



CANADA

Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism

EVIDENCE

Monday, November 30, 2009

Chair: Mario Silva

Parliamentary Publications

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•(1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.)): Good morning. I call to order the fifth hearing of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism.

We have a very busy agenda today, so I want to get going with the proceedings.

I want to remind witnesses that they have 10 minutes to speak, followed by questions and answers.

I also want to make note of the fact that the proceedings are being recorded and transcribed and will be available in February 2010 through our website.

We have again divided our panel in two. The first part will start any moment now. But I also want to note, for the members and everybody who is listening, that somebody will be taping the testimony of Reverend El Shafie for his use. If that is agreeable to the committee, we'll proceed.

Jeff.

Mr. Jeff Watson (Essex, CPC): Are we entertaining a discussion on whether that's all right with the committee, or are we just sort of throwing it out there and walking past it?

The Chair: Well, we asked last week.

Is it agreeable or not?

If it's not, I have to move on.

Mr. Jeff Watson: I'm pretty sure I objected. This is entirely different now.

The Chair: We're talking about the Reverend Majed El Shafie taping this for his personal use as a witness. It's not the media.

Mr. Jeff Watson: That might be splitting hairs, but for consistency's sake....

The Chair: We were talking about his taping his testimony only. I have to decide whether members are in agreement or not. If there is no agreement, I have to say no.

I'm sorry, Reverend El Shafie; my apologies, but there's no agreement, so you can't tape it. I apologize. I'm trying to move on with the hearing, but I've asked the members if they were okay with allowing your part of the presentation to be taped, but there is not agreement.

I don't want to have a debate, because we have very important issues to deal with. Unless the member is to ask for a vote....

I can't as chair ask for a vote, unless somebody proposes a vote. Right now there's no agreement.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Is there contention about this?

The Chair: There's no agreement.

An hon. member: But it's a public hearing.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Exactly. It is a public hearing, so anybody can do anything they wish.

The Chair: There are also precedents from the meetings we've had.

Anyway, I don't want to have too long a discussion. We have a very important day. I just want to know. If there's no agreement, we can move on, or if somebody wants to propose a vote.... But it's not up to me to propose a vote, as a chair.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I'll call for a vote.

The Chair: Okay. A vote has been called for.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Chairman, I think there may be some folks who are not aware of the fact that two other groups have been refused so far, that an agreement was made at a previous steering committee that this would be the case, and that the only media who would be present in the room would be CPAC. That's been the history up until now.

An hon. member: Once it has been videotaped, you have no idea where it goes.

The Chair: Is there any further discussion on this?

Carolyn Bennett.

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (St. Paul's, Lib.): I understand that this was to be for the reverend's personal use. It's not for media; he's using it in terms of his teaching. I think that's very different from a media representation.

All of us sometimes have our pictures taken at events and we use them in whatever way we see fit. But it's not media, so I don't think this falls under the same decision as that taken by the steering committee about media. This is a personal taping that the reverend wants to have made for his own personal use.

The Chair: Jeff Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I harbour no personal feelings against the witness. In fact I know him well enough.

First of all, for consistency's sake, we've taken a stand that there wouldn't be video representation. It makes it difficult to say no to others down the road. I don't think we should be getting into the selection of this one and not that one. I think that's not a direction we want to go in.

Secondly, once video has gone out, you don't necessarily have control of where it's going to go or how it's going to be used after the fact, including by others beyond the witness himself. I'm looking at a blog, for example. Sometimes e-mails can end up being posted in places they weren't necessarily originally intended to end up.

I think, Mr. Chair, just for consistency's sake, it's better not to. Let's just get on with the hearings.

The Chair: In fairness to the witnesses who are here, and because we also have limited time, we can have this discussion in the meeting we're going to have on Thursday morning. If there's no agreement, we can either move on, or if there's a vote, that's another issue. But we have to move on with this debate.

Is anybody calling for a vote?

A vote has been called.

All those in favour of the motion, which is to have a tape of Reverend Majed El Shafie's hearing only, please signify.

All those opposed, please signify.

The motion is carried.

Thank you.

You'll be able to tape only the part when you're speaking. Is that okay? Thank you very much.

Reverend El Shafie, you're the first one to speak. Welcome to the committee.

Reverend Majed El Shafie (President and Founder, One Free World International): Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for having me this morning. I'm sorry for all of this interruption and for taking time from the committee.

Anti-Semitism is a despicable, evil attitude that leads to untold suffering. Throughout the ages it has demonized the Jewish people to justify discrimination, abuse, and even murder. It is a road that ends seeking the destruction of the Jewish people, as in the Nazi Holocaust.

From the exile of the Jewish people by the Romans after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem to the horror of the Nazi gas chambers, Jews have been persecuted, harassed, and even killed simply because they are Jewish.

While there are no Nazi death camps today, anti-Semitism is rising not just here in Canada but also around the world. Just in 2005, in Paris, a Jewish young man, 23 years old, was kidnapped, was tortured for 24 days, and was killed in the end. Twenty-three people were arrested; 23 people were involved directly and indirectly in his case.

Close to home, here in Canada, synagogues and schools have been vandalized and fire-bombed, from Montreal and Quebec City to Kelowna, British Columbia, while university students hide their

Jewish identity to avoid harassment and intimidation on campuses such as York University and Concordia in Montreal.

In my opinion, there are two reasons for the problem of rising anti-Semitism here in Canada today. Number one, the new wave of anti-Semitism is hiding under or wearing the mask of anti-Zionists. Today it's more politically correct, if I may say so, to attack Israel. Instead of attacking the Jewish people and instead of anti-Semitism, today it's much easier to attack the state of Israel or the Israelis themselves.

So the new wave of anti-Semitism today in our world is wearing the anti-Zionist mask. This does not mean that we don't have the right to criticize the state of Israel or their policy. The state of Israel, like any other state, deserves to be criticized for their policy, but based on fact and truth, not just propaganda. Today the thin line that I'm concerned about with the rising of the anti-Zionists is that we're taking from the Jewish people their right to defend themselves and the acknowledged existence of the state of Israel.

What I'm saying here is that this new wave of anti-Semitism, wearing the mask of the anti-Zionist, is taking away from the Israeli people or from the Jewish people their ability to understand that they have the right to exist or to defend themselves, but not to criticize Israel. We can criticize Israel as a country and their policy. I am one of the people who criticizes Israel with regard, for example, to their policy concerning the Christians and Palestinians, but this does not mean taking away the right to exist or to defend themselves.

Just a few weeks ago in Canada, The United Church of Canada rejected a resolution mandating a boycott of Israel, but passed another one encouraging individual groups and churches to examine the issue and take the proper measures. It's as though they are trying to have their cake and eat it too.

● (1110)

This is the first problem we are facing, which is the rise of anti-Zionism, and hiding behind it is anti-Semitism.

The second problem we are facing is political correctness. Political correctness is right now here in Canada, such as in the media, for example, or with the politicians, or even academics. In the old days the job of the media was to report the truth and the facts on the ground. The politicians would stand for the truth, for the facts. But today in the media, or in politics or academia, they need to balance. They need to be politically correct.

Now when you watch the news they need to balance between the conflicts so they don't upset either group. But this is not really the job of the media. The media should not be politically correct. The media is supposed to publish the facts and the truth. It is the same for the politicians. Some politicians take their decisions based on which group in their riding, for example, will give them more votes. This is not supposed to be the case. They are supposed to support the facts and the truths on the ground.

Those are the two main problems that I believe are the reason for the rise in anti-Semitism.

Ladies and gentlemen, without taking more of your time, I am not here today just to fight anti-Semitism. I am here fighting anti-Semitism, and I am not a Jewish man; I am an Egyptian man. But I have learned through my experiences in the Middle East that when there is anti-Semitism anywhere, there is also persecution of other minorities.

For example, Egypt is a country that had a peace agreement at Camp David with Israel for over 25 years. Today their schools and their media are all anti-Semitic. It is all propaganda.

When I was nine years old and in school—and I remember this like yesterday—my history teacher stood in front of me and he was teaching us that we must hate the Jewish people. As a nine-year-old in Egypt I stood in front of him and I asked him, why do we need to hate them if we already have a peace agreement with them? Why are we talking about war? As my punishment, he beat my hands with a stick, on this hand five times and on this hand five times.

Fair enough. Eleven years later, when I became a Christian in Egypt I was persecuted; I was tortured for my beliefs.

In Iran, a country where they threaten every day to wipe Israel off the map, they persecute Christians, and the Bahá'ís. In Pakistan, a country that doesn't even acknowledge the state of Israel's existence, they have persecution of Ahmadis, of Christians. They have slave camps for the minorities.

The persecution that is happening, or the anti-Semitism that is happening, today to the Jewish people is not just affecting the Jewish people. If we let this happen here in Canada, and if we let anti-Semitism rise in Canada, we will be next. The Bahá'ís will be next, the Ahmadis will be next, the Christians will be next.

So we need to stand up today for the Jewish people and to fight anti-Semitism. We need to educate our public. We need to lose political correctness. We need to mention the facts and not to focus on propaganda, not just for the sake of the Jewish people but for the sake of every minority.

We need to remember that in 1937, the ship, *St. Louis*, came to the shores of this country. It was filled with 900 Jews. Our Prime Minister at the time, Mackenzie King, used to ask his dog for foreign affairs advice and talk to his mother's ghost. That's a true story; it's a fact. He sent them back, and most of them were killed by the Nazis. We need to ensure that this will never again happen in our history. Canada is the temple of human rights and is the conscience of this world. We need to be sure that this will never happen again.

Thank you, and God bless. I am done.

•(1115)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Reverend El Shafie.

We will now go to Father John Walsh. Welcome.

Father John Walsh (St. John Brébeuf Parish of Montreal): Good morning. Thank you for having me.

The Chair: Before you start, Father Walsh, I just wanted to let you....

Reverend El Shafie, will the cameras be off now after your statement?

•(1120)

Reverend Majed El Shafie: Do you want the camera off?

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Please continue, Father Walsh.

Father John Walsh: Thank you for welcoming me this morning. I feel very much at home in Canada, and therefore....

[Translation]

I am very pleased to be here this morning.

[English]

I think the responsibility that your committee has in reporting on anti-Semitism in Canada is going to have a great impact on the whole of Canadian life. I know that your final report is going to include broad areas of the impact of what you say, because a consistent policy on immigration will have to be developed, as will policies on how war criminals are pursued and prosecuted, on how new Canadians are integrated into Canadian society, on how medicare applies to all citizens, even those who are accused and found guilty of war crimes while they are in Canada, and on what effect policy will have on even city demographics.

I hope your final report will encompass not only the place of the Jewish community in anti-Semitism in Canada, but also Canadian life as a whole, the everyday ordinary lives of Canadians, including Canadian legislation and the legal system.

[Translation]

The report of Quebec's Bouchard-Taylor Commission on reasonable accommodation must be taken into consideration.

[English]

When we talk about anti-Semitism...I come from a tradition that has perhaps the strongest anti-Semitism in it, not only in prayer but in centuries of being anti-Semitic, and only recently, in the 1960s, have we removed from our Good Friday prayer a prayer for the conversion of the "perfidious Jews". If you have followed the news, there is some thought that the Tridentine liturgy will be returned and that prayer will again be used on a Good Friday as a conversion for the "perfidious Jews".

If you want to follow the history, it's best expressed, I think, in James Carroll's, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews — A History*, and for us as a Catholic Church, for a moral reckoning, in Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's *A Moral Reckoning* of the Roman Catholic Church.

We cannot falsify the history of the Catholic church, but in 1960, in that wonderful document *Nostra Aetate*, we began to make some amends to our Jewish community, asking not only for forgiveness for our past, but to have an ongoing look at what we must do to continue to build on that particular relationship between Jews and Catholics.

In Canada, a tripartite dialogue has developed in which we have Jews, Christians, and Muslims, which I think has enabled us to have a greater look at the overall view of who Canadians are vis-à-vis anti-Semitism. Recently—six or seven years ago—we included in our Catholic liturgy this prayer, “May we as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindu, Sikhs and Buddhists, people of faith and people of goodwill, work and pray for God's Reign, a Reign of mercy, love, justice and peace”. I can tell you that I have a rabbi friend who now has this prayer included in Shabbat service on Saturdays.

