

THE ABRAVANEL FAMILY NEWSLETTER

"Basta mi nombre que es Abravanel"

Newsletter No. 16
December 1992

THE HOUSE OF GOLD

The family Reunion in Israel occurred with great success on October 29, 1992 in the "Casa del Oro" in Ganot, a town just outside of Tel Aviv. Many family members renewed old friendships with long lost cousins, while others met relatives they had never known existed from Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, Yugoslavia and Libya. Articles from Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post are included on pages 5 and 6.

WITHOUT MOTHERS

Columbia University Press recently published Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II, by Harold Werner, who passed away in 1989. Mr. Werner, born in a small village in Eastern Poland in 1917, was a member of a Jewish resistance group that operated in the Polish forest. Called a tale of "unvarnished human testimony" by The New Yorker, the book describes the fight for survival against hostile German forces, and equally hostile Polish anti-Semitic forces.



Jewish partisans posing for a Russian photographer in German-occupied Poland in late 1943. Foreground from left Shienka from Wlodawa, Abram the Patzan, and Chanina Barbanel. Standing from left Harold Werner, Symcha Barbanel, Dora Grynszpan, Abram Grynszpan, and Velvale the Patzan. From the archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. From Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II

Please address all correspondence to:
Allan R. Abravanel, 111 SW Fifth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 295-4400

Among the members of his resistance group were the brothers Symcha and Chanina Barbanel (see Newsletter No. 16). Chanina (now known as Henry) had joined the group after escaping from a forced labor camp. Werner first met the Barbanel family through the intercession of Yosel Barbanel, a brother of Symcha and Chanina:

"Yosel [Barbanel] suggested that we leave the Zamolodycze woods and head toward the nearby village of Maryanka. That was his hometown, and he believed his family was somewhere in the Maryanka woods. His father, Rachmiel Barbanel, had been a successful cattle merchant before the war. He and his wife had four sons - Chaim, Yosel, Symcha, and Chanina - and three daughters.

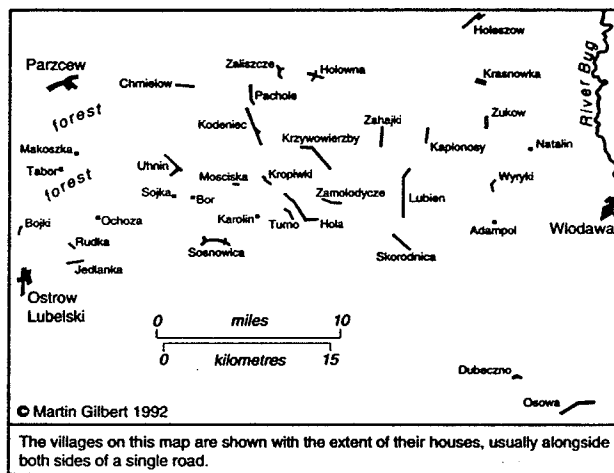
"Their ancestors had lived in the area for many generations and, as a result, they had many relatives in the neighboring towns of Sosnowica and Wlodawa and in the surrounding villages.

"When the Germans ordered all Jews to the ghettos, Rachmiel and his family went to the Maryanka woods instead, and all of his relatives from the area joined them. Altogether, Rachmiel's immediate family and close relations in the woods numbered about fifty people. Among his family, [Rachmiel] was treated with the respect of a king."

Werner reports that he fell asleep after joining Rachmiel and his family in the forest, and awoke to the sound of automatic gunfire. The German army had raided their camp, killing thirty of the members of their group. While the four Barbanel sons had survived, Rachmiel, his wife, one of their daughters and many of their relatives had died; another daughter had been wounded. Werner chronicles the fortune of the remainder of the family; only Symcha and Chanina, their Uncle Motel Barbanel and Aunt Chanche, and Motel and Chanche's young daughter, survived the War.

