CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION

AGENDA ATTACHMENT 2

MEETING DATE: Thursday, July 28, 2016
AGENDA ITEM #: 9
ITEM: CORRESPONDENCE

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

No action recommended.
May 26, 2016

To: Brooke Converse, Community and Media Relations Coordinator
CC: Contra Costa Library Commission, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
From: Ilana Kaufman, Public Affairs and Civic Engagement Director, East Bay, Jewish Community Relations Council

Subject: Establishing publicly accessible policies and related processes for when hate speech or harassment takes place in spaces holding Walnut Creek Library programs or events.

I am writing on behalf of the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. We are concerned by reports from our community that a series of programs at the Walnut Creek Library have included hurtful expressions of anti-Semitism. It’s imperative that the library, in its role as a venue and host of events, give the community a vehicle to respond to and address these concerns.

BACKGROUND
The Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents reports that anti-Semitic incident across the US increased by 21% in 2014 (the last year showing updated data)—the first time of the overall number of incidents has substantially risen, after nearly a decade of declines. That year was marked by a violent anti-Semitic shooting attack targeting Jewish community buildings in Kansas and anti-Jewish expressions linked to the war in Gaza. Since then, anti-Semitic rhetoric and actions have spiraled on campuses and in the broader community. Although Jews number only 2.2% of the US population, they are the target of over 50% of religiously motivated hate crimes. In addition, expressions of anti-Semitism are often masked as anti-Zionism, a link recognized by the US State Department’s definition of anti-Semitism and, most recently, by the Regents of the University of California’s Statement of Principles Against Intolerance.

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE JCRC
The JCRC represents over sixty Jewish organizations and synagogues across the Bay Area on matters of public affairs including advocating for the Jewish community when anti-Semtic or anti-Zionist activities occur. During the first four months of 2016, we received more than 40 reports of activity that felt disquieting or threatening to the Jewish community related to six programs taking place in Contra Costa County (please see appendix A). Two of these events featured Alison Weir (please see Appendix B) whom is known to be an anti-Semite and racist with formal ties to white supremacist Clay Douglass. Even pro-Palestinian advocacy groups who are highly critical of Israel have formally disassociated themselves from Ms. Weir. For example, both Jewish Voices for Peace and End the Occupation have taken the position that Alison Weir’s philosophies violate their belief in universal human rights (please see Appendix C).

In response to the reports we received, we attempted to direct residents to the Walnut Creek Library policies page, assuming there would be a resource for concerned residents who felt they had been exposed
to discrimination or harassment during a program in a Walnut Creek Library-supported program or space. There is not. In fact, after a thorough review of the Walnut Creek Library webpages, the JCRC was unable to identify any policy, process or individual to whom a Walnut Creek resident could turn to report a troubling experience of any kind. The JCRC went further, placing calls to the various library staff asking to be directed to the location where a policy or process might be found. In response, library staff directed the JCRC to Ms. Brooke Converse.

PROPOSED REMEDY
Through a phone conversation with Ms. Converse, JCRC learned that the Walnut Creek Library opts to have no system by which to vet prospective speakers using Walnut Creek Library spaces (leased, owned, or spaces formally hosting Walnut Creek events but owned by another entity). Ms. Converse explained that the Library believes the reward of creating expansive access for all who wish to use Walnut Creek Library spaces outweighs the risk of hosting someone such as Alison Weir.

JCRC understands this position and believes it is indeed important for Walnut Creek citizens of every race, ethnicity, faith or identity to have the right so use the library space. However, those same citizens also have the right to be and feel safe. It is therefore equally important that the library have publicly accessible policies and processes in place that allow residents to report incidents in their public library that they feel are discriminatory or harassing in nature.

The JCRC, on behalf of the organized Jewish community, proposes the Walnut Creek Library system put in place a process and policy that allows a resident to report discriminatory or harassing experiences had in Walnut Creek Library spaces and includes appropriate responses in alignment with the City’s other discrimination and harassment processes and policies. We also propose that the aforementioned processes and policies be made readily available on the library’s website in a location natural for such content and obviously available to those in search of such a process or policy.

Finally, we encourage the Walnut Creek Library system to consider implementing broad guidelines for groups, speakers and program topics when making decisions about who may use the Library’s spaces. General criteria that might be used include: relevance to community needs and interests; presenter background and qualifications; presentation quality; and historical, educational or recreational value. We are aware that several other library systems do have such guidelines in place.

I will appreciate hearing from you what you have decided to do about the proposals in this letter.

