

International Interreligious Affairs – highlights, Dec. 2008

David Rosen

The Seattle Chapter's very successful dinner at the beginning of December honoring Deborah Rosen at which I was honored to speak, provided an opportunity for my participation in well attended programs held both at the University of Seattle and at Washington University. At the latter I shared a platform with Imam Yahya Hendi of Georgetown University and Professor James Perkinson on the subject of Religions as promoters of Human Rights and Peace ? (<http://jsis.washington.edu/jewish/>)

The third world congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace organized by Hommes de parole (<http://www.hommesdeparole.org/>) took place in Paris, Dec.15-17, under the auspices of UNESCO at the latter's headquarters.

This meeting sought to focus on building cooperation for peace between Israeli and Palestinian religious leaders; but while the Israeli rabbinic attendance was impressive (as it had been in the previous meetings), the Palestinian religious representation and from the Arab world generally was poor. However there were some notable Muslim figures who had not participated in the previous meetings – in particular, two Iranian Ayatollahs and the past Secretary General of the World Muslim League from Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the Director General of UNESCO, the opening session was addressed by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal who is currently the chairman of the OIC. Wade declared his intention to host the fourth such meeting in Senegal, ensuring through his position in the OIC that the Muslim world as a whole would be well represented.

The opening session at UNESCO was also addressed by Israel's Ambassador to UNESCO, Dr. David Kornbluth and by Jewish and Muslim religious figures, including myself.