


Jews and Greeks
Remember Their Past:
The Political Career of
Tzevi Koretz (1933–43)

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The last chief rabbi of the Jewish community of Salonika, Rabbi Tzevi Koretz (1933–43), is engraved in the historical memory of the survivors of Salonikan Jewry and, by extension, in the collective Jewish memory as a foreign traitor who collaborated with the Nazis in order to save himself and his family. Newly available archives and a reassessment of existing material call for a revision of Koretz's role in this last chapter of the history of the Salonikan Jewish community. The background provided by the new material suggests that the way Koretz was portrayed in the Jewish historical memory was a function of the community's need to understand its unexpected and colossal tragedy. It substantiated the postwar Israeli ethos, and it served to allay any guilt that postwar Greece felt over the destruction of the Jewish community. This article seeks to shed light not only on the history of Salonikan Jewry in the modern era but also on our understanding of the tension between the assimilationist and nationalist trends among Diaspora Jewry, in general, and of the countries of the former Ottoman Empire in the first half of the twentieth century, in particular. It also adds a new dimension to the debate on the role of the Jewish

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leadership under Nazi rule. But, first and foremost, it is a case study of the nature of human memory, and how it evolves.

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The Building Blocks of Memory

The picture we have of Salonikan Jewry, as reflected in the available (particularly Hebrew) research material, is based mainly on the accounts of Salonikan Jews who immigrated to Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s.¹ Another corpus of testimonies was provided by survivors who either remained in Greece or immigrated to Israel, the Americas, and France. Very few accounts were written at the time. Of those that were, the most important is the memoir of Yomtov Yacoel, the legal counsel of the community before and during the occupation. Yacoel escaped to Athens after March 1943, where he wrote his memoir just before being caught by the Germans and sent to his death (March 22, 1944).² It is a detailed description of the community's history between April 1941 and the beginning of March 1943, on the eve of the deportations. It was left unfinished because of Yacoel's arrest. In fact, the Germans caught Yacoel as he was sitting and writing this document, and only by mere chance did not notice its significance.

The importance of this document lies in the detailed narration of the leadership's activities until March 1943.³ Daut (David) Levi, who served as general director of the community administration between 1919 and 1935, left us a memorandum he drew up during January–June 1942 on the community, its organization, its leadership, and assets for the period 1870–1940, based on his personal recollections. The memorandum was prepared at the request of Sabi Shealtiel, the community's president at the time, in a letter he sent to Levi on December 23, 1941.⁴ Alberto Nar, who evidently saw the original document, claims that the Nazis had demanded this information of Shealtiel. This contention is not entirely implausible, since they were constantly demanding information about the community—most of which they never used. In this case the report could have been of help to the Germans. The fact that Shealtiel, in his letter, specifically asked for information on the Jewish neighborhoods of Baron Hirsch, Kalamaria, Karaagatch, and 151 supports this conclusion.⁵

The Germans had a very good idea of the main nuclei of Jewish population in the city, and these neighborhoods were eventually turned into the Salonika Ghetto.⁶ Letters sent by a Salonikan Jew named "Neama" (Nehamah) to her sons in Athens between March 5 and April 10, 1943, reveal the anguish and fear that took hold of Salon-

ikan Jewry as well as the moral degradation that ensued upon their internment in the ghetto. No comment was made in these letters on the community leadership. Either this woman was so distressed by the immediate danger she felt for her life and by the knowledge that she would never see her sons again that nothing else mattered to her, or she felt unsafe to specify names and office holders. A third possibility exists, that at that time Koretz was not perceived yet as a collaborator.⁷ Two statements—one made on July 17, 1943, the other on August 7, 1943—by Salonikan Jews of Turkish citizenship whom the Turkish Consul in Salonika managed to save from deportation give their own account on the internment of the Jews in the ghettos, the confiscation of their property, and their deportation. These statements contain no reference whatsoever to the conduct of the Jewish leadership. A study of these documents reveals the American filtering process that the testimonies underwent. The American consul general in Istanbul who interviewed the first informant, and the assistant military attaché in that city who interviewed the second informant were primarily interested in the military intelligence they could glean from them.⁸ Three short documents—an anonymous letter from Athens dated August 15, 1943;⁹ a report written on September 15, 1943, by Feidon Kondopoulos, a Greek student and soldier in the Greek army who managed to escape from Greece to Cairo;¹⁰ and an anonymous testimony given on January 8, 1944¹¹—were published by Barukh Uziel.¹² On October 18, 1943, Saby Mallah, a former clerk at the Portuguese consulate in Salonika who saw the whole drama, left Salonika with other foreign nationals, and on December of that year he briefed two representatives of the Jewish agency in Lisbon.¹³

Very few accounts were written in the years 1945–55.¹⁴ The most important account, written not long after the war, is that of Michael Molho, a Salonikan educator and rabbinical scholar who escaped from the city at the beginning of the occupation with the help of Greek friends and who subsequently settled in Buenos Aires. His account was later elaborated by a fellow refugee, Joseph Nehama.¹⁵ Molho was able to make use of survivors' testimonies, as recorded shortly after their return from the camps, and of a variety of original documents, among them Yacoel's memorandum. Another detailed history of the fate of Greek Jewry, written decades after the war, is that of Michael Matsas, also a survivor who, after the war, settled in the United States.¹⁶ Although Molho and Nehama's book was a commemorative work (as its name, *In Memoriam*, implies), Matsas's book aspired to be a scholarly work on the Holocaust. The range of sources used by Matsas notwithstanding, the way he treats and interprets the material places it in the

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category of a survivor's testimony.¹⁷ Other sources on Salonikan Jewry include oral testimonies and written accounts generated 30, 40, or even 50 years after the war. The bulk of these accounts were written in the 1960s.¹⁸ The 1950s' and 1960s' accounts, Yacoel's memoir, and Molho and Nehama's book were the basis for the "official" collective memory created by the Jewish-Greek community in Israel—that is, the two volumes *Zikhron Saloniki* and *Saloniki: Ir va-em bi-Ysrael*.

In addition to Kondopoulos's report,¹⁹ accounts by non-Jews on the fate of Greek Jewry include that by Demetrios Pappas, given in Egypt and dated October 27, 1943, less than three months after the last transport of Salonikan Jews left the local railway station.²⁰ Pappas was a Greek diplomat who served as consul-general of Greece in Jerusalem in 1940; in 1942 he was appointed ambassador to Cairo, where he served until at least 1945. According to Photini Constantopoulou and Thanos Veremis, the Greek-Jewish community of Jerusalem was opposed to this latter posting "wishing him to stay in Jerusalem in token of their appreciation of his work there."²¹ Since he spent the years 1940–43 in the Middle East, his testimony can hardly be considered "an eye-witness account."

Another important account is that of the Greek author Sotiris Patatzis, a member of the communist-oriented Greek National Liberation Front (EAM),²² who continued to fight against the conservatives during the Greek civil war that followed the liberation from the Nazi yoke (1944–49). His book was first published in Athens in 1946, most probably in an underground printing house.²³ Only one collection of documents written in "real time" in the interwar period has been published so far. This collection is a selection of documents from the Archives of the Greek Foreign Ministry. The documentary pertaining to the crucial months of March–August 1943 in this book is very limited.²⁴ Two collections of documents on the liquidation of Salonikan Jewry have been published: one of them is a collection of documents from German sources, dealing with Greek Jewry in general;²⁵ the other is a collection of documents from the archives of the Italian consulate in Salonika. The latter contains important documents that shed new light on Koretz's activities. Like the Greek Foreign Ministry papers, these documents have not yet found their rightful place in the scholarly discourse on Koretz and on the period.²⁶

The role attributed to Koretz, the community's last rabbi, in the final hours of the community's existence, is largely colored by the perceptions of those who recorded this tragic chapter of Salonikan Jewish history. These perceptions may be considered the building blocks of memory. With this in mind, we may now proceed to investigate the way

this Greek tragedy found expression in the historical memory of the community.

After the departure of Rabbi Bentzion Uziel to Palestine in 1923, the Jewish community of Salonika lacked a chief rabbi. During the early 1930s, the leadership of Salonikan Jewry decided that it would be in the community's interest to seek a candidate for the post outside of Greece. The sources cited above provide no good reason for this decision. Reading between the lines, however, one may surmise that the leadership felt that the need for such a functionary became urgent and that the local cadre of candidates was unsuitable for the post. They needed new blood, a modern rabbi who would meet the challenges of the new times.

After a thorough search, Koretz, a young graduate of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary and a Ph.D. laureate of the University of Vienna in Philosophy and Semitic Languages, was selected. Upon assuming office in 1933, Koretz immediately initiated a series of measures designed to improve the community's political status. These measures were remarkably successful. Upon the return of King George II from exile, Koretz forged close ties with the Greek royal family. Later, he became a political ally of the dictator Ioannis Metaxas, who seized power in 1936. The new rabbi soon became a well-known public figure. He also introduced a series of administrative reforms into the community's financial and everyday affairs, and he initiated a housing project for the poor. Religious and legal issues remained within the competence of the local rabbis.

Despite these achievements, Koretz did not always see eye to eye with his community. As early as 1934, defamatory articles began appearing in the Jewish press, castigating him for his arrogance, his ostentatious way of life, and his ignorance on Jewish matters. The invasion of the Italian Army in 1940 as well as the acute famine that prevailed in the winter of 1941–42 silenced these voices, because survival became the chief concern of all inhabitants of the city, including Koretz's opponents. When Hitler realized that the Italians were unable to crush the Greek army, he sent his forces into Greece in April 1941. Salonika, unlike other parts of Greece, which were divided between Italy and Bulgaria, remained under the direct control of Nazi Germany. Shortly after the German occupation of the city (April 9, 1941), Koretz, who was in Athens at the time on official business, was arrested (May 17, 1941) and sent to Vienna.²⁷ About nine months later, he returned to Salonika, where he resumed office with the approval of the Germans, together with Sabi Shealtiel, the Nazi-appointed community president.

Until July 1942, the race laws against the Jews were not implemented, and despite hunger, disease, arrests, and property confiscations, people had no idea of what lay in store for them. Then suddenly, on Saturday, July 11, 1942, all Jewish men aged 18–45 in Salonika were ordered to report to Liberty Square to register for forced labor. For five hours, 9,000 Jewish men were kept waiting in the blazing sun and subjected to all manner of abuse and humiliation. Over the next few months, thousands of Jewish males were sent to forced labor under very harsh conditions, in the service of a German firm, mainly as road builders and hewers. According to Yacoel, it was his initiative that brought about the agreement with the German authorities to release the forced laborers in exchange for 3.5 billion drachmas. Eventually the community paid 2 billion drachmas, and in lieu of the rest it renounced any rights to the Jewish cemetery, long coveted by the Salonika municipality. On December 6, 1942, the ancient Jewish cemetery was hastily destroyed by the municipality, and the stones were sold by Greek contractors. By that time, both the Jewish leadership and the Gestapo had decided to get rid of Shealtiel. The Community Council felt that, because of his shallow character, he was a German stooge, whereas the Germans felt he lacked the authority to “reel in the catch.”²⁸ Although the community nominated other candidates, the Germans were set on Koretz. On December 11, 1942, therefore, Koretz replaced Shealtiel as president of the community, thereby holding the reins of both lay and religious power.

In mid-January 1943, Adolf Eichmann’s deputy, Rolf Günther, arrived in Athens to lay the groundwork for the implementation of the “Final Solution” in Greece.²⁹ At the end of that month, following the inevitable cooperation between the German Foreign Office and the Reich’s Security Main Office, Dieter Wisliceny, the “specialist” for the Final Solution in Slovakia, was assigned to Salonika, together with Alois Brunner, who was to take care of the technical side of the operation.³⁰ During the five weeks between Wisliceny’s arrival in Salonika (February 6, 1943) and the start of the deportations (March 15, 1943), the Jews were evicted from their homes, stripped of all their worldly assets and civil rights, and incarcerated in the poor Jewish neighborhoods that were turned into ghettos: Baron Hirsch, Hagia Paraskevi, 151, and Regie Vardar. While attempting to comply with the Nazis’ numerous and incessant demands, Koretz kept negotiating various financial arrangements with the Germans in order to save the community from deportation.³¹ On April 11, 1943,³² through the mediation of Genadios, the metropolitan of Salonika, Koretz met with the Greek prime minister, Ioannis D. Rhallis. His pleas for the prime minister’s intervention to

call off the deportations that had already begun, however, fell on deaf ears. Koretz’s policy of conciliation toward the German authorities did not save the community. This last intercession with the Greek authorities led to Koretz’s arrest and dismissal as president of the community. He was replaced by Jacques Albala, a Greek Jew who had spent several years in Vienna, spoke German, and had served until then as head of the Jewish police (a position then filled by Vitali Hasson). Both Albala and Hasson played a sordid role in the community’s last days, not only serving the Germans but also initiating crimes of their own.³³ Between March 15 and August 11, 1943, the entire Jewish community was deported to Auschwitz.³⁴ On August 2, 1943, Koretz and his family, 74 other “prominent” Salonikan Jews (members of the Community Council or those who had served the Germans in various ways) and their families, as well as 367 Spanish nationals were deported to Bergen-Belsen.³⁵ Although Koretz and his family survived the war, he died of typhus several weeks after the liberation.³⁶

It was only upon their return to Salonika that Koretz’s family realized that their father had been branded a traitor and Nazi collaborator.³⁷ Scored as arrogant and power-hungry, he was charged with hiding the bitter truth about the fate that awaited the Jews in order to further his own interests. He was blamed for too readily acquiescing to the Germans’ demand that he provide a detailed list of the Jewish population in the city, thereby enabling them to pursue their plans more efficiently. He was accused of deliberately betraying the community out of selfish motives and bringing about the loss of many lives that might otherwise have been spared.³⁸ These charges, taken together, have created the image that is etched on the Jewish historical memory.

Conventional Sources Reevaluated

As of this writing, no comprehensive study of Salonikan Jewry in the interwar period has been written.³⁹ All we have is a corpus of raw material that has been preserved for two reasons: its availability, and its appeal. At first, this material comprised memoirs and testimonies of Salonikans who immigrated to Palestine in the interwar period, many of them not necessarily for Zionist reasons, despite their assertions to the contrary. The more literate among them, who belonged to the hard core of Salonikan Zionists, were able to report on the establishment and structure of the various Zionist organizations and were themselves living testimony to the success of the Zionist movement in the city.⁴⁰ This material also included correspondence and documents

that were preserved by Salonikan Jews who immigrated to Israel as well as correspondence that was preserved in the Central Zionist Archives. Yet another historical source that, albeit erratically and sporadically, found its way into Palestine was Judeo-Spanish periodicals printed in Salonika. These collections of periodicals were left by Salonikan Jews who settled in Palestine and subscribed to these journals, or, in a few cases, were brought over by immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s. The journals were mainly Zionist, sometimes Socialist Zionist, in content, and both subscribers and compilers entertained a Zionist ideology that was reinforced during their years in Palestine and in the new State of Israel. As we shall see below, a new reading of these sources produces a much less monolithic picture of Salonika's past. Rather, a rich portrait emerges of a colorful and variegated Salonika, full of contradiction, passion, and lust for power and money—a portrait that could not have been painted in the past.⁴¹ To the evaluation of sources generated in the interwar period by Salonikans and emigrants should be added an evaluation of the survivors' testimonies given in Israel.

Even the few Holocaust survivors who arrived after the war, who were probably not even Zionists before the war, recognized that the bitter fate their families had suffered might have been prevented if a country of their own had existed. It was only after the war that many of them became Zionists. Therefore, their accounts cannot be regarded as an accurate testimony of what took place in Salonika before the war. As will be seen, they provided a picture of the past filtered through 40 years of hindsight—the time that elapsed between the events they described and the time they gave their testimonies.⁴²

Until the early 1960s, Zionist ideology implied *shelilat ha-golah*—negation of the Diaspora and all that it entailed. Anyone or anything that admitted the possibility of Jewish existence in Diaspora, or the possibility of an alternative ideology that might have saved lives, was suppressed or disparaged. During the late 1940s and the 1950s, the Holocaust, especially the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, played an important part in the emergence of the nation-state, whereas the role of non-Zionist movements, such as the Bund, was glossed over.⁴³ The personal experiences of the survivors, most of whom were neither partisans nor fighters, were considered a shameful secret not to be brought up in society or even within the family circle.⁴⁴ Their tragedy was compounded by shame, and even guilt, at having survived while so many had succumbed to such a horrible fate. In addition to the survivors, the nascent state needed tools to deal with the enormity of the tragedy. Until the Eichmann trial in 1961, the public dealt with the trauma by stifling any expression of the survivors' experiences and by inculcating examples of

Jewish heroism in the younger generation as role models for the future—a sure recipe, it was felt, for a future in which Jews would never again go like lambs to the slaughter.⁴⁵

The only way the survivors themselves were able to deal with the trauma, the guilt, and the shame was by finding a scapegoat. To some extent, the incidents that occurred on the Israeli street in the late 1940s and 1950s—people being accused of being capos and collaborators and taken to the nearest police station, the Kastner affair (1952–53),⁴⁶ and the section on collaborators in the Nazis and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law (1950)—represented not only a wish to bring the offenders to justice but also the survivors' frustration at their inability to take revenge on the Germans, and their need for absolution.⁴⁷ The survivors resolved this frustration by choosing a scapegoat. In the Salonikan case, it took the form of Koretz and his immediate family. Scapegoating enables a person or group to transfer feelings of guilt, aggression, responsibility, and suffering from oneself or from some inaccessible person or group onto another person or group or to an accessible person or group, and thus to satisfy a subconscious need to resolve or avoid such feelings. The need to displace responsibility from oneself or from some inaccessible person or group is not a conscious need, and scapegoating usually involves some degree of self-delusion.⁴⁸ The scapegoat himself must be accessible, different from the ostracizing group, weak, and hold unpopular views. Koretz was all of these.