So as we make amends, we also have to remember that the prayer life of the church that gave us that anti-Semitic attitude can also be changed, and over the years, if we begin to pray in each other's mosques and temples, synagogues and churches, with a prayer for unity of all our churches and ministers and rabbis and imams, then I hope we will be able to have, through the same process that denigrated us, one that will give us optimum prayer for each other and for a better prayer that will respect Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

I won't go through the full report that I submitted to you, but I would like to say this morning that I would like to add to the report the fact that when we talk about trying to establish a dialogue between people of different religions, already in yesterday's *Gazette* there was an article that said we need to call a truce in the bestseller religious war. However, Nicholas Kristof concludes by saying:

I'm hoping that the latest crop of books marks an armistice in the religious wars, a move away from both religious intolerance and irreligious intolerance. That would be a sign that perhaps we, along with God, are evolving toward a higher moral order.

What I don't think he has done is read all the bestsellers. I think we have to come to grips with the many new ways of being able to refocus on our sacred texts and to refocus on the way we interpret those sacred texts.

It's a real challenge for all of us, but I think that when we talk about divine providence, we have an axial or a critical topic about which Jews, Christians, Muslims, and all people of faith see that God is being provident to them. However, in our present situation, there are fewer and fewer believers across the world who believe that God is very provident by the situation in which we find ourselves, which is an inhumanity to man and woman in a world where we have to be able to find ways to be able to bridge the differences that exist.

One of the ways we can bridge it is to be able to listen to one another and to respect one another. In fact, I have this little quote from Maya Angelou that I think is very apropos. In her book, *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now*, she writes:

Each of us has the right and the responsibility to assess the roads which lie ahead, and those over which we have traveled, and if the future road looms ominous or unpromising, and the roads back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and, carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction. If the new choice is also unpalatable, without embarrassment, we must be ready to change that as well.

I think the hopefulness I see in today's world is that we have been able to sit with one another consistently and regularly, and we have begun to take new roads and new paths that we have not travelled before.

● (1125)

In fact, Rabbi David Rosen, in speaking in Krakow this year, talked about the fact that “Pope Paul VI called dialogue 'a new name for love' and Pope John Paul II embodied that spirit.” Rabbi Rosen said “it is the vision of Isaiah that gives us the greatest hope vision for the future and it was a son of Krakow who led us so remarkably towards that vision—may it be fulfilled speedily in our days.”

The God who was supposed to take care of us isn't, so it's better that we should reject that God than try to defend that God. The God who is over and against us, an interventionist God, a saviour God, simply no longer exists, if we've been reading any of the theological treatises. We have to find a way to be able to express God's presence, his transcendence in our imminence in what we do with one another, how we bring about a world of justice, a world in which the proclamation of our faith is integral to the way we speak of justice.

When I look at all the situations in our world today, to say that God is provident is a little difficult to defend from a pulpit. If we were to list them, I wouldn't be able to get into all the areas in which we have to face difficulties. But I will quote from a Canadian theologian, Gregory Baum, who says:

The Kingdom was preached as a new age. It will destroy the sin in the hearts of women and men and the injustices present in our institutions. It will rectify the inequalities in the world and give people access to the sources of life. It was this Kingdom that was to have no end, and Christ ushered in a new age.

If we look at that more realistically, we can see that our responsibility is to find God's transcendence in our imminence, in what we do with and for one another. With regard to anti-Semitism, it is absolutely important that we work together to eradicate anything against those who wish to profess faith. But we wish to be able to profess faith with one another so that we find a commonality in our faith beliefs, or at least our system of beliefs.

Fear is becoming the church's counsellor in some ways, and we have to fight against that as well. We have also to be able to develop what would be called *le catholicisme solidaire*. I don't think the word *solidaire* exists in English, but it might. We don't use it very often. But there is a need for us to be able to come to grips with the way in which we are going to live our lives.

Just recently, Linden MacIntyre received the Giller award for his book *The Bishop's Man*, the story of Father MacAskill. I loved what he said when he was interviewed. He said that although the template might be that of the church setting, with a bishop and a priest doing some of his difficult work, what is really missing in our world—and this is only the template for it—is our lack of leadership and how all our institutions are losing credibility. I think that is where we must work together, and we must work together more forcefully.

Thank you.

● (1130)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Father Walsh.

Now it's Rabbi Reuven Bulka.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka (Congregation Machzikei Hadas Of Ottawa): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the invitation to share some thoughts with you this morning.

I'd like to begin by making a comment not on anti-Semitism but on pro-Semitism.

I think it's fair to say that even though we're debating some pernicious evils lurking in our great country, it is also important to realize that there are many champions who basically love Jewish people. I've experienced it in my many years here in Canada. It is probably logical to say that if that were not the case, a committee such as this couldn't actually happen. The people who are on the committee are all people who have, in their lifetimes, exhibited this trait, and I think that in Canada we are fortunate to have an overwhelming majority of people who love Jewish people. When we speak about anti-Semitism, the context is not that this is mostly what Canada is all about. It's a problem within Canada, but it doesn't speak about what Canada is.

I'd like to share with you a little bit of our history as a synagogue.

I came to Canada in 1967. The simple math is I've been here over 40 years, and the synagogue where I am the rabbi was a very open synagogue at that time. We locked the doors at night, but during the day, the doors were open. Anybody could come in; anybody could leave.

All that changed in 1991, around the time of the Gulf War. It was a watershed. We started getting threatening calls. I myself had my life threatened, and we had to start doing what many other synagogues across Canada had to do, which was basically to lock our doors and put in a system that required you to identify yourself before you entered. We have security in place that is costing us, who can ill afford it, thousands of dollars a year just to protect our membership.

This is not the Canada that I came to in 1967. It's sad that this is the case, but, unfortunately, it is the case.

I'd like to think—and I think that you'll probably all agree, and I've heard it from my colleagues before me—anti-Semitism is not specifically a Jewish problem. It's a Canadian problem for all of us, because we pride ourselves on being a great country that is welcoming and open and embracing. Because it is underlined by hate, anti-Semitism threatens that its consuming fury will know no boundaries.

Jews have always been the first line of offence when it comes to anti-Semitism, but never the last line, and while this may be the case again here, the spillover into the Canada that we want to maintain is one that we cannot take any chances on in terms of allowing anti-Semitism of any form to fester in any way or shape, in any place, or in any nook or cranny across the country.

A little while ago, when I found out that I was going to be appearing before you, I sent an e-mail out to my congregation. I asked them whether they had experienced anti-Semitism in their lifetimes and what their impressions about it were. I got some interesting responses, from the usual stuff of names that they had been called, sometimes by kids who unfortunately were just repeating what they heard in their homes, to threats against their lives. One wrote to me that they'd had to move from one neighbourhood in Ottawa to another because of the constant threats that were being levelled against them.

The campuses have been a place where many Jewish kids feel uncomfortable, but let's not delude ourselves into thinking that this starts at the campuses. I got some e-mails from people who deal a lot with what's going on in the high schools. They report to me many incidents of anti-Semitic comments and actions in many of the high schools here in Ottawa. That is basically unacceptable, as you all know.

• (1135)

One that particularly hit was from someone who has a store on the ByWard Market, which is a stone's throw from here. He actually sent me a picture of a swastika that was painted on his store, a visibly Jewish store, on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. This is not the Canada we want to see.

Perhaps the graphic that sticks out the most in my mind comes from an experience I had when by chance I was downtown a number of years ago. A demonstration had just come off Parliament Hill, and some of the placards said those ugly words, "Kill the Jews". That was on Parliament Hill, so we have a major problem in that context.

The thing that I want to share with you is on the simple question of what we do with this. How do we counter anti-Semitism?

To me, the very simple answer is teach, teach, teach. I am chair of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, through which we're trying to have a new generation of children think positively in terms of organ donation. We have started a program that we hope will be taught in every single high school in Ontario, called "One Life...Many Gifts". The importance of this will be imprinted on children as they're going forward into maturity.

The concern I had about what was happening with anti-Semitism, the ill will that is engendered, and the general feeling of...the absence of love, shall I say, motivated me a little while ago to start something in Ottawa called Kindness Week. I think this is the way we need to go to fight anti-Semitism among others. You can fight anti-Semitism to a certain extent, but more important is the question of how to promote pro-Semitism and hopefully envelope the country in the Canadian embracing spirit so that anti-Semitism doesn't have a chance and would be embarrassed to rear its head.

Through legislation in Queen's Park, this year Kindness Week in Ottawa became Kindness Week in all of Ontario. My hope is that it will eventually become a dedicated week in Canada. We don't profess that people shouldn't be kind other than in that week, but we do suggest that the way around the dark forces of hate is to create a climate of accommodation, a climate of embracing, a climate of kindness.

We are in a battle, and in this battle we cannot relent for a moment. It's very easy to hate; it's much more difficult to love. It's much more difficult to create the climate and the institutions of love and respect than it is to throw a rock.

We need to create foot soldiers, and those foot soldiers are the children of the next generation. We owe it to them. We owe it to the legacy of our founding fathers and mothers that children going through any elementary or high school system will have been so inoculated against hate by the time they get to university that when they see it, they will reject it.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Rabbi.

We now go to Peter Ferreira.

Are you sharing your time with Dominic Campione?

Mr. Peter Ferreira (President, Canadian Ethnocultural Council): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee, for allowing us this opportunity. On behalf of the CEC and its 35 national member organizations, I thank you.

The CEC strongly believes that one of the most important means in combatting hate, in general, and anti-Semitism, in particular, is by providing opportunities for diverse ethnocultural communities to meet regularly, build relationships, learn and understand from each other, discuss issues of mutual concern, and support one another. Building capacity and developing leadership in Canadian ethnocultural civil society must be one of the fundamental principles and steps in this challenge.

Community support can more easily be harnessed when civil society is engaged through NGO institutions, which recognize equality, accommodation, democratic governance, and mutual respect based on Canadian values and laws, as espoused in our Canadian Multiculturalism Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The CEC is a vehicle for creating overlapping networks in which ethnic communities would not normally connect. It serves as a bridging organization, which social scientists recognize as a way to contribute to cohesion and civic participation. It is this strength and a contribution to the social fabric and social stability of Canada that the CEC has established and continues to promulgate, which at present is unfortunately undervalued and as such needs to be recognized and reinforced.

Sustained support for our organization, as a national umbrella organization, has virtually been eliminated over the past 10 years. The CEC's opportunities for discussion and dialogue are mainly driven by *projet du jour*, funding that, however important, engaged only a number of selected communities on a limited subject matter. As a result, it has been difficult to coordinate efforts and responses to acts and manifestations of anti-Semitism, hate, discrimination, and racism in a timely and sustained manner. At this juncture, opportunities for a continued dialogue and civil engagement remain tenuous.

I'm going to pass it over now to Dominique, who will attempt to answer the four questions we were asked.

● (1140)

Mr. Dominic Campione (Director, Canadian Ethnocultural Council): Thank you, Peter.

Mr. Chairman and members, thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak on this important issue.

From the basic human philosophical and social element, it is often said that what affects one affects us all. One can say in general terms that this fight against anti-Semitism, being the hatred of Jews manifested in words and deeds, is not just limited to itself—that is to

say, a fight against anti-Semitism—but is a fight for our rights, values, and principles, which form the very basis of a peaceful and democratic society.

Accordingly, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council supports the parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism in Canada by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. As stated by the president, Mr. Peter Ferreira, the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, which I'll refer to as CEC, founded in 1980, is—and it's important—a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental umbrella organization of more than 30 national ethnocultural organizations, of which the Canadian Jewish Congress is a member.

The CEC represents a cross-section of ethnocultural groups across Canada. It has over the years become a forum, a meeting place for dialogue for diverse ethnocultural populations in Canada, in which place or forum member organizations collaborate and share ideas and concerns affecting our communities. It is through dialogue and discussions that each of our member organizations becomes aware of the good and bad issues that affect our communities, be it—using this example on the good side—the world's first Italian Walk of Fame, cultural celebrations, injustices such as the internment of Ukrainian Canadians, Japanese Canadians, Italian Canadians, or immigration issues such as the head tax on Chinese Canadians, hate, and racism.

As to the latter, which is at issue here today, the CEC has stated that anti-Semitism has no place in any society, especially in democratic countries such as Canada. It is through the CEC's common meeting forum, which expounds the principles of fraternity, fairness, mutual respect, and understanding, that we discuss issues, disperse information, and engage with the ultimate hope of arriving at a solution for the betterment of all communities.

