

The Jews of Monastir Macedonia

The Life and Times of the
Departed Jewish Community of Bitola



By Shlomo Alboher

Jerusalem, Israel

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Translated from Hebrew by Eliezer E. Cohen

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INTRODUCTION

On March 11, 1943 all the Jews of Macedonia, all 7,215 of them, were taken from their homes by Bulgarian soldiers, policemen, and clerks to the the Monopol tobacco factory in the city of Skopje, capital of the republic of Macedonia. They spent the following days on the wooden benches of the factory, ten on a bench, starving, thirsty, and fearful as to their fate. For the five days until their deportation, they were without food, locked in the halls of the factory and guarded by the Bulgarian soldiers. There were three shipments from the the Monopol, 80 Jews in each cattle car of the train, each car sealed and locked on March 22, 25, and 29, all of them with one destination, the Treblinka extermination camp in Poland.

The only Macedonian Jews to survive were several dozen young Jews, who, a short time before the deportation comprehended the likely fate in store for the Jews of Europe and Macedonia. They fled to the mountains and joined the partisan underground fighting against the Bulgarian army. Many of them fell in battle, among them the young Monastir Jewess Esteria Ovadia (Mara, her underground nickname), at the age of 22. Afterwards she was proclaimed a national heroine of Macedonia, and in her memory, the Macedonians erected a statue in the field where, until the war, the central synagogue of Monastir, the Aragon Synagogue had stood.

In June 1998, I accompanied several family members in a visit to Macedonia, the land of our heritage. The sights were difficult, even horrifying. The two big synagogues of Monastir, Portugal and Aragon had disappeared.

The Jewish cemetery in Monastir, "Beit Haim" (the Home of the Living), founded in 1497, five years after the expulsion from Spain, was abandoned and in miserable condition. The Bulgarian soldiers had used the gravestones to pave their military camp, the parade grounds, the floors of the barracks, the swimming pool, the walls of the washrooms, sidewalks, etc.

The Macedonian peasant farmers also took part in the destruction. They used the gravestones to pave their yards or to build dining-room tables.

All that was left were smashed pieces of gravestones strewn all over the cemetery. Swastikas and Nazi slogans were drawn on the tent that the Jews of Monastir had put up over the grave of the great Abraham Aruesti, one of the head rabbis of the city. The iron fence around the cemetery and the "Magen David" (Jewish Star) adornments that were built in the 1920's were broken apart, and Macedonian shepherds were herding their sheep among the graves.

A particularly depressing moment occurred in the Skopje cigarette factory, the last stop of the Jews from Macedonia on the death trains to Treblinka. Many of my mother's family, the Calderon family, sat among those that waited on the benches of the tobacco factory, later to be transported to the death camps. There I said kaddish (the prayer for the dead) and read the names of those that were murdered in the death camps: Alboher, Alkotser, Argaz, Ashkenazi, Baruch, Mevorach, Hasson, Hassid, Meshulam, and Masson, Navon and Nehamah, Florentine and Pardo, Calderon and Konfino, Russo and Rossilio, and many others – the cream of Judaism from Spain and Portugal. Right then and there, as my feelings of shock resonated, I made the important decision to memorialize these Jews from my city.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my extreme gratitude to those who helped publish this book. They include Uri Oren, Danny Lebel, Jamilla (Angela) Kolonomus, Marc Cohen who had already written about the city of Monastir (Bitola) and Dr. Moshe Aruesti Nes-El, who researched the Jews from Monastir in Chile, from whom I learned a lot.

I would like to thank:

My teachers, my colleagues and my friends who accompanied my work with interest:

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Menahem Elon and Ephraim Levi, and dozens of others whom I interviewed. They enriched my knowledge of the Jews of Monastir in the city itself and elsewhere.

Last, but not least, best wishes to my beloved wife who stood by me and worked hard with me throughout this project.

Shlomo Alboher

PREFACE

About 60 years after the destruction of the Jewish community of Monastir (Bitola) in Treblinka, after the Bulgarians handed the Jews over to the Germans, two researchers, children of those Jews, established this memorial to them.

At the same time, Marc Cohen in the United States and Shlomo Alboher in Israel were involved in this sacred work. Both have degrees in an exploratory academic discipline. The former graduated from the University of Columbia in New York and lives in California, and the latter is a graduate of the Hebrew University and lives in Jerusalem. Cohen's work, written in English, appeared in New York in the year 2003, and now we have Alboher's book, originally written in Hebrew.

Since the destruction of the Monastir community in 1943, various works have been published about Jewish Macedonia by different authors, such as: Alexander Matkovsky, Jamilla Kolonomos, Vera Veskovitz Angelli, Zvi Loker, Ori Oren, Jenny Lebel, and others.

These authors dedicated most of their writing to the period of the holocaust and the events preceding it. However, the works of Jenny Lebel and, Professor Max Luria, (who wrote before the holocaust), on the Spanish language of Jewish Monastir were studies about the history and culture of Jewish Macedonia.

Still, the more recent contributions to the study of this community by Mark Cohen and Shlomo Alboher have played an extremely important role.

Mark Cohen, Last Century of a Sephardic Community - The Jews of Monastir, 1839-1943, published New York 2003

Jennie Lebel – Pride & Hope (1947).

Max A. Luria, A Study of the Monastir Dialect of Judeo-Spanish etc., New York 1930

On the one hand, these research studies are detailed and analytical, and rely on archives and varied sources. On the other hand, their conclusions are convincing, concentrating on the Jewish Spanish community in the Balkans somewhat like a microcosm of the Jewish Spanish world, which was destroyed in the holocaust. It is important to note, that Marc Cohen concentrated on the writing about the last years of the existence of the community, helped mainly by the archives of the Presbyterian Mission in Canada and Scotland that was active among the Balkan Jewish communities in the nineteenth century. Also helpful were the archives of the Alliance that made a special effort towards the modernization of the educational system, and archives of the JOINT in the USA and other places.

Shlomo Alboher covers the Ottoman era, especially the 450 years since the expulsion of the Jews from Portugal and Spain. He also relies, rightly, on the rabbinical literature that is an important reflection of the spiritual and social life of the community for hundreds of years, and for which there is no other literature.

The two researchers showed not only vast knowledge and scientific abilities, but also strong empathy for the communities of their parents. This is especially prominent in two central areas of the life of the community: Zionism and the Holocaust.

For the last 40 years of its existence, the community of Monastir was very Zionist. All the leaders, including the religious and intellectual ones, identified themselves with Zionism. Zionist and cultural events connected to the Land of Israel, Aliyah, and others were marked with a large celebration in the Aragon central synagogue, and in the Zionist cultural hall, the "Rebirth" (of the Jewish People). The youth movements, especially the "Shomer Hatzair" (the young guard), were prominent.

Moreover, there was absolutely no friction between the religious leaders and the non-religious in their relationship to Zionism. All organizations - the secular Zionist youth movements, the religious establishment, and the volunteer family assistance organizations acted side by side in harmony and cooperation with each other.

The Aliyah of the twenties and thirties flourished and every travel visa that was not used by Yugoslavia to the north was taken advantage of by the Macedonians.

A few years ago, Yosef (Tomi) Lapid told me that many wealthy Jews in the North willingly gave up their certificates for the poorer Jews from the South. Taking advantage of these documents, many of the Jews of Monastir, including Shlomo Alboher and his family, moved to Israel. These families were saved from the Holocaust, unlike their relatives who were not able to escape, and perished in Treblinka.

There is no doubt in my mind that their love for the Land of Israel was founded on the traditional love of the Land that led several individuals to move to Jerusalem in the late 1800's. Many of them settled in the Old City, the Yemin Moshe area, Ohel Moshe, or Mazkeret Moshe.

It was this attachment to the Land that led the Jews of the Balkans to follow the Messianic movements in the 1600's and 1700's, during the period of the false prophet Shabtai Zvi. The strongest following came from the descendents of the Jews that were expelled from Spain and Portugal and from those who were forced to convert.

Researchers of the Shabtai Zvi period, Professors Gershom Scholem, Meir Benayahu, Yakov Bernai and others concluded that the Balkan communities were drawn to the Sabbatian movement by Natan Haezrati, who lived in Kastoria, (today in northern Greece,) together with his students Rabbi Israel Hazan and Shemaia DiMaio.

This messianic activity coexisted there in the framework of Jewish culture or religious law. Natan Haezrati paid frequent visits to the communities of Monastir, Skopje and Sofia, which are today part of Bulgaria. In 1680 on his way from Sofia to Kastoria, he became ill, died and was buried in Skopje.

In my opinion, the devotion to Zionism by the Jews of Monastir in the 20th century was a clear continuation of the messianic fervor along with the love of the Land in the generations preceding modern Zionism.

Additional studies on the connection between these phenomena can help, since the metaphysical redemption, as explained by the Kabbala, and the redemption in the historical frame were bound together according to many researchers.

The holocaust of Jewish Monastir in March and April 1943 was part of the destruction of Jewish communities in Thrace, Greece, Macedonia, and particularly Serbia.

In April 1941, the Germans gave these areas into the full control of Bulgaria. On February 22, 1941, the Bulgarians and the Germans signed an official agreement, a unique agreement between Germany and an ally, that allowed the transfer of all Jews to Poland, this, after their right to Bulgarian nationality had been negated a year before.

The Bulgarians executed the deportation to Treblinka with the greatest of atrocities, including physical abuse, rape, starvation, thirst, and a confiscation of every material asset of the expelled.

Not one of the 11,343 expelled Jews survived.

At the same time, the Bulgarians began denying the holocaust, for which they themselves were responsible. They would make assertions as if the Jews belonged to the Germans and they could not prevent the deportation. But it is known that the German army and these areas were under full Bulgarian control and not annexed by the conquering Germans. These areas were part of the "United Bulgaria" of 1943 at the time of the holocaust.

By creating and spreading the false myth that Bulgaria saved its Jewish populace, when in reality 20 percent were sent to the death camps, Bulgaria has been helped by Jews, including those from Bulgaria, who know the truth and thus are aiding the Bulgarian holocaust deniers.

To understand this malignant process, which does an injustice to the holy souls of Thrace, Macedonia and others, it is important to see the monuments in the Bulgarian forest, including the statue of war criminal King Boris, who surrendered his Jewish subjects to death.

These monuments were set up with the help of Jewish supporters of Bulgaria in the United States and in Israel. They were taken down according to a decision of the committee of Judge Beisky on July 13, 2000. This committee was founded by the Jewish National Fund after continuous public activity by Jews who were expelled from the communities that were destroyed and by former Bulgarians who were opposed to the outrageous statue of Boris in the Bulgarian forest.

In my opinion, it would be worthwhile investigating the possible connection between the actions of the Bulgarian army against the Jews of Macedonia in the First World War, including the use of poisonous gas bombs that took many Jewish lives in Monastir, and the deportation of Jews to the death camps in the Second World War.

Is it possible that the Bulgarians had a special hatred of the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia because they expressed loyalty to Greece and Serbia, and later Yugoslavia, and did not support the aspirations of the Bulgarians to annex these areas to their country? Is it correct that this was the reason the Bulgarians acted against them when they had the chance during both world wars? Additional research into the archives of the government of Bulgaria can support or disprove this presumption, which is not to be disregarded automatically.

We must remember another aspect of the holocaust. Several dozen Jews that there were under the Bulgarian authority were saved from deportation and from annihilation due to the intervention of the consuls of Italy, Turkey and Spain that acted for the sake of their citizens. Yet, the Spanish government of Franco did not want to protect all the Ladino speakers in the Balkans (including Greece, Thessaloniki, Thrace, the islands Crete, Corfu, Rhodes, northern Greece and Athens, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Romania) or the Spanish communities in Holland and in Western Europe. All these preserved in one way or other their Iberian culture, but the Spanish and Portuguese governments ignored them. Their behavior in the Holocaust and their disregard for the fate of Spanish communities in Europe and in the other places does not grant them any respect.

If they had acted like neutral Sweden, which protected many Jews from Hungary and gave them Swedish identity cards through the efforts of Raoul Wallenberg, Spain and Portugal could have rescued thousands of Spanish Jews.

The exclusive contribution of Shlomo Alboher is included in the chapters that deal with the names of Jews in Monastir. These enlightening chapters shed light on the historical attachment of Monastirli Jews through connections to families, connections to other places and to literary sources. But allow me to relate personally to the surname Ischak, which was very prevalent in Monastir. The surviving family in Israel has changed their names to Yoshah, Yishai, and Ben-Yishai.

Shlomo Alboher found that the source of the name is the Bible name "Yitzhak" (Isaac) as pronounced by the Jews of Monastir. Without disregarding this explanation altogether, allow me to offer an additional explanation. It is very possible that the name "Ischak" is a corruption of the name "Ischer" as the Jews were wont to pronounce the city Hajar in Aragon. A while ago, Professor Haim Binart told me that in his opinion the surname "Alishur" comes from the word combination "Al Ishur", which means "coming from the city of Ashur in Aragon. This leads us to the possibility that the name "Ischak" is also connected to that city. As added proof to this theory, we can add the fact that the name "Ischak" was used only by Jews from the city of Monastir, a city prominent in people from Aragon. Whether this theory or the theory of Shlomo Alboher is correct, it is fitting to bring both possibilities to the reader.

This book by Shlomo Alboher shows not only his scientific dexterity, analytical ability, and empathy with the subject, but also the increased desire to study the heritage of the Jews of Spain. Monastir is worthy of such a great study and is finally receiving it. Alas, this antique community has disappeared in the smoke of the cursed fields of Treblinka. Our solace is in the work of the descendents of the Jews of Monastir, prospering and building in Israel, the United States and Chile, whose preeminent sons also contribute to the research of their past and culture.

Dr. Nissim Yosha

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Bar Ilan University

Head of the center for the induction of Spanish and Oriental Jewish heritage in the Education Ministry and Culture (1977-1989)

Preface to the English edition

I was approached to translate this book in the summer of 2009. Little did I realize that this would become much more than another translation. In many cases, translation of an academic work tends to become a cerebral preoccupation with semantics rather than the subject itself. In this case, it swept me into a world that I had little knowledge of, kindling a passion and becoming a labor of love.

This is the fascinating, not well-known account of a Spanish-Jewish Diaspora that remained intact in Europe for nearly 500 years after the forced expulsion from Spain in 1492. This community, which remained close-knit and vibrant until its demise in 1943, is a fascinating story, another glimpse into the annals of the wandering Jew and the time spent among their good Macedonian neighbors.

This book honors not only those who have passed on, but also those who live today, passing this glorious history on for the generations to come. It was my great fortune to get to know members of the Alboher family – Yehuda and his wife Ofra as well as the author Shlomo, who spent years on the research and writing of this book and his wife Ahuva. I feel honored to have been welcomed into the homes of these remarkable, noble people.

This work would not have come to life but for two people; Yehuda Alboher, who went to much trouble and expense to make sure that this book becomes a living legacy to his brother. And, to my good friend and accomplished author and editor Ya'acov Hava-kook, who spent many critical hours in helping this edition come to fruition. He can also take credit for having edited another more concise Hebrew edition that will enable the lives and times of the community of Bitola to reach a broader audience. My thanks also to Pinchas Fuchs and Aviva Cohen, who assisted me with the translation of this work.

Finally, I must explain the differences between the original Hebrew version and the English one. The English edition was meant to serve as the basis for the Macedonian edition. This required constant deliberation while editing various details that would be perti-

ment to modern readers - Jewish as well as Macedonian and non-Jewish. For this reason, a chapter rich on Monastir's contribution to rabbinical literature has been omitted in this version.

I hope the readers find that I have been able to balance this work successfully so that many people will be able to enjoy this fascinating historical account.

Eliezer E. Cohen

English Translator

Israel, 2010

History of the Jews of Monastir (Bitola)

From early times until the end of WW1, 1918

The name of the city "Monastir" (in Macedonia "Bitola", in Serbian "Bitolja") came from the Slavic word "Obitelj", which means "the people of the monastery". In Turkish "Monastir" (manastir) means "monastery". In Armenian, the name is "Toli Monastir". In Jewish literature, it is "Monstirio" (Monstrio or Monastrion). It is a town at the foot of the Perister Mountain, whose peak reaches 2001 meters above sea level, north of the Kale Bura Mountains in the Palgonia Valley in Macedonia.

The existence of Jews in Macedonia during the period of Alexander the Great (328 - 356 B.C.) we deduce from a story that is told of a Jewish soldier, one of Aristotle's' pupils, named Meshullam, a common Jewish name in Monastir as a first name and as a surname. This man was a decorated soldier in Alexander's army because of his expertise with the bow and arrow.

When the priests of his platoon stopped in order to watch the flight of a bird in order to foretell the future, he shot and killed the bird. His friends resented this, but he simply replied; "How can this bird predict your future, if he did not even know about the arrow aimed at him? Had he known, he would have flown a different route."

The apostle Paul (Shaul Hatarsi), visited many cities in Macedonia. During his journeys between 37 – 67 CE, he visited Philippi. In the New Testament, it records: "He left Napolis for Philippi, a city in Macedonia inhabited by the Romans. We stayed there several days..." Paul and Silas passed through Ampipholis Apolonia and ThesThessaloniki where there was a synagogue. As was his custom, Paul joined the Jews and on three Sabbaths, he gave sermons on topics from the Bible.

Jews lived in Macedonia in the year 40 CE. That year two Jewish delegations went from Alexandria, Egypt, and from Jerusalem to Rome. They tried to convince Caesar Gaius Caligula to cancel his plans for erecting his statue in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Philo, head of the delegation from Alexandria included in his book the letter from Agrippas I, king of Judea, to Gaius describing the Jews in the Roman towns, including Lethisalia, Boeotia, Macedonia, and others.

Direct evidence regarding Jewish settlement in this area was found in 1930 by the Stobidigs near Monastir. The Yugoslavian archaeologist, Zosi Petrovitz, found a column from a third century synagogue, which contained an engraving showing that the place was dedicated to the Jewish community by Claudius Tiberius Policharmos, who earned the nickname, Patriarch of the Synagogue. Mormorstein thinks that Policharmos' ancestors were among the slaves that Claudius Caesar released when he left Rome for Macedonia in the middle of the first century.

Benjamin Ben-Yona from Tudela, who travelled the world from 1159–1173, gave evidence of Jewish settlement in ThesThessaloniki in the twelfth century. He wrote, "From there (Bishina) to the city Soloniki (Thessaloniki), built by King Salukis, there is a big city where about 500 Jews live, all engaged in the trades.

At the time of Benjamin of Tudela, Thessaloniki had more Jews than any other city in Greece. He also mentions the city of Christopoli, on the way from Thessaloniki to Constantinople, bordering Macedonia and Thrace.

In his book on Jews on the Balkans, Maren Freidenberg states that during the thirteenth century Jews had a tendency, as Jews, to settle along the Via Egnatia. Among these cities was Monastir. In his opinion, the city Monastir could serve as an example of the colonization of the Jews in Macedonia, since it is situated on the main route from Thessaloniki in Greece to Dores, Albania, on the Adriatic coast. He testifies that in 1929 a sign was put up on the fence of the cemetery in Monastir, listing the years 1457 – 1929. He saw this as evidence to the existence of a Jewish community, although small, five years after the deportation from Spain.

In the years 1361–1400, the Ottoman sultanate conquered Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Karman. From 1381 to 1382 they occupied Monastir and made it into a fortress for protection against the Albanians, and controlled it until 1912 - an extensive period of 530 years. They had a major influence on the city, and this affected the Jewish community, its spiritual and economic life, as well as the self-esteem, aspirations, customs, dress style, and nature of the trades by which they made their livelihoods.

This was a traditional Jewish community that saw itself as Turkish, and demonstrated loyalty to the Turkish authority until the Macedonian rebellion in 1903. Many Jews took part in the rebellion, showing for the first time, resistance to the Turkish authority, until its demise during the Balkans wars (1912 – 1914) and WW1 (1914-1918).

From the Borse occupation of 1324 and especially after the capture of Constantinople by Mehmet II in 1453, many Jews emigrated from Germany, France, and Hungary. They also came from different places in Italy, Sicily, Oterno and Calabria to the area occupied by the Sultan. Some of these Jews came to Monastir and took on the surname Ashkenazi. In the course of time they were absorbed into the local society and abandoned their customs and their languages, prayed in the local synagogues and spoke Ladino

In the year 1457, Rabbi Yitzhak Zorfati called to all the Jewish communities to come to the area under Ottoman rule. In 1460, the Ottomans expelled the Jews from cities near Monastir, Skopje, Ochrid, Prillip, and Strip, and brought them to Constantinople during a forced “surgum” exile. We can assume that the exiles included the Jews of Monastir who numbered some 480 Jewish families in that year.

There is much material about the Jewish community that began in the sixteenth century and ended in the months March – April 1943. There are records from travelers, certificates from the Turkish courts and from the rabbinical responsa. Starting in the nineteenth century there were consular reports, Jewish and non-Jewish press, archives in Israel and other countries, and articles and books written in many languages about Macedonia, mainly on Monastir and its Jews.

THE 16TH CENTURY

In the beginning of the century Turkish and Venetian travelers described Monastir as a flourishing city with impressively large and beautiful public buildings, houses, hotels for caravans, a covered market with an iron gate, and a tremendous town square for exhibitions. The commerce in the city flourished. Inhabitants of the city dealt in grains, wool, animal skins and cotton. Evliya Celebi found 3,000 houses, 900 stores, 40 cafes, and 70 mosques in the city. Monastir also served as an Islamic religious center for all the Balkans. The city had a religious Islamic school and a school for judges. Under the Ottoman rule, the city grew from 480 families in 1460 (295 Moslems and 185 non-Moslems), to about 845 families in 1521, (approximately 640 Moslems and 205 non-Moslems).

According to a census, whose date was not recorded, but known to have taken place in the days of the Sultan Suleiman the Great (1520 - 1566), there were 43 Jewish families and 6 unmarried women. By the year of 1529, there were 60 Jewish families and 27 unmarried women. More Jews came from the city Evelina in Albania. These were Jews from Catalonia, Spain that settled in Evelina, but because of the harsh climate soon moved to Monastir.

Rabbi Yoseph David Ben-Lev was born in Monastir circa 1502. He left for Thessaloniki and became the head of the Jewish high court. He was well known as a person who fought the rich of the city who were exploiting the poor. Because of this, his sons were executed and he was forced to flee to Istanbul.

Maren Friedenbergs reported that in the 1520's there was a notable immigration of Jews to Monastir. At the same time the fake Messiah Shlomo Molcho (Diogo Pires) was active and wrote his book, "Sefer Ha-Mefo'ar " in which he "prophesied" that the year 1540 would be the year of the Messiah's coming. He joined a group of Jews, led by David Reuveni, who wanted to bring about the signing of a military agreement with Por-

tugal and with the pope to organize a militaristic expedition against Turkey, in order to free the Land of Israel from the Muslims.

In 1536, the Portuguese Inquisition was formed and many Jews fled for their lives to the Ottoman Empire. Some of them went to Monastir.

On September 5, 1539, Baruch HaCohen, from Ragoza (Dubrovnik) sold 750 liters of cinnamon, 1800 pounds of muscat, 450 liters of pepper, and 234 beef skins for a sum total of 2,378.50 ducats to Moshe Shuriali (Tzurieli), a Jew from Monastir. We see from this that the Jews of Monastir dealt in spices and animal hides and that their commerce reached as far as Ragoza. From a question brought before Rabbi Shmuel Di Medina it appears that the Jews of Monastir held slaves in those days. On July 15, 1550, Shmuel Avi-Mayor from Monastir handed over a slave, one Francisco Mauro, then 18 years old, to a dealer from Thessaloniki who lived in Venice. From this, we see that the Jews of Monastir also had dealings with the Venetians.

In 1559, due to the prevalence of Muslim slaves in the hands of Jews and Christians, the sultan announced a decree that forbade Jews and Christians from owning Moslem slaves. This included hiring released slaves who wished to remain with their previous masters.

From another question brought to Rabbi Shmuel Di Medina, it is clear that in Macedonia there were cases of conversion to Islam, because Jews of Monastir tried to influence a young Thessalonikin that had converted, to change his mind and return to Judaism.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, there were two major Jewish communities in Monastir, Aragon and Portugal. The relations between the neighborhoods were unfriendly, and they were referred to by their nicknames, the upper and the lower (the richer, aristocratic society and the poorer society). The upper neighborhood paid 2/3 of the taxes to authorities and the lower neighborhood only one third.

In 1557 a Jew from Monastir was murdered on his way home from Thessaloniki. It seems there was a lot of commerce between the Jews of Monastir and the Jews of Thessaloniki. This included trade agreements regarding the sale of animal hides.

In 1563, a Jewish dealer from Arta cheated his associate from Monastir during an exhibition in Tog'il. The Jew from Arta agreed to bring a purse of money that had been given him by the Jew from Monastir. However, the Jew from Arta claimed that the money was stolen from him by robbers on the way. The judges of the city were Joseph Aruesti, Joseph Bechar, Shlomo Adig'sh, and Judah Alpaki. This proves that Jews from Monastir attended exhibitions and made commercial contacts with the cities in Greece.

That year the Kadi of Monastir received an order to investigate the allegations according to which Jews sold wine to the Moslems, which their religion forbids.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, Rabbi Ben Avraham HaCohen served as rabbi of Monastir. Even though he moved to Thessaloniki, several of his religious decisions were connected to Jews from Monastir.

The Jews of Monastir lived in a special neighborhood called "Yahudi Mahalla". There was no wall around the neighborhood, but the houses were built in such a way as to defend their tenants. The neighborhood was also called the "big yard", Yahudi Hane or "El Cortigio" in Spanish. These special quarters, specifically for ethnic groups, not only Jews, were not unusual in the areas controlled by the Ottomans. The Ottomans established quarters like those for Jews in the cities: Waria, Kastoria, Yanina, Larisa, Shahs, Komotini, Monastir, Plobadib, Adirna, Skopje, and Sofia.

A list of Jewish dealers from Dubrovnik, (Ragoza), from the year 1572 was found, and in it their trades were specified. Sasson Nachman from Monastir was listed as a dealer in clothes and weapons. The trade in weapons was unusual, because, according to Omar's decrees, a Jew was forbidden to carry weapons, let alone deal in them. Apparently, this Jew's commerce in weapons was in the Christian countries, far away from the eyes of the Ottoman Sultans.

During those years, many Anousim (forced converts) who returned to Judaism fled Portugal and moved to Monastir. A question was brought to the local religious court regarding a disagreement about an inheritance between two brothers from Portugal. Matkovsky found that the escape of these converted Jews from Portugal began in 1568, and that many of them succeeded in smuggling their assets and immigrating to the cities of Macedonia. They were erudite, literate, and much richer than the local Jews.

In the year, 1575 a disagreement broke out between leaders of the community and their cantor. As mentioned, there were two communities, Aragon and Portugal. They had agreed upon joint management of a general fund from which the salaries of the religious leaders, cantors, teachers, butchers, and the religious needs of the communities would be paid. The communities employed two cantors, one of whom served both synagogues alternately. From here, we can see that there was no considerable difference, if any, in the wording and style of the prayers in both.

During the 1580's, as a result of the flow of money from the silver mines in America, the value of silver depreciated compared to gold at a rate of 70%. Because the Ottoman currency was based on silver, the depreciation caused inflation that disrupted the economy and brought a reduction of earnings from exports and a rise in cost of imports.

In the year 1582, the Sultan published a decree because of indignant Moslems, who claimed the Jews had jurisdiction over them concerning taxes.

The same year, an agreement was reached between Jewish dealers from Monastir and their brethren in Belgrade, Albania not to participate in the Aistroga exhibition on Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), or on the holiday of Sukkoth. From here, we see that because of the difficulties of making a livelihood, the Jewish dealers were in the habit of desecrating holidays, but now had recanted and returned to observing the holidays.

In 1589, four Jews from Monastir vowed to move together to the Land of Israel. They were compelled to annul the vow because the currency was devaluated and Turkish

debtors were unable to repay their debts. This shows that the Monastirli Jews were also in the business of money lending.

In the year 1591, seven Elders from Jerusalem admonished the members of the Jewish court and the leaders of the Jewish community of Monastir, because they acted improperly with regard to one of their Jews David Nachmias, who lent money to another Jew in the city. The borrower refused to recognize his debit and even enlisted two false witnesses that testified against the lender. When the court accepted the testimony, David Nachmias was compelled to leave the city in disgrace and to move to Jerusalem.

Travelers from Venice that visited Monastir reported that in the city had 1,500 houses, of these 250 owned by Jews. Many Jews preferred to rent houses, rather than buy, in order to avoid the payment of taxes that homeowners had to pay. The traveler Lorenzo Bernardo visited Monastir in 1591, where Rabbi Shmuel Nachmias told him the city had 200 Jewish families.

In 1595, Sultan Morad III forbade the Jews from wearing silk garments or other expensive clothes or jewelry. From this, we see that the Jews were wont to wear fancy clothes, a fact that seemed to bother the Moslem residents.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, control of the high seas belonged to the Dutch and the English. This caused a tremendous decrease in the commerce between India, the Far East and Europe. At the same time, the Persians forbade the export of silk to Europe through Anatolia. The inaccessibility of these trade routes caused a considerable decrease in the tax revenues of the Ottoman treasury.

Maren Friedberg showed from contemporary reports that the number of Jewish families in Monastir in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was considerable and was constantly growing. The two synagogues of the city were not big enough and the community rented several buildings to use for prayers. New synagogues were not built because of the "Omar decrees" that forbade the establishment of new synagogues.

Haim Gerber pointed out that Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire were forbidden to build new synagogues and houses taller than the Moslems mosques. It was also forbidden for them to reside in proximity to a mosque. Despite this, the Jewish quarter in Monastir was very close to the mosques.

The contacts of the Jews with the Turks were mainly about paying the head tax on all males over the age of 14. Those that fulfilled public positions, including rabbis, cantors, and teachers were exempt from this tax.

Jamilla Kolonomos discovered other taxes, besides property taxes that were imposed on the Jews. These included a certain amount of grains, skins, cloth, meat, and animals, mainly horses, in order to support the Turkish army, to finance the Turkish wars, and to provide for the security of the citizens. It was also used for the upkeep of Moslem rulers' mansions and mosques.

In the year 1620, The Sultan decreed that Jews could not carry a weapon, ride horses, or wear turbans and fur hats. In 1622, the Sultan also authorized a number of prohibi-

tions for Jews. They were forbidden to wear Venetian linen clothing or colorful turbans. They were also forbidden to carry knives and other weapons. Jewish women could not wear hats with inscriptions, or wear green pants or green belts. Trading in Moslem slaves, whether they were born Moslems or had converted to Islam was also illegal. A decree in 1636 forbade the robbing of Jews.

In the years in which there were economic crises, even the religious items were subject to taxes. The custom was that taxes were collected by the communities themselves, thus creating tensions among the people. The Jews were mostly tradesmen, the most prevalent being the sale of fruits and vegetables. They were also cobblers, tailors, weavers, cloth dyers, and carpet weavers. Because of the need for Schitah (kosher slaughtering), they were also prominent in the meat industry.

Another major trade of the Monastir Jews was the processing and tanning of hides as well as the manufacture of cloth, which required buying the raw wool from the farmers in outlying areas, which involved putting themselves in danger at times. There were also several Jews who had farms or vineyards.

The affluent Jews of the city dealt in commerce and also set up big workshops. Jews were also moneylenders. The lenders were part of a union and were only allowed to work in the moneychangers market (saraf carsiya). City dwellers were in need of loans, and sometimes this included entire villages. The accepted rate of interest was 30% a year. There were cases in which Jews served as tax collectors or representatives of the local authority (subasi). A few of them were known for their cruelty.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, because of economic pressure, a large group of Jews from Thessaloniki and Monastir converted to Islam. These Jews immigrated to Italy, where some returned to Judaism and some converted to Christianity. Because of these conversions, Jews were forbidden to live near a mosque, next to a school of Moslem religious study, next to a Tikna (used for religious lectures), or a Hamam (bath house), and thus were forced to live in quarters of their own.

OTTOMAN CERTIFICATES 1621 – 1692

Milosh Konstantinov's studies of the Jews of Monastir were helped by the records of the Ottoman Moslem courts from the years 1621 to 1692. He claims that the records from Monastir are among the oldest records of the Ottoman Empire. These records included 27 protocols. Konstantinov concentrated on the record of the Jews and found 309 documents from the period 1621 to 1692.

TAXES

Many of the documents dealt with the taxes that were imposed on the Jews. The tax that they paid to the authorities was called G'izia (head tax). The Turkish tax collector was called z'izi (collector of the head tax). In the year 1634 the Jews paid a tax of 66,000 Aspri. In 1636, 63,700 Akche; in 1652 42,750 Akche, and in 1662, 47,000 Akche. In 1656, the tax was paid in full with no amount mentioned. The Jews of Macedonia paid 2/3 of the general tax that was based on the head tax for Jews and Christians alike.

ROYAL DECREES

Periodically the sultan would publish Royal Decrees, in order to settle disputes and to solve problems that arose in the different parts of the colony. In 1655, the sultan Mohammed IV decreed that the head tax of the Monastir Jews would not exceed 42,700 Akche. Another decree forbade the Jews to wear clothes similar those worn by Moslems. Jews owned slaves, but it is not known whether they were Moslems or Christians.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE TURKS TOWARDS THE JEWS

In the year 1634, a Turk named Mustapha broke into a Jewish synagogue, stole 80,000 Aspri and murdered a Jew named David. Mustapha was then punished by death. In the same year, a group of farmers robbed Jewish dealers of 10 purses of money with about ten million Akche.

In 1637 several people (not clear if they were Turks or Christians), were accused of a Jewish murder. A fine of a thousand Akche was imposed on the murderers. In the same year, a Jewish boy was murdered in proximity to the village Lats'i. In that year a Jew was appointed administrator on the caravans (caravan bashia). In 1640, Jews were forbidden to deal in wool until they sold the required amount of wool to the Ottoman authorities. The registers show that robbers stole 18,000 Akche from the Jews. In 1656, Jews from Kortiz'o were falsely accused of killing a Moslem.

Among the Jews

The Jewish leadership in the city of Monastir was controlled by the Jews of Aragonese descent. In 1626, a large wave of Jews arrived from Portugal. With their arrival, the two communities argued about the establishment of a new cemetery, an argument that continued until 1634. Besides the state taxes, the Aragonese levied an additional tax on the Jews from Portugal consisting of 48 drachmas for the wealthier families and 12 drachmas for those of medium economic status.

Dwellings - From the documentation, it seems that the Jews were accustomed to acquiring real estate, fields for farming and houses in which to live. In 1656, there is a record of a large courtyard where Jews lived. In 1661, there is a record of a Jewish quarter called "Machlah"(in Turkish, "Place" or "neighborhood"). The Jews called the area "Maaleh".

Synagogue - In 1657, there is mention of a synagogue in proximity to the mosque Hamzi-Beg.

Conversion - Between the years 1621 – 1692, there is only one report of a conversion to Islam. Whether this was willingly or forced is not known.

Livelihood - in 1622, after a fire that broke out in Thessaloniki, Jews in the city established a weaving factory for the first time. As aforementioned, the Jews from Portugal came in 1626. Most of them were weavers or tailors. In 1635, a Jew received permission to carry out business deals outside Thessaloniki. From documentation, we know that in 1637, Jews dealt in grains. In 1638, Jews were mentioned as owning vineyards, apparently owning the fields. In 1640 Jews dealt in wool, most of which was sold to the Sultan with the rest sold on the free market. Jews also dealt in wax candles. Many Jews were moneylenders and collected interest.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, The Sultan Ahmed III (1703 – 1730) rose to the throne. He showed an interest in modernizing his empire in the spirit of the west with the aid of a Christian who had converted to Islam. Turkish ships were modernized and he started the first printing press for Moslems. (Gutenberg started printing in 1455).

In 1702, a Christian murdered Shlomo Cassuto from Monastir as he was on the way to an exhibition in Aistroga. The judges of the city were Joseph Bechar Moshe, Moshe Kamchi, and Joseph Kapsoto. In the same year, the Grand Vizier Dalbatan Pashah forbade Jews to wear brown shoes and red fur hats, or to wear fancy clothes with strings of gold or silver.

Due to economic problems in 1708, the Jews of Monastir turned to the authorities with a request to postpone payment of the head tax. They repeated their request the following year, but their requests were turned down. The sultan threatened that if they did not pay the taxes, he would send them off on long voyages in his sailing vessels.

When the Grand Vizier of Romlia visited Monastir, the Jews paid for his hospitality and that of his entourage to a sum of 19 Piaster and 5 Akche. In 1714, the Jews paid a head tax of 56,240 Akche and gave the treasury of the state (suret) a loan for a supply of food to the army.

In 1715, every family in Monastir paid 3,072 Akche for the upkeep of the army. The Turks called the Jews derogatory names such as "chifut" and called the Jewish nation "chifut millet".

A complaint was made to the sultan in 1731, that, even though the Jews had paid their head tax, the local rulers, tax collectors and Cadis forced them to provide wool, blankets, and agricultural products, and therefore, the Jews were leaving the city.

Aside from the head tax, the Jews were required to pay "chayir akchesi" - a tax to guard the grazing lands of the sultan, and "kasap akches" - a tax for kosher meat, as well as additional taxes.

FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE END OF TURKISH RULE IN MONASTIR

Near the beginning of the nineteenth century, Sultan Mohammed II ruled (1808 –1839). He dismantled the old-fashioned army and established a modern army in its place. He also founded schools for engineering, seamanship, and a military academy.

At the turn of the century, in the year 1800, a disagreement broke out between the Jewish wool dealers of Monastir and the Jewish owners of a clothing factory from Thessaloniki. From this we learn that the Jews of Monastir dealt in wool that was purchased from surrounding villages.

In September, 1800, the Jews of Monastir were required to participate in the purchase of 250 horses that the Monastir region was obligated to provide for the war against the French in Egypt.

In 1816, in order to suppress the Albanian rebellion in Shkidra in northern Albania and Bianina in the south, Sultan Mohammed II transferred the Bey's (a provincial governor) seat of government (the Beylerbeyik) from Sofia to Monastir.

In 1834, a fire broke out in Monastir that destroyed many Jewish homes and stores, including synagogues and schools. The leaders of the community enlisted messengers who traveled throughout the big communities of the realm and even to Christian countries in order to ask for donations for the rebuilding of the synagogues. Their payment was between 10 and 30 percent of the donations. Besides their wages, they could keep any clothes they received as donations.

In 1836, a few years before the reforms in the empire, Ami Boue visited the city. He was impressed by the proximity of the houses that seemed to be attached to each other, a method of building that was popular during the Ottoman reign. He was also fascinated by the gardens in the East of the city and the commercial center in the West which contained, according to him, 2,150 stores.

In his book, Dimski Kolb brings a document dated July 6, 1836 in connection with the fire in the city. According to the document, the Jewish community became very poor and the people could not pay the head tax of 1835 in the sum 5,826 Gorosh. They asked the authorities for pity. The answer, "Whereas the local administration is aware of the monetary status of the Jews of the city, it was decided to waive their debt of 1835 and also taxes for 1836." The debts remained registered in the books of the tax registry.

It is also important to note that due to its narrow streets, Monastir was one of the filthiest cities in the sultanate.

DAYS OF REFORM (1876 – 1939)

The Tanzimat were reforms that the Ottoman Sultans initiated under pressure from the European powers, in favor of non-Moslems. The first of the reformers was the Sultan

Abbid-el-Meg'rid (1839 - 1861). In November 1839, he publicized a list of reforms, the "H'ati shariff" which described the changes in the administration and the methods of enlistment, taxation, and the court system. The purpose was to guarantee life and private assets of the Ottoman subjects and to eliminate the discrimination between Moslems and non-Moslems.

In 1845, there was a disagreement between two Jews of Monastir over the purchase of grounds and the building of a house. From this, we can see that in the mid-nineteenth century Jews of Monastir were allowed to buy land and to build houses.

In 1848, the English painter Edward Lear visited the city. He was fascinated and wrote that the big public buildings, the barracks and the administration buildings at the entrance to the city surprised him by the width of the streets and their paving, and by the markets parts of which were covered. He was surprised to see undreamt-of culture including guard posts, military music, metal-works, mansions, guardhouses, and products and objects of beauty just waiting for someone to visit in all corners of the city.

In February 1856, Sultan Abbid-el-Mg'rid publicized another decree, the "H'ati Humayon" for improving the status of non-Moslems subjects. They were promised freedom of religion, equality in the payment of taxes, and access to public service positions, to the army of the sultan and to the military schools. It should be noted that in December of 1856, the Kadi announced a religious decision stating that the new reforms of the Sultan went against the Moslem religious law.

The g'izia tax was canceled in 1856, but was replaced by armed service –"bedel j askariye". The tax was collected by the leaders of the community until 1887 when the tax was administered by the Turks. The required army service was canceled permanently by the year 1909.

That year, the authorities in Monastir established secular legal courts that took away authority from the Jewish courts, leaving them in charge of personal issues alone. This was a most important year for the city of Monastir when the offices of the general staff

of the sultan's army in Macedonia were established in the city. This promised free trade and safe passage of major caravans of mules, horses, and camels.

According to consular reports from the middle of the nineteenth century, there were noted merchants in Monastir - Yechial Nachman Levy, Solomon Nachman Levy, Yaa-kov Rachamim Nachmias, Joseph Moshe Irgas and Joseph Haim Peres. There was a rich merchant whose name is unknown, who owned a stone building that served as a warehouse for merchandise from Europe, and whose value was estimated at 5,000 Pounds Sterling. The Jewish merchants included 10 millers, 18 dealers in grain, barley and rye, and 6 moneylenders. Jews also worked as pharmacists, tobacco merchants, cloth manufacturers, metalworkers, and goldsmiths. The more affluent Jews were burdened with the responsibility of paying the taxes.

During those days, the city flourished. The city developed factories and commercial contacts with neighboring countries based on traditional agriculture. The commerce of Monastir expanded beyond Macedonia to southern Albania.

In 1860, the trade company Rodev Brothers and Sons had subsidiaries in Sarajevo, Constantinople, Belgrade, Trieste, and Hamburg, and had dealings with Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, Budapest, London, Marseilles, and Lyon. They dealt in animal skins, textiles, and fish.

The year 1860 also saw an improvement in the status of the city of Monastir when it was connected to the Turkish telegraph lines. In the same year, a Jew from Monastir was accepted to the Council of Local Commerce (ticaret maclici) that had eight members: four Christians, three Moslems, and one Jew.

By 1864 there was a decline in the condition of Monastir when the capital of Vilayet was moved to Thessaloniki. Monastir thus lost its direct outlet to the Albanian seacoast.

The years 1870 - 1880 were a period of recession in Monastir caused by a general economic crisis in the East. In the years 1875 – 1878, during the war between Turkey and

Russia, many refugees of Turkish origin from the lost territories of the Ottoman Empire immigrated to the cities of Macedonia, including Monastir. After the Berlin agreement in 1878, the superpowers increased their involvement in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire.

The reforms of 1856 and, even more so, the Berlin agreement brought about the appointment of western consuls in Monastir, along with missionaries, doctors, and educators. Between the years 1856 – 1880 there were representatives of Catholic missionaries from France, of Protestants, of Adventists, of nuns from the "Daughters of Zion" in the United States, and of the Scottish church and the Canadian Presbyterian church. Two new churches were set up, one Bulgarian and one Greek Orthodox.

Attempts to convince Jews to convert from their religion were not very successful. In 1864, the Scottish missionary, a converted Jew by the name of Epstein, reported to his superiors that, after twenty months of intensified work, there were no results, and therefore he did not want to continue to receive money for nothing, and asked to return home. On the other hand, in the same year the Scottish missionary Stober reported that he was successful in penetrating every Jewish house in Monastir, from the home of Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael to the homes of the poor.

Stober was able to enter Jewish homes because of the economic problems of the Jews of Monastir after the big fire of 1863. The missionaries reported that in 1863, before the fire, only half of the Jews in the city, about three hundred families, lived in suitable living standards.

After the fire, at least two hundred families were in need of charity. The number of Jews in the city rose to 3000. Over 200 families lived near the banks of the river in the lowest quarter of the city, mostly in one-story buildings, with no retaining wall between the homes and the river. When the river rose on its west bank, their homes were flooded. On the assumption that an average family had five members, each building housed about six families. As a result of the crowded conditions and chronic malnutrition, outbreaks of contagious diseases were common.

There was a big courtyard in the center of the Jewish quarter that was surrounded by houses, the fronts of which were directed towards the courtyard and the backs of the buildings to the Christian neighborhoods. The apartments all had one or two rooms. The kitchens were in the yard and the ovens were used by all residents of the yard. The yard contained stockpiles of wood and charcoal.

In 1656, the Turks called the courtyard the "big yard" and the Jews called it the Cortigo. On August 20, 1863, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a huge fire broke out destroying nearly everything. Out of 232 homes that were ruined, 190 belonged to Jews. Only 15 Jewish houses remained untouched. About six hundred families, some 3,000 Jews, remained without shelter. After the blaze, an epidemic of Typhus erupted. The missionary Stober was called to help. He took advantage of donations from members of his church in Germany and in England, and was able to provide the Jews with medicine and food. The local governor also helped by providing the homeless with tents as temporary housing. There were not enough for all the Jews and many were compelled to live out in the open.

The authorities distributed a thousand loaves of bread a day, contributions from inhabitants of the city. This was not enough for all and many Jews had to buy bread from their meager savings.

On August 20, 1863, the Jews wrote to Sir Moshe Montefiore in London to ask for aid. The consul, Calvert made sure to bring the letter to London himself and added his own recommendation. Upon receipt of the letter, Montefiore acted immediately. He turned to the Board of Deputies and encouraged them to act, and also circulated a "Call for Help" in all synagogues in London. The Board of Deputies immediately approved aid in the sum of 100 pounds Sterling from the "Redemption of Captives" fund and 2,000 pounds Sterling from their personal accounts. The money was used for food, clothing, and shelter for the Jews of Monastir and was also used to rebuild the house of Rabbi Yaakov Israel.

Between the years 1870 – 1880, Turkish refugees that fled from Serbia and Bulgaria flowed into Monastir and competed with the local Jews for a livelihood from sources that were almost non-existent.

Until the year of 1863, Monastir had one Jewish religious school (Talmud Torah). The studies were in the traditional framework of reading the Bible passage twice and the Targum (Aramaic translation) once. This was the educational system for the kindergarten children from the ages of 3 to 6. The kindergarten teachers main occupation was close watch of the children, but they also taught songs and stories.

The Christian missionary Epstein reported that there were very strong contacts with the rabbi of the city, Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael, and with other Jews. He was impressed that several Jews wanted to break free from the restrictions of their traditional religion in favor of spiritual freedom. As a sign of progress, they wanted to take their children out of the religious school that was much too conservative, in order to give them a progressive western education in accordance with modern European culture.

To these middle-class Jews, education was seen as the best way to escape poverty and troubles. They realized that living on charity was not a permanent solution to their problems, and by the year 1857, two Jewish girls had enrolled in the Catholic school in the city.

Being aware of the needs of the time, several of the city's Jews decided to establish a modern school. In addition, at the end of 1864, the "Alliance" committee decided to establish a school for the advancement of Monastir's children. The committee included 17 of the wealthy leaders of the community, including 2 teachers, 5 merchants, and 9 bankers. It is not known what the president, Yitzhak Gabriel, did for a living.

In 1865, the Jews of Monastir turned to the Board of deputies in London to help rebuild the two religious study halls and the religious school that were destroyed by the fire of 1863. The committee refused to help. The members were not in favor of supporting the conservation of the "frozen" tradition but rather wished to support a productive, modern

education that would give the students a general education, knowledge of languages and a profession.

The missionaries exploited this situation, and by 1868 founded a Lazerist school in the city. It was officially for Bulgarians, but 6 of the 17 students were Jewish. The Lazerists were not satisfied with this, and in the year 1869 founded a school for Jewish children in which, according to the missionary Michael Stasionis, 20 Jewish children were enrolled. They progressed in their religious studies and in Turkish and Greek. There were three teachers - Turkish, Jewish, and Greek. Seeing the success of these frameworks, a group of well-educated Jews founded a course for the advancement of the education of the Jewish children. The French name of the course, "Cercle des Intimes" reflected the influence of French culture on the Jewish community.

In 1872, the rabbi of the city, Yaakov Yisrael started lending money with interest, and as security he mortgaged the houses of the borrowers. The borrower was Bechor Alboher.

The giving of loans with interest was not a Jewish monopoly. Those dealing in loans included all levels of society, including farmers, merchants, public figures, members of the military establishment, and religious leaders.

The newspaper 'La Epoca' from Thessaloniki reported on a number of different aspects in the lives of the Jews of Monastir, including community affairs, the rabbinate, support organizations, schools, the socio-economic situation, cultural level, and more. The advertisements in the newspaper reflected a period of thirty years in the annals of the Jews of the city, from 1878 (the Berlin agreement) until 1908 (the Turkish revolution). This was a period of nationalistic feelings, and the drive towards progress, education, and development among Jews of the realm.

Monastir was mentioned for the first time in the newspaper 'La Epoca' on Jan. 30, 1878. The article was about the donation from Jews of the city to help Jews who had emigrated (without mentioning from where or to where). More than forty Jews of the city

contributed to the fund that amounted to between ten to one hundred Piaster. Other contributions came from the Konfino Yeshiva and from two Moslems Turks.

In 1880, Meshulam Moshe Peso, a widower from Monastir, tried to marry a young maiden from the area, using messengers and coins that had adorned the head of his widow. The judges of the city were Moshe Negrin, Yakov Bechar Mordechai, and Yitzhak Gabriel HaCohen.

From the year 1881 on, Monastir served as the center of the villayet (capital) of the region of Monastir that included Albania, Greece and Yugoslavia. This was the seat of the general staff, the third army and the army of Romlia and its staff.

The feelings of the "Alliance" organization towards the traditional religious schools were very negative. "It is obvious that the traditional religious school is an educational institution where the children learn only to read in Hebrew, to translate a little (to the language of the area) and to pray. The poor children are crowded by the hundreds into cramped rooms where they suffocate. Teachers that are called rabbis run the schools. Many of them did not receive sufficient training for the jobs they are doing. The students in these institutions receive almost no knowledge, even in Hebrew. They are ignorant of anything that is not connected to religion."

In the 1880's, the Jews of the city founded schools according to the Alliance model. In the years 1883 - 1884, they opened two elementary schools, each one with four teachers and 150 students. They founded a secondary school with three classes and 160 students.

In 1886 there were nine synagogues in Monastir, the three big ones being the Portugal community synagogue, the Portuguese synagogue and the Aragon community synagogue. A traveler described the synagogue as a structure with three lines of columns which supported the building from inside, and twelve majestic domes on its roof, giving the building the appearance of a Moslem mosque or Turkish Hamam. At the turn of the

century the "Chevrah Kadishah", of Solomon Levy, of Ts'ilbon Franco, of "Ozer Dalim", and the lower synagogue (El Kal de Abasho) were added.

In 1887, a Greek school started up in Monastir where Jews from richer families also studied. This influenced middle-class Jews in the community to establish a Jewish school in which there were four teachers. David Nachmias from Kastoria taught Turkish and French, Bechor Cohen taught Hebrew and religious subjects, and Kucho Kolonomos taught Greek.

Towards the year 1888, a question about a tax exemption for a Talmid Chacham (religious scholar) arose in Monastir. This man had become quite wealthy from business. Even though he was not a great scholar and owned a pigpen, he asked the community to exempt him from taxes. From the question, we can assume that the custom in Monastir was that religious scholars who dealt in commerce would be obligated to pay taxes. The tax was imposed by the leaders of the community on those who were able to pay. It was intended not only for paying state taxes, but also to help the needy and widows, to pay the wages of the rabbi, and to support messengers to the Land of Israel.

In 1888, Rabbi Raphael Abraham Eshkalio, published a book of ethics called "Years of Life," in Monastir. One hundred eighty-six Jews of the city contributed to the publication of the book, including community leaders, one of the rabbis of the city, two educated leaders, treasurers of the "Mishmara" companies, the treasurers of the Yeshiva in honor of Rabbi Rachimim Faragi, and several former Jews who had moved to Skopje.

According to the German Weygand in 1885, the Jewish population of Monastir was 4000 out of 50,000. According to the Serbian Gopcevic, in 1890 the Jewish population of Monastir was 4000 out of 49,950.

In 1890, 250 students learned in the religious school, but Jewish students also learned in the Greek and Volachi (Aromani) schools. Jews also studied in the Turkish secondary school, the French Lazerist school and in the American Protestant school.

In 1894 a representative of the Alliance appealed to the Jewish public in Monastir, "Help yourselves and you will help the Alliance. The central committee of the Alliance will help you if you are willing to sacrifice for the sake of the education of your children."

The newspaper 'La Epoca' of August 24, 1894, reported that Jews of Monastir had yet to benefit from the economic and cultural regeneration that was occurring in the area. The railway connection to Thessaloniki spurred the local Jews to change.

