



The Facts on the Ground In Burundi

By Rabbi David Kuperman

If you think that the carnage portrayed in the hit movie *Hotel Rwanda* is a thing of the past for Central Africa, think again. The Tutsi genocide did not begin and end with the slaughter of upwards of a million people in Rwanda in 1994. In 1993 in Burundi, Rwanda's southern neighbor, some 300,000 Tutsis were hacked or burned to death by their Hutu neighbors. And the facts on the ground today, taken together, suggest that a full-scale genocide of the Tutsi population of Burundi is now in its preparatory stages:

- According to a recent report by Ismael Diallo, the director of the human-rights division of the UN Operation in Burundi, human rights violations continue in Burundi, with abuses by the intelligence services becoming noticeably worse. A local rights group, *Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l'Homme*, has decried extrajudicial killings and rape and the persecution they themselves have experienced for criticizing abuses by government agents. And the UN Security Council accused the Burundian government of dragging its feet regarding the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission “while challenges in the area of transitional justice and human rights violations appear to have increased.”
- Tutsis cannot meet as Tutsis without fear of being interrogated by government forces. Forced off their ancestral land to become internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking safety in numbers, their farms have been confiscated and they are threatened daily by the automatic weapon-toting adolescent militiamen posted on the corners of their ghetto streets to warn them that the time has come to leave. Hutus in the marketplace mock Tutsis by saying that their current possessions are irrelevant since soon enough they won't need anything at all. News services report the lynching of Tutsis who have been accused of sorcery or of inoculating their Hutu neighbors with disease organisms.
- All but the most opportunistic Tutsis recognize that they have no further role to play in their own country, and those relative few



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MADAGASCAR GROUPS SEEK CLOSER JEWISH TIES

By Cynthia Weisfield

Madagascar is the home of Kulanu's new correspondent, Raherimasoandro Andriamamonjy. Nicknamed Hery, he is a one-man *tour de force* for Judaism and Israel in his country.

Hery's initial visit to Israel was in 1991. In 1992, he founded the “Club Shalom Madagascar,” of which he remains the president. The group's mission, according to Hery, is to serve as an “interface or a *trait d'union* between Madagascar and Israel,” especially “to favor the cultural ties with the Malagasy people and the Israeli people.”

The group is made up of former interns who attended education programs in Israel. Many of those programs were through MASHAV-Israel and mostly geared to agricultural studies.

Hery returned to Israel in 1999 despite the fact that Madagascar did not have diplomatic relations with Israel at that time. On his return, Hery was part of the effort that resulted in Daniel Saada being recognized as the Israeli Ambassador to Madagascar in 2006.

Not all members of the “Club Shalom Madagascar” are Jewish. The “Diaspora Jiosy Gasy,” of which Hery is also the president, is the group for Jews and those who may wish to convert. He says that there are about 100 Jews registered with the club.

Hery reports that there have been no native-born Jews in Madagascar to this point. Some of those on the list are expatriates, some are returning to their roots, and some simply became interested in Judaism. Many follow the “ways and customs” of Judaism, including circumcision and not eating pork, according to Hery.

Madagascar Jews are spread throughout the country, although Hery could organize about 50 to meet in the capital city of Antananarivo for religious study. A core group currently meets as possible in a “large room of a house of one of our members for worship on the Sabbath.” Unfortunately, there is no rabbi or teacher, and they have limited knowledge of Hebrew, few books and very limited religious regalia. They know when Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, Purim, and Passover occur. Attendees read the Bible on an informal basis at meetings.

As if all of the preceding activities weren't enough, Hery also does research on Jewish history in Madagascar, even participating in academic seminars at local institutions. He reports that there are similarities between the local language and Hebrew. There is also an historical record of a Jewish “tribe” that fled Mecca, arriving in Madagascar in 1497 (although some authorities put it as early as 1491). The head of the group was Ali Ben Forah, also known as Ali Tawarath.

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KULANU (“ALL OF US”) is a tax-exempt organization of Jews of varied backgrounds and practices dedicated to finding lost and dispersed remnants of the Jewish people and assisting those who wish to (re)join the Jewish community. Kulanu is undertaking a variety of activities worldwide on behalf of these dispersed groups, including research, contacts, education, conversion when requested, and relocation to Israel if desired. This newsletter is published quarterly by Kulanu, 11603 Gilsan St., Silver Spring, MD 20902.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Teaching About Childbirth in Uganda (Again)

By Anne Katz-Jacobson

Returning this April to the Abayudaya community was such an exciting experience because we knew each other so well already.

I met first with the leaders of the Abayudaya Health Committee, Samson Wamani and Rebecca Nantabo, to develop a plan that would utilize my skills as a midwife with the needs of the Abayudaya community.

We thus began a series of meetings with women in Nabugoye, Namonyoni, Nasenyi and Namatumba to discuss family planning, HIV, pregnancy and birth, newborn problems, menopause, and other women's health issues. These sessions were delightful as we shared our life experiences with each other.

We also met specifically with men in the villages to increase their knowledge about HIV prevention, testing, and treatment

Last year I taught for the Foundation for the Development of



Receiving Home Birth Life Saving Skills certificates

Needy Communities (FDNC), a local NGO that trains community Health Outreach Workers, including some from the Abayudaya community. I held a discussion with the Health Workers themselves to review some of the difficulties they had encountered in the past year when teaching in the communities. This was a very exciting follow-up of the information we had studied together, particularly issues of teaching/learning. I was also able to help with some upgrading of skills for the nurses who are maintaining the FDNC Clinic.

The highlight of our program was the four-day Workshop in selected topics of Home Birth Life-Saving Skills, in which we trained village guides to assist families during pregnancy and birth emergencies. We were able to accomplish this with the assistance of the Abayudaya Women's Association providing logistic support for this intense program. At the conclusion of the Workshop, Abayudaya leader Aaron Kintu Moses and I presented graduates with certificates.

We were also able to have several sessions with teachers from Semei Kakungulu High School to review issues related to family planning and HIV.

On my flight back to London I tried not to cry but couldn't help myself. I would like to be helpful to the Abayudaya and FDNC communities -- more if my skill will allow. There is much to think about to see where I am going with this involvement. Meanwhile, I look forward to being with my husband, who has been such a support. I need to get back into my life again as wife, mother and grandmother. I am incredibly grateful for this miracle of being able to go to Africa and do the work I have always dreamed about. I shall never forget the people who have made my experience so rewarding. The kindness and generosity of Africa is beyond description. Hopefully, I can continue to give back a bit in one way or another in the years ahead.

Travel Opportunities

Tour to Ethiopia

Hurry! There may still be time to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and the Ethiopian millenium in Ethiopia with Riki Mullu of Chassida Shmella, the Ethiopian Jewish Community of North America and Israel. The Jewish Civilization Ethiopia tour runs from September 2 to 11, with optional extensions through September 16 (to include Rosh Hashanah). Tour covers Addis Ababa, Lalibela, Axum, and Gondar. Price for basic trip is \$3600 (includes economy airfare from NY or DC). Contact Riki.Mullu@ujc.org or (212) 284-6532; or phone Group IST Travel at (212) 594-8787.

Jewish Tour to Southern Italy

"Jewish Heritage in Southern Italy" is an 8-night tour from Rome to Sicily to the Amalfi Coast, beginning on October 23. Leaders are Dr. Laura Supino and Rabbi Barbara Aiello. The trip focuses on the oldest places of Jewish presence in Italy, as well as the rebirth, after 500 years, of Jewish life in Calabria. Limited to 14 participants, the cost is \$4885 (excluding airfare). Contact rabbi@rabbibarbara.com.

Abayudaya Mitzvah Tour

Kulanu has helped the Abayudaya Jewish community of Uganda develop a tourism program. Their annual two-week mitzvah tour in January includes a Ugandan wildlife Safari, two very musical *Shabbatot* with the Abayudaya community, an evening music and dance performance, and an opportunity to learn about their many programs in education, economic development, water, and agriculture. Past participants have always given this trip rave reviews! This year's two-week trip leaves on December 31, 2007, and costs only \$2750 (plus airfare). To learn more, see page 14 of this newsletter or click on the link on the Kulanu.org home page.

Jewish Tour to India

Dr. Kenneth and Joyce Robbins will lead a "luxury" tour entitled "The Jewish Heritage of India" January 19-February 3, 2008. The tour will visit Jewish sites in historical context, and also non-Jewish attractions, in Calcutta, Mysore, Hassan, Cochin, and Mumbai. Kenneth Robbins has published more than 50 articles and curated 10 exhibitions dealing with Indian history and art. In 2005, he led a Bnai Brith mission to honor the Cochin royal family for centuries of positive interactions with local Jews. He has edited a book, *African Elites in India*. Depending on the size of the group, the cost (excluding airfare) will be \$7,880 or \$6975 per person. Robbins can be reached at 703-379-2600 or RAJANWAB@aol.com.