There is no doubt that the eradication of anti-Semitism, hate, and racism is ideal; however, before one achieves this and scores, you must first, as they say in baseball, get to first base. Here, we must first have a dialogue, discuss, and reach out to our communities and all Canadians. We respectfully submit that a main vehicle through which this can be achieved is the CEC, the only national umbrella organization of ethnocultural groups.

The CEC has created opportunities for the ethnocultural NGOs to come together via its governance and its structure and through the board of presidents meeting. Concomitantly, this has, as stated, resulted in communication conduits so very important for the transmission, dissemination, and sharing of information, concerns, ideas, and values. As a result, geographic and cultural distances from coast to coast have been effectively bridged through this discussion on issues that concern our members.

Furthermore, the CEC member organizations have their own connections through their own respective local, provincial, national, and international communities, including connections in media, etc. The outreach of the CEC is immense and the partnerships created incredible. The developing contribution of the CEC to social dialogue and discourse, thereby giving opportunity to community leaders and concomitantly to their communities to learn about issues such as racism, hate, bias, and anti-Semitism, is not only evident but must be supported.

Personally, and through the CEC, the National Congress of Italian-Canadians and other members have come to be aware of and have participated in the rally against denial of the Holocaust. The 29th annual Holocaust Education Week in Toronto this year honoured Italians and the rescue of Italian jewellery.

The CEC's strength in bringing together diverse ethnocultural groups and contributions to the social fabric and stability of Canada has been established. But just as a flow to project funding that is limited in scope, so that it can properly engage and coordinate efforts and its responses to issues and concerns such as manifestations of anti-Semitism, hate, discrimination, and racism.

• (1145)

The CEC provides a venue for this, and it is respectfully submitted that this inquiry not only recognize the CEC's important role and function, but also its need and that of the concerned NGOs to be properly funded, so that the appropriate responses to manifestations of hate and anti-Semitism, in collaboration and collective work, can be carried out to educate the respective communities as well as to create a safe forum for dialogue and discourse for Canada's multicultural society.

It is through the coming together of all ethnocultural groups that the CEC receives its strength. As the words inscribed in the coat of arms of the CEC, granted by the Governor General in 1994, so correctly read: "From diversity, strength. *La diversité, notre force*". It is through our coming together through dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect that we will hopefully achieve—and I know it's an ideal—the eradication of anti-Semitism. Today we have heard words of dialogue from Father Walsh, "bridge the difference", "working together", "faith with one another", as well as from Rabbi Bulka, "the climate of embrace", "collaboration", and "kindness". There is a vehicle, and the vehicle is the CEC, or it's one of them. It exists; the structure is in place.

I read from Jack Levin, in *The Violence of Hate*, and this is as a result of my daughter studying anti-Semitism, hate, and racism. His conclusion, in trying to give an answer or a solution, is—and it is long, but I will quote—on page 109:

The violence of hate is unlikely when diverse people have developed a tradition of friendship, co-operation and mutual respect, when the members of one group are not seen as a threat or a challenge to the opportunities enjoyed by another, and when the individuals in a group are widely regarded as making an important contribution to the well-being of society. It would be tragic if, for the sake of short-term objectives, we were to allow the course of history to unfold without effectively intervening in a process otherwise destined for inter-group conflict and violence. For the purpose of reaching sympathizers and spectators, it may be necessary to create structured opportunities for increasing friendship and co-operation between groups whose members have traditionally been at serious odds. In the context of inter-group relations, it is distance, not familiarity, that breeds contempt.

The CEC gives this opportunity for all ethnocultural groups, all national groups, to meet, to dialogue, to discuss.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much for your presentation.

I'd like to now turn it over to the members for questions, starting off with Madame Folco.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you all for being here. I think the fact that you're all here together at one time is itself proof of your diversity and acceptance of diversity—I don't say toleration; I say acceptance. Lots of criticism has been made against multiculturalism, and some good things definitely have come out of it.

But my comments will be to Father Walsh.

It's good to see you here today, Father Walsh, particularly since you bring up something that has always been an influence in my life in terms of the religious roots of anti-Semitism. From Vatican II we had great hopes, of course; we all did, on all sides. I'd like to hear from you how you explain this return on the part of the present Pope—and I don't want to go through obvious answers, because the obvious answers are there—to a pre-Vatican II attitude.

Flowing from that, how influential do you think the Roman Catholic church is today throughout the world in influencing anti-Semitism, or possibly a fight against anti-Semitism?

Again flowing from that, how do you think the church could counter this?

I speak to you as a priest within the Roman Catholic church in Canada.

• (1150)

Father John Walsh: I'm glad you gave me the easy question first.

We have to be able to take the fact of Vatican II and *Nostra Aetate*, which was a wonderful document that has had a lot of commentary upon it and from which a lot of action has come. As a result of that action, no matter what Rome or the Vatican or the Curia will say, that action continues.

At the local level I have no problems whatsoever in terms of Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue. Every year in our particular community we have two witnesses who are survivors of the Holocaust who preach from the pulpit on a Sunday morning. We have an evening of prayer with Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists—you name it—who come together for an evening of prayer for peace. At the local level there is much going on in terms of Christian-Jewish dialogue, and it actually began in Montreal in 1939 at the Institut canadien de recherches sur le Judaïsme at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom. Looking back at history, to have had an institute on Judaism in 1939 was just unheard of, yet we have continued. Now there is an Institut canadien de recherches sur le Judaïsme, in French, and the dialogue itself has expanded; there is now Rencontre Musulmane as well. So at the local level there is a great deal going on.

At the national level we still have the consultation of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the ecumenical councils, and the CJC. At that level there is a great deal being done here in Canada. The longest structured dialogue in the world is right here in Canada, and I think it needs more governmental support.

So when you ask what we're doing, I think we're doing a great deal.

Have there been setbacks? Yes, there have been setbacks. When the Jewish scholars and the Catholic scholars began to research all the information coming out of the archives, there was a stop put to it; that was unfortunate, but they have recovered somewhat, and we're back into a dialogue that is greater than ever.

I was in the first group that left Rome to go and live in Jerusalem and study at Hebrew University in 1975, so I know that the struggle there has certainly been one.... I had a professor named Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini. Until he developed Parkinson's disease, he spent most of his time in Jerusalem, and is now back in Italy. He was the first cardinal of the church to have a book actually published in modern Hebrew, and the introduction is by David Rosen.

So there are many things going on at the local level, the national level, and the International level.

The work of Father John Pawlikowski, the chairperson of the International Council—

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Excuse me for interrupting, but I understand from what you're saying that there is a division within the Roman Catholic Church—in fact, a division between the Pope and the Curia, possibly, and the faithful and the local priests.

Father John Walsh: T'was ever thus, though. I mean, it's not something that's absolutely new. Every new idea is going to have a confrontation, and certainly when *Nostra Aetate* began to have the effect that it has had, there were people within our communities who had difficulty making that transition.

Are we at the best point that we've ever been in the history of the church with regard to Jews? Perhaps. Have we got a long way to go? Yes. Do we still have to change the structures of the church to be able to be not so much top down as bottom up? Yes.

Will we find a new theology and a new reflection and focus on God's word? When Elie Wiesel was in Montreal recently, one of the memorable things he said was that we must sit as Jews, Christians, and Muslims, together, and reinterpret our sacred texts, together, so that not only Muslims are looking at the Koran, but Christians and Jews would also be saying what it could mean in light of their scriptures. I think the challenge will be to be able to reinterpret and refocus our scriptures, to start from there and let each other have a good shot at what that scripture means and what that sacred text means to the other communities.

• (1155)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The next questioner is Madame Thi Lac.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Ève-Mary Thaï Thi Lac (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Good morning, gentlemen. I would like to thank you for being here with us today.

We have heard at length about what anti-semitism is, and about its pernicious effects on both the perpetrators and, especially, the victims.

I would like to hear your opinions on the issue. In recent years, hatred toward the Jewish community appears to be on the rise, following certain reasonable accommodations that our society

allows. For years, Quebec has tried to integrate its citizens in order to build a society that is fair to all.

Some reasonable accommodations might lead to other injustices and inequities, and might impinge on our society's longstanding rights, such as women's right to equality. We have all heard about the frosted windows at the YMCA and women who cannot conduct driving tests at the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec.

Would you not agree that accommodation like that can create other inequalities in our society, for women's equality, for example, and that they might lead to an increase in anti-semitism among the general public, because people would see it as a setback to the rights they have fought for over the years?

Anyone who wishes to answer my question can feel free to do so.

Father John Walsh: I will try to give a short answer. Some reasonable accommodations have undoubtedly created problems. We have seen that in Quebec with the accommodations that were made in the past. However, steps have been taken to build bridges between the communities, such as when that bus left Montreal for Hérouxville.

A dialogue was entered into so that people could understand the situation. In most cases, the problem is that people do not understand one another because they have not taken the time to do so. I believe that that is the area in which we must invest the time and effort to combat anti-semitism. We have to learn to understand Jewish people as they see themselves. That takes time, but it is a worthwhile effort. That is not reasonable accommodation, it is just plain reasonable.

[*English*]

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: It is an interesting question.

I first would like to say that not every Jew or Jewish community or organization always behaves in an exemplary way. We're human, right? And that is probably true of all institutions. We sometimes make mistakes. We do things that are not in the best interests of people, but that does not lead to anti-Semitism or any other type of hate. If there are issues...and you bring up some of the issues that are painful for us, and we discuss them very openly in our congregation and the difficulties that are involved in some of what you have raised. But nothing that happens on this score or any other should excuse people hating. If there are issues, then we discuss the issues and try to work it out. Reasonable accommodation and what that is leading to is somewhat reminiscent of the type of thing, this trap, that unfortunately we get into legally when we say, what was the motive for the person who committed the murder? We understand that no matter what motive you give, it doesn't justify the murder, but we get into our heads that because there was something going on.... That doesn't excuse it.

As much as the issues you raised are problematic issues, they should not ever be used as an excuse for one group hating another group. In the instances that you raise, done correctly, what this can do is bring the communities together, because what happens then is you say there is an issue and it's bothering me, so the right thing to do when two human beings or two groups are bothered by something is to sit down together to see what can be worked out that is good for both.

I see these not as excuses for people to hate but as opportunities for people to get to know each other better and to work together for a common good.

• (1200)

The Chair: Next will be Mr. Ken Dryden.

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

I'd like to address my question to Rabbi Bulka.

You talked about how, since 1991, you have found the atmosphere different from what it was before that time. We've heard a lot on other days from other people's testimony about the phrase "naming and shaming"—when there is an example of anti-Semitism, when there's something that really bothers us and that we believe is anti-Semitic, then we stop, we confront it, we name it, and we shame it.

From what you're saying, it sounds as though, to a phrase like that, you might say "maybe", about the confronting and the naming of it. On the shaming, you might say—and I want to hear your comments—"perhaps", but that those who are capable of being shamed, who feel similarly enough to feel shame, are one thing, and there are many people who will not feel shamed: you can name it and shame it all you want, but nothing much is going to change.

What your answer may be, from all the other things that you talked about, is that it's teaching, in one form or another—either the teaching that you talk about in schools or the teaching moments that you talk about in terms of disagreements and incidents that may represent differences in it—and that really, the only way of dealing with any of this is in terms of finding ways of discussion and of teaching whereby you generate, as you describe it, a pro-Semitism; that in the absence of that, all the rest of this doesn't really work particularly well.

Am I going where you were not willing to go, or is that a fair reflection of what you might believe?

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: Thank you, Ken.

I'm very willing to go where you suggested I'm willing to go. I think the right route in our own interchanges with people is that we always get a lot further with honey than with vinegar. We always get a lot further not with insulting, but with encouraging.

I know there have been instances over the course of time when people have said things that are blatantly anti-Semitic and have been called because of it and shamed, as you say, and rightfully. Those people probably don't feel the shame, but maybe even a sense of pride. Many people who hate Jews are not abashed about it.

What I tried to address to you and the committee was the question of what long-term strategy is most likely to work the best. In interpersonal relations and certainly in intercommunal relations, it's always the better strategy to emphasize the positive, to accentuate it, and to basically suffocate the hate with the effusion of love, understanding, and mutual respect.

I hate developing a country in which we are tolerant. I hope we can get away from that, because tolerance is such a negative thing. It's that I will tolerate you even though I can't stand your guts, but because you have equal rights to me, I will put up with you. I think we should basically reject this whole notion of tolerance and speak

about embracing each other. Harmony, growth, and promoting a Canada that we'll all be proud of will not come from tolerance; it will come from something far beyond that.

