



Arnold Roth speaking at the conference of terror victims in Valencia, Spain, this week. "The UN's definition [of terror] is not at all interested in how barbaric that act may be, or how random, or how defenceless and innocent the victims [are]." Photo: AAP/AP

Malki's father scolds UN at terror victims' meeting

MARK FRANKLIN

THE father of Malki Roth, the only Australian-born victim of the intifada, told an international conference of terror victims in Valencia this week that the civilised world has been "placed in a dangerous situation" by those who seek to rationalise terrorism.

"The mass communications media and the political sector have failed us," said Arnold Roth, who had been invited to speak at the conference as a representative of Israeli victims.

"In some cases I believe they have even become accomplices of the practitioners of terrorism."

Speaking to victims of terror attacks – including Bali, New York, London, Madrid and Beslan – Roth said politicians, journalists and editors "need to hear our voices" in order to "really understand that terrorism is not some kind of romantic struggle for dignity ... It is the purest, most physical expression of hatred and intolerance."

Roth's daughter Malki, who was born in Melbourne, was killed in 2001 aged 15 along with 14 others when a Palestinian suicide bomber blew up Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem.

"Everyone who knew her remembers the smile which was so large it left almost no room for her eyes," Roth said.

"None of this mattered to the terrorists ... We became victims because of someone else's anger, someone else's fight, someone else's value system, someone else's religion."

He challenged the United Nations to formulate a "plain language" definition of terrorism in its anti-terror convention, accusing the Arab League of "frustrating" the process by insisting that attacks carried out in the cause of "national liberation" do not constitute terrorism.

"Their definition is not at all interested in how barbaric that act may be, or how random, or how defenceless and innocent the victims [are]." Terrorism transcends politics and cannot be justified by any cause, he argued.

Many audience members sat in wheelchairs. Others were missing limbs or carrying visible scars. They spoke a global range of languages but nonetheless understood each others' suffering intimately.

Roth quoted from the Talmud saying: "He who is compassionate to the cruel will ultimately become cruel to the compassionate."

The message, he explained, is that rationalising terrorism does enormous damage because it justifies the indefensible.

"By being merciful to terror and to terrorists, we are being intolerably cruel to ourselves, our children and our society."

Born in Melbourne, Roth made aliyah in 1988 and now works as a lawyer in Jerusalem. The three-day Valencia conference followed similar meetings of victims in Madrid and Bogota in previous years.

Dayenu! No Jewish float for 2006 mardi gras

NICOLE BRESKIN

DAYENU! It's the name of the Jewish gay and lesbian group in Sydney, but it's also Hebrew for "enough".

And it seems that both sides in the battle over the rights of Jewish gays to be included in the Jewish community could be using the word – albeit for different purposes – this week following confirmation that there will be no Jewish float at this year's Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras for the first time since Dayenu made its controversial debut in 2000.

Dayenu co-founder Malcolm Davidowitz told the AJN that many Jewish gays no longer feel the need to "make a statement".

"Members are not as active and many who founded it [Dayenu] have moved on," he said, adding that entering the parade itself costs \$2000, which the group has not raised this year.

"People don't feel the need to make a statement. They just feel accepted [into the Jewish community]," Davidowitz said, pointing to the support of Progressive congregations such as Temple Emanuel Woollahra, where Dayenu has held annual Shabbat services for gays since 2001.



In its 2000 debut, Dayenu had approximately 70 members supporting the float, according to Davidowitz; now the same number are on the organisation's mailing list, though many are not "active", he said.

Another member of Dayenu, who wished to remain anonymous, added: "Participation comes in waves; some years people are able to participate, other years [their] energy falls elsewhere."

"It is always important to have a presence, but we can demonstrate that presence in several ways, whether or not we have the float," she said, noting that Dayenu will hold its sixth annual Shabbat service and dinner, this year at Temple Emanuel Woollahra, on March 3.

But Rabbi Moshe Gutnick, who said the AJN front-page photo of the float in its Sydney edition in 2000

"legitimised" the gay movement, told the AJN this week: "Sexuality is something in Judaism not to be flaunted or paraded."

"The less involvement in something [that is] not an expression of Judaism, the better," he said of Dayenu's decision.

In 2000, the AJN coverage sparked a storm of protest, mainly from Orthodox members of the community who consider homosexuality a transgression of Jewish law. Then Sydney AJN editor Vic Alhadeff was called before the Sydney Beth Din, but refused to attend. More than 200 letters were received, the vast majority in support of gay Jews.

