

# The Balkan Sephardim Stories from a World Destroyed



In 1492, when the Jews of Spain—the Sephardim—were expelled from the land they had lived in for a thousand years, they and their descendants sought refuge in many lands — the new world (like in Charleston and Savannah), South America, the Netherlands, and all along the Mediterranean. In the 1500s some 200,000 settled in the Ottoman’s recently conquered Balkan territories. In what became modern-day Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia, Jews lived alongside their Muslim and Christian neighbors. For 400 years, they never lived in a ghetto. There was never a pogrom against them. But as the Ottomans withdrew and

the ugly 20<sup>th</sup> century took shape, they were marked for destruction. By 1945 the vast majority of them had been murdered, and only Bulgaria managed to protect its Jews, while deporting, en masse, the Jews of Macedonia and northern Greece.

Then in 1992, 50 years after the massacre of the Balkan Sephardim, and 500 years after they had been expelled from Spain, a band of Holocaust survivors in Sarajevo turned their synagogue into a humanitarian aid agency during the Bosnian-Serb siege of their city. Who worked there? Jews and Muslims, Serbs and Croats.

Join us for a screening of multimedia films and conversation with Edward Serotta, Director of Centropa, a Jewish historical institute based in Vienna. This public event is being held as part of a teachers’ seminar in Columbia, held in partnership with USC’s College of Education, the SC Council on the Social Studies, and the SC Council on the Social Studies.

**Sunday, February 18, 2018**

**doors open at 1:00 pm, program begins at 1:15, reception afterwards**

**The Nickelodeon Theater**

**1607 Main St, Columbia, SC 29201**

Edward Serotta is a Savannah-born, Vienna-based writer, photographer, and filmmaker. He is the author of three books on Jews in Central Europe, including *Survival in Sarajevo: Jews, Bosnia, and the Lessons of the Past*. During the Bosnian war in the 1990s he filed reports for National Public

Radio, TIME, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. In 2000, Mr Serotta founded Centropa to preserve European Jewish memory through family pictures and stories. Centropa now works with more than 500 schools in 20 countries.