The Inquisition in Porto

By Manuel Lopes Azevedo
(from www.ladina.blogspot.com)

There has been very little published about the Inquisition in Porto, Portugal. This is a short summary of two articles on the subject, one by Amílcar Paulo (a protégé of Barros Basto), *A Inquisição no Porto, Acheias para a sua História, Separata de Douro Litoral-Boletim da Comissão de Etnografia e História-Nono Série-Vol II*, Porto, 1959, and the other by Elvira Cunha De Azevedo Mea, *A Inquisição do Porto, Separata da 'Revista de História' Vol I, Centro de História Da Universidade Do Porto*, 1979, Porto. Prof. Mea is presently writing a book about the Inquisition in Porto.

According to Amílcar Paulo (deceased), on June 30, 1541, King John III ordered Baltazar Limpo, the Carmelite bishop of Porto, to institute the Tribunal of the unHoly Office of the Inquisition. On February 11, 1543, according to Amílcar, the Tribunal held the first and only *auto de fe*. Three scaffolds were constructed. There were 84 penitents, of whom 21 were burned in effigy, 3 women and 5 men were burned alive, 4 *padeceram* (tortured), 15 were sentenced to perpetual jail with *sabenido* (sack worn by victims at *auto de fe*) and 43 received prison sentences of between 1 and 10 years. The *auto* lasted until 5 pm, with 30,000 people in attendance. The Tribunal was extinguished in 1544, according to Amílcar. The author reproduces several historical documents such as the edict of King John III establishing the Inquisition.

Professor Mea, who knew Amílcar Paulo, is much more circumspect. She notes that not much has been added to the work of Alexandre Herculano's classic, *History of the origin and establishment of the Inquisition in Portugal* (1854). She does not give much importance to Herculano's opinion that the Inquisition in Porto was motivated by vengeance of the Inquisitor, Bishop Baltazar Limpo, whom he describes as impetuous, obstinate, and fanatical.

According to Herculano, the bishop was angry with the New Christians for not paying the cost of converting the synagogue to a church and the re-paving of Rua de São Miguel in the former Olival Judiaria. Apparently there were a great number of New Christians living in the Ribeira neighborhood (docklands), selling ready-made clothes, who complained of exorbitant rents. In 1533 and 1534 they made a proposal to the municipality to return to the place of their ancestors, the Olival Judiaria, and promised to contribute towards the construction of a church, possibly on the site of the former the synagogue) and re-pavement the street of São Miguel, where Uriel DaCosta (known as the first secular Jew) was born. As of 1547, there still had not been an agreement. By that time Bishop Limpo was no longer in Portugal.

Mea, who writes 20 years after Amílcar Paulo, prefers to start anew, relying on five packets of documents then recently discovered at the Torre de Tombo, the national archive. Her partial analysis of the documents, which were in poor condition, indicates that cases before the Tribunal occurred between 1541 and 1546, with the greatest concentration in 1542-1544. There is also mention of a visit by the Bishop of Porto to Mesão Frio (up the Douro River) in 1542. Mea examined one document in which 56 witnesses were heard in one day, resulting in the denunciation of 30 New Christians. Evidence also revealed that a good number (26) of the incriminated were absent, many for more than a year, some having fled to Lisbon and Lamego before leaving the realm.

Mea also finds cases from Porto mistakenly listed in the *Coimbra Inventory of Inquisition Cases (Inventário dos Processos da Inquisição de Coimbra, 1541-46)*. There she finds 78 cases from Porto, some involving more than one accused. Analyzing additional sources, she found a total of 111 cases from Porto, some duplicated. She studied 54 cases referring to 93 individuals. Some cases are incomplete.

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500-YEAR-OLD KABBALAH STONE LOCATED IN PORTUGAL

By Manuel Lopes Azevedo

Following a circuitous search, a 500-year-old Kabbalah stone has been located in an obscure village museum in Portugal. The grey-black slate stone, of a trapezoid shape and about the thickness of a finger, fits on an extended hand. It is engraved with a disc about the size of an American coffee cup and contains a square the size of an average letter stamp within the disk.

The square is further divided into nine smaller squares containing Hebrew lettering. Surrounding the square on all sides there is additional Hebrew writing. The Hebrew characters have been etched in reverse into the slate to create a "negative" suitable for making copies in wax, clay or plaster. The engraving is in remarkably good condition. The writing within the square has been deciphered as a series of numbers, namely,

8 1 6
3 5 7
4 9 2

with each line or row totaling 15, regardless of how the numbers are added up. This type of square is known as a "magic square."

The Hebrew characters surrounding the square on all sides have not yet been definitively interpreted. The stone may have been an amulet or perhaps a Kabbalistic seal. Further research is being conducted.

For photos, see www.ladina.blogspot.com

BOOK COMMENT

Inquisition and Independence, A Riot in Fundão-1580 (Inquisição e Independência, Um Motim No Fundao-1580) by Maria Antonieta Garcia, Alma Azul, Coimbra, 2006

Reviewed by Manuel Lopes Azevedo

This book is about a riot in the 16th century in Fundão, the only known public act of resistance against the unHoly Office of the Inquisition to have occurred in Portugal.

On November 22, 1580, in the town of Fundão, in the Beira region, not far from Belmonte, Damião Mendes, a bailiff of the unHoly Office of the Inquisition reported that he was received at the door of a church by Estêvão Sampaio, the senior alderman in the town, and armed men who meant to kill him. He said they confronted him with the intention of impeding the work of the unHoly Office of the Inquisition. Bailiff Mendes complained of being pushed and knocked down, that the armed men broke his rod and took away his sword, that he was left without his hat and cape, and that he fell to the ground. They cut loose his horses and roughed up one of his men. He alleged that Sampaio spoke harshly to him and was rude, using obscenities toward him.

As was customary in that period, the bailiff would have arrived in Fundão secretly, then made an announcement to the population to attend church on Sunday in honor of some saint. When the church was full, the doors would be locked by guards and the Old Christians would be called upon to identify the New Christians, who would be

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Teachers in Andhra Pradesh

As we go to press, Rabbi Gerald and Boni Sussman are in Kotharedypalem, India, to teach the Telugu-speaking Jewish community for a few weeks. They write: "Shabbat in the village was quite an experience. We were greeted with flowers by a delegation and escorted to the synagogue with drums with a big welcome sign on the front gate." Stay tuned for their full report in the next newsletter!

Nigeria Book Project

Rabbi Howard Gorin of Congregation Tikvat Israel in Rockville, Maryland, and Dr. Christiana Okechukwu of Montgomery College (Rockville, Maryland, campus), have led a new collaborative effort to ship tons of Jewish books, collegiate textbooks, and computers to Nigeria. This collaboration includes the following: Tikvat Israel's Africa Project, Kulanu, and the Inwelle Study and Resource Centre in Enugu (a non-sectarian non-profit founded and operated by Professor Okechukwu).



Rabbi Howard Gorin

The Inwelle Centre will receive the textbooks and some of the computers. The Jewish books will be used to start ten community-based Jewish libraries throughout Nigeria. Remy Ilona, Kulanu's representative in Nigeria, will receive a large number of these books, which will be distributed to interested individuals throughout the country. Additionally, two universities -- in

Enugu State and Abia State -- will receive over 200 titles to start Judaica collections in their humanities sections. When the books are donated to the libraries, they will be given in the name of Tikvat Israel and Kulanu.

Tikvat Israel has collected the books and paid for most of the shipping costs. Kulanu contributed \$3000 toward these costs. The Inwelle Centre will provide logistical support -- clearing the books through customs and transporting them to Enugu -- and will warehouse the books until they can be distributed.

Included in the shipment are books that Betty Krulik donated from the Greenburgh Jewish Center, many of which she generously shipped to Rockville from New York.

High Holidays, Indian Style

Cantor Romiel Daniel's popular Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah services are open to the public for the 13th consecutive year, using Bene Israel liturgy. Services will be held at the Village Temple, 333 East 12th Street, NYC, beginning at 7 pm on Wednesday, September 12. Services are free, but donations are welcome. For further information, contact Romiel Daniel at (718) 897-8718.



Cantor Romiel Daniel

Listen to Radio from Spain on the Internet

RadioSefarad.Com is a mainly-Spanish-language website of audio features (news, Judaism, arts, travel, literature, cooking) for Jews of Spain and the rest of the world.

