—for many of the interviewees, their second one—and the birth of children. Indeed, while the themes discussed above have illustrated that personal experiences shape the perception of treason and help during and after the war and explain therefore why narratives may vary considerably, this is not the case when it comes to the topic of postwar weddings and childbirths. There seems to be a consensus among all my interviewees that there "was a special feeling common to all survivors, to get married and make a family" (Am4), or in other words, "to make a family after the catastrophe and to replace all the people who were lost" (Am4).

"They came back and they were all alone and did not find anybody, so they were saying: *'ade, ela, ela* [come on]' and people started marrying quickly. They wanted to be together" (Af3). In the personal narratives of the interviewees, getting married and having children marks "the new beginning" of their lives, a new beginning associated with the day-to-day problems of the postwar years.

> It was not an easy time, but at the same time it was a kind of "a new life is beginning." Everyone started having babies. There were many weddings and births. I could not have babies, I lost two. I stayed nine months in bed to have my daughter. It was like the heart cracking. Every day you did not know, would you have some news, would you not have some news. Would you have some fights with the court for the problems with the store that you have to get back, the house that you have to have back. (Af14)

Photo of Mrs. Palomba Alalluf holding a photo of her wedding in 1946, Thessaloniki, 1994. Reproduced by kind permission of Bea Lewkowicz

It is important to point out that marriages were both a psychological and an economic necessity in the postwar years. In particular, women who were left without any other family members to support them were under pressure to marry. In many instances they married older men whose wives and children had been killed in the camps. Mrs. A. describes how she got married as follows: "His first wife was taken to the Lager. When he came back he did not find her and he took me. What could I do? I did not have anyone. I did not love him" (Af1). After having left the Christian family she worked for because they had accused her of stealing, marriage seemed to be the only option. She moved in with her future husband, who was twelve years older, and became pregnant. Since her husband had been married before the war, they had

to wait until they could get married. The Jewish community had decided to let a year pass after the return of the camp survivors before widowers and widows could remarry. Eventually Mrs. A. got married on 2 June 1946 in a group wedding ceremony with nine other couples. Between 1945 and 1947, thirty-nine such group weddings took place (twenty-two in 1946 alone).[13] These weddings took place in the building of *Matanot leVionim*, which houses the Jewish school today and was a charity organization giving meals to poor pupils until the war.

> We were very poor. I did not have money to buy a wedding dress. All the girls wanted to get married and make a family, to go to Israel and to America. Therefore they married us all together. I got married with three of my friends. Five couple on one side, five on the other side, the rabbi [Michael Molho] and some men from the community in the middle. (Af1)

These group weddings embody the postwar situation of many Jews in Thessaloniki. The couples married together because they had no relatives with whom to celebrate; they had only each other to help and support. The weddings are seen both as a means to cope with the feelings of loss and loneliness and as a sign for a new beginning. Mr. B., for example, who was the president of the community for many years, recalls that these weddings were something very special to the Jewish community of Thessaloniki. After getting married, many couples shared their accommodations with two or three other couples until each one was able to move to their own flat or decided to emigrate. Of the ten couples who got married in the above-mentioned ceremony, three emigrated to America, four to Israel, and the others stayed in Thessaloniki (Af1).

Marriage was viewed both by individuals and the community (which encouraged marriages) as a step forward, either to facilitate emigration or to facilitate reestablishment in Thessaloniki. I was told that the community in some instances gave some dowry to the newly wed couples, in the form of sewing machines (Af10). Since most group weddings took place in 1946, we can assume that most people who performed these weddings were camp survivors. If we look at the marriage statistics, we can also notice that the average marriage age for males in 1945, when forty-five weddings were registered, was twenty-six (for females, twenty-three), whereas in 1946, when 151 weddings were registered, it was thirty-six (for females, twenty-six). These figures indicate that most men who married in 1945 were young and had come back from the mountains or from hiding, whereas men who married in 1946 were older, had mostly come back from the camps, and often were marrying for the second time. The wedding statistics reveal another interesting

point: twenty-three of the brides who were married in 1946 and 1947 had converted to Judaism. Due to the much smaller number of conversions in the following year and various references to this fact in the interviews, this number suggests that a number of Jewish men married Christian women who had helped them hide during the war.

