

Be'chol Lashon Update 6/28/04**Featured Articles:**

Shahanna McKinney- Baldon & William Baldon's Baby has Arrived!
Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Moves to Marquette Park
Needed A Conversation Policy
How Wen-Jing Became 'Shalva': Chinese Jewish Descendant Returns to Judaism
An Update on Past IAEJ Conferences and Workshops
Lenny Kravitz to Star in Barbecues and Bar Mitzvahs
US Christian Leader: Israel Should Reach Out to African-Americans
My Big Fat Interfaith Lesbian Wedding
Abarbanel's Commentary Released in Spanish
From the Silence of a Prison Cell in Uruguay
Fifty Years Later, Services Held to Honor Diplomat who Saved Jews
Dare We Call it Genocide?
Jewish Groups Step Up Efforts To Help Sudanese
In Congo, a Peace (of sorts) has Finally Settled in Nervously But a Raging HIV
Epidemic Continues Unabated
Top Colleges Take More Blacks, but Which Ones?

**Mazel Tov to Shahanna McKinney- Baldon & William Baldon on the
birth of their baby!****Sent by Shahanna McKinney-Baldwin**

Our baby is here! He was born 6/7/04 (18th of sivan) at 3:15 p.m. He weighed 7 lbs 6 oz. His
bris took place on 6/14 (25 of sivan) at Chabad house in Milwaukee. His English name:
William Joseph Baldon, IV, his Hebrew name: Zev Yoseph. For a picture: go to mckinneybal-
don.com and click on the baby links.

Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Moves to Marquette Park**sent by: Rabbi Capers Funnye****JUF News****The Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago: Chicago's
Central Jewish Communal Organizations****July Issue**

The second oldest Israelite congregation of African-American Jews in the United States - Beth
Shalom B'nai Zaken - moved from the South Chicago community to Marquette Park. The con-
gregation's former home located on South Houston Avenue, built in 1902, is the oldest Jewish
edifice in continuous use in the Chicago Metropolitan Area. The congregation, joined by many
friends, held a hachnassat sefer Torah (welcoming of the Torah scroll) ceremony June 5 to cel-
ebrate its opening.

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

Needed A Conversion Policy

Francine Klagsbrun

June 11, 2004

The Jewish Week

Of all the narratives in the Bible, one of the most disturbing to me appears in the book of Ezra. A scribe in ancient Babylonia during the fifth century BCE, Ezra returned to Judea about 150 years after the Jews had been exiled from that land. To his dismay he found that the Jews who had returned earlier had largely intermarried with neighboring tribes.

“Separate yourselves from ...the foreign women,” Ezra commanded, ordering the intermarried men to send their wives back to their own peoples along with the children they had borne. The command was meant to save the small, struggling Jewish community from disappearing into the nations around it, and some sages consider Ezra such a savior. Nevertheless it was a cruel demand. And although lists of intermarried men were drawn up, nobody knows how many actually cast out their wives and children.

I thought about Ezra’s harsh order over Shavuot, when the book of Ruth was read in synagogue. Ruth was the model convert to Judaism, uttering those memorable words to her mother-in-law Naomi, “... your people shall be my people and your God my God.” Why couldn’t Ezra have accepted the foreign-born wives in Judea the way Naomi accepted Ruth? The answer concerns timing. In earlier biblical eras, those who wished to join the Jewish community could do so simply by living among Jews and adopting their religion, as Ruth did. Such a person was called a “stranger,” or *ger*, and was to be treated kindly, as an equal. But in Ezra’s day, this casualness no longer seemed to work. The many foreigners who brought their own religious practices with them into the community threatened to dissipate its Jewishness.

Why, then, did Ezra not offer conversion, instead of ordering non-Jews kicked out? Timing again. Formal rules of conversion had not yet been developed. They came later, probably in the second and first centuries BCE. How sad that under his watch Ezra saw no choice but to break up families. How sad it is today, that thousands of years after Ezra, issues of conversion can still cause pain for individuals and families. A Chicago writer, Nancy Yos, describes in the March issue of *Commentary* magazine why she felt drawn to convert from Catholicism to Judaism, although her husband has not. Hers was a Reform conversion, she writes, to a “people without whom life would be intolerable.” In a letter in the magazine’s June issue, an Orthodox Israeli rabbi sympathizes with Yos, but states that her Reform conversion is “less than authentic.” He also questions how she can raise Jewish children with a non-Jewish husband. Shades of Ezra. Would the rabbi prefer that she dump her husband now, although he’s been consistently supportive of her conversion?

On the other hand, why can’t the Reform movement, which has done so much outreach and moved toward tradition in its conversion guidelines, commit itself fully to halachic standards, minimizing community divisiveness? By the same token, of course, when will the Orthodox, especially in Israel, finally agree to recognize the many Conservative and Reform conversions that do follow halacha? Several women I know have reluctantly undergone Orthodox conversions after their halachic Conservative ones to guarantee that if they have children who want to live in Israel someday, the Orthodox establishment will accept those children as Jews. Enough

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

of this. Isn't it time at last to end the conversion morass in Israel and here? Meanwhile, the good news is that even with infighting and even in this period of worldwide anti-Semitism, non-Jews feel attracted to Judaism. A few months ago I attended a panel discussion on conversion at the JCC in Manhattan organized by Rabbi Carol Levithan, director of Jewish learning programs there. The panelists had converted for diverse reasons, ranging from marriage to a Jew to a lifelong sense of feeling Jewish.

One of my favorite explanations came from a Swiss-German veterinarian who grew up Protestant, but was taken, he said facetiously, with a religion based on a "book [the Talmud] in which no one agrees with anyone else." More seriously, he and the others spoke of Judaism as a religion of "doing" and of the excitement of learning about it. Those of us who are Jews by birth often take our heritage for granted, while those who choose Judaism long only to be considered "real Jews." Like Ruth and Abraham before her, these people give up their ancestral homes and their families to journey to an unknown place. Had Ezra understood the great commitment outsiders make when joining the Jewish people, perhaps he would have tried harder to incorporate them into Jewish life instead of pushing them away. Certainly we today need to give all who convert the total acceptance they deserve. We, too, once were strangers in a strange land.

Francine Klagsbrun's most recent book is "The Fourth Commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day."

How Wen-Jing Became 'Shalva': Chinese Jewish Descendant Returns to Judaism

By Michael Freund

The Jerusalem Post

June 22, 2004

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JParticle/ShowFull&cid=1087787670379&p=1078027574097>

For the first time, a descendant of the once-vibrant Jewish community of Kaifeng, China, has undergone conversion in Israel and formally returned to Judaism. This past Sunday, Jin Wen-Jing, an 18-year-old student at the Yemin Orde youth village, went before a Haifa conversion court under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate. After administering an oral examination aimed at assessing her commitment to Judaism as well as her knowledge of Jewish law and tradition, the three rabbis comprising the Beit Din informed Wen-Jing that they had decided to accept her as a Jew.

