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Rector Frederick Lewy
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M6
CANADA

WIEN,
October 1, 2002
SWITZ:

Dear Rector Lewy,

At the age of almost 94, I do not often write to express my views over events that transpire thousands of miles from Vienna. However, these are not ordinary times, as I never thought I would live to see the day when there would be more open expression of hate against Jews than in the 1930s. Tragically, that is the situation today around the world.

Clearly, much of this can be attributed to the 2-year-old Intifada in the Middle East. While it is true that one can criticize Israel without being guilty of antisemitism, the level of invective; the co-opting of the vocabulary of genocide to depict Israeli actions; the depiction of Israel as a Nazi-like state; the silence of the international community to state-sponsored Jew hatred in the Arab world, have all combined to create an environment of fear and in many places intimidation against Jews the world over, the majority of whom are Zionists.

This leads me to the main purpose of writing to you. I recently learned that your university cancelled a scheduled speech by Israel's former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after anti-Israel protesters rioted and rampaged. To allow their violence and intimidation to succeed in silencing an important voice should be unacceptable to a university which promotes the values of freedom of speech and open exchange of ideas. I urge you to rescind Mr. Netanyahu's appearance at your university as soon as possible. Failure to do so will only further embolden those who see violence as the only way to achieve results.

Let me emphasize that I have no political affiliation with Mr. Netanyahu and have not consulted with him prior to my writing you this letter. I hope that Concordia University will act soon to correct the damage done, for more than glass was broken the day of that riot. And, it will take more than words to repair the damage.

Sincerely,



Simon Wiesenthal