New Venue for Multiracial Jewish Culture

Mixed Multitude, a new e-magazine from the Jewish Multiracial Network, is seeking multiracial Jewish writers, artists, photographers, and others connected with multiracial Jewish culture. The readership includes Jews of all colors--by birth, adoption, and conversion. The editor is also interested in hearing from non-writers who have a story of potential interest to the readership. Send information and queries to editor Corinne Lightweaver at editor.corlight@verizon.net.

JPS Mitzvah Projects

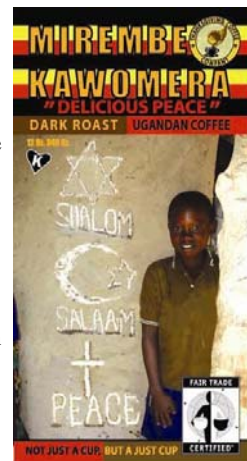
In addition to publishing books, the Jewish Publication Society is involved in several mitzvah projects, including bringing Jewish books to disadvantaged communities around the world. It has generously donated many cartons of books to Nigeria. The JPS has a new membership program to help finance these projects. Members taking a higher membership (starting at \$250) can donate books to non-profit organizations of their choice. Join online at www.jewishpub.org/membership, or contact Ellyn Weir at tel. (215) 832-0625.

Film News

JEM/GLO recently announced that its documentary trailer, *Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean*, was being showcased at the recent New York International Independent Film and Video Festival in Manhattan. In addition, the seven-minute trailer was screened in July at NYC's Village East Cinema. The documentary discusses the coffee cooperative founded by the Abayudaya coffee farmer J.J. Keki.

Director Gabriela Bohm spoke about her documentary *The Longing: The Forgotten Jews of South America* at a screening at Makor in NYC on April 29. The film involves *Anousim* who were dismissed by local Jewish authorities and undertook to study Judaism on the Internet and with an American Reform rabbi who ultimately comes to Ecuador to complete the conversion.

Sponsored by DC's Bnai Brith Kluznick National Jewish Museum, filmmaker Ed Askinazi spoke following the screening of his film *The Last Greeks on Broome Street*, on June 3 at Magen David Sephardic Cong. in Rockville, Maryland. Greek dancing, music, and desserts followed.



Speakers Spread the Word

The 4th Annual Sephardic *Anousim* Conference was scheduled to take place August 10-12 in El Paso, Texas. Speakers include student rabbi **Juan Mejia** on "Furthering the *Anousi* Revolution: Assets and Obstacles in the Return of the *Anousim*"; **Francine Gaillour, MD**, on "Your Ancestors were Conversos: What Does That Mean for You and Your Spiritual Path?"; **Vanessa Paloma** on "A Vision of Unity: Ideas and Plans to Coalesce the International Phenomena of the Awakening of Communities of *Anousim*"; **Gail Gutierrez** on "Orale, Israel: A Personal Narrative of Return"; and **Dr. Ron Duncan-Hart** on "The Struggle of the *Anousim* from Forced Conversion to the Rocky Path of

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Return.” For further information phone Congregation B’nai Zion at (914) 833-2222.

Itzik Dessie discussed the situation of Ethiopian Jews in Israel at Tifereth Israel Congregation, Washington, DC, on May 7. Dessie is the founder and director of Tebeka, an organization that provides legal assistance, advocacy and access to equal justice for Ethiopian Israelis.

Romiel Daniel spoke about the history of Jews in various regions of India on June 19 in a program sponsored jointly by the Manhattan JCC, the Sharon Hadassah chapter, and the Indian Jewish Community of the USA. The talk was followed by a buffet dinner and Indian music.

Karen Primack spoke about the Abayudaya at a meeting of American Jewish Committee summer interns on June 27 in Washington, DC.

The Jewish Study Center presented a five-week course in Washington on Jewish Cultures Across the Globe, beginning on May 16. Lecturers included **Jesse Karotkin** on China, **Ruth Cernea** on Burma, **Karen Primack** on the Telugu-speaking Jews of Andhra Pradesh, India, **Rabbi Howard Gorin** on Nigeria, and **Harvey Himberg** on Tunisia.

Photojournalist **Zion Ozeri** made a presentation at “The Great Jewish Wedding Event” on June 3 at the Bergen County Y (New Jersey). The event featured the music, culture and traditions of Indian, Ethiopian, Moroccan, Yemenite, and Hassidic weddings.

Gershom Sizomu spoke and sang about his Abayudaya Jewish community in Uganda at Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Louisville, Kentucky, on March 23.

Reporter **Jay Shefsky** presented a feature on March 29 on Chicago TV channel 11 about Rabbi Capers Funnye and his largely African American Beth Shalom B’nai Zaken EH Congregation. To view this lively feature on video, go to www.bethshalombz.org. (This site also has other fascinating videos featuring Funnye on various TV talk shows)

Kente Cloth Tallit Now Available



After months of anticipation, Kulanu has received a number of beautiful kente cloth tallitot from the Sefwi Wiawso community in Ghana. We have revamped the Kulanu Boutique so that you can easily view and order the tallitot at kulanuboutique.com. You can view photos of each tallit -- to get the best view, be sure to first click on an item and then click again on its photo to enlarge it. You can also order the challah covers from Ghana as well as other Jewish crafts, jewelry, books, and CD's at kulanuboutique.com.

Condolences

Jameson Rufugomwenye Museva, president of the Lemba Cultural Association (Zimbabwe), passed away on May 27, a great loss to the family and community.

The Bene Israel community mourns the death, on March 31, of **Hazan Benjamin Dandekar** of Magen David Synagogue in Mumbai, India.

The Community Beth Shmuel of Veracruz, Mexico, is mourning the recent loss of beloved “Uncle” **Asher (Carlos) Herrera Llano**, one of the founders of the congregation.

Mazal Tov!

To dedicated Kulanu benefactor **Lionel Okun** on the occasion of his 90th birthday, on September 25.

To **Igaal Sizomu**, son of Gershom Sizomu and Tziporah Naisi, who celebrated his Bar Mitzvah on June 9 at Shomrei Torah Synagogue in Los Angeles.

To **Tyler Waldman** and his family, who traveled from NYC to the deep south of Italy to become the first Bar Mitzvah in Calabria Italy in 500 years! The ceremony was held in the Progressive Jewish community's new synagogue, *Ner Tamid del Sud* (Eternal Light of the South), on June 15. Rabbi Barbara Aiello officiated.

To **Sarah Gold** on her marriage to **Menachem Pritzker** on May 27 in Israel. Sarah Gold spent four months as a Kulanu and AJWS volunteer in Uganda in 2005, and since then, has served as one of the coordinators of Kulanu's email group, kulanu-list@yahoogroups.com. She made aliya to Israel last year, and she now works for a small non-profit group called Jerusalem Peacemakers.

To long-time Kulanu supporter **Sherman Shapiro** on the 70th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah on July 14.

Todah Rabah!

For her Bat Mitzvah project, **Kelsey Waxman** has raised over \$1300 for Ugandan coffee farmers. Waxman is a student at Rabbi Brant Rosen's synagogue, Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston, Illinois. Abayudaya leader and coffee farmer JJ Keki stayed at her home during a US coffee tour.

Rochester's **Temple Sinai Religious School students** collected \$782 in *tzedaka* money for Kulanu's Abayudaya fund. Abayudaya leader Aaron Kintu Moses spoke at the temple last fall.

Kulanu is extremely grateful to these donors of \$5000 or more: **Cherna Moskowitz** and **Drs. Jack & Diane Zeller**.

And to these donors of \$1000-\$4999: **Deborah Kaminsky, The Madav IX Foundation, Peter Persoff, Mary Ramberg, and the University of Vermont Hillel**.

And to these donors of \$500-4999: **Irwin & Elaine Berg, Helen Frank, Jack & Pauline Freeman Foundation, Rabbi Scott L. Glass, and the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation**.

And to these donors of \$101-499: **Cantor Joel Caplan, Marguerite & Raymond Cross, Scott M. Eleff, Dean & Linda Englund, Falmouth Jewish Congregation Sisterhood, Hope & Matthew Feldman, Jon Fredman & Judy Philipson, Elkan & Zelda Gamzu, JCC-Y of Rockland, Inc., Nancy Kreimer, Jennifer Martin, and Temple Sinai in Rochester**.

And to these members of our \$100 Club: **Jane & Kimball Booth, Elaine Brichta, Ann Coburn, Congregation Sons of Israel, David J. Kaufman Post No. 41, Jewish War Veterans of USA, Rochester, William & Sue Ellen Druck, Lynne Elson, Eli & Linda Frank, Curtis & Joan Green, Donna Johnson, Ilene Laufman, Nancy Scholem, Lisa Lobin & Jay Schwartz, C. Kenneth & Rhoda A. Peters, Sherman & Rita Shapiro, Jack & Stephanie Ventura, Michael & Charla Waxman, and Gail B. Werbach**.