Speaking in fluent Hebrew, Wen-Jing was quick to express her joy, and relief, at the court's decision. "I was very nervous, but now I am very happy," she said. "This has always been my family's dream – to return to our roots." Wen-Jing arrived in Israel four years ago with her parents. Her father, Jin Guang-Yuan, who now goes by the name Shlomo, is a direct descendant of the Jewish community that existed for nearly a thousand years in the city of Kaifeng, which lies north of Beijing, on the south bank of the Yellow River. At its peak, during the Ming Dynasty, Kaifeng Jewry numbered about 5,000 people. But widespread intermarriage and assimilation, as well as the death of the community's last rabbi, brought about its demise by the

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

middle of the 19th century. Scholars say there are still hundreds of people in Kaifeng who cling to their identity as descendants of the town's Jewish community.

Wen-Jing's father still carries with him a copy of his internal Chinese identification card, which lists his nationality as "Yutai," or Jew. He and his wife hope to follow in their daughter's footsteps and undergo conversion soon. Since her arrival in Israel, Wen-Jing has been studying at Yemin Orde under the guidance of the youth village's director, Dr. Chaim Peri, as well Rabbi Zev Rubens, an educator who oversees the school's conversion program, both of whom accompanied her to the beit din. She has decided to adopt the name Shalva (serenity), which is the Hebrew translation of her Chinese given name. Currently in the midst of her matriculation exams, Wen-Jing will shortly enter the National Service (Sherut Leumi) program for religious girls, and will perform her national service at Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem.

Why did she decide to convert? "G-d chose the Jewish people to be His nation, and I wanted to be a part of it," said Wen-Jing, smiling. "G-d has performed many miracles for Israel," she said, adding, "The fact that I have come here from China, and made it all the way here, back to my people – that too is a miracle."

An Update on Past IAEJ Conferences and Workshops**The Ethiopian Israeli Public Awareness Plenum
February 24, 2004**

IAEJ, with the hard work of volunteer Michal Ben-Chorin, formed The Ethiopian Public Awareness Plenum with the goal of increasing Ethiopian community involvement in public dialogue, and to raise awareness within the general Israeli public of the achievements of the community.

IAEJ understands that the community's image depends upon its representation in the media and in the public sphere. The Plenum therefore seeks to bring together Ethiopian professionals and academics from a wide spectrum of fields, to represent the progress that Ethiopian-Israelis are making; to present those achievements to the media and to the general public. Towards that end the Plenum acts as a forum for discussion in which Ethiopian professionals and academics may formulate a unified stance on the issues that face the community today.

The Opening Conference for the Plenum was held on 24/2/04 at the Tal Hotel in Tel-Aviv. There were 85 participants from the Ethiopian professional and academic communities and speakers included writer on social affairs Gabi Smadar from news channel Arutz 2; and Dr. Itzik Saporta, member of the Management Faculty at Tel Aviv University and social activist for democracy in Israel. The conference was a positive beginning for the new Plenum. Future meetings and activities are currently being planned.

National IAEJ Conference on Inequality in Education
April 28, 2004

IAEJ held a conference of approximately 200 participants in conjunction with the release of our new 32-page report on "Ethiopian Immigrant Student Integration in Elementary Education." Participants included parents, educators, policy-makers and government officials, community leaders, social workers, NGO workers, students, media representatives and academics.

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

The conference focused on new IAEJ research concerning the placement and tracking of Ethiopian students in public Boarding Schools of the Ministry of Education. IAEJ conducted similar research in 1998. Reports from IAEJ fieldworkers suggested that the issue should be looked into once again, and an assessment of progress made. Besides the Boarding School issue, conference speakers, including Knesset Minister Yossi Sarid, and Tel Aviv University Doctor of Public Policy Dan Ben-Tal, spoke on a wide range of educational and economic issues facing the Ethiopian community in Israel. The conference succeeded in generating interest in the new report, was covered by both Hebrew and English print and electronic media outlets, and generated dialogue on this crucial issue among members of the community.

Lenny Kravitz to Star in Barbecues and Bar Mitzvahs

Wednesday, April 21st, 2004

MTV News.com

http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1486476/04202004/kravitz_lenny.jhtml>MTV

Barbecues and Bar Mitzvahs: According to MTV, Lenny Kravitz cinematic debut, Barbecues and Bar Mitzvahs, will be a dramatic comedy the artist compares to the films of Woody Allen. "It's not a music movie, which is cool," Kravitz said. "There are no concert scenes or anything. It's about someone in my particular position growing up between two cultures. It's like 'Annie Hall' or 'Manhattan.' "

The son of a Jewish TV producer and black actress Roxie Roker (who played Helen Willis in the TV series "The Jeffersons"), Kravitz searched for identity as a child and found solace in music, which he felt embraced all ethnicities. His movie, due in 2005, will address this discovery. Barbecues and Bar Mitzvahs will begin preproduction in the fall and will shoot next spring. Lenny will play the lead character, but the other roles are up for grabs. "I have some people in mind and people who have expressed interest, but nothing's on paper," he said.

US Christian Leader: Israel Should Reach Out to African-Americans

By Michael Freund

The Jerusalem Post

June 20, 2004

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=JPost/JParticle/Printer&cid=1087628461842&p=1006953079845>

A prominent Christian broadcaster and African-American leader is calling on Israel to make a more concerted effort to reach out to blacks and other minority groups in the United States in order to improve its image and boost its standing among different sectors of the American public. "I think you have a natural ally in terms of Africans-Americans as a group in the United States," said Pastor Glenn R. Plummer, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the National Religious Broadcasters Association, which represents over 1,700 Christian television, radio and other media in the United States. "I don't know that there is a lot of effort being made in that direction. I think there is a lot of room for improvement in terms of reaching out to those groups by Israel," Plummer said in a radio interview conducted in Jerusalem on behalf of the America's Voices in Israel program. A resident of Detroit, the 49-year old Christian evangel-

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

ical leader is here on his second visit, and he says that one of his reasons for doing so is to learn more about Israel's rescue of Ethiopian Jews.

"As an African-American myself, I am intrigued and I have been amazed by this story," Plummer said, "It is a fascinating story of how Israel went there, took out seats on these huge planes, put all these people in them and brought them here. I never knew this story until I came here," he said. Plummer seemed impressed that Ethiopia's black Jews had been welcomed in Israel with open arms. "As a black from America, we sometimes think in polarized terms of black and white," he said. "The divisions and polarizations that are in America, that is not their experience here, which was very refreshing for somebody like me to hear." Plummer believes that the story behind Israel's absorption of the Ethiopians needs to be more widely disseminated in the United States. "It is something I think that our country needs to hear, that African-Americans need to hear. I think that it will heighten the commitment of a whole group in our country who love the Bible but are not necessarily jointed yet with Israel, and I am personally driven to see that happen."

Plummer noted with pride the widespread support that Israel enjoys among Christians throughout the United States. "Aside from Jewish organizations, I would venture to say I don't think there is another group in America that is more outspokenly supportive of the State of Israel than evangelical Christians." The underlying reason for this support, he said, was not a desire to proselytize. "I think there is genuine love in the hearts of Americans, particularly among the evangelicals, for the nation of Israel, for the Land of Israel and for the people of Israel." "Not to have a passionate love for the Jewish people just does not make sense," he asserted, pointing out that Jesus and his disciples were all Jews.