On November 29, 1894, a newspaper report titled "The Jewish community in Monastir " reported that the chief rabbi of Monastir turned to the chief rabbi of Paris, Rabbi Tsadok HaCohen, with a request that the Alliance in Paris help the advancement of the education in the city. Rabbi Tsadok HaCohen asked Joseph Matalon, principal of the Alliance school in Thessaloniki, to visit the city. Joseph Matalon agreed and arranged the visit. He was welcomed by the chief rabbi, the heads of the community committee and they escorted him to the religious school. The people he met all expressed their desire to improve the education system and said that they looked forward to the report from Mister Matalon.

Mark Cohen described details of Matalon's report. In Monastir there were only six wealthy families. Most of the Jews made a living from small businesses or as craftsmen, including tailors, weavers, metalworkers, greengrocers and porters. The women worked like the men. They prepared their family members food needs, including bread, cheese and wine. A German guest by the name of Gustave Weingrad visited the city and was impressed by the Jewish artisans. He claimed that without exception, they all worked hard for their livelihoods and were satisfied with a minimum income. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, it was hard for the community to deal with the foreign education. The non-Jewish schools were much more luxurious and spacious than the Jewish school. The Greek and the American Protestant schools were built of stone, whereas the Jewish school was housed in a poor, decrepit wooden shed.

Raphael Kamchi described the Monastir religious school in his memoirs. There were six classrooms. The students were distributed in the classes without regard to their age and

or to their level of knowledge. The students learned the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, read and wrote stories, Torah scrolls and prayer. They did not learn Hebrew and, therefore, did not understand what they read. The teachers did not work on education and methods of instruction, but emphasized severe discipline. The students got up before sunrise for the morning prayers in the synagogue, and those who did not come on time were punished by being hit with the whip on the bottoms of their feet. There were also cases in which teachers tied a student and lowered him into the pit in the schoolyard where he stayed for hours.

In 1894, a rebellion broke out in the community, headed by Ovadia Joseph Pereira. Pereira opposed the composition of the community committee, whose members were only from the rich families. He claimed that the members of the committee did not worry about the poor of the community and their only action was the giving out of little rolls – one a day. Many of the poor families lived in wooden sheds around the shared courtyard. There were three yards, the "big yard", the "little yard", and the "yard of the bath house". One hundred and fifty families lived in the "big yard" and one hundred in the "little yard. The total number of families in these courtyards was 500, a total of 6,500 people. About 120 families belonged to the rich upper class, and about 60 families belonged to the middle-class. Around 100 families made their living from commerce and from general stores in the villages. The rest were extremely poor, lacking any profession or steady livelihood and served as porters or worked at whatever demeaning labor they could find.

In 1894, Ovadia Joseph Pereira established the "Ozer Dalim" company. The managers were Shlomo Yitzhak Levy, Yechial Raphael Kamchi, Abraham Albinda, Yitzhak Shlomo Kolonomos, Danny Levy, and Raphael Moshe Kimchi. Kucho Levy and Abraham Benjamin Kolonomos visited the poor homes regularly. The company based its budget on membership fees of one Matlik a week, no matter whether a person was rich or poor. The company hired non-Jewish doctors who received 2.5 Piaster for a visit, and provided the sick with medicine and needed food. The company also established a mater-

nity ward and special committees for different needs, including visiting the sick, clothes for the needy, and more.

Monastir had two burial societies ("Chevrah Kadisha"), the upper and the lower. Burial fees were progressive, rich and poor according to their means.

There were nine synagogues In Monastir.

1. Old Portuguese synagogue
2. Aragon Synagogue of the Kamchi family
3. Synagogue of the Chevrah Kadisha.
4. Synagogue of the scholar Yitzhak Levy (near the home of the Levy family)
5. Synagogue of Shlomo Levy (in the special luxurious room).
6. Synagogue of Yechiel Levy (in the special auditorium).
7. Synagogue of Aruesti (in a special prayer hall).
8. Synagogue for children and youth (in the religious school building).
9. Synagogue in a special room for the residents of the courtyards.

The demographic data on the Jews of Monastir seems incorrect. Apparently, there is an error in the number of families. If there were 500 Jewish families whose total number of members came to 6,500, then the average family was 13 people, which seems a bit unlikely. Narsis Levin (see below) reported on approximately six thousand Jews in Monastir.

It is also worthwhile to emphasize that even though Raphael Kamchi listed nine synagogues, it seems that only two, the Portuguese and Aragon, were veritable synagogues and all the others were just prayer rooms.

Narsis Levin, secretary of the Alliance in Paris, noted that Monastir was the second largest city in Macedonia (after Thessaloniki) in which there was an Alliance school. It was founded in 1895. Monastir numbered about 65 thousand residents, more than half of whom were Greeks. In the city there were six thousand Jews who spoke Turkish, Greek, and, of course, Ladino, their mother tongue. The Jews were very practical. They

kept their Jewish belief and the traditions of their forefathers. About five or six families in the community were very wealthy, one hundred and fifty lived well and all the rest managed to eke out a meager livelihood.

The varied nationalities and foreign entities in the city had their effect on the education of the youth. In reality, the non-Jewish governments and the foreign companies in Monastir had their own schools and the Jewish children were welcome.

For those who wanted to give their children a religious education but also a modern one, there was a need for a special school. Indeed, the community established such a school, aside from the religious school, a modern day school, under the guidance of a Jewish teacher from Thessaloniki. In April 1895, the school appointed a principal from the Alliance. As a result, all the Jewish students from the Greek, the Turkish, and the French schools preferred transferring to this school. This was in spite of the fact that the school charged a tuition fee.

With the help of the Baroness Hirsch and the Alliance, they bought a building in a nice area of the city. The school was inaugurated in its new building on September 25, 1896. Four columns supported the entrance. The school was co-ed from 1895 to 1901, when a separate school for girls was founded.

The girls' school opened in a very spacious new building, built with a ten thousand Franc contribution from the Baroness Edmond de Rothschild. The community reorganized the religious school in the new structure that it bought from its own money. In the school, now under the auspices of the Alliance, there were 250 students receiving a religious education as well as knowledge of Turkish and French.

In 1897 a fire broke out in Monastir that destroyed the courtyards and half of the city. There were rumors that representatives of the authorities poured oil in the different areas so that the Jewish quarter would be razed. The poor families were left without shelter and without a penny to their souls. For a while, they lived in tents that the govern-

ment provided for them. In order to build homes for the poor, the government imposed a special tax on the rich Jews in the city.

In 1898 the Turks allowed the Jews to use the old Turkish cemetery in order to build houses for the poor. The district became known as the "bomb sickness" because of a bomb that was found in a cargo of rice brought to the city from the village of Kots'na. After the blaze, messengers from Baron Hirsh came to the city to extend help to the poor families. They succeeded, by means of the Ottoman Bank, to sell the fields of the courtyards and to considerably improve the material situation of Jews in the city.

THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the start of the twentieth century the Jewish community of Monastir experienced spiritual and economic hardships that included changes in the rabbinate, through the lack of a rabbi and spiritual leader in the community, and ending with a severe lack of employment.

According to a report by the Bulgarian Kancov in 1900, the community consisted of 5,500 souls out of a population of about 37 thousand.

The newspaper 'La Epoca' of March 9, 1900, reported on the serious lack of employment in the city. At the same time, the newspaper described the budget of the community and the sources of its income. This included the tax that the community imposed on religious services. The expected income from the tax on meat which was 20,000 Piasters, on wine 8,000 Piasters, and from the renting of buildings, 10,000 Piasters. They used the earnings for bribe payments to the authorities for securing releases from army service. In the same edition, there was a report of a visit by Sa'adi HaLevy from Thessaloniki. He founded an organization called "Ozer Dalim" which was managed by young vigorous Jews in the city. He reported that the principal of the Alliance school in the city, Mister Levy, and the teachers worked hard to help the young generation progress, but regrettably, in the school of 220 students, there were only 30 girls.

On December 27, 1901, the newspaper reported that the community of Monastir received a contribution from the will of Baroness Klara Hirsch to the sum of 5,000 Francs and that rich members of the community agreed to contribute the same amount. The names of the new members of the community committee were chosen. These included Morino Calderon, Raphael Kamchi, Yechial Levy, Shlomo Rachamim, Abraham Moshe, Raphael Ergas, and Calev Kolonomos. The members of the committee worked hard to institute reforms in the community.

Many Jewish children continued to learn in the Lazerist missionary school. At the beginning of the twentieth century more than 150 Jewish children learned in these schools, giving the schools a high status. Many of these children were from wealthy families who valued the importance of contact with the French and European culture.

The newspaper of October 15, 1902, reported that the children in both the boys' and girls' schools were not achieving enough, a fact that caused disputes in the community. The Alliance decided to appoint new principals to both schools, and hired Mr. and Mrs. Ariel from Safed in Israel.

A newspaper story from the end of 1902, reported that the school was about to mark twenty-five years. It was not run by an educational committee, and existed mainly from tuition. Seven years before, David Levy had been appointed as the principal. He ran the school properly and managed to obtain donations from Paris and from other places. Three to four years earlier the community had taken responsibility of the school upon itself. It was said that many parents in the city were sending their children to foreign schools, even to Thessaloniki. The management of the Alliance school increased the number of the students in its classes, resulting in a decrease in the level of the studies. The school lost some of its prestige and many good students left the school. The educational committee did not function, and instead of progress and development, the school deteriorated.

Several of the students in the upper classes who refused to transfer to other classes were forced to do so. Afterward the parents were compelled to hire a private French teacher. The Alliance showed antipathy to the community. Mister Levy and the community committee informed the Alliance in Paris about the damage that was caused to the school and to told them that they expected help in the morale and intellectual advancement of the children.

On February 6, 1913, a letter by the leaders of the community in answer to the criticism and derision of Mister Levy, former principal of the Alliance school, was published in the Ab'nir newspaper in Thessaloniki. In the letter they stated that most families in Monastir

were poor families, but that poverty was not a stain that should detract from respect of the person. It is better to wear used clothes and to be people with feelings, magnanimous, and with pity, than to show off new clothes that conceal a hard and cruel heart.

On March 20 1903, the newspaper "La Epoca" reported on the visit of Shmuel Sa'adi HaLevy from Thessaloniki to Monastir. Sa'adi said that the previous principal of the school, Mister Levy, was not fit for the job and did not cooperate with the leaders of the community. The new situation in the schools was one of growth. The present principal David Aryeh, was a man of great integrity and a hard worker, and it looked like the school would continue to progress. The young generation in Monastir would be a generation of educated youth with a strong ethical background.

In the La Epoca of March 27, 1903, Shmuel Sa'adi HaLevy reported on the women's voluntary society that had been founded two years earlier. The annual membership fee had been set at one Magdi and there were 60 members. The goal of the association was to provide clothes for the poor girls and to provide them with all their schooling needs, books, blackboards and other things. The girls kept to a uniform dress code and sewed work aprons for themselves.

As to the girls' school, even though the building was not the best, there was an excellent teaching staff. Ribika Bonfilio from Constantinople was the principal and taught French. Ortensia Mizrachi was in charge of the kindergarten and Louisa taught Greek and sewing. Everything ran to the satisfaction of the parents and the pleasure of the girls. The teachers held a very successful party for the children on Purim in the auditorium of the city theater.

The community committee intended to build a new building for the boys, while the girls would continue to learn in the present one. The leaders of the community would contribute, and they would solicit donations from other sources. There had been great progress in the city thanks to the principal, Mr. Aryeh, and to city leaders Yechial Kamchi, Joseph Shlomo Ergash, Abraham Levy, Abraham Kamchi, and Yitzhak Nechamah.

From the year 1903, Alliance managed the girls' school. From 1905, the school was housed in a building built by a donation of Baron Edmond de Rothschild.

The newspaper of April 24, 1903, reported that on "Shabbat Hagadol" (the Sabbath before the Passover holiday), there was a party in the Alliance School for Boys with the principal David Aryeh. A choir of older students performed at the party. Students over twenty years old paid a yearly tuition of a half pound. Younger students paid less. Children paid ten Piasters. From this, we see that older children learned in the school alongside students of elementary school age.

In the same issue, the newspaper reported that an organization called 'Shomrei Shabbath' (the keepers of the Sabbath) was founded in the city. They met in the auditorium that seated seventy to eighty people.

The education committee was looking for an appropriate field on which to build the girls' school. There was a need for a new teacher. The education committee and the chief rabbi agreed to improve the conditions of the religious school.

In 1893, the International Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, IMRO, was founded in Thessaloniki. The goal was to free Macedonia from Turkish rule. Within a few years, a revolutionary center for west Macedonia was established in Monastir. Clause five of the regulations of the organization stated that anyone in Turkey could become a member of the organization without regard to sex, religion, or race. Many Jews joined the organization

By 1894, the organization's branch in Monastir had begun a program of propaganda among Jews of the city. At first only 20 Jews joined the organization. After the rebellion in August 1903, their number rose to 80. About 200 Jewish families supported the organization and helped finance its activities. Rich Jewish merchants such as the Pardo and Kamchi Company contributed to the organization generously. Other residents helped the rebellion in different ways. They obtained a number of hidden apartments

that served the leaders of the rebellion. They also helped by smuggling weapons and providing storage.

The rebellion against the Turks began in August 1903 on 'yellindin' - (the day of Elijah the Prophet). Several Jews from Thessaloniki joined the fighting units. Raphael Kamchi from Monastir was one of the founders of the organization and during the rebellion fought in the unit of Georgia Patrob. The unit fought in the areas near Monastir, Ressen, Prispa, and Kostor. The nickname of the unit in the underground was Iskander Big.

Raphael also contributed money (10,000 lavas) to the organization, as well as clothes and blankets. His brother Mentash Kamchi smuggled money, firearms, clothes, and personal sanitary needs to the combatants.

The Turks cruelly put down the rebellion. The leaders of the rebellion were disappointed by Bulgaria, which did not help them despite the fact that it initially supported the organization. Because the organization did not want to completely merge with Bulgaria, Serbia increased its activity in Macedonia. Russia and Austria also got involved and even forced Turkey to accept their adviser as ruler of Macedonia. They also sent an Italian general to reorganize the newly reformed gendarmerie. In the aftermath of the rebellion, many Jews left Monastir.

The newspaper of September 11, 1903, published an article by a man named Mishkal, who reported that several family heads from Monastir met to discuss the economic troubles and ways to overcome them. They concluded that agriculture would be the best solution to their problems. They decided to turn to the Jewish Colonization Association for help. But first, they decided that any family interested in the idea had to pay 50 Turkish pounds. Forty families expressed readiness to pay the required amount; so they sent a letter to the Association, hoping for a good outcome.

'La Epoca' of October 30, 1903, reported that the Alliance wanted to send a new principal, Miss Kantor, to the girls' school. She would arrive in Monastir after the Sukkoth holiday. There was hope that the girls' school would succeed like that of the boys.

The community also made many efforts to build a new building for the religious school whose principal was Mr. Nachmias, an experienced teacher in the community. The community appointed a special committee to establish the school. The Baroness de Hirsh left a large amount in her will for the building of the school. Also several families turned to the Jewish Colonization Association for help in establishing an agricultural farm where people of Monastir would be able to prepare themselves for farm work.

Abraham Mizrahi, head of the education committee of Monastir, reported that in the year 1903 the community contributed 3000 Francs and in 1905 5000 Francs to the Alliance school. Because of this, the community forced the Alliance to allot 10,000 Francs for the school.

A newspaper from August 25, 1904 reported that Monastir was actually ancient Heraclea, which the Greeks called Bitola. In the winter, it was covered in white and in the summer in refreshing green vegetation. There was one street and several alleyways that that needed proper paving. At night it was lit by oil lamps, but the public areas were empty of people. The city contained Moslems, Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Vlachs and Jews. The Jews lived in the two ugliest quarters of the city. Some lived in the courtyards (Kortiz'os) in narrow houses, but only the rich families were able to live in homes that were decent.

The community was not very old. It was established after the exile from Spain. It was easy to identify the first families because they established the "Chevrah Kadishah" and carried Spanish names like Calderon, Aruesti, and Kamchi. It seems that after the exile from Spain these families reached cities on the Adriatic Sea and from there came to Monastir. The first Jews in Monastir came from Albania and Greece. The Jews of Monastir lived peacefully with their neighbors and with the authorities. They were merchants, craftsmen, porters, agents, and tailors who made a meager livelihood. Most of them found it difficult to make a decent living. Most did not own property. The community was also very poor. The leaders of the community were notables. The income of the community came from the taxes on honey and wine. In order to balance its budget

the city received help from other cities. The community also gave much aid to the many needy people in the city.

"Ozer Dalim", an association that provided the sick with every they needed, such as medicines, milk, and food, received the community's commendaof a worthy institution. The organization also had a doctor to care for the sick.

The newspaper of February 14, 1908, reported that Zaki Bi Albala, who was president of the commercial tribunal of Monastir, was appointed as the general administrator in the city of Samsun. The newspaper congratulated him and wished him success in his job and praised him for the respect he had won from the authorities.

In the newspaper of March 14, 1908, a letter was published from a resident of Monastir, signed A. M.E. In it, he stated that one of the members of the new education committee in the city sent his son to the school of the Lazerists. He asked the question: "How could a person like that serve on the education committee of Jewish schools?" Our schools are inferior to those of the Christians and the reason is that the people see that the members of the education committee send their boys to the foreign schools. This leads them to think that the Alliance school teachers are inferior and unworthy of their roles".

Even after this letter, the program of the religious school continued as planned. The parents were for the most part, satisfied with the curriculum and education, but sometimes there were isolated incidents such as one argument between the principal and one of the parents that even led to fisticuffs. The worst that happened because of the dispute was that they closed the school for a whole day.

The newspaper of May 15, 1908, reported that for ten to twelve years the community had had no chief rabbi. The ones that officiated in the city in those years filled their role honorably, but, unfortunately, one of them died a year after coming to the city, and another left without returning. The community urgently needed a chief rabbi who could settle religious problems and any disputes that might break out. A Chief Rabbi would be

able to affect reforms in cooperation with the leaders of the community. The editors of the newspaper turned to Rabbi Yakov Meir to find a rabbi who was suitable for the community.

In the newspaper of May 19, 1908, A.M. Ergas, president, announced that a number of honorable women founded a choir of students in the Alliance girls' school and performed for the public. Meir Moshe, Calev Chai, and Shlomo Kolonomos were among the people that enjoyed the choir and contributed to the school.

'La Epoca', on the 10th of Sivan reported that three years ago, a company was set up to distribute the handiwork of poor women students enabling them to be independent. The company thanked Alberto Josef Schami who was born in Monastir and currently resided in Thessaloniki, for raising fifty benefactors for the company. They also reported that "The Semite Language Lovers Club" was celebrating their first anniversary on the first day of the Shavuot festival, May 5, 1908.

On June 9 1908, they reported that on the first day of the Shavuot holiday the synagogue in Monastir celebrated the first anniversary of the non-profit "Love, Help and Work Group". Those present included the treasurers of the Aragon and Portugal communities and a choir of the boys' Alliance school. Haim Ayalon, a teacher in the religious school, spoke.

Contributions to the company came from Vida Yitzhak Majo, Sarah Mirkada Albla, Matatia Albala, David Toledano, Silbi Yakov Pardo, Rebecca Shabbat Kasorla, Klara Moshe Ergas, Madam Haim Faraggi, Yitzhak Masaod, Esther Rachamim Levy, Yechial S. Kamchi, Moshe Dan Levy, and Shaul Yitzhak Russo. Matityahu Shabbtai Kamchi contributed ten aprons for needy girls. Others that contributed included the "Ozer Dalim" company, the metalworkers' union, the greengrocers, and the "Hebrew Language". Rabbi Yakov Meir wrote a letter of support to the company and enclosed a contribution of 5 pounds.

The newspaper of June 16, 1908, reported that the committee was occupied with the problem of finding a chief rabbi. Mister Abraham Kapoano, a member of the education committee, wanted to resign because of a disagreement with the other members. Joseph Masoud, the French teacher in the Alliance school, wrote a series of articles in the 'La Epoca', defaming the former principal of the religious school, Mister Alnekaveh. He was forced to resign after this. The defamations were lead by A. M. E. (apparently A. M. Ergas). Haim Ailion, the Hebrew teacher in the religious school also resigned.

David Aryeh, the principal of the Alliance school created a special fund with the aid of the treasurers of the communities and the meat dealers, in order to send Moshe, the ten-year-old son of Moshe Ashal, to Vienna for an urgent operation.

In the months July – August 1909, there was an exchange of letters between the leaders of the Monastir community, among them the president, Yechial R. Kamchi, and the Chief Rabbi in Istanbul, Rabbi Haim Nachum. The leaders complained that it had been a long time since there was a chief rabbi in the community. The last rabbi that had officiated in the community stayed less than two years and had to leave because the community could not afford his wages. The leaders of the community asked the Chief Rabbi to find a rabbi that would be able to lead and manage the needs of the community. They emphasized the importance of the rabbi being experienced and knowing Turkish and French. They promised to pay him an annual salary of 12 Turkish pounds, to provide him with a residential apartment and room to receive audiences, as well as an assistant. The leaders asked that the candidate rabbi come to Monastir before Rosh Hashanah and stay until after Yom Kippur so the community and its leaders could test his mettle.

The leaders of the community intended to impose a tax on each member of the community, equivalent to 25% of their state tax, in order to finance the rabbi; but some of the people in the community were opposed to the idea. As a result, the leaders abandoned the idea to hire a rabbi for the community, and the community remained without a spiritual leader. The leaders had no choice other than to notify the Chief Rabbi that the community was in a serious financial situation and could not afford the required ex-

penses to support the synagogue and the Alliance schools. The community already had a deficit of 250 Turkish pounds. The teachers and other debtors were demanding what was owed them, and there was no financial savior in sight. The situation was clear.

This is an appropriate place to bring in the words of Haim Gerber on the status of the guilds in the Ottoman Empire. Jewish workers and merchants were organized in guilds. The purpose of these organizations was to guarantee a just division of raw materials between the members of the guild. Every guild defined for itself the traditional products that members would make or sell and that were special only to them. Every guild tried to prevent members of other guilds from dealing in its business.

On February 17, 1909, the "El Tiempo" (French?) newspaper gave a report appeared on the celebration in the Monastir Alliance school. The boys' Alliance school had their annual party on February 6, 1909. The party was a success the likes of which were never before seen. As was the custom, the traditional party for the new the governor took place. The governor, Pachri Pasha truly showed great sympathy towards the community.

For a week the women's committee, Mrs. Moaz Mizrahi and Mrs. Yechiel R. Kamchi, with the help of the school principal Mr. N. Benisti, gave out invitations. The turnout was tremendous. Another women's committee with members Esther Pashi Effendi and Rivkah Modiano decorated the classrooms. The party started at 9:00 and continued until 6:00 in the morning. The governor was received with the singing of the official anthem. Also contributing to the success of the evening were the members of the education committee, Moize Mizrahi and Izaak Kolonomos, who had been helping the principal, Mr. Benisti in the advancement of education in the community.

All these people worked very hard to be sure that nothing was amiss. The senior leaders, political, civilian and military were present. Mayor Niazi Bey (the law hero), the general consul of Russia, the consul of France and his wife, the commercial Bulgarian attaché, the Greek consul and his interpreter attended. The Thessaloniki bank manager, manager of the Oriental bank, the controller of the accounts of the republic, and almost

everyone from the Jewish community were also there, as well as non-Jewish friends that felt at home.

In 1909 Joseph Uziel from Thessaloniki came to Monastir in an attempt to promote Zionist activity. He succeeded in his work and aroused the interest of many young people in the Zionist movement and the Land of Israel.

In 1910, the number the Jews in Monastir reached seven thousand. Written records showed that, around the year 1878, an exodus of Jews from Macedonia and Monastir began that justified the creation of an "Emigrant Fund".

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF MONASTIR FROM THE DAYS OF THE SERB-CROAT-SLOVENE KINGDOM UNTIL ANNIHILATION 1918 – 1943

(The city named Monastir becomes Bitola)

According to the peace agreement that was signed in Versailles at the end of 1918, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom was created. The Macedonia region became known as Southern Serbia. The city of Monastir became Bitola, the city's original name before the Turkish occupation began.

The new regime did not promise peace for the Jews of Bitola. In 1921, the Jews of the city were accused of the murder of a Christian youth in order to use his blood for baking matzos for Passover. Jews were attacked in the streets by agitators and beaten severely. Other rioters were satisfied with swearing, curses and insults. Only with the intervention of the Vladika, the head of the Provoslavic church was the quiet returned. They found the "murder victim" safe and sound, and everything returned to normal.

In 1922 the Thessaloniki newspaper "El Pueblo" reported that on March 17 Shmuel Pesach from Bitola was accused of kidnapping and murdering a Christian boy. A big mob attacked the Jewish quarter. The Commander of the police got involved, arrested five of the rioters, and restored order to the area. In 1926, there was another case of blood libel. Two Christian children were brought by agitators to the basement of a Jewish house and were told to scream for help. The incident reached the Commanders of the police who came to the place and heard the cries of the youths, "Jews want our blood." The Jewish doctor of the city Dr. Moshe Gerassi stood between the two groups and questioned the youths. During the investigation, the two admitted that they were forced by the agitators to do what they had done. They also pointed out the agitators who were then arrested.

THE COMMUNITY AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

The Jewish community charter was approved by the Yugoslav justice minister and states:

Abiding by the rules of the kingdom, the community will be in charge of the religious and cultural needs of its members and will facilitate religious freedom of worship including the building and upkeep of synagogues, houses of prayer, and other cultural and social institutions. The charter fixes the number of members on the community committee, the method of their selection, their salaries, holidays, terms of dismissal, etc. It also includes the detailed earnings and expenses of the community, the rights of employees, bylaws, etc.

The community income is derived from the following sources. Taxes paid by the members of the community according to their financial standing; a yearly tax of between 30 dinars for the poor up to 1,000 dinars for the rich, sale of permanent seats in the synagogues, earnings from different services rendered in the prayer houses, donations (from the directorate of the municipality), wills, holy donations, the community institutions fund, and rent from buildings and other real estate owned by the community. The community owned 40 different buildings and received rent from 173 apartments.

The world union of Sephardi Jews, which was founded during the thirteenth Zionist Congress in Carlsbad by delegates from the Land of Israel and from the Spanish Diaspora around the world, sought to establish a Sephardic federation at the Congress and in the World Zionist Congregation.

Bitola was among the cities that were asked to join the initiative. The Association turned to Rabbi Shabbtai Djain, the community's Rabbi, and asked for details about the community and its institutions. From the reply of Rabbi Djain of November 1, 1924, we can

determine that the heads of the community were Yitzhak Nechamah and Moshe Aron Ashal.

The community numbered some 810-820 families. The situation of Jews of the city was dire because of the Balkans War and World War I. The individuals' tax (for the taxpayers of the community) was small - only 150 dinars per year. The budget of the community was set according to its income, which they derived from property rentals under its authority, from kosher meat, from a limited tax on wine and on kosher food, from taxes on weddings at the rate of 2% of the dowry, and from the sale of matzos, etc.

SCHOOLS - The community had a partly autonomous school that was supported by the government. The community owned the school building. The Alliance school building that had operated in the past was partly destroyed, but was owned by the community, which hoped to rebuild it. The school had four official teachers who received their salary from the government. Classes were mixed, boys and girls together, and contained only Jewish children. There were five classes, one secondary level and four regular classes. The curriculum was nationalistic. According to Rabbi Djain, they did not teach Hebrew until he came, but since then, it became an important subject in the curriculum.

CHARITY ORGANIZATION – "Ozer Dalim" helped impoverished sick people and took responsibility for their medical treatment and medicine. More serious cases were sent to hospitals in the other cities such as Belgrade and Vienna for treatment. The organization had a synagogue whose income was dedicated to the functions of the organization. Likewise "Ozer Dalim" had income from rent of warehouses it owned, from donations, and from endowments.

GRANTS FOR THE NEEDY – Minza de Alivos Provis (Home for Feeding Needy Students) Close to 200 students daily received a hot lunch that included meat. "Grants for the needy" was supported by donations from Jews of the city and former residents who immigrated to America.

DRESSING THE UNCLOTHED - took care of the education of the children and provided them with clothes. The fund was financed by Jews from the city that immigrated to America.

CHEVRA KADISHA – BURIAL SOCIETY - two burial societies were operational and contributed some 25,000 dinars to the community budget. Uri Oren reported that those who could afford to pay for the burial services were charged, and those who could not pay were exempted. Shmuel Kalderon from Kfar Sirkin testified that one company served the wealthy and the other served the rest. On the right and left of the gate of the cemetery there were two rooms. According to Shmuel Kalderon, the right room served the priests and the left room was used for the purification of the dead. He reported that, to the best of his memory, in the 1930's, David Kalderon and Dalisia Pardo served as "washers" who took care of the purification rites of the dead.

"BIKUR HOLIM"- Uri Oren reported on a "bikur holim" fund that functioned in Bitola. This fund supported the families that remained without livelihood in the aftermath of the sickness of the family breadwinner. This included not only the father of the family, but also an older son on whose work and income the family depended. Special agents that visited the families of the sick gave the grant to the family every Thursday, towards the Sabbath.

According to Uri Oren, the "bikur holim", " grants for the needy ", and dressing the unclothed " funds were managed by committees of five to seven members, every committee with a chairman, a treasurer and a comptroller. The managers of the funds kept in constant touch with former Jews of city that emigrated to the United States and to South America who helped with their contributions.

The main regular source of income for these organizations was a special tax called "Peche" (from the Ladino word Pecho meaning chest), that every Jew in the community paid according to his ability. This tax also served to buy firewood for the city's poor to light their heaters in the winter, as well as to purchase flour and other needs for them before the holidays.

Another source of income to finance these and other expenses was the widely accepted custom of auctioning the right to perform certain religious rituals. For example, the rabbi of the synagogue would auction the right to uncover the silk wrapping of the Torah scrolls. In the same manner, the right to read from the Torah was sold to the highest bidder. We see from here that the Torah scrolls in Bitola were clothed in a fancy garment and not encased in a box as was customary in other Eastern communities. In Bitola, those that were honored by being called up to the Torah did not do the reading. They stood next to a "baal koreh" (a designated reader) and followed his reading.

COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION - This association was founded by Rabbi Djain to help needy students and was funded from donations made by former Jewish residents of Monastir who immigrated to America. In 1924, the fund accumulated some 100,000 dinars, which yielded interest of 7000 dinars a year.

Aside from the Monastir benevolent institutions, there were also several social, cultural and public action clubs.

"Club de los Intimos" – The Intimate Club - to distribute culture and knowledge among the Jews of the city. It had 60 members. Its financial state was bad and it struggled to pay the rent for the building that the community owned.

Club of the revival - Zionistic youth club.

Club "Dressing the Unclothed "- supported by the leaders of the association, members and other supporters.

Calisthenics Club- named for Joseph Trumpeldor.

Torah study Club – founded by the scholar Yitzhak Elisafan – teacher, chazzan, actor, and director, who came to Bitola from Thessaloniki. Elisafan (Thessaloniki, 1870 – Haifa, 1940) taught his students Hebrew songs and directed plays in the spirit of national Zionism. The students would parade in the streets singing Hebrew songs.

From a letter by Rachamim Joseph Israel, a teacher in the Bitola religious school to the Chief Sephardic Rabbi Yaakov Meir and to the president of the Sephardic community committee in Jerusalem from October 6, 1926, we learn that Bitola had four synagogues that organized an appeal for the Sephardic community committee in Jerusalem. Rabbi Israel apologized that the total sum of the donation was small and, in his words. "I hope that it will be received from our holy district with gratitude and thanks, the sum being small due to our city still being in ruins."

From here, we learn that the Jews of Monastir were not able to rebuild their homes that were ruined during the Balkan wars and WW1 (1912 - 1918).

Max Luria investigated the Ladino language (Judaio Espanol or as it was referred to by Jews of Bitola, Espanol). He came from New York to Bitola in order to learn and to investigate the Ladino of the Jews there which had a special quality of its own. He publicized his study in a book and in it described the city and its Jews. He claimed that in the past, Jews from Bitola had moved to the city of Kastoria in Greece, where the Espanol spoken there was very similar to the language spoken in Bitola.

He found that the women of Bitola were modest and chaste, since they refused to be interviewed by him. In his opinion, their refusal resulted from social and moral limitations. As a rule, they avoided contact with any foreigners. In his words, "the youngsters of the community that were educated spoke French among themselves, but the younger generation adopted the more contemporary Ladino dialect of Thessaloniki which they considered to be more progressive."

Max Luria also studied the socio-economic situation of the Bitola Jews. He found them to be divided into two classes, a small upper class with money and influence, and the vast majority that had to struggle to make a living. There was no middle class that could be a bridge between the two.

The majority was mainly petty traders and there were too many of them in their respective trades for it to be very profitable. The Jews in Bitola also found their livelihood as money-changers, metal workers, rag-merchants, cobblers, porters, and collectors of old clothes, a trade that was exclusive to Jews. As a rule, the possibilities of large scale trade were very limited. Not a single Jew dealt in agriculture.

The older Jews adopted themselves to the Turkish style of dress. The younger generation adopted a Western dress style.

Max Luria also reported on the condition of the Jewish homes. In his words, "in the past the Jews lived in the "cortigo" (big courtyard) surrounded by a wall. Fire and wars destroyed the courtyard, and the Jews were forced to move to another area where they also lived in their own quarter. This neighborhood encompassed both sides of Karageorgiva Street from the market to the end of the street. He indicated there were no limitations on places where Jews could reside; nevertheless, it seems that they willingly chose to live in a cramped quarter of their own.

Max Luria did not leave out the Jewish cemetery and found that the condition of the graves could not serve as a source for an historical and socio-economic study of the community, its rabbis and leaders, because until to the beginning of the 19th century it was not the custom to engrave inscriptions on the tombstones.

During the first thirty years of the 20th century public positions in the community were held by:

Yechial R. Kamchi, president, Bechar Yitzhak Kasorla, president, 5686, Yaakov Rachamim Israel, president, 5688 – 5689; Shmuel Yitzhak Massot, secretary, 5684-5685; Shalom Nechamah secretary, 5689; Moshe Aron Ashhal, member of the directorate of the community, 5684; Solomon Nachmias, secretary, 5684; Asher Yakov Nachmias, president, 5684-5685; Mantash Kolonomos, president in the beginning twenties; Shlomo Yitzhak Kolonomos, president 5672.

SURVEY OF RABBI AVRAHAM ROMANO, BEGINNING OF 1932

In 1932, the rabbi of Bitola Rabbi Avraham Romano publicized a report describing the severe situation of Jews in Bitola. In his words, Bitola did not benefit from any industrial progress. The city did not even have one modern factory. For the most part, the small factories engaged only one laborer. The city had a number of small merchants, mostly engaged in the haberdashery trade.

Many of the tradesmen were not experts in their fields. The cobbler could not make new shoes; only repair old ones. The tailor could not sew a new suit; only use needle and thread to mend the torn garment. Storeowners who lost their assets started to lease little gardens and to grow fruits and vegetables. If the father of the family was not successful in supporting his family he would take his son out of school and send him to the street to sell fruits, vegetables, seeds, or toilet paper. Children were sent to work as apprentices for artisans on the assumption that they would be able to earn something within three or four months from their new craft. However, those crafts that afforded income during the Ottoman era now failed to support their workers.

At times, a father would get his son employment in the shop where he worked as a messenger, thereby sentencing him to work for the rest of his life without a decent profession. The girls were sent out to work as housekeepers for gentile families. Therefore, the Jews of Bitola, adults and children, were descending into a life of poverty and unskilled labor. The number of peddlers on the streets increased, the maximum income being 120 dinars a week, the equivalent of much less than one English pound.

It was common to get married at the age of 18 -20 and the young couples were compelled to live with their parents. Rent was about 70 - 90 dinars a week, which was nearly a week's salary. The Jews lived in dilapidated, dark houses putting them in veritable danger. The pressure and the congestion were tremendous. Housewives toiled all day in vain to impose some sort of order and cleanliness in their tiny abodes.

The average family diet was meager and poor. In the winter, they ate mainly beans, in the summer lettuce, eggplant, green pepper and watermelon. Once a week, on the Sabbath, the menu included a small portion of meat.

Rabbi Avraham Romano also described an image of the Jews of Bitola as stooped, fearful but not lazy in the Oriental fashion. "He was suspicious and had no confidence in the authorities. He was miserly rather than thrifty. He neglected his exterior appearance, and had little ambition to improve his condition. He was a fatalist and unwilling to take his fate into his own hands.

"He suffered in silence up to the boiling point when he would have an outburst. He was superstitious and the minimal education he received in religious school made him view life through the prism of religion.

"He did not take responsibility for his dire straits but rather blamed the community, the authorities of the state, the Zionist leaders and the representatives of the benevolent organizations. He personally was not accountable!"

In defense of the Jews of Monastir and in contradiction to Rabbi Avraham Romano, Zvi Rothmiller responded: "This description of the Jews of Monastir reflects a very capitalistic viewpoint of society. Those same qualities that Romano cites regarding his congregation could be likewise extolled; The Jew is poor and modest; he does not meddle in the affairs that do not concern him, he follows the lessons from the Mishna's "Sayings of the Fathers": 'keep your distance from the authorities'. He is thrifty, frugal and happy with his lot; he does not primp, he does not boast and does not try to be self-important; he puts his faith in G-d and accepts his fate patiently. He is full of admiration and unwavering faith in the religion of his fathers, he is G-d fearing, traditionally observant and looks at life with humility, piety, and innocence."

In 1932, Rabbi Romano published a comprehensive survey on the Jews of Bitola and sent it to those with whom he corresponded. The survey contained a detailed list of the Jewish families and their trades in descending order.

Trade	Number Engaged
Unemployed	127
Porters	101
Small Stores	69
Cobblers	62
Market Vendors of Fruits and Vegetables	61
Rag-Peddlers	56
Dealers	47
Flour Dealers	40
Butchers	24
Clerks	23
Grocery Store Workers	22
Tailors	19
Metal Workers	19
Milk Dealers	14
Leather Dealers	10
Tooth Technicians	1
Doctors	1
Lawyers	1
Total	697
Others, Not Listed In the Survey	128
Total No. Of Families	825

Rabbi Romano listed the 825 families according to their financial status – 88 well off, 139 middle class, 331 poor.

He also described the school system in Bitola and the makeup of the Jewish children in the system. Out of 120 Jewish pupils in the elementary school, only 4-5 make it to the highest class. In 1932, 42 pupils were disqualified for First Grade in the elementary school due to failing on their entrance exams, a number that represents more than two-thirds of those tested. According to Rabbi Romano, the reason for their failure was first,

their lack of knowledge of Serbian, the official language, second, the level of the malnutrition and the harsh living conditions of the children. The rabbi predicted a bleak future. In his words they were trapped in circumstances which blocked the way to a general education and to the widening of their horizons. Soon these children would be seen as rag-merchants in the streets, dependent on the community.

These words of Rabbi Romano attest to his broad-mindedness and to his understanding that religious education alone perpetuated a cultural and economic deprivation. It was important to try to give the children a wide-ranging education that would permit them to earn their livelihood with respect while enabling them to integrate economically, socially and culturally.

On March 13 1932, a convention lead by Lazar Abramovitch took place at the office of the Jewish association in Belgrade. The discussion concerned the survey that Rabbi Avraham Romano had taken in Bitola, in order to bring the dire circumstances of the Bitola community to the attention of the Sephardic Jews in Yugoslavia. Copies of the survey were sent to 'Benevolencia' a benevolent association Sarajevo Jews, and to the "Association of Spanish Jews" in Belgrade. There was an exchange of letters between the 'Benevolencia ' and Lazar Abramovitch, chairman of the Jewish association in Belgrade, on ways the association could act. They established a committee of five members that discussed the suggestion of the 'Benevolencia ' to accept several Bitola youths as apprentices in the workshops and to teach them productive professions. According to 'Benevolencia', the communities of Zagreb, Skopje, and Novisad needed to be alerted. They pointed out that the material situation and the sanitation of Jews in Bitola was very poor. The community was rife with helpless poverty.

The suggestions of Rabbi Avraham Romano to the convention were:

- To send young people from Bitola to other places, in order to learn productive professions.

- To strive, in cooperation with the Zionist organizations, to send some of the youths to learn agriculture.
- After finishing 6th grade, (which was equivalent to the second year of high school), there was no point in continuing to invest money in them so they should be sent away from the city.

The suggestions of Lazar Abramovitch were:

- The communities Belgrade and Sarajevo would accept ten apprentices.
- The association would turn to the world directorate of the Jewish National Fund in the Land of Israel to ask for help in establishing a Jewish agricultural village for Bitola Jews in the Galilee.
- The communities of Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Novisad would accept 20 students from Bitola in their schools.
- The community of Belgrade would absorb ten additional students.
- The community of Belgrade would take it upon itself to collect 25,000 dinars to help the community of Bitola.

An argument broke out in the convention. Rabbi Avraham Romano maintained that the leaders of the convention should make a tour in order to examine the conditions in the city. He was opposed to sending the children away from Bitola, in order not to separate them from their parents. It was necessary to take any measures possible in order to help the children in their community.

The chairman of the community of Belgrade, Raphael Pinchi supported the position of the rabbi as to not sending away the children. Dr. Margolis said that the survey was a reasonable basis for action. Helena de Majo spoke on behalf of the organizations of the women in Belgrade and announced that the organizations of the women were ready to extend a hand, but they lacked financial resources. Aaron Alkalai and Leon de Leon said that they should create a program that was more inclusive.

A letter from Dr. David Albalak, who was not able to participate in the convention, was read. In the letter he suggested sending a delegation to Bitola and expressed his regrets that the "Jewish National Fund" was not invited to the convention, since they had already offered to take action. Likewise, he emphasized that the first offers of help for the Jews of Bitola actually came from the "Ashkenazi" Jews in Yugoslavia like Zvi Rothmiller. It was decided to establish a joint committee with the Zionist association, to be chaired by the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia (Rabbi Yitzhak Alkalai). This committee would arrange a visit to Bitola in order to organize the aid.

Bitola in 1936 in the Eyes of Zionist Socialist Leader, Dr. Rudolph Buchwald

Mass emigration of Jews from Bitola to the United States, Chile, and to Greece and Aliyah to the Land of Israel diluted the city of Jews and worsened their economic, social, and cultural situation. In 1936 the Zionist Association of Yugoslavia decided to examine the situation of the Jews in Bitola in order to offer ways to help. Dr. Rudolph Buchwald, the secretary general of the Zionist association was sent to the city. He toured the city and published his findings. He described the people thus:

"The elderly stick to their teachings and from their eyes one sees the wisdom of the ages. The Jews wore Caftans and donned fezzes with nobility. Many wore rags, the remnants of uniforms of various armies that crossed these areas: Turkish, Bulgarian, Serb and German. They were witnesses to the area's transitions, revolutions and wars. They were affected by different cultures: ancient Byzantine and Greek, latter day Turkish, Albanian, Serb and Bulgarian. Every one of them left their mark on the Jews. Never the less, they maintained their However, they held on to their distinctiveness which was like none other."

Buchwald described the Jewish quarter and its residents, "The neighborhood of the Jews (cortijos as they called it) was situated between the market and the Jewish cemetery which was outside the city. These were small rundown houses, prone to collaps-

ing. The Jews themselves of their initiative lived in separate quarters in order to live together and to keep their Judaism intact.

Today, the chains that bind the Jews to this quarter are the shackles of poverty. The more we walk into the ghetto, the houses are more dilapidated and dark. Sunshine does not reach them. Every room serves a whole family, with no light and cleanliness. We also see the destroyed homes as piles of rubble from the bombings of the last war. On many houses we found a Star of David and signature in Hebrew of the year the house was built.

Even political propaganda penetrated to the Jewish neighborhood. It was possible to read remnants of posters that were intended for the Jewish voter. They were written in the Hebrew letters in the Ladino language. This showed that the Hebrew and Ladino languages dominated the communication among the Jews. There were also printed pamphlets and leaflets, slogans and commercial advertisings. So too could be found in many homes, tomes preaching humility and piety from Bitola scholars such as Haim Raphael Ishkalio, Shlomo Kamchi, and others.

On the outskirts of the neighborhood, sheds were set up by the community to serve as a communal farm for the poor. Everything that I saw up to this, was virtually luxurious compared to the twenty or so wooden sheds pressed side by side around a musty yard. They were nothing more than dark lairs where families of six to ten souls lived. The children were pale and shriveled, although some were handsome with a glimpse of intelligence."

Buchwald also described the feeling of Jewish unity and the general hopelessness: "Outside the houses, women wear fancy head coverings made of coins. They do laundry, cook, and clean. Their whole lives are outdoors in the side alleys. During the stuffy summer nights, they send the children out into the streets. Here they sleep. These nights change the alley into one big bedroom."

"A young us girl of 17 carrying a baby girl came over to us. She was the youngest sister, the ninth sibling in her family. She told about their poverty. The father is happy on a day that he can bring home 5-6 dinars. He is despondent. He does not expect anything and suffers in passive indifference."

More on the Jewish women in south Serbia (Macedonia) and in Bitola:

"Today the woman is responsible for all aspects of life in the Ghetto, as a mother and as a housewife. The Zionist movement brought some relief. The woman, in spite of her lack of education, deals with the children's education. She also sends her girls to get an education. She herself is devout, a mixture of tradition and superstition. They believe in demons, the evil eye and good-luck charms".

Regarding the children and the Jewish youth: "In Bitola there are several hundred children lacking discipline or education. The classrooms are unreasonable. A Jewish kindergarten teacher commented: "How is it possible to work with the children when the majority of them come to the kindergarten without having had a slice of bread or a drop of milk?" How important, therefore, was the initiative of Mrs. Diana Romano from Zagreb to establish an orphanage for about 140 orphans in the city with the goal of sending them to Israel."

Buchwald nevertheless found a ray light in the organized Jewish youth: "On our tour we were met by the Zionist youth group "Strength and Bravery" which is affiliated with the Maccabi organization. They led us to their club whose rooms are bright and decorated with pictures and slogans. In the entrance we were received with the spirited singing of "The Song of the Jezre'el Valley".

This ray of light did not succeed in brightening the dusk of the lives of the Bitola Jewish children. This is how Leon Kamchi described the actions of the community committee for the sake of the children: "We help them as much as possible. It is not reasonable to assume that the benevolent societies can do more than in other places, considering that the number of wealthy community members is limited.

The children feel that they receive alms. They eat poor food in the soup kitchen and receive old uniforms instead of clothes. At times, it is necessary to separate the children from their parents, even forcibly. The children see around themselves only stale bread, limited horizons and ignorance. When they grow up in these surroundings, there is little choice but to go in his father's footsteps, to be a porter, peddler, or in the best case, a store helper."

Buchwald finished his visit with a very important meeting in the Aragon synagogue. Buchwald described the synagogue and the participants:

"The building was a successful combination of Spanish and eastern style, including many carpets, antique chairs, ancient candelabras and the heavy adornment of Holy Ark. The synagogue was full to overflowing. Even the old people that did not understand Serbo-Croatian came to hear about the Land of Israel. Everyone listened very attentively. The women's section was also full of women whose heads were covered. The women of Bitola showed a great interest in the Land of Israel."

Jews from Bitola who immigrated to the United States stayed in contact with their family members and with other members of the community. They were aware of their distress and tried to help. In September 1937, Jews from Bitola in Indianapolis established a fund to aid to their community called the "Jewish Welfare Fund of Indianapolis". They raised money for garments for the sake of children of the community and inspired people of the communities in New York and Rochester to do the same. The garments were sent to Bitola after they were released from customs in Serbia, on the recommendation of Rabbi Yitzhak Alkalai from Belgrade. The day the garments arrived in Bitola was a festive day for the people of the community, who paraded around the Jewish neighborhood in their new garments. Jews from Indianapolis contributed between 500 and 600 dollars annually for the sake of members of their former community. Donations were also sent from communities in New York and Rochester.

Rabbi Avraham Romano made an additional survey on December 1, 1939, and published it on September 9, 1940. According to the survey, on Passover 1939, 318 fami-

lies were listed as receiving aid from the community. Those families numbered 1,426 individuals compared with 294 families - 1,515 individuals who received aid in 1931. In other words, the circle of poverty grew by an additional 271 people.

The rabbi also described the condition of the homes of Jews of the city. In his words, several families lived under one roof. They maintained joint housekeeping and worked together. Parents lived with their married children, or with their girls and their grooms. Many tried to build their own nest, but only a few succeeded. Several returned to the bosom of the expanded family for financial reasons.

Below is the list of Jews that worked for their livelihood, according to trade:

Trade	Number	Trade	Number
Sales Clerks	89	Washers	8
Porters	70	Holy Articles	8
Unemployed	63	Vegetable Farmers	8
Cobblers	57	Street Cleaners	8
Vegetable Sellers	54	Students	7
Rag-Merchants	43	Ironers	6
Dealers	43	Barbers	6
Day Workers	42	Glaziers	6
Peddlers	34	Agents	6
Commercial Agents	29	Sewers	6
Beggars	29	Metal Workers	5
Rag Tailors	26	Diners	4
Small Stores	24	Exporters	4
Butchers	22	Coal Dealers	4
Servants	21	Restaurateurs	3
Tinsmith	17	Tailors	3
Dealers—Chickens	16	Doctors	3

Fruit Farmers	14	Firemen	2
Tanners	14	Carpenters	2
Coffee Houses	11	Engineers	1
Wagon Drivers	10	Lawyers	1
Money Changers	9	Painters	1
Clerks	9	Dentists	1
Total			849

From the list it is clear, that the number of employed was greater than the total number of families which shows that other family members, aside from the father, went to work. There is no list of data on working women. A lot of evidence shows that Jewish girls worked as housekeepers, mainly for gentiles. A comparison between the survey of 1932 and the survey of 1939 shows that the number of workers rose from 570 to 849. New trades that Jews of Bitola adopted between the surveys were day laborers, hawkers, beggars, chickens dealers, café owners, wagon drivers, money changers, fruit and vegetable farmers, glaziers, barbers, metal workers, small restaurants owners, coal dealers, exporters, tailors, carpenters, firemen and painters.

In the years 1931–1940, 1,090 Jews left Bitola (303 families and 129 singles), 569 males and 521 females. Four hundred and twenty nine moved to the Land of Israel, 205 to Zagreb, 181 to Skopje, 162 to Belgrade, 27 to Novisad, 42 to South America, 26 to Greece, 7 to Bosnia, 7 to Shtip, and 5 to Novi Pazar.

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT IN BITOLA

From the 1920s, Bitola was full of vibrant activity, with many Zionist organizations being founded and intensive activity, aimed at fulfilling several goals. First, instilling a love for the Land of Israel, and guiding the people of the community towards productive professions - especially agriculture. Another aim was to establish courses in Hebrew, establish clubs, as well as organizing youth movements for learning and working.

They founded cultural and benevolence organizations in a Zionist atmosphere and accustomed the community to contribute to Jewish national institutions like JNF and Keren Hayesod. They sent youths to learn agriculture in the agricultural ranches near Bitola and in the agricultural school "Mikveh Yisrael" in Palestine. Another aim was to organize Aliyah (immigration) to the Land of Israel, (this was especially so in the cases of young women) whether under guise of tourism or through legal licenses, if obtainable from the British Mandate.

The community's Rabbi, Shabtai Djian in his letter for the unification of Jerusalem in the summer of 1924, wrote "the word Zion fills the heart of every Jew in Bitola."

On November 29, 1925, Leon Kamchi was asked his opinion on the subject of the Land of Israel. The bulletin was written in Ladino and published by the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem. He wrote:

"The bulletin has special usefulness and is of special value because it turns the attention of Spanish Jews in the Diaspora to what is happening in the Land of Israel movement. We wait to receive this bulletin every week with curiosity and longing. Since many people do not read French and Serbo-Croatian, they can now get new information in Ladino, and read it with enthusiasm. We paste copies of the bulletin on the gates of the synagogues, so that all members of the community can read them."

Leon Kamchi was also impressed by the annual calendar of the Jewish National Fund that arrived in Bitola, and so wrote to the World Sephardi Federation:

"I want to remind you that the annual calendar of the Jewish National Fund that contains lists of its activities, its goals and successes over the last years, had a big affect on the public. We hope that frequent publication of pamphlets like these or similar ones will help the dissemination of the Zionist ideal among the people who do not know what is happening in the Land of Israel; will bring them closer to the ideals of the nation and the work being done in the Land of Israel. These pamphlets tell stories of the Zionist movement and its leaders such as Herzl, Nordau, Jabotinsky, Sokolov, Smilanski and others. Manuals that describe the activities of the Jewish National Fund that are full of pictures from life in the Land are bound to arouse anticipation to read more about the Land of Israel.

In his letter to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem from November 25, 1925, he wrote:

"What is needed is a newspaper in Ladino which will contain extensive information from the Land of Israel about what is happening there, with articles that deal with the birth of Zionism. A newspaper which will be able to arouse those from their sleepiness, from their everyday idleness and will raise their pride and self respect around the rebirth of the nation."

