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BS"D
26 Kislev 5777
2 Chanukah 5777
December 14, 2017

Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman
President
Yeshiva University
president@yu.edu

Dear Rabbi Berman:

Congratulations on your recent investiture as President of Yeshiva University. We pray that G-d grants you the fortitude and determination to preside over what is undoubtedly one of the most prestigious yet challenging positions in the Jewish world today.

We hesitate to add to your numerous burdens, but we feel it is necessary to make you aware of an urgent situation concerning a prominent member of the Yeshiva University faculty, a man whom Orthodox parents have entrusted with the education of their sons and daughters.

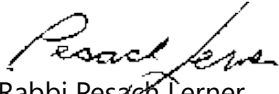
Following America's historic recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel last week, some 165 self-described "Jewish Studies scholars" signed a public statement denouncing the U.S. action and falsely accusing Israel of mistreating Arab residents of the city. One of the signatories on the statement is Jess Olson, Associate Director of Yeshiva University Center for Israel Studies and Associate Professor in YU's Department of Jewish History.

The statement reads as objectively as a typical UN resolution on Israel. It equates Israeli and Palestinian "rights" to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. It misportrays propaganda from B'tselem, a discredited extremist organization, as fact. Professor Olson and his colleagues feign ignorance of the ethnic cleansing of Jews from their homes in each and every Arab country within the past century, and the need for security in Israel to ensure that local "Palestinian" Arabs do not finish the job. They fail to credit Israel for permitting all to access their chosen places of worship for the first time in 2000 years -- something denied to Jews in the Palestinian Authority and much of the Arab world.

We request that Yeshiva University publicly disavow this repugnant statement, and refer Professor Olson's endorsement to the appropriate faculty committee for review. His position at the Center for Israel Studies in particular raises legitimate questions about what revisionist history he may be espousing in the classroom. Young Jewish adults attend YU to learn the truth about Israel and Jerusalem, not to be treated to the demonization we have faced throughout our history. His participation in this declaration thus harms the university's reputation in the eye of the Jewish community.

We enclose a copy of the statement with Professor Jess Olson's name listed at position 106. Given the urgency of this matter, we await your earliest possible response.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pesach Lerner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Rabbi Pesach Lerner
President

Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld

Rabbi Avrohom Gordimer, YC '89, RIETS '93, CSL '96

Rabbi Dov Fischer, RIETS '81, BRGS '83

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Rabbi Yaakov Menken