• (1205)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next is Mr. Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thanks go to our witnesses for appearing before the committee.

One of the things that this committee is being asked to do, and I think it's probably a good starting point, is to define what anti-Semitism is, if we're going to discuss whether or not it exists in Canada, and to what extent and what to do about it. To that extent, we're being asked in particular, or some have asked us, to take up the definition by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.

First of all, are you familiar with the definition? Second, would you agree that it should be the definition we use? Or do you have a different definition that we should be considering?

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: Do you have a copy handy?

Mr. Jeff Watson: I could probably read it; I don't know whether I could distribute it. I have a copy, anyway. I can read the relevant highlighted portion, if you'd like. The working definition says:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

It goes on to suggest that "such manifestations could also target the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity". It gives a few examples of that.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Which definition are you reading? I missed that.

Mr. Jeff Watson: It is the EUMC's working definition.

The Chair: It's in our package, on the last page.

Mr. Jeff Watson: If you don't have a comment for now, that's all right as well. You may not be familiar with it, but if you could provide your thoughts on it to the committee at some point in the future, we'd certainly appreciate that.

Let me go on. I want to make sure I didn't misunderstand something, Mr. El Shafie, and I believe it's Mr. Ferreira or Mr. Campione. You were making some sort of link between anti-Semitism and broader discrimination. I want to make sure we understand this correctly.

Was that a characterization that anti-Semitism is perhaps the thin edge of a wedge to other forms of discrimination, or is it generalizing, saying that all forms of discrimination are more or less the same and that we shouldn't have a focus on one versus another?

Reverend Majed El Shafie: Mr. Watson, if you heard all the speeches of the Nazis in the Second World War about the Jewish people, it is the same things that are being said today, but about the state of Israel or about the Israelis. It is the same thing; just take out “Jewish” and put “Israel” in instead. That is basically the only difference I can hear being said in the speeches.

What I am saying is that there is a very thin line that we cannot cross between anti-Semitism and hiding under anti-Zionism. We can always criticize the policy of Israel, if you disagree with their approach to issues and so on, but we cannot allow this line to be crossed into denying the existence of Israel or its right to defend itself. That's basically what I'm saying.

• (1210)

Mr. Jeff Watson: Okay. I thought I heard a connection between anti-Semitism and a broader discussion about tackling discrimination in all forms. It wasn't clear in my mind whether or not we were elevating anti-Semitism as a sort of thin edge of the wedge to be tackled that relates to other forms of discrimination or whether we're equating it with them.

The focus becomes important. For example, university campuses will have, generally, anti-discrimination policies but may not have a specific anti-Semitism policy. Equating all forms of discrimination could be perceived as a failure for tackling anti-Semitism.

Do you understand where I'm going with that? I just want to be sure which sort of connection you're trying to make.

Mr. Dominic Campione: When I raised that matter, basically defining anti-Semitism in its very simple words as “hatred of Jews manifested in words and deeds”, I was trying to say that what affects one affects us all. Undoubtedly there are general democratic principles of equality, fairness, peace, and that is what I was referring to, basically saying that we can't leave any stone unturned; we must be able to face this hatred that is there and deal with it, and that it affects us all.

Mr. Jeff Watson: I'm afraid my time is probably slipping away now.

Let me go on. The all-party parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism in England, which is a bit of a template—although not exclusively, in how we're following it—concluded, and I'm going to quote here:

We conclude that it is the Jewish community itself that is best qualified to determine what does and does not constitute antisemitism.

Do you agree with that position, or do you not agree with that conclusion of the all-party English inquiry panel?

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: Of this group, I'm the only Jewish guy, and I like all the other definitions that have come up.

I'm not sure we have an exclusive mandate, but we probably have experienced it more directly and can sense it. I think we have a radar out for it because we're the intended target, but in general, people of wisdom and perception can pretty well come up with the same conclusions that we would. I wouldn't want to claim any exclusivity on it. I think it is something that all human beings who are sensitive can apprehend pretty well.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Mr. Chair, how much time do I have left?

The Chair: It's basically done. Thank you very much.

We will now go to Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North, NDP): Thank you very much. Thanks to all of you for being here.

There seems to be general agreement among all of you about the need for education, attitude changes, and policies in response to anti-Semitism, but very few of you have touched on the law.

I noticed, Father Walsh, that in one statement you do say that there's a need to revamp hate laws so that they can be applied throughout Canada. I'd like you to explain what that means. Then I'd like to hear from Rabbi Bulka and then, if time permits, from the rest of you in terms of what we should be looking at as recommendations around hate laws and legislation generally.

Father John Walsh: Thank you for the question.

I said that we have to be able to revamp the laws because I don't think the hate laws are very clear in the minds of most Canadians when we talk about anti-Semitism or anti-anything in any of the religious communities. We can't forget that the Christian community is statistically the most persecuted community in the world today. If the issue of hate laws is not understood by average everyday Canadians, how are they going to be able to discern within their community when someone raises the red flag and says it is an anti-Semitic moment or an anti-Semitic act?

The people in the general population who don't understand that cannot react either for or against. We become very amorphous about a lot of the laws that are being promulgated, and people don't really see how they're going to be enacted or how they're going to be persecuted because they violate them. That's what I was trying to say: if the laws themselves don't speak to the average Canadian, how can any community possibly raise the issues and then do something to better the situation?

• (1215)

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: I deliberately left out the law, not because I am against the law but because I'm a little bit concerned about how far the law can go. The law can address an evil, but it can't change the fibre of society. I hope the general approach of this very important committee will be to develop a strategy that will minimize the likelihood of anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head, not because the law says you can't but because people won't want to. They won't want to because it will be totally unacceptable; people will appreciate each other, and this will not be part of their conversation.

Laws in this area are necessary, obviously, for the same reasons other laws are. We'd like everybody not to steal, but we have to have laws against it. It gets a little bit dicey with regard to this issue, and I leave it to the legal minds to figure out ones that will improve the situation, but if you ask me, I certainly wouldn't be excited to see this entire report reduced to legalities. We're not going to get that far with that approach; we'll just basically address the hatemongers who are out in the open and who are apprehended, but we won't really get to the question of what we're doing to build the Canada of tomorrow that our children and grandchildren will be happy to live in.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: I have a brief follow-up. I share that concern, and I certainly agree with you, but on the other hand, I also don't want to see this process and our report being used by others with other agendas to get rid of the hate laws under the human rights legislation. I'm trying to separate out what's valid and what's useful.

Is there a final comment on any of that?

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: I don't feel expert enough in this area. I know there are issues with it. Personally I like the idea that we have these types of regulations on the books so that people know there are lines they cannot cross. I think that's important, and I share your concern about it. There are debates about this, and I hope everyone who is involved in it is well-intentioned.

However, aside from the buffer of a law that is a fall-back position when you get into the really extreme stuff, I think there would be unanimity about the idea of seeking a positive approach.

Father John Walsh: I will just add one little comment. I think the quintessential part of all religion is to humanize the world. The first time Pope John XXIII actually took up the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was the time when he said, "That should be part of our church as well", and that's when we began to protect human rights. Therefore, I think they do somehow come together, when we see the negative effects of destroying human rights and not bringing justice to our society. They are certainly very interconnected.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Professor Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): I want to put a question to Reverend El Shafie.

I thought your presentation was very compelling this morning, both with respect to traditional anti-Semitism, which as you put it still persists, and also with respect to the new anti-Semitism. You ended up with almost a plea for the exercise of political leadership for people to stand up and be counted.

I'm wondering in that context whether you have any specific recommendations you might make as to what a Canadian parliamentary committee could do with respect to combatting that which you described, and/or what the government itself can do in that regard.

Reverend Majed El Shafie: Thank you, Mr. Cotler.

First, education is very important: that we educate academically our children, that we speak with the new generation in the universities or in the schools. The most important thing is that, besides coming from the parliamentary decision-makers, it needs to come from the different communities themselves—not just from the Jewish community.

The main problem we are facing right now is that as Christians we are defending Christians, or we're speaking against persecution that is happening to the Christians. The Falun Gong is doing the same; the Uighurs are doing the same. We need to start a multi-faith event, and we actually did this with B'nai Brith and Rabbi Bulka. We started something like a multi-faith event whereby we could bring in the Falun Gong with the Christians, with the Jews, with the Muslim Uighurs, and we went to five different cities. It needs to come from the different communities, and the decision-makers need to start to

speaking up, not just about anti-Semitism but about the persecution that is happening to the Christians—all the communities—because we are in the same boat. If they hurt the Jews today, they will hurt us next.

I believe the decision-makers need to go down from their high seats to the leaders of the communities, put their hands in their hands, and lose all the political correctness and start to face the problem head-on.

With that, we need as well to watch for.... I am a newcomer, Mr. Cotler, and people know that. I just came to Canada seven years ago. I just got my citizenship three years ago. When I received my Canadian citizenship, I looked around me in the room and I found many people coming from different backgrounds. It was a beautiful, wonderful scene.

The question in my mind was really, for all of these people who became new Canadians, who were newcomers, that they know more about our harmony, that they understand more about the Canadian way of living and loving each other and compromising or living in peace with each other. This is the question. Some newcomers are coming—and I hope I am not crossing any lines here, but it is what it is—with hidden agendas. Some of them come from countries where they have their issues with Israel or with the Jewish people. Is our government, with regard to immigration, doing enough to educate the newcomers, the new immigrants, with respect to living in peace with each other? This is a question.

Education for the newcomer is really an important thing. Don't just give him a 100-page document so that he can go have a test and say "yes" or "wrong" all the way through and become a Canadian citizen. No. Educate him. Give him courses about tolerance. Give him courses about combatting anti-Semitism, persecution of the Christians, or any other minorities. That is what the government needs to start taking steps to do.

• (1220)

The Chair: Mr. Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I have one very brief follow-up, if I may.

In your presentation, you spoke about how the new anti-Semitism, or even anti-Zionism, acts as a cloak, let's say, for anti-Semitism. We sometimes hear the opposite: that anti-Semitism is used as a shield to blunt criticism of Israel. How would you distinguish between the two in that regard?

Reverend Majed El Shafie: There are two major points here. If you start to deny the existence of Israel or their right to defend themselves, which, by the way, is a right that has been given to them by the United Nations, not by us.... If you start to take these two points, immediately you are using the anti-Zionism as the new anti-Semitism. These are the two points that you can be clear on as to which one is what. If you start to take away Israel's right to exist or to defend itself, this point is being used as anti-Semitism. That's what I believe.

Thank you.

The Chair: Candice Hoepfner.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Thanks very much.

Thanks to all the witnesses for being here.

I want to go back to talking about faith groups in Canada and globally, and how faith groups can contribute either to anti-Semitism or to the support of Jewish people.

Rabbi, you articulated it so well when you talked about the fact that we need to love and respect, and obviously you cannot legislate that; it has to be taught.

I'm wondering, first of all, if we look specifically at Canada and even at North America, would you agree that, within Christian faith groups, evangelical Christians have been predominantly supportive of Israel and of fighting anti-Semitism?

Is that something you would agree with, Rabbi and Reverend?

• (1225)

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: The answer is yes and no.

First, let me say that we love them all, but evangelicals have been a mixed bag in North America. On the one hand, their support of Israel has been marvellous. On the other hand, you have these occasional outbursts from some people within that community who say their agenda is to convert the Jews. This is not the type of activity that we would appreciate that much, if you can understand that.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: So we take the good with the bad, and we say that if we had to make a choice between the two, we'd take the choice they have made, which is basically to be great champions of Israel and to profess that they want to convert us, because I'm hoping we will be strong enough that we'll be able to resist that, and then we'll trade it off. That's fine.

But I can say that I'm not a little bothered but a lot bothered by why they still have this agenda of wanting.... Essentially, you know what happens. If you take a look at it in the long run, if they want to convert one Jew, they want to convert all Jews. So if they want to convert all Jews, basically they want to erase Judaism. If they were to erase Judaism, then there wouldn't be a Jewish state because there wouldn't be any Jews to be in the Jewish state, right? It's a long agenda. I don't know if they have the personnel to be able to do this—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: —but as you can tell, it's almost a contradiction in terms, which it's very wise for you to raise. But I think the general tenor within the community is to raise a strong objection when they hear this. This is not endemic throughout the entire evangelical community, just a part of it, but you asked me about the general reaction, so I'm sort of giving it to you. I hope that answers your question.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Yes, thank you.

