

# REFLECTION

NAME

DATE

**Extract taken from the book: 'Salonica. City of ghosts' by Mark Mazower, 2004, published by Harper Collins.**

1. Life before the Second World War Language and Identity.

From the Greek point of view, the key to turning Jews into full citizens of their new country was language. Before 1912, few Jews in Salonica had bothered to learn Greek. From 1915, however, all Jewish (and Muslim) community schools in receipt of public funds were obliged to teach it. Jewish children were not forced to attend what Greek civil servants called 'our schools' - whose instruction was described as rather 'classical' and 'incompatible with Jewish customs and nature'.

Instead Athens invested in the Jewish schools themselves, providing language teachers and later actual buildings. In this way, the young generation learned Greek quickly and by the Second World War, many Jewish children were fluent, having taken in school productions of such Greek classics as 'Golfo the Shepherdess' or the stirring story of Leonidas and the 300. After one school play, a Judo Spanish paper proudly reported in 1932 that: " Many Christian friends who followed the performance assured us that they could not tell that the actors were Jews, so beautiful and correct was their Greek. (p.403)

**Q: IN WHAT CITY DID JEWS LEARN GREEK MORE FLUENTLY AND WHY?**

**COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**