Since the Germans, as a nation, were amorphous, impersonal, and inaccessible, it was only natural for the survivors to point an accusing finger at Koretz, whose family had survived the war and was a living reminder of their loss. Koretz was an outsider, a stranger who did not belong, an Ashkenazi in a Sephardic community that had once been an illustrious center of Jewish culture and learning but had now fallen into decay. Moreover, Koretz was dead and had been far from popular.

All of these motives led first of all to the automatic adoption, devoid of any historical criticism, of Yomtov Yacoel's memoir.⁴⁹ Yacoel was well aware that he was writing for posterity. First and foremost he wanted to make sure that his good name would not be tarnished, which was one reason why he refrained from taking upon himself the presidency of the community when the Nazis offered it to him.⁵⁰ He dwelled at length on initiatives he was involved in, taking most of the credit. By no means did he accuse Koretz of collaboration with the Nazis, but he certainly criticized him sharply for not having understood the situation, wasting time on unimportant things while neglecting grave issues, and not taking the initiative to embark on certain avenues that might have circumvented the Nazi plans. He blamed Koretz for

not recruiting Greek public opinion in Salonika in favor of the community⁵¹ and for the delay in sending emissaries to Athens, first to raise money for the laborers' ransom and later to persuade Greek premier Constantine Logothetopoulos to intervene with the Nazi authorities. Yacoel was also furious that Koretz refused to authorize him to present a formal appeal to Max Merten, the German Salonika-Aegean military commander against the measures taken by the Germans since February 6, or even to appeal orally to him.

With hindsight, we can look at Koretz's methods of operation in a different light. Koretz might not have known that the Germans had already decided to get rid of the Jewish laborers, since the coming winter would have stopped the work.⁵² As soon as the Germans decided on the immediate implementation of the Final Solution, they tried to extract as much money as possible from the community, laying their hands in this manner on cash belonging to foreign citizens as well. Today we know that the expediency with which the community paid the ransom for the laborers only brought it closer to its demise. Koretz, who had frantically tried to fulfill all of the Germans orders, was in no hurry at all to fulfill this one. The question that arises is "Why?" If Koretz understood that the laborers would be discharged anyway, the answer is obvious, but even if he was not aware of it, his tactics are clear. Since he was playing against time, the ransom money demanded for the laborers was a card he would not have used carelessly. In fact, he did not have many cards, and this one was very good. Yacoel's criticism in the case of recruiting Salonikan public opinion and the approach to Logothetopoulos takes another dimension when considering that both tactics were actually accomplished—the latter in spite of Koretz's doubts as to Logothetopoulos's real feelings toward the community. As for the appeal to the Germans, one may only assume that Koretz understood the ramifications, whereas Yacoel did not. An unemotional reading of Yacoel's memoir reveals an intelligent politician who found himself in dire straits; he dared not be a leader himself, lest he endanger his good name and perhaps also his life, but he also felt that he could do better than those who led. Thus, he offered advice. When that was rejected or ignored, he was indeed angry.⁵³ In the midst of the tragedy, he had already been aware that future generations would scrutinize the leadership's actions, including his, and thus hurried to write his version of events.

An almost unknown testimony, given by Raphael Mosheh Kamhi, the famous hero of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, belongs to the genre of accounts that were written with the purpose of building a collective memory. Although written in Israel about

three years after the war, the witness was no ordinary Salonikan survivor. His memoirs of the Greek tragedy, and his bitter assessment of Koretz's role in it, were different in that they were not motivated solely by rage, despair, or shame. A legendary figure among the Bulgarian Macedonians, a hero of the Ilinden revolt (1903), and a defender of the Macedonian cause for 40 years, Kamhi was rescued from the Salonikan ghetto by his Bulgarian friends and transferred safely to Sofia. In communist Bulgaria he became a national hero. Although he made aliyah with the rest of Bulgarian Jewry, he always insisted that he was not a Zionist but a Macedonian freedom fighter. Bearing in mind that Bulgaria identified with the communist side in the civil war that erupted in Greece after World War II, and given that Koretz was identified with the conservative regime that prevailed in Greece before the war and was the arch foe of the communists throughout the bloody years of 1941–49, Kamhi was no impartial witness. His testimony, besides being peppered with historical inaccuracies, is also extremely anti-Greek. And yet, the account he bequeathed the role of the chief rabbi (whom he called "the head of the Jewish Gestapo") in the Salonikan tragedy certainly reflects the prevailing sentiment of many survivors more "ordinary" than himself.⁵⁴

The most acrimonious feelings toward Koretz were expressed by people who wrote during the decade following liberation, who believed they were writing history or, rather, building the collective memory—that is, Molho,⁵⁵ Y. S. Emmanuel (who was assigned by the editorial board of *Zikhron Saloniki* to write "a history of the community"), and D. A. Recanati.⁵⁶ Among the testimonies taken by Yad Vashem during the 1960s, I found only two that mentioned Koretz at all: one from Paris, describing his efforts to save the community through negotiations with the Germans;⁵⁷ the other from Tel Aviv, mentioning tacitly his role as liaison between the community and the Germans.⁵⁸ The picture presented by the Salonikan survivors who made aliyah and whose testimonies were taken in 1984–85 is more complex. Among the 44 Salonikan witnesses, only 15 referred to Koretz's role in their tragedy. One witness, Jacque Stroumsa, wrote an autobiography in 1967 of which five pages were devoted to Koretz's role in the extermination of Salonikan Jewry.⁵⁹ Over two decades years later, when S. Raphael recorded Stroumsa's testimony,⁶⁰ the latter did not even mention Koretz's name. The testimonies of 1984–85 lack the derogatory expressions that characterized the testimonies of the early postwar years. Most of them blamed Koretz for making the wrong decisions, or for saying the wrong things at the wrong time. One of them, Mosheh Aelion, even stated that, despite the passage of so many years,

he could not forget the apologia for Koretz he had read (probably Nathan Eck's articles).⁶¹ Yet he barely remembered Koretz's ignominious speech at the Monastirli Synagogue (March 17, 1943), which won him notoriety when he admitted there was nothing he could do to stop the deportation and advised his flock to do the best they could to prepare themselves for the journey.⁶² Obviously, after so many years, the importance of Koretz's conciliatory words dwindled in the overall picture of the great tragedy. Incidentally, Aelion was the only witness to admit that his memory might be affected by the passage of time. But he was not the only survivor to feel that, 40 years after the liberation, Koretz's role in the tragedy of Salonikan Jewry should not be taken for granted.⁶³

Most of those who referred to Koretz in their testimony came from affluent Salonikan neighborhoods and were more literate than the other survivors. This was due to the fact that their families were the only ones to have had some access to Jewish public life in the city. Since many of them were in their late teens or early twenties during the tragic spring of 1943, they remember the gossip around the family table, most of which was not sympathetic to the rabbi even before the war, as we shall see below. Noteworthy in this group of witnesses is Yaakov Handali, the son of a wealthy building-materials merchant, who as a high school boy was ordered by Koretz to take part in the preparation of the community census ordered by the Nazis. His case is exceptional in the virulent testimony regarding Koretz that he provided in Raphael's book. He is also exceptional in the course he took down "memory lane": in 1993, Handali published his heartbreaking memoirs of the horrors he underwent during the war, and he further emphasized and developed Koretz's role as a collaborator and traitor.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, all the survivors whose memoirs Raphael documented—outside this group of 15 witnesses—accepted the deportation and everything that ensued as some enormous catastrophe that had neither rhyme nor reason. In 1988, when Raphael's book was published, the need for a scapegoat was not as pressing as it had been in the first 15 years after the war. Twenty-seven years after the Eichmann trial, Israeli society was ready to abandon the supremacy of the ethos of the "new Jew," and survivors had learned that their past was nothing to be ashamed of.

Any evaluation of the Salonikan tragedy must take into account the changes that took place in Israeli society following the Yom Kippur War in 1973. At that time, the legitimacy of personal memories of the Holocaust was already taken for granted. Personal experiences of the Holocaust were no longer a cause for shame. Underlying the moral

and existential shock experienced by Israeli society as a result of that war was the recognition that the leadership was human and liable to make the same mistakes as simple mortals. The war evoked for each survivor the existential trauma of his or her youth. This time, however, the revolving sword was no longer a memory of the past but something that was threatening the future, the next generation, the children. Each of them experienced anew the distressing sensation that leadership was not infallible. This time around, only the bravery and self-sacrifice of individuals won the day. Faced with the Israeli government's incompetence, which had almost cost the state's existence, Koretz was no longer perceived as being quite so demonic. For many of the survivors, though not for all, he became just another fallible human being who deserved, at best, a brief, albeit bitter, condemnation.⁶⁵

Since, however, the Salonikan tragedy failed to awaken the same public sentiment as did other Holocaust tragedies, none of this change of heart affected the general picture. The few Israelis who remembered Koretz's name associated it with betrayal. It is worth noting that the two studies written by Salonikan Jews outside of Israel decades after the liberation—by Matsas in the United States and by Nar in Salonika⁶⁶—tend to view Koretz's role in a negative light. While Israeli society went through some very painful soul searching from the 1960s through the 1990s and experienced hardships that enabled many of its members to view the past through a different lense, these two authors were stuck (albeit not to the same degree) in the same emotional ambience as the survivors after the liberation. Nar, who still lives in Salonika, writes that "future historians will have to decide what happened" (in terms of Koretz's role in the story). Although Nar adduced some corrective evidence regarding Koretz's activities in Salonika, he could not refrain from interpreting Daut Levi's study in a way that presented Koretz in a negative light.⁶⁷ The conflict between the modern scholar and the 1980s Salonikan Jew is obvious. Living as he did among Greeks in Greece, Nar could hardly challenge the way these events were molded in the Greek collective memory—namely, that the Jewish leaders were to blame for the Jews' tragedy.⁶⁸ Neither he nor Matsas had endured the "purgatory" that the Israeli collective memory had suffered, and for both of them the need for a scapegoat still played an important role even 40 to 50 years after the liberation.⁶⁹

Last but not least, we must consider the role played by the Greek historical memory in shaping our protagonist's portrait. The account of events written by Feidon Kondopoulos, the testimony of Demetrios Pappas, and the account by Sotiris Patatzis reflect this, which is as resistant to change as the Israeli historical memory, and which prevails to

this very day.⁷⁰ Kondopoulos describes the chain of events, beginning with the arrival of a special SS unit, which was rumored to have been responsible for the persecution of the Jews in other parts of occupied Europe, and goes on to describe the public torture inflicted on the male population in Liberty Square (July 11, 1943).⁷¹ He describes how “The Jewish Community Council, headed by Mr. Albert [Vitali] Hasson, and comprising many personalities, Chief Rabbi Koretz included, handed over the complete list of Jewish inhabitants to the Rosenberg Squad. This was Salonikan Jewry’s greatest mistake.”⁷² In his description of the persecution of the Jews and the German’s cruelty, he emphasizes the fact that the Jewish leadership and the Jewish police helped the Germans perpetrate their crimes—and committed some of their own, too. “The main criminals were Albala, Hasson, Edgar Kunio, Marcel Neftel, and last but not least Chief Rabbi Tzevi Koretz, who should be numbered among the traitors, because of his cowardice.” Another interesting aspect of Kondopoulos’s account is his focus on the exemplary behavior of the Greek people, who helped the persecuted Jews while endangering their own lives. In particular, he emphasizes the role of the EAM in assisting Jews by helping them hide and escape or by absorbing them into its units. Kondopoulos’s greatest contribution to the history of the Holocaust is his assertion in September 1943 that “if the Germans are to be believed, they [the Jews] were all exterminated shortly after crossing the Greek border. The rumor says that the Germans placed the Jews in special ‘showers’ after filling them with poisonous gas.”⁷³

According to Pappas, Hasson, the notorious head of the Jewish Police in Salonika, together with Koretz, handed over the community records to the Germans. However, he also testified that “about 15,000 people, most of them women and children, are hiding in Salonika.” According to him, “there is no house in Salonika without Jews. The Christians behave in an exemplary manner. They are prepared to risk their lives in order to save whomever they can. The Jews change their names and pass themselves off as relatives of the Greeks.”⁷⁴

Patatzis’s account is not only more elaborate but also more significant. Since it was published only in Greek, it merits extensive citation as well as a detailed discussion. Patatzis attempted to explain the story of the Jews’ tragedy, as he called it, in sociological terms. He rejected the idea that it was Christian hatred of the Jews for deicide that had caused the Jews’ tragic fate. According to him, the Holocaust was not the result of the Church’s hatred of the Jews but rather of the fact that the Jews were interested only in their own survival as a religious community, and never took an interest in the fate of their host country. It

was their self-imposed segregation, he maintained, that led them to their tragic end.⁷⁵ He developed this theme even further:

They have a tremendous respect for the law of the State because it is important for their life and prosperity. The Jews’ law-abiding nature makes them incapable of insurrection, sacrifice, or struggle. Any action against the law removes the Jews from their normal way of life. Hence the so-called “cowardice of the Jews.” When the law ceases to have any meaning, and resistance to it becomes vital to the Jews, they are plunged into a state of anarchy, which is the main cause of their downfall.⁷⁶

Since the Jews were conditioned to obey the law, and the law was dictated to them by their rabbis, the responsibility for their destruction lay with their rabbis—more specifically, with Koretz:

In order to save himself, Chief Rabbi Tzevi Koretz ingratiated himself with the Germans, obeyed them blindly, and even collaborated openly with them. In some cases, he betrayed his own flock. . . .

Most of the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the Chief Rabbi. He comes under suspicion for many reasons. According to many Jews, he was a German agent.⁷⁷

Patatzis goes on to explain the link between the Jews’ law-abiding nature and their leaders’ demands for “blind obedience so as not to anger the Germans”:

Of course, if the Germans were to get angry, they would direct their anger first and foremost at the leaders. Thus, the leaders’ safety was contingent on the obedience of the masses, and that was the only thing they cared about in those difficult times.⁷⁸

Koretz was blamed not only for his actions but also for his failure to warn his flock of the impending tragedy:

The responsibility lies with the leadership because, in communities based on theocratic models, the masses are not used to taking the initiative. They were waiting for a signal from the community authority, which exercised a kind of “spiritual dictatorship” over them. None of the leaders, however, were brave enough to advise their flock to resist or even to hide or escape. It could have been so easy to save 50,000 souls.