Asked about recent strains in black-Jewish relations in the United States, Plummer said he thinks that at least part of the problem stems from certain African-American political leaders, "who have taken the position that Israel is now the Goliath and the Palestinians are the Davids. They have painted this picture of Israel being the oppressor." "Maybe they are just ignorant of the facts, but that is hard for me to believe," he said, adding that, "As an African-American leader I feel very differently." One of the emotional highlights of his visit, Plummer said, was going to the Old City of Jerusalem and seeing the Temple Mount. Being here, he said, has been "a wonderful experience. It has revived inside of me the desire to see others come and visit Israel".

Preferring not to comment on Israel's internal political situation, Plummer did have one piece of advice for Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and for all Israelis. "Don't quit, don't give up, don't back down. You may be tired, but continue to be strong and be courageous, remember who your real strength is. You are Israel!" "Your strength," he concluded, "is in the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He will never forsake you."

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

My Big Fat Interfaith Lesbian Wedding

By Cynthia Kalish

InterfaithFamily.com

Thursday, June 17, 2004

I finally know first hand what all the fuss is about when planning a wedding. I still don't understand why it takes a year or two, as I am now in the throes of planning two weddings. I'm doing everything, from registering at Crate and Barrel and Home Depot, to ordering wedding invitations and a gender sensitive ketubah, Jewish marriage contract, from endless conversations with my mother about the guest list to pre-marital blood tests and so on.

Michelle, my partner of fourteen years, and I will have a civil wedding at Worcester City Hall on May 20, the first day possible under the new Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision. We will celebrate with friends and family, including our 6-year-old daughter who has no clue that we are not already "married." Many strangers will likely be a part of this deeply personal moment as well, as there continues to be an extraordinary amount of controversy swirling around the decision to allow two people of the same gender to marry.

As if one wedding is not enough, Michelle and I will also have a religious ceremony in August. Although Michelle is not Jewish, we are raising our daughter as a Jew and are both active in our Reform congregation. It is important to both of us that our union be blessed in a religious ceremony. Now, try finding a rabbi who will not only marry two lesbians, but two interfaith lesbians! We were thrilled to find Rabbi Lev Baesh of Dover, New Hampshire, who will officiate at our ceremony. We have also been blessed with tremendous support from our own rabbi, Jordan Millstein. Although it is not his practice to officiate at interfaith weddings, he has been there for us on an emotional and spiritual level that has buoyed us through difficult times and embraced us in times of joy. As a child, I had all the usual dreams of being married and having children, but when I came out as a lesbian in my early twenties, I gave up that dream. Then, six years ago, after several years of trying to become pregnant, I gave birth to Hannah and Michelle legally adopted her.

Last July, our lives took a very different turn. Michelle was diagnosed with stage IV breast cancer. After several rounds of chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, and more chemotherapy, we have experienced an entirely new dimension to the depth of our commitment to one another. "For better or for worse... in sickness and in health"...yet until now we could not legally take those vows. Of course, we took them in our hearts and have made them the central force of our life together. Those who have experienced the agony of having a spouse diagnosed with a terminal illness know that there is no comparable pain. For us, we also had to cope with making our way through this journey with no legal attachment to one another. That is the main reason that we will be married.

Our upcoming weddings will not make our lives together more valid in our own eyes, in the eyes of our loving and supportive families, in the eyes of our fellow congregants at Temple Emanuel, or in my opinion, in the eyes of God. In the eyes of the law, however, we will be viewed differently. Our relationship will be legitimized and will be equal to those in heterosexual marriages. And perhaps those people who want to define us by what happens in our bedroom,

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

they will be able to see that there is far more depth to our relationship, just as there is far more depth to a heterosexual relationship, than the act of making love.

Personally, one of the most rewarding parts of this progress toward same gender marriages has been seeing how much support there is in my Worcester Jewish community. Rabbi Millstein has been incredibly vocal in his support of the issue and has become a local activist in the Worcester press and other public forums. Although he has made the decision in his rabbinic practice not to officiate at interfaith weddings, he has been an ongoing source of strength and support to both Michelle and me. Friends from the congregation who I always knew were privately supportive of gay rights have impressed me with their eloquence and their willingness to now take a public stand for same-sex marriage as a civil right. And when I announced at our last temple board meeting that Michelle and I would be getting married in May, I received an overwhelming round of applause and resounding mazel tovs.

Yes, I am sad that we cannot be married in our own synagogue with our own rabbi, but we are working on ways to include our temple family and be a part of this event together. We will include Jewish rituals in a way that is comfortable for all of us, and members of my spiritual community, including my rabbi, will share in our joy. Most importantly, Michelle and I will share, in God's presence, the love and commitment that we have felt for each other for fourteen years. Running a close second, in our daughter Hannah's mind, is the fact that she gets to be the flower girl--and really, what could be better than that?

Cynthia Kalish lives in Worcester, Massachusetts, with her partner and their 6-year-old daughter. She works in a human service organization dedicated to serving diverse populations as a recruitment and training coordinator.

Abarbanel's Commentary Released in Spanish**Israel National News****June 21, 2004**

For the first time, a selection of commentaries on the weekly Torah portion by the medieval rabbinical scholar Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1508) has been published in Spanish.

Las Preguntas de Abarbanel: Seleccion de Comentarios sobre la Tora (Questions of the Abarbanel: A Selection of Commentaries on the Torah), was released this week by the Jerusalem-based Amishav <<http://www.amishav.org.il>> organization, which assists "lost Jews" seeking to return to the Jewish people. The book was written by Abraham Renner, a Torah scholar from Mexico City.

"There is a growing thirst for Jewish texts throughout the Spanish-speaking world," Amishav Director Michael Freund said, adding, "Since the Abarbanel was a towering figure among medieval Spanish Jewry, it only seemed fitting to make his work available to a Spanish-speaking audience."

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

From the Silence of a Prison Cell in Uruguay

By Ilan Stavans

Forward

June 18, 2004

'Silence is the real crime against humanity," states Mauricio Rosencof in his wrenching autobiographical novel, "The Letters That Never Came." He ought to know: Rosencof, who was accused of being a subversive and attempting against Uruguayan sovereignty, spent 13 years in prison before regaining his freedom in 1985, with the return of the democracy to Uruguay and the declaration of an amnesty for political prisoners. Of those 13 years, 1112 were spent in solitary confinement and almost total inactivity.

His cells were filthy and barely 3 feet by 6. His diet was atrocious and he spent long periods on the verge of starvation, sometimes drinking his own urine to stay alive. He was tortured savagely and repeatedly and had to be hospitalized on several occasions. Except for a 30-minute visit with members of his immediate family once a month, he saw no one, talked to no one and heard no human voices except those of his captors, who were under strict orders to address him only with insults and commands. To pass the time, Rosencof would watch a spider on the wall, studying the web it carefully designed. Or else, he would set his mind free, revisiting every moment in his life, from his childhood in a working-class neighborhood in Montevideo to his apprenticeship as a journalist, his experience as a playwright, and his involvement with the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (MLN-Tupamaros), an urban guerrilla movement active in Uruguay from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. But never, ever, did he capitulate to silence.

