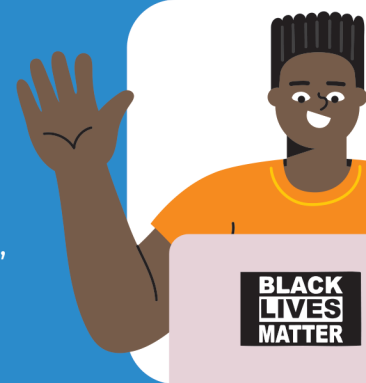




ZIONESS

CAMPUS TOOLKIT

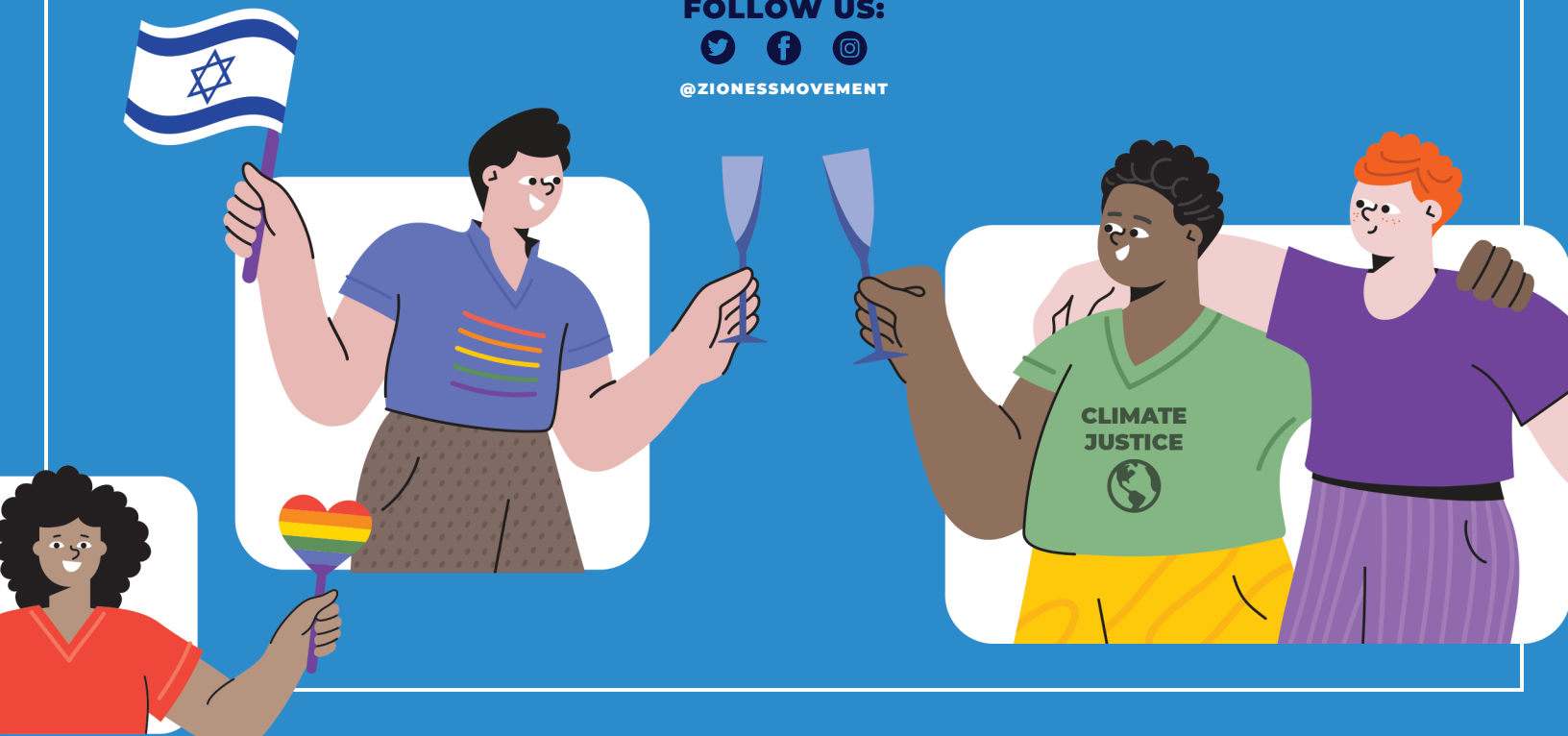
Resources, guidance and engagement opportunities for Zionesses on campus who believe in “saying gay,” gender equity, women’s rights, Black and Native American liberation, reproductive freedoms, queer and trans liberation, climate and environmental justice, Jewish liberation (Zionism) and **liberation for all**



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RESOURCES INCLUDED:

[Introducing the Zioness Campus Toolkit](#)

[How to be an Anti-Antisemite: Know the Tropes](#)

[Apply to the \(paid\) Zioness Fall Organizing Fellowship!](#)

[How Antisemitism Weakens Progressive Power and Fuels White Supremacy](#)

[Reproductive Freedom is a Jewish Mandate](#)

[Zioness LGBTQIA+ Action Toolkit](#)

[Zionesses for Racial Justice: An Activists' Guide](#)

[Respecting and Honoring Jews of Color](#)

[Zionism and Feminism: Inextricably Linked Movements for Liberation](#)

[Understanding Antisemitism: A Guide for Partners](#)

[Origins and Genesis of Modern "Anti-Zionism"](#)

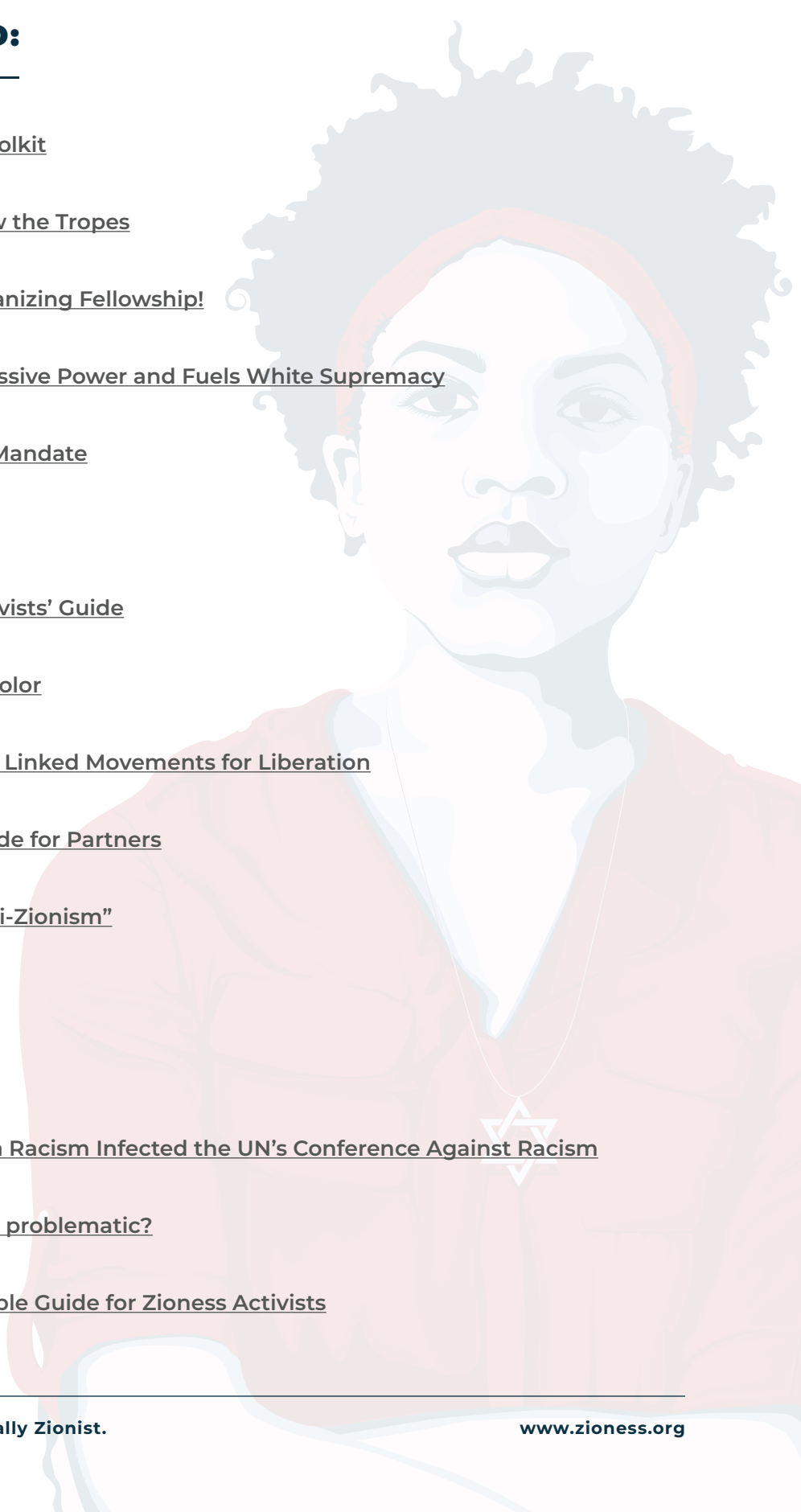
[Deescalation Techniques](#)