The persecution did not begin immediately, and local conditions were very favorable [to the Jews]. As the Jews themselves have said, all Greeks were prepared to hide Jews. Before the war, there were 77,000 Jews in Greece who had the means to launch an uprising and to invest all they had in this struggle, which was not a simple life-and-death struggle but a

life-and-death struggle for the survival of the Jewish race. But no one lifted a finger. Even those who were clever or brave enough to escape to the mountains avoided fighting. Although many volunteered for the auxiliary services, most were on the run until the end. This was due not to cowardice but rather to the fact that for generations they had grown accustomed to thinking only of themselves, their work, their children, and their homes, and to relying on the leadership for all other decisions. Therefore, when this new tragedy arose, they were incapable of dealing with it on their own. It follows that, once the leadership became paralyzed by fear, all their subjects became psychologically and objectively ready for extermination. Indeed, barring a few exceptions, all the Jews retreated into their shells and were left to the mercy of the Germans, who eventually exterminated them without any resistance. . . .⁷⁹

Although it was still possible to save many people, the Chief Rabbi made sure that no one would escape: "We advise our people," he said on March 5 [1943],⁸⁰ "to show discernment and ignore rumors, because these rumors are unfounded." The unfortunate people believed him.⁸¹

As a member of the left-oriented resistance writing in the middle of the civil war between the leftists and conservatives (who were identified by the left with the Greece that had collaborated with Germany), Patatzis explains why all the leaders who had collaborated with Germany dared return to Greece after its liberation. It was not because they had a clean conscience but because

[t]hey knew that Greece was at that time a haven for traitors. True, the few survivors wanted to lynch them, but meanwhile, the Greek State, motivated by its revolting collaborators' psychology, prosecuted a few token collaborators. Thus, the tragedy of 50,000 people ended without catharsis.⁸²

How are we to understand these external accounts? Before we address this question, it should be borne in mind that Greek society reacted to the deportations at two levels: the unofficial, and the official. At the unofficial level, the average Greek was simply trying to survive. Active resistance to the deportations was fraught with danger, while the deportations also gave many Greeks an opportunity to become rich or, at least, to improve their financial situation during a period of economic crisis.⁸³ Under such circumstances, refraining from action was a natural choice.⁸⁴ This inertia, however, takes on another significance in light of the large-scale resistance that swept through Greece in the spring and summer of 1943, including mass demonstrations, strikes, and civil disobedience, to protest the various evils of the German occupation. In spite of the declaration issued by the EAM on January 22, 1943, warning of the impending deportations and calling on

Greeks to resist them,⁸⁵ the deportation of the Jews was not on the protesters' agenda at that time.⁸⁶

The official level meant the Greek government in Athens, the provincial administration in Macedonia, and the Greek Orthodox Church. The most important figure in the local administration was the governor-general of Macedonia, Vasilis Simonides. There is no evidence that he initiated any of the steps against the Jews of Salonika, but his signature appears on all Nazi orders. He never protested, and moreover, though a cabinet member, he was accused of never briefing the central government regarding any of the measures taken against the Jews, including the deportations. He was also the main figure in the looting of Jewish property in Salonika, setting up on March 8, 1943, the Service for the Disposal of Jewish wealth. Simonides served the Germans until the last day of the occupation.⁸⁷ The Greek premier, Constantine Logothetopoulos, represented the central administration. In 1948 he published a book entitled "Here is the Truth," in which he claimed that Simonides failed to brief him regarding what was going on in Salonika. However, German documentation shows that Logothetopoulos knew. There was a channel of information between him and Simonides but he did not really mind. His letters of protest sent to Günther Altenburg, the German plenipotentiary to Greece, on March 18 and March 22, 1943, were, as he himself admitted, the outcome of opposition to the German treatment of the Jews, emanating "from all layers of Greek society." Moreover, his information came from Simonides' office, and, what is worse, he knew that the Jews were going to a place of no return.⁸⁸ The other major official expressions of protest against the persecution of Greek Jewry were the petition sent by Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens to Logothetopoulos and to Altenburg (March 23 and 24, 1943),⁸⁹ and the protest by Bishop Methodios against the persecution of the Jews of Corfu.⁹⁰ The only actual resistance to the deportation of the Jews displayed in Greece by official figures seems to be that of the mayor of Zante, Loukas Carrer, and the metropolitan bishop, Chrysostomos, who actively prevented the deportation of the Jews of this island.⁹¹

The wording of Archbishop Damaskinos's petition, signed by an impressive list of Greek intellectuals, academics, and heads of professional associations, deserves some commentary. Whereas the first part focuses on the "Hebrew community's" contribution to Greece and loyalty to the State, and emphasizes the Christian ideal of equality, in order to pressure the Greek government into intervening on behalf of Greek Jewry, the sixth paragraph of this petition declares:

We are not, of course, unaware of the profound opposition between the New Germany and the Israelite community. Nor is it our intention to become the defenders or even the judges of international Jewry or of any of its activities in the context of the world's major political and economic problems. The only thing that interests us and is of vital concern to us today is the fate of 60,000 of our fellow citizens of the Hebrew faith, whose nobility of sentiment, fraternal disposition, progressive ideas, economic activity, and, most important of all, impeccable patriotism . . . we have experienced throughout our life together.⁹²

This paragraph reflects the archbishop's difficulty in separating between Jews in general and the Jews he knew personally, in particular Koretz. However, official Greece was not prepared to put its money where its mouth was.

Most of Salonika's Greek population never imagined the true extent of the calamity awaiting the deported Jews, though some more astute ones tried to forewarn their friends and neighbors. According to the consul-general of Italy, who reported from Salonika during the deportations, the city's "Greek element" (that is, the Greek Christians) did not display much enthusiasm for the deportation of the Jews, particularly in light of the brutal manner in which it was carried out.⁹³ Yacoel wrote on indifference and hostility existing hand in hand with compassion and assistance.⁹⁴ A few survivors spoke of antisemitism, but only one of those interviewed for Raphael's book recalls that the Greeks were actually happy to see the Jews go.⁹⁵ A testimony taken from an anonymous Jewish witness on January 8, 1944, stated that "The Greek intellectuals were thoroughly outraged by these persecutions. The masses were either indifferent or hostile."⁹⁶ Saby Mallah briefed people from the Jewish Agency in Lisbon (December 1943) and reported that the Christians in Salonika were "sympathetic to the German action of creating the ghetto and even toward the deportations."⁹⁷ Koretz's widow, Gita, testified that she could not remember any manifestations of antisemitism among the Greeks before the deportations. When the survivors returned from the camps, however, the situation had changed. Her assumption was "that they [the Greeks] had learned something from the Germans."⁹⁸ More likely, though, the reason for this hostile attitude was that the Greek locals had to forgo Jewish assets that they had become accustomed to regard as their own.

It is important to recall that most of the city's residents belonged to a generation that had personally experienced displacement and deportation at the hands of a victorious conqueror. It was a human experience that was familiar to them, a typical scenario of human history. Besides, the Jews had been brought to the city by one despised con-

queror and were now being driven out by another. Therefore, Greek society viewed the deportations as a "Jewish problem"—the painful misfortune of others—rather than as a "Greek problem."⁹⁹ Post factum, however, most Greeks, whether on the left or the right of the political spectrum, felt that something evil had taken place, and they felt a moral and emotional need to dissociate themselves from what had happened.

This need is reflected in Kondopulos's as well as in Patatzis's and Pappas's testimonies. Especially interesting and significant are the similarities between the last two accounts. Both of them stress the Greeks' willingness to help the Jews. Pappas's assertions concerning the irreproachable behavior of the Christian population, and his accounts of how thousands of Greek households hid persecuted Jews, should be examined against Molho's evidence, based on data collected after the war, which indicates that only 70 Salonikan Jews were hidden by their Greek neighbors.¹⁰⁰ Although Patatzis was aware that only a few Jews managed to escape the Nazi death machine, this was not, he claimed, for lack of good will on the part of the Greeks. According to him, many more Jews would have been saved had they availed themselves of this good will. Neither of the two authors considers the problem of how hiding places were to be found in the mountains or in the city for 50,000 people, of which at least two-thirds were children, mothers, and the elderly. Both are of the opinion that the Jews themselves, or rather their leaders, were to blame for their misfortunes. Pappas, with his more conservative orientation, stressed the fact that the Christians followed in Jesus' footsteps by sacrificing themselves for the sake of others. The implication is that a hypothetical Christian leadership in such a situation would have chosen self-sacrifice rather than collaboration. Patatzis, the socialist, arrives at the same conclusion but from a different angle. Although he denies that religion played a part in the Jewish tragedy, his sociological explanation, with Marxist trappings, leads him to the same conclusion: The Jews were hated not because they killed Jesus but because of their religion, which led to segregation and indifference to the needs of the host society. This segregation ultimately fostered a blind trust in their leadership while their indifference prevented them from participating in the Greek struggle, even when their survival was at stake. Leaving aside the accuracy of his statement regarding Jewish participation in the Greek resistance¹⁰¹ and other similar statements, this analysis implies that, had the Jews been less resolute in their adherence to their religion, the tragedy could have been averted.

One aspect of Patatzis's account brings to mind the Israeli post-World War II mentality that persisted until at least the Eichmann trial:

"Why did they go like lambs to the slaughter? Why did they not rise up and fight?"¹⁰² were questions posed both by the Israeli Sabra and by Patatzis. The latter's answer is unequivocal: The immediate responsibility lay with the Jewish leadership, and the overall responsibility lay with the modality of Jewish life in the Diaspora as it had evolved over the generations. In both cases, his views were consonant with those of most Israelis and the Israeli leadership in the late 1940s and the 1950s, who sought to breed a new kind of Jew. This new Jew was the native-born Sabra, divorced from his diasporic past with all of its social or cultural limitations, indoctrinated to fight to the death for his first and last home. Patatzis's covert—and possibly subconscious—solution was the assimilation of Jews among their gentile neighbors.

In conclusion, Koretz had to be found guilty in order to enable Israeli society to dissociate itself from the diasporic existence he stood for, to purge itself of the shame of its brothers having gone like lambs to the slaughter, to exorcise its guilt at having been unable to prevent this from happening, and to absolve the survivor's guilt of being alive while others were dead. Moreover, Koretz had to be found guilty in order to vindicate the Greek collective consciousness for not having done enough to prevent the deportations. The subconscious need for absolution still plays an important part in molding collective memory in modern Greece and in the transfer of this memory to present and future generations.¹⁰³

Newly Discovered Sources and the Salonikan Reality of the 1930s and 1940s

A study of the newly discovered archives of the Salonikan community, seized by the Nazis in April 1941 and transferred to Moscow by the Red Army in 1945, along with the sources mentioned above, enables us today to form a more balanced, if not radically different, picture of Salonikan Jewry in the interwar period and during the German occupation, and of Koretz's role within it.

Between Empire and Nation-State: Zionism, Socialism and Assimilationism

From the late nineteenth century until the outbreak of World War II, Greece was an aspiring nation-state that forged its national identity by annexing grecophone (or what were considered statutory grecophone) territories. This "Great Idea" triggered, in the final analysis, two historical events of momentous import for Salonikan Jewry: Salonika's

annexation to Greece in 1912, and the "Great Catastrophe" of 1922–23, during which over a million Greek refugees streamed from Anatolia toward Greece. These were landmark events, because implicit in the transition from empire to nation-state was the assumption that Salonika could no longer retain its Jewish character. The settlement of 100,000–150,000 Greek refugees in a town of some 150,000, of whom more than half were Jews, turned this assumption into a reality.¹⁰⁴

This is the background against which I shall attempt to analyze the sociopolitical composition of the Jewish community itself. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Jewish community of Salonika comprised a tiny percentage of international businessmen and industrialists (most of whom held foreign citizenship), a small middle class (composed of members of the liberal professions and small-time merchants), and, as the vast majority (about 90 percent), petty craftsmen and day laborers who lived from hand to mouth. The moneyed classes of the community were those who traditionally led the community. The war between the Ottoman Empire and Italy over the Dodecanese Islands (1910–12) and the wars between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and the Ottoman Empire over control of the Balkans (1912–13) brought about significant changes in the community's economic profile. Already at the outbreak of the Dodecanese war, the large industrialists and international merchants had begun to dwindle. Upon the entry of the Greek army and the establishment of Greek rule (1912), the remnants of this class, which had aspired to lead the community in the Ottoman past, were caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. On the one hand, leadership of the community implied a struggle for the community's rights. On the other, they realized that such a struggle would lead to an open confrontation with the current government, a struggle they wished to avoid, since the government's cooperation was essential for the continuation of their financial and business activities. If such cooperation failed to ensure them continued economic prosperity, they preferred to realize their assets and emigrate, rather than enter into a convoluted relationship with a government that already considered them an exploitative and hostile element and that was bent on "hellenizing" the city and destroying "Jewish hegemony" there. Indeed, many of the city's affluent members disappeared from the Salonikan landscape, never to return, creating a vacuum that demanded resolution.¹⁰⁵

The Zionists' rise to power was more a response to this leadership vacuum than an expression of the community's ideological beliefs. In 1920, three political blocs had crystallized in Salonika: the Zionists, the Communists, and the Assimilationists. The hard core of the Zionists

and Assimilationists came from the same social echelons: the middle and upper-middle classes.¹⁰⁶ Until the 1928 elections, the Zionist leadership managed to avoid publicizing the fact that, since 1920, all men aged 21 or older were entitled to vote, whether they were tax-payers or not, in order to prevent the masses from voting for the Communist Party. When the Communists won 15 percent of the vote in 1928, the Zionists were dismayed, rather excessively so, given the fact that they themselves won 61 percent of the vote and that many members of the lower classes had not voted, despite being entitled to. Their dismay at the Communists' achievement evidently had more to do with how this vote would be interpreted by the Greek public than anything else.

The Zionist leaders were at the forefront of the struggle for civil rights for Salonikan Jewry: the right of those rendered homeless by the Great Fire of 1917, which totally razed the Jewish neighborhood; continued recognition of Saturday as the official day of rest; the right to exercise their traditional professions; equal representation in the elections to the Greek parliament; and the struggle against antisemitic organizations. The Zionist electoral victory was a response to the disappearance of the traditional plutocracy. The Assimilationists (also known as the Moderado bloc) were perceived as serving their own interests, rather than those of the community at large, and thus could not compete with the Zionists. The Communists, in contrast, served their electorate's social and political interests and fought for civil rights, decent wages, reasonable working hours, and the right to unionize. Although most Salonikan Jews were workers, voting for the Communist Party was out of the question for many of them, since it implied a total rejection of the traditional value system implanted in them since early childhood. Zionism, though offering less in the way of economic well-being or workers' rights, still represented—or so they thought—a partial solution that coincided with the cultural and sociopolitical interests of most Salonikan Jews. The available material shows that most aliyah applicants were poor, semiliterate, daily laborers unaffiliated with any Zionist organization, who wished to immigrate to Palestine because of economic hardship and political oppression and because there was nowhere else to go. This suggests that the “implementers of the dream” were not necessarily Zionists, even if they voted for a Zionist party.

The Assimilationists, for their part, tried to persuade the Jewish public that there was no real antisemitism in Salonika. At the same time, they strove to convince the Greek political power center, as well as Greek public opinion, that the Greek Jews desired nothing more than to merge body and soul with the Hellenic state. Although the

Zionists vigorously opposed this idea, they were unsure as to how far they could go in persuading Salonikan Jewry that they had no future in Greece without antagonizing the Greeks. In spite of their bourgeois origins and proclivities, the Zionist leaders were viewed by Greek public opinion as representatives of the anti-national and anti-Greek Communist cosmopolitan powers. From 1927 to 1931, the Jews of Salonika were the target of nationalist-racist attacks launched by organizations such as the Tria-Epsilon (Ethniki Enosis Elas) in pamphlets and newspapers such as *Makedonia* and *Tachidromos*. These attacks culminated in 1931 in the Campbell riots, perpetrated by a Tria-Epsilon mob and its supporters against the residents of the Jewish working-class neighborhood of “Campbell.”¹⁰⁷

Choosing a Chief Rabbi

The rift between rich and poor—accentuated by the Great Fire, the Great Catastrophe, and the struggles between various political camps, and combined with strong pressures from Greek society—led to the resignation of Rabbi Bentzion Uziel, who returned to Palestine in 1923 to become the first chief rabbi of Tel Aviv. It was clear that the community needed a chief rabbi who was also a prominent personality, one who would know how to speak to kings and premiers. It was equally clear, however, that a prominent figure of moral stature would find it hard to cope with the turbulent waves of Salonikan politics and would be difficult to manipulate. A weak personality could be manipulated to lead the masses into decisions that were in the leadership's interests. These conflicting interests rendered the choice of a chief rabbi almost impossible.

It was only after 10 years of being without a chief rabbi, and following a lengthy search, that Koretz was brought over from Berlin. He was a graduate of the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, had a Ph.D. in oriental studies from the University of Vienna, and was conversant with several languages. In Germany, both he and his wife had been considered observant Jews. Koretz's appointment was approved by all camps, and the Zionists considered him “one of us.”¹⁰⁸ His appointment did not take effect, however, until he gave a written pledge to grow his beard in the oriental style.¹⁰⁹ The main purpose of the appointment was to defuse the potentially explosive relationship between Greeks and Jews. However, the Zionist leadership in Salonika could offer no formula as to how Koretz would enhance his community's standing without prejudicing Zionist interests.¹¹⁰ The Zionists had to walk the tightrope of maintaining a reasonable rela-

tionship with the Greek government and Greek society while fostering a sense of an impending catastrophe that only they could deal with. The Zionists supported Koretz's appointment in the belief that he would consult them on every issue, but they soon realized that he had his own ideas of what he, as leader of a minority in a nation-state, was required to do in order to achieve maximum results with minimum fallout.

