

The Empire Club Presents



**THE RISE OF WHITE SUPREMACY
IN CANADA**

**WITH GLOBAL NEWS',
FARAH NASSER & DR. MOHAMAD FAKIH**

Welcome Address, by Mr. Kent Emerson, Associate Vice
President at the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation
and President of the Empire Club of Canada

June 13, 2019

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From the One King West Hotel in downtown Toronto, welcome, to the Empire Club of Canada. For those of you just joining us through either our webcast or podcast, welcome, to the meeting.

Today, we present Canada's top experts in the field of hate and extremism, research to explain the unparalleled growth of hate groups and what Canadians can do about it.

HEAD TABLE

Distinguished Guest Speakers:

Dr. Mohamad Fakhri, President and Chief Executive Officer,
Paramount Fine Foods; Voice of UNHCR Canada

Mr. Bernie Farber, Chairman, Canadian Anti-Hate Network

Mr. Mustafa Farooq, Executive Director, National Council of Canadian Muslims

Ms. Farah Nasser, News Anchor, Global News

Dr. Barbara Perry, Professor, Ontario Tech University

Guests:

Mr. Giancarlo Drennan, Principal, Maple Leaf Strategies Inc.

Mr. Michael Kobzar, Director, Energy Management, Ontario, Siemens Canada;
First Vice President, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. MJ Perry, Vice President and Owner, Mr. Discount Ltd.; PhD Candidate in
Theology (University of Toronto); Director, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Michael Thompson, Councillor for Ward 21 (Scarborough Centre)
and Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto

Ms. Cara Zwibel, Director, Fundamental Freedoms Program, Canadian Civil
Liberties Association

The Empire Club of Canada in its past 115 years has addressed nearly every national and international issue of the day. In its rich history, however, it has never addressed the issue of white nationalism until today. Unfortunately, you may not be surprised to learn that in having a record of every speech delivered, we have found speeches in our archives in the early days that have exhibited a type of thinking that, frankly, is unimaginable today, thinking that was prevalent at the beginning of the last century and that was, more specifically, demonstrated by early British Canadians with views on how the Anglo-Saxons all need to sit together or how misplaced the suffragettes were and other similar viewpoints.

Thankfully, times have moved on and the Empire Club itself has striven to be a modern, diverse, and inclusive organization, and the speeches delivered at our podium have reflected changing attitudes of society.

However, that does not mean there are no longer persistent or salient societal issues that need to be addressed. Part of the Empire Club's rich history is its willingness to have important and, at times, difficult conversations at our podium.

That is why we are here today to talk about white nationalism: Because the experts say it is on the rise, and statistics show that hate crime is on the rise as well. President Donald Trump agrees with none of what I just said, stating that the problem with white nationalism is caused by "a small group of people that have very, very serious problems." If you are

here today, I doubt you believe that. If you are watching our podcast, I doubt you believe that. Bernie *[Farber]*, do you believe that?

BF: Not even a little bit.

KE: Bernie does not believe that. There is a division between public perception in terms of whether this is a serious issue in Canada. There are people who believe this is just an American problem. Our panel will address that today. We know that the Internet and social media have provided new tools, connectivity, and anonymity to those interested in spreading hate speech.

I would think what people want to know is what is causing this increase. Where does it lurk and how do you stop it? In my life, I have a son and a new baby girl. This is Alice, all six pounds and two ounces of her. She was born just a few weeks ago.

When she is old enough, the conversation I want to be having with her is, “Alice, in this world, everyone is treated equally. All you have got to do is work hard, and that is your advantage in life, but it is your ability to work harder.” The reality is the world is not quite that place. Alice Emerson will not experience the life as a target of certain types of hate. I have experienced things in my life. I realized that there are many parents who have had and will have to have more difficult conversations than I will. In terms of today’s introduc-

tion, I thought it was more appropriate to turn it over to someone who had relevant experiences, and that is Dr. Mohamad Fakih. Many of you know his story about having approached a nearly bankrupt restaurant and transformed it into one of the fastest-growing chains in North America.

Many of you would also be aware of his dedication to helping others. I have known Dr. Fakih for a little while. When he was not a big shot, he was very interested in asking how your family is doing; how things are with you; and what is going on in your life.

Now that he is a big shot, he is still asking: How are you doing? How is your family? He is a very lovely man, and he has always taken time for me.

He is a community leader and a citizen supporting multiple causes and organizations, including the Canadian Cancer Society, Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Hospital for Sick Children, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and a whole bunch of others—the UN Refugee Agency in Canada.

Both Paramount and Mohamad have donated generously to these charities and other nonprofit organizations. He has also started a nonprofit organization himself called the Fakih Foundation that ensures underserved communities and at-risk populations are motivated and empowered for entrepreneurship, lead-

ership, diversity and inclusion. In the past three years, after the Canadian government decided to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees, Dr. Fakih made headlines in Canadian news when he travelled to Lebanon to visit the Islamic Relief camps for Syrian refugees to gain a deeper understanding of current relief efforts. He has won a tremendous amount of awards.

