



CANADA

Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism

EVIDENCE

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Chair: Mario Silva

Parliamentary Publications

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•(0810)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.)): Good morning, everybody.

I would like to call the fourth hearing on the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism to order.

Our meeting is scheduled from eight to eleven, but I realize that some members have to leave early because there are other committees they are part of. At the same time, I think we might be ending the meeting earlier, because of some last-minute cancellations. We shall see. I just want to let members know that Dr. Bernard Shapiro, who is the president emeritus of McGill University, is unfortunately unable to come and be here with us because of the fact that there's a family illness. As well, Professor Sheldon Levy will join us by telephone around 8:30. He was not able to get on his flight due to fog in Toronto. That's regrettable, but we're pleased that he's going to be calling in to make his testimony.

I should mention that Professor Bernard Shapiro has already made an extensive testimony and is also available online to members. We do have with us Robert Steiner, and also Fred Lowy, so thank you very much. I believe Ms. Francine Page and Patrick Monahan will be here soon. Patrick may also be caught up in the fog in Toronto.

Mr. Steiner, you could start making your presentation and then it would be Dr. Lowy, and then Francine Page. If by chance Sheldon Levy gets in around 8:30, I might have to cut one of you off and then we'll go back to you. Thank you very much for being here.

Robert Steiner.

Mr. Robert Steiner (As an Individual): Thank you, Mr. Chair.
[*Translation*]

I want to thank you for inviting us to be here. This has been an issue in Canadian universities for a long time. If you don't mind, I will start with a personal anecdote.

When my grandfather was around my age, he won the Guggenheim award for being a world leader in his field and one of the most promising scientists of his generation in physiology. He was offered a tenured position at John Hopkins University, in the United States. It was 1940, and his research was key to the war effort; he decided to stay in Montreal to continue his work.

His university, McGill University, never offered him a tenured position. Without the commensurate salary, he was unable to continue his scientific research, despite his continued success. He became a family physician and physiology professor at a dental

school. My grandfather lost out on his career, but Canada and even the world lost out on the neurological discoveries he could have made, simply because his university at the time decided that it already had enough Jewish people. And that was not just at McGill University.

In 1966, my father joined the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto. It was only about 10 years prior that a Jewish person had become the first Jewish department head in that faculty. In Jewish liturgy, Dor Vador is said to be passed on from one generation to the next. So I am here before you as a member of the third generation of a Jewish family on a Canadian campus. I can tell you that I have never had to deal with the obstacles that my grandfather did, but I can also tell you that the struggle against racism and the struggle to build bridges between populations that have concerns about the other remains one of the biggest challenges I face in my day-to-day work.

[*English*]

I want to thank you on the university's behalf for asking us these important and timely questions. Because the subject is so painful, it is also vulnerable at times to exaggeration, and if we are to address it soberly, we have to address it factually. I'd like to begin with some facts about our campuses and then move on to describe our approach and the values that underlie it.

There is no evidence of generalized anti-Semitism on U of T's campuses. There is no evidence of Jewish students being systemically harassed and intimidated on our campuses. There is no evidence that it is dangerous to be a pro-Israeli student, faculty member, or staff member on our campuses—in fact, quite the opposite. A large number are actively involved in deepening our university's connection to leading research universities and institutions in Israel, and those efforts have provoked no noticeable criticism or hostility from any corner.

Our university has 72,000 students, 11,000 faculty and staff, and on a good day, 2,000 visitors. We have a population twice the size of West Vancouver, twice the size of Rimouski, and twice the size of North Bay. We are as large, in other words, as a mid-sized Canadian city and far more diverse than most. So it is also a fact that there are inevitably tensions between groups advocating different ideas, and there are just as inevitably individual experiences of anti-Semitism, just as there are of homophobia, sexual harassment, Islamophobia, and racism. That is in fact why our university employs a large staff of administrators to focus on specifically these issues.

That we have an inclusive environment and one that is relatively stable is very much to the credit of our students and our faculty, who tend, for the most part, to approach these tense issues in a spirit of tolerance for others. The climate they create allows us as administration to pursue an approach that appears to work more often than not, and I offer its four elements for your consideration.

The first element is outreach to vulnerable groups. Various parts of the administration maintain close touch with communities on campus that may feel vulnerable. That includes Hillel. It also includes the Muslim Students' Association, the Black Students' Association, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities, and others. We work to understand the general tone in those communities from month to month, to build partnership with them, and to ensure that they know the specific university officers to whom they can reach out when they are worried at any time.

The second pillar is what I would call aggressive education. When we hear of an event that may be provocative, we reach out to that group, too, to teach them precisely about the responsibilities that come with free speech and their obligation under our policies to ensure an event that is open and that tolerates opposing views. We warn them that anti-Semitism and other forms of racism will not be tolerated. We explain that contravening these policies places any group at risk of losing their room-booking privileges on our campuses, and we coach them if necessary in the most constructive ways to manage disruptions and disturbances during an event.

The third pillar is monitoring. Senior members of our administration, I among them, attend many of the events of our community that our community has told us concern them. We attend as a physical representation of the university's policies, we attend to assist organizers in maintaining calm, and we attend in the act of witness. This isn't perfect. An administrator or a special constable at one end of a hallway may not hear what is being said to someone at another end of the hallway. Of course, we do not monitor every discussion about the Middle East on all three of our campuses, nor would we.

There is a fourth pillar to our approach, which I call, roughly, follow-up. This can take any number of forms. Sometimes an anti-racism officer simply has a discussion to hear one person who feels injured and teach another person who crossed the line. Sometimes those discussions take place between whole communities. Sometimes the follow-up is a hard warning followed by discipline. Sometimes it is a longer investigation. On relatively few occasions have we found it necessary to forward evidence to the hate crimes unit of the Toronto Police Service for its investigation.

This approach does not sanitize our environment, nor is that its aim. It is rooted in our values, which can seem as messy as the world for which we are preparing our students. Our job is not to insulate them from the tension of opposing views; it is in fact to maximize their opportunity for dissent but in a manner that is tolerant, inclusive, and safe. The principle of free expression is a cornerstone of free academies and democratic societies, and no university embracing that principle can ban legal expressions of opinion. Indeed, every member of our university community should be prepared to confront opinions that they find morally offensive. It is our job to teach our students how to participate in deep and intimate conflicts with mutual respect. It is for that very reason that

intolerance has no moral place at this university, even when expressed through means protected by the principle of free expression.

• (0815)

We can only respond to racism by confronting it directly, prosecuting it whenever warranted, protecting the safety of our members, and promoting diversity with unwavering commitment.

Last month a group of students provoked grave offence among their black peers by wearing blackface makeup during a costume competition. Two senior administrators met with the complainants promptly and then met with the students who crossed the line, to explain the offence that they caused.

The black students asked for an apology. The offending students promptly gave it, explaining that no one had ever taught them the history and the meaning of blackface. We in the administration and our colleagues in the student governments recognized that apology as sincere and even courageous, but we also felt that it was not enough. We worked with our student governments to convene a town hall in which our professors lectured on the history of blackface, and our students presented their apology to 300 of their peers. It was quite remarkable and underscores what I said earlier about the good fortune we have with our students in our faculty. For the most part, we stumble onto our mistakes and use them as chances to learn.

These values have led us to safely deepen our connections to Israel in recent years. In 2007 our president was among one of the first Canadians to send a formal letter of protest to the British University and College Union when it was pushing for an academic boycott of Israel. He even led a U of T delegation to three Israeli universities, and on his return he wrote an op-ed for *The Globe and Mail* explaining what Canada could learn from those universities.

Our faculty of social work has launched a collaborative program with Haifa University on the study and treatment of trauma. Our department of Jewish studies is growing. When CUPE Ontario began promoting its own noxious attempt to boycott Israel, U of T's protests didn't just come from our administration; they came just as much and as harshly from our own TAs and our own sessional instructors, members of that union who refused to join the boycott.

Let me finish with some of the message that our president sent the general secretary of the British University and College Union in 2007. He wrote that "in the years ahead, the University of Toronto will be deepening, not diminishing, its institutional ties to Israeli universities". And he went on to say:

...academic boycotts...start the global academic enterprise down a dangerously slippery slope of politicization. At the bottom of that slope is a world with diminished discourse among scholars, their students, and their societies. To the extent that such discourse is diminished, so also is our prospect, as scholars, for peacefully advancing the human enterprise in all its dimensions.

Thank you.

•(0820)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Steiner.

We would like to now proceed with Fred Lowy. As I mentioned before, hopefully Sheldon Levy will be on the phone in about 10 to 15 minutes. Thank you very much.

Dr. Fred Lowy (As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, *mesdames et messieurs*. I'm going to speak primarily in English, *mais je parlerai français si on me pose une question en français*.

First of all, I applaud the creation of this coalition. I believe you're tackling a subject that needs to be tackled.

I should also point out to begin with that I am not representing Concordia University per se. I am president emeritus, having left office in 2005, so I don't propose to speak for the university, although I did speak a couple of days ago with the current president, Professor Judith Woodsworth, and made sure that I'm up to date on what the university is currently doing.

Certainly I do accept responsibility for what happened at the university during my time of leadership, which was 1995-2005, and should there be questions about that era, I'd be glad to attempt to tackle them. I should point out that unlike Mr. Steiner or Madam Page, I am no longer an officer of the university represented here. What I'd like to do today is take this opportunity to say a few words generally about the problem of anti-Semitism on campuses, not just Concordia's campus, but all campuses.

I'd like to begin with a couple of personal statements, talk about anti-Semitism on campuses in Canada, and elsewhere as well, and then talk about what I think administration can do, so to speak, to make this public space, the university campus, a space as free as possible of discrimination and hate.

First, let me state categorically, obviously, that anti-Semitism is morally wrong and unacceptable. Hate speech, intimidation, or violence directed against any ethnic or religious or racial or linguistic group is totally unacceptable and should simply not be supported in any way. As I mentioned earlier, I fully support your coalition's objectives, your mission. I signed the 2002 statement of university presidents in the United States, and I fully subscribe to the Bollinger statement that was also attached to the material that we received.

Personally, I know something about anti-Semitism. I was born in 1933, the year that Adolf Hitler took office. I was born in Austria. In 1938, when I was five years old, my family left Austria. That was the year of the coming together of Germany and Austria, the Anschluss, which was actually, of course, a takeover of Austria by Germany. We left six months after this event. In the meantime, my father had been imprisoned. Fortunately, in the confusion of that first year, he was released, and of course my family left Austria as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, some of my extended family died in the Holocaust, though my own nuclear family was spared.

From that extreme manifestation of anti-Semitism, I certainly have a considerable sensitivity to the subject. What I'm happy to say—as Mr. Steiner just did with regard to the University of Toronto—is that by and large, I think Canadian campuses are safe. They are not

hotbeds of anti-Semitism or racism of any kind, although, of course, these conditions do occur, as they do in society generally.

Possibly, anti-Semitism is more overt on the campus than it is in Canadian society generally. Why? I think there are basically two reasons why anti-Semitism is more overt and possibly exists to a greater extent. Again, let me qualify what I'm about to say, because we're talking about something absolutely different from the kind of epitomized violence of the Holocaust or similar kinds of events. The anti-Semitism we're talking about here has to do with expressions of hatred and attempts at intimidation. There is some pushing and shoving at times, but very rarely. Primarily it's argument or shouting at the verbal level.

•(0825)

I say that I think there are two broad reasons why this happens on campus. First, students generally tend to be drawn to anti-establishment policies, anti-establishment events, and so on. It is not all students, of course. It's a minority of activist students. Of course this goes way back in history. In more recent history, I can think of the European revolutions of 1848, which were primarily led by students. The 1968 uprisings, particularly in France, were led by students. Many of those leaders are now in parliaments in Europe. And of course there were the Vietnam protests in the United States.

Students tend to be against political correctness, so if they have anti-Semitic views, these are expressed more readily on university campuses than they are on the street generally.

