



CANADA

Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism

EVIDENCE

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Chair: Mario Silva

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•(1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.)): Good morning, everybody. *Bienvenue à tous.*

I would like to call to order the second hearing of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism.

The meeting will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and will be broken up into three different parts. In the first hour, we will be hearing from Professor Yehuda Bauer and Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld. They will be with us through audio conferencing, through a telephone conference, as we were not able to get them on video conference. I apologize for that.

I also want to mention that we have some information from Miriam Stein that can be distributed. Unfortunately, she only has copies in English. If it's okay, I will distribute that to members.

The second thing is that Clair Bromwell, a Carleton University master's student at the school of journalism, would like to record the hearings.

Is that okay with members of the committee?

Sarah, you've been dealing with her—

Ms. Sarah LaFreniere (Associate Director, Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism): It's just to report on us for a project they're doing for school.

Would that be correct, Clair?

Yes.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): Mr. Chairman, I have some concerns around that. We had agreed previously that we would have one single feed. It always concerns me, when you have different sources, how that's publicized.

The Chair: Okay.

There isn't agreement, so you will not be able to record it. I'm sorry about that.

The other thing I'll mention is that CPAC is recording the hearing for their show entitled *On the Bright Side*.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Again, I apologize for the fact that we found out only very recently—in fact, at 7 o'clock this morning—that we were able to get both Professor Yehuda Bauer and Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld only

through audio feed, not video feed. It will require everybody to be very patient and also to listen attentively.

I would ask you, Dr. Gerstenfeld and Professor Bauer, to introduce yourselves each time you speak so that everybody is clear on who is actually speaking. We are to have transcripts of the hearing afterwards, so for our own purposes of recording, if you could introduce yourself by name each time, that would be greatly appreciated.

With that, Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, would you make your presentation, please.

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld (Director, Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism Program, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, As an Individual): Mr. Chairman, I first would like to express my appreciation for being given this opportunity to make a number of observations on anti-Semitism.

You will find, in the documents that we've presented you with, our detailed, footnoted presentation on global anti-Semitism. It analyzes the main characteristics of this global anti-Semitism, including the main originators of anti-Jewish hatred, the instruments they use, and the impacts of the anti-Semitic process. We have also included specific recommendations on what we think your committee should recommend.

I cannot, in the limited time available, deal with the large number of topics that are in the document we've submitted to you. I thus will focus on two issues that I consider particularly important. First, if we speak about Canadian anti-Semitism, what are my associations as somebody who analyzes global anti-Semitism? My second focus concerns what I hope will be the main recommendations of your commission.

Now, if we speak about Canada and anti-Semitism among experts of international anti-Semitism abroad, it is first and foremost campus anti-Semitism. Among democratic countries, Canada and the United Kingdom are the international pioneers in this field, followed by the United States and Norway.

Seven years ago, we at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, where I am the chairman of the board, initiated a research program into global academic anti-Semitism. The reason for that was largely Canada.

First, we had a Canadian intern student who had been physically attacked at Concordia University because of her pro-Israeli views. That same year, our attention was drawn to a lecture by Ted Honderich, a British professor of Canadian origin, at the University of Toronto. He said there that the Palestinians had a “moral right” to blow up Jews. He even encouraged them to do so.

These two cases of anti-Semitic incitement in Canada led to the beginning of our research program on global anti-Semitism on campus.

Regretfully, our knowledge of Canadian campus anti-Semitism has grown very much since then. I'll just mention a few incidents with which you're probably familiar.

There has been more violence at Concordia.

The hate program of Israeli Apartheid Week began at the University of Toronto in 2004. It has spread from Toronto, nationally and internationally.

There was a call for a boycott by anti-Israeli academics in January 2009 by Sid Ryan, president of the Ontario branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

During a visit I made to Canada this past summer, I was told by several professors and students that Jewish students are increasingly avoiding York University because of problems there. In February, Jewish students were confronted on the York campus by murderous anti-Semitic threats. A conference at York campus that demonized Israel took place there in June this year.

I recall that when I published my book *Academics Against Israel and the Jews* in 2007, I included, among the 17 case studies, two on Canada, because I considered it particularly important. I had a third chapter prepared that was dedicated to York University, but the author was too late with the corrections. Otherwise, three out of 18 case studies would have been Canadian. This is a further indication of the relative importance of campus anti-Semitism in Canada from a global viewpoint.

I think your country's image is being increasingly tainted abroad by both the incidents of anti-Semitic hatred on a number of your campuses and the poor reaction of campus administrations against it. I have not seen, over seven years, any indications of a decline in the hate phenomena on your campuses. The testimonies of Jewish students on Canadian campuses—you can find them in the preparatory material that's been submitted to you for today—will further confirm my opinion.

•(1110)

Now, campus anti-Semitism in Canada and elsewhere is an indicator of much more widespread problems in academia. Jews and Israel are often the first to be attacked, but it's only a matter of time until others will be targeted.

You cannot explain this problem away by saying that academic freedom is too loosely interpreted and many administrators of universities are weak personalities. In his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell introduced three famous slogans: “War is Peace”, “Slavery is Freedom”, and “Ignorance is Strength”. I think, had Orwell lived today and written about some universities—not

only Canadian ones—he might have added these: “Propaganda is Advancing Knowledge”, “Indoctrination is Higher Education”, and “Incitement promotes Scholarship”.

I have worked for 40 years as a strategic adviser to a variety of the world's largest corporations. I have never seen, during those years, any self-ruling body that after a certain time didn't become morally corrupt, be that in the business world or elsewhere, such as in academia.

There may well be a necessity for a much more general inquiry into the functioning of Canadian universities. A first step could be that complaints concerning anti-Semitism on campus should not be investigated by the universities themselves, which tend to whitewash them, but by outside bodies.

There are, beside campus anti-Semitism, other aspects of Canadian anti-Semitism. Just to mention one, classic versions of protestant anti-Semitism have mutated into anti-Israelism in parts of the United Church of Christ in Canada. However, none of the other issues equal in importance Canadian campus anti-Semitism.

So far, that's the first issue. The second issue I want to address is what I hope will be the main recommendations of your commission. Canada was the first country to withdraw from Durban II. I think it should also be the first country to bring an interstate complaint against Iran before the International Court of Justice. Both Iran and Canada are parties to the genocide convention, and Iran has criminally violated this genocide treaty. I think your former justice minister, Professor Cotler, can explain this much better than I can.

As for the second recommendation, there is a dramatic shortage in the world of think tanks and university institutions that study national and global anti-Semitism. Canada became an international leader in the field of national Jewish studies when its government of the time funded chairs in Canadian Jewish studies at both Concordia University and York University. By funding institutions for the study of anti-Semitism, it can become an international leader in this field as well, and the analysis of campus anti-Semitism should be a high priority for such institutions.

My third recommendation is that there is a need for perfected methods of monitoring and analyzing anti-Semitic incidents deriving from the three main variants of anti-Semitism over the past 2,000 years: first, religious anti-Semitism; second, ethnic or nationalist anti-Semitism; and third, anti-Israelism. This also must include anti-Semitism on the Internet. If you charge an institution with establishing criteria, sophisticated methodologies, and a data bank, as well as ongoing monitoring, you may make Canada an international leader in this area, from which many others may be able to learn a lot.

I should underline that no work can be done without an accepted definition of what anti-Semitism is. It is therefore important to accept such a definition, and the best available for this purpose is the one adopted by the EUMC.

My other recommendations are contained in the document that I presented earlier to your commission. Our centre will gladly assist you in bringing these recommendations closer to implementation.

Thank you for your attention.

•(1115)

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

We will now hear from Professor Yehuda Bauer.

You also will have ten minutes to make your presentation, Professor.

Professor Yehuda Bauer (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Academic Adviser, Yad Vashem, As an Individual): Thank you very much.

I would like to thank you and your committee for having me present some issues and possibly some answers to the problems that you are addressing.

My concern is a global one and a historical one. I think the first issue that one has to consider is what anti-Semitism actually is. Of course, “anti-Semitism” is the wrong term for what we are dealing with. There is no “Semitism” that you can be “anti”. Therefore, anti-Semitism is really a nonsensical word. It was coined by a German journalist and anti-Jewish agitator by the name of Wilhelm Marr in 1879 in order to differentiate the new nationalist and racist Jew hatred from the traditional religious one that preceded it.

We use that term for a variety of problems that arise in modern society. We use it for discrimination against Jews and for anything between a moderate dislike of Jews to murderous hatred. But I think we have to realize that when we use that term, we use something that does not really describe what we mean. What we actually mean is Jew hatred—in other words, the idea that Jews are some kind of disturbing factor in modern society.

This, of course, has historical roots of tremendous importance, which we won't go into now. Modern anti-Semitism, post-World War II, was obviously influenced by the Holocaust. Any contemporary anti-Jewish propaganda relates one way or another to that event.

I think anti-Semitism has become a global issue, not just a Canadian, American, British, European, or Muslim countries issue. It has become a problem that all of humanity has to deal with.

Let me put it very clearly: anti-Semitism was a major, if not *the* major, factor in the development of Nazi ideology, which directly led to World War II, which caused the deaths, in Europe alone, of 35 million people. Close to 6 million of these were the Jews who were murdered by the Nazis; 29 million were non-Jews.

In other words, 29 million non-Jewish people were killed largely because of Jew hatred. I emphasize that: non-Jews were killed because of hatred of Jews. If there's any good reason for non-Jewish people to fight anti-Semitism, I think that historical experience should lead them to do that.

My second point is that we always thought anti-Semitism was a result of economic problems, of economic downturns. The post-World War II incidents of anti-Semitism—in my paper, I analyze four such waves of anti-Semitism—show very clearly that this was not the case. In some cases, anti-Semitism was caused by economic downturns. In others, it was certainly not caused by economic downturns but by cultural problems, political problems, and of course by the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian confrontation in the Middle

East, which was not the cause of anti-Semitism but was a trigger for anti-Semitism.

In other words, my contention is that if there should be some kind of compromise or solution one way or another of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, there certainly will be a weakening of anti-Semitic propaganda, but it will not disappear. Proof of that can be seen in the development of radical Islamic anti-Jewish propaganda before the establishment of the state of Israel. Even if some kind of arrangement should be reached in the Middle East region, there is no chance, I think, of anti-Semitism disappearing.

•(1120)

Anti-Semitism can be fought over time, basically by two strategies. One is the recognition of the right of every group to have its own culture and independence—cultural, political, and so on. That would include the Jews along with many other groups. The other one is to undercut the basis for anti-Semitism.

The basis for anti-Semitism is the fact that the Jews are neither better nor worse than anyone else, but their culture is certainly different, and it is that difference on which the enemies of the Jews focus. Once one recognizes that, one can then develop strategies to fight it. One can encourage the idea that every group, including the Jews, has its own right to separate development and to recognition as a group.

Of course, this can only happen in democratic societies. In the present situation, we have to say that we are dealing with two kinds of worlds. We are dealing with the world of, roughly speaking, so-called western democracies. “Western”, of course, includes Australia and Japan, so the term is not really geographical but cultural. We also deal with the non-democratic world, where the impact of fighting anti-Semitism is necessarily extremely limited. I think we have to recognize that the possibility of fighting anti-Semitism in Pakistan or other places like that is limited by our limitations of influencing these societies from the outside.

Pakistan is an excellent example, because there is not a single Jew there. There was one there and they killed him. That was the American Jewish journalist Daniel Pearl.

So we are dealing with two separate issues with one underlying base. That underlying base is the traditional and cultural hatred of the Jewish people because they are different. Israel has become another case of a development from the Middle Ages; in the Middle Ages, it was the individual Jew who was hated, persecuted, and so on, but now it is the collective Jew.

The collective Jew is the state of Israel as a Jewish state. The hatred of Israel is really a direct configuration of the Middle Ages and the early modern periods. I think that when one realizes this, one can then move forward in order to deal with it.

My recommendations to your committee would be on a number of points.

First, I think your example and the example of Britain should be followed. There is an initiative in Britain for an international parliamentary union of parliamentary representatives fighting anti-Semitism; in other words, a global parliamentary movement that will include more and more parliaments in the democratic or even half-democratic world in order to face this issue.

The second point is education. You can't deal with academic anti-Semitism, for instance, without realizing that the students who are following anti-Semitic propaganda are the sons and daughters of parents who, one way or another, may influence them in one way or the opposite way—in other words, for or against anti-Semitic propaganda. So the issue is about educating not only the children but also the adults. It means introducing programs into schools that will be not only with the children but with their backgrounds, with their peer societies and parent societies.

Those are two of my main recommendations. Of course, any kind of political alliance between Canada and other countries to fight anti-Semitism will be extremely welcome.

Thank you very much.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Bauer.

We will now turn to the members of our committee.

The first question goes to Raymonde Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Thank you to the witnesses for appearing today on this not only important but extremely sensitive subject.

I have two questions. One is to Dr. Gerstenfeld and the other one, obviously, is to Dr. Bauer.

Dr. Gerstenfeld, you mentioned Norway and Sweden. As I recall, in the Second World War both Norway and Sweden, and particularly Sweden, made some very concrete gestures of solidarity with the Jews. You've mentioned here that politicians in Sweden and a government minister in Norway have gone completely the other way, have made anti-Semitic remarks and gestures, and have participated in anti-Semitic movements.