Rabbi Koretz Assumes Office

Koretz arrived in Salonika on May 1933. After assuming office on August 20, 1933, he immediately embarked on political activity aimed at forging ties not only with royalist circles, who traditionally supported the Jewish community of Salonika, but even with nationalist circles, which had traditionally been associated with xenophobic ideas.¹¹¹

On the eve of Koretz's appointment, Greece was embroiled in a political crisis. During 1928–32, the Greek prime minister, Eleftherios Venizellos, unable to resolve the country's economic problems, adopted an increasingly centralized and authoritarian policy. Although a self-defined "liberal," his ideology was, in fact, both anti-royalist and anti-communist. After he lost his power base among the refugees, Venizellos had to step down in 1932. This did not deter him from organizing a coup against the newly elected government. Venizellos's rebellion against the Tsaldaris-led royalist government was a source of concern for most of Salonika's Jews. All the political investment by the mainstream political leadership in the royalist regime appeared to evaporate in the face of this new development.¹¹² Venizellist circles in the city spread the rumor that, once the city fell into rebel hands, the community would be taught a lesson.¹¹³ No wonder, then, that the community leaders breathed a sigh of relief when the rebellion failed. Koretz and Leon Recanati, the president of the community, sought an audience with the governor in order to express the community's delight at the victory.¹¹⁴ When King George II returned to Greece after more than 10 years of exile, Koretz and the rest of the communal leadership hastened to congratulate him. Koretz became a close friend of the royal family.¹¹⁵

At the same time, ill winds were blowing from without. The majority of the community was in dire financial straits after being ousted from their traditional occupations by the Anatolian refugees, and, with emigration a virtual impossibility, the pressure on the Zionist leadership was enormous. They had either to obtain more aliyah permits or to solve the domestic problems. In the meantime, Koretz was paid a very generous salary, and he maintained a lavish residence frequented by

guests from Greece and abroad. Among his guests were many world Zionist leaders, intellectuals, Greek clergymen, academicians, and politicians.¹¹⁶ In the hope that Koretz would be their lackey, the Zionist leaders of Salonika ignored the grievances of the poor. Their hopes, however, were soon dashed, as Koretz swiftly mastered Greek, made many friends outside the community, and created his own independent power base.¹¹⁷

Already in 1934, this behavior triggered sharp criticisms against him in a number of articles printed in the moderate newspaper *El Tiempo*. At first, the criticism was directed at the rabbi's salary.¹¹⁸ The newspaper's editor, Yitzhak David Florentin, pandered to the readers' appetite for rumors and scandal by focusing on issues such as Koretz's Ashkenazi origins: "It is common knowledge that these people [Ashkenazim] have a difficult, autocratic, and inflexible character, while we Sephardim are of a sweet, flexible, and good-natured disposition."¹¹⁹ He claimed, not without reason, that the community could not afford Koretz's extravagant lifestyle. The real bone of contention, however, was the fact that Koretz had taken to inspecting the community's accounts and had appointed himself chairman of all public committees. This gave him control over the internal affairs of the community, which, as an organization, owned a lot of real estate capable of generating a comfortable revenue to people situated in the right places. The Zionist leadership, alarmed at this turn of events, was unable to reveal the true nature of its concerns and therefore cloaked them in an ideological guise.¹²⁰

In the course of 1936, Zionist attacks on Koretz's political agenda gained momentum. Avraham Recanati, founder of the Mizrahi movement in Salonika who was already living in Tel Aviv at the time, sent a vehement article to *El Mesajero* accusing Koretz of being an Assimilationist and a coward, and therefore unfit to hold office.¹²¹ Yet reports in *El Mesajero*, submitted by the inner core of the Community Council, have their own tale to tell. The Zionist members of the council demanded Koretz's resignation without offering any explanation, claiming affinity with the proverbial Arab who knew a lot but said little (because he did not speak Turkish; in Turkish, *Arap çok bilir, söylemesini bilmez*). *El Mesajero's* correspondent began wondering whether their silence was due less to inarticulacy than to the fact that they had something to hide. Maybe they, too, had *fuego de basho la fez* (Ladino for a skeleton in their closet; literally, fire under their fezzes).¹²² The Zionist leadership of Salonika left no stone unturned in its quest for incriminating evidence that could be used to dismiss Koretz. Although the Jewish press—to which the literate section of the Jewish population

was exposed—was openly enlisted in this war, some of the steps taken by the leadership itself were carried out in secret.¹²³

Dismissing Koretz proved more difficult than expected. With Ioannis Metaxas's rise to power (1936), Koretz found an ally in his quest to turn the Jews of Salonika into true Greek citizens. Koretz's efforts to build a foundation of mutual trust between Greek Jewry and the government—based on the right of Jews to their own religious and communal lives while remaining loyal to the Greek state, and their right to aspire to a Jewish state of their own in Palestine—were successful, and they led to pro-Jewish and pro-Zionist declarations on the part of Metaxas and other Greek politicians.¹²⁴ This did not, however, dispel the Zionist leadership's concerns. The ideological rift between the rabbi and the community leadership reflected a psychological rift, too, one that was shared by the leadership and the masses. One of the problems facing the Jews of Salonika was the recognition that they were no longer masters of the city. Although logically they knew they had been conquered, emotionally they found it hard to come to terms with their new status. Salonika was neither exile nor Diaspora. Salonika was home, and they were the landlords. Rich or poor, they were proud of their birthright. This attitude, naturally, kindled much resentment on the part of the Greeks.

Koretz, however, was a true descendant of generations of European Jews who knew what it meant to be a minority in a hostile environment, even if the said environment had emancipated them. Having spent most of his formative years in Vienna, Berlin, and Hamburg, Koretz never imagined that the Jews' relationship with the ambient society was contingent on Salonika's remaining a Jewish city. The Zionist leaders of Salonika were imbued with the historical memory of 450 years of supremacy in the city. All Koretz dreamed of was to be tolerated, German style. With a German royal family and a dictator who had received a German military education, this seemed the natural way to proceed. Yet from a Salonikan perspective, he was seen as a coward.

These cultural differences, however, were not the only issue. The real bone of contention was Koretz's investigations into financial operations carried out without his permission. The main issue revolved around property belonging to the various congregations situated in the area that had been burned down in 1917. These congregations received plots of land in other parts of the city in exchange for the original ones, which were expropriated in order to rebuild the destroyed area. Since the traditional *raison d'être* of these congregations no longer existed, there was strong pressure on them to sell the properties and to use the money for communal purposes. This led to mis-

management of valuable communal real estate,¹²⁵ much of which was sold to community leaders for next to nothing.¹²⁶ At the other end of the scale, rumor had it that powerful people who owned a private synagogue in the burned area were asking for lavish compensation from the public coffers.¹²⁷ Most of these people identified themselves with the Zionist cause. The data on these real estate transactions indicate that the battle was not only between different ideologies but also between the traditional elite and the new upstart rabbi, an unpopular stranger who dared to meddle in its affairs. Koretz tried to assert his control over this property in order to replenish the dwindling public coffers. The Zionist leaders, for their part, saw no reason why property that had been accumulated for generations by their ancestors should be disposed of as Koretz saw fit.

The sale of the Italia Yashan property is a case in point. Given to the congregation in exchange for plots confiscated after the Great Fire of 1917, this property became the focus of a scandal that lasted from 1936 to 1940. It was probably no coincidence that the Italia Yashan scandal coincided with Zionist demands to dismiss Koretz and with the publication of Avraham Recanati's vehement article in *El Mesajero*. By the end of 1935, the leaders of the Italia Yashan congregation began building a new synagogue, the money for which was supposed to have come from a donation of half a million drachmas by one of its congregants. It transpired that there was no consensus within the congregation or the community as a whole concerning the project, especially since only a few worshippers attended the synagogue. The congregation's leaders, however, insisted that their prayer book was different from the Sephardic one and that, after generations of following their own liturgy, they had no intention of abandoning it. Others argued that the money could be used for more important projects and called for the closure of all poorly attended synagogues.¹²⁸

In February 1936, rumor had it that real estate belonging to the congregation had been sold in order to finance the building of the new synagogue, and complaints of irregularities in connection with the sale were voiced by members of the Italia Yashan congregation. Koretz asked Rabbi Hayim Haviv to set up a committee of inquiry to investigate the congregation's financial affairs. It is worth noting that Haviv had been a candidate for the office of chief rabbi before Koretz's election. With a reputation for modesty and honesty, he was very popular in Salonika. Indeed, most of those who had originally favored importing a rabbi from outside Salonika would, by now, have been very happy to see Haviv as chief rabbi.¹²⁹ The treasurer of the Italia Yashan congregation was Shemuel David Florentin, and its president was his relative Aharon

Yaakov Florentin, a veteran member of the Community Assembly and of the Community Council (until World War II)¹³⁰ and an active Zionist.¹³¹ Shemuel Florentin was apparently related to Yitzhak David Florentin, the editor of *El Tiempo*, as well as to David Yitzhak Florentin, the famous Zionist leader (who was already living in Tel Aviv at the time). All of them were members of the Italia Yashan congregation.¹³²

Koretz, who resented the fact that the Italia Yashan leaders had sold the real estate without his permission or even his knowledge, seized the opportunity to begin investigating the case. By the spring of 1939, the case had not yet been closed. The Italia Yashan leadership ignored Koretz's investigation. Aharon Florentin claimed that nothing irregular had occurred: plots of land had been sold, another had been bought for the synagogue building, and all transactions had been conducted in an entirely legal manner. According to him, the fictitious allegation was being spread by opponents within Italia Yashan. Although the allegation itself was never spelled out, it was almost certainly an allusion to embezzlement. The Italia Yashan affair has far-reaching repercussions over and beyond the case itself. Sale of public property was always an avenue of opportunity for resourceful officials and entrepreneurs, and the discovery of irregularities was in itself not surprising.¹³³ What was noteworthy in this affair was the way it was exploited by the community's rival camps—the old established leadership versus the upstart rabbi who dared to meddle into others' affairs. Needless to say, the issue of whether Florentin was a Zionist or not, or the beliefs of his opponents, is entirely irrelevant. The conflict was motivated by money, not ideology.¹³⁴

Irrespective of what the Salonikans felt about Koretz, his connections with the Greek royal family and administration granted him immunity and made it impossible to oust him. Moreover, as time went by, it seemed that his political agenda was proving itself. His success in forming a new kind of relationship with the Greek government was not the only factor that contributed to this process; the change in the Mandatory government of Palestine's immigration policy in 1936 also played a role. Whereas in 1933–35 a large number of certificates had been granted to poor *olim*, after the start of the 1936 riots Sir Arthur Wauchope, the British high commissioner, recommended that immigration be suspended until the Royal Commission had drawn its conclusions.¹³⁵ By then, the hard-core Zionists had already immigrated to Palestine. Since there was nowhere left to go, the only solution was to stay put and try and make the best of things.¹³⁶

In 1937, Koretz's salary was raised by 15 percent,¹³⁷ and in 1938, when his contract was due to expire, he decided to renew it for an-

other three years despite certain misgivings.¹³⁸ This decision was an interesting one for a number of reasons, but we shall discuss only the personal angle at this stage. In the testimony of Koretz's widow, she admitted that she had been unhappy in Salonika and had suffered greatly from the constant stream of criticism directed at her husband. She felt she had been banished to an alien and primitive province that was totally inadequate for the needs of a civilized person. Although, as an interested party, some of her statements should be viewed with caution, it would appear that the feelings she expressed concerning her new home were genuine. She kept nagging her husband to leave and urged him to accept a post at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem or the post of chief rabbi of Alexandria, which had also been offered to him. In early 1941, on the eve of Germany's invasion of Greece, Koretz renewed his contract with the community for the last time, against his wife's wishes, claiming that he could not abandon his flock in times of need.¹³⁹ Koretz's decision to renew his contract in 1938 was no doubt inspired by his lavish salary, the exalted status he enjoyed in Greek public life, and his belief that life would continue showering power, glamour, and honor on him. In early 1941, however, even he understood that times had changed. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the statement imputed to him by his wife—"This is my place, I cannot leave!"—was authentic.¹⁴⁰

In the Lion's Maw

On April 22, 1941, two weeks after the German army's entry into Salonika, the Greek royal family and government fled to Crete and then to Egypt. According to Koretz's wife and son, he was in Athens at the time and was offered the opportunity of joining the royal family in Egypt, along with his family. He refused. Although we have no reason to doubt the veracity of their claim,¹⁴¹ there is considerable doubt concerning the reason for his refusal, which may have been, as his wife claimed, his loyalty toward his flock. However, if his family had been with him in Athens at the time, would Koretz have made a different choice? On May 17, Koretz was arrested by the Germans in Athens. His family received a postcard from Vienna, where he was being held in custody.¹⁴² Since there is no direct evidence on the period of his imprisonment, those nine months remain something of an enigma. Only three sources refer to his prison term, and each of them contains problems. Yet, given that the allegations brought against Koretz after the war about his collaboration with the Germans stemmed from this period, they are worth scrutiny.

The first source is an extraordinary science-fiction story by Hinko Gottlieb, a Jewish journalist from Zagreb who shared cell 84 of the Vienna prison with Koretz. After his release several months later, Gottlieb joined Tito's partisans, fought in the war, and lived to see the liberation.¹⁴³ Despite the literary nature of this source, it is clear that, though the prison inmates were kept under humiliating conditions, they were not tortured and the Nazis apparently could not make up their minds what to do with them. In hindsight, Gottlieb deduced that there was no "system" to their arrest:

The gigantic organization of the Gestapo that we long considered omniscient and omnivident was simply a large terrorist organization that was extremely powerful and extremely irresponsible. Its entire existence was based on its notoriety. Wherever the German army went, it would be followed by hordes of Gestapo agents, spies, provocateurs, and informers. These would detain thousands of civilians, intern them in concentration camps and prisons, and confiscate their money, furniture, files, books, and documents. They knew nothing of the people they captured, apart from superficial and unsubstantiated information from unreliable sources. They never showed any interest in these people's actions. They had no intention of getting rid of those who harmed Germany or its interests. Their actions were merely designed to strengthen their power by creating an atmosphere of terror, fear, and insecurity in the crudest possible way. Once the people had fallen into disarray and lost their leadership, terror destroyed any possibility of resistance. For a start, that was enough.¹⁴⁴

Koretz was released in December 1941. Notes written in French by his widow in late 1945 (the second source) reveal that he spent the next three months with Jewish friends in Vienna, recuperating from his ordeal:

After returning from Vienna in February [1942], where he had endured nine months of terrible agony, he had a lot to relate. The prison was enormous, and his fellow prisoners were all from the Balkans, Zagreb, Belgrade, etc. The first months were terrible, hardly any food, he was dying of hunger. To make matters worse, he had no change of underwear, not even a handkerchief. It was terrible. After the first and only interrogation that lasted for two days, he asked, as a favor, that the Vienna community be notified that he was being held there, and that he be allowed to receive some underwear and food from time to time. He complained of weakness, and after a doctor had seen him several times, he was given permission [to contact the Vienna community]. The request was conveyed by telephone to the community, which sent him underwear and some food. At that time he was also given permission to write home, and I received a

postcard on August 25 [1941]. He was arrested and transferred to Vienna as chief rabbi. Since he claimed to have been on excellent terms with the royal family and the government, and Greece was in a state of war with Germany, he was blamed for influencing King George to declare war.¹⁴⁵

At first sight, the idea of interrogating Koretz about the Greek royal family seems rather strange. After all, what could he tell them that they did not already know or could not glean from more informed sources? One such item of information may have been Koretz's success in enlisting the help of the royal family for refugees and refugee ships that had landed on Greek shores.¹⁴⁶ Such cooperation must have been a source of embarrassment to the Nazi regime, bearing in mind that the Greek king was actually more German than Greek. At the same time, the connection between the rabbi and the exiled king was used by the Nazi propaganda machinery to stress that Koretz had influenced King George to serve "Anglo-Jewish policy."¹⁴⁷ Molho had another explanation for Koretz's arrest: his anti-German speeches and his international activity in protest of the bombardment of the Hagia Sophia church in Salonika (1940).¹⁴⁸ The possibility exists that his connections with the royal family became an issue only because he raised them, apparently to gain better treatment. I agree with Gottlieb's evaluation of Gestapo policy, but I disagree with his assertion that the Nazis tried to eliminate all possible leadership in the countries they invaded. On the contrary, wherever they went, they made an effort to harness the leadership apparatus to their own interests. They might have detained Koretz, and Gottlieb, for that matter, without having any idea what to do with them, but it is questionable whether, when they released them, they had no "plans" for them.