Israel now and possibly Jews generally are seen as establishment rather than anything else. Israel is seen as powerful and relatively affluent in the Middle East. Palestinians are seen as victims and the oppressed. This of course is a remarkable change in the last half century. When Israel was established in 1948, it was in fact very weak, poor, threatened by its neighbours, and threatened with extinction. The Arab states, by contrast, seemed relatively powerful. The activist students at that time, I'm told, since I don't quite remember that so clearly from personal experience, by and large were pro-Israel, Israel being the weaker, the underdog, at the time. The political left, which right now is very much anti-Israeli throughout the world, at that time was very much pro-Israeli. So I think that is one reason anti-Semitism on campus is more overt and possibly more intense.

The second reason, which is to some extent connected, is a very important reason for anti-Semitism on our campuses, and that is organized Islamic anti-Israeli propaganda and activism. I said Islamic, because I'm not talking about Muslims generally or Arabs generally. The vast majority of Arab and Muslim students in Canadian universities are there for an education and have the same objectives as any Canadian student who attends university. As a matter of fact, Concordia University, where I was more recently, even more than the University of Toronto, has a high proportion of Muslim students, primarily from North Africa, but from elsewhere in the Middle East as well.

Muslim students, as I say, by and large are like students everywhere. But among Muslim students, there is a group in most universities, and certainly that was true of Concordia, of politically committed Islamist students who essentially mobilize support from within the Muslim student community and then within the general activist community for political purposes.

Recently a British MP, Denis MacShane, published a book called *Globalising Hatred: The New Anti-Semitism*, in which he makes the same point about British universities. It is exactly the same. What he wrote about British universities can be applied to Canadian universities without change.

● (0830)

The Chair: Dr. Lowy, I just wanted to let you know and the members know that Dr. Sheldon Levy is online now.

Dr. Fred Lowy: Hello, Dr. Levy.

The process on campuses in Britain, and I think with us as well, begins with a quite appropriate criticism of Israeli government policies. That is entirely appropriate. In Israel itself there is considerable criticism of its government policies, whatever government may be in power. But it goes on essentially to an anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism, if you like, in which Israel is singled out for criticism, opprobrium, boycotts, and the like, out of proportion to its contributions to unrest in the world, and certainly without reference to equally or much more egregious contributions to unrest from elsewhere, including its immediate neighbours.

What's more, it includes age-old allegations against Jewish people, which essentially have been used by anti-Semites in Europe for generations—more recently, the idea that there's a broad international Jewish conspiracy to infiltrate centres of power and so on.

Let me take a few minutes to talk about the Concordia situation from 1999 to 2002, because it may be instructive, even though I think it's an extreme example of what can happen at other universities.

In 1999, unbeknownst to the administration, a number of anarchist activist students joined Concordia as students. Some of them already had earned degrees elsewhere. There was a Ph.D graduate from York University who enrolled in a language class. There was a student from Guelph who had been expelled from Guelph for activist activities, etc. The administration was not aware of this, because they came as individuals, perfectly legitimately. Over the next year, they very effectively took over the student government of the university. This wasn't very difficult, because at Concordia, even though it's always been a highly politicized campus, very few people bothered to vote. Actually, with 8% of the eligible voters voting, a narrow victory for this activist group took place. Once in power, they used it extremely effectively to advance their own causes.

This had nothing to do with anti-Semitism or the Middle East to begin with. However, they alienated the board of governors; they alienated professional students, particularly commerce and engineering students. And they were about to be defeated in the next student election, the following year, when they struck up a pact with the activist Muslim students—that is, you vote for us and we'll advance your causes.

I should also point out that at this time in Quebec student organizations can become certified as unions. Once they are certified as a union—and this happened at Concordia—they then have total control over the funds the university collects on their behalf, that is, student fees. This group, in addition to getting support from the Muslim community at Concordia and elsewhere, now had over \$1.5 million to work with. They used it in a variety of ways, but one of them included an anti-Semitic approach within campus, targeting Jewish students and Jewish causes as part of the pact with the relatively small group of Islamist students, not with the overall Muslim student association.

The effect was, as you might imagine, an escalation. The Jewish students mobilized as well. The Jewish student organization Hillel and the society for Palestinian human rights clashed in a variety of ways, escalating by bringing in provocative speakers on either side, and by seeking and getting support from their communities outside the university.

● (0835)

The matter came to a head when the Jewish community, possibly for other reasons, invited Mr. Netanyahu, who at that time was not in government. He is Prime Minister of Israel now, as you probably know. In any event, he was regarded as a hardliner on Israeli-Palestinian issues. There was a considerable amount of discontent, especially among Muslim students, at this invitation. The student government at the time, together with a small but vocal Islamist group, resolved to prevent the speech from taking place. I call this group "Islamists" not because of their religious beliefs, but for want of a better word. They brought people from all over the place—Montreal, Toronto, Detroit, Windsor. Quite a number of people came, and about 2,000 people caused a small riot. Fortunately, nobody was seriously hurt. A few people got pushed around. Some windows were broken. A lot of negative publicity took place in 2002, which hurt the university in a variety of ways. It intimidated students and created a hostile campus atmosphere, which had not previously existed.

The following year, as a result of all this, the group of students who had been in power were soundly defeated. Having talked to Dr. Woodsworth, I can confirm that since then there has been no repetition of this kind of student government. Right now, student government at Concordia is like student government at any Canadian campus. But during this brief period it demonstrated what can happen on Canadian campuses.

What role should the administration play at the universities? That's one of the key issues. In Canada, universities are essential to economic, social, intellectual, and cultural life. They are extremely important institutions in our country. They have to remain open and democratic. They have to remain spheres of learning and scholarship, research and citizenship. They have to welcome the clash of ideas. They have to set an example for respect for individuals and society, and they have to serve as models for conflict resolution in a diverse community.

Among the university administration's roles is to protect the campus as a public forum for freedom of expression, including the expression of unpopular views. It has to promote freedom to think, freedom to challenge. If civility and freedom are not present, the university is going to be a much diminished place. In fact, it might not even be a university at all. At the same time, the university also has to make sure that it remains a civil environment in which to learn, teach, and do research. Faculty and students must be able to pursue their objectives, free of intimidation and undue distraction.

So the administration, especially an administration in a crisis, has a dual role. It has the responsibility of weighing freedom and civility and ensuring that both objectives are met. This requires prioritization of certain virtues that, though difficult to ensure, must nevertheless be encouraged. I am talking about fairness, respect for persons, reasonableness in argument, truthfulness, and civility. As I say, this is a fine line that has to be maintained, and most of the time I think university administrations can do it.

● (0840)

Anti-Semitism is one expression of hatred, and that's what you're focusing on. Of course there are many other expressions of hatred, all of which the university should attempt essentially to channel into positive and constructive dimensions.

Perhaps I should stop there, Mr. Chairman, and be prepared to answer any questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have actually been very generous with the witnesses' times because of the fact that we had some cancellations and also our panel today is only divided into the university, so there's no other discussion but that.

Dr. Levy, are you on line still?

Professor Sheldon Levy (As an Individual): Yes, I am.

The Chair: Is it possible that you could make your presentation now?

Prof. Sheldon Levy: Yes, I would be delighted to do that.

I'm sorry I could not be there with you. As I mentioned, the flight leaving Toronto was cancelled.

I thought it would be best to describe the situation at Ryerson as accurately as I can and not get into historical context, of which I'm not as much of an expert. But I will give you the facts as best I can, if that is okay, as a beginning.

Let me begin by explaining that well before the call for your information we had already set up on campus what we call an "anti-racism task force". It has two co-chairs: Dr. Grace Edward Galabuzi and Dr. Eileen Antone. They looked at all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism, but it was not exclusive to that.

Recently that group asked an expert, Dr. Frances Henry, who is a professor at York University and who authored the 2006 report at Queen's University, to interview both the Jewish students and faculty for us. She provided me with an early report. I should also mention that the interviews were conducted with Muslim students and faculty, and they shared their concerns as well. I have those facts to share with you.

Let me begin by saying that the commonality of the interviews was a shared concern on the need for the university to continue to foster an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment.

It was very clear that Israel Apartheid Week was a very difficult time for many on campus. You have heard directly from Jewish faculty from the university on that. However, I want to point out that when Jewish students and faculty were asked about that week, although they found it very difficult, they did not think it should be shut down. They knew that it would be seen as, and it would be, shutting down freedom of speech.

To put clarity on this, for many, Israel Apartheid Week is a way of speaking out against the government. But many see it not as speaking out against the government but rather speaking out against Jews. However, it's important to note that when asked, neither the faculty nor the students thought the solution was to shut it down—as if we could, in any event.

There was broad agreement that the university should establish ground rules for any events in order to allow for a civilized discussion and to be clear that language is intended to focus on criticism of the policies of the Israeli government. One of their recommendations, which we are now going to consider very carefully, is the establishment of "ground rules", to use their words

● (0845)

I also want also to mention that both the students and the faculty felt that a recent Ryerson lecture series titled "Prospects for Peace" was an example of civil discourse and a start in the right direction. I want to emphasize a bit about this conference. It was conducted by faculty and students. The auditoriums were filled. At no time were there what I'd call civility problems. There was high emotion at times. There was strong debate, agreements and disagreements, but it was never anything but civil.

Let me give you the names of the people who participated in this forum. Let me begin with Professor Yoram Peri, the new director of the Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies at the University of Maryland; Nadia Hijab, senior fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies, an independent non-profit research organization and a leading resource on the Arab-Israeli conflict; Robert Malley, director for International Crisis Group in the Middle East and North Africa, and the national security advisor at the White House on the Middle East peace process; Dr. Juan Cole, the Richard P. Mitchell professor of history at the University of Michigan and author of the book *Engaging the Muslim World*; and Michael Bell, the Paul Martin Sr. scholar in international relations at the University of Windsor, and former ambassador to Jordan.

I mention this because if you look at the individuals and where they're coming from, you'll see that the students and the faculty tried to find a balance of those people that you could consider to be knowledgeable and the world's best. Therefore the dialogue was based upon scholarly work, not simply rhetoric.

I do, however, want to also point out that there was recognition that proactive visible support for all groups on campus by senior administration was a very positive move. Here I wanted to share with you that the administration in the last year—more than the years before—started to become much more visible in going to and supporting different events. Personally, I went to the Muslim Eid Festival. I also was there to read out the names of Holocaust victims. This Friday, we're having a Shabbat dinner at the university where the Jewish students and faculty are inviting not only other Jews, but students from all nationalities, and we're hosting it by the university.

I didn't realize, to be quite candid with you, how important the visibility of senior administration meant to these groups. If there was an error I made, it was not becoming more active personally in events and showing my support for different communities earlier. But we are making up for it, and all groups—whether it was the Muslim students or the Jewish students—not only noticed it, but appreciated it. So it was a lesson learned for myself.

I also want to point out that outside of the university we have groups that want to push the university in one way or the other. It would be from not allowing something to shutting down something. The university is always trying to be protective of the rights of individuals and freedoms, and all of those. Those are not very often noticed or appreciated by whatever group happens to be pushing. I have to say that I wish there were a way we could educate the external groups about the university and how we go about our business to protect the rights of individuals. External groups quite often—in their interest of trying to help—make life even more difficult for us.

There was a conference, and I'm sure you have the information. It was called "Anti-Semitism in Academia: Sources and Solutions". It was convened by the Magenta Foundation on February 23 and 24, 2006, in Amsterdam. That conference included many recommendations, and we had systematically started to go through them. Many of them we have in place, but I wanted to mention three we could do better at, by way of example. These come directly from that conference.

● (0850)

Those that we do—and that I'm confident that most if not all universities do—are the standards and guidelines and academic responsibility, protection of students from harassment and discrimination. We have all of those policies in place, but the three that I wanted to mention that may be helpful to my university and helpful to all universities are the following, and this comes from the recommendations of that conference: one, develop model curricula that promote the use of critical thinking and learning environments, equipping students with the tools to recognize and evaluate racist and anti-Semitic sources of information; two, encourage universities to develop training in their standard curricula that promotes tolerance and diversity; three, promote joint efforts that bring together diverse groups committed to dialogue and civil discourse, especially when conflict in the Middle East threatens to create a climate of harassment or fear within the university. Student groups in particular should be recognized as important partners.

Let me end by sharing with the committee what we are doing at the moment.

First, I mentioned we have the anti-racism task force, and I gave you a bit of the early results of that task force, but that report will soon be made public at the university and it will deal with all forms of racism.