I think this is important in terms of what we see in Canada, because as I see it, these are two countries that are, first of all, democratic countries. Secondly, they are very socially minded countries. And in particular, they are countries that stood very strongly against anti-Semitism and against the Holocaust during World War II.

What is it, in your mind, that changed these countries and changed a certain number of people in these countries towards anti-Semitic gestures? What is the lesson for Canada? I see a lot of parallels with what is going on in Canada.

That is my question to Dr. Gerstenfeld.

Shall I stop there, Mr. Chair, and then go on later on to my second question?

• (1130)

The Chair: You can put both of them, if you want. It's up to you.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I'll ask my question to Dr. Bauer as well, then, and then Dr. Bauer will have some time to think about it.

Actually, it's a question that goes to just about everyone whose papers I've read. That is, we all mention the Jews' right to a national home and the fact that Jews have as much right to a national home as any other national group. However, no one, in their paper, has mentioned the fact that one of the criticisms against Jews being in Israel and considering Israel a national home is that...what is being said is that actually the Jews have been away from this for so long that in fact they have forsaken this right, and this right was given to them by Britain and France, amongst other countries. This argument was certainly a strong argument for many years, as I recall.

I would like someone to address that particular question.

First of all, Dr. Gerstenfeld.

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld: I have studied these two countries, Sweden and Norway, in great detail, and these two countries benefit greatly from an image that is largely false. This image can be maintained because there is hardly any foreign press interest. There are more foreign journalists in Israel today than there have been in Norway for the whole period since the Vikings terrorized Europe a thousand years ago.

Norway has a strong anti-Semitic tradition, which nobody knows about because nobody knows much about Norway. The name of Quisling, the wartime Prime Minister of Norway, has entered into the general language as the archetype of the traitor. It was the Norwegians and not the Germans who arrested and stole the possessions of the Jews during the Second World War. There were others who helped some Jews to escape. Norway forbade Jewish ritual slaughter—while continuing the hunting and killing of whales—in 1929, four years before ritual slaughter was forbidden in Nazi Germany.

We now have a phenomenon with Norway, with only 4.8 million people, as a pioneer in anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli incidents, and for me the two are largely interchangeable. They had a person who wanted to take the Nobel Peace Prize back from Prime Minister Peres, at the time, because that person had been condemned after the Second World War as a collaborator of the Nazis. Still, she was put on the Nobel Peace Prize committee. Minister Halverson of the extreme left was present at an anti-Israeli demonstration in January, where there were shouts of “death to the Jews”. The NTN University, a week ago, was the first university where a proposal of boycott was brought against Israel. It was defeated after enormous international pressure. The rector was the first rector to finance an anti-Israeli hate propaganda series.

All this derives from a largely leftist ideology, which sees itself as an ally of Muslims and Palestinians, even if that means supporting genocidal and criminal attitudes among these people.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: What about Sweden, Dr. Gerstenfeld?

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld: First of all, the war image you mentioned about Sweden is very one-sided. Sweden was a major trader with Germany. The Wallenberg family—I'm not speaking about Raoul Wallenberg, who was an outsider in that family—were major collaborators and only by chance escaped condemnation as collaborators after the Second World War. Indeed, when the war turned to the other side and it was clear that Germany would lose the war, they were open to receiving Danish Jews and they had earlier received a few Norwegian Jews.

In Sweden, this new type of anti-Israelism, which masks anti-Semitism, was introduced by perhaps the most famous Swedish post-war politician, Olaf Palme, a socialist who understood that Sweden should become anti-American and re-orient itself to the third world, of which the Muslim world is a very large part. He in fact made anti-Semitic remarks. He compared Israel to a Nazi state. He was together with the Greek Prime Minister, Andreas Papandreu. They were the first European senior politicians to make these anti-Semitic remarks. Nobody knows about it because nobody cares about Sweden. You cannot have today in either Norway or in Sweden a commission like your own because there are parties in these countries where you cannot find a single parliamentarian who could behave honestly in such a committee. That is certainly true for the socialist left in Norway. It is certainly true for the Left Party and the Green Party in Sweden. I have my major doubts about the socialists in Sweden. I also have major doubts about a number of other parties in Norway.

• (1135)

Ms. Raymonde Folco: Thank you.

The Chair: Dr. Bauer.

Prof. Yehuda Bauer: Yes.

The question that was addressed to me is a completely different one, of course. I cannot say that I agree with Dr. Gerstenfeld in what he said, but that's another issue.

The fact that the Jews were either driven out or left their country a very long time ago doesn't mean to say that they did not see that country as their spiritual home. In other words, for a very long period of time throughout the Middle Ages and before that, the whole of the Jewish culture was directed towards the return to whatever you want to call it—land of Israel and Palestine and so on. The possibility of returning was prevented by the political and economic situation throughout all these centuries. But throughout these centuries there were constant attempts by Jews to return there. Some of the major spiritual figures of Judaism in the Middle Ages ended their lives in that country because they wanted to resettle there.

The country was conquered by Arab invaders in the seventh century. Islam became the dominant religion, and over a period of time the local inhabitants identified with the invaders. This is a kind of situation where you have, in my view, basically two nationalisms fighting over a small piece of land. From the perspective of each one of these nationalisms, they have a right to the country. Both Jews and Palestinians have an inborn right to independence and security, and because they fight over that piece of land, the only way to reach that point would be to arrive at a compromise that would recognize each side's right to live in peace and security developing their own separate identities, cultures, and so on.

The historical argument against the Jewish settlement is very complicated and is in fact very controversial. You could say the same thing about the Palestinians. The Palestinian nationality is a fact. The moment a group of people recognizes themselves as a separate group, they are a separate group. Most of Israeli society today accepts the Palestinians as a separate people, but we should remember that the Palestinian nationality was founded in 1912 by a small group of intellectuals in Haifa. Until then the Arab inhabitants of Palestine considered themselves to be Syrians, not anything else. That doesn't mean to say that the Palestinians are not a nationality and that they don't have a right, just as the Jews have, to their separate organization, national identity, and so on. But to take the position of the Palestinians and deny the other people their rights is as illegitimate as it would be the other way around. So a recognition of the right of a people that was driven out of Palestine 2,000 years ago and was unable to return, dreamt of that return the whole time, and did not find another place to settle permanently... They were driven from one place to the other, and in the end the only possibility was to come back to the place that they had left a long time ago.

Let me just argue with my friend and colleague Dr. Gerstenfeld for a second. The facts that he presented are correct, but that was totally one-sided. It wasn't just a few Jews who were saved by the Norwegians; it was half of the Jewish community: 861 people were smuggled over the border by Norwegians into Sweden. And Quisling was sentenced to death after World War II.

• (1140)

The kind of analysis of it in Sweden is, I think, a one-sided thing, because if you take that analysis that you heard at face value, then there's absolutely no hope for any kind of change, and this is not true. There are elements in Norway and in Sweden who are opposed to the anti-Semitic elements. We need to encourage them. We need to do everything in our power to do that. Also, the Norwegian government just recently declared that the fight against anti-Semitism was one of its main objects.

You can argue about whether this was meant to be heard in the way that it was or, in other words, that it was meant to be understood in the way that it was heard or not, but certainly one should utilize such declarations and such movements in order to change situations, and not only in Norway and in Sweden. You have the same thing in Britain. You have the same thing in other countries. You have the same thing in some South American countries as well.

This is a global issue. It is not limited to Scandinavia. There again, the anti-Israeli sentiment is absolutely true; it is a cover for anti-Semitism. But that does not mean there is no right to criticize Israeli policies. It means that once you turn from criticizing the policies of another country to denying its right of existence, it becomes anti-Semitism. That's what's happening.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Professor Bauer and Dr. Gerstenfeld.

We have three more people on the committee who would like to ask questions of both of you.

I will ask if everybody could just limit their questions to within seven minutes or less, if possible. In the second part of the committee, then, I will allow members who haven't asked questions to have their first opportunity to ask questions of our other distinguished panel members as well.

For now we will go to David Sweet, Joyce Murray, and then Ken Dryden. That will be it for this round.

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

Thank you, Professor Bauer and Dr. Gerstenfeld, for your participation with us today.

I have a combination of the remarks said by both of you this morning and some of the written material, and I just want it to culminate in a single question. My concern is that McMaster University is situated in the electoral district I represent, and we've had Israeli apartheid days and some issues there. The campuses are certainly a concern. I relate to the words that were mentioned this morning, which were that there's not any decline at all evident in the anti-Semitic nature of campuses in Canada, or at least some campuses.

But I want to turn mostly to the Internet.

Dr. Gerstenfeld, in the paper that you gave us in advance, you said:

Anti-Semitism has adapted itself to the Internet. Spreading anti-Semitism there is increasingly effective. It may well lead to a culture where anti-Semitism is socially acceptable.

I just want you to expand on that. There are only three sentences there, and you didn't get a chance in your own comments today to talk about the dangers of the Internet and this whole dark fear that this may become socially acceptable because it's so profuse.

• (1145)

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld: First, with the limited time, I do not want to enter into an argument with Professor Bauer.

My book *Behind the Humanitarian Mask: The Nordic Countries, Israel and the Jews* is now—after we sold it out—free on the Internet. Everybody can read this detailed, documented book themselves.

As to the Internet, to a large extent the same is true. At the Jerusalem Center we have published a detailed analysis—footnotes 54, 55, 56 in my document—on what goes on over the Internet. We have since published one more detailed essay on what goes on in terms of allowing Holocaust denial on Facebook. These are new developments.

A major problem, of course, is that in the United States, due to their constitution's First Amendment, many of the international hate sources are located on American servers even if they are in other languages and are operated by people in other languages. This whole field has developed far too fast for governments to act effectively against it.

As explained in these documents, it is obvious that we have seen a shift of information from the media to the Internet. We now see a shift from general sources on the Internet to sources among your friends. That is what Internet 2.0 is about. You get more and more

information from people you are friendly with, and that goes at the expense of library information, media information, etc.

These are phenomena, as I said, at their very beginning, and they merit study. That supports further what I said earlier, that if at present you have hardly any institutions in the world that do research on actual anti-Semitism and future anti-Semitism and transient anti-Semitism, then that's also the reason why relatively little is known about this. One has to realize that only four universities in the world have anti-Semitism centres, and very much of their work is focused on the history of anti-Semitism. Only a part is focused on what goes on currently.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Joyce Murray.

Ms. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): I'd like to thank both of the professors for helping us with understanding this issue and how we can be constructive.

For me, one of the most critical things to understand is the difference between anti-Israel and anti-Semitism.

Professor Gerstenfeld, you stated that anti-Israel sentiment is essentially interchangeable with anti-Semitic views. At the London Conference on Combating Antisemitism, speaker after speaker acknowledged that criticism of the policies of the state of Israel should not be considered, per se, anti-Semitism.

We're seeing in Canada that some of the submissions are claiming that they have a concern over the plight of Palestinian people, and claiming that the state of Israel in some cases provides unequal treatment of Palestinians versus Jews in access to water and necessities of life.

Then Dr. Bauer made the statement that anti-Israel or anti-Israel policy becomes anti-Semitism when it's denying the right of Israel to existence.

There's a big polarity between "anti-Israel and anti-Semitism are the same" and "it's only anti-Semitism when it goes to the extreme of denying the right of Israel to exist". I am really trying to understand what is anti-Semitic and what is legitimate criticism of the policies of Israel and not anti-Semitism.

Can you both comment a bit on that?

• (1150)

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld: If you look at my footnote number 4, I have published a major essay on the common characteristics of anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism, which will certainly answer your question in much greater detail than I can do in a few minutes.

First of all, you have to look into the definition of the EUMC, which I have recommended that your committee adopt, to see when anti-Israelism becomes anti-Semitism. If, for instance, you take the Hamas charter, you can see there that "Jews" and "Israel" are used interchangeably. Here you have a charter of a political movement that promotes genocide of the Jews. It is obvious that the two are the same.

The core element of anti-Semitism is that the Jews are the absolute evil. This absolute evil mutates over periods. In the three main types of anti-Semitism—religious, nationalistic, and anti-Israelism—absolute evil is different. In religious anti-Semitism it is killing Christ, the son of God; in nationalist anti-Semitism it's being genetically inferior; and in anti-Israelism it is Israel, the Nazi state, because in our society today the Nazi state is the metaphor of absolute evil. The same core elements, the striving of the Jews to power, the Jew as a killer of children, and the Jew as being an inferior human being...for instance, you find that in many Muslim expressions the Jews are apes and pigs. You find these major themes expressed.

I can only recommend to you that all the material in my many footnotes is on the web and that you print it out. On each of the detailed points you wish to check, you will find the answers in one of the 60 documents I list, which to a large extent have been published by our centre.

