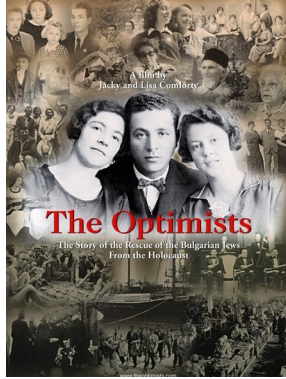


Bulgarian Orthodox Church
photo: Mariana Ivanova Ruseva



Revolutionary Hero,
Vasil Levski



BULGARIA AND THE HOLOCAUST: THE FRAGILITY OF GOODNESS

A Symposium, Exhibition, and Cultural Event

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2012 • 4PM
HILLEL AT UCLA (574 HILGARD AVE)

Sponsored by

The UCLA Center for Jewish Studies and
The Dortort Center for Creativity in the Arts at UCLA Hillel

With the Generous Support of

The Bulgarian Jewish Heritage Alliance of America and
The "1939" Club

Cosponsored By

The UCLA Center for European and Eurasian Studies
The UCLA Department of History
The UCLA Mickey Katz Chair in Jewish Music
The Consulate General of Bulgaria in Los Angeles

SCHEDULE

- 4 PM** Welcome: **Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller** (Hillel at UCLA)
Todd Presner (UCLA)
- 4:10** Remarks: **Marin J Dimitrov** (Consul General of Bulgaria)
- 4:15** Remarks: **Rabbi Haim Asa** (Temple Beth Tikvah)
- 4:20** Musical Performance
Directed by **Tzvetanka Varimezova** (UCLA)
Introduction: **Timothy Rice** (UCLA)
- 4:45** Keynote Address:
Steven F Sage (US Holocaust Memorial Museum)
- 5:30** Reception
- 6:30** Screening of **The Optimists**
Q&A: **Jacky Comforty** (Director)
Moderator: **Gail Kligman** (UCLA)

This exhibition tells the story of how the Bulgarian Jews survived the Holocaust. In February 1943, Bulgaria and Germany signed an agreement to deport Bulgarian Jewry to camps in Poland. Over 1,000 Jews of Thrace and Macedonia, then under Bulgarian administration, were detained and handed over to the Germans who sent them to death camps. Then Bulgarian Police proceeded to round up 9,000 Jews within Bulgaria itself. An intense public reaction ensued. Significant and public protest involving key political leaders and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church moved King Boris III to cancel the deportation on the very day of its planned execution. While expelled from their homes and persecuted, Bulgaria's 48,000 Jews nonetheless escaped total destruction with the help of civic society.

BIOS

Remarks: Rabbi Haim Asa was born in Bulgaria to a Sephardic family. In 1944, the family fled the Nazis and made Aliyah. He joined the youth division of the underground Haganah and eventually enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces, where he served as a paratrooper and later in the Mossad. He came to the U.S. in 1954. After ordination from Hebrew Union College in 1963, Rabbi Asa was the Latin American Director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He became rabbi of Temple Beth Tikvah in Orange County in 1966 and is now Rabbi Emeritus.

Remarks: Marin Dimitrov earned an MA degree in English Philology from the University of Sofia, and an Executive MBA from the University of Humberside & Lincolnshire (UK). Prior to being appointed Consul General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Los Angeles, Mr. Dimitrov served as a senior executive both in the public and private sectors, heading the Bulgarian Commercial and Economic office in London from 2001 to 2005, and serving as Country Manager for Balkan Holdings – a UK private fund investing in South-Eastern Europe.

Keynote address: Dr. Steven F. Sage served as Consul at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria from 1984-1986, an assignment which included the Human Rights, National Minorities, and Religious Affairs portfolios. More recently he has worked as an historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. There he documented World War II-era Jewish forced labor in Bulgaria, on behalf of the Jewish Claims

Conference, using materials obtained from the state and military archives in Bulgaria. That effort led to a compensation award paid to survivors. Dr. Sage has just presented papers at the Bulgaria Helsinki Committee's conference on the Holocaust in Bulgaria, held in October, and again last week at a conference in Sofia sponsored by Sofia University and Haifa University. He is now working on a book, *The Holocaust in Bulgaria*. His other Holocaust-related book is *Ibsen and Hitler*, published in 2006.

Musical Performance: Tzvetanka Varimezova was born in Bulgaria and received a B.A. degree in choral conducting and folk instrument pedagogy from the Academy of Music and Dance in Plovdiv. In Bulgaria she was a soloist and assistant choral director for a number of professional women's choirs in Sofia, including the Bulgarian National Ensemble of Folk Song and Dance. She came to the U.S. in 2001 to teach at UCLA.

Screening: THE OPTIMISTS. On March 9th, 1943, police arrived at the home of filmmaker Jacky Comforty's family in Bulgaria. This was to be the beginning of the end, the start of the journey to Treblinka. **THE OPTIMISTS** blends personal and historical narrative in documenting the dramatic story of Bulgarian Christians and Muslims who secured the safety of their Jewish neighbors from deportation. Winner of first prize for documenting the Jewish experience at the Jerusalem International Film Festival in 2000, and co-winner of the Peace Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2001.

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I. Four Traditional Sephardic Songs

1. **La Roza Enflorece (The rose blooms)** arr. Nikolai Kaufman (1min 45sec)
The Rose blooms in the month of May. My soul is slipping away, suffering of love. Come soon dove. Come soon my soul, because I am going to die.
2. **La Senora Novia (Here's to the bride!)** arr. Nikolai Kaufman (1min 30sec)
3. **Lo Siete Izos di Hana (The sevens sons of Hannah)** arr. Flory Jagoda (3min)
Guitar: Justin Dragen, Finger Cymbals: Ronda Berkeley, Frame Drum: Trudy Israel
Hanna raised her seven sons to be proud Jews and adhere to Holy Law. When the king offers them riches and his crown if they will abandon their religion, but they refuse his offer.
4. **La Novia Destrenza el Pelo (The bride unbraids her hair)** (2min 30sec)
The groom faints as his bride unbraids her hair. He promises to be a good husband who will fulfill his wife's desires and keep her from worries.

II. Four Traditional Bulgarian Songs

5. **Zaspalo e Chelebijche (The Shepherd fell asleep)** arr. Nikolai Kaufman (2min 30sec)
A song from the Rhodope Mountains in southern Bulgaria about a handsome young shepherd who has fallen asleep in his sweetheart's arms. Although she loves to watch him as he sleeps, she must wake him because the rooster is crowing and they must part before dawn.
6. **Trendafilchitu (The Carnation)** arr. Nikolai Kaufman (2min)
A young man proposes marriage to a young woman, Dona, saying that he wants to buy her a silver dress and golden shoes.
7. **Nauchil Sai Dobri (Dobri understood)** arr. Nikolai Kaufman (2min 20sec)
Dobri the dressmaker is in love with Bonka, so he moves his supplies to her village so that he can see her every day.
8. **Sidjankata (The Working Bee)** (1min 30sec)
A young man compares young women to the sweetness of fruits and flowers, but compares his own girlfriend to a quince, beautiful on the outside but not so sweet inside.