Werner's description of life in the woods, where the partisans fought for their lives against an often unseen and unexpected foe, and sought vengeance against their enemies, is particularly vivid. One story of another German raid into the forest emphasizes the thin margin between survival and extinction:

"Many people who were running escaped the [German machine gun] fire. While running and holding her three-year-old daughter, Chanche Barbanel was grazed by a bullet that passed through her hair and set it on fire. Her little girl kept pleading with her mother, 'Please don't drop me,' when she saw her mother's hair on fire. Chanche



Map 4: Polish villages between Parczew and Wlodawa—the Jewish partisans' area of operation.

From Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II

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held on to her daughter, and the two of them, along with her husband Motel, survived the attack and ultimately the war."

Werner describes a raid on a German train. Eight partisans, including Chanina Barbanel, intended to use a captured cannon shell to blow up the rail bridge over which the train would travel:

"Chanina and I, along with two other men, climbed to the rail line and dug a pit under the rails in which to place the shell. The other four, who had hauled the shell up the embankment, kept watch and helped put the shell in place.

"It was almost midnight. Everyone was nervous and anxious to see this operation succeed.... We held our breath when the locomotive reached the bridge. [A partisan] triggered the fuse, and a tremendous explosion obliterated the bridge just ahead of the locomotive.... The locomotive hurtled into the river forty feet below, pulling the rest of the train with it.

"It was a military train full of hundreds of German soldiers. Some of them started jumping out of the train into the shallow water. They were running in all directions and appeared dazed and disorganized. We stood on the riverbank, firing our rifles at the mass of struggling men.

"We heard one of the wounded Germans shouting 'Muter, Mutter! [Mother, Mother!]' I remember [one of the partisans] from Sosnowica, standing next to me as we fired at the soldiers, murmuring: 'They still have mothers. We don't have our mothers. They killed all of them.'"

FROM THE LIBRARY

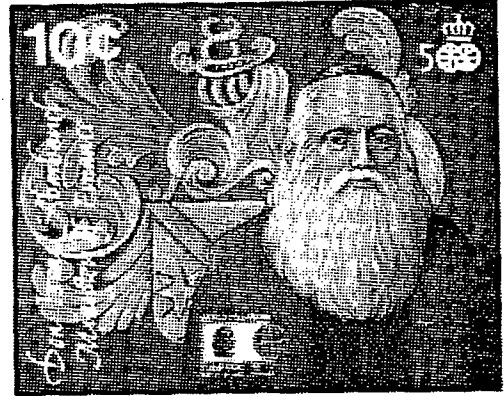
David Raphael, the author of The Alhambra Decree, has edited a new book containing selections relating to the Expulsion from Spain. Entitled The Expulsion 1492 Chronicles, the anthology of 25 chronicles describes the Expulsion in vivid detail, and includes the description by Don Isaac Abravanel of his famous audience with Ferdinand and Isabella to avert the decree. The book may be purchased from Carmi House Press, P.O. Box 4796, North Hollywood, California 91607.

Jane Gerber, the speaker at the reunion dinner in New York in March 1992, has written The Jews of Spain - A History of the Sephardic Experience. Ms. Gerber is Professor of Jewish history and director of the Institute for Sephardic Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center. Copies of the work may be obtained by calling The Free Press at (800) 323-7445, or by writing their office at 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022, Attention: Dino Battista.

PHILATELIC NEWS

Grenada has issued a series of stamps for the Quincentennial of the dispersion from Spain. The 10 cent stamp features Don Isaac Abravanel and the family coat of arms.

Grenada
Grenadines



ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE

The Newsletter received the following letter of JACK DON ABRAVANEL (Los Angeles, California), a retired fire captain, from a publication of the Tenement Museum:

"I wish to inform you that I was the Sheffield milkman who served 97 Orchard Street from September 1929 to December 1936, when I joined the NY Fire Department. For seven and a half years I served all of Orchard Street from Delancey to Canal; [also] Allen St., Hester St., and Canal and Division Sts. Being young, I was able to execute delivery of milk in this area, which consisted of 610 flights of stairs, daily - six days a week at \$37 a week. I served stores, P.S. 42 on Hester and Ludlow, and factories on the way back to the barn on 28th Street between 10th and 11th Aves.