Prof. Yehuda Bauer: I think Dr. Gerstenfeld is right to direct you to the definition of anti-Semitism and of anti-Israelism of the EUMC. In addition, you could use the definition of Natan Sharansky, the former minister in the Israeli government who was a refusenik, a person who was persecuted by the communist regime in the Soviet Union. His definition is parallel, really, to what the EUMC has said, only much more detailed. There is absolutely no question in my mind that you can criticize the state of Israel, just the same as you can criticize the Government of Canada, or the governments of the U.S., Russia, or any other country. It is perfectly legitimate to do so. It is absolutely illegitimate to say that because you don't like the policy of the Canadian government you think that Canada should be abolished and join, let's say, the United States. The moment you become anti-Canadian in that sense, you change your attitude completely.

If you are in favour of the autonomy and independence of any kind of ethnic group, and you advocate, for instance, the independence of Malaysia, that is one thing. When you then say that you are against the independence of Malaysia and Malaysia should be abolished, then you are anti-Malay, or anti-Chinese-Malay. In other words, you become an opponent of the ethnicity that occupies the territory of the country that you want to abolish. That is a genocidal policy. That is the policy that is advocated, for instance, by the Iranian president when he says that Israel should be abolished. That is a clear genocidal statement, and it is a genocidal statement against the Jews. If it is a genocidal statement against the Jews, that is obviously anti-Semitic.

My definition would be very simple. The moment you deny the right of the Jews to have an independent state and you deny the right of Israel to exist, as any other country that is a member of the United Nations, then you become a potential genocidal adversary of the Jewish people—in other words, an anti-Semite.

I think the definitions are pretty clear. What is missing is the translation of opposition to this kind of thing into political action. In other words, the moment somebody says anything like that—and by the way, not only about Israel but about any country of any ethnicity that occupies that country, that lives in that country—then that becomes genocidal. And there is a convention against genocide, which was signed by most countries of the world, the genocide convention of 1948. The moment you incite against such a state,

against such an ethnicity, that comes under that convention. Article II of the convention says very clearly that incitement against such an ethnicity is in itself a genocidal act. So I think the definitions are pretty clear.

•(1155)

The Chair: We have to move on. We have to wrap up this part and go on to the second part.

Ken Dryden.

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

The question is mostly for Professor Bauer. You have laid out what you believe the circumstances to be and you have made some suggestions as to what steps might be taken. I would like you to look ahead ten years. If those steps were taken, given the circumstances you described, where might we be?

You talked about where we are not being just because of an economic downturn and not just because of problems in the Middle East, and that, yes, there might be somewhat less anti-Semitism if there were a resolution to the Israel-Palestine problems. You also talked about people seeing differences and how that exacerbates problems.

You talked about the need for every group to be recognized, to have a right to culture and religion, to be understood as different. You talked about supporting initiatives as in the U.K., to have a global parliamentary movement, the education of adults, not just children.

If a number of those things would have been imagined and/or tried to a lesser or greater extent in the past, why, this time, will those things be initiated more effectively? Why will they lead to greater results this time than other times? What would happen, really, if in fact they were? How would you imagine things playing out ten years from now? From what you see as the problem, for what you imagine as the solutions, from the difficulty of initiating those solutions, where do you see us ten years from now?

Prof. Yehuda Bauer: You see, I'm an historian. Historians have tremendous problems in predicting the past. They are pretty hopeless when they come to predict the future.

So I don't think I can really answer your question of where we will be—

•(1200)

Hon. Ken Dryden: But anybody who offers recommendations is imagining a future.

Prof. Yehuda Bauer: That's right.

Hon. Ken Dryden: You've offered recommendations. What is that future you're imagining?

Prof. Yehuda Bauer: It means that one should act in the hope that it will make a difference. That is the most that people can expect of themselves.

Look, I'm a very old man, and I've seen a lot of things. I think the best thing to do is to plan for the future in the hope that it'll help. The Swedish government in 2000 organized a conference on Holocaust education with exactly that kind of thing in mind, and it did help to a certain degree. Certainly it was better than if it hadn't happened.

And 27 countries, including Canada, are now members of the International Task Force for Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research. One of the main tasks of that task force is to fight against anti-Semitism. It is a tremendous task, obviously, and we are trying to deal with it from an educational point of view in the widest sense of the word, academic and museum and so on and so forth, and education in schools and education for adults.

This is an ongoing thing. If we had started that ten or fifteen years ago, I think we would be in a better situation today. I'm quite convinced of that. When you turn to actual educators and to actual pupils and you deal with that in a consistent way over a long period of time, it does have an impact. Education does have an impact. I think it is one of the best means to change attitudes and policies in the long run. It is not going to change things tomorrow morning. That is absolutely certain. But if we don't do it today, in another five or six years' time we will be in the same situation that we are in today without having done what we should have done five or six years ago.

It is clear to me that this is an essential issue that should be addressed, especially when you take not only the educational issue but the political issue as well. Fighting in an organized way against anti-Semitism is something absolutely new. In the first two and a half decades at least after World War II, there was no kind of political action against anti-Semitism. It was only relatively recently that people began to realize that fighting against anti-Semitism when they are not Jewish is in their interest.

We had international meetings of the OECD in Europe, where Canada is also an observer and Israel is an observer, and we had three meetings that dealt with anti-Semitism. It did something. It raised the consciousness of a large number of countries that this is an issue they have to address.

Your own parliamentary meeting, the one that we are addressing at this very moment, is proof of the fact that there is a growing realization that this is an issue that has to be addressed.

The Chair: I want to thank you very much, Professor Bauer and Dr. Gerstenfeld. We apologize that we were not able to get you on video conference today, but we've certainly heard you quite clearly here in our parliamentary meeting room.

We have to now go to the second part of the committee meeting. That said, we very much appreciate the comments you made today. We thank you very much for being available—in a different place, a different time, but certainly very important to be with us.

Thank you very much.

Prof. Yehuda Bauer: You're welcome.

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld: You're welcome.

The Chair: We will now go to Professor Kenneth Marcus and Professor Alvin Rosenfeld.

Professor Marcus, please, could you start?

Professor Kenneth Marcus (Lillie and Nathan Ackerman Chair in Equality and Justice in America, Baruch College, City University of New York, As an Individual): Good morning.

Thank you, Chairman Silva, Vice-Chair Reid, distinguished parliamentarians. I am very honoured to be here and very delighted that while we have a sobering problem to discuss, you're taking these strong steps forward to resolve the problems. It's my hope that we in the United States will be able to follow the model that you are setting.

In my paper I argue that what we need most is clear, specific guidance on what is anti-Semitism so it can be resolved. And who needs to provide it? I would say, first, you do, which is to say parliamentary bodies both informally and formally. Second, it would be government regulatory and enforcement agencies, through their policies and through their enforcement. And third, it would be universities and other entities through their policies, through their compliance, through their education, through their orientation. All of this is what needs to be done.

I would say that, just as Professor Bauer and Dr. Gerstenfeld argue, the best single way to do it is by using the EUMC working definition. That is what I've argued for as well, specifically that the examples used to support the working definition are the best available source.

It seems to me that in other areas, we have come to understand the need for these sorts of specific examples. Universities, employers, and government agencies have now increasingly come to understand that it is not enough to tell people not to engage in sex discrimination. If you want to address sexual harassment, you have to say sexual harassment. And it's not enough just to say sexual harassment, because good intentions are often not enough. You need to provide examples for what is and what is not sexual harassment. Often universities do provide specific examples. Sometimes it's lengthy—what is covered and what is not covered—and, equally importantly, they use these examples as a basis for training and orientation. They make it clear what is acceptable and what isn't.

Well, this is no less important, certainly, in the areas of ethnic and racial discrimination. It may even be more important, because what we've seen over the last several decades with respect to both racism and anti-Semitism is that the problem has become increasingly covert, sometimes unconscious, and that the problem, because it is more subtle, needs to be explicated in a clear, more specific way.

Ultimately, I would argue that the goal we have is to change the culture, to change the culture in universities and to change the culture in workplaces and elsewhere where we have a problem. Legislation won't do that on its own, but we can provide the beginning of it. Once there is a legislative action, once there are policies that are accepted by regulatory agencies, once there is enforcement of those policies by the agencies, once universities have on the books what can be done, once it is then something that is provided in freshmen orientation for students, new staff training, universities, that's when we begin to change the culture.

Now, in some ways I think we have something very solid to work on, because in North America over the last few decades we have developed norms of civility that have largely reduced problems of racism and anti-Semitism from earlier levels that we had in the past. What we're seeing now is a breach or a breakdown in those existing norms. As we have developed strong bulwarks against racism and anti-Semitism, these problems have mutated somewhat. They've mutated in ways that enable people to get around the social stigma that's attached to certain forms of bias. So the challenge that we have is this. How can we repair existing norms of civility, which are basically sound in our universities and throughout society, so that the problem of anti-Semitism is not spread further?

I would argue that the development of policies that are specific—the examples used by EUMC—is the first way to do it, but I would say there are other things that need to be done as well. Speaking out is very important, and it's not done well enough. I have seen examples of university presidents who respond to specific acts of anti-Semitism by calling them out, with specificity, saying that we won't stand for this.

Now, that doesn't mean they necessarily punish them unless the actions are punishment-worthy. Sometimes they are, sometimes they aren't. But university presidents always have a freedom of speech to say what's right and what's wrong. They should be backed up by other leaders in society when they do that.

• (1205)

I've seen other cases where university leaders will not speak out. They won't speak out because they don't want to be perceived as either infringing freedom of speech or taking sides in a political battle.

Well, those are not the issues. I don't think anyone is suggesting that they either violate freedom of speech or engage in politics. Rather, when they see uncivil, biased, or hate-related actions on their campuses, they need to be very blunt and forthright about it. The same should be said not just of university leaders but also of public leaders within the country.

The final thing I would say is that when I speak out about the need to strengthen the policies we have to combat specific incidents, and when I speak about the need to build up the norms that will help us to inoculate ourselves, to build up resistance against it, these are, I think, very important short-term aspects of the problem. I think they need to be done quickly and in the short term, although it is not the complete solution.

The first thing I was welcomed with when I arrived here in Ottawa yesterday and cleared customs was a dispenser of hand sanitizer at

the airport and at my hotel. This is a very important way of dealing with the dissemination of disease in places where we have a transmission of different sorts of people and where we have a concentration of individuals.

I think it's important that we combat the germs where we see them on the university as well, and some of the policies I'm talking about are a kind of hand sanitizer. It's also important that we boost our immunity in the different ways that I've discussed by building the system of norms. But I also think that the people who put up the hand sanitizer dispensers didn't think they were curing H1N1. They thought they were providing a short-term means of managing or containing an illness while someone else works on solving or curing the ultimate problem.

We're not really talking now about curing the ultimate problem and I can't tell you how to cure it. There was a call earlier this morning, I think from Dr. Gerstenfeld, for providing more research in this area. What I would say is that all of the different methods we have in terms of policy for combatting the situation are critically important in the short term, but we have to understand that they should come together with finding a cure. That's where I think we cannot tell what the cure is, but we can tell you that there is a crying need for research centres to determine what precisely the function is within individual psychology and within social systems of anti-Semitism and racism, why this function is served in the way it is served, and how we can stop that from happening.

Again, I would urge you, both directly, yourselves, and through your influence on regulatory agencies and universities, to insist on very clear specific definitions of anti-Semitism, like EUMC; to work on ways of building up the norms that have been breaking down when it comes to rebutting racism and anti-Semitism; but beyond that, to build up the research that's needed in order to provide a long-term solution.

Thank you.

• (1210)

The Chair: Professor Alvin Rosenfeld.

Professor Alvin Rosenfeld (Director of the Institute for Jewish Culture and the Arts, Indiana University, As an Individual): Thank you.

First of all, let me applaud this initiative. It is really very important, and it has a certain urgency behind it that I wish was recognized in my own country. I know of no such parallel development at the moment in Washington, D.C., so I applaud you for your initiative.

I want to begin with a bit of an apology, because you're going to hear some pessimism. Pessimism doesn't mean hopelessness, and it doesn't mean that one should do nothing, but there is a certain dangerous momentum behind the issues that we're dealing with here, that you are dealing with. Whether or not it is going to be possible to check that momentum and keep the destructive potential of anti-Semitism from reaching its full extent, no one knows for sure.

What we do know from the history of anti-Semitism, though, is that it can be hugely and horribly destructive. None of us sitting around here wants to see that happen.

Mr. Dryden, I was very much taken by your question about where might we be ten years from now. I'm prompted by that to offer you my own prognosis. While I don't know any more than you or anyone else knows with certainty where we'll be, I fear that if the present momentum that we're witnessing continues to build up, we're going to be nowhere good. I think we are living in very troubled times. I think these troubles are deepening. Just how bad they will get, we don't know. The resurgence of anti-Semitism is symptomatic of the troubles, but the troubles go beyond anti-Semitism as well.

One of the reasons why I am a bit pessimistic...but again, pessimistic is not hopeless. I don't counsel that we do nothing and just hold our heads in our hands. But one of the reasons why I'm a bit pessimistic is that the scandal that in the past attended anti-Semitism itself has weakened. It used to be, not so long ago, that if one could, on the basis of evidence, notice the presence of anti-Semitism, that in and of itself would settle the matter. There were few things that one could be accused of that were worse than being an anti-Semite.

