

Manolis Kalligeris

Manolis Kalligeris, born Dec. 4, 1923, in Chania, on the most southern Greek Island of Crete, describes his experience as a Greek Christian during the German occupation, 1941-1944. His family, father, mother and two younger sisters, lived in Chania close to the Jewish neighborhood (Evraiki). Their store (glasshouse) was on the commercial Bolari Street, close to many Jewish stores. Next door was the ready-made-cloths store of Constantini.

His father had a number of Jewish customers, suppliers and friends. Manolis remembers the names of Cohen, Minervo, and Jacob the barber from Chania, Benroubi from Athens and Aseos from Salonika (Thessaloniki). The Constantini family sold their store and moved to Athens before the war, and they survived. The Cohen family and Jacob the barber perished. Minervo, who fought the Italians at the beginning of the war, returned from the front to Athens and survived. He does not know the fate of the Aseos.

Manolis did not have any Jewish classmates, or social friends, although there were many in his school. In general, the relationship between the Jews and the Christians in Chania was very good, without any distinctions. The town of Chania was fiercely bombarded by the Germans, but the Jewish neighborhood was not targeted. It was rumored that the Greeks had put German prisoners there, and the Germans knew about it.

When the Germans came did not treat the Jews differently until the very day they captured them. One a day of 1942 (he is not sure of the exact date) , very early in the morning, the Germans went into the Jewish neighborhood, captured all the Jews, loaded them to military track and transported them to the port of Souda, East of Chania. There, they loaded them on ships and torpedoed them as they were afloat. After the Jews left, their houses and stores were looted, and their houses were occupied by Christians. Rumors also have it that some Jews gave their jewelry to Christian friends believing that they will return.... A lot of people became rich off the Jews. Manolis did not want to mentioned names, although he seems to know some.