If I listed them all, I would be here all day: the 2014 Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award; the Globe and Mail titled Dr. Fakih one of Toronto's "16 to watch in 2016." He was named among the 50 Most Influential People in 2017 by Toronto Life. He got an honorary doctorate from Ryerson in 2018. Dr. Fakih represents the very example of what Canada should want new Canadians to be, the very example of that. Yet he has been exposed to racism, Islamophobia, unfair impediments in traveling across borders, and more.

I will leave it to him to describe his experience and to have the honour of introducing today's panel.

Please, welcome philanthropist, activist, community leader, founder of the Fakih Foundation and CEO of Paramount Fine Foods, Dr. Mohamad Fakih.

The Rise of White Supremacy in Canada with Ms. Farah Nasser and Dr. Mohamed Fakih

DMF: Thank you Kent. I was just whispering to Kent, and I said, “I am very proud of you.” I did.

Good afternoon. I feel really honoured to be here today. Just like you, I look forward to learning from the impressive people that will be speaking after me on the panel. I am not an expert. My experience with hate is not academic. It is personal. I will tell you about the most prominent example, the one you may have read about in the news.

Some of you may have already heard me talking about it, but I would be talking about it very often because we need to have more and more conversations like this. Kevin Johnston is a guy who runs a hate speech website. He made me his favourite target, calling me a ‘terrorist’, calling me a ‘jihadist’. He made videos outside my restaurant and said that you are only allowed my restaurant if you have raped your wife or someone else’s wife so many times. He said that inside my restaurant everyone inside is up to something nefarious. Now, my English is good, but I had to Google that one. I have an accent, but I like it. I want to keep that one, too. At first, I was, like, “Buddy, people are here, and they come to me just to buy Shawarma,

relax.” I tried to reason with him, but he would pester me, attack me online, follow me and my children around shopping centres. He shouted at me, made my children shake, and my son, Adam—four years old—would wake up three, four times at night asking who that man was who hated his dad. Finally, I decided: “Enough. Enough of this. This is Canada, and you should not be able to get away with this in this country.” I sued him for defamation in 2017. Last month, we had the verdict. The judge agreed with me.

She awarded \$2.5 million. Of the things that Johnston said about me, she wrote, “a loathsome example of hate speech at its worst, targeting people solely because of their religion.” I believe in fighting back, as you know. I think more of us should do that.

The judge wrote in her judgment, “Left unchallenged, hate speech poisons the integrity of our democracy.” There are a lot of reasons why immigrants and minorities do not stand up for themselves.

A lot of people call me and tell me, and did call me and say, “Let it go. You have a lot to lose, and he does not have anything to lose. Why do you do it? Why do you get yourself involved?” None of them realize that I would have had lost myself if I let it go.

If I did not fight back, I would have had lost the respect of my family and my children and, most importantly, I would not have realized again, and found my-

self the person I wanted to be. Some immigrants and newcomers do not have the money for a legal fight.

Some do not think they will get a fair shake in the court system. Some newcomers do not want to be seen as troublemakers in their new country. All immigrants and minorities are appreciative of the opportunity given to them by Canada. When I came here with \$1,200, a smile from a Canadian made a difference to me and to my life. A lot of them are afraid to lose that opportunity they were given but when hateful words go unchallenged, it is like an invitation to others, an invitation to come out of the shadows and make them feel safe to announce and even celebrate their intolerance.

There are laws in place to protect all Canadians, those born here and those who have been welcomed here. We should not be shy about putting those laws to work for the greater good. We should proclaim all of us, loudly, that hate speech has no place in Canada.

If you speak hateful words, if you engage in hateful actions against anyone, against Muslims, against the Black people, against Jewish people, just simply against any Canadian, you will be held accountable and, as per the judge, you will pay \$2.5 million.

I do not know how much of the judgment I will ever collect. Johnston is not a rich guy, but I will go after him.

No matter how much it is, I will not feed my family with that money. I am going to use that money to financially support others who seek to protect themselves and our Canadian values against people who engage in hate speech. I would like to use that money to organize more events like this and start a call to action to all of you business leaders, in law firms, quite frankly, so that all of us together can talk more about this and start workshops in all companies and in schools where we actually ask the parents to show up.

As well, we should demand more from our political leaders. It is important to keep up the fight, and I will tell you why. The same day that I got the judgment, I could not wait to go back home and wait for my kids at 4 o'clock to arrive with the school bus.

I wanted to read the decision to them. I wanted them to know that I came through with my promise to them. I promised them that that person that scared them in the mall will pay a price. They were happy for me. My wife was happy. That same night that person repeated the video of my children in the mall to upset me and to anger my family. He actually made another video and said worse things about me and my family and about my community and just the fact that I am Muslim. I acted like it is all good. I was smiling because I did not want my family to lose that celebration moment that they waited for, for two years. But before

I went to bed I was sitting alone, and I realized I only won one battle, but the fight and the war will go on.

The fight will go on for all of us Canadians if we do not stand up against hate. Sometimes when I get upset I go to my computer. I go to YouTube, and I go start listening and reading the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. To me, King's words are a reminder that it is not enough to remain silent in the condemnation of hate. To win against hate, we are going to need a loud voice and a firm spine, someone to defend us, but we need to keep this country warm and welcoming.