L'Shana Tova!

Happy New Year!

MUSICIAN IN UGANDA:

I Have Never Enjoyed a Shabbat As Much as This One

By Steven Corn

My journey to the Abayudaya began a few years ago when Rabbi Gershom Sizomu became friends with Hazzan Mike Stein of my synagogue, Temple Aliyah, in Woodland Hills, California. I play piano for our children's choir and Mike had begun to teach us the Abayudaya melodies for such prayers as *L'cha Dodi*, *Oseh Shalom*, and others.

After nearly two years of playing this music at our family Shabbat services, I ran into Mike at our annual Purim festival. He mentioned that he had finally planned a trip to Uganda and was going in July with his youngest son, Jared. Mike simply said, "Want to come?" My initial reaction was skepticism. I probably said something like, "Yeah, sure." But Mike pressed on and encouraged me to join him. Finally, after three weeks of deliberations and continued encouragement by Mike, I decided to go.

One of main goals for the trip was to participate in the Abayudaya Shabbat experience. Mike, Jared and I all were Rabbi Gershom's guests for Shabbat and we slept at his house.

The Abayudaya observe Shabbat faithfully. The Kabbalat Shabbat featured Mike and Jared with an Abayudaya musician playing the new guitar that a fellow congregant, Jeff Goldsmith, and I donated to the community. There were about 40 adults and at least 20 children. The voices were glorious as they sang the tight, triadic harmonies that are well known throughout Africa and especially central Africa. Towards the end of Kabbalat Shabbat, we all danced in a circle around the *bima*. I had two cute 7-year-old girls, both named Devorah, gripping my hands. It was so much fun.

Cantor Stein led the service and was in rare form. Rabbi Gershom did a great *d'var Torah* which was spoken in English and translated into Luganda. After services, which culminated in a great *Adon Olam*, there was a Shabbat dinner that Gershom hosted. About 10 or 12 men sat in a large semicircle outside his house. The women cooked up a tremendous amount of food. It had to be enough to feed not only the people there, but the whole community at lunch the next day. The meal was rice, matoke (a banana that thinks it's a potato), kidney beans, and a piece of chicken (which was kosher, of course). They also served sweet potatoes and kale.

The next day began with the chickens squawking. A cold breakfast consisted of eggs, bananas (which I brought), bread and hot tea. The tea water was kept hot from before Shabbat. Morning services began at 9 am. I was given an *aliyah* (which was a very nice honor). Isaac, Gershom's nephew, read the first two sections, and Jared made a great effort with the third; then Mike read the rest of the portion. In between the *aliyot*, the whole congregation sang a brief Lugandan melody. Basically, it is designed to keep everyone awake during the long Torah portion!

After morning services, a community lunch was served. We guests ate in Gershom's living room, but everyone else lined up by the back door. Tziporah and Yael, Gershom's sister, served rice, matoke,

and beans to the whole community. As Gershom said, it is the responsibility of a leader to feed his community. (Would that all world leaders shared that sentiment!) The lunch was cold since they could not build a fire.

The afternoon began with a Torah study class. About 20 men and women sat under a tree next to the synagogue discussing issues that Gershom brought up. We discussed angels, courage, responsibility, and Satan. We then did a brief afternoon service that involved a partial Torah reading of next week's *parsha*.

Around 3 pm, we finally had "free time" (like camp). Mike and Jared slept, but I went for a stroll around the compound. I stopped at the old school, which is a mud and stick structure that has been completely destroyed by termites. Its only purpose is to store desks. As I sat down to read, two children, John (14) and Zachariah (12), came by to say Hi. They were not part of the Abayudaya community. They asked a lot of questions about where I was from. So I gave them a geography lesson by drawing a map of the world on the ground. They knew some of the bigger countries, but their questions were very interesting: Do you have mountains, rice, pineapples? Where do you get your food? What happens if it doesn't rain? Are there city centers without homes?

They asked me to walk with them to visit their home. They said that it was only 10 minutes away. But by African time, that was really 30 minutes and I should have known. So I went off traipsing thru the Ugandan jungle on a dirt path. After 20 minutes, I was starting to get nervous. But the children seemed so friendly that I trusted that everything was going to be

fine. I also had a general direction of where the village was, so I felt that I could avoid getting totally lost. We ended up at their house, which is a mud/stick construction. The poverty here is beyond startling. But, luckily, they have electricity and will soon have flowing water. For now, they have to carry water in large containers a mile or two. They took me back along a steep shortcut. Although I was thoroughly soaked with sweat and breathing heavily, it culminated in an amazing view of the valley. I only wish that I had my camera (but it was Shabbat and I could not use it).

The pre-Havdalah time was spent having two incredible discussions. One was with a group of three men from a town 200 miles to the north. They want to become Jews and came to the Abayudaya to find out how to learn more and convert. There are 80 of them in their village. Gershom is going to teach one of them as their leader prior to doing a conversion. The whole process may take two years. When I asked one of them why he wanted to be a Jew, he responded very simply. He said that he did not want to worship the three gods (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) of Christianity. He did not want to worship Allah and the prophets. He just wanted to worship the one true God.

The next conversation was with Gershom, his brother Aaron (who is the rabbi in Gershom's absence) and David Eleff, a college-aged volunteer. We discussed notions of life on other planets and the uniqueness of humans. I was able to give a little lesson on the size of

(Continued on page 7)



Seth and JJ laying Tefilin on a week-day morning

The Facts on the Ground In Burundi (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

who have been able to flee have already fled into exile. Meanwhile, former génocidaires and their families, along with other Africans sympathetic to their ambitions, have flooded into Burundi.

- More than 3,000 war criminals, many of them condemned to death or to life imprisonment for genocide, have been released from prison under “provisional amnesty” by order of Burundi’s popular Pres. Nkurunziza, himself a war criminal under sentence of death. Now, Tutsis who could bear witness against them are being murdered with impunity.
- Hand grenades are tossed into places where Tutsis congregate socially and the government passes this off as random violence. Tutsis have been assassinated in broad daylight on city streets by police and soldiers in uniform, demonstrating that no one should care about the spilling of Tutsi blood. Death squads, largely trained in the Sudan and functioning in coordination with the police and assorted Hutu militias, have already begun their work.
- After arresting young Tutsi men living in the IDP camps, the government announced the closing of those camps, and asked the remaining women, children, and older men to return to their homes, which are now in the hands of their former Hutu neighbors. This follows the closing of the country’s largest IDP camp to make way for a second international airport in a country smaller than Maryland and about the size of Massachusetts.
- For a variety of reasons, not least among them the loss of so many Tutsi farmers and their fertilizer-producing cows, starvation is rampant in some parts of Burundi. But it is primarily the Tutsis who die; Hutu men join the militias in the bush and take what they want.
- Tutsis who legally commemorate or plan to commemorate the genocide against Burundian Tutsis in 1993, and who try to ensure that such genocide will not be repeated, are beaten and arrested, along with the attorneys who defend them and the journalists who report about them. In a further attempt to erase Tutsi memory, one of the principal mass graves of Tutsis murdered in 1993 has been bulldozed to make way for a soccer stadium. And in an attempt to erase history itself, members of the Burundian intelligence service, led by the infamous “Jean-Petit,” entered Room N° 100 in the Court of Appeals during the night of December 24, 2006, and removed all the hard disks containing the judiciary briefs of the 1993 genocide, effectively expunging the record of Nkurunziza’s actions and those of the people he unilaterally amnestied. These activities also help to ensure the credibility of respected historians like the revisionist Jean-Pierre Chrétien, who in 1994 confirmed the murder of 300,000 Tutsis in October 1993 but later applied that number to all Burundians, and particularly Hutus, who died between 1993 and 2004.
- On the night of April 9, 2007, Butaganzwa commune was the scene of a serious confrontation between the army and unknown men armed with automatic weapons. The FNL, the one Hutu militia remaining outside the government (which the FNL complains is overly generous to the Tutsi population), denied any knowledge of the attack, and an army spokesman asserted that

(Continued on page 13)

The Inquisition in Porto (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

The Tribunal was situated at the mansions of the Inquisitor Jorge Rodrigues on Rua Chã. The prisoners were lodged in the bishop’s prison but in 1544 there is evidence of a new prison on Rua Escura. In one of the later cases (1545-47) of merchants Leonor Gomes and Joao Serrão, we learn that the vicar, Joao Ferreira, had replaced the bishop.