Reverend, what would you say?

Reverend Majed El Shafie: I believe that the evangelical community, the same as the Jewish community, is made up of human beings, not all of them perfect. Some of them will have a hidden agenda and some of them will love Israel for who they are.

I have known Rabbi Bulka for five years now and I've never tried to convert him. To be honest with you, I like him as the Jew he is.

I believe that evangelicals are the best lawyers to Israel today; this is the fact on the ground. I believe that the evangelicals are united with Israel. If they have a hidden agenda, I don't see it, good or bad. I would not agree with that. But at the same time, it's a free world. There is freedom of religion. It's like Jehovah's Witnesses who come knocking at my door every Saturday in my apartment in downtown Toronto. I open the door and I smile. I let them speak and say whatever they want, and I say thank you and bye-bye.

In a time of freedom, there is freedom of religion, and the most important thing here is not who is trying to convert who, but who is standing in the gap with who? Who is fighting the good fight for who? Who is really united for who? That's what I care about.

I don't care about who's trying to convert who or something like this. The evangelicals are standing with Israel and standing with the Jewish people and we keep doing this. As well, we are hoping that the Jewish community will stand with the persecuted Christians and the persecuted church.

Thank you.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Are there further comments?

Scott Reid.

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

The chair has asked me to be brief. I just want to direct a few questions to Rabbi Bulka, the first one just for information.

You mentioned placards on Parliament Hill saying “Death to Jews”. The chair and I both weren't sure if you mentioned the year that occurred in.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: I think it was about four or five years ago.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you.

I have a question that comes out of your mentioning 1991 as the year when it seemed the backlash and the rise of the current wave of anti-Semitism began. I confess I was a bit surprised by that year, because I think of 1991 as being the year when the hateful resolution 3379 of the United Nations was repealed. That was the resolution passed in 1975 that equated Zionism with racism. If you had asked me what was the low water mark of anti-Semitism, the most encouraging year, I would have pulled out 1991 in terms of international affairs.

I just wonder if you have any thoughts on these two apparently contradictory trends happening at the same time.

• (1230)

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: Yes, it's very interesting; I too was surprised. Unfortunately, though, looking back at our history, this was exactly when it happened. It coincided with the Gulf War.

I guess it shows that different streams react to different things. I was also surprised by virtue of the fact that, you know, what did the Gulf War have to do with Israel? People have made equations, but essentially it was the Americans and Kuwait. It had nothing to do directly with Israel. As you know, as it went on, Israel got implicated in terms of threats made against it and Scuds thrown in its way.

It probably speaks about an interesting phenomenon, which is that there's a lot of hidden anti-Semitism in certain places, and it just takes a precipitant—it doesn't even have to be a logical precipitant—for it to get unleashed and to have excuses for it. In this instance, this is what happened with us.

I would imagine that with other congregations it may have been a different date, but this is what I remember very clearly in ours.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you.

My last question is regarding the placards on Parliament Hill. What event was that?

Rabbi Reuven Bulka: It was a demonstration. I have a fuzzy memory, but it was an anti-Israel demonstration, that's for sure. What caused it or led to it, I couldn't tell you, I'm sorry.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you very much.

I think Father Walsh wanted to say something, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Father Walsh.

Father John Walsh: I know that we're coming to the end, so I want to mention an incredible quote I found from our Canadian Irshad Manji, who wrote the book *The Trouble With Islam*. This is what she says: "Our global responsibility now is not to determine who owns what identity but to convey to future generations what we all owe each other."

Thank you.

The Chair: That's very nice. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here. We very much appreciate your testimonies.

We will have a five-minute break to allow the second panel to be seated.

Again, thank you very much for being here.

•(1230)

(Pause)

•(1240)

The Chair: Members, please be seated.

Thank you very much for being here this afternoon. I'd like to start by again reminding the witnesses they have 10 minutes to speak. If there are any questions that are going to take too long, I'll raise a yellow card, which means you have one more minute, and the red card means you're just out of time.

We will start with Shelley Faintuch.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shelley Faintuch (Community Relations Director, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg): Good morning, I would first like to thank the chair, Mr. Sylva, and the co-chair, Mr. Reid, for agreeing to bring everyone together here today. I would also like to thank all the

parliamentarians present for their fine work and for giving me the opportunity to speak to the committee.

This afternoon, I would like to focus on four issues: first, the definition of anti-semitism, second, the Canadian Human Rights Museum, third, guarding against anti-semitism and, finally, education.

•(1245)

[*English*]

To start off, I'd like to look at the question of definition and the question that was mentioned by the Honourable Mr. Watson and then taken up by the Honourable Irwin Cotler.

I do believe we need a working definition that is rather narrow with respect to the question of anti-Semitism, so that it is applicable to various situations and so that we can use it as something that is really useful. We've had occasion to meet with various members, both of our community and of the general community at large, who feel very muzzled by the word "anti-Semitism". They are afraid of speaking about Israel or speaking about Jews. They fear being attacked as anti-Semites. I believe, therefore, that we need a working definition that will make people feel at ease. I believe that in order to narrow the definition, we can perhaps use Knesset member Natan Sharansky's three Ds test. When we're dealing with the question of Israel—and Israel is not the central issue when it comes to anti-Semitism—I think we can look at Israel as perhaps the new Jew on the block in the history of anti-Semitism that goes back thousands of years, but I believe we do have to look at something to narrow our focus and to make sure that criticism of the state of Israel isn't necessarily considered out of context. So I would refer to Knesset member Sharansky's three Ds test. If someone is demonizing Israel, dehumanizing, delegitimizing, or using the double standard—I guess that would be four Ds—then those could be instances of anti-Semitism.

On the question of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights—which is a question that concerns us greatly, especially in Winnipeg, Manitoba—we have seen, with the advent of questions regarding the financing of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, many ad hominem attacks against Gail Asper, who has been raising some of the private funds for the museum. It's become an issue that frankly I find, first of all as a Canadian and then as a Jew, extremely disturbing. It has been called the "Jew Museum". It has been called the "Monied Museum", and if you refer to your packages you will find that people have referred to the board of the museum as the board that would be stocked by a bunch of Weinsteins to help protect the state of Israel. I raise that here because it's a question that concerns us all. This is a national museum that we're talking about, and we'll obviously have to be talking about anti-Semitism when it comes to the content of this museum.

[*Translation*]

How can we guard against anti-semitism? After I discussed the issue with members of the Winnipeg police force, we found that it is extremely difficult to prosecute people under section 319 of the Criminal Code, and I wonder whether it is a problem of definition or terminology.

[English]

I do know that my colleague, Mark Freiman, will be raising this issue, but when an anti-Semitic act has been perpetrated and when the wilful promotion of hatred has been perpetrated, I do think we need to look at section 319 of the Criminal Code. I'm not a jurist, nor am I a lawyer—I just like talking about the sections—but I do think we will have to discuss that. I can tell you that in Manitoba there has not been one case that has been prosecuted, and we have spoken to the attorneys general, who are loath to prosecute cases for fear of making *causes célèbres* out of these cases. So perhaps we need to look at the legislation again.

We also have to look at the proliferation of hate on the Internet, and I believe there should perhaps be a national or an inter-parliamentary committee struck to look at that particular area of anti-Semitism.

My fourth and final point is what we can do to stem the tide of anti-Semitism, which is a growing tide, unfortunately, with increasing audacity, as you will see in the report that we submitted. By the way, the members of the committee will have a colour copy of the report, although we have black and white here. You'll be able to see many of the faces of anti-Semitism in that report.

Education is, of course, key. Rabbi Bulka referred to it. Father Walsh referred to it. We have all referred to these in the past, but there are certain forms of education, both formal and informal, that I think can be undertaken. First of all, there's a program called FAST—I think Mr. Comper is going to be discussing that with you tomorrow—that fights anti-Semitism as part of a greater program of anti-racism. There are various other recommendations in the report. There's also the Asper human rights and Holocaust program, which has been a very effective tool in Canada, having seen more than 7,000 students go through an education program. It is at the level of children, I think, where we have to concentrate.

• (1250)

[Translation]

In conclusion, I believe that Canada will be facing an increasing number of immigration claims because of the rise in anti-semitism, particularly in Europe and in countries like Venezuela. Those immigration claims will therefore have to be closely examined.

[English]

Last, I would like to once again thank the members of the steering committee and the committee. I do hope the study of anti-Semitism will be an ongoing affair and an affair of Parliament itself. I believe Canada can play a leading role in the global arena to combat anti-Semitism worldwide.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Our next witness is Avi Benlolo.

Avi, I hear you have a presentation as well.

Mr. Avi Benlolo (President and Chief Executive Officer, Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies): I do have a presentation.

As mentioned, at the courtesy of the committee, I will show you a video. You'll tell me how much time I have left; I will go through it very quickly, because I have a substantial number of notes and a presentation.

Thank you again. It's a pleasure to be here.

When it comes to human rights, Canada is the most progressive, respectful country on earth. Unfortunately, anti-Semitism has emerged as a major problem here in Canada over the last decade. It has manifested itself in many ways, ranging from the traditional, such as vandalism and graffiti, to the extreme, the firebombings of schools, community centres, and synagogues. Now we have the subversive anti-Semitism that permeates institutions and threatens to change the very fabric of this nation.

What concerns me and my organization today is the institutionalization of anti-Semitism, as exemplified by unions, universities, private and public businesses, and some human rights organizations. The anti-Semitism of today manifests as anti-Israel agitation around boycott, divestments, and sanctions. It is a specific singling out of Israel alone for harsh economic measures reinforced by incitement, which may lead to the strengthening of anti-Semitism.

Touching on universities now—I'm going through this very quickly—it's of course interesting to note that as I sat here just this morning, I got an e-mail saying that the next Israeli apartheid week has been announced for March 1 to 7, 2010. As you know, this is the week that has essentially castigated the state of Israel and fomented anti-Semitism on university campuses, starting with the University of Toronto, and now, according to the e-mail I got this morning, on 35 campuses. Of course, the York University campus last year saw some very disturbing events.

We know as well that businesses have been targeted, businesses such as Mountain Equipment Co-op, Le Sélect Bistro, Indigo Books, and so forth. One of the concerns, concerning Indigo and some others, is that if you're a Jewish proprietor, you may get hit, especially if you support the state of Israel.

On the unions, we are all aware of the various resolutions that have been passed by CUPE Ontario that have called for boycotts, sanctions, and divestments from Israel, from CUPW and others, but I want to point out a positive example of what is, to my knowledge, the only union in Canada that has passed a very balanced resolution, and that's the Carpenters' Union. It's an example of what this committee may take under consideration in proposing to other unions. It did talk about a two-state solution. It did talk against the calling of Israel as an apartheid state and the mislabelling of Israel for sanctions and divestments.

Another major issue for us is what is called, shockingly, the “human rights” group, which we saw with the Toronto pride week, and Montreal, but Toronto more so this year. We saw various marchers who were carrying placards calling for an end to Israeli apartheid. Some of the marchers as well wore swastikas around their arms. Why? It's very questionable. But the radicalism we're seeing marching on Toronto's streets against the Jewish state foments anti-Semitism and hatred toward the Jewish community. It also marginalizes and ostracizes gay Jews who want to participate in the event.

We also saw in the last year what we refer to as “community” violence and radicalism. We saw, for example, Palestine House bringing in two radical speakers on April 5, 2009. One of them was Ekrima Sabri, an Imam of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem—the previous one—and Atallah Hanna, the Greek Orthodox bishop. They are both radical leaders in Jerusalem. In 2005 Sabri said that “anyone who studies 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' and specifically the Talmud will discover that one of the goals of these Protocols is to cause confusion in the world and to undermine security throughout the world.” This was a speaker here in Canada, on Canadian soil.

● (1255)

Of course, the street violence around the Gaza war was disconcerting. We live in a democracy, and people should protest and speak their minds, but to call for the killing of Jews or to promote the destruction of the state of Israel obviously causes us great discomfort.

As well, I want to talk about the attack on history and culture that we're very concerned about and have seen various examples of in recent months.

One example, of course, is the Dead Sea scrolls and the opposition around exhibiting the Dead Sea scrolls at the ROM, which is a method to essentially erase the fact that the scrolls are a testament to Jews living on the land and a call to boycott them.