[Zionism vs. Anti-Zionism](#)

[The Dangers of Durban: Anti-Jewish Racism Infected the UN's Conference Against Racism](#)

[Memo: What is BDS and why is it so problematic?](#)

[When You Show Up as Allies: A Simple Guide for Zioness Activists](#)



Dear Zionesses on campus,

We hope you've had an incredible summer spent learning, growing, spending time with loved ones and, hopefully, hitting the beach. We know the end of summer can feel like a bummer, but we hope you are excited to get back to campus and the start of a new academic year full of opportunity! For our freshman Zionesses, congratulations on reaching this momentous milestone in your lives. We're so excited for you to find independence and freedom, meet lifelong friends, join organizations and clubs, and pursue your many passions.

For those of you who aren't yet familiar with Zioness, we are thrilled to introduce ourselves—and hope to be a part of your campus life and your young professional life for a long time to come. Zioness is a domestic social justice activist organization, focused on the advancement of social, racial, economic, environmental and gender justice in America. In our fight for progressive change and a more equitable world, we show up as Zionists, representing our pride in our Jewish identities, our Jewish story, and our commitment to liberation for all oppressed communities and peoples.

Zioness exists to provide a home, a community, and a place for activism for all of you who identify as both unabashedly progressive and unapologetically Zionist—which for us, are one-and-the-same. We fight for progress as Zionists because Zionism is the embodiment of progress and liberation, and because living proudly and authentically as Zionists is how we tell the world that we will never hide our Jewish identities—of which Zionism is an intrinsic piece—and that we will never cede movements for social change or abandon our commitment to tikkun olam, repairing the world.

College is a time for you to come into your own, develop your own opinions and make your own decisions. You'll have access to a variety of perspectives, ideas and experiences, and you will be inspired, challenged and moved every day. At times, you'll be exposed to ideas—especially relating to your Jewish/Zionist identities—that may be tricky to navigate. And while we encourage you to engage respectfully and constructively, who you are and the values you hold should never be questioned or demonized. As a Zionist and a progressive, and as a person who refuses to choose between those two inseparable pieces of you, your voice and your story matter and belong everywhere on your campus.

Zioness is here to help you navigate the dynamics, on campus and beyond, in which you feel any form of erasure, demonization, or harassment. We know that as college students, fighting antisemitism on campus is just one of countless priorities and commitments, but for those of you who want to take a stand and want some guidance, language, or support—we are here and ready to help. This “Zioness Back-to-School Backpack” provides useful resources on topics that have affected others in your shoes; we would be thrilled to talk through any of the resources, or any specific challenges you are facing, anytime. You can reach us by emailing about@zioness.org and we will get back to you right away.

Wishing you b'hatzlacha, good luck, and we are cheering you on as you embark on this incredible journey.

With love and solidarity,
Team Zioness



HOW TO BE AN *ANTI* ANTISEMITE

Antisemitism has been in the news again after some high profile people employed blatantly antisemitic tropes. Part of the challenge we face in fighting this form of bigotry is that a lot of people don't know what antisemitism is, or what it sounds like. We're here to help.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY ANTISEMITISM?

The word "antisemitism" gets thrown around with very little context. **At its core, it is simply anti-Jewish bigotry—a form of racism against the Jewish people.** Here are some common antisemitic (racist) characterizations and associations that have been used throughout history to degrade and dehumanize Jews—leading to devastating consequences.

JEW AS SCAPEGOAT

For 2000+ years, Jews have been wrongfully blamed for problems afflicting society and humanity. Scapegoating began with the accusation (which persists to this day) that Jews killed Jesus. In the Middle Ages, Jews in Europe were blamed for causing the "Black Death," killing millions. In 2017, a rumor spread in Saudi Arabia that Israel (the Jews) had sent AIDS-infected melons via underground passages. Some have outrageously accused the Jews and/or Israel of creating covid-19.

JEW AS "PERVERTERS OF THE WHITE RACE"

Adolf Hitler's Naziism was built on a system of race-based laws (the Nuremberg Laws) claiming that Jews must be eradicated because their "impure blood" was "perverting the white race." **Such degrading ideology has continued to surface, including in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017,** where white nationalists with tiki torches chanted "Blood and Soil," a Nazi chant celebrating Germany (the soil) being purified (cleansed of Jewish blood).

JEW AS "PRIVILEGED WHITE PEOPLE" OR WHITE SUPREMACISTS

While the far right attacks Jews for perverting the white race, **the far left ironically attacks Jews as privileged, white oppressors.** While many—but by no means all—Jews present as white and benefit from that privilege, barbaric Jew-hatred is at the very core of white supremacy. Until Jews are welcome in cohesive, united coalitions for justice, we will never defeat the threat of white nationalism in America or white supremacy around the globe.

HOW TO BE AN *ANTI* ANTISEMITE

JEW AS HOLDERS OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS

The theme of mythical, unrestrainable Jewish power implies that Jews are above the laws of religion or politics or even nature. **By presenting the Jews as omnipotent, antisemites convince the masses that a Jewish cabal is responsible for devastating societal events**, even if such accountability is completely unreasonable or illogical.

VICTIM BLAMING OF JEWS

Some attempt to justify Jew-hatred as a reasonable reaction to certain supposed Jewish characteristics or behaviors. **After the Holocaust, antisemites said the “weak Jews” deserved their fate because they didn’t stand up to the Nazis, going “like sheep to the slaughter.”** Reacting to rising violence against Jews in NYC in 2020, Orthodox victims were blamed for “overdevelopment/gentrification” and “complex racial tensions.”

THE JEW AS EVIL, DECEPTIVE, MANIPULATIVE AND GREEDY

Jews are often caricatured with devils ears or a long, hook nose that represents evil, deception, manipulation and greed. This antisemitic imagery originated with **Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice, in which the character Shylock, a financier, is repeatedly referred to as “the devil in the likeness of a Jew.”** Modern antisemites like the Rev. Louis Farrakhan regularly demonize Jews as “Satanic”.

