themselves merely as Jews, and declared to be Jewish anyone born of a Jewish mother or—and this is the absolutely crucial fact—anyone who converted to Judaism. Which is to say, in terms of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted by the 20th General Assembly, anyone—regardless of ''race, colour, descent, or nationally or ethnic origin . . .''

The state of Israel, which in time was the creation of the Zionist Movement, has been extraordinary in nothing so much as the range of ''racial stocks'' from which it Orient and Jew from the West. Most such persons could be said to have been ''born'' Jewish, just as most Presbyterians and most Hindus are ''born'' to their faith, but there are many Jews who are just converts. With a consistency in the matter which surely attests to the importance of this issue to that religions and political culture, Israeli courts have held that a Jew who converts to another religion is no longer a Jew. Inn the meantime the population of Israel also includes large numbers of non-Jews, among them Arabs of both the Muslim and Christian religions and Christians of other national origins. Many of these persons are citizens of Israel, and those who are not can become citizens by legal procedures very much like those which obtain in a typical nation of Western Europe.

Now I should wish to be understood that I am here making one point, and one point only, which is that whatever else Zionism may be, it is not and cannot be ''a form of racism.'' In logic, the State of Israel could be, or could become, many things, theoretically, including many things undesirable, but it could not be and could not become racism unless it ceased to be Zionist.

Indeed, the idea that Jews are a ''race'' was invented not by Jews but by those who hated Jews. The idea of Jews as a race was invented by nineteenth century anti-semites such as Houston Steward Chamberlain and Edouard Drumont, who saw that in an increasingly secular age, which is to say an age made for fewer distinctions between people, the old religions grounds for anti-semitism were losing force. New justifications were needed for excluding and persecuting Jews, and so the new idea of Jews as a race—rather than as a religion—was born. It was a contemptible idea at the beginning, and no civilized person would be associated with it. To think that it is an idea now endorsed by the United Nations is to reflect on what civilization has come to.

It is precisely a concern for civilization, for civilized values that are or should be precious to all mankind, that arouses us at this moment to such special passion. What we have at stake here is not merely the honor and the legitimacy of the State of Israel—although a challenge to the legitimacy of any member nation ought always to arouse the vigilance of all members of the United Nations. For a yet more important matter is at issue, which is the integrity of the whole body of moral and legal precepts which we know as human rights.

The terrible lie that has been told here today will have terrible consequences. Not only will people begin to say, indeed they have already begun to say that the United Nations is a place where lies are told, but far more serious, grave and perhaps irreparable harm will be done to the cause of human rights itself. The harm will arise first because it will strip from racism the precise and abhorrent meaning that it still precariously holds today. How will the people of the world feel about racism and the need to struggle against it, when they are told that it is an idea as broad as to include the Jewish national liberation movement?

As the lie spreads, it will do harm in a second way. Many of the members of the United Nations owe their independence in no small part to the notion of human rights, as it has spread from the domestic sphere to the international sphere exercised its influence over the old colonial powers. We are now coming into a time when that independence is likely to be threatened again. There will be new forces, some of them arising now, new prophets and new despots, who will justify their actions with the help of just such distortions of words as we have sanctioned here today. Today we have drained the word ''racism'' of its meaning. Tomorrow, terms like ''national self-determination'' and ''national honor'' will be perverted in the same way to serve the purposes of conquest and exploitation. And when these claims begin to be made—as they already have begun to be made—it is the small nations of the world whose integrity will suffer. And how will the small nations of the world defend themselves, on what grounds will others be moved to defend and protect them, when the language of human rights, the only language by which the small can be defended, is no longer believed and no longer has a power of its own?

There is this danger, and then a final danger that is the most serious of all. Which is that the damage we now do to the idea of human rights and the language of human rights could well be irreversible.

The idea of human rights as we know it today is not an idea which has always existed in human affairs, it is an idea which appeared at a specific time in the world, and under very special circumstances. It appeared when European philosophers of the seventeenth century began to argue that man was a being whose existence was independent from that of the State, that he need join a political community only if he did not lose by that association more than he gained. From this very specific political philosophy stemmed the idea of political rights, of claims that the individual could justly make against the state; it was because the individual was seen as so separate from the State that he could make legitimate demands upon it.

That was the philosophy from which the idea of domestic and international rights sprang. But most of the world does not hold with that philosophy now. Most of the world believes in newer modes of political thought, in philosophies that do not accept the individual as distinct from and prior to the State, in philosophies that therefore do not provide any justification for the idea of human rights and philosophies that have no words by which to explain their value. If we destroy the words that were given to us by past centuries, we will not have words to replace them, for philosophy today has no such words.

But there are those of us who have not forsaken these older words, still so new to much of the world. Not forsaken them now, not here, not anywhere, not ever.

The United States of America declares that it does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act.

HONORING BENJAMIN VINCI

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, Senator CLINTON and I rise today to recognize and honor the service of Benjamin Vinci of Port Chester, New York—a true American hero.

In 1941, at the age of 21, Benjamin Vinci left home to serve in the U.S. Army, and by December of that year, was stationed in Hawaii with the 97th Army Coast Artillery Guard. Like so many there on the morning of December 7, 1941, Benjamin Vinci was going about his daily business. He had just completed all night guard duty and was eating breakfast when the whole base erupted in smoke and fire as Japanese war plans attacked Pearl Harbor and the surrounding area.

As bombers strafed the mess tent, a 50-caliber bullet hit Private Vinci in the back. But ignoring his wound, Benjamin Vinci reached an anti-aircraft emplacement and began to fight back. He stepped down only when he was ordered to find an ambulance and tend to his wound.

Along the way, instead of seeking cover, Benjamin Vinci ran down to the beach and rescued a man who had been shot through the legs. Helping the other soldier into a motorboat, he navigated through a hail of bombs and ammunition to the other side of the bay where he finally boarded an ambulance. But on the way to the hospital at Hickham field, planes targeted the ambulance and Benjamin Vinci was wounded again—this time a 50-caliber bullet coming to rest near his heart.

Mrs. CLINTON. In the aftermath of the attack, doctors believed Private Vinci's wounds were fatal, but he persevered. He received the Purple Heart and eventually was transferred to a hospital in Colorado, where doctors were able to remove one of the two bullets that had almost taken his life, but not both. He continues to carry with him the second bullet, which has never been able to be removed.

Disabled from his wounds, Benjamin Vinci returned to Port Chester after being discharged from the Army and resumed life as a civilian. For many years, Mr. Vinci worked as a vacuum cleaner salesman in Westchester County. He married Rose Civitella in 1945, and together they raised four children: Peter, Burnadette, JoAnn, and Joseph.

We honor and thank Benjamin Vinci for his tremendous sacrifice, vital contribution, and gallant service to our Nation. His acts of bravery are an exceptional example of the fortitude, determination, and strength of the American spirit. As Mr. Vinci carries the burden of his wounds and the bullet he received on that December morning of infamy, so too must we carry the memory of his heroic deeds, remembering and honoring all the men and women of that great generation—those veterans of World War II who saved our Nation, and the world.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Madam President, at the close of business yesterday, Thursday, July 26, 2001, the Federal debt stood at $5,736,556,518,776.52, five trillion, seven hundred thirty-six billion, five hundred fifty-six million, five hundred eighteen thousand, seven hundred seventy-six dollars and fifty-two cents.

One year ago, July 26, 2000, the Federal debt stood at $5,669,530,000,000, five