



AMERICAN SEPHARDI FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER

Promoting the Sephardic Jewish Experience

SPRING 2011

UPCOMING & CURRENT EVENTS



International Symposium on Jewish Life in Morocco

Sunday, May 15 and Monday, May 16, 2011

The ASF will conduct a two-day international symposium entitled: '*Jewish Life in Morocco*' at its home at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. The symposium will feature international scholars from Morocco, France, Canada, Israel and the U.S., who will present the history, contributions and contemporary story of Jewish Morocco. Specific topics will include, among others: *Evolution of Jewish Life, Moroccan Jews and the Arts, Moroccan Rabbis and Jewish Thought, Relationships Between Jews and Muslims, Moroccan Jewish Diaspora* and the *Jews of Morocco Today*. The symposium, open to the public, is part of the year-long series: '*2,000 Years of Jewish Life in Morocco: An Epic Journey*,' which is being held under the High Patronage of His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco.



Images of a Lost World: Pictures & Stories of Balkan Sephardic Life

March 31, 2011 - Fall 2011

The American Sephardi Federation and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, present an exhibition on Balkan Sephardic life, created by Centropa. This exhibition, which opens on March 31, 2011, is based on the family stories and pictures pulled from Centropa's archive of more than 200 interviews conducted in Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia. The pictures and stories take us back into the world of Balkan Sephardic Jewry in its last decades, and through these personal stories of going to school, falling in love and recalling family holidays, Jewish history comes to life. A program follows, moderated by Edward Serotta, Director of Centropa. This exhibition was originally commissioned by the Foreign Ministry of Spain and has been funded by the Spanish Embassy in Washington, DC and Casa Sefarad/Israel in Madrid.

RECENT EVENTS



Edwin Black - *Farhud: Roots of the Arab-Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust*

On January 31, 2011, the ASF presented internationally acclaimed author Edwin Black, who presented well-documented truths about Arab-Nazi collaboration during the Holocaust. The talk shed new light on the discussion of the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. His book "*The Farhud*" fills a long-standing gap in our understanding of the terrible events of 70 years ago and their continuing impact on today's Middle East. Listen to Edwin Black's lecture online at americansephardifederation.org.

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RECENT EVENTS CONTINUED



Tableau Vivant: The Berberisca Ceremony

On February 6, 2011, the *American Sephardi Federation* conducted a live re-enactment – in ceremonial dress and in an authentic Moroccan setting – of the picturesque *Noche de Berberisca* or *Soirée du Henné*. This most traditional Moroccan Jewish ceremony generally takes place during the week that precedes the wedding, in an atmosphere full of joy and emotion. It is enhanced with wedding songs, elegant outfits and delicious pastries. The evening reached its climax when the bride made her entrance, magnificently made up and dressed in the Berberisca gown called *Traje de paños* in Spanish or *Keswa Elkbara* (Great Dress) in Arabic. The *Tableau Vivant* was part of the year-long series of programs entitled: ‘2,000 Years of Jewish Life in Morocco: An Epic Journey,’ made possible through the support of the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation.



Behind the Scenes: An Intimate Video Visit to Morocco

On January 27, 2011, the ASF presented ‘Behind the Scenes: An Intimate Video Visit to Morocco’ with Peter Geffen. On annual travels to Morocco with college students and teachers, Mr. Geffen has encountered a growing collection of remarkable stories of Muslim-Jewish co-existence. He mentioned that in small villages across Morocco one encounters a connection, still vibrant, even in the total absence of Jews for the past 50 years. This event included video interviews with Berbers who still fondly remember their Jewish neighbors. The videos went into the villages of Arazane, Telouine and Telouet for a first hand visit to the old mellah, its synagogues and the warm and gracious people who make it all come alive. A college student alumni of the KIVUNIM program joined Peter for this special evening which was funded in part by the Spanish Embassy in Washington, DC and Casa Sefarad/Israel in Madrid.



ASF Gala Benefit Dinner

On December 13, the 2010 ASF Gala Benefit Dinner was held at The Pierre hotel in New York City. A special honor was bestowed upon His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco during the dinner which was accepted, on his behalf, by Serge Berdugo, Moroccan Ambassador-At-Large. The evening’s Keynote Speaker was The Hon. Marc C. Ginsberg, former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco. Moroccan Jewry and its long history are the focus of a year-long series of events during 2010-2011.



Exhibition: ‘Looking Back: Jewish Life in Morocco’

This exhibition is still on view until the **Fall of 2011**. It provides an overview of the presence and flourishing of Jews in the ancient and modern Kingdom of Morocco. It is presented through the implementation of artistically designed textual displays, pull quotes, non-photo images, historic photos, captions, replications of historic documents, and other visuals which portray the life of Jews living throughout this North African country. Developed by Shelomo Alfassa, it has been funded in part by the New York Council for the Humanities. The exhibition opened on October 14, 2010 with a keynote address by Dr. Norman A. Stillman of The University of Oklahoma. (The lecture is available to be listened to on the ASF website). *Gallery Hours: Sunday, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday and Wednesday, 9:30 am to 8:00 pm, Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 am to 5:00 pm, Friday: 9:30 am to 3:00 pm.*