“JEWS CONTROL THE WORLD”

This idea is often displayed through images of Jews with tentacles (like an octopus) or holding onto strings (like a puppeteer) that control the levers of society. **It suggests that Jews have ultimate power, seek to dominate the world, and control the media, financial institutions, and government.** Simultaneously, the far right sees Jews as the “invisible hand” empowering non-white communities at the expense of “white America,” while the far left sees Jews as controlling these systems to keep people of color oppressed.

THE JEW AS SUBHUMAN

Often depicted as rodents or vermin, antisemitic ideology maintains that Jews are subhuman, **worthy of extermination without guilt or shame, as the Nazis attempted with their “Final Solution”** (the Holocaust). Animalistic characterizations of Jews are recognizable forms of Jew-hatred, such as when Rev. Louis Farrakhan calls Jews “termites.”

HOW TO BE AN *ANTI* ANTISEMITE

REFERENCES TO OR VISUALIZATIONS OF BLOOD

Known as the “blood libel,” Jews have been alleged since the Middle Ages to be murderous, bloodthirsty people who bake the blood of Christian children into matzah at Passover. Today, Israeli Jews are grossly and libelously accused of harvesting the organs of Palestinians. **Imagery of blood in the context of Jews is ubiquitously seen as antisemitic; blood libels often led to mob violence and the decimation of entire Jewish communities.**

JEW AS DISLOYAL

Since Jews were exiled from their indigenous homeland in Israel, although they maintained a continuous presence there, they have lived on the margins of most societies. Since long before Israel's reestablishment in 1948—although the trope has become more pervasive since—diaspora **Jews have been questioned on their loyalty to their “host countries”**. Jews have lived (and been persecuted) around the world, faced suspicion as sinister or untrustworthy, and accused of dual loyalty to some amorphous “higher” Jewish interest.

JEW AS “ZIONIST”

By perverting the term “Zionism” and libelously associating it with racism, apartheid, and colonialism, some have found a “politically correct” way to attack Jews as “Zionists”. Around 95% of Jews are Zionists—Jews who support their own liberation—and these attacks play on the same tropes that are employed directly against Jews. **As MLK Jr. said, “When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews—you are talking antisemitism.”**

JEW AND MONEY

Banned from participating in certain professions, Jews throughout history often became moneylenders (bankers). This association is visualized with images of **Jews with cash or currency symbols, often in the context of other tropes, including Jewish greed, power, control or manipulation**. With wild conspiracy theories, Jewish financiers, like the Rothschild and Soros families, are demonized and scapegoated for the ills of any given society.

HOLOCAUST DENIAL

By denying or distorting the established, incontrovertible facts of the Holocaust, including the plan to annihilate the Jews of Europe and beyond, **antisemites attempt to erase history** and suggest that the Holocaust was invented or exaggerated as part of a manipulative Jewish plot to gain the world's sympathy.

Apply to the Zioness Fall Organizing Fellowship!

The Zioness team is thrilled to announce the launch of Zioness' inaugural Fall Organizing Fellowship program: a substantial, paid investment toward putting grassroots organizing boots on the ground in key cities across the country. As members of the Fall Organizing Fellowship program, our new teammates will receive hands-on organizing training that will support Fellowship team members' abilities to advocate for their progressive and Zionist values both during and beyond their tenure as Fellows.

The Fall Organizing Fellowship will be a rigorous, 12-week (paid!) program open to activists and aspiring activists in communities across the country. Fellows will serve as Zioness ambassadors to their communities and will help shape a grassroots organizing program we look forward to running for years to come.

Our first Fellowship cohort will strategically target five of the largest cities in the US: New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Houston and Austin, although applicants living in other locations will also be considered as this is a remote position. **A full description of the Fellowship and details on how to apply can be found at zioness.org/careers. Zioness will offer a \$1,500/per month stipend and/or academic/class credits where applicable.**

Fellowship team members will be responsible for individual and team organizing metrics, expanding our existing national grassroots programs and infrastructure, managing local volunteer and partner relationships, and ongoing reporting of all organizing activities out in the field. Our Organizing Fellows will engage members of their communities—specifically, progressive Jews and allies—in grassroots organizing efforts to impact some of the most critical issues of our time. Fellows will also engage in Get Out the Vote/Voter Education initiatives in the run up to the critical midterm elections in November.

Fellows will have the opportunity to learn grassroots organizing skills and will play a key role in building a first-of-its-kind community engagement program aimed at building volunteer leadership at the local level, effecting change on core progressive issues, and effectively confronting on antisemitism/anti-Zionism anywhere it presents itself. Fellows will work closely with other progressive groups to build relationships and execute unique programs.

The Fall Organizing Fellowship program will officially launch on September 15th and will end on December 9th (although these dates may be flexible). Fellows are expected to maintain a fixed weekly schedule, with a minimum weekly time commitment of 15 hours per week.

View the full fellowship [description here](#)

Apply by sending a cover letter and resume to Nick@zioness.org

Location: This is a remote opportunity, with slight preference given for candidates located in New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Houston, or Austin.

Zioness is committed to building an organization that is representative of our country's beautiful diversity. We welcome all applicants who share our mission and vision, and strongly encourage applicants from marginalized and underrepresented communities to apply.



ZIINESS

UNABASHEDLY PROGRESSIVE,
UNAPOLOGETICALLY ZIONIST.



HOW ANTISEMITISM WEAKENS OUR PROGRESSIVE POWER AND FUELS WHITE SUPREMACY

Antisemitism poses an ever-present and significant threat to Jewish life. Identifying right-wing antisemitism is generally straightforward. But, when we don't address anti-Jewish ideas in our progressive spaces, all of our communities suffer.

As Eric Ward so clearly lays out in his seminal work “Skin In The Game,” antisemitism fuels white nationalism in America, and sits at the beating heart of violent white supremacy. Just as anti-Black racism is deeply engrained in the foundations of our country, anti-Jewish sentiment is systemic, institutionalized, and pervasive in the national and global consciousness. Our default assumption should be that anti-Jewish sentiments, often in the form of biases, are present in all communities and movements, at all times.

HOW ANTI-JEWISH IDEAS WEAKEN OUR MOVEMENTS:

- When Jews are treated as “other,” frequently for being “Zionists” (meaning we support Jewish liberation, as more than 90% of American Jews do), they feel pushed out of progressive spaces. This not only means fewer allies and less likelihood of successfully advancing the issues we care about, but it undermines our values and credibility as a movement that aims to fight all forms of oppression.
- White supremacists gain power by dividing the progressive movement. It is in their interest to create artificial divides between communities united in the fight for justice, distracting us from our goals. When debates on Israel and Palestine are framed as a zero-sum game, as if progressives can only support one marginalized group or the other, the status quo is preserved. This is a reality that none of us — Jewish, Palestinian, Black, Indigenous or otherwise — can afford.
- To white nationalists, Jews are not white. Jews “pervert the white race” with “impure blood”, and work to advance “inferior” races to the detriment of white, Christian patriarchy. This is the meaning of the neo-Nazis’ chants in Charlottesville, “Jews will not replace us” — which is not about Jews (who make up 2% of the U.S. population) overthrowing white power, but about Jewish solidarity with communities of color. While most Jews in America present as white and benefit from white privilege, racializing Jews as white erases our lived experience as victims of white supremacist persecution the world over. When progressives buy into these constructs, it reinforces white supremacy.
- Anti-Jewishness has become a wedge issue that has been remarkably effective at distracting us from our true goal. Is it a leftist problem? A right-wing problem? Are Jews greedy capitalists or secret, revolutionary socialists? Are they universalist or particularist? Are they white? These debates all share two things in common: they play on antisemitic tropes, and they keep our attention away from the growing threat white supremacy poses to Jews, communities of color, all marginalized groups, and democracy itself.
- There is no way to defeat white supremacy without defeating antisemitism in all its forms—including “anti-Zionism”. And anti-Jewish ideas, pushed down into all communities by white supremacists in America, exist in our progressive spaces.