Second, we will of course discuss the recommendations and we will seek the support of the Senate, and I am sure we will have it, and we will begin a formal process to review the recommendations. The administration—and here I mean academic and non-academic—has a major role. It is clear, as I said, that we are asked to lead, and when we do lead, it is welcome.

Third, we will continue to seek opportunities that enable civilized discourse on campus, and in that regard we entered into discussions on partnerships with what's called the Mosaic Institute and the Canadian Centre for Diversity. During Holocaust Education Week, senior administration, including me, participated in the reading of names, and as I mentioned, we are showing our support for all groups, one example being the Shabbat dinner, but we could do a lot more.

I will end by saying that we are fortunate at Ryerson that for 99%, or some very large number of people, these are not issues. We have to never let them become issues by not accepting the one percent, because the one percent will grow if one tolerates intolerance.

In any event, Chair, I'm happy to answer any questions. I hope these were useful comments. I again apologize for not being with you.

● (0855)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Levy.

We have to make some changes in the structure of how we're going to proceed because of the fact we were not able to get Patrick Monahan, who was also to be on the same flight as you, but the flight was cancelled and therefore he's not able to be here. He will also be able to be before the committee and make a presentation through teleconference, but unfortunately he can't be on at the same time as Dr. Levy, so we'll go to questions to the ones who have already made their presentations, Robert Steiner from U of T and Dr. Fred Lowy from Concordia, and then we'll do the second part with Patrick Monahan and Francine Page, if that's okay.

The first questions would be from Judy Wasylcyia-Leis.

Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Thank you very much.

This has been a very interesting round of presentations. I'm sorry I missed the couple at the beginning, but I would like to ask a general question, especially in view of Dr. Levy's presentation.

What would be the implications of government policy to penalize universities in any way, through use of funding or denial of funding, to respond to a university that is allowing a wide-ranging discourse that may not necessarily be in line with perceptions of the day?

In other words, given the emphasis on discourse and on cracking down on obvious evidence of hatred or racism, but not going to the extent of wielding a heavy stick in the event of a debate that may not always be in line with other people's thinking, what is your view in terms of government getting involved in any way on that front?

I'll start with Dr. Levy, if you could.

Prof. Sheldon Levy: Thank you very much.

Let me begin by saying that the university must follow the law of the day. We have no choice and would not want to make a choice. Therefore, the moment that speech becomes one of hate, I don't think the university has any choice but to act, because it's breaking a law of the country. That's the first point. So we would be absolutely on the same side.

But when you go to the next level, someone is making a judgment to say, on the one hand, this is hate, or on the other one, this is freedom of speech. Ultimately, government trying to intervene to make a grey decision would make matters worse. If you thought the law of the country was unclear and that it needed more specification to allow its proper administration, that's a different issue, but to come in and create a law on the fly would be problematic.

I think you could very well ask a very good question on whether the clarity of the existing law needs to be changed.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Go ahead.

Dr. Fred Lowy: First of all, I agree with what Dr. Levy said.

I don't know of any incident in a Canadian university that would justify the kind of action that you've suggested. I can envision possibly a situation where a university allows things to get out of hand to the point where this kind of punishment might be appropriate. But I agree with Dr. Levy; I think it would not be helpful. By and large, in the present context, it would be disproportionate and unwarranted.

At the same time, our hate laws have to be reviewed from time to time, not just with regard to the campus but to society generally in Canada. But I do believe that the universities, up until now and probably into the foreseeable future, will be able to handle it without this kind of intervention.

• (0900)

Mr. Robert Steiner: Let me start by noting that most universities in this country are so poorly funded that we sometimes feel we're penalized simply for operating.

But let me be actually very clear in an answer here. I think this would be extraordinarily dangerous. It would be dangerous on three levels.

First of all, it would extraordinarily dangerous legally. I'm not a legal scholar, and unfortunately Professor Monahan isn't here to actually correct me on whatever mistakes I'm going to make. Not only am I not a legal scholar, and I'm not a lawyer, but I would have to believe that kind of legislation couldn't survive review by the Supreme Court and would be a contravention of the Charter of Rights, if not in law then certainly in its intent.

It's dangerous for the environment on our campuses and dangerous for the environment more broadly in society, because it

would be really the first instance in our society of saying, beyond the hate crimes legislation, what we're allowed to talk about.

Ultimately, I think it would be dangerous for our democracy as well. I think it would raise tension and it would undermine the basic vibrancy of our democratic society—in fact, its fundamental operation.

It's also unnecessary. First of all, we have hate crimes law. Hate crimes law, at least in Ontario—I can't speak for other provinces—and certainly in Toronto, is not one of these laws that sits passively on the books. The Toronto Police Service has a unit that actively investigates hate crimes. We refer materials to them and they review them the way they would any evidence of a potential criminal incident. Hate crimes law works and there are actions taken under it. They are prosecuted, where used, and we use them.

But hate crimes law is not the only form of legislation or, more to the point, form of policy that actually sits here. Well before then we have a whole bunch of other policy tools that we use. We have codes of student conduct. There are human rights tribunals, if it gets beyond that, which actually operate outside the conventional judiciary system. We are actively involved in managing this.

So taking that ultimate step is the democratic atom bomb. To legislate speech in that way I think would be dangerous and unnecessary.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Sweet.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First and foremost, I want to thank you for participating, Mr. Steiner, Dr. Lowy, and Professor Levy. And maybe I will thank Professor Levy as well for the three recommendations that you said you felt were significant for a university. I notice everybody taking notes on those.

Mr. Steiner, in your presentation you feel very strongly about the action that you've taken on your campus, and of course you've probably heard of some of the testimony that we've heard, that in fact contrary to what you said, university campuses in Toronto are often seedbeds for anti-Semitism.

My concern is that we made a broad swath of invitations to university presidents. It would seem to me that with those kinds of allegations there would be a lot of motivation for presidents to come and make sure that they made their case very clearly that this wasn't the case, as you've done today.

So I guess I'm asking for an opinion first, and then I have some follow-up questions on some other things you've said.

Of course, Professor Levy or Dr. Lowy, you could chime in as well. Do you have any kind of notion, any idea why we wouldn't have more presidents who wanted to participate?

Mr. Robert Steiner: I can't speak to any presidents other than the president I serve at the University of Toronto. I can tell you that the reason there is strictly one of logistics. We had the invitation, I believe, at the very end of October. He had a full-day retreat—if you will, a cabinet retreat, to use Ottawa language—of the tri-campus vice-presidents' group, which is his senior inner cabinet, if you will, that had been scheduled I think since mid-August. So he just couldn't come. We wanted to make sure there was representation here.

As an assistant vice-president, I'm also a member of cabinet, to use again the Ottawa language, and I am one of the members of cabinet who is most actively involved in these issues. So we also felt that it was appropriate for me to come, and I could actually speak to these issues in a way that reflected a level of engagement that the president has not always had the opportunity to have, simply because he is the president of the whole university and these are issues that often fall squarely on my desk.

So for a substantive conversation, we also felt it would be useful for me to be here. But he regrets not being able to attend. I actually wanted to extend that as well.

•(0905)

Mr. David Sweet: Okay, good.

Any comment, Dr. Lowy?

Dr. Fred Lowy: I really cannot comment on it, Mr. Sweet. I don't know why I was invited, but I suppose it was because I'm a former president. I don't know whether the current president of Concordia was invited. In any event, I was pleased to be invited, because I think it's an important topic and your work on this coalition is important. So I accepted, but I have no idea why the other people were too busy to come.

Mr. David Sweet: Thanks, Dr. Lowy.

Mr. Steiner, you mentioned that you keep close watch and that if there are circumstances that cross the line, you report them to the metro hate crimes unit. Do you keep a log of the incidents and how many you've referred over to the Toronto police?

Mr. Robert Steiner: I believe there may exist some kind of a formal log like that at our campus police, because our campus police serve as the liaison for those. I could tell you off the top of my head I can almost count them, because they've been so few.

There was an incident in I believe 2004 or 2005, when some leaflets appeared in one of our libraries that as far as our comfort level was concerned clearly crossed the line. They were anti-Semitic. We pulled them off within an hour or two and referred them all to the Toronto police for investigation.

I'm trying to remember if there were others. I don't even know, to tell you the truth, if there were any others. Referring something to the hate crimes unit at the Toronto police is a very rare step, because something has to be so clearly criminal or potentially criminal. It's not for us to determine whether it's criminal or not; it's up to the crown and the police, and most things we can actually address well before it gets to that level.

Mr. David Sweet: Okay.

Obviously, with your statement, there have been allegations made by others about university campuses. Do you have any idea why

those kinds of allegations would be made towards Canadian campuses? Do you think there's an overreaction by students who are reporting back to people?

Mr. Robert Steiner: Mr. Sweet, again, I can only comment about my own university. I've heard the testimony that preceded, at least in the last session, where there were a number of students who came, and the head of Hillel, on campus in Toronto, was also there. And I speak to Zac quite regularly. I spoke with him a month ago and I spoke with him in fact yesterday. I heard his testimony.

The only thing I could say is that there are three universities in Toronto. There are more in the region. Zac is involved in a number of them. When I listened to his testimony, he actually didn't raise any examples about the University of Toronto at all.

I can't comment about events that may or may not have happened at other universities in Toronto.

The Chair: Thank you.

Carolyn Bennett.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): Thanks very much.

And thank you all for your testimony.

Dr. Lowy's testimony spoke to what I think a number of years ago we were concerned about: people maybe registering for one course and then infiltrating into the student administration. I just wonder if the universities now have some way of dealing with that or safeguarding against using a university campus for organizing in this way.

Dr. Fred Lowy: I can just speak generally. I think it would be very difficult to do it. Universities don't screen potential students for their political views, nor do I think that would be a good idea. Until people who conduct themselves as you have described do something, I'm not sure what the university is able to do. People come to university for a variety of reasons. Most people come to advance their personal careers and to learn and explore, etc. Occasionally some people come to universities, as to many other institutions, for their own purposes, whether they be political or otherwise.

It would be nice if we could identify troublemakers in advance, but it's not easy to do it. And what's more, for what you or I might call a troublemaker, somebody else would probably use a different label altogether, a more positive one.

Speaking as a former university administrator, the person I would consider a troublemaker is someone who interferes with the true work of the university, which requires a civic space that is civil.

•(0910)

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I was just wondering if there were rules on some campuses that you have to be at least a half-time or a full-time student in order to participate in the—

Dr. Fred Lowy: Indeed. I'm sorry, I misunderstood your question.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I mean, to register for one course and then become the president of the student administrative council doesn't seem quite right. But I just wondered if there were safeguards put.

Dr. Fred Lowy: Yes, as a matter of fact this is true of many universities, that in order to be a student governor, or a member of the student executive council or something like that, you really need to be at least a half-time student, or in some universities you have to be a full-time student.

Of course there are also organizations that represent graduate students, others represent undergraduates, etc., and they all have their own rules.

But again, this is not something that is easy for the administration to legislate. This is something the students themselves organize.

Mr. Robert Steiner: I can take a slightly different perspective on the question, Dr. Bennett, which is, what do we actually do about events and what are the different rules that we have for internal and external bookings for rooms? That actually is a concern, and it's a concern that has prompted a lot of debate in the administration at the University of Toronto.

Because we are a taxpayer-funded institution, and we're a public institution, and we operate within the context of our communities, we make our space available to the community at large. But we also make sure that every community group that comes on the campus clearly indicates what their purpose is for actually booking a room, and understands what our policies are. And for that purpose there is a slightly different process in room booking for outside groups.

The issue sometimes has been when an internal group books on behalf of an external group and doesn't indicate that it's doing so. When those situations have arisen—and they have arisen quite rarely—they are significant. And those are the kinds of instances when we will immediately sit down with that group and advise them of the rule and tell them that if this happens again, they will lose their room-booking privileges, and they have one more chance to make sure that this doesn't happen again.

That's the kind of place where we tend to draw the line. It's not the dramatic, standing up on the podium, but we have the policies and it's in using them that's we're actually fighting this fight, if you will.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: Dr. Levy, is there any policy at Ryerson?

