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Summary

George Ftikas born February 10, 1929 in Thessaloniki, Greece. His father was Dmitri, who moved to Salonica where he met his wife, Anastisia (née Sopholides?). George had one brother, Niarchos. His father worked for the savings branch of the national postal service. He had also been a partisan against Ottoman rule. He describes his early living conditions and surroundings. His family was Christian but not very religious. His school and neighborhood were of mixed religions with little animosity.

He begins his discussion about the war experience with Mussolini's failed attack on Greece in October, 1940 and the subsequent intervention by Hitler in May, 1941 which drained his forces and delayed his attack on Russia. George relates the severe wartime deprivations, especially food, and his interactions with occupying Germans.

George had heard that Polish Jews had been taken away by the Nazis. Therefore, the local Jewish community – about 20% of the population – was alarmed, but chose unwisely to organize themselves to move into a few central places, which made their expulsion easier in March, 1943. George states that some people think former UN General Secretary, Kurt Waldheim, was part of this operation, but he has no personal information. He goes on to discuss the political factions within the guerilla resistance.

His uncle, Kristos Cristides (?) had a cousin who was an officer in the Greek army and was married to a Jew. They had neighbors who narrowly avoided arrest by the Gestapo, and who were offered sanctuary by George's father at their apartment in Charilaou. The family, a mother with her son and daughter, hid there for about six months until leaving for Athens where concealment was easier. George also created some issues of a hand-written magazine in the last years of the war; he could have topics about the conduct of the war, but information about the Jews was too dangerous to publish.

After the war, Thessaloniki was occupied by local Communist guerrillas for three months. George moved to Athens becoming an interpreter until mid-1950's when he had to do his military service, also as an interpreter. He married an American a woman working for the local CIA office and in 1959, they came to the U.S.