

32ND Annual
Symposium
on the
Holocaust and Genocide

April 8 - 12, 2024



VANIER
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SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER
FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES



32nd Symposium on the Holocaust and Genocide: EXTREMISM

* Unless specified, all presentations take place in the **Auditorium (A103)** and on **Zoom** (links below)

Monday, April 8

10:00-11:30

DANGEROUS SPEECH AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Susan Benesch

Susan Benesch founded and directs the Dangerous Speech Project to study rhetoric that can inspire violence, and to find ways to prevent this without infringing on freedom of expression. She regularly foists related ideas on tech companies, to improve both content moderation and user behavior. Trained as an international human rights lawyer at Yale, Susan has worked for NGOs including Amnesty International and Human Rights First, and she has taught and lectured at universities in many countries. She is also a Faculty Associate of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85270580627?pwd=RJIYrvhRjs4KI3BUTD3gP-x8HvKp3w.B7lGeT3d93SPf2C>

11:30-1:00

DISRUPTIVE CONVERGENCE IN THE NEW SOCIAL POLARIZATION ERA: MOVING AWAY FROM DIVISIVE DISCOURSES TOWARDS PROTECTION OF SOCIAL PEACE

Ghayda Hassan

This talk will reflect on the impact of social polarizations on the peace fabric of our societies. It will focus on the risks of securitization of the social space and discourses that dehumanize the others. The talk will also discuss the socially disruptive juncture of the current socio-political and technological climate and offer some ways forward to protect social harmony.

Dr. Ghayda Hassan is a clinical psychologist and professor of clinical psychology at UQÀM. She is the director of the Canada Practitioners Network for the Prevention of Radicalization and Extremist Violence. She also is a UNESCO co-chair on Prevention of Violence Radicalization, as well as a researcher and clinical consultant at the SHERPA-RAPS team and the CIUSSS-CODIM.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88969519151?pwd=Xx0HPO6JqdYzrNkkqQZr6-Cuy3TwSg.f7PorpOrYhWWEy6G>

1:00-2:30

MIS- AND DISINFORMATION: DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

This talk shows and discusses a short film about recent events (e.g., the January 6 Capitol attack, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as hate propelled shootings in the U.S., attacks on the Roma and Sinti and numerous other mass hate crimes) and how people can easily get trapped in a spiral of mis- and dis-information that ultimately leads to bigotry, intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination. The presentation also includes an animated segment devoted to the nature and importance of critical thinking.

Leo Wurmbbrand and Gabriel Steinberger are students in the Austrian Service Abroad program (Gedenkdiener) who, in lieu of otherwise compulsory military service, have opted to work, voluntarily, in Holocaust museums and peace educational centres world-wide.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86487823681?pwd=Mt4S8Zlfn3xcKR8us1OcqpbTCaHeqw.fBYo35dSkQ0pQgsV>

Tuesday, April 9

8:30-10:00

THE TRIPLE THREAT TO OUR DEMOCRACIES: HOW ANTISEMITISM IS THE FUEL

Haras Rafiq

Interim Managing Director of the Institute for Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) and a trustee of the UK charity: *Muslims*

Against Antisemitism. Haras has been a Counter-Extremism and Counter Terrorism expert since 2004. This talk focuses on the convergence between right- and left-wing extremism and Islamism.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83747424952?pwd=2J47dEStQZ4quHBA8qohpRs1SEnsEQ.351ABuC35g4dyHtV>

10:00-11:30

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: A NEEDS-BASED APPROACH

Louis Audet-Gosselin

While violent extremism has often been met with repressive response due to its violent and disruptive character, in recent years prevention initiatives based on a public health approach have emerged to address vulnerability and protective factors that influence the radicalization process. This approach can help address legitimate grievances at the center of that process, as well as individual, environmental and social conditions that increase the risk of extremism.

Louis Audet-Gosselin is the scientific and strategic director of the Center for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology and specializes in extremism.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85889598315?pwd=YsA9ExhnXLA2w0oCfmWYv0JIJliBg.yjuJdDh_oXne8s8

11:30-1:00

THE CONTINUUM OF HATE

Barbara Perry

Xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, homophobia, misogyny and other related forms of hate threaten the security and well-being of targeted communities across Canada. Recent years have seen dramatic increases in hateful and extremist ideas, movements and practices, often with dire consequences. The broad dissemination of hateful and dangerous speech, often vilifying and demonizing specific communities has enabled offline manifestations of hate. This talk discusses this continuum of hate and the need to increase our collective capacity to

understand and counter it on a national scale.