"I'll never forget 79 Orchard Street, corner of Broome, because I had only one client for a pint of milk, which I was forced to serve or else the investigator would have me fired. Only one client left, because of the Depression. I'll always remember climbing the six stories and finding a 'no milk today' notice. "

RACHEL'S STORY

Anyos Muchos i Buenos; Turkey's Sephardim: 1492-1992 is a photographic exhibit that is touring the United States. The exhibit begins with a story of the expulsion from Spain in 1492 told in Ladino by Rachel Benhabip Levi of Istanbul:

"In Spain, there were many rich people, of those some were jewelers. You know what a jeweler is? So, an old jeweler who did not work anymore, had in his possession one ring...so valuable that when he tried to sell it no one could afford it, for he put a very high price on it. He finally tried to sell it to the King, who liked it very much, but couldn't buy it either...even though the Queen's eyes were dazzled by it. The King said, 'I don't have that kind of money to buy it.'

"There was a Jewish ambassador by the name of Don Isaac Abravanel who could pay what the jeweler asked for the ring. A month later, at a ball in the Royal Palace to which the Ambassador and his wife were invited, she wore the precious ring. When the Queen saw the ring she got very upset and said to the King, 'You, the rich King, you couldn't buy this ring for me.... But the dirty Jew bought it for his wife.... The Jews are going to have to leave from here....' So the Jews were expelled from Spain, and Turkey received them with open arms."

HA'ARETZ
November 3, 1992

לא רק לאיטלקים יש דון

צאצאי דון יצחק אברבנאל מספרים, שכאשר שמע בטהובן את השם אברבנאל, מיד קפצה עליו המוזקה והוא ניגש לכתובת הפתיחה לסימפוניה החמישית

מאת אביטל ניצן

השורשים העמוקים של בני אבות אברבנאל לא נעצרים בלבד ברוח אברבנאל - פילוסוף, זואי, פרשן הדג'ר, שר האוצר מלכת ספרד איזבלה וגם משלושת הספונסורים הידועים שסימנו את מסעו של קולרס וס לאמריקה הם ממשיכים את המסורת עד למשפחת בית המלך.

גם אם איש משמות צאצאי אברבנאל - ספרדים ואשכנזים, שאינם גם שמות משפחה ברובם, ברובם אף ברובלסקי, תכנסו כיום חמישי האחרון לסדרה של "מלך שבישיבת גת" - ניסה לטעון למלוכה כולם יגישו את הגאווה שהשתררה למשפחה מיוחדת זו.

במסגרת מינוי אברבנאל (ור' לי ששמי אבר'אל) הוא משמש המפתח ונגו של עלון המשפחה המופץ והאברבנאלים בחצי העולם ר' נחמאל אברבנאל, איש קרן שער העסקים, שגורל מפורסם ביזנסולוגיה וב-1943 קיבל דרכת שותפות למחנות הרייז, משגן את המשפט בגאווה ויהי.

כמעט כל בני המשפחה נוספו אהרן, הוא אביו שעה שהא נגזר תמונת משפחה מצוינת, השתמרה דרך גם אצל קרובים ארוכות הברית ונראים בה סמל אדם וסמל ריינה על השטת ילדיהם.

בני המשפחה מרעיד שלי, אך יקשי לטעון עוד סיפורים על משפחה.

החל שלי אברבנאל ליידיד ה' אני מודעת עם המורשת משפחתית במלג שלי, מפרסות גוטלויה, למישג 'שארדה זה עליה יש משמעות עמוקה.

