

## Lucillo Merci on Anti-Jewish Legislation in Greece

The persecution of the Greek Jews commenced in June 1942, when altogether some 47,000 people were deported from Salonika to the east. The passages from Merci's diary give an account of the activities of the Italian consulate in Salonika, which attempted to save as many Jews as possible by naturalizing them as Italian citizens. Lucillo Merci was active in these attempts.

February 25

For the first time one could see Jews wearing the Star of David in the streets. The Star of David is a yellow hexagonal star which is visible from a distance. The star is stamped with an identification number corresponding to the number in the bearer's identity card, by means of which he can be identified at any time by German or Greek policemen.

March 8

Further orders imposed on the Jews are:

Ban on walking on the promenade and the main streets.

Ban on doing business on Via Egnatia.

The Jews are required to submit a list of their property to the authorities.

All Jewish stores will be closed.

Leaving the ghetto on Saturday is forbidden.

The Jews are required to hand over the keys of their business forthwith.

The city is rife with rumors. One of them has it that all Greek Jews will be sent to Poland, whereas citizens of other countries will be returned to their countries of origin (Italians to Italy, etc.). No restrictions have been imposed on Jews of Italian nationality whose case engages our attention. The entire burden of work falls on me and on Mrs. Capasso, as we are entrusted with maintaining contact with the Germans.

Source: "Excerpts from the Salonika Diary of Lucillo Merci (February-August 1943)", *Yad Vashem Studies*, 18, 1987, pp. 301- 302.