Respectfully submitted,

Ilana Kaufman
Public Affairs and Civic Engagement Director, East Bay
Jewish Community Relations Council
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Appendix A: *Summary of Contra Costa County events experienced as disquieting or threatening to the Jewish community*

**January 22, 2016:** “A Conversation on the Middle East” with 11th District Congressman Mark DeSaulnier and Stephen Zunes, Ph.D.
Program partners, supporters or sponsors: Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center, Rossmoor Voices for Palestine
Location: Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center

**February 9, 2016:** Alison Weir, “Israel, Palestine and U.S.: the Context Behind the Headlines.”
Program partners, supporters or sponsors: Rossmoor Voices for Palestine, If Americans Knew
Location: Rossmoor Community, Walnut Creek

**March 8, 2016:** "Zionism Unsettled." Peacock Hall (Rossmoor Theater)
Location: Rossmoor Community, Walnut Creek
Program partners, supporters or sponsors: Rossmoor Voices for Palestine

**March 30, 2016:** Alison Weir: “Should the U.S. Keep Giving Israel $10 Million Per Day?”
Location: Walnut Creek Public Library
Program partners, supporters or sponsors Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center, Rossmoor Voices for Justice in Palestine, If Americans Knew, Friendly Favors

**April 2, 2016:** Alison Weir “Should the U.S. Keep Giving Israel $10 Million Per Day?”
Location: Richmond Library at Civic Center
Program partners, supporters or sponsors: If Americans Knew

**April 12, 2016:** Film Screening, Ghost Town: Stories from Hebron
Location: Rossmoor Community, Walnut Creek
Program partners, supporters or sponsors: Rossmoor Voices for Justice in Palestine
Appendix B: Profile on Alison Weir

1) POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES CAMPUS PROFILE- ALISON WEIR: IF AMERICANS KNEW

BY SPENCER SUNSHINE

***This profile is one in a small collection produced for PRA’s report Construction Campus Conflict: Antisemitism and Islamophobia on U.S. College Campuses 2007-2011. Figures profiled played significant roles in campus controversies reviewed for that report. In the assessment of our authors, these figures’ campus appearances have done more to inflame existing divisions than to build towards positive alternatives. However, we imply no moral, ideological, or other equivalency. Individual profile authors decided what information was most useful for readers to evaluate their claims, rhetoric, and roles in campus controversies.

Editor’s Note: This profile is different from the other profiles because it was commissioned as a piece of investigative journalism and analysis on an individual for whom there is very little mainstream coverage.

Few political writers today appear in the publications of both the Left and the Far Right. One rare exception is Alison Weir, the founder of If Americans Knew (IAK). Her denunciations of the vast power that Israel and its supporters in the United States allegedly wield resonate on the Far Right with figures like former Klansman and politician David Duke, the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review, antisemitic talk radio host Clay Douglas, and the Pacifica Forum at the University of Oregon, which the Southern Poverty Law Center lists as a hate group.

At the same time, she can be found on the Left in the pages of Z Magazine, Project Censored, and CounterPunch. She has been praised by Socialist Worker, broadcast on affiliates of the Pacifica radio network, and spoken at the Left Forum conference.[1] Alison Weir blogs at www.alisonweir.org and edits “Israel-Palestine: The Missing Headlines” (http://israel-palestinenews.blogspot.com). While there is no editor listed by name at the site, it seems that she is also editor of the new IAK blog http://israelpalestineanalysis.wordpress.com. Weir is president of the Council for the National Interest and sometimes hosts its radio show, “Jerusalem Calling.”

At first glance, Weir seems like a typical Palestine solidarity activist. She says that she founded If Americans Knew (IAK) after she visited the Occupied Territories in 2001 and witnessed numerous human rights violations that were not covered in the United States press. IAK is sometimes portrayed as a media watchdog group, and its tagline is “What Every American Needs to Know About Israel-Palestine.”

But a closer inspection of Weir and IAK reveals disturbing elements. The main focus of their work is not on Palestinian conditions or rights, but on the power of the so-called Israel lobby in the United States. Weir describes the U.S. media’s tilt toward Israel as possibly “the most monumental cover-up in media history.”[3] While she admits that a number of factors may account for this alleged pro-Israel bias, she consistently targets the Jewish backgrounds of editors and reporters.[4] Even if they think they are unbiased, she says, unconscious family influences are likely to sway their opinions.[5]
IAK’s criticisms of Zionism and Israel dovetail with traditional antisemitic narratives, and Weir often cites antisemitic writers and publications as her sources. When asked if the work of antisemitic authors including Israel Shamir, Gilad Atzmon, and Kevin MacDonald were truly legitimate, she replied, “Yes. I suggest people read their work for themselves.”[6]

In 2005, IAK analyzed the coverage of deaths in the Israel-Palestine conflict in *The New York Times* and other newspapers, and concluded the outlets had a pro-Israel bias.[7] The group met with *New York Times* Public Editor Daniel Okrent, who did not accept their findings.[8] The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), a pro-Israel media-watchdog group, criticized IAK’s report for methodological errors.[9]

In 2008, another controversy erupted after the public library in Greenwich, Connecticut cancelled a talk by Weir that had been scheduled by a member of IAK in one of the library’s public meeting rooms. Under pressure from free-speech advocates such as the American Library Association, the talk was rescheduled. The controversy received national media attention.[10]