The hate we hear today is a challenge to our way of living, but it is also a chance for our country, an opportunity to stand up for what is right and what is good. In that face of intolerance we can come together.

In the face of hate, we can love. While other countries build walls and close themselves to the world, we can open our doors wider. We do not often speak of the 'Canadian dream'. Even when I was a kid in Lebanon everybody spoke about the American dream.

We should often speak about the Canadian dream. What should be our Canadian dream? It should be a dream for us all, not only for ourselves. It should recognize that Canada works best when its people work together in community and respect. It should recognize that we stand together in good times and bad, that

we speak together in opposition to hate and to those who try to divide us. It should recognize that when we join together, all of us together, like today, there is a table where we partner such that half are Jewish and the other half are Muslim young people who come to listen to this. When we join in building a country where intolerance is pushed to the farthest fringes and shouted down each and every time it raises its voice, there will always be people who hate from their bones, but together, all of us together we can make them smaller in numbers, smaller in influence, smaller and smaller until they disappear. This is my Canadian dream, and I hope it is yours. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Kent and his team, and even One King and the team that served the food and everyone while the Empire Club has taken a leadership role by hosting something like this to talk about anti-hate. Let us altogether send a message right here from this place, One King, from the entire club of Canada, frankly, all of Canada, let us try to send the message.

I am going to ask you all to join me to stand up. Let us send a message right here from One King that all of us Canadians stand up against hate. Thank you.

Before I introduce the panel, I wanted to say something very, very important to all of you. Let's go Raptors! I promise, I found it in my car because of my kids. Now, I cannot wait to introduce the panel.

Half of the panelists were with me on another panel three days ago. We are going to end up repeating ourselves today. Our first panelist's career spans for more than a quarter century and is focused on human rights, pluralism and inter-ethnic/faith/race relations.

A former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress and the Mosaic Institute, he is recognized and called upon by the courts, media and law enforcement as an expert in human and civil rights. He is one of the few in the field to be accepted by Canadian courts as an expert in hate crime, white supremacy and anti-racism.

He is Chair of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network and sits as a board member of Human Rights Watch.

He has been recognized by Canada for his human rights work having been awarded the Canada 125 Medal, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Sovereign's Medal as well as the special commendation award from the Venerable Order of St. John.

He writes for newspapers and magazines and is a sought-after speaker appearing regularly on television, radio and podcasts, and I am proud to call him my friend. Ladies and gentlemen, please, welcome and help me welcoming my friend and Chairman of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, Bernie Farber, to the stage. Our next guest is a lawyer by profession.

Mustafa Farooq completed his Juris Doctor at the University of Alberta and Osgoode Hall and later

earned his Master of Laws at University of California, Berkeley. He previously served as a senior political staffer to a provincial cabinet minister in which role he worked on various legislative and policy initiatives.

Mustafa was also a visiting scholar at Osgoode Hall Law School researching countering violent extremism policy in Canada. His book entitled *Law, Politics, and Countering Violent Extremism* is forthcoming.

He is a published writer and commentator in various news media and publications on issues related to Canadian Muslims, human rights and civil liberties and public policy issues including Islamophobia and national security. Ladies and gentlemen, please, welcome Mustafa Farooq, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Council of Canadian Muslims, to the stage. Thank you.

Barbara Perry is a professor, and I just met her two days ago; we were on a panel together; she is a Director of the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism.

She has written extensively on social justice generally and hate crime, specifically. She has published several books spanning both areas, including *Diversity, Crime and Justice in Canada* and *In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crime*. She has also published in the area of Native American victimization and social control. Dr. Perry continues to work

in the area of hate crime and has begun to make contributions to the limited scholarship on hate crime in Canada. She is regularly called upon by local, national and international media as an expert on hate crime and right-wing extremism. Her community work was recognized in 2018 with the Ontario Leading Women, Building Communities Award and was recognized in 2019 by the City of Oshawa for her volunteerism.

Ladies and gentlemen, please, welcome Professor in the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Dr. Barbara Perry.

Last but not least, finally, today's moderator is one of Toronto's most recognizable faces in news, and I am very, very proud of her. Farah Nasser is an award-winning journalist, bringing extensive experience to her role as anchor on Global News at 5:30 and at 6:30. Nasser's status as a trusted journalist with a strong political background, having covered elections at every government level, has earned her the opportunity to moderate key political debates, including the main 2018 Ontario provincial election debate and the only broadcast 2018 Toronto mayoral debate.

Providing viewers across the GTA much needed clarity for nearly two decades, she was on the ground reporting during major events such as the Toronto van attack, the 2010 G20 Toronto Summit and the Toronto 18 terror trial. Nasser began her career with Rogers

TV before accepting a position with Newstalk 1010, where she worked her way up to a reporting role.

When not reporting on the day's headlines of Global News—and I know this for a fact—Nasser is always spending her time volunteering in the community.

Ladies and gentlemen, please, welcome News Anchor for Global News, Farah Nasser. Thank you.