Again dealing with culture, we were very concerned around the Toronto film festival and what happened there, of course, with the protests against that. One of the leaders who signed the petition against having the Tel Aviv films at the film festival was Jane Fonda, who, in a meeting with Rabbi Hier, our own dean and founder, said, “I didn't know; I wasn't aware that Tel Aviv is not occupied.” It's quite flabbergasting to look at this and see the ignorance in the community about what can foment anti-Semitism and intolerance. As we all know, of course, Jane Fonda recanted her signature from the protest that was put forth by Naomi Klein.

Third, of course, is a film called *An Education*, which has just come out in theatres. It may still be in theatres. I saw it just two weeks ago. If you go to see it, you'll notice that it focuses on anti-Semitism, which has nothing to do with the plot. One of the main characters, the man, is a thief and a sexual predator and, it is declared quite openly and continuously throughout the film, is Jewish. Therefore, the question as you watch this film is, what does this have to do with the film? What did this have to do with the story? The question is, how does a film like that get into the theatres uncensored, not discussed by the public, and of course through Canada Customs? Because it was produced by the BBC; it is an English production, and that's a very important point.

As well, now I want to talk to you, and more importantly to this presentation, about Internet hate. I don't know how many of the people who have testified have talked about that, but that, for the Simon Wiesenthal Center, is a very major issue. I want to start by telling you a little story to humanize what is going on in our community.

Last week, there was what was called “Kick a Ginger Day”. A parent called my office to identify her son Noah as being a victim of a hate crime. Because he has red hair, he was repeatedly kicked.

Noah, of course, did not want to go to school that morning and did not want to reveal to his parents and to the school what was going to happen to him that day. He knew in advance. Noah confessed later that the attacks on him were vicious in the classroom, the hallways, and the schoolyard. If you can imagine it, this poor kid was kicked all morning long in school because he has red hair.

What does this have to do with anti-Semitism? Perhaps nothing, but perhaps it has something to do with it. Or perhaps it has something to do with a broad stroke that we could look at in regard to how anti-Semitism could impact our society in general.

It exemplifies how the worship of Hitler and his views can spiral into communities through technology. You see, the ringleader of this particular attack used Facebook to actually inspire the hate and the profile that happened. He essentially posted a picture of himself as a baby, tailored to look like Hitler, with the statement that Hitler “had a troubled childhood”. Other items of note on this page were a poster of Osama Bin Laden's face on the body of Gollum from the *Lord of the Rings* and a kitten with a gun pointed out the window as if he's a sniper. This is a high school student in Ontario, and right now it's there on Facebook.

This committee has heard remarks on diverse issues concerning anti-Semitism. It must equally consider how technology is being abused to foment hate and intolerance.

With that, I'd like to show you a couple of very, very quick examples. As I said, we track hate groups.

● (1300)

What's happening is, obviously, no matter where these websites are being developed, they are accessible by everybody. These are all hate sites. One website that is used is called Kaboom. Essentially, it's a suicide-bombing game.

This is the game. Essentially, the goal is to blow up as many people as you can. The more people you kill, the more points you have. This is one of the scariest games on the Internet, and it's used widely by youths and—who knows—perhaps by individuals like this one on Facebook, whom I talked about.

I want to talk to you as well about hate groups in Canada, which is a little bit more relevant to what's happening here. We'll go to Canada right here. Again, here we're profiling how new social networking tools like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are now being used. It's no longer just Internet hate sites. These are tools that are being used.

This one here is a Facebook group. The name is NSM Canada, standing for National Socialist Movement. After having its original profile rejected by Facebook regulators, the National Socialist Movement is one of America's most active neo-Nazi organizations.

Let me go to the next. This one here is actually an interesting one. Ziofascism.net: Exposing Zionofascism in Canada and the World is a Montreal blog that features negative stereotypes of Jews and their alleged influence in Canada and on the international stage. It claims Jews were involved in 9/11 and blames Israel's intelligence agency for a supposed terrorist attack on Montreal's metro system. The site has also claimed that ZOG, Zionist Occupation Government, controls Washington, London, and Paris.

This is one of the tools that I can leave with the committee. Here you have the Canadian Heritage Alliance. It's prolific and it's here in Canada. You've got various groups, like the Aryan Guard, who are out there, who are putting this information forward. My concern, of course, is that the youth go to these sites and they learn how to hate and they get involved with these groups, like Stormfront Canada. I think these are all very serious issues for this committee to consider in its report.

Before I conclude, I also want to play a three-minute video, if the chair will allow me to do that—I'll just take one second to load it in here—on Israeli apartheid week, because I think it's a very serious issue for the committee to consider dealing with.

We have a problem on Canadian campuses. This kind of goes through the problem of Israeli apartheid week and gives you footage of what we've found over the last couple of years.

• (1305)

[*Video Presentation*]

Mr. Avi Benlolo: I know I'm out of time. Thank you very much.

By the way, I will just say that the last scene was at Vari Hall at York University.

In conclusion, we as an organization believe that education is the way to solve this problem, so I thank the committee again for this.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ruth Klein.

Ms. Ruth Klein (National Director of the League for Human Rights, B'nai Brith Canada): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon to the chair, the vice-chair, and all the members of the panel.

I'm the national director of both the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada and its Institute for International Affairs, so I've had the opportunity to study anti-Semitism in Canada not just in the purely Canadian context, but also in terms of the global scene. I'm also executive director of Canada's new national task force on Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. So both professionally and personally—I'm the daughter of a Holocaust survivor—my goal is the preservation of historical truth, the countering of Holocaust denial, one of the many forms of anti-Semitism present in Canada today, and the fight against all forms of hate activity.

The League for Human Rights is the anti-defamation league here in Canada, documenting, analyzing, and responding to anti-Semitism. Similar functions are carried out by the Community Security Trust in the U.K. and by our other partners in the global forum on anti-Semitism. The league publishes an annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents, an audit that has tracked and reported anti-Semitism in Canada for the past 28 years in the context of using that data to check the pulse of racism in this country in general.

As other speakers have mentioned, when attacks against Jews are tolerated, attacks on other minority groups are never far behind. In that sense, the audit is often considered the barometer of prejudice in Canada. We share this information regularly, as well as strategies to counter hate, with all vulnerable groups, through many outreach

activities, including a Community Alliance Forum held last year with the support of the Attorney General of Ontario. That brought together all groups in Ontario to look at this problem and see what can be done.

Given the authoritative nature of this data, our audit figures have been cited by governmental and research bodies worldwide, such as the U.S. State Department, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Steven Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism at Tel Aviv University. The full list appears on the back of the audit, which you have.

But the audit is more than just facts and figures. It really is about people, about their fears, and about their anxieties. It's about community and governmental response or lack of it. It's also important to note that while the audit's consistency of definition and reporting methodology has allowed for long-term analysis of trends and trajectories, we can only report the tip of the iceberg in terms of the full dimensions of the problem.

For example, police experts and sociologists agree that usually only about 10% of victims ever come forward to report their victimization, and that's for any type of hate crime. We know that people who do come forward to call our 24/7 anti-hate hotline do so with trepidation. That is why this service has to be confidential.

Why this trepidation? Why should people be so nervous about coming forward to report incidents? Well, let's go first with age: elderly Holocaust survivors know from experience that things can only get worse. Again, as the daughter of a survivor, I know that I have imbibed some of those anxieties myself in terms of being very, very careful when you make a complaint and when you go to the authorities.

Those who've come more recently from countries with despotic governments or corrupt police forces fear any contact with the authorities. They're very unlikely to go to the police. That's why it is sometimes more comfortable for them to go to a community organization as a buffer.

The visibly orthodox Jewish population has a very philosophical approach. They seem to have accepted that if they look different, they will attract unwelcome attention, even in the multiculturalism of today's Canadian scene.

Also, there are certainly people who don't like to come forward because they think they'll be dismissed, that they won't be taken seriously and nothing will happen.

I tell you this, ladies and gentlemen, because I want you to fully understand just how much this initiative of yours, the all-party coalition and the inquiry, means to members of the community. They've received an enormous comfort from the fact that this initiative even exists. Obviously, we hope there will be long-term ramifications and improvement, but you've taken the first step, and that means a tremendous amount to the people on the street.

I'm very aware of the constraints under which you have been working and the open opposition you've faced in taking this step. And why? Because you are allowing the Jewish community the opportunity to describe its own experiences and to define its own victimization.

Really, that's where my presentation begins today, because I'm wondering about these attempts by other groups here in Canada to deny the Jewish people that right, to try to co-opt it for themselves, and to minimize and dismiss what the Jewish community is saying. Really, in effect, that's the second layer of victimization: telling people that their perceptions and their feelings are invalid. For example, when a group of faculty and students of various backgrounds at York put together a statement claiming there's no anti-Semitism on campus, and there's not a visible Jew amongst them, we have to wonder. Who except a visible Jew, distinguished by external signs of religion, can tell you what it's like having to walk through a hostile environment and what it's like to be intimidated, ridiculed, and threatened? And who except a supporter of the Jewish state can tell you what it feels like in the classroom when their beliefs and their opinions are attacked, marginalized, or even dismissed, and they have a very strong fear that if they don't write the politically correct thing in their term papers, their academic standing might be affected?

● (1310)

Can you imagine this if you were having an inquiry on any other subject here today—on anti-black prejudice, or gay bashing, or what's called Islamophobia—and do you really feel that you would have this type of outpouring of opposition to what you were doing? I think this is very telling. It's only on the issue of anti-Semitism that we seem to have this rush to deny its existence. I call this type of activity “anti-Semitism denial”.

Even putting that aside, there are many people today who will claim that vandalism at schools or synagogues is really just the work of kids, that it's just a few kids playing out, a few nutcases, and that it's really not that bad, unless, of course, there's open violence.

So in effect, we're really becoming more tolerant of anti-Semitism in Canada, not less, and part of it stems from this attempt to artificially separate the bonds between the Jewish people and their ancestral homeland and to deny the ancient national, religious, and cultural connections. The committee has already heard of the new anti-Semitism, which seeks to deny the Jewish people, as a collective entity, the same right to self-determination in their own homeland that all other people claim, and really, it's not that much different from attempts of traditional anti-Semitism to deny Jews, as individuals, the individual human rights that all people enjoy.

I'd like to repeat this, even though other witnesses have said this. This has nothing to do with the legitimate criticism of the state of Israel of the kind that might be applied and should be applied to other states. This has everything to do with overt or covert calls for the destruction of the Jewish state. It has everything to do with using anti-Israel rhetoric as a mask, a cloak, for age-old anti-Jewish stereotypes and imagery.

Now, to bring this back to Canada, because we know that on the global scene these things happen, you're really being asked by people who are against the whole purpose of this inquiry to make an artificial separation between anti-Jew hatred and hatred of the Jewish state, but current realities make this task almost impossible. There is already an intertwining of these two threads, which can't really be so easily separated.

For example, let's look back to 2002 and the firebombing of Quebec City's only synagogue. We met privately with a member of Parliament at that time who, while she regretted the incident and told us that she was sorry, said she would be unable to make a public statement condemning the firebombing because it might be looked at as being pro-Israel. In fact, that is what happened. She got up in the House subsequently. She did not make the statement. She spoke about the CBC. It was left to a colleague to condemn the firebombing.

So already these two themes are really mixed in people's minds. In Canada, these dual themes of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism run parallel and are used interchangeably, as has been mentioned before. We see this in the sharing of rhetoric and images between the extreme left and the extreme right. The extreme left will borrow Holocaust imagery and age-old Jewish stereotypes to attack Israel, while the neo-Nazis use the Middle East conflict as a justification for furthering their anti-Jewish ideology. So whereas before the talk was of Jewish control of the media and Jewish control of the government and the financial world, the terminology now has changed. It's Israeli control. It's Zionist control.

There are those who have caught on well to this stratagem. For example, the Canadian branch of Stormfront has advised its members to use the terminology “Zionists” or “Israel-firsters”—that's their little term—because they get more mileage from that than saying “Jews” outright. The circle of hatred continues, from the old blood libels in which Jews were periodically accused of poisoning wells or murdering Jewish children to drink their blood for Passover rituals, to the modern-day allegations we hear today. Israel is poisoning wells, we hear, and there are cartoons showing Israelis preparing to drink the blood of Palestinians.

That's to say nothing about 9/11 conspiracy theories, which are really a mirror of the old accusations that Jews, just by their nature, were responsible for every natural or man-made disaster.

● (1315)

Here in Canada, just recently, there has been a wild claim, which originated here and is being disseminated on the Internet, that the Jews are responsible for the H1N1 virus.

