CENTER FOR JEWISH-BULGARIAN COOPERATION "ALEF" ACTIVITY REPORT 2018

INTERNATIONAL DAY IN A MEMORIAL OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST



Center "Alef" traditionally celebrates the International Holocaust Remembrance Day - 27th of January. In 2018, the accent fell on the 75th anniversary of the salvation of Bulgarian Jews and the deportation of 11,343 Jews from Vardar Macedonia, Western Thrace and Pirot to the Nazi concentration camps. The day was honored together with the Professional Mathematics High School "Acad. Nikola Obreshkov" under the motto "Learning from the past, we act for the future". In front of a hundred and fifty students from 9th and 10th grade in the school's actor's room the documentary movie by Alberta Alkalay "To Remember", recreating the events in Burgas, which led to the rescue of the Burgas Jews in 1943, was presented. The high school students and Center "Alef" have joined the world initiative of the World Jewish Congress "WE REMEMBER". Alef's Center president Alberta Alkalay headed the jury at the multimedia presentation contest "HOLOCAUST - NEVER AGAIN. TO LEARN THE LESSONS OF HISTORY" which was attended by students from the Professional Mathematics High School and students from the Professional High School for Tourism. The event was part of the Memorial Days, organized by the Professional Mathematics High School "Acad. Nikola Obreshkov" with the active participation of Center "Alef".

EDUCATIONAL MEETING JEWISH CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND HOLIDAYS

Center "Alef" did a number of meetings with students in different grades in high schools in Burgas to introduce the history, traditions and culture of Jewish ethnos to them.

The peculiarities of the Jewish way of life, culture and religion were presented to the 7th grade students from the Professional Mathematics High School. Alef's Center president Alberta Alkalay has traced the history of the Jewish people since their emergence during the millennia until today and she explained in details the role of the traditions and the significance of the specific symbolism typical of this ethnos. She was also talking about the ancient roots of the Jewish-Bulgarian relations, the formation of the Jewish municipalities in Bulgaria and how they lived with them in understanding and peace.



From the name of Center Alef, Alberta Alkalay donated to the school's library literature from Jewish's authors, including the precious edition of the monograph "The Jews in Bulgaria 1878-1949".

FINISHING THE PROJECT OF THE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAM INTERREG BULGARIA – TURKEY

Center for Jewish-Bulgarian Cooperation "Alef" successfully finished the project "The path of Legends - establishing new partnerships for the development of stable cultural and historical tourism" under the cross-border cooperation program INTERREG Bulgaria – Turkey, funded by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance 2014-2020. The project partner is the Organization for Cross-Border Culture in Edirne, Republic of Turkey.



A two-day Bulgarian-Turkish work meeting on the topic "Promoting the cross-border region of Strandzha-Yildiz as a cultural and historical destination" ended the project. The meeting was implemented on 16th and 17th of March 2018 in the conference hall "Ahelo" of the Grand Hotel and SPA Primoretz - Burgas. The meeting was attended by 30 representatives of the tourism industry from Bulgaria and 20 representatives from Turkey. The opportunities for the development of legendary tourism in the region were presented by Mustafa Filiz - a professor at the Trakya University in Edirne, the associate professor Diana

Radoynova at the University "Prof. D-r Asen Zlatarov" – Burgas, Ivelina Ivanova and Goran Stefanov from the Historical Museum in Malko Tarnovo. On 17th of March, the Turkish tour operators visited legendary places in the Bulgarian part of Strandzha to make them acquaintance with the opportunities they can offer their tourists. A trilingual edition (in Bulgarian, Turkish and English), containing Strandzha legends on both sides of the border, was also printed within the project. An expedition of a team of "Alef" Center in the Strandzha region was also implemented.

