

Excerpts From Proceedings

**The Anti-Defamation League
Conference
on Global
Anti-Semitism**



1913-2003



OUR 90TH YEAR

GLEN A. TOBIAS, *National Chair*

ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN, *National Director*

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OPENING REMARKS

by

ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN

ADL National Director

ADL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ANTI-SEMITISM

October 31, 2002 - New York, NY

Diplomatic Breakfast Session



*Y*our Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Mademoiselle,
Dear Friends, it is customary to say how pleased I am that you're here.

On the one hand, I'm very pleased that you're here. On the other hand, the reason for your presence, the reason that we have convened this conference, is something less than pleasing for those of us who are concerned with civility, fairness in history and with justice.

I have been privileged to serve through the Anti-Defamation League for 37 years, to fight the battle against bigotry, dissidence, hatred and anti-Semitism.

I did not believe that in my lifetime there would be a need to convene a conference on anti-Semitism, not as a historical fact, not as a retrospective, not as an assessment and analysis of the past, but that we would be convened to deal with anti-Semitism as a current event.

I did not believe that in my lifetime anti-Semitism would again become a clear and present danger to the Jewish people, nor did I believe that Jews throughout the world would be vulnerable again because they are Jews.

And so because of the circumstance, the fact that you are here, the fact that we are gathered here today, tomorrow, and that this morning so many of you in this room are members of the diplomatic corps, says to us, the Jewish community and hopefully in the days ahead, to the world, that we are not alone. That in this moment of concern and crisis, the Jewish people are not alone.

And when one looks back at the history of the Holocaust and Shoah, one does find a very bright chapter written by the Wallenbergs, by the Sugiharas.

There was a page written by the diplomatic corps who stood up, stood up courageously in defense of what was right and to save human beings because they were singled out for who and what they were.

We have this morning — and at the end of the breakfast I will read the roll of honor — diplomats from over 30 countries, from Australia, from Austria to Venezuela and we have with us representatives of 18 Jewish communities from around the world, from Norway, Mexico, France and Russia, who have come to share, have come to discuss, and who have come to strategize.

To set the tone, to begin the significant conference at this significant time, we have asked one who is the most qualified to address us, to inspire us, to educate us, and to teach us. He is the philosopher, the

prophet of a seminal event of the 20th century; the Holocaust is the core, the center and the cause of his life.

He has spent his lifetime crying for those who perish and crying out against those who abandoned them to a fate that he still cannot and never truly comprehend.

We can only remember and teach its lessons so that they can never and will never again be repeated.

Today, as I said, the Jewish community faces the greatest danger since the terrible time of the Shoah. Who better to open this conference than the man who is its chronicle, its voice, Elie Wiesel.

Almost three decades ago, my friend Elie gave the opening lecture at the International Symposium on the Holocaust. It was June 3, 1974. Jews and Christians came together again to confront Shoah, as a historical event, and assess its meaning for the present and the future.

Today, Jews and Christians come together to confront global anti-Semitism. The world was consumed on the flames of war against the Jews in the past century, and we are here to say that we will not allow those fires to burn ever again.

And I can think of no better way to introduce Elie Wiesel than to simply repeat the words used to introduce him that night at the cathedral of St. John the Divine, 30 years ago, before he became the Nobel Peace Laureate. And I repeat. "Elie Wiesel is a leader of, and a leader for humanity. He has had the courage and has the courage and the capacity to share his soul with the world, and in the process, to remind the world that it, too, has a soul.

"Through his writings, he has made each of us painfully conscious to the depths to which we, as individuals and as a society, can sink and yet the hope also to which we can turn. He has shown us our brutality and our possibilities.

"He has shown us our failures. He has shown us our divine likeness. He has shown us our pain. He has shown us our promise.

"He has taken us from the inner depth to light. He has passed through the night of despair and disillusion to the dawn of continuation. He has become a legend in our time.

"He has stood as a beggar in Jerusalem. He has given voice to the Jews of silence. And he has led one generation after another to a revival of their own faith, at a time when the word 'faith' has become almost extinct an acronym.

"By his pain and by his presence, he has set our souls on fire, even leading some of us to a renewal of the oath of life's affirmation."

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in welcoming one of the great men of our time, and of all time, the Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel.

SPEECH

by

Nobel Peace Laureate

ELIE WIESEL

ADL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ANTI-SEMITISM

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M

y dear Abe, allies, friends, accomplices in so many endeavors, I'm touched by what you say.

What I find we all try to do, we try to bring some sense in a world which often is losing its sensibility, find to give back certain dignities to worlds have been abused.

We are trying to show the danger when danger is there. You at ADL have done it for 30 or 40 years as the head of an organization which deserves its place and honor in Jewish history.

I am a lonely person. I am alone. I am a writer and teacher, I follow my students and with my words which often fail me. I, too, am here because Abe invited me. The subject is so important that we cannot say no. One would fear almost that one is failing one's task as a human being if one is not here to fight the oldest prejudice of history, which is anti-Semitism.

What is anti-Semitism? I have learned that whenever we have a philosophical question, we go back to Hebrew, always. Naturally because I am a Jew and I study Jewish literature, Jewish philosophy.

But for me it's Hebrew. Others may go back to Greek or to Latin or to French, which is a good philosophical language. In Hebrew anti-Semitism is called Sunai Yisrael, the hater of Israel. That was before Israel was a country.

It meant simply the people of Israel. Somebody who hates Israel, the people of Israel, simply because it is the people of Israel, is therefore the enemy of Israel. That's the word.

And that's an anti-Semite. What makes a person an anti-Semite? Of course, an anti-Semite is someone who expresses his or her hatred with words.

An anti-Semite who is silent, only he knows about it. And I wish it was so for all of them. But they talk, and they are vocal.

The good thing is that they are all using the same arguments and the same language, which often is vulgar, because hatred is expressed in vulgarity. Hatred has no elegant language.

You may be an opponent ideologically. You may disagree on many issues with anyone. But if hatred enters the picture, the language itself is distorted. And the language becomes vulgar. Hatred means vulgarity. But then, hatred is vulgarity.

So for so many centuries, Jews have been singled out as an object of hate.

It is not new; anyone who studies the history of anti-Semitism actually sees it has a place in the history of the Jewish people.

That the Greeks already were tainted in Rome, ancient Rome, Tacitus, Cicero, they had anti-Semitic things to say about Jews.

Cicero was convinced for instance that the judicial system was dominated by Jews. In one of his works he said, "Don't speak aloud because the judges" — the judges — "are corrupt because of their links to Jews."

They are convinced already there that Jews dominate the world, as they are now. So what I would like to prove to you one thing, first of all, that whoever hates, hates everybody.

The mistake until now was that people thought it was possible to hate Jews and get away with it.

My culture, my education is a French culture and education. I grew up in France, I studied in France, and I have, therefore, tremendous affection and admiration for French culture.

But when I studied, I realized in the '30s for instance that most of the writers, most, not all, great writers, have been anti-Semites without knowing it.

I thought I was speaking about those who knew it. Jacques Chardon, a great writer, he was actually the hero of François Mitterand. Mitterand loved Chardon. Whenever I spoke to him, it was "Chardon." Chardon was a vicious anti-Semite. But you have not only Chardon who was openly an anti-Semite, but you have Nerdom who was really a great novelist, collaborator of the Nazis during the war, but others as well.

Simply, they grew up when anti-Semitism was part of life. Winter is a great writer, and one who hates the Jews. Doesn't even know why, but hates the Jews.

Of course, the language had to do with it. Every Sunday they would hear in church certain words that were deicide, little did it matter that deicide means one thing, even if what they wanted to say meant another.

Deicide means that the Jews killed God. As if God can be killed. So they said we killed Jesus. But Jesus wasn't God, but in fact Jesus was a Jew. But in their minds, these and many other the words have survived so many centuries. And how many Jews were killed because of that word, deicide.

Then, of course, all the other accusations. That we dominate the market. We control the world. I had a discussion once with a great writer who was my friend in France, and where I was in '67. I remember, three days before the Six-Day War, I was, like most Jews in the world, frightened that Israel may lose the war.

And this friend of mine said, "What are you worried? After all, you know you have such power. Washington will not let you down. England will not let you down." Even Gaulle, he went on and on and on.

Finally I said, "You know, you are convinced really that we control the world." And I said, "You know what? We don't. But I have an idea. I make a deal with you. Give us the world for one century, I promise you we will give it back in better shape."

But the truth is we don't.

Because if we controlled the world, it wouldn't be in such a bad shape. Hatred is very strange. Because it has a face and it has a setting. And it is not limited to national frontiers or to cultural boundaries.

We spoke, let's say, the last century, the last year of the last century, the key word everywhere was "globalization," "globalization." Wherever I went. It meant even if there was a conference on gastronomy, "globalization"; chemistry, "globalization"; economy, of course, "globalization."

Well, we achieved globalization, at least in two domains. Terror. We fight global terror, no doubt about that. And anti-Semitism. It is in more than one country. What does it mean that the world turned against the Jews? Why?

Paul Valéry was a great, great poet and novelist, member of the Academy. And Paul Valéry, I have a great feeling of gratitude not only because of his poetry, but because when Beckson died, Beckson was one of the great philosophers of the 20th century, Jewish.

He got a Nobel Prize for literature, although he was a philosopher. He never wrote anything in literature. But his philosophy was written in such style and language, that he got a Nobel for literature. Patel offered him a dispensation not to wear the yellow star and, not, to have to go to the Commissariat. No. He wanted to wear the star. And he died.

When he died, the Académie Française — he was a member of the Académie, had a special session. And Beckson had the courage to give the eulogy, a masterful text, and for this I'm grateful to Valérie. And Valérie said one thing, he said, "The worst thing that could happen to us, all of us, any one of us, is to believe what our adversary or enemy says about us."

Hey, does it happen today? Occasionally. I'm sure many of us are asked, quietly, elegantly, politely, tell what is it about the Jews that he or she, with such hatred everywhere. There must be something.

Philosophers, social philosophers say is because we introduce conscience. Others because we survived. All kinds of things. And we somehow forget it is not for us to answer that question. Let the hater answer. Why should I make the hater's task easy? Let him tell me, why he hates me.

Anti-Semitism is an extraordinary phenomenon. The anti-Semite hates people who have not been born yet. Which was hatred is not even linked to something a person has done or will do or has obtained. Any person, Jewish, who can be born 200 years from now or was born 400 years ago is an object of hate.

Does it mean, therefore, that the anti-Semite actually reasonably could be deranged? I would say yes. It is a sickness. There is mental sickness, and there is moral sickness. An anti-Semite is morally sick. He is sick because he lives in a delusion. In France during the occupation, there was a paper called "Je Suis Partout" — I am Everywhere. Poor Jews, they were everywhere.

They were hiding in the cellars or shipped off to Drancy. When they were lucky, they found families who helped them. But they wanted to be seen. And the papers said, "The Jews are everywhere." They were convinced, they were looking for Jews, whether there were, there were not. It is an illusion, hallucination. The anti-Semite is sick. So this conference comes in time, it comes in time because of certain reasons.

But you said that you never would have believed that you would have to call such a conference. I'm with you. If anyone had told me that in my life I would have been fighting anti-Semitism, I swear to you I wouldn't have believed it. I swear to you in name of anything sacred. I thought one thing at least we have learned, we have learned what anti-Semitism leads to. And it is here. Now the pretext is

Israel. I hope that some of you know me. Not every one who criticizes Israel is an anti-Semite. I cannot criticize Israel. I live in America. Before that I lived in France. I don't share the physical dangers or even the daily anguish that parents have in Israel when their children take a bus, or when they sit down for a Passover meal, or when their children go to the cafe, I don't have that.

Therefore, I feel I cannot. But I understand if some others do have courage, what they call courage to criticize or even go further than that, to attack. It doesn't mean that he or she is an anti-Semite. It is the context that matters then. If that person has had occasion to defend Israel and to applaud Israel and to praise Israel and now has something to say which is not great, all right.

But somebody who has always done that, somebody who does nothing but that, somebody who is not ready to understand the pain and the agony that goes on in Israel day after day, somebody who doesn't have the civility and the moral courage and integrity to realize what suicide killing does to a people, that person I'm afraid is close to cross the border.

