



**Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies**

[www.fswc.ca](http://www.fswc.ca)

**AVI BENLOLO, PRESIDENT AND CEO, CANADA  
Toronto, December 14, 2007**

### **MY BLOG**

#### **Seasons Greetings**

To all our friends celebrating Christmas, on behalf of our Board of Directors and the staff at Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a very happy new year. May all your wishes come true and may we continue to strive hand in hand to bring goodwill to all humanity.

#### **Shame on Swastika Artist**

Imagine our horror this week at having discovered that someone had penciled a swastika onto a sign we posted in the lobby of the building housing the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center. The sign was there to direct visiting groups to our Centre for diversity and tolerance training. Judging by the numbers of people attending our sessions lately to dialogue and build bridges, this artist buffoon must be one lonely person. This is an open invitation for him or her to come to the Wiesenthal Center – and start repairing the world, rather than demeaning it.

#### **Students React Positively to Wiesenthal Study on Israel Boycott**

Responding to an open letter we published in the Varsity (UofT's student newspaper), one notable student leader wrote, *"I was delighted to see the full page spread...last week from the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Last year I ran a slate for the student union elections...As it stands, UofT undergraduate students are paying into a fund that goes to support various groups...including "Anti-Israeli Apartheid Week". Most constituents frowned upon this form of deceptive funding."*

Our study proved that UofT and Ryerson students do not want their funds used by unions and student groups to fund anti-Israel activity. This is a significant expose that demonstrates that anti-Israel agitators are marginal and that the student body is far more sensible and aware that Israel is a free and democratic nation.

## **On Durban II**

For many people around the world, particularly those in the Jewish community, the very mention of the word, Durban (the city) brings out an onslaught of negative emotions. That's because in 2001, Durban, South Africa became the scene of the most vile and obscene Jewish bashing not seen since 1933 Germany. The World Conference Against Racism held in Durban, degraded into a politicized Conference FOR racism – against one group – the Jews. And one state, - Israel. If you want to know how dehumanization, marginalization and racism truly begins, study Durban.

Plans for Durban II are underway for spring 2009. What is most spectacular, is that Libya is the Chair of the working group and Iran is Chair of the preparatory group while Cuba serves as its Vice President. How is it possible that some of the greatest violators of human rights are permitted to lead the next session of The World Conference Against Racism? How can unbiased fairness for the benefit of all humanity be achieved at such an important conference when the political aspirations and anti-Israel sentiments (particularly of Iran) will likely degrade the conference into another Israel bashing opportunity?

In speaking about this very problem with Shimon Samuels, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Director for International Relations based in Paris, he suggested that Canada can play a very important and vital role. He recalled, "feeling desperately alone at the Geneva prep commission for Durban I in the year 2000, it was the Canadian delegation that provided me with the warmth of hospitality and support for Jewish sovereignty and rights. I turned to the Canadian authorities to stand by us for the sake of western values throughout the struggle to keep Durban II from being politically hi-jacked and keeping it on the path of antiracism and human rights".

The Canadian government should be encouraged not to fund Durban II under the current conditions. On the other hand, both Shimon and I agreed that it might be interesting to have the conference on Canadian soil rather than Tripoli if it was to go ahead. With Canadian hate speech laws and strong public opposition to aggressive behaviour, radicals would be instantly de-clawed and the conference would proceed as it should. Food for thought.

### **Announcement: Spirit of Hope Benefit Chairs**

It is my honour and pleasure to inform our membership that this year's Benefit Co-Chairs are Ron and Hedy Frisch. FSWC is privileged to have one of the most dynamic

leadership couple serve as figureheads of the most important fundraiser of the year. Both Hedy and Ron bring a wealth of experience having served on numerous committees and campaigns over the years. Hedy has Co-Chaired the Mount Sinai Gala and the Baycrest Gala. Ron has Chaired the JNF Campaign and Negev Dinner, and he has Co-Chaired the UJA Campaign. We wish them well and thank them wholeheartedly for helping FSWC promote tolerance, justice and human rights in Canada and beyond.

### **It's Glenn Beck!**

One of our main speakers for the May 29<sup>th</sup> Spirit of Hope Benefit is Glenn Beck: his radio talk-show is syndicated by 267 stations every day; he has the third most listened talk show in America. He hosts a nightly show on CNN prime time television called the Glenn Beck show; he addresses many political, social and economic issues in a very witty and colourful way.

Stay tuned for more updates about guests who will appear at the Benefit. In a "situation room" like format, the guests will discuss the American Presidential elections, nuclear Iran, the Middle East Conflict, the threat of terrorism and world-wide issues. Registration for this tremendous event begins January 2008.

### **Congratulations Osgoode Team**

I was pleased to hear from Leo Adler that the Osgood Hall Law School team sponsored by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center made it to the finals of the International Criminal Court trial competition at the Hague. The team also took home two prizes. The following comments were made by Dean Patrick Monahan:

*"We are grateful to the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies for generously sponsoring our team. As an NGO, the FSWC has observer status at the ICC and has sent delegates to many ICC events in an effort to see that Simon Wiesenthal's vision for justice (that war criminals and those charged with crimes against humanity be brought to trial before competent courts) is carried out. Please join me in congratulating Subhi, Sarah, Josh and Professors Williams and Adler."*

### **Mazal Tov**

We wish Mitchell Shnier and Dini Partnoy a big mazal tov on their recent marriage. May you have a wonderful and a happy life together and continue enriching the world with your care and compassion.

### **Let Them Go!**

Canadian designated terrorist organizations, Hamas (Gaza Strip) and Hezbollah (Lebanon) are still holding captive, Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev. We have not forgotten them. They must be freed immediately and returned to their families.

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