"ALEF" WAS PRESENTED AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SOFIA UNIVERSITY



Alef's Center president Alberta Alkalay participated in the International Scientific Conference "75 years. The Unforgettable Faces of Salvation" at Sofia University" St. Kliment Ohridski ". She told how the documentary movie "To remember" about the saviors of the Bulgarian Jews in Burgas was created. The tape takes out of oblivion a little known facts about the Jewish community in the city and the people who have not frightened to assert the human values during

the Holocaust. Alberta Alkalay talked about the initiatives of the "Alef" Center for the preservation of historical memory and continuity throughout the generations.

"ALEF" MET HAVA PINHAS-COHEN

The poetess Hava Pinhas-Cohen arrives from Israel to Burgas to take part in initiatives dedicated to World Poetry Day. Center "Alef" hosted her poetic recital in the House of the Writer. The event was also dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews from the death camps and dedicated the memory of the killed Jews from Vardar Macedonia, Western Thrace and Pirot.

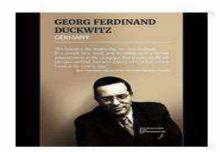


PHOTO EXHIBITION "BEYOND THE DEBT"

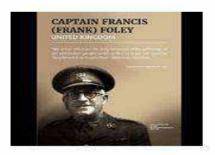
The photo exhibition "Beyond the Debt", telling about the work of 28 diplomats from 21 countries that saved hundreds of Jews from deportation in the death camps and announced by "Yad Vashem" as "Righteous of the World," was presented in Burgas. It was created to honor the diplomats of non-Jewish origin

who saved Jews from their executioners and to express gratitude and sympathy for the behavior of these worthy people.









Through the "Alef" Center intermediation the exposition was provided by the Embassy of Israel in Bulgaria and the State Institute for Culture to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and was shown in the only Bulgarian city outside the capital. For 7 days the exhibition in the Cultural Center "Sea Casino" was visited by more than 500 people. Consulate General of Turkey in Burgas Nuray Inontepe showed a special interest in the exhibition. Among the diplomats in the exposition, who saved Jews during the Holocaust, is also a representative of Turkey.



THE MEMORIAL OF GRATITUDE "TO REMEMBER"



A memorial of gratitude was placed in the very heart of Burgas, next to the building of the Municipality. The inscription on it is: "TO REMEMBER" the empathy and courage of public figures from Burgas who have made an important contribution to rescue their Jewish fellow-citizens from the death camps in 1941-1944. Among the most prominent rescuers of the Burgas Jews were the Mayor of Burgas in 1943 Dr. Dyanko Pravchev, the writer Petko Chorbadzhiev (Rosen), the industrialists Lyubomir Zurkov and Petar Velchev.



The memorial of gratitude was built on the initiative of the Center for Jewish-Bulgarian Cooperation "Alef" and funded also by "Alef". At the ceremony of its opening official guests were His Eminence the Metropolitan of Sliven Ioannikiy, Her Excellency the Ambassador of Israel Irit Lilian, Dr. Maxim Benvenstis - President of the "Tsedaka" Foundation – Organization of the Jews in Bulgaria "Shalom", the presidents of Shalom regional organizations in Burgas, Shumen, Stara Zagora and Sliven - Tiko Varsano, Beta Haralanova, Krasimira Goteva and Julia Gavavova, the Mayor of Burgas - Dimitar Nikolov, the deputies Diana Yordanova and Nikolay Tishev, Sevdalina Tourmanova - Deputy Regional Governor of Burgas, Elena Prihodko - First Secretary of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Bulgaria, the Director of the RDIA Burgas - Kaloyan Kaloyanov, Liora and Elaine Assa from the United States and Israel, honorary consuls, municipal councilors, politicians and public figures.

Hundreds of citizens and students gathered in front of the newly opened monument to bow their heads in memory of the 11,343 innocent victims of the Holocaust from Western Thrace, Vardar Macedonia and Pirot and to pay tribute to the rescuers of nearly 50,000 Bulgarian Jews. Despite the unusually cold weather the attendees filled the space around the memorial and presented many wreaths and flowers.