On the other side, I believe we should be careful to — and all of us here I'm sure are against anti-Semitism. We should be careful not to pass collective judgments. The charge of anti-Semitism is too serious to play around with it. Only the anti-Semite is an anti-Semite. And therefore, I cannot say, for instance, that the people are anti-Semitic, we cannot say that.

A people are composed of many families, international families, political families, religious families or just families. Those who are anti-Semite should be condemned in shame. But not all are. So therefore, let's be careful.

Europe today, unfortunately, has witnessed an up-surge of anti-Semitism. Does it mean that all Europe is anti-Semitic? No. Do we say that any country, any is? No.

We can only say that in that country or in that country, Anti-Semites have become more vocal, and we must deplore it and do whatever you can to disarm it.

In the '30s, France was the center of anti-Fascism, Andre Gidé and Andrew Malvo, always intellectuals. Intellectuals led the fight against Fascism. To be an anti-Fascist was an honor.

And very few people who wanted actually to do something with their lives felt that they will stay on sideline. Paris was full always of anti-Fascists. But when I studied the documents — I wasn't there — strangely enough, anti-Semitism did not play a very important role. It was the fascist, dictatorship; it was the Spanish Civil War, what Germany has done in the war.

Anti-Semitism was not that much a priority as an option to be fought. Today it must be. Whenever we speak about a world, danger to the whole world, we must see that anti-Semitism is part of that danger. Four, I come back to my first statement. Whoever hates Jews, hates everybody. And actually, hate of the others is self-hatred as well. But what we all have in common, that the goal is the destruction of what is noble and the human being and the human family which is a sense of sovereignty, human sovereignty, that every human being is sovereign and, therefore, must not be attacked, slandered and cast aside as an object.

I wish you, Abe and all those who are here, good work. May shalom be with you. And I thank you for being here.

(Standing ovation.)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

by

Nobel Peace Laureate

ELIE WIESEL

ADL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ANTI-SEMITISM

October 31, 2002 - New York, NY



I will tell you an anecdote.

When I came to America, a few weeks after I arrived, I had an accident; a taxi cab ran over me in Times Square. The ambulance came and took me to one hospital. They checked my pockets, I was poor; I was a refugee. They realized I had no money, no insurance; they put me back on the ambulance. I went like a Pirandello wrote the play, six Characters in search. Here was an ambulance in search of a hospital I was on it. Finally I found a hospital, a physician, and he took me in. He actually saved my life. After ten days in coma, I came out. And then colleagues — I was a journalist for Yedioth Ahronoth then the poorest paper in Israel. It became rich when I left. So they came to see me. There was a man named Alexander Sauber, he was a journalist in Israel, and he published a newspaper. Tremendous sense of humor. He looked at me, "How do you feel?" Look, I was totally smashed. He said, "It could have been worse." I said, "Alexander" — having been like that for three months — it could be worse? Do you know that everything was broken? It could be worse? My pen was broken. Everything could be worse. I said, "What could be worse?" He said, "It could have happened to me." In every story of humor, there is some truth.

Anti-Semitism is not only something that happens to some of us. It could happen to all of us. In fact, it does. You mentioned, of course, the tragedy [Shoah] in the years preceding the tragedy. At that time, the Jewish communities were complacent and the non-Jewish communities indifferent. Because each time we felt it is not us, it's them. The German Jews, well, because Hitler, you know, didn't like to assimilate the German Jews. He was threatened by the assimilation, not the religious Jews. Then the Polish Jews were, Hasidic. Slowly, we always felt — not us, it is them. It was us.

Today we all know that. It is all of us. I will go further. I will say that anti-Semitism is a threat not only to Jewish people — mainly to us — it is a threat to all people. If it works with Jews from the enemy's viewpoint, it will work with every minority. If they will realize that hate can produce their own realization of their own mean, evil goal, they will try. They have tried.

Therefore, I believe that we now have been summoned to fight anti-Semitism. It means we are doing it, of course for our people first, but not only for our people. We are doing it for all those who tomorrow may need help, but at least may need a presence. Somebody, as you said, should say no, just no to evil, no to hatred. But anti-Semitism is still special.

To paraphrase Ecclesiastes, days come, days go, one generation follows another. The world has changed in the last 2,000 years. But after all, only anti-Semitism remained. How come? In medicine, progress

was made. In philosophy, new philosophies have replaced old philosophies, or at least added to it. Science? My God, what has been done in the field of science! We go to the moon. We go to the depth of the oceans. In medicine, we can prevent diseases that yesterday were mortal. And the only disease that has not found its cure is anti-Semitism. What do they want from us? You ask this question and you realize that there is something irrational about anti-Semitism. Because all the contradictions merge in that disease.

For some, we are too rich. For others, we are too poor. For some we are internationalists, or as you said without loyalties. For others, we are too nationalist. For some we are too religious, for others, not enough. You have on one hand, of course, the latest, Hitler and Stalin. Communism and Nazism felt that they must hate Jews in order to fulfill their dreams.

Take Luther and Torquemada, what did they want from us? Old Luther was a friend of the Jews, as young — I'm sorry, young Luther was a friend of the Jews like Mohammad in the beginning was a friend of the Jews in Medina. Old Luther became the worst enemy. So what is it about the Jews that excites their animosity and their hatred? Of course they are puzzled. They are puzzled because, we must realize, that wherever there is an established order, we come and we question it.

The specificity of the Jewish person is that we question. The entire Talmudic Discourse is based on the question, and we go on questioning. We don't accept established truth. But we don't do it to antagonize. We do it almost out of musical harmony. An answer without a question makes no sense. Who gives answers without questions? The fanatic and we are against fanatics. And again for those of you who I'm sure will agree with me, the Talmud is the greatest work on fanatics because it is based on dialogue.

We admire Hillel because Hillel was a moderate. Not only he. But because the school of Hillel always respected — although he was always winning with the majority — he respected the minority view. Therefore, the views of the minority were recorded exactly the same way as the views of the majority. Call it pluralism today. I call it, simply, decency.

The reason why they don't understand us. They say, "Look, we try every single method to get rid of you." This was an essential when Jews were not persecuted somewhere. There wasn't a method that wasn't used somehow, somewhere. And we stick together, I hope, and we are here. And they can't understand. They even tried seduction. It was so easy for Jews in Poland, during the time of Jacob Frank, the false Messiah, to convert and disappear. No more problems. No more persecution. We didn't do it. Jews in Spain in 1492, when the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabel gave a decree, either you convert or you leave. They could have stayed. Some did stay. And you never heard from them again. Maybe they died in happiness. I don't know.

At that time there were two great families. There is an example which is too extraordinary. Both of them were important families, the heads had very strong positions. One of them was called Abraham Senor. He was a counselor to the Court; wealthy, a learned man, influential, respected. And the decree was issued; he chose to convert. He and his entire family. The other one was Dol Yitzak Abramel. Also counselor to the Kings, an author, a teacher, respected, influential, extremely wealthy. He left with his entire family, went to Italy, began writing on Messianism and taught royalty. The book was the laws of royalty. What happened? Senor's family totally vanished from our history. Abramel's family remains with the books. To this day, the Abramel's are all over the world, and they are the same family and they meet, I think, every few years. People don't understand. Why didn't you convert? Why suffer?

I had written a play when I came back from Russia for the first time. I published a book "The Jews of

Silence," and it didn't do much. People didn't want to hear our story, about Soviet Jewry. There were a few. Mainly the Prime Minister's office, Meir Rosenne, who was the Ambassador in Washington. We were very few. We would go literally from community to community trying to awake the Jewish communities, "Look, there are millions of Jews who suffer and want to remain Jewish." It didn't work.

So I decided, what else can I do? I was on television, on radio, I published articles. Nothing, doing. So I said maybe I'll write a play. How do you write a play? I studied theater as literature. In that play I described the rabbi, the last rabbi in Moscow and his family. He had a daughter; the daughter had a son. But his son-in-law was a Communist. And one of the climaxes was the confrontation between the rabbi and his son-in-law about his grandson, who was going to have his bar mitzvah. And the rabbi says to his son-in-law, "Well, your son, my grandson, is going to bar mitzvah." He said, "What do you really want?" I said now, the son-in-law, the Communist, to his father-in-law, "My father suffered as a Jew, my grandfather suffered as a Jew, his father suffered as a Jew, generation after generation they suffered as Jews, how long do you want this to go on? I think it must stop. And with my son, it will stop."

But I had a problem when I wrote the part. The argument is good. I, as a father, would like my son to suffer? If to be Jewish means to suffer, why suffer? Go ahead. Become a Communist, as if they didn't suffer. They don't understand us. Logically, we should give up. The seduction was there.

Assimilation is possible. Not only now. In the medieval times, it was possible. Why didn't we? What is so big about being members of a small people? Today we are 13 million. Which, by way, think about the numbers. In 1390 there were 18 million, and today we are 13 million.

A friend of mine came back from China once and when we spoke there was still Mao Tse-Tung. And he asked me, "What are you doing?" He described the world scene and the Middle East. We spoke about Israel, the Arabs — at that time they were called Arabs not Palestinians yet. And Mao Tse-Tung couldn't understand — or was it Chao En- Lai. He said, "How many Jews are there in Israel?" There was three million or so. He said, "Three million in China is in the language of the permissible error. You make such a fuss about it."

There is a marvelous book. One of the best Sartre wrote called "Les Mots" — "Words." He describes in the beginning, he describes in the biography, that his grandfather was a marine officer and he would travel and travel and travel. And he said, he had told me once he came back for one night and he slept with his wife and gave her a child, me, and went on. This was Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism saying, "Look at what is the existence between two commas." That could be the history of Jewish people, two commas, so small, always small.

And yet they cannot swallow us. They cannot understand why we want to survive. But the world is so hostile. This is our work. To explain why to us being Jewish means being human. I really don't believe that we are superior to any other nation. They think we think we are, but I don't think so. I believe to be Jewish is for the Jew the only way to attain a kind of universal dimension. If I would have denied my Jewishness in order to be able to speak to non-Jews, I would never do it. I would never have anything to say. But, what I say about the Jews I say about the Catholics and Protestants and Buddhists and Muslims and Atheists. We are who we are. We are who we want to be. We are what we do. And so because of this total lack of understanding and knowledge, they hate us.

And then you would ask, is anti-Semitism a hereditary disease? It's possible. Some diseases are hereditary and genetic. Is this a genetic disease? No. Too easy. An anti-Semite is responsible for his or her hate. But it is true the social environment has an influence.

I will give you an example. I'm sure all of you know the name Voltaire. You cannot imagine emancipation without Voltaire. But he didn't like Jews. How could a person be so great and so anti-Semitic? There was no reason why he didn't like Jews. He didn't like Jews. He said terrible things. That we are misers and we are a danger.

Ezra Pound "The Cantos," a great poet. How can you imagine modern poetry without "The Cantos"? A vicious anti-Semite. When he got the Bertinger prize, the most prestigious prize in poetry, two poets had a discussion, Auden and Shapiro, Karl Shapiro. Auden said to Shapiro, "You know, don't take it too harsh, everyone is anti-Semitic sometimes." What a sad comment on human nature and the human condition. Why should we have hatred in us towards a certain group? Why? The answer is not simple and it has more than one aspect, more than one layer.

But one thing we do know, my good friends, those of you who are Ambassadors and friends. Jews and non-Jews, trust us, with one thing — we are a generation that is endowed with antennas. That's all we have here, antennas. We capture signs from history. I say it, believe me, with a heavy heart. I say it as a teacher and I live as a teacher. The young people, I look at them and I feel sorry for them. That they are entering our 21st century. And what went wrong? All of us believe that the 21st century would be better. All of you surely have participated in the celebrations of the new millennium, century. (For some of us it was more different because it was Shabbat.) But look, champagne, fireworks. Because we were convinced that the 20th century is finished.

Now the new century began. Terrorism, suicide killings. I think the new danger, the new enemy is terrorism. Fanaticism, which is part of terrorism. Every fanatic is a terrorist. We have the antennae and we feel that anti-Semitism is the barometer. We always felt that. Not only the Jewish people, but of the world in which we live. A society which harbors anti-Semitism is a sick society. And so we work together to try to find ways of defending ourselves.