Prof. Mea states that it is not possible to analyze the nature of the Inquisition in Porto, as the institution was in its infancy and there was a lack of general applicable rules throughout the realm. Rather, it depended a lot on the character of the individual Inquisitors. In Porto, one of the Inquisitors suspected anyone whose parents were forcibly baptized or who lived with a New Christian, like Violante Dias and her husband Antonio Dias, imprisoned for two years. At the other extreme is Genebra Gomes, a widow of 80 years, born on Rua de São Miguel and baptized as an adult in 1497, was also imprisoned for two years. Her case stands out because she prayed frequently in Hebrew and observed Pesach and Yom Kippur.

Mea notes that the absence of 26 accused and an additional seven whose whereabouts were unknown, is perhaps evidence of the economic power of Porto’s New Christians and their ability to easily escape the clutches of the Inquisition. Their economic power may also explain the rigid and inflexible attitude of many of the accused and witnesses who were uncooperative and refused to corroborate incriminating evidence. Some witnesses were imprisoned, like Leonor and Eva Gomes, aunt and niece of Genebra, for interfering with witnesses. There were many appeals by accused persons and many allegations of illegality on part of the Tribunal, such as not releasing prisoners once their cases were completed.

Pursuant to the documents Mea studied, there were at least two *auto de fes* in Porto at the field near the gate of the Olival, one on February 11, 1543, and another on April 27, 1547. The Tribunal ended with the papal bull of Paul III on July 16, 1547.

Enjoying Shabbat (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

the universe and quantum physics, which they all found very interesting. Finally, all that crazy reading came to good use!

It was overcast all day with several short periods of light rain. But the sunset was glorious. The sun peeked through around 6 pm and lit up all the mountains and valleys in golden light. It was spectacular!

Havdalah was preceded by a short *Ma’ariv* service in the synagogue. But Havdalah was held outside. Daphne (Gershom’s daughter) held the candle and Mike led the service. It was nearly pitch black till we lit the candle. It was so beautiful. I had Devorah, Sarah, and another Devorah (all around 7-8 years old) clamoring to hold my hands as we made the circle.

I have never enjoyed a Shabbat as much as this one. As Mike said, it was the closest that he has experienced to a “true” Shabbat in the sense of our ancestors in the desert. The day ended around 8:30 when JJ brought us back to the hotel.

I have to give Rabbi Gershom and his brothers a tremendous amount of respect. They have accomplished so much and have very ambitious plans to continue the development of the community. He is completely dedicated to his people and one can’t help but be energized by such commitment.

LETTERS TO KULANU

Celebrating the First Abayudaya Bar Mitzvah in the USA

Our son Igaal's Bar Mitzvah was amazing! It was sparked off by a Kabbalat Shabbat service conducted in both Abayudaya and Chasidic styles at Shomrei Torah Synagogue in West Hills California. Igaal played a Djembe drum while I played guitar before sundown on Friday. The service was followed by a Shabbat dinner reception at the home of Stuart and Yvonne Lorch.

On Shabbat morning, Igaal led the congregation in *Birchot ha shahar*, gave a *dvar Torah*, read Torah and Haftarah, and expressed willingness to become a future spiritual leader. Dr. Gary Tobin deliv-



Igaal, Gershom, Daphna, and Tziporah

ered an inspiring talk about the occasion, which he described as history in progress. Rabbi Camras spoke words of courage to Igaal and blessed him. The morning service was crowned by a Shabbat Luncheon sponsored by Warner and Phoebe Frank in honor of Igaal's Bar Mitzvah.

The wonderful Bar Mitzvah party was sponsored by the Lorch family. It took place in Thousand Oaks CA, at a spacious and beautiful compound belonging to Stuart's brother. A variety of games and a life-guarded swimming pool were available to the guests.

Special thanks go to Yvonne, Stuart, Jennifer and Joshua Lorch and to Warner and Phoebe Frank. The Lorches are our adopted family here; their son Joshua has been coming with us to Uganda every summer.

*Gershom Sizomu
Los Angeles and Mbale, Uganda*

Remembering J. R. Museva

We received the news of the recent passing of Mr. J. R. Museva with the greatest of sadness. It was especially painful, as we were looking forward so very much to meeting with him again a few weeks later.

We remember fondly Mr. Museva's warm welcome and graciousness, when we arrived unannounced at Mapakomhere, Zimbabwe, almost two years ago. Without hesitation he interrupted his day to host us, introducing us to headman Tadzembwa and tribal elders and showing us around the school. His pride in the children, whom he spoke of as the future, was evident as he took us from class to class.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his family and the whole Lemba

community. We mourn with them this great loss of a man we think of as a friend. He will be sorely missed.

*Andrew, Relly, Sharon and David Coleman
Westport, CT*

Setting the Record Straight

Just to set the record straight, I thought I'd let you know that the first water tank at Nabugoye in Uganda was directly funded by myself to the Abayudaya community near the end of 2001. I visited the community for the first time to gather data for my Masters thesis in the summer of 2001, where I was hosted by Tziporah and Rabbi Gershom. Shortly thereafter I personally sent funds to members of the community, who were in New York and about to leave for Uganda, for the purpose of purchasing and installing a water tank that I had seen in nearby Mbale town while I was there. The tank was purchased and installed at Nabugoye sometime in late 2001. I returned to Nabugoye in January 2002, and the only water tank there at that time was the one I had donated.

I'm sure I wouldn't recognize Nabugoye today, with all of the reported development work Kulanu has undertaken, which must be of tremendous value to the Abayudaya community. There's no question that much more than water tanks has been achieved on Kulanu's part.

It's a mistake in the record, however, to attribute the donation of the very first water tank in the community to Kulanu rather than as I have indicated above. I might also point out that I and other women of fellow Hebrew congregations of color in New York continue to support the Abayudaya community on a modest basis.

*Y'sudah Yehudah
New York, NY*

(Editor's note: In announcing an upcoming speaking tour by an Abayudaya leader, we mentioned "the many public works projects the community has accomplished with Kulanu's help, including the first water well and water catchment tanks in the community." It would have been clearer if we had written that Kulanu has supported "water catchment tanks and the first water well in the community." We honor Y'sudah Yehudah's historic donation to bring the first catchment tank to the community. The photo below, taken in 2002, shows this tank at Nabugoye Hill.)



The Jews of Jamaica -- Then and Now

By Irwin M. Berg

In the summer of 2007 my wife Elaine and I joined a project sponsored by Caribbean Volunteer Expeditions to record the inscriptions of the tombstones in a Jewish cemetery in Falmouth, Jamaica. I knew that Jews had settled in several regions in the Caribbean, but I knew nothing of the Jewish community in Jamaica. So the project attracted my attention.

Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, but mainly Portugal, settled in Jamaica beginning about 1530 CE to avoid the Inquisition that was making their secret lives miserable and dangerous. At this time, the island was a Spanish territory. In Jamaica they continued to profess being Catholic, but they were able more easily to continue their Jewish observances in secret than on the Iberian Peninsula. In 1655 the British navy sailed into Kingston, Jamaica, led by a Crypto-Jewish pilot, Campoe Sabbatha. Once the British conquered the island from Spain, the Jews came out of the closet and openly practiced their religion. Over time Jews from other Spanish colonies made their way to Jamaica and their numbers grew.

Although most Jews settled in Spanish Town and Kingston (on the southwest shore of the island), they lived everywhere in Jamaica. Their numbers were surprisingly large until recent times.

| Year | Number of Jews |
|------|----------------|
| 1700 | 400 |
| 1735 | 800 |
| 1881 | 2535 |
| 1957 | 1600 |
| 1978 | 350 |
| 2005 | 250 |

The Cemeteries

The oldest Jewish cemetery in Jamaica is located at Hunts Bay, across the harbor from Port Royal, and midway between Kingston and Spanish Town. It was opened shortly after the British conquered the island in 1655. According to Mordecai Arbell in *The Portuguese Jews of Jamaica*, the tombstone inscriptions in the Port Royal cemetery are in Hebrew and Portuguese with some English. From what we saw in Falmouth and Montego Bay, Portuguese was soon forgotten in favor of English, and the use of Hebrew declined, albeit more slowly. By 1890 no readable tombstone in the Jewish cemeteries of Falmouth or Montego Bay contained any Hebrew.

Until the middle of the 19th century, Falmouth, the port nearest the largest and most productive sugar plantations, was the most important city on the northern shore of Jamaica. The numbers of graves in the Jewish cemetery suggest that there must have been a substantial Jewish community in Falmouth. We were able to read -- at least in part -- inscriptions on 78 tombstones, and there were indications of at least 35 more grave sites without surviving tombstones or with tombstones that could not be read.