For the first time this year, Center "Alef" has presented its honored "Memory Keeper" rank. Dimitar Nikolov – mayor of Burgas and Dr. Maxim Benvenistis - president of the "Tsedaka" Foundation at the OJB "Shalom" were the first ones who received the honored ranks.



PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK "75 YEARS – THE UNFORGOTTEN FACES OF SALVATION"

The edition of OJB "Shalom" - "75 YEARS — "The unforgotten faces of salvation" was presented in Burgas. The book has gathered the names of Bulgarians who contributed the most for the rescue of the Bulgarian Jews. It contains the names of some of the most prominent rescuers from Burgas - Dr. Dyanko Pravchev, Petko Rosen, Petar Velchev. The information about them was collected and provided by the "Alef" Center.



FINALE OT THE 5^{TH} NATIONAL LITERARY CONTEST



The fifth edition of the national literary student contest "Who saves one human life, saves the whole universe" ended with a ceremony at the Cultural Center "Sea Casino". The event in Burgas was honored by the Ambassador of of Israel in Bulgaria Irit Lilian. It coincided with the special day "Yom HaShoah" this is a day of mourning and respect to the victims of the Holocaust for the Jews all around the world and in Israel is honored by the State.



Among the official guests of the award ceremony were also Dr. Maxim Benvenstis - President of the "Tsedaka" Foundation - OJB "Shalom", the presidents of the Shalom regional organizations in Burgas, Shumen, Stara Zagora and Sliven - Tiko Varsano, Beta Haralanova, Krasimira Goteva and Julia Gavazova, deputies Diana Yordanova and Nikolay Tishev, the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Burgas Yordanka Ananieva, the Head of the Appellate Prosecutor's Office - Burgas — the public prosecutor Lyubomir Petrov, the president of Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior Kaloyan Kaloyanov, Liora and Elaine Assa from the United States and Israel.



More than 120 young people from around 35 settlements from all over the country joined the literary competition. They could choose one of three subjects for their essays:

- * If a time machine "returned" you to Bulgaria in March 1943, what would you do?
- * If there is a political regime that is genocidal in the future, what choice would you make and what sacrifices you could bear?
- * I was one of the saved ones...
- * The in-depth researches of the students showed extraordinary empathy and active civic attitude.

In the difficulty of choosing the best works, the jury gave more awards than usual. The best essay which took the first place was of the 16-year-old Monika Mitova from Blagoevgrad, she won a participation in a one-week World Youth Leaders Forum in Israel, where she presented Bulgaria at the expense of the organizers.



The two second awards of 250 leva were for Dzhansel Mumun, 17 years old, from Chernoochene and Dimitar Panayotov, 15 years old, from Silistra.



Sabrina Hodja, 17 years old from Yakoruda and 15-year-old Georgi Minchev from Sofia won the third place. The prize was 150 leva for each one of them. Traditionally, the award ceremony was attended by all 20 nominated students from all over the country. They received encouraging awards - books and diplomas. The best works were published on the website of "Alef".

NEWSPAPER "ALEF"



НАЦИОНАЛЕН УЧЕНИЧЕСКИ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕН КОНКУРС 2018 г. бр. 5

Център АЛЕФ награди победителите в петото издание на конкурса

Център за еврейско-българско сътрудничество Arreco" сътрудничество "Алеф награди побадителите в Петия национален литературен ученически конкурс Жойто опаси адин човещим живот, спаснав ципата вселена". Събитието в Бургас бе почетено от посланика на държавата Израел в България Н.Пр. държавата Израел в България Н.Пр. Ирит Лилиян, Максии Бенвенисти - ОЕБ Шалом , предствентели на вврейските общности "Шалом о Тургас, Сливен » Стара Закора, Иорданка Анаживая - зай-кими в Община Бургас, Писра и Илейн Асса от САЩ и Израел То съвладна отко специалния ден Иом А Шош, който е ден за тржур и почит към жертвите на Коломоста за всични вервая по света.

Холокоств за всички еврам по света. Над 120 младежи от около 35 населени места от цялата страна се включика в литературната над-превере Те можеха да избират одна оттрите теми за своите осета.