I feel that it is a critical period that we are in now. I will give you my life map. If and when America hits Iraq, Iraq surely hits Israel. We were in Israel during the Gulf War — my friend Yossi and I. It was eerie. We would go see the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and it was eerie. Scuds were falling and Israel didn't respond. It was eerie because it didn't make sense. Israel had nothing to do with the Gulf War, and yet the scuds fell on Israel.

Iraq will do it again. And we know this time Iraq will use non-conventional weapons. What shall Israel do? What will Israel do? Should Israel respond? Israel I think will have to respond. Can you imagine the situation of Jews in Europe in certain places? I shiver.

Therefore, it is so important what ADL has done and all Jewish organizations together, to pull the alarm. What else can we do when we see the train running toward an abyss? What else can we do than to pull the alarm? This is what we are supposed to do now, pull the alarm. And since we are a people of hope, we hope that the train will stop in time. Ultimately, it is our choice. The word "choice" is in the Bible. Adam and Eve had a choice. They made their own choice. To choose life is our choice. It is in the Bible. We shall choose our friends. Choose those who you want to resemble you. You will love the way you love a friend. We are all friends.

Believe me that whatever is threatening us Jews is a threat to everybody. The response, there is a word for it – solidarity. Anti-Semites from the very beginning had a few goals. First, to isolate the Jew, then to define the Jew, then to shame the Jew. To bring the Jew to a position in which the Jew, he or she,

should feel ashamed of being Jewish. Not only threatened, but ashamed of being Jewish. And ultimately, to remove the Jews in the ghetto, and then worse.

All the tragedies that have occurred, occurred because we had no friends. We had a few, but they were so few. The lady that saved you, Abe, you said it, she was illiterate. We had a maid in my little town, also illiterate. And she sneaked into the ghetto and she pleaded with us, my parents. We didn't even know where we were going, but she knew we were going to be chased out of town. She pleaded, "Come with me, I have a house in the mountains." Since we didn't know where we were going in 1944, to this day I shall not understand. Everybody knew about Auschwitz except Jews in Hungary, we did not know, because again, we had no friends. But she tried.

You are our friends. Thank you.

(Standing ovation.)

COUNTRY REPORTS:

NORWAY

MARTIN BODD

Representative

JEWISH COMMUNITY OF OSLO



Let me start by informing you that Norway is not an anti-Semitic country and should not be considered as one. So why worry? There are reasons to worry. In a moment I will tell you why. But before I start giving you a picture of what's going on in Norway regarding the Jewish community and the Israelis living there, let me give you some facts as to why Norway's position not only affects the people living there, but has some effect on the international arena:

- Norway has a seat in the United Nations Security Council
- Our capital bears the name of the Peace Accord between Israel and the Palestinians
- Norway is in the leading position for the Commission for Financial support to the PA

The country and the Norwegians are quite focused on the current conflict.

As I said Norway is not an anti-Semitic country. We have a Government and politicians who regularly speak up and warn against anti-Semitism. The police are not at all ignorant to our situation. There are very few neo-Nazi organizations in the country. Yet there have been more reports about incitements and harassments towards Jews the last two years since 1945.

We have found that there are differences in the negative attitudes towards Jews and Israel. There are mainly three aspects we talk about: anti-Israel, anti-Jewish, and anti-Semitism

It must be clear that all the criticism of the politics of Israel is not only legitimate, but sometimes fair and right. Among Jews and Israelis all over the globe, criticizing Israel is a daily matter. But when the criticism becomes overwhelming, we sometimes have to look for an un-pleasant hidden agenda, or for strong or weak tendencies of anti-Semitism.

Norway is a secular country, and the mainstream of Norwegians does not consider themselves believers of any religion. Many among the younger generation see religion as the main source of many of the wars and conflicts that have occurred in history.

Many Norwegian are not only non-religious, they consider themselves anti-religious.

The Jews are, for lack of better knowledge, considered to be believers of the Jewish religion and not a people having the same culture, sharing common history and values, but with different opinions. We are considered as many others, a religious group. We are using the religion as a cause for unjustifiable actions. Today, the Middle-East conflict, in particular, is considered a religious conflict.

The Norwegian media often use words like: The Jewish War machine is crushing our Oslo Peace accord; The Jewish State instead of Israel; Jewish settlers and extremists.

The result of the combination of a negative attitude towards Sharon's policy — he is seen as a Jewish leader for a Jewish state — and anti-Semitic waves makes the majority of the people more likely to criticize Jewish values.

The result is unfortunate. The ones who are the real anti-Semites face little resistance in the public. There is a small group that can be considered really anti-Semitic, though they are not many. In a country of 4.5 million, the 120,000 Muslims living in Norway are in general not very well received and welcomed. The Progressive party, considered by the media as right-wing hardliners, has become the undisputable most popular party in Norway.

There has been more harassment of Jews during the last two years than ever since 1945. What is the reason for this? The people in our country react to different subjects on the basis of their own experiences, but also to the way the subjects are presented in the media. This translates to domestic issues such as taxes, politics and children's issues. It is different with foreign affairs. Here, there are few self-experienced experiences, but we trust the media.

One cannot just ignore the harassment of Jews. There is much to indicate that a certain support exists among the Norwegian people when there are threats or because of a political issue. Some fanatics probably feel this support because of the media's coverage of the Middle East conflict.

This spring it was big news when former Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg asked the people at a demonstration to remove posters equating the Star of David and the swastika. When they were removed, he continued with his speech standing right in front of posters with the words in Arabic: Death to the Jews. Would he continue to speak if this was a demonstration against terror where posters said: Islam is terror?

I am not saying that the Norwegian media is anti-Semitic, but that their use of pictures and language results in the unforeseen side-effect of anti-Semitism. The Israeli Prime Minister is portrayed negatively in the newspapers. For instance: Sharon in an SS uniform in a concentration camp; shouting to Arafat as a prisoner, "Off with your hat;" characterized with the Jewish Star on the band around his arm instead of the swastika. Sharon is a dream for people to overdraw because he is easily recognized. The use of Jewish symbols, however, is unnecessary.

On radio and TV there are often discussion and debates on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Here it is important for us to keep a balance. We Norwegian Jews support the state of Israel, but we are not in a conflict with the Palestinians or the Arabs. When I have been asked to participate in several TV debates and ask the journalist, "Who else will be attending?" The answer is typical, "Yes, we have invited a Palestinian." The media tries to drag Norwegian Jews into the conflict by having us confront a Palestinian, not a Norwegian Muslim. During these debates the media often use the same individuals and pass them on as neutral, objective participants, failing to mention their backgrounds. For instance, the Director of the Institute for Human Rights Butechjøn, who has been active in the Palestinian Committee in Norway; Lars Gule, leader of the Humanitarian Ethics Association, responsible for attempting to carry out a terrorist attack in Jerusalem in 1982. Clearly these individuals are not neutral.

The titles of these discussions are also not very balanced: "How can we put pressure on Israel?" "What does it help to support Arafat, when the USA does not?" If this isn't politics, I wonder what I call what is going on inside the Parliament. Even if the supposedly objective individuals are not at all objective, then they are good at articulation. Those who defend Israel are considered Bible-fanatics with

old-fashioned opinions.

The picture is complicated, but we have arrived at a situation where Israel is being boycotted by many and Jews are being harassed. On our Labor Day, May 1st, the Labor Union leader called for a boycott of Israel. The Union counts 700,000 members. Personally I feel as if I am part of a Kafka-process. I am being accused of a murder I have had nothing to do with, and on top of it all, was not committed.

Our languages are rich enough to better describe the events in the Middle East and to avoid stigmatizing and demonizing everything Israel does directly and the Jews indirectly. In this way I feel that the Norwegian Media has failed.

Most of the incitements and harassments against Jews have not been reported. Hardly any of the children or the adults offended by anti-Semitic statements or alike, have been willing to come forward publicly. This is due to the fear of being connected to a "state of evil" and a people supporting this state with the possible personal consequences this might have. We have reports of approximately 15 incidents where 10 children have been harassed. No Jews have been physically hurt during the last 24 months because of anti-Semitism. In certain parts of the big cities in Norway, it is not recommended to wear symbols, letters etc. that link one person to Israel. Muslims dominate these areas. Yet, in the perspective of the conflict in the Middle East and the reactions around the world, our statement is that Jews are safe in Norway.

We do speak out against anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism with some success, but there are some ways to succeed better. From my local perspective, the Media is the one most important body to approach. The time is over when the press runs after the politicians. Today, at least in Scandinavia, the politicians run after the press. Let me just mention that there are huge differences between our country and for instance the USA when it comes to campaigning for seats in the Parliament/Congress. We have little influence on what is the opinion of the politicians when it comes to the Middle East Conflict. A politician chooses a party after the party's program. He sticks to the program and if it is anti-Israel, it might be some of the main reason he entered exactly that party.

Yet, a politician cannot put himself into all different kinds of issues. Everyone in this room has some opinion about the tax level, unemployment, the school politic and other domestic issues. The situation is by far different when it comes to foreign politics. That is also the case for our politicians. They are much more dependent on the reporters. What do we know about the Fiji Islands? What do we know about the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia over the area of Ogaden?

For instance, when a politician from Wyoming is elected to Congress because he is known for being someone who knows a lot about forestry and farming issues, he easily ends up in a difficult situation if a journalist questioning him asks a biased question like: Now see what the Israelis have done in Jenin. How would you describe the picture I am showing you now on the screen? It has become so bad that Norwegian politicians and even ministers have told me, "I am good friend of Israel, so therefore I choose to shut up."

Our most successful methods when approaching the media are the following:

- We are a concerned group of Norwegians Jews, who feel sorry for and have sympathy for all the ones suffering in the Middle East conflict.
- We do hope for peace in the region.

- We support a Palestinian state.
- We think the Palestinians are suffering, but we do not share how the Palestinian leaders are trying to solve the problem with Israel.
- We do not want the conflict transferred to Norway.
- We express our opinion, particular to the editors, that they know better and deserve better to have more in-depth analyses of the conflict than what is the case today.
- And, the side-effect of the biased tabloid reporting is an increased Anti-Semitism.

You will be invited to any newspaper or TV-channel to elaborate more about this.

We need today to find out what strategy that works best for each country. No matter what we call it, anti-Israel, anti-Jewish or anti-Semitism, they all must be fought differently according to the environment in which they appear. There is not one global strategy, but plenty of opportunities. The only strategy I believe is global. We have no time to spare. We have to start now and we must work together with non -Jews, to fight Anti-Semitism everywhere, now.

COUNTRY REPORTS:

FRANCE

ROGER CUKIERMAN

President

CONSEIL REPRESENTATIF DES JUIVES DE FRANCE (CRIF)



You probably all know what a genius is. A genius is a very normal child with a Jewish mother. We have had geniuses in France for the last 2,000 years. We have had Rashi in the northeast of France in the middle-ages; we have had the Jews who were surrounding the Pope in the 14th century in Avignon; we had the Jews who fled from Spain in the 15th century; we had the Jews coming from Eastern Europe to Alsace in the 16th and 17th century; we had the revolution. French nationality was given in 1790 to the 80,000 Jews who were then living in France. And the Count Clermont-Tonnerre said, "We give everything to the Jews as individuals and nothing to the Jews as a nation."

In 1802, Napoleon gave a statute to the rabbis, to the rabbinical organization. He was clever enough to give the power of nomination to the civilian Jews and not to the rabbis. Then in 1870, the French Minister of Interior Cremieux, a Jew from Avignon, gave French nationality to the 30,000 Algerian Jews, which shows that the relationship between France and the Jews was in many cases a love affair.

We had also negative points. But as a counterpart, the Jews brought to France many very well-known writers, philosophers and so on. Some of them were mentioned by Elie Wiesel a moment ago. We brought also four prime ministers. The sad side of France's relationship with Jews appeared in the Dreyfus Affair. That is one century ago. And it took 11 years to obtain justice in this affair. It had one very positive impact.

It was the opportunity for Herzl to create the idea of Zionism, when seeing how Jews were treated at that time in France. We had another very bad time, which was the Vichy period, where the French government went much beyond what the Nazis were requesting from the French government as far as the position of the French Jews was concerned.

And I must say that today the pro-Arab attitude continues in the French government, which started in 1967, after the end of the war in Algiers.