Leon Kamchi gained his affection for the Land of Israel as a refugee in Thessaloniki during the First World War, when the armies that fought in the area bombed and attacked Bitola. He was only 17 only when the announcement of the Balfour Declaration reached Thessaloniki. He was eagerly engrossed in the general excitement that encompassed the Jews of Thessaloniki with the dream of building a Jewish national home in the Land of Israel.

Upon his return to Bitola in 1919, he founded two Zionist youth organizations, "Sons of Zion" and "Daughters of Zion". In November 1923, the two united under the name "The Rebirth" with about 200 members at its founding. Leon Kamchi was chosen as chairman, with Shmuel Levy serving as his assistant. Albert Asael was the secretary and Yakov Aruesti the treasurer and responsible for connections with the Jewish National

Fund. Yitzhak Msaod (Massot) was the comptroller, Yitzhak Levy the economist, and Abraham Kamchi sports administrator. Hannah Hason and Hannah Kasorla were chairpersons of the women's division. That year, the "Rebirth" Movement joined the organization of Jewish youth in the Serbo-Croatian kingdom.

On November 1, 1924, Rabbi Shabbtai Djain wrote to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem about the institutions of his community, including the Zionist organizations active there.

"The "Rebirth" – The Zionist Youth Association had several hundred active members, working according to a Zionistic program. They were highly dedicated to working for the Jewish National Fund and the distribution of shekels." Konstantinov added: The association highly valued the love of agriculture and every year sent a number of members to agricultural centers to learn and develop.

"Sarah Aharonson" - Zionist association for girls, had 80 members. Its goal was to educate its members in the national Hebrew environment. It organized lectures every fifteen days by one of the girls, and monthly by a local intellectual. The lectures were generally based on translations from publications in Hebrew. The association covered its expenses by charging one dinar from each member who attended the lectures, and from events, etc. This association excels in its activities.

The Keren Hayesod committee - Was chaired by Rabbi Shabbtai Djain, along with Moshe Beracha, Moshon Pardo, Zilibon Franko. Dareon Pardo, along with Shmuel Levy and Leon Kamchi are representatives of the "Rebirth" organization.

The "shekel" committee – We learn about the "shekel" committee" from an appeal publicized by the committee in Bitola from April to May, 1925: "Bitola was always first in Yugoslavia with a collection of 600 – 700 shekels. We hope that this year we will reach a record in the fulfillment of our responsibility. Jews, Jewesses! Buy the shekel. If the committee does not find you in your workplace or at home, find the way to pay the she-

kel. This is your duty and privilege!" The shekel committee was founded the "Rebirth" movement.

Jenny Lebel pointed out that in the years 1924 - 1927 Jews of Bitola contributed between 600 - 800 shekels every year, about 10% more than all the shekels collected throughout Yugoslavia. In the years 1928 - 1931 when the situation of the Bitola Jews was very bad, they contributed 400 - 500 shekels, about 7% of the shekels that were collected in Yugoslavia.

Drama society - Henry Nachmias established a drama course. He staged the presentations, also wrote several plays, and translated plays of other authors. He put the play "Dreyfus" on stage. He also directed the play of Rabbi Yitzhak Alizaphon, who was the head of the "Learners of Torah", and of Rabbi Djain, including "Sarah Aharonson", about the returning to Zion and "Devorah and Yiftach" about the Land of Israel in the time of the Bible. They also performed "The Imaginary Invalid" by Molière.

Soccer – In Bitola there were Jewish soccer teams named "Sinai", "Maccabi" and "Hatikvah" (Hope). They played against each other and against Jewish teams from Skopje.

Sports associations – In Bitola there were four sports associations – "Hatikvah", "Maccabi", "Trumpeldor", and "Olympic".

Even though the Jews of Bitola excelled in the distribution of the shekels, they were not invited to send representatives to the World Zionist Congress. On August 15, 1925, before the opening of the fifteenth Zionist congress, the preparatory office for the world committee of Spanish Jews in Jerusalem wrote a letter. This was in answer to the call for shekels in April 1925: According to the regulations of the Zionist Federation, the "preparatory office" can benefit from the shekels from Bitola and transfer them to its account in order to increase its representation in the congress.

Rabbi Djain asked to serve as a representative to the congress on behalf of his city Bitola, but was rebuffed with the excuse that the office was only able to send two representatives, one on behalf of itself and one on behalf of the "Mizrahi movement".

Konstantinov added information about other organizations that operated in Bitola:

Blue – white - The association's members were the young people of the progressive workers. Its chairman was Marcel de Majo. She was in favor of cooperative work, Aliyah to the Land of Israel and the establishment of a Jewish state.

Jenny Lebel pointed out that "Blue-White became active in 1934 and within a short time had 300 members. The leaders were Nissim Alba, Marcel de Majo, Victor Meshullam, Mordechai Nachmias, and Shmuel Kalderon. The association organized agricultural studies. Several members also participated in a training program for fishermen in Suchek, on the shore of the Adriatic Sea.

Esperansa (the hope) –Organizations with this name were also found in other communities such as Sarajevo. Jenny Lebel reported that in 1925, members of the "hope" club learned Hebrew from a kindergarten teacher from the Land of Israel named Leah Davidson. The association also had a soccer team called "Hope". Among the members of the sports association were: Leon Albohar, Pinchas Alabenda, Abraham Albaranes, Leon Beracha, Moshe Hason, Moshe Israel, Jacque Cohen, Moshe Levy, Yitzhak Mossa, Liko Navon, Jacque Nachmias, Jacque Pardo, Yitzhak Pardo, Moshe Pardo, Jacque Kalderon, and Haim Rosso. (49)

WIZO - Konstantinos reported that this women's organization dealt with social activities and the ideals of Zionism, which they held in high esteem, and Aliyah to the Land of Israel. In addition, the organization arranged dowries for girls that had none, enabling them to marry and rescuing them from the danger of straying.

Orchestra - Jenny Lebel reported about an orchestra that was part of the Zionist activity in Bitola. The orchestra, called "Hatikvah" (the hope), had wind instruments, drums,

and cymbals. This orchestra escorted delegates from Bitola to the Zionist youth convention in south Serbia (Macedonia) that took place on May 31, 1924.

Rabbi Djain worked together with Rabbi Leon Kamchi in their Zionist activities and wrote the following to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem in his letter of July 18, 1924: "I worked very hard for the regeneration of the youth in Bitola in an attempt to prepare them for life in the Land of Israel. My idea of a Hebrew - Spanish colony for Jews from Bitola in Israel began to progress. In October this year, I will pay a short visit to the United States and visit the big communities of Bitola Jews in order to found a colony in Israel. The affection for the Land of Israel in this city is so great, that no power can stand in the way of their immigration to Zion."

In his letter of October 23, 1924, he added:

"We are sure that half of the citizens of Bitola want to move to Israel. This year we spent 750 shekels on a grand celebration that I arranged on "Lag Ba'omer" called the "day of the shekel". The celebration took place in all four synagogues. There was also a public ceremony in one of the parks and afterwards, there was a showing of the play "Sarah Aharonson".

Rabbi Djain reported on the donations of the Jews of Bitola to the Jewish National Fund and the "Keren Hayesod" who were suffering from impoverishment due to the destruction caused by WW1 and the Balkan wars:

"With the collection of money for Keren Hayesod and with the founding of new schools, the money collected for the Jewish National Fund was not satisfactory this year, even though, in comparison to the other cities in Yugoslavia, Bitola in past years has been at the forefront.

On June 24, 1927, Rabbi Djain wrote to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem: "This year, 510 shekels were sold compared with 320 last year."

The years 1928 – 1930 were years of economic crisis and depression and, as a result, there was a decrease in the weighing of the shekels in Yugoslavia and in the Jewish world as a whole. Leon Kamchi, seeing the phenomenon, suggested in an article in "Bezidov", that the Zionist federation cut the price of the shekel in half. As a result, weighing of the shekel would receive a new incentive, the number sold would increase, and the income of the Federation would not be hurt.

An emissary from Bitola by the name of Yaakov Alboher made Aliyah to Jerusalem in 1925 and was involved in the acquisition of 30 dunams (7½ acres) next to the village of Na'an in order to establish a settlement of Jews from Bitola. The owner of the land was Tewfik Ayoub from Jaffa. The deal did not go through. Yaakov Alboher later enlisted in the "Haganah" paramilitary defense corps. In 1929, on his way from the Romema neighborhood in Jerusalem to his position at the Diskin Orphan Home in Givat Shaul, Arab assailants murdered him.

Leon Kamchi evoked new interest in the establishment of a settlement for the Jews of Bitola in Israel. He wrote to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem on December 20, 1925, claiming that a group of Jews from Bitola was preparing to move to Israel to work in an agricultural settlement that the Jewish National Fund was to establish for them. He asked the World Sephardi Federation to require the JNF to allocate the appropriate lands.

The World Sephardi Federation did not show any interest in the idea and in their letter, asked Kamchi to cool off his enthusiasm: "If the olim (immigrants) that plan to come from Bitola intend to work in agriculture, we can help them only once they come to Israel. If the reason for their Aliyah is farming alone, they must receive education and guidance before they start working in the fields".

Despite this, when representatives from Bitola visited Israel, headed by Rabbi Djain, Leon Kamchi, and Bechor Kasorla, the World Sephardi Federation showed support for the idea of a settlement of Bitola Jews in Israel.

On June 4, 1926, the following was recorded, regarding the "retinue of honored guests from Bitola: You have set an important goal for yourselves on this visit to Israel – to lay down the foundation for the first Spanish Jewish settlement of Jews from Bitola. The World Sephardi Federation sees the establishment of this important enterprise as a part of our national rebirth. May you proceed and be successful!"

The Jews of Bitola continued to vigorously request the acquisition of lands from the World Sephardi Federation. They mentioned the subject in almost every letter that they sent from Bitola to the "rebirth" movement. In a letter dated February 8, 1927 from the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem to Mister Bechor Kasorla, the World Sephardi Federation delegate from Bitola, they wrote, "The land that was ear-marked for the Jews of Bitola, that was to bring respect to Spanish Judaism, was given over to another organized agricultural group."

The World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem also required that all donations to the "National Funds" and the shekels collected by the Zionist Congress be turned over to them in order to increase their power and representation of Bitola. This request was met with resistance among the Zionists in the city. Therefore, the Federation representative in Bitola wrote to the Federation in Jerusalem on February 8, 1927: "The request of the World Sephardi Federation that all donations to the "National Funds", and the shekels collected by the Zionist Congress be turned over to the Federation has become the source of major dissention.

Leon Kamchi was able to unite all the Zionist movements in Bitola into one central committee, which he chaired, in order to prevent the Jews of Bitola from accepting the conditions of the World Sephardi Federation. In March he wrote to the Federation in Jerusalem: "An agreement has been reached among all the Zionist organizations in Bitola. All Zionist activities will be conducted under one central committee."

The World Sephardi Federation hurt the Zionist activities, including the work of the community when it took advantage of the visit by the group from Bitola to Jerusalem and asked Rabbi Djain to travel to Argentina as its representative in order to try to in-

crease the interest of South American Jews in the ideals of Zionism. The rabbi agreed and pressed the community of Bitola to free him of his duties for a period so he could travel.

In a letter from Rabbi Djain to Dr. Yitzhak Levy, assistant chairman of the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem, he wrote: "In another month I will travel for several months to Europe and the United States, in exchange for the establishment of the Hebrew-Separdic settlement in Israel."

The Federation knew that Rabbi Djain had served the community only a short time. He started his tenure in 1924, during which he managed to breathe life into the community and to arouse the interest in the Land of Israel. Despite this, the Federation notified the central committee in Bitola that on June 15, 1926, the rabbi had agreed to travel for six months as a representative, during which time he would also be able, among other things, to create interest among the Sephardic Diaspora in America regarding the situation in Bitola.

The possibility of creating interest among the Spanish Jewish Diaspora in America regarding the situation in Bitola was the rationale for getting the committee in Bitola to agree to the rabbi's trip despite a written contract. The committee members thought naively that the rabbi's stay in America would be short and that he would succeed in interesting Spanish Jews in America, especially those from Bitola, to help their brethren in the city. But, Rabbi Djain did not return to Bitola and the city was left without a rabbi and without someone to push the Zionist ideals.

A letter from the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem dated January 24, 1929, as sent to Shmuel Levy, representative from Bitola: "In December, 1928, Rabbi Djain was appointed Chief Rabbi of the Spanish Jews in Argentina and we wish him much success."

The Jews of Bitola were aware of the fact that the Federation did not help their needs. In a letter from the Federation in Bitola to the Federation in Jerusalem, they wrote:

"There is going to be a break between the representatives of the World Sephardi Federation and the activists in the Zionist movements, and so the World Zionist Organization must act to settle the Spanish Jews. The strength of the Federation is weakening. The public does not support it and in the near future it will have no purpose at all."

The World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem proved its weakness and uselessness when it wrote on January 24, 1929, to the Bitola representative, Mr. Shmuel Levy, "Unfortunately we do not see any progress in regard to settling the Spanish ("Spanish", mind you, not "Jews of Bitola"). The harsh crisis affecting the leaders of the Zionist movement might be the reason for the delay in fulfilling its promises towards the Spaniards"

On June 25, 1929, in his letter to the Federation in Jerusalem, Leon Kamchi repeated the question of the resettlement of Jews from Bitola in the Land of Israel: "PICA (Palestine Jewish Colonization Association) created a colony near Binyamina. Shmuel Levy, assistant to Leon Kamchi in the "rebirth" movement who had moved to Israel, examined the area. It is imperative to bring Jews there from Bitola. It is worthwhile to examine other places."

Apparently, the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem was so busy taking care of the victims from the Arab riots of August, 1929, that, not only did they not care for the Aliyah of the Jews from Bitola and the establishment of an agricultural colony for them, but even asked them to increase their donations to help cover expenses in Israel. In a letter of December 13, 1929, they wrote, "Those who were hurt the most, through loss of life and property, were for the most part Jews of Spanish and Eastern origin. We turn to you with a special request to allot a big sum this year for the World Sephardi Federation and to support it as much as possible, physically and spiritually.

The creation of the Jewish Agency for the Land of Israel awakened a new hope for the Jews of Bitola. A letter from the community's central committee to the Jewish Agency of June 17, 1929, stated:

"We are looking forward to fulfilling the idea of building a national homeland and express our desire to make Aliyah to the Land of Israel in order to be part of its settlement. The idea of the creation of the "Jewish Agency" is a very good one. We wish to bring to your attention that the unification of the World Zionist Organization with non-Zionist organizations would be incomplete without representation of the Sephardic part of the People of Israel. We see the World Sephardi Federation as our representative in the WZO. Its representatives in Israel deserve representation in the Jewish Agency."

Uri Oren reported that in 1930 there were elections for the community's central committee. The Zionist movement in the city, headed by Leon Kamchi, took part. The Zionist movement won the election and received all the seats of the committee, but lost the support of the public. As a result, Leon Kamchi resigned from the committee, and the old committee took its place.

In an article from September 11, 1931, Leon Kamchi demanded that the community committee set aside 10% of its income for the national funds as required by the WZO in Yugoslavia. The committee already had a tremendous burden because of its poor members. The leaders of the committee, among them Yaakov Rachamim Israel, showed their opposition.

Leon Kamchi did not despair and found an easier way to get the needed funds. On October 13, 1931, Carlo Friedman visited the city and asked to elicit donations for the Jewish Agency and to interview potential candidates for Aliyah. Leon Kamchi arranged a meeting for him in the Maccabi auditorium and asked that the youth volunteer to help get the funds. He claimed that the young people had to prove that they were worthy to take part in the spiritual rebirth and the rebuilding of the Land of Israel. In a few days, they collected 16,000 dinars and Leon Kamchi announced that within a few more days the sum would reach 30,000 dinars.

On April 30, 1932, there was a convention in Bitola attended by 80 guests from Skopje, including 40 youngsters. At the convention, Leon Kamchi expressed harsh criticism on

the situation of the youth: "The main problem is Bitola, where a great concentration of youth from all financial levels lives without any present or future.

Here, Judaism is going downhill and there is a true danger of a serious loss. High School children are forced, for one reason or another, to leave school, and cannot find honorable work other than trudging back and forth through the streets of the city in an attempt to sell writing paper or baskets of dried fruit. These healthy youths cannot see any possibility of finding a normal livelihood. The best thing they could do is to unite in Israel, even without a set profession. There they can lead a modest life, but at least one with pride."

Leon Kamchi put the responsibility for the situation on the leaders of the community. According to him, instead of concentrating on helping the youth learn Hebrew in order to bring them closer to the rest of the Jews of the world and the land of Israel, they were preoccupied with benevolence and other charities.

Leon Kamchi, a merchant and commercial agent, saw the solution for the youth specifically through a pioneering spirit. "To take our fate in our hands, to train the youth in the ideals of the "HaShomer Hatzair" Youth Zionist movement, to give them the needed goals. We must manage our lives according to our outlook on life."

He demanded to retake the leadership of the community. "If the heads of the community will not take into consideration these facts, then they must realize that the next generation plans to get very involved in our institutions, and to take over the leadership." Taking over the community was intended to advance Zionist activities.

Rabbi Avraham Romano, rabbi of Bitola, worked together with Leon Kamchi on Zionist activities in the city. On January 30, 1931, the newspaper "Zidov" reported that they refurbished the "Aragon" Synagogue, and on January 17, there was a party to celebrate 35 years since the establishment of the "Ozer Dalim" benevolent society. The speakers for the Zionist movement were Leon Kamchi and Rabbi Romano.

"Zidov" also reported on Zionist groups' cultural activities in Bitola. "All the cultural elite participated in the big ball sponsored by WIZO - the consuls from France, Italy, and Romania, and other civilian and military government representatives. Pictures of Herzl, Weizmann and scenes from the Land of Israel hung on the wall next to the picture of the royal family.

On February 8, the eve of Tu Beshvat (Jewish Arbor Day), there was a general meeting of the Jewish National Fund in the auditorium of the "rebirth" organization that was filled to overflowing. Leon Kamchi talked about the forestry projects of the JNF. Members of the "rebirth" literature club recited poetry, and the band added pleasant melodies.

Saturday night (apparently February 28, 1931) in the "rebirth" auditorium there was a meeting in memory of Joseph Trumpeldor, where Leon Kamchi said: "We must break away from the Diaspora mentality. The key to success is in our hands and it is the Land. Come let us redeem the national homeland. No other nation, no matter how friendly, will build it for us."

The cultural activities included classes in Hebrew arranged by the "rebirth". There were classes given in Hebrew by Rabbi Avraham Romano with the assistance of Leon Kamchi. Every Shabbat there was a general talk in Hebrew.

In July 1931, students from the rabbinical seminary in Sarajevo visited Bitola. One of the students, Yaakov Maestro wrote about his impressions of the visit in the newspaper, "Zidov". "It is wonderful to see how thirsty the Jews of Bitola were for any word of Judaism, any lecture or speech. Of all the communities I know, only in Bitola did they learn Hebrew for its own merits. Many youngsters speak Hebrew and almost all at least understand the language. For this, the community owes a debt of gratitude to Leon Kamchi"

Even the synagogues in Bitola were a ground for Zionist activity. On November 2, 1931, there was a celebration for the fourteenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration in the synagogue. A representative of the Jewish National Fund spoke to a large crowd

about the declaration and ended with the call, "Give help to the JNF". The crowd broke out with the singing of "Hatikvah," the national anthem.

The Zionist youth of Bitola had an effect on the youth of Skopje. On January 7, 1932, there was a convention of the youth of Skopje. A big representation came from Bitola. The youth from Bitola marched through the streets of the city with a band of wind instruments leading the way. Leon Kamchi was chairman of the convention. He defined the goal of the Zionist movements as making Aliyah to the Land of Israel. Throughout the clubhouse enthusiastic singing of "Hatikvah", the national anthem and "Techezakna" (be strong), the Israel workers anthem could be heard.

On April 2 – 3, 1933, a convention of the "Association of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia", was held in Belgrade. This was a Jewish organization with humanitarian and religious leanings. Leon Kamchi participated and gave a speech in Hebrew whereby he claimed that the youth that he represented did not hate religion nor the Rabbis. Their approach to Judaism required a new outlook. By this, he meant the outlook of pioneering Zionism. He did not forget to state the special needs of his city to the delegates of the committee. "The expansion of training and education of the youth is important all over, but in Bitola's case it is an emergency".

The popularity of Leon Kamchi among the Jews of Yugoslavia was shown by the fact that he was chosen for the central committee of the "Association of Communities" by a large margin of 167 votes out of 188 delegates who participated in the vote. Leon Kamchi demonstrated his support for the activities of the "HaShomer Hatzair movement" in Bitola. Immediately upon his return home from the convention, he organized a meeting of the parents of the members of the "HaShomer Hatzair", and pushed them to support constant Zionist work. He expressed his satisfaction at the success of the Zionist movement in the "Association of Communities".

In April 1933, as part of his job as chairman of the Zionist movement, he attended a convention celebrating the founding of a local Zionist organization in Skopje. He

opened his speech with greetings in Hebrew and claimed: "We must teach our youth Hebrew so that they can be absorbed by the Jewish labourers in the Land of Israel".

The Jews of Bitola took part in the protest marches against the treatment of Jews in Germany. In June 1933, there was a big demonstration at which Rabbi Avraham Romano, Moshe Brechah, Dr. Moshe Gerassi, and Leon Kamchi spoke. "Until a solution is found for the Jewish nation the world cannot find a solution to its problems." They demanded help for the Jews of Germany. That same day they collected a sum of 13,000 dinars for the "Fund to help the Jews of Germany."

Leon Kamchi, led the "workers' list for the Land of Israel" in the elections for the eighteenth Zionist Congress ". He was second on the list after Dr. Joel Rosenberg from Zagreb. The list supported the pioneering efforts in the land of Israel. The elections were held from July 16 – 23. In Bitola, 375 members voted, 297 for the "Workers' List for the Land of Israel", 70 for the General Zionists, and only 8 for the Revisionists. That year in Bitola, 542 shekels were weighed out of 7,410 shekels from all of Yugoslavia.

The Congress, allotted four seats to the Zionists in Yugoslavia, and the "Workers for the Land of Israel" list received two seats. This meant that Leon Kamchi was elected as the number two delegate to the Congress on the "Workers for the Land of Israel" ticket, but for unknown reasons, Drago Shteiner, number three on the list, went instead.

We have a letter from Drago Shteiner to Leon Kamchi from August 8 1933, in which he notified Kamchi of his intention to inform the Zionist Congress about the special situation of the Bitola Jews. He asked Kamchi to prepare a summary of these needs, the settlers in "Bet Sha'arim", and the number of legal permits for Aliyah. He also promised Kamchi to meet Moshe Eschkenasi, representative of the "Shomer Hatzair organization" in Bitola, on his way to Prague to receive detailed operational instructions from him.

Together with twenty-three other Zionist leaders in Yugoslavia, Leon Kamchi, as a part of the workers' movement, signed a petition, which downgraded the Revisionist movement. It was because its delegates appeared at the eighteenth Zionist Congress

dressed in Fascist uniforms and because they threatened to quit the "Zionist federation".

We learn much about Kamchi's attachment to the Hebrew language and to the Land of Israel movement from many actions. In July 1934, Bitola held a memorial for Haim Nachman Bialik. All the organizations of the city, including youth movements, women's organizations, and Jewish culture clubs attended. At the meeting, Kamchi praised the poet and read some of his poems and a chorus of youngsters sang "Techezakna", which had been written by Bialik.

The synagogue continued to be an arena for Zionist activities. During the summer of 1935, they held a memorial gathering for Herzl and Bialik. Leon Kamchi spoke at the meeting.

Just before the nineteenth Zionist Congress, Leon Kamchi asked the Jews of Bitola to donate shekels for Zionism. During the mass meeting in Bitola, he forcefully debated with the Revisionist representative.

That year in Bitola, the "HaShomer Hatzair" underwent a crisis after its instructors went away on a training course, and the children's parents expressed dissatisfaction with the modern leanings of their children. Leon Kamchi and the other leaders of the Zionist movement held a meeting with the parents to explain the basic concepts of the "Ha-Shomer Hatzair" to them. They sang Hebrew songs about the Land of Israel and the drama group put on a play about the life of the pioneers in Israel.

Towards the end of 1936, the newspaper "Zidov" wrote about the growing interest of the Bitola Jews in the Land of Israel: "A documentary movie about the United Israel Appeal called, "The Land of Toil and the Future" came to Bitola. The movie was shown in the only movie theater in Bitola, and for an entire week, the theater was filled to overflowing.

As mentioned, Dr. Rudolph Buchwald, secretary general of the United Zionists in Yugoslavia, visited Bitola in 1936. He summarized his visit with warm words and a positive

feeling that the best solution for the Jews of Bitola was Zionism, Aliyah and settlement in the Land of Israel. "Among the youth I found the meaning of pioneering, the value of the continued and unwavering aspiration among the young, to tie their fates with the Land of Israel. I understood that the youth felt suffocated by the oppressive atmosphere of their city, and that they were seeking to live in the spaciousness of Israel. In Bitola, more than any other place in southern Yugoslavia, the spirit of Zionism was felt."

Between 1936 and 1937 there was an apparent lull in Zionist activities in Bitola. The "Zidov" newspaper from November 18, 1936, in a lone statement said, "for a number of years there has been a need to reorganize the Zionist associations in Bitola. On November 13 a temporary committee was formed, consisting of members from the various Zionist organizations, including youth groups."

Leon Kamchi continued to support the "HaShomer Hatzair". On its 25th anniversary, March 25, 1939, he sent a congratulatory message to the leadership in Yugoslavia. Among other things he wrote: "Zionism is not just a wave of emigration, but a movement to renew life in a nation that is returning to its homeland. What could be more important, more sensible in this day and age in which mankind is in a deep fog and many have entered into a state of despair."

In April 1939, he sent congratulations to the "HaShomer Hatzair" convention in Belgrade, Yugoslavia: "Harvest your holy work for the sake of the National Fund. Prepare the youth for the Land of Israel and strengthen the foundation of the land for times of trouble and for times of peace. The idea of the redemption leads us to the way of life of the rebirth of the nation, nationally, spiritually and socially."

In November, 1940, the Yugoslavian army took over the "HaShomer Hatzair" house. This made the Zionist activities much more difficult among the young. Despite this, activities in Bitola did not cease. In November 1941, two months before the German invasion of Yugoslavia, a newspaper reported that on January 25 there was a convention in Bitola, marking the first anniversary of the founding of "Blue-White". Speeches and congratulations were in order. Hezki Bechar, a messenger from the Land of Israel, lec-

tured on the Jewish brigade. At the end of the ceremony Leon Kamchi blessed the participants and called upon the youth to stand firm in their work."

This marked the end of Zionist activities in Bitola. Leon Kamchi and Avraham Romano were taken along with so many other Jews of the city to be consumed in the flames of the Treblinka death camp. The Jewish National Fund recognized the work of Leon Kamchi and memorialized him in the book, "Images".

In the introduction to the book, it says, "Collected in this book were only images of those who stood at the forefront of the redemption through the Jewish National Fund, whether they were speakers, planners, or representatives and workers that worked in the centers of various countries and brought the Fund vitality and money."

Leon Kamchi was one of those images. Here is how Y. Bechar described his work. "During the period between the two World Wars, he toiled toward the idea of Zionism in all areas, and his style of work was for the general public. He influenced every individual, person by person, activity by activity. It was only natural that a popular activist such as he would give his full efforts for the redemption of land and such in his work for the JNF, as part of his Zionist effort. He was head of the JNF committee for many years in every district, before being in charge of all the activities throughout Yugoslavia."

HEBREW EDUCATION IN BITOLA

The community of Bitola turned to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem with a request for a kindergarten teacher. In a letter dated August 21, 1924, they wrote "Relative to the request of Rabbi Djain for an Israeli teacher for the kindergarten in Bitola... we are negotiating with the Education Committee ... We would like to draw your attention to two conditions that must be fulfilled before a teacher can go to Bitola. 1- The salary will be no less than that of the teachers sent to Bulgaria. 2- The travel expenses of the teacher will be paid by your community."

The education committee recommended the kindergarten teacher, Leah Ben-David, and the community agreed to the conditions. On Aug 21, 1924, Rabbi Djain sent a telegram that said, "We agree to the conditions. Hurry and send the teacher and inform us about the arrangements."

On October 23, 1924, Dr. Yitzhak Levy of the Federation in Jerusalem announced, "Now with the sending of the first expert teacher, she is the first, not only in Bitola, but in all of Yugoslavia and we are very satisfied with her."

In his letter to the Federation in Jerusalem on November 25, 1925, Rabbi Djain expressed his appreciation for the teacher Leah Ben David. "There is plenty of news from the city regarding the institutions, especially concerning the progress in Hebrew. On Chanukah, we will celebrate the Holiday of the Macabees, all in Hebrew. We will show the play "Deborah" in three parts. The sounds of spoken Hebrew are heard in the streets of Bitola. All of this, thanks to the intensive work of the teacher you sent us who continues to work with all her strength."

Leah Ben David served the community during the school years 1924-1925 and after she left, the community was without a Hebrew teacher. All attempts to find another teacher from Israel failed. In a letter to the Federation in Jerusalem from March 6, 1926, Rabbi Djain wrote, "We are in need of a young couple that can establish a Jewish home as an

example in Bitola. Two teachers arrived in Bitola on March 23, 1927, but were thrown out by the Serbian police."

On June 24, 1927, The Federation in Bitola notified the Federation in Jerusalem that, according to an edict of the Education Minister of Serbia, Aaron Ben Baruch and Naomi Ba'alul could not return to Bitola. After that, the community was not allowed to hire a Hebrew teacher."

Representatives of the Federation in Bitola tried to demand their rights as a minority, as defined by the League of Nations. "We are certain that as a minority, we have the right to bring a teacher from the Land of Israel and who knows? Maybe the efforts by Belgrade and Zagreb will reap positive results. We feel it is important that the Zionist leadership in Israel press the Zionist leadership in Yugoslavia with this question. In case a solution is not found, we are sure that we will lose the chance to revive the Hebrew language in our country."

In a letter from the community signed by the president, Yaakov Israel and the secretary Shalom Nechama, they expressed their fear of the situation in the community. "The school has ceased to function. Students roam around without any education. But, what can we do against the authorities?"

ALIYAH TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Aliyah, which literally means "going up to the Land of Israel" was the goal of most of the Jews of Bitola. In a letter from July 18, 1924, Rabbi Shabbtai Djain insisted: "Already four months I am the rabbi of the community of Bitola, the only city in Yugoslavia that weekly sends groups to immigrate to the Land of Israel. The love of the Land of Israel in the city is great, so that there is no power that can stop the rest from joining".

In his letter of October 1, 1924, Rabbi Djain repeated this when he complained that the immigrants from Bitola were suffering from adjustment problems and there was no one to help them. "The question of "Aliyah" occupies much time in Bitola, since over the last few months more than 15 families moved to Israel, and had no one to help or advise them. The few letters we received from them put us in a quandary. Some of them have returned, bringing with them sad and frustrating stories. Among these returnees are tradesmen and farmers. The impressions from these people can have a negative effect on the morale, not only in Bitola, since this spreads from city to city."

Baruch Aharon Kasorla, representative of the Federation in Bitola, wrote to the World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem about the desire of the Sephardic Jews to make Aliyah to Israel, among them Jews from his city, and the obstacles put in their way. "The Jewish Agency must give money in order to rehabilitate the Spanish. The strong desire of Spanish Jews to work in the Land of Israel has arisen again in their communities. Many Spanish Jews have a strong desire to move to Israel. The hardships imposed by the British Mandate have hurt our desire to return to Zion".

THE METHODS OF ALIYAH TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The British mandate, which governed the land of Israel from the end of the WW1 until after WW2 made it difficult for Jews to immigrate to their ancestral homeland.

In his book, "A city named Monastir", Uri Oren explained the methods that Leon Kamchi used in order to increase the wave of Aliyah to Israel:

Aliyah of females – He convinced a large number of young women to make Aliyah. He claimed that in Bitola there were a disproportionate number of girls due to the Aliyah of many of the young men - who would be happy to marry these girls from Bitola. The

grooms in Israel had another advantage. They did not have dowry demands. The girls left for Israel on three month visitor permits, but stayed permanently."

Permits for Aliyah – Aliyah permits were given out in limited numbers. The land of Israel office in Yugoslavia was located in Zagreb. Leon Kamchi convinced the Zionist officials that the Jews of Bitola should have precedence due to their impoverished state and passion for Israel. He also created artificial families to take advantage of each permit and increase the number of Jews allowed to immigrate.

The wealthy – Wealthy Jews were few in Bitola but some did move to Israel. The British Mandate permitted Aliyah by rich Jews to those who could prove that they had at least 1000 pounds in their possession.

Tourist visas – A tourist could receive a special permit to stay in Israel for three months on condition that he prove that he had 25 Israeli pounds in his possession. A check for this sum made its way from Bitola to Jaffa and served many tourists. Moshe Yishai reported that his family came to Israel in three groups, all using the same check. Yehuda Alboher reported that his grandparents Yehuda and Clara Alboher also used this trick and their family came to Jerusalem in two groups.

There is testimony of other attempts to make Aliyah in the archives of the "Spanish Committee". At the beginning of 1926, Shabbtai Kamchi tried to get to Israel with his wife and daughter. Aged 58, he was afraid that he would not be issued a permit, so he considered forging the birth date on his passport.

The World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem made several suggestions;

To obtain 500 Egyptian pounds, the sum needed for a tailor's permit.

To ask his grandson, already in Israel, to invite him. The grandson needed to show that he would be able to earn at least 13,500 pounds a year (4500 per each family member)

To obtain a tourist permit. Avraham Testa's family applied for permission to make Aliyah in 1926. The Association in Jerusalem notified them that the Zionist leadership dealt only with the Aliyah of pioneers aged 17–45. Tradesmen had to show that they had 250 pounds Sterling, and those without trades needed to show 500 pounds. Olim with older children in Israel could invite the family, but they had to show that they could support them to the sum of 500 pounds per family member. Testa's two sons who were already in Israel asked the authorities for permits for their family.

On May 26, 1929, Leon Kamchi turned to Ovadia Hazan in Jerusalem and told him that he was taking care of obtaining Aliyah permits for Jews from Bitola. As part of the process, he was in touch with the English consul in Skopje and the Zionist Federation in Belgrade. He asked that Hazan try to obtain a permit for Yaakov Ischak, 69 years old, his wife Bechorah, 48, and their 2 daughters through the federation in Jerusalem. They had 500 pounds each. His brother in New York helped them. The daughters were seamstresses and could find work in a clothing factory in Israel.

In 1931, Leon Ischak and family asked to move to Israel. The World Sephardi Federation in Jerusalem recommended they be granted a permit as family members. The family was not able to get the required permits, and moved in three groups, pretending to be tourists.

In the beginning of the 1930's, there was a large movement of immigration from Bitola. On April 1, 1931, Dr. Shlomo Levy from the head office of the Jewish National Fund wrote to M. D. Gaon:

"I request that you speak to the person who gave me this letter, since they came to Israel from Bitola without any knowledge as to what to do." He also wrote, "Yehuda Aharon Alboher came from Bitola with a recommendation from Leon Kamchi and turned to the JNF office for help in getting started in Israel. They sent him to Moshe David Gaon, secretary of the Spanish community, and to the World Sephardi Federation".

On July 12, 1931, Dr. Shlomo Levy wrote again to Moshe David Cohen. "I think we must take care of the Aliyah of the Bitola Jews because the number of people that are leaving southern Serbia is increasing from day to day."

On April 11, 1932, assistant chairman of the Association of Olim from Monastir in Jerusalem, Yitzhak Alexandri, sent the Committee for the Spanish Community a list of 120 new olim from Bitola whose financial situation was not good."

The Zidov newspaper reported on an attempt to bring the children of Bitola to Israel. It included a report from the city's Rabbi, Avraham Romano, according to which the Jews of Bitola were suffering from starvation, and the children should be saved as soon as possible, and be sent to Israel or elsewhere in Yugoslavia to learn a trade.

The author, Shlomo Alboher moved to Israel with his parents, Aharon and Regina (nee Kalderon), his older brother Yehuda (6 years old), the author (4 years old), and his younger brother Eliezer, who may have been the youngest oleh from Bitola. The family immigrated by legal means with a proper permit. Eliezer was three weeks old when they left Bitola and seven weeks old when he reached the port of Jaffa.

Yaakov Maestro of the Sarajevo rabbinical seminary visited Bitola with his students. He reported that when he came to the Jewish ghetto in Bitola, the Jews welcomed them with the call: "Send us to the Land of Israel. Here we have no way of making a living."

On August 26, 1932, a newspaper reported, "The exile of Jews from Bitola was a fact. Through the Jewish Agency of the Zionist Association of Yugoslavia, 87 Jews left for Israel. They had received tourist permits from the British consul. In the months that followed, another 40 Jews left. Complete families left. Most had travel expenses for only one family member. They preferred to live in poverty in Israel rather than in Europe. Out of 110 youngsters who registered for training camp, 10 have already left." In 1931, very few official permits were given out to the Jews from Yugoslavia, but the list of requests got longer."

Leon Kamchi invited the leaders of Yugoslavian Jewry to Bitola so they could see the severity of the Jewish situation, and to convince them to help find ways to alleviate the problem. At the end of 1932, a delegation of the national leaders of Yugoslavian Jewry visited Bitola. This included representatives from Jewish communities, WIZO, and representatives from public organizations in Belgrade and Sarajevo,

Dr. Freidrich Popas, head of the organization of communities, and Lazar Abromowitz, one of the Sephardic Jewish leaders in Belgrade headed the delegation. At a meeting in town, Abramovich claimed that the solution to the problem of Bitola was not Aliyah to Israel. The desire of the Jews of the city to move to Israel hindered their development and was an obstacle in the way of advancement. The proof was the fact that the financial and political status of the Jews of Belgrade was good and they had no aspirations for Aliyah. He suggested that the Jews of Bitola spread out among other cities and in that way, they would find an abundance of possibilities for a livelihood. The Jews of Bitola were ungrateful to their motherland, he added, saying it would be better for them to stay in a fruitful land with 14 million residents rather than go to Israel, which was desolate and with hardly any inhabitants.

These remarks caused an uproar, and the Jews of Bitola loudly protested. Leon Kamchi tried to quiet the crowd, and pointed out to Lazar Abramovich that the Jews of Bitola did not intend to spread out all over Yugoslavia. He thanked the guests that took the trouble to come to Bitola and announced that its Jews had a strong desire to move to Israel. He closed the meeting with the singing of the Zionist anthem, "Hatikvah" which ends with the words "to return to the land of our forefathers to the city where David rests."

In the summary of the Zionist Association of Yugoslavia of 1932, it reported that Bitola was given priority over other communities in Yugoslavia for receiving Aliyah permits. This was thanks to the work of Leon Kamchi, since Bitola was one of the few towns in Yugoslavia where the youth learned Hebrew.

On February 11 1933, Leon Kamchi turned to Hillel Levy and Avraham Drigatz from Mishmar Haemek. He told them that Bitola had received only 18 Aliyah permits. He recommended that David Kamchi be accepted to the kibbutz. He described David Kamchi as a modest youth, a hard worker with discipline, and a desire to work and live as part of the collective kibbutz.

Leon also told them that the representative of Hashomer Hatzair, Moshe Ashkenazi had been in Bitola for eight days and expressed his hope that "it will be possible to take advantage of groups with a strong foundation. This would be a jumping-off point for a large kibbutz movement for Bitola, even all the Jews of Serbia". Leon Kamchi also wrote about his political outlook by saying that the process of realization of Zionism by a large number of olim was beginning to happen. In his opinion, the middle-class families, the strongest foundation of Jewish society, would soon disappear and the status of the workers, farmers and proletariat would be strengthened. He ended with the promise that he would gradually send people to Israel who had better training.

On February 24, 1934, Kamchi wrote a letter to his compatriot, Drago Shteiner, and congratulated him on his upcoming move to Israel. In the letter, he expressed his desire to follow his friend, but in his words: "to the joy of the Jews of my town, the time has not yet come when I can say, I am ready. Without a doubt, I will make Aliyah in 1934 - 1935. I am just sorry that I will leave several open issues; however the Land of Israel demands workers and needs them."

On May 29, 1934, Leon Kamchi sent another letter to Drago Shteiner, this time to Kibbutz Merhaviah. He wrote about Aliyah from Bitola: "I know that the situation is very bad. The British masters are hardening their hearts regarding Aliyah permits."

Leon Kamchi returned to the subject of his Aliyah, this time with much stronger words: "I want to fulfill my desire to make Aliyah. More than 11 years have passed since Rabbi Djain took my passport with the promise that Leon Kamchi would become a pioneer in the Land of Israel. I want to move within the next 2-3 years and to settle in a village. I

have some problems with closing out my business and selling my properties, but I have a feeling that my last year in exile will be 1936."

Leon Kamchi never moved to Israel and we have no testimony of any Aliyah from Bitola after 1935. The Aliyah from Bitola continued only after the Holocaust, when a few survivors of the holocaust fires made their way to Israel, most of them partisans who had survived the war.

The "HaShomer Hatzair"

The HaShomer Hatzair movement began its activities in Yugoslavia in 1930 after two youth movements merged – the "Organization of Scouts" from Zagreb and the "Blue-White Tribe" from Belgrade. In August 1931, the movement decided to send a representative to Bitola. Shlomo Ashkenazi, a member of Kibbutz Merchavia, was chosen. The movement defined his position in a letter from the national leadership in Karkur to the leadership in Zagreb. "To establish a serious, large movement in southern Serbia (Macedonia)".

Shlomo Ashkenazi came to Bitola in January 1933 and in his first letter, he wrote his impressions of the youth of the city: "What exists is far from satisfactory from several points. There are very few who can be worked with and can be trusted." He found a few groups of HaShomer Hatzair – one of former "scouts", one of "young scouts", and three groups of village children. The members of the first group consisted of ten students of the "gymnasium" (secular school), including two girls. "They sing and dance, but do not know Hebrew. Some of the older ones are interested in going to the training camp of the Yugoslavian Kibbutz in Belgrade. Many of them are very simple youngsters, without much of an education. They had good manners."

We see that the "HaShomer Hatzair" was active even before Shlomo Ashkenazi arrived in 1933. In the beginning of that year, Moshe Kamchi and David Kalderon, both active

in the "HaShomer Hatzair" in Bitola, wrote two letters to the Yugoslavian group living in the Sha'ar Haamakim kibbutz in Israel. He told them that they were coming to Israel and that they had organized an adult pioneer committee of 10 members.

In May 1933, Ashkenazi wrote, "Even though the educational activity has shown signs of recovery and normalization, a reasonable cultural level is missing; books especially, which are necessary for activities in the language of the country. The teaching of Hebrew takes over 20 hours a week of my time, and despite this, I doubt that we will be able to function in Hebrew."

In his letter, Shlomo Ashkenazi described the activities of the branch in Bitola. "I arranged get-togethers on these holidays; Tu Be-Shevat, Purim, Passover, and Lag Ba-Omer. There was no lack of problems. Since only some of them will continue in school and the others will be going out to work or stay at home (girls), the group numbers 20 older students, 29 scouts, 45 villagers, and 80 from the desert. We have no future since there are not enough group leaders. We started to publish a newspaper for levels A and B. For the first time girls have also gone to the summer camps. Last year, the first group went – all of them boys."

Steven Risotsky reported that in the Bitola HaShomer Hatzair movement there were three levels, elementary school, high school students, and 'graduates; "that had gone to training camp."

Shlomo Ashkenazi was not happy with the work in Bitola and asked to return to Israel claiming that he could not adjust to the conditions of the place. "It is impossible to stay in this part of the country more than one year. A person who is used to another type of life style starts to degenerate and to be a time-waster in many aspects."

After one year's work in Bitola, Ashkenazi wrote from Skopje, "I finally left Bitola after being there a year. I left there with the hope that the Shomer Hatzair movement was on a strong, solid foundation. Among the graduates of Bitola, there is an idealistic foundation, something that was missing in other areas. There are attempts to master Hebrew

literature and they are already capable of reading books with vowels. The seniors group has dwindled of late. Over 20 members left, seven to training camps, and one directly for Israel. Many have left school a while ago and are now unemployed."

After Ashkenazi, the HaShomer Hatzair representative was Meir Davidowitz who gathered the children who had been born after the World War I. The activities continued. According to a survey on March 21, 1939, Bitola had 156 members and was able to send eight representatives to the national convention in Yugoslavia.

In 1939, the branch leader was Eliyahu Baruch from Belgrade. Meanwhile in Bitola there was a new generation of members to the movement: Vicky Mossa, Serina Pisso, Adle Farazi, Avraham Sadikarijo, David Kalderon, Yaakov Kalderon, Joseph Kamchi, Stella Kamchi, Albert Russo, Benyamin Russo, and Moritz Schami.

Several members of the movement joined the Yugoslavian Communist youth movement, SCOJ. When the Germans conquered Bitola in April 9, 1941, they prohibited the activities of the youth movements Hashomer Hatzair, WIZO, and the "Blue-White.

THE COMMUNIST YOUTH MOVEMENT -SCOJ

With the increase in strength of the Communist Party, many young Jews from Bitola joined the party's youth movement. Among them were Montash Ischak, Albert Elba, Nissim Alboher, Enrique Alboher, Albert Aruesti, Nissim Hasson, Jack Cohen, Mordo Cohen, Selba Cohen, Solomon Cohen, Albert Levy, Eli Levy (senior guide), Eliko Levy, Victor Meshullam, Solomon Meshullam, Solomon Sadikarijo, Bato Anna, Popa Fisso, Eli Faraschi, Victor Pardo, Jamila Kolonomos, Jack Kalderon, Dadi Kalderon, Bratu Kasorla (senior guide), Moritz Romano, Albert Russo, Arniko Russo, Moti Russo, Moritz Schami (responsible for several groups, and Shirley Schami –a total of 31. The girls

included Luna Ischak, Esther Arusi, Matilda Hason, Shelley Cohen, Nina Levy, Stella Levy, Alegra Nachmias, Estheria Ovadia, Fanna Zion, Jamila Kolonomos (responsible for three groups, Luna Kalderon, Victoria Kamchi, Rosa Kamchi, Rina Kamchi (responsible for several groups), Soltzi Kasurela, Alegra Schami –a total of 16. All told, they numbered 47, with girls comprising about one-third of the members.

In April 1942, they arrested several members of the SOJC, including Victor Pardo, Morris Schami, Moritz Romano, Bato Anna, and Eli Faraschi. They were imprisoned, tortured, and sentenced to hard labor, but they did not give up the names of the other members. In 1943, Rosa Kamchi was arrested on her way to join the partisans and sentenced to a long prison term.

Many of the members of SOJC eventually joined the Yugoslavian resistance and fought with the partisans against the Nazis and the Bulgarian occupation in Macedonia.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

From 1941 – 1942 many of the Jewish youth of the city were active in the Communist Party. The members of the Communist committee in Bitola were Nissim Alba, Menahem Ischak, Nissim Alboher, Aharon Aruesti, Eliyahu Meschullam, Fifo Hasson, Mordo Todilano, Aaron Testa, Mordecai Cohen, Marcel de-Majo, Victor Meschullam. Shlomo Meschullam, Gabi Nechmias, Mordecai Nachmias, Avraham Sadikarijo, Shlomo Sadikarijo, Avraham Anna, Eli Faraschi, Victor Pardo, Deck Zion, Yitzchak Tzarfati, David Kalderon, Shmuel Kalderon, Shimeon Kalderon, Victor Kamchi, Albert Russo, Beno Russo, and Moritz Schami – a total of 28. Girls that joined were Shelley Cohen, Miriam Popovitz, Sarah Pipo, Adela Faraschi, Penina Zion, Jamila Kolonomos, Stella Kamchi, Soltzi Kasurela, and Maggy Russo – a total of 10 girls. Their number increased by 36%.

ANTISEMITISM AND IT'S CONSEQUENCE – ANNIHILATION 1938 - 1943

During the years 1938 – 1939, the Yugoslavian government headed by Cvetković and Maček passed laws that discriminated against the Jews. On June 27 1939, they publicized the anti-Semitic laws which led to the exile of many Jews from the country. They stipulated that:

1. Every Jew who entered Yugoslavia after January 1, 1935, must leave within three months.
2. Every Jew who came to Yugoslavia before January 1, 1935, and had not lived there at least 10 years, must leave within three months.
3. All Jews that lived in Yugoslavia more than 10 years and were not Yugoslavian citizens (including those who sought citizenship and were denied) must leave within a year.

In 1940, the Cvetković / Maček government passed laws to limit the equal of rights of its formal Jewish citizens. They were not allowed to deal in certain trades and their children were not allowed to study in the government run schools.

The day before the German invasion of Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, about 300 Jews fled from Serbia to Macedonia, most of them settling without permits in Skopje or Bitola.

At the beginning of April 1941, there were 810 families in Bitola, consisting of 3,351 people. Macedonia's total Jewish population was 7,762 Jews, meaning that 43% of all the Jews in Macedonia resided in Bitola. Yugoslavia was occupied within two weeks. Almost immediately afterwards, the German army gave Macedonia over to the Bulgarians and left Macedonia, to be replaced by the Bulgarian army. Bulgaria controlled Macedonia from the time of the German occupation until the surrender of Bulgaria.

Bitola was captured by a division of Hitler's S.S. on April 9, 1941. At that time, the Jews of Bitola lived on the Left bank of the Dragora River and the Jewish quarter included the neighborhoods of "Los Cortijos", "La Kalzia", Buenos Aires, "Bostoniki" and "La Tebana".

The "Los Cortijos" neighborhood was built as a half-circle with an entrance gate. There were about 100 families. Every family, elderly, parents, and children, had one room, the entrance to which was from the street up a set of stairs. Underneath was a basement, used for storing food for the winter and at times, for animals and chickens. In the center of the neighborhood there was a public water well and a short distance away, a joint bathroom. Besides these neighborhoods, there was another neighborhood from Dr. Reis Street to Dalmatia Street, East and North of the "Tebana". The quarter had 2 Jewish schools "La Skolia"(small school) and "Tebana".

With the occupation, they moved the Jews living on the right side of the Dragora River to the left side. The first three days of German occupation were marked by looting, with German soldiers entering Jewish owned shops and apartments and taking whatever they chose. Signs started appearing on shop fronts: "No entrance to Jews, Serbs and dogs."

The Jews were not allowed to come to the market before 10:00 in the morning. This essentially limited them from buying anything, since the food products in the market were sold by then, and the Jews of the city were meant to starve.

Jewish representatives from the city met with the head of the Provoslav Church, Cardinal Filaresta. They demanded that he intervene to rescind the deportation decree for the Jews. The Cardinal promised that such a thing could not happen and that the rumors were just enemy propaganda.

On August 26, 1942, the Bulgarian government created a commission for Jewish affairs and on September 3 appointed Alexander Belev as chairman. The commission, whose office was in Sofia, opened branches and appointed representatives for all cities in Ma-

cedonia. Simultaneously, they were in constant contact with the local governments and with the Gestapo.

They too the commission's funding from the "Jewish Community fund" which was formed after the foreclosing of all Jewish accounts in Bulgarian banks. In this way, the commission usurped percentages of the personal assets of the community's Jews as well as the funds that belonged to the various cultural and benevolent organizations.

The government of Bulgaria passed anti-Jewish laws as part of the plan to destroy the Jewish economy, to restrict their civil rights and eventually to annihilate them physically. On January 24, 1941, the National Bulgarian Assembly passed the "laws to protect the nation." On September 13, the government passed by-laws for the enforcement of these laws. On September 15, King Boris III confirmed the laws. All Jews were declared enemies of the state, and this law was meant to protect the Bulgarian people from them.

In 1942, a law was passed to collect a one-time tax from the Jews. Accordingly, every Jew was to give the authorities one-fifth of his assets. Every Jew was required to declare all his possessions, property, debts, cash, jewelry, furniture, housewares, etc. A special committee checked the authenticity of the declaration and re-evaluated the assets. Any mistakes in the declaration brought about the confiscation of everything or imprisonment. The committee exaggerated their evaluations in order to increase the sums of the tax.

Essentially, the government of Bulgaria had decided to deport the Jews. This was the reason behind the governmental decision of March 2, 1943, to requisition all the Jewish property:

1. The property of all Jews that will be deported from Bulgaria will be claimed by the government. There is no way to appeal this decision.
2. The "Commission for Jewish Affairs" will auction off the portable assets of the expellees. The money will be deposited in a bank account under the name of the

Jewish owners. If the owners are not known, the money will be deposited in the account of the "Fund for Jewish Communities".

3. Since all Jewish institutions are closed, all the money of the local communities and the property of religious institutions will be transferred to the local municipalities.