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM IS A JEWISH VALUE

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM IS A JEWISH VALUE

When we hear that something is a Jewish value, it can sound abstract and nebulous. But when we say reproductive freedom is a Jewish value, we mean it in a decisive, concrete way. Swipe left to learn about the religious Jewish texts that affirm our dedication to protecting the right to choose.

LIFE BEGINS WITH BREATH נפש

In Jewish tradition, breath, life, or spirit— נפש (*Nefesh*), in Hebrew—is the beginning of life. That means that a fetus only has the potential for life—according to Jewish law, **a baby's first breath is when their life begins.**

ALWAYS PERMISSIBLE, SOMETIMES IMPERATIVE פקוח נפש

פקוח נפש (*Pikuach Nefesh*) is the most fundamental Jewish rule: there is nothing more urgent than saving a life. As such, in a situation where a pregnancy threatens the pregnant person's life, abortion is not only permitted, but required to save a life. In dangerous pregnancies, Judaism mandates that we choose life: the life of the pregnant person.

DEFINING PIKUACH NEFESH

פקוח נפש (*Pikuach Nefesh*) goes beyond vital signs, just as נפש (*Nefesh*) is about more than respiration. These concepts also encapsulate abstract definitions of life such as the soul and spirit. As such, the scope for circumstances in which abortion is permitted is also broader than literal life-saving.

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM IS A JEWISH VALUE

RABBI KASS ABELSON ON ABORTION

“There is clear precedent in the tradition...to permit abortion of a fetus to save a mother’s life, to safeguard her health, or even for ‘a very thin reason,’ such as to spare her physical pain or mental anguish.” *Rabbi Kass Abelson, Proceedings of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, pp. 3-10 (1980-5)*

REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM & RELIGION

Too often, religion is weaponized in conversations about reproductive freedom as a means to strip women of their agency. This is why Jews and our allies are uniquely positioned to change the national dialogue about religion and the freedom to choose.

RABBI EMILY LANGOWITZ ON ABORTION & RELIGION

“The antidote to a conservative religiously-driven political agenda on reproductive rights is not a call for the removal of faith from public life, but the presentation of a platform of reproductive choice firmly rooted in a different understanding of religious values. As progressive religious leaders, then, we have both the opportunity and the moral responsibility to offer nuanced religious language in discussing abortion and all facets and stages of the reproductive life cycle.” - *Rabbi Emily Langowitz*

THE LEGACY OF JEWISH REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE ACTIVISM

The American Jewish community overwhelmingly supports the right to choose. Via organizations like the National Council of Jewish Women and Jewish Women International, our community has been at the forefront of the fight for reproductive freedom for over 120 years, because Judaism is unequivocally pro-choice. Now, as recent crackdowns threaten abortion access, especially to our Black, brown, young, and economically disadvantaged siblings in the South, it is more important than ever to continue that legacy.

ZIONESS

**LGBTQIA+
EQUALITY**

ACTION TOOLKIT



@ZIONESSMOVEMENT



SECTION 1

DIVERSIFY YOUR FEED

There are so many thought leaders and organizations to choose from- here are just a few that inspire us.

To become a better advocate, incorporate diversity of sexuality, gender, and gender expression into your social media feed and learn from LGBTQIA+ thought leaders! Here are some folks to follow to and updated on how to stand with our siblings in the LGBTQIA+ community.

THOUGHT LEADERS



Jewish LGBT



Hen Mazzig



Laverne Cox



Ashlee Marie Preston



Ashley C Ford



Sherente Mishitashin Harris

ORGANIZATIONS



The Human Rights Campaign



The Trevor Project



The Okra Project



The Marsha P. Johnson Institute



For the Gworls



G.L.I.T.S



The National Black Justice Coalition Inviting In Toolkit



National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network



SECTION 2

PRIDE IS EVERYDAY!

[Gen Z is the most Queer identified generation in US history](#), and oppressive stigmatization of LGBTQIA+ identity is gradually being rejected by most Americans. As more Americans feel safe finding their own identities and living their truth, Queer-phobic activists are digging in! State level anti-trans legislation is cropping up around the country, and the Supreme Court recently ruled to curtail LGBTQIA+ rights under the guise of ‘religious freedom.’ Now is the time to stand up against those who would legislate Queer-phobia and try to force Queer communities back in the closet.

GET EDUCATED ABOUT QUEER LEGAL EQUALITY IN YOUR STATE

Do You Know How Your State Ranks? The National Equality Map from the Transgender Law Center Provides a comprehensive overview of state-by-state legal disparities for Queer Americans. [National Equality Map](#)

- In June 2015, The Supreme Court, in the landmark *Obergefell v Hodges* decision, made marriage equality the law of the land. While this was a huge advancement in equality for LGBTQIA+ Americans, marriage equality does not create full equality. LGBTQIA+ Americans still face legal discrimination and we must remain vigilant in our advocacy!
- Legal medical homophobia: Gay and Bisexual men TO THIS DAY can only donate blood if they have not had sex for three months (and this was only ‘relaxed’ in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). In the 1980s as the AIDS pandemic devastated the Queer community, the pandemic of indifference to Queer suffering made it far deadlier. Our government remained silent, ignored the ongoing health crisis, and barred Gay and Bi men from being eligible to donate blood. This legislation was based on homophobia, fear, and stigmatization, NOT science.
- Almost immediately following Obergefell, discriminatory and transphobic legislation began sweeping through the country. North Carolina’s “bathroom bill,” a total ban on trans Americans serving in the military, prohibitions against trans women competing in women’s athletics, and more became the next frontier in the wave of fights for equity, and those battles are ongoing. Join the fight!

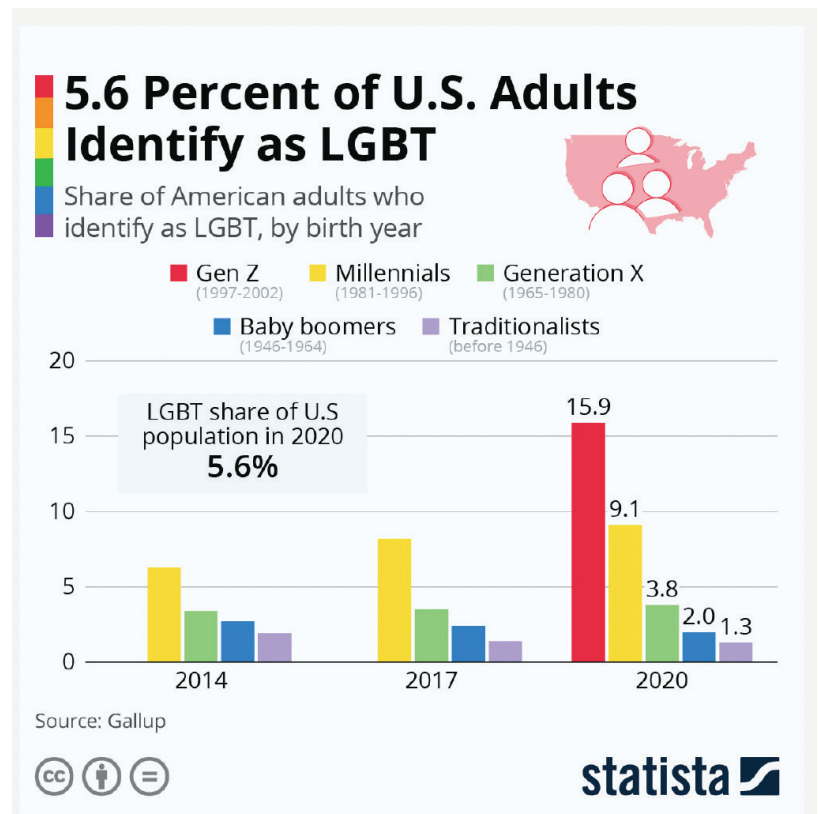


SECTION 3

TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS YOU STAND WITH THE QUEER COMMUNITY

