

Bulgarian Jewish Heritage Center, Jaffa; the Union of Bulgarian Jews; The Salvador Foundation; the Israel-Bulgaria Friendship and Collaboration Association: the Claims Conference; The Learning Project; and the Herzlina Jaeger Foundation in collaboration with The International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem; the Dahan Center, Bar Ilan University; and the Tel Aviv Cinematheque are honored to invite you to the international conference

**Persecution and Collaboration, Rescue and Survival:
New Perspectives on Bulgaria and the Holocaust After 80 Years**

May 22-24, 2023

There will be simultaneous translation Hebrew-English/English Hebrew

The conference will be recorded and made accessible via the internet site of Bulgarian Jewish Heritage Center, Jaffa

Conference Program

Monday, May 22, 2023

**Safra Auditorium, International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem,
Jerusalem**

9:30 Gathering and Refreshments

10:00-10:30 Opening Session: Greetings

Chair: Dan Michman, Head, The International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem; and Bar-Ilan University

Dani Dayan, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate

Dr. Jacky Vidal, Bulgarian Jewish Heritage Center, Jaffa

H.M. Rumiana Bachvarova, Bulgarian Ambassador to Israel

10:30-12:30 Session One: The Anti-Jewish Legislation and its Impact on the Life of the Jews in the Kingdom of Bulgaria

Chair: Dina Porat, Yad Vashem and Tel Aviv University

Shlomo Shealtiel, Yad Yaari

Visible and hidden motives of the opponents of King Boris III government's anti-Jewish policy

Moti Kanari, Independent Researcher, Giv'atayim

The Deportations of Foreign Citizens from Bulgaria

Zdravka Krasteva, Kliment Ohridski University, Sofia

Legal Aspects of the Anti-Jewish Policy in the Kingdom of Bulgaria (1941-1944)

Steven Sage, Independent Researcher, Rockville, Maryland
Labor Camps and Ghettos in Bulgaria
Discussion

12:30-13:15 Lunch Break

13:15-15:00 Session Two: The Final Solution in the United Bulgarian Kingdom

Session in memory of the late pioneer researcher of Bulgaria and the Holocaust, Prof. Fred Chary

Chair: Angel Chorapchiev, Yad Vashem and the University of Haifa

Roumen Avramov, Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia
Bulgaria and the Holocaust: Bifurcating Trajectories

Vasilis Ritzaleos, Democritus University of Thrace, Thessaloniki
The Persecution of the Greek Jews in the Bulgarian Occupied Zone in Greece (1941-1943): The Case of Drama

Souzana Hazan, Jewish Museum, Augsburg
Preparing the Section about Bulgaria in vol. 13 of the German documentary series: "The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by Nazi Germany 1933-45" (paper presented via zoom)

15:40-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-17:15 Session Three: Bulgaria and the Holocaust: History, Memory, Representation

Chair: Moshe Mossek, Bulgarian Jewish Heritage Center

Dan Michman, Yad Vashem; and Bar-Ilan University
Research on Bulgaria and the Holocaust: The Broader Context

Nadège Ragaru, Sciences Po, Paris
The Role of the Immediate Post-War Trials in Bulgaria in documenting the Fate of Bulgarian Jews (paper presented via zoom)

Jacky Comforty, The Learning Project, Bloomington, Indiana
The Stolen Narrative of the Bulgarian Jews and the Holocaust

A round table discussion moderated by the session chair
The Circumstances of the Survival of Bulgarian Jews – Scholarly and Memory Polemics
Discussants: Shlomo Shealtiel, Moti Kanari, Jacky Comforty, Dan Michman, Lea Cohen

17:30 Reception

Tuesday, May 23, 2023,

Feldman Auditorium (Building 301), Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan

09:30 – 10:00 **Gathering and Refreshments**

Opening Session:

Chair: Dr. Shimon Ohayon, Director, The Dahan Center, Bar-Ilan University

Greetings:

Prof. Shmuel Refael, Dean, The Faculty of Jewish Studies, Bar-Ilan University

Mr. Ino Yitzhak, Chairman, The Union of Bulgarian Immigrants

H.M. Rumiana Bachvarova, Bulgarian Ambassador to Israel

10:30 - 11:00 Keynote Lecture by Mr. Menachem Z. Rosensaft, Vice President, World Jewish Congress, New York

The Holocaust in Bulgaria: A Global Jewish Perspective

11:00- 12:00 **Sesion One The Existing and the Non-existent Documentation of the History of Bulgarian Jews during the Holocaust**

Chair: Moshe Mossek, Independent Researcher, Jerusalem

Panel Discussion: What Can There Still be Found in the Archives? Unsolved Questions Regarding Bulgaria and the Holocaust, and Challenges of Future Research

Dedicated to the Memory of Dr. Emanuel 'Emko' Margolis

Discussants:

Jacky Comforty, Bloomington, Indiana: Introduction

Vania Gazenko, Bulgarian National Archives, Sofia

Angel Chorapchiev, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem

Nadège Ragaru, Sciences Po, Paris (participation via Zoom)

12:00- 12:30 Coffee break

12:30-14:15 Session Two: Memory, Commemoration, and Heritage

Session in Honor of Prof. Robert Arno, Indiana University, Bloomington

Chair: Dr. Yossef Charvit Bar Ilan

Leah Cohen, Independent Researcher and Novelist, Neuenburg

The 80th Anniversary of the Persecution and Salvation of the Jews in the Kingdom of Bulgaria: New Paths of Holocaust Revisionism