Note that Koretz was released just a few weeks before the Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942). The question will always remain whether he was set free because those who released him were not yet aware of plans for the Final Solution in Greece, or because they had already prepared the ground to use him in the future, counting on the fact that his prison term had rendered him sufficiently cooperative while not too suspicious.¹⁴⁹

The third source regarding Koretz's arrest is the testimony given at the Bratislava court on June 27, 1947, by Dieter Wisliceny in which he referred to Koretz's release. He testified that Koretz told him in February 1943 that his release was due to his very good relations with the *kriminal-komisar* Dörzhage. Daniel Carpi doubts the credibility of this detail, since Wisliceny had not known Koretz at the time of his arrest and was not familiar with its circumstances. Hans Dörzhage (as the name appears in his formal personal file and in most documents) was

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the first head of the Athens Security Police/Security Service. Dörhage had started his police career during the Weimar period, but he was already a member of rightwing armed militias. Joining the Nazi Party was a natural step for him. There is no reason to imagine him bestowing special favor on Koretz. The only place and time when he and Koretz could have met were the days between the German entrance into Athens (April 7, 1941) and Koretz's arrest and subsequent deportation to Vienna (May 17, 1941). Given his official position, Dörhage must have played a major role in the decision to arrest Koretz.¹⁵⁰ What kind of relations, if any, existed between jailer and prisoner we shall never know. However, if a "plan" did exist, then leading Koretz to believe that his good relations with the local police were the reason for his release was not a bad idea from the Nazi point of view.

Whatever the case,¹⁵¹ there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the Nazis did not inform Koretz of the fate they were preparing for the Jews of Salonika. This is not surprising. If they wished to enlist his cooperation, they had every reason to keep their plan a secret from him, since any leak of information would simply hinder its implementation.¹⁵² We also know that the Germans went out of their way to hide their plans for Salonikan Jewry from their Italian allies, too.¹⁵³ The correspondence of their diplomatic representatives in Salonika contains no allusion whatsoever to the fate of Salonikan Jewry in "Kraków," their bogus destination.¹⁵⁴ The successful dissemination of the "Kraków story" depended on as few people as possible having a different tale to tell. If Koretz knew anything of the Nazis' plan, this could only have been through the EAM, and, in view of his pre-war political orientation, it is hard to believe that this was the case. Yet he knew for certain that the train was taking them not to a land of milk and honey but rather to a place of misery and desolation. He tried to stall and suggested other solutions, but when these failed he advocated resignation, not defiance. The postwar Israeli ethos could not tolerate such submissiveness; the survivors perceived it as betrayal. And Greek collective memory was relieved to discover that even the Jews blamed themselves for the tragedy that had befallen them.

This is not the only issue that must be reevaluated in light of the new documents that provide data on Koretz's role and on the way his behavior was interpreted and immortalized in the collective memory. Carpi, in his study of Italian diplomatic documents of the period, brings three examples of how archival material challenges the portrayal of events by survivors even when only a few years have elapsed. One of the examples is an episode he calls "The case of the hostages who were not taken."¹⁵⁵ Carpi compares Molho's rendition of the

event¹⁵⁶ to a letter written by several Salonikan Jews who took part in it and reported it to the Italian consul-general in the city. Unlike Molho's description, this letter was written a day or two after it happened. The event as described by Molho, and later elaborated by others, can be summarized as follows: On an unspecified date, in the month of March, the Jewish community gave the Germans a list of 104 notables who were immediately ordered to report to a certain place, where Koretz and SS officer Alois Brunner were waiting for them. On their arrival, Koretz told them in no uncertain terms that the Germans were intending to take them hostage, to insure the good behavior of the entire community, but that he was offering himself up as a hostage in their place. He then warned them that any failure by Salonika's Jews to comply with the Germans' demands would result in their execution. The letter sent to the consul-general, however, gives the date of the event as March 7, 1943. The letter claims that the Germans called the meeting, though it does not specify the SS officer who attended. The authors of the letter claim that the person who spoke so harshly at the meeting was the SS officer, not Koretz, and that there were 100, not 104, notables.

Carpi has already noted that the identification of the officer present at this meeting proves that Molho edited his source. His informant could not have known who the SS officer was, since he would never have introduced himself to the audience. Moreover, the fact that Molho imputes Koretz, not the SS officer, with haranguing the Jews, is further proof that Molho edited his source. While delving into the documents, I was able to find Molho's possible source, the memoir written by Yacoel. This hard-working public servant, who wrote his account sometime between March 1943 and March 1944, did mention Brunner as the SS officer. He also wrote that it was Brunner who spoke, that Koretz only interpreted, and that it was the Germans who ordered this gathering. However, two facts related in this memoir cast a shadow of doubt on Yacoel's description of the "hostages" affair: he speaks about "hundreds of Jewish notables," and he mentions in brackets that Brunner "was the German officer who was rumored to have liquidated the Jewry of Vienna."¹⁵⁷ Writing about "hundreds of men" can only mean that Yacoel was not present at the place. He might have found out later that Brunner was the officer who attended the meeting, but it is very doubtful that Yacoel knew while hiding in Athens that Brunner was the man in charge of the liquidation of Viennese Jewry. Had he known what happened to them while he was still in Salonika, things might have taken another direction.

Thus, we are dealing here with two main sources that have filtered

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the facts of the hostage episode. One is Yacoel himself and may even be someone who actually added material to his original memoir. The second is Molho, who rewrote the edited Yacoel. In Molho's case we see further evidence of how time plays havoc with memory. With the passage of time, people believe what they need to believe, for whatever reason. If the sources contradict this need, then the sources must be "tailored" to meet the need. In the case of the historian, the tailored version is the story that is bequeathed to posterity.

This article would be incomplete without a discussion of the moral issue raised by all of Koretz's critics. Why did he provide this list to the Germans in the first place, and why did he provide the list of the entire community? An honorable man would have died rather than betray the entire community. If this did not make Koretz a collaborator, it certainly made him a coward.

By viewing Koretz's actions in the context of his political career as a whole, we can find it easier to understand the style of leadership he adopted under the Nazi yoke. It should be recalled that, during the pre-war years, his policy had been not to resist the storm but to bend with it. This policy earned him a great deal of criticism even then, especially from Zionist circles, though it would appear not to have been detrimental to Salonikan Jewry during the Metaxas regime—in fact, they may have even benefited from it. When the Germans arrived, Koretz simply continued to do what he was best at: adapting to the new reality and waiting for the storm to pass. He might have remembered the graffiti on the walls of his Vienna jail: "Admit only what they already know."¹⁵⁸ Giving them the information they asked for was admitting what they already knew. The Germans would have had no problem locating every single Jew in Salonika even without the list, and they did not seem to have ever used the information gathered there.¹⁵⁹ It was only when the deportations started that Koretz realized all was lost, and by then it was far too late. None of his entreaties to Prime Minister Rhallis or Metropolitan Genadios were of any help either to him or to his community.

The portrayal of Koretz as a collaborator and a traitor should thus be treated with caution and evaluated in the context of the needs of the various actors in this tragic story. Each actor had his own wounds to lick, his own house to rebuild, his own scruples to assuage. The memory bequeathed to their descendants is the product of these needs.

History deals with narratives, not morals. It is up to readers to draw their own moral conclusions from these narratives. It is very hard, therefore, to judge whether the mere existence of a Jewish leadership at this historical crossroads was detrimental to the Jewish people and

served Nazi plans. Possibly even in Salonika a power vacuum might have caused a turbulence that would have enabled more Jews to save their lives. If this hypothesis were a certainty, we would have to conclude that Koretz's actions were detrimental to his community. However, this was something no one could have foreseen at the time. We can only theorize about it now, post factum and post mortem.

Notes

This article is part of a political biography of Rabbi Koretz I am currently preparing. The research for this work was carried out with the assistance of the Israel Science Foundation (Grant 881/03). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from foreign-language sources are mine.

- 1 B. Uziel, ed., *Ginzakh Saloniki* (Tel Aviv, 1961); *Saloniki: Ir va-em bi-Ysrael* (Jerusalem, 1967); D. A. Recanati, ed., *Zikhron Saloniki*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1972–86).
- 2 Yacoel was hiding with his family under a Christian name. He was denounced, identified as a Jew, and tortured all night to reveal the hideouts of other Jews. According to Shelomoh Reuven, who translated Yacoel's memoir into Hebrew, the Germans did not succeed in breaking his silence. The next day he was sent to Auschwitz along with his family and the Greek friend who helped to hide him. Yacoel was made to work in the Sonderkommando at Birkenau, and he (and the Greek friend) perished in the crematorium in Sept. 1944. See Reuven's notes in *Saloniki: Ir va-em bi-Ysrael*, 275, 290.
- 3 "The Memoir of Yomtov Yacoel (1943)," in *The Holocaust in Salonika: Eyewitness Accounts*, ed. S. Bowman and I. Benmayor (New York, 2002), 23–122. This edition is a translation of Phrangiski Ambatzopoulos's Greek translation *To olokaftoma stis martiries ton Ellinon Evraion* (The Holocaust in the Martyrology of Greek Jews) (Salonika, 1993). The memoir was first published by Asher Moisis in 1950–52. For a Hebrew version of the document, see Y. Yacoel, "Ba-derekh la-avadon," in *Saloniki: Ir va-em bi-Ysrael*, 275–89. For a critique of the Hebrew translation, see D. Carpi, "Yehudei Yavan b'tkufat ha-shoah (1941–1943) veyahasam shel shiltonot ha-kibush ha-italkiyim," *Yalkut moreshet* 31 (1981): 7–38, nn. 14, 28; this paper was also published as "Notes on the History of the Jews in Greece during the Holocaust Period: The Attitude of the Italians (1941–1943)," in *Festschrift in Honor of Dr. George S. Wise*, ed. H. Ben-Shahar et al. (Tel Aviv, 1981), 25–62. I was unable to see the original manuscript of Yacoel's memoir.
- 4 So far, I have not been able to

see the original document. In May–June 1971, David Y. Benvenisti, then president of the Salonika Jewish community, translated the document into Greek and added a short preface, explaining that the document was in one of the few files returned from Germany to the community after the war. I was able to see the Greek translation in the Koretz family's private archives in Tel Aviv. The publication of the second volume of *Zikhron Saloniki* in 1986 included the same article by Daut Levi, entitled "Sekirah al mosdot hakehilah ha-yehudit be-Saloniki (5630–5700)" (127–43). The editorial board added notes to the article stating that the survey had been undertaken at Sabi Shealtiel's request (127) and that the Hebrew version was "slightly abridged" (142). In 1988, Alberto Nar from Salonika published a paper based on this memorandum, "Mia anekdoti ekthesi tou 1942 yia ti domi tis Israilitikas Koinotitas Thessalonikis stin periodo 1912–1940, antitipo apo ta praktika tou simposiou 'I Thessaloniki meta to 1912' [1–3 November 1985]" (A 1942 Unpublished Study on the Structure of the Jewish Community in the Years 1912–1940, a printout of the First Symposium "Salonika after 1912" [1–3 November 1985]), *Chronika* (Chronicle) (Apr.–Mar. 1988): 12–17. The three versions are not identical in all respects.

5 See Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 127.

6 Yacoel attested that only 7,500

Jews lived outside of this area ("Memoir," 91–92).

- 7 "Letters from Salonika, 1943," *The Jewish Museum of Greece Newsletter* 33 (1992): 4–8.
- 8 See the statements of Jako Menashe [Report no. 12], and "a young Jewess" [Report no. 1083 (R-992)], published by A. Kitroeff, "Documents: The Jews in Greece, 1941–1944: Eyewitness Accounts," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 12, no. 3 (1985): 3–52. (See also www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/greecerep12.html and www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/greece1083.html.)
- 9 B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki*, 82–83.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 78–81. Through the generosity of Mr. Manolis Kandilakis from Salonika, I was able to get a copy of the original report kept in the archives of the Greek Foreign Ministry. This testimony was also published in Ph. Constantopoulou and Th. Veremis, eds., *Documents on the History of the Greek Jews: Records from the Historical Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (Athens, 1998), 257–61. The same report must have been the basis for another and broader report prepared by the Greek Foreign Ministry itself in the summer of 1944 on the atrocities against Greek Jews, cited by the same authors (*ibid.*, 274–76). The versions printed by Uziel and by Constantopoulou-Veremis vary in some details from the photocopied document I was given by Mr. Kandilakis; see also n. 72 below. Kondopoulos's report appears to have been entwined in an un-

dated booklet in French, *Le drame des juifs hellènes*, published in Cairo by the Société Orientale de Publicité. Although the sample I saw in the Koretz archives did not have a publication date, the envelope in which it was sent from Egypt was addressed to the Koretz family in "Palestine," so it could not have been published after 1948.

11 B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki*, 84–90.

12 Obviously, the anonymous testimonies were taken from Jews. The last testimony (Jan. 8, 1944) might have been that of Meir de Button.

13 A. Apostolou, "The Exception of Salonika": Bystanders and Collaborators in Northern Greece," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 174.

14 I. A. Matarasso, "And Yet Not All of Them Died (1948)," in Bowman and Benmayor, *Holocaust in Salonika*, 123–236; S. M. Uziel, "They Encircled and Encompassed Me (1953)," in *ibid.*, 237–80 (Uziel's account was first published as *Savvuni gam sevavuni-bekhem adonai qui amilam* [Salonika, 1953]; see also Central Zionist Archives [hereafter CZA], 0-84/3-4); *Memoirs of Raphael Mosheh Kamhi on the deportations, and letters written from Tel Aviv to Eli Ashkenazi in Sofia, Apr. 10, 1948*, Bulgarian State Archives, Sofia, Archives of the Jewish Scientific Institute, f. 1568, op. 1, file 8806, sn. 18, pp. 48–57 (1–10) (Tel Aviv University, Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center [hereafter TAU DP], Bulgaria Archives, doc. 949); un-

dated (approximately from the same period as the previous letter), *ibid.*, sn. 19, pp. 200–203 (TAU DP, Bulgaria Archives, doc. 972; translated from Bulgarian by Milena Lazarova).

15 M. Molho, *In Memoriam*, vol. 1 (Salonika, 1948); J. Nehama, *In Memoriam*, vol. 2 (Salonika, 1949); M. Molho, *In Memoriam*, vol. 3 (Buenos Aires, 1953) The 2nd edition, published in Salonika in 1973, includes all three parts; vol. 2 was revised by Molho, with additions and corrections by J. Nehama. In this article I refer to the 1973 edition.

16 M. Matsas, *The Illusion of Safety: The Story of the Greek Jews During the Second World War* (New York, 1997).

17 This assessment of Matsas's book can also be found in S. Bowman's bibliographical essay at the end of Bowman and Benmayor, *Holocaust in Salonika*, 422. As an illustration of Matsas's handling of documents, see p. 40, where one finds a long citation allegedly taken from Cecil Roth, "The Last Days of Jewish Salonika," *Commentary* 5 (1950): 49–55: "Dr. Koretz was invited from Berlin to serve as the Chief Rabbi of Salonika in 1932 for a period of five years. He was the least successful of all religious leaders in the long history of Salonika Jewry, and very rapidly was in conflict with most communal leaders[,] particularly the Zionists. In 1937, at the termination of his office, the community intimated to Dr. Koretz that his leadership was no longer required. However, the

Governor-General of Salonika, Mr. Krimis [*sic*: should be Kirmis], a minister under the Metaxas dictatorship, made it clear to the Community Council that Dr. Koretz enjoyed the support and confidence of the government and demanded that his term be extended. It is through the interference of the Greek dictatorial government that Dr. Koretz remained Chief Rabbi against the will of Salonika Jewry . . . [omission by Matsas] Shortly afterwards the Rosenberg mission arrived in Salonika, headed by the same Brunner who was already notorious for his operations in Vienna." To my amazement, I was unable to find this paragraph in Roth's paper. It was invented by Matsas to support what "he already knew."

- 18 See, e.g., the testimonies taken by Yad Vashem from 1960 to 1966: Hayim Alajem, Paris 1960 (Alef-1116/64); Yosef Ashua, Paris 1960 (Alef-1117/65); Eti Hasid, Tel Aviv 1960 (Het-1304/5); Yaakov Asael, Tel Aviv 1962 (Ayin-1875/9); David Aharon, Tel Aviv 1965 (Alef-2429/166); Avraham Arditti, no police or date given (Alef-03-2149/145); Asher Berti, Haifa 1965 (Bet-2519/232); and Hayim Hanokh, Haifa 1966 (Het-2509/18). See also S. Raphael, ed., *Bi-nitvei sheol: Yehudei Yavan ba-shoah-pirkei edut* (Tel Aviv, 1988); *Yahadut Yavan be-hurbanah-pirkei zikhronot* (Tel Aviv, 1988); R. Camhi-Fromer and E. Aelion, *The House by the Sea: A Portrait of the Holocaust in Greece* (San Fran-

cisco, 1998); M. Ha-Eliyon (Aelion), *Metzareei sheol: Korotav shel yotze Saloniki be-mahanot ha-hashmadah* (Tel Aviv, 1978); E. Hassid, *Reflets de ma vie* (Paris, 1979); E. Kounio-Amarilio, *From Thessaloniki to Auschwitz and Back: Memories of a Survivor from Thessaloniki* (London, 2000); J. Handeli (Yaakov Handali), *A Greek Jew from Salonika Remembers*, trans. from Hebrew by M. Kett (New York, 1993); and J. Strounsa, *Violonista ad Auschwitz*, trans. M. Giuliani (Brescia, 2000).