That's no longer the case. In fact, today, in large parts of the world, anti-Semitism is part of not just public rhetoric but public policy. It has sanction. In certain cases it's state-sponsored. Iran is the most blatant example, but I strongly urge that we keep an eye on Turkey as well, and Venezuela. Those are three countries right now that seem to me to simply not care any more that what we all know to be anti-Semitism is shameful. It is not shameful to them any more. They advocate it and are building it into daily life in very dangerous ways.

Let me call attention to a few developments in my own country that have happened in recent months. On June 10—you are all aware of this—an 89-year-old white supremacist and self-declared anti-Semite, James von Brunn, entered the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., with a twenty-two calibre rifle and murdered the museum security guard. I'm sure the news was foreground in Canada, as it was in the States.

A note that this killer left behind in his car reads as follows, and this may not in fact have been built into the news. He wrote, "The Holocaust is a lie. Obama was created by Jews. Obama does what his Jew owners tell him to do. Jews captured America's money. Jews control the mass media." One hears that rhetoric more and more today. Finger-pointing at the Jews as being a conspiratorial people in control of the media, the money, politics, and what have you is dangerously common today, and we need to do more than just take note of it.

On the very same day when this killer did his horrible work in Washington, the Reverend Jeremiah Wright, President Obama's former pastor, was quoted in *The New York Times* as complaining that "Jews" were keeping him from seeing the President. That's a direct quote.

•(1215)

A month before, in early May, a man none of us had ever heard of named Stephen Morgan was charged with the murder of a Wesleyan University student of Jewish family background. Wesleyan University is in Connecticut. He fatally shot her while she was at work in the university bookstore. His journal was later retrieved, and it included the following words, which I quote: "I think it okay to kill Jews and go on a killing spree at this school."

That same month, in mid-May, the FBI arrested four Muslim converts in New York City and charged them with plotting to blow up two synagogues in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. The group's alleged ringleader, a man named James Cromitie, was quoted as saying the following words—and I apologize for the vulgarisms, the words are his and not mine, but you need to hear them: "I hate those motherfuckers, those fucking Jewish bastards....I would like to get [destroy] a synagogue."

There is a common thread that links these otherwise separate incidents, and to my mind it's a newly liberated sense that it's okay to harbour hatred of Jews and to express that hatred in openly aggressive, even murderous, ways.

You might properly ask whether we are looking at psychopaths and sociopaths here. The answer is, yes, for sure we are. But we are also witnessing the spread of such pathology on a global scale. While in some cases the behaviour of these anti-Semites seems driven by deeply personal and sick passions, in many others strong ideological currents seem to guide their hostile words and actions.

To understand what animates today's anti-Semitism, then, it is important to identify its ideological underpinnings and understand how these underpinnings animate, and in some cases lend sanction to, today's Jew hatred. That is major work. We're only now beginning to do that work. It's going to take a significant effort on the part of researchers, parliamentarians like you, and a great many others. Until and unless we understand where this hatred today springs from, we won't be able to deal with it effectively. One of the ways for all of us to deal with today's anti-Semitism is to try to find what intellectual currents and ideological underpinnings motivate so much of it.

I'm going to stop there, and I'd be more than happy, with Ken Marcus, to answer your questions.

•(1220)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The first round of questions goes to Jeff Watson.

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

Thank you to our witnesses.

I wish you wouldn't stop; I may actually start where you stopped, Professor Rosenfeld.

First, as a preamble, at Remembrance Day last week I was reflecting a bit at a ceremony in one of my local communities and I was asked by the media about remembrance. I had a bit of a reaction to what I think has become a very passive understanding of Remembrance Day today. It's one day a year when we think about what happened and then go on living our lives as if that really didn't matter.

I think there are three things: remembrance, vigilance to threats, and then action to counter threats, and these are the lessons to be learned on what remembrance is actually about.

I think both of you touched on an important theme, that there's an ideological front with respect to radical Islam, but more broadly speaking with respect to combatting anti-Semitism. There's an ideological war front that hasn't really been opened here. Could we start with that?

I have a philosophical question first, which is how do you win an ideological war in a post-modern society that sees everything equal in terms of values or cultures? Second, if we're going to be successful in winning an ideological war, can you identify some of the ideological underpinnings?

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: You're absolutely right, by the way, to frame it in those terms. And it's not a war of ideas, it is a war of ideologies. There's a difference. One can combat bad ideas with good ideas. Can one combat toxic ideologies with better ideologies? I hope so, but I'm not sure so—particularly the ideologies that fuel anti-Semitism, which are rife with very destructive passions: fear of the Jews, envy of the Jews, suspicion of the Jews. These things go deep and they're not easily controlled, which isn't to say we mustn't try to control them. If we can begin to understand the ideologies that feed them we have a chance.

There are several different ideologies. One can't understand today's anti-Semitism without looking at radical or jihadist Islam, and a great deal of work needs to be done in that regard. As we know, there's a kind of taboo today against looking too closely at radical Islam for fear of bringing harm to Muslims as such, and one certainly does need to be cautious. We don't want to have harm come to innocent Muslims. But there are a lot of other people, probably including...and let me keep the word “probably” for a moment. I want to be a bit tentative, because we don't yet have all of the evidence. But the man who just shot up Fort Hood in Texas almost certainly looks to me to have the profile of the jihadist Muslim killer. We need to understand what jihad is really about. We need to understand radical or politicized jihadist Islam better than we do, and we mustn't fear looking into that. We need to look into that.

So one source of today's ideological warfare lies just there. Another one is on the hard left, or the far left. For all kinds of reasons, anti-Semitism on the hard left ties in with other “anti” words—anti-Americanism, anti-globalization, anti-capitalism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, you name it. There's a whole package, in other words, of ideologies here that need to be looked at, deconstructed and the like. And the relativism that you just made mention of, which is part of post-modernism and the particular cultural moment we are living in, itself needs to be critiqued, because we know certain things are not relative. There is such a thing as wickedness or evil, although those terms are under suspicion today. There is such a thing as murderous hatred, and that murderous hatred is fuelled by several different ideologies. And one of those also, by the way, not as potent today as it has been, is the kind of nationalism and racism that defines the resurgent far right. We are looking not only at skinhead or neo-Nazi right-wing ideology, but in certain parts of eastern Europe today, there's a more “respectable” kind of nationalistic ideology that includes anti-Semitism right at its centre.

I know you had Denis MacShane here within the last couple of weeks. He wrote a piece that appeared in one of the Canadian newspapers in which he singled out by name people who are sitting right now in Brussels in the European Parliament who exemplify this

kind of hard-core, right-wing ideological nationalism and anti-Semitism.

So that's a beginning of what we need to look at. We have lots to do.

•(1225)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Irwin Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): I want to welcome you both. It's not often we have two scholars who are university professors and experts on anti-Semitism.

The trigger for my question was what Professor Marcus was saying, but I invite both of you to comment, though I suspect we may get a different approach, which would be fine.

Professor Marcus, you mentioned that if you want to combat sexual harassment, you have to call it what it is and give examples. By analogy, one would say that if you want to combat anti-Semitism, you have to call it what it is and give examples.

Increasingly, one finds reference to Israel as an apartheid state, or even an apartheid Nazi state. Apartheid in international law is a crime against humanity. Nazism is a metaphor for evil. So you can arguably say that indicting Israel as an apartheid Nazi state is a call for the dismantling of Israel as a Jewish state, or even an obligatory dismantling of Israel as a Jewish state, because an apartheid Nazi state has no right to exist.

Mr. Marcus, as someone who is both a scholar of anti-Semitism and an expert on free speech, how do you address an apartheid week on campus? You have also been involved in studies on campus anti-Semitism. What should be the normative approach, to use your conceptualization, with regard to an apartheid week? One might say this is anti-Semitic and should not be permitted, or one might permit it under some notion of free speech.

I think you might get what I mean. I'd just like your sense of how to approach this—establishing norms, evolving policies, dealing this with as a case study.

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: That's a very good question, Mr. Cotler. And I'm honoured to be here with you specifically today.

You focused on the free speech aspect of that question. That is appropriate. Oftentimes, even biased and hateful statements contain elements that need to be protected. But that never ends the question. Apart from whether there are policy ramifications, there are many things that can be done to rebut biased, hateful, or simply wrong-headed and illegitimate approaches that have no ramifications for the suppression of speech. The first is to speak out against it, and I think university officials and public leaders should do so.

Second, sometimes there will be conduct that is not pure speech but that is in some way a violation. For instance, a protest may be carried on where it's not permitted, or expression may be conducted in a place that is not a public forum. There may be conduct that is not speech. There are many different categories of Holocaust remembrance day celebrations that either do not involve speech activities or that do not involve protected speech under any conception. All this should be done to regulate the non-protected aspects of the activity, and people should speak out against it.

As for whether there is a way in which these sorts of things can be regulated, it seems to me that there are many forms of anti-Semitism or racism that should not be regulated by the government. In an Israel apartheid week, there are things that should not be regulated but should nevertheless be addressed in other ways from the bully pulpit.

•(1230)

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: I can't speak to the legal issues, but I can speak to other issues around Israeli Apartheid Week and other such manifestations. In the old days we would say that's just kids, that's just political theatre, and youngsters 18 to 22 engage in those kinds of things.

But that was the old days. This is very well organized. There's a national organization, actually, that funds and organizes Israel Apartheid Week. You can catch it on the web; in fact, they have their own website. Who provides the money, I am not sure. I don't know if anyone is sure. But a great deal of work, effort, and funding goes into these operations. I know that if similar demonstrations were mounted against gays on my own campus, or against blacks on my own campus, they would be shut down within an hour. One has to ask permission of universities to use public space on campus, and no university official at my university would grant permission for demonstrations against gays, women, blacks, or any other groups. Why such license should be given in this case beats me. I don't see the legitimacy of it.

Second, I would say this: such demonstrations are part of a strategy, and the strategy is more and more obvious. The strategy, in fact, Professor Cotler, is to de-legitimize the state of Israel by driving home the point that it is an apartheid state. I will be in Israel next month, and I go to Israel as often as I can. While I know that Israel is not perfect, I know absolutely for sure that it's not an apartheid state. What I also know for sure is that the more it's accused of being an apartheid state, a racist state, a state that engages in ethnic cleansing, a Nazi state, the more it begins to sap the morale of Israelis and also of Israel's supporters outside. Repeat the lie often enough, it sticks and does its damage.

These are very poisonous developments, and if within the law they can be shut down, they should be shut down.

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: The one thing I would add to Dr. Rosenfeld's comments is that even if the core celebration of Israeli Apartheid Week were protected under local speech laws, frequently there are incidents that spill out of events like this that involve a more blatant form of harassment. So even if the observance of an Israeli Apartheid Week were protected, that doesn't mean we can be anything less than vigilant in watching to see what comes out of it in terms of the harassment of individual students.

•(1235)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Randy Hoback.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Gentlemen, thank you for coming here today. It's great to have you here. For me, this is a fairly new subject so it's one I'm learning a lot about and have a lot of curiosity about.

I want to highlight the fact that today Prime Minister Harper is in Mumbai. He went to Shabbat House and met with Rabbi Yosef Kantor and Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn just to pay tribute.

I wanted to get on the record, Chair, that he was there today.

My questions are more to do with the dealing of anti-Semitic acts. What process did you follow as a university administrator? What advice would you give them as a process to follow if you identified an anti-Semitic act going on at your university? How would you deal with it?

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: I think it's important to deal with it within a framework that's used to address discrimination and harassment generally within the university. First of all, it's important to have policies that are in place that are specifically clear and specific that people are on notice. Then it should be addressed through all of the same anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that we use elsewhere.

For those forms of anti-Semitism that do not rise to the level of being actionable, either legally or within the rules and regulations of the university, then it should be dealt with simply as a breach of the civility norms within the institution, and addressed in the way that such breaches are dealt with. At a minimum, this means speaking out and being very clear and specific. It certainly doesn't mean only generally saying we're against racism and anti-Semitism without any sort of specificity, which is utterly useless, but it does mean being very clear about what is unacceptable and inconsistent with the code and within the norms of the institution.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Would you say this has to go before university? Do you think, as we are dealing with anti-Semitism, that this is a possibility we should be looking at in the high schools with our kids? Is that something we also should be looking at?

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: Yes. I have to say that my familiarity is more within the U.S. context than within the Canadian context. I've not seen data on—

Mr. Randy Hoback: Let's use that experience to our benefit.

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: Yes.

In the elementary and secondary context in the United States, I have seen two kinds of problems. One is that textbooks often have bias—shoddy information and inaccuracies that sometimes are clearly biased. It is surprising that in the 21st century we have that, but we do have it, from some major publishers that, I expect, are probably selling their textbooks into Canada as well.

So the first problem is to look closely at the textbooks, because the major publishers in the United States still have some very serious problems. The second problem is harassment and other bias in the high schools, and we do see that. We don't see the same sort of organization and we don't see the same ideological drivers on the high school campus as in the college, but we certainly see a number of incidents.

There I think it's important to specify the policies within the school district and to treat them consistently, which is to say take them seriously and not allow them.

Mr. Randy Hoback: You would probably agree, then, that there needs to be some sort of definition and a definite need to have some sort of consensus that's consistent on what the policy should be, no matter whether it is high school or university. Do you think that work has been done, or is still a work-in-progress?