Do You Know How Your State Ranks? The National Equality Map from the Transgender Law Center Provides a comprehensive overview of state-by-state legal disparities for Queer Americans. [National Equality Map](#)

- The Equality Act - Click here to [urge your senators](#) to join the House in passing the Equality Act, which is long overdue. President Biden supports and will sign this legislation.
- The Therapeutic Fraud Prevention Act - [Click here to urge your Representatives](#) to support this crucial legislation banning the fraudulent and cruel practice of conversion therapy.”
- LGBTQ Business Equal Credit Enforcement and Investment Act - [Click here to urge your Senators to introduce and join the House in passing the LGBTQ Business Equal Credit Enforcement and Investment Act](#) which aims to end discriminatory financial lending practices against LGBTQ-owned businesses.





SECTION 5

LGBTQIA+ ALLYSHIP DOS AND DON'TS

- Add your pronouns to your social media bios and email signature. This is an easy way to signal that you are an ally who will respect the identities of those you interact with.
- Start asking people what pronouns you should use when you refer to them. It's a respectful way to make sure you're not misgendering people.
- Don't assume anyone's sexuality. For example, if you're asking a new friend if they're dating, ask if they have a "partner", "spouse" or "are seeing anyone".
- Buy from LGBTQIA+ owned businesses - there are tons out there, WE LOVE Wildfang clothing, Fluide makeup, and Rebirth Garments clothes and accessories, among others!
- Donate to funds that help trans and non-binary individuals buy binders (which are used to flatten the chest). This is an easy step to support someone's journey to a gender expression that is fully aligned with their identity.
- Don't ask trans and non-binary individuals invasive questions. Asking what gender they were assigned at birth, or their deadname (the name they were given at birth) can be extremely invalidating. What matters is who the person is at this moment. This aligns with the Jewish teaching to welcome community members who have made changes in their lives, without digging into their past. Converts, people who are newly observant, and others who have made significant life transitions may not be reminded of their past actions or situation.
- Be thoughtful with your language when you talk about someone's sexuality. For example, don't ask a bisexual person if they are "half straight, half gay." No one deserves to have their identity sliced into pieces.





SECTION 6

LEARN MORE

There are an increasing number of high quality films and shows exploring the complexities of LGBTQIA+ culture and life in the US. This is a fun and engaging way to learn more about Queer culture.

WATCH



Pose
(TV Show)



Paris is Burning
(Documentary)



Disclosure
(Documentary)



Moonlight
(Film)



Tangerine
(Film)



Rafiki
(Film)



READ



Is Paris Burning,
(Essay by
Bell Hooks)



Angels in
America, a play
by Tony Kushner
(Play)



When We Rise, a
memoir by Cleve
Jones (Memoir)



Sister Outsider:
Essays and
Speeches by
Audre Lorde
(Book of essays)

The Progress Pride flag was created in 2018 by Daniel Quasar. The Progress Pride Flag creates more inclusions for the LGBTQ community with the original rainbow Pride flag, brown and black stripes to represent people of color, and the colors of the trans flag (white, pink and blue).

ZIONESS

Zionesses for Racial Justice: **AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE**

Understanding and Confronting Implicit Bias and Privilege

Showing Up as Allies and Accomplices

We May Experience Antisemitism. We Will Address it. We Must Not Walk Away.

Addressing Antisemitic Tropes in Your Activism



@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

Zionesses for Racial Justice: AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE



UNDERSTANDING AND CONFRONTING IMPLICIT BIAS AND PRIVILEGE

Many are realizing for the first time that the United States is built upon a foundation of white supremacy and systemic racism. While we recognize and affirm the frustration of our Black siblings and neighbors that this awakening is long overdue, there is a reckoning happening—and a real opportunity for Zionesses to use our varying levels of privilege to pursue sustainable change.

This moment has called for us to reflect, listen, and ask how we can show up as the best and most effective allies and accomplices. There is an endless amount of listening left to do, but we have already heard overwhelmingly from our Black partners and allies: **we must start by understanding and confronting the implicit biases within all of us, as citizens of the United States and participants (even if unintentionally) in the unjust systems and institutions that hold up our country—and hold down BIPOC individuals (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).**

We know from our own work how critically important it is to let members of historically targeted communities define their own pain, express their own challenges, and ask for whatever form of solidarity makes them feel most seen and supported. This is the solidarity that we are unequivocally committed to providing. That means that we must take the time to listen and learn.

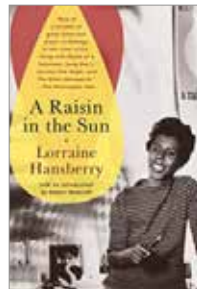
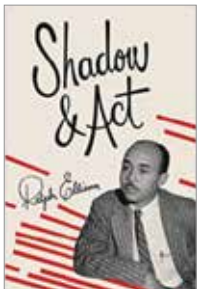
DO THE WORK WITH ZIONESS

Watch our webinar, [Understanding Implicit Bias](#) with Leslie Short of [The Cavu Group](#) (a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion firm).

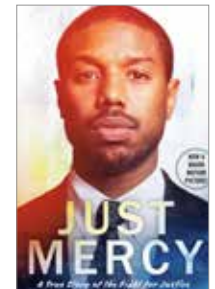
Then [sign up](#) for a conversation with fellow Zioness activists in your community on anti-racism.



READ



WATCH



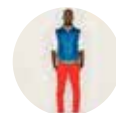
FOLLOW



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[RABBI SANDRA](#)
[@RABBISANDRA](#)



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[BE A KING](#)
[@BERNICEKING](#)

Zionesses for Racial Justice: AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE



SHOWING UP AS ALLIES AND ACCOMPLICES

Black lives matter. As Jews, our primary mandate is *pikuach nefesh*, our commitment to protecting and preserving human life. We live in a country and a world where some lives are valued less than others, where Black people are held down by systemic oppression through institutions and social realities that form the foundation of our everyday lives. This reality is intolerable, and Zioness declares, today and every day, not only that Black lives matter, but that Black lives are beautiful, invaluable, precious. Our work to dismantle white supremacy and its systems of oppression will not end until we live in a world that fully respects and values the humanity of BIPOC Americans.

That is why Zionesses from coast to coast have been and will continue to participate, proudly and vocally, at marches and rallies in support of Black lives. That is why we will continue our work with coalition building and fighting for policy changes at the local, state and federal levels.

There are several critical things we must understand about allyship. First, being an ally is a title we earn by showing up and doing the work—not a title we assume. Second, being an ally requires actions, not just words—allyship is a verb, not an adjective. Third, our ultimate goal shouldn't be just allyship. Rather, we should seek to become accomplices in dismantling systems of oppression and white supremacy in America that threaten both the Black and Jewish communities.

