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Dear Lord Mayor.

I was shocked and offended by your decision to cancel my talk in Munich at the Pädagogisches Institut des Schul- und Kulturreferats der Landeshauptstadt München, organized by the group Salam-Shalom from Friday, 23rd, through Sunday, 25th of October, 2009.

My father was silenced in a similar way as a German Jew in the early 1930s and it is sad to witness the very same censorship returning in 2009. Like me, my father and his friends, were regarded as 'humanists' and 'peacenik' Jews whose voice had to be quashed and stopped.

I am a leading professor of history in one of Britain's most prestigious universities. I was invited both as a professional historian and as a peace activist. Nowhere in Europe, and indeed nowhere in the world, did I experience such a repressive attitude and a surrender to the intimidation of few people who claim to represent the Jewish experience and catastrophe. If anything, the memory of my family and many other Jews was abused when I, their direct descendent, was not allowed to speak freely in Germany. I am not concerned about my own freedom of speech, as I say this is generously and naturally granted everywhere else in Europe. I am worried, as any decent person should be, about the state of freedom of speech and democracy in present day Germany.

I am sure that by hindsight the municipality would realise that the censorship was a terrible mistake that can still be corrected and I should be re-invited to the Institute.

Yours sincerely,

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