Michael Berenbaum, Holocaust Researcher, Author, Museum Planner, Los Angeles

The Role of Holocaust Museums in the Education on and Learning Lessons from the Holocaust

Yitzhak Lipovetski-Lir, Chair, Association for Friendship Israel-Bulgaria, Tel Aviv
The Monuments in Sofia and Tel Aviv Commemorating the Survival of Bulgarian Jews during the Holocaust

Rani Jaeger, Hartman Institute, Jerusalem
The "Holocaust Haggadah" as a Means to Internalize Holocaust Memory Among Bulgarian Jews

Discussion

14:15- 14:45 Coffee Break

14:45-16:00 Session Three: Rescue and Survival Initiatives and Activism

Chair: Ora Schwarzwald, Bar-Ilan University

Orly Miron, Bar Ilan University:

Jewish Business Networks in the Balkans: Transnational Ethnic Entrepreneurship

Moshe Ovadia, Academic Center Levinsky-Wingate:

Bulgarian Rabbis and Their Actions to Save the Jews during the Holocaust

Jacky Comforty, Filmmaker, Bloomington, Indiana:

Documentary Film: *The May 24, 1943 Demonstration Against the Deportation of the Jews of Sofia*

Discussion

16:00 - 16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 - 18:00 Session Four: Artistic and Cultural Representations of the Fate of Bulgarian Jews during the Holocaust

Dedicated to the Memory of the Late Poet Chava Pinchas-Cohen

Chair: Jacky Vidal, Bulgarian Jewish Heritage House, Jaffa

Martha Aladjem Bloomfield, Artist, Oral Historian, East Lansing, Michigan

Reclaimed Voices: Paintings of the Bulgarian Holocaust

Edward McGlynn Gaffney Jr., Los Angeles

The Challenges of Historical Reconstruction of the Holocaust in the Balkans and of Making Ethical Judgment of the Past

Rena Sha'ashua Hasson, Association for Friendship and Brotherhood Israel-Bulgaria, Tel Aviv

Simcho Isakov: the Poet and Zionist Leader

Albert Cohen, Actor, Tel Aviv

Readings from Isaakov's Oeuvre

18:00 Reception

The Holocaust in Bulgaria: Independent Documentary Film Marathon

With the attendance of the filmmakers

Tel Aviv Cinematheque, May 24, 2023

09:30 **Balkan Jazz - Jacky Comforty**

Balkan Jazz tells the life story and music of Niko Nissimov and his Jewish friends from the Bulgarian Jazz band, The Optimists. The movie charts their rise to stardom as a band in late 1930s Bulgaria. The beginning of WWII changed everything for them as Bulgaria joined the Axis powers. Anti-Jewish laws and restrictions brought the band to a halt. All men were drafted to slave labor camps, and the entire community was on the verge of extinction. Niko was saved by his friends at the last minute from a transport destined for the death camp of Treblinka.

11:30 **The Immigration Boat Salvador - Nissim Mossek**

The Immigration Boat Salvador tells the story of the forgotten story of the illegal ship Salvador, which sailed from Bulgaria to Israel in 1940 with 352 passengers on board, but sank off the coast of Turkey. Of all the passengers on board, only 122 survived. Using archival materials and interviews with survivors, the director, Nissim Musk, tells the story of Salvador and the story of the immigration of the Jews of Bulgaria, and also dwells on the way the disaster was received among the Israeli population - being ignored.

13:30 **Empty Boxcars - Edward Gaffney**

Empty Boxcars tells the amazing story of the survival of over 50000 Jews in World War II and the mass murder of 11393 Jews from territories under Bulgarian control in Greece and Macedonia. The plot to murder all European Jews was marked 'top secret' but was brazenly public. Footage of the trains renders the crime visible. When the plot is exposed, Bulgarians from many walks of life, church leaders and labor leaders, lawyers and doctors, rose up in protest. Would we risk our lives to save someone in deep trouble? These courageous Bulgarians encourages us to think we must, and so we can.

15:30 **The Optimists - Jacky Comforty**

How were 50,000 Bulgarian Jews saved from the Holocaust despite the intense efforts of their government to deport them? *The Optimists* tells the dramatic story of how people of all ethnic backgrounds and religions at the eleventh hour, secured the safety of their Jewish neighbors.

17:30 **Closing Event of the Conference - and Pre- premiere of the Film *Monument to Love***

Tickets for the closing event can be ordered at <https://cintlv.pres.global/order/78811> or by phone * 6876

Jacky Comforty, Moderator

Greetings:

Dr. Jacky Vidal, Chair Bulgarian Jewish Heritage House Jaffa

Ambassador David Cohen, Chair Salvador foundation

Yitzhak Lipovetski-Lir, Chair, Association for Friendship Israel-Bulgaria

H.M. Rumiana Bachvarova, Bulgarian Ambassador to Israel

Guest of Honor Mr. Menachem Rosensaft, Vice President, World Jewish Congress it's the Symbolism Of the May 24, 1943 Demonstration

18:00 - World Premiere of ***Monument to Love*** by Jacky Comforty

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/813353706>

20:00 -19:45 - Questions and answers

21:00-20:00 Reception in the Lobby