In 2009, based on stories that had appeared in a Swedish newspaper, Weir published articles in *CounterPunch* and the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* accusing Israel of harvesting organs from Palestinians.[11] Weir’s claim was widely denounced as a modern version of the antisemitic blood libel—the myth that Jews use the blood of sacrificed Christian children to make Passover matzos. Weir says “Israel’s core identity is based on ethnic and religious discrimination by a colonial, immigrant group,” and that it has an “exclusionist identity.”[12] She describes the 1948 founding of Israel as “one of the modern world’s most successful ethnic cleansings,” and a “holocaust” for Palestinians; elsewhere she implies this holocaust continues today.[13]

She has also said that “Israel struck first in all its wars except one. Historically, it was the initiator of conflict.”[14] IAK writers such as Mazin Qumsiyeh, Jeffrey Blankfort [see profile], and Kathy Christison and the late Bill Christison claim that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was planned and executed by groups that are identified as being overwhelmingly Jewish. Weir has been on the board of NewPolicy.org, an offshoot of the New Policy PAC, whose mission is “to work with citizens, lawmakers, and administration officials to implement longstanding American positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict in the interest of enhancing American security”[15] whose antisemitic website http://windowintopalestine.blogspot.com/ includes assertions that Israel was behind the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. In one radio interview, Weir also referred to “the significant role that Zionists played in pushing the U.S. into World War I,” and said, “these same groups [are] trying to push us into a war with Iran.”[16]

IAK claims that Israel, together with its supporters in the United States, controls many aspects of the U.S. government. Weir says, “The Israel lobby became far more powerful than those who originally tried to oppose it: the State Department, the Pentagon, the oil lobby.”[17] IAK board member Paul Findley (a former Republican congressional representative from Illinois) describes the United States as in “bondage to Israel’s misdeeds.”[18] Weir summarizes the situation by saying, “What Israel says, our media repeat. What Israel demands, our government gives. What Israel wants, its well-greased lobby delivers.”[19]

IAK is careful never to blame “the Jews”; instead it consistently refers to subsets of Jews such as “the Zionists,” “the Israel lobby,” or “the neocons.” American neoconservatives in particular are specifically identified as being overwhelmingly Jewish.[20] Jewish subgroups are described consistently as elites who subvert national sovereignty. The “dual loyalties” of these subgroups is a common theme on the IAK website. “Neocons” in the United States and “oligarchs” in Russia receive special attention. Weir says that IAK “is opposed to discrimination in all its forms,” and one of her articles is subtitled “Antisemitism is Wrong.” However, the article does not address the issue other than to say that people should not be dissuaded from criticizing Israel because they fear being called antisemitic.[21] When asked about what
constitutes an antisemitic view that she would oppose, she identified statements which refer explicitly and collectively to “the Jews.”[22]

IAK narratives are consistent with the antisemitic conspiracisms of the past century, including the claims that Jews are clannish and cabal-like, have dual loyalties, control the media and the government, steal the body parts of non-Jews, and start wars, often in countries where they are a minority and where the wars are against the country’s interests. Following a classic populist narrative, Weir says that the American people must be informed about this situation to start “reclaiming our nation, our principles and our souls.”[23] One email sent by the Council for the National Interest and signed by Weir even deploys one of the most famous antisemitic images, claiming that liberal J Street and the conservative American Israel Public Affairs Committee are “two tentacles of the same lobby.”[24]

Like many populist and conspiratorial narratives, some of IAK’s information is true and has potentially important things to contribute to public discourse; some of it is misleading, biased, or suffers from serious omissions; and much of it repeats traditional antisemitic conspiracisms. Alison Weir is not a recognized scholar on Middle East affairs, and campus groups and activists working for recognition and rights for Palestinians would be well advised to seek out more legitimate sources of information on the conflict than IAK.


5www.blogtalkradio.com/claydouglas/2010/08/23/the-free-american-hour;
www.blogtalkradio.com/claydouglas/2010/02/09/the-free-american-hour;
www.blogtalkradio.com/claydouglas/2011/05/18/the-free-american-hour


[15] NewPolicy.org is currently


[22] Alison Weir, interview with Spencer Sunshine.


- See more at: http://www.politicalresearch.org/campus-profile-alison-weir-if-americans-knew/#sthash.TQ0Yuo0u.dpuf
Appendix C: Pro-Palestinian Advocacy Groups Perspectives on Alison Weir

1) U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation Statement on Complaint Filed Regarding Alison Weir and If Americans Knew

2) Jewish Voice for Peace Statement on Relationship with Alison Weir

1) Statement on Complaint Filed Regarding Alison Weir and If Americans Knew

July 16, 2015

The following statement, issued by the Steering Committee of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation

1. summarizes our receipt of a complaint against Alison Weir and the organization If Americans Knew and our subsequent action following that complaint,
2. provides further discussion of our position on the political issues that this case touches upon,
3. and provides evidence and documentation that undergirds the decisions that have been made by the organization.