Ако мащина на времето те "върже" България през морт 1943 година, как билостъпигла?

*Ако в бъдеще мастъли политически режим, които мастършва тенсцид, какъв избор би направил/а и какви жертви би могъл/а да понесеш?

активно гражданско отношение. Големият брой квнествени текстове изключително много затрудки журито. състав: Михайлина Павлова главен редактор на вестник "Евремски



вести" и описание "L'Estrea" и отардии радактор в БНР, Румен Леонидов — писател, поет издател и Асен Йорданов — уорналист, поет и директор на сайта Бивоп.бг.

Базол.бг.
В затруднението си да отове найдобрите творби, журито присъди повяче
награди. Освен полякита награда —
предотовляе на България в едноседмичен святовен форум за мляди
пидери в израел, биха връчени две втори
натредми по 250 лв. и две трети награди
от по 150 лв.
Продължава на стр. 2



мисти. Отпанията вричи председателяя на "Алеф»
Алберта Алкалай.
"Объянхме този
вонкурс, защого
сме убедини, ча
да не я преживляют относи. Младенте
споделят нешите ценности и тоза ни
дана учерености в бълдециото", кажин
Алберта Алкалай.

Голямата награда на конкурса получи 16-годишната Моника Митова от Благовирад. Тя ще представи България в адносед-мичен световен форум за млади лидери в Херциих Израел. Наградата бе връчена от посланика на Израел у нас Н. Пр. Могт Гитан сътвет сътвет сътвет Могт Гитан сътвет сътвет Могт Гитан сътвет сътвет Нага Гитан Нага На Ирит Лилиан, конто даде висока оценка за идеята на конкурса да предава на бъдещите поколения паметта за достойните дела на

Фотоизложбата "Отеъд дълга" представя праведниците на света

пеметник за своето спасение преди 75 години отупа - Историята на Илейн Асса стр. 4



Center "Alef" published a specialized newspaper that is printed and virtual and is distributed in schools and institutions. The newspaper is published in connection with the conduct and reporting of the annual literary competition "Who saves one human life, saves the whole universe". This year, copies 4 and 5 were published.

CENTER "ALEF" AND THE FACULTYOF HISTORY OF SOFIA UNIVERSITY COOPERATION



Center "Alef" and the Faculty of History of Sofia University have begun a joined activity. It is aimed at attracting students to important discussion topics about contemporary society. The joined activities will be realized in close cooperation with the "Hebraistics" subject at the Faculty of History of Sofia University. Alef's Virtual Library has already been enriched with 11 student works.

HEBREW BOOK DONATION FOR THE "YAVOROV" REGIONAL LIBRARY



Trough the "Alef" intermediation the Regional Library "P. K. Yavorov " in Burgas received Hebrew books. Moses Bahar from Israel made the donation and it contains 20 books from popular Israeli authors. Among them is Shimon Peres's autobiographical book - "No room for small Dreams", the critical biography of Benjamin Netanyahu, written by one of Israel's most influential political journalists, Ben Caspit. There are also books by the Israeli journalist, politician and deputy Ofera Shelah, books by the famous novelist Assaf Inbari and others. These are the first Hebrew books that go into the library's stock.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY AT BURGAS AIRPORT

For another year, Center for Jewish-Bulgarian Cooperation "Alef" have paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the terrorist act in Burgas Airport on 18th July 2012. "Alef" again took part in a commemorative ceremony in memory of the Israelis, Moar Harush, Elyor Pries, Icic Collengi, Amir Menashe and Koshava Shriki and the Bulgarian Mustafa Kyosov.



Alef's representatives laid a wreath at the memorial of the victims in the attack and expressed their sympathy for the pain of ridiculously taken innocent human lives.

"ALEF" REQUESTS THE SYNAGOGUE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE "BURGAS OLD CARD"

Bas-relieves of the Burgas Synagogue and the Catholic church to be included in the "Burgas old card" mosaic on Bogoridi Street, offers "Alepf". The buildings of the two temples are symbol of the many ethnic and religious diversity of the city.