A best seller in the Spanish-speaking world when it first appeared in 2000, and the first of Rosencof's books to be translated into English, "The Letters That Never Came" is a stunning document, rendered successfully by Louise B. Popkin. The device it uses is at once elegant and suggestive. While Rosencof was in captivity, a shadowy image kept popping into his head. "It was, of all people, the postman in our neighborhood in Montevideo," he would later tell the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz. The postman was a messenger of hope.

During their first years in Uruguay, the Rosencofs regularly received letters from their relatives back in Belzyce, Poland. "Marriages, births, deaths, even how many eggs the red hen had laid. Papa would read them to us at Sunday dinner over Mama's chicken soup. The letters were in Yiddish and I didn't understand them, but in prison I clearly remembered the joy he experienced with every one."

Mysteriously the letters stopped coming in 1936. It was clear later that, after the Nazis had invaded Poland in 1939, Rosencof's Polish relatives were transferred first to the Lublin ghetto and from there to Auschwitz and Treblinka. In "The Letters That Never Came," Rosencof himself completes the correspondence.

The first part of his autobiographical novel evokes the neighborhood where he came of age. In vivid colors, he depicts the struggles of Yiddish-speaking immigrants to the Southern Cone. He mentions Khevl Katz, the legendary Argentine-Jewish songwriter whose original lyrics mixed Yiddish and Spanish in a vernacular not unlike the Spanglish of Latinos in the United States

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

today; the Jewish cemetery La Paz, in Montevideo, where approximately 98% of the nation's Jews are buried; the cuenteñicks, door-to-door peddlers who were paid by their Jewish customers in installments. Interspersed among his reminiscences are the letters that he imagines his European relatives would have written from the ghetto and from the camps. In the rest of the book, Rosencof relives and reflects upon his experience as a prisoner. Via his imagination, he returns to the dungeons, where mentally he composes a long letter to his parents.

But Rosencof's poignant work is about survival as well as suffering. Words link five generations of Rosencofs, the Old World to the New, the plight of a Uruguayan to that of Hitler's victims, and his own struggle to theirs. In the solitude of his dungeon, the author feels the presence of Mordechai Anielewicz, the leader of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, and his followers. "They resisted, Papa, they resisted, it was the first uprising in all of Europe, and it was theirs, Viejo, it was ours, and that's what gets us through...." By joining these tales of torment and endurance, Rosencof poses fundamental questions about repression, resistance and the human condition.

"These days," he has one of his relatives write from the camps, with a moral authority born of maturity and self-awareness, "I'm wondering where our screams go. They can't get lost, that's unthinkable. They can't possibly vanish, just fade away, die out, die for no reason, screams were made for a reason, they were screamed for a reason. Screams don't die."

No, screams don't die. Rosencof's imagined letters, those letters that never came, are a meditation on his Jewishness and a coming-to-terms with his pain. They are also — fittingly — his repudiation of silence and, as such, his assurance of survival.

Ilan Stavans is the Lewis-Sebring professor in Latin American and Latino culture at Amherst College in Mass. This is an abbreviated version of his introduction to "The Letters That Never Came" (University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

Fifty Years Later, Services Held to Honor Diplomat who Saved Jews

By Alana B. Elias Kornfeld & B. Elias Kornfeld

JTA email Edition

Wednesday, 16 Jun 2004

Sent By: Rufina Bernardetti Silva Mausenbaum

A late-night visit from a refugee rabbi during World War II convinced a Portuguese official to save Jews from Hitler. Rabbi Haim Kruger, a refugee in France, and Aristides de Sousa Mendes, Portugal's consul general in Bordeaux, "spoke all through the night about the problems of the war, Sebastiao de Sousa Mendes," the consul's son told JTA recently. "In the morning, my father decided that it was time to save rather than ignore the refugees." So Aristides de Sousa Mendes issued visas to endangered Jews against the orders of the Portuguese dictator, Antonio Salazar. He took the risk because he would rather be with God against men than with men against God, Sousa Mendes is reported to have said. That risk saved 30,000 Jewish lives, but it cost Sousa Mendes his job. He died in 1954 in a Lisbon poorhouse. In honor of 50 years since his death, Sousa Mendes, legacy is being honored for a week starting Thursday, 64 years to the day since he started his rescue mission on June 17, 1940. The special interfaith initiative is being led by the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation.

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat based in Hungary, saved about 100,000 Jews during the Holocaust. Both Wallenberg and Sousa Mendes are recognized as Righteous Gentiles by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem. "We Jewish people have to have a balance between complaining about what we suffered and celebrating the people who helped us, said Baruch Tenenbaum, founder of the Wallenberg Foundation in New York. "When there is shade, there is also light," Tenenbaum says, and Sousa Mendes was one ray of light in the darkness of the Holocaust. Organizers of the interfaith initiative contacted churches and synagogues around the world to request that special services be held beginning June 17. As part of the events, the 50th Anniversary Sousa Mendes Medal will be given to Father Bernard Jacques Riviere of Bordeaux for preserving Sousa Mendes, memory through his radio program and articles. Recipients of the International Sousa Mendes Righteous Award will be announced at ceremonies in Rome and New York, officials said. Without Sousa Mendes, visas, which he distributed as the Nazis were advancing on the south of France, thousands of Jews wouldn't have made it, said Isaac Bitton, whose aunt Esther managed the Jewish soup kitchen in Portugal that Sousa Mendes frequented in his later years. "The people he saved were flabbergasted, amazed and grateful, said Sousa Mendes, youngest son, John Paul Abranches, who lives in California.

As a child in Portugal, Abranches met and spoke with people his father saved. As an adult, he has met other survivors at memorial events for his father. Abranches said the gratitude will be reflected back during the week's events. "For the first time you will see cardinals all over the world celebrate in mass to remember somebody who devoted and gave his life to save Jewish people, Tenenbaum said. Rabbis in Jerusalem, New York, Brazil, Argentina, Portugal, Montreal, Poland and France will hold synagogue services honoring Sousa Mendes. Masses in his honor will be held in New York, the Vatican, France, Canada, Brazil, South Africa, Poland, East Timor, Cape Verde and elsewhere, according to the Wallenberg Foundation. Tenenbaum said he admires Sousa Mendes, righteousness and says it's necessary to spread recognition of his actions. "It's not just that we remember them, we are motivating others to remember them, he said. "It's a chain of goodwill."

Dare We Call it Genocide?