Also, in the last two years we had violent anti-Jewish acts. There were hundreds of those. We said to the French government, one year ago, that this was intolerable. As French citizens what we expected from the government was to see to it that our freedom as citizens, our right to go to synagogues or to send our children to Jewish schools, had to be respected with the help of the French authorities. We suffered to see synagogues being burned; tens of them were burned. We suffered to see our schools, Jewish schools being hurt by Molotov cocktails. We saw bus transportation for Jewish schools being attacked. We saw rabbis or Jews with the signs of their Jewishness being attacked. And the answer we got one year ago was, "You exaggerate this. It is the general violence and you are too sensitive." We

were not the only ones to be sensitive. And the result was the result of the presidential elections in April.

What was the cause of this atmosphere which created anti-Jewish acts? We see three sources. The first is a traditional extreme right anti-Semitic attitude, which is symbolized by Mr. Le Pen. Mr. Le Pen got 18 percent of the French vote at the presidential election, which means that practically one French person out of five accepts the anti-Semitic and extreme right ideas of this movement. This movement is dangerous because it reflects a philosophical attitude. It is not dangerous on the field because they are not — with little exceptions, they are not really violent at this stage.

The second source of anti-Semitism is a very worrisome new source. It comes from the extreme left. We have seen in the recent presidential election again, ten percent of the French voters who voted for former Trotskyite partisans, who are against globalization, against capitalism, against America, against Zionism, and from there it arises naturally, against the Jews. This movement creates a lot of trouble in our minds because it's a popular attitude. It comes from people who are able to attract the humanitarian part of the French population. And they are popular in the media. They are well-accepted in public opinion. And when they claim their solidarity with the Palestinian people, and when they protest against the so-called tough attitude of the Israelis, they are convincing public opinion and, therefore, creating an atmosphere in France which is very painful for the Jews.

This pain is much worse than what we felt when we were attacked or when the synagogues were attacked. It is not so much for us the matter of seeing things which are belonging to us being burned or even being wounded by attacks; it is a fact that 50, 60 years after the Shoah we are condemned by public opinion, we are rejected by public opinion, and we are put aside from the general French population.

The third group of people who see us with an antagonistic eye is the Muslim population. Ten percent of the French population is composed of Muslims coming mostly from North Africa. These people naturally take the position of being favorable to the Palestinians against Israel. This would be natural in the same way that we are in favor of Israel and not of the Palestinians, but the difference is that we never attacked a mosque, we never attacked an imam. They are the ones who are the authors of many of the aggressions we have been submitted to.

So we consider that this is a very dangerous situation. I don't say that all ten percent of the French population composed of Muslims is against us, but it is among their people that aggressors are often recruited.

Ten percent of the French population means six million people. The Jews are only 600,000 people, which means we are only one percent. They outnumber us very clearly. And it has also political impact, these differences in figures. For instance, last year a prominent advisor of the socialist party made a report saying that the socialists should take into account the number of voters of each camp before deciding about their policy towards Israel, towards the Middle East and towards the anti-Semitic question. This man went even further recently in an interview in a Swiss newspaper, saying that Israel should be added to the axis of the evil, which is composed, according to the American definition, of Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

We also see a growing influence of Islamic religious fanatic people. There was a project conceived by the former governments to have the representation of the Islamic world similar to the representation of the Jewish people in France. This representation was supposed to be achieved according to the number of square meters of every mosque. The result would have been that the control of the Muslim population in France would have been in the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood. And I remind you that the Muslim Brotherhood are forbidden in Egypt, forbidden in Syria, forbidden in most Arab countries because they are fanatics.

For us it was most important that the representative should be myriad representation. What we obtained with the help of some moderate Muslims, like the rector of the Paris mosque, was to delay the vote. And fortunately, with the arrival of the new government, we were able to see the complete change of the French government on this subject. Since the new government went in, we have seen a decrease in the acts of violence against the Jews. Probably because the new minister of interior has been efficient in showing his willingness to fight against that type of violence. But we know that it is only temporary. The atmosphere is still bad. We see it in the schools and in the universities. It is practically impossible to teach the Shoah in certain schools. It is impossible in some cases for even moderate Jews to come and make conferences in universities about Israel or about Zionism or about Jewish subjects.

We also see the development of new actions such as boycotts of Israeli products, and some of the pro-Palestinian groups, with the help of some leftists go as far as asking also to boycott so-called Zionist companies, which means Jewish companies. So we are facing a general atmosphere which clearly would enable any spark to resume violent actions against the Jews. We are conscious of that situation. We know that it may happen if and when the war with Iraq begins.

Therefore, we are vigilant and we try to convince the government to take all measures necessary to confront that situation. It is not always easy, because French foreign policy is very sensitive to maintain good relationship with the Arabs. We have good relations with the new minister of foreign affairs. He has said strong things against terrorism. Unfortunately, we saw during the visit of President Chirac in Beirut at the time of the Francophone Summit, that his commitment to the Arab side is still unchanged.

So we do our best. We have taken measures within the community to look for more security for our people. We are trying to influence the politicians, the government, the civil society in France. The Jewish community shows its full solidarity. Of course, there are always some exceptions. You can always find some Jews who deliver speeches against Israel or against the Jewish community.

But when we called a mass demonstration for April 7, 2002 against anti-Semitism and for the support of Israel, 200,000 people came into the streets. They were mostly Jews. We had very few non-Jews. 200,000 Jews out of a population of 600,000 means practically half of the Jewish population, if you exclude children and older people. So it is very strange that in a country like France where the Jewish population is composed of bourgeois people, that practically one person out of two feels a necessity to express its solidarity. Nevertheless, this mass demonstration gave us confidence in the solidarity of the Jewish people. This solidarity is also shown by numerous trips to Israel. Practically every week or two 100, 200, 300 Jews from France go to Israel for a solidarity trip.

So we are confident that the Jews are ready to fight, if necessary. I must say that, frankly, I am more worried for the future of France if France lets the Islamic influence develop. Because today they are ten percent in France. In 20 years, they will probably be 15 percent. And if the Islamic influence is not fought against, then France has as much problems as the Jews have.

COUNTRY REPORTS:

BRITAIN

JO WAGERMAN

President

THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS



I think I have to open by reminding you of something that Elie Wiesel said this morning when talking about anti-Semitism, he said it is not limited to national frontiers and cultural boundaries. Therefore, I think this morning you are going to hear me say quite a lot of things that Roger [Cukierman] has said and I'm sure your two other speakers will also have much in common.

Until recently, anti-Semitism has been restricted to minority and insignificant splintered groups of the far right. But now we are facing an explosion of Muslim anti-Semitism and its spread through the Muslim populations of Europe. Arab newspapers, TV and radio, books, films, popular songs, children's programs, political speeches, Muslim clerics, all put out a stream of hatred which pushes four lines:

One: conspiracy theories about Jewish plans for world domination. Two: blood libels and fantasies of Jewish poisoning and the spread of AIDS. Three: diabolical Nazi-like images of Jews. Four: genocidal rhetoric and incitement to violence. The relentless message is that Jews plan world domination and the eradication of Islam and Christianity. They are the origin of all evil and corruption. And visually, the depiction of the Jews is straight from the pages of *Der Stürmer*. 112 TV and radio stations from Bangladesh to Marrakech push this stuff out to the Muslim populations of Europe. It spreads with electrifying speed among those who are Muslim immigrants in Western democracies.

The aim is not simply to delegitimize Israel as a Jewish state, but to dehumanize Judaism and the Jewish people. It is profoundly and deeply anti-Semitic, and its language resonates with the Jews of Europe who have heard it all in living memory. In Britain, anti-Israel activity has become anti-Jewish activity. We have, after all, more than one to two million Muslims and less than 300,000 Jews. Interestingly enough, and different from France, in Britain Muslims are mostly Pakistanis, not Arabs. Speeches and rallies at demos and in mosques give incitement to violence, and newspapers printed in the Arab world are distributed wherever there is a Muslim population. Let me give you a couple of small tastes.

A demonstration was held in Trafalgar Square two years ago. "By Allah, they [are] dirty, cursed people, Yahud, they make Hitler like a saint... how wicked [and] how evil these Jews are... they don't even deserve the death of a dog."

From a book, *Unveiling Some Top Rulings of Islam*, published in London in February 2001. "[The Americans and Jews are] unbeliever aggressors are attacking our land and our honor. They must be killed wherever they are and by [whatever] possible method." The third quotation, the famous one, I think, because it appeared all over Britain, from leaflets distributed by Al-Muhajirun in Birmingham, Manchester and London. "The final hour will not come until the Muslims kill the Jews."

Tony Blair, our Prime Minister, is perhaps the best supporter of Israel in Europe. He is held back by his own left wing and by his self-service. And the British, of course, have longer experience in terrorism than almost anybody else, having been fighting Irish terrorism for many generations. So their sympathies tend not to rest with the terrorists. In Britain we have real support from the police forces. We pressurize all the organs of the British legal system to prosecute those law breakers and in this we have some success. For example, two of the three I quoted to you above are now standing trial. We had law changes, good law changes which the British community pressurized for in February 2001 and we have, therefore, less of this material published in Britain.

Our pressure to the Foreign Office means that they have raised their concerns over vicious propaganda with Arab governments directly. We don't know if it was our formal protest that resulted in the recall of the Saudi Ambassador, but his outrageous public statement and the publication of his very tender poem in praise of suicide bombers made his position in London untenable. However, the situation was not helped by the fact that Prince Charles gave him a farewell dinner. And we should not forget that the Arabists in the Foreign Office are still very powerful.

We have attacks on property and on people, and they range from verbal abuse to kicks and to punches, and we've had one or two incidents serious enough to put victims in hospitals. Particularly and outstandingly, as everywhere else, there is widespread targeting, intimidation and harassment of Jewish students on campus.

We have in Britain the Community Security Trust. Our own organization which, through trained volunteers and cooperation with the forces of law and order, protect schools, synagogues and public figures with great success. Attacks have dropped dramatically in the last month after we've had a successful prosecution for incitement. The boycott campaign, which targets both academics and enterprises, is taking on an extremely anti-Semitic nature. We are fighting an attack on academic freedom and on the free exchange of ideas and on the free exchange of personnel. We are fighting that very vigorously in Britain, and so far with some success. I meet with the presidents of the Association of University Teachers, with the president of the British Academy and Royal Society, and these are distinguished bodies of the arts and sciences.

It is, perhaps, the emergence of a simply anti-Israel, political left wing, that has shaken the Jews. It has taken us by surprise. The Islamic hatred of America, not only as the defender of Israel, but as the epitome of democracy, liberal value and globalization resonates with the traditional left. Anti-Americanism in Europe is deep-seeded and ancient. It is interestingly here too on the Jewish left. Because the left is traditionally where the Jews found their political home. Many continue to fight to maintain their Judaism and their Zionism, but some very prominent Jews have become the loudest of our enemies. The most recent examples, just the day before I left, was Harold Pinter appearing on the BBC saying that you couldn't attack Iraq because Israel had nuclear weapons and had used them. The left wing media increasingly view Israel's actions against Palestinian terrorisms as racist, colonialist and Nazi-like. The demonization of Israel, and media obsession blaming Israel for the current impasse in the Middle East, smothers Jews.

We do have some champions. Thank God for Lord Black and for the *Daily Telegraph* in Britain. Dominant media opinion has a very strong left-wing bias. The BBC, as you all well know, is among the worst. And, of course, it has worldwide influence. *The Guardian* is the left-wing paper of the intelligentsia, teachers, clerics, academics, and is deeply hostile to Israel while maintaining that you can't call it anti-Semitic, because so many of the people on it who write about Israel are Jews. *The Guardian* gives a platform to the most extreme Arab opinion. My attempts to reason with them, all together about four

hours of debate and discussion, have completely failed.

You may have read of Britain's Chief Rabbi. The most recent attack in a film by a Jewish MP, Gerald Kaufman, was the most vicious. Our attempts to combat this through direct challenge and through personal networking have completely failed. Carlton Television aired another deeply anti-Israel film by a journalist, John Pilger. We have been more successful here and we are in the process of getting an alternative film aired and made.