Part 1: Process and Decision with Respect to Complaint against Alison Weir and If Americans Knew

The US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation is a coalition of hundreds of US-based groups working for Palestinian rights. In 2012, the Steering Committee of the US Campaign, elected at our annual conference, formed a working group to address racism within the coalition as part of our ongoing effort to become an anti-racist organization. The work of this group resulted in the adoption of our anti-racism principles in 2013 and the establishment of procedures for handling instances of racism and bigotry within the coalition.

Earlier this year, the US Campaign received a formal complaint from a member group regarding actions and statements by Alison Weir while representing a coalition member group, If Americans Knew. A committee was formed to review this complaint, to allow Ms. Weir to respond to the complaint for herself, and to determine whether our anti-racism principles have been violated; importantly, the committee also assessed whether these violations are likely to continue in the future.

After a thorough review and a correspondence with Ms. Weir, the committee has concluded that Ms. Weir’s repeated statements and actions, often as the Executive Director of If Americans Knew, did indeed violate our anti-racism principles, as detailed later in this statement. Ms. Weir’s responses led us to
believe that these violations will continue in the future. Based on the report of the review committee, our Steering Committee voted in favor of removing Ms. Weir and If Americans Knew from our coalition.

Ms. Weir and If Americans Knew have been notified of this determination which is effective immediately. Per our established procedures, Ms. Weir and If Americans Knew are entitled to reapply to join the coalition, at which time the US Campaign Steering Committee will assess whether concerns detailed herein have been addressed.

Our decision was informed by the following actions taken that we believe violate our anti-racism principles. In the attachments to this decision, we include full footnotes and evidence undergirding each point:

1. Ms. Weir posted a blog on her personal website that references Jews as a race being “an object of hatred to all the peoples among whom it has established itself,” effectively blaming Jews for anti-Semitism. (See Section 1 of Part 3)

2. In writing about a controversy surrounding allegations of the Israeli military harvesting the organs of Palestinians in 2009, Ms. Weir responded to supporters of Israel claiming this was a new “blood libel” by citing the research of Ariel Toaff, who purported to have uncovered ritual murder of Christian children by Jews in medieval Europe (the very definition of “blood libel”). (See Section 2 of part 3)

3. Ms. Weir has appeared at least five times for hour-long episodes on notorious white supremacist and militiaman Clayton Douglas’s radio show, the “Free American Hour,” between 2010 and 2012. A cursory glance at Douglas’s homepage would raise concerns about the host and program’s political content. Douglas’s homepage features the confederate flag, a video that opens with the title “9/11 Brainwashing and the Holohoax,” and numerous references to the “Jew World Order” and its “war on Adolph Hitler,” as well as claims of “ritual murder of Christians and Children by Jews.” While interviewing Ms. Weir, Douglas:
   a. made derogatory remarks about Arabs (See 3a and 3d of Part 3)
   b. repeatedly asserted Jewish control of the world (3b, 3g, 3h, and 3j)
   c. quoted and played speech by the former head of the KKK, David Duke, proclaiming a war on Christianity (3c, 3e)
   d. demonized adherents of communism, insinuating it is a Jewish conspiracy (3h)
   e. downplayed or denied the existence of apartheid historically in South Africa, analogizing criticism of white South Africans during apartheid, which Douglas sees as unfair, to the treatment of white Americans today. Similarly, Douglas analogizes the average German between WWI and WWII and average white American today (3f 3j)

Confronted with these assertions and statements, and knowing full well Douglas’s larger record of white supremacist views, Ms. Weir made little to no effort to challenge, confront, or rebut any of these views; on the contrary, she continued to appear on the show, placing Palestinian rights advocacy within the context of -- rather than in opposition to -- those views.

4. During appearances on Douglas’s radio show, Ms. Weir:
   a. explained her view that Muslims are much closer to Christians than Jews, stating “...sadly, if you look at the theology of Judaism, that is quite different. So again, it’s not that I like to tell negative things about any group, but we do need to be fully informed on this.” (See Section 4a of Part 3)
   b. acknowledged several books Douglas mentioned when ranting about communism and its connection to Jewish people, stating that she "read some portions of those books and they are as you say, they do discuss the Jewish connection to the Gulags..."(4b, Part 3)
c. acknowledged that Douglas is perceived as racist, but indicated that she dismissed these allegations. (4c, Part 3)

5. In addition to appearing on the “Free American Hour”, Ms. Weir spoke more than once, and as recently as April 2015, to the American Free Press, another white supremacist publication whose homepage currently features numerous defenses of the confederate flag, including an article proclaiming that the outrage around the Charleston shooting of nine Black church-goers is a tactic in the “ongoing war on traditional America.” The front page of their print publication declares “Civil War II: Hate group exploits tragic shooting as catalyst for vicious assault on Christian, Southern culture.” (See Section 5 of Part 3)

According to her response to our inquiry, Ms. Weir is fully committed as a matter of principle to continuing to contribute to American Free Press, “Free American Hour”, and any other show regardless of its agenda. That may be her principle but it is not ours.