By Nicholas D. Kristof

June 16, 2004

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/16/opinion/16KRIS.html?ex=1088434957&ei=1&en=cb4c0cf3fb64abdf>

Along the Cad-Sudan border the Bush administration says it is exploring whether to describe the mass murder and rape in the Darfur region of Sudan as "genocide." I suggest that President Bush invite to the White House a real expert, Magboula Muhammad Khattar, a 24-year-old widow huddled under a tree here. The world has acquiesced shamefully in the Darfur genocide, perhaps because 320,000 deaths this year (a best-case projection from the U.S. Agency for International Development) seems like one more boring statistic. So listen to Ms. Khattar's story, multiply it by hundreds of thousands, and let's see if we still want to look the other way.

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

Just a few months ago, Ms. Khattar had a great life. Her sweet personality and lovely appearance earned a hefty bride price of 40 cattle when she was married four years ago to Ali Daoud, a prosperous farmer. The family owned 300 cattle and 50 camels, making them among the wealthiest in their village, Ab-Layha in western Sudan. Ms. Khattar promptly bore two children, the youngest born late last year. About the same time, though, the Sudanese government resolved to crush a rebellion in Darfur, a region the size of France in western Sudan. Sudan armed and paid a militia of Arab raiders, the Janjaweed, and authorized them to slaughter and drive out members of the Zaghawa, Masalit and Fur tribes.

On March 12, Ms. Khattar was performing her predawn Muslim prayers about 4 a.m. when a Sudanese government Antonov aircraft started dropping bombs on Ab-Layha, which is made up of Zaghawa tribespeople. Moments later, more than 1,000 Janjaweed attackers rode into the village on horses and camels, backed by Sudanese government troops in trucks. "The Janjaweed shouted: 'We will not allow blacks here. We will not let Zaghawa here. This land is only for Arabs,'" Ms. Khattar recalled. Ms. Khattar grabbed her children, and, as shots and flames raged around her, raced for a nearby forest. But her father and mother tried to protect their animals - they were yelling, "Don't take our livestock." They were both shot dead.

The attack was part of a deliberate strategy to ensure that the village would be forever uninhabitable, that the Zaghawa could never live there again. The Janjaweed poisoned wells by stuffing them with the corpses of people and donkeys. They also blew up a dam that supplied water to the farms, destroyed seven hand pumps in the village and burned all the homes and even the village school, the clinic and the mosque. In separate interviews, I talked to more than a dozen other survivors from Ab-Layha, and they all confirm Ms. Khattar's story. By most accounts, about 100 people were massacred that day in Ab-Layha, and a particular effort was made to exterminate all men and boys, even the very young. Women and girls were sometimes allowed to flee, but the prettiest were kidnapped.

Most of those raped don't want to talk about it. But Zahra Abdel Karim, a 30-year-old woman, told me how in the same attack on Ab-Layha, the Janjaweed shot to death her husband, Adam, and 7-year-old son, Rahshid, as well as three of her brothers. Then they grabbed her 4-year-old son, Rasheed, from her arms and cut his throat. The Janjaweed took her and her two sisters away on horses and gang-raped them, she said. The troops shot one sister, Kuttuma, and cut the throat of the other, Fatima, and they discussed how to mutilate her. (Sexual humiliation has been part of the Sudanese strategy to drive out the African tribes people. The Janjaweed routinely add to the stigma by branding or scarring the women they rape.)

"One Janjaweed said: 'You belong to me. You are a slave to the Arabs, and this is the sign of a slave,'" she recalled. He slashed her leg with a sword before letting her hobble away, stark naked. Other villagers confirmed that they had found her naked and bleeding, and she showed me the scar on her leg. By comparison, Ms. Khattar was one of the lucky ones. She lost her parents, her home and all her belongings, but her husband and children were alive, and she had not been raped. Unfortunately, her luck would soon run out. I'll tell you more of her story on Saturday, because if she and her people aren't victims of genocide, then the word has no meaning.

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

Jewish Groups Step Up Efforts To Help Sudanese

By Ori Nir

Forward

June 11, 2004

After months of inaction, Jewish organizations are stepping up their efforts to call attention to the rising threat of a government-backed genocide in Sudan and to raise money for the country's massive population of non-Arab Muslim refugees.

The Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief, an umbrella organization of 40 Jewish associations that meets on an ad hoc basis to address humanitarian crises worldwide, decided last week to create a new 11-agency coalition to focus exclusively on Sudan. Dubbed the Coalition for Sudan Relief, the new entity has begun to lobby Congress and the Bush administration to put pressure on the Sudanese government to allow access for relief shipments and personnel to the western Sudanese province of Darfur.

"We are really in the initial phases of forming the coalition and making decisions on how we are going to act and get the word out," said Will Recant, the coordinator of the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief and assistant executive vice president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Recant said that despite their slow response, members of the disaster coalition seem dedicated to preventing another African genocide. A decade ago, Jewish organizations were criticized for failing to do enough to stop the 1994 genocide that took place in Rwanda.

The driving force behind the stepped-up activism has been the American Jewish World Service, a Peace Corps-style aid group that is supplying assistance to the refugees. In an effort to alert the public, the organization is launching what insiders describe as its first-ever advertising campaign in the national media. The campaign will focus on the plight of Sudanese refugees.

According to the United Nations and international relief organizations, more than 1 million people have been displaced by the violence in the western Sudanese province of Darfur, where government-sponsored militias routed black Muslims in what United Nations observers have called a 14-month campaign of "ethnic cleansing." Relief agencies are warning that if aid does not reach the refugees from Darfur soon, as many as 350,000 of them could die in the next few weeks and hundreds of thousands more may perish in subsequent weeks.

"What's happening there is truly stunning," said Jerry Fowler, director of the Committee on Conscience of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Fowler made his remarks in an interview with the Forward, shortly after his return last week from a 10-day fact-finding mission to Chad, where 120,000 Sudanese refugees are living in what are widely reported to be squalid conditions. The Holocaust Museum issued a genocide alert two months ago and is now distributing an "alert sheet" to visitors. The museum attracts approximately 30,000 people a week.

"I spoke to a lot of refugees and their stories were remarkably consistent," Fowler said. "They said they fled because of fear. They all talked about militia attacks on their villages. Men and boys being murdered. Homes being burned. Livestock being stolen. Sometimes it was the militia in conjunction with the Sudanese government and sometimes just the militia. Sometimes there were bombardments from the air."

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

The refugees, Fowler said, fled with the bare necessities, and are threatened with famine, dehydration and disease. "There was this one woman sitting under a tree, with some blankets and a couple of water jugs," Fowler said. "She crossed over two days earlier, and that's all she had left in the world. Her donkey died, her goats died. She had nothing, in an extremely harsh desert environment."

While access to Darfur has been almost completely cut off by the Sudanese government, reaching the refugee camps in Chad is arduous because of rough terrain, Fowler said. The journey is about to become even tougher in the next month, he added, when the rainy season starts and the valleys that crisscross the area become muddy. "One should keep in mind that this is an environment that does not allow for any margins of error," Fowler said.