In Britain in September 2000 we set up BICOM, a news and information lobby group, which is making some headway, but it is a long, slow process and it is very expensive. Our relations with other ethnic minorities in multi-cultural Britain are crucial. Our hitherto good relationships with organizations have all but disappeared, but we have excellent formal and informal networks with Hindus and Sikhs.

Christians are more problematical. Our formal networks, good Christian relations, continue to function. But there is a deep bias against Israel in Anglican and other churches. Only privately will some clergy admit to fears of the activities of Islam in Britain directly against Christians in Britain. This passivity and silence in the face of threat puzzles us. Islam clearly states that peace will come only when all follow Islam. Conflict in the rest of the world between Muslims and Christians, Muslims and Hindus should set alarm bells ringing in those communities. It is interestingly that only the *Catholic Herald* in Britain printed truth about the siege in Bethlehem, and asked why there was no worldwide Christian condemnation of the Palestinians' desecration of the Church of the Nativity.

Where does Israel fit into this racist agenda? Israel is the scapegoat for the continuous Arab inability to achieve political unity or economic development. Jews are blamed as the agents of Western imperialism, globalization, and an invasive modernist culture. There is an emotional rage in Arab literature that the despised and defenseless Jews of history have been able to defeat several Arab armies in the battlefield. And there is a fear of Israeli technological prowess as an instrument of control. At rallies, meetings and demonstrations, one increasingly sees the equivalence between the Swastika and the Magen David; between the Holocaust and Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

How do Jews resist the repeated defense that criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitism? Where do we draw the line? Is there a line between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism? I have to say to you that it is not difficult. We define "anti-Semitism" very simply. Elie Wiesel did it for us so beautifully this morning. Hatred of, attacks on, persecution of Jews. What is anti-Zionism? Do not deceive yourselves. Anti-Zionism is a denial of Israel's right to exist; the demand that Jews should have no Jewish state; that the Jews should be driven out by all and any means, and the whole of the area should be a Muslim state.

Thirdly in Britain, there something I can only call anti-Sharonism. This is the favorite stance of the European left, who believe that all conflicts in the Middle East stem from Sharon's — you can put for yourself all the quotation marks around these things — intransigence, overreaction, occupation, settlements, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. How do we as Jews react to this?

Well, we must accept that it is legitimate in democratic societies with free press for the policies and actions of any state and any leader to be subject to criticism. This kind of "anti" is not anti-Semitism. There are big buts that follow that statement. It is legitimate to engage in argument. It is legitimate to argue that peace would not be restored if Israel returns to its pre-1967 borders. Israel would then be a small and indefensible state on its way to destruction, and that destruction would be rapidly aided by the other demand that three and a half million descendants of Arab refugees be incorporated into its space. Nor should a civilized society believe that any situation in which suicide bombers kill teenagers

and babies in cafes and buses is defensible.

We as Jews have to be forcefully in this debate and not let the argument go by default. Indeed, it is impossible for European Jews to separate anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, because the hatred emanating from the Muslim world is directed at Jews and Judaism; at Jews all over the world, and calls unequivocally for their destruction wherever they may be. This call is put into action in Western Europe by Muslim attacks on Jews. On Jews, not on Israelis. Jewish institutions, not Israeli institutions. Jews are attacked indiscriminately, whether they are.

Zionists or not, irrespective of their age, their religious commitment or their nationality. I have not asserted there can be no criticism of Israel. But I want to, perhaps, lay down for you what I consider to be the ground rules.

First, as I said in a very heated meeting I had with Mary Robinson, United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, "Be sure you have your facts right. Beware of anecdotal evidence. Don't swallow Palestinian propaganda or the careful editing of pictures." Second, criticism of Israel should present a balanced view, and this entails listening to both sides. Third, all events have to be set in their context. We see the facts of '48 and the facts of '67 being smothered as if they never happened. For us as Jews, there is an added break. Although we say it so often, really, no one is listening anymore.

Israel is a democracy. And if 70 percent of its population support the actions of its government, the views of small numbers of disaffected soldiers and extreme academics should not be given great prominence by outsiders. Lastly, when things are really bad, it is not the time for Jews to criticize. On the road, when a truck is hurtling towards your mother, don't argue with her about her driving. And it is not the right time, especially if all the other drivers are aiming straight at her, and blaming her. She is, after all, family.

So having noted all of this, let me conclude with what I think ought to be an action plan for European Jewish communities:

- 1) We must organize our physical security against attacks. We have a right to protection from the state. That does not mean to say we should sit on our hands and not organize our own protection, too.
- 2) We must beware of the encroachment of our hard-won religious and civil liberties.
- 3) The failure of governments to prosecute Islamist anti-Semitism must be addressed by Jewish communities. Governments and police tolerate from Islamist groups and the far left what they would never tolerate from the far right.
- 4) We should beware the legitimization of anti-Semitism and its defense on the ground that it is only a proper criticism of Israel.
- 5) We must use our avenues to government — and for all of us they are different — to fight for Israel in combating propaganda, in resisting discriminatory trade regulations, and in fighting against the condemnation of Israel without balance both in the EU and in the UN.
- 6) We should fight the capture of professional and academic societies and organizations who try to boycott contact with Israel and turn it into a pariah state.

Finally, there is a much bigger problem and a much more difficult one, which is the problem of immigration. We were immigrants once. Our survival in the last two centuries has depended on some countries' willingness to accept us as refugees, and we have been quick to condemn those who would not. We are, to say the least, confused. Does not justice demand that we assist others to migrate where once we did? But how will our children live with the ever-increasing numbers of those who will not practice mutual respect and toleration, and who plan — and I quote from a broadcast by the Chairman of the Muslim Party in Britain — “not rest until the flag of Islam is flying over 10 Downing Street.”

COUNTRY REPORTS:

ARGENTINA

ALFREDO NEUBURGER

Director, Political Affairs & Communications

DELEGACION DE ASOCIACIONES ISRAELITAS ARGENTINAS (DAIA)



J have been involved in the Jewish community for about three decades. Traditionally, we from South America brought the worst stories and our European friends were always worried about our issues, and we were sort of envying the tranquility of the Jewish communities in Europe.

Things are different today. Much different. It is not that we are so great, but you are much worse. I come from a community that has a long history of anti-Semitism. There are approximately 200,000 Jews in Argentina today in a country of 37 million. You know the story about Nazis coming to Argentina immediately after World War II. You heard the stories about the dictatorship and the special emphasis in their Jewish condition when Jews were arrested by the military, how they suffered more than non-Jews.

The fact is that in the last few years we are facing an economic collapse in Argentina that is the worst in its history and is affecting seriously all walks of life, but especially the middle-class — and most Jews belong to the middle-class. So we are witnessing something we never had seen before in Jewish life in our country. We have almost 50 percent of the Jewish community under the poverty level. This is unprecedented in Argentina, and probably it is unprecedented in most of the Jewish communities around the world. One quarter of the community is being supported in their basic needs by local and international Jewish organizations, mainly from the United States and Israel, through the Joint and JAFI. The two issues combined explain something which is unusual.

We Jews have always feared that in times of turmoil, of economic collapse, Jews would become scapegoats. It is not happening today in Argentina. Why? For several reasons. One is that Jews themselves are suffering greatly from the economic collapse. And this is known by the society. We are not seen as “the exploiters,” as the traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes. Everybody is seeing Jewish institutions with long lines of Jews waiting to get economic assistance to be able to feed their children, the same as their non-Jewish neighbors.

Secondly, it is what happened in Argentina in the last decade in terms of the two deadliest terrorist attacks against Jews anywhere in the world since the Shoah. I’m referring to the destroying of the Israeli embassy in 1992 and the bombing of the Jewish community headquarters, our own headquarters in 1994, with a total of over 100 dead and over 300 injured. I will come back to that a few minutes later when we speak about the global threat of anti-Semitism.

It is almost 20 years since Argentina became a democracy. There has been progress in terms of a more pluralistic, a more respectful, a more tolerant society. Argentina is basically a Catholic country. The church has changed a lot worldwide, and it has also changed — although at a much slower pace — in Argentina. We have traditionally had a more conservative church. The church is facing its own problems now because of the situation, because they are losing a lot of their members to others, basically the

evangelicals, and because they feel the threat of the Islamic world. So they have opened new avenues of dialogue and relationship with the Jewish community. For example, the cardinal of Buenos Aires, the highest member of the church, has visited our headquarters and prayed for those fallen in the terrorist attacks in our premises. This is unprecedented. And there is now a strong dialogue with the foreign ministry which is studying a new law regarding religious freedom. It has called together a group of representatives of the various religions, including ours. We are working together with the church and other religious institutions.

We are progressing in educational matters. So in the broad sense, it is working out in terms of anti-discrimination, in terms of the social issues. However, we still could not obtain that "anti-Semitism" be included, in those precise words, in documents, in laws, in various walks of life. Discrimination, yes. Prejudice, racism, yes. But with anti-Semitism, there are still some difficulties. There is a large community of Arab origin in Argentina, but most of them are of Lebanese Christian origin, not Islamic. We, the community, can find a quite friendly relationship with what is called the Federation of Arab Institutions. They have their own internal strife, because they are the moderates in the Arab community who relate with us. They have their own radicals who are confronting them, asking why they have friendly relationship with the "Zionists."

Regarding the issue which was described by the previous speakers of how the Middle East conflict is viewed by the press and the general society, in the last two years of the new intifada, we were fortunate. Our worries, our terrible situation, have been a blessing. Why? Our own problems are so terrible in Argentina that there is very little time to be concerned with what happens abroad. The politicians don't have the time. They are worried protecting themselves from the anger of the people because of what is going on. The press is mainly concerned, although there have been some problems with the press, with the situation in the country. We have a political crisis with a government that is interim and looking forward to elections, which at this stage we don't know when they will take place, if they will take place, and how they will take place. So as I said, the crisis is consuming most of the attention. Therefore, we did not have an increase, as it happened in Europe, in the United States, in Canada and Australia, of anti-Semitic incidents. At least no increase of significance.

The DAIA, the umbrella body of the community, has the responsibility of community security. We have, as the leader of the British community explained, a similar organization in Argentina, strengthened especially after the bombings, which works closely with the public authorities in terms of protecting our institutions and our people. And we have to indicate, as I said before, that fortunately there have not been incidents of violence. Very minor. Nothing compared with what is going on, what has been going on in Europe. Coming back to the bombings, which have had and have a significant influence in Argentina and its Jewish life, I have been asked many times, 'Why did the terrorist attacks against Jews happened in Argentina?' Why Argentina?

There are several possible explanations. It is a large Jewish community — the largest in Latin America. The terrorists choose their targets with various objectives in mind: the greatest impact; the least possibility of being caught. Argentina was a good place for both. Impact, and very little possibility of being caught because of a lack of adequate resources and experience in dealing with international terrorism, and local corruption which could be very helpful to prevent any serious investigation. Now, ten years after the first attack, eight years after the second one, almost nothing has been discovered on the Embassy bombing. Some progress could be made in the investigation of the Jewish community headquarters' bombing. There is a trial going on against some local participants, as accessories. We know because of the evidence gathered, that both attacks were planned and decided by top Iranian authorities, executed by Hizbollah operatives, with the local participation of some corrupt police officers and mem-

bers of the Islamic community in the region. And why do we stress this? Because we have gathered here to address the danger of global anti-Semitism.

A decision is made in Tehran to kill Jews in Argentina. A few weeks ago I read an excellent piece, which I recommend, in *The New Yorker* by journalist Jeffrey Goldberg, with whom we've been in touch because he has thoroughly researched Hizbollah and the attacks in Argentina, as well as other terrorist attacks against Israel and Jews. In Beirut he interviewed the head of Hizbollah, Sheikh Nasrallah, asking, "Sheikh Nasrallah, everybody is saying that you had something to do with the attacks in Argentina." Sheikh Nasrallah replied, "We do not want to hurt Jews in Argentina" — which is an interesting answer. He did not say, "We do not want to hurt Jews," he said, "We do not want to hurt Jews in Argentina" — probably anywhere else yes. But he said — and pay attention to this — he said, "Only if they transfer the (Middle East) conflict over there, then it's legitimate."