The oldest readable inscription was of Isaac Simon, who died on January 17, 1815, at age 60. The next oldest was that of Lazarus Solomon, who died on November 21, 1822, at age 80. Between the years 1815 and 1849, there are 19 tombstones with names and dates. The average age at death during this period was 31.7 years, from the readable tombstones. The actual average age at death was probably several years less because we know of four infants who died during this period whose tombstones we could not locate or read.

From the decade between 1850 and 1860 there are 21 readable tombstones with dates. All the deaths during this period occurred on or between 1854 and 1959 -- the highest number of deaths during any 10-year period -- and the average age at death was 19.8 years, the lowest during any 10-year period. Some plague or other catastrophe might have hit Jamaica during these years to have brought so much loss of life so early to the Jewish community of Falmouth.

In the period 1861 to 1900, there are 23 readable tombstones with

dates. The average age at death was 53.9 years, with no infant deaths as far as we can determine.

In the 20th century, there are only 11 readable tombstones with dates. The average age at death was 65.4 years. The most recent tombstone in the Falmouth Jewish cemetery is that of Alfred Leopold Delgado, who died on December 21, 1944 at age 83.

The information on the tombstones corresponds with what we know about the history of Falmouth and of its Jews. The town was founded sometime around 1770 by the Barrett family, from whom the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning was descended. The Jews who came to live in Falmouth were merchants and traders dependent upon the vitality of the sugar plantations surrounding Falmouth and upon international trade. Falmouth, once a wealthy town, gradually became impoverished when the international market for sugar began to decline early in the 19th century; when the slaves who worked the sugar plantations were freed in 1835; and when deep draft steamships replaced sailing vessels and found Falmouth harbor too shallow.

The Jewish cemetery is located on Duke Street, a short walk from the Anglican Cathedral and cemetery. It measures 124 feet by 83 feet. The names of those interned are mostly Spanish or Portuguese; the most common being DeSouza, Carvalho, Delgado, Nunes, DeLeon, DeLisser, Furtado, DeCasseres, Lindo (more about Lindo later), DePass, and Morales. Several decedents had biblical names such as Joseph, Solomon, Isaac and Simon. Did these families revert to their pre-conversion names as part of their return to their ancestral religion? Some names show an English origin: Morris, Moss, Tyson, Harris, Lyons, and Hart. It would also be interesting to know whether these names were the result of a name change, intermarriage, or an influx of English Jews. Lastly, there are a few clearly Ashkenazic names: Wetzler, Magnus, and Ashenheim. Dr. Lewis Ashenheim, who died in 1857, is the great-grandfather of Jamaica's first ambassador to Washington, Sir Neville Ashenheim. Today, according to Dr. James Parrent of Falmouth Heritage Renewal, there are no Jews living in Falmouth.

There were at one time two Jewish cemeteries in Montego Bay. Montego Bay is Jamaica's second largest city and at one time had a thriving Jewish community that has shrunk to a couple of families. The older of the two cemeteries has disappeared. What we know is that it closed for burials in 1898. The cemetery measured 120 feet by 90 feet. The ground was sold sometime before 1958, and it is now occupied by the Churches Corporate Credit Union. The premises were viewed in 1958 by Barnett and Wright, authors of *The Jews of Jamaica Tombstone Inscriptions 1663-1880*, who found only three tombstones in place.

When Elaine and I visited the premises of the Credit Union on Union Street there were no longer any tombstones. We made an attempt to locate them by contacting the current owner of the premises and the Jamaican Historical Society without success.

The earliest interment in the second Jewish cemetery of Montego Bay occurred in 1898 and the most recent in 1923. Measuring 138 feet by 100 feet, it is larger than the cemetery at Falmouth, with evidence of only 22 burials, of which 10 tombstones are readable. The names of those interred there include Solomons, Isaacs, Jacobs, Corinaldi, Magnus, Aarons, Reuben and Hart. Obviously, when the land was purchased and the second cemetery opened, a more fruitful future was anticipated by the Jewish community of Montego Bay than eventuated.

This cemetery also reflects what we know about the Jewish community of Montego Bay. It was not until 1845 that a synagogue was consecrated in Montego Bay, but according to Barnett and Wright the congregation declined during the 20th century. When the synagogue was destroyed by a hurricane in 1912, it was never rebuilt.

What can we learn about the Jews of Falmouth and Montego Bay from their cemeteries?

(Continued on page 12)

The Improbable Jew

By Clara Castelar

My mother's family has a talent for the improbable. This is something I only came to appreciate when I tried to chart the paths that led my Melo and Oliveira ancestors from Iberia to sleepy little towns on the Cear-Paraiba border in Northeast Brazil.

Mine is not a complete map. The paths twist, turn and often vanish. When I began my quest for my elusive ancestors, almost thirty years ago, all I had to go on was a watch and a prayer. The watch had belonged to my grandfather, Joo Laurentino Melo, son of Laurentino Jose Cabea de Melo. It had a rampant lion engraved inside its lid and it was said to be a family heirloom; the prayer was my grandmother's, who passed it on to me when I turned thirteen. She told me that traditionally, it was passed on from father to son, but her father had taught it to her cautioning not to repeat it before strangers. She was the eldest daughter and so was I.

A decade or so later, I had moved to Shepherdstown, West Virginia when I met Zohara Muchinsky Boyd, a Holocaust survivor from Poland. It surprised me how quickly we bonded, considering the cultural differences I believed to exist between Catholic Brazil and Jewish Breslau.

It turned out that as children we had read some of the same books and that some of her mother's domestic habits were very much like my own mother's, which we took to be nothing more than universal mommisms, but what absolutely awed me, was Zohara's kindness.

I quizzed her about her values. She told me that her Jewish upbringing shaped her and that kindness was the heart of Judaism. It was to honor Zohara that I went to my first Rosh Hashanah service. There I found out that my grandmother's secret prayer was the *U'Netaneh Tokef Kedushat Hayom*, Let Us Tell How Utterly Holy This Day Is.

"On Rosh Hashanah it will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur it will be sealed

how many will pass from the earth and how many will be created;
who will live and who will die;
who will die at his predestined time and who before his time;
who by water and who by fire,
who by sword, who by beast, who by famine, who by thirst,
who by storm, who by plague, who by strangulation,
and who by stoning.

Who will rest and who will wander,
who will live in harmony and who will be harried,
who will enjoy tranquility and who will suffer,
who will be impoverished and who will be enriched,
who will be degraded and who will be exalted."

The puzzlement of Judaic tradition existing in what seemed to be a Catholic family, stayed with me for many years. As I continued to inform myself about Judaism, it became clear to me that my family followed many Judaic-based practices--just how many I would not find out until the advent of the internet. I had never heard of New Christians, Marranos, Conversos, Anoussim or Crypto-Jews until I posted a message on a Jewish website asking if anyone had information on the Jewish roots of the Oliveira, Melo, Barros, Pereira, Dantas, Bezerra, Nunes, Sousa, and Monteiro families from Northeast Brazil. Bob Feron, head of the translation section at the Brazilian Embassy, responded. He was a member of Kulanu, Hebrew for all of us, an outreach group whose goal is to find and assist dispersed remnants of the Jewish people. Bob put me in touch with Karen Primack, editor of the Kulanu Newsletter, and Jack Zeller, Kulanu's president. They, in turn, led me to Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn, whose rabbinical thesis dealt with Brazilian crypto-Jews and who is a leading authority on the subject. I also heard from Professor Judith Laiken, in the American South-

(Continued on page 16)

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PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

Due out in November 2007 from the Univ. of New Mexico Press: *New Mexico's Crypto-Jews: Image and Memory*, with photographs by **Cary Herz** and with essays by **Ori Z. Soltes** and **Mona Hernandez**.

Howard M. Lenhoff's *Black Jews, Jews, and Other Heroes, How Grassroots Activism Led to the Rescue of the Ethiopian Jews*, is a critically acclaimed, "riveting" account. Gefen 2007

Shocken has recently published **Sophie Judah's** *Dropped from Heaven: Stories*. The book contains 19 stories involving the Bene Israel Jews in India over the course of the past 100 years.

Carolivia Herron has written a children's book, *Always an Olivia – A Remarkable Family History*. Based on her own family history, the fictional story follows members of a Jewish family in Spain in the 1400s to Portugal, Italy, North Africa, and, finally, to the Georgia Sea Islands of America in 1805. Kar-Ben Publishing 2007.