On Tuesday, the Anti-Defamation League issued a statement urging the Sudanese government to grant full access to "aid organizations, human rights investigators, and international monitors" and urged America to take all steps to avoid genocide. The American Jewish World Service has been trying for weeks to focus Jewish public attention on Sudan, said the organization's communications director, Ronni Strongin. Blaming what she described as a dearth of media coverage on the situation, Strongin added: "People just don't know what's going on." Strongin said that the best way to get American Jews to care about the crisis was to convince more Jewish organizations to take up the issue.

Strongin's organization is joining in the efforts of American and international relief associations to supply food and water, medicines and sanitation facilities to refugees in Darfur and Chad. The president and executive director of the American Jewish World Service, Ruth Messinger, briefed a group of Jewish activists last week on the efforts to aid Sudanese refugees. In a subsequent statement sent to the Forward, Messinger said: "As Jews who know firsthand the consequences of silence from the international community, we have an increased moral obligation to respond to crimes against humanity, regardless of the ethnicity or religion of the people being victimized. I believe that as the American people, and particularly the Jewish community, hear about the gruesome killings and inhumane detainments in Darfur, they will, they must respond."

**In Congo, a Peace (of sorts) has Finally Settled in Nervously
But a Raging HIV Epidemic Continues Unabated**

By Andrew Moss

The San Francisco Chronicle

Thursday, June 24, 2004

The problem with border crossings is that you don't know what is happening on the other side. I was nervous, fiddling with the busted zipper on my duffel bag, as I waited for the Rwandan official to clear me onto the bridge over the Ruzizi River. At the other end of the bridge was the Congolese town of Bukavu.

My driver, Evariste, was hanging around till I got through the formalities, protecting me from a bustling crowd of Rwandan gawkers, smart-mouthed Congolese market women with baskets

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

on their heads and polio victims in wheelchairs. Rwanda, 10 years after the three-month-long genocide of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus, was still in a state of depression and fear. Now I was about to cross into Congo, the country that used to be called Zaire, which collapsed into war in the aftermath of the genocide. Peace had finally broken out in Congo in May 2003.

In Bukavu the Dutch branch of Médecins Sans Frontières -- Doctors Without Borders -- began providing HIV treatment immediately after the peace treaty was signed; it was the first non-governmental organization in the enormous country to treat people with free anti-retroviral drugs. The omnipresent NGOs provide most of the humanitarian services in places like eastern Congo. I was amazed that anybody there was doing anti-retroviral treatment.

South Kivu, the province over the river, had been at war since 1996, when the army of Paul Kagame, the Rwandan strongman, attacked the camps of the Hutu "genocidaires" who fled Rwanda after the genocide. The genocidaires took over the refugee camps along Lake Kivu, proclaiming the formation of a new army to "finish the job." Kagame's army dispersed the camps and drove hundreds of thousands of Hutus west into the jungle. Perhaps 200,000 disappeared, swallowed up by disease and starvation. The Rwandans kept going, overturned the corrupt (and U.S.-backed) Mobutu government, which supported the genocidaires, and threw Congo into a long war. Six of Congo's neighbors invaded, looting diamonds, gold, timber and whatever else was salable. Three million people are believed to have died in a war which, though hardly noticed in the United States, was the worst since World War II.

But in May the last of the invading armies (the Ugandans) had been negotiated out, and U.N. forces had taken over peacekeeping in eastern Congo. Bukavu was relatively peaceful, said an NGO worker I met in Rwanda. Oh, there had been a couple of nights of automatic-weapons fire two weeks ago, and there were several thousand Hutu militia still roaming around, not to speak of the Mayi Mayi ... but relatively peaceful.

Trying to look casual, I picked up my duffel bag and walked nervously out onto the bridge.

"Don't let them keep your passport," Corry Kik, the MSF director said, meaning I might need it in a hurry if things blew up. But the Congolese border official stuck it in a deep drawer of his desk. I watched it disappear with a sinking feeling.

Corry picked me up in a standard-issue white Toyota Land Cruiser with a 10-foot whip aerial on the front. We rode into town 2 feet above the populace, looking down on the busy street. It was full of animated, cheerful, chatty- looking Congolese, different from the taciturn and suspicious Rwandans, who gave you hard-eyed stares as if to penetrate your secret motives.

A spectacular view of the town and Lake Kivu opened up -- red roofs on waves of green hills rising up from the lakeshore. Closer up, there were huge potholes in the main road that wound round the lake, no building that looked less than 30 years old, and troops in camouflage fatigues camped at major road intersections. Whose troops were they, I asked Corry.

"Whoever's in charge."

The shooting two weeks ago had been a confrontation between the provincial governor, caught stockpiling weapons from Rwanda, and the national government in Kinshasa, she said. After

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

two days, MONUC, the U.N. mission in Congo, had managed to negotiate a cease-fire -- for the moment. Bukavu was 1, 000 miles of roadless jungle from the capital, and the Rwandans were unlikely to relax their hold on the eastern provinces completely.

Corry dropped me at the Hotel des Orchides on the lake. Hardwood jungle sprinkled with flowering vines ran down to the lakeshore. Everybody was speaking French. The manager was a Belgian left over from the colonial era. "He has trouble with army officers coming in and drinking up his stock," Corry said.

At dinner at Mama Kinja's restaurant, the MSF doctors and nurses, Dutch and Canadian women and one saturnine male lab tech from San Francisco ran around giddily, exchanging excited gossip with other NGO staffers. NGOs are run by cautious older professionals like Corry, who watch the security situation. She was the one who would have to pull the MSF team out if things blew up. But the staff is composed of young people on short-term contracts. Back in Rwanda, the young staffers had been subdued by the 10th anniversary of the genocide. Mama Kinja's was bubbling like New York on a Saturday night.

Corry had been in Congo a long time and had been working to set up the HIV treatment project for four years. She had been at the notorious camps in Goma at the north end of Lake Kivu when the Hutu militias took over and the NGOs found themselves feeding and treating a genocidal army. The eastern Congo was complex. It wasn't so much that you didn't know who the good guys were, I thought. It was more that there weren't any good guys left. I asked Corry if she thought MSF had been right to pull out of Goma.

"Look, 90 percent of the people in the camps were just people. So 90 percent of what we did was good."

Next morning we set off for the MSF clinic, through a roadblock on the edge of town where soldiers were checking for weapons. They casually waved us through as if the white Land Cruiser were moving in a parallel universe. Congolese women, all of whom seemed to be wearing wigs, stared at us curiously, and schoolchildren waved delightedly. I thought things looked pretty cheerful out there in Bukavu. No children had waved in Rwanda.

In the news of the day, the U.N. was investigating a cannibalism incident in the hills to the west, attributed to Hutu militia who had already eaten up the local cattle. Three heads had been found in a tree with the message "the man who has a rifle need never be hungry." The MSF clinic was high on a hill with a spectacular view over the lake and town. The clinic was behind a gate in a high fence and almost invisible under flowering bushes and trees. Inside, patients, mostly women with small children, were sitting nervously on benches waiting for a staff of local doctors and nurses to check them in. Out back, other women were laughing and shouting, waiting for their turn at the food distribution center. Like many front-line treatment programs, MSF was feeding its HIV patients because there was no point in treating them if they were going to die of malnutrition. The U. N. World Food Program was providing the food.