FN: Thank you, Mohamad, for that kind introduction for all of us. Thank you all for being here and a special thank you to the Empire Club, because I know you mentioned this is the first time the Empire Club is doing a discussion like this. I really feel like in a public forum like this—we were talking about this—this is possibly the first time this topic is being broached with leaders from our country. Unfortunately, I do not think it is going to be the last time we are talking about this, but it certainly is the first time, and thank you for making that happen. I think it is so important.

FN: I think we should begin today by talking about the elephant in the room, which is that there are people, possibly in this room, but I know certainly in other rooms that believe this is not an issue here, that this is an American problem. Certainly, it seems, for me covering the news, that this is no longer relegated to the margins of society. Barbara Perry, you are an expert in this field. You know very well. Set a baseline for

us and explain this phenomenon. If we could start that way.

BP: I think what I would like to do is set the context in terms of what are the manifestations, how we know that there is a rise in white nationalism or white supremacy, far-right activism, if you will. I think there are a number of indicators of that. One of the most recent, I think, signs of that are the data that came out from StatCan over the last year, which looks at police-reported hate crimes, for which we found there is a 47% increase in the number of police-reported hate crimes from 2016 to 2017. That is unprecedented to have that kind of increase in any category of crime.

I would argue if it was any category of crime, we would have been calling it a crisis. We would have been demanding national inquiries. What is happening here? We have not really been very active around this. I think that is really telling. We have the hate crime data. The other thing is the increasing presence and visibility and the vocal nature of the organized hate movement, so I am referring to white nationalist groups, white supremacist groups, those sorts of things. When we published our first study, *The Far-Right in Canada*, we identified just about 100 active groups across the country, and we are now in the second stage of that research, and, already, just four years later, we are estimating well over 200—the number

is probably approaching 300—active groups across the country. I think that those two figures together are enough. Maybe the last thing to mention, which sort of links them, is if we think about the number of homicides, simply the number of mass murders in the last four or five years, what do you think? A couple? Three? Four? Nineteen homicides are attributable to some strand of right-wing extremism. Justin Bourque killed three RCMP officers in Moncton, inspired by his own online radicalization, if you will, reading right-wing websites. We had Alexandre Bissonnette who killed six Muslim men at prayer inspired by Islamophobia, inspired by Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen.

Then, more recently, of course, Alek Minassian, who took ten lives in Toronto in his van attack, was inspired by misogyny associated with the incel movement, which is part of the far-right as well. If these are not reasons to take seriously the threat, I do not know what more evidence we can possibly share.

FN: Can I just add to that. In the last municipal election, as well, we saw in Toronto here, a white nationalist and neo-Nazi enabler, as you have said, Bernie, and in Mississauga, we had the same man who was in a lawsuit with Mohamad Fakih, a vile Islamophobe and anti-immigrant agitator and together they got 50,000 votes. Fifty thousand votes in the GTA; 50,000 people have voted for hate mongers. It is not even an issue,

in terms of geography; the most diverse place where diversity is our strength, this is what is happening.

Bernie, I am going to turn it over to you, because you are the one who pointed that out to me. You have been monitoring; you have been confronting; and you have been dealing with hate groups and white supremacist groups for much of your career. You were at the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Paloma Foundation, the Mosaic Institute. Now, you are the Chair of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network. How did your journey bring you here? What was your journey, I guess, in getting to this point, and what lessons have you learned along the way?

BF: The journey really started with my father, who was a Holocaust survivor in a small village in Poland—750 Jews. He was the only Jew to have survived the war.

His first wife, two children, seven brothers and sisters, the entire village of Jews was murdered in the gas chambers of Treblinka. He survived, and he came here to start a new life. It was his words, really, that I think inspired me from that day forward to understand that hatred is alive and silence feeds hatred and that it is important to always speak out, as Mohamad quite eloquently said. My journey took me through to the Canadian Jewish Congress where I figured one of the things that we really have to do is defend our own community and by defending our own commu-

nity, we also defend others. We are going back to the '80s and '90s with the first rise of neo-Nazism through what was known then as a group called the Heritage Front. Some of you may remember them. They used to be called the "Canadian Nazi Party," but they got a little bit smarter, and they decided, well, we cannot call ourselves Nazis anymore, and they picked up the term 'Heritage Front'. 'Heritage', what is wrong with 'Heritage'?

Of course, we cottoned on to it in the end, but the fact of the matter is that it never went away. It was put down; it bubbled on the surface for a while; and we have seen this happen time and again from post-World War II. It almost goes like this, peaks and valley, peaks and valleys. Today, we are in the situation that I do not think I have ever seen before, to be quite honest.

I am very worried. I am very concerned. Barbara went over the number of murders. That, to me, shows that there is a clear and present danger. Let me add one thing just to give you another perspective.

When people ask me, How bad is it, really? the fact of the matter is that the Canadian Forces Intelligence Group came out with a study just a few weeks ago—this was from our own Canadian Armed Forces—in which they identified that between 2013 and 2018, there were 53 active members of neo-Nazi organizations in the Canadian military. At this time, as we are

speaking right here, there remains 33 active members of some of the most violent neo-Nazi organizations in the world, groups like Atomwaffen, classified as a domestic terrorist organization in the United States; III%ers; and the Proud Boys. They are serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. They are getting arms training. They are learning how to make bombs.