So Jeffrey Goldberg asked him, "Well, did they transfer the conflict?" Nasrallah's answer was to raise his eyebrows in silence. What do they mean by "transferring the conflict"? They mean we love Israel, we have our solidarity with Israel, we support our Jewish brethren in Israel in the conflict against Islamic terrorism, and in the conflict in the war they have. That is transferring the conflict. And that is a legitimate reason to kill Jews in Argentina on orders from Tehran.

This is global anti-Semitism. Jeffrey Goldberg describes the anti-Semitic — not anti-Zionist — language that Hizbollah uses on their satellite channel "Al-Manar," which is viewed all over the world, including by the Islamic community in South America. They watch the Hizbollah TV satellite with anti-Semitic statements and images, which is almost a translation of *Der Stürmer* or other Nazi publications. So the difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is really a non-issue. It is almost the same, the arguments are the same.

We are suffering, as I said, this tremendous crisis in Argentina which affects very severely the Jewish community. It affects individuals, families and institutions. And we have had a significant increase in aliyah in the last year and a half. The average of around 1,000 Jews a year that were leaving for Israel is now 4,500, almost 5,000 this year, and we estimate 7,000 by the end of the year. If the crisis remains as it is, the numbers will probably remain steady, about 5,000 to 8,000 per year. Israel has been extremely helpful, and also the American Jewish community, in supporting this aliyah, which in many cases is a desperate aliyah. People are leaving because they literally are unable to feed themselves and their families.

So to sum up let me add one point which is very important. We have now an important instrument to fight anti-Semitism, which is the anti-discrimination law, and we have used it and successfully. For the first time in the history of the country, we have sent to prison individuals for painting swastikas on walls in the street, or for distributing anti-Semitic propaganda inciting hatred against the Jews. It is a very useful instrument that can still be improved. We have a Legal Department in DAIA that deals specifically with this, assisting individual Jews who have suffered this kind of attack or discrimination. We are convinced that because we are so far away from the places where important decisions are made around the world, that one of the greatest mistakes has been to consider attacks against Jews in one place as a local incident. And we have always paid high prices for that misperception.

The time has come for all of us to understand that when a Jew is kicked, beaten in London or Paris, when a synagogue is burned, when Jews are bombed, they are attacking the Jewish people. We should act locally, but think globally, because our enemies do. They behave and work, as a global organization. They exchange views. They exchange the information. They can plan an attack in Tehran to kill Jews in Argentina. They gather information around the world. We should at least be as effective in exchanging information, in designing our own strategy, in fighting our common enemy together, in a much more intelligent, cohesive and committed way.

THE CHURCH AND ANTI-SEMITISM: WHAT MORE CAN WE DO?

(Excerpts)

ISRAEL SINGER

Chairman

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH COMMITTEE FOR INTERRELIGIOUS CONSULTATIONS

October 31, 2002



Let me explain to you what IJCIC is, then you will know why it is so difficult to spell, pronounce and do, and why the task is even more difficult now than it was when it was founded. IJCIC's task is to take the major Jewish organizations and denominations, the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith, other American Jewish community groups, World Jewish Congress, Israel Interfaith Association, and the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform and get them to work together.

To convince the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform to sit together with the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, ADL, and the World Jewish Congress at the same table in conference or in contact with other churches is a task that is more difficult than to sit with the Catholic Church. Yet, it is a particularly important task that we have. The Catholics are only one. If I were to make the speech fifty years ago, I would tell you, we have a hopeless task, one that needs to be dealt with, with moral as well as with particular political inclinations, one in which we will not have great success in bringing the Jewish people together to do.

Julie Isaac described the relationship with the Catholic Church, a church which was guilty of crimes against the Jewish people for 2,000 years, but particularly in recent times during the Holocaust, and that those crimes were to be described and summarized as a theology for attempt. It is a good phrase. It was presented for the first time by Nachum Goldman when he and Julie Isaac went to see Cardinal Bea. The church which has a sense of guilt about its own experiences, felt that it should do something. But it knew that it needed to find a group that could be all encompassing, including Israel as well as the Jewish people and all of its denominations. It knew that that would be no simple task. It knew that its *mea culpa*, *mea maximum*, which it needed to make, needed to be made to all Jewish people.

Tonight I am speaking not only about the Catholic Church but our relations with the others. I will mention all of them. I am not here tonight to tell you about how bad our situation is and how or what the church has done to create and to encourage anti-Semitism and how religion itself is the most destabilizing factor in world affairs; how religions at large are the cause for the most xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism *interralia* and has been for a very long time. But also to tell you what, hopefully, we can do together. So there will be a couple of suggestions in the program for action to conclude one aspect of the Catholic concerns and begin work with the World Council of Churches, as well as with other faiths like the Muslims. We need to be in dialogue with them. The question is how, and how to do it quickly because time is short.

During World War II, there were some who did great things. Not just illiterate persons who saved individuals' lives but there were very literate people who saved lives. One, the Papal Nuncio in Istanbul in

World War II who became Pope John XXIII, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, was a person of great kindness. He personally felt he needed to say the mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. The Church has a spotty history with some positive spots. He was the one who Bea worked for and he was the one who began this process. That process was later advanced and in many ways, brought forward by this Pope, John Paul II.

We have a good relationship that has been nurtured for forty years with a Catholic Church willing to make many amends, but with much more yet to be done.

The first principal I present tonight is an action principal. We – ADL and WJC have been working towards a program of action with regard to our relationship with Catholics. Its not new. But the principal goes beyond the advancements that the Pope himself made when he announced that anti-Semitism is a sin against God and man, and published it on the front page of the Osservatore Romano. The trickle down effect of that statement to the average archbishop, bishop, monsignor and parish priest and worse, to the illiterate peasant that is looking for someone to dislike for his own impoverished condition, is something which has not yet happened.

Only two Bishop Conferences in the world, France and Germany, have taken this and promulgated it. It has not happened in Poland and not in the United States, to take two disparate countries; not in Italy nor Hungary. Not in the Ukraine and not in Lithuania. These are Catholic countries where people were butchered, killed, hated and are still hated in places, even where there are very few Jews. These Bishops Conferences have not taken the obligation of what the infallible Pope announced is an obligation for them to pass. Why it is not being passed by Cardinal Egan is something beyond my understanding, when he needs us to help him get a better face for his church, a more human face at a time when they are in crisis in the United States. We offered them a helping hand but they have to do what their Pope asked them to do with regard to us. And that friendship is one that we want to build with them.

In Canada, particularly in Quebec, French Canadians still act in a manner that is very un-French Catholic with regard to the way the French Catholic bishops have at least formally acted. Argentina is also a problem. It is the only country where you see the principal of Catholic society in its constitutional life, in its army, and in the very core of its life.

We look today to the Church, to begin this project together with us. ADL and World Jewish Congress commits themselves to IJCIC to succeed in attempting to get 50 Bishops Conferences in one year. To change history as they have been instructed to do in their theological obligation. But we, in return, shall have an obligation to them; to work together with them and to ask them what ails them and what pains them. The reason I present it this way is because we cannot come to them as we have over the last fifty years with demands only.

Here I present to you a new diplomatic vision for the interreligious dialogue that relates to the next two subjects, the World Council of Churches and the world of Islam. We need to have a vision with regard to the other peoples in the world who are believers and non-believers. It is not just our synagogues that are not always full. It is their churches that are empty; they have a problem too. We as Jews and they as Christians, we as Jews and they as Protestants, need to look at the world of belief and to make it more understanding and relevant. We can't help them, but we can discuss with them how the world of information has affected us, the world of entertainment has affected them and us and how the world, in which such fickle changes, as violence, economic interaction and interrelationship and worse, how one big country like ours having difficulty economically can affect everybody else and how that relates to the world of feeding people and poverty as opposed to belief in God to help in this area.

I do want to tell you that they need us as badly as we need them. We have to start talking to them more frankly and more truthfully. We have to start talking to them about things they want to talk to us about as well, not just our demanding of them.

We can help them solve their problems with the IMF, in Argentina, because that will help the Catholic Church. We can work with Caritas in feeding the poor and we should do that. We don't do enough of it though we have begun it. We've begun it in a program we started in Argentina where the Church and the Jews can begin to do the kinds of things we know how to do. We can do it in other places. We can make them more relevant, we can make them more important, we can make their churches one more time become a force for good. So, it is time to start listening and making requests.

You should know that the World Council of Churches makes the Catholic Church look like our best friends. The World Council of Churches is the head office for anti-Semitic dissemination of statements. I use the word anti-Semitic despite the fact I was always careful about abusing of that word.

Today I am being more ugly than anyone has ever been in abusing that term because coming out of that home of God, as they call it, coming out of Geneva, are the ugliest words that have been produced anywhere, any time. No NGO produces the kind of ugly statements that the World Council of Churches produces in the name of God. We have been an empty shell with regard to the abilities that we have in terms of the way we talk to them.

The only meeting we have had with the World Council of Churches in the last couple of years has been when their converted Jew, who is the person responsible for dealing with Jews, comes to visit us and calls us names. He says that Israel is a nation which takes hostages, a nation which builds concentration camps, a nation which treats its strangers the way it treats the Palestinians. We need a new program with regard to people who act in this manner in the name of God.

When the NGO community of the United Nations does so because it is driven by the World League for Arab Women, when it does so because it is driven by Wahhabi induced funds, I have no prayer. They are paid spokespersons. When the World Council of Churches does this because they believe that this is the right thing to do, because they want to be in tune with new age theology, and they have been doing it for a decade now. They poison the wells of every European country's ideology and we don't answer them. We have lost our moral compass. We have lost our ability for being able to deal with other faiths. We have taken it and rendered it totally useless because Rabbis have lost their ability to be able to deal with their colleagues.

The World Council of Churches needs to be called to task, and I have come here tonight to announce a program in which we are not going to stand for this any longer. Our dialogue with them is going to be harsher than any dialogue we ever had with the Catholics. Because they speak not from theology or in the name of God, but because they have lost their relevance as men and women of God, they are trying to become relevant again on our backs and that is unacceptable.

Then a more somber and hopeful note. A billion and a quarter Muslims aren't people merely to be wailed, whined, and feared about. We need to do something with regard to them and we can't categorize them all in one big category. We know that Muslims have been investing the fortune worldwide in building mosques and those who have are not Muslims particularly friendly to us, to Israel, to Western civilization, to the United States. American religious leaders understand this better than Jews. Because Americans have become the victims together with the Jews, we have a big alliance. But the alliance doesn't have to be only against them. It can also be with them.

There are Muslims who live on the periphery. There are Euro Muslims, not all of whom want to fight with us and even with America. Some of the Euro Muslims are among the most violent who were trained in Hamburg to come here and destroy the Twin Towers. There are Muslims that are being trained at the present time in Holland and in Belgium who are the most voracious eaters of Arab anti-Semitism. But not all.

Many, like us, want to become part of the societies to which they have moved. They want to become Frenchmen and Belgians and Dutch and want to find out what these societies that they have migrated to can offer them. They want to become citizens but will not be citizens if they don't learn to speak the language of the West. Hatred is something which we can begin to dialogue about with these peripheral Muslims. They want to enter the world of the West and though not an easy fix, it is one that is worth our time.

When we started the dialogue with the Catholics after 2,000 years of theology of contempt, it is true they weren't killing people in the streets, but they were producing a theology for it. The Muslims might actually have people in their mosques who might want to advance themselves economically and socially, because they have left the seed of backward civilizations for economic advance, the way we did when we left Europe. It is true we weren't violent and neither are all of them, and to give up on it in advance is to take IJCIC and render it impotent.

I recommend today as a third possible program, that we begin to touch on those who live on the periphery, be it Malaysia, be it Indonesia. It is not easy but there are some in those countries who are looking towards us because they don't want to be painted with that one bloody brush. We need to find them and we need to work at it.

I do hope that we can begin these practical programs together. We have the ability, we have succeeded before and we can succeed again.

Thank you.

IRWIN COTLER



I want to begin with some opening observations. Number one, we are witnessing, and I think we have heard this as a kind of running theme, and escalating intensifying globalizing virulent, and, even lethal anti-Semitism that is representative of the atmospherics of the '30s and without parallel or precedent since the end of the second world war.