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: It definitely hasn't been done. With respect to anti-Semitism, I know of no university or school district that is providing the clarity and specificity that is required.

•(1240)

Mr. Randy Hoback: As a government official, when we see examples of a university over and over again putting up with or tolerating anti-Semitism, where it's blatantly obvious, what would you recommend we as government officials do to deal with that institution?

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: I think there are two tools. One is shame and the other is money.

The first thing is to call them on it and to make sure their stakeholders understand they are failing on their job. I think shame is a very potent tool.

I don't know how the mechanics work within the Canadian system, but certainly I imagine that most of these leaders are highly funded by you to do the research in their institutions, and their students are probably supported by you. I see no reason why the largesse that you provide should not come with a condition that it not be used in ways that discriminate against students.

Ultimately, I think, the strongest tool you have is to condition financial support upon the assurance that they are providing equal opportunity to all students and not allowing a climate of anti-Semitism or racism to develop.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Okay.

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: I would add just one thing, if I may: speak in a loud voice.

It's disgraceful to be an anti-Semite, really disgraceful. There is no way in the world it should not be sharply denounced and continually denounced if indeed it doesn't go away. It can also be hugely destructive, as we know. It's okay from time to time to bang the table and not just speak in legalese—although the legal language is vital, and I understand that.

At the end of my own submission to you, I quote your Prime Minister, Stephen Harper. I've never met the gentleman, but after reading his words, I would love to shake his hand. What he has to say is, my gosh, just what's called for. That should be said time and time again, as forcefully as can be.

Canada doesn't want to bring disgrace upon itself. No country should. No university should. No school should. One can't really make any bones about that. It is just unacceptable, period.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Rosenfeld, how would we take this report so it's a report that bangs the table?

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: You're in a better position than I am to know that, but I see just behind you a gentleman with a TV camera. I think getting to the media and in no uncertain terms denouncing what deserves to be denounced in the strongest terms possible is critical. I think it's also critical to involve other people whose voices are heard in the country and enlist them as allies in this fight.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: I have Ken Dryden next; however, I've been trying to tell the committee that I will let members who haven't asked questions go first.

Anita will be first, and then Scott will be the last person in this round. Then we'll go to part three.

Anita.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Oh. I lost my question when you told me I couldn't ask it.

The Chair: I'm sorry; that was my fault.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

Professor Rosenfeld, as I'm listening to you, what I'm hearing you say, in many ways, is name it; it's not been named enough. Name it in forums like this. Name it when it's on campus.

How else can we be naming it and calling it for what it is?

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: In one week, Governor Daniels, the governor of the state in which I live and work, is going to give a major address in Indianapolis on anti-Semitism. I'm one of the people advising him, and my advice to him is exactly what I said before: speak out very strongly, clearly, and unambiguously.

If the Governor of the State of Indiana gets the message out to the people of Indiana—and in fact the people of America at large—that anti-Semitism is absolutely unacceptable and we won't tolerate it, he will be making a real contribution. That has to be done by others, and often.

Hon. Anita Neville: What do you think the resistance to doing it is, and how can we overcome it?

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: The resistance is relatively weak, because some of it rests on political correctness. Political correctness is shabby and can be dealt with readily. One shouldn't allow it, after all. One shouldn't be a bully, but one shouldn't be confined from speaking the truth as one sees it, political correctness aside. So that's relatively lightweight resistance.

However, the ideological matters we touched on before are harder to deal with because they go deeper and involve mentalities. Ken Marcus began his remarks by saying what really needs to be done is a tall assignment: we have to change the culture. That takes a long time to happen.

• (1245)

Hon. Anita Neville: Generations.

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: Yes. Will we have generations? Once the genie is let out of the bottle in this regard, it can be toxic. I don't want to sound overly urgent, but it has to be taken very seriously and dealt with head-on, very forthrightly, no question about it, in all the ways that we can deal with it.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

My apologies for not warning you before that you could have a question.

Scott.

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

I'm going back to an earlier exchange that involved Professor Cotler on Israel Apartheid Week and the de-legitimization of the state of Israel.

This language hasn't been used, I think perhaps because it's not United Nations language; it was language of the previous American administration. I'm trying to confirm whether my hypothesis is correct or if I'm just imagining it, but what I hear is that there's an effort to argue that Israel is, by the norms of international law, a failed state, that it fails to provide the functions of a state, or indeed acts in a method that is intrinsic to its being that is antithetical to what makes a state legitimate. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us, as good international citizens, to enforce regime change upon it, or at least stand by while regime change takes place from without.

Is that overstating the goals of at least some of these folks?

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: I don't encounter that language. I don't see references to Israel as a failed state. It's well known that it's a democratic state. It's well known that it's an advanced state. One of its scientists will soon be getting a Nobel Prize for chemistry. So it's in many ways an extremely admirable state.

What I do hear is that it's a corrupt state, that it's a Nazi-like state, and that it resembles South Africa. In other words, what I hear are a series of potent slurs against it.

Professor Cotler mentioned that any state that indeed is an apartheid state gives up its legitimacy and does not have a right to continue to exist. Apartheid states or racist states should not exist. Do I think Israel is such a state? Absolutely not. Am I aware that others are accusing it of being such a state? Yes, I am. It's foul, it's vulgar, but it's repeated often enough, and it does damage. So no, I don't hear that Israel is a failed state, but I do hear increasingly that it's an unacceptable state and that it should either give up its Jewish essence and become something else or meld into some single state with the Palestinians. In my view, this is an unworkable solution. So it's under attack. It's embattled and it needs and deserves friends and allies.

The Chair: Madame Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: My question will be brief, but I'd like the answer to be as long as possible within the time limits.

I was reading your résumé, Professor Rosenfeld. It says that you have been writing about contemporary anti-Semitism, and that some of your articles on this subject have evoked intense debate internationally. I'd like to link that to its ideological underpinnings. I wonder if, without going into what you've said already in the paper, you could speak on that.

• (1250)

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: One of the dimensions of my own published work that's made it controversial is that I broke a taboo and said in public that any of a number of Jews have themselves contributed to the anti-Semitic climate that we're in now. I named them and quoted their words. I'm not the only person to have done that. There are some people in Israel who've done it as well.

One cannot understand today's anti-Semitism and hatred of Israel without recognizing the contributions of both radicalized Muslims and leftist Jews. There are Jews on the far left who abet such hostility through their own publications and their own works.

Truth-telling is important if we're going to understand what we're dealing with. Part of the truth has to do with a severe form of Jewish anti-Zionism. Some people regard it as a form of Jewish self-hatred—that may or may not apply in individual cases. Some of it, I think, is more narcissism than self-hatred. I am not licensed to psycho-analyze authors of works I read, but in such cases there seems to be both a deep pathology and a politics of bad faith.

I was serious when I talked about unpacking the ideologies that fuel today's hostility. Some of those ideologies have, as their architects—I'm ashamed to say, but I have to say—Jews, themselves.

Prof. Kenneth Marcus: If I may just add something briefly, Dr. Rosenfeld is correct in indicating his work has stirred international discussion and some controversy, but if it's not clear to you, I do want to add that he is also extraordinarily highly regarded internationally for his work, and I'm privileged to be on the panel with him. It is very difficult to do anything that means anything in the field of civil rights without creating some sort of controversy. In fact, the development of some form of controversy is a sign that you're doing something meaningful.

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: Let me just add one other thing. In line with what I said, our earlier Israeli speakers, whom we heard over audio, both said that every people is entitled to self-determination. The latest attack against Israel is that the Israelis, and beyond the Israelis the Jews themselves, are not a people: that Jewish peoplehood is a fake, it's a fabrication, it's made up. A book just now published by a professor at Tel Aviv University named Shlomo Zand makes this case. The book is nonsense. His field is French history. He knows nothing at all about Jewish history, but he claims to have studied the history of the Jews and determined that the Jews are not, indeed, a people. Consequently, they have no right to self-determination, let alone the land, because they don't exist as a discrete people. This book is now being widely translated into many European languages. It already has an Arabic translation and some months ago it won a major prize in France.

That book has parallels in other books. One of them, again, is a rotten book called *The Holocaust Industry*, by a man named Norman Finkelstein. At last count, that book was published in 17 different foreign language translations and has sold hundreds of thousands of copies. No scholar of the Holocaust—that's my own field of research—credits it whatsoever. It has no scholarly value, but nonetheless it's become a bestseller.

What does that say? It says what we're dealing with is not rational, but as I said before, implicates passions of a very sordid kind, and these books written by people with the name of Finkelstein and Shlomo Zand feed those crazy passions.

• (1255)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ken Dryden, for a very brief question and answer.

Hon. Ken Dryden: Professor Rosenfeld, you talked about how there are many more instruments of discourse available to us now. I think the public discourse in general is nastier than it has ever been

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: Yes.

Hon. Ken Dryden: —and, with the instruments we have, is more likely to continue that way. You described yourself as being more pessimistic. I think what you're saying, but I'd like to hear your response to it, is that what you are experiencing you would believe is a broadening and a deepening of a deep-seated hatred. It is not a broadening of a glib hatred, it's far deeper and more profound than that. Given what you would describe as the principal instrument in response, that of calling it as it is, standing up to it, that you would believe that, given the growth of it, the depth of it, and the fact that it is a deep-seated hatred, that is an instrument that is going to be very difficult to stand up to what you would see as the present circumstances. Is that right?

Prof. Alvin Rosenfeld: Yes.

I'll just add one other thing to your list of the sources of my pessimism. It's not only everything you said it was, it's also becoming more mainstream. We're familiar with the depth of anti-Jewish hostility. What's new is not that. What's new is that it's begun to move from the margins towards and into the mainstream, which makes it even worse.

Is it enough to decry it? Is it enough to denounce it? I don't know what's enough. I know that I have five grandchildren, and I'd like to see them grow up in a better world. So I and others feel called upon to do what we can to expose and denounce what needs to be exposed and denounced. We would love to see our numbers multiply and have others do the same.

We are living at a time when ideologies of a very nasty sort are gaining rather than lessening in strength. Are there other instruments available to us? No doubt there are legal instruments that can be used. There is nothing like forging alliances among people of real democratic spirit and getting them to take seriously the threats not only to the Jews but to society, as such, lest anti-Semitism corrupt the very foundations of the world we live in and that we want to see our children and grandchildren live in.

Other than those things, I don't know what we can do. I really don't know what we can do.

The Chair: Thank you very much, both Professor Marcus and Professor Rosenfeld. We really appreciate your being here.

Now we go to part three. We are now going to hear from Zac Kaye, executive director, and Daniel Ferman, from Hillel of Greater Toronto; Miriam Stein, advocacy chair of the Jewish Law Students' Association; and Josh Zelikovitz, immediate past-president of Hillel at Queen's University. I really apologize if I butchered anyone's name.

I guess we will start with Zac. Then we'll go to Miriam and then Josh.

• (1300)

Mr. Zac Kaye (Executive Director, Hillel of Greater Toronto, As an Individual): Thank you. It is a real pleasure to be here. I appreciate, as the other speakers have mentioned, the significance of these hearings.

We're here to describe the situation as it exists.

Mr. Scott Reid: Excuse me, Mr. Kaye, I'm just wondering if folks at the back of the room could be a little quieter. We are trying to record the proceedings today, and it's important that we have as much quiet as possible.

I apologize, Mr. Kaye, for the interruption.

Mr. Zac Kaye: Everybody has to eat, right?

The Chair: Start again if you like. Thank you very much.

Mr. Zac Kaye: Thank you for inviting us to this hearing. We're going to talk from the perspective of being on the campus, being at the heart of the situation here in Canada, as some people see it, in Toronto.

I'm the executive director of Hillel that oversees the campuses in the greater Toronto area, all the universities and the colleges, and Daniel Ferman is our city-wide student council president and former president of Hillel at York. He will speak specifically to the issues at York.

You commented that through the briefings we had, we might learn from the speakers who went before us. In a way you can probably tell that while I am now Canadian, I am originally English.

I would like to pick up a point from Mr. Dryden's question about forecasting the future. I was the national Israel affairs person for what is now called the Union of Jewish Students in Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and I had the pleasure, or perhaps not so great pleasure, of dealing with what was then known as the crisis over Zionism as racism, and the attempts on campus in Britain to marginalize Jewish students. Indeed, in some universities, including Sunderland Polytechnic, which is now a university, the Jewish society Hillel was actually banned from being an official society within the student union of that university. That goes right down to my alma mater, Manchester University, at which, last year, there was an attempt that succeeded and then was voted back down to ban the Hillel society in which I was very involved many years ago.

Having spent time with Mr. MacShane from the British High Commission, who was here and who spoke with you, I think that really what we're seeing is a continuing threat. As we have seen, we have to forecast ten years ahead. I would go back and see that we have actually reached that point, that the move from anti-Zionism has become one of marginalizing Israel and therefore Jews. What we've seen on campus, particularly at York and U of T, and I will comment particularly on Ryerson, is that during the period of the intifada, a new paradigm emerged, which was the resurrection of the Zionism-racism debate but really in the form of what we now call, and you discussed it this morning, the issue of IAW—because we don't want to give it a name—which is Israel Apartheid Week. One of the reasons, as the professor said, is that our own Jewish students begin to believe that Israel is an apartheid state, because if you repeat it often enough, they will begin to believe it.