WE MAY EXPERIENCE ANTISEMITISM. WE WILL ADDRESS IT. WE MUST NOT WALK AWAY.

We know that there is a possibility that we may experience some painful antisemitism in our activism. If we encounter it, we will address it. **Antisemitism divides and weakens our movements for justice, pushing committed activists out of the spaces that are effectively advocating for urgent change.**

When we engage in good faith to advance movements for justice and face propaganda slandering Israel and Zionism—the liberation movement of the Jewish people—this antisemitism is painful and crushing. We will be conscious of the fact that what we hear often stems from a lack of understanding. We will assume the best in people and be gentle when correcting the record, understanding that our lived experiences may be different. **And we will remember that the fight against anti-Black and anti-Jewish racism is a shared battle against white supremacy, and our success depends on the strength of our relationships with our allies. We will only defeat hate by fighting it together.**

Four years ago, the platform announced by the Movement for Black Lives endorsed a boycott of Israel and cynically referred to Israel with factual fallacies and deeply hurtful and divisive language. It was harmful for our relationships and tested our historic and enduring bonds with the Black community. We cannot pretend this didn't happen, and Zioness' founders experienced this pain firsthand. At Zioness, we know that showing up authentically as who we are, building relationships, and engaging in these discussions head-on is the key to changing hearts and minds.

However, Black lives matter, even if we disagree—because Black lives matter, no matter what.

Zionesses for Racial Justice: AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE



ADDRESSING ANTISEMITIC TROPES IN YOUR ACTIVISM

TROPE

“Zionism is Racism”

Zionism is the liberation movement of the Jewish people—akin to Black nationalism for Blacks and decolonization of indigenous land for Native Americans. **Zionism is the answer to the Jewish people’s historic and systematic oppression: it is emancipation for one of world’s most enduring persecuted communities.** Zionism has nothing to do with any other people other than the Jews, and it is not racism; it is justice for the Jewish people after millenia of oppression. Zioness, an unabashedly progressive and unapologetically Zionist movement, is anti-racist by definition.



Background:

The phrase “Zionism is racism” originated with a Soviet and Arab-sponsored 1975 United Nations resolution that was widely condemned by many Black American leaders at the time. The U.N. rescinded and apologized for the resolution in 1991. Many Leftists, socialists, and labor organizers, including Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph (who organized the March on Washington), condemned the resolution upon its passage. Randolph called Israel’s founding, “a heroic and challenging struggle for human rights, justice, and freedom.”

The actual definition of Zionism is the struggle for the Jewish people’s right to self-determination in our historic homeland. Today, Zionism means continuing this liberation by supporting the safety and security of the Jewish people in a safe and secure Israel. **The suggestion that “Zionism is racism” is an attack on Zionists—a perverse claim that Jews are racist for supporting our own emancipation.**

Further Reading:

[*Speech to the UN General Assembly, by U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Daniel Patrick Moynihan*](#)

[*Response To Common Inaccuracy: Zionism is Racism \(ADL\)*](#)

TROPE

“Jews were behind the Atlantic Slave Trade”

Jews did not start or control the Atlantic Slave Trade. This trope aims to divide Blacks and Jews—natural and powerful allies in our shared fight against white supremacy. And Jews did not make up a majority of slaveowners—not even close—nor could they possibly have, given that the American Jewish population only eclipsed 150,000 men, women and children in 1850. Sadly, there were Jews of means who did own slaves, like people of all backgrounds—Europeans, Africans, Arabs, and even Indigenous Americans—who all made money off African slaves.

Background:

This propoganda is primarily spread to demonize Jews and prevent Jews from engaging in anti-racist advocacy. It is commonly spread by Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, and David Duke, the former

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Ku Klux Klan grand wizard—both designated hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center. **All mainstream scholars describe these claims as antisemitic.**

Jews were involved in American and the broader Atlantic Slave Trade to a comparatively insignificant degree, which does not absolve us of guilt, but contextualizes the appalling fact that the slave trade was ubiquitous. As David Brion Davis wrote, “The participants in the Atlantic slave system included Arabs, Berbers, scores of African ethnic groups, Italians, Portuguese, Spaniards, Dutch, Jews, Germans, Swedes, French, English, Danes, white Americans,

Native Americans, and even thousands of New World blacks who had been emancipated or were descended from freed slaves but who then became slaveholding farmers or planters themselves.”

Further Reading:

[*Is Jewish Control Over the Slave Trade a Nation of Islam Lie or Scholarly Truth?* \(Tablet\)](#)

[*The Slave Trade and the Jews* \(NY Review of Books\)](#)



“Israel trains American law enforcement to be racist / ‘Deadly Exchange’”

Racism and police brutality in America are systemic and institutionalized. They have been a shameful yet intentional part of our institutions since they were built, 400 years ago. Israel has been a state for 72 years, and joint police and military trainings have been happening for about 20 years. American racism is not caused or inflamed by joint U.S.-Israel security partnerships.

Background:

This is a form of blood libel, a common trope that seeks to blame Jews for death caused by other means. An extremist group with a dangerously misleading name, “Jewish Voice for Peace,” has worked to spread this antisemitic claim in a series they call “Deadly Exchange” by alleging that exchanges of arms, security technologies and ideologies exacerbate violence and discrimination against communities of color in both countries.

American racism began when the first enslaved Africans were brought to Jamestown in 1619. Police brutality and white supremacy were endemic in America before, during, and after the Civil War (1860s) and Civil Rights Movement (1950s/60s). Theodor Herzl founded political Zionism when he published *Der Judenstaat* in 1896. Israel formally became a state in 1948—and has unfortunately been forced to become a world leader in anti-terrorism (because of thousands of attacks on innocent civilians since its founding) and national security policy (because of regular attacks by state and non-state actors on all sides of it). American and Israeli police started joint security training in the early 2000s. **The attempt to place blame on Israel (or Zionists—Jews who support our own liberation) for the murder of Black people in America is a hideous, defamatory accusation that reeks of anti-Jewish racism.**

Further Reading:

[*JVP's Anti-Semitic Obsession With Jewish Power* \(ADL\)](#)

[*Jews Drive U.S. Police Brutality Against People of Color? JVP Crosses Over Into anti-Semitism* \(Haaretz\)](#)

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TROPE

“Israel treats Palestinians the same way America treats Blacks”

The relationship between Israelis and Palestinians is not the same as the relationship between white America and Black America. Black people in America are fighting for equality in a country that promises that to all its citizens—a promise that has never been realized, and which will never be realized without the dismantling and rebuilding of our systems and institutions, which rest upon a foundation of white supremacy. **The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is about two distinct forms of nationalism—Jewish nationalism and Palestinian nationalism—that can (and we believe must) coexist, but not in the same state.** This is why most Israelis, and the vast majority of Jews across the diaspora (including in Zioness), support two states for two peoples, living side by side in peace, in which both states can realize the full rights and dreams of their peoples.