We have implored the Canadian Armed Forces to do something. Get rid of them; take them out of service. All we have been faced with is silence, so, today, I am calling upon the defense minister to take action; get rid of these 30 before something terrible happens. I hope you are with me on that because this is huge and this is important.

FN: The government certainly has to answer for that.

BF: Absolutely.

FN: Mustafa, I want to turn it over to you, because we talked about StatCan. Barbara Perry, we have never seen, in modern history, hate crimes against the Muslim community like we have seen in modern history.

These are reported hate crimes, because most hate crimes, remember, are not even reported—Muslim men, women, children, targeted with violence, even death. How did we get to this point, and how do we confront this ugly reality, Mustafa?

MF: Thank you for your question. I think it is important to note that there is still a large amount—maybe this is the academic in me—of research that needs to be done to fully account for the rise of the public-facing nature of many of these groups. I generally agree with Bernie that this sentiment never went away but really went underground.

To understand how these groups continue to articulate themselves more publicly, to be more active, to organize, to militarize, I think there is a lot more research that is required and that is something that Dr. Perry has been paving the way forward on.

I think, in terms of understanding that, I think we can think about factors like the rise of populist movements, to the south and how that has influenced Canadian politics. We can think about a real network of folks who are invested in Islamophobia and other forms of racism and white supremacy across North America and Europe. There are a number of potential factors. Just to sort of double on the points raised by Bernie and Barbara already, I think it is so critical to understand that the problem of white supremacy is a problem that is affecting people every single day in their lived realities. Let me put that more precisely.

I was on a plane the other day to Edmonton, and we got a call from the Quebec City Mosque, which as you all know, was the site where the largest attack against

any religious minority in Canada took place, and during this phone call, we learned that there was an individual who came to the mosque and assaulted one of the mosque goers. While assaulting him, he called out a number of anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments, and asked everyone to show him their passports. When we asked the premier of Quebec to stand up, to stand against a discourse of intolerance, a discourse of division, his response was, “What discourse of divide, what discourse of division?” And he specifically noted that they were not going to add, necessarily, more police protection for the mosque, as if things are fine and as if to say, “What are we really going to do about racism?” It was sort of a shrugging-of-the-shoulders kind of response. When you have people at the very top sort of shrugging their shoulders in response to this kind of racist, white supremacist violence, that is when things get very concerning for us all across Canada.

FN: It has to be more than lip service. Let us talk about, specifically, the tools and also whether police have the tools that they need. I will open up to all three of you.

Do the police have the tools they need to do their job in enforcement and also the justice system?

Are we doing enough? Are we seeing enough in terms of what we are seeing, cases going through the justice system? We heard Mohamad Fakhir's, but what is happening in that realm with authorities, Barbara?

BP: We have very limited legislative tools with which to counter this hate speech and hate crime, in fact.

We do not have a standalone piece of legislation that says, “This is a hate crime.” We have sentencing legislation, so if something, an assault, is found to be motivated by bias or prejudice, there might be an opportunity to enhance the sentence after the finding of guilt. It is invoked very rarely.

The only other legislation we have is really propaganda legislation, which is kind of around hate speech and especially those sorts of things like Your Ward News, but between 2010 and 2017, again, I am going to ask you to guess, how many cases do you think? Hundreds, dozens, thousands? Thirty-seven.

Keep in mind, that with the dramatic increase we have been seeing, the legislation is not enforced. In part, that is because of hesitancy on the part of the Crown because this is a case, a series of offences that need to go to the Attorney General for permission to lay charges. It is the only offence in the Criminal Code. Police are not well trained in investigative techniques, especially, in smaller services, in smaller cities. In some of the larger cities, like Toronto, York Region, for example, they do have trained personnel. They do have hate crime units, but that is not the norm. Police are not in a strong position. Crowns are not well trained in building the cases either.

Again, we have very few tools. After s. 13 of the Human Rights Code was eliminated, that left us with not even civil remedies for hate speech, the kind of hate speech that Mohamad was talking about. We are in pretty dire straits in terms of our ability to confront it, legally.

BF: Let me just follow a little bit and give you the example. Barbara mentioned Your Ward News. How many people remember the case of Your Ward News? This was the rag that was distributed here in Toronto, in Oshawa and other places that was probably a prescription, if you will, for what hate crime is. You opened that newspaper, and you thought, “This is the most hateful thing I have ever seen.” It was reported by me and a couple of other people in 2010 to Toronto police. The case just finished about three months ago. Now, the man was found guilty.

Mr. Sears was found guilty, and he will be sentenced in the next couple of weeks, but it took close to seven years to move from investigation to settlement. I do not think a homicide takes that long. Keep this in mind. There is also a lot of angst over the whole issue of free speech versus hate speech. And s. 319 of the Criminal Code makes it a criminally indictable offense to knowingly and willfully promote hate against a group identified by race, creed, colour, nationality, sexual orientation. As Barbara said, in order to lay that charge, there

is an extra level of protection for which you need the Attorney General's permission to do so. So very often these charges are not laid, because, quite frankly, police just cannot be bothered by that. They do not get it.