Prof. Sheldon Levy: Just to comment on the last speaker, with regard to room bookings, this is a significant point. I'll also mention that sometimes the student union has a building and wants to make some additional revenue by renting out the space, and it finds itself with the same problem. So we have started to work together with the student groups that essentially own space on a common policy, because we're sometimes surprised or tricked into leasing space or renting space. It is a significant issue.

With regard to the other question, about full-time and half-time, it varies across the province. A number of universities have a policy that when you become a student president, you take only one course or no courses. I don't think there's any uniformity at all. But I certainly agree with the comment that whatever you do, that won't be the solution to the troublemaker.

● (0915)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Ken Dryden.

Hon. Ken Dryden (York Centre, Lib.): Thank you.

Thanks to all of you for your testimony today. It was fascinating to listen to in terms of the way you laid out your understanding of a university and the kind of place of learning you understand a university to be. It was not just in terms of the courses; it was in terms of interactions, discourse, and conflict, all of which are central parts of student learning.

Of course, given that this is the case, the rest of the discussion today is about what happens, and how do you deal with it, when, as you say, something crosses a line. In a lot of ways, that's a line that is kind of within that understanding you have. But beyond that, it's not a defined line. It's just something you know when you see it. When that happens, I guess the question is, what then?

We've heard a lot of testimony from other people, other witnesses, and a phrase that keeps coming up is that when something does cross the line, you name it and you shame it. Of course that's part of an environment too. Part of a learning environment is finding that place beyond which it is unacceptable and then learning how to deal with the unacceptable.

How do you do that? When you have found yourself in those sorts of situations, how do you apply...? Do you believe that notion of naming it, and by so doing shaming it, or would you understand it differently?

Mr. Robert Steiner: Thank you, Mr. Dryden.

I'm not sure that we would agree with the idea of naming and shaming. I think we would agree with the naming part, absolutely. I think our approach would be naming and healing or naming and educating. Frankly, both healing and educating tend to be far more difficult when you're shaming someone. I don't think naming is the equivalent of shaming. Again I draw back to the example that we just had. It wasn't with regard to anti-Semitism, but it was about this inadvertent use of blackface. If you don't know, blackface is a makeup that has a very sad and sordid history, particularly in the United States and in the U.K., as a platform for theatrical discrimination against blacks in the United States.

A group of students wore this in a costume contest to purportedly be the Jamaican bobsled team. We gave them the opportunity first of all to understand what they had done. We gave them the benefit of the doubt that they didn't realize what they had done. When they realized what they had done, they apologized. When, in their apology, they recognized that they actually didn't even realize what the problem was, we sought to educate. Through the combination of healing and education, we actually tried to build a bridge. The ultimate goal of this whole exercise is to help students then go out into society in a way that is constructive so they won't do this again and so they know why they're not going to do this again, and hopefully they will have good feelings towards the students they offended and not be ashamed before the students or the communities they offended. That's healing.

Also, it is to give those who are vulnerable and who have been victimized the opportunity to hear an apology and the opportunity to build a bridge and the opportunity to recognize that they actually have the power in our community to make those things happen. There's nothing in that about shame. It is about naming it, and it is about teaching and healing.

Now, quite specifically as to what we do issue by issue, the answer really depends on the issue. I think the first instinct, because we're all educators, is to see if we can actually teach something. That assumes, and we try to give people the benefit of the doubt, that they stumbled into an error, that they didn't do this maliciously. But we also keep our eyes open to the idea that they may have done it maliciously. So our first efforts are often to try to bring about a conversation and understand and investigate.

There are times when we actually realize—and they are relatively rare, more rare than you might think—that there was some malicious intent involved. I always take comfort in the fact that the University of Toronto, and I imagine other universities, may have more policies about more things than almost any other institution in Canadian society, with the possible exception of Parliament. These policies have been thought out by people who are very highly qualified to think about these things, including people in our law faculties and our faculties of education and social work and so on. We use those policies. So there are tools for us to use. Sometimes there are disciplinary tools whereby we actually take a room-booking privilege away. That's a big deal. If you're a group and you can't book a room for a year, in effect you sort of atrophy as a group.

Sometimes, very rarely, there are disciplinary actions, but usually an issue gets addressed well before that. People don't usually want to go down that route, partly because it takes a long time and partly because it becomes confrontational and raises tension in the environment. Most people even on the vulnerable side of these things don't want to go down that route. Occasionally, because of the possibility of a criminal event, which is taken seriously at that level, we will refer it. But often our instinct is to try to teach, and usually that works.

• (0920)

Dr. Fred Lowy: Thank you for your preliminary comments and your question.

There are three levels of response: education; disciplinary action, sometimes leading to suspension; and, on rare occasions, referral to the police and to the criminal system.

At Concordia, the disturbance of 2002 led to five arrests and a dozen expulsions from the university. But that's an extreme situation. There was no precedent for it, except the 1969 riot at Sir George Williams, a forerunner of Concordia. The 2002 event with Mr. Netanyahu, with his aborted speech, was the only occasion since then when the police have had to make arrests. By and large, academic sanctions are the greatest penalty. These can include suspension and, when the line is obviously crossed, even expulsion. It is rare for an individual to do this. Usually, it's groups who cross the line. There are also some administrative solutions such as enforcement of rules about posting and installations that students might erect. Education, bringing groups together, is effective, and in

the long run is probably the ideal way to go. But if someone or some group crosses the line, then the university has to take action.

Hon. Ken Dryden: Is it possible for Dr. Levy to...?

The Chair: Dr. Levy, did you want to make a comment?

Prof. Sheldon Levy: I don't want to repeat the excellent comments of my colleagues. Let me add a bit from my perspective. I'm going to talk a bit about when the line is not crossed, even though others think it has been.

Even though you might permit a certain activity to go ahead in the interest of protecting individual rights, it doesn't mean that you as the senior administrator can't speak out and say you don't like it. In other words, you have an independent voice as well as an administrative voice. But you have to explain your decision. You have to use your own voice to comment on what you believe. You don't let these things go unnoticed, and you bring it up for discussion in the community. Too often people meet misconduct with silence. More and more, presidents and vice-presidents have a leadership role. When something happens, even though you allow it to continue, you can still speak out and say what you think. Bring people together, and give people a voice. I think it's the silence that's the biggest problem.

• (0925)

The Chair: Thank you.

Raymonde Folco.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Steiner, with all due respect, you mentioned the incident about blackface at your university. Of course it is shocking, and we all understand the historical reasons behind it, but I would suggest that it is not the kind of example I would use to talk about the kind of action you've taken. Let me explain myself.

Blackface and any prejudice against or discrimination against anyone of colour is not acceptable anywhere in North America. It's not acceptable by law; it's not, particularly, acceptable through the psychology of people today. I would submit that this is not the case with anti-Semitism today. I would submit that if we were to take an example of... Let's take for example the Holocaust, about which people who have been told what has happened refuse to accept it.

The example you have brought with blackface is useful in itself for some cases. I would submit that it is not useful in the case we have before us, because there exists today, as I see it, in several countries, including our own, an atmosphere—I don't want to call it anything else—that is not conducive to the people who would go forward on this kind of action recognizing that they have done something that is not acceptable according to our values and mores.

I'll stop there.

Mr. Robert Steiner: Madame Folco, I can only comment about my university again. For one thing, we don't have any kind of record of which I'm aware of there being Holocaust deniers on our campus. We haven't received any complaints from any of our students, Jewish or otherwise, about Holocaust deniers on our campus. I used the example of blackface because it is the strongest example of a racist event—or an event that was experienced by those in a vulnerable community as racist towards them—that we've had recently on our campus.

I'm glad that I can't actually bring you an equivalent example concerning anti-Semitism, because I just don't have it to bring. When I speak to Zac Kaye, the director of Hillel, what he'll describe is that there are individuals at the University of Toronto who feel anxious, for all sorts of reasons, but what he'll also say to me is that there is no generalized sense of intimidation or harassment of Jewish students at my university.

We can speak about individual incidents, if there are some of which you are aware, at our university, but this is the example I brought because it's the example there is. The environment at the University of Toronto is generally a safe environment for Jewish students and for students and faculty members who are pro-Israel.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: That's a good thing. I'm glad about your saying that this is the worst example you can bring up; that's a good thing. However, I felt duty-bound to make that particular comment, because we're looking into anti-Semitism, and there are shades and degrees, and I felt that it was important to bring this forward.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you.

David Sweet.

Mr. David Sweet: I want to follow up on something Mr. Dryden mentioned about some of the past testimony, about “naming it and shaming it”.

Mr. Steiner, you talked about “name it and educate” and about most of it being innocent. What I've heard here in testimony and what I've heard in my own local riding, which includes Westdale and McMaster University, is that the incidents from the Israeli Apartheid Week events are not innocent; they're generally planned and executed by people who have a very succinct, very determined agenda. In fact, I have some website copies here. One seminar is called “A Farewell to Israel: The coming break-up of North American Zionism”. Another one is an outreach for high school students only, except that it's on a university campus: “High Schools Against Israeli Apartheid”.

Dr. Levy, I would like to draw you in on this, because you mentioned that your faculty and students didn't feel that you should end Israeli Apartheid Week. When you know the motivation here, how do you prevent people from being bused in and prevent the gross intimidation that we know happens when other groups come in—Dr. Lowy has talked about past incidents of this at Concordia—if you continue to have that event, which is a magnet to that activity's going on?

The Chair: I'll hear Mr. Steiner, then Dr. Lowy, and I presume Dr. Levy will probably want to talk about this as well.

Robert.

Mr. Robert Steiner: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I want to be very clear that I did not use the word “innocent.” Innocent is not a term I would use for this. What I said is that many of the incidents we are talking about are things that people have stumbled into.

I wouldn't include Israeli Apartheid Week among them. People clearly don't “stumble into” Israeli Apartheid Week. They might stumble by a table, but they don't stumble into planning it. That said, again speaking only for my three campuses, I want to describe what Israeli Apartheid Week is and looks like at our campuses. It may look different at other campuses—it may look different at McMaster—I don't know.

I'm answering this in the context of the general question at this committee, which is whether there is an environment of systematized, gross intimidation towards Jewish students. Let me describe, against that as a sort of barometer, what Israeli Apartheid Week looks like—because I go, unfortunately.

At the University of Toronto, Israeli Apartheid Week is a table that is roughly this big—and for the sake of the transcript, I am indicating a table maybe about two metres long—with three people at it, in our arts and science building for four days. It is one of about 12 or 13 tables in that building through the day. The others are doing bake sales, fund-raising, campaigns for various other causes. It tends to be in a corner; it tends to be poorly attended; it tends to have one or two people behind the table.

The other components of Israeli Apartheid Week are two events usually, because the Israeli Apartheid Week organizers share that week, if you will, between different campuses in Toronto, and book two events during the week at U. of T. They tend to be at about 8 p. m.; they tend to be in a lecture hall that is relatively hard to get to—in my experience, in one of the engineering buildings—and attended by about 80 people, mostly fellow travellers of their group.

At the event I attended last year, one event on the first night had produced some complaints. Our senior administrators met immediately the next morning with the organizers and drew the line and said that the kinds of behaviours that had happened and prompted the complaints were unacceptable. The next night, at the event I was slated to attend and at which I sat in the audience, the organizers got up and stated three times at the beginning of the event that anti-Semitism would not be tolerated. The event was calm—not highly educational, but calm.

And that's it; that's Israeli Apartheid Week. Frankly, the biggest event for me in Israeli Apartheid Week is the slew—and I mean the huge volume—of letters that we get from members of our community—from faculty members, many of whom aren't on our campus but are in the teaching hospitals, and from the broader community—each of which is important, each of which we take time to address. That's the bulk of my work, and that's the bulk of our administrative work in that week.

So, to disabuse this committee of the notion that, at least at the University of Toronto, we have masses of people being bused in to intimidate Jewish students on a mass level even for one week, it's just not the case.

•(0935)

Dr. Fred Lowy: I think it's important to distinguish activities on campus that Jewish students regard as objectionable from active anti-Semitism. There is no doubt that there are a lot of people who oppose certain policies of the Israeli government but do not hate Jews, and I don't believe that's anti-Semitism. There are, of course, people who do hate Jews or who conduct themselves in such a way as to suggest that they hate Jews and who perform hateful actions—they're not many, but they do exist on campus—and they sometimes hide this view about Jews in an anti-Israeli diatribe. And they can be intimidating at times.

