



Dr. Efraim Zuroff lecture

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on November 16, 2009**



This speech was presented to attendees of the Broad Lecture Series, featuring Efraim Zuroff, on November 16, 2009.

It is certainly my pleasure to welcome to FIU Dr. Efraim Zuroff, chief Nazi hunter of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and director of its Israel office, a man who has spent the past 30 years in the relentless pursuit of war criminals. Born in New York, Dr. Zuroff moved to Israel in 1970 after completing his undergraduate degree in history (with honors) at Yeshiva University. He obtained an M.A. degree in Holocaust studies at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University, where he also completed his Ph.D.

In 1978, Dr. Zuroff became the first director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles and began his career as a Nazi hunter in 1980 when he was hired by the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations to be their sole researcher in Israel. During his six years in that capacity, his efforts assisted in the preparation of cases against numerous Nazi war criminals living in the United States. In 1986 his research uncovered the postwar escape of hundreds of Nazi war criminals to Australia, Canada, Great Britain and other countries and he rejoined the Wiesenthal Center to coordinate its international efforts to bring Holocaust perpetrators to justice.

His efforts influenced the passage of special laws in Canada, Australia and Great Britain which enable the prosecution of Nazi war criminals in those countries. Since the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, Dr. Zuroff also has played a major role in the efforts to convince Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and other post-Communist societies to confront the widespread complicity of their nationals in the crimes of the Holocaust, as well as to prosecute local Nazi collaborators.

In the summer of 2002, together with Aryeh Rubin, Director of the Targum Shlishi Foundation, Dr. Zuroff launched "Operation: Last Chance," which offers financial rewards for information which will facilitate the conviction and punishment of Nazi war criminals. It is a campaign to locate and bring to justice as many as possible of the worst suspected Nazi criminals before ill health or death spares them from trial. So far, the project has been initiated in thirteen countries and has yielded the names of 530 previously unknown suspects, one hundred of which have been submitted to local prosecutors.

Dr. Zuroff, who describes himself as "one-third detective, one-third historian and one-third political lobbyist," also has served as an official advisor to the Rwandan government in their efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of that country's genocide.

Over the years, Dr. Zuroff has published more than 250 articles, reports, and reviews on various topics relating to the Holocaust and other issues of concern in the Jewish world. The Simon Wiesenthal Center's "Annual Status Report on the Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals," which Dr. Zuroff initiated in 2001, and which he has written every year since, is considered the authoritative source on the subject.

In his new book, "Operation Last Chance: One Man's Quest to Bring Nazi Criminals to Justice," he tells the story of his worldwide search for Nazi war criminals and the heroic measures he has taken to honor the victims of the Third Reich.