Barbara kindly said that there were a few metropolitan police forces that still have hate units. The truth of the matter is there used to be many police forces that had hate units right across Canada. They have all been eliminated. What they do now is they assign two or three individuals within the intelligence unit so that when a hate crime comes along, they get to investigate it. It is not the same as having a specialized group of people who have been specifically trained to deal with this, now, at a time when the rise in hate crimes is so monumental, and, more than that, when it has turned. During my time at the Canadian Jewish Congress, we were dealing with swastikas painted on synagogue walls and slogans, terribly written slogans, "Damn Jews," whatever you want. They were hateful, disgusting words. Today, it has moved from hateful, disgusting words to violence and murder. Violence and murder and 50,000 people in the Greater Toronto Area thought it was quite all right to put an 'X' beside a name of a neo-Nazi enabler to be mayor of their city.

Think about that for a moment. Fifty thousand does not amount to a hill of beans when you are talking about 2.5 million people in Toronto, but to me it amounts to

a hill of beans. Why? Because it only takes really one person. It just takes one. Of those 50,000 people, how many of them are really active? I do not know. Even if you say 1,000 of them are really active or 100 are really active, one person in the United States in 1995, Timothy McVeigh, planted a bomb at the Alfred P. Murrah Building in Oklahoma City where 168 people, 19 children, were murdered. One person. Think about that.

FN: So many points to pick up on that. Barbara, I am curious to hear from you because you have studied this.

How do words become action? How does that happen? We should probably—I wanted to have a bigger conversation. Maybe this is the right time to talk about it: Social media. It is such a big part of this. We know that Facebook and also YouTube are eliminating access to white supremacists, but are they serious about this?

Is this actually doable? How do you police that?

BP: Social media is, I think, one of the greatest enablers of the movement right now. Facebook and YouTube and all of these various forums that they have access to become important points for them to connect and by connecting, then build and empower themselves within their group, but it also enables them, so a hatemonger in Toronto can now connect with a stroke of a keyboard with their like-minded others in Birmingham, UK, and Birmingham, U.S. with people in Austria and Australia.

It also creates this broader national network, so a col-

lective national identity, global identity around white nationalism, white supremacy, that empowers them even more. The very access to that increases their sense of strength and empowerment. It increases their capacity to recruit through just their words, through their music, through their games, through whatever sorts of electronic media that might be associated with them. It also, then I think affects the communities that are targeted, because they are also aware of those narratives. I think, in some respects, while it empowers the groups, it disempowers targeted communities as well, so a very dangerous locus for the concentration. It is also one of the things that contributes to the violence. So many of the mass murders that we have seen associated with the far right, Christchurch, for example, Pittsburgh, even in Quebec City and certainly with the Minassian case in Toronto, have made reference to what they learned online, the kinds of engagements that they have had online, the narratives that they have adopted from some of these far-right websites. There is a straight line to be drawn in many cases.

FN: Mustafa and then Bernie, what do you want to see social media sites do?

MF: We were recently at the Justice Committee making a number of recommendations around countering online hate. I think Dr. Perry pointed to how, for example, in Justice Huot's decision on Alexandre Bissonnette, in

paragraphs 9 through 12 of the decision, there was mention about how Alexandre Bissonnette was consulting #muslimban on Twitter. He was on YouTube; he was on Facebook, so it is not a particular social media company.

This is a wide, whole-of-society approach to combatting this online hate issue. In fact, if you go on to various neo-Nazi websites, you will find my name, and you will probably also will find Bernie Farber's name as potential targets.

BF: They like us.

MF: They like us. We are part of their fan club. It is important to think about how we are going to combat that from a whole of society perspective. We are specifically calling on the federal government to begin a parliamentary study for how to regulate social media companies. While we recognize that the Digital Charter and the Christchurch declaration are important first steps, they remain aspirational, and they have not yet resulted in real, concrete regulation. We are looking for a parliamentary study that will simply bring together the best lines, folks who are thinking about civil liberties, folks who are thinking about the protection of people, people who understand the Internet, people who understand how complicated this web is to weigh in and provide concrete recommendations for the government to build really robust, but balanced regulation around this. Just before going for-

ward, I also want to note that it is really easy for us to think that this stuff happens online and that it is sort of limited to the sort of online scope. In Alberta, which is obviously my home province, there is a group called the III%ers, which Dr. Perry has written on extensively, and this group literally, as we are speaking, gets together and does meetings and does live ammo trainings for practicing going into mosques with semi-automatic rifles.

They prepare bombs. They get together and talk about their hatred of Muslims. Their chapter president said that the only good Muslim is a dead Muslim.

Recently, affiliates of the III%er organization called the Canadian Infidels scoped out one of my hometown mosques, the Al-Rashid Mosque with one of their folks, whose name I will not say, and entered the mosque and did a video recording to scope out the mosque in a very palpable, terrifying sense. Not only do we have to think about immediate changes to the way we deal with online regulation, but we have to think about how it is acceptable that a group is actively militarizing, actively espousing an ideology that commands for the murder of a segment of our population and we are not doing anything about it. I can tell you that if those same people looked like me and were training in the forests of Alberta with automatic rifles, I think we would be doing something about it. It is incumbent that we take an immediate step, an immediate stance to stop these folks.