In addition to the requirement for all Jews of Macedonia to declare all their possessions, the tax office of Bitola announced a regulation regarding Jews that had been away for a period and had left behind assets. So as not to have the property confiscated, they were required to report to the office within 14 days to pay the government a sum set by the delegate. Since it was not possible for these Jews to report as required, all the property was confiscated. The families whose property was confiscated included 17 families living in the United States, 8 in other cities in Yugoslavia, 7 in Greece, and 2 whose whereabouts were unknown. The value of this property in Macedonia was more than 34 million Levas.

On March 2 1943, the Bulgarian government decided how it would take control of all the Jewish property after deportation to the death camps. The first section of the decisions stated that all personal property of the deported Jews would be confiscated by the government. Immediately after deportation, Christen Patrov, who was in charge of state assets, publicized a decree regarding the sale of property in the cities Skopje, Bitola, Ochrid, Prilip, Shtip, and Kinanovo. The property of the Jews of Macedonia was sold at auction.

The Bulgarians estimated the value at 40 million Levas. However, they were only able to make 19.5 million Levas, (approximately 238 thousand dollars), because many valuable items were stolen by members of the committee.

In November 1946, a committee was formed in Bitola that determined the damage done by the Bulgarians to the Jewish population was more than half a billion pre-war dinars.

The committee pointed out that the loss to the economy of the city because of the deportation of the Jews was more than 1,746,000 dinars.

Along with the economic decrees and the confiscation of property, the government put political and personal restrictions on the Jews of Macedonia:

1. Jews from Macedonia could not receive Bulgarian citizenship. They were regarded as citizens of Yugoslavia and paid a tax of 30 Levas per month for the right to live in Bulgaria. They were also required to carry a special identity card.

2. Jews lost the right to vote or to run for office.

3. Jews were not allowed to work at jobs in governmental institutions, municipalities and organizations, whether public or private.

4. Jews were not allowed to serve in the Bulgarian army and instead were required to pay a special tax.

5. Jews were not allowed to marry non-Jews or to live with them outside of wedlock. Mixed marriages would not be recognized after the publication of the law.

6. Jews were not allowed to hire non-Jewish maids or housekeepers.

7. Jews were not allowed to live in certain cities or neighborhoods.

8. Jews were not allowed to move from one city to another, or from one neighborhood to another without police permission.

9. Non-Jews were not allowed to adopt Jewish children, even if only one parent was Jewish.

A decree from September 4 1942, by the Commission for Jewish Affairs required all Jews to put signs on their homes. The signs said, "Jewish Home" in bold letters and listed all the residents of the building. Jewish stores required signs stating "Jewish Busi-

ness". Decree number 32 from September 23, 1942, by the Commission for Jewish Affairs required all Jews over 10 years of age to display a 3 cm wide "star of David" on the upper left side of their garments.

Many of the youth in Bitola who understood what was happening tried to join the Yugoslavian resistance and fight with the partisans, but were turned down with the excuse "all in good time..." These youngsters grudgingly accepted this for the simple reason that the Communist Party was supposed to inform them if they knew of any impending danger to the Jews, so they could then join the fighting forces.

The leaders of the Party did not rush to recruit the Jewish youth since they figured they would be more valuable helping locally in Bitola than on the battlefield. Actually, these youngsters did all they could and joined any possible activities. Their homes were used to store arms and organize for war. They prepared propaganda material, printed it, and gave it out. They collected materials that could be used for first aid for the fighters, hid fighters in their homes before they went out to the battlefield and took care of them during the fighting. While comprising only about 10% of the city population, Jews took a large part in the activities. They constituted some 75% of the underground cells and activities on behalf of the partisans.

Jamila Kolonomos reported that 30 members of the Communist Party, over 150 members of the Communist youth movement and 650 other activists were involved in collecting funds, cloth material, food, and other needs for the fighting partisans under the framework of the "Fund for National Aid" that the resistance founded in Bitola. Groups of the Communist youth movement and their leaders would often meet in the homes of the Jewish members.

The members of the aid committee were Leon Ischak, Dario Aruesti, Leon Franco, Peretz Russo, and Moritz Schami. They collected two-thirds of all the money collected in Bitola for the resistance movement. Lona Tzorfati, Rachel Levy, and Allegra Nachmias were among the donors to the committee.

Goja Georgevsky, a Communist from Bitola, declared Jewish merchants donated two-thirds of the cloth used for the fighters' uniforms. Among the Jews whose homes were used as storehouses for their needs were Pipo Hasson, Itzak Israel, Adela Farrazi, Yizhak Tzorfat, David Kaldron, Leon Kamchi, Roza Kamchi, Solomon Kasorla, Russo Kasorla, Moritz Shami, and others. Others were involved in other activities. Mordo Nachmias Lazo gave cover to several fighters for several months; Adela Farazi gave cover to the national hero Vizo Franca and other fighters for a month. Shmuel Kalderon gave cover to his son Russo and several non-Jewish fighters. Rosa Kamchi gave cover to Mordo Todilano and several non-Jewish fighters. Yithzak Israel's tailor shop, Leon Kamchi's home, and Solomon Kasorla's flourmill were used for refuge.

This is the proclamation that the Communist Party printed and publicized as a call to action for the Jewish residents of the city of Bitola: "Jews of Macedonia! The anti-Semitism and the actions against the Jews are an integral part of the reactionist regime against the people. At the same time, this signifies the coming downfall of the reactionist regime. For hundreds of years, Macedonians and Jews have lived together, one house next to the other, one business next to the other. For hundreds of years, the subjugators of Macedonia have changed. One goes and another comes, but the status of the Macedonian and Jewish nations has not changed. It has always been one of servitude. During the worst periods of the Macedonian nation, the Jews have been at their side. During the 'yelindon' rebellion, many fighters found refuge in Jewish homes and many Jews helped the fighters and were active in fighting for the independence of Macedonia."

Alexander Matkovsky reported about another proclamation from the Macedonian resistance movement that called for Jews to help the fighting forces: "Jews of Macedonia! Raise your heads proudly. The Fascist pirate ship is sinking. The Red army coming from the North and East, the armies of England and America from the South, and the air forces of the Western Allied Forces are destroying the dictatorship and Fascism. The day of freedom is approaching."

The Macedonian nation extends its hand as a brother calling you to join the fight. Everyone who joins the partisans will strengthen the fighting force. Every Leva will help the national effort. Every pair of shoes, socks, or clothing will bring us closer to victory. Down with the criminal international anti-Semitism of Hitler and the dogs loyal to him, the Bulgarian Fascists!

-Down with stealing from the Jews!

-Down with disgraceful signs and ghettos!

-Down with Garbovski's concentration camps!

- Down with labor camps and forced labor!

-Long live solidarity of all the nations in Macedonia!

-Long live Partisan freedom in Macedonia!

-Long live the comradeship between the Jewish nation and the Macedonian nation!

-Long live the struggle against the servitude of the nations in Europe!

-Long live victory and freedom!"

In April 1942, a group of members of the Communist Party and the Yugoslavian Communist youth movement were betrayed and arrested, among them several Jews. In June, they were brought to trial in a Bulgarian military court that sentenced them to long prison terms, up to 15 years. As a result, the heads of the underground agreed that several Young Jews whose activities had been discovered should join them.

The Bulgarians and the Germans moved forward towards their "final solution" for the Jews of Macedonia. On June 28, 1942, the Bulgarian National Assembly passed a law authorizing the government to take action regarding the "Jewish question". Negotiations were held with the German ambassador, Bekerle in Sofia and the Bulgarian Minister of

the Interior, Peter Garbovsky. They reached an agreement that, in the first stage, Bulgaria would hand over to Germany, 20,000 Jews, mostly from the areas recently absorbed by Bulgaria, including Macedonia.

At the beginning of December 1942, most of the Jewish community leaders were exiled to scattered Bulgarian villages, among them, Leon Kamchi. This was done in order to leave the community without leadership and without a directing hand before and during the process of deportation to the death camps. At the beginning of 1943, 87 Jews from Bitola were imprisoned and their possessions confiscated. After a tax of 4,350,000 Levas was paid, they were allowed to return home.

On February 2, 1943, an oral agreement was reached between Theodore Danker, S. S. officer in Sofia, and Alexander Belev on the expulsion of the Jews:

"The Reich is willing to receive the Jews from Bulgaria, the number to be determined ahead of time. The expulsion is to start in the beginning of March 1943. The deportees will be handed over to the German army at certain points to be determined in advance. With their handing over to the Germans, they will lose their Bulgarian citizenship, if they possessed citizenship, and the Bulgarian authorities will cease interest in their fate. The deportees will be gathered together in temporary camps near the railroad stations. They will be allowed to take with them clothes and food for the journey that is to last 10 – 15 days. The collection will be done without advanced notice and all at one time in order to prevent escape."

Alexander Belev explained to the Interior Minister Garbovsky that the collection of the Jews according to the agreement would require complete cooperation between the police and the army. The Jews would be told that they were being moved from one district of Bulgaria to another with no hint of the fact that they were being turned over to the Germans. After the "emigration" of the Jews, the government would confiscate all their property.

On February 3, 1943, the day after the agreement with Theodore Danker, Alexander Belev instructed all the representatives of the Commission of Jewish Affairs to prepare immediately a list of all Jews in each area. The lists were to be by family, pointing out sex, age, trade, and address. A copy of the list was to be given to the Commission no later than February 9, 1943.

According to the statistics of the Commission, the number of Jews in Bitola before the expulsion was 813 families, including 3,342 people.

According to the statistics before the war, there were 810 families, including 3,351 people.

According to the census, as reported by Jamila Kolonomos and Vera Vaskovitz-Vangelli, the number was 3,276 people.

On February 22, 1943, a contract was signed by which 20,000 Jews would be transferred to the German areas in the east, as the first stage. Alexander Belev for Bulgaria and Theodore Danker for Germany signed the agreement. According to the contract:

"After the agreement is ratified by the Bulgarian government, the transfer of 20,000 Jews, with no preference as to sex or age will begin. The German Reich will receive them in the Eastern Territory. The Jews will not be allowed to take arms, foreign currency, or other precious metals with them. For each shipment, lists in three copies would be made out. One copy would be sent to the German army who would receive the first shipment near railroad stations. One copy would be sent to the German representative in Sofia. In any case and under no circumstances would the Bulgarian government be able to ask for the return of Jews that had left its boundaries."

Immediately upon the signing of the agreement, the preparations for the deportation began, even without formal ratification by the Bulgarian government. Bulgaria was divided into areas of responsibility with Bitola falling under the responsibility of Karl Stomenov.

The winter of 1942 - 1943 was particularly harsh. Even in March, there was heavy snow. When Leon Ischak heard from Bulgarian sources that the Jews of Bitola were to be sent to the East, he presented himself before the local Committee of the Communist Party and demanded that they allow the Jewish youth to join the partisans. The members calmed him down by assuring him that the rumors could not be true since they had very good relations with the Macedonians and they had not heard of any such plans.

At 2:00 in the morning on the night of March 11, 1943, hundreds of Bulgarian policemen gathered in the cities of Skopje, Bitola, and Shtip to gather up the Jews and send them off to the death camps. Wagons were waiting by the police stations to carry the Jews' possessions and the infirm.

Assembling the Jews was done according to the lists that had been prepared. Groups of policemen were sent to the homes. Each group had several cardboard boards with a list of the heads of the families and their exact addresses. Each group had a ball of string to tie up the keys of the houses that were emptied along with the boards with the residents' names by address.

A concentration camp was set up in the Bulgarian government tobacco factory, the 'Monopol' in Skopje, to hold the Jews until shipment. The collection of the Jews of Bitola was under the command of Kiril Stomenov and Georgi Gambzov. Seven hundred and ninety-three families, 3,351 people, were collected that day. The Jewish quarter was divided into 20 sections. Each section was assigned to a group of policemen, including an officer, a teacher, five policemen, and five soldiers. At 2:00 in the morning on the night of March 11, 1943, a curfew was clamped down on the city and all movement was forbidden. Between 5:00 and 6:00 A.M., the Jews were told that they had to be ready to travel within an hour. At 7:00 the Jews left their homes and went to the collection points that had been set aside for each group. Here they took any possessions of value from them. Eight Jewish patients were taken from the hospital to the collection points, among them two patients who had had operations just days before.

They packed the Jews into cattle cars, 50 – 60 people to a car, together with their belongings. The conditions were so crowded that many had to stand. There was no water and the children burst out crying. One woman had to give birth and there was no doctor. At midnight, the cars reached Skopje. The doors of the cars were opened and the "travelers" were pushed into two big buildings. In the darkness, they bumped into one another and the Bulgarian soldiers beat them. Only in the morning did they realize that they were prisoners in the buildings of the tobacco factory along with the rest of the Jews of Macedonia.

Pejo Drageno Peev was appointed commander of the camp. Policemen and soldiers served under him as well as section commanders, detectives, guards, soldiers, clerks, directors, and technicians. The guarding was very strict. There were machine guns in the corner of the courtyard. Soldiers and horsemen patrolled the grounds and there were armed units around the courtyard.

Bylaws were set, by which they woke the Jews at 7:00 AM, and bedtime was 8:00 PM. Searches were conducted in the morning and the evening. The prisoners were not allowed to keep money, arms, cigarettes or matches.

Entrance to the camp was not allowed by anyone from outside, and the prisoners were not allowed any contact with anyone outside. Doctors were not allowed into the camp. Sick people were checked by doctors from among the prisoners.

Use of the bathroom was made in groups accompanied by a guard. The camp had just 15 bathrooms, so all day there were long lines. The prisoners were not allowed to write on the walls or to bang on them with hammers, to smoke, to play any kind of games, to sing, to read a newspaper, to drink alcoholic beverages, to look out a window, to write to each other, or to go from one section to another.

Alexander Matkovski interviewed Helena Leon Ischak, a Jewish doctor from Bitola:

"In one hall we were more than 500 people. At midnight, we came to Skopje, and we were imprisoned in one of the buildings of the 'Monopol.' That day and the next we were imprisoned with Jews from Shtip because the Jews from Skopje were being searched for anything worth stealing. The day before we were imprisoned in the cattle cars and now we are imprisoned in the building without any toilets. People were compelled to relieve themselves in the corner and the stench became unbearable.

When some of the people had the nerve to try to look out the window, one of the commanders shot his pistol. Only on March 13, did they open the doors and allow us to go out to the latrines.

They let all 500 of us out of the room for half an hour, and then pushed us back into the room, so that less than half of the people were able to go to the toilet or obtain water. Going to the toilet was allowed only once a day, section by section, for such a short period of time that many who were weak, sick, or crippled did not even get down the stairs.

We were starving. Only on the fifth day did the authorities organize a kitchen. We were more than 7000 people and there was not enough food or cooking utensils. They started giving out food at 11:00 AM and the last group received their portions only around 5:00 PM. The food was given out only once a day. The portion was 250 grams of bread and generally watered down beans and rice. Sometimes there was a piece of smoked meat that was so vile we could not swallow it, even though we were starving.

There were utensils for less than half of the prisoners so several people ate from one dish. Just for sadistic pleasure, they would make us undress completely on the excuse that they were searching for money or hidden foreign currency. There were cases when they even stole diapers from babies.

If they found anything on anyone, they would beat him. One of the police commanders, nicknamed "Tatari" because he looked like a Mongolian and was particularly sadistic, gave the meanest beatings. All day long, he would walk around the camp with a nightstick in hand and hit anyone, child, woman, sick, or elderly.

After they pushed us into the building by hitting us with the sticks, they would stand in the center of the courtyard and make fun of us. The same policemen would secretly sell us bread, canned goods, and other needs for outrageous prices. A loaf of bread that cost 16 Levas would cost 500 Levas.

Many mothers lost the ability to produce milk for their babies due to extreme fear, and there was no milk for them. After a few days, there was a "big hearted" command to bring milk for the babies, but it was drunk by the guards and detectives. When they did the searches, they did not leave us so much as an aspirin. The first few days we were allowed to send the chronic sick and mothers about to give birth to the hospital, but they were sent back, even if they needed further treatments."

Another testimony is from Albert Tzarfati from Bitola who escaped from the Monopol.

"For lunch we received a watered down bean soup. Immediately after the food was given out, the children would run to the buckets and with their hands tried to scoop up the remains and drink it. There was an infirmary in the camp. Paper was used instead of a mattress and they covered themselves with what had been used in the bathroom. The infirmary served young girls from the camp. The policemen and inspectors hurt them, brought them forcefully to their offices, and they returned full of tears. One girl whose name was Zanna told me that she had been raped. They threatened to shoot her if she dared reveal what had happened."

The Bulgarian authorities did not forget the heads of the community who had been exiled to the villages in Bulgaria. On March 11, the day of the transfer to the Monopol camp, they rounded up these leaders and sent them by train from Sofia to Skopje. There the policemen were waiting for them. They were put in jail and the next day, they were brought to the storerooms of the Monopol in handcuffs with an armed police escort, to join their fellow Jews.

On March 11, 1943, the number of prisoners from Bitola was 3,351, 302 under age five, 290 aged 5–10, 696 aged 10–16, 1,622 between 16–60 and 441 over 60.

Four Jewish families numbering ten people were freed from the Monopol because they had Italian citizenship. There were no Jews from Bitola among them. All the doctors and nurses and their families were freed on orders from Sofia. Helena Leon Ischak, a doctor from Bitola, along with her husband and mother were among them.

Albert Moshon Aruesti, 36 years old from Bitola, escaped from the Monopol. On the night of March 25 he left the camp, hid for 24 hours with the missionary Schumanov in Skopje, stole across the border to Oritzbatz, which was under Italian occupation, and stayed there until the war ended. Another youth from Bitola who managed to escape from the camp was Albert Tzorfat. He left the camp on March 26, 1943.

Josef Kamchi from Bitola also escaped from the camp. He found refuge at the home of the Italian Consul in Skopje. Laroza, the consul, suggested that Kamchi dress in an Italian army uniform and he would help him get out of the city, but Kamchi succeeded on his own to cross over the Albanian border.

EXTERMINATION

The Jews that were imprisoned in the Monopol compound were transferred to the Treblinka death camp. They were exterminated – every single one. The transfer was completed in three transports, even though the original plan called for five. The Bulgarian railway received instructions to transport the Jews from Macedonia to the border. The first transport was guarded by one officer and 120 soldiers, all Bulgarian. Once the transport was given over to the German army, according to a list which had been written up in Bulgarian and German, the Bulgarians had no further interest in them. In each car, there was a small keg of water and several pails for going to the bathroom. In each car there were about 80 people with their personal belongings. Each adult was allowed to take with him 40 kg and each child 20 kg.

M. Ischak gave witness to the shipment of Jews from Bitola: "The first transport left on March 22, 1943. The day before it was determined that 1600 people would be on board. They received provisions for 15 days. Each person received 1 1/2 kg bread, 1/2 kg Kachcaval cheese, 2 kg dry bread, and 1 kg of uncooked smoked meat, that no one wanted to take. That morning they were notified that another 800 people were added to the shipment.

They were forced onto the cars in a great hurry because the train was set to move. Many of the newcomers did not get their food portion. When a person's turn came to board, no one asked if they were sick, pregnant or had just given birth."

From Skopje, the train passed through various stations on the way to the Treblinka death camp. A woman died along the way. Between Pietrokow and Malkinia, three men died. The train reached its final destination, Treblinka, on March 28, 1943. According to the German report, 1,338 Jews were sent by the Bulgarians, minus the four were delivered to the Germans in Treblinka.

The second train left on March 25 with a group of Jews from Skopje, Bitola, and the entire community of Shtip. This shipment was received in Skopje by the Gestapo.

The train passed through stations in Karalivo, Zamron, Roma, Zagreb, Laundaberg, Chestichov, Poterkov, Warsaw, Malkinia, and Teblinka. Between Zamron and Roma, a 90-year-old woman died and her body was given to the authorities in Roma. In Zagreb, a 70-year-old man died and in Laundaberg a 2-year-old died. The train reached its destination, Treblinka on March 31. According to the German reports 2,402 Jews minus 3 were given over by the Bulgarians.

The third shipment left on March 29, 1943, at 12:30 PM. The shipment included most of the Jews from Bitola, 40 Jews from Skopje, and about 90 youngsters from Kavala. The train passed through Kosmat and through the same stations as the second train. Five died on the way, a 76-year-old woman, an 85-year-old man, a 96-year-old woman, a 6-month-old baby, and a 96-year-old man. The train reached its destination, Treblinka, on April 5, 1943. According to the German report 2,404 Jews minus 5 were delivered by the Bulgarians.

The Bulgarians sent a total of 7,144 Jews from Skopje to Treblinka. Twelve died on the way. In Treblinka 7,132 were murdered, including 3,013 from Bitola.”

Yechiel Meir Reichman, who worked for a year in several positions in Treblinka, from carrying a stretcher to taking out teeth from the dead, gave us a reliable picture of the Treblinka camp and the systematic mass murder apparatus.

"Treblinka was built with a high level of expertise. At first glance, it looked like a regular train station. The long platform was able to handle 40 cars at once. Nearby were two adjacent sheds. In the right shed, food that the prisoners brought with them was stored. The left shed was used to undress the women and children. The murderers pretended to be sensitive and allowed the women to undress on their way to the place from which there was no return.

"Opposite the shed was the path to the gas chambers, called "Shlauch" (pipe). Down this path, covered with light-colored sand, they would run naked. There was no return. The people going down the path were hit brutally and poked with spears. The sand became red from the blood that was shed on it. The path was not very long. After a few minutes, the prisoners would come to a white building with a Jewish star. A German greeted them at the entrance beckoning "please, please." The stairs led to a hall decorated with flowers. Long towels hung on the walls.

The gas chamber is seven meters square. In the center are showerheads through which the gas flows into the room. On one of the walls, there is a thick pipe used to suck the air from the chamber. The doors are covered with thick felt to prevent air from getting in from outside. There are ten such rooms in the building.

Not far away is a building with three gas chambers. Germans stood near the doors, pushing, beating and screaming at the prisoners, "Hurry, hurry, outside".

"Two of us take a stretcher to a building a distance away where there is a pile of bodies as high as the floor of a building. These are the bodies of those just exterminated by gas. As I run back and forth, I see the deep hole, in which several Jewish prisoners were laying the bodies down, side by side."

Yechiel Meir Reichman reported on ways that the authorities used to make the murder more efficient and details about one shipment of Jews from outside of Poland in April 1943:

"It was March 1943. The work was conducted at a fast pace. The commander of the camp decreed that the preparation of the stretchers begin two hours before the regular schedule, so that we would not have to wait. Burial hole after burial hole is emptied of the bodies buried there. When a burial hole was empty, but in the corner there were spots of blood, one of the workers had to undress and go into the hole in order to take out the last remnants of bodies and to clean the hole."

"Every day the work got more efficient. The ovens were brought closer to the holes in order to save valuable time carrying the bodies. As usual, they filled the ovens all day with bodies and towards evening, they would burn them.

In April, new shipments began to come, especially from outside Poland. One morning, within a few minutes after the doors of the gas chambers were sealed, shouts could be heard throughout the camp: "Help. Help. Shema Yisroel – Hear O Israel the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is one..." Afterwards I looked upon the faces of the dead and thought how different they looked from us. It seems that they were especially selected– handsome, strong and healthy. They looked as if they had fallen asleep and were still alive."

Several Jews from Bitola escaped to Kastoria in Greece in the hope of being saved from the inferno. According to witnesses from the Macedonian committee in the book by Alexander Matkovsky:

"A few Jews escaped from Bitola to the town of Kastoria, where they were caught and brought to Auschwitz. Some died on the way. The commander of the camp, Kramer, separated the men and women, and between those that were able to work and those who were unable. They were numbered with tattoos. In the camp, they took blood from the prisoners with syringes, blood for the German soldiers. They were awakened at 2:30 AM and waited in their sheds until 6:30. The workday was from 6:30AM to 5:30 PM. They worked as tailors, craftsmen, and porters to fill and empty the trains. Every day they would receive 250 grams of bread.

Every month, a "selection" was carried out in the camp. Those that were not able to work were sent to the crematorium. The camp had 9 crematoria. From the entrance to the sheds, we could see how the trains arrived full of Jews. They were undressed and given "soap", then the faucets of the "bath houses" were opened and they were all choked to death within ten minutes. The bodies were brought to the crematoria from which the fires rose high into the sky. The workers of the crematoria were not allowed to come into contact with anyone else. Among these workers were also Jews, who would await the same fate within a month."

Gita Schami reported that 18 youths from Bitola escaped to Kastoria on March 10, 1943, the day before the shipment to the Monopol camp. Among them was Gita Schami herself and Shmuel Kalderon, who joined a group of Greek partisans. Gita was taken with other Jews from Kastoria to the Harmankoia camp outside Thessaloniki and from there to Auschwitz on April 11, 1943. Gita stayed alive because she was found fit to work. Her brother Shabbtai was killed in Bergen Belsen. Gita herself was sent to the Mauthausen Concentration Camp and was freed by the United States forces. On December 6, 1948, she moved to Israel and lived in Kfar Sirkin.

She wrote thus to her children:

"I returned from Auschwitz,
Barbed wire, hell and atrocities,
I saw on their way to death, thousands of bodies
In the gas chambers, their souls went up in smoke
With neither goodbye nor kiss..."

She commanded them: "Remember! Do not forget!

Despite the difficulties that the heads of the Communist Party posed for the Jewish youths who wanted to join the fighting units, some youths with boldness and their own initiative managed to join various partisan units. In 1942 the youngsters that managed to join the units included Damian Grayev, Victor Meschullam (nickname in the underground - Bostrik), Mordecai Todilano (Spiro), and Yosef Fifo Russo. Benjamin Russo (Kiki), Mordecai Nachmias (Lazi), and Nissim Alba (Miki) joined the Janna Sandansky unit. Aaron Aruesti and Lazar Yosef were returned to Bitola so that they could continue to work with the underground in the city.

In March 1943, eight more youths managed to escape and join the partisans, including Shlomo Sadikarijo (Moe), Shmuel Sadikarijo (Simoliko), Albert Kasorla (Berto), Albert Russo (Kata), Esteria Ovadia (Mara), Jamila Kolonomos (Tzava), Esteria Levy (Lana), and Edla Farazi (Kata).

Shmuel Kalderon (Bima), David Kalderon, Marcel De Majo, Yosef Fifo Hasson, Mantash Ischak, Pinchas Ischak, and Luna Ischak Joined the partisans in Greece. The brothers Albert (Avraham Segev) and Moshe Kasrola and Yosef and Shimon Aruesti escaped from Bitola. They waited for a contact of the partisans to meet them. When he did not come, they escaped to Albania, where they stayed until Italy surrendered, and then they joined the partisans.

Raphael Batino who was one of the first partisans and organizers of the rebellion against the Fascists in Sanjak, fell in battle in 1942. His underground name was Misha Tzevtakovitch. Because the Jewish fighters used underground names, it is hard to know for sure how many Jews actually fought with the partisans.

The Jewish partisans fought Chetnicks (Yugoslavian Units that supported the Germans), the Bulgarian army, and German and Italian units. Some showed outstanding bravery, including Victor Meschullam (Bostrik), Shlomo Sadikarijo, and Esteria Ovadia. Victor Meshullam reached the high rank of major and served as Yugoslavia's military attaché in Turkey after the war. His son Russo also excelled and was promoted to General after the war.

Many of the Jewish partisans were killed In the fighting, among them:

Aaron Aruesti, Marcel De Majo, Mordecai Todilano, Mordecai Nachmias, Esteria Ovadia, Yosef Peso, Shlomo Sedikario, Shmuel Sedikario, Yitzhak Tzarfati, and others. Many of them served as high-ranking officers. Mordecai Nachmias was killed in May 1944 as a brigade commissar. Shlomo Sadikarijo served in a similar capacity and was killed in Komnovo in 1944. His brother Shmuel, serving as commissar of a paratrooper unit, was killed in 1945. Shlomo Sadikarijo was killed in an attack on a stronghold near Stradina in Macedonia. Esteria Ovadia (Mara) served as the acting division commissar.

Esteria Ovadia led the fighters in many battles and motivated them by song and passion. She fell in an attack on a stronghold on Mount Kimkchilan early on the morning of August 26, 1944. She was only 22. After she fell, her comrades marched into battle

with a song of praise for the heroine Esteria (Mara) Ovadia, a song that became a Macedonian folk song:

Remember her, my brother,

Esteria Mara

Esteria Mara

Fell for the nation,

For the nation she fell

For Macedonia.

On October 9, 1953 Esteria Ovadia (Mara) was declared a national heroine of Yugoslavia.

The following is a list of the Jewish fighters in the underground partisan units, including the movement to which they belonged, area of their activities, nicknames, comments and sources:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Nickname</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Source</u>
Mantash Ischak		Greece			Lebel, 223
Pinchas Ischak		Greece			Lebel, 223
Nissim Alba	Blue-White	Macedonia	Miki		Lebel, 186, 223
Aaron Aruesti		Macedonia		fell in battle	Lebel, 223
Dario Aruesti	Shomer Hatzair				Kolonomos
Yosef Aruesti		Albania			Lebel, 223
Shimon Aruesti		Albania			Lebel, 223
Raphael Batino	Communists	Bitola	Misha Tzvakivich		Lebel, 192, 223
(fell in battle					

<u>Name</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Nickname</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Source</u>
Eliyahu Baruch Shomer Hatzair					Kolonomos
Yosef Fifo Hasson		Greece			Lebel, 223
Mordecai Todilano		Macedonia	Spero,	fell in battle	Lebel, 223
Yitzhak Israel					Kolonomos
Marcel De Majo	Blue-White	Greece		fell in battle	Lebel, 186, 223
Moise Moshe					Kolonomos
Victor Meshullam	Blue-White				Lebel, 223
Gabi Nachmias					Kolonomos
Mordecai Nachmias	Blue-white	Macedonia	Lazo	unit brigade commissar	Lebel, 223
Yana Unit					
Sandansky				fell in battle	
Avraham Ano					Kolonomos
Yosef Pipo Peso		Macedonia		Demain Unit	Lebel, 223
Fell in battle		Graiv			
Eli Farazi					Kolonomos
Yitzhak Farazi					Kolonomos
Leon Farazi					Kolonomos
Victor Fardo	Communists				Kolonomos
Leon Farkoni					Kolonomos
Avraham Tzikario	Shomer Hatzair				Lebel, 223
David Sadikarijo					Kolonomos
Haim Sadikarijo					Kolonomos
Shlomo Sadikarijo		brigade commissar		fell in battle	Kolonomos

<u>Name</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Nickname</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Source</u>
Shmuel Sadikarijo fell in battle		Macedonia		platoon commissar	Lebel, 223
Jack Zion					Kolonomos
Yitzhak Tzarfati		Macedonia			Lebel, 223
David Kalderon Shomer Hatzair		Greece			Lebel, 184, 223
Shmuel Kalderon		Greece	Bima		Lebel, 223
Leon Kamchi					Kolonomos
Fifo Kamchi Shomer Hatzair					Kolonomos
					Lebel, 184
Albert Kasorla		Greece	Berto	Israel – Avraham	Lebel, 223
Segev					
Moshe Kasorla					
Albert Russo	Shomer Hatzair		Kata		Lebel, 184
					Kolonomos
Benjamin Russo	Shomer Hatzair		Kiki	Yana Unit	Lebel, 184, 198
				Sandansky	
Peretz Russo					Kolonomos
Moshe Schami	Shomer Hatzair				Lebel, 184
					Kolonomos
Elazar Shalom					Kolonomos
<u>Women</u>					
Luna Ischak.		Greece			Lebel, 223

Shelley Cohen		Macedonia		Ristasky, 49
Esterina Levy		Macedonia	Laza	Lebel, 223
Rashla Levy				Kolonomos
Alegra Nachmias				Kolonomos
Esteria Ovadia	SOJC	Macedonia	Mara	Lebel, 191, 223
heroine of Yugoslavia	Commissar		fell in battle	
Rika Sadikarijo		Macedonia		Kolonomos
Adela Farazi	Shomer Hatzair	Macedonia	Kata	Lebel, 184, 223
Miriam Popodich				Kolonomos
Sarah Peso	Shomer Hatzair			Lebel, 184
				Kolonomos
Jamila Kolonomos	Shomer Hatzair	Macedonia	Tzavta	Lebel, 223
Stella Kamchi				Kolonomos
Rosa Kamchi				Kolonomos

One can read more about the battles of the Jewish partisans in the book "A Young Girl Named Esteria" by Stryn Ristevsky, translated by Yaakov Meastro.

JEWISH HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL FUND

In 1996, the Macedonian government passed a law making property that was nationalized after the World War II, private property. There were four paragraphs dealing with returning property that was taken from the Jews of Macedonia who were murdered in the Holocaust. Property was divided into two types;

1. Land – houses, fields and gardens that could be returned to their owners
2. Land – Jewish street, school, hospital, and other property that was sold by the Macedonian government and cannot be returned. For these, the government will offer compensation in the form of government bonds in Macedonian Dinars linked to the Euro and bearing interest.

In April – May 2002, the Macedonian government decided to establish a compensation fund for the Jews of Macedonia. There were by-laws for the fund; goals were detailed, as were the principles and method of handling the funds. A committee consisting of three representatives of the government and three representatives of the Skopje Jewish community headed the fund. The committee first met in July 2002 and agreed that the chairman would always be a representative of the Jewish community with his assistant being a representative of the government. The members of the community were Prof. Shmuel Sadikarijo, Sammy Zaderbako, and Liliana Mizrahi. Members from the government were Goren Targekovsky, Demitri Bogov, and Rifat Velio.

The committee set three goals:

1. Establishment of a museum and a Educational Center in the former Jewish quarter of Skopje
2. Reconstruction and preservation of Jewish historical sites like the Jewish cemetery in Bitola
3. Advancement of educational programs fostering understanding between different ethnic groups.

The committee established a sub-committee, whose purpose was to prepare a list of Jewish sites, using historical information and other sources, since there were no wills or holy books to prove Jewish ownership. They found forty sites which were under Jewish ownership and could be returned to the community of Skopje. Thirty-six sites, valued at approximately 3 million dollars, were found that could not be returned and for which government bonds would be issued.

The community in Skopje received the title for two small stores (sized 20 square meters and 15 square meters) in Bitola, as well as the Hashomer Hatzair building which requires an estimated \$120,000 in repairs and renovations to make it usable.

Monastir in Rabbinical literature*

Aliya – Four Monastir Jews vow to immigrate to Israel

Prior to 1592, judges from Monastir, asked Rabbi Shlomo Cohen for a legal ruling regarding a vow taken by four Monastir Jews to immigrate to Israel that they were unable to fulfill.

The question forwarded said: "Reuben Simeon, Levi and Judah, four of them together made a holy vow in the presence of three Rabbis; Rabbi Shmuel di Medina, Rabbi Shlomo Cohen and Rabbi Bezalel of Jerusalem, to move to Israel with their families. They vowed to leave Monastir for the holy city of Safed during the month of Adar that year, unless unable to do so because of circumstances beyond their control.

"As they prepared to leave, they were held back by a large unpaid loan owed to a local judge who would not accept repayment. When they made their vows, they did not consider this. In addition, they did not realize that the king would devalue the currency leaving them with less money than they had anticipated. In fact, there was not enough to sustain their families financially, which could cause them to become charity cases, and this surely was not their intention.

They would not have made a vow had they know this. In addition, some Turks owed them significant sums, and they would not be able to collect their debts so quickly, causing them serious financial loss. On top of that, one of the families had a baby who would only suckle from his wet nurse, and if they moved now, he might stop eating and this would cause mortal danger to his life. All these things were extenuating circumstances that were not realized at the time of the vow, and we therefore inquire as to whether there is some way to nullify their vows...".

From this incidence, we learn several things. We see that Jews from Monastir used to vow to immigrate to Israel – particularly to settle in the town of Safed. Also, that immigration to Israel was organized in groups – in this case four families, men, women and

children. We learn that before immigration, a sacred vow was taken before three rabbis. According to the custom that they followed, a vow could only be nullified by decree of a great sage, in this case Rabbi Shlomo Ben Avraham Hacoheh.

Apparently, a former city judge was very wealthy and engaged in money lending and it seems that he was not interested in the four families leaving for Israel since he refused to cancel their debt. We also learn that the Ottoman authorities devalued their currency.

The immigrating Jews were apparently merchants rather than artisans and had a desire to earn their own livelihood by engaging in commerce and trade rather than live off charity. Seemingly, women in Monastir also had difficulty nursing and employed midwives.

* Editors note: This chapter on Rabbinical literature has been omitted in the English edition. This is but one short example.

Monastir Jewish Family Names

Monastirli Jews used to name their children with the names of their living parents, starting with the paternal parents, then the maternal parents. In this way, personal names recurred in each family, as was the custom since antiquity.

It was customary of Monastir Jews, both males and females, to have two names, one after their grandfather and one after their father. For example, if a person's name was Yaakov Rafael Aruesti, then it was clear that his grandfather's name was Yaakov and his father's name was Rafael.

Firstborn children were sometimes called Bechor or Bechora (which means firstborn in Hebrew). Children who were born in the month of Nissan (when the Passover holiday falls) sometimes named their children Nissan or Moshe (Moses). Children born during the month of Av (the month that has a fast day commemorating the destruction of the holy Temple in Jerusalem) were sometimes called Menahem or Nechama (from Hebrew) or Conforti (from Ladino).

In a family in which a baby had died, some named their child Mirkada or Mirkado meaning purchased. This was meant to confuse the evil spirit and prevent injury to other babies in the family.

Additionally, they added names such as Rafael or Haim to persons who had become ill as a spiritual remedy for promoting recuperation.

Male names were predominately of Hebrew origin. Biblical names like Abraham, Isaac,

Jacob, Judah, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Zachary, Gabriel, Raphael, Meyer, Rachamim, Akiva, Haim, Shem-Tov and others are often found.

In a few cases, non-Hebraic names such as Solomon Salmo were Septuagint versions of Shlomo. Todoros was from the Greek Theodoros, Victor means Haim, Papo is Joseph, Jacko or Jack is Jacob, Chiliboun is a title of respect in Turkish, Alter, which means elderly, was used by Jews of Ashkenazic of descent, etc.

As to women, they too had predominately-biblical names: Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah, Miriam, Esther. These names often assumed a Spanish form. Sarah - Sarina, Rivka - Rebecca, Rachel – Rochella, Miriam – Mary, Esther - Esteria, Esterina or Stella. Colloquial Hebrew names such as Mazal or Mazal-Tov were also used.

Unlike the men, women were also called by gentile Spanish names such as: Ora, Yvonne, Ida, Allegra, Buena, Joya, Julia, Donna, Victoria, Luna, Lunar, Sol, Palomba, Frisiada, Clara, Rika, Ricola, Reyna and Regina.

The Monastir Jews maintained not only their given names, but preserved their surnames as well and it was not customary to change or hebraicize them. The family names retained their purity and original pronunciation.

The census of Monastir Jews conducted in February 1943 by the Bulgarians, before they were deported to the crematoria in Treblinka, recorded one hundred and six names surnames. Responsa literature, history books and research archives, attest to another seventy-four names. In total, one hundred and eighty distinct surnames.

These names were examined and researched by us. We recorded names and included a short biography. We pointed out, in most cases, the names and relation with the Iberian Peninsula. Also, we have classified the names by linguistic origins and importance in separate tables. To indicate the ties of many names of Jews of the Iberian Peninsula,

we have brought information about some of their ancestors in Spain. We are aware that some of our determinations might be classified and interpreted differently; therefore, we tried to note all the possible associations and classifications to the best of our knowledge.

The victims of Treblinka were prevented from carrying on their ancient family names.

This work seeks to rectify this crime and to perpetuate their memory.

General Note: names without the header, 'Monastir family history', appear in the Bulgarian census of February 1943, but are not found in other sources of the community's history.

1. List of Jewish names Monastir (Bitola)

Surname	Origin	Source
Adiges	Non-Iberian town	Community records
Aladjem	Arab common in Iberia	1943 census
Alba alva	Iberian town	1943 census
Albahari	Arab	Community records
Albalat, albolak, albalach, albalak	Iberian town	1943 census
Albaranes	Iberian town	1943 census
Albenda	Iberian town	1943 census
Albida	Iberian town	1943 census
Albiracha	Iberian town	1943 census

Albocher, albo- char	Iberian town	1943 census
alboher, albochar		
albucher, albohar		
albuhor		
Albrase, al- borasch	Iberian town	1943 census
Alfakim	Arab common in Iberia	Community records
Alimendra	Iberian town	1943 census
Alishandra	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Alkob	Iberian town	1943 census
Alkues	Spanish connotation	1943 census
Alkuser	Iberian town	1943 census
Almuslino	Iberian town	1943 census
Anaf	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Aruesti aruesti	Iberian town	1943 census
Aron	Iberian town	Community records
Aruti	Iberian town	Community records
Arwa	Iberian town	1943 census
Asael	Biblical Hebrew theo- phoric	1943 census
Avila (de)	Iberian town	Community records
Avraham	Biblical Hebrew	Community records
Bar adon	Hebrew post-biblical	Community records

Baruch	Biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Batino	Spanish connotation	Community records
Beaykar	Unknown or mistake	1943 census
Bechar	Hebrew post-biblical	1943 census
Ben adon		
Ben ezra	Hebrew common in iberia	Community records
	Hebrew common in Iberia	Community records
Ben nun	Biblical hebrew	Community records
Ben salem	Post biblical hebrew	1943 census
Ben shaul	Biblical hebrew	Community records
Ben zion	Post biblical hebrew	Community records
Beracha	Biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Bishorda	Non-Iberian town	Community records
Bua	Portuguese connotation	Community records
	Spanish connotation	Community records
Calderon, kal- deron	Iberian landmark	1943 census
Calvo	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Capuano	Non-Iberian town	Community records
Carilio	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Cassuto	Spanish term	Community records
Cereskis	Spanish term	1943 census

Crespin	Spanish term	Community records
Elisafan	Biblical Hebrew theophoric	Community records
Ergas, ergass	Spanish term	1943 census
Escalona	Iberian town	Community records
Eschkenazi	Biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Falcon	Spanish term	Community records
Faraid	Common Iberian Arab	1943 census
Farasch, faraschi, faradschi, fraggi, farat, farazi	Iberian town	1943 census
Florentin	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Frances	Spanish term	Community records
Franko	Iberian town	1943 census
Gamlid	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Gascon	Non-Iberian towns	Community records
Gatenyo	Non-Iberian towns	Community records
Gavriel	Biblical Hebrew theophoric	Community records
Ger zedek	Post biblical hebrew	Community records
Gerassi	Iberian town	Community records
Geron	Towns in Iberia	1943 census
Grassiano	Non-Iberian towns	Community records

Haim	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Hasan, hassan,	Foreign hebrew source	1943 census
Hason, hasson, hisson	Hebrew common in iberia	1943 census
Hassid	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Homen	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Honen	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Hovesh	Post biblical Hebrew	
Ili	Biblical Hebrew	Community records
Imanuel	Biblical Hebrew theo- phoric	Community records
Ischach, ischak	Biblical hebrew	1943 census
Isformas	Unknown or mistake	Community records
Israel	Biblical Hebrew theo- phoric	1943 census
Istrumsa	Iberian town	Community records
Jain	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Kamchi, kamhi	Hebrew common in iberia	1943 census
Kamelchi	Turkish	1943 census
Kasorla, kassorla	Iberian landmark	1943 census
Katan, kattan	Biblical hebrew	1943 census
Kativilia	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Katon	Hebrew common in	1943 census

	Iberia	
Kazis	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Kelner	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Koen	Biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Kolonomos	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Konfino	Spanish term	1943 census
Kovo	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Leon, de leon	Towns in iberia	Community records
Leoy	Portuguese connotation	1943 census
Lerma	Iberian landmark	Community records
Livi, lewi, levy, levi,	Biblical hebrew	1943 census
Luca	Non-Iberian town	Community records
Mair	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Majo	Iberian landmark	1943 census
Mandil	Hebrew common in Iberia	Community records
Manu	Spanish term	1943 census
Masai	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Mason	Spanish term	1943 census
Massot	Arab common in Iberia	1943 census
Medina	Iberian landmark	Community records
Medonsa	Iberian landmark	1943 census

Meshulam	Biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Metulam	Unknown or mistake	1943 census
Mevorach	Hebrew common in Iberia	1943 census
Mizrahi	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Modiano	Non-Iberian towns	Community records
Mois	Hebrew common in Iberia	1943 census
Molcho	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Mossa	Hebrew common in Iberia	1943 census
Mullia	Non-Iberian towns	Community records
Murssa	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Nachmias	Hebrew common in Iberia	1943 census
Nahman	Hebrew common in Iberia	Community records
Nahmuli	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Nahum	Biblical Hebrew	Community records
Navon, nawon	Post biblical hebrew	1943 census
Nechama	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Negri	Towns in Iberia	1943 census
Nino	Spanish term	Community records
Nisam	Unknown or mistake	1943 census

Nisan	Hebrew of foreign origin	1943 census
Nissau	Portuguese connotation	1943 census
Nissim	Post biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Nisson	Portuguese connotation	1943 census
Ovadiach, ovad'a, ovada, ovadia,	Towns in iberia	1943 census
Papu	Spanish term	Community records
Pardo	Iberian town	1943 census
Passi	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Perera	Iberian town	Community records
Perez	Hebrew common in Iberia	Community records
Peso, pesso	Iberian town	1943 census
Pessah	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Pifi	Unknown or mistake	1943 census
Possot	Iberian town	1943 census
Rafael	Biblical Hebrew theo- phoric	Community records
Reuven	Hebrew common in Iberia	Community records
Romano	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Rusa	Iberian landmark	1943 census
Rusilio	Towns in Iberia	1943 census

Ruso, russo	Italian	1943 census
Sabah	Arab origin	Community records
Sacharia	Biblical Hebrew theophoric	1943 census
Sadikarijo	Hebrew common in Iberia	1943 census
Sarfat, sarfati	Biblical hebrew	1943 census
Sashkenazi	Mistake	1943 census
Sbuli	Towns in Iberia	Community records
Schabitai	Hebrew from foreign source	1943 census
Schali	Spanish term	1943 census
Schami	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Schamo	Non-Iberian town	1943 census
Schoach	Biblical Hebrew theophoric	1943 census
Schonzin	Non-Iberian town	Community records
Sema	Post biblical Hebrew	1943census
Sion	Biblical Hebrew	1943 census
Sisa (de)	Towns in iberia	Community records
Skajo	Towns in Iberia	1943 census
Sobik	Unknown or mistake	1943 census
Sofer	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Solomon, salmon	Biblical hebrew	1943 census

Talbi	Towns in Iberia	1943 census
Teso	Towns in Iberia	1943 census
Testa	Towns in Iberia	1943 census
Todilano	Iberian town	Iberian town
Toledano	Iberian town	Community records
Varsano	Towns in Iberia	1943census
Xaporta	Spanish term	1943census
Yeni	Turkish	Community records
Yosef	Biblical Hebrew	Community records
Yosha	Post biblical Hebrew	Community records
Zadik	Hebrew common in Iberia	1943 census
Zadok	Hebrew common in Iberia	Community records
Zurieli	Biblical Hebrew theo- phoric	Community records

The names of Monastir Jews who did not have children in town during the Bulgarian census in 1943 (Names from the Monastir community records)

1. Adiges
2. Albahari
3. Alfakim
4. Aron

5. Avila (De)
6. Avraham
7. Batino
8. Ben David
9. Ben Ezra
10. Ben Nahmias
11. Ben Nun
12. Ben Shaul
13. Ben Zion
14. Ben-Adon
15. Ben-Lev
16. Bishurda
17. Bua
18. Buton (De)
19. Calvo
20. Capuano
21. Carilio
22. Cassuto
23. Cativilia
24. Cazis
25. Crespin
26. Elizafan
27. Escalona
28. Falcon
29. Frances
30. Gascon

31. Gatenyo
32. Gavriel
33. Ger Zedek
34. Gerassi
35. Grassiano
36. Hovesh
37. Ili
38. Imanuel
39. Isformas
40. Istrumsa
41. Jain
42. Kovo
43. Leon (De)
44. Lerma
45. Luca
46. Mandil
47. Medina
48. Mizrahi
49. Modiano
50. Molcho
51. Mullia
52. Mursa
53. Nahman
54. Nahmuli
55. Nahum
56. Nino

57. Papu
58. Passi
59. Perera
60. Perez
61. Pesah
62. Refael
63. Reuven
64. Sabah
65. Sbuli
66. Schonzin
67. Sisa (De)
68. Sofer
69. Toledano
70. Yeni
71. Yosef
72. Yosha
73. Zadok
74. Zurieli

Names whose origin is from Iberian towns according to the Bulgarian census in 1943

1. Alba, Alva
2. Alboher
3. Alburase
4. Albeda
5. Alberaca
6. Albalak

7. Albenda
8. Alberanes
9. Alimendra
10. Almoslino
11. Alcob
12. Alkuser
13. Aruesti
14. Arva
15. Aroti
16. Geron
17. Varsano
18. Todilano
19. Talbi. Talvi
20. Teso
21. Testa
22. Majo, Majo (De)
23. Medonsa (De)
24. Negri, Negrin
25. Skajo
26. Ovadia
27. Posot
28. Peso
29. Faraji
30. Pardo
31. Franco
32. Calderon

33. Kasoria

34. Rosillio

35. Rusa

1. Alba, Alva

Alba De Tormes Tormes - city in central Spain, southeast of Salamanca.

Alba De Yeltes – (Alba Posse) City in Spain.

Alva – River in Portugal near Coimbra.

Alba dawn, - a white robe of priests.

De Alva was a name of Spanish nobility. There was a Jewish settlement there prior to the expulsion.

Family history in Monastir

Alberto Alba - a member of the Communist youth movement.

Mickey Alba - a member of the Communist Party.

Moshe Alba – in 1929, he played for the Sinai soccer team.

Nissim Alba - (Mickey) from 1934 he headed the blue - white movement. As of 1942, he was a partisan in the Yana Sandusky unit in the mountains of Macedonia.

Samuel Alba – A Judge prior to 1761. Other court judges included: Mordechai Kamhi and Shlomo Yakar. They tried the case of two Jews murdered in Albania.

2. Alboher

Albojera – A settlement and Lake in the Badajoz region on the Portuguese border.

Albufera, Albuera De Feria – A lake also spelled La Albufera Albufera, Alpujarra.

Albuquerque – A settlement in the Extre Madura principality.

Family history in Monastir:

Bechor Alboher – Mentioned in a court case in 1872 regarding a debt and mortgage note.

Dan Alboher – A witness in the 1740 court case regarding the sale of houses owned by the orphan Shemtov Aruesti.

Jacob Aaron Alboher - in 1888, he contributed to the publishing of a book by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskalio "Lifetime".

Leon Alboher - Member of the sports association, "Hatikva".

Shabbat Alboher – In 1884, he testified about the attempt of Yitzhak Ben Yakar to betroth Sarah, the daughter of Joseph Calderon, fraudulently.

Nissim Alboher – Member of the Communist Youth Alliance and the Communist Party.

Samuel Alboher – In 1872, he was a guarantor on debt notes of Bechor Alboher.

Use of the name in Spain

Yehuda Albuquerque - Alonso de la Calle owed Judah Albuquerque, resident of Erumbarda five Fagins of oats. Yehuda Albuquerque handed the debt over to Diego Vasquez.

Bartholomew de Albakar – Viceroy to the king for Jewish weapons. He was involved in the case of Solomon Franco who in 1470 unsuccessfully filed for exemption from 'Firma de Derecho taxes.

3. Alborasch, Albrase

Albarracin - a city in the kingdom of Aragon northeast Lakohineka, Spain. There was a Jewish settlement there before the expulsion.

4. Albeida

The Arabic name of the city of Saragossa, due to its white walls. Also can mean Muslim audience or court.

Alvedin, Alvedi - Jewish policeman served as an arbitrator in a lawsuit between a Christian and a Jew.

Vedi, Alved, Bedin, Albedin - public prosecutor, judge.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham David Albida - member of the rabbinical search committee.

The name in use in Spain - Jacob Albidano Maolit - supplied food to the King of Navarra.

5. Albiracha

Alberacha - river northwest of Toledo.

La Alberca, La Alberca De Zan Cara towns in Spain.

In Arabic – the blessing.

Used by “conversos” (sometimes mistakenly referred to as maranos) to mean greeting or benedictions such as Kiddush or sometimes just a prayer.

6. Albalak, Albala

Albalate De Sinca – city in the Kingdom of Aragon, east of Saragossa.

Albala – Town in the Badajos region between Trujilo and Caceres. Albala Del Cavdillo, Albalat De La Ribera, Albalat Deis Sorells.

In Spanish Albala En Blanco means - note from the king. In Castilla the practice was to sign a blank bill. The audience wrote the name of the condemned and gave the note to the hangman for execution.

In Arabic - rhetoric, art of speech.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham Albla - in 1888 contributed to the publication of the book “Shnot Hayim” written by Rafael Abraham Iskalio.

Zaki Bey Albala- President of the commercial tribunal in Monastir. Appointed in 1908 to the position ‘director of trade’ in the town of Samson.

Sol Matityahu Albala – contributed to the “Like work” society.