But perhaps even more intimidating is the third group of people, who for political reasons rather than racial or religious reasons oppose not just Israeli policies but Israel's very existence; who oppose anything positive said about Israel; who are prepared to essentially be untruthful in their arguments; and who criticize Israel—in fact, single out Israel—for opprobrium, and sometimes Israeli leaders for opprobrium, without reference to context or objectivity. When these people are loud in expressing their views, it can in that sense feel intimidating to Jewish students. But I think that this third group is relatively small on most campuses, maybe all campuses, and can be contained by the kinds of measures that Mr. Steiner just mentioned.

The Chair: Thank you.

Dr. Levy, would you like to make a comment?

Prof. Sheldon Levy: This is a difficult question, and I'll try to collect my thoughts.

Not to disagree—in fact on Dr. Lowy's comments, if you could have seen me, I was shaking my head in the positive direction as he was speaking.

From what I have seen, it is very clear that the Jewish students and Jewish faculty find the Israeli Apartheid Week very uncomfortable. There is no doubt about that at all. I think they recognize that the criticism of the government of Israel for its actions is one of the freedoms that universities allow and promote as criticism of government and government actions. Nonetheless, they feel uneasy because it is a Jewish government and that's the association of it.

But I will go back to my comment that they themselves do not see as the answer shutting down the event. I think what we do is we monitor it by day, like every minute. When this week happens, it's almost like job number one of the administration to both monitor it and to try to ensure that the type of level of discourse and the types of emotions stay much in check, as my colleague from the University of Toronto said.

It might sound easy, but I think it has to be recognized that this is a difficult time for Jewish faculty and students who feel that the administration should do something, but no one has defined what it is because they themselves recognize the balance between doing something and shutting something down. Freedom of speech has that quality. It goes with the territory that you allow it, knowing that you might be hurt by it. Yet shutting it down is the biggest hurt of all, so we balance all the time.

I want to echo my University of Toronto colleague and not give your committee, Chair, the impression that this is running wild or

anything. I don't know the size of our table, but in some sense the smallest table will still make, for understandable reasons.... I want to emphasize that this isn't a sensitivity that is not shared, for very understandable reasons. The table size is immaterial; it is the words that are used: Israel apartheid. Why pick on Israel and not other jurisdictions?

We don't have great answers for our colleagues on this, but they have legitimate concerns. As my colleague said, we balance it and work on it. But I don't want anyone to think that there are busloads of people coming in and the place has gone crazy. It's anything but that.

•(0940)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Levy. We very much appreciate and understand the fact that you weren't able to make it here due to the fog situation.

We also want to get Professor Patrick Monahan. Unfortunately, you have to leave us in order for us to get that call through, but we're hoping that Robert Steiner, Fred Lowy, and Francine Page will be able to stay on for part two of our session.

We thank you very much. We thank you for your leadership and appreciate the comments. Thank you.

Prof. Sheldon Levy: Thank you very much. Goodbye.

The Chair: We'll now take a five-minute break to get Patrick Monahan on the line.

•(0940)

_____ (Pause) _____

•(0945)

•(0950)

The Chair: Patrick, we're very pleased you could be with us. I realize that you had problems getting here because of the fog. It was the same for Sheldon Levy, but he just made his presentation and was able to join us for about an hour and a half with questions and answers.

Would you be able to stay for at least an hour with us?

Professor Patrick Monahan (As an Individual): I would like to be free by eleven. I have another commitment at eleven.

The Chair: It will probably be just before eleven anyway. So thank you very much. It's good of you to be here.

We still have your presentation to hear, and also that of Francine Page, from the University of Ottawa. We will start with your presentation, followed by Francine, and then we'll go to questions and answers.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Who is there?

The Chair: There's Robert Steiner, from the University of Toronto. Dr. Fred Lowy, who is president emeritus from Concordia University, will also be joining us. He just stepped out for a minute.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Okay, but who am I speaking with?

The Chair: I am Mario Silva, the chair. Scott Reid is here. We also have Jeff Watson, who is a member of Parliament. Dave Van Kesteren is another member of Parliament. We also have Dr. Carolyn Bennett and Ken Dryden. Those are the members who are here at present. There were about four other members here, but they had to leave for a committee. There are six of us here at present.

Does that help you now?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Yes, that's helpful.

The Chair: Thank you.

Please start with your presentation.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I'm going to make some opening comments, and then we'll have an exchange of views.

Obviously I haven't heard what President Levy had to say, so I'm a little uncertain as to what the focus of the discussion has been, but let me say by way of opening comment that conflicts around the Middle East and the debate over the conflict in the Middle East have become the most challenging issues in terms of free expression on university campuses, I would say, over the past decade or so.

I would say that it has been challenging because on the one hand we are committed to the principle of free expression, and we therefore, by law and also by principle, are committed to encouraging and allowing the widest possible range of viewpoints, even on controversial issues and even when the statements made may cause offence to listeners or others. On the one hand we are committed to that value, but at the same time we are committed to a learning environment in which we first of all want to protect vulnerable students from intimidation or harassment by others, whether those are other students or other individuals—they could be faculty members, or others—but we also want to provide a learning environment that is conducive to free inquiry, one in which they can ask questions, ponder, reflect, and change their views as well.

When we have a very heated issue such as the Middle East, an issue on which people feel very passionately and very strongly, we sometimes find that we have direct conflict between student groups. Certain other students feel intimidated by that, and it makes it very challenging for us to preserve our commitment to free expression and to deal with some of these issues.

I believe you have heard from at least one of our students here at York. We have had our share of challenges, I suppose, to put it mildly, but last year we had a couple of incidents that were particularly challenging and troubling.

In one incident a number of students felt intimidated and threatened and were barricaded in an office in our student centre. This incident occurred following a strike in which some students were challenging the leadership of the student government here. It was not an issue around the Middle East and the issue was not framed in that way, but a number of students involved in it were also involved in the Hillel organization on campus, so it ended up that they retreated to, or went to, the offices of Hillel. When they were able to leave, they had to be escorted out by police. There were alleged to have been some slurs, and there were some slurs uttered by some of the students outside as the students left. That was a very unacceptable situation for those students, obviously.

Immediately following that, there was a major demonstration in Vari Hall, which is the major gathering place here. This took place on February 12 last year. It caused a number of difficulties, because student groups were shouting at each other. There was a great deal of anger and it was intimidating as well for other students, who had to navigate through that demonstration.

● (0955)

So as a result of those incidents in particular, President Shoukri, the York president, appointed a task force and he asked me—I was then still the dean of the law school, but I had been designated to be the provost—to chair this task force, which was made up of faculty members and administrators and students, to hear from students, to meet with them, to receive submissions from the community, and to try to model and develop mechanisms to address some of these issues and promote respectful dialogue on campus.

So we did do that. We had hearings and we received written submissions. We met with student groups. We met with Jewish student groups. We met with some of the other groups—for example, the Muslim Students' Association. There's an organization called Students Against Israeli Apartheid; we met with them.

As a result of that, we developed a report that was unanimously supported by the members of the task force and ultimately accepted by the president, which proposed a number of things. One of them is to model respectful dialogue, for the university to create a standing committee that would in fact invite speakers to come to campus to create forums where there is respectful dialogue, including on issues around the Middle East, but not just on those.

We've also proposed and put in place what we believe to be more effective enforcement of some of our policies, particularly, for example, with respect to the student code of conduct, where under the former system it was largely a complaints-based process, and the time taken to deal with complaints.... For example, there was a complaint with respect to that February 11th incident in the student centre. It took about three months or so for that matter to be dealt with. In fact, there was a finding that there had been a violation of the student code of conduct in that case, but it took a long time to deal with that and it was felt that it should not require a complaint by an individual, but rather should be dealt with through a normal enforcement procedure.

So we have a new enforcement procedure for the student code of conduct, and we believe that will work well, but it's early days yet. It's just been put in place this past month. We also have better enforcement for our policies on temporary use of space, which are time, place, and manner regulations to ensure the appropriate use of space.

We are making some changes to Vari Hall with the full support of students, to create an environment there that is going to be, we believe, more conducive to student use of the space. That is proceeding.

So I think we are making some progress on these issues. Nevertheless, these are challenging issues, and I think they're challenging issues for all universities in Canada.

I know you'll want to discuss this, but I might just conclude that I—speaking here on behalf of the university—am quite concerned by some of the statements or public comments that have been made in various forums, or perhaps in various media, about York University. I think they have seized upon certain incidents or issues that have arisen to—I think demonize might be an overly strong word—characterize the university as unfriendly toward Jewish students, a sort of hotbed of anti-Semitism. That is simply not correct.

We look for political leaders, such as you, community leaders, and community organizations to show leadership, balance, and moderation in their expression of views, as opposed to taking extreme positions that are not supported by evidence. The difficulty is that there can be what I'm going to describe as a narrative that gets created and is then picked up by others who've never set foot on the campus here but purport to be experts on the atmosphere on our campus. I think it is unfair. Indeed, it is unfair not only to the university but to the students, because it sows fear, it sows division, and it fans flames of more conflict.

•(1000)

In any of your reports or discussions on this, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, we will be urging you to show the leadership that members of Parliament have shown on these issues. And indeed your committee, by looking into this matter, is showing leadership. That is a concern we have. Obviously, I speak as a representative of this university. We would hope that your report and the work of your committee would not in any way contribute further to it.

Those are my opening comments, and I'd be happy to discuss any particular points with members of the committee.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Monahan.

We're now going to hear from Francine Page, and then we'll turn it over to questions.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Page (As an Individual): Please feel free to ask me questions in French. I will also speak in English, as I am more anglophone.

[*English*]

I work at the Centre for Equity and Human Rights at the University of Ottawa. As you've heard from other folks around the table, I am actually paid by the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa.

Just to contextualize the University of Ottawa compared to other universities, we're one of the only universities in Canada that does not have an anti-discrimination policy and procedure. Nor do we have accommodation policies on religion accommodation.

Part of the work we do is a two-tiered service. We work directly with clients—students—who have experienced discrimination or harassment on campus. We also look at systemic issues. The lack of policies and procedures does present a systemic barrier when addressing matters of discrimination.

I have to let you know, though, in all confidence, that I know that the policies and procedures have been drafted. I've revised them. But

they are not yet implemented. I'm very much looking forward to having some guidelines for the community when it comes to matters of discrimination.

For my part, I've been with the University of Ottawa since November 2007, and I've had three cases related to anti-Semitism. One that I'll speak more about, because it's something we've talked about a lot here at the table.... I can't comment on general anti-Semitism on campuses. I've had three incidents of anti-Semitism, but I would not say that there is generalized anti-Semitism on campus, as you noted, as well.

However, notwithstanding the diversity of religious beliefs, what's really disturbing is the rise in religiously motivated discrimination over the last several years in Canada. Some statistics provided by the Law Society of Upper Canada noted that of 928 human rights violations—we're looking at hate crimes, as well—43% were religiously motivated. And in 2002 a survey revealed that the larger percentage of people targeted by hate crimes were Jews.

•(1005)

We see that there is concern to have in our macrocosm and it's being played out on our microcosm on campuses as well.

The Supreme Court notes that the dissemination of hate violates the guarantee of freedom of expression. It's really important to be able to discuss contentious issues on campus, but it is also important that all forms of religious intolerance in the form of discrimination, harassment, and hate crimes directed at any group should be condemned as well.

Academic study should strive to promote and support religious understanding. That's what we heard at the table today.

For our part, we've done a lot of proactive measures in order to address discrimination and harassment on our campus. We have a positive space program where we deliver training to 5,000 students a year. Our *University 101: Transition Guide to University* talks about the importance of inclusion and diversity. We train all newcomers and all students in residence around their rights and responsibilities, and talk about all prohibited grounds, as outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

We participated in a new campaign. It's a social change campaign, but it was quite disappointing in one sense, and I'll explain why later. It's the "Right to Respect" campaign. It's being measured by Dr. Holly Johnson. It will be something hopefully like "Don't Drink and Drive". So with the Right to Respect on campus, it's about what to do to make a difference to make sure this environment is one that's inclusive, where students can study unhindered by any discriminatory practices. And it's been a great collaborative effort with the graduate student association, the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa, as well as with the University of Ottawa key partners: equity officers, protection services, etc.