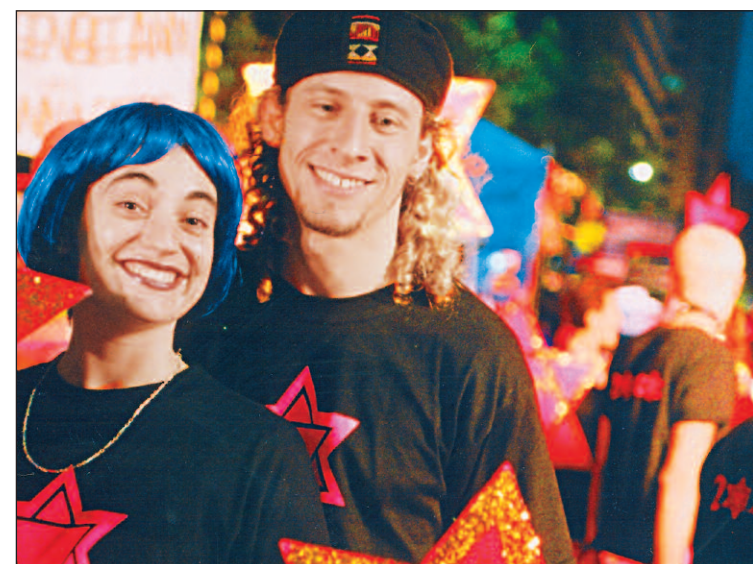
In 2001, the Rabbinical Council of NSW released a statement saying homosexuality "is abhorrent to, and is explicitly prohibited by, Torah teaching".

Earlier this month, Aleph, Melbourne's social and support group for Jewish gay and bisexual men, participated in the Pride March in St Kilda with gay Arabs to promote multicultural acceptance.

Aleph coordinator Michael Barnett said: "The success of the [Dayenu] Shabbat dinner is more important than visibility in a pride march."



Rabbi Moshe Gutnick: "Sexuality is something in Judaism not to be flaunted."



Some of the Jews who were on the first mardi gras float in 2000. Dayenu will not have a Jewish float in this year's parade, the first time since 2000.

I have no problem with Jews, says Leunig

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The Iranian competition was launched last week by *Hamshahri*, one of the largest newspapers in Iran, in response to the widespread publication over the last fortnight, including in Australia and New Zealand, of a series of provocative caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, originally published by a Danish newspaper four months ago.

Leunig defended the 2002 cartoon as "anti-war", and said the cartoonists' job is "to touch the wound; you have to touch it in order to heal it". He added that his visit to Auschwitz 15 years ago "awakened my social and humanitarian conscience".

He acknowledged, however, that because his original cartoon mentioned Auschwitz it would "immediately qualify" for the Iranian competition.

Federal MP Michael Danby concurred, saying it was a "devastating indictment" of Leunig's cartoon that the officials in Tehran "thought his entry appropriate".

Leunig said he had received "not a word" after he had "gone after" John Howard, Tony Blair and George Bush in his cartoons. But following his cartoon last month criticising Ariel Sharon over Israel's assassination of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Leunig said he received "this unique anger". But he conceded that his cartoons may be too clever for some of his readers. "It's possible that I can overestimate the intellectuality of my readers. I have been trying to get my message over without deliberately being offensive. But it seems it is the cartoonist's lot to be misunderstood."

Hamshahri has since removed Leunig's cartoon from its website, and apologised to the Australian icon.

The *Age* reported on Wednesday that the culprit who submitted the cartoon was a website writer for the TV satire *The Chaser*. It reported that Leunig had received a "sincere apology" from the culprit, which was accepted.

Leunig's 2002 cartoon, published at the height of "Operation Defensive Shield", in which the IDF was falsely accused of a massacre in Jenin, com-

prised two panels, one with the infamous words "Work Brings Freedom" under the title "Auschwitz 1942", and the other with the words "War Brings Peace" under the title of "Israel 2002".

In both sections the same man with a Star of David on his back is featured, first walking into the gates of Auschwitz, then carrying a rifle walking towards Israel.

The cartoon was rejected by then *Age* editor Michael Gawenda, who said at the time it went beyond the limits of debate on the Middle East. The cartoon subsequently appeared on ABC's *Media Watch* and in Fairfax's *Good Weekend* magazine as part of a feature.

Henry Benjamin is the Australian correspondent for JTA, New York.

FAIRFAX SLAMS AJAC OVER LEUNIG COMMENTS

MARK FRANKLIN

A BITTER war of words has erupted between the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council (AJAC) and Fairfax publishers over comments made by AJAC policy director Ted Lapkin in Wednesday's edition of the *Australian*.

Lapkin accused cartoonist Michael Leunig of playing the martyr after he expressed outrage over his cartoon being fraudulently entered in a competition run by an Iranian newspaper, *Hamshahri*, to find the most

offensive Holocaust cartoon. "Leunig can play the martyr as much as he wants," Lapkin was quoted as saying. "The thing we need to remember is that the cartoon that was sent in – even though not by Leunig – would fit perfectly within the terms of the competition run by the Iranian newspaper."

In a blistering letter to AJAC's executive director, Dr Colin Rubenstein, Fairfax editorial director Mark Scott said: "To take advantage of the perpetration of a fraud to attack Mr Leunig and, by association, the *Age*,

reflects poorly on both Mr Lapkin and his organisation."

Lapkin said: "Leunig himself conceded that some of his cartoons have been profoundly offensive to the mainstream Jewish community. When asked by a media outlet I articulated these longstanding and public concerns. I stand by my statement."

Fairfax director of corporate affairs Bruce Wolpe added: "It is a shame that AJAC has not missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity to denigrate the *Age*, even when it has done the right thing."