An allegation remains on the website of a Canadian Islamic organization that Jews “institutionalized racism”.

I know we've had a lot of talk today about the importance of groups working together to stamp out discrimination against all of us. That isn't very helpful.

We even had a gratuitous dig in a media editorial just last week by a writer who probably did not even realize how he has internalized anti-Jewish prejudice. He wrote that for Jews, the term “never again” applies only to them, a real throwback to the old depiction of Jews as selfish, alien from their fellow citizens, with no human compassion for any other group.

It doesn't have to be as crass as the comment by a Vancouver man some years ago that Jews are the brothers of monkeys and pigs. It doesn't have to be the "Jews are dogs" slur that was chanted at a Montreal rally earlier this year, which, by the way, was attended by trade unionists and some politicians. Subtle can sometimes be more insidious since it raises fewer red flags. With fewer red flags, it's less likely to be noticed and it can be made to sound like a debating point.

To sum up, ladies and gentlemen, the facts from our studies are quite clear. Recent audit findings show an ongoing disproportionate targeting of the Jewish community compared to other minorities, and this is at a time when the Jewish population of Canada is declining. It is currently less than 1% of the total population.

A 2008 Statistics Canada study based on data on hate crimes from 2006 found that nearly two-thirds of hate crimes motivated by religion were directed at the Jewish faith. The Toronto Police, just to give one example, recorded 153 hate-related occurrences in 2008; 45 of them, a rather high proportion, were against Jews.

Where do we go from here? You've taken the first very important step, but what else can be done? You have several recommendations on file in my initial submission and also the submission from colleagues of mine in the League for Human Rights, but I'd just like to really summarize them in terms of thematic: acknowledgment, terminology, and training.

In terms of acknowledgement, really, to move forward we're going to need a general acknowledgement that anti-Semitism is an issue, is a problem, is a challenge in Canada today, and that is a prerequisite for any type of change. If done formally by this inquiry, it will give a moral voice to efforts to counter it.

We know that the British report specifically recognizes the problem of anti-Semitism on campus. It's our hope that this inquiry will also focus on this area, because we've seen and I've heard previous testimony that university administrations seem very ready to dismiss this issue.

In terms of acknowledgement, we also note Senator Jerry Grafstein's long battle in the Senate to bring the issue of anti-Semitism to the attention of this body and to have them bring about a resolution that would mirror motions already adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We ask the inquiry to encourage the Senate to work together with this inquiry and to acknowledge the problem. Really, everyone has to work together on this.

In terms of terminology, we need one consistent definition to use here in Canada across the board. The working definition—it's been asked about before—has been adopted by the EUMC, now the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Units of the OSCE that work in combatting racism already use this definition. The U.S. State Department uses this definition, and the London Declaration, to which Canada is a signatory, calls for expanded use of the definition to inform policy and training.

I agree in a certain sense that Natan Sharansky's definition hones in on specific points, but I think the benefit of the EUMC definition is that it gives very specific examples, and when we're dealing with fora—for example, universities—where apparently there is no definition, we're going to need one.

My final point is training. We need that training for hate crimes officers, crown prosecutors and judges, university administrations, as I mentioned, and school administrations as well, since anti-Israeli coalitions are now going earlier and earlier into the educational system.

● (1320)

In fact, I'd like to suggest that any public program that gets government money should have an anti-discrimination policy that includes, again, the same definition of anti-Semitism that we would all be using and that this inquiry I hope will support.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

● (1325)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Klein.

I was actually quite generous with everybody's time. I thought it was important to get everything on the record.

I also want to thank you very much for the report on anti-Semitism incidents in 2008. I appreciate the fact that it was in both English and French.

We'll start with the first questions.

Dr. Hedy Fry.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Throughout all of this, I have been facing a conundrum. We talk about anti-Semitic incidents. We talk about anti-Semitic acts. We talk about hate. But long before that there was speech. And the thing about speech is that in a free and democratic society, everyone is allowed freedom of speech.

I was at the Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C., many years ago. One of the things that struck me most of all was that what happened in Nazi Germany began in a very tolerant society with speech. That speech was allowed to lie and grow and be seen to be normal, eventually, so that when the speech began to be ramped up and then the acts began to occur, everyone had become used to it. Everyone felt it was okay to say and do certain things.

The real question that faces me...and this goes for the Internet as well, which is a new form of speech.

I'm glad you brought that up, Avi, because this is something that concerns me. It's now being used more and more to spread virulent speech, and it's very difficult sometimes to find out who is doing the speaking.

So how do you see us dealing with this? What is the line here? I'm not asking for a legal definition; I'm speaking about a society that recognizes fairly early signs of a danger that is coming. How do you deal with that freedom of speech? Where does the line occur between freedom of speech and anti-Semitic speech, or any kind of hate speech that isn't really virulent hate but is just setting up groups to be treated as if they aren't as good as other groups? How do we draw that line?

Then, what do we do about the Internet? The Internet spreads not only hate but also the kind of disrespectful and...I don't know what word to use, but it's speech that crosses *just* that much, not enough to fall under the law of hate speech. I think that's probably one of the biggest issues that we have to decide how to deal with.

Mr. Avi Benlolo: I've given this issue a lot of thought for many years.

We talked about the university situation. Of course the universities say, look, we must allow this to happen because of freedom of speech. They're not wrong about that in the sense that certainly a university should allow freedom of speech. The question is where does it cross the line?

I don't know if you saw, in one of the videos, the banner that was held up. The banner said, "Free Palestine from the river to the sea". It could mean a lot of things. It falls into a lot of grey areas. It doesn't exactly classify as hate speech. The university will tell you, well, we can't make any arrests or do anything unless it's hate speech. But almost nothing seems to be hate speech. That is a particular bone of contention. Here you have—you heard the statistics from my colleague—a victimized group. The Jewish community is a victimized group. There has to be some special attention given to that group.

Some people would say to let the marketplace dictate, and whatever happens, happens. But look at history: when you let the marketplace dictate, as we saw in Nazi Germany, that's what happens. So we can't let the marketplace dictate.

There have to be, I think, a little bit stricter laws, with more procedures and more protocols in place to stop this kind of thing, even if it's a little blurry. I know it impinges on the issue of freedom of speech. I don't want to do that, but there is something there that we definitely have to look at and analyze and think about carefully.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

David Sweet.

• (1330)

Mr. David Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just have two questions for any or all of our guests who would like to comment.

We had Robert Steiner here from the University of Toronto. He was indicating that at the university the only representation of Israeli apartheid week was a small table that you could hardly notice unless you walked up to it. I don't remember if it was at a student centre or at what location, but it was somewhere on the campus. That is not the representation that we've had in the past, and that I've had even in my constituency office, with McMaster University being in the riding I represent. I was just wondering if you would comment on that description of Israeli apartheid week.

Ms. Shelley Faintuch: As a person from a province that has not had Israel apartheid week, but that Israel apartheid week is threatening, I don't think that characterization could possibly be true. If you turn to page 59, I believe, in the handouts you have, or to page 14 of the original submission I made, you can see posters that were listed at the University of Manitoba Students' Union, and they're really quite offensive. They're beyond offensive. They are, as

far as we're concerned, the wilful promotion of hatred, and this is at a school where there is no Israel apartheid week.

Our students have been feeling rather beleaguered. A number of groups are bringing in speakers who are characterizing Israel as an apartheid state and who are making our students feel unsafe and unwelcome. Our students really just want to get on with the business of being students.

So characterizations such as the one that you've heard may not be giving the complete truth. Despite the fact that we don't have an Israel apartheid week, our students have told us that the environment is becoming more and more malignant for them.

Ms. Ruth Klein: I would have to agree with you. I think perhaps the representative of the university administration went down once and perhaps saw a table, but there's plenty more going on, even at the University of Toronto. I think we have to remember also that we shouldn't just be talking about Israel apartheid week. It's not one week out of 52; you're talking about a year-long stream of activities and propaganda.

Also, we have to remember that perhaps the U of T rep was misled by the fact that the U of T has a slightly different configuration from York University, where there is the central Vari Hall, where there are central areas that can be blocked and used as staging grounds for provocative exhibits. It's harder to do that at U of T, but that does not mean that the activity does not go on.

I've been at meetings with university administrations where they actually don't know what's being given out on their campuses. The signature poster for Israel apartheid week for this year showed Israel collectively as a child killer targeting a toddler holding a teddy bear. The year before it was Israel raping Palestine.

These are not images that prompt discussion and debate of the kind that one would like to see in the university. They're designed to be provocative. They're designed to raise the pulse. They're designed to cause trouble, and trouble does follow.

Mr. David Sweet: There's another thing I was surprised at in Mr. Steiner's testimony, because I asked him directly if he kept records, particularly of the cases where they'd called the Toronto hate crimes unit, and he said they didn't keep any definitive records.

In your answer, you mentioned speaking to the administration—and, I would imagine, probably to a number of NGOs—but I want to confirm this. Have you been encouraging the university administration, when these incidents happen, to have their security actually document these and keep track of them so we can actually, definitively...? It's just like you mentioned about the percentage of hate crimes in Toronto; there were 153, with one-third of them being toward the Jewish community. This gives you a clear indication that there's an issue. Have you encouraged them to keep statistics so you can monitor this?

•(1335)

Ms. Ruth Klein: We have encouraged them, but it's very difficult for them to keep statistics when they don't have any definitions. They don't have definitions in their policies, and with anti-Semitism, really all anyone has to say is that this is about Israel's policies, that this has nothing to do with Jews. What comes out of these demonstrations and the provocative activity, though, is very much anti-Semitism.

It would be very hard for them to keep definitive statistics. On the other hand, one would hope they would be keeping better records than they are. For example, at York University there don't seem to be very good records on what happened on February 11 when Jewish students had to be escorted out of the Hillel centre by police, and I find that very troubling.

The Chair: We still have five members who want to ask questions. I'm going to ask members to please try to be short with their questions and the witnesses to also be short with their answers.

Madame Folco.

[Translation]

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

We've been hearing that people are saying no, it is not true, there is no anti-Semitism in Canada. So my first question was going to be, do you really think there is anti-Semitism in Canada?

All of you have made it very clear, but, Ms. Klein, cumulatively you have laid out such an account of one thing after another, I don't see how anyone can really ask that question. The answer is so very clearly obvious.

My question is going to be about education. I did ask this question of other witnesses a couple of weeks back. Every time something goes wrong, we tell one another we have to do something about education. We have to get teachers to sensitize children. We have to show them good pedagogical materials so that they understand what it was really about and are not ignorant of what happened and see it for what it really was.

I beg to differ. My experience has been quite the contrary. My experience has been that in fact you can teach very young children about anti-Semitism and the consequences of anti-Semitism such as the Holocaust and others, but as they grow up from primary school age and go into secondary school, something happens to human beings. They become adolescents. In becoming adolescents, in some way they lose that sensitivity that they had in primary school. We've seen this with intercultural education, for example, which I was involved in for many years. They become desensitized. The obvious, horrible example of this that I have to mention was in the film that was shown. I didn't see the film but apparently in one scene there was a baby being thrown into the air and so on and so forth, and apparently the spectators laughed, and it was teenagers who laughed at this.

I don't really have a question; I really have a doubt. How can we really put all the onus of responsibility on the educational system when it seems to me, from my point of view, that the educational system is not able to support this responsibility? That is not because

it doesn't have the tools, but because somehow this is not the place to do it. Where the place to do it is, I don't know. All these kids who are now teenagers and young adults, who we saw in all those videos, were kids at one point, and at one point, somewhere, they read a book. They heard about Anne Frank. There is a book called *Hana's Suitcase* out there now. It's all there in the air, but how do they respond? They respond by talking about Holocaust business and so on.

This is the kind of response we have when we try in good faith to bring this information to so many people. Really it is a cry in the darkness, as far as I can see. We're putting a burden on our educational system. I don't think the educational system can do it, and I don't think it is the place where we should do it. Where should we do it? I don't know, and I ask you that question.

Ms. Ruth Klein: To me, it's an uphill battle in the schools. It doesn't mean we will stop doing it, but it is an uphill battle. Part of it, which was alluded to by my colleague, is the pervasiveness of information coming through the Internet. It is the propaganda from all over the world that will come in and tell you about Jews. Kids spend an awful lot of time on the Internet and on these social networking media opportunities, more time than they do at school, more time than they do with their parents. I have heard parents blamed as well for not inculcating their children with proper values. Really it is the Internet we have to look to.