Alef justifies its offer in a special letter to the mayor of Burgas Dimitar Nikolov. Now there are three temples in the mosaic - the cathedral "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", built in the former Bulgarian quarter, the Greek church "Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God", and the Armenian church "Surp Hatch". The Jewish Synagogue, based to them, has been omitted. "The synagogue building is one of the cultural and historical treasures of Burgas and is emblematic for the city. It is a symbol of the presence of the Jewish community and its contribution to the development of Burgas from the begining of its creation to nowadays.

Built between the center of the former Jewish quarter, in the historic center of the old Burgas, the Synagogue clearly indicates the Jewish presence in the fate of the city, "these are the motives of the Alef's request.



"ALEF" PARTICIPATES IN THE CEREMONY FOR THE OPENING OF THE MONUMENT OF SALVATION IN TEL AVIV



A memorial of salvation dedicated to the Bulgarians who prevented the deportation of the Jews to the Nazi death camps and the rescued nearly 48,000 Jews was opened in Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Israel on 5th September. The official opening ceremony was attended by the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai, representatives of the Bulgarian community in Israel, and a Bulgarian government delegation headed by the Prime Minister Boyko Borisov.

"Alef" Center, represented by its president Alberta Alkalay and Lora Asa, a representative of the organization in Israel, was included in the official Bulgarian delegation for its contribution to preserving memory among young people, expanding the historical knowledge and popularizing the heroic action of Bulgarians who, in the dark years of World War II, refused to sacrifice their fellow-citizens – the Jews.



"SEA OF WORDS"

Burgas hosted a unique Bulgarian-Hungarian literary meeting, organized by the Center "Alef". The event took place under a project funded by the Ministry of Culture within the framework of the Communication Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the European Union.

Seven Hungarian writers Czabina Ughi, Gyongyi Hegedus, Gyorgy Szondi, Attila Hegyi Botos, Attila Jasz, Imre Babics, Csaba Zsebok together with their colleagues from Burgas, Kalina Telyanova, Bina Kals, Roza Maximova, Milka Ivanova, Ivan Suhivanov, Mina Krasteva, Elena Trendafilova, Rosen Drumev and Elka Vasileva interpreted a common subject in a creative workshop and created 19 poetry works in both languages - Bulgarian and Hungarian. The poems created in the workshop sounded through the translations of Gyorgy Szondi and Liana Petrova in the following literary evening.







The home of the writer was narrow to accommodate all the people who wanted to get acquainted with contemporary Hungarian literature and to hear how the poetic Hungarian speech sounded. The Hungarian poets told about themselves, about their work and their leader- Gyorgy Szondi, an artist permanently connected with Bulgaria, shared the main distinctions of contemporary Hungarian literature. The creative meeting grew into a friendly one and laid the foundation for future virtual and real meetings.





"ALEF" ANNOUNCED THE 6^{TH} NATIONAL LITERARY CONTEST

Център за еврейско-българско сътрудничество Алеф обявява

VI НАЦИОНАЛЕН ЛИТЕРАТУРЕН КОНКУРС

"Който спаси един човешки живот, спасява цяла вселена"

на тема:

ДА ОБИЧАШ, ВЪПРЕКИ...

Напишете художествен разказ за любов, приятелство, разбирателство, взаимопомощ и саможертва между българи и евреи.

Конкурсът ще се проведе в 2 категории:

ж ученици /15-19 год./

* студенти

Награди за всяка от категориите:

I място – 400 лева II място – 300 лева III място – 200 лева

Най-добрите 20 автори ще участват в тържествена церемония по награждаването в Бургас през пролетта на 2019 г на разноски на организаторите.

Документи по темата, библиография и филмографиявъв виртуалната библиотека на Алеф: www.alef-bg.org.