There are two tiers to that campaign. One is to target students, and the other one targets employees themselves. The employee campaign was not prepared in time for the launch. Again, fostering that sense of respect across campus means that everybody should be subjected to the key messaging that everybody has a right to respect.

When we talk a lot about students, among students we've had cases of racism, and they were from faculty to students as well, so this is really speaking to the fact that the whole community needs to be educated on these issues.

I've drafted quickly some recommendations, and then it will be set for discussion. There's an acknowledgement that anti-Semitism is a human rights violation, and it condemns all of those types of manifestations. It is important to compile data and statistics as well so that when we have these discussions we're able to speak frankly about what is actually going on in our campuses. Unfortunately, I am just speaking of cases that have come to our attention. We're a youth centre, as I said before, so some students will talk to protection services when they're feeling intimidated. Other students might talk to the administration. I don't think we have a good pulse on what's going on at our campus.

It's important to train our protection services about hate crimes to ensure that policies and procedures sponsor safe, respectful campuses free from discrimination, which includes anti-Semitism. Education and training are key to promoting inter-religious dialogue.

For ourselves, we requested the City of Ottawa to proclaim December 10 as Human Rights Day, which it is, International Human Rights Day, but it hadn't been done within our own city as a proclamation. In 2008 the proclamation was made, and we continue to do activities on that day to promote human rights.

On promotion of inter-religious dialogue, last year we had a symposium called "Diversity and Accessibility on Campus". Senator Oliver came to speak about the reality of racism on campus. He's a great speaker. Maybe he could be invited to speak to the panel as well. We are doing an inter-faith dialogue on January 21. It is important as well to avoid elevating certain religions above others and to think in terms of neutral accommodations too. And of course having accommodations policies and procedures for religious accommodation is quite clearly important.

That is just to set the tone.

• (1010)

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Patrick, we have technical problems.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Okay, just hold on.

The Chair: Okay.

Is that better now? Maybe if you were to speak, the translators can indicate to me whether that's better.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I'm going to have to call you back on another number. This is not working.

The Chair: Is it a pod that you're using?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I have to use another phone to phone back, if I can do that.

The Chair: Okay, if you could, that would be great, because it's becoming very difficult for the translators to in fact translate your—

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Okay, I will call back at the same number in one minute.

The Chair: Okay, thank you very much.

I apologize for the members who are here, but these are some of the challenges with technology.

We do have questions, but I'm not sure whether we should....

Patrick? Yes, Patrick?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Yes.

The Chair: Is this better?

The translators are indicating to me that it's perfect. Thank you very much.

We have now questions from members of Parliament. The first one would be Carolyn Bennett.

Perhaps members could also indicate who they'd like to have their questions answered by, whether it's everybody on the panel or whether it's a specific person, so that Patrick Monahan would be able to know whether it's for him or not.

Carolyn Bennett.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett: I would just like the panellists to deal with the online environment.

Professor Monahan, even though I have set foot on the York University campus, the place that I've been the most concerned about has been in the online environment and with students from York coming on my Sunday night MSN chat room, regardless of what we're talking about, and just putting "Israel apartheid" as part of an intervention every other comment for months at a time, until other participants have asked me to block them. The kind of intimidation that can happen in the online environment may be just as difficult, hurtful, and not safe for people to feel that they can participate in a chat.

It was usually the same person who came on every week with a different name. But once he was explaining to me that if I didn't understand and wouldn't stop supporting Israel apartheid, there were 20 people sitting in the room with him who were all going to actually deal with me at the next election or deal with me in whatever way.

I want to know if any of the universities do feel there is a code of conduct online as well, in terms of intimidation or the kind of appropriate conduct by their students, or if you've had complaints about that kind of behaviour.

Mr. Robert Steiner: I can begin by addressing very quickly—

The Chair: Patrick will need to hear you.

Mr. Robert Steiner: Professor Monahan, it's Rob Steiner, from the University of Toronto, the assistant vice-president.

Just to address a question, I believe that our student code of conduct applies to all media. I suppose there would be some kind of a jurisdictional question, depending on whether a website is hosted by us or not.

We occasionally have had incidents where members of our student body or members of our faculty have used campus listservs in order to promote events in the name of departments, which actually were not really in the name of their department. Those we manage just as matters of discipline or as a warning, often just to say, "You can't use the listserv for this and please cease doing that", and then sending out a note to the various folks who received it, saying "This is not an event affiliated with the University of Toronto", which is very different from what you're talking about. I haven't received complaints about that kind of thing, though, Dr. Bennett.

•(1015)

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Did you want me to comment on that? I'd be happy to comment on that.

The Chair: Yes, you can. Thank you.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: First of all, Dr. Bennett, let me say that you raise a very important issue. It is a much more complex issue in many respects. I should say, though, that we have not received that many complaints about the Israeli-Palestinian issue in that context. The issues around anti-Semitism have been around the public incidents.

The online environment is a very difficult one. First of all, it's often anonymous, so for the posters on an online chat, the nature of the dialogue is quite different from what it would be in a classroom setting or in a face-to-face setting. Those people who post there feel uninhibited by any requirements of civility. The name-calling, the ad hominem between anonymous posters on an Internet chat site is quite breathtaking.

Certainly the code of conduct in all university regulations would apply to students who, as part of their academic activities, are posting on various sites. We would not normally try to regulate student conduct—the conduct of people who happen to be students—that has no relationship to the university business.

I would say, though, that one difference is that the phenomenon of what I would call the unwilling participant is not really as pressing in an online environment. By the unwilling participant I mean those who are subjected to certain forms of speech or certain messages they do not wish to be subjected to. There are certain circumstances. This has been a concern here to eliminate or try to reduce this phenomenon where students say, "Look, I'm not interested in this debate. I don't want to be participating in this debate. I want to go about my business. I'm here to study mathematics or business or sociology or what have you, but I'm not interested in debates about various topics. I should be allowed to go about my business without being subjected to that." So we've tried to deal with these issues, to respect that right of the unwilling participant not to be press-ganged into these debates.

In the online environment, if someone doesn't wish to participate in these debates, they don't have to go online, or if someone tries to divert the issue in this way that you describe, they can simply not be present with it.

I should say that the number of students who are intensely interested in these issues is relatively small as a proportion of the entire student population. But when you have 50,000 students, even if it's a relatively small proportion, it still can number in the hundreds. It can be a small number. I would be surprised if there

were 20 in the room, but there could certainly be a small number who are very adamant, and it's very difficult to get them off the issues, as you have described.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Jeff Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, of course, to our witnesses for participating.

I want to start the discussion, because I find I'm having a hard time putting an anchor in the ground. So let's start with what I think is the most important starting point, if you will.

This committee is being asked in its report to accept a definition of what anti-Semitism is. The recommendation has been that we adopt the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia's working definition of anti-Semitism as the basis for understanding the question of anti-Semitism in Canada.

First of all—and I want all the panellists to weigh in on this—are you familiar with the EUMC on Racism and Xenophobia? Second, are you familiar with their working definition on anti-Semitism? Third, is that the adopted definition of anti-Semitism you use on your campuses and in your policies with respect to dealing with anti-Semitism?

Who wants to start? Maybe Professor Monahan can start, and then the panellists who are sitting in front of me can answer those questions.

•(1020)

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I'm familiar with the EUMC. I'm not familiar offhand with that definition of anti-Semitism. I don't have it in front of me, so I can't really comment on it. I don't have the specific definition in front of me.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Can you provide to the inquiry panel the university's definition of anti-Semitism that they use in their policies?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I could certainly undertake to do so. I don't have that in front of me, but I can certainly undertake to provide you with our.... We have an anti-discrimination policy and codes of conduct and so on, and I can certainly provide the committee with those materials.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you, Professor.

Do the other panellists want to answer the same questions?

Dr. Fred Lowy: I don't have the definition before me at this moment, but as I recall I am in favour of it. I believe it's a useful definition.

I think it's important to point out that if we speak about anti-Semitism as an attitude that someone has—and that may be occasionally reflected in things they say—attitudes are not something you can regulate. However, you can regulate actions. If attitudes are expressed in terms of—

Mr. Jeff Watson: With due respect, Dr. Lowy, I'm not looking to entertain a debate on the merits of the definition. I simply want to know if you're familiar with the group, its definition, and whether that's your definition. That's what I'm trying to get as a starting point.

Do the other panellists want to answer? Mr. Steiner, Ms. Page.

Ms. Francine Page: I am familiar with the definition but not the definition that the University of Ottawa uses. When I do my work, it's always informed by provincial legislation when it comes to these matters.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Okay.

Mr. Steiner.

Mr. Robert Steiner: I'm not familiar with the definition. And I'm not familiar with the body, although I imagine that other officials at the University of Toronto are.

Our definition of various forms of racism and discrimination usually starts with a vulnerable group. If they tell us they're anxious, then we take that seriously. That's our starting point. There is a hate crimes definition, and we leave that to the police and the crown to determine. But for our work, we start with the vulnerable group and ask them how they're feeling, regardless of whatever formal definition there may be.

Mr. Jeff Watson: I think the importance of settling on a definition is manifold. If we're going to be comparing statistics or compiling statistics, it should be easily translatable and understood, because we're working from essentially the same definition. If they're not, then we may be missing something or not capturing the extent of the problem.

I believe it was Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld who testified before this committee that Canada, along with the United Kingdom—and I think there is one other country that he mentioned, which is escaping me at the moment—were “pioneers in campus anti-Semitism”. He went further to suggest that Jewish students are increasingly avoiding York University. If I understand it correctly, this is something that may not be occurring on campus, but people are actually avoiding the campus as a result.

I'd like Professor Monahan to respond to both of those points. Does he consider Canada an international pioneer in campus anti-Semitism? And is he aware, or does he agree, that Jewish students are increasingly avoiding York University?

Then I'd like the remaining panellists to answer just the question on whether they believe Canada is an international pioneer in campus anti-Semitism.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Thank you for the question. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on it.

First of all, I do not know the person you were referring to who testified. I assume the reference to a “pioneer in anti-Semitism” was made as a kind of booby prize. In other words, we're not really a pioneer, in the positive sense.

I really can't comment internationally. I don't have a basis to make a judgment. I can tell you, though, that I do not think this university.... And I resent, quite frankly, individuals such as this who may not have ever been here. I don't know what his basis is for suggesting that Jewish students are avoiding the campus.

I certainly do think we have challenges at this university, and all universities in North America. There is no question that there are certain challenges, and they are not in any sense to be minimized. I

have not seen that Jewish students are not coming to campus. But I do know that if irresponsible statements are made that are repeated by credible leaders, I expect it may well have an impact on students. That's not because the students ought to fear coming here; they are told to fear coming here and they don't.

I don't have any information to indicate that Jewish students are not coming here. Our enrollments are strong this year. In fact our enrollments are up from what they were last year. We had not expected that. We had expected that perhaps there would be some negative impact from the strike last year, not because of the Middle East, but the strike.

We did do some public opinion research and found that generally the Middle East was not a driver in terms of student choice. There were issues around the labour disruption and its impact that were far more significant.

Quite frankly, I must take exception to those kinds of comments, unless the professor has done an analysis of his own—and I doubt very much that he has—to be able to make statements of that kind.

• (1025)

Mr. Jeff Watson: Okay.

The other panellists, if you would comment.

Mr. Robert Steiner: I can't really comment on the state of universities nationwide, Mr. Watson. I'm here from one university only. I heard that testimony; I don't understand the professor's definition of “pioneer”, particularly given that some countries in the world don't allow Jewish students or faculty members to attend university at all. That said, I can't comment on the state of affairs at other universities across the country.

Dr. Fred Lowy: Similarly, I cannot do comparisons because I don't know what's going on in the rest of the world. Certainly, in terms of the literature, the United States, Britain, and Canada do indeed report episodes of anti-Semitism. I suspect that this is also true in other European countries, but I have no information about that.

Ms. Francine Page: I would probably recommend that you also contact CAPDHHE, which is the Canadian Association for Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education. They are connected to all the equity officers on campuses across Canada, who could probably help to answer that question for you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We are going to turn now to Ken Dryden.

