

Jerusalem Post, January 22, 2004

Seven Days

by Melissa Radler

Rabbi and rapper for rights

Citing Martin Luther King Jr. as his inspiration, hip hop mogul Russell Simmons joined forces with Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, to urge people from all backgrounds to fight anti-Semitism.

"Were King alive today, he would speak out vociferously against this new wave of anti-Semitism," wrote Simmons (who serves as the foundation's chairman) and Schneier in an opinion piece published in Jewish and African-American newspapers this week in honor of Martin Luther King Day, observed January 19.

"He also would not tolerate the moral laryngitis that many political leaders seem to suffer from in the face of these despicable acts against the Jewish people."

The article cites a recent foundation survey showing that 77% of Blacks and 73% of Jews believe the two communities should work together on civil rights issues, and the article calls on the black community to fight against the resurgence of global anti-Semitism.

"This is the civil rights struggle of the Jewish people in the year 2004," explained Schneier. "Just as we championed the civil rights of African-American, we need African-Americans to champion basic human rights for Jews during this onslaught."

Also this week, the foundation distributed curriculum guides on strengthening Black-Jewish relations, including Schneier's 2000 book, *Shared Dreams: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Jewish Community* to 120 Jewish schools, community centers and boards of Jewish education. The book outlines the Jewish community's contribution to the civil rights movement, and King's positive relations with Jewish leaders.