- 19 A representative of the American Office of Special Services (OSS) in Turkey reported on information given by two Greek students; one of them might have been Kondopoulos. See Apostolou, "Exception of Salonika," 180.
- 20 CZA, S53/1575.
- 21 Constantopoulou and Veremis, *Documents on the History of the Greek Jews*, 429. On Pappas's various activities on behalf of the Greek government-in-exile and later the Royalist government, the Jewish community in Palestine and its institutions, and the Jewish community of Egypt, see *ibid.*, 290, 299, 301, 310–11. From 1963 to 1967 Pappas served as deputy minister of foreign affairs in Greece.
- 22 An abbreviation of *Ethnikón Apeletherotikón Métopon–Ethnikós Laikós Apeletherotikós Strátos* (National Liberation Front–National Popular Liberation Army), a communist-sponsored resistance organization (formed Sept. 1941) and its military wing (formed Dec. 1942), which op-

erated in occupied Greece during World War II, fighting against the Germans and the Italians as well as against other guerrilla bands. EAM-ELAS became the most powerful guerrilla band in the country. See M. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece* (New Haven, Conn., 1993), 123–43.

- 23 S. Patatzis, *Matomena Chronia* (Ôhe Chronicles of the Resistance) (Athens, 1946); quotations from this work are taken from the 4th edition (Athens, 1997). I am indebted to Haris Exertzoglou, who introduced me to this book, and to Maria Christina Chatziioannou, who assisted me with the translation.
- 24 Constantopoulou and Veremis, *Documents on the History of the Greek Jews*, esp. 249–306. See n. 103 below.
- 25 P. Enepekides, *To olokaftoma ton Evraion tis Ellades 1941–1944 epi ti vasi ton mistikon archion ton SS* (The Holocaust of Greek Jews 1941–1944 According to the Secret Archives of the SS) (Athens, 1969).
- 26 D. Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents on the History of the Holocaust in Greece (1941–1943)* (Tel Aviv, 1999). See also D. Carpi, "New Approach to Some Episodes in the History of the Jews in Salonika During the Holocaust: Memory, Myth, Documentation," in *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans, 1808–1945*, vol. 2, ed. M. Rozen (Tel Aviv, 2002), 259–89.
- 27 Arrested with him were the Salonika community president,

Raphael HaLevi, and the president of B'nai B'rith, Jules Tazartes. See the testimony of Mrs. Gita Koretz and her son, Adv. Aryeh Koretz (Jan. 11, 1976), Yad Vashem, Tel Aviv branch, Collection of Testimonies, 3527/–304-qof (hereafter: Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem); Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 173; and Carpi, "Notes on the History of the Jews in Greece," 53, n. 13.

- 28 According to Yacoel, the Nazis offered him the job first, but he refused lest "his name will be irreparably tarnished" ("Memoir," 78). See S. M. Uziel, "They Encircled and Encompassed Me," 244.
- 29 C. R. Browning, *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office: A Study of the DIII of Abteilung Deutschland 1940–1943* (New York, 1976), 161.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 161–62. See Minutes of the Nuremberg Trials, Twenty-Sixth Day: Thursday, Jan. 3, 1946, part 13 of 15, p. 282, Dieter Wisliceny's testimony: www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-03/tgmwc-03-26-13.html; U.S. National Archives, World War Crimes Records (Nuremberg) RG 238, Reports of interrogation of Dieter Wisliceny, Nov. 23, 1945, pp. 10–11.
- 31 Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem.
- 32 The date is very clear from Wisliceny's letter to Maximilian (Max) Merten, dated Apr. 15, 1943: it was Saturday, Apr. 11, in the late afternoon. See also Y. Ben, *Yehudei Yavan ba-shoah u-va-hitnagdut* (Tel Aviv, 1985), 47–48, and Enepekides, *To olokaftoma ton Evraion tis Ellades*.

- Merten was the chief of the military administration with the commander of the armed forces in the Salonika-Aegean Theater and participated actively in the deportation and the looting of Jewish property. On Merten, see Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 241, 246–47; M. Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York, 2005); and S. Hassid, “The Trial of Max Merten in the Changing Mirrors of Time and Place,” hcc.haifa.ac.il/Departments/history-school/conferences/holocaust_greece/Samuel_Hassid.pdf. Parts of Wisliceny’s letter to Merten were published also in Matsas, *Illusion of Safety*, 65–66. For the letter, see Politisches Archive, Auswärtiges Amt (Bonn), vol. 66 (Deutsche Gesandtschaft-Athen).
- 33 Vitali Hasson made aliyah in 1933. I could not find any clue as to when or why he returned to Salonika. See record of immigrants dated Mar. 12, 1935, listing Vitali Hasson, a shirt-maker, as residing in Palestine since 1933, in the Archives of the Palestinian Office of Salonika, located in the Institute for the Documentation of Historical Collections in Moscow (formerly *Osobi Archiv*; hereafter Moscow Institute], Fond 1435, opis 1, File 21, #50, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. No. 1270; see also the lawsuit of the Salonika community against members accused of collaborating with the Nazis, Sept. 11, 1945, CZA, 851/44. On Albala and Hasson’s shameful crimes, see Molho, *In*
- Memoriam*, 298–300; Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents*, 45–48; D. Carpi, “Mekorot italkiim le-toledot ha-yehudim be-Saloniki bi-tkufat ha-shoah,” *Peamim* 65 (1995): 124–26; Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 401.
- 34 On the deportation and extermination of the Salonika community, see Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*; Enepekides, *To olokaftoma ton Evraion tis Ellades*; Y. S. Emmanuel, “Toledot yehudei Saloniki,” in Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 1: 236–64; J. Ben, “Jewish Leadership in Greece During the Holocaust,” in *Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Nazi Europe, 1933–1945: Proceedings of the Third Yad Vashem International Historical Conference* (Jerusalem, 1979), 335–52; Ben, *Yehudei Yavan ba-shoah u-va-hitnagdut*; Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 238–48; B. Pierron, “Juifs et chrétiens de la Grèce moderne: Histoire des relations intercommunautaires de 1821–1945” (Ph.D. diss., Paris, 1996), 219–50; R. Benvenisti, ed., *Oi Evraioi tis Ellades stin katochi* (The Jews of Greece During the Holocaust) (Salonika, 1998); Matsas, *Illusion of Safety*; Carpi, “Yehudei Yavan bi-tkufat ha-shoah”; Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents*; Carpi, “New Approach”; Carpi, “Mekorot italkiim,” 109–29; S. Bowman, “Greece,” in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (New Haven, Conn., 2001), 265–70; Bowman and Benmayor, *Holocaust in Salonika*; Apostolou, “Exception of Salonika”; Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 392–411; and A. Apostolou, “Greek Trag-
- edy; Review of Mark Mazower’s *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430–1950*,” *Commentary*, July 11, 2005.
- 35 Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 264–65. In his interrogation after the war, Wisliceny reported that this transport consisted of “700 or so Spanish Jews” (U.S. National Archives, World War Crimes Records [Nuremberg] RG 238, Reports of interrogation of Dieter Wisliceny, Nov. 23, 1945, p. 17).
- 36 A. Koretz, *Yomano shel naar, Bergen-Belsen July 11, 1944–March 3, 1945* (Tel Aviv, 1992), 93.
- 37 Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem; interview with Adv. Aryeh Koretz conducted in his Tel Aviv office on Jan. 27, 2005; lawsuit of the Salonika community against members accused of collaborating with the Nazis, Sept. 11, 1945, CZA, 851/44; S. M. Uziel, “They Encircled and Encompassed Me”; Ben, *Greek Jewry*, 206–9. See also www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/Collaboration.html.
- 38 Emmanuel, “Toledot yehudei Saloniki,” 236–50; Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 50, 56–57, 63–67, 73–110.
- 39 Mazower, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, and my own book, *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: The Jews in Turkey and the Balkans, 1808–1945*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv, 2005), rectify this situation only in part. On the political history of the Salonikan community, see Pierron, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 117–219. For a discussion of specific topics relating to this period, see (in addition to the studies and
- sources cited above) R. Molho, “Popular Antisemitism and State Policy in Salonika during the City’s Annexation to Greece,” *Jewish Social Studies* 50, nos. 3–4 (Summer–Fall 1988/93): 253–64; R. Molho, “Jewish Working-Class Neighborhoods Established in Salonika Following the 1890 and 1917 Fires,” in Rozen, *Last Ottoman Century and Beyond*, 2: 173–94; F. Abatzopoulou, “The Image of the Jew in the Literature of Salonika,” in *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity Since 1912*, ed. P. Mackridge and E. Yannakakis (Oxford, 1997), 217–26; V. Hastaoglou-Martinidis, “On the State of the Jewish Community of Salonika After the Fire of 1917: An Unpublished Memoir and Other Documents from the Papers of Henry Morgenthau,” in *The Jewish Communities of Southeastern Europe: From the Fifteenth Century to the End of World War II*, ed. I. K. Hassiotis (Thessaloniki, 1997), 147–74; A. Yerolympos, “La part du feu,” in *Salonique, 1850–1918: La ‘ville des Juifs’ et le réveil des Balkans*, ed. G. Veinstein (Paris, 1992), 261–70; A. Yerolympos, *Urban Transformations in the Balkans (1820–1920): Aspects of Balkan Town Planning and the Remaking of Thessaloniki* (Salonika, 1996); M. Vassilikou, “The Anti-Semitic Riots in Thessaloniki (June 1931) and the Greek Press: A Case-Study of ‘Scapegoating’ Theory” (master’s thesis, King’s College London, 1993); M. Vassilikou, “Politics of the Jewish Community of Salon-

- ika in the Inter-War Years: Party Ideologies and Party Competition" (Ph.D. diss., King's College London, 2000); S. Bowman, "Germans and Jews in Interwar Greece," in Hassiotis, *Jewish Communities of Southeastern Europe*, 75–86; S. Srugo, "Minimal Saloniki li-nmal Haifah: Aliyatam shel poalei nmal Saloniki bein shetei milhamot ha-olam" (master's thesis, University of Haifa, 2003); and G. Hadar, "Hebetim be-haye'i hamishpahah ha-yehudit be-Saloniki, 1900–1943" (Ph.D. diss., University of Haifa, 2003).
- 40 See B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki; Saloniki: Ir va-em bi-Ysrael*; Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*; and D. Benvenisti, *Mi-Saloniki li-Yrushalayim: Pirkei hayim* (Jerusalem, 1981).
- 41 At the same time, it should be emphasized that Mazower's statement—"The main trend was that a large part of the community first embraced and lost faith in Zionism" (*Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 378–79)—does not take into consideration the bulk of these and other internal sources, and thus it is exaggerated as well as inaccurate. By 1936, the gates to Palestine were closed by the Mandate government, and at the same time Ioannis Metaxas prohibited the overt Zionist activity in Greece (although he did not object to Zionism as an ideal). See my *Last Ottoman Century*, 1: 255–310.
- 42 Testimonies can be found in Raphael, *Bi-ntivei sheok*; Dario Akunis, 43; Shelomoh Arokh, 52; Shelomoh Bivas, 59; Shaul Ben Maor, 85; Avraham Gategno, 144; Yosef Gerasi, 153; Mosheh Aelion, 169–70; Yaakov Handali, 188–89; Eliyahu Teva, 208; Yitzhaq Shemuel, 236; Dario and Alberto Levi, 268, 276; Gedalyah Levi, 282; Yitzhaq Levi, 288; David Mordukh, 302; Yaakov Malakh, 312; Menahem Shabetai, 336; Avraham Najari, 362; Benyamin Fortis, 400–401; David Tzevi, 419–21; Alberto Tzarfati, 429; and Hayim Raphael, 477. It should be emphasized that these testimonies were given in 1984–85. These 22 witnesses, who constitute half of the Salonikans who gave their testimonies to the editor, said at the time that the only solution they could think of after the liberation was a place of their own—namely, Palestine. Nothing in their testimonies shows any affinity to Zionism before the war. The rest made aliyah for a variety of reasons. Only 7 of the 44 witnesses declared a prewar affinity to Zionism: Izidor Alallouf, 30; Avraham Halegua, 172; Yitzhaq Kohen, 243; Esther Maestro, 290; Jenny Nahmias, 364; Mery Nahman, 364; and Yaakov Razon, 454. One of the witnesses, Jacque Stroumsa, whose testimony reveals no sign of a Zionist orientation, referred in his autobiography (*Violonista ad Auschwitz*, 21, written approximately in 1967) to his participation in the Maccabi orchestra in Salonika.
- 43 For a very disturbing analysis of this process taken to an extreme, see I. Zertal, *Ha-umah ve-ha-mavel, historyah, zikaron, politikah* (Or Yehudah, 2002). The author was widely criticized in Israel for superimposing her views on the facts. Her main ideas had already been expressed in her book *From Catastrophe to Power: Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley, 1998), esp. 263–74. However, other scholars have expressed a similar view. See T. Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, trans. H. Watzman (New York, 1994); M. Brug, "Merosh Metzadah ad lev ha-geto: Hamitos ke-historyah," in *Mitos ve-zikaron: Gilgulehah shel hatodaah ha-yisreelit*, ed. D. Ohana and Robert S. Wistreich (Jerusalem, 1997), 203–30; M. Brug, "Netzurim be-homot ha-zikaron: Andartat geto Varshah ke-semel ha-shoah vega-gevurah be-Polin uve-Yisrael," *Alpayim: A Multidisciplinary Publication for Contemporary Thought and Literature* 14 (1997): 148–74; and R. Stauber, *Ha-lekah la-dor: Shoah u-gevurah ba-mahshavah ha-tziburit ba-aretz bi-shnot ha-hamishim* (Jerusalem, 2000), esp. 7–36.
- 44 A. Shapira, "Ha-shoah: Zikaron prati ve-zikaron tziburi," in *Atzmaut, hamishim ha-shanim harishonot*, ed. A. Shapira (Jerusalem, 1998), 527–40.
- 45 See O. Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley, 2000), esp. 76–90; see also n. 65 below.
- 46 On the controversy around this affair, see, e.g., S. Rosenfeld, *Tik pelili 124: Mishpat Gruenwald-Kastner* (Tel Aviv, 1955); B. Hecht, *Perfidy* (New York, 1961); Y. Bauer, *Jews for Sale? Nazi-Jewish Negotiations, 1933–1945* (New Haven, Conn., 1994), 145–71; Y. Weitz, *Ha-ish she-nirtzah paamayim: Hayav, mishpato u-mot shel Dr. Yisrael Kastner* (Jerusalem, 1995); L. Bilsky, "Judging Evil in the Trial of Kastner," *Law and History Review* 19 (2001): 117–60; T. Friling, *Arrows in the Dark: David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv Leadership, and Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust*, vol. 2 (Madison, Wisc., 2005), 64, 67, 218.
- 47 Segev, *Seventh Million*, 255–95, 305–10; H. Yablonka, "Ha-hok la-asiyat din ba-natzim uve-ozreihem: Hebet nosaf li-shelat ha-yisreelim, ha-nitzolim, vha-shoah," *Cathedra* 82 (1996): 15–135; G. Glasner-Heled and D. Bar-On, "Eliezer Greenboim: Havnatay sipuro shel kapo bemisgeret zikhron ha-shoah ha-kolektivi bi-Ysrael," www.bgu.ac.il/~danbaron/Docs_Dan/greenbaum.doc.
- 48 C. A. Carter, *Kenneth Burke and the Scapegoat Process* (Norman, Okla., 1996); see also www.scapegoat.demon.co.uk.
- 49 See n. 3 above. Regarding the need for such criticism see, in the text below, the discussion of "hostages who were not taken."
- 50 See n. 28 above.
- 51 Yacoel, "Memoir," 105.
- 52 See Matarasso, "And Yet Not All of Them Died," 139.
- 53 Yacoel, "Memoir," 103.
- 54 See Kamhi's memoirs on the deportations and letters written from Tel Aviv to Eli Ashkenazi in Sofia, Apr. 10, 1948, Bulgarian State Archives, Sofia, Archives of the Jewish Scientific Institute, f. 1568, op. 1, file 8806, sn. 18, pp. 48–57 (1–10) (TAU DP, Bulgaria

Archives, doc. 949); undated (approximately from the same period as the previous letter), *ibid.*, sn. 19, pp. 200–203 (TAU DP, Bulgaria Archives, doc. 972). On Kamhi's rescue, see his letter written in Tel Aviv to Eli Ashkenazi in Sofia, Oct. 24, 1949, *ibid.*, sn. 18, (1-4) (TAU DP, Bulgaria Archives, doc. 911), and the certificate issued to him on Apr. 2, 1943, by the German commander of Salonika–Aegean Region, Military Administration Department, allowing him to leave the ghetto and exempting him from deportation and from the obligation to wear the yellow badge, *ibid.*, sn. 20, p. 421 (TAU DP, Bulgaria Archives, doc. 988).