Hon. Ken Dryden: Thank you.

This question is for Professor Monahan. Some of the other witnesses have talked about what Israel Apartheid Week looks like on their campus, the nature of the events, the number of events, the presentation tables, the numbers of students, that sort of thing. Could you tell us what Israel Apartheid Week looks like at York?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I can comment on what it looked like this year. Prior to this year I was not the provost; I was running the law school. I can tell you that the phenomenon of Israeli Apartheid Week had no discernible impact on the law school, but I was not involved in the central administration at that time.

This year, Israeli Apartheid Week took place. Some speakers were invited to campus by the sponsors of the week. The events took place in classrooms on campus. I don't know the exact numbers, but there would have been people who were interested in the topics and heard the speakers and engaged in the discussion in the normal way that one would see on a university campus. There would have been tabling in the sense that student groups would have set up tables to advertise or promote the existence of these events, but generally the week did not provoke any major confrontations or conflict. From the point of view of some of the issues we've heard about, it was a fairly low-key event. There was no major event of any kind in Vari Hall, so it was a relatively quiet event.

I realize people are concerned about the messaging involved in having the event, but as far as the nature of the event, it was relatively quiet and passed without any major incident.

• (1030)

Hon. Ken Dryden: Just a little bit more specifically, about how many students might have attended? Would you assume some non-students would have been there as well?

Also, if this year was that much calmer, why was it calmer this year than last year, for instance?

It would seem as if York has had more difficulties than other universities in Canada. Why York?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: With respect to how many attended, I'd have to get that information for you. I don't have that at my fingertips and I wouldn't want to quote a number to you. I do not think it was huge numbers, but I don't know. There were a couple of lectures that took place in fairly sizable classrooms that might have held a hundred people or so. I don't know whether they were full or how many attended, but I could certainly get back to you about that.

Was it calmer this year than in previous years? I do not know if the Israeli Apartheid Week was any more disruptive or any more difficult in previous years. I know there have been incidents on campus, but I don't know whether they've been associated with Israeli Apartheid Week, so again I do not know factually whether it was any different from previous years. I could investigate that if it is appropriate or of significance.

The broader question asked why York has more difficulties than others. First of all, we have a very large campus and we have a very large number of students. Some of them—not a large percentage, but some numbers of them—are very passionate about issues around the Middle East, and there have been incidents of conflict between students. I think that we have had to try to manage that conflict more effectively, if I might say so, and I think we have taken steps to do so.

I think as well that some of the incidents here have attracted tremendous media attention, yet I've heard of similar incidents at other universities that do not seem to attract the same attention. Part of it as well is a kind of narrative, as I mentioned earlier, that

becomes part of the media portrayal of a particular campus. Then anything that happens that's consistent with or fits with that narrative is then highlighted, while things that do not fit with the narrative are ignored.

I know that you, as members of Parliament and as politicians, are quite familiar with what I'm talking about, not in the context of the Middle East but in terms of the way the media will portray certain situations. I think there's been a bit of that as well, but I think we have tried to take a hard look at our policies and procedures and, as I say, we've put in place some that I believe are more effective enforcement mechanisms. Through those mechanisms, we hope to see a reduction in direct conflict between students.

It doesn't mean there aren't going to be students who will continue to raise issues pro and con or that there will not be debate. People will be concerned about these things, but we are trying to deal with these situations, these clashes between different student groups, which I think are unproductive.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Scott Reid.

• (1035)

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Thank you.

The panellists today have indicated that they don't believe there's widespread anti-Semitic sentiment across Canada's student population. Certainly my own experience as a member of Parliament has indicated that in Canadian society as a whole there isn't widespread anti-Semitic sentiment. It's very much a minority sentiment, and the minority is very small.

That being said, I get the impression, Dr. Lowy, from your presentation and from other presentations we have heard, that there is an effort on the part of those who are aggressively anti-Israel in their approach to attempt to leverage what they are doing by entering institutions that have, in general, low levels of involvement but widespread democratic mandates, such as student bodies, groups like Mountain Equipment Co-op, some trade unions, and so on. Levels of participation when resolutions are being passed are often quite low, and they use that to take over the institution for the purposes of that vote and thereby give the impression that they represent a more widespread mandate than is actually the case.

Am I summarizing accurately a phenomenon that's going on?

Dr. Fred Lowy: Mr. Reid, I believe you've summarized it very well.

Mr. Scott Reid: I guess the obvious question arises, then, of what kinds of measures can be taken? Perhaps none can be taken and it's just the nature of having widespread democratic mandates that you have put up with this sort of thing happening with whatever the issue du jour happens to be. I don't know.

Dr. Fred Lowy: Sir, with regard to anti-Semitic sentiment, as you describe it, I'm not sure one can do anything about people's sentiments, but one can do something about people's actions, both speech and physical action, of course. On the one hand, the university codes, and on the other hand, the law itself determine what's acceptable and what's not acceptable. Then I think it is important to take action.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Could I comment on that?

First of all, I agree entirely with Dr. Lowy's comment. We are here to regulate conduct and behaviour. We're not here to program people's thoughts so that they think the so-called "correct" view of the world. So our focus very much is on behaviour.

We have made a conscious effort to reach out to what I will call the "ordinary student" and to tap into what I believe to be the majority sentiment on campus, and with some success. For example, with the task force that the president set up, we called for nominations from students. Any student was entitled to apply. They could explain why they would like to be on the task force and what their background was, what student involvement they'd had, and so on. We received hundreds of applications.

There was some criticism by some of the organized student groups that said we should leave the selection of students to their organizations. We said no, we want to allow for ordinary students to come forward. We persisted with that and we selected some students. We felt that those students gave expression to what I'm going to call the "average" student. We had seven students and they represented a cross-section of students, but I think they also saw themselves as representatives of the general student interest.

That led us to some positive and constructive discussions around the actual needs of students. That, in our judgment, proved effective. So we have adopted that same model now. We have a campus dialogue committee that's promoting speakers. Again, we're not asking for representatives from student organizations to nominate; we are inviting ordinary students to apply. We will select students based on their level of commitment, concern, and experience in dealing with other students.

We've tried to take measures of that kind to reach, if you will, down to the level of average students, because sometimes it's difficult to do that otherwise.

● (1040)

Mr. Robert Steiner: It's a great question, and I think it's very insightful, but I would actually try to note something encouraging as well, which is that these attempts often have a reaction and are stopped. The latest example, as we heard from Dr. Lowy, is that this group's attempt to be re-elected was stopped, and that actually provoked an additional year of pain, but subsequently there has not been a repetition of it at his university.

CUPE Ontario attempted to create an academic boycott of Israel. CUPE felt that it had jurisdiction over that or had some involvement in that because, among others, they organized TAs and sessional instructors on a number of campuses. That failed generally, and it failed specifically on our campus because the members—the TAs and the sessionals—stopped it.

We should bear that in mind, quite apart from anything happening in universities. Mountain Equipment Co-op's attempts have also failed. I'm a member of MEC, and in fact I just got two e-mails during the break about a boycott campaign happening this weekend in Toronto at the MEC store.

The same free expression that we are ensuring for dissent in a respectful way also works very much, and I would say often even harder, the other way. It allows people to mobilize on their opinions in the other direction. I found, at our university anyway, that attitudes of tolerance and reason usually have the final word despite attempts to infiltrate these organizations.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll go to Judy Wasylcia-Leis.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis: Let me just carry on with this whole discussion around the presence on campuses far and wide of an Israel apartheid demo week, whatever you want to call it. We may disagree on an intellectual basis with the notion, we may conclude it's not based on fact, we may not appreciate it in terms of public policy, but I guess the question for all of us is whether it is anti-Semitic and what's the relevance of all of this for our commission dealing with anti-Semitism.

That's for all of you.

Ms. Francine Page: I know of course Carleton University and the University of Ottawa experience a lot of controversy. Last year in February around Israel Apartheid Week there was a series of lectures and public events occurring on campuses, and there were posters made. The poster was created by a cartoonist and depicts the situation of a child being killed by an aerial bombardment quite clearly targeted by Israel. So on February 9 the posters were banned from Carleton University under the order of the Carleton Equity Services, and the rationale said, and I quote, "...could be seen to incite others to infringe rights protected in the Ontario Human Rights Code" and are "insensitive to the norms and civil discourse in a free and democratic society".

The public events and the public lectures occurred. Again, it's this whole issue around being able to speak about contentious issues. However, the crucial question remains: in an academic setting it is important to discuss such issues, but do the marketing materials and the discussions themselves lead to a hostile environment for any campus members?

So if community members are coming to tell us that they're not feeling safe and are subjected to intimidation, discrimination, or harassment, then we have a problem. The whole idea is are we disseminating hate, and if we are, that's violating the guarantee of the freedom of expression, but academic settings are a place to discuss contentious issues.

Dr. Fred Lowy: Well, basically I agree with what Ms. Page has just said. It's a difficult issue. There's no doubt that many people, myself included, find Israel Apartheid Week to be objectionable. It's objectionable on a variety of counts, but certainly as an academic I find it objectionable in the lack of objectivity that the week displays.

The intent clearly is to demonize Israel to the extent that people believe what has been said as the only truth; therefore it's successful in demonizing Israel.

However, again I go back to what somebody else here said this morning: to ban it from campus, despite its various flaws, I think really is against the very spirit of a university. We ought to be capable of handling objectionable and even incorrect statements so long as there's an opportunity to counter them and to put them in context. But outright banning I think is counterproductive.

• (1045)

Mr. Robert Steiner: You've asked us, Ms. Wasylycia-Leis, to return to the questions of this committee, so I would do that in three ways. One is actually to return, literally, to the questions that we were given, and I'll return, actually, to the beginning of my statement.

Is there a generalized sense of anti-Semitism on our campus? There's no evidence that there is. Is it dangerous to be a pro-Israel student, faculty member, or staff member on our campus? There is no evidence that it is, and quite to the contrary. So the next question is what we do about anti-Semitism on our campus, such as it exists in a more individualized way from time to time, and more to the point, about the tensions that exist.

What do we do? We start with the vulnerable groups, the same way we do with any other vulnerable group: we keep in touch with them, we understand what their experiences are, and we take signals from them as to what issues and events need to be addressed. We then, as I call it, aggressively educate. We reach out not just to the vulnerable group, but to the group that may be about to cross a line, and we teach them exactly what their responsibilities are as they use the privilege of free speech and what our policies are. The third is that we monitor, and the fourth is that we follow up. And that follow-up can be anything from education to enforcement of policies, if policies have been contravened, to in rare cases forwarding evidence to the Toronto police hate crimes unit. And I should ultimately say that, in terms of what we do, we root all of this in an attempt to build an environment that is safe for discourse even about the most intense and difficult subjects. We root all of our action in fact and in evidence, not in fear and exaggeration.

And so the last question is what more we can do. And the answer, first of all, is always to teach more and get our people out even farther. As in any job at a university, there are always too few people on the ground. That's just the nature of a university. So the answer is teaching people more and being more active about the outreach on both sides of any of these issues.

I'll just conclude the answer to that question with a suggestion that I make, and it's more of a personal suggestion that I make than necessarily something that comes out of a policy book. I get a lot of calls from members of the community, who rightly and understandably are worried and nervous, particularly around the times of Israel Apartheid Week. What I suggest to them is that Israel

Apartheid Week lasts one week out of 52. In fact, our portion of it really only lasts two days out of that week, but the university is open 52 weeks a year. It is open those 52 weeks for any person who believes and supports and loves Israel to present Israel in any light they wish, to raise Israel's profile in a positive way, and to use that same space and the same facilities and the same intellectual facilities that we provide to any group to present Israel in a positive way, so that we can actually change the channel on this conversation, if they feel that is necessary.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Thank you.

What about Professor Monahan?

The Chair: Professor Monahan.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I endorse most of what's been said.

Let me first say that, obviously, Israel Apartheid Week poses a great many challenges. And I understand and recognize that, for Jewish students on this campus who are promoters and supporters of the state of Israel, the fact of this week is itself a source of angst, I'm sure, of great concern. It may make them feel unwelcome. I have great concerns about the impact of this week on our campus atmosphere.