Taken as a pattern, we concluded that Ms. Weir’s views and actions, on behalf of If Americans Knew, contradict the US Campaign’s anti-racism principles.

The US Campaign contacted Ms. Weir privately so that she could respond to the assertions herself, in her own words. Our correspondence with Ms. Weir was sent in accordance with our anti-racism procedures. Ms. Weir chose to publicize the private inquiry and misrepresent it as a public, divisive “attack” on her and her freedom to organize. Ms. Weir’s representation of our communication is inaccurate and functioned as a substitute to addressing the serious concerns we raised.

Although the Steering Committee of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation deliberated solely on the allegations made and the subsequent facts uncovered by our review, we acknowledge that this issue has raised significant political questions that are relevant to the movement at large -- issues such as white supremacy, anti-Semitism, privilege, racism, and others. In the following section, we elaborate on some of these issues.

Part 2 - The US Campaign’s Position on Issues Raised by the Alison Weir Case

We are striving to build a progressive, inclusive, and effective movement for Palestinian rights in the US. If Americans Knew and Executive Director Ms. Weir have long contributed to our movement, providing useful resources and tirelessly advocating for Palestinian rights. It is precisely for this reason that many of us were taken aback and disappointed by the stance Ms. Weir took in responding to what we believed would be an opportunity for a member organization to send a clear and powerful message opposing white supremacy, hate and racism. Some, including Ms. Weir, have incorrectly claimed that the US Campaign is acting at the behest of Jewish Voice for Peace. This suggestion seems to assume that only Jews can be concerned about anti-Semitism and racism in our movement. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our movement cannot flourish and achieve its aims if we tolerate the same biases and bigotry against which we fight.

• On allies: In Ms. Weir’s response and public comments, she insists that we need to spread the word about Palestinian rights, wherever we can, to gain more allies to our cause. We strongly believe that one cannot be an ally to the Palestinian cause if one’s objection to Israel’s actions toward Palestinians is part and parcel of one’s broader worldview of hatred toward all non-whites and non-Christians. Such “allies” want to use our movement to further their racist aims rather than truly help the Palestinian people. Just as we would not accept the KKK as an “ally” we also cannot accept individuals or groups that believe in its hateful ideology. It is the same logic we apply in not accepting any overtly Islamophobic, Zionist or homophobic groups in our coalition.
• On strategic value: Claiming a strategic value in appearing on white supremacist media without
challenging the racist or bigoted views presented, on the basis that it allows our message further access,
may sound compelling, and even courageous to some, but it is an argument rooted in white privilege. We
know that it is Palestinians, their struggle, and other people of color who suffer the consequences when
movement members carry such affiliations. Principled advocates of Palestinian rights appear on media
outlets that have promoted bigoted narratives, such as Fox News or CNN, in order to challenge, not
reinforce, racism in all of its forms, including anti-Palestinian bias, Zionist propaganda, Islamophobia and
white supremacy.
• On white supremacy: White supremacy is racism emanating from white privilege, or the belief that
white people are superior to all other groups and races. The institutionalization of this hateful ideology
has led to the killing and oppression of millions of native, African-American and other non-white people
throughout the history of the United States. Institutionalized white supremacy continues its attack on
black and brown communities today in various forms including police brutality, mass incarceration, anti-
immigrant policies, and widespread Islamophobia. Appeasing white supremacists for political gain
empowers and legitimizes white supremacy, which contributes to its ongoing ability to materially affect
people’s lives.
• On divisiveness: We have heard concerns that bringing up these issues can be considered ‘divisive’ in
our movement. We do not take those concerns lightly. We weigh them against the tendency in dominant
culture to shy away from discussion about race and racism in order not to break a perceived consensus.
This is as true for race in this country as it is for Palestinian advocacy. However, to be true to our
principles, we must recognize that what is truly divisive is condoning racism or bigotry of any kind.
Appeals to unity that fail to address issues of racism are rooted in white privilege, ultimately placing the
burden on people of color to accept this racism as part of joining the movement or our coalition.
• On muzzling of dissent: We recognize that advocacy for Palestinian rights is often met with attempts
to muzzle speech or portray legitimate criticism of Israeli policies as anti-Semitic. We have all learned to
be vigilant to bring these efforts to light whenever they occur. Just as we insist on continuing to speak up
loudly and forcefully for Palestinian rights, we hold the same commitment regarding racism and other
forms of bigotry. Failing to do both violates our principles and damages the movement at large.