Following the many weddings in the postwar years, there was a baby boom. Between 1945 and 1951, 402 children were born, compared to 234 between 1951 and 1971 and 205 between 1971 and 1994. The number of new births was so high that the AJDC funded a special gynecological clinic in order to accommodate the medical needs of all the pregnant Jewish women. The doctor in charge was Dr. Menashe, a concentration-camp survivor who was the first president of the community after the war until he emigrated to the United States in 1952 (Am4).

Emigration

The decision whether to stay in Thessaloniki or to leave was probably one of the most pertinent issues for Jewish couples and individuals in the postwar period. When talking about emigration, one should also bear in mind that not all camp survivors returned to Thessaloniki; many instead found their way to France, Israel, or America (Am4). Some families were already split up during the war.

The push factors that made people move to Israel, the United States, or other parts of Greece (mostly Athens) were again both psychological and economical. The most common answer people gave me when asked about postwar emigration was: "The ones who had nobody and nothing here, they went to Israel and the United States" (Af5). It certainly seems to have been the case that people who had managed to reopen a family business and reclaim family property were less likely to leave than others. For those who had reclaimed their own or their family businesses, the prospect of "being an employee" somewhere else seems to have been among the strongest reasons to stay. (Am4).

However, one should not underestimate other factors. Mrs. M., for example, tells me why she did not want to stay in Thessaloniki: "I wanted very much to go to America. I was sick from the problems with my parents [who had been deported and killed]. I got very melancholic, I could not help it. I started saying, we should go. What are we going to do? To raise our children here?"(Af14). The concern for the children was also voiced by another interviewee who emigrated to the United States in 1956: "I was well off here. I was well paid. I built my own house. But I asked myself: What kind of a future will my children have in Greece? That's what pushed me" (Am6). Another factor driving em-

igration in the 1940s that should not be overlooked is the outbreak of the civil war. The prospect of being drafted into a war in which one "did not know whether you are an enemy or a friend" (Am3) after having survived the camps must have also contributed to the decision to emigrate.

Traitors

For a handful of people, emigration from Thessaloniki was a way out of a community in which they were no longer accepted. I hereby refer to Jews who were perceived as traitors and collaborators. This is a topic not widely discussed in the interviews. One person who is commonly perceived as a traitor and held responsible for the fact that so many Jews were deported to Poland is Rabbi Koretz. One interviewee tells me that "when his wife and son came back to Thessaloniki nobody talked to them" (Af15). They both emigrated to Israel. The only other references to traitors in the interviews concern the trial in Thessaloniki in which one Jew was hanged for collaboration with the Germans (Af15) and the treatment of children whose father was believed to have been a traitor. The following episode, recounted by a teacher who worked in the community, highlights some of the dilemmas the Jewish community faced after the war.

> After school, every afternoon we used to meet. I used to play little piano pieces and small songs for the children and we used to have chocolate and beverages given to us by the "Joint." One day a mother comes and tells me: "Madame S., please send away these two children because their father was a traitor, a real traitor, send them away." I said: "No Madame, the children have nothing to do with that. The children are children, beautiful children. Why should I send them away?" The woman replied: "Do you think so? I had four children and they killed them, why they should live?" She was right. He was a traitor and he saved his children, she wasn't a traitor and she lost four children. "You are right," I said, "but I am not going to kill these children. They live here." (Afg18)

Mrs. M., who is very involved with the women's organization of the community, remembers that immediately after the war, some women were not accepted in the club. These were women who were associated with the community leadership during the war who had been deported in the last transport to Bergen-Belsen, where they stayed in a separate camp, called the *Albala Lager* or *Lager del Los Privilegiados* (The Camp of the Privileged). She adds that "memories fade when the years pass" (Af12), and therefore the issue was resolved over the years.

"We Were All Together"

Analyzing all the interviews, there is much more emphasis on unity and the breakdown of social distance within the community than on divisions and conflict, though this does not mean that the postwar community was not riven by conflicts, disputes, and suspicion. One of the interviewees who emigrated to the United States very clearly remembers a lot of polemics and fighting between community members and that "every Jew was a headache for the community" (Am6). We need to bear in mind that memory can be affected by the position of the speaker (was and is he or she politically active in the community?), by present (at the time of the interview) experience and perception (of "community," for example), and by the wish to focus on the "positive" aspects of reconstruction rather than on the "negative" ones.

