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**«Vice versa: the transformation of the image of the Jews and the Holocaust
among the European extreme right»**

Good afternoon,

My name is Mikhail Zakharov, I am from the city Orel, located in the central part of Russia.

My speech is devoted to the problem of the perception of the Holocaust and the attitude of contemporary far-right parties in Europe towards Israel. I have been studying the extreme right movement for a long time. In the ideological area, it is one of the most poorly studied and, at the same time, mythologized social concepts. Far-right parties in Europe are actively involved in public policy, obtaining a good potential in the elections. What's more, they aim to be an important factor in the process of political decision-making and its implementation. Therefore, it is important to study their attitude to the Jewish question as one of the cornerstones of their ideology.

After the victory over Nazi Germany and its allies, almost all right-wing movements were ostracized and pushed to the periphery of political life. The right remained only as marginal youth, shouting «Juden Raus» at their meetings.

However, the right discourse has not gone away completely. Today, the liberal democratic system of values is not at its best, and left-wing ideas are seriously discredited. In these circumstances, right-wing movements are gaining more and more political weight all over Europe.

How do they differ from their predecessors? In the postwar years, the right wing has changed markedly. The ideology that was formed in the first half of the twentieth century, when right-wing radical regimes triumphed throughout Europe, remained in the past. Today they can be defined by slogans of «European cultural heritage», «Christian democracy», «Nation». They have a negative attitude to the phenomena of globalization and European integration. The main threat to the development of modern Western European countries is seen in the influx of immigrants from states with a fundamentally different culture. Modern far-right political forces are moving away from and distancing themselves from neo-fascism.

The most important feature in the evolution of the modern European extreme right is the transformation in political discourse of the images of the «friend» and the «enemy». If earlier the far right had «global Zionism» as their main enemy, now the main threat to Europe is Islam, especially radical.

The far right wave is encouraged by the success of their colleagues from the «Swiss people's party», whose initiative to ban the construction of minarets was supported by about 60%

of the population in the referendum. They believe that significant symbols of Islam should not appear on the millennial land of Christianity. To counter the threat, their leaders are seeking alliances with Israel, a longstanding Arab enemy. «The Arab leaders are to be blamed - and Islam is to be blamed», «I am not ashamed to stand with Israel, but proud. I am grateful to Israel. I will always defend Israel. Your country is the cradle of Western civilization. We call it Judeo-Christian civilization with good reason», - said in 2010 Gert Wilders, politician, leader of the opposition Freedom Party in the Netherlands, known in particular for its anti-Islamic orientation. Traditional Europe could disappear, absorbed by Islam with its cultural doctrine – that is the danger.

This is the new reality that has influenced the image of right-wing parties in Europe. They had to revise their programs, making their aims, and sometimes even the main goal - the struggle against illegal immigration - the requirement of integration of new arrivals in the culture of country, limiting the spread of Muslim influence, counter-terrorism. The Jews have receded into the background, or disappeared from the agenda of these parties and even in some places sympathy for them appeared, thanks to the confrontation between Israel and Muslim countries and the hostility of Muslims to Jews.

Extreme right populists, trying to rush into the political mainstream, attempt to get rid of their oldest stigma — accusations of anti-Semitism. So, in November 2016 in Vienna, took place an event called «A New Conference on anti-Semitism», dedicated to the anniversary of the Kristallnacht. This conference was especially impressive for its sponsor: the far-right «Freedom Party of Austria» (FPA), among whose founders were former Nazis, who are fighting against immigration and whose member had a good chance to take the presidency. «This is one of the most pro-Israeli parties in Europe», said Michael Kleiner, a participant at the conference, a former Knesset Deputy. The party leadership claims that the party is purged of anti-Semites, and has a common goal with Israel and the Jewish people: to control the spread of Islam. In April 2016, the leader of FPA Heinz-Christian Strache, presently Vice-Chancellor of Austria, visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem and called Jews to unite in a joint struggle.

Is this a real change of the mentality of the far right or «the enemy of my enemy is my friend?» The growing popularity of extreme right political parties is a matter of concern to Jewish communities in Europe and around the world. It is known that the extreme right often allow themselves statements that devalue all change of their discourse, representing ostentatious all efforts to reform and update ideology. Many citizens are convinced that the far right parties are close to the neo-Nazis and hide their true views to improve their reputation in the fight against the invasion of Muslims.

However, not all people share the concerns of Jewish leaders over the growing popularity of the far right. On the contrary, they hope that these parties will fight against the uncontrolled migration of Muslims and the recent increase of Islamic radicalism. In addition, the attacks on Jews have ceased to be the prerogative of the far-right movements. Many left-wing political parties are now anti-Israel. It happened due to a number of factors, one of which is the historical relationship between the Arab Communist movement and the «euroleft».

Immigrants from Asia and Africa, with a significant percentage of Muslims, continue coming to Europe. In other words, opposition to immigrants and, above all, Muslim expansion

will only grow. At the same time, almost all Muslims do not have warm feelings towards Jews. The increase of the Muslim population in Europe is not a good sign for Israel, because Muslims are gradually gaining political power, forcing the leaders of political parties to listen to them and to their anti-Israeli tirades.

A review of the views of these parties is taking place. A rapprochement will only be possible when many representatives of the political core of the nationalist movements in Europe completely and publicly renounce the anti-Semitic component of their ideology. But is it a sustainable trend?

Thank you.