היה משה מוד במשפחה היה גבש של אנשים שמעולם לא יחד קדם לכן, שבא מרקע קצועי, הברתי והשכלתי שונה, ארצות מצא שונה, ובכל זאת מישג מרגיש הניגוי. גם שמו של דן יהודה, בנו של דן יצחק, חזר בתחילה הוא היה רומן ועל זה ביהודה חתמי חתמי נפשו אברבנאל בתים ופילוסוף, אהבה, בנות הייאלוגים על ופלטון, השפיע רבות על השירה ילדיהם באיטליה.

מפגש האברבנאלים בארץ זה המכש של כיום קדם שנה נד בני יצחק, ב-31 במרץ 1992, בדיק 500 שנה מיום הדין המלך הואן קילוס על ירושם ספר. 130 בני המשפחה



הפגוש המשפחתי האחרון. ר' לי ששמי אברבנאל

המשפחה של האברבנאל. גם ביוזמה של המנדט הציוני מסק נודא (מאיר וידעלה, ליד כרמלית שב הונגריה, מוצאים שורשים המני עים למשפחה אברבנאל. אנה, בנו של נודא, מספרת שסבה ליכר את נודא הצעיר לארצו, והיא עתודה אותו אחר כך להתעניין ביהדות ספרד. והשיבה עוד ארוכה לינה אברבנאל, שוקגית התאסרו לידת ונה שעשתה קיימה באה"ב תמסרה בשנת השישים רייחוד אברבנאל-לינו (1772-1852) מעוזרו החשובים של בני מין ר' יודעלה; מיקי אברבנאל, שחקן הבייסבול המצויין (1968) מבנות הרויט סקט' בני ריאפוליס, ועוד אברבנאל היי שראלי, קברניט אל על. עוד אברבנאל, אנה, לא הגיע למפגש שנערך בגנת אהרן, עין אברבנאל, מנהל מכונית מרמת הרצון, ייצג את מלג המשפחה שהגיע לישראל מקיימבזוק שבחוסה הלכנה לדבר' עין, סבו משה, שעלה ליי שראל ב-1912 והקים בה את הקולנוע הראשון, "ערך", והא הקיינו הראשון על הטיילת בתל אביב, היה גם האברבנאל הראשון ששחרר לארץ בעת הדרשה למפגש, מספר עין, הוא הגיע בעיקר בגלל הסקרנות להבדיל מאברבנאלים באמריקה המוששים קרובי משפחה כספר הטל שנים בגינים לעיד דה, הוא לא נאמן שהמפגש היה ייצג קשרים, אבל אי פעם אי אפשר לדעת, הוא מסוים.

הזכר סיפורים יש לצאצאי דון יצחק, אבל הסיפור המדויק אברבנאל כאשר הוא לבין ספרד - שייך לג'ק אברבנאל, ליד מלונקי ותרשב האיינגטון, לר' ביה, במרוא 1943, כשהתי קבלה הקדשה לגרש את יהודי מלונקי, והערב הגולל פרנק, ששלט או בספרד, הודש במשלת גרמניה לאפשר לשגרירות הספרדית להמשיך ולמסך הגנה ליהודים המועים לאחוזות ספרדיות.

מליון דולה. סיכיליו נמסרם הוא שם הביעה של בניו אברבנאל, בנו של אלברט חם אברבנאל מלונקי. נמסרם, הובלה שאר שות פוליטיות, אמר כבוד הראינות כי אי שמעולם לא הלך לבית נבנת הוא גם כיום כיסוד, "כדי להתאים עם אלו היסט. מפורסם אוד, ששיאיתיו הייסלומטיות ממש, הוא רק ג'וז אברבנאל, הקונסול הכללי של פרוסוגל באיסטנבול. לדברי הביטאון יש ברשות וק אברבנאל אילן יחסין, ששורשי משורשים לאורך מאתיים שנה.