Undoubtedly, the community played a central role in helping individuals to reestablish themselves. Most community members were involved in the life of the community in one way or the other, either in leadership functions, as members of a committee, or as visitors to and participants in social and religious communal gatherings. Very soon after the return of the camp survivors, the community held elections to constitute the Community Assembly (fifty people) and to form a community council (nine people). The fact that there were different parties (Zionist, Partisan/Socialist, and Displaced Persons parties) is not seen as a sign of division but as a sign of vitality and survival: "This small community which had just escaped death showed its vitality. All the parties worked for the same aim, the reestablishment of the Jews. They were all concerned with the return of property and education" (Am4). The "reconstruction" of the reconstruction years, for example with regard to the different parties, does not necessarily reflect the experience of party politics at the time, in which many people probably would have liked a more unified community.

The stress of community unity on the political level is mirrored by the stress of unity on the social level: "Here after the war, we were all one. We did not have different classes. How many were we? When we had a wedding, for example, everybody was invited. . . . To the synagogue everybody is invited, when you have child, when you have a Brit Milah or a Bar Mitzwah everybody is invited" (Af3).[14] The unity or the breakdown of social boundaries among the few Jews in postwar Thessaloniki is certainly an important topic in all narratives about the postwar years, although it is presented in a different light in the different interviews. Some people see it as a positive phenomenon, some view it with a high degree of embitterment. Mr. B. talks about this issue as follows: "At that time, nobody thought about being rich or

poor. The main thing was to be alive, and to enjoy this life. That was the most important thing. At that time we enjoyed life more than today. Today one is rich, one is poor, one is this or that, but at the time we were all together" (Am4). In contrast to this positive memory, Mrs. M. says: "We are nobody now. We don't belong to any class. You cannot classify among 800 people" (Af14). These kinds of statement are clearly linked to personal biographies and personal coping strategies. Mr. B. was actively involved in the reconstruction of the community, while Mrs. M. emigrated with her husband and two children to the United States.

It seems that people who were actively involved in the reconstruction of the community tend to stress more the notion of social unity in postwar Thessaloniki. This notion not only is viewed differently by some interviewees but also is not shared by everyone. Mrs. A. tells me: "The rich don't speak with the poor. We are not united. The rich are rich, the middle class are middle class. They never spoke to each other" (Af1). This view was certainly not the majority view, but it might indicate that there is a different social perception of class difference. Class difference, mainly defined in terms of income and family background, looks different from the perspective of Mrs. A., who remained relatively poor after the war. For her it is clear that the "rich marry the rich and the middle class the middle class" (Af1); she includes herself in the latter. In this statement she refers clearly to the more recent situation, but it is interesting that she extends the time period "after the war" (which I had used in my question) to today.

Class differences among community members after the war were thus not totally eradicated, but social boundaries were definitely blurred and social distance certainly reduced. As one interviewee puts it: "People belong to different classes, but since the Holocaust was very, very recent everything else came second. Jews felt first as Jews and then as belonging to different classes" (Bm25). The stress on cohesion and unity expressed itself clearly when it came to the education of the children. The community had decided to send all Jewish children to two private Greek primary schools. Arrangements were made with the schools to allow external teachers to come to the schools and teach Jewish religion and Hebrew to the children. The community had also created a special club and a summer camp for the children in order to "prevent assimilation and give them a good Jewish education" (Am4). What is perceived among the older generation as the breakdown of class boundaries and the feeling of togetherness as a result of the catastrophic decimation of the community is perceived in a much more positive light in terms of closeness by the generation that grew up after the war.

Growing Up after the War

The children who grew up in Thessaloniki after the war were raised as members of a small minority. In contrast to their parents, they did not know what it was like before the war: "For my father Salonika and the community is something else, a mixture of before the war and after the war. For me it is only what I saw after the war. . . . I know we are only a very small minority. My father did not grow up in a city in which there was a Jewish minority. This is a very big difference" (Bf29). The children who grew up after the war can be divided in two groups: the very few children who had survived the war, and those who were born in the postwar baby boom. Although these groups differ considerably in size, they describe their socialization in very similar ways, emphasizing the close bond that existed between the children.