Solomon Albala - Monastir leather merchant. – in 1592 his agent in his Ragusa insured one roll of silk worth ten and a half sheets of processed goat skins.

Sarah Mirkada Albala - contributed to the “Like work” society.

Use of the name in Spain

Jacob Albala – from Aragon. In 1273 he received a privilege not to pay more than 1/15 of the total tax for ten years.

Jacob Albala- doctor from Almunia De La Dona Godina.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, he married Seti, sister of Doctor Joseph Eleazar of Saragossa.

Yitzhak Ben Albala – one of the Spanish sages of the second half of the eleventh century. Had personal ties with a French Ashkenazy sage named Fargors or Fargross.

7. Albenda

Albendea - Spanish settlement east of Valdeoliva.

Albelda de Iregua – town in Spain south of Logrono. (The monastirils interchange between the letters “l” and “n”).

Monastir family history

Abraham Albenda - in 1894 served as director of the “Ozer Dalim” Philanthropic society.

Abraham Albilda - testified in court in 1761 in the murder case of Jacob Bechor Absalom Cohen.

Abraham, Joseph David, Mercado Pinchas Albilda - in 1888 contributed to the publication of the book “Lifetime” by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskalio.

David Albilda - In 1772, testified on the murder of his father Avraham and Avraham Ben – Yakar.

Pinchas Albenda – In 1925 a member of the “HaTikva” Association.

Use of the name in Spain - Moshe Albilda – mentioned in the sermons of Rabbi Yosef Gershon son of Rabbi Meir Gershon ST.

8. Albianm Albaranes

Spanish name is also written in Arabic origin: Elbrahnes, Elbranes, Brahnes, Baranes

The name Baranes has Hebrew connotations: Bar - Hanes (miracle worker).

In Arabic: The Pyrenees Mountains, a river north of Merida a coat with a cowl.

Family history in Monastir:

Abraham Alberanitz - in 1888 contributed to the publication of the book "Lifetime" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskario.

Abraham Albaranes - Member of the "Hatikva" Association.

Use of the name in Spain - Moshe Alberaniss – Rabbi, expelled from Spain in 1492. He settled in Fez Morocco. Among the four legislators of the Sephardic community in the city. Signer of the regulations of the Spanish refugees in Morocco which was translated into Ladino in 1494.

9. Alimendra

Almendares - a river in Spain.

Almendra – Almond in Spanish.

10. Almoslino, Almosnino

Written forms: Almosnino, Almoxnino,.

From - Aimazan - City of the Kingdom of Castile. There were Jews living there during the expulsion.

Almosnino - Almosnino preacher. Aimosnero - Almosnro – philanthropist. Aimouzni - Almosni who belongs to the tribe Snosi Algeria.

Eimosiino - used also for Christians Spanish.

Almosnino name used in Spain as a Jew surname.

Family history in Monastir

Isaac Almosnino – in 1567, drowned at sea.

Use of the name in Spain - Abraham Almosnino – Huesca converted but returned to Judaism. Christian name Juan De Ciudad -1489 executed by fire. Grandfather of Rabbi Moshe Almosnino Thessaloniki.

Samuel Almosnino – lived during the expulsion. Wrote about the role of philosophy as a means of communicating with foreigners.

11. Alkob

Alcoba - locality in Spain.

Alcovy – name of river.

12. Alcocer

Communities and sites in Spain and Portugal that the word palace in Arabic is a foundation:

Folmiro Cazar, Kesar De Poimero - a city in Spain, north of Falencia.

Real Cazar - a city southeast of Mérida in Spain.

Sal Du Alcazar - a city in southern Portugal northeast of Santiago de Kasson.

Puebla de Alcocer - town in Extremadura.

Alksar, Lucena - a city in southern Spain in Andalusia, 80 km from Cordoba. Has a castle named Alksar.

Alcaiceria - a covered market in Murcia. A city in south-east Spain.

Alksar - Market in Guadix, a city in south - west Spain.

Alcaiceria - a covered market in Malaga that was locked at night.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham Alkotzer - in 1763, signed the will - a legacy of Raphael Aruesti of Monastir.

Abraham, Isaac and Bechor Alkotzir contributed towards the publishing of the book by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskalio "Lifetime" in 1884.

Mazliach Alkotzr – was sent in 1926-1925 from Monastir to Jerusalem to study at the Alliance "Torah u-Melacha" school.

Use of the name in Spain - Dr. Alkosir and Dr. Dee Talbira – were appointed by the Inquisition regarding the salaries of Alonso de Vilariel and Alonso de Disfidos.

Fernande de Alksar - before converting was named Shlomo Adroque. Part of a group of Jews who returned to Spain from Portugal to buy back the property sold at the time of the expulsion.

3. Aruesti

Huervas - a city in Spain, south of Bihar.

Ervas Grande - a settlement in Spain.

Aiguilles De Arves - locality in Spain.

Roasta - a village on the left bank of the River.

Hierba – Spanish for weed, grass, hay.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham Aruesti - in 1773, testified regarding an aguna (a married women whose husband disappeared and is presumed dead).

Avram Shemaiah Aruesti - contributed to the “Ozer Dalim” fund for the poor.

Abraham Joseph Aruesti - in 1942 moved to Monastir for Skopje Left a debt of 2560 Levas to the Skopje community.

Aaron Aruesti - a member of the Communist Party. In 1942 served with the Partisans in the mountains of Macedonia. Fell in battle.

Albert Aruesti – member of the communist youth movement.

Elazar Aruesti - 1888 Treasurer of a benevolent society, contributed to the publishing of the book “Lifetime” by Rabbi Raphael Chaim Iskalio.

Dario Aruesti - active in the “Shomer Hatzair” movement and in 1943 a member of the resistance committee.

Chaim Bechar Yaakov Aruesti - Treasurer of the Zionist movement “Tchiya” ('Rebirth') and treasurer of the JNF (Jewish National Fund).

Chaim Bechar YomTov Aruesti - murdered in 1762. The Jewish court dealt with nullifying her marriage thereof.

Haim Moshe, Yaakov Chaim, Yekutiel Shlomo, Rebecca and Shemaiah Aruesti - in 1888 contributed towards the publication of the book “Lifetime” by Rabbi Raphael

Chaim Iskalio.

Haim S. Aruesti - member committee to recruit a chief Rabbi for Monastir.

Chaim Shemaiah Aruesti - contributor to the "Ozaer Dalim" benevolent society.

Yosef and Shimon Aruesti - fled to Albania and fought with the partisans there.

Jacob and Joseph Aruesti - in 1763, lived adjacent to the Aragon synagogue.

Yekutiel S. Aruesti - member committee to recruit a chief Rabbi for Monastir.

Yeshua Aruesti - in 1740, bought homes from Shemtov Aruesti, an orphan via his guardian Solomon Aruesti. The deal was canceled by order of the court. Meir Aruesti - in 1888 held a reading in his house of the "Tikkun Karet" service.

Moses and Joseph Aruesti - Members of the 'Hope' sports Association.

Santo Aruesti - collected money for the Macedonian uprising against the Turks in 1903.

Albert Aruesti - Member of the communist youth movement. In March 1943 he escaped from the roundup at the 'monopoly' factory in Skopje.

Frisaida, wife of Lod Aruesti - contributed to the "Ozer Dalim" benevolent society.

Rafael ShemTov Aruesti - in 1763, he bequeathed his home and store to his grandson Shem Tov Aruesti.

Solomon Aruesti - judge. Members of his court: Samuel Yosha and Shabbat Kamchi.

Solomon Aruesti - committee to recruit a chief Rabbi for Monastir.

Shem Tov Aruesti - in 1763, signed the will of Rafael Aruesti.

Use of the name in Spain - Saul Arroes - represented the Jews of Calatayud in negotiations with traders from Genoa, Barcelona and Valencia regarding transportation of Jews from Spain and other countries during the expulsion.

14. Arwa

Huervas, a city in Spain, south of Bihar

15. Aroti

Communities in Spain: La Hureta de Elche, La Huerta, La Huerta de Murcia, La Huerta Del Rey, De La Huerta Ganoin, La Huerta de Valencia, La Huerta Valde, Carabanos. In documents from the middle ages the name appears: Arrueti, Aroti, Arruet, Rueti, Arueti, Arrutt, Alrueti.

Aruete - a Christian surname in Spain also adopted by Jews. Origin of the family from Pamplona, Navarra.

Rota – a city in the bay of Cadiz in Spain. Ruta el Yahud – an ancient Jewish fortress in the Saragossa region.

Rota - a wheel sign that the Jews of Aragon wore on their garments.

Family history in Monastir

Aroti family - founded the "Ozer Dalim" synagogue whose income was dedicated to a benevolent fund to help the sick.

Esther Aroti – member of the communist youth movement.

Joseph Alreuti – Judge in 1566. Members of his Court: Joseph Aiskalona and Aaron Bechar Moshe.

Isaac Abraham Aroti - contributed to the poor 1930, donated a memorial tablet, provided a house for the destitute in memory of his father Abraham Isaac Aroti.

Isaac Aroti - member committee to recruit a chief Rabbi for Monastir.

Ben Zion and Mordechai Aroti – testified in 1884 regarding Yitschak Ben Yakar's attempt to fraudulently betroth Sarah, daughter of the late Joseph Kaldiron.

Joseph Alrwiti – a judge in 1563. Received testimony on the drowning of Chaim D'Avilla of the coast of Venice.

Joseph Aroti – judge in 1866.

Use of the name in Spain - Ashach Arroat - among the members of the community Catalunyaud mentioned in the letter of Prince Don Alfonso of Saragosa to the Bishop of Catalunyaud requiring the bishop to end the harassment of Jews.

Don Yento Arroati - member of the community of Saragossa in -1397. Collector for the

meat and wine tax placed on the community. In 1402 mentioned as one of the people calling for a general meeting of the synogague at Tarzona.

Samuel Roati – His wife Allegra and his children Moses and Jamilla as well as Saul Arroati, his wife Ardonia and his sons Moses, Ishmael and Jacob and many others fled Spain by ship, but were held captive by the pirates in Nice and later redeemed from bondage in Marseille in the summer of 1492.

16. Geron

From Gerona a city in Spain north of Barcelona.

Gerona – a province in northwest Spain from Visigoth times.

Giron was a common Jewish surname in Spain.

Family history in Monastir

Chacham Giron - (first name unknown) was a scholar and teacher at the Monastir Jewish academy.

17. Versano

Barcelona (Barca ancient name), Catalonia, Spain. Also called Barcino. Jon Varsano - Apollia, North - Italy

Barceko used in Spain as a Jewish surname.

18. Todilano from Tudela, Navarro, Spain

In 1170 King Sancho the Wise granted rights to the Jews of the city and gave them a gift of a plot for use as a cemetery. A Jewish community existed there during the time of the expulsion.

In the Tudela city archives, protocols from a hearing in the Jewish court in the fifteenth century were found.

Family history in Monastir

Mordo Todilano - a Communist Party member.

Mordechai Todilano – from 1942 fought with the partisans in the mountains of Macedonia. Fell in the battle.

Use of the name in Spain

Binyamin Ben Yona of Tudela – world traveler and adventurer. Lived in the second half of the 12th century. Left on his excursions between 1159 – 1167 and returned to his town in 1172 - 1173. He visited the cities of Provence and the cities of Antioch, Tyre, Sidon, the land of Israel, Iran and reached China. He described in detail what he saw in his book 'book of journeys', which is considered the most important book of Jewish and general history of its time. Soncino first published the book in Constantinople in 1543, and afterwards in many other editions. The book was translated into many European languages.

19. Talvi, Talbi

From the city Talavera De La Reina, west of Toledo.

Not far from where the Alberetza river flows into the Tacho river. The city was conquered during the Spanish reconquest during the 13th – 14th centuries. A Jewish community existed there until the expulsion. In 1474 the community paid a tax to the throne and in 1491 paid a special tax of 52,000 gold coins towards the conquest of Granada.

Before the expulsion there were 168 tax payers who dealt in medicine, silversmithing, shopkeeping etc. Talavera was the seat of the Inquisition in the years 1486 - 1527.

Family history in Monastir

Aaron Talbi - In 1738, testified in court regarding the murder of Moshe Hasson.

Esperansa, wife of David Talbi - contributed to the “Ozer Dalim” benevolent fund.

David Jacob Talbi - contributed to the “Ozer Dalim” benevolent fund in 1937.

Isaac Talbi - testified in court in 1738, about the murder of Moshe Hasson.

Rafael Talbi - In 1932-1928 he studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Sarajevo. Received a Master's Degree to serve as assistant Rabbi and teacher in - elementary and secondary schools.

Use of the name in Spain

Dr. Dee Talbira and Dr. Alkosir - received an appointment by the Inquisition regarding the positions of Alonso de Oilariel and Alonso de Sispidos..

Juan de Talvera – converted to Christianity. In 1485 he held brought legal accusations against the Jews of Castile.

Yossi de Talvera - brother of the apostate Juan de Talvera. He, his sister and brother-in-law Yossi Katlan remained loyal to Judaism. Complained to the crown that the Jews of Segovia and the realm wished to harm him because of the claims he filed against them.

20. Teso

From the city Tejo.

A city in Portugal on the border of the Kingdom of Castile

Teson – in Spanish - perseverance, diligence. (Spanish Jews do not pronounce the “N” at the end of words.)

21. Testa

From the city Tausta north - west of Saragossa.

A common surname among Spanish Jews meaning head. Family members from Kalat Ayud converted to Christianity.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham Testa - In 1926, a request was made of the World Federation of Sephardi Jews in Jerusalem, to secure an immigration certificate for Abraham Testa.

Aaron Testa - a Communist Party member.

Aaron and Isaac Tista - contributed in 1888 towards the issuing of the book "Lifetime" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskalio.

Isaac Tista - in 1888 served as class treasurer.

Nissim Testa - Arazi – 1916 – 1981 - Member of the "Shomer Hatzair" movement. He immigrated to Israel in 1939 and joined his friends at kibbutz Sha'ar Haamakim. In 1944, he broke his leg while parachuting in Serbia. He died on his kibbutz.

22. Majo, De Majo

Majo - a river in Spain.

Majo – A bay.

Major - Mallorca island. A Christian surname in Spain in use also by Jews.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham De Mayo – Prior to 1761, testified regarding the murder of Yaakov Bechar Absalom HaCohen.

Abraham Benjamin, Joseph and Shemaiah Mayo - in 1888 contributed towards the publishing of "Lifetime" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Aiskeliio.

Vida Isaac Mayo - contributed to "Ehov et hamelacha" benevolent society.

Marcel De Mayo - a member of the Zionist "blue & white" movement. Member of the Communist Party. Fought in Mountains of Greece during World War II, where he fell in battle.

Moses de Mayo – a judge in 1643.

Moses de Mayo - a judge in 1687.

Samuel Avimayor – in 1550, he gave his servant Francisco Mauro, 18, as a gift to a merchant from Milan who lived in Venice.

Rabbi Shemaiah De Mayo – a judge in 1672.

Use of the name in Spain – Shemtov ibn Major Villalpando - owed Garcia Matansa 54,000 marvadis whose due date was June 17, 1492.

23. De Medonsa, a corruption of Mendosa.

Mendez - City in the Lerea district in Portugal.

Mendaza, Mendaca - a place in Navarra.

Mendes Nunez – A town in Spain.

The origin of this name is the monarchy of Celanova in Galicia.

Family history in Monastir

Eldad De Mendosa - a dentist. Born in Thessaloniki, he settled in Monastir.

Use of the name used in Spain

Alvar Nonais de Mendoza – Apostate from Juato. Named Isaac Cohen before his conversion. Claimed that he built the community synagogue with his own money. The Synagogue and other houses he owned were sold while he was sitting in jail and he demanded the money.

Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza - Cardinal. On June 15, 1492, he baptized the court rabbi of Castile, Abraham Senior.

24. Negri, Negrin

Negraira, Galicia province in Spain.

Nagari - village near Burgos, Spain.

Nagera grown in Logrono, Spain. Also spelled: Negri, Nagri, Nagari, Najari.

Family history in Monastir

Isaac Negrin – a judge in 1884.

Moshe Negrin – a judge in 1880.

Use of the name in Spain

Ashach Najari and Jacob Arepol – were appointed by Queen Donna Violanta in 1394 to divide the tax imposed upon the community in Teruel between the city's Jews.

David Negro (son of Gedaliah Ben Yihya) – carried out a diplomatic mission in Castile and Portugal on behalf of John the first. John brought David Negro to Castile and put him in charge of the Kingdom's Jews. He was also appointed member of the King's Council.

Jacob Negri – lawyer for the Jews of Jativa. Mentioned in a letter in 1306 regarding re-distribution of taxes.

Sasson Najari and his brother Issac of Teruel – mentioned in a letter of Prince Don Juan from 6 December 1382. His sons Sasson, Samuel and Jeanteau leased the collection of rents in the Kingdom of Aragon.

25. Skaio also written Iskalio

from the city Escalona on the banks of the river Alberatze.

Escalona, Aragon in Spain, north - west of Toledo.

The community was damaged in the riots of 1391. There was a Jewish community there in the fifteenth century.

Family history in Monastir

Moshe Avraham Iskalio - in 1880 he testified in court regarding the betrothal of Leah Kasorla and the widower Meshullam Moshe Pinto.

Raphael Abraham Iskalio - in 1888 his book “Lifetime” was published.

Rafael Haim Iskalio - a judge in 1884.

26. Ubeida

Ubeida - a city in the kingdom of Castile north of the Kingdom of Granada.

Obeida - City east of Jaen. The Jewish community was badly hurt in the riots of 1391.

Obeido - City in the kingdom of Lyon, north of the city Lyon. A court of the Inquisition operated there.

Oveido - a city in Portugal on the Atlantic Ocean.

The source of the name Obadiah is biblical. One of the prophets and six other people mentioned in the Bible are named Ovadia. While initially a first name it gradually became used as a surname in the Orient, becoming Abdulla in Arabic speaking countries.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham AVOID – in 1738, was a witness in the murder trial of Moshe Hasson.

Avraham Ovadia – in 1820 a moneychanger and guarantor of the towns butchers.

Estheria Ovadia – member of the Communist Youth movement. In 1942, a partisan in the mountains of Macedonia. Fell in battle. National hero of Yugoslavia.

Yosef Eliyahu and Mordechai Eliyahu Ovadia - in 1888 contributed to the publishing of "Lifetime" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Aiskeliio.

Moise Ovadia - the only Jew still residing in Bitola at the time this book was written.

Use of the name used in Spain

Gonzalo Martinez De Oveido, Castile. Courtier of King Alfonso the Eleventh (1312 - 1350). Had a falling out with Don Joseph De Ecija.

Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon - Maimonides – his full name was Rabbi Moshe son of the esteemed sage Rabbi Maimon, son of Rabbi Ovadia, as his surname. So wrote Rabbi Sheshet, the president of Saragossa in his epistle to the scholars of Lonil that Maimonides was called by the Arabs Ibn Abdulla.

The father of the family name first mentioned in the list of Maimonides ratio (Shilat, letters, A, p. 101). Maimonides writes in his famous letter to Yemen "from myself, Moshe son of Rabbi Maimon the judge, son of Yossef the sage, son of Rabbi Yitschak, son of Rabbi Ovadiah the judge of blessed memory."

27. Poso, Posot

Name of a number of settlements in the de Lugo Province, La Coruña, Ponte Verde, Orense, Oveido, Granada. In documents from the middle ages it was written Poso. use of the name in Spain – Juan Delfoso - Francisco La Torre who was very wealthy. During the expulsion, his assets were distributed among twenty-three residents, including Juan del Poso.

Chaim Foso - in 1450, he gave power of attorney to Louis Gutierrez of San Juan to prosecute a resident of Avila.

28. Peso

Spanish settlement in the Ponte Verde region as well as other localities in Portugal.

Peso Da Regna

Peso – Castilian currency.

Pecho - a fixed tax amount paid to the Kingdom by all communities in Spain.

Family history in Monastir

Abraham Peso - in 1834 was sent as an emissary of the city to Europe to raise money for rehabilitation of the Jewish Quarter after it was burned down

Bechor Meshullam Peso - in February 1908, he was murdered on the way from Ochrid to Monastir.

Benjamin Peso - testified in court regarding a rotten kidney found in a ritually slaughtered animal.

Haim Avraham Peso – Judge in 1838.

Hasdai Peso – in 1929 he was a member of the “Sinai” soccer team.

Joseph Peso – Judge. In 1701, discussed the case of the murder of a Jew during the fair in Couchina.

Joseph Pippo Peso - a member of the Communist Party (Ristsky 49). From 1942 fought as a Partisan in the mountains of Macedonia. Died in battle.

Joseph Pisho - In 1761, went looking for the body of Jacob Absalom HaCohen who was murdered in the village Couchina.

Jacob Peso - In 1597, drowned at sea on the way from Pisa to Rogoza.

Isaac Peso – A judge in 1738.

Isaac Peso - A judge in 1791.

Moshe Yaakov Peso - contributed in 1888 towards the issuing of the book “Lifetime” by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Ishkalio.

Meshulam Moshe Peso - In 1880, his betrothal to the 4 daughter of the late Joshua Shabbat Casorla came before the court.

Pippo Peso - a member of the Communist youth movement.

Samuel Peso - was murdered on the road to Monastir in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Sarina Peso - active in the "Shomer Hatzair" movement and a member of the communist party.

Use of the name in Spain - Yossi Pecho or Peso - was ordered to evacuate his home in the city and move to the Jewish Quarter. Was involved in the court case of Louis de Merida, Yehuda Halili and Sando the pouch maker regarding his house. The case was brought before the crown and was given to the court for judgment.

29 Faraji

the Arabic name of Guadalajara.

Praga - City in Aragon south of Monsoon in the kingdom of Catalonia. There was a Jewish community here until the expulsion.

Family history in Monastir

Adela Faraji – her house was used as a warehouse for weapons, she gave shelter to national hero Vencho Fraka and others. Active in the "Shomer Hatzair" movement. Fought with the partisans in the Macedonian mountains.

Elijah Faranji - in 1804, he received a concession to open an aluminum factory.

Elijah Faranji - in 1888 served as treasurer of a benevolent society.

David Moshe Faranji - in July 1927 served as the community secretary.

Vital Faranji - Board Member of the United Israel Appeal in 1924.

Madame Chaim Faranji - contributed to the benevolent society promoting employment.

Yaacov Ben Yehuda Fras – A judge in 1643. Sent a question to Daniel Aistrosha regarding the exemption from tax for scholars.

Rachamim Faranji - in 1888 there was a meeting held at his house. He and Eliyahu Faranji contributed to the publishing of the book "Lifetime" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskallio.

Use of the name in Spain

Isaac ibn Faraj - exiles from Castile in 1492. Wrote that the expulsion from Spain af-

ected more than forty thousand Jewish households in Castile, Navarra and Aragon. Solomon Faranji – in November 1492, the priest of Reinosa inquired about property and bills of debt that he left behind after the expulsion.

30. Pardo

town names in the provinces of Viscaya, Jaen, Salamanca and Madrid.

El Pardo – settlement.

Pardo – an island.

Pardo - dark brown color.

Family history in Monastir

Buena, wife of Solomon Pardo – contributed in 1930 to the “Ozer Dalim” benevolent society.

Batach Pardo - participated in the battles against the Turks during the Macedonian rebellion in 1903.

Dario and Moshon Pardo - in 1924 Members of the UIA.

David Judah Pardo - in 1888 contributed to the publishing of the book “Lifetime” by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskalio.

Victor Pardo - Member of the Soviet Communist Youth and the Communist Party. Returned to Bitola in 1941. Was arrested in April 1942 and thrown in jail.

Jacques Isaac and Moses Pardo - Members in the “Hatikva” sports Association.

Pardo - in 1931 appeared as an actor in the play ‘Dreyfus’.

Isaac A. Pardo (possibly known also as Leon A. Pardo) - moved from Skopje to Bitola. In 1942 left a debt to the community in Skopje of 1064 Levas.

Moshe and Pinchas Pardo-in 1779 they testified at the murder trial of Yekutiel Grasiانو.

Sylvia Jacob Pardo - contributed to the society for seeking employment for the needy

Solomon Joseph Pardo - contributed to the “Ozer Dalim” benevolent society.

Use of the name in Spain

Isabelle Dee Prado – from Ciudad Real, wife of Juan de Kuta a clerk, served as a witness for the prosecution in the Inquisition of Katalina de Samorra.

Moses Pardo - Rodriguez de Mansilia, received from the Crown the revenues of the Guadalajara community from real estate. Among the debtors was Moses Pardo who owed 300 morbidi.

31. Franco

Spanish: generous, free, exempt from tax

Spanish towns in the provinces La Coruña, Burgos, Lugo, Oviedo. Franco De Caridad, Franco De La Rocha.

Family history in Monastir

Isaac Franco and his son - In 1597 they drowned on the way from Pisa to Ragoza.

Leon Franco - in 1942 was a member of the war assistance committee.

Cilibon Abraham Franco - In 1884, testified in court regarding the attempt of Yitshak Yakar to betroth Sarah, daughter of Joseph Abraham Kalderon dishonestly.

Cilibon Franco - in 1924 was member of the UIA executive committee. He moved to Soplia and in 1942, he returned leaving behind a debt of 5600 Levas.

Solomon Isaac Franco - contributed in 1888 towards the issuing of the book "Lifetime" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Aiskellio.

Use of the name in Spain

Solomon Franco – lived in the fourteenth century. Wrote an interpretation of the commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra on the Bible.

Peru Franco – lived in Ciudad Real. Was a prosecution witness in the trial of Juan Falcon senior.

Isaac Franco and his sons Moshe and Yossi – From La Guardia. Mentioned by the apostate Benito Garcia who claimed that they tried to seduce him back to Judaism covertly.

32. Calderon, Caldera

Names of places in Albacete and Seville.

Caille De Calderon – a street in Muslim Todilo.

Calderon - a large pot.

Common Christian surname. In 1371 Jews were commanded by the courts to bear “Christian names”.

Family history in Monastir

Gabriel, Joseph David, Yaakov Yosef, Yitzhak Yehiel and Shlomo Yehuda Calderon - contributed towards the issuing of the book “Lifetime” by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Aiskelilio.

Gita Calderon (Levy) – In 1943, she escaped from Bitola to Casorla. From there she was taken to Thessaloniki and from there to Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen and Mathausen. She survived the Holocaust and lives in Kfar Sirkin.

Daddo Jacques and Samuel Calderon - communist youth movement members.

David Calderon – Member of the “Shomer Hatzair movement. Fought with the partisans in the mountains of Greece. His house served as a weapons warehouse.

David and Ishmael Calderon - partisans in World War II. Fought in Greece.

Jacques Calderon - Member of the “Hatikva” sports Association.

Joseph Abraham Calderon - Yitzhak Ben Yakar dishonestly tried to betroth his orphaned daughter Sarah.

Jacob Calderon - complained during the mid-16th century to the Qadi that he was required to pay the head tax - despite being deaf and blind.

Jacob Calderon – In 1575 gave testimony in court.

Yaacov Ben Calderon - In 1634 he bought half a farm from a Christian. In 1634, he served as a tax collector.

Jacob Ben-Zion and Jacques Calderon - in 1931 they appeared as actors in the play ‘Dreyfus’.

Jacob and David Calderon – in 1932, active in the “Shomer Hatzair (young guard) movement.

Isaac Calderon - In 1738, he testified in court regarding the murder of Moshe Hasson.

Isaac Calderon - in 1888 served as treasurer of a benevolent society.

Yitzhak Ben-Yosef and Yitzhak Ben-Mordechai Calderon - In 1929 members of the Sinai football team.

Moshe Calderon - testified at the murder trial of Gabriel Graciano who was murdered at the Estroga fair.

Moshe Calderon - in 1888 served as treasurer of a benevolent society.

Moshe Shlomo Calderon – member of the committee to recruit a new chief rabbi for Monastir.

Raphael Solomon Calderon – Judge in 1838.

Samuel Calderon - In 1763, signed the will of Raphael Aruesti in Jerusalem.

Shmuel Bechar Jacob Calderon – Rabbi. In 1791, approved the wording of a question regarding the drowning of Moshe Raphael in Alexandria.

Use of the name in Spain

Juan Calderon – from Makida. The Christian name of Juda ibn Shabtai who converted before the expulsion. His parents Yehuda and Zoza left Spain. He smuggled money to his father in Portugal and was tried for this in 1510-1500.

Cesar Calderon - business manager of Seignior Baranda. In 1492-1494 he was authorized on behalf of Rabbi Abraham Nachira.

33. Casorla

A settlement. Village near Jaen in Spain.

In -1479 an agreement was signed in Casorla between Castile and Aragon dividing Moslem Spain between the two countries.

the name Casorla, Cazorla was a common Jewish surname in Spain.

Family History Monastir

Abraham Casorla - in the mid eighteenth century was presented with the news that two Jews were murdered.

Abraham Casorla - In 1880 he testified in the case of the betrothal of Leah Casorla with the widower Moshe Peso.

Avraham Moshe Casorla - contributed to helping the poor.

Abraham, Moses and Peretz Casorla - contributed to the issuing of the book "years of life" by Rabbi Rafael Abraham Iskalio.

Albert Casorla – From 1942 a partisan fighter in the Macedonian mountains.

Albert and Moses Casorla - fled from Bitola to Albania during World War II.

Elijah and Victor Casorla - appeared as actors in the play Dreyfus.

Eliyahu and Haim Casorla - in 1888 served as treasurers for a benevolent society.

Bechor Casorla - in 1926 he visited the Land of Israel with a delegation from Monastir.

The delegation was headed by Rabbi Shabtai Djain. In 1927 served as president of the Bitola branch of the World Federation of Sephardic of Jews.

Baruch Aaron Casorla - Association representative in the 1930's.

Berto and Solchi Casorla - communist youth movement members.

Hanna Casorla – member of "Tehiya" movement.

Joshua Shabbat Casorla - In 1880, the betrothal of his widowed daughter Leah to Moshe Meshulam Peso was brought to court.

Meir J. Casorla - studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Sarajevo.

Meir Casorla - was born in 1910. After completing his studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Sarajevo, he served as a rabbi in Monastir. In 1936, he moved to Stip and was Rabbi there until his death along with his wife Julia, daughter of Bochor Rafael Yehuda Halevi of Stip.

Moshe Ben Joshua Casorla (see above) - After completing his studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Sarajevo in 1932, he became rabbi of the Sephardic community in Paris. Joined the French Resistance during World War II and received a Officer Des Palmes medal.

Moses Ben Raphael Casorla - Member of the 'Tehiya' and society of young Jews. He immigrated to Israel in 1933.

Salamon Casorla – Scholar. Taught at the Talmud Torah academy in 1931.

Sulchi Casorla – member of the Communist Party.

Salmon Casorla - his house was used as a weapons warehouse and his flour mill was used to hide resistance fighters.

Rebecca Shabbat Casorla - contributed to the employment benevolent society.

34. Rosillio

Rosilion - City of Aragon, near the Gulf of Leon, Spain.

One of the countries in the Aragon Confederation.

Rosilho – Square in Lisbon where Auto de fe parades were held.

Rossio - Settlement in the Viseu region.

Rosillio - pure and bright color.

Rosillion - red colored flower.

35. Rosa, Rusa

From Rosas, the port of Catalonia.

Rosa De La Frontera, Rosa del Alcuña, Rosa Morada, Rosa – towns on the Iberian peninsula.

Rusa - Russian woman. Rosa - Rose in Spanish. A name common among Catholics of Majorca – considered by the local residents to be of Jewish origin.

Towns in Iberia from the History of the Community

The following families had no relations in town during the period that the Bulgarian census was carried out in 1943.

1. Avila (De)
2. Istrumza
3. Eskalona
4. Aron

5. Gerassi
6. Jain
7. Toledano
8. Leon (De)
9. Llerma
10. Medina
11. Mursa
12. Sbuli
13. Sisa (De)
14. Passi
- 15, Pereira
16. Cazis
17. Cativilia
18. Calvo
19. Carillo
20. Covo

1. Avila (De)

A city in the kingdom of Castile. In 1329 and 1339 there were pogroms against the Jews.. It was the seat of the temporary court of the Inquisition.

In the Middle Ages the name was also written as De Abela, De Abila, or De Avila.

Family history in Monastir:

Haim D. Avila – drowned in Venice around 1807.

Use of the name in Spain:

In 1489 Rabbi Abraham De Avila asked the Valdialid Committee to turn to the "Alkadish of Medina De Rioseco to demand the execution of the court decision against Shmuel De Avila

Diego Arias D'avila, minister and advisor to King Enrico IV from Castilia. Was born in Segovia and died in 1466. He and his family converted during the missionary crusade of Vicente Ferrer.

Don Josef De Avila, tax collector for King Shania IV from Castile. He wanted to marry off his son to the daughter of the mystic Rabbi Moshe De Leon, on condition that the rabbi's widow pass on to him a hand-written copy of the kabbalistic book of "Zohar".

Jacob De Abella – In 1487 he was listed among the accused by the Inquisition in Aragon.

Don Samuel De Avila – Before 1348 he sold grain mills on the Adaja River to the Bishop of Avila.

2. Istrumsa

In Portuguese Estremos– west of Badajoz . There was a community of Jews there until the expulsion.

Astrosa – name used by Christians on the Iberian Island.

Strumica – city in Macedonia

Family history in Monastir:

Haim Benjamin Estrumica – In 1864 he was a member of the Alliance Israelite Universelle.

3. Escalona

City in Andalusia, south-west of Madrid. Jews lived there from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries

Escalona – city north-west of Toledo on the shore of the Alberaca River.

Escalona Del Pardo - town in Spain.

Josef Escalona - In 1566 (5726), he was a judge. Josef Alroti and Aron Bechar Moshe were fellow members of the court.

4. Aron

Name of town in Spain, name of river in Spain

Aaron – name of son of Amram and brother of Moses. The name Aron was identified in Spain as a Jewish name.

Family history in Monastir:

Shlomo Aron – In 1929 played for the “Sinai” soccer team.

5. Gerassi

Jeres De La Frontera

Towns in Spain

Jeres, Jeres De Garcia Salinas, Jeres De Los Caballeros, Alcubilla

Geraci – small village on the Island of Sicily.. The family members in Solonika were the only ones from Sicily.

Family history in Monastir:

Moshe Geraci – the city doctor., born in Belgrade. In 1926 he was the subject of a blood libel regarding the murder of two Christians. For a short time he served as head of

the community and head of the local Zionist movement. In 1933 at a demonstration against the Nazis he spoke about the persecution of the Jews in Germany.

6. Gain

Jaen - east of Cordoba, principality of Spain. In 1246 it was taken over from the Muslims by the Christians. The community was hurt badly by the pogrom of 1391 (5151).

Family history in Monastir:

Schabitai Ben Josef Djain was born in Palibona in 1883 and died in Argentina in 1946. From 1924 – 1928 he served as the Chief Rabbi of Monastir. He taught Jewish nationalism and Zionism. His students acted out the plays "Sara Aronson" and "The Rebirth". In 1924, he initiated the establishment of a Jewish farming community in the Land of Israel for the Jews of Bitola. He also initiated the establishment of a "Youth Village" for the youth of Bitola that moved to Israel. He managed to arrange the Aliyah of at least half of the children of the town.

He went to the United States and to South America to ask for donations from former residents of Bitola for this purpose. Essentially, he was a representative of the World Association of Spanish Jewry. He served as the Chief Rabbi of the Spanish Jews in Argentina from 1934 – 1943. His books include "Bar Kochvah", "Esther", "Deborah", "Yiphtah", "From the upper and Lower Worlds", "Our Children", "Sarah Aronson", "The Pioneers", "The Delightful Song of Life", "The Home of the Poor", and "The Sexton's Daughter".

Use of the name in Spain.

Elavar Garcia de Jain – forced to convert by the Inquisition. In his indictment, several witnesses were disqualified and others rescinded.

Yakov El-Jain – doctor to King Carlos II.

Don Yitzhak Eljain – Just before he and his wife were expelled, he asked 17,000 marvadi from Dio Ruise for the house where he lived in Saragossa.

7. Toledano

Toledo – Capital city of Spain, province in Spain. According to one tradition, those that were expelled promised themselves never to return to Toledo. Their slogan was "Toledo, no". According to Yakov Moshe Toledano this was just a story. According to another tradition the expellees were proud of the memory of the city. Their slogan – "We are Toledano". At the time of the expulsion they were among the families in the official accounting. In Solonik the Toledano family was listed as part of the community of Mugarabi, North Africa, and Catalan.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham and Avraham Yakov Toledano – In 1888 they donated toward the publishing of Rabbi Raphael Avraham Eishklein's book "The Years of Life".

David Toledano – On June 9, 1908 he gave a donation for the booklet "Love Work".

Moshe Yakov Toledano – In 1942 (5702) he donated to the organization "Help for the Poor".

Rachel, wife of Moshe Toledano – In 1936 (5696) she donated to "Help for the Poor".

Use of the name in Spain

Avraham De Toledano - called Don Alephim. In the 13th century, he was doctor to King Alonso El Sabir He translated several books on astronomy from Arabic to Hebrew.

Elazar Toledano – rabbi in Toledo. In 1489 in Lisbon he established the first printing shop in Portugal.

Yehudah Toledano – from Toledo. Together with ten Jews from Alpujara were expelled from Malaga and each one paid nine marvadi to the commissar in charge of the expulsion for each liter of merchandise they had with them.

Josef El-Toledano – from Toledo. (the former name was Toletola). In the middle of the twelfth century he was mentioned in a document as a resident of Toledo.

Yitzhak from Toletola (Toledo) – rabbi and astronomer in the thirteenth century. He wrote the book "Round Sky and Straight Sky".

8. Leon (De)

Leon – the capital of the Leon Princedom, a city in the Visigoth Kingdom, on the border with the Soave Kingdom, capital of Ordonio the first. (850 – 861).

Leon – Spanish Princedom in the Middle Ages and a District in Spain.

Leon – in Spanish a lion. The Leon family was from Pamplona, Navarre. The community was hurt tremendously by the pogroms of 1391 (5151).

Family history from Monastir:

Barzilai De Leon – In 1575 (5375) he was a witness in a court case.

Use of the name in Spain.

Eishach De Leon – In 1492 he was mentioned in a notary document for the Cabalory family in Saragossa.

Yitzhak De Leon – rabbi in Eikonia, After being expelled from Andalusia, Rabbi Yehudah ben Virga came to him and stayed from 1488 – 1491.

Moshe De Leon – resided temporarily in Avila under the protection of Don Josef De Avila. From 1290 – 1299 he lived in Guadeljara.. He also lived in Segovia. During the period 1280 – 1286 he wrote the book "The Zohar" and other books about the Zohar including the "Faithful Shepherd".

9. Llerma

Lierma – city in the Burgos Princedom

Lerma – town

Lerma – river. The name is also written Larma. This was a familiar name among Christians in Spain and was adopted also by some Jews.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Lerma – In 1575 (5325) he was a witness in a case about a rotten kidney that was found in a cow.

David Lerma – In 1567 (5327) he was a member of the court. Other members of the court were Yitzhak Katabilia and Moshe Russo.

Use of the name in Spain

Ines Gonzalo Sances – wife of Joselo Sanches De Lerma, brought before a court of the Inquisition, disqualified five witnesses and explained four other incidents, yet the judges did not accept the disqualifications.

Jento and Hayes Lerma – In 1482 they received permission from Queen Isabela to open stores in Toledo, on the condition that they live in the Jewish Quarter.

Moshe De Lerma – from Cantos. He was mentioned as a cosigner to a loan for Juan Herero of Cantos. The contract was written in Avila on February 12, 1488.

Don Salome Lerma and Yako Lerma – recorded as homeowners in Guadalajara just before the expulsion.

10. Medina

Medina De Pomar – city in the Burgos District where there was a Jewish community before the expulsion.

Medina Del Campo– city in the Valladolid District where there was a Jewish community before the expulsion.

Medina De Rioseco – village in the Valladolid District.

Medina Selim – city. In 1280 a Jew by the name of Avraham wrote a contract with a representative of the church of Siguanza concerning the sale of salt.

Medina Sidonia – city in the Princedom of Cadiz.

Medina De Las Torres – city in the Princedom of Badajos.

Medina Azzahara - city in the Princedom of Cordoba.

Medina – "city" in Arabic.

Family history in Monastir:

Benyamin Medina – Rabbi of the city in the first half of the seventeenth century. He died about 1650 in Monastir.

Use of the name in Spain

Don Sage De Medina – son of Don Josef. In 1490 he rented apartments in the Jewish quarter of Caldandrin from the city of Avila.

Yakov De Medina – Before the expulsion, after his conversion, Fernan Perez sold his house in Ciudad Rodrigo to Francisco De Vargas. When he converted again, Vargas refused to return the house for its full price. The authorities commanded Vargas to return the house.

Martin De Medina – forced conversion. He claimed before his investigators: "They did not crucify or kill Jesus. No holy person went to Heaven. The words of the prophets are all true."

11. Mursa

Murcia – city in south-east Spain. In 1243 the city was captured during the reconquest of Spain.

There was a Jewish community there at the time of the expulsion. The Murcia family was originally from Pamplona.

Family history in Monastir:

Shlomo Murcia – He was a judge in the second half of the sixteenth century. Other judges in his court were Yitzhak Ben Lev Ben Ploni and Gabriel De Siso.

Use of the name in Spain.

Issac De Murcia Mayer and Solomon De Murcia were residents of Ajea at the time of the expulsion.

Vidal De Murcia and Sue De Murcia were in jail with Leon Elba. The three were co-signers for Moshe Elkolombary when he rented a boat to transport expelled Jews.

12. Sbuli

Sevilla – city and district in south-west Spain on the border with Portugal. In the fifth century there was a community of Jews. In the sixth century the city was absorbed by the Visigoth Kingdom. Until the middle of the twelfth century it was a city in the Kingdom of Cordoba. The community was hurt badly by the pogroms of 1391, but there still was a Jewish community at the time of the expulsion. In 1481 housed a court of the Inquisition.

Other towns in Spain included Sevilla De Niefang, Sevilla La Nueva, and Sevilla De La Jara. On various documents there were names of towns including Sevillano Sibili De Sevilla, Assibili, Akivil Axivil, and Axbili.

Family history in Monastir:

Schabatai Zevuli – At the end of the sixteenth century Monastir was a major center of leather tanning who supplied raw hides to the Jewish merchants and tanneries in Gruzza. Shabati Zevuluni from Moastir was a representative for Shabatai Juda from Valono. He insured a shipment of 25 finished Cordovani goat skins, among which were 3400 hides worth 1700 Skody.

Use of the name in Spain

Avraham Siviliani – In the name of the community in Avila bought bedding and clothes from Jewish workmen. In a letter in 1477 Queen Isabella forbade such dealings.

Acach Axbili from Teruel was mentioned on a decree of Frodo III King of Aragon in 1284.

Juan De Sivilia – Converso Xeres De La Frontera. In 1482 he escaped from the Inquisition to Abuja, Portugal. an icon of him was burnt at the stake.

Yom Tov Ben Avraham Eishbili – Rabbi in Alkalia during the thirteenth – fourteenth centuries in Alcalea De Cinca. He wrote books of new learning ideas on several Talmudic

tractates. Many of his ideas were published in the book "New ideas of the Ritvah" in Limburg, 1860-1861.

13. Sisa

Sisa – city in Spain. The Duke of Sisa received an order from the King of Portugal asking Pope Clemens VIII to receive a letter.

Cisa – city in North-west Italy.

Cisa Orunca – city in Spain west of Kapaau, was the capital of Naples.

Cisa Sisa – general tax on food products that the communities of Navarre put on their residents in the time of Jacob II, in the middle of the fourteenth century.

Family history in Monastir:

Gabriel De Sisa – judge in the second half of the sixteenth century. Other members of the court were Yitzhak Ben-Lev and Shlomo Mursa.

Use of the name in Spain

Lope De Sisa – converted Jew, resident of Saloniki. He told the authorities about his relative Yosi Hodida, who served as a tax-collector for Ladecma.

Farage Suzan – helped Fernando De Medina distribute movable property from the Muslims in Kadis. He translated documents and certificates to Arabic.

14. Passi

Pasi, Passi – used in Spain as a Jewish name

Family history in Monastir:

Esther Pasi – In 1909 she decorated classrooms in the Alliance school for girls..

Use of the name in Spain.

Garcia De Paz – lived in Val Verde. During the expulsion he received a present from Roin Martinez Pacho Jarandilia, a business and 500 Marvadi.

15. Perera

Ferera – city in Portugal.

Perera – community in Mayor.

Pereres – community in Zamora.

Herrera Del Duque – small town in Istramdura.

Herreria – village in the Moisis Palencia district.

Rua De Perrarias – street of the metal-workers in Lisbon.

Herrera – name also used by Christians in Spain.

Pereira – Pear tree in Portuguese.

Family history in Monastir:

Ovadia Ben Josef Perrara – In 1894 he established the "Help for the Needy" organization that offered medical help to the needy. Its financial support came from taxes and from donations.

Use of the name in Spain and Portugal

Gonsuala De Herrera – converted Jew that was brought to trial. He was a witness for the prosecution in the case against Juan Dias Donsil. He reported about a gathering on Yom Kippur in the home of Garcia De Herrera.

Anton De Herrera – from Ciudad Real. He was a witness for the prosecution in the case against Gonzales Escohidó.

Diego Ferera – brother of Doctor Diego Ferera from the city Souzel. He lived in Alvas.

Juan De Herrera El Tresquelado from Ciudad Real – He was a prosecution witness in the case against Juan De Salvador Real.

Medina De Herera – wife of Sancho Fernandez De Vilarobia. In 1511 Maria Gonzales, wife of Pardo De Vilareal, testified that she was hung after she read a Hebrew book at the home of Christian De La Sarsa.

16. Cazis

Cadiz – city and bay in the south-western section of the Iberian Isles, in the Oviedo District

Cadiz – Province in south-west Spain. It was recorded in documents in Spain during the Middle Ages as Cazes, Cases, Avincazes, Avincases, Avincaces, Avencaces, Caczes, and Quases.

Family history in Monastir:

Yom-tov Cazis – In 1588 (5349) he made a promise to move to Israel and to live in Safed.

Use of the name in Spain

Josef Cazis from Monson – mentioned many times in protocols of the city from 1465 – 1475.

Maimon Cazis and Yitzhak Cohen from Cazis – In 1318 they were mentioned in a document of the city of Valencia with regard to their request to free a crate of indigo that had arrived from Mayor and was confiscated by the Valencian navy.

Shmuel Even Cadiz – tailor. In 1351 he was recorded as the owner of houses in Huesca.

17. Cativilia

From the city Jativa, town in Spain in the Princedom of Valencia. In 1248 it was recaptured during the reconquest. In 1481 a center for copying books was established. There was a community of Jews there until the expulsion. The community disappeared after the pogrom in July 1391, as a result of which all the Jews converted. A flourishing community, now called Aljama Noviter Facta, was rebuilt in the second half of the fifteenth century and. at the time of the expulsion the community had a third of all the Jews of Valencia.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Cativilia – In 1567 he was a member of the court. Other court members were Moshe Russo and David Lerma.

Moshe Cativilia – In 1591 (5351) he was sued in court because of a debt to David Nachmias.

18. Calvo

Calvo – names of several towns in the Princedoms of Ponteverda and Logo in Spain. Documents from the Middle Ages also used the names A1 Calvo A1 Calbo, and E1 Calbo.

Calvo – in Spanish "bald".

Calvo – name of a family in Castilian Spain.

Family history from Monastir:

Rabbi Yitzhak Calvo – Author of "A Laugh for Me" a book on laws, morals and Kabala. The original manuscript is in the ,Montana Institute in Madrid.

Use of the name in Spain.

Avraham A1 Calvo – In 1287 he was mentioned in a decree of the Aragon King Don Alfonso III.

Eishak A1 Calvo – Jew of the royal court in Jaca. He was mentioned in decrees of the Aragon King Don Fredo III.

Ephod Al Calvo – head of the Jewish community in Saragossa. He was mentioned in a decree of the Aragon King Don Alfonso III.

19. Carillo

Carrion – city in the Castilian Kingdom, between Burgos and Leon, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Carillon De Los Condes – district between Burgos and Leon where many Jews lived in the eleventh century.

Family history in Monastir:

Yehudah Carillo - In 1588 (5349) he made a promise to move to Israel and to live in Safed.

Use of the name in Spain

Eluardo De Carillo – His wife Juana De Ciruz converted and, together with other converted Jews, demanded that their property be returned to them for the price for which it was sold.

Yosi Shem-Tov De Carillo – Rabbi Shem-Tov Don Santob De Carrion wrote songs in Hebrew and Spanish. He was the adversary of the apostate Avner Burgos.

20. Covo

Covo – village in the Maisis District.

Cueva – Spanish town.

Cuevas De Almizra – village near the city Huescar.

Covo – name used by Christians in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Josef Covo – In 1925 he donated to "Help for the Poor".

Rachel, Yitzhak Josef Covo's wife – In 1936 she donated to "Help for the Poor".

Use of the name in Spain

Haim Covo and Rabbi Haim Covo – On February 10, 1487, the Catholic king wrote to Garcia Lopez De Chinchilla to take care of a request of groups of Jews, among which were Haim Covo and Rabbi Haim Covo, residents of Valencia, in regard to their expulsion from Vialmasida and the threat on their lives by the city council.

Francisco Sanchez De La Cueva and his brother Fernando Gomez De La Cueva – expelled from the city Cuellar. They returned afterward, and converted and got back the property that had been sold by their brother Shimon.

Names with implication in Spanish or Portuguese - Bulgarian Census, 1943

1. Ergas
2. Aljues
3. Leoy
4. Manu
5. Mason
6. Nissau
7. Nisson
8. Saporta
9. Confino
10. Creskis
11. Shali

1. Ergas

Ergasulo – Underground Prison in ancient Rome used especially for slaves. The name was used by Christians in Spain and was adopted by Jews. It was also a Christian name used in Iberia.

Ergas – from the Greek word "Ergasia", meaning "work, toil".

The name "Orgaz" was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

Family history in Monastir:

Bechora, David Shlomo, Yosef Shlomo, and Shlomo Yitzhak Ergas - In 1888 they contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Ischklein "The Years of Life".

Yosef Moshe Ergas – In 1864 he was a member of the "Alliance" Committee.

Klara Moshe Ergas – She contributed to the "Love Work" Society.

Shmuel Ben-Yitzhak Ergas – In 1588 he promised to make Aliyah to Israel and live in Zefat.

2. Aljues

Arabic - the Known G-d, Spanish – "Juez" – judge, "Aljuez" – the judge

Alguacil – Policeman in the Spanish city, messenger of the court.

3. Leoy

From the Portuguese "Loa" - praise

In Spanish – "Leao" or Leon, sometimes written "Leao"

Leal – A family name used by Jews in Spain, also used by Christians.

Use of the name in the Iberian Peninsula

Leo Levy from the "Gerona" in Spain settled in Perpignan after the expulsion.

Yaakov Leal – expelled from Portugal, moved to Algeria and then to Fez in 1510.

4. Manu

From the Spanish "Mano" - hand, trunk (elephant), hand shake, social status ("La Mano Menor" - low status)

Manu – "u" instead of "o" was used by the Jews of Monastir

Manu was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

5. Mason

Spanish for "builder", Franco Mason – free, unrestricted builder.

6. Nacao, Nicao

In Portuguese – a nation. The Portuguese Marranos that returned to their Judaism were called "Membros De Nacao". It was used as a nickname for the Jews who were descendants of the Marranos and returned to Judaism. It was used for congregations of

Marranos (in Spanish "Nacion" – nation). It was also a nickname for the Portuguese community in Amsterdam.

7. Nisson

In Portuguese "Nisso" or "Nisto", meaning "this thing". These may have been distortions of the name Nisao and Nissan.

8. Saporta

In Spanish documents from the Middle Ages it was also written: Zaporta, Zaportas, Saportas, Saports Ce Porta, Ces Portes, Ca Porta, Ses Portes, De Saporta, Ca[orta, Caporta. In the thirteenth century in Catalina and Majorca, in the fifteenth century in Amsterdam, and in the seventh century in Bordeaux the name was written as Caporta and Saportas. In Chichportes, the eighteenth century in Algeria the name was written "Seis Piertas", Spanish for "six gates".

Saporta – a Jewish road in Saragossa, named for a rich Jew who loaned Czar Carlos V a large sum and was therefore honored by him.

The name was also used by Christians in Spain.

Use of the name in Spain:

Rabbi Istrock Sasportas (Sporta) was petitioned King Carlos V of Navarre regarding the Jews that were hurt during the riots of 1391.

Shlomo Sporta from Sangoto together with Avraham Banbesht, rented land from Mesadar Montessa for 5000 marvadi.

9. Confino

In Spanish: Forbidden, confined, exiled, limited to living in a specified area.

It was a known name among Jews in Spain

Family history in Monastir:

Baruch Confino – In 1888 he contributed towards the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Ischklein "The Years of Life".

