

Margarita Flaskidou-Kazamia
RG-50.855*0026

Margarita Flaskidou-Kazamia, born on Nov. 22, 1931, at 17 Edmondou Rostan Street, Thessaloniki (Salonika), Greece describes her experience as a Greek Christian, in the period during the German occupation (1941 – 1943) and after liberation. There were a lot of Jews in that area, and maintained good relations with their Christian and Armenian neighbors. Her family did not have any close Jewish friends. Margarita had some Jewish classmates in Elementary School but hardly any in High School. The only student she remembers is a “slim boy with black curly hair” called Maurice. The Jews spoke very good Greek but with a slight accent; their main language was Ladino. In the back of the house, they had Jewish neighbors, Madam Sterina and her daughters, and used to talk across from their windows. The Christian children knew of the Jewish holidays, and enjoyed the Matsah, during Passover, and sugar dolls, during Purim. Her grandfather, lived nearby, had a rabbi as neighbor and good friend; he let him build the Sukkah, during Sukkoth, in his back yard.

The Germans came to Salonika on a Monday in 1941. Because of the bombings, Margarita’s family left for the village of Poligyro the same Friday. When they came back after a short while, they found Germans occupying the first floor of their house. They were simple soldiers and did not cause any troubles. There was a lot of hunger during the German occupation, and she witnessed people falling down from it.

The difficulties for the Jews started when they Germans ordered them to wear a star on their chest, and shave the head of women with lice (they were called “okras”). After a while, in 1942 or 1943 (she does not remember exactly) they gathered all the Jews and paraded them down on Stratos Avenue to the train station. She witnessed that parade of sad, miserable people, and cried with the memory. She recalls that, their neighbor, Madam Sterina tried to kill herself rather than leave her house; she survived that ordeal, but not the concentration camps. None of that family came back. When the Jews left their houses, Margarita did not witness any foraging; she assumes it happened, but not by the neighbors. Eventually, the houses were occupied by Christians, but she does not know how and under what conditions.

After the war, the family of Stela Gatenio, with her children, Rita and Alberto, and friend, Bounika, came back and settled in a house across from hers. Eventually that family immigrated to Israel. Margarita and, particularly, her sister became very friendly with Elvira Naar, and the Molhou family. Indeed her sister’s son got married to Nina Molhou.