Among my interviewees, two were born during the war, both in Athens. Mr. A. survived in hiding with his mother while his father was with the partisans in the mountains. Mrs. B. survived with a Christian couple who pretended to be her parents. Mr. A. came back to Thessaloniki with his parents in 1954. Like Mrs. B., whose mother had survived Auschwitz and settled in Thessaloniki in 1947, he regularly went to the club in the community center and to the *Kataskinosi* (sometimes also referred to in Hebrew as the *Keitana*), the yearly summer camp for the children. Both remember the activities related to the club and the summer camp in a very positive way. They stress that they felt "like brothers and sisters," that the club and the *Kataskinosi* was "like a family" and like a "second home." "I was very happy when I stayed there with all the children. There were about twelve children in my age who had survived. We were like brothers and sisters" (Bf22). The feeling of family is associated with notions of closeness and similarity: "I really feel nostalgic about the friends I met in the *Kataskinosi* because of one thing. It was like family to me. My name was not strange to them. I was among people that were called Florentin or Coen, names which were similar to mine" (Bm21). The club and the *Kataskinosi* provided the children with a kind of family framework that many did not have because of the Holocaust. For the children, the communal atmosphere was perceived in contrast to the atmosphere at home. Mr. A. describes how things were at his home: "I remember my mother crying a lot. I remember very much the feeling of loss we had in the house and I remember my feeling of not being able to compete with the other children because I did not have a grandmother, a grandfather, an uncle, an aunt, a nephew, a niece, a cousin" (Bm21). For Mrs. B., who did not attend the same school as the other Jewish children, the small room in

the community center and the summer camp were an escape not only from the melancholic atmosphere at home but also from the antisemitic atmosphere at school, where the other girls used to call her *Evrea* ("Jewess").

Apart from the relationship with the other children, most interviewees also remember vividly the Israeli teachers (*morim*) who were brought from Israel (with the help of the Jewish Agency) to work with the children. The learning of Hebrew songs and Israeli dances enhanced the feeling of togetherness among the children (Bm21). Because of this socialization and the personal ties to Salonikans who had emigrated to Israel, Israel became an important source of identification for the postwar generation. The community also encouraged young people to study in Israel, which many (especially the boys) did.

In contrast to the small group of children who survived the war, the baby boom generation constituted "a rather strong group of Jewish boys and girls, who did not feel as a minority at all" (Bm25). As a consequence of the community's policy to send the Jewish children to two schools, there were classes in which 50 percent of the children were Jewish. This changed when the children went to high school: "It was like a very nice family at elementary school, you felt secure. When I went to high school I was very shocked at the beginning. I had lost many of the privileges I had as a protected child in the elementary school" (Bf29). This statement illustrates the sense of insecurity some of the second-generation children must have felt, which went hand-in-hand with the notion of safety and protection among Jews and a community that was there to protect its members. The link to the historical experience of their parents is obvious. Mrs. V. recalls what she felt like as a young girl: "I felt different. If we are Greeks, why did Greece not protect the Jews during the Holocaust? Why did nobody protect them?" (Bf30). Based on the sample of my interviews, it seems that gender needs to be looked at in this context. There is clearly more stress on vulnerability and insecurity among the women I interviewed than among the men. Although the men stress the closeness and lifelong importance of the friendships among the Jewish children, they also recall that they rebelled against the "low-profile mentality" of their parents. They did not want to "keep quiet" about their Jewishness, they did not identify with "the Jews from the camps, who thought that we cannot sing very loud or dance very openly." Instead, they wanted to be "proud Jews" who "fight back" (Bm21). This element of rebellion is completely missing in the interviews with the women of that generation, and one gets the impression that the girls developed a more distinct sense of responsibility toward their survivor parents, taking them into account, for example, when considering a move or a choice of spouse. "A lot of

