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Oral history interview with Asimina Sarafi

Summary

Asimina Sarafi, born in Trikala, Greece, on Jan. 25, 1933 in Trikala, Thessaly, central Greece, describes her experience as a Christian during the German occupation, 1940-45. Her family comprised of her Father (Giannis), Mother (Fani), two brothers (Michalis and Dimitris) and her. Her Father was an attorney, and her two brothers became an attorney and civil engineer. The whole family, specially her two brother were involved in ELAS (the Greek Peoples Liberation Army) and later in the Communist/Socialist Party. The family had a large house on Kondili Street, close to the central town square, which was in the middle of the then Jewish neighborhood. As a result, Asimina's only and closest friends were Jewish.

The Jews of Trikala were craftsmen and merchants, and generally well off. Their houses were small and modest, but always clean and neat. When the Germans came, about 3/4 of the Jews escaped to the surrounding villages and mountains. Unfortunately, a lot returned, fooled by the Germans' initial inactivity. They were captured and sent to concentration camps. The ones who stayed away, survived and returned to Trikala to resume their lives. She remembers members of the Moisis, Levi and Solomon families returned from the country side.

At the beginning, Trikala was occupied by the Italians, and everything was fine. But when Italy capitulated the summer of 1943 and the Germans occupied Trikala, life changed for the worst. There was a lot of hunger in the city. The Germans did not do anything against the Jews for the first year. But in the early morning of March 24, 1944, they moved in the Jewish neighborhood and captured all the Jews. They put them in army trucks and took them away. Asimina and her family saw everything from their windows. By 7:00 am, all the Jews were gone.

Asimina remembers a lot of Jewish families:

- Natan, the father was a tinsmith
- Atoun, shoemaker
- Negrin, the father was a hatter and the mother a seamstress
- Sambethai, the wife was very close friends with Asimina's mother.
- Levis, had a daughter who survived and got married in Switzerland
- Moisi
- Mordochai
- Solomon Solomon
- Makis Kapetas
- Cohen
- Kampelis, their daughter survived and got married in Volos, a neighboring town
- Tovil, their store was next to her house. They had a daughter called Matoula who survived, and settled in Athens
- Iosif, their daughter Gabi was very close to Asimina. They also had another daughter, Mireig
- Marcos Ganis, their daughter survived and returned

All the above were cloth merchants