10. Kreskis

It was a derivative of the verb Crecer, in Spanish (the command form of the verb) to grow, to plant. This is the source of the Hebrew name "Tzemah", to grow (plant).

Family history in Monastir:

Shmuel Ben-Krekis (apparently a distortion of the name Kreskis). In the middle of the seventh century, he, along with other Jews, complained before the legal authorities in Portugal that the people of Aragon were taxing them unfairly.

Use of the name in Spain:

Avraham and Yehudah Kreskis – father and son drew navigation maps using the Catalanian method and made compasses. They were protected by a decree of the king and excused from wearing the Jewish tag. During the riots of 1391, the son Yehudah converted to Christianity and afterward called himself Jaime Ribes.

Hasdia Kreskis – Saragossa, 1412. Philosopher and leader, he was well known at the court of the Juan. He was the rabbi and leader of the community in Saragossa. The king appointed him the only judge authorized to deal with informers. During the riots of 1391, his only son was killed. He worked to rebuild the Jewish community, to collect money, and to institute new regulations for the communities of Saragossa and the surrounding area. He wrote his controversial book "The Nullification of the Principles of Christianity" in Catalanian.

Hasdia Kreskis (the elder) – One of the ten community leaders in Catalonia, to whom Rabbi R. Kolonomos' book "The Test" was dedicated. He died during the big plague of 1348.

11. Schali

In Spanish – Chal, meaning scarf, kerchief.

Names with meaning in Spain and Portugal - Community Records

1. Batino
2. Bua
3. Buton (De)
4. Nino
5. Falcon
6. Papu
7. Frances
8. Kassuto
9. Krispin

1. Batino

This was a family name used by Christians in Spain. It was also an Arab nickname. The name Patino was used by Jews.

Family history in Monastir:

Julia Batino – She was President of WIZO in Monastir. In 1930, she married Yisroel As-sa. In 1942, she died in the Jesanovac Concentration Camp.

Raphael Batino – He was born in Monastir. In 1910, his parents sent him to Mexico, where he became a member of the Communist Party. In 1934, he returned to Bitola and in 1935 moved to Skopje, where he participated in strikes and demonstrations. Because of his activities, he was sentenced to five years in the Satrama Prison in Mistrobiza. While in prison he translated "The Capital" by Karl Marx. During World War II, he escaped from prison and joined the partisans. In 1942, he was killed in battle in Bitola.

2. Boa

In Spanish – strangulation, the Enyx Javalus snake, shawl. In Portuguese – Bua – a woman's name translated from the Spanish Buena. In Hebrew – Tova (good, favor).

Family history in Monastir:

Shlomo Boa – In the second half of the seventeenth century he was a court witness for a man named Haim, who had lied in order to marry a girl from the town.

3. Buton, De Buton

In documents from the Middle Ages the name is written Biton or Viton.

Spanish – Buton – button, bud.

Vita – Bitá – life

Buton – life, a living person

It was originally a first name that, around the fourteenth century, became used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi Avraham Ben-Yehudah De Buton – In 1761 he was the rabbi and head of the rabbinical court of the city. Avraham Kamchi and Yosef Peso also served on the court. They permitted a woman to remarry after her husband was killed near the village Kosina. The court decision read: "All that has been presented before us on Adar 2, 5521 (1761) is legal and final." In the introduction to his book "Avraham's Vision" he told about his experiences as rabbi of the city.

Rabbi David De Buton – In 1794 he was rabbi of the city.

Mordecai De Buton – In 1558 a witness gave testimony in the Skopje court that he was found dead on the shore of the Verde River.

Use of the name in Spain:

Avraham Buton – He was among the exiles from Spain who signed on regulations in Fez in 1545.

Yanto Buton – He signed on a document describing the dissolving of the community in Valladolid.

Solomon Buton – rabbi, doctor of a factory in Castalia. He was exempt from certain taxes, shown in a letter from the Queen of Segovia in Castalia on September 17, 1476.

4. Nino

Spanish – child

Family history in Monastir:

Yosef Nino – a witness in a court in the second half of the seventeenth century.

5. Falcon

Spanish – a type of old cannon, hawk, crocodile, eagle. It is also written Falchon, Falco. It was a known name among Jews in Spain

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Falcon – In 1575 he was a witness in a court case.

Avraham Falcon – In 1643 he was the Rabbi of the town Solonik and a member of the Yeshiva run by Rabbi Shlomo Ben-Mayor. His religious responsa were written in the book "Guardian of Avraham".

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi Shem-Tov Falcon – At the beginning of the fourteenth century he taught Rabbi Aharon HaCohen, the author of the book "The Paths of Life". The community passed regulations of its own regarding trade, inheritance, and marriage.

Bondia Falcon – He is mentioned in many documents in Spain, especially during 1356 – 1368, as the representative of the Jewish community and as an elder of the town of

Perpignan. Along with other rabbis and Balshon Falcon, he was a co-signer of a response regarding the disgracing of a Torah scholar.

Gomez and Gabriel Falcon – In March, 1494, Carchidor of Segovia Diaz Sanchez was asked to judge a claim of Gomez and Gabriel Falcon on land that their father Moshe Zarco sold at the time of the expulsion from Spain. They both returned to Segovia and converted to Christianity.

Harnon Falcon – He lived in Ciudad Real, where he served as a witness in several court cases. There were others that also gave testimony from Alsala, Tarazona, Gerona, Toledo, Rosillon, Valecia, and other towns.

6. Papu, Papo

Spanish - "Papo" - fat, crop (of a bird's gullet)

Ladino – Papu – old grandfather

It was a known name among Jews in Spain

7. Frances

Other forms of the name – Franco, Franca, Franca (with accent on c)

Someone from France, French, someone who had come to Spain from France

Many Jews in Spain before the expulsion used this name.

Family history in Monastir:

Solomon Yitzchak Frances – In 1864 he was a member of "All Israel are Friends".

Family history in Spain:

Ephraim and Shmuel Frances - They served together with another brother served as tax collectors in the area around Zorita and Almoguerra. Ephraim Frances' son converted to Christianity and was afterward known by the name Pedro De Pastona.

Leon Frances – served King Juan Manbara as a tax collector in the 1460's.

8. Capsoot, Capsuto, Cassuto

Meaning - Hat, hood (on a coat). This name was used for the Spanish exiles from 1391 because of the small hat that they wore.

The names "Capusi" and "Casuto" were also used by Christians in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Haim Moshe Capsuto– In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Yehudah Capsuto – In 1687 he was a member of the religious court. Other members were Moshe De Meir and Meschulem Halevi. In 1685 he confirmed the donation of the Fancaso community from Doctor Yosef Hacoheh of Zafet.

Yehudah Bechar Shlomo Capsoot – In 1575 he was a witness in the religious court.

Yosef Capsuto – In 1702 he was a religious judge. Other judges were Yosef Bechar Moshe and Moshe Kamchi

Shlomo Capsuto – a merchant. In 1862 he was killed by robbers on the way from Monastir to a fair in Estroga.

Shamaya Caputo – In 1771 he testified in Thessaloniki at the trial of the murderers of Avraham Albilda.

Family history in Spain:

Yaakov Cachupi – delegate for the Jewish communities in Spain. In September 1484 he represented the community in Segovia that was dispossessed from the synagogue, the study hall, and the cemetery.

Yosef Caputo – He was among the negotiators with the ship captains for the transporting of Jews to Pisa during the expulsion.

9. Krispin

The origin Latin – Crispinus – adornment for women's hair. During the Middle Ages the name was written Aben Crespin, Ben Crespi, Avencresp, Crespini, Abincresp, and Avencrespin.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Krispin – In 1575 he was a witness in court.

Use of the name in Spain:

Estrog Krispin – escaped from the Inquisition in Tarragona. According to R. Kolonomos, he was the author of the book "The Test".

Vidal Krispin – from Tarragona. In 1294 he gave a deposit to Bonjouda Balash from Fez and to Yaakov David from Barcelona for a trip to Alexandria.

Yaakov Ben Krispin – Rabbi and poet. He lived in Spain in the twelfth century, He wrote "The Book of Morals" which was mentioned by Yehudah Alharazi.

Hebrew Names used in Iberia - Bulgarian census, 1943

1. Ben Yakar
2. Hasson
3. Mevorach
4. Mois
5. Mossa
6. Nahmias
7. Sadikarijo
8. Zadik
9. Katon
10. Kamhi

1. Ben Yakar

Ben – son Yakar – beloved, respected

Even Yakar (precious stone) originally from Portugal. They were one of the four affluent and respected families that settled in Venice and Verona after the expulsion.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Ben-Yakar – In 1782 he was murdered on his way to Soloniki.

Yehudah Ben-Yakar – In 1884 he lied in order to marry Sarah, an orphan, daughter of Yosef Calderon.

Shlomo Ben-Yakar – judge in 1761. Other judges were Mordecai Kamchi and Shmuel Alba. They were the judges in the case of the murder of two Jews from Albania who were on their way to Monastir.

Use of the name in Spain:

Rabbi Yehudah Ben-Yakar – lived in Gerona in the thirteenth century. He is mentioned by the Ramban (Nachmanidies) as one of his teachers in Jewish Law.

2. Hasson

Hebrew – strong, brave, powerful

Arabic - type of bird

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Hasson – In 1926 he was sent from Monastir to Jerusalem to learn stone-cutting.

Avram Hasson – lived in Tabana near the mosque. The underground printing press operated in his home until 1942. It was run by the Macedonian Steve Neumob along with his son and Albert Russo.

Bechar David Hasson and Bechar Moshe Hasson - They contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Hannah Hasson – active in the women's branch of the Zionist organization "The Re-birth".

Yosef Pipo Hasson – He fought as a partisan in the Greek mountains in the Second World War and his home was used for storage of arms. He was a member of the Communist Party.

Moshe Hasson – In 1738 he was murdered and the case came to court.

Moshe Hasson – member of the sports organization "The Hope".

Shlomo Hasson – In 1738 he was a witness at the trial of the murderers of his brother Moshe.

Use of the name in Spain:

Avraham Hasson – During the beginning of the fifteenth century he served as a lion trainer for Carlos III, King of Navarre.

3. Mevorach

Praised, worthy of praise, with many blessings

Use of the name in Spain:

Mevorach – He is mentioned in one of the poems by Shmuel HaNagidd as someone who lived in the city "Mivtzar" the Hebrew name for a Kalaat Ayoud.

Y. Mevorach – nicknamed "Abu Alfadel" set a rule before the Rambam that "If any woman gives witness as to an acquisition, the acquisition is not final until her father or brother validate it".

4. Mois

From the original Hebrew name "Moshe" in Spanish form.

5. Mossa

From the original Hebrew for Moses.

In Spanish documents the name is also written as Ibn Mussa, Ben Mussa, or Musa. It was originally a first name which became used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Viko Mossa – active in the youth Zionist movement the "Young Guard".

Yaakov Ben Moshe – In 1634 he rented land from a Turkish farmer.

Yaakov Ben Moshe – In 1694 he was brought before a Moslem court in a case related to the ownership of a vineyard.

Yitzhak Mussa – active in the sports organization "The Hope".

Meir Mussa – donated to the Alliance Girls' School.

Use of the name in Spain:

Haym Muca - Several Christians owed him money and he owed others. He asked his debtors to advance the date of payment so he could leave Spain. The Crown accepted his request and told Lopi De Bostamenti to appoint two local residents to control his money matters.

Haym Ben Mussa – from Bichar, a rabbi and poet. He was born near Salamanca in 1390 and died in 1460. He wrote the article "Shield and Dagger", a defense of the Jews against the Christians, relating specifically to Nicola De Lira. He translated to Hebrew a book by Aljazer. He wrote a commentary on the book of Isaiah and other books of the Bible.

Muca De Portella – served in several capacities in the service of King Pedro III. In 1277 he negotiated with the Moslems from the villages near Mantissa that rebelled against the king. He also served as the head financial minister of the Aragon area. He was killed in 1283.

6. Nahmias, Namais

From the Hebrew "Nehemia", also written Neamais.

The name was also used by Christians in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Nahmias – In 1903 he was the principal and a teacher in the Talmud Torah (religious school).

Avraham Bechar Shlomo Nahmais – In 1740 he was a witness in the case involving the sale of the home of the orphan Shem-Tov Aruesti.

Avram Nahmais - In 1942 he moved from Skopje to Monastir, leaving behind a debt of 2528 Libas (Belgian money) according to the estimation from 1939.

Alegra Nahmais – a member of the Communist Youth Movement and the resistance Committee.

Esther, daughter of David Nahmais – In 1772 she was left a widow when her husband Haym Aruesti was murdered.

Asher Yaakov Nahmais – President of the Community of Monastir from 1924 - 1925.

Gabi and Mordecai Nahmais – members of the Communist Party.

David Nahmais – In Soloniki Doctor Amatos Kevitanis אמאטוס לויטאנוס cared for him in Monastir. He died at the age of 20.

David Nahmais - In 1591 he sued Moshe Kativilia קאטיביליה for a debt he had not paid.

David Nahmais – from Castoria. At the end of the nineteenth century he taught Turkish and Spanish in the school that was established by the middle-class of the community.

Henry Nahmais – In the 1920's he organized a theater group in Monastir and directed their performances.

Jack Nahmais - member of the sports organization "The Hope".

Todros Nahmais – In 1888 he was the treasurer of the group that read the "Liturgy against extermination"

Yaakov Nahmais – In 1597 he drowned on his way from Pisa to Ragosa.

Yaakov Rahamim Nahmais – In 1864 he was a member of the "All Jews are Friends" Committee.

Mordecai Nahmais – In 1934 he was a member of "Blue – White". In 1942 he used his home as a hideout for partisans in the Macedonian mountains. He fell in battle.

Solomon Nahmais – In 1828 he was the secretary of the community.

Shlomo Nahmais – In 1740 he was a judge. Other judges were Shlomo Aruesti and Shmuel Yeusha.

Shlomo Bechar Moshe Nachmais – In 1643 he was a judge. Other judges were Yaakov Hameyuchas from the Farash (Farag) Ben Yehudah family, and Shabatai Bechar Saadia.

Shmuel Nahmais – In 1591 he served as Rabbi of the city.

Use of the name in Spain:

David Ben Yosef Nahmais – from Toledo. He and his three brothers died in the plague of 1349.

Jesua Namais from Hita – in the Province of Gold heart. Before the expulsion he sold a house, a vineyard, and all the household items to Fernando De Brihuega.

Yitzhak Nahmais – from Cordova, rabbi and judge. In 1391 he escaped to Fez and served there as a rabbi and judge in the court of Shimon Ben Tzemah and Doran Tzarfati.

7. Sadikarijo

Hebrew origin – Tzadik - A person that does charity, doing charity, acquitted in a court case. In Spanish the suffix "rio" was added.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Sadikarijo – active in the "Young Guard" and a member of the Communist Party. He participated in the battles to free Macedonia and was awarded several medals of honor.

Solomon Sadikarijo – member of the Communist Youth and the Communist Party

Shlomo and Shmuel Sadikarijo – From 1942 they fought with the partisans from Macedonia and were killed in battle – Shlomo in a commando raid in 1944 and Shmuel as a commander of a paratrooper unit in 1945.

Use of the name in Spain:

Shlomo Sadicar – On Oct. 7, 1492, he was among a group of Jews from Zaragoza that empowered the merchant Tomas Colom from Valencia to negotiate with Pedro Laitha, the owner of a ship in Ampolia, to transport them to a safe place.

8. Zadik

One who gives charity, honest, a G-d fearing individual, one who performs commandments, acquitted in a court case. The family lived in Spain in Aribello in Luearubia, in Lan Zion, Santiago Cordova.

Use of the name in Spain:

Yosef Ben Zadik – Hebrew poet. He wrote a religious article, "Short Remembrance of a Righteous Person" in which he tried to explain each ruling briefly.

Rabbi Yosef Ben Yaakov Ibn Sadik – 1149 from Cordova. He was a rabbi, philosopher, and poet. From 1138 until his death he served as a judge in Cordova. He was a friend of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi and Avraham and Moshe Ben-Ezra. Twenty of his poems were saved. He wrote "Small World", a philosophical book in which he claims that knowledge of the Creator and doing His wishes are two ways for a person to come to great pleasure.

9. Katon

From the Hebrew "katan" - Young, short (height), a branch of the Kamchi family, one of whose ancestors was called "Le Petit" (the Small One)

In North Africa the name used was Betito, Betit, or Betite.

10. Kamchi

From the Hebrew "Kemah" - Flour, seeds of wheat that were ground.

Kamchi – having flour or the taste of flour.

It was the name of some of the great commentators in Spain and Narbonne.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Kamchi – In 1761 a judge. Other judges were Avraham De Buton and Yosef Peso. In 1761 they were the tribunal in the case of the murder of Rabbi Yaakov Bechar Avshalom Hacoheh.

Avraham Kamchi – son of Moshe Shlomo Kamchi. Was a tax collector for thirty-four villages near Monastir.

Avraham Kamchi – responsible for the sports in the "Rebirth" organization.

Bechar Kamchi, Yeshua Bechar Haym, Yitzhak Avraham, and Shabat Shlomo Kamchi – In 1888 they contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Ischklein "The Years of Life".

Dan Kamchi - judge in 1838. Other judges were Raphael Shlomo Calderon and Haym Avraham Peso.

Dan Mercado Kamchi – Before 1849 he was sent to several cities to collect support for the rebuilding of two synagogues in Monastir that had been burned down.

Victor, Victoria, Rosa, and Rena Kamchi – members of the Communist Youth. Victor was also a member of the Communist Party. On her way to join the partisans Rosa was arrested and sent to jail.

Yosef Kamchi – In 1919 he was the President of the community.

Yosef Pifo Kamchi – active in the "Youth Guard" and a member of the Communist Party.

Yechiel Kimchi – In 1903 he was a member of the Education Committee.

Yecheil Hakamchi - In 1909 he was the President of the community

Yeheil D. – In 1909 he was the leader of the community

Yeheil Raphael Kamchi and Raphael Moshe Kamchi – served as board members for the organization "Help for the Poor".

Leon Kamchi – Zionist community leader in Monastir. As the vice-chairman of the community he founded two Zionist youth organizations, "Sons of Zion" and "Daughters of Zion" and "The Rebirth" for adults with a special section for women and a sports organization with a soccer team. He was also vice-chairman of the Federation in Yugoslavia, representative of the Israeli office of the Jewish National Fund and "Keren Hayesod". He was killed in the holocaust. His home was used for storage of arms for fighters.

Montash Kamchi – In 1903 as an active participant in the rebellion in Ilandan he passed on arms and ammunition to the fighters.

Montash Kamchi – In 1931 he acted a part in the play "Dreyfus".

Mordecai Kamchi – In 1761 he was a judge. Other judges were Shmuel Alba and Shlomo Ben Yakar. They were judges in a case of the murderers of two Jews from Albania on their way to Monastir.

Mordecai Kamchi – In 1643 he was a merchant of animal skins.

Moshe Kamchi – In 1702 he was a judge. Other judges were Yosef Bechar Moshe and Yosef Caputo.

Moshe Shabtai Kamchi – In 1865 in Belgrade, along with Yitzhak Gavriel Hacoheh, he published Eliezer Ben Shem Tov Papo's book "Damesik Eliezer".

Moshe Shlomo Kamchi – In 1792 he was the community leader and served as a member of the city council and the district civil and criminal court. He dealt in flour and in 1828 became wealthy because of a drought in the area.

Matityahu Shabtai Kamchi – donated to the "Love Work" organization.

Stella Kamchi – active in the "Youth Guard" and a member of the Communist Party

Raphael Kamchi – born in Monastir in 1870, died in Tel Aviv in 1970. He was a member of the revolutionary national organization in Macedonia known as VMRO. In 1903, he

participated in the rebellion against the Turks in Ilandon in Macedonia. In 1908, he served as the head of the community in Monastir. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, he lived in Soloniki and was the sexton of the Monastirili synagogue. In 1943, he escaped to Sofia.

Shabatai Shlomo Kamchi – In 1888 he served as an elder in the community.

Shabatai Kamchi – In 1740 he confirmed a decision of the judges Shmuel Yeusha, Avraham Bechar, Shlomo Nahmais, and Dan Akbochari.

Shabatai Kamchi – In 1738 he was a witness in court regarding the murder of Moshe Hasson.

Shabatai Bechar Yehoshua Kamchi – rabbi of the city. In 1791 he confirmed a question of the court regarding a suit of Moshe Raphael on the shore of Alexandria.

Shimon Kamchi – In 1919 he was the vice-president of the community.

Use of the name in Spain:

David Kamchi – son of Yosef, lived from 1160 – 1235. In 1232 during the controversy over the Rambam, he agreed with the Rambam. He wrote the book "The Book of the Roots", a Hebrew dictionary, commentary to Chronicles, Genesis, books of the Prophets, Psalms, and Proverbs. His commentary to Psalms was published separately under the name "Answers to the Christians".

Yosef Kamchi – lived from 1105 – 1170. He escaped from Spain to Provence because of the decrees of the Muslim rulers. He settled in Narbonne and worked at spreading Jewish ideas from Spain to Jews throughout Christian Europe. He wrote the book "Book of Memories" on Hebrew grammar. He instructed his sons Moshe and David on the instructions of the Hebrew language. As a commentator of the Bible, he explained the work in a direct manner. He wrote "The Book of the Torah", "The Book of Sales", "The Collection", "The Holy Shekel" (donation to the Holy Temple), "The Book of the Covenant", and a controversial book against the Christians.

Moshe Kamchi – lived 1120 – 1190, son of Yosef. He wrote "The Way of the Road to Knowledge", "Good Understanding", "Bandage", commentaries on Proverbs, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Job.

Hebrew Names in Iberia –Community Records

(Families who had no descendents in town during the Bulgarian Census, 1943)

1. Ben Lev
2. Ben Nahamais
3. Ben Ezra
4. Nahman
5. Perez
6. Zadok
7. Reuven

1. Ben Lev

Ben – son, Lev – heart, center of veins of the body, center of feelings, desires, wisdom, courage, etc.

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi David Ben Lev – son of Rabbi Yosef Ben Lev. He served as rabbi of the city in the first half of the 1500's and was murdered in 1545.

Rabbi Yosef Ben Lev – born in Monastir about 1500. He served as rabbi in Monastir and died around 1580. He also served as rabbi of Thessaloniki. Rabbi Binyamin Halevi Ashkenazi wrote about him, "The famous sage Rabbi Yosef Ben Lev absorbed much anger from the leaders of community of Thessaloniki because he would not show favoritism to any one in particular. Many people disagreed with him. After his son Dovid, a brilliant scholar, was murdered, he decided to leave Thessaloniki and move to Constantinople. In 1545 he was appointed to the Chief Rabbi of the Yeshivah founded by Hannah Garcia and her son-in-law was appointed as the President."

Rabbi Yitzhak Ben Lev – Judge. Other judges were Gavriel De Siso and Shlomo Morsa. He wrote about insurance on the sea. The ship owners were charging non-Jews 4% and the Jews 8-10%. He also wrote about community customs. "The custom in the city in Kushta was that all groups acted as one congregation and copied from each other, whereby in Thessaloniki each group stayed by itself."

2. Ben Nahamias

From documents from the Middle Ages – Abe Namaia, Aben Nahamias, Ibn Nakmiash, Abenhamais.

Ben – son, Nahmias – name taken from Nehemiah, with the Spanish addition "as" – home of

Original (Hebrew) Nehemiah son of Helkiah.

Family history in Monastir:

Esther, daughter of David Nahmias - widow of Haim Bechar Shem Tov Aruesti, who was murdered in 1773.

David Nahmias – father of Esther Nahmias, whose case was considered in the court.

Moshe Ben Nahmias – In 1643 he was a judge in the court case of Yaakov Meyuhas.

Moshe Ben Nahmias – In 1772 he was a witness in the case of the murder of Haim Bechar Shem Tov Aresti.

Use of the name in Spain:

David, son of Yosef Nahmais – He and three others died of the plague in Toledo in 1349.

Moshe Ben Nahmias – from Zamora. Because of the testimony of Yosef Franco, He was accused of receiving "holy bread" taken from the LaGuardia Church.

Don Sag Abenhamais – He is mentioned in documents of the king from Toledo in 1292.

Don Shlomo Ibn Nakmiash - Tax collector for the bishop in Cordova and Jaen.

3. Ben Ezra

Ben – son, Ezra – Aramaic – help, assistance, support.

The original name (Hebrew) Ezra, son of Shria, son of Ezariah, son of Helkia.

Family history in Spain:

Avraham Ibn Ezra – Toledo, 1089 – Calera, 1164 Poet, Bible commentator, philosopher, astronomer, and doctor. He wrote many books in these areas. His prayers of chastisement, requests for forgiveness, and poems have been accepted as part of the Jewish prayers for the holidays.

Moshe (Abu-Horn) son of Yaakov Ibn Ezra – In 1090 the city Grenada was captured by the Christians, but he continued to live there. Afterward he fled to Christian Spain. He wrote poems and comments on poems of others. Much of his work was translated into Arabic.

4. Nahman

Consolation, one who consoles, name given to children born in the Hebrew month of Av (month of the destruction of the Holy Temple)

Family history in Monastir:

Sassoon Nahman – In 1572 – he was a merchant of arms and of clothing in Ragosa.

Use of the name in Spain:

Moshe Ben Nahman – lived 1194 – 1270. He was rabbi of Gerona. He made Aliyah to Israel in 1267 and helped establish the Jewish community in Jerusalem.

5. Perez, Peres

Spanish – Pereza, laziness, idleness

Hebrew – break, destroy, split

First name, son of Yehudah and Tamar (Book of Genesis)

Family history in Monastir:

Haim Perez and his brothers – In 1888 they contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Yosef Haim Peres – In 1864 he was a member of the "All Jews are Friends" Committee.

Use of the name in Spain:

Juan Peres – born in Seville, lived in Zaragoza. In 1487 he was hung in Zaragoza.

Yehudah Peres – In 1439 he collected the taxes in Acavala from the cardinal of Mondonia.

6. Zadok

Righteousness, honest, truth, straightforward

Zadok – first name of many men in the Bible.

From documents from the Middle Ages – Aben Cadoc, Aben Cadoque, Abenzadoch, Sadoch, Zadoch, Cadoch, Sadox

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi Shmuel Zadok – He served as a teacher in Monastir in the beginning of the eighteenth century and was a member of the Ashkenazi community in Thessaloniki. In 1725, along with other rabbis of Thessaloniki, he signed an agreement against the rich men that wanted to institute a tax on the religious sages. He passed judgment relative to a request that Don Asher Abarbanel pay a fine to his daughter-in-law's father. He spent some time in Rhodes and was listed among the fifteen rabbis mentioned in the memorial prayer on the eve of Yom Kippur.

Use of the name in Spain:

Eliezer Ben Ischak Zadok – In September 1421 he gave to Jamal, the daughter of Arnesto Abenheart and his brothers Juan Sanches a sculpture in Kalaat Ayoud. He lived for while in Monoson.

Yosi Zadok – In 1397 he was among those who established a reform in Saragossa as to the taxes on wine and other donations for the welfare of the community.

7. Reuben

The first-born of Yaakov and Leah, the tribe of Reuben, a first name that was turned into a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Reuben – a liturgical poet. In the seventeenth century, he lived in the city. His rhymes were carved on tombstones in the cemetery of Solonoki.

Use of the name in Spain:

Avraham Reuben – A son of converts to Christianity. His Christian name was Pedro Gomez De Stormier. He was born in Valencia near the Minion River. On September 8, 1624, he was brought before a judge of the Inquisition. In his own testimony he told of meeting with other Jewish converts. He taught another convert by the name of Francisco De San Antonio how to read Hebrew from a booklet he had used to teach children before he converted. He also taught him several prayers. He also taught his wife Francisca the "She-ma" prayer. His investigation took from June, 1619 – November, 1625.

Arab Surnames common in Iberia - The Bulgarian census

1. Alajem
2. Massot
3. Faraid

1. Alajem

Arabic – foreigner, Persian, Persia

From the word for community

The Jewish community in Spain was called Aljama.

Arabic – one who grooms horses.

Use of the name in Spain:

Legem - In 1448, members of the family rented the income from the Montissa order in Burianna.

2. Massot

Arabic – contented

Spanish – "Mazot" – meat fed to the king's lion.

The name was used as a surname among Jews in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Aharon Massot – In 1563 he testified in court to the effect that Yitzhak Sofer gave Haim Bechar Hacoheh 300 flowers.

Yitzhak Massot – supervisor for the Zionist organization "The Rebirth".

Leah Yitzhak Massot - donated to the "Love Work" organization.

Shmuel Yitzhak Massot (Massud) – Secretary of the community Aug. 5, 1924 and July 18-19, 1925.

Use of the name in Spain:

Daughter of Shmuel Massud – from Lisbon. Portugal sent a divorce document to Yosef son of Shlomo Alaluf who was in Jativa, Spain.

3. Faraid

Arabic – a precious stone, pearls

Use of the name in Spain:

Natan Faraij – from Jativa, owner of a Genoan ship

Arab surnames common in Iberia - Community records

1. Alfakim

2. Mandil

1. Alfakim, Alhakim

From the Arabic – the doctor, the wise man

In the Middle Ages in Spain it was written Alphaquim, Alfaquim, Alfaquin (twelfth century) Faquim (thirteenth century), Alfachin, Alfaqui, Alfaquin, Alfaquein (fourteenth century), also Haquim, Alfequim, Faquin,

The title "Alfaquih" was given to the advisor of the king, the king's secretary and translator.

Today the name Con-Xin is used. Some think it is derived from "Faquim". The name has been used for Jews that converted to Christianity.

Family history in Monastir:

Yehudah Alfaki – 1563, judge. Other judges were Yosef Aleoesti and Yosef Bechar Shlomo Edigis.

Use of the name in Spain:

Alfakim family – in Palma De Majorca, community leaders in the fourteenth century.

Avraham Alfakim – Barcelona – doctor, treasurer, translator. He cosigned a loan for the Prince Bergner IV (1131 – 1162).

Yehudah Ibn Menasheh Alfakim – In Jativa in 1280 he collect rents.

Shmuel Alfakim and Shlomo Alfakim – in Navara – property owners in different districts in Navara.

2. Mandil

Arabic – kerchief, handkerchief

Family history in Monastir:

Yohanan, son of Benyamin Mandil – He was born in Shabaz in 1873 and died in Thessaloniki in 1916. In 1913, he came to Bitola and established the newspaper Bitoljske

Novine. In 1915, he moved to Thessaloniki and was one of the founders of the newspaper Velka Serbjia.

Use of the name in Spain:

Avraham Mandil – He was mentioned on notary documents in Barcelona in 1383– 1384.

Vidal Yaakov Mandil – wove silk with threads of gold. He was mentioned on notary documents in Barcelona in 1385.

Non-Iberian Towns - Bulgarian census, 1943

1. Alischandra
2. Gamlid
3. Masai
4. Slorentin
5. Kolonomos
6. Kellner
7. Romano
8. Schamu
9. Schami

1. Alischandra

From "Alsandria", city in northern Italy near the Po River.

2. Gamlid, Galmid, Galmidi

Surname used by Christians in Greece.

Surname used on the Island of Crete.

In 1931 the name Galmidi was used in Tunisia.

3. Masai

From "Massa" – small city in Toscana.

4. Florentin

From the town "Castiglione Fiorentino", 106 km from Florence on the way to Rome.

5. Kolonomos

In Greek – "Kolo" – good, "nomos" – name, so someone with a good name (reputation). The name shows that the family came from the Hellenist district. The name shows that the family came from "Luca" in northern Italy, whose residents were among the scholars of Ashkenaz. Inscriptions for the name "Kallon" are found on graves in Jerusalem.

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi Kolonomos – In 1558 he gave testimony in court that when he was in the Jewish Ghetto a Turk by the name of Achmad told him that he saw the body of a Jew on the shore of the Bardal.

Avraham Benyamin Kolonomos – At the end of the nineteenth century he was active in the "Help for the Needy" organization and in 1910 donated to the organization.

Isaak Kolonomos – member of the Education Committee in Monastir (1909).

Esther Kolonomos – In 1908 she died in Monastir at the age of 82. She had returned to Monastir after 13 years in Jerusalem.

Binyamin Kolonomos – In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Jamila Kolonomos – a resident of Skopje. In 1922, she was active in the "Youth Guard" and a member of the Communist Party. In 1942, she joined the partisans in the Macedonian mountains and was a political and army leader for the partisans. She became a group leader in the 42nd division.

Together with Dr. Vera Veskovish-Vangeli, she wrote the books "The Jews in Macedonia during the Second World War" and "Stories of Spanish Jews in Macedonia". She also wrote a manuscript, "Research on the Ladino Language in Bitola and Skopje".

In 1941, she received the "Spomenica" award from the partisans along with other awards.

Yitzhak Shlomo Kolonomos – In 1894 he founded the "Help for the Needy" organization.

Calev Chai Shlomo Kolonomos – In 1908 he donated to the girls' religious school.

Kochio Kolonomos – At the end of the nineteenth century he was a Hebrew teacher for the school founded for the middle class in the community.

Shlomo Yitzhak Kolonomos – In 1912 he was the President of the community.

6. Kellner

A German name – from the city Kiln, a city in the Franco Kingdom in the Czardom of the Holy Roman Empire in Germany, near the Raines River, north of Minx.

Family history in Monastir:

Josephina Tudor Kellner lived in the city with her daughter Doctor Ilonaka אילונקה – Ischak Kellner and her son-in-law Dr. Leon Ischak, a lawyer. All three survived the Monopole Concentration camp.

7. Romano

Italian name, from the city Rome. It was used as a nickname for the Spanish Jews living in Greece, on the islands, and in Italy before the expulsion of 1492. They were also

called "Romanists" (from Rome), "Yanisits" (from Yonona) , "Gregos (from Greece), and Byzantists" (from Byzantium) . The name "Romano" was used by Jews in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Romano – He was born in Sarajevo in 1895 and died in Treblinka in 1943. He was the rabbi of the city from 1931 until his death. While in Sarajevo in 1912 he organized a group of 30 youngsters from Bosnia and led them on a visit to the Land of Israel. In 1940 he was a representative of Bitola to the convention of rabbis in Serbia.

Moritz Romano – resident of Skopje. He was active in the "Youth Guard" and a member of the Communist Youth and the Communist Party. He was the Yugoslavian ambassador to Chile.

Shabatai Romano – In 1575 he gave testimony in a court.

8. Schamu

Arabic name – from Damascus, with the Spanish ending "u".

Schami - Arabic name – from Damascus, with the Arabic ending "i".

Family history in Monastir:

Alberto Yosef Schami – born in Monastir, collected money in Soloniki for the "Promotion of Work" organization in Monastir.

Zechariah Schami – scholar, taught in the Religious Jewish Day School in 1931.

Zechariah and Shabatai Schami – In 1888 they contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Ischklein "The Years of Life".

Allegro Morris and Sherlo Schami – members of the Communist Party. Sherlo, a member of the central committee, was arrested in 1942.

Morris Schami – His house served as a storeroom for arms.

Non-Iberian Towns – Community History

1. Adiges
2. Bishurda
3. Gateenyo
4. Gascon
5. Grassyano
6. Luca
7. Modino
8. Mulia
9. Kapuano
10. Shuncin

1. Adiges

City in Greece, north-west of the Gulf of Thessaloniki.

Adige – river in northwest Italy, cutting through the city of Verona.

Family history in Monastir:

David Adige – In 1575 he gave testimony in court.

Yosef Bechar Solomon Adige – In 1563 he was a judge. Other judges were Rabbi Yosef Alvoriti and Rabbi Yudah Alfaki.

2. Bishurda

From the name "Birdashi" from the city Beziers in France, formerly called Badrash.

Besora – a Levantine name used on the Belari Islands. הבליאריים

Bardashi – name used by Jews in France.

Jews in Spain used the names Bardaji and Bedarsi.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Besora – In 1591 he gave witness in court regarding the debt of Moshe Catibilia to David Nachmais.

Shalom Besora – In 1761 he gave testimony regarding the murder of Yaakov Bechar Avshalom Hacohen.

3. Gatenyo

Spanish, from Gota or Qatanes in Spain.

Italian – from the city Gaeta, south of Rome

Gatino – original name from Spanish.

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi Ben Benisti Gatenyo – lived in Monastir in the middle of the nineteenth century, the first-born son of Rabbi Avraham Ben Benisti Gatenyo, the author of the book "The Silver Shadow". He was killed on his way to Monastir in 1859.

Rabbi Avraham Ben Benisti Gatenyo - the author of the book "The Silver Shadow". He was saved from an attack by highwaymen on him and his son in 1859.

4. Gascon

Gascoigne – district in France. In the Middle Ages it was a south-western province of France, between Garon and the Perinea. Its capital was Aush. Many Jews that were

expelled from Spain and Portugal reached this area and, because the Inquisition had no power there, returned to their Judaism.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Gascon – In 1589 he promised to make Aliyah to the Land of Israel.

Use of the name in Spain:

Shmuel Gascon – He was among the Jews expelled from Portugal that were hung in Ancona

5. Grassyano

Grasse – city in Provence in south-east France.

Family history in Monastir:

Yekutiel Grassyano – deaf. He was murdered on his way home from an exhibit in Estroga. He was a trader. His horse carried a bunch of apples.

6. Luca

Latin, Italian – Luques, a city in northwest Italy, in the Toscana District, northeast of Pisa. According to tradition the scholar Aharon Ben Shmuel, leader of the community in Babylon, came to Luca and passed on the "Secrets of the Prayers" to Rabbi Kolonomos.

Family history in Monastir:

David Luca – In the middle of the sixteenth century he served as rabbi of the city. He died in 1577 in Soloniki. Rabbi Saadia Lango recited an elegy.

7. Modino

From Modino, a city in Italy

Family history in Monastir:

Rivka Modino – In 1909 she was active in the religious girls' school.

8. Mulia

From the city Mellia in Italy

Mellia – Spanish Morocco

Molla – in Italian – woman

Family history in Monastir:

Nahman Yaakov Mulia – In 1864 he was a member of the "All Jews are Friends" organization.

9. Capuano

From the city Capuano in Italy.

The name was used by Jews in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Avranam Capuano – He was a member of the Education Committee. He resigned in 1908.

10. Shunchin

The city Soncino near Carmine in the district of Milano in Italy. There the name was written Soncino, Sonciani, or Soncion. Members of the family were book publishers since 1483.

Family history in Monastir:

Shlomo Bar Natan Soncino – In 1566 he gave witness in court about a case of marriage on false pretenses.

Biblical Hebrew Names – Bulgarian Census, 1943

1. Ischach *
2. Aschkenazi
3. Baruch
4. Beracha *
5. Cohen *
6. Levi *
7. Meshulam
8. Solomon
9. Zion
10. Sarfati
11. Katan

Names marked with a "*" were used in Spain.

1. Ischach

Derived from the name Itzhak, the second of the forefathers, son of Avraham and father of Yaakov. The name was mentioned on documents in Spain in the Middle Ages – Azach, Cag, Iszach, Issach, Assach, and Asach. It was a surname that was later used as a first name. Those whose names were Ischach were changed to Yosha or Yishi in

Israel. Doctor Nissim Yusha was of the opinion that the name originated in the city of Ishar in Aragon, Spain, where there was a Jewish printing shop, which had been established in 1485.

Family history in Monastir:

Dr. Helena Ischach-Kellner – was a pharmacist in Monastir after World War I. She had come to Monastir from the Vividina province in Yugoslavia. She was freed from the Monopol Concentration Camp because she was a pharmacist.

Dr. Leon Ischach – lawyer, Dr. Helena Ischach-Kellner's husband. He was freed from the Monopol Concentration Camp along with his wife.

Leon Ischach – In 1942 he was a member of the committee for the struggle. He demanded the recruitment of Jewish youngsters to the partisans.

Luna Montash and Pinchas Ischach – During World War II they served with the partisans in Greece.

Leon Moshe Ischach – In 1931 the committee for Jews of Spanish background requested from the Jewish agency to grant him and his family permits to make Aliyah to Israel.

Luna and Montash Ischach – members of the Communist Youth Movement.

Use of the name in Spain:

Yitzchak Yitzchak (Izaque, Isaque) – lived in Toledo. He was a cloth merchant who bought merchandise from Diago De Toledo for 125,000 marvadis, but, because of a decree freezing all Jewish debts, he did not pay him. Before leaving Spain during the expulsion, Jewish buyers gave him promissory notes from Christians that owed him money. These Christians agreed to pay him the money instead of paying the Jews to whom they were in debt.

Magistar Shlomo Yitzchak – Jewish scholar, not well known elsewhere. He participated in the Tortossa Debates on San Mateo on the subject "Heresy and Mistakes in the Tal-

mud". He was of the opinion that one must explain the words of the Talmud in the same manner as passages in the Bible, that means to explain the material according to the general topic of the book.

2. Ashkenazi

From Ashkenaz, son of Gomer, son of Yephet and from the name Askenaz (Ancient name for Germany). It was used as a nickname for Jews from Central Europe, especially from Germany. Their main language was Yiddish. Because the name spread throughout the Jews of Spain whose language was Ladino, the name was used to refer to the Spanish Jews after the expulsion.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Ashkenazi – In 1925-1926 he was sent from Monastir to Jerusalem to study in the Alliance school.

Moshe Ashkenazi – born in Bulgaria. He was a representative of the "Youth Guard" Zionist movement in Monastir from 1931 -1932.

3. Baruch

Baruch Ben-Neria was the secretary of Yermihahu the Prophet. It was the names of some of the Jews that returned to Israel from Babylonia with Ezra and Nehemiah. It was a first name that became a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Eliyahu Baruch (Likach) – representative of the "Youth Guard" in Bitola.

Yosef Baruch – doctor in Bitola, born in Sarajevo.

Yaakov Baruch – In 1597 he drowned at sea on the way from Pisa to Ragusa.

Shabbat Bechar Baruch - In 1888 he was the treasurer of the group that read the "Liturgury against extermination"

Shemia Yitzhak Baruch – member of the committee to find a rabbi for Monastir.

Use of the name in Spain:

Baruch Ben Shmuel Baruch – the request to divorce his wife was brought before the court of Perez Hacoheh, Nissim Girondi, and Nissim Ben-Reuven in Barcelona.

4. Beracha

Name of one of the men who came to King David in Ziglag, one of the 30 men of the special forces of King David

Greeting, regular term used for praise of G-d, riches, satisfaction. The family was included among the Priests. The name was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

Family history in Monastir:

M. Beracha – served as a lawyer in Bitola before the expulsion. He was born in Serbia.

5. Cohen

The name stands for one who serves G-d in the Holy Temple and in the synagogue. It was a title that became a surname. Jews with this name are associated with the family of Aaron the High Priest, and thus would bless the congregations at prayer. The name was also used for a Priest or religious leader among other nations.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Cohen – In 1592 he was asked to nullify the vows of four members of Monastir to move to the Land of Israel.

Avraham and Eliyahu Hacoheh – In 1687 they gave testimony in court in Monastir before Moshe De Meir, Yeoda Casoto, and Meshulem Halevi.

echor Hacoheh – At the end of the nineteenth century he taught Hebrew and religious subjects in the Jewish school established by members of the community's middle class.

Binyamin Avraham, Yaakov Mordecai, Mordecai Avraham, and Moshe Hacoheh - contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Jacque Hacoheh – member of the "Hope" sports organization.

Jacque Mordo, Solomon Silvan, and Shelley Cohen – members of the Communist Party.

Rabbi Haim Bechar Hacoheh – In 1563 he testified in court that he received from Yitzhak Sofer 300 flowers to bring to Rabbi Yosef Bechar Yehudah.

Yosef Hacoheh – from Safed, He came to Monastir in 1685 and received a donation of 15 Grush.

Yaakov Bechar Avshalom Cohen – In 1880 he was a judge. Other judges were Moshe Nigrin and Yitzhak Gavriel Hacoheh.

Yaakov and Natan Cohen – In the middle of the seventeenth century in Venice they received testimony regarding a claim of Haim De Avilo.

Yitzhak Elazar Cohen – In 1589 he vowed to move to the Land of Israel and live in Safed.

Yitzhak Bechar Eliezer Cohen – Rabbi of the city. In 1588 he made a religious (halachic) decision regarding three residents who vowed to move to Israel. Because one of them was unable to go, all three could not go. The rabbi allowed the breaking of the vow and wrote: "The honorable intention in that they thought to move to Israel will be considered as a good deed as if they really had done it, even though they never really were able to carry it out."

Yitzhak Gavriel Hacoheh – In 1864 he served on the "All Jews are Friends" committee. In 1865 in Belgrade he published Eliezer Ben Shem-Tov Papo's book "Damesek Eliezer", a commentary on Yoreh Dah (Part of the Shulchan Aruch).

Yitzhak Gavriel Hacoheh – In 1880 he was a judge. Other judges were Moshe Nigrin and Yaakov Bechar Mordecai Hacoheh.

Moshe Bechar Yehora Hacoheh – In 1791 he was a judge. Other judges were Yosef Nechemuli and Yitzhak Pisso.

Mordecai Cohen – Member of the Communist Party.

Moshe Ben Yehudah Cohen – In 1526 he married a girl under false pretenses.

Matityahu Cohen – In 1929 he was a member of the “Sinai” soccer team.

Shelley Cohen - Member of the Communist Party.

Shlomo Ben Avraham Cohen – born in Shurun, Syrus. In 1540 he moved to Monastir, the birthplace of Rabbi Yosef Ben Lev and from there moved to Castalia in Thessaloniki.

Use of the name in Spain:

Avraham Cohen - from Trujillo. He helped get Jewish possessions out of Trujillo And from the area to the south before he left with the expulsion.

Yom Tov Cohen – He helped negotiate the transportation of Jews from Javita to Pisa in Italy.

Yitzhak Cohen – from Achya. Against the will of Thomas De Torquemada, he continued to sit in jail even after the expulsion because of the debts he owed to Christian creditors.

Rabbi Moshe Hacoheh – from Tordesillas. He was a rabbi and cantor during the time of the brothers Pedro and Enriquo and their efforts against the forced conversions led by the students of the converted Avner of Burgos. In 1275 he wrote the book "Help for Belief" against the Christians.

Perez Hacoheh – Rabbi in Barcelona. Among his colleagues were the "Rivash" (Rabbi Yitzhak ben Sheshet), Rabbi Nissim Grondi, and Rabbi Vital De Tolosha.

6. Levi

Name of Yaakov and Leah's third son (Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah – Exodus 1,2)

Name of the tribe headed by Moshe and Aharon, the tribe that served as Priests and

Levites in the Tabernacle and the Holy Temple. The title turned into use as a surname. Those who had this name were descended from the tribe of Levi. It was also used as a surname by the Jews.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Halevi – In 1894 he was the rabbi of Monastir.

Avishai Raphael Halevi, Yitzhak Nahman Halevi, Meir Avraham Halevi – In 1864 they served on the "All Jews are Friends" committee.

Eliezer Mordecai Halevi – In 1872 he was a cosigner to a loan for Bechar Albechar to Rabbi Yaakiv Yisroel Arditi.

Esther Rahaman Levi - donated to the "Love Work" organization.

Estheria Levi – In 1942 she joined the partisans in the mountains of Macedonia.

Avraham Levi – In 1903 he was a member of the Education Committee.

Avraham Nahman Levi – In 1908 he was a member of the committee to find a rabbi for Monastir.

Eli Levi – a member of the Communist Party.

Ben-Zion, Yosef David, Yitzhak Shem-Tov, and Moshe Yitzhak Levi - In 1888 they contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Ischklein "The Years of Life".

Baruch Aharon Yosef Halevi – In 1929 he represented the international organization of Spanish Jews.

Gavriel Levi – In the 1920's he moved to Sarajevo and was killed by the Croatian Fascists on Aug. 1, 1942.

Dani Levi - In 1894 he served on the board of the "Help for the Needy" organization.

Haim Mordecai Halevi – In 1772 his son-in-law Haim Bechar Shem-Tov Aruesti was murdered.

Haim Shlomo Halevi and Dan Levi – In 1772 they served as judges. The other judge was Yaakov Hazan.

Yechiel Nahman Halevi – In the middle of the nineteenth century a synagogue was founded in his name.

Yitzhak Halevi – In 1800 he was a wool merchant.

Yitzhak Levi – In 1894 a synagogue was founded in his name.

Yitzhak Levi - economist for the Zionist organization "The Rebirth.

Yitzhak Avishai Levi – In Sept., 1914, he contributed to the "Help for the Needy" organization. In 1908, he was a member of the committee to find a rabbi for Monastir.

Leon A. Levi – In 1942 he went from Skopje to Bitola, leaving behind a debt of 2000 לבות to the community of Skopje, according the accounts of 1941-1942.

Matzliah Avishai Levi – In Sept. 1884, he testified in regard to the attempt by Yitzhak Yakar to marry Sarah Calderon under false pretenses.

Mordecai and Yitzhak Levi — In 1929 they were members of the Chinese soccer team.

Moshe Levi - In 1929 his orphaned children received a package of clothing from the "Joint".

Moshe Levi – In 1929, with the help of the community, made Aliyah to the Land of Israel and studied in the Agricultural School "Mikveh Yisroel".

Moshe Dan Levi – In 1908 he donated to the "Love Work" organization.

Meshulem Halevi – In 1702 he was a judge. Other judges were Moshe De Meir and Yehudah Cassoto. In 1685 he acknowledged the contribution of the community in the notebook of Yosef Hacoheh from Safed.

Nissim Levi – In 1926 he was sent by the community to Jerusalem to learn stone-cutting.

Solomon Nahman Halevi – In the middle of the nineteenth century he was a merchant in Monastir.

Solomon Levi – In 1886 a synagogue was founded in his name.

Shlomo Yitzhak Levi – In 1894 he was one of the founders of the "Help for the Needy" organization

Kuzio Levi – In 1894 he was active in the "Help for the Needy" organization

Shmuel Levi – He was the vice-chairman of the Zionist organization "The Rebirth". In 1928 he was a member of the central Zionist Committee in Monastir.

Shmuel Avraham Levi – In 1926 he was the secretary of the international organization of Spanish Jews.

Use of the name in Spain:

Rabbi Zericha Halevi from Gerona – student of and replacement for Rabbi Karashka in the rabbinate. When he was 18, he moved from Gerona to Narbonne, then he returned to Gerona. As a rabbi, he followed the religious laws of the Rambam.

Rabbi Yehadah Halevi – born in 1075 in Toledo and died in Egypt in 1141. He was a colleague of Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra, who lived in the same city. He lived for a while in Lucena where he became friendly with Rabbi Yosef Ibn Migash. He moved to the Christian-dominated Toledo and from there to the Moslem-dominated Egypt, living in Corboba, Granada, and Almeria. There he met Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra. In 1140 he sailed to Alexandria and from there to Cairo. He had intended to continue to the Land of Israel. He wrote about 750 poems and the controversial book "The Kuzari" (describing principles of Judaism) and was considered to be one of the greatest poets in Spain.

Yosef Halevi, Dan Yosef De Ecija – He was promoted to the position of chief sheriff chief inspector. During the reign of King Alfonso XI (1322 – 1350) he was the only Jew to sit on the advisory board to the king.

Don Shlomo Halevi from Burgos – lived from 1350 – 1435. After his conversion he was called Paulus De Santa Maria. He was a good friend of Rabbi Yitzhak ben Sheshet, Dan Meir Algoadish, Rabbi Yehuda (grandson of the "Rash"-Rabbenu Asher), Dan Yosef Orah-Biana, and Don Meir Benvenisti. In 1389 he traveled to Cavatina in France as a representative of Castalia. On July 21, 1391 he converted and afterward held several

positions: in 1396 - the Arch-Duke of Torino, in 1403 - the Bishop of Cartagena, in 1407 - chief advisor to the King of Castalia, and in 1415 – Bishop of Burgos. He wrote the controversial book "Scrutinium Scripturarum" and the history book "Suma De Cronicas De Espana".

Yosef, son of Meir Halevi Ibn Migash – born in 1077 in Sevilla and died in 1141 in Lucena. He was one of the great Torah scholars of the fourth generation in Spain, a student of Rabbi Yitzhak Ben Baruch Albalia and Rabbi Yitzhak Alfasi. Among his students was Maimon (father of the renowned Rambam). All that is left of his teachings are commentaries on the tractates Babba Batra and Shavuot.

7. Mechulam

It was the name of several people in the Bible from different tribes and different periods. The first Mechulam in the Bible was the grandfather of Shafan, the scribe for the prophet Yeshayahu. It was a first name that was used as a surname. The family name was not known in Spain, the roots were in Province.

Family history in Monastir:

Eliyahu Mechulam – testified in a case concerning the marriage of Mechulam Moshe Piso to the orphan Leah, daughter of Shevat Casurla.

Haim Mechulam – In 1884 he married under false pretenses.

Victor Mechulam – In 1942 he joined the "Blue and White". As a member of the partisans fighting in Macedonia in the unit commanded by Damon Gruber, he earned a note of recognition for valor. He was a member of the Communist Youth and the Communist Party.