my friends went to Israel [to study]. I also wanted to go but my father would not let me because he had lost already one girl in the concentration camp. He did not want to lose me as well. When he said something like this, there was no more question about going" (Bf30). The sense of duty to their parents as Holocaust survivors is very striking in the next quotation. When asked about mixed marriages, Mrs. S. replies: "I felt that I did not have the right to marry a Christian guy because my father went through the Holocaust. It was my feeling that I could not do this to my father, who was a believing Jew and has been in a concentration camp" (Bf29). The most plausible explanation for the development of this kind of gendered postwar Jewish identities is that the girls on the whole grew up more protected than the boys and that there was more pressure on them to marry at a young age within the community. Most women whom I interviewed in this generation talk about the effect of the Holocaust on their upbringing. They relate the fact that their parents sent them to good schools and wanted to give them a good education in their parents' experience: "They prepared us to survive, as if there would be another Holocaust. My father always said: I survived because I knew some languages. That's why he wanted to teach us foreign languages" (Bf30). Some people of the second generation describe their parents' feeling of insecurity; others express it themselves. Mr. M. remembers that his parents, who belong to an old Salonikan family, did not take it for granted after the war "that they as Jews will be here tomorrow" (Bm27). Feelings of contingency or lack of durability do not relate only to place but also to people. Mrs. V.'s way of describing her relationship with her Christian friends (in 1994) illustrates this notion.

> Yes, I live here, I like to live here, I have many friends here, but I don't know, if there will be another Holocaust, if these friends will be friends then. We are friends now, yes of course, because we have our position, our prestige, and all these things, they have to learn from me, I have to learn from them, we exchange ideas and all these things, but I don't know if they will be friends in a difficult-hard time." (Bf30)

Survival Strategies

In the previous pages I have tried to illuminate the process of return and reconstruction in the light of the most profound effect of the war on the surviving Jews: the experience of uprooting and dislocation. The war had taken away "home" from most Jews, in both a narrow and a broad sense. Their "home" was not there anymore because of the postwar presence in which families were absent and houses often occupied by strangers; their "hometown" was also no longer there because of the

destruction of most Jewish references to the past, the biggest of which was the destruction of the old Jewish cemetery. After the Jewish cemetery had been destroyed in 1942, Jewish tombstones were scattered all over the city, used as building material for houses, walls, stairs, courtyards, and churches. One interviewee talks about visiting a house in which the whole staircase was built of Jewish tombstones; on each stair you could read another Jewish name (Af15). After the war, the new university was built on the site of the former cemetery.

These radical changes in the lives of individual Jews and in the landscape of the city brought about a new meaning for Jewish community and Jewish identity in postwar Thessaloniki. The war transformed a heterogeneous and settled population group (who had developed a very strong notion of their Salonikan identity) into a homogeneous, vulnerable, and uprooted minority group. Bereft of a real home, the community became a substitute home, in which relationships between its members were perceived in terms of an extended family framework providing support, help, friendship, and a link to the past. Because of the traumatic experience of the Holocaust and the subsequent experience of dislocation, the community and contact with other Jews provided a "secure safe haven" for the older generation and an "intimate place to socialize" for the younger generation. The concepts of "being together" and *Enter Mosotros* (which means "among ourselves" in Ladino) are distinct expressions of the newly formed postwar minority identity.

Ethnic and religious identities are often formulated in terms of symbolic kinship because kinship provides a model of relatedness based on a "natural connection" and a "shared essence." In the case of the Jewish community in postwar Thessaloniki, the "natural connection" between the Jews was the shared historical experience, the shared memory of a very different prewar Thessaloniki, and the shared absence of family. But the family metaphor of community expresses more than the function of a substitute family of community; it also describes the "privatization" and marginalization of the postwar Jewish community. The community became marginal in terms of numbers, but more importantly, in terms of the public memory of the city. Formulated in the discourse of the Greek nation-state, history was viewed through the looking-glass of historical continuity and homogeneity, not through one of multiculturalism and heterogeneity. This meant that the history of the Jews in Thessaloniki was largely ignored.

In terms of a communal survival strategy, this "privatization" was reflected in the maintenance of a very low public profile. I suggest that this "low-profile identity" is an expression of powerlessness and a response to the war and postwar experience, as illustrated in the following quotation: "We were not like the prewar [Jewish] Salonikans who had their own deputies and who could influence the local mayor. We knew there was very little we could do. We will always run the risk of provoking, without wanting it" (Bm25). We can state, therefore, that the two most important Jewish adaptation strategies in postwar Thessaloniki were, on the individual level, the re-creation of families, and on the communal level, the creation of a community with a low public profile and a high private profile, providing protection, support, help, and a family framework for its members in the changed, non-Jewish environment.