This is part of our problem. Our students, by and large, being products of a very comfortable middle-class environment, are not exposed, and we recognize that. They're not exposed to the Palestinian narrative. One of the things that we talk about is respecting that narrative. However, when the narrative is used against you in a very negative way, and our students themselves are not experienced, not knowledgeable and so on... This relates back to the question about high schools and how you educate people to stand up and deal with these issues. Standing up and dealing with these issues suggests that there is a sense of civil discourse that exists on campus so that you can actually discuss those issues. I am on record many times as calling for the universities to create an environment where civil discourse can actually take place. We've seen at York and Ryerson and U of T—U of T being the cradle of IAW—that indeed the discourse is not civil, and that these are not places where Jewish students can engage in discourse. You've seen in our submission to

this committee that we identify many examples of things over the last five or six years that have befallen our Jewish students when they have attempted to present their own views, as did Natan Sharansky. He was a hero, a refusenik, with the civil rights movement in Russia, and a cabinet minister in Israel. He came to speak, and I chaired the event at York University. He was shouted down and prevented from speaking in the most disgusting manner.

• (1305)

We used to have a situation on campus at York where we had an unwritten policy that we respected each other's space. Daniel will talk in a moment about how, on February 11 last year, that was broken.

At Ryerson University what we've seen—and as we reported in our report—is the use by the student union to delegitimize in many ways the voice of Jewish students, the ability of Jewish students to counteract much of the rhetoric that goes on. And interestingly, Friday nights being the Jewish Sabbath, most of the events, most of the programs, even those that are committees of the student union to discuss equity issues, race relations issues, and so on, are held on Friday night, thus preventing our Jewish students from being there and participating in those programs.

I know that Sheldon Levy, president of Ryerson, is going to be coming to speak with you, to the credit of the university, notwithstanding the day of infamy, in a way, that they had during Campus Caravan—which we detailed here—two years ago. It happened to be a day when we were on campus with my president of Hillel, a lawyer in Toronto, and a couple of our students. We were meeting with President Levy that day and we thought we would take a look at the Campus Caravan, which is a celebration of multiculturalism, of everything that we pride ourselves on and what Canada is all about. As we entered into the Caravan, we went up some stairs, and there at the top of the stairs was a very sophisticated checkpoint, which must have had a couple of thousand dollars spent on it, with a barrier across, thus preventing you from entering the event unless they chose to let you in. This always has been a non-political event, and here it was being politicized with films and so on. As you'll read in the narrative we present, it was certainly anti-Israel and bordering anti-Semitism.

What we've seen is the progression from the post-war anti-Semitism in Britain that I grew up in, following on from the Mosley movement, to the emergence of the National Front, and today the British National Party. All of this is a progression. We don't have to go ten years forward—sorry to belabour it—we can see it.

As is mentioned in the British parliamentary report very clearly, the marginalization of Israel has meant the marginalization of Jews and the marginalization of Jewish students on campus. Hillel has stood steadfast in attempting to deal with some very difficult issues. You cannot imagine how Jewish students feel. They feel alienated many times, yet very proud of the fact they attend U of T, they attend York, and Ryerson, and they value the quality of education. Some Jewish professors have written extensively, colleagues of ours, who feel passionately.... My own children—one is a graduate and one was at York and then moved on to another university. Nevertheless, we feel proud about what York stands for. What we have to enable is that civil discourse is really the order of the day. I was at a conference recently in Chicago where this was very much the theme when we talked about the elephant in the room.

One of the things that the British parliamentary report talks about is the creation of a centre for constructive dialogue, what in the States they call centres for civic engagement. We've certainly very much encouraged the universities to look at those.

One of the things we really see having to happen is that Jewish students need to be protected and so on.

I want to pass it on now to Daniel before we come back later, maybe through the questions, to some of the recommendations we wish to make.

• (1310)

The Chair: We try to be at ten minutes, more or less. You're getting very close to that. Sorry about that.

Daniel.

Mr. Daniel Ferman (Citywide President, Hillel of Greater Toronto, As an Individual): I'll try to keep it brief.

The issue is clearly widespread throughout the country, and perhaps, as was mentioned, the most publicity this year was at York, given our three-month strike and some of the issues that went on. What I want to do is walk through a little bit of what happened during that strike, and post-strike, and those are some of the main issues.

The first day of the strike, and throughout the first week, what we saw on the streets of York University were the TAs striking alongside the Palestinian flag. Now, try to explain to me how the Palestinian flag is out with protesters and you'll have won this debate. There is no reason for it to be out there. And this whole debate, this whole issue over TAs, and over the strike, turned into an issue of Israel and Palestine, of Jewish students, of Jewish faculty. And it became a debate throughout. What we saw, really, was this issue being hijacked.

The strike went on, and clearly CUPE—which has now, I just heard recently, been taken over by the national office for several reasons—really hijacked this agenda, which, on the face of it, as was mentioned earlier by some of our callers, was anti-Israel. I'll echo their sentiment that there is reasonable criticism of any country, but this crosses the line into anti-Semitism in many cases.

What many of the students did is come together. The student government was against the students in this case and was for the

union, and was protesting alongside the teaching assistants. So the students came together and tried to impeach the student government.

Now, this was a wide area of students, students from all backgrounds, including several Jewish students. In the petition that had been achieved, we had about 10% of the student population sign off that they wanted to impeach the student government, and a press conference was held a floor below where Hillel is in the university. This press conference was disrupted by about a hundred people, and eventually it was shut down.

When several students, who happened to be Jewish, returned to Hillel—and let me be clear, because there's been controversy that it was moved—the press conference was closed, it was cancelled, and some students went back to the Jewish students' association, the Hillel on campus, to relax.

A few minutes later, a hundred people came around there and barricaded the students in their lounge because they were Jewish and because of their beliefs. Clearly, that's anti-Semitic. Clearly, it's unacceptable. Police were called and we were advised that we couldn't be safe in our space, that we were not allowed to be in our space for fear that we would be hurt physically, emotionally, or other, so we left. And on the way out—and I apologize for the vulgarity, again, as my colleagues on the panel did beforehand—I was called a "fucking Jew" and I was told to "Die, Jew". While we were in there, I heard, "Let's go in and get them."

I've never felt a moment like that, never felt scared like that. And clearly, that is well beyond the line of anti-Israelism. Clearly, that's well beyond the line of any acceptable discourse on campus.

These types of issues at York and others are not isolated. Clearly, the extreme ones are not happening on a regular basis. And thank God for that. It could be much worse. It could be much worse. But that being said, the same day—this was February 11—in a classroom, a student was told not to wear an Israeli shirt because the teaching assistant didn't agree with his politics.

Once again, the university took its bureaucratic time to achieve things. Both those incidents are still not finished. There are still appeals. There's still discussion. Obviously, things take time, but today, in November, nine months later, those incidents are still not resolved.

Time's brief, but I want to mention one other thing before a couple of recommendations.

Last week, for Remembrance Day—there was the comment about Remembrance Day—an alternative ceremony was held at York University at about 11:20, so right after the main ceremony finished. It was designed to allow other people to express their views. Now, the ceremony was broadcast on the radio, and it began by saying that while it's important to recognize those from our military who have lost their lives to defend this country, we can't forget those in the other countries who have died. It focused primarily on the Middle East conflict, on the Palestinians. It was horrific, you know, that these things are being allowed on the university.

There is a line. Freedom of speech is important; the university is a place for dialogue and discussion, but that is unacceptable. It is unacceptable for Canadian values to be hijacked for those purposes, and that's clearly what is happening throughout the university system.

•(1315)

I have a couple of comments on some recommendations that have been outlined in your packets. But I want to focus on providing training for university officials and student union officials in order to ensure that the diversity and equity of all are preserved. I sit as a member of the student union government in the opposition, and they are completely anti-Israel.

My time is coming to a close. I will leave some time for questions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we will go to Miriam Stein.

Ms. Miriam Stein (Advocacy Chair, Jewish Law Students' Association, As an Individual): Good afternoon.

My name is Miriam Stein. I am a common law student at the University of Ottawa. I volunteer for Hillel Ottawa, and I am the advocacy chair for the Jewish Law Students' Association, the JLSA, for 2009-10 academic year.

While my statement to the panel will discuss events that involve either Hillel Ottawa or the JLSA, my statement is an individualized account and does not necessarily represent the beliefs of either Hillel Ottawa or the JLSA.

Hillel is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world. Its mission is to enrich the lives of Jewish students on campus by exploring and celebrating Jewish identity through a variety of mechanisms. Hillel's international website declares that Hillel is steadfastly committed to the support of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure and recognized borders and as a member of the family of free nations. At every campus, each Hillel is somewhat different, reflecting the interests of its student and professional leaders.

My statement concerns an experience I had while volunteering for Hillel Ottawa. The Ottawa contingent of the Ontario Public Interest Research Group, which I will refer to as OPIRG, is categorized by the student federation of the University of Ottawa as an "other levied organization". It shares its privilege status along with three official University of Ottawa entities: student academic and support services, legal aid, and sports services. In 2007-08, the student federation allocated \$208,685 in student funds to OPIRG Ottawa. More recent figures are unavailable, but its funding has increased. In 2008-09, undergraduate students paid it \$3.38 per semester and are now paying \$3.46 per semester.

While OPIRG Ottawa is funded through student dollars, this organization allows membership from outside the campus and will fund events by non-campus groups. OPIRG Ottawa claims to be a non-partisan group, unaffiliated to any political party or movement. The organization claims to be dedicated to bringing together and building upon a broad-based community. As stated on its website, its mandate is to advocate for social, environmental, and economic justice.

In October 2008 I was volunteering for Hillel Ottawa with regard to a Jewish community-wide event in which a Jewish Ugandan leader was slated to discuss topics such as sustainable development initiatives and education among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Uganda, topics in line with OPIRG Ottawa's interests.

The event was non-political and unrelated to the state of Israel. My task was to alert the broader student community about this event, and I asked organizations if they would support the event—in name, not money. I invited various student groups to sponsor the event, including OPIRG Ottawa. After the event had passed, OPIRG Ottawa decided it should respond to my invitation. I was sent an email directed to Hillel. The email stated that OPIRG Ottawa could not sponsor what seems to be an interesting event due to Hillel's relationship to apartheid, Israel, and Zionist ideology. Since then, OPIRG Ottawa has more than twice reaffirmed its blanket opposition to working with Hillel. Meanwhile, OPIRG Ottawa remains open to working with other student groups and non-student groups. For example, the Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights is one of its actions groups, and this status ensures that the group has access to OPIRG Ottawa's financial resources.

Student outrage against OPIRG Ottawa's stance against Hillel intensified. On December 16, 2008, OPIRG Ottawa posted a public response addressing students' concerns. In the letter, OPIRG Ottawa stated that Hillel's Ottawa mandate specifies that Hillel promotes the support of the Jewish state, the state of Israel. OPIRG Ottawa said it viewed Hillel's steadfast support of Israel to be a position that alienates Palestinians and undermines respect for their personhood, mobility rights, and basic human rights. Accordingly, the letter continued, OPIRG Ottawa could not formally endorse Hillel Ottawa or events sponsored by it. OPIRG Ottawa based this decision on Hillel's political support of Zionism, while claiming to be open to working with Jewish organizations and other organizations that respect basic human rights for Palestinians.

I was, and remain, appalled by OPIRG Ottawa's zero-sum formulation of support for the state of Israel and respect for human rights for Palestinians. This zero-sum reasoning is simplistic, offensive, and blatantly false. I am also appalled by OPIRG Ottawa's naive understanding of Zionism as well as its use of the word in a derogatory manner. It is clear that if any Jewish organization wishes to work with OPIRG Ottawa it must either share OPIRG Ottawa's extreme political and social views on Israel or support Israel in silence. Rather than encouraging dialogue and allowing for thoughtful criticism of Israel, as there should be for any state, OPIRG Ottawa has rejected all dialogue and has come to a conclusion regarding Israel.

• (1320)

As a member of the Jewish Law Students' Association, the JLSA, I teamed up with the JLSA's then advocacy chair to respond to OPIRG-Ottawa's letter. We explained that OPIRG-Ottawa's stance against Hillel makes Jewish students feel isolated and marginalized. To address OPIRG-Ottawa's refusal to work with known Zionists while remaining open to working with other Jewish organizations, we noted that for many Jews, to be Jewish is to be Zionist. We asserted that as Jews, we have the right to believe in our people's inalienable right to self-determination.

As a result of OPIRG-Ottawa's blanket rejection of Hillel Ottawa, I helped initiate an opt-out campaign on campus to encourage students to recover the portion of their tuition fees that helps fund OPIRG-Ottawa. While some universities have an online opt-out, University of Ottawa students must opt out in person. They must undergo the hassle of providing OPIRG-Ottawa with their valid student card and proof of registration and payment for the semester. Several students reported to me feeling uncomfortable being forced to opt out in person.

I raised my concerns regarding OPIRG-Ottawa with the university's president, Mr. Allan Rock; the then president of the university student federation, Mr. Dean Haldenby; and the director of the university's Centre for Equity and Human Rights, Ms. Francine Page.