גם כורים מספרים, שכשכר ימי נמה לעבר הבטייה הוסיף הארטורודוקסית, היה נגד לשרש לת אברבנאל. אבי, הצעיר ליאונד מספרים, שיצירותיו נמצאות גם במחאון תל אביב, היה גאה במוצא היהודי והי תייחסות לדון יצחק אברבנאל. כאוד המכתבים מתלונן כורים כמני אביו על הצקותיה של בת ודחתו אולגה פריינדברג, האב נמנם אותו ומסכר את התנה גתה ב'גאווה האפיינית לפלג

ר'ד אליט ר' אברבנאל, שעסק בריאות הרוח. הייסן שהעניק דון יצחק אברבנאל יד עם לואיס דה סג' אנגלו אברדה וקסו למסע לג'ר לוי אמריקה וזה לגילוי כבוד שעולם סלוג. מירנה נסיה ליאנה במסר אמריקה הניקה סודה של ארבעה בולים, שבאוד מום נראה דון יצחק לצד אננית המסך "נסה מירה", וכן צמד מסבקות המדעון היהודי בקרקל, קליפורניה, הנפיק סודת מליות, והעלון, שמוחו על כך, לא שוכח לציין את הכ תובת המדעית. למעניינים בר' כישנה ויש גם ימות, תרבות חברת דומק מאלוה בספרד, תגר שאים את השם אברבנאל, "מסעמים מסודיים". העלון ממאי '86 מציין שובכמות מר גבלת, ומי שהפך ב"יון אברבנאל במרומ, כראי לו שיווד לרוכש כבו עתה.

מבין האברבנאלים המפורסמים היום כיום מציין הביטאון את סיכיליו נמסרם, כוכב הלוחי זה שהזו האיש היעך ב-150-160

Variations on a blue-blooded theme

A piece of junk mail to an Oregon lawyer triggered a search for an Abrabanel family tree five years ago. The results of the reunion here, Greer Fay Cashman writes

AN Abrabanel is an Abrabanel by any other name — and people with those and similar names gathered yesterday for a special family reunion.

It all started in 1987, when Allan Abravanel, a lawyer from Portland, Oregon, received junk mail with a proposal to trace his family tree.

Abravanel — who all his life has been asked "Do you know who you are?" — knew that he was somehow related to the renowned 15th-century statesman, philosopher and biblical exegete Don Isaac Abrabanel, and he was curious as to how many distant cousins he might have in the US.

He responded to the offer and received a list of 80 people with surnames similar to his own. Forty of them were already known to him.

He wrote to the others to establish contact, and in doing so, became the founding editor of the *Abravanel Family Newsletter*.

Publication of the newsletter is irregular, but Abravanel puts out at least three issues a year. Distribution, which quickly became international, increased to 200 copies in the first year and is now more than 500.

He estimates that the readers number about 1,500, since family members in different parts of the world pass around the newsletter among themselves.

People who receive the newsletter give him leads to other relatives, often supplying thumbnail biographies.

A family reunion was inevitable, and the 500th anniversary year of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Columbus's discovery of America was an ideal linchpin for the Abrabanel and other clans of Spanish/Portuguese extraction.

Joseph and Samuel, continue to surface among 20th-century Abrabanel.

A talent for writing, be it commentary, poetry, journalism or fiction, seems to be an Abrabanel family trait, and medicine has been a calling in every generation. One of the British Abrabanel, David Abrabanel Lindo, performed the ritual circumcision on Benjamin Disraeli, who later became an Anglican and went on to become prime minister of England.

Don Isaac wrote numerous commentaries on the major and minor prophets; his son Judah, who was a physician, was also a poet and one of the foremost Renaissance philosophers.

Max Nordau, the co-founder of the World Zionist Organization, was descended from a Spanish Jewish family which traced its origins to Isaac Abrabanel. Like his famous forebears, Nordau, born Simon Maximilian Sudfeld, was a philosopher, physician and writer.

Another famous member of the clan was the great Russian author Boris Pasternak.

