



FRIENDS OF
SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER
FOR HOLOCAUST STUDIES

February 05, 2008

Professor David Naylor
President, University of Toronto

Re: Israel Apartheid Week at U of T

Dear President Naylor,

We understand that the University has an unflagging commitment to freedom of speech. However, we would hope that the University would never allow this principle to be hijacked by a blatantly racist event sponsored and conducted on its campus. We are writing today to express our deep dismay that, in fact, this is exactly what is about to occur.

The University notes its commitment to decency by pointing to its Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office. If fighting racism and protecting diversity are to mean something, the University should not be blind to the biggest display of racism on its campus -- "Israel Apartheid Week".

"Israel Apartheid Week" is not really about apartheid. Indeed, the title is a slap in the face to those who fought against South Africa's apartheid regime. It is a contrived extravaganza to ignite false fury. Israel is a pluralistic democracy where Christians, Bahai, Jews, Muslims, Druze and others have freedoms and rights that are utterly lacking in neighboring Arab countries.

Criticism of Israel is not of itself anti-Semitic. However, the specific targeting of Israel alone is anti-Semitic. Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination by claiming that the existence of Israel is a racist endeavor is anti-Semitic. Applying a double standard by requiring of Israel behavior not demanded of any of its neighbors is anti-Semitic. "Israel Apartheid Week" brings this and more to your campus.

We deeply believe that freedom of speech should be protected. But, we also believe that the University of Toronto should not lend its implied support and its campus to facilitate this baseless racism.

"Israel Apartheid Week" is a transparent masquerade of an ancient evil. We believe that the University of Toronto can do better.

Sincerely,

Avi Benlolo

Avi Benlolo
President and CEO, Canada

Leo Adler

Leo Adler
Director of National Affairs

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