Second, however widespread, virulent and even lethal this anti-Semitism may be, we must always remember that whatever 2002 may be, it is not 1942. There is a Jewish State today. There is a Jewish people with untold moral, intellectual and material resources. Would that the Jews in the Second World War in the ghettos of Europe, let alone the death camps, could have gotten together as we are getting together here with an Anti-Defamation League and World Jewish Congress at the vanguard at the time.

There are non-Jews who are prepared to stand with us, who are prepared to stand up and be counted, if we will be able to show them the way. Anti-Semitism may indeed be a clear and present danger, but it can be confronted, it can be unmasked and it can be overcome.

Third, from a conceptual and analytical point of view, more importantly, from a strategic and policy point of view, we need to distinguish between old and new anti-Semitism, however much they may conceptually and even operationally overlap. In other words, we need to develop what I will call a new conceptual grid, a new set of indicators, by which we can identify, monitor, evaluate and combat the new anti-Semitism. The Anti-Defamation League has done an extremely important, I would say legacy, work in being able to develop its set of indicators which allows them to develop the empirical studies that they have with regard to anti-Jewishness.

I think in the face of this new anti-Jewishness, we may need an additional paradigm shift and to develop a new conceptual grid identifying the set of indicators by which we cannot just intuitively know the new anti-Semitism when we see it or feel it, but be able to identify it in almost an empirical way.

Fourth, the central feature of this new anti-Jewishness is the singling out of Israel and the Jewish people for differential and discriminatory treatment in the international arena. This is what I will call the benign form of the new anti-Jewishness. The more lethal form of this new anti-Jewishness is whether Israel becomes not only the Jew among the nations, but as I shall describe the Salman Rushdie among the nations.

Fifth, we are witnessing an Orwellian inversion of law and language with respect to this new anti-Jewishness. Where anti-Semitism proceeds under the banner of human rights, operates under the protective

cover of international law and operates under the authority as it were of the United Nations, which holds itself out and to which it is ascribed being the repository of human rights and international law. That makes it all the more sophisticated but at the same time, all the more pernicious, because it is much more difficult to be able to identify when it comes under the mask of human rights and international law. But it has a particular impact among other things — on the NGO culture, on the campus culture in academia — precisely because it operates under the banner of human rights. We need to understand the nature of this dynamic, its fallout and the strategic advocacy to combat it.

Number six is what I would call the danger of a state-sanctioned culture of hate. Nazism almost succeeded, not only because of the industry of terror and the technology of terror, the industry of death and technology of death, but because of the ideology, even pathology of hate. It was this teaching of contempt, this demonizing of the other, where it all begins. As the Supreme Court of Canada put it, the Holocaust did not begin in the gas chambers, it began with words.

What we witness in the Middle East today is a state sanctioned culture of hate that is the most proximate cause of terror on the daily basis. But in the Arab and Muslim world it is not only state sanctioned, but a state-orchestrated culture of hate and a critical phase of this culture of hate. In the mosque, in the media, in the educational system, and in the summer camps, this hate operates in a culture of impunity, not in a culture of any accountability. The people who hate are not only not brought to justice, but are celebrated and that leads to, and in fact, inspires the commission of acts of terror.

Number seven. This state sanctioned culture of hate is not only a clear and present danger to Jews, but it is as clear and present danger to the Arab regimes themselves. The state-sanctioned culture of hate is inciting the Arab street. For a while it may be against Israel and the Jews to deflect away from the anger that would otherwise be oriented toward the regime. It is stirring up a situation where they may no longer be able to control the Arab street.

It is also a danger to the peace process, because it alienates people in Israel who are supportive of that process, but in the face of this state-sanctioned culture of hate begin to say, well this is not just a territorial conflict; it is an existential conflict of the unwillingness of the people in the Arab and Palestinian leadership to accept the legitimization of existence of the Jewish state.

The history, of the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict can be summed up almost in one phrase as a history of double rejectionism, from the UN General Assembly Partition Resolution rejected in 1947 to the Barak-Clinton plan in the year 2000. Arabs and Palestinians were prepared to forego the establishment of a Palestinian state if that meant also countenancing the establishment and the existence of a Jewish state. And that is why I use the term, double rejectionism. We have to understand the nature therefore of this culture of hate, as actually being an assault upon even Palestinian self-determination, as Palestinians are held hostages to this indoctrination of hate.

Leading to the eighth observation, that we there isn't a cure to this disease of anti-Semitism but democracy can be a healthy antidote to the virus of anti-Semitism. Empirical studies have shown that democratic governments, democratic societies, can act as a kind of antidote to the virus of anti-Semitism which incubates and explodes in non-democratic societies. Therefore, we should make the promotion of democratic development part also of our approach to anti-Semitism. Islam is not inherently incompatible with democracy. We should not be that patronizing, saying, we can't have Islam and democracy together. I think you can.

Number nine. That the indifference, the acquiescence or the complicity with anti-Semitism, including

anti-Semitic terror, only encourages and invites the forces of terror and hate against others. And so you have a situation where 9/11 may have overshadowed Durban, but Durban foreshadowed 9/11.

Number ten, the most lethal form of anti-Semitism is what I call genocidal anti-Semitism — inciting to and resulting in genocidal bombing.

Number eleven, is that not all Jews are Zionists and not all critics of Zionism and Israel are necessarily anti-Semitic. We have to be very careful in what we identify as being anti-Semitic because if we say that everything is anti-Semitic then nothing will be anti-Semitic. I would like to turn to the development of a conceptual grid or set of indicators by which we can identify this anti-Semitism.

This new anti-Jewishness overlaps with classical Anti-Semitism but is distinguishable from it. It is grounded in the “Zionism-Racism” resolution and ideology, but goes beyond it. If we need a new vocabulary to try to define it, and I think we do, we can perhaps best define the new anti-Jewishness as being the discrimination against denial of or assault of, assault upon, national particularity and people anywhere, whenever that national particularity or peoplehood happens to be Jewish. Whether we are talking Israel as the collective Jew among the nations or whether we are talking about Jewish collectivities. Classical anti-Semitism was a discrimination against or denial of the rights of individual Jews to live as equal members in a society. ADL in particular developed a set of indicators to identify the status of Jews in a society at any given moment in time.

The new anti-Jewishness is the discrimination, the assault upon the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations. What is common to old and new anti-Jewishness is discrimination. All that has happened is that it has moved from discrimination against the Jews as individuals, to the discrimination of the Jews as a people. In that discrimination as the Jews as a people, with Israel emerging as a Jew among the nations, it has in effect recycled and resurrected the classical anti-Jewishness in its own intensity and manifestation.

I would like to propose a set of indicators that we might use by which we cannot just intuitively, but hopefully more conceptually and empirically, identify, monitor, evaluate, and combat this new anti-Jewishness.

The first one, and most lethal, is what I call existential or genocidal anti-Semitism. I am referring to the public cult for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people and which fits the juridical definition of genocide in the genocide treaty.

There are three manifestations of it today. First are the covenants of terrorist organizations and like Hamas, Islamic Jihad, like Hizbollah which openly and publicly call for the destruction of Israel in the killing of Jews, let alone their demonization of Jews in those covenants themselves. Second is the public call by radical Islamic clerics, and sometimes not so radical ones, for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews wherever they maybe. Third is the public call by states in the international community, like Iran and Iraq, for the destruction of another member state in the international community. The worst thing about each and all of these manifestations is the silence that greets and attends these calls.

The second indicator is political anti-Semitism, also with three manifestations. The discrimination against or denial of the right of the Jewish people to self determination; the denial to Israel of its legitimacy; the demonization of Israel. In a world where human rights has emerged as the new secular religion of our time, the indictment of Israel as the human rights violator of our time, resulted in Israel emerging as the new anti-Christ of our time with all the fallout that that implies.

Third is ideological anti-Semitism. This is evidenced not only by the Zionism is racism indictment, but by the characterization of Israel being a criminal apartheid state. The notion of Israel as an apartheid state is even more toxic and more virulent because it not only gives anti-Semitism the appearance of international sanction, but becomes the basis for the call for the dismantling of Israel as an apartheid state.

Fourth is theological anti-Semitism. I am referring to the convergence of the state-sanctioned Muslim anti-Semitism, along with Christian replacement theology.

Fifth is what I will call culture anti-Semitism. I am referring here to a mélange of attitudes, sentiments and innuendo of the chattering classes and the enlightened elite you find in academia and the literati, in the parliaments of the world, and amongst the human rights culture. Anti-Semitism has become respectable once more, not just in Germany or Catholic central Europe but at the London dinner table.

Sixth is the particular genre of European anti-Semitism. The convergence of the extreme left and the extreme right in Europe, which finds expressions in different capitals of Europe in public demonstrations that call for the death of the Jews, and that are carried out with impunity. It is the demonization of Israel through the increasing ascription of Nazi metaphors and indifference or silence in the face of horrific acts of terror against Israel. Yet, threatening Israel with sanctions if it exercises its right of self-defense against terror.

The seventh is what I will call the substantive anti-Jewishness in the international arena — the denial to Israel of equality before the law in the international arena. It is one of the more sophisticated and insidious manifestations and expression of anti-Semitism. I am referring here to two particular examples. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and the first convening of the contracting parties of the Geneva Convention.

It is now on the record that the UN Commission on Human Rights has indicted Israel “for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in the occupied territory.” The media can now quote the repository of human rights, the UN Commission on Human Rights.

The Geneva Convention adopted in 1949 had never been brought together for the genocide in Cambodia, ethnic cleansing in the Balkans or genocide in Rwanda. The only time the contracting parties were ever brought together was to deliver an indictment against one member state, in the international community, namely Israel, under the cover-up and in the name of international humanitarian law.

That is why I say our response has to be that these kinds of singling out of Israel for differential discriminatory treatment in the international arena are not only prejudicial to Israel and the Jewish people, but to undermine the integrity of the United Nations, under whose auspices they take place. They undermine the authority of international humanitarian law; they undermine the whole structure of human rights in whose name they take place.

I have given you, at this point, seven indicators. I will only name the others. The next one would be what I call the procedural anti-Jewishness, the denial to Israel of procedural international due process, that in the international arena. Nine is legalized anti-Semitism expressed in the UN and specialized agencies. Ten is economic. The Arab boycott is rearing its ugly head again. We have been focusing on divestment which is yet another manifestation of it. Great work was done by Jewish organizations on the Arab Boycott in the late '70s and '80s in particular, but it has reasserted itself and maybe we should revisit it Because, here too, is another manifestation of a kind of economic apartheid.

Holocaust denial is the eleventh form. Twelve is racist terrorism against Jews, whether it is in Argentina on the singling out of Israelis or Jewish nationals as objects of state sanctioned terror. State-sanctioned anti-Semitism as the thirteen.

None of this is intended to suggest, nor would I wish to have it inferred from any of my remarks today, that Israel is somehow above the law, or that Jewish people are not to be held accountable for any violations of international human rights law or humanitarian law and order. On the contrary, Israel and the Jewish people are responsible like any other state. No one is saying that Israel should not observe standards of human rights. But why are not these standards being applied equally to anyone else? No one is saying that human rights do not deserve respect. But why are not the rights of Israel and the Jewish people not deserving of equal respect? And that is the point that we have to continue to make.

There is a clear and present danger and the time has come to sound the alarm. I say this not only for Israel and the Jewish people, whose safety and security is under existential threat and attack, but for the world community and the human condition as a whole. Anti-Semitism is in a sense the canary in the pantheon of evil. As we have learned throughout history, as it goes with the Jews so will it go with everyone else, and that while it may begin with the Jews, it doesn't end with the Jews.

So we have to stand up, in this struggle against anti-Semitism, as part of the larger struggle for human rights and human dignity in our time. This has always been my credo. I come to the support of Israel and the Jewish people not simply because it is a Jewish cause, but because I believe profoundly that it is a just cause, and when we struggle against anti-Semitism we are struggling for "tikkun olam" in the most profound sense of the word.

Thank you.

CLOSING SPEECH

by

JOSCHKA FISCHER

Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Federal Republic of Germany

ADL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ANTI-SEMITISM

November 1, 2002 – New York, NY



Mr. Tobias, Mr. Foxman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The murder of six million German and European Jews by the Nazis nearly sixty years ago shook the world to its foundations. This crime against humanity dramatically changed the world – especially Europe. In spite of the lessons that people should have learned from the Holocaust, the phenomenon of anti-Semitism is still widespread around the world. We are confronted with it daily.