55 It is worth nothing at this juncture that, on Dec. 11, 1959, in response to a letter sent to him by Gita Koretz, Molho wrote to her the following (in Spanish): "What I wrote in my book *In Memoriam* was not inspired by hatred or revenge. Now that tempers have cooled, I am undertaking new inquiries to check what I and others have written on the subject of her late husband's unconscious collaboration." "Believe me" he added, "and I speak to you as a brother, my intention is to shed light on an 'affair' that in my opinion has never been properly clarified. What arguments would you put forward to mitigate Dr. Koretz's responsibility, and to facilitate my inquiry into the truth?" (letter sent from Buenos Aires, Koretz Family Archives). Molho passed away before she could answer.

- 56 Emmanuel, "Toledot yehudei Saloniki," 243–50; "Miluim laperek ha-shemonah-asar: Dr. Koretz and the Germans" (an editorial note), in Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 261–64.
- 57 Yosef Ashua testimony, *Yad Vashem* (Alef-1117/65).
- 58 Eti Hasid testimony, *ibid.* (Het-1304/5).
- 59 Stroumsa, *Violonista ad Auschwitz*, 41–46.
- 60 Raphael, *Bi-ntivei sheol*, 378–85.
- 61 N. Eck, "New Light on the Charges Against the Last Chief Rabbi of Salonika," *Yad Vashem Bulletin* 17 [Dec. 1965]: 9–15, and 19 [Oct. 1966]: 28–35.
- 62 Aelion's testimony in Raphael, *Bi-ntivei sheol*, 167. See also Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 99–100; Koretz testimony, *Yad Vashem*.
- 63 Ben Maor testimony, in Raphael, *Bi-ntivei sheol*, 81; Aelion Moshel in *ibid.*, 167. See also Carter, *Kenneth Burke and the Scapegoat Process*, and www.scapegoat.demon.co.uk.
- 64 Compare Handali's testimony in Raphael, *Bi-ntivei sheol*, 183–84, to his memoirs, *A Greek Jew from Salonika Remembers*; see also n. 103 below. A similar process, though less extreme, may be discerned in Avraham (Alberto) Halegua's case. When interviewed by Raphael (1984–85), he mentioned Koretz very briefly, with a curse. Four years later he produced a typewritten memoir (1989), in which he elaborated on Koretz's alleged role in the misfortune of the Salonikan Jewry ("Ha-gehenom ha-shahor: Le-olam lo nahazor."

Unlike Handali, he was the son of workers, lost a wife and daughter in Auschwitz, and the publication of his booklet was his last venture in commemorating the past.

- 65 The readiness in the 1980s to re-evaluate the post–World War II extremist Israeli ethos is exemplified clearly in the "Fall of Nitzanim" affair, when 104 members of Kibbutz Nitzanim, in the southern part of the country, and soldiers of the Givati division surrendered to the Egyptian army and were taken captive on June 7, 1948. Equipped only with rifles and Sten guns, members of the kibbutz fought a fierce 10-day battle against the Egyptian army, but, with 33 casualties (women and children had not been evacuated, as in other besieged settlements), they decided to surrender. On June 9, Abba Kovner, the legendary partisan of the Vilna Ghetto, published a "Combat Page" in which he condemned their surrender, stressing that the order to fight specified "to a man" (emphasized in the original Haganah order). For 35 years, Nitzanim members were branded cowards. Then, 1963 saw the publication of the first study to describe the complete circumstances of the battle, including the story from the defenders' point of view. They claimed that they were not given enough weapons for political reasons (they belonged to a different party) and were actually stranded by their division.
- Kovner never revoked his statement. However, on Memorial Day in 1988, his widow (like him, an ex-partisan) and his son went to Nitzanim to light the memorial candle on the warriors' grave and to commemorate their bravery. His son spoke of the "generosity that was not planted by the former generation, nor by mine, either" (D. Porat, *Me-ever la-gashmi: Parashat hayav shel Abba Kovner* [Tel Aviv, 2000], 272–78). For an interesting analysis of the evolution of the Israeli collective memory of the Holocaust, see D. Gutwein, "Hafrat ha-shoah: Politukah, zikaron ve-historyografyah," *Dapim le-heker ha-shoah, measef* 16 (1998): 7–51 and the extensive bibliography in the footnotes.
- 66 Matsas, *Illusion of Safety*; Nar, "Mia anekdoti ekthesi tou 1942."
- 67 Nar, "Mia anekdoti ekthesi tou 1942," 17.
- 68 See n. 70 below.
- 69 See also B. Lewkowicz, "After the War We Were Together": Jewish Memories of Postwar Thessaloniki," in *After the War Was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation, and State in Greece, 1943–1969*, ed. M. Mazower (Princeton, 2000), 255, 264.
- 70 Compare the discussion in sources cited below with Ari Shavit's incredible interview with Mikis Theodorakis, published Aug. 30, 2004, in *Ha-aretz*. Shavit, in an attempt to get to the bottom of Theodorakis's attitude toward the Jewish people, asked: "So, for you, what was most disturbing was the secre-

tiveness and reticence of the Jews, not their role in the Jesus story?" Theodorakis answered: "[D]uring the war the Jews were hunted down like animals. And we in the progressive movement saved tens of thousands of Jews. The Jews of Thessaloniki were the victims of the rabbis who didn't let them come and hide in the mountains with us. For us, the Jews of Greece were no different from the Greeks. They were entirely Greek" (www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/469781.html).

- 71 Kondopoulos stated that it was mid-June (B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki*, 78).
- 72 It should be noted that the translation provided by Thanos Veremis and the Hebrew translation provided by B. Uziel do not correspond in every detail with the photocopy of this testimony taken from the Greek Foreign Ministry Archives by Manolis Kandilakis. In the photocopy I hold, it says: "The President of the Jewish Community of Salonika and Rabbi Koretz gave to the Gestapo commander Rosenberg . . ." (i.e., the name of Hasson and the detail about the "other Jewish dignitaries" do not appear). The only explanation I can offer is that, at some point before this testimony reached either Uziel or Veremis, it was rewritten and slightly edited.
- 73 B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki*, 78–81; Constantopoulou and Veremis, *Documents on the History of the Greek Jews*, 261. In the photocopy of the document given to me by Manolis Kandilakis, the wording

is: "The rumor says that the Jews who were taken by the Germans out of the Greek borders were all murdered in special showers by gas." So far as I know, this was the first time the existence of the gas chambers was mentioned in the free world. The Vrba-Weczler Report that asserted this fact reached the Jewish leadership in Budapest only in April or May 1944 and the Allied intelligence services in June that year. Its contents were suppressed by all parties involved. See J. Borkin, *The Crime and Punishment of I. G. Farben* (New York, 1978), 112–13; Friling, *Arrows in the Dark*, 2: 77–85; Bauer, *Jews for Sale*, 156–57. Bauer accepts Kastner's claim that people had the information but would not believe it. Whatever Kondopoulos knew was not conveyed to the Jews of Athens (see the anonymous letter from Athens dated Aug. 15, 1943, cited in B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki*, 82).

- 74 CZA, S53/1575.
- 75 Patatzis, *Matomena Chronia*, 181–82.
- 76 Ibid., 182.
- 77 Ibid., 185.
- 78 Ibid., 187.
- 79 Ibid., 188–90.
- 80 Four days before the first transport to Auschwitz.
- 81 Patatzis, *Matomena Chronia*, 194.
- 82 Ibid., 200.
- 83 See Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 246–48, and compare Apostolou, "Exception of Salonika," 173–75, 179–80. Mazower's new book, *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 406–11, provides more information and is more accu-

rate than his first book, on the indifference and collaboration with the Nazis on the part of the Greek population. More detail as well as more attention has also been dedicated to the Salonikan activities on behalf of Jewish fellow citizens. Apostolou, in his review "Greek Tragedy," sharply criticizes the symmetry of Mazower's presentation, claiming that it distorts the true nature of events.

- 84 George Margaritis, "The Greek Orthodox Church and the Holocaust," hcc.haifa.ac.il/Departments/history-school/conferences/holocaust_greece/margaritas.pdf, 9–14, 16, 18–19.
- 85 For a translation of this leaflet into English, see www.yadvashem.org.il.
- 86 Margaritis, "Greek Orthodox Church," 13. Mazower explains it as the Greek need to concentrate efforts on more urgent problems—i.e., to prevent the Germans from expanding the Bulgarian occupation zone (*Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 410–11).
- 87 Apostolou, "Exception of Salonika," 176–81.
- 88 Ibid., 181; Enepekides, *Holocaust*, 33–39. See especially Logothetopoulos to Altenburg, Mar. 18, 1943, where he uses the word *exodosin* (extermination). Gita Koretz stated that both Simonides and Logothetopoulos were very hostile to the Jews and just waited for their destruction (Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem).
- 89 Margaritis, "Greek Orthodox Church," 11–12. For an English translation of the protest pre-
- 90 Margaritis, "Greek Orthodox Church," 15.
- 91 *To Vima*, Dec. 12, 1989, cited in Matsas, *Illusion of Safety*, 122–23.
- 92 Nar, "Social Organization," 19–20.
- 93 Consul-General Zamboni to the Italian Diplomatic Mission in Athens, for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome, Feb. 28, 1943, Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents*, doc. 1943.11, pp. 129–131; Consul-General Zamboni to Italian diplomatic mission in Athens, Mar. 18, 1943, *ibid.*, doc. 1943.16, pp. 138–39; General of Carabinieri, G. Picche, to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome, written in Rome, Apr. 1, 1943, *ibid.*, doc. 1943.22, pp. 148–50. See also Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 245–46.
- 94 Yacoel, "Memoir," 71–77, 85–86, 105, 108–9, 114.
- 95 See, e.g., the testimonies of Shaul ben Maor and of Avraham Najari in Raphael, *Bi-ntivei sheol*, 81, 359.
- 96 "Edut Bar M.B." (the testimony of Bar M. B., age 47, taken by Barukh Uziel), in B. Uziel, *Ginzakh Saloniki*, 84. See also H. Lehrman, "Greece: Unsed

- Cakes of Soap—The Pattern of Jewish Fate Repeats Itself,” *Commentary* (May 1946): 48–52.
- 97 Apostolou, “Exception of Salonika,” 174.
- 98 See Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem.
- 99 Margaritis, “Greek Orthodox Church,” 14, 17–18.
- 100 Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 2: 150.
- 101 See “Freedom or Death: The Jews in the Greek Resistance,” Symposium on the Holocaust in Greece, Dec. 12, 2002, Haifa University (hcc.haifa.ac.il/Departments/history-school/conferences/holocaust_greece/bowman.pdf). See also David Aharon testimony, Yad Vashem (AJef-2429/266).
- 102 See n. 65 above.
- 103 Compare Enepekides’s evaluation of the Greek prime minister under the German occupation, Constantine Logothetopoulos, in *To olokaftoma ton Evraion tis Ellades*, 33–39, to that of Molho in *In Memoriam*, 128. Compare these, too, with Pierron, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 229–31. Enepekides did not mince words trying to emphasize the positive role played by the Greek governments under the occupation and that of the Greek people in helping the persecuted Jews. Unlike other historians, he did not bind this viewpoint to the idea that Koretz was the main figure responsible for the Jews’ disaster. A. Kitroeff’s presentation of the way Y. Ben evaluated Koretz’s role in the Salonikan tragedy is illuminating: “The author is critical of the community

leadership’s parleying with the Germans” (*The Jews in War-Time Greece: The Case of Athens* [Athens, 1995], 55). In fact, Ben expressed no such view on that, or any other, page of his paper. Of great interest to that matter is the choice of documents from the years 1943–45 presented in Constantopoulou and Veremis, *Documents on the History of the Greek Jews*, esp. 249–306. Most of them are statements stressing the help given by the Greek people to the Jews of Greece. See also the interview with Mikis Theodorakis (n. 70 above), and the article citing Handali in the Greek newspaper *Alpha-Ena*, Dec. 21–22, 2002, “Oi Evraioi dosilogoi kai sinergates ton Evraion: Kataggelies epizisantos tou Aousvits Iakovou Chandali” (The Names of the Jewish Collaborators, According to Auschwitz Survivor Yaakov Handali). Most of the information in this article was taken from Handali’s memoirs, but a special section of the article is devoted to Koretz, entitled “What does Handali write and think about Koretz?” The anonymous reporter cites Handali as saying: “I do not accept that he did not cut a deal with the Germans. I am 99% sure that he collaborated with them. Bergen-Belsen was a special camp for Spanish, Italian and Latin-American Jews. Rabbi Koretz, being a Polish Jew, did not belong there. I believe that he assisted the Germans, and that’s why he was sent there with his wife and two children. His son kept a diary in the camp in

which he described the kind of food they got, and how they were treated. He knows where his father is buried. As to my friend’s father, nothing was left.’ When Handali hears that Rabbi Koretz was arrested in 1941, he states that there was no documentary evidence to that effect. ‘Why did they send him there? They could easily have sent him to Genti Koule! They sent him to Mauthausen, however, for a purpose—to make him cooperate, and told him to become the Community president. There is a rumor that he was sent by plane!’” To evaluate these alleged citations of Handali, see Aryeh Koretz’s diary (*Yomano shel naar*). For the reason why Koretz was sent to Bergen Belsen, see Dieter Wisliceny’s memorandum to G. Altenburg, the German plenipotentiary to Athens, dated Apr. 16, 1943, in which he recommended sending Koretz to Theresienstadt. Wisliceny reckoned that he might come in handy in a future POW exchange (addenda to the letter sent to Max Merten; see n. 32 above). For the sake of journalistic objectivity, the Greek journalist included a short response from Aryeh Koretz, explaining that his father had been trying to “buy time.” The true purpose of this article was to prove not only that the Jews were to blame for the tragedy that had befallen them but that even an Auschwitz survivor supported this thesis. Thus, anyone refuting this idea was automatically a Holocaust

- denier. A review of the general histories of the Nazi occupation of Greece shows that the negative presentation of Koretz’s role was repeated in J. L. Hondros, *Occupation and Resistance: The Greek Agony 1941–44* (New York, 1983), 93. Of interest is the development in Mazower’s evaluation of the past: whereas Koretz is described in positive terms in *Inside Hitler’s Greece*, 242–44, his role takes a totally different character in *Salonika, City of Ghosts*, 400–404, 411. In both books there is a great emphasis on the assistance given to the Jews by the Greek people (compare n. 83 above). The papers by George Margaritis, “Greek Orthodox Church and the Holocaust,” and Anderw Apostolou, “Exception of Salonika” and “Greek Tragedy,” are certainly exceptions to the general rule.
- 104 Because of the political implications that emerged from the demographic composition of the city, each ethnic group presented different statistics. The exact number of refugees who settled in Salonika itself is inconclusive. In 1913, Greek estimates placed the population of Salonika at 157,889, of whom only 36,956 were Greek and 61,439 were Jews (the rest were Muslims and others). According to data sent in 1916 by the Greek Foreign Ministry to the Greek ambassador in Paris, in response to his inquiry, the number of Greeks in Salonika rose from 39,956 in 1913 to 68,205 in 1916, while the number of Jews

(61,439) did not change. The Jews themselves estimated their number at 90,000 in 1913. These statistics, along with others from different sources, are cited by R. Molho in "Les juifs de Salonique, 1856-1919: Une communauté hors de la norme," 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., l'Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg, 1996), 1: 57-90, esp. 81. On the eve of World War II, the Jewish population of Salonika was estimated at 52,350 (Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 17) out of a total of 240,000. It is estimated that, between 1914 and 1923, some 200,000 Greeks passed through the city, though not all of them remained there. The number of refugees who settled in the city in those years is generally estimated at 150,000. See *League of Nations Commission on Greek Refugee Settlements* (Geneva, 1926); E. G. Mears, *Greece Today: The Aftermath of the Refugee Impact* (Stanford, 1929); C. B. Eddy, *Greece and the Greek Refugees* (London, 1931); S. Ladas, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York, 1932), 621-71; D. Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and Its Impact upon Greece* (Paris, 1962), 28, 69-136; L. Leontidou, *The Mediterranean City in Transition: Social Change and Urban Development* (Cambridge, Engl., 1990), 72-75; E. Voutira, "Population Transfers and Resettlement Policies in Inter-War Europe: The Case of Asia Minor Refugees in Macedonia from an International and National Perspective," in *Ourselves and Others*:

- The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity Since 1912*, ed. P. Mackridge and E. Yannakakis (Oxford, 1997), 91-110; and A. Yerolympos, "Inter-War Town Planning and the Refugee Problem in Greece: Temporary 'Solutions' and Long-Term Dysfunctions," in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*, ed. R. Hirschon (New York, 2003), 132-43, esp. 135, 143. Also of interest is J. S. Koliopolis, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," in Mackridge and Yannakakis, *Ourselves and Others*, 39-58.
- 105 See *Tribuna Libre*, Oct. 14, 1910, p. 2; *Avanti*, Sept. 12, 1913, p. 2. On emigration from Salonika from the Balkan wars through World War I, see Hadar, "Hebetim be-hayei ha-mishpahah ha-yehudit be-Saloniki," chap. 2, and Rozen, *Last Ottoman Century and Beyond*, 1: chap. 9.
- 106 Ben Yaakov, "El sionismo movimiento de masas, mas en Saloniki," *Aksiyon*, May 17, 1933.
- 107 Rozen, *Last Ottoman Century and Beyond*, 1: chap. 9.
- 108 From N. D. Torezyner (later Tur-Sinai), chairperson of the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, to the leaders of the Jewish community of Salonika, July 21, 1932 (document in Hebrew in the Koretz Family Archive); from Koretz to the president of the Salonika community, Aug. 1, 1932 (German document in the Koretz Family Archive); from

the leaders of the Salonika community to Rabbi Koretz, Nov. 28, 1932 (French document in the Koretz Family Archive), Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem.