"The Improbable Jew," by **Clara Castelar**, appears on *Dispatches from the Vanishing World*, Alex Shoumatoff's online forum for documenting and raising consciousness about the world's fast-disappearing cultural and biological diversity. Castelar's piece involves her Crypto-Jewish family history in Brazil and is viewable at http://www.dispatchesfromthevanishingworld.com/dispatch34/d34_1.html. An excerpt appears on page 11 of this newsletter.

The June issue of *World Jewish Digest* carried "Passover with the Pashtun" by **Ilene R. Prusher**. It describes the author's surreptitious celebration of Passover in Afghanistan in 2002 as a "freedom festival," her travels to Jewish sites in Afghanistan, and her subsequent research into the Pashtun as possible descendants of a Lost Tribe of Israel.

www.dispatchesfromthevanishingworld.com (search for Castelar).

"Spring Valley Couple Tell of Visit to Uganda Jews," concerning Lillian and Gilbert Zinn's talk at the JCC-Y, written by **Suzan Clarke**, appeared in *Journal News* on June 27.

According to **D. P. Bhattacharya's** "More and More Jewish Youths Plan To Go Back to Israel," more and more youths from Gujarat's 61 Jewish families are looking forward to making aliya. The article appeared on Expressindia.com on June 24.

"Socially Just to the Last Drop," by **Richard Greenberg**, appeared in the *Washington Jewish Week* on June 4. It discusses congregations in the DC area that are selling and using Ugandan Mirembe Kawomera Coffee for fund-raising and social justice projects.

The May 18 *Forward* published **Jay Michaelson's** "Shrine of False Messiah in Turkey To Be Razed." The house of Sabetai Tzvi is considered a shrine by hundreds of Crypto-Jews (*Doenmeh*) in Turkey today.

"Decoding Family Recipes," by Adeena Sussman, appeared in the April issue of *Hadassah Magazine*, profiling chef Jennifer Felicia Abadi, author of the Syrian Jewish cookbook, *A Fistful of Lentils*.

Matt Siegel's JTA piece, "Turkmen Jewish Leader Eyes Aliyah," was published on April 23. It discusses Lyuba Garbuzova, a young

grandmother who is devoted to helping Turkenistan's Jews emigrate to Israel.

"Seder for a Tiny Community" appeared in the *Washington Jewish Week* on April 12. It discusses Chabad-Lubavitch' provision of food and yeshiva student leader for seders for the 300-strong, isolated Jewish community on the inaccessible Kamchatka Peninsula, on the east-ern edge of the Russian federation.

On March 24, the *Courier-Journal* ran **Sara Cunningham's** "Taste of Uganda: Rabbi Reaches out to Children Through Music." It reports of Gershom Sizomu's visit to Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Louisville, Kentucky.

Uriel Heilman's JTA article, "Israel Capping Ethiopian Aliyah?" was published on February 14. It explains that Israel has issued a substantial number of denial notices to Ethiopian aliyah petitioners for the first time. Avraham Neguise of the advocacy group South Wing to Zion takes issue with the government's assessments of eligibility.



MADAGASCAR SEEKS CLOSER JEWISH TIES (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

The descendants of the group are known as the Anakara tribe, which still exists.

Hery and the members of the "Diaspora Jiosy Gasy" are passionate about becoming fully educated and recognized Jews. They wish, as Hery puts it, to "live in unison with all the children of Israel scattered across the world." They want to develop an appreciation of Jewish culture and to receive Jewish education.

Any assistance is welcome. Hery has been in contact with other Jewish organizations, including the South African Country Communities division of the African Jewish Congress. Unfortunately, he is not able to attend their meetings. The "Diaspora Jiosy Gasy" needs all manner of religious books and training. Hery speaks some English, but materials in French would be especially helpful. A computer would also be very welcome. Contact him for advice on how to send items:

M. RAHERIMASOANDRO ANDRIAMAMONJY
President du Club Shalom Madagascar,
Secrétaire General de la Diaspora Jiosy Gasy
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The Jews of Jamaica (cont.)

(Continued from page 9)

In Falmouth only 13 of the 78 readable tombstones had some Hebrew; a 14th had the Hebrew date of death in Latin letters. All 78, even those that had some Hebrew, were predominantly in English. Of the 13 with some Hebrew, only four were dated after 1860. None of the 10 readable inscriptions in the Montego Bay cemetery had any Hebrew. The tombstones show that knowledge of Hebrew, never strong during the 19th century, became even weaker over time and disappeared by the beginning of the 20th century.

All the tombstones of the Jewish cemeteries of Falmouth and Montego Bay (but one) face east. The explanation generally given for the practice of Spanish and Portuguese Jews burying their dead facing east is that, when the Messiah would appear in Jerusalem, the dead, without the need for turning around, would rise from their resting places and proceed directly to Jerusalem. This custom of burying the dead facing east is not followed by Ashkenazic Jews but was also followed by Sephardic Jews in their oldest cemeteries in Surinam and New York.

(My visit to the Anglican cathedral cemeteries of Montego Bay, Falmouth and Ocho Rios as well as to the two oldest Church cemeteries in New York City - Trinity Church and St. Paul's Church - found that the graves in those cemeteries also faced east. Conflicting reasons are given by Christians for this practice.)

Modern History

Until late in the 19th century, Arbell reports, Jamaican Jewish ritual and customs were Orthodox. In 1884 the United Congregation of Israelites was formed from a union of the Ashkenazi and Sephardic congregations, and it continues to exist to this day. This was an umbrella organization for Jamaican Jews from all sections of the island. Its purpose was to conform religious practice with a population that was no longer Orthodox and wished to adopt Conservative rituals and practices. In 1913, it introduced a prayer book which included an English transliteration of Hebrew prayers for a population that largely could no longer read Hebrew.

Most of Jamaica's Jews left for Britain, the USA and Canada between 1962, when Jamaica became independent, and the 1970s, when political unrest was widespread. This sharply reduced the island's Jewish population, which in 1957 numbered 1600, but by 1978 had only 350 remaining. This sharp reduction in so short a period seems to have lit a desire to survive among those remaining. In 1969 a Hillel School was founded by the United Congregation of Israelites in Kingston as a secular private primary and secondary school.

In 1997 the Neveh Shalom Institute was founded to preserve the sites of old Jewish synagogues and other remains. In 2006 the Jewish community celebrated the 350th anniversary of Jewish life in Jamaica by inaugurating a Jamaican Jewish Heritage Center.

Today there is only one synagogue remaining in Jamaica. It is the 100 year old Shaare Shalom Synagogue, located at 92 Duke Street in Kingston, Tel: 1-876-922-5931, email: shareshlom@cwjamaica.com. The floor of Shaare Shalom is covered with a layer of white sand. This tradition arose when secret Jews had to muffle the sounds of worship lest they be discovered and denounced to the Inquisition.

One of our volunteers, Rachel Frankel, traveled to Kingston from Falmouth to spend a Shabbat with the congregation. About 60 people attended services on that Saturday morning. (The usual number does not exceed 20, and there is almost always a minyan with women being counted). Most of the service was in English. Men and women sat together. Some women wore a *kippah* (head covering) and a *tallit* (prayer shawl), and a woman read from the Torah. Many of the congregation were of mixed race -- Afro-Caribbean and Caucasian.

Being of mixed race is not new to the Jews of Jamaica. Slavery

was abolished in Jamaica in 1835. While the Jews of Jamaica were not owners of plantations -- where most Africans labored as slaves -- they did own slaves, and unions between Jews and slaves did occur. After 1835 intermarriage and other unions became so common that Dr. Lewis Ashenheim in 1844 predicted that the Jewish community of Jamaica was headed into extinction. John Bigelow, who traveled to Jamaica in 1850, a bare 15 years after slavery was abolished, had never before seen a black Jew. In his travelogue he wrote of his astonishment at the proportion of Jews who were "of all colors."

Some 250 Jews live on an island of three million, of whom 90% to 95% are of predominantly African origin. The United Congregation of Israelites is openly inclusive. It is openly willing to convert the non-Jewish marriage partner and is aggressively supporting intermarried couples who wish to raise their children as Jewish. The British periodical *Jewish Renaissance* has reported that although the rate of intermarriage and interracial marriage is high, the families of mixed marriages are choosing to bring up their children as Jews, whereas in the past Jamaican Jews who married out of the faith most often brought up their children as Christians.

Shaare Shalom, which has no rabbi, is led by Ainsley Henriques, a descendant of one of the oldest Jewish families in Jamaica. Henriques married Sheila Chong, a former Miss Jamaica, of half Chinese and half Afro-Caribbean origin. She converted to Judaism, and their children have been raised as Jews.

The cantor of Shaare Shalom is Winston Mendes-Davidson. In his late 40s, curiosity about his name led him to discover that his mother's grandfather was Jewish. This kindled in him an interest in Judaism and led to his conversion.