Mr. Rock blogged about his concerns, and in a public letter to Mr. Haldenby, he encouraged the student federation to speak out against OPIRG-Ottawa's refusal to work with Hillel. In a letter in response to Mr. Rock, Mr. Haldenby stated that while OPIRG-Ottawa is an organization external to the student federation, he had raised his concerns with Ms. Page.

Ms. Page provided me with information explaining how OPIRG-Ottawa can lose its student funding, a burdensome task that ultimately relies on the goodwill of the student body to vote against the organization. She also explained to me that the University of Ottawa has yet to implement any kind of general anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy. As such, the university lacks any concrete human rights standards for the university to follow and enforce. Finally, she told me that since OPIRG-Ottawa is external to the student federation, the federation cannot prescribe a code of conduct for OPIRG-Ottawa. In essence, the organization seems to be above the law.

It is now almost a year since OPIRG-Ottawa's views regarding Hillel Ottawa became public. I have yet to witness any sort change regarding OPIRG-Ottawa's policy toward Hillel Ottawa. The result is that OPIRG-Ottawa has been able to marginalize and discriminate against Jewish students without any consequence.

The behaviour on campus by groups such as OPIRG-Ottawa is unacceptable. To prevent and monitor this kind of behaviour, I have some recommendations.

The government should provide a yearly report to Parliament that details the trends and levels of anti-Semitic activity on campus. As part of that reporting exercise, the government should establish clearly defined benchmarks as to what constitutes discrimination, harassment, and racism in an academic setting. These benchmarks

should help universities identify the line between legitimate criticism of the State of Israel and anti-Semitism.

As a prerequisite for receiving any post-secondary grants awarded by the government, a post-secondary institution should demonstrate to the government the following: it has an articulate and well-publicized anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-racism policy that allows human rights standards to be applied; it has active policies and programs in place to ensure civil discourse and an academic exchange of ideas in an environment free of intimidation and fear; and it ensures that organizations funded by student levies receive mandatory diversity and sensitivity training.

To conclude, I want to clearly express what this issue means to me. As a Canadian and as a Jew, I have found OPIRG-Ottawa's position against Hillel, its condemnation of Zionism, and its declared stance on the State of Israel both hurtful and alienating. I have been made to feel as though it is shameful and somehow wrong to openly support the State of Israel and to believe in the right to Jewish self-determination. It is frustrating, upsetting, and confusing that a group with privileged status as an other-levied organization at a university in our nation's capital can take such a contentious and staunch position with absolute impunity.

OPIRG-Ottawa's actions have engendered a hostile environment for me to express my Jewish identity on campus. If one does not understand how OPIRG-Ottawa's actions are discriminatory on their face, then let me assure you, they are discriminatory in their effects.

Thank you, Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to speak before you as well as before the panel.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Miriam.

Now we go to Josh Zelikovitz.

Mr. Josh Zelikovitz (Immediate Past President, Queen's Hillel, As an Individual): Good afternoon.

My name is Josh Zelikovitz. I'm going to talk specifically about anti-Semitism at Queen's University and I'm going to make some recommendations for how to move forward.

Queen's Hillel is similar to the two organizations that were just described. I would say the two key differences are, firstly, that we are an organization that's governed completely by students and we are a democratic institution, and secondly, Queen's Hillel doesn't actively engage in what you would call Israel advocacy. Our ideology is that we support Israel, but we don't carry out day-to-day activism.

I'm the immediate past president of Queen's Hillel and I'm here today as their representative.

To elaborate on anti-Semitism at Queen's, I want to talk about concerns Jewish students are facing on three levels. Firstly, there are manifestations of classic anti-Semitism, problems relating to Jewish dietary restrictions, and anti-Semitism as it relates to issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

When I speak of classic anti-Semitism, I'm talking about a very basic disdain for Jews that manifests itself in a way very differently from the more politically charged issues I'm going to talk about after. To highlight a few of these, last year while I was serving as president of Hillel, we had a Jewish student who was an active Hillel member whose car was defaced with swastikas and the words "dirty Jew" written across it.

I should mention, for context, that this happened amidst a series of racist attacks at Queen's that were not exclusively targeted at Jews. The Muslim Students Association had its offices and prayer space broken into and vandalized several times. A black faculty member was assaulted and verbally harassed. I think when we look at this classic anti-Semitism, it's more rooted in a form of xenophobia that targets multiple groups, not exclusively Jews.

I can speak about the Jewish aspect because it's what I'm more familiar with. The written submission goes more in depth into this, but we've had similar incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism on a Queen's bulletin board in 2004, most recently on student property this past summer. We've also had incidents. Queen's Hillel runs a Holocaust education week each year, and in the students centre we put up a large display. We've had incidents where people will write many anti-Semitic remarks on our response board, which we put up for people to share their reactions to the display. As a result, we've had to remove this board. So that's the classic anti-Semitism.

Moving on to the issue of dietary restrictions, it seems like something that would be a bit out of place here, but I do think it's an important issue. At Queen's, almost all first-year students live in residence. To live in residence on main campus, students must buy a meal plan; they can't opt out of it, and this has a value of several thousands of dollars. The problem is that there are no realistic kosher options. So the reality is that students who are coming into first year, who are Jewish and follow Jewish dietary laws, need to make a decision to either lose thousands of dollars that they're not able to opt out of or to skip what's considered a core element of Queen's experience. I've spoken to the administration at Queen's many times. I would say this problem is rooted in logistical concerns and not racism. Nonetheless, it constitutes a systematic exclusion of some Jewish students from the Queen's community, based on their religious beliefs. I think that's a very serious problem that needs to be addressed.

Thirdly, I want to talk about anti-Semitism as it relates to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Now, I want to clarify that before I go into this. We should say we always have the problem of determining when something is anti-Semitic and when it's simply a criticism of Israel. This is especially important for my organization, Queen's Hillel, because we're an organization that combats anti-Semitism, but we do not consider it part of our mandate, as a centre for Jewish campus life, to be the organization that responds every time something is said against Israel. It's simply outside of what we do.

I would reject the argument that there's a specific line of severity or magnitude in which anti-Israel or anti-Zionist attitudes become anti-Semitic. I don't think it's an issue of how harsh these criticisms are. Rather, it's a question of what methods are employed by it.

●(1325)

When I was president last year I worked with a group of Hillel executives to devise very clear standards on when we consider an attack on Israel or Zionism to be anti-Semitic. We came up with none of these completely on our own. We did extensive reading on various other policies that other organizations use, and we came up with three criteria for when we consider things that are related to Israel or Zionism to be anti-Semitic.

The first one is if they employ classically anti-Semitic themes. So if we see things like physical stereotypes—Jews depicted with big noses—or imagery of classically anti-Semitic issues, if we see things like global conspiracies, Jews carrying big bags of money, or allusions to blood libel, those are instant triggers that we're dealing with an anti-Semitic issue.

Second is denying or belittling the Holocaust. When I say "belittling", I'm not just talking about people who say the Holocaust didn't happen; I'm also talking about people who make false comparisons that diminish the enormity of six million murders.

The third criterion we use is collective responsibility. So if one group of Jews, in any context, is blamed for the actions of another group of Jews, we consider that to be anti-Semitic. The core element of racism is that the part is responsible for the whole, or vice-versa.

I want to talk about some specific instances when we felt these lines had been crossed. Two have been related to anti-Israel cartoons, and the results were a little bit different.

The first one was in 2004. This was before my time at Queen's Hillel, but I spoke to the person who was the president at the time, who relayed this to me.

Essentially, QPHR, the Queen's Palestinian Human Rights Club, which is now known as SPHR, distributed literature portraying Jews with big noses and carrying large sacks of money. When Queen's Hillel pursued the issue—it was quite a public issue and was in the Queen's *Journal*, the student newspaper—the president of their club wrote to the Queen's *Journal* saying that their organization could not be anti-Semitic on the grounds that "Palestinians are Semites too".

In essence, QPHR denied not only that its cartoon showing Jews with big noses and sacks of money was anti-Semitic, but based on the etymology of the word "anti-Semitism", it denied that it was even capable of being anti-Semitic.

Now I'm going to speak about a similar incident that happened last year when I was running Hillel.

SPHR had several cartoons posted to their Facebook page demonizing Israel. Some of them were what I would consider to be in bad taste but not anti-Semitic. But there were three very problematic ones. Two equated Jews with Nazis, and a third image certainly evoked blood libel because it showed Jews preparing to drink the blood of Palestinians. Ironically, the person who originally posted these cartoons to the SPHR Facebook page was a key leader in an organization known as QCREG, the Queen's Coalition against Racial and Ethnic Discrimination, which is a major anti-racist group on campus and has projects that are funded in part by the university.

I met with this student leader. She denied that they were anti-Semitic, but she did agree to remove the images.

I want to talk about belittling of the Holocaust, because we had a problem two years ago when I was serving as the Queen's Hillel community relations liaison. It was after an Israeli incursion into Gaza, and SPHR placed a large banner in the student centre commemorating "victims of the Gaza Shoah". For those of you unfamiliar with the term, Shoah is the Hebrew word for Holocaust.

My position and the position of Hillel was that SPHR was fully within their rights to mourn their dead. But Queen's Hillel argued that the use of the word "Shoah" in this enormity diminished the enormity of the Holocaust. The calculated use of this term was intentionally meant to make Jewish students feel unwelcome, and it didn't really provide anything meaningful to the discourse. So in response we placed a poster next to SPHR's defining what Shoah was and why the misuse of the term was offensive and hurtful to Jewish people.

Of course, no discussion of contemporary anti-Semitism on Canadian universities is complete without addressing Israel Apartheid Week. As we know, it started at the University of Toronto and tries to connect Israel to apartheid South Africa.

• (1330)

We had IAW for the first time at Queens University. I'm going to argue that IAW itself is not inherently anti-Semitic, but it creates an environment where anti-Semitism is permitted to flourish.

There are other problems related to IAW that are not necessarily anti-Semitism, but they are still causes for concern. During IAW, we had these so-called checkpoints. SPHR, which runs Israeli Apartheid Week, allied with several professors and set up what were called checkpoints outside of several classrooms that would simulate going through a West Bank checkpoint. Students would go through and then watch a lengthy presentation in class.

A number of students, Jewish and non-Jewish, approached Hillel. They felt that they had no possibility of opting out of these checkpoints because they were mandatory parts of their class. Some were specifically put on days when there were assignments due, so the students had to go to these classes. They felt they were being harassed, and they felt there was an abuse of podium going on. Again, I'm not sure if this would be considered explicitly anti-Semitic, but it certainly is a cause for concern.

The next incident I'm going to describe I think demonstrates perfectly how IAW creates this environment of hatred that allows anti-Semitism to flourish. During IAW, a pro-Israel group at Queen's, which is called Israel on Campus, was distributing literature throughout the university. One of the pamphlets they had was an article from the *National Post* about two black South African women who had lived through the apartheid era. They were arguing that Israeli apartheid was a false analogy and that it shouldn't be used in this case. A Jewish student found and brought a copy to me and Hillel that had swastikas drawn all over it.

How do we move forward from here? We see there is a connection from Israel Apartheid Week to creating this environment where hate occurs. Pertaining to the first issue of classical anti-Semitism, I would say this needs to be dealt with in the same way that all other

forms of racism are combated. I would also say that in this classic anti-Semitism the institutions in place have been fairly well equipped to deal with them.

On the kosher issue, the problem of food, I would say there's definitely a role for government. These are public institutions. There's a possibility for government to either provide grants or resources that can allow dietary restrictions to be fulfilled or to legislatively mandate that institutions must let students opt out if they're being excluded from the services they're required to buy.

Finally, on the issue of anti-Semitism and its intersection with the Arab-Israeli conflict, I want to state unequivocally that we don't want censorship against the state of Israel. We don't want censorship against criticism because it's not just contrary to our own Canadian values, but I think it would also further inflame radicals on the other side.

What can we do? I will give three concrete recommendations.

The first is that government needs a clear definition of what anti-Semitism is and where this intersection occurs. CPCCA certainly can play a role on that.

Secondly, I think it's important to have a mechanism that can report and look into these incidents further, because us coming to you isn't the same as a neutral organization.

Third, I think there's a role for government officials to play as a moral influencer, to use your own voices to rally support.

I want to express my gratitude and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

• (1335)

The Chair: Thank you.

I've been very generous with all of the witnesses' time, but we only have 20 minutes and there are about four members who have questions to ask. The questions and answers have to be very brief, with no more than five minutes.

Candice Hoepfner, you haven't asked a question yet. You can go first.

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

I think any time there's discrimination of any kind, one of the best things we can do is shine a light on it. I think that's what we're trying to do. I know the media plays a huge role in exposing discrimination. They have played a huge role, whether it's been discrimination against gay and lesbian people, women, or aboriginal people. They play a huge role in exposing the circumstances and the harm that's done to individuals.

I hear your stories, Miriam and Daniel, and I'm wondering whether there was any kind of media coverage on this. Did the university media cover it? Did the mainstream media cover it? If they did, what was the coverage like? If they didn't, could any of you speak a little about the role that media can play in helping to combat anti-Semitism?

• (1340)

Mr. Daniel Ferman: I can comment if you want.