"You'll want to talk shop," Corry said, dropping me off with Heather Culbert, a young Canadian doctor who was treating the HIV patients. Heather was nervous because she had only been working a few weeks and she wasn't familiar with African AIDS. I told her I liked to watch doc-

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

tors work with AIDS patients because it made everything real. I thought there was an obligation to look and listen even if what you saw in patients who didn't have access to anti-retrovirals was terminal disease and fear.

She was dealing with a woman with a cough, not on anti-retrovirals but on monthly prophylaxis with cotrimoxazole. She decided the cough wasn't serious and sent the woman away, earning a black look. Patients liked to be given something, she said. The next patient needed a diagnostic test for a non-HIV-related condition. "On ne peut pas payer pour ses soins," she said. We can't afford to pay for that care.

No. 3 had hugely swollen lymph nodes behind her ear with large weeping abscesses -- usually a result of tuberculosis. Heather wasn't sure. She wanted to swab the abscesses and send the results to a lab for culturing to see if it was TB, but there probably wasn't anybody in all of eastern Congo who was doing TB cultures. She would treat "presumptively," as doctors put it, and see if the patient got better. That was what AIDS medicine was in places like Bukavu. The patient stared at us with big alarmed eyes.

A woman in a Bambi T-shirt came in with her baby. Most of the women here were wearing American surplus T-shirts from the market along with brightly colored pagnes, wraparound skirts, often with political slogans on them. The baby boy had a sore on his penis and couldn't urinate. Heather diagnosed it as a yeast infection -- "it's really messy down there; we'll give him some treatment for that." It was a bad sign because it might mean he was HIV positive, but he wouldn't get tested until he was 18 months old. There was an older brother, the woman said, but "déjà il est mort d'HIV" -- he had already died.

Heather started recruiting the mother to go on anti-retrovirals. MSF had about 40 people on the drugs, she said. They had started off too conservatively, trying to recruit only people who were at a late stage of disease. Now they were trying to recruit 10 a month, but it was difficult getting people to come to the clinic -- probably they were afraid -- and only four of this week's eight eligibles had showed.

Corry came back and dragged me outside to show off the food distribution center. Now there was a full-fledged market out there, with women sitting and gossiping on the ground while two cheerful matrons -- patients on anti-retrovirals themselves -- lifted sacks of flour and beans and measured out oil. Chi Chi, the director, was an enormous muscular Congolese clearly having a great time surrounded by all these women. "Mama Agathe," Corry said, pointing to one of the matrons. "Femme forte!"

Mama Agathe, the strong woman, flexed her muscles grinning, and pointed back at Corry: "Mama Corry!" Mama Corry, you're the boss, she meant. You did it. That evening the lights went out in Bukavu. Maybe all the electricity was going to the huge Primus brewery down by the lake, the staffers said. It happened sometimes.

We had finished our tour of clinics and hospitals. There was nothing available in the hospitals for patients who couldn't pay -- no beds, no medicine, no food. MSF was renting rooms and hiring nurses for its HIV patients. This produced the uncomfortable two-class system that is one of

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

the big problems of HIV treatment in Africa: Why should the HIV patients get all this attention and everyone else be left to die? I put this question aside and went off with the staffers to the Welfare Restaurant, set up inside the U.N. compound. It was the only other place to eat besides Mama Kinja's, and sold the only cheeseburger in Bukavu.

Inside, two terminally bored officers from the U.N. command, one Senegalese, one Uruguayan, sat numbly at separate tables, their legs splayed out in front of them, staring separately into space. Could it be that boring in Bukavu? They gave the young female doctors and nurses longing looks as we sat down. Corry had stayed home again; she was cranky and withdrawn. Perhaps she was worrying about the security situation or perhaps it was simply that she had seen too much of life in eastern Congo.

"I've done everything," she said "emergencies, evacuations, feeding centers, vaccinations, outbreaks." Now she was pitting some young doctors and nurses and Mama Agathe against an HIV epidemic that could easily be infecting 10 percent of the population in South Kivu. And nobody quite knew who was in control of the province. We climbed into the white Land Cruiser to go home, and the driver called in to the communications center at the MSF house on the lake. MSF employees moved only in the vehicles and called in their position every time they moved.

The staffers lived in a house out in the suburbs, and I caught an undercurrent of nervousness as we headed out into the darkness. But the armored personnel carriers had left the compound, so hopefully MONUC was patrolling the city. I admired what MSF was doing here, I thought, as we drove through the dark and silent outskirts of Bukavu, and what it was doing in the other HIV treatment programs it had set up across the continent. But even more I admired the cheerfulness of the Congolese, in the street and in the restaurants and at the HIV clinic on the hill. In halting French, I asked the driver how it came about that the Congolese were so cheerful, in spite of so many wars and so much poverty and disease? "Nous sommes habitués," he said philosophically. We're used to it.

Postscript:

Three days after I left Bukavu, the Rwandans closed the border. Tension between insurgents thought to be backed by Rwanda and troops loyal to the Congolese government continued until, on June 2, troops from the main Rwanda-backed faction seized the town. The insurgents claimed that genocide was being planned against Congolese of Tutsi origin.

Riots protesting MONUC's inability to prevent the seizure of Bukavu broke out in Kinshasa and other Congolese cities. MSF staff took refuge in the MONUC compound. Later, the group was withdrawn to Kigali, the Rwandan capital. Heather Culbert fled in jogging clothes and had to cross the border without a passport. Government forces retook Bukavu on June 9. At least 100 people were killed in the fighting. International observers since June 9 report no evidence of genocide. Corry Kik and her team remain in Kigali.

Andrew Moss is professor emeritus of epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California at San Francisco. He is following the progress of AIDS treatment in the developing world.

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

Top Colleges Take More Blacks, but Which Ones?

By Sararimer and Karen W. Arenson

New York Times

Thursday, June 24, 2004

At the most recent reunion of Harvard University's black alumni, there was lots of pleased talk about the increase in the number of black students at Harvard. But the celebratory mood was broken in one forum, when some speakers brought up the thorny issue of exactly who those black students were. While about 8 percent, or about 530, of Harvard's undergraduates were black, Lani Guinier, a Harvard law professor, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., the chairman of Harvard's African and African-American studies department, pointed out that the majority of them — perhaps as many as two-thirds — were West Indian and African immigrants or their children, or to a lesser extent, children of biracial couples.

They said that only about a third of the students were from families in which all four grandparents were born in this country, descendants of slaves. Many argue that it was students like these, disadvantaged by the legacy of Jim Crow laws, segregation and decades of racism, poverty and inferior schools, who were intended as principal beneficiaries of affirmative action in university admissions.

What concerned the two professors, they said, was that in the high-stakes world of admissions to the most selective colleges — and with it, entry into the country's inner circles of power, wealth and influence — African-American students whose families have been in America for generations were being left behind. "I just want people to be honest enough to talk about it," Professor Gates, the Yale-educated son of a West Virginia paper-mill worker, said recently, reiterating the questions he has been raising since the black alumni weekend last fall. "What are the implications of this?"

