

## YOUNG ISRAEL TO 92nd STREET Y: STOP FEATURING ANTI-ISRAEL SPEAKERS

The National Council of Young Israel sent a letter to the leadership of the 92nd Street Y in New York City requesting that they take greater care in the future not to feature anti-Israel personalities at their public events.

The letter, which was signed by Young Israel President Farley Weiss, Chairman of the Board Robert Levi and 1st Vice President Yosef Poplack, referred to a number of instances over the past several months in which the 92nd Street Y chose to showcase individuals who have publically denigrated the State of Israel, including Roger Waters, a lead member of the band Pink Floyd and a noted critic of Israel, and Alice Walker, a celebrated author who regularly demonizes Israel.

"Your decision to showcase personalities who openly denounce Israel and who unabashedly malign the Jewish State in the public arena is particularly troubling and antithetical to your core mission, and contrary to the deep interests of your primary constituency," said the letter.

"While we admire your longstanding effort to promote Jewish culture, we are deeply concerned over your ill-considered programmatic decisions that run counter to the interests of your own constituency. Extending an invitation to noted anti-Israel personalities is counterproductive and runs afoul of your desire to affirm a commitment to the State of Israel and world Jewry. Individuals who denigrate the Jewish State should not be welcomed with open arms at any venue that is associated with a Jewish group or organization."

"We respectfully request that greater care be given in the future to the selection of featured speakers at the 92nd Street Y and ask that you invite those who stand for and with Israel instead of those who call for boycotting Israel."

*The entire text of the National Council of Young Israel's letter is below:*

June 9, 2013

Stuart J. Ellman, President  
Thomas S. Kaplan, Chairman of the Board  
Sol Adler, Executive Director  
92nd Street Y  
1395 Lexington Avenue  
New York, NY 10128

Dear Messrs. Ellman, Kaplan and Adler:

As an organization dedicated to promoting public pride in Jewish heritage and modern Jewish civilization, the 92nd Street Y has spread and strengthened Jewish culture since its inception in 1874.

We were therefore dismayed at some of the invitees that you have chosen to feature in the past several months. Your decision to showcase personalities who openly denounce Israel and who unabashedly malign the Jewish State in the public arena is particularly troubling and antithetical to your core mission, and contrary to the deep interests of your primary constituency.

In April 2013, the 92nd Street Y was to host an event featuring Roger Waters, a lead member of the band Pink Floyd and a noted critic of the State of Israel.

As you may know, in October 2012, Roger Waters called on New York's Carnegie Hall to cancel an upcoming performance of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Mr. Waters has successfully urged artists, including Stevie Wonder, to boycott Israel. He has made repeated outrageous and defamatory comments towards Israel, including falsely accusing Israel of ethnic cleansing at the United Nations.

In addition, last week you hosted Alice Walker, a celebrated author who regularly demonizes Israel.

Ms. Walker joined with Roger Waters in urging Carnegie Hall to call off a concert by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. In addition, she recently implored popular songstress Alicia Keys to cancel her scheduled concert in Tel Aviv. Moreover, Walker has referred to Israel as a "terrorist organization." It is indeed ironic that the 92nd Street Y aims to provide a forum for notables who seek to slam the door Israeli door shut to artists and intellectuals.

While we admire your longstanding effort to promote Jewish culture, we are deeply concerned over your ill-considered programmatic decisions that run counter to the interests of your own constituency. Extending an invitation to noted anti-Israel personalities is counterproductive and runs afoul of your desire to affirm a commitment to the State of Israel and world Jewry. Individuals who denigrate the Jewish State should not be welcomed with open arms at any venue that is associated with a Jewish group or organization.

We respectfully request that greater care be given in the future to the selection of featured speakers at the 92nd Street Y and ask that you invite those who stand for and with Israel instead of those who call for boycotting Israel.

Sincerely,

Farley Weiss, President  
Robert Levi, Chairman of the Board  
Yosef Poplack, 1st Vice President