In terms of many of the incidents at York, the larger incidents were definitely covered by the mainstream media. Many of the papers and some of the TV stations even picked up on some of the incidents. Obviously the smaller incidents made it to some of the campus media.

But the way the mainstream media works, it's short-lived. The *Canadian Jewish News* and some of the larger Jewish papers picked up on these incidents and have been following them since they started. But ultimately they die away in the media. They're smaller issues in the eyes of the media, and as I said, some of these issues are unresolved months later, and therefore the mainstream media is not interested at that point. But they were covered at the time, and the mainstream media really helps to get out the message that these incidents are happening on campus.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: So would you say that they did play a positive role in getting the message out? Would you say positive? Neutral?

Mr. Daniel Ferman: Is it ever one way? Obviously not all the coverage was positive, but it is getting the message out there that there are incidents and there are problems the university needs to address.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Thanks.

Ms. Miriam Stein: The incident that happened with OPIRG-Ottawa was initially reported in the media. It was picked up by the *Ottawa Citizen* and I know several other media outlets reported on it as well.

But I'd have to agree with what Mr. Ferman said that while initially the story.... Mr. Allan Rock, of course, was concerned that this was suddenly in the news. It raises concerns, but then after a while it just sort of dies away without any kind of sustained attention on the issue.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Maybe that's where I'm hoping that we can find ways to encourage the media to sustain interest, because they do pick certain groups, and it's good. They pick certain groups that they help—for example, gays and lesbians. They've done a very good job of exposing discrimination against that group of people, and if there is any continued discrimination.

I wonder if there are ways we can help educate the media so they can maybe bring this forward, even in a stronger way, while still obviously remaining balanced.

Mr. Zac Kaye: One of the things we've seen is that the media is very mixed, depending on who is influencing whom. And certainly some of the national papers have been influenced by one side or the other, so there is bias that is reported.

One of the things we would like to see—something that the British parliamentary committee recommended—is that there be a yearly report card that maybe comes from Parliament, reflecting trends on anti-Semitism so this can't be ignored. Then it's on the table, the level of physical attacks and intimidation, and that those who support Israel's position on campus are exposed to the level of anti-Semitism that we've heard about.

Part of the fact is that often a story emerges and then, as we've heard, it dies away. If it's clearly on the record—if February 11 is clearly seen to be the nadir of anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish students

in universities in Canada—then it has to be noted. But it has to be noted in a forum where the media can refer to it, pick it up, and move forward with it.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: And maybe there will be some accountability.

Mr. Zac Kaye: Correct, and that accountability will come as a consequence.

Ms. Candice Hoepfner: Right.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Professor Irwin Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I just want to say that I commend you for coming here. It's one thing to have scholars discuss hostile environments on campus and the like—and certainly the testimony we had from our scholars this morning was important—but it's another thing to have people come with witness testimony who have experienced that kind of hostile environment.

My question to you—because you've all made some recommendations that are well founded about what government or Parliament can do—as witnesses, I'd like to know what the university has done. Not only what it has done, but what has it not done and what can it do? Let me be very specific for reasons of time. Both Zac and Danny mentioned that in light of the incidents that you've described, nine months later very little has been done with regard to those incidents. I understand that an inquiry was set up. I'd like to know what the results of that inquiry were, whether you deemed them to be satisfactory, and what recommendations need to be made.

My second question, which any of you can pick up on, is what has the faculty done? I still regard myself as a member of a faculty at a university, and frankly, these were not the kinds of things we were experiencing. But I'd like to know, does faculty speak up? Do they speak up with respect to matters such as a discriminatory, hostile environment and the like?

Those are my questions.

• (1345)

Mr. Daniel Ferman: In terms of the inquiry you mentioned, the results were published, and many of the recommendations that were suggested are slowly being implemented. Like anything, there is a process to it. We are hopeful that they will bring some changes. So far this year, there have been very few incidents—nothing major—which is a positive sign, obviously, moving forward. In the document that was circulated, the recommendations were about creating a sense of dialogue on campus and bringing groups together in a non-combative way, without protests and the like, dealing in dialogue and having multi-faith initiatives and the like to really pull these things together.

Are they satisfactory? We'll see. It's too early to tell at this point. Hopefully some of the changes will provide permanent change for the months to come.

Just briefly about faculty, the faculty have been very supportive to Jewish students for the most part overall, always willing to speak out. I think from the faculty's perspective—and I won't speak for them—they are there for good. They are professors for good, and they value the university and will defend it. The one thing I'll say is that York, for example, is still a great place for Jewish students to go. Notwithstanding what's been said and what I said earlier, it's still a great place for students to attend, and there's still a lot of benefit for Jewish students to go there.

Mr. Josh Zelikovitz: If I could just add, I've spoken with many faculty members who feel very strongly one way or the other but are uncomfortable to speak. Many of the faculty members who sympathize with Jewish students feel very uncomfortable to speak because they think there will be repercussions within their own academic circle. I don't know that much about the internal politics of it, but I would say about a dozen or so have expressed to me concerns that they don't feel they can speak out the way others can.

Mr. Zac Kaye: Just very quickly, we had the Monahan report into the variety of incidents at York, and there are a number of meetings—I'll be attending one next week—that are looking at the creation of a centre for dialogue, which is something I've been recommending at York for a long time, and hopefully that might come into being. We do have now on many campus the faculty for Palestine, which is a group of academics who take up that position, and I can't bring evidence, but certainly there's anecdotal evidence about the misuse of the podium by some of these professors, intimidating Jewish students and so on. There was an incident at the university in Oshawa where a Jewish student in a class felt that the professor, totally out of the context of the class, was critical of Israel, of recent happenings, and he wrote an e-mail to the professor. In the next class, the professor asked if there was anybody Jewish in the class. Fortunately the student was sensitive enough and aware enough not to put up his hand to self-identify, but he certainly felt victimized by what took place.

We are seeing the misuse of the podium in many ways, and it's one of the most difficult things for students to come to bring evidence. We have a number of examples of where students have come to us and reported situations, but they're fearful of actually moving forward on them because of the system that exists.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

You have very little time.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: It's very brief. It's just a question of fact.

Professor Marcus said if you want to combat sexual harassment, you have to call it such and give examples. My question is whether the inquiry at York identified what you described this morning or otherwise as being anti-Jewish activities or whether it left it in a rather generalized comment.

Mr. Zac Kaye: Unfortunately, it's in a very generalized form. We did submit, together with the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Jewish Federation, a very strong list of recommendations. One of the criticisms of the report is that it doesn't per se identify anti-Semitism outright. Perhaps that's one of the criticisms that we'll hold up against the report itself. A number of students did organize their own press conference a few weeks ago to focus on that issue. I think that by negotiation we'll move forward to try—hearing what the

professor had to say—to call a spade a spade. I think that's a work in progress, to be honest.

• (1350)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

David Sweet.

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

I just wanted to go back. I didn't ask a question in the last round because I asked one in the first and didn't want to take up some time. Professor Rosenfeld had mentioned something that I felt in its simplicity was profound. He talked about the fact that anti-Semitism has gone mainstream, and one of the ways to view the seriousness of the issue is that it's not scandalous any more, where just 20 years ago it was. Even in the testimony that I hear, even those people who are positively supportive of those who had just given testimony, who are in universities, who have been going to classes, it's passive in nature. No longer are they outraged by what's happened. That's a real concern of mine.

Another big concern of mine is something that was given in a testimony by Ms. Stein.

I just want to confirm that you spoke to Ms. Francine Page, who is the director of the university's Centre for Equity and Human Rights. You testified that "As such, the university lacks any concrete human rights standards for the university to follow and enforce." You're saying that the university actually has a department of human rights but has no written policy or standards on that. Is that correct, or am I reading it wrong?

Ms. Miriam Stein: The centre that Ms. Francine Page works for is an organ of the student federation. I'm not an expert on how these organizations work on campus, but it's the independent voice away from the official voice of the university. So if you were to go on to the University of Ottawa website, for example, you're not going to find any kind of anti-discrimination policy, but you'll find, for example, an anti-sexual-harassment policy.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. David Sweet: Is there something in the works? Are they actually developing some standards?

Ms. Miriam Stein: I think there's something going on in the works, but I'm not exactly privy to what's happening with that and when it's going to come out, if at all.

Mr. David Sweet: Thank you.

The Chair: Just for the members to be aware, Ms. Page is going to be here next week. Maybe you can ask her the question at that time.

The next person to speak is Madame Folco.

Ms. Raymonde Folco: I'd like to thank all four of you for coming. It shows me how strong you are in the face of what is going on today.

You've spoken out very strongly. I've been hearing language today that I thought I would never hear again in my lifetime. I've heard language such as "If you repeat it often enough, people will believe you." I heard that when I was two, three, four, five years old. I heard language such as "If there aren't too many of us, then it's okay,"—and I'm talking about Queen's—"but if there are too many of us, then obviously it's not okay any more." I'm listening to the misuse or the redirection of language for purposes other than the real sense of the language. As I said, these are things I never thought I would hear again. Excuse me for being emotional.

One of the things I thought was really horrible... I was looking at these cartoons. The parallel it brought to mind was what happened in Denmark a year or a year and a half ago with the cartoons that presented Muhammad and Allah. And I thought about what went on throughout the whole world. Everybody rose up. It was exactly the opposite of what is going on with these. This is the first time I've seen these cartoons. Nobody out there is even mentioning them. These are obscene, yet nobody is saying a word about them.

What this brings to my mind is that we are into a period of time... Witnesses have talked about mainstream. I think it's even worse than mainstream. It's to the point now where everybody can let go of whatever hate they have in their hearts, in order to show that hate to the world.

I come from Quebec. I've worked in human rights in Quebec, and particularly with immigration. One of the things we have done is to talk about reasonable accommodation—you may have heard of this. One of the things we did under reasonable accommodation, which I was personally involved in, was look at various minority rights to see how we could accommodate—that's where the word comes from—those rights in terms of what the majority expected.

So when I'm listening to Jewish dietary laws, and the fact that Queen's University thinks it's prohibitive... If I understand correctly, it can't put together some kosher meals. I can't believe this. This is discrimination. We know that it is possible to put together some kind of neutral meal so that people who follow the kosher rules can participate. I call this discrimination; it's not simply a matter of not being able to put it together.

At the same time that we're looking throughout Canada at how to accommodate various minorities—and I'm not only talking about minorities who have come from other countries, but all kinds of minorities—we are cutting down, we are threatening... I feel threatened by everything I've heard, and I know you feel threatened by what you have lived through.

I'm having a sort of emotional reaction now, so I hope you'll forgive me for this, but I want to thank you very much, particularly the young people. You're three generations away from what I lived through, but you're there.

Thank you.

• (1355)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madame Folco.

Anita Neville, a few minutes.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you. I just have a minute to complete.

I want to thank you all for coming. It's not an easy thing to do.

I think we've all followed and read through what was going on, particularly at York. And I have spoken to university administrators in other settings who have claimed that nothing is going on, or there are no manifestations of anti-Semitism on their campuses. But in fact, I know, because I'm hearing from people in classrooms or whatever, of smaller incidents, not of big incidents, but of smaller things happening.

In two minutes or less, I'm interested in the genesis of what happened at York, how it took root, and what were the early expressions before it hit the headlines.

Mr. Zac Kaye: I arrived at York to re-establish Hillel in 1995, and we went through a period of quiet. As I referred to in my remarks, the second intifada really sparked the emergence. We've heard from different speakers about the left, through the unions, and a number of individuals of Jewish background who took up the Palestinian cause in what one hoped initially would be a civil manner. Without question, the spark for this whole thing in Canada was Concordia.

Shortly thereafter we brought Daniel Pipes to York in the most stringent of circumstances. It was harder to get in to hear Pipes than it was to get in here this morning. We took over the physical education centre at York. It was surrounded by a phalanx of mounted police—looking outside from inside. The glass was replaced in order to make it safe. There was a real fear of what could potentially happen.

From that point onward, when I sat in the student centre with students who represented the Palestinian perspective and were opposed to Pipes being there, they told me and our Jewish students that they would dictate who would speak on campus; that Daniel Pipes was not welcome on this campus; and that those who support Zionism were not welcome on campus. There was no question in my mind, whether I agreed with Pipes or not, that Pipes should and would speak. That was also the view of Lorna Marsden, the president of the university, who facilitated the event, notwithstanding the difficulties at the time.

So in my mind, historically looking back, it was the combination of the intifada, a number of groups, individuals, the unions, left-wing faculty, Jewish professors, as we've heard from our academics today, and then the attempt to stifle the Jewish voice in light of Concordia. That was the genesis of what we're now seeing on a lot of our campuses.

I agree with you that part of what I learned at the conference in Chicago two weeks ago was that on many of the smaller campuses across the United States and in Canada there is very much evidence of the anti-Israel position, often coming from the podium—the misuse of the podium by faculty who take up that position. There's nobody to respond and delegitimize the views that are expressed. So it's perhaps even worse than at our universities, where our students are bravely standing up and counteracting what's being said.

• (1400)

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

This concludes the second hearing of our inquiry panel. I want to thank everybody for their participation. We look forward to our next hearing. Thank you very much for being here.

The meeting is adjourned.

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