

Ingham: anti-Semitism starts early

Local woman takes on cause

By Peter Cogswell
Emerald Contributor

Isabel Ingham offered a gentle perspective on anti-Semitism Wednesday as part of "A Multi-Cultural Gathering of Women," sponsored by the ASUO Women's Center in the EMU Forum Room.

Ingham, a native of Eugene, said she became interested in anti-Semitism when two Jewish friends informed her of the anti-semitist views they felt while living in New York.

"Before then, it never occurred to me that Jews were treated badly," Ingham said. "My family has had a long history of standing up for Jews."

Ingham said that being a non-Jew herself, she did not initially realize that non-Jews could be hurt by anti-Semitism. It was while attending workshops that she realized that events such as the Holocaust did affect non-Jewish people as much as those who are Jewish.

"A lady who I knew was not Jewish stood and spoke on the Holocaust and what it meant to her as a person," Ingham said. "It was when she started to cry that I first realized that antisemitism affects everyone's lives, not just the lives of people who are Jewish."

Ingham now lectures and gives workshops on the subject. Ingham said the biggest problem is many people are reared with what she called filters that affect how they feel towards other people. People cannot control what filters they are brought up with.

"It is as if doctors dip babies into vats when they are born and this dictates the feelings these babies will have towards other people when they are older," Ingham said. These filters are what Ingham said are the leading cause of anti-Semitism in the world.

Another cause of anti-Semitism according to Ingham is that many people have stereotypes about Jews that are not true. Ingham used the stereotype that all Jews are rich as an example.

"Most people feel that all Jewish people are rich," Ingham said. "This just is not



Isabel Ingham speaks about anti-Semitism from a non-Jewish perspective during a Wednesday forum. Ingham's remarks were part of a week-long gathering sponsored by the ASUO Women's Center.

true. The overwhelming majority of Jewish people are working class employees."

Ingham said Jewish people isolate themselves from society because they tend not to trust non-Jewish people.

"I have never met a Jew who has said they believe that other people would stand up for them in a time of crisis," Ingham said. "My best Jewish friends still don't trust me, even though they know how I feel about anti-Semitism."

According to Ingham, the two keys to changing how people feel towards Jews in attempting to bring an end to anti-Semitism are awareness and education on the part of non-Jews.

"We have to change our brains to cure anti-Semitism," Ingham said.

On the part of Jews, Ingham said that they have to do away with the skepticism they have toward others.

Ingham also said that to cure anti-Semitism it is important that Jews do not pit themselves against other oppressed groups, such as blacks and hispanics.

"It is important that people don't argue who is more oppressed, the Jews or the blacks," Ingham said. "Oppression should not divide."



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