Yitzhak Mechulam - In 1929 he was a member of the "Sinai" soccer team.

Solomon Mechulam - He was a member of the Communist Youth and the Communist Party.

Shlomo Ben Mechulam – In 1626 he had a maidservant by whom he had a son.

8. Solomon

From the name of "Shlomo the King" in the spelling of the translation of the 70 sages. It was used as a first name and a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Nehamah Shlomo - In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Ischklein "The Years of Life".

Use of the name in Spain:

Yehudah Shlomo – In the beginning of the fourteenth century he was one of the founders of the community in Saragossa.

9. Zion

The city of David, nickname for Jerusalem, for the Kingdom of Judah, or for the Land of Israel. It was the root of the word Zionism.

Family history in Monastir:

Jacque Zion - He was a member of the Communist Party.

Todros Ben-Zion – In 1888 he was the treasurer of the group that read the "Liturgy against extermination".

Fanna Zion - a member of the Communist Party.

10. Sarfati

A Frenchman, a person from Sarfat. In the Bible it was the name of a city in the country of Tyre, between Tyre and Sidon."Go to Sarfat which is in Sidon" (Kings I, 17, 9) It was the land to which the northern tribes were exiled. "The exile of the children of Israel from

Canaan to Sarfat" (Ovadhah 1, 20) Sarfat is identified as Galia or France. The name Sarfati was used in Spain as a Jewish name. In Spain in the thirteenth century, someone from Sarfat was called Frances and De Francia. The Jews were expelled from France in 1306 by King Louis Phillip and in 1394 by King Carlos IV. According to a tradition passed on through Rabbi Azulai, the Sarfati family in Morocco was the family of the "Rabbenu Tam", Rabbi Yaakov ben Meir, one of the Tosfot commentaries on the Talmud.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Sarfati - In 1888 the group that read the "Liturgy against extermination" met in his home.

Avraham Yeudah, Yosef Bechar, and Shevet Yitzhak Sarfati - In 1888 they contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Albert Sarfati – In March 1943 he escaped from the Monopol Concentration Camp.

Rabbi Yitzhak Sarfati – In 1834 he was a representative to Europe to raise funds for the rebuilding of the Jewish quarter after the fire.

Yitzhak Sarfati – In 1880 he testified in a case related to a wedding with coins.

Yitzhak Sarfati - a member of the Communist Party. His house served as a storeroom for arms. As a partisan during World War II, he fell in battle.

Meshulem Sarfati - In 1779 he testified in the case regarding the murder of Yekutiel Grassiano.

Luna Sarfati – In 1942 he was a member of the "Committee for the Struggle"

Shlomo Avraham Sarfati – In 1864 he served on the "Alliance" committee.

11. Katan

In the Bible, meaning "small". The name of the father of one of the Jews that returned to Israel with the prophet Ezrah. "The family of Ezgar Yonatan son of Hakatan" (Ezrah 8, 12)

Not valuable. In the language of the sages – a small boy, under the age of Bar Mitzvah.

In Arabic – flax, a merchant of cloth.

The name "Catan" was a Jewish name used in Spain.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Katinilia – In 1588 he was a judge. Other judges were Moshe Russo and David Lerma.

Biblical Hebrew Names – Community History

1. Avraham
2. Ben David
3. Ben Nun
4. Ben Shaul
5. Yosef
6. Nahum
7. Ili

1. Avraham

Avraham son of Terah – the father of the Jewish Nation. It was a first name that was used as a surname, a name that was given to converts to Judaism. It was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

Family history in Monastir:

Meir Avraham - In 1908 he was a member of the committee to find a rabbi for Monastir.

Mordecai Avraham – In 1567 he drowned in the Ragoza River.

Moshe ben Avraham – In April 1634 he rented land for pasture at the foot of Mt. Prister. Along with other Jews from Portugal, he complained to the authorities that the Jews of Aragon were charging them too high taxes.

2. Ben David

From – David King of Israel

Family history in Monastir:

Migdal Ben David – In 1820 he was a butcher in Monastir.

Use of the name in Spain:

Natan Ben David – In 1165 in Barcelona he and his wife sold a booth in the market to Yitzhak Bar Yehudah.

3. Ben Nun

From - Nun, the father of Yehoshuah.

Family history in Monastir:

David Ben Nun – In 1634, along with other Jews from Portugal, he complained to the authorities that the Jews of Aragon were charging them too high taxes.

4. Ben Shaul

From – Saul the King of Israel.

Family history in Monastir:

Yehudah Ben Shaul – In 1820 he was a butcher in Monastir.

5. Yosef

The name of the first-born son of the Patriarchs Jacob and Rachel.

Family history in Monastir:

Yisroel Yosef – In 1738 he testified in the case of the murder of Moshe Hasson.

Lazar Yosef – He joined the partisans, but was sent back home.

6. Nahum

The name of a prophet in Israel, one who is comforted. It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Manuel Nahum – mentioned in a court case in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Manuel Bechar Nahum – In 1562 he was a witness in a case of marriage under false pretenses.

7. Ili

In the Bible the name of Eli the Cohen at the time of the Tabernacle in Shiloh, Up-
per, supreme.

Eli – pestle - cylinder for grinding in a mortar, pistil of a flower.

Family history in Monastir:

Rabbi Yehudah, son of Rabbi Moshe Ili – born in Thessaloniki, served on the committee to find a rabbi for Monastir. He was a teacher and cantor, then rabbi of the city. He wrote the book "Fine Flour", a collection of religious laws. Late in life he moved to Israel.

Biblical Theophoric Hebrew Names - Bulgarian census, 1943

1. Zeharia
2. Yehoshua (Schoah)
3. Israel
4. Asael

1. Zeharia

From the Hebrew root – to remember, not to forget, and the ending "ia" or "ua" signifying G-d. Name of a Jewish prophet. "The spirit of G-d encompassed Zehariah, son of Yehoyadah the Cohen" (Chronicles II, 24, 20). Name of a King of Israel "King Zeharia, son of Zerubavel, of Israel" (Kings II, 15, 8) The name was a first name that was used as a surname.

2. Schoach

From Yehoshuah, servant of Moshe, led the Israelites through the conquest of Israel.

Name with reference to G-d. Prefix "yehu" and ending "yeshah". Yeshuah – savior, helper. The name Jeshua was also used in Spain among the Christians.

Family history in Monastir:

Avraham Yitzhak Yeshuah – In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Esperensa Yaishi, daughter of Moshe Kamchi – In 1643, widow of Moshe Yaishi who was killed on his way home to Monastir from Kastoria.

Moshe and Eliezer Yosuahi – In 1643 they were killed on their way home to Monastir from Castoria.

3. Israel

From the root – upright, with the ending "el" signifying G-d. This was the name of our forefather Yaakov after his struggle with the angel. "No longer will you be called Yaakov, but Israel" (Genesis 32, 29). It was a first name that was used as a surname. It is a name given to converts to Judaism. It is used to define a Jew, rather than a non-Jew, or a Jew who is not a Cohen or a Levite, also used for the Jewish Nation as a whole. In the Bible the name was used for the Northern Kingdom. It is now the name of the Jewish State of Israel.

Family history in Monastir:

Izak Israel – He ran a sewing workshop, sewing clothes for the partisans.

Yosef Israel – son of Yaakov Israel, rabbi of the city. He published his father's book "Redemption of Yaakov". In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Yosef Yaakov Israel – He was a teacher and rabbi. He wrote commentaries on the Torah. He died at the age of 71.

Yaakov Israel - member of the "Hope" sports organization.

Yaakov, son of Yosef Israel – In 1872 he sued Bechar Albechar for an unpaid debt. As rabbi of the city in 1896 he published his book "Rejoice Israel", explanations on the Ethics of the Fathers, Bible, "Shulchan Aruch" (book of Laws and Customs), traditional stories translated to Spanish. This son Yosef printed these books a second time in 1900 in Belgrade.

Yaakov Raphael Israel – He left a fund for the "Congregation of Yaakov" yeshiva so the students would study in his memory.

Yaakov Rechamim Israel – President of the community from 1927 – 1929.

Yaakov Raphael Yosef Israel – In October 1884 he was a judge. Other judges were Yitzhak Nigrin and Raphael Haim Ischkelio.

Yitzhak Israel – He hid fighters for the partisans in his store.

Rechamim Israel – In 1919 he was a teacher in the city. On April 30, 1919, he confirmed the receipt of 500 francs from the local committee of the "Joint".

Rechamim Yosef Israel – In 1926 he was a school teacher in Monastir. He confirmed receipt of a letter from Rabbi Yaakov Meir wherein the rabbi asked the Jews of Bitola to help the Jews in Jerusalem. He then promised to help.

Use of the name in Spain:

Gavriel Israel – On May 23, 1485, the town of Ronda was captured by Christians, who decreed that no Jew could live there except for Gavriel Israel because he was the king's translator to Arabic.

Gavriel Israel from Lierna – He was appointed to collect taxes for his service as a n Arabic translator to the king in the war with Granada.

Moshe Gavriel from Burriana – In 1474 the community still existed as an organized unit with Moshe Israel at its head.

4. Asael

In the Bible – Asa-el, from the root "deed" with the ending "el" of Gd. It was the name of David's brother and one of the Levites that returned to Israel from Babylonia. It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Moshe Asael – Son of Hasher. In 1908 he was sent to Venice for an operation, funded by donations of the guilds in Monastir.

Rechemim Asael – scholar, teacher in the religious school in Bitola in 1931,

Biblical Theophoric Hebrew Names – Community History

1. Elizafan

2. Gavriel

3. Emanuel

4. Zurielei

5. Refael

1. Elizafan

From Eli – My G-d, Zafan – guard – Elizafan – guarded, kept by Gd. Names of several people in the Bible.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Elizafan – Born in Soloniki, 1870, died in Haifa, 1948. He was the rabbi of Monastir from 1929 – 1932. He founded the school for "teenagers learning the Torah", where he taught Jewish nationalism. He served as a rabbi, cantor, and drama director in the school.

Shlomo Elizafan - Member of the Youth Communist Party.

2. Gavriel

From Gever – courageous, strong, with the ending "el" for G-d. It is the name of one of the guardian angels of the Jewish People.

Family history in Monastir:

Mordecai Gavriel – In 1567 he drowned in the Ragoza River.

3. Emanuel

Emanu – with us, el – short form of the name of G-d. "G-d is with us". Son of Isaiah the prophet. The name was used as a nickname for the Jewish People.

Family history in Monastir:

Yosef Emanuel – In 1563 he testified in court that Yitzhak Sofer gave 300 flowers to bring to Rabbi Haim Bechar Hacoheh at a fair in Tojil.

4. Zurielei

From the Biblical name Zuriel – Zur – rock, Eli – G-d.

Family history in Monastir:

Moshe Zurieli – In 1539 he was a spice merchant who dealt with other merchants in Ragosa.

5. Refael

Refa – to heal, el – name of G-d. It is the name of one of the guardian angels of the Jewish People.

Family history in Monastir:

Moshe Refael – In 1791 testimony was given in the court in Monastir to the effect that Moshe Refael, a resident of the city, left for Jerusalem to visit holy places and drowned off the coast of Alexandria.

Post biblical Hebrew Names – Bulgarian census, 1943

1. Bahar
2. Ben Salem
3. Homen

4. Honen
5. Haim
6. Hasid
7. Meir
8. Navon
9. Nehama
10. Nissim
11. Anav
12. Semae

1. Bahar

Anachronism for "son of the honored rabbi". Before the use of surnames became prominent, it was customary to call someone by his name and the name of his father like Yosi, son of Shimon. From this custom the surname Bachar developed.

Family history in Monastir:

Aharon Bachar Moshe – In 1566 he was a judge. Other judges were Yosef Aroeti and Yosef Ischkalona.

Yosef Bachar Moshe – In 1702 he was a judge. Other judges were Moshe Kamchi and Yosef Kapesoto.

Yaakov Bachar Moshe – In 1880 he was a judge. Other judges were Moshe Nigrin and Yitzhak Gavriel Hacoheh.

Shabati Bachar Saadia – In 1643 he was a judge. Other judges were Yaakov Hameyuchas from the Farash family and Shlomo Bachar Moshe Nachmias.

2. Ben Salem

From "Ben-shalem". Ben – son, shalem – complete, pure, absolute. It was one of the names of the city Jerusalem.

Ben-shalem – son of Jerusalem. The name was used in Samaria (central Israel) in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE. It was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

3. Homen

From – sun-pillars (used for sun worship). "You shall not build Asherim (trees for idol worship) or sun-pillars" (Yeshayahu 27, 9).

Homen – a sun worshiper. Might be a distortion of the word Honen – to find favor.

It was not unusual for Jews in Spain to exchange the "m" sound with "n".

4. Honen

From the root – to find favor, to grant favors, to forgive.

Family history in Monastir:

Malkah Honen – In 1853 she was the daughter of Yeshuah Hazan and the wife of Natan Bechar Honen.

Natan Bechar Honen – In 1853, he was husband of Malkah, daughter of Yeshuah Hazan, who left an inheritance.

Ovadia Honen – In 1738 he was a judge. Other judges were Yitzhak Pisso and Shabatai Kamchi.

5. Haim

In Hebrew it means life. It was a name that was added to the name of a sick person as a sign of overcoming the illness. It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Yitzhak Haim - In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

6. Hasid

One who behaves with piety, righteousness and charity. It was a nickname for a sect during the time of the Hasmoneans. It is used for the followers of the "Baal Shem Tov". It signifies someone who is devoted to a particular principle or way of life. The original family name was Hasid-Cohen, but in the middle of the nineteenth century the "Cohen" was dropped and the name became Hasid.

7. Meir

One who shines light, happy, uplifting. Rabbi Meir was a Tannah (scholar during the period after the destruction of the Second Temple), a student of Rabbi Akivah and Rabbi Elishah Ben Avuyah. It was a private name that was used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir:

Shmuel Avraham Meir – In 1929 he was the secretary of the international organization of Spanish Jews.

8. Navon

Smart, understanding inner meanings of ideas, done with wisdom and logic. The name was in use as a Jewish name in Spain.

Family history in Monastir

Liki Navon - member of the "Hope" sports organization.

9. Nehama

Support, comfort in time of pain or mourning, redemption. It was a first name for men and women alike that was used as a surname. It was a name given to children born during the three-week period of remembrance of the destruction of the Holy Temple. It was also a name associated with Jews in Spain.

Family history in Monastir

Yitzhak Nehama – In 1903 he was a member of the Education Committee.

Yitzhak Nehama – In 1924 he and Moshe Ashael were head of the community.

S. Nehama – In 1929 he was the secretary of the community.

Solomon Nehama – In 1927 he was secretary of the community.

Solomon Nehama – In 1919 he was the secretary-treasurer of the community.

Shlomo Bechar Nehama - In 1864 he served on the "Alliance" committee.

10. Nissim

The plural of the word for flag or a miracle. In Jewish tradition the name was a first name and a surname. The name was often given to children born in the Hebrew month of Nissan. The name became used as a surname after Rabbi Eliyahu Nissim, the author of the book "Order of Eliyahu".

Family history in Monastir

Aharon Nissim - In 1864 he served on the "Alliance" committee.

Baruch Nissim – Born in Toledo in 1898 and died in Tel Aviv in 1968. In Bitola he owned a sewing shop that employed many people from the community. He moved to Israel in 1933. In 1935 he was chairman of the assembly that decided to create the "Organization of Yugoslavian immigrants". In 1934 he established the "Niva" clothes factory.

11. Anav, Anaf

Modest, poor, humble. According to tradition, the family was descended from captives that Titus brought to Rome (after his conquest of the Land of Israel). In the Bulgarian Poll the family is listed as "Anaf". The letter "f" is pronounced in German like a "v" in Latin (or Latin languages) or "vet" in Hebrew.

Family history in Monastir

Bato Anav — Member of the Communist Party. In 1942 he was arrested and imprisoned.

12. Sema

Vegetation. In the Mishnah it was used as growth in the field. The translation to Spanish – Cresque, Cresches, or Crescas. It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Post biblical Hebrew names – Community History

1. Bar Adon, Ben Adon
2. Ben Zion
3. Ger Zedek
4. Hovesh
5. Yosha
6. Molcho
7. Mizrahi
8. Nahmuli

9. Sofer

10. Pesah

1. Bar Adon, Ben Adon

Ben – son, relative to his parents, Adon – title as "sir", ruler, also a nickname for G-d, respected son, son of Don.

Family history in Monastir

Reuven Bar-Adon (Brondon) – In 1643 he was a judge. Other judges were Yaakov Hameyuchas from the Farash family and Shlomo Bachar Moshe Nachmias.

Moshe Bar-Adon – daughter of Moshe Bar-Adon was present when Yitzhak Yakar tried to Marry Sarah, daughter of Yosef Calderon Arditi under false pretenses.

Shaul Ben-Adon – In 1929 he contributed to the "Help for the Needy" organization.

2. Ben Zion

Ben – son, relative to his parents, Zion – Jerusalem. Ben Zion – son of Jerusalem.

Family history in Monastir

Dr. Ariel Ben-Zion – born in Jerusalem in 1870, died in Paris in 1933. He was the son of the acclaimed scholar Rabbi Yedhayahu Zion Halevi. He was appointed rabbi of Monastir in 1914.

3. Ger Tsedek

Hebrew – nickname for a convert to Judaism who accepts full responsibility of all commandments.

Family history in Monastir

Avraham Ger-Tsedek – born in Mitilina. In 1859 he studied in the Theological seminary in Izmir. He was converted in Dravian, Macedonia. In 1870 he was one of the community of Rabbi Yosef Ben Adot in Soloniki. After his marriage he moved to Monastir where he served as rabbi of the city and as a judge. He was called "Rabbi Avraham the converted". He wrote "Run Avraham", "I am Avraham", and "The Book of fate".

4. Hovesh

From the word for "one who bandages", to wrap up, to bandage, to tie a saddle to an animal, to cover one's head.

Family history in Monastir

Haim Hovesh – In 1591 he testified in the case of the debt of Haim Catibilia to David Nachmias.

Yeudah Hovesh – In 1567 he drowned in the Ragoza River.

5. Yosha

From the Hebrew verb to save, help in time of trouble.

Family history in Monastir

Haim Yaakov Yosha – In 1773 he testified in the case of a murder and allowing the widow to remarry. Members of the court were Haim Shlomo Halevi, Dan Levi, and Yaakov Hazan.

6. Molcho

From the Hebrew word for king with the Spanish ending "o".

Family history in Monastir

Shlomo Molcho (Diago Peres) – born in Portugal in 1592, died in Manitoba in 1532. He served as a notary for the King in Portugal. He circumcised himself and accepted the

Hebrew name Shlomo Molcho. He traveled to Turkey as a representative of the false messiah David Hareuveni. He spent some time in Jerusalem, France, and Damascus. In 1526 he came to Thessaloniki and met Rabbi Avraham Zarfati. He then traveled to Monastir, where he wrote letters to Rabbi Taitichik. He publicized a collection of lectures in which he claimed that the final redemption would come in the year 1540. He visited Ankara and Pissarro. He was hung in Monastir.

From the two letters he wrote to Rabbi Taitichik one has been lost and the other stated, "You already know that when I wrote to Yosef Tista, who asked me to tell him when I was to leave Portugal".

7. Mizrahi

Mizrah – east, where the sun rises, Mizrahi – from the east.

Family history in Monastir

Avraham Mizrahi – In 1903 he was the chairman of the Education Committee.

Moiz Mizrahi - 1909 he was a member of the Education Committee.

8. Nahmuli

From the name Nahman (the nickname for the month of Av – when the Temples were destroyed) with the ending "i" – my (possessive).

Family history in Monastir

(Vidal) Bechar Yosef Nahmuli – In 1791 he was a judge. Other judges were Yitzhak Pisso and Moshe Bechar Yeodah Cohen.

9. Sofer

From the Hebrew Sofer Stam - a religious scribe, one who writes books, **secretary**.

Family history in Monastir

Yitzhak Sofer – 1653 he testified that Sheverid Tojil gave Rabbi Haim Bechar Menahem Cohen 300 flowers.

10. Pesah

Name given to boys born on the holiday of Pesah (Passover). It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir

Shmuel Pesah – In 1922 he was accused of kidnapping and killing a Christian boy to use his blood for the baking of Matzot on Pesah.

Hebrew Names from Foreign Sources – Bulgarian census. 1943

1. Hazan
2. Nisan
3. Shabetai

1. Hazan

From the Acadian root "Hazannu", supervisor in a community, religious leader. In Aramaic – Hazana – leader in religious services in a synagogue, sexton, supervisor in a synagogue.

Family history in Monastir

Yeushua Hazan - In 1853 he left an inheritance for the community. The inheritance was decided in court. His sons were Yaakov, Shimon, Shemai, and Avraham, and his daughter was Malkah (wife of Natan Bechar Honen).

Rabbi Yaakov Hazan – In 1772 he was a judge. Other judges were Haim Shlomo Halevi and Dan Levi.

Rabbi Yaakov Elisha, from the Hazan family – In 1672 he was a judge. Other judges were Shemayah Demayo and Menahem Russo.

Yoitzhak Yisroel Hazan – In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Matitia Hazan – In 1791 he was rabbi of the city. He allowed a question concerning the claim of Moshe Refael on the shore of Alexandria.

Refael Yeshua Hazan – In 1853 he was a judge. Other judges were Matityahu Yaakov Hacohen and Moshe Kamchi.

Use of the name in Spain:

Rabbi Avraham Hazan – scholar and liturgical poet from Andalusia. He wrote the liturgical poem "Little Daughter".

Rabbi Avraham, from the Hazan family – After the expulsion he went to Thessaloniki. He was a colleague of Rabbi Haim, son of Rabbi Yaakov Ovadia, head of the Catalan community in Thessaloniki.

Dan Yaakov Hazan – According to the testimony of Rabbi Ben Shem-Tov from Saragossa, on April 30, 1492, Dan Yaakov Hazan was one of the leaders of the community.

Shlomo, son of Shlomo Hazan – He was the scribe of the community in Zaragoza. He also fixed a Torah Scroll that had been owned by Rabbi Shmuel, son of Yaakov Hasartfati.

2. Nisan

The name of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. "The first month which is Nisan" (Esther 3, 7) It is the seventh month in the calendar that starts from Tishrei (counting the years by number). It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Family history in Monastir

Avraham and Moshon Nisan – dairy farmers in Bitola. They brought arms and other needed items to the Macedonian partisans during the Yilindin rebellion in 1903.

3. Shabetai

Origin as an Aramaic name, found in the Bible books Ezra and Nehemiah, in letters sent from Aswan, Egypt, in the fifth and sixth centuries. It was a place mentioned in writings from Aramaic Babylonia, near the Temple of Asiss in Aswan and the catacombs in Rome. In the fourth century it became used as a Christian name. It is a name given to a child born on Shabbat. It was a first name that was used as a surname.

Use of the name in Spain:

Yehudah Halevi, son of Yitzhak Ibn Shabetai – He lived in Spain at the end of the twelfth century and was one of the first to introduce the "makama" notebook into Hebrew literature. Among his works were "Presents for Yehudah", "The Struggle for Wisdom and Riches", and "The Vow and the Ostracism", His last "makama" was written after he was ostracized by the heads of the community in Zaragoza.

Yosef Shabetai – from Seville. In 1255 Ferdinand III returned to him possessions in Seville that had been his in the past.

Names from Foreign Sources – Bulgarian census. 1943

Russo

1. Russo

Italian name – Rousso, red colored, red headed, name of non-Jews in Italy.

In Thessaloniki this family was connected to Yishmael who had broken away from Calabria and were known as "the community of the Russo family".

It is possible that the family originated in the town Russi, North-east of Verona, Italy. The name Ruso was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

Family history in Monastir

Albert Arniki and his son Russo – Member of the Youth Communist Party.

Albert and Benyamin Russo – They were active in the "Youth Guard" and in 1942 with the partisans in the Macedonian hills. In May 1941 they hid in Binyamin's home about 100 rifles and ammunition for the partisans. His son Russo's home was used as a center for the underground Communist activities and as a workshop for repairing arms.

His son Russo - Member of the Communist Party.

Haim Russo - Member of the Youth Communist Party.

Yeuda Russo - In 1888 he was the treasurer of the group that read the "Liturgy against extermination".

Yosef Papo Russo – He acted in the play "Dreyfus" and was a partisan in the unit led by Damon Graib.

Maggy Russo - Member of the Youth Communist Party.

Rabbi Menahem Russo – In 1672 he was a judge. Other judges were Shemaya Demayo and Yaakov Elisha, from the Hazan family.

Menahem Russo - In 1888 he contributed to the printing of the book by Rabbi Raphael Avraham Iskalio "The Years of Life".

Nissim Russo – In 1940 he was the representative of Bitola at the convention of rabbis in south Serbia.

Peretz Russo- In 1942 he was a member of the committee to help the struggle.

Moshe Russo – In 1567 he was a judge. Other judges were Yitzhak Catibillia and David Lirma.

Shaul Yitzhak Russo – In 1908 he donated to the "Love Work" organization

Turkish Names - Bulgarian Poll. 1943

1. Kamelchi

In Turkish – complete, a member of the Kamel family (the ending "chi" – belonging, possessive) In Turkish Kemal, very pretty, nickname for someone named Shmuel,

Turkish Name - Community History

2. Yeni

From Yeni in Turkish – new. Larissa was called Yeni Shenir (the new city) in Turkish. Yitzhak Shmuel Emanuel thinks the name is Turkish. In Thessaloniki the family were members of the Sicilian community.

Family history in Monastir

David Yeni – In 1738 he was a witness in the case of the murder of Moshe Hasan.

Arabic Names - Community History

1. Albahari

2. Sabah

1. Albahari

From Arabic – sailor, seaman

The name Albajari was used by Jews in Spain.

Family history in Monastir

Albahari – In 1919 he was a soldier just released from the army. His three children received 100 francs relief from the local committee of the "Joint".

Enrico Albahari - Member of the Youth Communist Party.

Yehudah Albahari – In 1838 he testified in the courtroom of Dan Kimchi, Refael Shlomo Calderon, and Avraham Peso.

2. Sabah

Morning. The name Sabah was used in Spain as a Jewish name.

Family history in Monastir

Shabetai Sabah – In 1643 he testified in the case of the murder of the brothers Moshe and Elazar Yoeishi from Monastir on their way home from Castoria.

Unknown and Distorted Names – Bulgarian census. 1943

1. Beyakar
2. Metulam
3. Nissam
4. Sachkenazi
5. Subik
6. Fifi

1. Beyakar

Distortion of the name Ben Yakar

2. Metulam

Distortion of the name Meshulam.

3. Nissam

Distortion of the name Nisan.

In Spanish it is common that the letters "m" and "n" get interchanged.

4. Sachkenazi

Distortion of the name Aschkenazi.

It may have been a distortion of the pollsters.

5. Sobik

The source is not known. It was the name of a woman in Monastir. Her full name was Bechora Bochor Subik. She may have been married and was widowed from a non-Jew with that name.

6. Pifi

The source is not known. It may have been the name of woman or a mistake of the pollster.

Unknown and Distorted Names – Community History

1. Isformas

The source is not known. It was written in the poll of Jews in the Land of Israel in 1839.

It may have been a distortion of the name Istromas or Istromasa.

Jewish philanthropic organizations that operated in Monastir

Two international Jewish philanthropic organizations operated in Monastir (Bitola); Alliance Israelite Universelle and the American Joint Distribution committee (JADC). Alliance was active in the city between the years 1895-1913, and the Joint was active there between the years 1916- 1941. The two organizations did not function at the same time and the lack of operations by the Joint was as a result of the fierce fighting during the second Balkan War and World War I.

Alliance Israelite Universelle.

Alliance was founded in Paris in 1860 with the objective of preserving Jewish rights and saving Jews from persecution around the world. The Jews in the western countries benefited from emancipation both culturally and financially, especially in France. They sought to help their brethren in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa towards acceptance into society, just as they had been accepted.

Alliance's main activities were therefore first and foremost in the field of education. They promoted subjects such as industry and agriculture. The first Alliance school was opened in Tetuan, Morocco in 1862, and afterwards in Damascus, Baghdad, and Adrianople.

Alliance formed local councils in many cities around the world. In 1880, there were 349 Alliance councils. The peak number of their schools occurred in 1913 when 180 schools were open teaching some 43,700 pupils.

The Joint - the American Joint Distribution Committee. The Joint was a benevolent Jewish Society founded in New York City on November 27, 1914. Its initial purpose was to help distressed and persecuted Jews in Europe during World War I. The Joint helped those who were hurt by the war, especially 800,000 Jewish refugees in Russia and Austria. Its expenditures during World War I amounted to 15 million dollars. In the

years 1925-1936 the Joint sponsored 100,000 German Jews and doubled this number in 1937. During World II, the Joint's main function was saving the Jews of Europe. During the first two years of the war, it was active mainly in Poland.

Boy's Elementary School. Alliance founded the Boy's Elementary School in 1895 under the direction of N. D. Levy who ran the school for 7 years (1895-1901). Afterwards the school was run by N.D. Aryeh for five years(1902-1907). N. D. Aryeh had a vice-principal for some of those years, 1903-1904 It was M. Castro. In 1905 it was M. Rosenbaum, in 1907, N. A. Giron. From 1909-1910 the school was run by M. Benvenisti. Y. Giron was the vice-principal in 1909.

For three years (1911-1913) the school was run by Ben-Simchon. From 1911-1912 his vice-principal was M. Menda and in 1913, the final year of his school the vice-principal was Mrs. Mayo. The principals and their deputies were not from Monastir. In The years 1895-1897 Rabbis also taught in the schools, 2 each year, and it is probable that they taught holy studies. From 1898 onwards, the rabbis' teaching was stopped. Turkish, Greek, Hebrew and Serbian languages were taught In the school.

Turkish- was taught by one teacher from the years 1895-1911. In 1912 only one teacher taught the subject and in 1913 his job was ended.

Greek- In the year 1895-1912 there was one teacher and in 1913 the position was stopped.

Hebrew-Between the years 1895-1897 no Hebrew was taught. Between 1898 and 1899, two teachers taught Hebrew, every year. In 1900 3 teachers were teaching Hebrew and from this year onward 1-3 teachers taught Hebrew. It is possible that rabbis were used as Hebrew teachers as until 1897 they were classified as rabbis, and from 1898 they were classified as teachers.

Serbian- Serbian was taught only in the final year of the school's existence in 1913, and 4 teachers taught it as Turkish and Greek were no longer taught. It seems that this was a directive from the Serbian authorities.

French- There is no information on French teachers. In Alliance schools, French was the language of instruction for all subjects.

Other than teachers, the school also employed 1 or 2 monitors every year as well as a domestic servant.

Vocational Girls' School for sewing

In 1903, Alliance founded the sewing school for girls under the direction of Mrs. Hazan who managed the school from the years 1903-1904. After her, it was run by Mrs. Calderon for three years from 1905-1907. From 1908-1910 it was run by Mrs. Benvenisti , followed by Mrs. Ben Simchon from 1911-1913. During the final two years, Mrs. Ben Simchon was aided by Mrs. Ashkenazi and in 1913 by Mrs. Menda. We do not know from where the principals or their assistants came to Monastir. It is possible that M. Calderon and her deputy Mrs. Ashkenazi were local people since their surnames were common in Monastir.

The Hebrew and Greek languages were taught in the school, one teacher for each language. Hebrew was taught during the years 1904-1907 and 1912-1913. Greek was taught in 1904-1906 and 1908-1913.

Other than languages, the school also taught sewing; one teacher for every year the school was in existence. There is no information regarding the teaching of the French language since all of the studies were conducted in this language. Additionally, the school staff also included between one and two monitors as well as one teacher for Home Economics.

Alliance schools in Monastir

Bulletin	Year	Number of boy stu- dents	Paying tuition	% pay- ing tuition	Number of girl stu- dents	Paying tuition	% pay- ing tui- tion	Total number of students
20	1895	184	138					
1	6	205	120					
2	7	279	135					
3	8	247	124					
4	9	216	123					
5	1900	229	142					
6	1	136	76					
7	2	158	88					
8	3	167	92	55	150	116	77	317
9	4	172	97	56	185	135	73	357
300	5	176	114	64	182	120	66	358
1	6	170	110	64	195	131	67	365
2	7	156	96	61	172	119	69	328
3	8	?	?	?	142	87	61	142
4	9	228	199	87	144	85	59	372
5	1910	217	182	83	135	89	66	352
6	1	253	213	84	182	153	84	435
7	2	269	211	78	206	162	79	475
8	3	226	163	72	293	197	67	519

The table shows that the highest number of students in the boys' school – 279 – was in 1897 and the lowest - 136 - was in 1901. The highest number of students in the girls' school – 293 - was in 1913 and the lowest – 85 – was in 1909. In 1911 the percentage of parents paying tuition rose to 84% which shows that the economic situation was good and enabled them to pay their children's' tuition. The high level of tuition payments also shows that the parents were interested in having their daughters receive an education, specifically a vocation that would enable them to be good housekeepers (the sewing machine was included in the list of dowry gifts that a bride was meant to bring to her new home). The Alliance schools were destroyed during the First World War and were not reopened afterwards. The graduates of the Alliance schools formed the basis of the educated strata in society. They established their own circle of friends containing 50 members and were active in helping needy families in the community.

The American Joint Distribution Committee (JADC) in Monastir

The “Joint” began activity in Monastir on November 16, 1916 when the chief rabbi of Thessaloniki, Rabbi Yakov Meir approached the organization and notified it that the Allies had conquered the cities of Florina and Monastir and that the community of Thessaloniki was very troubled by the disasters that overtook those 2 communities. Additionally the rabbi announced that the Thessaloniki community was in difficult straits. It had decided to help these 2 communities by sending them a wagonload of flour as well as emissaries carrying with them 5,000 drachmas for division among the cities' poor. The rabbi expressed his confidence that the Joint would help these 2 communities.

A protocol from the 30th of November, 1916 shows Rabbi Yakov Meir contacting the French authorities, asking them to help insure that the convoy sent to Monastir as soon

as transportation is possible, should receive all the help it needs. The prefect M. Adocides agreed to assist in the division of flour between the Jews of Monastir.

Monastir expatriates living in other places came to the assistance of their brethren and families. In Thessaloniki Haim S. Aruesti and Frères contacted the "Hevra Ahavat Shalom" society of ex-Monastirilis and notified them that the Jews of Monastir were in dire straits. The price of bread in town had risen to 30 grush for an Uka (equivalent to about 2 lbs. of bread). People were selling their clothes in order to provide food for their children. The society was asked to help in any way possible, rich and poor alike. They wrote that if food assistance was not sent in a hurry, Jews were liable to die from the cold in the bitter Monastir winter. They recommended sending the assistance by Western Union as quickly as possible.

The Joint heeded Rabbi Meir's plea and on February 9, 1917 sent him 2,000 dollars for distribution to the Jews of Monastir. On the 7th of March, 1917, Jacques Calderon and Haim Aruesti approved acceptance of this sum.

In the meantime the Jewish community of expatriates from Monastir, living in Indianapolis in the US came to the assistance of their brethren in Monastir. Michael Bamberger of the Indianapolis Association for Relief of Jewish war sufferers wrote on Feb. 12, 1917 to Mr. Louis Marshall in New York. In his letter he explains that Indianapolis has a small community of Turkish Jews whose origin is Monastir. They explained to him the dire straits of the situation in Monastir claiming that in the past months Jews were dying of hunger in town. They therefore asked him to contact Mr. Marshall in order to have the Joint help the Jews. The funds that reached the community via Thessaloniki were not sufficient. Additional sums of money were sent to monastir via Sofia with Rabbi David Fifano. Two hundred dollars were sent directly from the Joint and 850 Bulgarian Levas were sent by Henry Morgenthau, who wanted to establish a special committee for distributing the funds.

The Joint representative in Athens Mrs. Hetti Goldman, traveled to Monastir to see up close the situation of the Jews in town. Her visit produced a detailed protocol which was presented to the Joint in New York on February 27th of 1919. Due to its importance there were no other sources regarding the Jews of Monastir after World War I. I have found it prudent to contain the whole report here:

“My visit to Monastir unfortunately was short since I only arrived after the railway line was fixed. I was in town 3 days and was then required to return to Thessaloniki because of the heavy snow that was liable to collapse the railway line bridges on the way to Thessaloniki, which might have stranded me in town for several weeks.

Monastir lies in a valley surrounded by high mountains and was built in the past in a proper fashion, but was mostly destroyed during the war, and hardly a house was left standing.

All inhabitants live in houses, but their number has declined to about half. They are living in very dense conditions and in improperly ventilated cellars without windows and doors, conditions which could cause many diseases such as typhoid fever, dysentery, etc.”

Population

The population of Monastir declined from 80,000 to 25-30,000 people, including army units. This number has increased lately due to the return of refugees. It is estimated that tens of thousands will never return so that the population will probably only grow to about 30,000 people. Before the war, there were 1,250 Jewish families. All but 100 families or so abandoned the town during the air raids and fled to Florina, Wedna, and Thessaloniki. Many of them received assistance of tents and food from the Serbians.

Many of those who fled the town will probably return. Fifteen of the wealthiest families moved to Athens and there are still those residing in Thessaloniki. It is unclear whether they will return to Monastir. Now, Monastir has some six hundred families, about fifty who are well off financially, one hundred and twenty who can take care of themselves, and four hundred families who remain in deep poverty.

Housing

The housing situation is atrocious. The Jewish population was hit hardest. 85% of the damage in town fell in the Jewish quarters; this statistic was attested to by the mayor who certified that "the Jewish population suffered more than any other part of the population". All together they lost some three hundred homes, thirty five to forty shops, three synagogues and two Alliance schools. A Hebrew Academy that was partially destroyed was repaired with the help of four families who contributed six thousand francs. The stores that were destroyed were community owned and were rented out to the needy who paid rent based on their capability. The rents were typically one hundred to two hundred francs a year.

The Prefect in Monastir called on the citizens to send in estimates of their damage. They are hopeful that some of it might be recovered from the Bulgarians. When I discussed this with the mayor, he was skeptical that enough money would be received to rebuild the houses and stores. He estimates that only a small portion of the damages will be returned.

Food Supplies

The Red Cross is in charge of food supplies together with the Bulgarian government. It has a list of some seven thousand in need of them, including one thousand Jews. The food is distributed every ten days and includes 120 grams of flour a day from the Red Cross and 80 grams from the government, a total of 200 grams a day. The government

stopped the distribution in the middle of January, due to the collapse of the rail line. Sometime after that the Red Cross was left without any flour which caused great suffering. It was able to renew the supply and it was said that the government would also soon be able to supply flour. In addition to flour, the Red Cross supplies polyunsaturated fat and vegetable oil, as well as rice and beans. The bread now is two francs for a kilogram but the prices are slowly coming down. As to meat, the situation for the Jews is more severe because of the tax on kosher meat that was instituted by the Jewish community. Regular meat can be attained for eight or nine francs or Uka, but kosher meat costs twelve francs, and as a result very little kosher meat is bought.

Health

The mayor estimates that twenty-five people die every week. This is the case mostly with refugees returning to their homes. The municipality supplies doctors who administer to the poor, free of charge. In the American Women's Hospital, there are fifty to 60 beds. The municipal hospital is also open and available to the terminally ill.

Attendance in School

The Serbian schools are also open to the Jewish children, but they do not want to learn in them. As a result, only 250 out of the 750 children are at school. Actually, these children are crowding into a 3-room school that has just been refurbished. The Jewish academy has no heating and requires tuition of between ten cents to thirty francs a week, based on the ability of the parents to pay. Alliance lately tried to assess the damage done to the schools they operated and also offered to send a principal. The estimated damage to the school buildings was nearly three hundred thousand francs.

Employment

Other than a couple of shoemakers and tinsmiths, almost all of the Jews are merchants or low-class petty merchants. The poorest are the porters. For this reason the Jews can expect to suffer more than any other part of the population. The government has

put an effort into helping the farmers by providing seeds and work animals and it is expected that agriculture will recover by next summer. Commerce on the other hand, is conducted only with the adjacent and Albanian towns, while the Jewish merchants are used to selling to farmers who come from distant villages like Skotol, and Torsezi. They now buy all their merchandise in Thessaloniki. I have been told that the two years of Serbian government were years of prosperity since commerce was given a greater opportunity than under the Turkish regime.

Relations With the Government

The relations with the Serbian government are very good and I did not hear any complaints. The prefect and mayor are very gracious and supportive to the extent, of which they are capable. The government does not subsidize conscripted soldiers, but provides three francs a month to war widows. Seven out of eight Jewish war widows receive this stipend. And there are other requests that are pending approval.

Aid Institutions of the Community

Before the war, a benevolent society provided two Jewish doctors for the community. One was a volunteer and the other was paid 100 francs a month. The needed sums were raised by a tax of one sou a week that was paid by every member in the society. About two hundred wealthy people of the community paid double the sum that was collected. This sum was paid in one or two yearly payments. Additionally, there was a society of Alliance graduates with some fifty members who provided lunches for two hundred pupils. The community never established a hospital or orphanage. The Jewish community was asked to send ten orphans to the Serbian orphanage but declined to do so for reasons of necessity in maintaining a kosher diet.

Clothing

The supplies of the Serbian Red Cross do not meet the needs. The Red Cross is expecting shipments of clothes from France and Italy. The Red Cross' activity is planned until the end of June or July. In any case it has to function in so many spheres, and therefore the actual assistance is small. We must send shoes and warm clothes immediately; otherwise there will be great suffering and hardship.

Upon my return from Monastir, I sent a telegram #11; "I visited Monastir and found suffering, but not a situation so dire thanks to the efforts of the Red Cross and the Serbian authorities. There is a great need for clothes and shoes, and the situation is very bad because of the near total destruction of the Jewish quarter. I recommend telegraphing 850 dollars as an experimental budget for 3 months in order to enable lunch for the school children, payment for the teachers, and small grants to widows."

From the above description, we can understand that the main problems were clothing and children. I don't think it would be smart to send personnel to Monastir. We need to organize temporary help. As to meals for school children, this is an act of charity that the community is used to, and since it is important to get them out and feed them properly, I recommended a 3 month grant for dispensing soap as well bread and meals and afternoon meals. The Red Cross will provide a cup of cocoa every afternoon. The addition of 300 francs for an additional teacher will enable 50 additional students into the school. Some of the poorest families, especially widows, who were saved from starving by the Red Cross look sick and suffer from malnutrition, that is why I thought it worthwhile to give them a small monthly wage. This is also the case with families whose main provider is ill or was inducted into the army by the authorities. There are so few men in Serbia that the government had to induct civilians to do some of the army's work. While in Monastir 62 Jews were conscripted in order to lead army mules from Thessaloniki. One hundred dollars a month is needed in Monastir for the school to provide lunch for 300 pupils. This will allow for a bowl of soup and a slice of bread for

every pupil (the Red Cross will take of baking the bread), 60 dollars toward the salary of a teacher and 100 dollars for additional expenses.

I explained to all involved that this is a temporary arrangement. We will send a social worker to organize the work. The community will certainly find it necessary to gradually collect funds so they can be distributed to the needy. Unfortunately, the Red Cross was not allowed to sell anything, so all of the clothing was given away for free. Almost certainly a large number of the citizens could have paid something, even a small sum, for purchasing clothes. In this way the community could have collected some funding to use for housing. I met with all of the community council members and explained to them the goals of our organization and what kind of help they can expect from us. I did not find among them a sufficient number of intelligent people who could act as a committee. It did not look feasible to start to organize a permanent organization in the short time I was there. That can be done possibly by people who will move to the area if indeed it is decided to send personnel to Monastir. If not, it will require me to return there again in order to set up a committee and take a look at the housing problem. For now, I have chosen 3 people: Moses A. Kamchi, the vice-president of the community, Joseph Kamchi, and Shlomo Nechama. They are supposed to work with Captain Laning McFarland, the Red Cross representative in Monastir. Money can be sent via the committee in Thessaloniki since banks in Monastir have not renewed their operations.”

In March 1919 Mrs. Goldman wrote: “After consulting with the Red Cross mission it was decided that a doctor, two nurses and a social worker were much needed. Many people were without medical care other than a small hospital. The Red Cross took care of feeding the Jews of Monastir for 2 years.”

On March 6, 1919 the Joint secretariat wrote the first secretary in Washington that \$2,500 were sent to Monastir to buy matzoth (unleavened bread), and \$850 for expenses for 3 months. By the 24th of June the Joint committee in Thessaloniki wrote to

the Joint in New York that it was sending a detailed list of those receiving assistance in Monastir, and the Jews there were requesting continued funds to feed young orphans and pay the salaries of 2 teachers.

Mrs. Hetti Goldman visited in July 1919 and reported to her superiors what she had found; that the condition of the Jews in Monastir was bad. "The Jews that remained alive are lacking in enterprise. They were well taken care of by the Red Cross whose representatives I met with. The Jewish Community Council asked for assistance in clothing and refurbishing the school. They complained that the schools were still unopened."

From a letter sent by the Monastir Ahavat Shalom Society in New York we learn that the Jews of New York sent Monastir clothing through the Joint. This letter from Dec. 30, 1919 by Rafael Tzarfati attests to the fact that the clothing reached its destination and that the society was willing to continue helping the Joint in any possible.

Another letter was sent to the Joint in N.Y by the secretary of the Jewish School in Monastir on March 30, 1920. The letter was signed by Solomon Yitzhak Nechama, who was also a Joint representative in Monastir. The letter contains gratitude to the Joint for all the assistance given to the Jews of Monastir. Newspapers in Ladino were attached to the letter and asked to be sent to the different Jews working on behalf of Monastir in the US.

The Joint continued to help the Jews of Monastir. On April 18, 1921 the Thessaloniki committee notified Mr. M. Morpurgo, the President Of the local Joint council in Thessaloniki that 3,000 drachmas were sent to Monastir for the purchase of Matzoth (unleavened bread) and their distribution to the city's poor.

The Joint activities ceased for quite a number of years after that. The beginning of August 1937 the communities, Bitola, Skopje, and Nova Sad, and the Central Committee of Yugoslavian Jews made a report to the Joint about the condition of the Jews in Yugoslavia, among them the Jews in Bitola. According to this report there were 73,700 Jews, among them 48,572 (60%) in the major cities. In the areas that in the past were part of the Ottoman empire, 12,000 were sited in the cities of Bitola, Skopje, and Stip

For the past 25 years the Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities operated jointly. Out of the 73,703 Jews in Yugoslavia only 14,299 (20%) earned enough money to pay the community tax. In the Jewish section of Bitola, 3,870 Jews reside. Only 300 (8%) are capable of paying this tax, and this is the lowest percentage in all of Yugoslavia.

Bitola, Monastir

Bitola is a classic example of disgraceful poverty. Most of the Jews of Bitola emigrated from the city. Today 3,870 Jews remain. The delegation of the Central Committee of Yugoslavian Jews came to town to check on the circumstances there. They visited the Jewish quarter, and painted a very dire picture of Jews living in very appalling housing, and barely making a living from repairing torn shoes and clothing. The children suffer from the lack of an education. Children from five to eight don't go to school and from the age of 11 are already roaming the streets and markets. The condition of most of the parents was considered to be beyond repair. There is a great deal of lethargy and people seem to feel a hopeless. Although they are familiar with several languages such as Ladino, Greek, Turkish, Albanian, and the Zinzar, the local dialect of the country, they are not experts in any of these tongues. The older generation of those educated in the Alliance schools which were closed in 1914 speak fluent French. Ladino is the common language among the Jews.

If they find work, most of them are employed as merchants or petty merchants while working at simple crafts the families are large and sometimes include 10 children. The father is usually dependent on the children to supplement the family income, and as a

result the children are sent out to be apprentices of petty trades and do not learn a respectable profession that can lead them to a better future. The girls are usually sent to work as maids, mostly in gentile homes. All in all, the dire straits, lack of education, and economic opportunities have left the community decimated and virtually hopeless. The sub-standard housing in the Jewish quarter certainly has contributed to the deterioration in health of the people.

In the summer months, people virtually live outside, and sanitary conditions are very difficult. The Bitola community of 3,605 people includes 86 families who are well off, 129 who could be considered middle class, 307 families who are poor and 331 families who are below the poverty line. All told, there remain in Bitola some 853 Jewish families. Out of 647 employed people the breakdown is as follows: 47 merchants, 67 petty merchants, 14 bankers or money lenders, 56 used clothing merchants, 62 clothing retailers. 61 market stall owners, 19 shoe repairmen, and shoe sewers, 1 doctor, 1 lawyer, and 1 dentist, all three of whom were not city natives. There are also 22 shop owners, 23 clerks, 24 butchers, 11 scholars, 101 porters and errand boys & 170 rag men.

Aid to Bitola

Much has been done of late for the Jews of Bitola. Some of them have emigrated to Belgrade, and made it their home. They took advantage of the fund that was established for the purpose of helping emigrants to find work or trades that would enable them to make a living. Emigration is not a panacea to this problem, besides the fact that the funds allocated for this are not great.

In August 1937, Monastir expatriates, residents of New York City and Indianapolis came to the assistance of their brethren once again. On August 23, 1937, H. Joseph Hyman, a director at the Jewish Welfare Fund wrote to Joseph C. Hyman, secretary of the Joint in New York, saying: Indianapolis has a community of Sephardic Jews numbering some

75 families, nearly all of them from Monastir. "They feel a great commitment to their brethren and wish to help them. About a month ago, representatives from the Relief committee of the Jewish sufferers of Monastir seek a congregation of Peace and Brotherhood. They requested the congregation in Indianapolis to donate money towards clothing for their brethren in Monastir. The community here collected large amounts of clothing and sent them to the Joint in New York. As to money, the Sephardic community said that all their members support the Jewish Welfare Relief which contributes money to the Joint and therefore, in their opinion, the Joint should make any assistance available to the community in Monastir. In Monastir 750 families live in poverty, and I am wondering if the Joint can establish a free loan society to help them out. Another request that was presented was that the Joint send the clothing that we collected. As to the community here we enjoy close cooperation. Most of the people are not well-to-do, but nevertheless contribute to the Welfare Fund. Please let me know what has been done in this regard."

It is known that the Joint showed interest in the Jews of Monastir during and in the aftermath of World War I. When many of them became penniless refugees in the years 1937-38, and the Jews of Monastir again needed help from the Joint, the organization was deeply involved in helping the Jewish refugees from Germany and did not put an effort into dealing with the Jews of Monastir. During World War II, the Joint was active in saving the Jews of Eastern Europe, particularly the Jews of Poland. We do not have any knowledge regarding attempts by the joint to successfully deal with the Jews of Macedonia, among them the Jews of Monastir.

To sum up, from the activities of the Jewish philanthropic organizations "Alliance" and "The Joint", it is apparent that until 1913, the Monastir community lived in relative tranquility and tolerable welfare under the Turkish regime. During the Balkan War in World War I, the city was destroyed and most of its Jewish residents abandoned it forever. Before World War Monastir had 1250 Jewish families, and in 1919 only 600.

In the period between 1919 to 1937 the number of families in Monastir grew to 853 and it is reasonable to assume that Jewish refugees who departed for surrounding areas returned to their city. After the war, the Monastir community dwindled, many of the community members were destitute and there were a large number of orphans and widows. The Alliance schools were destroyed and ceased operation as the Jewish Academies remained closed until at least 1919. In 1919 only 250 Jewish pupils studied in town, while in 1913 there were over there 490 pupils in the Alliance schools, alone.

The incidence of displaced youth grew. Children and youth without supervision and education roamed the markets and streets without anything to do, trying to find any kind of job that would earn them even a slight amount of money in order to overcome their hunger and to assist their families and their families' sustenance.

Monastirilis who emigrated to Thessaloniki and to the US did not forget the city of their forefathers nor their family and relatives. They tried to help as best they could and to garner support for them from other sources.

The Monastirli Diaspora

Many of Monastir's Jews who suffered from wars, disasters, poverty and in 1908 from induction into the Turkish army, decided to emigrate from the city and try their luck in other lands. Waves of people, families, young people and others abandoned their hometown, their homes families, and relatives and sailed for new countries. In 4 countries, centers of Jews from Monastir were founded including the land of Israel, the United States, Greece and Chili. Some also migrated to Albania and France.

The Jews of Monastir and the land of Israel

The connection of the Jews of Monastir to the land of Israel was great. Jews from Monastir infiltrated into Israel in order to settle in it, visited it as pilgrims in order to visit the holy places and gravesites of the righteous. In 1589, 4 families started planning together to move their families to the land of Israel and settle in the city of Safed. For various reasons which were not dependent upon those who wished to move to Israel, they did not end up moving.