Part 3 - Evidence and Documentation Supporting the US Campaign’s Decision

The evidence and supporting documentation presented below pertains to actions taken by Ms. Weir and
referenced in Part 1 of this statement. It contains quotes from materials that she posted on her website,
and statements made to her in public conversations that she did not challenge. None of the evidence
presented below refers to re-posts of her materials on third party websites or other acts or expressions not
under her control.

We feel compelled to present this information in detail as it fully conveys the gravity of the situation. This
is not an isolated incident, and it is not rumor or hearsay; rather, it is a series of repeated, documented
instances of accepting and condoning extreme racist speech. Moreover, the quotes below illustrate that
this is not a case of re-branding legitimate criticism of Israeli policies as anti-Semitic; rather, it is a case of
an individual favorably re-posting racist content on her website and failing to challenge racist statements
made during interviews she participated in.

1. As part of a series of attacks on Palestinians who signed a statement distancing themselves from
Israelite writer Gilad Atzmon, Ms. Weir hosted an original blog post on her personal website by Roger
Tucker. In this post, Tucker quotes Jewish-French thinker Bernard Lazare’s 1894 Anti-semitism, its
History and Causes:

“If this hostility, even aversion, had only been shown towards the Jews at one period and in one country,
it would be easy to unravel the limited causes of this anger, but this race has been on the contrary an object of hatred to all the peoples among whom it has established itself. It must be therefore, since the enemies of the Jews belonged to the most diverse races, since they lived in countries very distant from each other, since they were ruled by very different laws, governed by opposite principles, since they had neither the same morals, nor the same customs, since they were animated by unlike dispositions which did not permit them to judge of anything in the same way, it must be therefore that the general cause of anti-Semitism has always resided in Israel itself and not in those who have fought against Israel.”

For anyone reading the excerpt Tucker chose (emphasis ours), it is evident it is aimed at blaming Jewish people [referenced as “Israel” given that the state did not exist at that time] for any bigotry they might face. Tucker also exceptionalizes Jewish religious texts by citing them as evidence that Jewish people are inherently racist, a practice we often identify as Islamophobia when done to the Qur’an:

“Just take a look at the Old Testament, let alone the blatant contempt for the “goyim” (non-Jews) found in the Talmud. The dehumanization of “the Other” is a very old and characteristically Jewish pattern. For tribal Jews and their allies, the “shabbas goyim,” to bandy about the term “racism” is hypocrisy of the highest order. (“The term shabbos goy refers to a non-Jew who performs duties that Jewish law forbids a Jew from performing on the Sabbath.” – wikipedia) What I am getting at is that Ali Abunimah et al are arguably shabbas goyim, non-Jewish elements of the currently dominant political force in the Western world that James Petras refers to as the Zionist Power Configuration (JPC).”

Finally, Tucker attributes Israel’s apartheid and settler-colonial policies to Jewish culture:

“...take a look at this, Ali Abunimah attacking Gilad Atzmon at the Stuttgart One State conference (Dec 2010. “Jewish Culture… doesn’t explain anything at all.” This remark is not only absurd – it would be like saying that slavery had nothing to do with the Civil War…”

On this last point, it is important to understand that to conflate Judaism and Jewish people globally with the state of Israel is to replicate Zionism, a political ideology that has spent decades trying to convince the world that they are one in the same.

3. Statements made by Clay Douglas to Ms. Weir during his interviews of her on his radio show:
   a. Made derogatory statements about Arabs [5:00],
   b. referenced the Protocols of the Elders of Zion - a long debunked forgery claiming Jewish plans to control the world - as fact [22:25],
   c. played clips of former head of the KKK David Duke speaking in which he declares that there is a war on Christianity in the United States, supporting sentiments Douglas himself frequently expresses. [35:00],
   d. asked Ms. Weir, “The Palestinians aren’t Arabs; there’s a lot of them that are Christians TOO, aren’t they?” [32:23]
   e. cited David Duke criticizing the presence of a menorah on the White House lawn but not a Christmas tree. Ms. Weir responded skeptically to the menorah story, but went on to state, “You know, if I moved to a country that was largely Muslim or largely Jewish, I wouldn’t feel, “Well, my... I should suddenly take over and change that country, I would have to fit in and play a role.” [41:23]
   f. downplayed the existence of apartheid in South Africa, criticizing the treatment of white South Africans and pejoratively calling Nelson Mandela a communist. Douglas went on to suggest that “Americans” (presumably referring to white Americans) are now similarly being unfairly treated as he believes white South Africans were under apartheid. [24:25]
   g. claims that all of our media is controlled by Jewish people, then asks Ms. Weir, “If the Jews control the media and the newspapers, all of our sources of news, and they call our money… Alison, are we
Palestinians on our own land, right now?" Ms. Weir responds challenging the use of the term 'the Jews,' highlighting that Jews aren't monolithic and mainstream Jewish organizations may take actions that not all Jews agree with. Yet at no time does she challenge Douglas' assertions including that Jews “call our money,” control all of the media, etc. [30:06]