Background:

Upon Israel's founding and recognition by the international community in 1947, the Jews fighting for Israeli independence agreed to a U.N. Partition Plan, which would give sovereignty to both the Jews and the Arabs (both of whom were called Palestinians) living in the territory at the time. The Arab Palestinians did not accept statehood, and there have been a series of wars and military escalations waged against Israel since, which have resulted in death and destruction on both sides. However, Israel has never enslaved Palestinians, who are represented by two different Palestinian governments, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. **Israel faces real, existential internal and external threats, which have been internalized throughout Israeli society, including in law enforcement.** Sometimes those fears lead to mistakes, injustices and terribly distressing outcomes. But Israel does not have a 400 year history of systemic oppression, nor does it have systems that were built expressly to oppress Arabs. **Israel was recognized and built as a Jewish state—its foundation had one goal: to protect the Jewish people, a persecuted minority that has endured thousands of years of systemic and genocidal oppression.**

Further Reading:

[*Don't Confuse the Struggle of African Americans With That of the Palestinians* \(Haaretz\)](#)

[*A Dose of Nuance: Israel's Arabs are not America's blacks* \(The Jerusalem Post\)](#)

TROPE

“Israel is a racist country”

Israel is an extraordinarily diverse, multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith and pluralistic country in a constant struggle to balance its founding commitments as a Jewish-majority state (for the Jewish people, not ruled by the Jewish religion) and a thriving democracy. Israel is not perfect—but the disproportionate focus on Israel's challenges, especially as compared to nations around the world committing regular human rights atrocities, is explicitly antisemitic.

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Background:

All Jews are indigenous to the land of Israel, and were only living in Europe and the Middle East/ North Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries because of their repeated expulsion from their ancestral home. Today, only 30% of Israeli Jews descend from refugees from Europe who present as “white”. Most Israelis are Jews of Color whose families fled persecution and returned to Israel from across the MENA region.



Like many multicultural countries, disparities exist among Israelis of different ethnic backgrounds; for example, approximately 150,000 Ethiopian Jewish citizens of Israel lack equal access to the same opportunities as many non-African Israelis, and Arab Israelis, who make up 20% of Israel's population, frequently encounter various forms of bigotry. Although Israelis and Jews across the diaspora dream of a perfectly egalitarian Israel, we are proud of the many activists and organizations fighting for a more just and inclusive Israeli society for all of the country's citizens and inhabitants. **Those who claim “Israel is a racist state” by highlighting human rights violations, have consistently demonstrated a hypocrisy and inconsistency that can only be described as antisemitic.** As Jews, we are left to wonder why the world's only Jewish state is singled out with unique intensity and consistency for its injustices, while countless explicitly Christian and Islamic nations engage in human rights violations unquestionably more egregious than Israel's.

Further Reading:

[**No, Israel isn't a country of privileged and powerful white Europeans** \(Los Angeles Times\)](#)

[**Diversity in Israel: Lessons for the United States** \(Brookings Institution\)](#)

TROPE

“Israel is an apartheid state”

Israel's citizens come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds—including 2 million Arab Israelis out of a country of 8 million people—and are all subject to the same system of laws. **While there is racism and intolerance in Israel, like there is in every country in the world, the conflation of these disparities with apartheid is disturbing and abhorrent to Black South Africans who lived under a system that made them legally subservient, in every aspect of their lives, to a white ruling minority.**

Background:

Israel is a Jewish-majority state, reestablished in the 20th century as a refuge for the long-persecuted Jewish people. Unlike in apartheid South Africa, where whites were a minority ruling class that dominated the Black majority, Jews make up the overwhelming majority of Israel's population. Yet, unlike Blacks in apartheid South Africa, Arab Israelis (and all Israelis) live under the same system of laws, and while no country can

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claim full equality of opportunity, all Israelis have access to the same government systems and institutions that drive daily life. Ethiopian Jews facing repression were brought to Israel in history-making humanitarian airlifts and are full citizens with equal freedoms under the law and proud members of Israeli society. **Arab Israelis have full citizenship rights, including the right to vote, while Blacks in apartheid South Africa had no rights at all. Arab Israelis are doctors, lawyers, professors, business executives, judges, military leaders and high level political figures.**

Israel's relationship with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is different, and in some ways distressing and oppressive. From its reestablishment in 1947 and its acceptance of the U.N. Partition Plan,

Israel has hoped to live side-by-side in peace with a Palestinian state—offers which were never accepted by Palestinian leadership. The reality today is very complicated, and potential unilateral action by the Israeli government which would transform the status of the West Bank would make the situation far less straightforward. **Nevertheless, Israel has always aimed to separate from the Palestinians—not to subjugate them.** Comparisons of Israeli society to South African apartheid are gross, and antisemitic, distortions.

Further Reading:

[*Why Israel Is Nothing Like Apartheid South Africa* \(The New York Times\)](#)

[*Response To Common Inaccuracy: Israel is an Apartheid State* \(ADL\)](#)



“Zionists are not welcome here [in the racial justice movement]”

Jews are Zionists. Zionism is the liberation movement of the Jewish people—and it is inherent to our Jewish identities. To alienate Zionists from progressive movements is to tell Jews that we are not welcome. In the case of the racial justice movement, Zionist Jews have not only been welcome, but have led. The NAACP was founded by a powerful partnership between American Zionists and Black leaders. American Jews will continue to fight for racial justice because we know that the cause is just—and that our commitment to *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world, mandates it.



Background:

American Jews helped lead the Civil Rights Movement and all movements for justice and equality in America. American Jews in disproportionate numbers marched, organized, gave speeches, donated, provided legal representation, and participated in sit-ins, and the overwhelming majority of Jews are and have always been committed to fighting racism.

We stand on the shoulders of giants. We will continue to show up and serve as allies and accomplices to our BIPOC siblings and neighbors. **Attacks on Jews and “Zionists” in racial justice spaces are antithetical to**

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the mission of those spaces, distract from the urgent problem of systemic racism, and divide those spaces at a time when we most need to be united in the pursuit of our shared goals. In response to such attacks, we must continue to show up as our authentic selves: progressive Jews who are proudly Zionist and believe to our core that Black lives matter. We must exemplify the Jewish call to better the world—including standing up for racial justice—and Zioness will put in the work, every day, because our communities are undeniably stronger together.

Further Reading:

[*Martin Luther King Jr., the Civil Rights Movement, and American Jews* \(Los Angeles Review of Books\)](#)



TROPE

“White nationalism isn’t about Jews”/“Jews are privileged white people”

White nationalism is fueled by antisemitism. White nationalists believe that white people are a superior race, and blame the Jews (who they claim have inexplicable and omnipotent power) for the success of justice movements for BIPOC, including the Civil Rights Movement.

Background:

Black people (including Black Jews) are often (but certainly not exclusively) the physical victims of white nationalism and institutionalized white supremacy in America, but white nationalist racist ideology is grounded in antisemitism. **Jews are one of the primary targets of white nationalists, who believe that their movement cannot succeed until the all-powerful Jews are eradicated.** Further, Jews have been targeted over and over again for their impure blood, which white nationalists believe is perverting the white race, and which still drives murderous attacks on synagogues and other Jewish institutions today.



White nationalists have historically sought to turn other oppressed communities against Jews, in order to divide our movements, making all of us exponentially more vulnerable. While most Jews do present as white, which is an undeniable privilege in today’s America, this does not protect Jews from the dangers of white nationalism or white supremacy. **There is no denying that Blacks and Jews are in this fight together, and anyone attacking Jews or Zionists in any justice movement is expressly harming the movement and hindering its progress.**

Further Reading:

[*Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism* \(Political Research Associates\)](#)

[*Alt Right: A Primer on the New White Supremacy* \(ADL\)](#)

ZIONESS A GUIDE TO RESPECTING JEWS OF COLOR



DON'T ACT SURPRISED THAT WE'RE JEWISH.

If you see a person of color in Jewish spaces like in shul or at a Bat Mitzvah, you can assume they are Jewish. Jews are incredibly diverse—after all, we were exiled from the land of Israel and scattered all over the globe.