Attacks on synagogues, the desecration of gravestones or the painting of swastikas in Europe right through to anti-Semitic hate propaganda in some media in the Middle East and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 – anti-Semitism has many ugly faces. Anti-Semitism in whatever guise is worrying in the extreme. Therefore it is good and important that such a qualified organization as the Anti-Defamation League has made global anti-Semitism the focus of its conference. Because anti-Semitism is not just a threat to Jews but represents a general danger to peace, freedom and democracy. Racism is repulsive and politically extremely dangerous.

But how are we to combat anti-Semitism effectively? What strategies promise success?

You have invited me here today to speak about this subject. This is no easy task for a German foreign minister. Given our history, after all, no country bears so much guilt and responsibility for racist anti-Semitism as Germany. The Nazi period marked the end of centuries of flourishing Jewish life and culture in Europe. Through the expulsion and murder of the German Jews by the Nazis, we Germans have forever destroyed a major part of ourselves.

Scientists such as Albert Einstein, literary figures such as Lion Feuchtwanger and directors such as Ernst Lubitsch found their pioneering works scorned and themselves driven into exile. They left behind a gaping void that until today we have not been able to close. I see this particularly in Berlin, the city in which Jews were able to develop their potential to the fullest and liveliest effect. This historical experience also means that we are firmly committed to countering every kind of anti-Semitism, every kind of racism and xenophobia. For this Germany bears a great, historic and moral responsibility, which we must always strive to meet.

The origins and identity of the democratic Germany can only be understood against the background of my country's responsibility for the Holocaust. Remembering this crime against humanity and resulting obligations will continue to determine German policy in the future as well. We will do everything possible to keep the memory of this dark chapter of our past alive so that we can remain watchful. In the coming months the Holocaust memorial will be built next to the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin as a place

where this tragic, terrible memory will be set in stone. This monument is for us Germans, for we need to be reminded.

I can and will not hide the fact that anti-Semitic incidents also repeatedly take place in Germany. It troubles me that all Jewish institutions in Germany are still under permanent police protection. But the response of government and the courts to anti-Semitism or even criminal offences with an anti-Semitic background is clear and unambiguous. Never again will we permit even initial signs of excluding and persecuting a section of the population on the grounds of its religion, color or origin. The overwhelming majority of Germans have accepted the lasting historical responsibility for the genocide committed against the German and European Jewry. We will act decisively against anti-Semitism in Germany and know that we must be especially alert.

We also know that the consequences of Hitler's racist anti-Semitism will only be overcome when Germans of Jewish faith in my country can live free from fear and in complete safety. We have unfortunately not yet achieved this goal with respect to safety. An important measure of our ability to become an open and tolerant society are the Jewish communities in Germany. The question of whether German Jews can feel safe and at home in our country is the ultimate test of credibility of our German democracy. It is our "second chance" as the historian Fritz Stern once put it. We are determined to use it.

I am therefore glad that the Jewish communities of Germany have again increased considerably in recent years through immigration. Berlin today has the fastest growing Jewish community in Europe. In many German cities new Jewish schools are being built and seminaries for training rabbis are being established. Given the past tragedy, it is almost a miracle that I can tell you Jewish life in Germany today is vibrant and flourishing. But it also shows that we have already achieved a great deal towards reaching this goal.

I am also pleased about the results of the recent Federal elections in Germany. That won't surprise you, but I am not only glad about the victory of the Red-Green coalition but also, above all, about the fact that extremist, xenophobic, let alone anti-Semitic tendencies did not have a chance with German voters. With a voter turnout of 80 per cent, once again not one far-right party made it into the Bundestag. Moreover anti-Semitic undercurrents in one of the mainstream party's election campaigns resulted in its clear defeat.

Our moral responsibility, however, is not just restricted to German domestic policy. We also have an obligation to do everything possible in the wider world to prevent such catastrophes like that of the Third Reich from ever happening again. This moral responsibility is very clearly reflected in our relationship with the State of Israel. Without any reservation, Germany endorses Israel's right to exist and the right of its citizens to live within secure borders and at peace with their neighbors. This wholehearted commitment to Israel is a key parameter of German foreign policy. It is not negotiable and forms the basis of the special relationship between Germany and Israel. This is a position on which we are very firm in our dealings with states that are hostile to Israel. If they want to negotiate with us, then they must accept this fundamental principle.

Thus we are Israel's most reliable partner after the United States and its most important ally in Europe. No-one in Germany could have even dared dream of this a few decades ago. This "curious friendship", as New York Times correspondent Roger Cohen has described it, is reflected in the multitude of contacts that exist in all walks of life. We are in continuous contact politically, economically and culturally, and our relations are very good, although they are never going to be easy.

Arising from this close relationship is our deep concern about the Middle East peace process. Time and again, ever since its founding, there have been violent attempts to deny Israel its right to exist. Right to

the present day, violence and terror are part of daily reality in Israel. At the same time, the history of the State of Israel is almost tragically linked to the fate of the Palestinians. No solution has yet been found that satisfies both peoples.

During my visit to Israel last year I witnessed the appalling terrorist attack on the Dolphinarium discotheque in which so many young people were killed or severely wounded. I will never forget the grief, the horror, and the rage that the terror – so indiscriminate and yet so calculated – triggered in Tel Aviv. Unfortunately, it has been followed by further devastating attacks, with countless innocent victims.

On the other side, the Palestinians also mourn relatives and friends who were killed. The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories is appalling. Many houses in the towns and villages have been destroyed. The closures are strangling all economic life. The Israeli Government is itself aware of this problem.

There must be an end to the terror and violence. We need a political solution that will bring lasting peace to both peoples.

I am convinced that this aim cannot be achieved by confrontation. Rather, everything possible must be done to facilitate the road to peace via the negotiating table. With the Oslo Agreement, the historic handshake in the White House Rose Garden and at Camp David, peace seemed within the grasp of Israel and Palestine. Unfortunately, our hopes were disappointed; violence and terror in the Middle East claim new victims almost every day. The entire region is in danger of becoming increasingly destabilized.

And yet there are many realistic proposals for solutions on the table. The Saudi initiative for normalizing relations with Israel deserves attention. President Bush has described the road to a two-state solution in clear and constructive terms. A Palestinian state must be independent and democratically legitimized from within. This is not a utopia but realistically thought out. I know of no country in the Arab world in which the democratic and civil society potential is greater than it is in the Palestinian territories.

The Quartet of the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations continues to be committed to working towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. For the first time in years the most important players in the international community are striving together for a common peace plan. I would like to emphasize the close collaboration here between the US and the European Union. In particular, our friends in America have the central role to play in the peace process. Their commitment and responsibility cannot be appreciated highly enough.

In this context, I would like to underline the fact that the development of the partnership between the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel would have been unthinkable without the role of the United States. It was America that helped us more than any other country to be reintegrated into the international community. America's strategic foresight and generosity were decisive factors in the growth of a democratic society in post-war Germany, a society that does not evade questions about its past and which is prepared to learn from it. We are deeply grateful to our American friends for their help. The transatlantic alliance between Berlin and Washington is a valuable asset and also a cornerstone of German foreign policy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me in conclusion to return once more to Germany. Not long ago we opened the new Jewish Museum in Berlin. It was built by the American Jewish architect Daniel Libeskind. Another prominent American, who was in fact born in Berlin – former U.S. secretary of the treasury Michael Blumenthal –

is its Director. The Museum's disjointed architecture vividly illustrates the difficult relationship between Germany and its Jews. On the way through the building, which is at the same time a path through the thousand year-old Jewish history of Germany, the visitor cannot help running into sharp corners and sudden edges. It is an instructive and serious tour. Underpinning the fractured design of the building is an absolutely straight, wide corridor which Libeskind calls the axis of continuity. This is meant to symbolize the survival of the Jews and Jewish life in spite of centuries of persecution and expulsion. I hope that this axis underpins and supports our joint efforts to combat anti-Semitism and xenophobia and to promote democracy and human rights. For me, it represents a symbol of hope, just like the fact that Daniel Libeskind, who was born in Poland and raised in Israel and the United States, today lives and works in Berlin.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Of one thing you can be sure: Democratic Germany is and will remain your true friend and partner. Thank you.

Anti-Defamation League

NATIONAL OFFICE (webmaster@adl.org) 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017	(212) 885-7700	
WASHINGTON OFFICE 1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW (Suite 1020), Washington, DC 20036 (natlgov@adl.org)	(202) 452-8320	
REGIONAL OFFICES		
ALBUQUERQUE P.O. Box 21639, Albuquerque, NM 87154 (new-mexico@adl.org)		(505) 823-2712
ARIZONA One E. Camelback #670, Phoenix, AZ 85012 (arizona@adl.org)		(602) 274-0991
ATLANTA (Southeast) One Securities Centre, 3490 Piedmont Road NE (Suite 610), Atlanta, GA 30305 (atlanta@adl.org)		(404) 262-3470
BOSTON (New England) 126 High Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02110 (boston@adl.org)		(617) 457-8800
CHICAGO (Greater Chicago/Upper Midwest) 309 West Washington (Suite 750), Chicago, IL 60606 (chicago@adl.org)		(312) 782-5080
CLEVELAND (Ohio/Kentucky/Allegheny) 505 Terminal Tower, Cleveland, OH 44113 (cleveland@adl.org)		(216) 579-9600
CONNECTICUT 1952 Whitney Avenue, 3rd Floor, Hamden, CT 06517 (connecticut@adl.org)		(203) 288-6500
DALLAS (North Texas/Oklahoma) 12800 Hillcrest Road (Suite 219), Dallas, TX 75230 (dallas@adl.org)		(972) 960-0342
DC (District of Columbia/Maryland/Virginia/North Carolina) 1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW (Suite 1020), Washington, DC 20036 (washington-dc@adl.org)		(202) 452-8310
DENVER (Mountain States) 1120 Lincoln Street (Suite 1301), Denver, CO 80203-2136 (denver@adl.org)		(303) 830-7177
DETROIT (Michigan) 6735 Telegraph Road (Suite 300), Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301 (detroit@adl.org)		(248) 646-2440
HOUSTON (Southwest) 4635 Southwest Freeway (Suite 400), Houston, TX 77027 (houston@adl.org)		(713) 627-3490
LAS VEGAS 1050 East Flamingo Road (Suite N339), Las Vegas, NV 89119 (las-vegas@adl.org)		(702) 862-8600
LOS ANGELES (Pacific Southwest) 10495 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (los-angeles@adl.org)		(310) 446-8000
SATELLITE OFFICES		
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY , 22622 Vanowen Street, West Hills, CA 91307 (san-fernando-valley@adl.org)		(818) 464-3220
SANTA BARBARA , 35 W. Victoria Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 (santa-barbara@adl.org)		(805) 564-6670
MIAMI (Florida) 2 South Biscayne Boulevard (Suite 2650), Miami, FL 33131-1802 (miami@adl.org)		(305) 373-6306
SATELLITE OFFICE		
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NEW YORK 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (new-york@adl.org)		(212) 885-7970
OMAHA (Plains States) 333 South 132nd Street, Omaha, NE 68154 (omaha@adl.org)		(402) 333-1303
ORANGE COUNTY/LONG BEACH 959 South Coast Drive (Suite 374), Costa Mesa, CA 92626 (orange-county@adl.org)		(714) 979-4733
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ST. LOUIS (Missouri/Southern Illinois) 10420 Old Olive, Suite 208, St. Louis, MO 63141 (st-louis@adl.org)		(314) 432-6868
OFFICES OUTSIDE THE U.S.		
JERUSALEM 21 Jabotinsky Street, Jerusalem, Israel 92141 (israel@adl.org)		011-972-2-566-7741
MOSCOW MHG, Bolshoi Golovin Per, 22-1 Moscow 10745, Russia (moscow@adl.org)		011-7-095-207-6063
CANADA Cooperative Association with the League for Human Rights of Canadian B'nai Brith 15 Hove Street (Suite 210), Downsview, Ontario, Canada, M3H 4Y8 (league@bnaibrith.ca)		(416) 633-6224

Web site: www.adl.org

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