Through Kulanu, I was introduced to Jessie Brooks, who was born in London of Jamaican descent. Her great-grandmother was the child of a Jewish father and a black mother. She wrote to me: "This was not uncommon in Jamaica as you can imagine. It was the acceptable norm for men to live with common law wives and even have concubines. Many children fathered by Jews outside marriage were not always brought up as Jews but still had Jewish heritage."

Five years ago Jessie Brooks was introduced to Judaism by a friend and has since received an Orthodox conversion.

Conversion as a survival technique is becoming common not only in Jamaica but in several tiny Jewish communities of the Caribbean and Central America. Several of these communities have formed an umbrella group called the Union of Jewish Congregations of Latin America and the Caribbean. These communities include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Bahamas, Jamaica, Aruba and Panama, among others. These communities strive to maintain their Jewish identity as members migrate out or marry non-Jews. The converts are accepted under conditions that may not conform to Orthodox *halacha* (traditional Jewish law). In their desire to attract the children of mixed marriages, some permit the non-Jewish spouse to participate in the synagogue in religious activities.

When I visited the Anglican cemetery in Ocho Rios, I noticed a tombstone which had a large six-pointed Star of David. It was the resting place of Jack Ruby Lindo, who died on April 2, 1989. "Lindo," I knew from my work in Falmouth, is a common name among Jamaican Jews of Portuguese origin. The bottom of the stone contained the following inscription: "P.S. See you in Zion." One can speculate on what caused Jack Ruby Lindo to be buried in this manner, but a most likely reason is that he or those who buried him had some attachment to Judaism or some feeling of identification with Jewish ancestors. It is the goal of the United Congregation of Israelites to preserve to Judaism the Lindos of Jamaica. This writer wishes that it will succeed.

The Facts on the Ground In Burundi (cont.)

(Continued from page 7)

these unknown men were simple gangsters, though nothing was stolen and no house seems to have been targeted. Violence is not simply a random, grass-roots phenomenon: Feruzi Mohamed, the former governor of Muyinga province, has been implicated in the disappearance and presumed death of more than thirty people, at least seven of whose corpses washed up on the banks of the Ruvubu River last July. All such events, including attacks by the Burundian army against the FNL, provide a thinly veiled pretext to kill any Tutsis in the vicinity.

Hate speech, such a powerful tool in arousing Hutu violence in Rwanda prior to the genocide there, is becoming increasingly common in Burundi.

- What the present governor of Muyinga has reported as occurring in his province is actually occurring throughout Burundi: dissidents from Burundi's ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, are inciting the population to civil disobedience and actively recruiting combatants to join in preparing for a coming attack on their party's power center. The new recruits, joined by a faction of the FNL that refuses to negotiate peace with the government, swell the ranks of the tens of thousands of militia members who constitute the personal army of the imprisoned former head of the party, Radjabu Hussein, created as a tool for the imposition of his anti-Tutsi, pro-Islamic, dictatorial ambitions. Within the government, Radjabu's supporters call upon party members to reject Pres. Nkurunziza as irrelevant and to embrace Radjabu's fight for complete Hutu power and a final solution to the Tutsi problem. Pascaline Kampayano, a member of the National Assembly and the highly visible president of the party's women's league, resigned from her government post at the end of May.
- Hate speech, such a powerful tool in arousing Hutu violence in Rwanda prior to the genocide there, is becoming increasingly common in Burundi. On the morning of June 2, 2006, a seasoned Hutu activist gathered thousands of Hutus in Ngozi's Central Market and urged them not to leave without buying a machete, because the reprieve for the Tutsis was over and the time had come to give them a definitive lesson; by later that afternoon, not a single machete remained in the shops. A death sentence for Tutsis, broadcast on the radio this past mid-August, came directly from Pres. Nkurunziza, who declared that the Tutsi would be punished without mercy for their plans to overthrow the Hutu-dominated government. (The accusations of a coup proved so blatantly bogus that the government was eventually forced to back down, but not before torturing the Tutsi, and only the Tutsi, "conspirators" and preparing the justification for further action against all Tutsis.) Crowds cheered incendiary speeches by Nkurunziza and Radjabu Hussein, expressing the hope that Tutsi prisoners would be crushed so painfully that their families would hear their cries from prison and anticipate the same for themselves. And in early May of this year, a prominent Hutu website published a lengthy poem accusing the Tutsis of murderous aggression against their gentle Hutu neighbors and warning that those who have killed with weapons would themselves be killed by weapons.

The US Government, according to people in the State Department with whom I have spoken, has no plan to prevent genocide in Burundi and no contingency plan for dealing with genocide once it begins. Indeed, our government apparently has no will to do much of anything at all. This is despite the fact that at least some people at State have

Why does our Government seem to turn a blind eye to the fate of Tutsis in Central Africa?

come to recognize, in light of the ethnically based rule of the majority and the increasing exercise of the politics of power, that whatever hopes they had for democracy in Burundi have been dashed. Perhaps, as a country, we prefer Pres. Clinton's approach to the genocide in Rwanda: berating ourselves for inaction only when the accusations issuing from the empty mouths of a million corpses become too loud to ignore.

Why does our Government seem to turn a blind eye to the fate of Tutsis in Central Africa? Answers are many: reluctance to use the "g" word lest we have to act on our commitments to prevent genocide, deference to the European community (especially France, which actively aided the Hutu killers in Rwanda), lack of a compelling reason to get involved (though the growing influence of well-bankrolled and radical Islam in Burundi should be a very good reason, if a humanitarian reason will not suffice), and the complacent notion of moral equivalency, or, in the words of former French President Mitterrand, "in such countries, genocide is not too important."

The American press is silent. The Burundian and European press and high-minded NGOs make it easier to ignore what is really happening by declining to identify who is doing what to whom.

The forces that trigger genocide feed on political chaos, hatred, blood-lust, impunity, and greed – all of which are being purposefully cultivated in Burundi today, as they were in Rwanda in 1994. Genocide is not inter-tribal conflict. It is not conflict at all – it is mass murder. It cannot be excused and it must not be denied.

Book Comment (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

handcuffed and led away to the subterranean jail cells of the unHoly Office. But this time, the secret was discovered and the bailiff was in for a surprise.

Esther Muznick, vice-president of the Israeli Community of Lisbon, described the book as a good crime novel at the recent launch of the book in Lisbon. There are several annexes of historical documents, an excellent bibliography, and 20 pages of the names of the victims of the Inquisition from Fundão from 1582 to 1754.

Fundão-born Maria Antonieta Garcia is a retired professor of Sociology at the University of Beira Interior, where she founded the Centre for Jewish Studies. She is the author of numerous books on Portuguese Jewish history, including the critically acclaimed *Judaísmo no Feminino* (1999), an analysis of the community of Belmonte. Regrettably, none of her books have been translated into English, something the Friends of Marranos hopes to change.



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The Improbable Jew (cont.)

(Continued from page 10)

west, Crypto-Judaism scholar Schulamith Halevy, and journalist Inacio Steinhardt, in Israel. An intense exchange of e-mail followed and for the first time I became aware of a part of history, consistently left out of Brazilian textbooks.

Folk traditions say that Jews arrived in Iberia as traders and settlers, in King Solomon's ships. That tradition also maintains that Jews came to Iberia following the Babylonian Captivity. Jewish historian Josephus quotes Greek geographer Strabos, to prove following the destruction of the Second Temple, Jewish migration extended to every corner of the known world. But there exists proof of Jewish presence in Spain, in the 3rd Century BCE and in Portugal, the 6th Century, CE. Judaism was a *religio licita*, a legal religion, throughout the Roman Empire, but once the Visigoths supplanted the Romans as rulers of Iberia and converted to Christianity, things took an ugly turn. In 615 Visigothic King Sisebut ordered that Jews who refused to convert be given a hundred lashes. Should they continue to resist, all their prop-

erty would be confiscated and they would be banished. Sisebut also instituted the death penalty for Jews who reverted to Judaism, thus creating the need for Jews to hide their true religious identity.

In the 8th. Century, the Islamic invasion of Spain ended Visigothic rule and inaugurated an era of deliverance. For approximately seven centuries, Jews were able to worship openly.

However, as Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella supplanted Islamic rulers, in 1492, conversion obsession took hold in Spain.

Non-Christians were no longer protected minorities. Faced countless sanctions, many Jews and Moslems outwardly embraced Christianity while continuing to follow Judaism and Islam in secret.

(Editor's note: this is an excerpt from "The Improbable Jew," which is published in its entirety on the website www.dispatchesfromthevanishingworld.com. See Dispatch #34 for the article with photos.

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