•(1340)

Mr. Avi Benlolo: I would just add that certainly we believe the Internet to be a major factor. As Canadians, we have to look at ISP servers and Facebook and all of these social networking sites. But I have to disagree in the sense that I do believe education—repeated education—is the most important thing.

We have a training program in our centre. In our classroom every day we have public school students. It's not enough, not even the tip of the iceberg, but we have to educate them and sensitize them about being good people.

I think the other factor we have to look at is religious upbringing—where it is they're worshipping, what it is they're getting—and also their households. It was mentioned earlier about new immigrants and educating new immigrants about Canadian values.

So there are a lot of factors here. I think we have to go at it from multiple directions in order to affect that individual kid. That's what will make that dramatic difference.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Jeff Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson: I'm going to defer to Ms. Wasylycia-Leis. We can just swap places. I understand she has a meeting to get to, and I want to respect that.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Don't you have a meeting too?

Mr. Jeff Watson: I have some flexibility around being late, so don't worry about that.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: Thank you for your generosity, Jeff. I appreciate that.

I did want a couple of minutes to ask a question of especially my good friends who've come all the way from Winnipeg. Shelley and Abby are so prominent in this whole struggle, and both have done amazing work for a long time.

I want to ask a question about what's working and what isn't. Many people will look at Manitoba and Winnipeg and say that despite the fact that there's still a lot of evidence of anti-Semitism, you seem to be doing a better job of curbing and curtailing anti-Semitism, promoting dialogue, cracking down on hate incidents. I want to know if you think that is true. I believe it is true, based on talking to other colleagues.

Second, is that as a result of the fact that we have celebrated multiculturalism as an official policy for so long, as the CEC said earlier in the debate? Is it because you as members of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg have been so active in terms of lobbying politicians? Is it because you've developed strong ties with universities and the education system and are so high-profile in terms of the dialogue? Or is it the work you've done in terms of the police and establishing a hate unit?

I'm looking for suggestions on what has worked in Winnipeg that we could apply nationally and on what hasn't worked.

Ms. Shelley Faintuch: First of all, Judy, thank you very much; you're very kind.

We have had a multi-faceted approach. I'm not sure how positive and how successful it is, but when we're dealing with education we can't just leave everything to the schools. We have educated members of the police force and members of the Canadian Forces on racism in general and on that very special form of racism that has its own name—anti-Semitism.

We've worked with the schools, high schools and elementary schools, on bullying and anti-bullying programs, bringing in anti-Semitism and racism as forms of bullying, as in fact they are. We have worked with the presidents of the universities and continue to do so—finding, by the way, that most of the presidents of the universities are not completely aware of what goes on under their logo because so many speakers are being brought in.

Honestly, we'll take a stab at anything at any level, from policing to speaking to the AG to speaking to teachers to hosting in-services for teachers, and also going out to high schools and into the general public. We do an awful lot of interfaith dialogue where we raise these questions. We've done a lot of work in the inter-ethnic scene as well.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: I'd like to ask one more question around definition.

Shelley, you spoke about that at the outset, about trying to come up with a fairly narrow definition. The challenge for all of us is to actually address new stages of anti-Semitism without appearing to want to cut off all debate around the state of Israel. We're trying to find a way to do that.

One of the previous presenters we had, by the name of Mark Surchin, told us that he was concerned that the social stigma of expressions of anti-Semitism not be lessened by defining the term "anti-Semitism" too broadly such that it loses its power to shame. I'm

wondering if that's what you're getting at, or if it's another definition around narrow that you're going toward.

● (1345)

Ms. Shelley Faintuch: I believe that too broad a definition will in fact desensitize people to what anti-Semitism is and that too narrow a definition...and this is the waffle of the person who doesn't have the definition down pat. It is something that we have to work on so that it can be used for remedies. I'm talking both about legal remedies and about educational remedies.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis: It was actually a comment made by Mark Surchin. I think he was trying to warn us as a committee that if we appear to be so caught up in any reaction to Israel, we're going to cut off our nose to spite our face. I guess I'm still trying to grapple with how we do this so that we don't put up the bogeyman and we don't destroy the work of cracking down on anti-Semitism by being so politically careful.

Ms. Shelley Faintuch: I don't think there's any political careflessness in legitimate criticism of any democracy by somebody who lives in a democracy.

The Chair: Ms. Klein.

Ms. Ruth Klein: I think you've identified a really central problem for all of us in terms of too broad and too narrow, but the only thing is that if you go too narrow, the people who do not like any mention at all of Israel in this definition will not be happy either. Either we take the bull by the horns and try to make this at least broad enough that we're bringing in modern manifestations.... Because that is what the efforts to stop this inquiry going forward really are about: stopping that being added.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Watson.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses for appearing.

I'm glad we got to the question of definition. I've been asking witnesses about the EUMC's working definition of anti-Semitism, because our committee is being tasked, of course, to come up with a definition, and it has been recommended that this is the definition we should be using.

I note that it's in the 2008 audit of anti-Semitic incidents, at the back, so without presuming, though, just for the record, is this the definition that this panel should be adopting for its report? Is that a yes...?

Ms. Ruth Klein: I believe it is, because it's already in use. To try to come up now with a third definition probably would be—

Mr. Jeff Watson: Thank you.

It's just that nodding heads don't show up on the record—

A voice: Okay.

Mr. Jeff Watson: —so I wanted to be sure that we got an actual answer to the question.

Of course, the definition is important. I asked our university panel what their definition of anti-Semitism was. They couldn't say what their definition of anti-Semitism was, but they could definitively conclude that anti-Semitism wasn't a problem on their campuses, so that didn't quite make sense.

Toward the end we got into a little bit of discussion about the outside voices, if you will, those beyond the panel. I'm holding in my hand, for example, a copy of a comparison made by one particular blogger, a comparison of this committee to the old White House un-American activities committee, with the blogger calling it a northern version of that, if you will. That, of course, was the committee tasked with looking into communism and communist acts among Americans, with Joe McCarthy and that whole McCarthyism.

I began to ask a question of Rabbi Bulka on the all-party parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism government response in England. I started with the question about where they said, "We conclude that it is the Jewish community itself that is best qualified to determine what does and does not constitute antisemitism." The rabbi, as wise as he was, said that he liked the definitions he was hearing here. Unfortunately, I didn't get to ask the next question as we had run out of time.

On that question, I'm sure there are some people whose definition of anti-Semitism you wouldn't want appearing at this committee, so I want to ask this question for information for this committee, because we make decisions about witnesses, for example, who appear here. Can you give us some guidance on certain voices who perhaps shouldn't be at the table, or do you accept what the all-party committee suggested, which is that the Jewish community itself is best qualified as to what does and does not constitute anti-Semitism? Are there some voices you fear appearing at the table, perhaps, in the definition of what anti-Semitism is?

•(1350)

Ms. Shelley Faintuch: I would suggest that the voices that come to the table are voices that are representative of the mainstream Jewish community and that are accountable to the Jewish community. I would also suggest that there be some voices from the non-Jewish community. We have parliamentarians around this table who have become eminently qualified to also weigh in.

Mr. Jeff Watson: Is there anybody else who wants to give us some advice?

Ms. Ruth Klein: I don't think we need fear other people coming here, but I think the people who come should have some expertise and knowledge in the area. You wouldn't ask.... I'm not an expert in anti-black discrimination, though I work closely with the black community. I would not put myself forward as an expert witness to give testimony if you were looking at anti-black activity. I think the same yardstick should apply.

Mr. Avi Benlolo: I would in fact agree with you wholeheartedly. I have to say that I was surprised by some of the testimony that was given, because in my view it should come from the leadership of the Jewish community, from people who represent large groups within the community, and specifically in Canada, since this is a Canadian inquiry.

From my organization's point of view, as I'm sure it is with other organizations, we have 25,000 Canadian members that we represent.

So for this inquiry's purposes, my view is that certainly our definition, our model, and our view of anti-Semitism should be taken into account.

The Chair: Will that be it?

Mr. Jeff Watson: No, I'm asking—

The Chair: I would just ask you to be very brief. We have two more members wanting to ask questions.

Mr. Jeff Watson: That's fair enough. I'll leave it at that, then. Thank you.

The Chair: Professor Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I just want to thank all three witnesses for excellent presentations.

My question is to Ruth Klein, because it's a question that has to do with methodology. I think your presentation really was a very representative submission on both traditional anti-Semitism and new anti-Semitism.

When I look at the audit of anti-Semitic incidents, by your own conceptualization in appendix 1, "Definitions of Antisemitic Incidents Used by the League for Human Rights", you go into harassment, vandalism, and violence. I know there's a little footnote afterwards re anti-Israel rhetoric. But my point is that it appears to me that you're using traditional indicators respecting anti-Semitism, but you have not yet factored into your report the very things that you have factored into your submission.

So my question is, should not the League for Human Rights in effect update or revisit its own methodology so that, for example, whether it be the EUMC definition or that of the London declaration, etc., it does relate to those things, to what I would call the indicators of the new anti-Semitism, and not just the indicators of the traditional anti-Semitism?

Ms. Ruth Klein: Thank you for that question.

You'll note that at the beginning of my verbal presentation I said that we were looking at the tip of the iceberg and that, really, we know that our numbers are an underestimation, and one of the reasons is this little disclaimer at the bottom of page 25. We recognize that the boundaries between anti-Semitism and anti-Israel activity sometimes are hard to define. Only in cases where we are 100% sure and where there is a very clear anti-Semitic component will we count the incident.

The reason we do this is that for 28 years we've been doing it this way, and for the various bodies worldwide who rely on this material for an idea of what's going on in Canada, it would really skew things if we were to change in mid-term. That's not to say that we don't keep other statistics. If you read the conclusion and the introduction of the audit, you'll see that those additional indicators are taken into account.

Our own internal discussion at the moment would be when to make the switch. We're speaking with many different partners, because they would not be able to make the same comparisons over the last almost three decades if we put in an additional factor at this moment, but it doesn't mean that we don't take it into account.

The Chair: Thank you.

Candice Hoepfner.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Thank you very much.

Thank you to the witnesses.

I also want to welcome Shelley and Avi from Winnipeg. I've gotten to know them over the last nine months to a year.

Thank you for the work you're doing.

I want to ask Ms. Klein something. You mentioned an example of a member of Parliament who was sort of inconsistent in their support. They recognized that something had been done that was anti-Semitic but they didn't actually want to come out and make a statement.

I think before we can start to pass judgment on our society, we need to look at ourselves as parliamentarians. I'm wondering if you could give us an objective piece of advice, because we're all part of our political parties, and as much as we want to remain objective, many times we are partisan. Those of us who are here want to see anti-Semitism ended. We want to see Jews supported. We want to see Israel supported.

How do we sincerely hold each other to account without becoming partisan? How do we sincerely hold each other to account to not just talk the talk, but walk the walk? I'm wondering, Ms. Klein, if you could comment on that and if you could give us some objective advice.

•(1355)

Ms. Ruth Klein: Thank you for that question.

Basically, if a synagogue is vandalized, if a mosque is vandalized, if a church or any type of Sikh or Hindu or Buddhist temple is vandalized, there has to be the same yardstick. Once we start mixing in politics, then we're really lost.

I think people who look to Canada would be very surprised at a Canada where a sitting member of Parliament was actually afraid to get up and condemn something like that. Really, I think it speaks to the fact that in many people's minds, the two issues of anti-Semitism

traditional and anti-Semitism new have really become glued together. It will be very hard, in any definition or otherwise, to separate them.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: If I'm hearing you correctly, we need you to help hold us to account, because if we're trying to hold each other to account, politics get involved.

Ms. Ruth Klein: Well, we do try. We do try.

We had a private meeting, as I said. We didn't go public and embarrass the MP. We actually wondered whether it wouldn't be very obvious to everybody that she got up and made a statement on something else right after the firebombing, and it was left to somebody else to make the denunciation. It actually surprised us more that other people didn't pick up on that, on how odd it was.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: And it wasn't picked up on.

Ms. Ruth Klein: No; I heard no more about it.

As I said, we tried. We had a public meeting. We wanted to facilitate, to help, but it was not to be.

We have to ask that other members of Parliament hold their colleagues to account.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: You would suggest that we do hold each other to account on our talk versus our actions.

Ms. Ruth Klein: I think so, yes.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here. We very much appreciate the testimony.

Thank you, members. I would remind you that we start our hearings tomorrow morning: 8 o'clock, 180 Wellington, room 536.

Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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