From a letter written by Jerusalem scholars to the head of the Monastir community in 1591, we learn that there was a Monastir Jew by the name of David Nachmias who lived in Jerusalem and was known for his piety in both Jerusalem and Hebron. In the middle of the 18th century we find that there was a Monastirli community in Jerusalem. This we deduce from an occurrence that happened in 1763. An elderly couple from the community decided to bequeath their assets to their grandson who was left Monastir. Their names were Mazal Tov and Rafael Shem Tov Aruesti. Even though their will stated specifically that this was written with a sound mind and under no coercion, there were those who contested the will, and therefore, a hearing was held in a community court in Jerusalem whose members were Shmuel Calderon, Shem-Tov Aruesti and Avraham Alkotzir. It is supposed that the couple lived in Jerusalem for a long time and it was written when they were very old, before their deaths. Apparently, the Monastirli community in Jerusalem was quite large for the time, since it supported scholars and was able to maintain its own court of law.

In another example of pilgrimages to Jerusalem we learn from a question that was directed at the court (Beit Din) in Monastir regarding three Jews from Macedonia who wished to worship in the holy city of Jerusalem. They arrived at the Turkish island of Kos, from there they sailed to Rhodes, and from there took an Albanian ship to Alexandria. Unfortunately, the ship was wrecked off the coast of Egypt and they drowned at sea.

From a census conducted by Sir Moses Montefiori in Israel in 1839 it is apparent that there were 13 acknowledged families from Monastir who numbered 29 people. Two additional families carried Monastirli surnames, but their land of origin was not written possibly because they had already been born in the country. If we add them to the total number, we reach 15 families and some 36 individuals, and it is probable that the number was even greater since the land of origin was not always recorded. All of those who made Aliyah from Monastir settled in Jerusalem between the years 1772-1832, a total of 11 families. Many of them were young couples or bachelors, and only 3 established families. Their ages ranged between 30 and 70; two of them were considered wealthy, 5 were considered middle-class and 2 were considered to be making a subsistence level income. The rest were considered poor. Among their professions were merchants, millers, currency dealers, tailors, artisans and scholars.

A little about the Jews from Monastir who lived in Jerusalem in the 20th century can be gleaned from the city's archives. During the 1920s the Sephardic community committee conducted a census of the Sephardic and Oriental Jews in town, according to the various neighborhoods. The details are written in a big ledger without dates, and the common Monastirli names can be discerned from among them. Additionally there is a list of voters for the second assembly in 1925 that is also divided up according to neighborhoods. In the archives there is a Monastir file and it includes the names of new immigrants from Monastir who made Aliyah around 1932.

Although newcomers from Monastir could be found in many of the new neighborhoods springing up outside the walls of old Jerusalem, the old city remained a magnet for Jews who immigrated from Monastir to Israel. All told, there were some 112 families that could be counted, including a total of some 315 individuals.

The book “courtyards in the ancient city” by Yaakov Elazar also tell about the Jews of Monastir who lived as did other families in houses that surrounded the courtyards. It is written that the Sephardic Jews from the Balkans lived near Midan street and the Street of Chains. The book also gives a glimpse of how the people lived, on summer nights, especially when the moon was full. Tables were set in the courtyard and kerosene lamps were lit. In the winter, gatherings were also held in the big courtyard. In the earthquake of 1927, the courtyard was destroyed, and later during the Arab riots of 1936-1939, the courtyard was abandoned completely. The book also has photographs of two leading Monastir Jews who lived in the old city – Shmuel Pedro, who was a great scholar and fought the missionaries, and Haim Nachmias who was considered one of the leading Monastirlis and the founder of the “Yegia Kapaim” neighborhood.

The book also sheds light on the occupations of the immigrants from Monastir. They were common people who worked at simple jobs, many of them selling and fixing used shoes and clothing. They also served various synagogues and organizations. The Russo family is credited with having introduced the weaving of brooms and brushes. Bechor Russo was one of the first greengrocers in the old city. The book also gives us interesting information about (mixed) marriages, particularly by women from Monastir with men from other Oriental communities.

The Monastirlis were blessed with girls who were in demand, particularly by immigrants from Yemen, Persia, and Kurdistan. In this way the courtyards were rejuvenated with many wedding ceremonies. Rabbi Abraham Azrieli, who was a courtyard owner happily made inter-marriages between the various communities. Yaakov Elazar further reports in his book about these special circumstances of the first (inter-marriage) between a young Yemenite marrying a Monastirli woman, which he claims were the first between a Yemenite and a Sephardic woman. Haim Ma’adali was infatuated with Leah, the red-head immigrant from Monastir. On the 15th of the month of Shvat, the fair-skinned Leah was married to the dark-skinned Haim and became the first couple of these communities to intermarry.

The Jews of Monastir continued to immigrate to Jerusalem. The society of olim from Monastir from Israel sent a letter on April 10, 1932 to the Sephardic community committee in Jerusalem which stated: "We are forwarding a list of new immigrants from Monastir whose economic situation is not bright, and we ask that you please include them in meals for the Passover holiday." According to this list a total of 10 households- 53 individuals were included. Undoubtedly, there were other immigrants from Monastir who were not impoverished or who refused to be included in the list of those receiving food. In any case, from the census conducted by the Sephardic community committee, the number of households grew to 121-362 people, making the Jews of Monastir a considerable number of the Sephardic Jews in the old city.

In 1939 a census was conducted in one of the poor neighborhoods for the purpose of dispensing kerosene. There were 12 Monastir households comprising 46 individuals. It is apparent that the Jews of Monastir, particularly the underprivileged among them, rented housing in poor neighborhoods where the rent was low. Three of them managed to buy their houses. The Sha'arei Zion neighborhood was founded by Jews who had moved from the old city. Some of them were from Kurdistan and the Syrian community of Haleb, and some were from Monastir. Fourteen households – 62 persons out of the 200 people living in the neighborhood were former residents of Monastir. The neighborhood survived the various Arab riots of the 1920s and 30s, until it was finally abandoned in 1939. The final committee meeting covered many topics including rejuvenating the neighborhood. A short time after the meeting, one of the leading residents of the neighborhood, Michael ben Avraham Iskaio who was a founder of the synagogue, was murdered by an Arab. The community, in part due to security issue, was abandoned, and the various religious artifacts from the synagogues were moved to other synagogues in the city with the stipulation that if the neighborhood was rebuilt, they would be returned.

A list of 142 immigrants from Monastir appears in the city archive from April 1942. The Sephardic community committee was asked to give them the necessary supplies to celebrate the Passover festival and from this, we learn that a large number of immigrants from Monastir in the late 1920s and the early 1930s were impoverished.

It seems apparent from later lists of people receiving aid especially around the holiday time that the fortunes of a many immigrants from Monastir did not improve from the early 1930s. A questionnaire that was disseminated among 40 families from Monastir shows that many came at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Few came during the first 2 decades of the 20th century and many came in the years 1922, 1925, 1927, 1931, 1932. The last immigrant was Shmaya Kamchi who made Aliyah in 1935.

There were those who came as bachelors, but the majority came as families. Many came as tourists and stayed in the country. Some were able to immigrate with certificates of immigration. Those who came as tourists divided their families into smaller groups so the authorities would not be alerted to their intention of staying in the country. Those who came with certificates artificially increased the size of their families and added relatives and orphans. A great number of those who came on Aliyah joined their brethren in the old city of Jerusalem and from there moved to the new neighborhoods of the city, especially after the Arab riots of 1929 and 1936-1939. From there, many moved to Tel Aviv and Rishon Le Zion, Petach Tikvah, Beit Shearim, and Kfar Sirkin. Young olim who were members of the "Shomer HaTzair" organization in Monastir settled in the Sha'ar HaAmakim kibbutz and others settled in kibbutzim such as Alonim, Yehiam and Revivim. In their early years in the country they could be found working as cheese makers, shepherds, greengrocers, tailors and shoemakers, rag dealers, scrap metal dealers, petty merchants, broom and brush weavers, candy makers, synagogue sextons, etc. With time they moved over to other occupations prevalent at that time, especially in the building trade, as postal clerks, city clerks, and bureaucrats in the ports. Those who went to agricultural settlements grew livestock and vegetables, etc.

Most of those surveyed showed their homes to be in greater Jerusalem with a small number of people spread out in some 14 other towns and settlements around the country. This survey also showed that a majority of the people married among the Monastir community. A good number married other Sephardic and Oriental Jews and a small number also married Ashkenazi Jews.

Monastirle Synagogues in Jerusalem

The Jews of Monastir built 2 synagogues in the old city at the end of the 19th century. The first one Yagel Yakov was founded in 1888, the second one, Ahavat Hesed in 1893. In 1924 it was known by the name of Hesed V'Emet. Yaakov Elazar in his book, "Old City Courtyards," tells about the Monastirli synagogues in the old city. According to his testimony, his father Yehuda Elazar was a spokesman for the immigrants of Monastir. He writes, "they organized their own special synagogue as well as various benevolent societies. When the number of olim from Monastir grew, another synagogue was opened. On the Eve of the Day of Atonement, all of the Jews gathered in the synagogues and took care of the debts they had taken upon themselves throughout the year, so they could enter the Day of Atonement clear of conscience. The 2 synagogues donated money for the building of a new synagogue, a total of 120 pounds. When the Shaarei Tzion synagogue was closed, its treasury was transferred to the Yagel Yaakov synagogue, a total of 118.50 pounds.

Monastirli Monuments in Jerusalem

The Jerusalem municipality commemorated the memory of two people from Monastir, Leon Kamchi and Esther Ovadia.

Leon Kamchi, the president of the Zionist federation in Monastir, and the deputy chairman in the community, (died in Treblinka). The city planted a garden in his memory on Baron Hirsch Street in the Kiryat Moshe neighborhood.

Esther Ovadia (Mara) a partisan fighter and national Yugoslavian heroine. The city named a street after her, in the Ramat Beit HaKerem neighborhood.

Agricultural Settlements

Young adults from Monastir, who received agricultural training when they made Aliyah to Israel, requested to set up their own village. Since they were unable to organize a big enough group of settlers, they joined various other settlements which were already established. Kibbutzim and rural towns settled them when they joined as small groups or individuals.

Alonim - a kibbutz in the Jezreel Valley in 1935 they settled in the side family courtyard and Sheikh Aberech. In 1938 the settlement was established until Couscous. In 1938 Avraham Albohar of Monastir joined with a couple members of the "Law" from Jerusalem.

Ashdot Yaakov – A kibbutz in the Jordan valley 5 miles south of the Sea of Galilee, established in 1935 bought by the "Las Picas" Palestine Jewish Colonization Association.

Beit Shearim – the settlement was founded by Jews from Yugoslavia. In 1932 another 7 families from Yugoslavia joined the settlement. They had difficulties since they were not affiliated with any of the settlement organizations.

Jennie Lebel reported that the group that arrived from Monastir on the huts from the previous settlers with their own private funds. The settlement had one water well with a pump that was very sufficient for their needs. Every settler received 150 dunams, but because of the scarcity of water it was difficult to develop their farms. The settlers approached the settler organizations and asked for a 200 pound loan for each family to dig additional wells, but their requests were unheeded, and after 3 years of hardship they were forced to abandon the town. David Calderon stayed in the settlement after it was abandoned by the Yugoslavian settlers, and became the secretary of a new town that was formed in its place between the years 1936-1953.

Bezot - A moshav in western Galilee, 8 kilometers north of Nahariya. It was founded in 1949 by olim from Yugoslavia. Albert Casorla, "Avraham Segev" who was a holocaust survivor from Monastir was among them.

Kfar Sirkin – Village southeast of Petach Tikvah founded in 1936. Many ex-Monastirlis joined Kfar Sirkin. The first came in 1931, and in 1948 were joined by other Monastirlis who survived the holocaust. Gita and Shmuel. Gita survived the holocaust and Shmuel served with the partisans in Greece. Dora & Dario Russo. Dora survived Auschwitz, and Dario served as a pilot in the Serbian army. Nico and Leah Pardo. Nico escaped from the Monopol concentration camp to Albania, and after the war married Leah who was from Split (today's Croatia).

Magshimim – 3 kilometers south of Petach Tikvah. Discharged British soldiers founded it in 1949. Various families moved there in the 1950s.

Other olim from Monastir moved to Petach Tikvah and Rishon LeZion. They were employed as agricultural workers in the citrus groves, as pickers and packers. A few also worked in the winery. Those who were unable to work in agriculture made a living from selling fruit and vegetables in stores and shops.

Sha'ar Ha'amakim - a kibbutz in the Jezreel Valley – Five youngsters from the “Ha-shomer Hatzair” organization of Bitola settled there.

Monuments in the Land of Israel commemorating the Martyrs.

On October 24, 1993 the Jewish national Fund approached Simian the second, son of the king of Bulgaria, Boris III, king of Bulgaria during the Holocaust, and suggested planting a forest in his memory in Israel.

When news of this was published, the newspapers in Israel were flooded with protest letters, among them from Jews from Monastir who were against this because of Bulgaria's cooperation with the Nazis, and their having been the ones to ship the Jews to the extermination camps. Because of the outcry the JNF decided to call the forest the Bulgarian forest rather than name it after Boris III. A plaque was put up in memory of King Boris the III that said “in memory of the King of Bulgaria, Boris III 1894-1943 and his Queen Joanna, for their work in saving the Jews of Bulgaria during the holocaust.

Next to this monument is a memorial to the 11, 343 Jewish martyrs of Thrace & Macedonia who were exterminated in 1943 under the Nazi's regime. It must be noted that the memorial mentions the Nazi's former atrocities and does not mention that they was conducted under the Bulgarians' authority.

The placement of these memorials became known to the public only in 1999 when a committee was set up in this regard and many called for the plaque commemorating Boris III to be removed. As a result of the public outcry and the attention of the various media, a committee was established to come to conclusions regarding the monument to Boris III. The JNF was committed to acting according to their findings.

After 6 months of deliberations the finding was that the memorial should be removed. Two new memorials replaced it, one commemorating the 11,343 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia, who were martyred in the Treblinka death camp in 1943, and the second for the noble souls among the Bulgarian people who stood together with the 49,000 Jews of Bulgaria who were saved from the holocaust.

The Monastir Diaspora in the United States

In the latter part of the 19th century, there were many changes in the communities of the Orient and the Balkans. Western ideas started to permeate. Part of this was due to the Alliance schools that operated in Monastir from 1895 to 1913. Based on these studies, the Sephardic youth felt that they had the power to improve their lives. America, as the land of wealth, industry, and employment captured their hearts. At the beginning, most of the immigrants were young people. When they were able to base themselves financially, they sent money to their poor relatives, and with time, sent them travel money to the United States.

With that, the number of Spanish origin Jews who immigrated to the United States in the years 1890 and 1907 was small and numbered some 2,700 people. In 1908, the Young Turks revolution occurred with the desired outcome being a government that was based on freedom and democracy. Indeed, this government was founded. It granted equal rights to all citizens of the Sultanate including the right of duty to serve in the army, something that caused great concern among the Jews. Those who were inducted into the army were from the ages of 20 to 45 and as a result, many preferred to leave the areas controlled by the Ottoman Empire.

During the Balkan Wars, 1912-1914, many cities were destroyed, among them Monastir. The destruction of Monastir repeated itself during the years of World War I (1914-1918). These wars also caused many young people to leave the Ottoman Empire for other countries. At the same time, the industry and commerce in the United States was booming, and immigrants did not have to serve in the army when they became citizens. Those who were conscripted were paid handsomely. The public schools enabled every man to get ahead, and a new world was open. People worked here for a decent wage and could prepare dowries and the necessities for getting married. Girls received an education, learned English, and participated in social activities.

The number of Sephardic Jews who immigrated to the United States from 1908-1914 is estimated at some 10,000. The number of immigrants decreased during World War I, but an additional 10,000 arrived in the United States between the years 1920-1924.

New York

Rabbi David de Sola Pool estimated that 80 to 90% of the Spanish Jews settled in NY, mostly on the lower East Side. HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) did not originally recognize the Sephardic immigrants as Jews. Yitzhak Gadol intervened and an oriental department was established. It began operations in the second half of 1911. Gadol served voluntarily as its secretary for a long time, taking this upon himself when he saw the plight of his Sephardic brethren.

He was surprised to find that many of the young Sephardim were sitting in coffee houses. When he asked why they were not at work, they explained that many of them worked at nights in the movie houses, hotels and nightclubs. Jacques Farhi described the difficult plight of the Sephardic immigrants in their early days in the summer of 1912. "We live in New York in a furnace and amidst garbage. We live in dank, narrow, dark houses and work from morning to night without a day of rest. We sleep poorly, eat poorly, and dress poorly and we are losing the finest days of our youth". The Spanish immigrants tended to congregate together and continued to live the life style of their native lands. They sang Turkish songs and Spanish romances, spoke in Ladino among themselves, and gathered at coffee houses.

In 1921, the American congress passed a law limiting the number of immigrants. The number of immigrants from Yugoslavia was limited to 6,405 people. In 1924, an additional law was passed, enabling only 2% of those who emigrated from a certain country in 1890 to enter the United States.

In 1907, the Monastirli immigrants in the United States founded the Congregation of Peace and brotherhood of Monastir. They incorporated the society in 1910. By 1911, it had 120 members who met on Chrystie St. The Jews of Monastir were a notable congregation among the Ladino speaking congregations. They had a strong affinity for Jewish traditions and they started a Jewish Learning Academy (Talmud Torah in 1918),

and a synagogue. On April 14, 1911, the newspaper La America reported a celebration held by the Monastir synagogue with the induction of a new Torah scroll. They held a parade in the streets with music and dancing, and the flags of the United States, Turkey, and the national blue-white flag of the Jews. The society invited Jews from all communities to take part and expected help from the various Jewish communities.

In January 1913, the La America newspaper received complaints from Monastir Jews protesting that the paper did not publish the various cultural activities of the Monastir community, compared to the Kastoria Jewish community. The editor explained that his paper had many subscribers from the Kastoria community, but only 5 from the Monastir community, even though the Monastir community was larger than that of Kastoria. He also claimed that a play put on by the Kastoria community was on Jewish subjects and was shown for the purpose of collecting money for founding a Jewish school, whereas the Monastir community's play was a translated one from French that had nothing to do with Jewish culture.

The Sephardic Jews suffered from an inferiority complex in regard to their Ashkenazi brethren. The Ashkenazi Jews were more successful in business and had among them many wealthy people, which was not the case with the Sephardic community. Moshe Gadol suggested setting up a special bank for Sephardic Jews that would offer loans to Sephardic merchants without any waiting period. He was of the opinion that American banks as well as those run by Ashkenazi Jews did not treat Sephardic Jews fairly.

The fact is that the Sephardic Jews were unable to base themselves financially. In the meantime, the flood of Spanish immigrants continued to Harlem, New Lots, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. They worked hard, but only a few were able to remove themselves from poverty. In many cases, financial success resulted in a deterioration of family life. Family heads worked long hours, but spent very little time with their wives or children, even on the weekends. Foregoing the obligations of religion became an accepted practice among most of the community. At the beginning, many felt pangs of guilt when they had to transgress the Sabbath or eat non-kosher foods, but this soon passed and the children and grandchildren were drifting further & further from Jewish traditions.

As part of their getting used to a new country and learning the English language, the Spanish Jews needed their Holy books in Ladino. In order to fulfill this need, there was an ad in the newspaper offering books in Ladino. These were printed in Vienna as well as the United States, such as the Bible, which had one column in Hebrew and the other in Ladino. The cost of a book like this was \$5. There were also ads that sold holy trinkets from Jerusalem, for example a Mezuzah, which is affixed to the doorpost, for sale at a cost of 20 cents. We can learn some of the occupations of the immigrants from want ads that the newspapers published in Ladino, such as:

- Clerks familiar with sewing clothes and dresses...
- People with experience for continual work in ironing clothes and dresses. Women who want to work at home embroidering and knitting. Good pay and continual employment for someone who knows how to iron suits. Seamstresses who know how to work a sewing machine...
- Girls with experience on Singer sewing machines sewing nightgowns. Thirty to thirty-five dollars a week...
- Seeking an intelligent young man who can learn how to cut cloth for women's coats...

The LaVera newspaper had an item from July 15, 1926, stating that Rabbi Djain, the chief Rabbi of Monastir was in Jerusalem currently and would be visiting the United States, soon. He would be coming to raise funds for the poor in Monastir and to support the schools there, with the help of the colony of Monastir expatriates; he hoped to have success, as in the past, in this holy mission.

It seems apparent that the Jews of Monastir in New York integrated into their surroundings. They learned how to use the newspaper for advertising, both business and social issues, and they learned how to celebrate family events in banquet halls and hotels. Rabbi Mayor Elias Kasorla publicized his services, and when he was appointed the Rabbi and secretary of the Sephardic court, used the newspaper to publicize the outcome of trials.

From the ads in the newspapers, we can also see that there were intermarriages between the Monastir expatriates and Sephardic spouses from other Sephardic communities as well as with European Jews. 'The Love & Peace Monastir Inc. Society,' founded in 1907, continued to operate for many years and branched out into other parts of town, including Brooklyn and New Lots where hospital and a home for the aged were set up. Another branch was downtown. An ad from 1937 talks about a party being organized for young people, and it was very successful as all the tickets were sold out.

The Jews of Monastir in New York also founded a Yeshiva, a Jewish seminary called Or Torah, which was located on Eldridge Street, and invited people of the community to attend and study every evening.

Like other Sephardic Jews, The Monastirlis were active in contributing to help the Jews of the Land of Israel. In May 1938, a newspaper published that the Sephardic Jews of New Lots were getting together to contribute to the United Palestine Fund, and this was spearheaded by Jews from the Monastir community. The connection between the Monastir Jews in the United States to their brethren in Monastir was strong, both in the early years as well as the following ones. This can be seen by the various funds that were set up to help the Jews of Monastir in their times of trouble. They collected money in order to feed schoolchildren in Monastir, to make sure that the children were able to attend school; clothing was collected to send there, both as individuals and as a community gesture. The firms of Kaplan, Elias, and Pruss Brothers donated clothes for this cause. A lot of this was difficult to ship over to Monastir and required special permits from the Yugoslavian government. In 1938, it was publicized that the clothing had arrived and that it would save the city's poor from running about in the harsh winter without proper clothing. Money was also collected to help the poor of Monastir and other places such as Thessaloniki, Palestine, and Florina.

These efforts were intensified up until and through the war, and 25,000 dollars were targeted for collection to send to the Jews in Monastir. This, even as the Nazi regime was encroaching on the lives of the community. It appears that the Monastir

Jews in the United States were unaware as late as 1944, that their brethren in Monastir had already been murdered in the death camps of Treblinka in March-April 1943.

Today the Jews of Monastir in New York have their cultural center and synagogue, called "The Emet V'Shalom – The Sephardic Temple which serves the Sephardic community at large as well as the scions of the Monastirli community in New York.

The Monastirli Community in Indianapolis

The first Sephardic families to reach Indianapolis and found the community arrived between the years 1904 to 1908. The biggest wave of immigrants arrived between the years 1913 to 1922. Most of the families came from Monastir, and by 1933, numbered 75 families, a total of 850 people.

Other than a few, most were referred to the place by the IRO (Industrial Removal Office) which dealt with organizing immigrants and spreading them to different places in the country that needed laborers. Most of the immigrants from 1913-1914 were sent to work in the Kahn tailoring factory. Here, many of these Sephardic immigrants found that speaking Ladino was not to their benefit, as they were confused with immigrants from South America.

The Sephardic immigrants refused to receive help from the established Ashkenazi community, and preferred to look after their needs by themselves. However, they did accept help from the Reform community since they had a more liberal attitude towards faith and culture. In 1916, the Reform community helped the Spanish Jews buy burial grounds and in 1919, to establish a synagogue. All immigrants to the United States had the obligation to learn English, and without this knowledge, they could not get citizenship. Therefore, they were sent to public schools, and men, women, and children, were asked to contribute to the family's livelihood.

Women went to work at the ages of 16 - 18. Youngsters approaching age 18 worked part time as paper salesmen, watching fruit and vegetable stalls, and from

this, we can infer that this was a common mode of employment for the immigrants in those days. Many of these youngsters did not have time to attend high school. It was very difficult to pass on the legacy of the Sephardic traditions to the younger generation. In the words of one: "We were busy working, and didn't have time for stories."

The Ladino and Sephardic culture was not taught in the Sephardic religious schools and when the European and Sephardic communities came nearer, the Sephardic children attended the Ashkenazi Jewish schools. During the 1920's, with the improvement in the economy, those with means moved from the South side to the North side of town, and this migration continued into the 1930's and 1940's.

The newspaper, La America, reported on December 25, 1918 that a Zionist Federation of Monastir was founded in Indianapolis. The newspaper also reported that the community was not very cohesive, and not organized, and still did not have a Hebrew Sunday school. The newspaper, La Vara contains an advertisement placed by Bechor Asael saying that, "we need to increase our help to the Jews of Palestine. We Sephardic Jews need to organize and to send them money."

From the archives of the Joint, we learn that in 1937 the Indianapolis community, together with their brethren in New York and Rochester, started a fund to aid their brethren in Monastir. They approached Mr. Joseph Hyman, the head of the Jewish Welfare Fund of Indianapolis, asking him to demand that the Joint help the Jews of Monastir in their dire straits. According to the archive, the Monastirli community in Indianapolis aided the Jews in Monastir to the sum of \$600 a year, and collected clothing worth \$1500-\$2000. Since the quantity of clothing was greater than the needs in Monastir, it was assumed that they would sell the surplus, and by such, increase the budget of the community.

The community used to hold picnics and excursions which were advertised in the La Vara newspaper. On the days of Awe and other holidays, collections were taken up for various causes. In 1940, the community numbered 64 Sephardic families and the Sephardic Jews were active in various spheres. The younger generation of the

Monastir community made efforts to bring themselves closer to the younger generation of the European Jews in Indianapolis, and they started having joint prayer services. Two hundred members attended the first one held. In 1942, an organization called the Sephardic Youth of Indianapolis was founded to help promote the Jewish culture among the youngsters.

The Monastirli Community in Rochester, New York

Rochester served as a center for Jews from Monastir. From a newspaper report on June 21, 1912, it states that the situation of the Sephardic community in Rochester is bleak. It has some 40-50 people from Monastir who are of good character, but lack a formal education. Some are so uneducated that they cannot even read the La America newspaper.

The Or Yisrael society was founded in 1909 with a capital of \$300. The La America newspaper reported that in 1912, a literary group was founded in Rochester, which grew and had 30 members. They bought books from Jerusalem and an effort was made to increase the literary knowledge of the public. The women of Rochester also organized activities and the community maintained a Jewish school, a synagogue, and a burial society.

The Sephardic community used to hold picnics where all the community members would get together informally and they started a youth organization called "The Young Men's Sephardic Association". Additionally, an organization called the "Young, New Sephardic Association of Rochester" was active, and in 1926, they held a big reception.

On Feb. 29, 1928, the World Sephardic Federation in Jerusalem sent the community a letter acknowledging their contributions. They also enclosed their annual report for 1927 in English, Spanish, Hebrew, and French, and asked that they bring it to the knowledge of the community.

From the archives of the Joint, we learn that Rochester was active in Monastir through the congregation of Peace and Brotherhood of Monastir, Inc. relief committee. The community had contact with the chief Rabbi of Israel, BenZion Mayer Chai Uziel. In 1941, the rabbi wrote a letter acknowledging a donation he received for his Gates of Zion yeshiva. In his letter, he asked that the community contact him whenever they chose, if they had need of Rabbis, ritual slaughterers, Cantors, etc. Additionally the rabbi told them he was founding a center to train rabbis who would be able to service communities abroad, and asked that they donate to its foundation.

In August 1943, the community published an ad looking for a Cantor and a Hebrew teacher for the Or Yisrael community in Rochester.

The Immigration of Monastir Jews to the United States

The Jews of Monastir started immigrating to the United States in 1901, with most of the immigration taking place in the 1920's. A glance at the list of immigrants shows that many were single or young families that came with babies less than a year old. Sometimes they were joined by the parents of the father or the mother. Typically, the majority of them were aged 18-30, and they entered the United States by ship from Le Havre in France or Southampton in England.

To sum up, the immigrants from Monastir to the United States came mostly from the years 1908-1924, and suffered from a difficult time initially, both from their Spanish brethren as well as among society in general, and because of the fact that most of them were poor, and did not possess a good education. In many cases, they settled in poor neighborhoods, but in time were able to base themselves and move upwards socially and into better neighborhoods. They started out doing menial labor, shining shoes, sewing, peddling, working in movie theaters, nightclubs, and hotels, but little by little, they studied at night school and learned American ways and the English language, and became presidents, chairmen, treasurers, and trustees of organizations.

In New York, they founded three communities, the first on the lower East Side, the second, downtown, and the third in Brooklyn, as well as communities established in Rochester, New York, and Indianapolis, Indiana. They set up public committees, synagogues, Sunday schools, and burial societies, as well as women's auxiliaries, youth groups and social clubs, and finally in New York, a hospital and old age home.

They maintained their synagogues, and had social events and outings. It is apparent that the attendance in synagogues during weekdays and Sabbath was light, but they were, for the most part, active on holidays. As a community, they had many activities during the year, whether private or public events that were held in houses or in banquet halls and hotels.

The communities did not forget where they came from and continued to support their brethren in Monastir and in the other towns that refugees fled to during the war and destruction. They also supported institutions in Israel. As Jewish Americans, they contributed to American Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Welfare Fund, and the United Palestine Fund, and they supported the Civil Defense and the United States Soldiers Welfare Funds.

It can be said that the Jews of Monastir immigrated to the United States as extremely poor and uneducated people in many cases, but they learned, developed and based themselves financially and socially and became honorable American citizens.

The Jews of Monastir in Greece

The Jews of Monastir had diverse relations with Jews in other cities of Macedonian Greece, Athens, and Thrace. Many Jews immigrated to these cities for various reasons. Among these were Athens, Drama, Thessaloniki, Florina, Kavala, and Kastoria. The majority of Monastirli Jews in Greece were murdered along with their Greek Jewish brethren in the Auschwitz death camp.

Athens

Capital of Greece, and its biggest city in the Attica province.

Fifteen of the richest families in Monastir immigrated to Athens during World War I. According to the chronicles in the Yad V'Shem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem, we learn that Monastir-born Jews who lived in Athens were murdered in the Holocaust.

Another city, Drama, the capital of the Drama province in one of the valleys in Macedonian Greece. The community was an “annex” of the nearby Kavala community.

Thessaloniki

Capital of Macedonian Greece, a port city on the Aegean Sea. It was also called the “Jerusalem of the Balkans” since it was an important Middle Eastern Jewish center. Rabbi Shmuel Di Medina called it a city that was mostly populated by Jews. Monastir was spiritually akin to Thessaloniki, its rabbis and sages. When the rabbis of Monastir had a problem or a question of Jewish law they could not solve, they referred it to the rabbis in Thessaloniki.

There were social ties between Monastir & Thessaloniki, and reciprocal visits were common as well as marriages between people from both cities. For example, the Jewish merchants in Thessaloniki had commercial ties with merchants and tanners in

Monastir. In the 16th century, a formal agreement was signed between leather dealers in Thessaloniki and tanners in Monastir.

Some of the Jews from Monastir fled for their lives during the Balkan Wars (1912-1914) and during World War I (1914-1918), when Monastir was the scene of fierce battles and was bombed and had most of its houses destroyed. Many of those escaped to Thessaloniki where the Monastirli refugees received help from a society called "Misgav Ladach". Some of the womenfolk who arrived from Monastir gained employment in a local tobacco factory.

From 1916 to 1917, houses were built in the El Amaria district in Thessaloniki for the Monastir refugees, and until the destruction of the community during the Holocaust, this was known as the Monastirli's neighborhood. During those years, a well-based Monastirli community existed in Thessaloniki, and we see that a commercial company run by Jews from Monastir, called Y. Aruesti, and Bros. was based there. This company sent an appeal to the Monastirli Society in New York, asking for assistance for the Jews in Monastir. The Monastir Jews in the United States also helped the Monastir Jews in Thessaloniki. In 1938, the former sent a one hundred dollar donation to them.

In 1927, a Monastir expatriate by the name of Isaac Aruesti founded a synagogue for the Monastir community, which meant that many Jews from Monastir required their own place of worship. This synagogue often held Sabbath gatherings of the young Mizrachi organization.

On April 9, 1941, the Germans conquered Thessaloniki. A unit called the Rosenberg commandos came to Thessaloniki in June 1941, lead by Dr. Johann Paul who, in the past, headed the Hebrew Department in a Jewish research institute in Frankfurt. He confiscated many books and antiques as well as the entire library of the Monastir synagogue.

On March 17, 1943, the chief rabbi of Thessaloniki, Rabbi Kurtz spoke before the prayers and told the congregation: "the times are hard and tragic you will need patience and courage". The Jews of Thessaloniki, including the Jews from Monastir, were sent

to their deaths in the Auschwitz camp in trains that left Thessaloniki on the 15th, 17th, 19th, 23rd, and 27th of March 1943; on the 3rd, 5th, 7^h, 10th, 13th, 16th, 20th, 22nd and 28th of April 1943. On the 3rd and 9th of May 1943; on 1 June 1943, and on the 2 and 10 of August 1943.

Of all the synagogues in Thessaloniki, only one remained standing and that was the Monastir synagogue at #37 Singaro Street, designed by the architect Eli Levy and built in 1927. The synagogue was spared because it was used as a warehouse for the Red Cross during the war. It was refurbished after the war, and serves as the central synagogue for the Jews of Thessaloniki until today.

Florina

Capital of the Greek province of Macedonia.

Some sixty Jewish families from Monastir fled there during the Balkan Wars and World War I (1912 to 1918). Some returned to Monastir afterwards, and others remained in place and founded the expatriate Monastir society. A newspaper called Universe Israelite reported on Feb. 16, 1917 that Jews escaped from the bombed Monastir. Those with the means escaped first and the Chief Rabbi escaped with the German forces. The refugees reached the train station in Florina on their way to Thessaloniki.

The Jews in Florina were not able to help these refugees since they, themselves, were very poor and barely made a living. One of the heads of the town who was approached for help said that he could not help them, explaining that their rabbi could have helped, but he, unfortunately had abandoned his flock and left.

The Chief Rabbi of Thessaloniki intervened in the Florina affair; however, the sum of money that was collected was small, and there was a fear that many would die of cold and hunger. The person that helped them the most was the head of the railroad, who said that it was imperative to set up the means of saving people with the help of the allied armies.

It is apparent that the percentage of refugees in town were high as in 1923 several were on the Jewish Community committee. After the war, there were people who moved to Florina, as well, and there is even some evidence that most of the Jews in town originally came from Monastir between the two wars. In 1928, there were 290 Jews, 284 of whom spoke Ladino as their main language. In 1929, the number of families was listed as 48 and the head of the Jewish council and his assistant were both from Monastir. In 1940, the number of Jews had risen to 400 people.

Two hundred and ninety five Jews from Florin perished in the Birkenau death camp; out of them, some 275 were Monastirlis or former Monastir residents and their children who were born in Florina.

Kavala

A Greek Macedonian city, known as Neopolis in ancient times.

According to an Alliance Israelite Universelle report, some 250 Jewish families live there, most of them originally from Thessaloniki and others from Monastir, Sars, and Constantinople.

Kastoria

A city in northern Macedonian Greece- 150 kilometers west of Thessaloniki.

Due to its geographical location at an important crossroads, the merchants of Constantinople, Belgrade, Valona, Nish, Monastir, Sarajevo, and Skopje forged commercial ties with Kastoria. We know that commercial ties existed between Kastoria and Monastir in 1643 from testimony given about the murder of two Jews from Monastir. In 1834 the rabbi of Kastoria, Meir Alkalai was recorded as having been in Monastir and meeting with its council members in order to seek donations for the rebuilding of a synagogue and Jewish school that were burned down in a fire.

After the Balkan wars, Greece annexed Kastoria, and records show that Jewish refugees from Monastir moved there. In 1926, the community in Kastoria sent a letter with

the Chief Rabbi of Monastir, Rabbi Shabtai Djain to the Zionist Federation in the Sephardic Federation in Jerusalem asking that they send a teacher to them.

On March 10, 1943, a group of Jewish youths from Monastir escaped to Kastoria in Greece. Among them were Gita Levy and Shmuel Kalderon. Gita joined her family in Kastoria and Shmuel joined the Greek partisans. On March 23 1944, the Germans incarcerated the Kastoria Jews in a camp outside of Thessaloniki, from where they were transported to the Auschwitz death camp, arriving on April 11, 1944. Gita Calderon was sent to the Birkenau work camp and from there to Bergen-Belsen. From there she ended up in Mathausen where she was liberated by the American army on May 2, 1945. After the war, she found out that her brother, Shabtai Levy, had died in Bergen-Belsen.

The Jews of Monastir in Chile

The first Jew from Monastir to immigrate to Chile was Albert Levy. He arrived in the city of Temuco in 1900 to find a livelihood as a tailor. This immigration was well received by the authorities in Chile who were interested in driving the native Indians out of the area.

In his wake, more immigrants from Monastir arrived, and in 1916, there were enough Jews from Monastir in town to set up a community center. The initiator of the community center was Matthias Albala. The center was set up on August 5 1916, and at the same time, a "Centro"- a Macedonian youth center was established with 20 members. The new center held balls, theatrical and musical performances. They dedicated the proceeds to a society called "Halbasha" which helped the community's poor and bought books for the Jewish orphanage.

In 1916, the community set various rules and regulations for membership, and 21 heads of the community who acted as a council signed these. In 1921, they were revised to suit the new needs that had arisen. In 1920, a committee was established to buy a building for use as a community center, and in 1927, the Macedonian Youth Center's name was changed to the "Community Center of Temuco".

A burial society was also active. In 1929, a census of the residents of Temuco was taken and out of 251 Jews in the city, 203 were from Monastir, among them 39 elderly, 89 adults, and 75 children. In other words, the Jewish émigrés from Monastir made up 80% of the Jewish population.

They crowned Rabbi Djain who had served as the Chief Rabbi of Monastir, as President Emeritus of the community and a committee was established for the foundation of a Jewish school. A teacher was brought in from Jerusalem, but left his position as he was unable to adapt to the surroundings.

Rabbi Shabtai Djain returned from Chile to Jerusalem, and spoke to the World Sephardic Federation there. He told them how Zionism was important to the Sephardic Jews in

Temuco. The community had over 30 families, both European and Spanish Jews, together.

On Jan. 30, 1929, the community wrote a letter to the Jews in Monastir explaining that in Temuco it was hard to make a living, and that those who immigrated without the means of a livelihood could expect trouble and hardship. The community was interested only in young, single people who were vibrant and had initiative, and whom were invited by their relatives in Chile. From this, we understand that Temuco received its share of Jewish immigrants from Monastir, some of whom had no craft or any means of livelihood and who, in the end, caused hardship to the community who had trouble adopting them.

On May 3 1930, the Jewish Youth Society of Temuco was established. Its first President was Dr. DiMaio, a dentist. A newspaper, "Alma Hebrea" was also established. A flood of immigrants from Monastir came to Temuco in 1933 and brought with them two Torah scrolls that the community used. The letter was apparently not heeded and the community had a hard time absorbing the new immigrants. They asked that they return home to Monastir.

On March 7, 1933, the community heads sent a letter to the Yugoslavian Consul in Santiago, asking his help in funding the return to Monastir of the widow Dona Ricola Kalderon and her two orphaned children.

On September 12 1935, a fire broke out in Temuco, which destroyed the community building and archives. Only the synagogue was saved, and this fire caused great demoralization in the community. In 1947, Yedidia Yisrael was appointed Chief Rabbi of the Republic of Chile.

Many of the early Monastirli settlers in Temuco moved to Santiago, and some moved to other towns such as La Serena, Los Angeles, Ranca Gua Ovalle, Valparaiso, and Vina del Mar. After a few decades, the Temuco community dwindled, and the Santiago community became dominant.

The Monastirlis were active in the Zionist movement in Chile, beginning in 1919. From Sept. 17 to 19 of that year they held a Zionist Congress in Santiago. In 1926, the Zionist

Federation's emissary, Dr. Ariel BenZion, paid a visit to Chile. In 1929, they founded the Bialik Society that held cultural, literary and Zionist evenings. In 1930, Alberto Kasorla, who was born in Monastir, made Aliyah from Chile to Israel. From 1943 a branch of the Jewish Sephardic youth movement Juventud Israelita was active as well as Dror-B'nai Akiva, and other Zionist movements.

The Jews in Chile widely pursued education and the number who received academic degrees and who worked in professions was high, including engineers, doctors, poets, pharmacists, lawyers, and dentists. In 1940 two young members of the Monastir community won Prizes of Excellence from the University in Santiago. The community also tended to refrain from intermarriage with gentiles, but there was full integration between the European and Spanish Jews, who married freely between themselves.

Nearly 30 distinct Monastirli names can be found among the Jews in Chile. It is quite likely that many other families are represented in the population via the names of women who assumed the names of their husbands. While the surnames of the Jews from Monastir were not changed, it became customary to use Spanish names as personal names, which was uncommon in Monastir. This was the case with boys and girls; however, the custom in Monastir was also to use foreign names, for girls as well.

To sum up, we can say that the first Jews to arrive from Monastir to Chile arrived in 1900, both families and single persons. They settled in Temuco, and were actually pioneer settlers in the town. Only after they were financially prosperous did they start immigrating to the capital, Santiago. They founded independent communities that were well-run and contained synagogues, schools, benevolent societies, burial societies, and cemeteries. We can also deduce that poor people needing help were among the early refugees.

They ran their communities in a democratic fashion with elections, and elected councils. Youth groups and women's auxiliaries were operational, as well. The community was active and vibrant, socially, economically, culturally, and publicly. It looked after proper education for the children, and brought forth educators, academics, writers, poets, and economists. Its members were active in Sephardic Jewish organizations, locally and

internationally, and took part in local, national, and international Zionist activities. With time, they adopted the Spanish language and relinquished Ladino. Some even assumed private Spanish names, but all retained their original Monastirli family names, which were passed down from father to son.

List of institutions and organizations established by Monastirlis in Chile

Halbasha

Centro Macedonico Israelita

Comite Ejecutivo Sionista Sociedad

Hessed Ve Emet Sociedad De Damas

Israelitas Delegacion De La ?

Confederaci6n Mundial De Los ?

Judios Sefaradies Centro Union

Juventud Judia Max Nordau Grupo

Bialik Sociedad Colegio Hebreo

Comunidad Judia De Temuco

Compania Israelita De Bomberos

Colegio Hebreo De Temuco

Ozer Dalim

International organizations and institutions that operated in Chile

Deportivo Macabi

Corporacion Tecnica Ort Oze

Bene Berith

Dror

Wizo

Noar Mizrahi, Bnei Akiva

Hanoar Hatzioni

MONASTIR JEWS IN OTHER LANDS

Jews from Monastir also immigrated to Albania and France. Albania served as a land of refuge during World War II, and Paris was a destination for permanent immigration.

Albania

Jews from Monastir escaped to Albania during World War II. Among those who escaped were Nikko Pardo, and his sister-in-law Allegra. The two were caught in Albaicin, but Albanian friends helped them escape.

The Albanians operated a refugee camp between the years 1941- 1942, near the city of Cavea. Among the refugees from Monastir were Pepe Hasson, and Nikko Pardo. In the years 1943-1944, three Aruesti brothers found refuge with farmers in the village Librazhd.

France

Jews from Monastir also immigrated to Paris. In Monastir the Alliance Israelite Universelle was active between the years 1895 – 1913 and founded several schools in which the language of instruction was French. Some of the graduates of this school immigrated to Paris and made a life there. From the Yad V'Shem Holocaust archives, we know of several Jews, born in Monastir, who perished in the Holocaust. Among them were Ya'acov and Flor Nachmias.

Summary

It was by the grace of G-d that the Jews of Monastir were scattered to different countries in the world. Poverty and desperation drove them to leave their city, Monastir, and wander as Jews who maintained their traditions and were loyal to the land of their forefathers. They were ardent Zionists, and it was very natural that many would find their way to the land of Israel. With the lack of opportunity locally, they sought ways to support themselves, honorably, and it was natural that many turned to the United States, the sought after land for many immigrants. Chile did not possess any large discernable drawing points, but the despondency of the Monastir Jews was so great, they were willing to try their luck anywhere on the earth where they could find some peace and prosperity. From this, we can see that Chile became by chance a location due to the initiative of a single immigrant from Monastir who pulled many people in his wake.

Those who departed from Monastir to these other destinations founded their own communities where they were able to continue familial customs. With time, other Sephardic Jews joined these communities, and in the latter years, the communities became more generalized and nationalistic regarding their faith and Jewish religious observance. They found peace, a livelihood and a life with honor for their offspring. The fact that they left Monastir saved them from the bitter fate of those who remained behind in the mother city.

Alas, this was not the case with those who immigrated to the cities of Greece such as Thessaloniki, Florina, and Kastoria. They too perished in the flames with their brethren, the Jews of Greece, in the crematoria of Auschwitz. This was also the fate of the Monastirli Jews who reached Paris.

The Jewish Census in Monastir (Bitola) 1943

Early in 1943, the Bulgarians who ruled Macedonia in the years 1941-1944, conducted a census of the Jews in preparation for their transport to the Treblinka death camp.

This census exists in two versions, one in Bulgarian, and one in German.

The Bulgarian version is hand written and in bad shape, sometimes illegible, sometimes incomplete. The German version was printed on a typewriter in Latin letters, is clearly readable and organized alphabetically by the surnames of those polled. The two versions were in the hands of Macedonian researchers, Jamilla Kolonomos, a Jewess born in Monastir, and Vera Maskovsky Angelli from Skopje. They brought the census to public attention and published it in a book that includes the census of all towns in Macedonia.

The census also includes family members who lived with other family members, such as stepsons, sons-in-law, etc. Some names are in a different part of the list since names were sometimes spelled differently, such as Alba, also spelled as Alva, or Calderon which was also spelled with a K – Kalderon. The following list of the Monastir Jews which appears on pages 1169-1271 in the second volume of their book.

This census counted 788 families, comprising 761 households and 106 surnames. The total number of people was 3,276, of them 1,639 men and 1,637 women who lived on 75 different streets. The ages ranged from newborns to 94 years old, and they worked in various fields of employment. All of those polled held Yugoslavian citizenship.

SURNAMES OF THE JEWS OF Monastir (Bitola)

1. Aladjem
2. Alba, Alva, Aiwa
3. Albalach, Albalak, Albalat, Albolak
4. Albaranes
5. Albenda
6. Albida
7. Albiracha
8. Albocher, Albohar, Alboher, Albochar, Albucher, Albohar, Albuhor
9. Albrase, Alborasch
10. Alimendra
11. Alishandra
12. Alkob
13. Alkues
14. Alkuser
15. Almuslino
16. Anaf
17. Aruesti, Aruesti, Arvesti
18. Aruti

19. Arwa
20. Asael
21. Baruch
22. Beakar, Bejakar
23. Bechar, Bekar
24. Benjakar
25. Bensalem
26. Beracha
27. Calderon, Kalderon
28. Demajo, Majo
29. Ergas, Ergass
30. Eschkenasi
31. Faradschi, Faraggi, Farasch, , Farat, FaraziFaraschi,
32. Faraid
33. Florentin
34. Franko
35. Gamlid
36. Geron
37. Haim
38. Hasan, Hassan, Hassen
39. Hason, Hasson, Hisson
40. Hassid
41. Homen

42. Honen
43. Ischach, Ischak
44. Israel
45. Kamchi, Kamhi
46. Kamelchi
47. Kasorla, Kassorla
48. Katan, Kattan
49. Katon
50. Kellner
51. Koen
52. Kolonomos
53. Konfino
54. Kreskis
55. Leoy
56. Levy, Levi, Lewy, Livi, Liwi
57. Mair
58. Manu
59. Masai
60. Mason
61. Massot
62. Medonsa

63. Meschlam, Meshulan, Mischulam
64. Metuiam
65. Mevorah
66. Mois

67. Mossa
68. Nachmias
69. Navon, Nawon
70. Nechama
71. Negri
72. Nisam
73. Nisan
74. Nissau
75. Nissim
76. Nisson
77. Ovada, Ovadia, Ovadiach, Ovadio
78. Pardo
79. Peso, Pesso
80. Pifi
81. Possot
82. Romano
83. Rosilio
84. Rusa
85. Ruso, Russo
86. Sacharia
87. Sachkenasi
88. Sadik
89. Sadikarijo
90. Saporta
91. Sarfat, Sarfati

92. Schabitai

93. Schali
94. Schami
95. Schamo
96. Schoach
97. Semea
98. Sion
99. Skajo
100. Sobik
101. Solomon, Salamon
102. Talbi, Talvi
103. Teso
104. Testa
105. Todilano
106. Varsano

EPILOGUE

In summation, we will recount some of the activities conducted by the Monastirli committees in the home country, Macedonia, and other countries in honor of their hometown brethren who died in the Holocaust.

United States of America, New York

In New York, the congregation “Peace and Brotherhood of Monastir” is active. This society was recently unable to organize a memorial service for the Monastir martyrs. In greater New York, the Sephardic Jewish community of Forest Hills has a yearly memorial service during which the memory of the Holocaust martyrs of the Balkan countries is memorialized.

Chile

In Temuco, it is not customary to organize memorial services. However, in Santiago, a ceremony is held once a year in honor of all the Balkan communities, as part of a general memorial ceremony held by the “Comunidad Israelita Sepharadi”.

Macedonia

In Macedonia, the authorities have constructed a memorial in memory of the martyrs at the entrance to the general cemetery in Skopje, and an additional monument in honor of the partisans that fell fighting the Bulgarians, Germans, and Chetniks. On March 11 2004, a memorial was inaugurated commemorating the martyrs from the Monopol camp.

In Bitola, the city constructed a monument in memory of Esteria Ovadia (Mara), the Yugoslavian national heroine and a native of Bitola. The city erected another monument with six branches, in remembrance of the Jews of Bitola who died in Treblinka and commemorating the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Europe. Additionally, a kindergarten was named for Esteria Ovadia.

The Macedonian authorities and the remnants of Macedonian Jewry who live in Skopje designated March 11 (the day the Jews of Macedonia were rounded up in the Monopol

concentration camp), as a memorial day for the Jews of Macedonia who died in the Holocaust.

On March 11 2003, the Jews of Skopje and many guests inaugurated the new "Beit Ya'acov" synagogue, which was built above the Jewish community center in Skopje. The Beit Yisrael community in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, contributed \$25,000 dollars towards the building of the synagogue. Rabbi Yitzhak Asael, the chief rabbi of Yugoslavia conducted the ceremony.

At the ceremony, the United States ambassador, Michael Einik, and his Israeli born wife were present. Two Torah scrolls were donated, one by the Jews of Bulgaria, and the other by the Jewish community center of Pasadena, California. The Macedonian government issued a special stamp commemorating sixty years since the annihilation of the 7,000 Jews of Macedonia.

The Macedonian government and its Jews set aside March 10 and 11 of 2004 as a memorial to those Jews who died in the Holocaust. The ceremonies were conducted in Stip, Bitola, and Skopje, and included memorial prayers, a visit to the cemetery, dedication of monuments and the laying of wreaths at the various monuments dedicated to the martyrs of those cities. On March 11 2004, in Skopje, the monument at the Monopol concentration camp was dedicated and a reception was held by the mayor. In Bitola, a movie was produced for television which enlightened the public about the ancient Jewish community that existed there before the war; when the Jews arrived in town, the community's history, culture and religion.

Israel

In Israel the Jews of Monastir planted 3013 trees in the Martyrs Forest in memory of those Jews who perished. With the advocacy of Aharon Alboher, Yitzhak Alexanderoni, and Yitzhak Meshullam, the Jerusalem municipality planted a garden on Baron Hirsch Street, in memory of Leon Kamchi, the Zionist leader in Bitola. The municipality of Jerusalem also named one of the streets in the Ramat Beit HaKerem neighborhood after Esteria Ovadia (Mara), a partisan leader who fell in battle and who is considered a national heroine of Yugoslavia.

On a yearly basis, on the eve of the Jewish month of Nisan, the Jews of Monastir gather in their synagogue, "Yagel Ya'acov", at 26 Alfandari St. in Jerusalem and hold a memorial ceremony for the martyrs.

In 2003, to commemorate to mark the 60th year of the deportation of the Monastir Jews to their death in Treblinka, the next generation of The Jews of Macedonia, an NGO (non-profit organization) sent an invitation to all the offspring of the sons of Monastirli Jews to take part in the memorial service in the synagogue. The synagogue was filled

to capacity and all those present, lit memorial candles in six branched candelabras. Authors Jennie Lebel, Nir Baruch, and Tzvi Lacker, spoke at the ceremony. Shlomo Alboher read the memorial words of the martyrs of Monastir, that were written in stone on the wall of the synagogue. These were composed by Yitzhak Alexandroni, who organized and conducted the memorial service at the synagogue for many years.

After the reading of the remembrance tablets, the holy ark was opened and in front of a single Torah scroll that was brought to the synagogue in Jerusalem from Monastir, the ceremony was concluded by Shlomo Alboher, who read from the book of Ezekial, chapter 37; from the vision of the dry bones, which contain the words: "I will put my spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land and you will know that I am the L-rd. I have announced it and it is done by declaration of G-d".

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Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used with some 40 Monastirlis living in Israel.