Barbara Perry is a Professor in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at Ontario Tech University, and the Director of the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism. She also holds a UNESCO Chair in Hate Studies. She has written extensively on social justice generally and hate crime and right-wing extremism specifically. She has published several books spanning each of these areas, including Diversity, Crime and Justice in Canada, In the Name of Hate: Understanding Hate Crime, and Right-wing Extremism in Canada. Dr. Perry has made substantial contributions to the limited scholarship on hate crime in Canada, including work on anti-Muslim violence, antisemitic hate crime, hate crime against 2SLGBTQI communities, the community impacts of hate crime, and right-wing extremism in Canada.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83027425641?pwd=V_I3RF5648n9wmrigOnHj_TuTE6JWA.vjkZSGDw_zHUy_HJ

2:00-4:00
BUILDINGS, BODIES, BABIES: SPECTERS OF FASCISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Dan Panneton

Fascism is a seductive and malleable ideology that preys on prevalent social anxieties while adapting to changing circumstances. Fears about how we order our society, the aesthetics that we use, gender roles, physical form, and child rearing are exploited by far-right individuals and movements seeking to normalize their worldview. Buildings, Bodies, Babies is a multimedia presentation that explores how the tropes and fears of classical fascism continue to manifest in today's social media environments.

Dan Panneton is the Director of Allyship and Community Engagement at the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center. He is an expert on far-right extremism and online

hate who led the creation of the Government of Canada Anti-Racism Action Program resource Hatepedia, and who in 2021 provided expert testimony to the House of Commons' inquiry into the history and use of hate symbols in Canada. His writing on extremism and conspiratorial thinking has been published by the Atlantic, the Globe and Mail, the Literary Review of Canada, and the Walrus.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85740232290?pwd=lnbzQQtiT9H6lzHRgaHn9w0a9ceKqg.Etm3HCDhxZulK-Fs>

Wednesday, April 10

10:00-11:30
BATTLING OUR INNER EXTREMIST: EXTREMISM AS A HUMAN PHENOMENON

Rabbi Yehuda Sarna, Honorary Chair

Too often, discussions of extremism center on the way a particular religious, racial or national identity exhibits extremist tendencies. This presentation argues that extremism is best understood as a human phenomenon, a feature of humanity against which all identities must build resilience. Through an exploration of the psychological roots of extremism, an exercise in introspection, and recommendations for collective resilience, we hope to offer an inclusive approach to preventing violence.

Rabbi Yehuda Sarna is the Executive Director of the Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life at New York University, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Public Administration at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and University Chaplain at NYU. He served as the inaugural Chief Rabbi of the Moses Ben Maimon Synagogue of the Abraham Family House in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and now continues as a Senior Religious Advisor.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85875142319?pwd=CkWsEfl2NaA8o0cnKfyfXetHvRNjTw.zvqm17kWdZBcejgp>

12:00-1:30 (UB)
HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION SERVICE

* This event will take place in the Boardroom (F216), in-person only

1:30 pm-3:00
GLOBAL EFFORTS TO FIGHT ONLINE HATE

Kyle Matthews

Kyle Matthews is the Executive Director of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) at Concordia University. At Concordia, he founded the Raoul Wallenberg Legacy of Leadership project as well as the Digital Mass Atrocity Prevention Lab, which works to counter online extremism and study how social media platforms are being used as a weapon of war. His work focuses on human rights, emerging technologies and global conflict.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81975858852?pwd=UMWo0EX9CDnJQU3LcAgHYIUGzjKfqw.yUje-3H5CahC1nEA>

Thursday, April 11

10:00-11:30
ANALYZING ONLINE ANTISEMITISM AFTER 7 OCTOBER

Mattias Becker

Dr. Becker will present the Decoding Antisemitism project's analysis of online reactions to the Hamas attacks and Israeli military operations on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. In his talk, Dr. Becker will show how the initial social media response to 7 October represented a turning point in online discourse about Israel and track the development of the subsequent debate.

Dr. Becker leads the international research project Decoding Antisemitism at Technische Universität Berlin. Using a mixed methods approach that also incorporates AI-based methods, 22 researchers analyze antisemitism in mainstream discourse online in Germany, France, and in the UK. Matthias studied Linguistics,

Philosophy, and Literature at the Freie Universität Berlin, and has worked with several research projects on the use of language in political and media campaigns at the Technical University.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89927693161?pwd=8q5Oe7FZO4jSvPxlwCmGFh0EUwlh3q.Uk7CGbTiDsi7drKX>

11:30-1:00
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES THAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO EXTREMISM

Karen White

Have you ever wondered how people become convinced of the extreme ideas found in cults, radical groups, and the darker corners of the Internet? How is it that some individuals and groups do things most people find unreasonable and even abhorrent? There are normal psychological processes involved, that can take us further than we might have imagined. Those processes can also take people to extremes in close relationships, politics, and everyday life.

Karen White did her undergraduate studies at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, then her graduate studies at the University of Manitoba. She has taught at Vanier for over 20 years and is a practicing clinical psychologist. She is particularly interested in understanding the counter-intuitive and counter-productive ways people behave.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85604322500?pwd=kFEv354_XBBZ0OSVhX2EYXq9o09kbQ.z24-ZiiEeNlxz1D0

1:00-2:30
A WOMAN'S TOUCH? AN HISTORY OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS
Johanna Masse

There have always been women terrorists throughout history but only relatively recently has the phenomenon deemed of academic interest, due to remaining substantial bias in the appraisal of women as perpetrators of political violence.