h. begins ranting against Communism, claiming that all of the communist [used pejoratively] leaders were Jewish. Douglas says that the Russians used to call communism “Judaism for the masses.” He continues on a bigoted and factually inaccurate rant, "60 million White Christian Russians were killed after the Soviet Union took over. The politburo in the Soviet Union was 90% Jewish. Marx and Lenin, the founders of communism, were Jewish. Stalin was Jewish. And all of the commissars that forced the Russians into battle against the Germans... they happened to be Jewish." Douglas then claims that the people running detention centers in the Soviet Union were Jewish. He continues, "We have the same setup, the same scenario, going on in America now." Ms. Weir begins her response to this rant by stating, "There's a lot happening that people truly need to wake up to..." [36:00]

i. Douglas regularly attacks communism and communists in all of the episodes of his show reviewed, including denouncing the late South African President and freedom fighter Nelson Mandela and his ANC party as communist.

j. mentions the possibility of President Obama being impeached due to a “lack of a birth certificate,” which Ms. Weir does not directly respond to but rather says she and Douglas agree on the point that "people should be getting the full facts." [44:50]

k. says that Hitler was "perceived as a hero to the German people because they were starving to death, their economy had crashed" and then appears to suggest that Americans are dealing with similar issues. Douglas subsequently blames the “Schiffs and the Rothschilds” for these issues, presumably referring to the two Jewish families. [45:40]

l. stated that, instead of calling those he was referring to “Jews,” he would call them “Morlocks,” a reference to fictional reptilian antagonists, in H.G. Wells novels, who dwell underground. [23:15]

4. Statements made by Ms. Weir to Clayton Douglas on his radio show.

a. Ms. Weir explained that Muslims are much closer to Christians than Jews, stating “...sadly, if you look at the theology of Judaism, that is quite different. So again, it’s not that I like to tell negative things about any group, but we do need to be fully informed on this.” [29:00]

b. Ms. Weir acknowledged several books Douglas mentioned when discussing communism and its connection to Jewish people, stating that she "read some portions of those books and they are as you say, they discuss the Jewish connection to the Gulags..." [38:55]

c. Throughout her interviews with Douglas, Ms. Weir repeats her belief and agreement that Douglas is not racist, violent or anti-Semitic.

5. As late as April 2015, Ms. Weir gave an interview to American Free Press. The front page of the American Free Press print publication declares “Civil War II: Hate group exploits tragic shooting as catalyst for vicious assault on Christian, Southern culture.” The website’s current top post is an apartheid apology and diatribe against Nelson Mandela. 

- See more at: http://www.endtheoccupation.org/article.php?id=4510#sthash.iHU7so7I.dpuf

2) JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE STATEMENT ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ALISON WEIR, 15 JUNE 2015

May 5th Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) communicated with Alison Weir our decision to formalize an internal policy not to work with her. We subsequently communicated this decision to our chapter leaders. Since Alison Weir and If Americans Knew (IAK) have chosen to publicly attack JVP in response, we are writing to offer more detail about what led to our decision.
In our letter to Weir we communicated that we have chosen not to work with her because our central tenet is opposition to racism and oppression in all its forms, and she has consistently chosen to stay silent when given the opportunity to challenge bigotry, which we find repugnant.

There is a fundamental difference between engaging with oppressive beliefs in order to challenge them, and tacitly or directly endorsing those beliefs without challenge.

Weir has been a repeat and friendly guest of white supremacist Clay Douglas on his hate radio show, the Free American. Clay Douglas is concerned primarily with the survival of the White race and sees malign Jewish influence everywhere. His racist, anti-Jewish, and anti-gay rhetoric can be found across the front pages of his multiple websites.

In the course of Weir’s appearance with Clay Douglas on August 25, 2010, for example, she was silent when Douglas invoked the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and engaged in a racist diatribe against Jews. Her troubling associations and choices further include giving interviews to a range of far-right outlets including The American Free Press, which the Southern Poverty Law Center has identified as a hate group, and the anti-gay, anti-Jewish pastor Mark Dankof.

Not only have we not seen evidence that she has disavowed, debated, or challenged the thinking of any of these outlets or institutions, Weir has made clear in her response to our letter that she will proudly continue her practice of pursuing airtime on white supremacist radio shows and other such outlets without refuting, debating, or otherwise decrying their racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic beliefs. She is entitled to continue this strategy, just as we are entitled to decide not to work with her.

We know full well that the Israel lobby uses false and misleading accusations of anti-Semitism to silence critics of Israeli policies. We have called out that tactic time and time again and stood in defense of those who have been wrongly maligned with this accusation. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all accusations of anti-Semitism are unfair. Indeed, we have long warned that the political conflation of all criticisms of Israeli policy with anti-Semitism make it harder and harder to call out actual anti-Semitism when it does occur.