Both Professor Gates and Professor Guinier emphasize that this is not about excluding immigrants, whom sociologists describe as a highly motivated, self-selected group. Blacks, who make up 13 percent of the United States population, are still underrepresented at Harvard and other selective colleges, they said. The conversation that bubbled up that weekend has continued across campus here and beyond as these professors and others publicly raise painful and complicated questions about race and class and how they play out in elite university admissions, issues that some educators and black admissions officers have privately talked about for some time.

There is no consensus on the answers, and since most institutions say they do not look into the origins of their black students, the absence of hard data makes the discussion even more difficult. Some educators, including the president of Harvard, Lawrence H. Summers, declined to comment on the issue; others are divided. The president of Amherst College, Anthony W. Marx, says that colleges should care about the ethnicity of black students because in overlooking those with predominantly American roots, colleges are missing an "opportunity to correct a past injustice" and depriving their campuses "of voices that are particular to being African-American, with all the historical disadvantages that that entails."

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

But others say there is no reason to take the ancestry of black students into account. "I don't think it should matter for purposes of admissions in higher education," said Lee C. Bollinger, the president of Columbia University, who as president of the University of Michigan fiercely defended its use of affirmative action. "The issue is not origin, but social practices. It matters in American society whether you grow up black or white. It's that differential effect that really is the basis for affirmative action."

Professors Gates and Guinier cite various sources for their figures about Harvard's black students, including conversations with administrators and students, a recent Harvard undergraduate honors thesis based on extensive student interviews, and the "Black Guide to Life at Harvard," which surveyed 70 percent of the black undergraduates and was published last year by the Harvard Black Students Association.

Researchers at Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania who have been studying the achievement of minority students at 28 selective colleges and universities (including theirs, as well as Yale, Columbia, Duke and the University of California at Berkeley), found that 41 percent of the black students identified themselves as immigrants, as children of immigrants or as mixed race.

Douglas S. Massey, a Princeton sociology professor who was one of the researchers, said the black students from immigrant families and the mixed-race students represented a larger proportion of the black students than that in the black population in the United States generally. Andrew A. Beveridge, a sociologist at Queens College, says that among 18- to 25-year-old blacks nationwide, about 9 percent describe themselves as of African or West Indian ancestry. Like the Gates and Guinier numbers, these tallies do not include foreign students.

In the 40 or so years since affirmative action began in higher education, the focus has been on increasing the numbers of black students at selective colleges, not on their family background. Professor Massey said that the admissions officials he talked to at these colleges seemed surprised by the findings about the black students. "They really didn't have a good idea of what they're getting," he said.

But few black students are surprised. Sheila Adams, a Harvard senior, was born in the South Bronx to a school security officer and a subway token seller, and her family has been in this country for generations. Ms. Adams said there were so few black students like her at Harvard that they had taken to referring to themselves as "the descendants."

The subject, however, remains taboo among some college administrators. Anthony Carnevale, a former vice president at the Educational Testing Service, which develops SAT tests, said colleges were happy to take high-performing black students from immigrant families.

"They've found an easy way out," Mr. Carnevale said. "The truth is, the higher-education community is no longer connected to the civil rights movement. These immigrants represent Horatio Alger, not Brown v. Board of Education and America's race history."

Almost from its inception, following the civil rights struggles of the 1960's, affirmative action has been attacked and redefined. In its 1978 Bakke decision, the Supreme Court shifted the ration-

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

ale away from issues of social justice to the educational value of diversity. One black admissions official at a highly selective college said the reluctance of college officials to discuss these issues has helped obscure the scarcity of black students whose families have been in this country for generations.

"If somebody does not start paying attention to those who are not able to make it in, they're going to start drifting farther and farther behind," said the official, who declined to be identified because the subject is so charged. "You've got to say that the long-term blacks were either dealt a crooked hand, or something is innately wrong with them. And I simply won't accept that there is something wrong with them."

Mary C. Waters, the chairman of the sociology department at Harvard, who has studied West Indian immigrants, says they are initially more successful than many African-Americans for a number of reasons. Since they come from majority-black countries, they are less psychologically handicapped by the stigma of race. In addition, many arrive with higher levels of education and professional experience. And at first, they encounter less discrimination.

"You need a philosophical discussion about what are the aims of affirmative action," Professor Waters said. "If it's about getting black faces at Harvard, then you're doing fine. If it's about making up for 200 to 500 years of slavery in this country and its aftermath, then you're not doing well. And if it's about having diversity that includes African-Americans from the South or from inner-city high schools, then you're not doing well, either."

Even among black scholars there is disagreement on whether a discussion about the origins of black students is helpful. Orlando Patterson, a Harvard sociologist and West Indian native, said he wished others would "let sleeping dogs lie."

"The doors are wide open - as wide open as they ever will be - for native-born black middle-class kids to enter elite colleges," he wrote in an e-mail message. There is also wide disagreement about what, if anything, should be done about the underrepresentation of African-American students whose families have been here for generations. Even Professor Gates, who can trace his ancestry back to slaves, and Professor Guinier, whose mother is white and whose father immigrated from Jamaica, emphasize different ideas.

"This is about the kids of recent arrivals beating out the black indigenous middle-class kids," said Professor Gates, who plans to assemble a study group on the subject. "We need to learn what the immigrants' kids have so we can bottle it and sell it, because many members of the African-American community, particularly among the chronically poor, have lost that sense of purpose and values which produced our generation."

In Professor Guinier's view, there are plenty of other blacks who could also succeed at elite colleges, but the institutions are not doing enough to find them. She said they were overly reliant on measures like SAT scores, which correlate strongly with family wealth and parental education. "Colleges and universities are defaulting on their obligation to train and educate a representative group of future leaders," said Professor Guinier, a Harvard graduate herself who has been studying college admissions practices for more than a decade. "And they are excluding poor and working-class whites, not just descendants of slaves."

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research (www.JewishResearch.org)

Harvard admissions officials say that they, too, are concerned about attracting more lower-income students of all races. They plan to spend an additional \$300,000 to \$375,000 a year to recruit more low-income students and provide more financial aid to these students.

"This increases the chances that we will be able to reach into the communities that have not been reached," said William R. Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid. While Harvard officials ignore the ethnic distinctions among their black students, Harvard's black undergraduates are developing a body of literature in the form of student research papers.

Aisha Haynie, the undergraduate whose senior thesis Professor Guinier cited, said her research was prompted by the reaction from her black classmates when she told them that she was not from the West Indies or Africa, but from the Carolinas. "They would say, 'No, where are you really from?' " said Ms. Haynie, 26, who earned a master's degree in public policy at Princeton and is now in medical school. Marques J. Redd, a 20-year-old from Macon, Ga., who graduated in June and was one of the editors of Harvard's black student guide, said that Harvard officials had discouraged them from collecting the data on who the black students were.

"But we thought it was one aspect of the black experience at Harvard that should be documented," he said. "The knowledge had power. It was something that needed to be out in the open instead of something that people whispered about."