- 109 From Koretz to the president of the Jewish community in Salonika, Oct. 14, 1932 (French document in the Koretz Family Archive). He eventually cultivated a short, well-trimmed beard.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 See letter sent by the editor of the nationalist newspaper *Ellas*, published in Athens, in response to Rabbi Koretz's letter of Nov. 10, 1933, Moscow Institute, f. 1428, op. 1, file 156, pp. 185-87 (in Greek), and Koretz's letter to the editor dated Jan. 4, 1934, *ibid.*, file 94, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. no. 16835.
- 112 *Ha-olam* 24, no. 44 (Nov. 14, 1935): 704.
- 113 *Ibid.*, no. 11 (Mar. 14, 1935): 172.
- 114 *Ibid.*, no. 12 (Mar. 21, 1935): 192.
- 115 *Aksiyon Prensa*, June 21, 1936; *ibid.*, Oct. 14, 1937.
- 116 Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem.
- 117 Rozen, *Last Ottoman Century and Beyond*, 1: chap. 9.
- 118 *El Tiempo*, May 16, 1934.
- 119 Yitzhak David Florentin's defense speech in the Greek court hearing Koretz's libel suit. Minutes of the Greek Court, Sept. 13, 1934 (Greek document in the Koretz Family Archive).
- 120 On the *El Tiempo*-Koretz scandal and the libel suit brought by Koretz against Florentin, see *El Tiempo*, Sept. 13, 15, 20, 29, 1934; Nov. 10, 1934; Dec. 8,

1934. Minutes of the Greek Court, September 13, 1934 (Greek document in the Koretz Family Archive). See also *El Mesajero*, Dec. 9, 1935.

- 121 H. A. Toledano, "Igrot ha-itonai Eliyahu Veisse al matzav ha-kehilah," in Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 2: 168-76.
- 122 *El Mesajero*, Jan. 1, 1936.
- 123 See the letter by Adolph Arditi, head of the Zionist Federation in Salonika, to Yisrael Auerbach in Paris, complaining about Koretz and asking Auerbach to inquire into his past in Berlin and elsewhere, with the obvious intention of getting rid of him (Oct. 17, 1935, Moscow Institute, Keren Ha-yesod Archives, f. 115, file 69), and Auerbach's response that he had only good things to say about Koretz (Nov. 3, 1935, *ibid.*).
- 124 On the preparations for Metaxas's visit to Salonika following his rise to power, see Moscow Institute, f. 1428, op. 1, file 102, p. 159 (TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 16963). See also the invitation to a festive lunch at the Town Hall of Salonika with the prime minister and the crown prince during the same visit, Sept. 1, 1936, *ibid.*, p. 158. For Metaxas's declaration in favor of Zionism on the occasion of his inclusion in the Golden Book in Jerusalem, and for Koretz's speech at that ceremony, held in the presence of the head of the Salonika community, Asher Moisis, the head of the Athens community, Zakharias Vital, and the head of B'nai B'rith in Athens, David

- Sciacki, on Nov. 10, 1937, see the ceremonial booklet in Judeo-Spanish and Greek (no publisher, no date), Ben Zvi Institute, no. 18096. See also Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem, p. 14, and the recorded testimony of Aryeh Koretz, Masuah Archives, cassette no. VP/192, 02:12:07.
- 125 Concerning the sale of a plot on Venizelos street by the president of the community, Eliyahu Ben-Uzilio (*El Tiempo*, May 7, 1934), see "El Koncilio y la fortuna de las kehilot," *Aksiyon*, Jan. 7, 1935.
- 126 See n. 133 below. See also "Eleksiyones? Unika solusyon, unika salida!" *El Mesajero*, Apr. 26, 1936: "Almost all members of the assembly are involved in problems of real estate management."
- 127 "El Koncilio y la fortuna de las kehilot."
- 128 *Aksiyon Prensa*, Nov. 11, 24, 1935; Dec. 10, 1935.
- 129 On Rabbi Haviv, see Recanati, *Zikhron Saloniki*, 2: 462–63, and I. Matarasso, "'Charmbi Chaim Chabib,' Anamniseis apo tin Thessaloniki tou 1943" (Harabi Hayim Habib, *Memoirs from 1943, Salonika*), *Chronika* (Sept. 1984): 68–69.
- 130 See the list of members of the Community Assembly, May 27, 1934 (Moscow Institute, f. 1428, op. 1, file 145, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 18272); meeting of the Community Council, Dec. 17, 1939 (ibid., TAU DP, Salonika Archives doc 638); and meeting of the Community Council, June 4, 1940 (ibid., TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 9158).
- 131 See the list of Zionist candidates for the communal elections, May 27, 1934 (Moscow Institute, f. 1437, op. 1, file 1, ns 17a, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 2571), and "Komunita Israelita comision elektoral," *Aksiyon*, June 1, 1934. (The mix-up between Judeo-Spanish and Italian is in the original text.)
- 132 Shemuel Florentin's father was also called David (see Moscow Institute, f. 1437, op. 1, file 106, ns 579, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 26801). These names were so common that, barring some supporting evidence, no definite conclusion can be drawn.
- 133 The way in which communal real estate was handled by the leadership will be dealt with in detail in my forthcoming biography of Koretz. In the meantime, see the allegation that the Zionist leader, Mentesh Ibn Shanji, sold communal property in the 151 neighborhood to his close friends ("Muestra opinion: Anarkiyal," *El Foburgo*, Dec. 4, 1926) and the Community Council minutes dated June 4, 1940. At that point the community was in great financial difficulties and could hardly pay salaries. Not only was a lot of real estate sold but an effort was also made to collect debts owed to the community. One of the subjects discussed at this meeting was a piece of property in the 151 neighborhood sold to Mr. Avraham Ginio on 1928 (this is not the famous Zionist leader Avraham Alberto Ginio, but possibly a nephew or more distant relative). At the sale, it was decided that the price of 32,000 drachmas would be considered a loan given to him by the community. At the said meeting, Ginio was asked to pay back the loan. He agreed to pay but only if offered a discount of 9,000 drachmas. Some of the council members were of the opinion that such a discount was not in order, since he had not repaid his debt for 12 years. It was finally decided that he would pay no less than 25,000 drachmas (Moscow Institute, f. 1428, op. 1, file 145, ns 770, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 9158). On June 9, 1940, in another decision, the Community Council stated that it had decided to sell house no. 44 in the 151 neighborhood to Avraham Moisis (Mosheh) Ginio. It also stated that the contract drawn up in 1926 (*sic*) by the Greek lawyer V. Kouvela was erroneously made out for the sale of house no. 73 in the same neighborhood, whereas the intention had been to sell no. 44, which was much larger (240 square meters). The price was fixed at 69,000 drachmas, a very low price, on the pretext that the property was in bad condition (ibid., cassette no. 129, time 0:06.43).
- 134 For the Italia Yashan scandal, see part of a letter from Koretz to Haviv, Feb. 21, 1936 (Moscow Institute, f. 1428, op. 1, file 115, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30736), describing the assets and their status; from Koretz to the leaders of Italia Yashan, asking for the account books, Aug. 25, 1938 (ibid., ns 190, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30731); from Rabbi Hayim Haviv to Koretz, Oct. 27, 1938 (ibid., ns 189, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30732), declaring that there was nothing wrong with the accounts; from Koretz to Florentin asking for explanations and notifying him of the appointment of a committee of inquiry, Nov. 6, 1938 (ibid., ns 175, TAU DP, Salonika Archives doc. 30722); appointment of the committee, Nov. 8, 1938 (ibid., 179–180, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 39725); from Koretz to Italia Yashan, following a request by 40 members of the congregation, proposing that the congregational leadership should organize general elections to the Congregational Council, Nov. 8, 1938 (ibid., ns 181, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30726); from Koretz to Italia Yashan, saying that the congregational leadership had not submitted a list of voters, nor fixed an election date, Jan. 21, 1939 (ibid., TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30727); from the committee of inquiry, headed by Rabbi Haviv, to Koretz, saying that the committee is still operative and has advised Italia Yashan's accountant to add one or two members of the opposition to the council, but Shemuel Florentin rejected the idea and demanded to know who had complained about irregularities in the elections and in the financial management of the council, Apr. 18, 1939 (ibid., ns. 178, TAU DP, Salonika Ar-

- chives, doc. 30724); from Koretz to the Congregational Council of Italia Yashan, complaining that Italia Yashan had not answered his letters and was refusing to hand over its account books, and unless the books were submitted within 48 hours he would call for new elections to the congregational leadership, May 26, 1939 (ibid., TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30723); *Aksiyon*, Oct. 14, 1938; and finally Dr. Tzevi Zohar's report to Mosheh Shertok (Sharett), Jan. 15, 1939 (CZA, KH4/B/2044). On Aug. 9, 1939, Koretz complained about the sale of the Sicilia Hadash property (Moscow Institute f. 1428, op. 1, file 115, p. 91, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 30456).
- 135 N. Gross, "Ha-mediniyut hakkalkalit shel memshelet hamandat," in *Ha-historyah shel Erets Yisrael*, ed. A. Shavit, vol. 9: *Ha-mandat v'eha-bayit ha-leumi* (Jerusalem, 1982), 102.
- 136 Zohar's report to Shertok, Jan. 15, 1939.
- 137 From the president and secretary of the community to Koretz, Oct. 29, 1937 (letter in Spanish in the Koretz Family Archive).
- 138 From the president and secretary of the community to Koretz, Apr. 10 and 11, 1938 (letters in Spanish in the Koretz Family Archive).
- 139 Koretz testimony, Yad Vashem.
- 140 Ibid.
- 141 Ibid., and Aryeh Koretz's testimony, Masu'ah Archives, cassette no. VP/192.
- 142 See n. 27 above.
- 143 H. Gottlieb, "Ha-mafteah la-shaar ha-gadol," trans. (from Serbo-Croatian) Tz. Rothen, in *Ketavim*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv, 1980), 115–203. This wonderful novel, written after the war, was preceded by a short story on the same theme written in 1940, called "Va-yehi ba-hatzi halaylah," in ibid., 56–62.
- 144 "Ha-mafteah la-shaar ha-gadol," 141–42.
- 145 Manuscript in the Koretz family archives. I saw only the Hebrew translation done by her son, Adv. Aryeh Koretz.
- 146 See an undated report on the situation of three boats carrying Jewish refugees that sailed from Prague via the Danube, which were not allowed to dock in a Romanian port or in Istanbul. The report notes that the ships were not seaworthy and that food supplies were inadequate (Moscow Institute, f. 1427, op. 1, file 4, p. 43, TAU DP, Salonika Archives, doc. 1918); the representatives of the refugees on the Miloš, anchored in the port of Piraeus, requested that a Greek official be allowed to check conditions onboard and ascertain the gravity of the situation (ibid., p. 38, doc. 1914, Oct. 15, 1940); an offer was made to pay for the right to dock until their entry to Palestine was authorized (ibid., p. 41, doc. 1916, Oct. 16, 1940); negotiations commenced with other Greek ports (ibid., p. 8, doc. 1907, Oct. 18, 1940); and, in the name of the passengers on the Miloš, Ernest Braun thanks the Captain of Lavrion Port for his help to the ship and its 709 passengers (ibid., p. 9, doc. 1908, Oct. 18, 1940). On Metaxas's assistance to the refugees and his support of the Jewish community in general, see an eyewitness's account, "Yavan ha-nofelet v'eha-Yehudim," *Davar*, May 18, 1941; from Eva Michaelis-Stern of Aliyat Ha-Noar in Paris to Princess Maria of Greece, asking her to convince the Jews of Greece to assign the 4,000 pounds they had collected for assistance to refugees to finance the journey of refugee children from Holland, Belgium, and Poland to Palestine (Koretz Family Archive); from Koretz to the Community Council, Apr. 9, 1940, concerning Princess Maria of Greece's request that the money collected in Greece for refugees from central Europe be used to help Henrietta Szold send Jewish refugee children to Palestine. The letter stated that Princess Maria had been cooperating with Henrietta Szold's organization for a long time, and he saw no reason for refusing her request. The rest of the letter deals with assistance to two ships anchored in Piraeus that were unable to reach shore or continue to Palestine (Koretz Family Archive).
- 147 *To neon drama tou ellinismou kai ai skoteinai dinameis o Basileus Georgios o B' organon tou mistiriodous anotatou Evraikou Simvoulion* (The New Drama of Greece and the Forces of Evil: King George the II Organ of the Mysterious Highest Jewish Council) (Salonika, 1942), 17. (Copy kept at the Koretz family archives).
- 148 Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 50.
- 149 Hitler's adjutant, Gerhard Engel, claims that, on Oct. 2, 1941, Hitler met with Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heidrich (head of the Reich's Security Main Office), Wilhelm Keitel (chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces), and Alfred Jodl (chief of Operation Staff of the High Command of the Armed Forces). At that meeting, Himmler reported on the deportation of the Jews and specified those of Riga, Reval, and Minsk. Allegedly, also at that meeting, Hitler authorized Himmler to carry out the deportation of the Jews of Salonika, where he feared a disastrous mingling of Jews and Levantines. P. Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews: The Genesis of the Holocaust* (London, 1994), 171–72, points to the fact that Himmler was in the Ukraine until Oct. 5, 1941, which places this purported meeting after this date. See also C. B. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942* (Lincoln, Neb., 2004), 519, n. 73. If Engel's information is accurate, then the assumption that the Germans set Koretz free due to the progress of their plans toward implementing the Final Solution in Greece becomes more plausible. By the end of Nov. 1941, the rumor about the Final Solution had already made its way to diplomatic circles in Europe. See R. Breitman (IWC Director of Historical Research, U.S. National Archives) Report

- based on these newly declassified records, "What Chilean Diplomats Learned About the Holocaust" (www.archives.gov/iwg/research_papers/breitman_chilean_diplomats.html).
- 150 "Notes on the History of the Jews in Greece," 53, n. 13. Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece*, 230. Dörhage was sent back to the Reich in March 1942, after it was discovered that he had been feeding his children from official rations (*ibid.*, 44).
- 151 Little is to be gained by repeating Eck's attempt to refute the charges brought against Koretz (Eck, "New Light on the Charges Against the Last Chief Rabbi of Salonika"). Only new material that has come to light will be discussed here.
- 152 See *ibid.*, 30–31.
- 153 Carpi, *Italian Diplomatic Documents*, 21–25.
- 154 Dublon-Knebel, "The Holocaust in Greece as Reflected in Documents from the German Foreign Office," hcc.haifa.ac.il/Departments/history-school/conferences/holocaust_greece/knebel_english.pdf.
- 155 Carpi, "New Approach," 265–69. For the full letter, see D. Carpi, "Mekorot italkiim," 113–15.
- 156 Molho and Nehama, *In Memoriam*, 94.
- 157 Yacoel, "Memoir," 119–20.
- 158 Gottlieb, "Ha-mafteah la-shaar ha-gadol," 141.
- 159 See the testimony of an anonymous Jew of Turkish citizenship. This witness attested that the Germans did not use any of the declarations prepared for them by the Jews, as they were ordered by the community leadership, but seized any property they came across and tortured people whom they suspected of hiding money or valuables (see n. 8 above). See also Daut Levi's report (n. 4 above) and Yoin Tov Yacoel's memoirs (n. 3 above) as well as reports of the interrogation of Dieter Wisliceny, U.S. National Archives, World War Crimes Records (Nuremberg), RG 238, Nov. 23, 1945, p. 12, all regarding the Germans' knowledge of the Jewish neighborhood independently from the information allegedly given to them by Koretz.