Often, their political agency is at least partially denied, at different levels. Terrorist women are therefore often "exceptionalized" in both media and academic literature. Such assumptions need to be questioned as it hinders a global appreciation and understanding of women's roles in terrorist groups; and more generally of the multifaceted dimension of violence itself. Operating in a patriarchal and often highly oppressive context do not automatically imply that these women are not autonomous agents. In the last few years, the issue of women's violent involvement had become pivotal with the legal and societal ramification of ISIS-affiliated women's return in their home countries. This presentation aims to highlight the importance of considering the women's experience and involvement in political violence as it influences our understanding of violence.

Johanna Masse obtained her PhD in political science from Université Laval in 2021, where she is currently teaching in the sociology department. She came back after a first postdoctoral fellowship at Queen's University (Kingston, ON, Canada), and a second one at University College Dublin (Dublin, Ireland). Her research interests are on gender and political violence, having studied women's involvement in both legitimate and illegitimate violent organizations.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85927897651?pwd=JBGzflY4wwYGW9iSaoplFt51ql0JwA.Unl_JP62V5uU2PLX

** Note to Vanier teachers and professional and support staff: Attending this presentation in person can count as your Sexual Violence Prevention & Response (SVPR) training for the 2023-2024 academic year.*

2:30-4:00
HATE SPEECH IN CANADA: CURRENT LEGAL LANDSCAPE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Angela Marinós

This talk will focus on the current legal landscape involving hate speech in Canada. It will outline the tools that are currently available in Canadian law to combat hatred, both federally and provincially, and will also touch on some of the relevant jurisprudence on this issue, from across the country. Finally, it will set out some recommendations on how we can move forward to combat this pernicious issue.

Angela is the Chief General Counsel at the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights. Prior to this, she was General Counsel at the Department of Justice Canada, where she litigated more than 130 cases involving immigration, constitutional, national security and international law. Angela has conducted trials involving concentration camp guards during the Holocaust, and was the lead counsel in the Oberlander case, where she was successful in having Oberlander's Canadian citizenship finally revoked for his complicity in crimes against humanity.

Angela is a graduate of Vanier College, holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts in English Literature, as well as a Bachelor of Civil Law and Bachelor of Laws from McGill University, where she graduated with Distinction. She also has a master's in law with a specialization in International Criminal Law from Leiden University in the Netherlands.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82995426575?pwd=gBbBTDs_jGV6UX7Vqz0DuIC-3OL-A.n9XtEoGE39AYMfW5

With generous support of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights

Friday, April 12

8:30-10:00

ANTISEMITISM AS THE COMMON DENOMINATOR ACROSS EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES

Lorenzo Vidino

Antisemitic narratives, tropes and memes are increasingly shared by adherents of the most disparate extremist ideologies: Islamist, far right, far left, black supremacists and others. The presentation will analyze how this phenomenon, which has existed for decades, has surged in recent years, largely because of social media.

Dr. Vidino, an expert on Islamism in Europe and North America, is the Director of the Program on Extremism at The George Washington University. A native of Italy who holds American citizenship, Dr. Vidino earned a law degree from the University of Milan Law School and a doctorate in international relations from Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88437689874?pwd=yTrzt0s2kwp523l61y3pOpokSLKaFQ.osJUhnIq44tYq0un>

10:00-11:30

LIFE BEYOND EXTREMISM: REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Elizabeth Moore

In this presentation, Elizabeth will review her radicalization and deradicalization journeys and some of the key events that occurred while she was an extremist. She will relate her experiences to what is occurring in today's extremism landscape, highlighting the following:

- Key belief and behavioral changes that occur during radicalization.
- The role of antisemitism in extremist movements.
- Holocaust denial as a recruitment tool.
- Loss of identity within extremism. (The movement becomes everything).

- The challenges of deradicalization and the importance of support.
- The limitations of the extremism framework. Can we call it extremism when mainstream politicians are dabbling in it?

Students should come away with a solid understanding of what to look for if they are concerned about a friend or family member's intensifying racist or extremist views. They will understand the role of antisemitism in extremism and gain an appreciation for the serious nature of radicalization. They will also have resources they can access for support for themselves or their loved ones.

In 1995, at the age of 21, Elizabeth Moore defected from The Heritage Front with the help of Bernie Farber and the Canadian Jewish Congress. Today she is a speaker, writer, and educator on racist extremism, and has conducted keynote addresses, lectures, and workshops for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General's Office, York Region Police Department, York, McMaster, and Queen's universities, and the Toronto Board of Education, among others. Her written work has appeared in school textbooks, learning guides, government reports, and mainstream media publications. Elizabeth is a freelance EDI writer/researcher and sits on the steering committee for Enhancing Social Justice Education.

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81562618964?pwd=O6orenJIFutvIX_6LFDk788ODVSCpQ.rw2z1cCIGzvgYBV0

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