

Minutes of Special Meeting of the Board of the Jewish Community of Salonika, Held on Tuesday, September 11, 1945

The Board of the Jewish Community of Salonika held a special meeting today, Tuesday, September 11, 1945, at 3.00 p.m. in order to discuss the measures to be taken following the arrival at Sidirocastro of 53 persons from the Concentration Camp of Bergen-Belsen, where they were sent, through special privilege, by the Germans in 1943. Some of these people have to account for their close cooperation with the Rosenberg Commission, which was responsible for the persecution and deportation of the Jews; others have to explain their behavior as members of the Communal Council or of communal committees during the deportation period; and generally, all have to explain the special favor which the Germans granted them by sending them to a concentration camp considered to be of a privileged nature instead of sending them to the concentration camps and crematoria located in Poland.

The return of these persons has caused a tremendous uproar amongst the Jewish population of Salonika [...] After hearing the advice of those who attended the meeting, the following decisions were agreed upon unanimously:

(1) 16 persons, viz:

Castro Albert

Albala Jacques

Sack Max

Barzilay Ezra

Uziel Salomon

Yoel Groufred

Koretz Gitta

Albala Lora

Sion Leon (Topouz)

Hasson Joseph

Hasson Issac

Errera Joseph

Jack Ida

Sion Buena

Castro Moise

Yoel Mathilde

will have to appear before the court. Some of them have manifestly cooperated with the Germans. Others, having been members of the Communal Council or of communal committees, or having been closely related to the principal accused parties, have to account for their direct or indirect actions during the deportation.

2) All the other persons (children excluded) whose sole indictment for the time being is that of having enjoyed the favor of the Germans, have to appear before the court and explain what prompted this special favor (since it is a well known fact that the Germans never granted anything to those who did not, in turn, serve them, still less where Jews were concerned). They must also give details regarding the conduct of the 16 accused parties listed above.

3) A notice will be posted in the offices of the Jewish Community inviting all those who have to depose against the 53 persons mentioned above to proceed immediately in the necessary formalities by bringing the required data to the relevant departments in the Community building. This data will complement the existing depositions.

4) The Legal Advisors, Messrs. Sam Nahmias and Rofel Cohen, are requested to file the necessary depositions with the Public Prosecutor. An accusation will likewise be filed with the Prosecutor against Vital Hasson and Edgard Cunic, whose generally acknowledged cooperation with the Germans is particularly disgusting. Both of them are now in Athens; the former is in preventive detention, and the latter is still free.

On behalf of the Communal Council,

Haim Saltiel.

President.

In January 1943, the Rosenberg Commission, consisting of a small number of German officers and soldiers belonging to the infamous SD GESTAPO, arrived in Salonika specifically for the purpose of persecuting the Jews. The Commission's purpose was to capture en masse all of the Jews of Salonika, to deport them to Poland, and generally to exterminate them and to appropriate all of their property. To achieve this objective, the Commission approached all low-class people in Salonika who were willing to serve and assist them in exchange for various forms of remuneration. The Commission asked for the assistance of the first 18 persons in the above list, who had willingly placed themselves under its orders. They thus became organs of the occupier and consciously contributed to the execution of a crime the likes of which has not been witnessed in human history. The first one accused, H. Koretz, who, as chief Rabbi and spiritual leader of the Jews of Salonika, had considerable influence on his flock, obtained an order from the Rosenberg Commission to be appointed president of the Jewish Community of Salonika. In addition to his religious duties, he also invested himself with political authority. With the assistance of those engaged by the Germans upon his suggestion, he began carrying out faithfully the orders of the Commission, even though he knew that he was assisting in the systematic destruction and extermination of the Jews of Salonika. Among those engaged by him were Solomon Ouziel and Jack Albala, liaison for the Chief Rabbi and President to the Rosenberg Commission, and later, also to the Town Civil Police Chief. In the course of this mission and under the leadership of Vital Hasson, the remaining 15 accused placed themselves under the orders of the S.D. GESTAPO SERVICE, which supplied them with authority to execute any unjust act of violence against any Jew or Greek Christian who assisted the Jews. Under the protection of the first 3 leaders and the immediate orders of the S.D., this gang of 15 thugs quickly took a census, concentrated 43,000 Jews in special closed quarters (Ghettos), and then captured and imprisoned

them in the BARON HIRSCH concentration camp, from whence they were deported to death camps in Poland. They did this in a way that provoked terror and abhorrence throughout the whole country. But the capture and deportation were not the sole actions of this Commission. Before deportation, those who were to be deported were stripped of all possessions and were left naked. For this special task, Vital Hasson, Edgar Cunic and Leon Sion (Topouz) offered their services, thus becoming the absolute masters of the Baron Hirsch Concentration Camp. They arrested any Jew who according to their judgment might have hidden money or other precious objects. In some instances, in order to force them to reveal the persons to whom they had entrusted their property, the accused treated those Jews so cruelly that they were on brink of death. These barbarians had substituted and surpassed the occupier in their savageness, thus turning the Baron Hirsch Concentration Camp into a place of martyrdom for any Jew who was suspected of having hidden money or other property. Furthermore, they converted this Camp into a place of orgies: together with the Germans, they violated any Jewish woman or girl in the presence of her parents and co-religionists to the shock of all concerned. The remaining 18 accused were also involved in this action: Albert Castro was engaged and favored in various ways by the Gestapo service; Mr Sack Max and Yoel Groufter, treacherous Jews from Poland, were engaged [...] by the Germans in the service of the Jewish Community of Salonika with the object of espionage and preparation of extermination work [...]; S. Barzilay, I. Hasson, I. Errera, G. Koretz, L. Albala, I. Jack, M. Castro, M. Yoel, in remuneration for their services to the Germans, were spared the suffering experienced by other Jews by having the privilege of being transported to the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp, where only those who had offered important services to the Germans could stay. There, their lives were not threatened, and they had everything in abundance, while their co-religionists and the victims of their criminal acts were being gassed and burned in the crematoria, or were dying en masse [...] in Poland. They had all kinds of pleasures at their disposal, even sexual enjoyment, as is evident by the fact that children were born in that camp. The remaining 37 persons accused also enjoyed this privileged position, having also been transported to the privileged

Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. They were evidently given this privilege in exchange for services rendered to the occupier during the deportation of the Jews; it is known, after all, that Germans never give anything to anyone, and especially to Jews, without something in return.

As the above actions are punished by Clause 1, par. D.E. St. and Clause 4 of Legislative Act No.6 of the year 1945, re sanctions to be imposed on those having cooperated with the enemy, as completed and modified by Act No. 12 of the year 1945 in Clause 88, 27 and 307 of the Penal Law in combination with Clause 56 of Penal Law

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we submit a lawsuit against them and ask that they be punished according to the law. The proposed witnesses are:

- 1) Issac Matarasso, doctor, Tsimiski street No.93
- 2) Mentach Melho, landowner, Vassileos Iraklion No.6
- 3) Joseph Amariglio, merchant Stoa Allatini
- 4) Victor Almosnino, merchant, Paraskevopoulos 16
- 5) Salvator Cunic, merchant, Vassileos Constantinos 17
- 6) Salomon A. Maissa, doctor, Vassileou Iraklion 24
- 7) David Jacob Bitran, merchant, Vassil. Trakliou 24
- 8) Levy Avram Allalouf, merchant, Vassil. Iraklion 24.

all residents of Salonika.