The notion of the Jewish community as family is still relevant today. A young woman describes the relationship to other Jews of the same generation by saying: "We had no choice. So we were always together as a family" (Cf41). In contrast to their parents or grandparents, many of the younger generation talk about this aspect of community in the context of constraint and pressure. They want a more open community, and they are able to voice their discomfort about the omission of Jews from the public memory more easily: "We cannot accept the memory loss of our countrymen, and we cannot accept that the Jewish presence in our town is ignored, just like that" (Bm25). The process of the reconstruction of the community started immediately after the war. The process of the reconstruction of Jewish memory, though, has just recently begun.

Notes

1. The number of deportees varies according to different sources. During 1943 and 1944, between 54,533 (M. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–1944* [New Haven and London, 1993], 256) and 62,573 (M. Molho, *In Memoriam: Hommage aux Victimes Juives des Nazisen Grece* [Salonika, 1988]) Jews from all over Greece were deported to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, between 46,061 (based on records of the Greek Railway) and 48,774 (based on the remaining records of Auschwitz-Birkenau) from Thessaloniki alone (H. Fleischer, "Greichenland," in W. Benz, ed., *Dimensionen des Völkermords* [Munich, 1991], 241–73).

2. *Evraiko Vima* 5, 21 Dec. 1945.

3. J. Plaut, *Greek Jewry in the Twentieth Century, 1913–1983: Patterns of Jewish Survival in the Greek Provinces before and after the Holocaust* (London, 1996), 74.

4. The legal status of the community dates back to Law no. 2456 from 1920, which gave all Jewish communities in Greece this special status; Jewish Community of Thessaloniki, *A Short History of the Jewish Community* (Thessaloniki, 1978), 40.

5. B. Lewkowicz, "Greece Is My Home, But . . . Ethnic Identity of Greek Jews in Thessaloniki," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 4.2 (1994): 237.

6. S. Marketos, "Ethnos choris Evreos: Apopseis tis Historiographikis Kataskevis tou Ellinismou," in *Synchrona Themata*, vols. 52–53, no. 17 (1994): 52–69. That is not to say that no research has been published elsewhere. The growing volume of material on this subject may most conveniently be followed in the bibliographic surveys of the *Bulletin of Judaeo-Greek Studies.*

7. I had a very similar experience in Athens. I was invited to a wedding that took place in the synagogue of Athens. The airplane was delayed and I was in an extreme hurry to get there in time. After jumping into a taxi and explaining where I wanted to go, the taxi driver started arguing with me. He had never heard of a Jewish synagogue. I told him to drive to Melidoni Street. He had never heard of the street either. He made it quite clear that he thought I was a confused foreigner, and even when we got there he still looked very doubtful. One thing was clear, this was not a language problem. He simply had not heard of such a thing as a Jewish synagogue before.

8. I would like to thank the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and all my interviewees for their generous help and cooperation throughout my research. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to all the people who welcomed me with open arms and made me feel at home in Thessaloniki.

9. This label indicates the number of the interview, and to which group (A, B, C, D) and which gender (m, f) the interviewee belonged. In order to protect the identities of the interviewees I use abbreviated names.

10. The concentration-camp survivors refer to themselves as *omiros* ("hostages") who were in *omoria* ("taken hostage") in the *stratopedo* ("concentration camp").

11. E. Counio-Amarigilio, *Peninta chronia meta: Anamniseis mias Salonikiotissas Evraias* (Thessaloniki, 1995), 131.

12. Kokot writes that the Asia Minor refugees in Thessaloniki whom she researched still sometimes jokingly refer to Jews "who were made into soap" (*tous kanane sapounaki*) when they speak about the war. W. Kokot, "Kulturelle Modelle und Soziale Identitaet in einem Fluechtlingsviertel in Thessaloniki," dissertation, University of Cologne (1995), 197.

13. All the figures concerning marriages are based on my own research of the community archives.

14. *Brit Milah* is the Jewish circumcision ceremony, *Bar Mitzwah* the ceremony that marks the initiation of a thirteen-year-old boy into the Jewish religious community.