BF: Let me just take this one step further. Mustafa spoke about the III%ers, and I mentioned the problem in our Canadian military. Those same III%ers are part of the 33 individuals who are presently getting trained by the Canadian military. They do not have to hide in the forests of Alberta; they are getting the training within the Canadian military. Can you imagine for a moment if these 33 people, instead of being white supremacists, that the report was that there were 33 members of ISIS getting trained in the Canadian military? You guys would be out of your seats, storming the federal government immediately to do something. Yet, if it is white supremacists who have killed us in our houses of worship, that is okay. Leaders have to lead. It is as simple as that. This past January when the United We Roll convoy came to Parliament Hill, you will all remember that, amongst that convoy, at least one third of them—and we had people there on Parliament Hill identifying them—belong to the Yellow Vest Movement, which has turned into the most racist, anti-immigrant, Islamophobic movements in this country. Faith Goldy whom we have talked about, a neo-Nazi enabler, spoke at that event shortly after the leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition spoke there. He had the opportunity to call out racism and bigotry, and he chose not to. The Canadian Anti-Hate Network takes no sides in politics. I called out the defense minister on the military.

I called out the Leader of the Opposition in not speaking out against racism because that is what gives them oxygen. Yes, it may have started in the United States with Trump saying, “There are some good Nazis.” There are no good Nazis. They are evil people, period. That is the kind of thing that gives them oxygen. As soon as they hear something like that, they feel that they can step out of the garbage can, dust themselves off and continue with their evil work. We have a lot of work to do, for sure.

FN: I have a bunch of other questions, but I feel like, just because of time, I want to turn it over to the audience if there are any questions, or I could keep going.

Questions & Answers

Q: In America, there is a well-known phrase: “Make America Great Again.” I think we can emulate that, leaving out the word ‘make’ and ‘again’.

Canada is a great country, and organizations like the Empire Club have got the fortitude and the wisdom of gathering a well-respected, honest, decent people to explain to us all, though we are not quite perfect, but we have a direction to go.

All of you speak as though I think that you suf-

ferred, especially Bernie, such that you can sympathize and understand discrimination and bigotry.

My question is: In the long term—we cannot change the past; we are in the present—will the younger generation perhaps have less biased views inherent from previous generations, as the Second World War Nazis or whatever, such that this young country can really flourish? Can we identify as you have done in the speeches, that cancer [of hate], and can the younger generation adopt a well-balanced view of the growth of Canada?

BF: That is an excellent question. I have great hope in the young people of Canada. In the last federal election, when there was a turn towards Islamophobia, Canadians and a lot of young Canadians, turned against that.

I think that is something to recognize. However, let us be clear: The Nazis of the 1980s and 1990s are not the Nazis of 2019. They are not skinheads on the streets getting into fights.

They are in universities.

They are in colleges.

They are in businesses.

They are in law firms.

They are in government.

They are all over the place.

If you take a look at them today, they are wearing suits and ties, nicely trimmed beards, and they are finding ways into young people's consciousness.

We have to find a way to battle that. The only way to battle that—you have your parents on the one hand, but where are kids spending most of their time? In school. That is where the education really has to begin, as young as kindergarten, right through high school and right through university. If we do not get that information out to them as part of the educational process, I fear for the future.

BP: To add to that, I think the educational process and what needs to be included in that is not just the diversity, education and the anti-oppressive training that they claim that they are getting now. It is not quite clear that is really happening in the schools, but in addition to that, they also need critical digital literacy skills.

This is one of the issues. Not just youth. I would argue even adults need that because there is so much not just misinformation, but disinformation in the media now, social media in particular. We do not all necessarily have that maybe the will or the capacity to unpack that disinformation, to do our own fact checking. I think it is important that with this next generation, while we have got the opportunity, we have that captive audience in the schools, and that is the time to teach them how to be critical about what they read on

social media, how to deconstruct the mythologies that are so common, those narratives of Islamophobia, racism, anti-Indigenous sentiment, misogyny, and all of those other things. I think we have a great opportunity that we cannot afford to lose if, in fact, we do want to move forward with what I see as sort of the realization of poor Canadian values of equity and inclusion and respect for diversity.

FN: That is such a good point about media literacy. I completely agree.

Q: **Hi. I have great experiences in this regard, starting in 1980s, when I was at a function at the University of Toronto. The function was attacked, but I was also involved in that. We were attacked by a group called Western Guard. I think Bernie failed to mention them, but they were quite active in those days. That happened. Anyway, that is a long story. I will not get into it too far. It is an old story, also. Recently, for us a new face of Western Guard has appeared in Washington, called Trump. In my opinion, his “Make America Great Again” has received my response in this card, if you can read it.**

FN: No, we cannot read it. What does it say?

Q: **It says, “Make Our Planet Green Again.” We have to challenge the existing crises that we face in terms of climate change and the nuclear age. Yes, these**

are problems, but they are not existential problems, not that I am trying to belittle the problem.