That being said, I have to endorse Dr. Lowy's comments, which are to say that, as long as people abide by the laws of the land and as long as they do not force others to participate in these events, then we are going to allow them to go on, because the university must allow all those on campus the right to express their views, even when it does create discomfort for others. We have to ensure there are opportunities for those of a different view to express their views without being intimidated or harassed or being shut down or silenced. And we will do so, and we will defend the rights of those who wish to speak to the contrary. But the option of somehow attempting to shut down this week or prevent it from occurring or frustrate it indirectly I do not think is something the university can or indeed should be engaged in.

• (1050)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Dave Van Kesteren.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you all.

I'm new to this committee. I was asked to participate to take up somebody else's space, so a lot of this refreshes the mind when I think about what I've read in the papers and some of the incidents that have taken place.

I want to direct my question to Professor Monahan. I'm somewhat puzzled when I hear some of the responses to the actions that were taken. When I think about some of the possibilities of violence that we all saw and were all very moved by last year at York, the students who were barricaded in their own Hillel Lounge, I'm puzzled why the police removed the Jewish students, rather than dispersing the crowd. Can you explain why that action was taken? It would seem that if somebody were threatened, the police action would be toward those who were doing the threatening.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: First of all, that's a police matter. Let's be very clear, that's police judgment; it's not a university judgment. When the police come on campus, they do not take instructions from the university. They're here as law enforcement officers. As to why they did so, I haven't asked them, but I know how the police operate, generally. I assume they were of the view that the actions of the others outside who were chanting and standing around were not violating the law. No charges were laid. Police will lay charges if there's a violation of law. I assume that would be so.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: You say there was no breaking of the law. What was being chanted? Can you give me some examples of some of the chants?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I can't recall, but I think they were slogans of some type around the Middle East, or maybe they were talking about students off campus or something. I'm not quite sure what the chants were.

It was a very heated situation, as well, because it was a direct conflict over whether the current student government should be impeached.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Was there somebody on the university staff or somebody in the organization who was monitoring this and writing down some of the things that were chanted?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Yes, yes—

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: You must have some of the chants that were—

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Yes. I'm happy to be cross-examined, and I'll come there and I'll spend as much time as I need, but let me be clear: the police make judgments; the police decide to lay charges or not lay charges, and the police looked at it and decided no charges were to be laid. There was a complaint that there had been violations of the student code of conduct. The chanting, which I think had something to do with students getting off our campus, and so on, was found to violate the student code of conduct, and a finding was—

• (1055)

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: The university must have a code of conduct: this is tolerated; this is not tolerated. Am I right to assume that?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: Yes, there is a student code of conduct, and it was found and a complaint was brought and an adjudicator was appointed. She investigated the matter and made a finding that indeed this was contrary to the student code of conduct, and sanctions were imposed on the offending parties.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Can you tell us about that? What discipline was handed down by York to the students?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: A reprimand was issued to them; a fine was imposed; they were required to apologize to the students

concerned. The nature of the sanctions are such that they're relatively limited. They may appear to someone from outside to be limited, but there were sanctions of that kind imposed upon the offenders. Most importantly, there was a statement that said this was not acceptable, this was not tolerable conduct, it was not appropriate, it should not be allowed to occur on our campus, and will not be allowed to occur on our campus.

We need to move more effectively in the future. I think it probably took too long to address the issue, but the issue was addressed through our disciplinary measures under the student code of conduct.

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren: Were they followed through? Did the university follow through on those? And did they ensure that in fact these reprimands—or whatever you had decided on as appropriate action—were followed through?

Let me ask this question. Did you go to the students who were threatened and did you ask them if this was appropriate and if they felt, at this point, a whole lot safer on the campus?

Prof. Patrick Monahan: The students who were complaining were participating in the process. There was a finding made. As to whether they were satisfied with that, I don't know the answer to that. It may be that they were or were not. Certainly we did follow this up with the task force I referred to earlier, which I chaired, and we heard from the same students. They came and met with us and expressed concerns. As a result of that, we attempted to deal with this in a broader, more systemic fashion, around the nature of the student code of conduct.

There was the fact that up until last time it had been largely a complaints-based process. We have changed that. We have changed the way in which the policies on use of space are administered and enforced. So we attempted to address it not simply as a one-off incident, addressing individuals, but rather dealing with it in the broader context.

I can say that the task force report was positively regarded and reacted to by the very groups that had brought the complaint. So I think the answer to your question is that those students have seen a positive change and are supportive of the administration's efforts to deal with these issues.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Professor Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): I'm sorry for my late arrival. I was coming from your good city of Toronto.

Let me just pick up on what I did hear and maybe relate to that.

I think, Mr. Steiner, you expressed views that I suspect have been agreed to, from what I could hear, generally speaking.

First, is there evidence of widespread anti-Semitism on the campuses? The answer was no.

Is there evidence that it is dangerous for Jewish students to be pro-Israeli? The answer was no.

Must the campus be a source of free speech and rigorous academic debate? The answer would be yes.

Let me now put some other questions to you to contextualize the ones you put and answered:

(1) Is there evidence that Israeli Apartheid Week is a widespread phenomenon, even if it's only one week during the year? The answer is yes.

(2) Is apartheid defined under international law as a crime against humanity? The answer is yes.

(3) Do these Israeli Apartheid Weeks therefore call for the dismantling of Israel as being in effect a crime against humanity? The answer is yes.

(4) Does this have the effect of promoting hatred and contempt of Israel as a crime against humanity? The answer is yes.

(5) Does this have the effect of intimidating student support for Israel? I think the answer is yes, from my own experience on campus, from the evidence before this committee, and the like.

(6) Does Israeli Apartheid Week have the effect of silencing the student supporters of Israel? I think the answer to that is yes, and that undermines, as I think Dr. Shapiro would put it in his own remarks—I don't want to speak for him—free speech to the extent that students feel they are part of a hostile environment, and their speech is silenced or intimidated.

(7) Does it stereotype and stigmatize Jewish students of Israel as being supporters of a criminal apartheid state? The answer is yes.

So Israeli Apartheid Week, I would say, has very prejudicial and nefarious consequences that would undermine and diminish the mission of a university to promote free speech and civil discourse, to ensure that there is a free and secure environment for speech, and indeed undermines, at the end of the day, the university's commitment to freedom of speech.

My question is, would you, as university administrators, allow an anti-gay week, one week, but an anti-gay week on campus? Would you allow an anti-black week, only one week, but an anti-black week on campus? Would you allow an anti-Muslim week on campus? I suspect that the answer would be, and properly, no. So my question is, why then would you allow an Israeli Apartheid Week, which has the effect of, as I said, silencing if not intimidating Jewish students, and labelling Israel as an apartheid state, a crime against humanity?

Let me be clear: all forms of rigorous criticism of policies of Israel can be permitted, encouraged, and the like. I have no problem with that. I am talking about a collective indictment of the Jewish state and the call for its dismantling. Is this not in a sense an unequal application of the university's own standards? Because for the very reasons that you would not allow any of those other weeks that I mentioned, I suggest that you revisit the whole question of allowing an Israeli Apartheid Week. I'm not saying to ban it; I'm saying to revisit that whole issue in the context of some of the things that I share with you this morning.

● (1100)

The Chair: Does anybody wish to comment on that?

Robert Steiner.

Mr. Robert Steiner: I can begin to address Professor Cotler.

Thank you, first of all, for inviting us. I didn't have an opportunity at the beginning to thank you personally for convening this group. I know your role in it, and I want to thank you on behalf of the university. I'm also sorry that you weren't able to hear my initial comments and that I wasn't able to actually submit them in writing before, but they will be in the transcript, presumably, for you to read, and you'll have some sense of our approach at the University of Toronto.

I can't engage in an argument or a debate, at least not in this forum, although I'd be happy to over a glass of wine or beer or a Shabbat dinner, on the logic of the arguments around Israel and apartheid. I can answer, though, in these three ways.

You asked the question: Is there evidence that Israel Apartheid Week is widespread? One would have to define what we mean by widespread. For the purpose of my answer here, I will define it as widespread within the University of Toronto, and the answer is no. There is no evidence that this involves any more than a very small number of people and that in fact it is not even noticeable to those people who choose not to actually walk right up to a table or walk into an event.

I described it before you came, Professor Cotler. At the University of Toronto, Israel Apartheid Week is just, to use your words, not widespread at all. It is present, but it's not widespread. It causes anxiety, understandably, but it is not widespread.

Does it have the effect of silencing support for Israel on campus? There is no evidence that at the University of Toronto it does. There is no evidence that it does. I have not heard any of that evidence from anyone. In fact, as I said in my opening statement, it's quite to the contrary. At the University of Toronto I could give you a number of examples. I've stated them before, so they are in the transcript.

The final question was would we allow an anti-Islamic week on campus? No, we wouldn't, but we did allow Betar-Tagar to host an event that was very provocatively named "Know Radical Islam". We allowed it, it caused a lot of injury, and it required us to do the same kind of outreach to the Muslim Students Association that we do with Hillel.

These are difficult issues on all sides.

● (1105)

The Chair: Thank you.

We're going to have to ask everybody to be very brief with their comments, because we are running over time and I have another committee to attend to as well.

Dr. Lowy, please.

Dr. Fred Lowy: I understand the need for brevity. Unfortunately, the question that Professor Cotler raised is one that's highly complex and doesn't admit to a brief answer. But in a nutshell, I would say that if I were asked if an anti-Jewish week were acceptable—no, in my view. Is an anti-Muslim week acceptable? No, I don't believe it is. Is an anti-gay week acceptable? I also believe that's not acceptable.

Why would an Israeli Apartheid Week not be in the same category? I'm not for a moment denying the fact that the motives of the people who promote Israel Apartheid Week are varied, and some of them are totally unacceptable. But the fact that the week itself is, in my view, acceptable, although odious, is because there is a political argument that can be made—one that I personally reject—that some of Israel's actions do constitute in the minds of some people apartheid. Therefore it is a subject that is debatable, even though the way it's characterized and the way it's actually carried out lacks objectivity and is, by and large, untruthful and calls for responses. It is the responses, or the potential for responses, that hold out some promise for equalization or at least a neutralization of the Israel Apartheid Week. And as Rob Steiner has just pointed out, by and large, I don't think it is that influential, even though it is highly objectionable and hurtful in fact to many Jewish people.

The Chair: Thank you.

Nobody else wants to make any comments?

Dr. Monahan.

Prof. Patrick Monahan: I have to subscribe to the comments of Dr. Lowy, quite frankly. The analogy of an anti-gay week or anti-Muslim week I don't think is on all fours with that of Israel Apartheid Week. The attempt to criticize or even to go beyond that in terms of the state of Israel and its policies is something that is permitted on this campus and other campuses. It may not be an ideal situation, and we would prefer, all things being considered, not to have to deal with it, but that's the nature of discourse on campuses, and I think that any attempt to prevent this from occurring would

itself be a violation of law. We have no authority to prevent people from criticizing the state of Israel. I don't know what authority we would invoke to do so. I don't believe we can invoke the view that someone else objects to the expression of this view and therefore it can't be allowed to happen. I think it's a very challenging situation, obviously, but it's something we have to deal with.

• (1110)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: So that my remarks will not be misconstrued, I did not object to criticism of Israel. I want to make that clear. I did not object to rigorous criticisms of Israeli policy and practice. I objected only to the singling out of one member state in the international community for differential and discriminatory treatment, and under the rubric of the struggle against racism call for its dismantling by labelling it as an Israeli apartheid state. I'm saying that offends, in my view, the very character of civil discourse in a university and has the effect, if not the intent, of silencing some of the supporters of that Jewish state.

The Chair: Thank you, Professor Cotler, but we have to leave, unfortunately.

I want to thank everybody for being here. Thank you very much, Patrick Monahan, for your attendance.

I have just one small housekeeping note for members, if the members are okay with this. Next week Reverend El Shafie is making a presentation. He would like to record his part of the presentation—either he or somebody from his group would record it. It's One Free World International. Would that be allowed, if he'll be able to? Would members be okay with that?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: It's okay then. Thank you very much.

Thank you, everybody, for being here.

The meeting is adjourned.

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