Both Boris Pasternak and his father Leonid, a celebrated artist, made frequent references in their correspondence to their Abrabanel lineage.

Albert Abrabanel, who was born in Germany and immigrated to the US, was a renowned psychologist

who in 1964 co-edited the landmark publication *The Encyclopedia of Sexual Behavior*. His daughter Stephanie Abrabanel, a professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, is also a prize-winning editor-at-large with *Family Circle* magazine.

Howard Barbanel, the founder of the *Miami Jewish Tribune*, is now a senior executive with *Forward*, the English-language successor to the Yiddish daily *Forverri*. Another journalist is theater critic Jonathan Abrabanel of Chicago, who recently was named the recipient of the Peter Lisagor Award for exemplary journalism for his "Stage Whispers" column.

Don Isaac Abrabanel, who served as financial adviser to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Castile, could have stayed in Spain and continued to enjoy his considerable wealth and status, had he been prepared to renounce Judaism and convert to Christianity. He chose exile instead and went to Naples, where he and other members of his family again occupied positions of influence.

Ironically, Don Isaac's grandfather, Samuel, had converted to Christianity during the Portuguese riots of 1391. The family later returned to Judaism, though some branches again converted to Christianity.

Don Isaac's claim to be a descendant of the House of David, if confirmed, would make his progeny blue bloods.

The 500th anniversary of Don Isaac's birth was celebrated in 1937 in Berlin.

An Abrabanel exhibition held at the Berlin Jewish Museum was later destroyed by the Nazis.

An Abrabanel served with the German forces in World War II,

while some Jewish members of his family were being exterminated in the death camps and others were fighting with the partisans.

A small, non-Jewish branch of the Abrabanel family still lives in Germany. Stephan Abarbanell, a Protestant minister in Frankfurt, wrote Allan Abravanel that his grandfather was a half-Jew married to a Christian. His father, though not permitted because of his Jewish blood to join the Hitler Youth, was nonetheless drafted into the army at age 17.

The Abrabanel, both Jewish and Christian, are scattered all over the world. Allan Abravanel, who comes from the Gallipoli branch of the family, says that getting to know them in person or by correspondence has increased his knowledge of Jewish and family history enormously.

"Saloniki was just a name. I never really connected to it before," he said during an interview in Jerusalem. It is only in the last four years that he has discovered what a vibrant Jewish community Saloniki had, Abravanel says.

He regrets that he has not yet made much headway with the Italian branch of the family, but he intends to remedy this in the near future. Meanwhile, he is getting to know some of the Israelis whom he did not meet on previous visits here.

The Israeli line is not without its notables. Oded Abarbanel of Tel Aviv has the dubious distinction of being the only ElAl pilot of a hijacked plane.

Abrabanel's plane was hijacked on July 23, 1968, by Arab terrorists over the Mediterranean and diverted to Algeria. He was one of 12 Israelis, seven of them crew members, held in Algeria for 39 days



Allan Abravanel

before being released following the intervention of the Italian government.

Another Israeli Abarbanel who came to international attention is Levana Abarbanel, who in 1978 won the Miss Israel contest.

The late Moshe Abarbanell, who was born in Russia in 1875 and came here prior to the outbreak of World War I, is credited with opening the country's first cinema, the Eden in Tel Aviv, in 1915.

The recent wave of immigration from Russia has brought new cousins to the fore, including Lola Abarbanel Eukin and Marlena Idelchik, both of whom now live in Haifa. The latter is the granddaughter of

an Abarbanel. The largest concentrations of Abrabanel and their variants, as far as Abravanel knows, are in the US, Latin America and France. Large Polish branches of the family perished in the Holocaust, but it is just possible that totally unknown branches are still flourishing in Russia and other parts of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Some of the Abrabanel, especially the women, are hard to find because they have changed their names. Abravanel does not have a clear idea of how many family affiliates there are in toto, but he estimates that the number is anywhere between 3,000 and 5,000.