They are existential on an individual basis maybe, but as a community at large, perhaps, not.

Anyway, I am just trying to change the focus to the climate crisis, which is a lot more pressing than the issues at hand.

FN: Right. Certainly, there is, and I think everybody in this room knows that this planet is changing and certainly an issue for another day to discuss, but, yes, we are all in this together in terms of the planet. Thank you for that.

Q: I just want to ask any member of the panel, how the economy factors into the rise or fall of hate crimes and hate issues? Barbara, you spoke about education. This is Ontario; you see what is happening with education, so to add hate education onto that, it is not going to happen. Then there is the police.

I suspect there are also cutbacks there. When the economy is good, is hate on the down?

FN: Such a good question.

BP: It is a really good question. I am glad to say Canada came very late to this game, relative to our European counterparts and even American counterparts where the rise of the right has preceded us probably by a decade, at least a decade in Europe, because of the fi-

nancial crises, subsequent crises in Europe. I think we are buffered, because we did not suffer quite the same troughs and valleys as other parts of the west, so I think we have been privileged by that. Look at the Yellow Vests movement, for example, when they began, and it is really a shame what has happened to them, because when they began, it was really grounded in authentic concerns about economic insecurity and, especially, in the energy sector and the oil industry in Alberta.

Economic uncertainty can play a role, and that has been since, as you suggested, hijacked and co-opted by the far right, because it is a great legitimate set of concerns to then grasp on the racism as a means of scapegoating. Who is responsible for all of those problems?

It is multiculturalism policies; it is globalization; it is all of those bugaboos associated with the far-right narratives. Economic cycles can have an impact.

MF: I agree with Dr. Perry that they certainly—and looking at the sociological conditions that lead to white supremacy, it is important and it is critical, but we also have to recognize that affluent folks can be super-racist, too.

Our folks who are Indigenous, our folks who identify as Black are folks who have experienced that for years not accounting for economic dips and cycles, and they can tell you that very clearly. I think we have to be cognizant of the fact that just looking at sociological indicators does not alleviate us from the personal moral

responsibility of standing up against racism, of standing up against white supremacy whenever we see it.

BF: Let me just end with this, because I know we are running out of time. I said leaders have to lead. All of you here are members of different communities, the business community, education community. You, every one of you, have a responsibility from this day forward because you now have this information. You cannot go home and forget it. You just cannot. It is now imbedded in your minds. I would ask each and every one of you to speak to your MPs; speak to your MPPs; speak to your local councillors; tell them you no longer will stand for this. You want hate education in the schools. You do not want them to pull back from that, as you said, because they will, but you have their ears. Please, this is the time to not be silent. My father used to say, "If you want to get something done, you have got to open your mouth." I implore you all: Open your mouths.

FN: There is a federal election coming; this is the time.

BF: Yes, there is.

FN: Thank you.

KE: To deliver the appreciation remarks, today, we have our board member of the Empire Club of Canada, MJ Perry.

**Note of Appreciation, by Ms. MJ Perry, Vice President
and Owner, Mr. Discount Ltd.; PhD Candidate,
Theology, University of Toronto; Director,
Empire Club of Canada**

I am a post-war baby of this city. I was raised by what I thought was a diverse and compassionate and caring community, but I was also taught to be a nice, polite little girl who never challenged anything.

I want to thank all of you, Dr. Fakhri for sharing your story, Ms. Nasser, Mr. Faber, Mr. Farooq and Dr. Perry for showing us that it is okay to be a little rude sometimes when it is courageous and to point out those things that we need to change.

Thank you for being patient with us to tell us how and thank you for giving us ideas to go forward. I would like to quote Mr. Fakhri, when he said, "Hate speech destroys the integrity of our democracy." Thank you all.

Concluding Remarks, by Kent Emerson

Thank you, MJ. I found the panel and everything today very moving, and I think this is one of our best events of the year because I think it was really, really from the heart.

I thank you all for coming. I also want to recognize a few people who have supported this event. Obviously, Councillor Thompson, it means a lot that you are here today representing our city. We have a couple of other people.

We have former Finance Minister Charles Sousa here today. I want to thank you. We have a former chief of staff to a premier, Andrew Bevan here today. Thank you, everyone for coming. Is there anyone in the room representing social media, a large social media company? Is there anyone here in the room? We did invite them to come today. I wanted to recognize them, because I thought they would be part of this conversation. I just wanted to recognize anyone from social media who would be here, but I have not been introduced to anyone. Ladies and gentlemen, we are almost at the end of our season. We have a few more events coming up.

We have an event “Women Who Build,” tonight, about women in the construction sector. Next week, we have a very important event on education. This topic has come up a lot today, with the Conference Board of Canada and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation teaming up. Next week, the Conference Board is releasing a report on how investing in education contributes to the economy.

That will be a big deal, and it will make a lot of news.

It is next Wednesday, at lunchtime. Then, we have the federal health minister coming the following week to talk about palliative care. There will be a couple more events for the rest of the season. By the end of the season, we will have had 39 events since September, so we are very proud of this season at the Empire Club. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming.

Meeting adjourned.