

# Ottawa to target hatred on Internet

By PETER EDWARDS  
STAFF REPORTER

Nineteen federal departments and agencies are working on an action plan to fight hate crime on the Internet, an international symposium has heard.

The announcement was made last night by Multiculturalism Secretary of State Hedy Fry to lawmakers, law enforcers, academics and educators at a B'nai Brith symposium at Metro Hall.

"I think it's time that we stop denying the existence of hatred," Fry said.

Co-operation between different countries and different groups in society is vital to battling the spread of right-wing extremism on the Internet, Fry said.

"It defies walls. It defies borders."

Canada's greatness is built upon tolerance and respect for different people, and this is threatened by hate groups using the Internet, Fry added.

Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall told the gathering she hopes that a case to be heard by the Canadian Human Rights Commission next month gives teeth to law enforcement groups battling hate crime on the

Internet.

Hall said she hopes the commission establishes a precedent and determines that using the Internet to spread hatred violates laws against spreading hate by telephone lines.

"The value of the Internet as a tool to promote democracy and human rights is astounding," said Lyle Smordin, national president of B'nai Brith Canada.

"Unfortunately, the same technology also allows for the spread of hatred and the encouragement of violence against identifiable groups," Smordin said.

"The international nature of the Internet requires that a concerted effort is made to create international co-operation in dealing with the new issues that arise from this method of communication," symposium co-chair Lawrence Hart said.

"Our challenge in a democratic society, as always in human rights issues, is to balance the right to freedom of speech with the right to be free from being the object of hatred and the violence that flows from it," said David Matas, symposium co-chair.

## B'nai Brith Hosts Symposium

**Toronto--**With Hate Groups having found a new home on the World Wide Web, an explosion of highly sophisticated Websites are peddling the propaganda of hatemongers and posing new and dangerous challenges to human rights worldwide.

A first step toward developing strategies to deal with hate on the internet and counter its impact was the recent International Symposium on Hate on the Internet hosted by B'nai Brith Canada.

In cooperation with B'nai Brith International and co-Chaired by Dr. Lawrence Hart, National Chair of the Institute for International Affairs and Rochelle Wilner, National Chair of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, Canadian and international government and police officials and experts in the field of law/legislation, human rights, computer technology, education and community action came together September 7th to the 9th, to explore possible solutions.

"The value of the internet as a tool to promote democracy and human rights is astounding. Unfortunately, the same technology also allows for the spread of

hatred and the encouragement of violence against identifiable groups," said Lyle Smordin, National President of B'nai Brith Canada. "The internet links scholars from around the world furthering the cause of science and knowledge, yet this same technology also links extremists thus furthering their cause with the same speed and efficiency. Those committed to combating hatred, racism and xenophobia must use the internet to further the cause of justice with the same fervor as those who would seek to undermine our fundamental values."

Frank Dimant, Executive Vice President of B'nai Brith Canada added: "Whether hate is pontificated to thousands at a mass rally, distributed in the form of pamphlets or transmitted over the phone lines as an Internet Website, usenet or email and whether it is in the form of Holocaust denial, anti-Zionist rhetoric or straight blatant anti-Jewish slander, the ramifications to the Jewish community are devastating. As a people, we have fought anti-Semitism through the ages and must continue to do so wherever it may be and in whatever form it takes."

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CANADA

## Conference calls for tough laws to stop hate material on Internet

The Canadian Press

TORONTO — The Criminal Code should be amended so Canada could prosecute offenders who transmit hate material on the Internet from outside the country, an international symposium was told yesterday.

A legal solution to the issue would

likely be more realistic than trying to screen out offending Web sites, said Alan Adel, vice-chairman of the League for Human Rights.

"Canada has in many cases taken the lead on the international scene," particularly in the sphere of human rights, Mr. Adel said, speaking at a B'nai Brith conference.

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