Своите произведения до 5 печатни страници с трите имена, възраст, град, училище, клас, университет изпращайте до 1 март 2019 г. на .center.alef@gmail.com или на пл. "Баба Ганка" 4, ет. 4, Център "Алеф"., Бургас 8000.

Center for Jewish-Bulgarian Cooperation "Alef" challenged the students with the sixth edition of the National Literary Competition "Who saves one human life, saves the whole universe". This time the young authors will have to mix reality with imagination and tell stories of love and friendship between Bulgarians and Jews. For the first time this year, besides high school students, university students from all over the country will be able to participate in the creative competition. Center "Alef" changed the regulation and extended the age range of the race due to the great interest and numerous requests for participation by students from different universities in the country.

The subject of the competition is: "To love, despite..."

The participants will have to mix reality and imagination in their art tales. Based on their knowledge of the past, they must tell stories of love, friendship, understanding, mutual assistance and self-sacrifice between Bulgarians and Jews. Based on what they have read in textbooks and books, what they have seen in the movies or in a museum, what they have taught by people who have survived war, Holocaust, and other human trials, young authors have to create their story and to send it for the competition. The best in the two age categories will be awarded at a traditional ceremony in Burgas in Spring 2019.

PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE MARKING OF 75 YEARS FROM THE RESCUE OF THE BULGARIAN JEWS



"Alef" joined the National Communication Strategy for marking the 75th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews through the campaign "Holocaust - Bulgaria's Contribution of the Rescue of the Jews". The Center visited several settlements in the Burgas District, taking historical talks and screening the author's documentary movie "To Remember". Alef's campaign started in Chernomoretz with a meeting with 300 students and citizens, continued with a screening and discussion in front of 400 students in Aytos and envisages similar events in other settlements in the region.



BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FILMOGRAPHY ENRICH THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY OF "ALEF"

The subject of the sixth national literary contest "To love, despite..." challenges the young authors to create their own art tales about love, friendship, understanding, mutual help and self-sacrifice between Bulgarians and Jews during the Second World War or other dramatic periods of human history. "Alef" enriched its virtual library and now the students can be inspired by real faces and events.



Besides links to publications about real people and events, there is also a bibliography containing more than 50 book titles of documentary and literary works related to the topic of the competition. Among them are emblematic books published over a wide range of times, such as Markus Zusak's "The Thief of Books", Lea Cohen's "The Collector of Diaries", Ka-tzetnik's "House of Dolls", Emil Antonov's "The diary of a Jew", "The man who stopped Hitler" by Gabriele Nissim and others. The filmography contains over 25 feature movies and two documentaries. The Virtual Library is periodically enriched with new materials and book titles.

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS INITIATIVE OF THE BULGARIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

One of the causes of the Center for Jewish-Bulgarian Cooperation "Alef" in Burgas is to be like a guardian of history memory. The Association set the beginning of the creation of a mini-museum for the history of the Jewish community in Bulgaria. Documents and objects will tell how the Jews lived in peace and understanding with their neighbors and fellow citizens, what are their holidays, rituals, cultural traditions...



A small part is already available, mainly photos, letters and documents, as well as a video that tells about the culture and the way of living of the Jewish people. Center "Alef" appeals to all Bulgarians and Jews living in Bulgaria who have preserved substantial memories from the history of their families: discover the pieces of memory and give them a second life as part of a museum exposition. Besides that the exposition will be positioned in a mini-museum, it will also be filmed and arranged in an exhibition that will be able to travel to all over the country. It will be an excellent illustrator for historical talks, especially related to the Holocaust and the Bulgarian Jews rescued by the Nazi camps.

ERASMUS+ PROGRAM PROJECT



"Alef" Center won a project under the European program ERASMUS +. The theme of the project is "Supporting Migrant and Refugee Workers for Cultivating Intercultural Competencies". Its duration is 24 months and it aims to develop and implement training modules, activities and materials for refugee and migrant workers as well as to develop sessions that will cultivate their knowledge of intercultural development and socio-political diversity. The project focuses on the sector priority "Adult Education".