Our objection to Weir’s unwillingness to challenge or confront bigotry is rooted in the organizational values we hold most dear. JVP is part of a broad progressive movement that makes the connections between the struggle in Israel/Palestine and all struggles aimed at justice, dignity, freedom, and equality for all—from the Black Lives Matter Movement to the struggle for immigrant rights, from work against mass incarceration to opposing US militarism around the world, and many others. Thus we are not interested in making common cause with individuals or groups who do not share those values. We are not progressive only on Palestine—our work on Palestine is in fact a specific reflection of our broader values.

In contrast, Weir and IAK have a fundamental political framing that the U.S. is not implicated in the same racist and white supremacist structures as Israel. This tail wags the dog theory is a form of chauvinistic nationalism that absolves American interest in perpetuating injustice—not just in Israel but in other regions around the world.

For example, in IAK’s Our Story on their website it reads:
[Alison Weir] founded an organization to be directed by Americans without personal or family ties to the region who would research and actively disseminate accurate information to the American public.

In other words, according to Weir and If Americans Knew, only non-Arab, non-Muslim, non-Palestinian, and non-Jewish voices can be trusted to speak the truth, based solely on their ethnic or religious identity.

Notions of objectivity are routinely used to discredit the experiences of those most directly affected by oppression. But no one is objective, least of all Americans who benefit from the U.S. government’s destructive interventionist and white supremacist policies around the world.

Despite her support for Palestinian rights, Weir ultimately does a disservice to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, which is firmly rooted in the universal values of justice, equality and freedom. We believe we should not and cannot win by endorsing or tolerating any form of hate, whether against People of Color, queer and trans people, Jews, Muslims or anyone else.
To: Ilana Kaufman, Public Affairs and Civic Engagement Director
East Bay Jewish Community Relations Council
2121 Allston Way
Berkeley, CA 94720
ikaufman@jerc.org

From: Terry Speiker, Interim Contra Costa County Librarian

Subject: Letter of May 26, 2016 regarding use of the Walnut Creek Library

Date: June 15, 2016

Dear Ms. Kaufman,

This letter is in response to yours of May 26, 2016 regarding the use of public meeting rooms or conference areas in the Walnut Creek Library.

I understand you had previously talked with Brooke Converse, our public information manager, about the issues in question and that she had told you about the library's property use guidelines, the ownership of the Walnut Creek Library and the links on our website where this information can be found by the public. This correspondence addresses follow-up questions.

USE OF PUBLIC MEETING ROOMS AND SPACES AT THE WALNUT CREEK LIBRARY:

The Walnut Creek Library is owned by the City of Walnut Creek. The County leases the facility from the City for the purpose of providing library services for the public.

As owner of the facility, the City of Walnut Creek determines how public meeting rooms and spaces within the library can be used and by whom. Questions or comments regarding the City of Walnut Creek’s policies and rules on this matter should be directed to the City of Walnut Creek.
The City of Walnut Creek Facility Rentals Office manages the use and reservation of public meeting rooms and spaces in the Walnut Creek Library. The City’s Facility Rentals Office can be contacted at (925) 256-3575. In addition, the City’s Recreation Department can be contacted at (925) 943-5858.

Additional information can be found at www.walnut-creek.org/rentals.

COUNTY LIBRARY POLICIES:

For your information, the County also has several policies that apply to the entire County library system except where specified, as in the case of city-owned facilities.

The County’s library policies are posted for the public on the County library website at the following web addresses:

http://ccelib.org/policies/index.html

http://ccelib.org/policies/MeetingRoomRules.pdf

HOW TO ASK QUESTIONS OR SUBMIT COMPLAINTS:

You have also asked how the public can get or give information, ask questions about or register complaints with the library system or an individual library.

In addition to sending a letter to Library Administration or to an individual library requesting a response, there are numerous electronic ways for the public to contact the County’s library system. At the link which follows, the various ways to contact the Library system or individual libraries can be found:

http://ccelib.org/askaqquestion/
From this page the public can choose to:

- Submit a comment on an online form
- Click on the “Chat” button and get information by chatting live with a knowledge library staff person from 8:30am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday
- Find out the phone number to call any of the community libraries directly or how to connect via the 1-800 phone number
- Email a request for technical assistance or to contact Library Administration or the Library Commission
- Text comments or questions
- Leave comments or connect with us via Facebook or Twitter.

Library staff monitor these electronic communication tools and sites and refer all questions, comments or issues received to the correct person or library for a response. They also keep track of the questions received and use these questions or issues to update online information and other communication documents produced by the library.

I hope the material summarized in this letter is helpful to the organizations and people on whose behalf you have contacted us. Please let us know if you have questions or wish further information. Thank you.

Terry Speiker, Interim Contra Costa County Librarian
tspeiker@ccclib.org
925-927-3201

CC: BOS
Contra Costa County Library Commission
Better Government Ordinance file/Clerk of the Board’s Office