DON'T SAY WE 'DON'T LOOK' JEWISH.

Jews don't all look the same! There is no one way to 'look' or 'be' Jewish. Let's not reinforce stereotypes about Jews with 'big noses' or 'frizzy hair'—or, that Jews are white. This erases the beautiful diversity of our people.

A JEW IS A JEW.

Whether someone converted to Judaism or was born Jewish, this person is Jewish! We have had Jewish conversions since the beginning, including people who have played a profound role in the story of the Jewish people— like, Ruth, of the Book of Ruth! Calling people “converts” or even “Jews of choice” is othering.

DON'T TOUCH OUR HAIR.

In Black communities and other communities of color, hairstyles can be an expression of cultural pride and identity. Touching someone's hair (or any other part of their body) out of curiosity is offensive —and also, unsanitary. Do not violate someone's personal space.

ZIONESS A GUIDE TO RESPECTING JEWS OF COLOR



JEWS OF COLOR ARE FULLY JEWISH AND FULLY PEOPLE OF COLOR — AT THE SAME TIME.

Jews of Color are Jewish people and people of color. They are not “half Black and half Jewish” or any other fraction of an identity. Their identities are never in competition, and never less than 100%.

BE THOUGHTFUL WHEN YOU PLAY JEWISH GEOGRAPHY.

While Jewish geography can be a fun game when you first meet someone, assuming a Jew of Color knows another random Jew of Color can be racist and problematic.

DON'T ASK ABOUT SOMEONE'S JEWISH BACKGROUND.

This question can be innocent, or motivated by a genuine desire to connect, but too often it can feel like fishing for personal information, or checking someone's Jewish credentials. Unless someone chooses to share their background or journey with you, just welcome them and enjoy sharing space with a fellow Jew. Questions like ‘What is your Hebrew name?’ or ‘Where were your parents from?’ are similarly problematic.

EMBRACE THE DIVERSITY OF JEWISH FOOD!

From shakshuka to chraime to fesenjan, Jewish cuisine reflects the global Jewish diaspora. Not all Jews identify ethnically with gefilte fish, or bagels and lox. In the same way there is no one way to be or look Jewish, there's no one way to make Jewish foods!

Feminism & Zionism:

INEXTRICABLY LINKED MOVEMENTS FOR LIBERATION

Excerpts from iconic thought leader and former parliamentarian
Dr. Einat Wilf's "[Anti-Feminism and Anti-Zionism](#)" (Tablet Magazine 2018)

"Feminism and Zionism are daughters of the enlightenment...**Feminism and Zionism are infused with resistance against the pre-Enlightenment idea that how you are born should determine how you die.**"

"Feminism and Zionism are ongoing rebellions against millennia-long power structures that assigned women and Jews a "proper place" in society. For women, it was an order dating back to the beginnings of the agricultural era, that simultaneously enabled and necessitated their control as child-bearing properties. For Jews, it was a theological, and by extension social, assignation of their inferior role by Christianity and Islam."

"Entire cultural structures—civilizations—were built on the edifice of female and Jewish inferiority...Feminism and Zionism challenged all that. They were both forms of refusal to accept the role that others have assigned to women and Jews. They were forms of self-assertion that cried out: I refuse to be seen how you wish to see me, I refuse to be that which you want me to be, I am not your inferior, I can be so much more than I am allowed to be, and I insist on being free to explore and make the most of my humanity."

"In that, feminism and Zionism were built on self-definition and human agency. **Both these movements could emerge only once the secular and radical idea that human beings, individually and collectively, are masters of their fate, was introduced.** Once human beings could be conceived of as active agents of historical change, rather than passive receivers of divine fate, women and Jews could begin to formulate the notion that even if one might be dealt some of the worst cards in history, and by a whole lot of dealers, it does not mean that there is nothing to be done."

"It was the growing ability of women and Jews to lay claim to being human beings worthy of equality and liberty, as well as their ability to mobilize their respective groups to make that claim, that made the success of their revolutions possible."

"Alas, feminist women and Zionist Jews proved themselves ingrates. The more they attained, the more they wanted. **Unable to celebrate what they were given, they exhibited an annoying tendency to not just care about being somewhat better off than before but to actually want true equality.** It was a tendency that was often resisted by women and Jews themselves, who feared that the fragile achievements they already had would be endangered by movements that insisted on pressing ever forward."

Feminism & Zionism:

INEXTRICABLY LINKED MOVEMENTS FOR LIBERATION

“Feminism and Zionism were two of the most successful revolutions to emerge from enlightenment thinking. The achievements of both movements in each turn were remarkable, and of a nature that only a short while earlier would have been considered unthinkable and impossible. **Wherever and whenever feminism and Zionism swept through societies, they turned them upside down and inside out.** By changing the very image of what it means to be a woman or what it means to be a Jew, it forced change on societies and civilizations that were predicated on a very specific and limited image of what it meant to be either of those things.”

“That change was not always welcome. In fact, it was resisted at every turn, often violently, even ferociously. The more power—of various kinds—was amassed by women and Jews, the more their rise felt like an offense to the “proper order of things.” **The challenge of feminism and Zionism to millennia-long power structures was never going to go over unchallenged. It is in the very nature of power that no-one, ever, gives it up willingly and easily.**”

“It is, therefore, no coincidence that wherever and whenever women and Jews grew in prominence, their rise was met with increasing violence...Direct violence has not been the only method by which the backlash against the aspirations of women and Jews to equality has been implemented. Various insidious ways, mostly transparent to those who grew up under cultural expressions designed to signal the proper place for women and Jews, were employed. From “The Beauty Myth” to religious “modesty” to sinister anti-Zionist intellectual assaults, entire cultures and civilizations were mobilized to drive a wedge between the “Good Woman” and the “Bad Feminist,” between the “Good Jew” and the “Bad Zionist.””

“The difference between the Good and the Bad? Power. A “Good Woman” does not aspire to power; in fact, she feels uncomfortable with it and would be more than happy to forgo it. A “Good Jew” feels queasy with manifestations of Jewish power, and in the face of raw expressions of it rushes to declare his or her renunciation of Zionism. It is no accident that the forms of female and Jewish expressions that are most mocked, criticized, and denigrated are those that involve the expression of power. If the revolutions of feminism and Zionism are ever to be stalled, and even rolled back, women and Jews must come to feel uneasy with power.”

“True equality leads inexorably to a redistribution of power and resources, [which is] why to “those accustomed to privilege, equality feels a whole lot like discrimination.” Young men in the West might no longer individually think that women are their inferiors,

Feminism & Zionism:

INEXTRICABLY LINKED MOVEMENTS FOR LIBERATION

but they would need to exhibit remarkable blindness to argue that they do not inhabit a world in which the social structures, norms, and cultural output were shaped by this assumption. Young people who have only always known a powerful state of Israel might [be] prone to confusing cause and effect—thinking that the Western and Islamic obsession with Israel is about what Israel does, rather than about what Israel is: an expression of Jewish self-mastery and power.”

“It is in the nature of feminism and Zionism that they cannot rest until they have reached true equality: until the resources of power are redistributed so that women and Jews are no longer ever in danger of being put “back in their place.” This can only be achieved with the transformation of the civilizational systems that have determined what that “proper place” is. This is why feminism does not stop with education, voting, reproductive rights, equal pay at work, and safety at work...This is why Zionism has not ended with the establishment of a state for the Jewish people, because the idea of equal sovereign Jews, governing a share of the Earth’s land on their own, continues to be ferociously resisted...”

Read the whole extraordinary piece [HERE!](#)

And don’t miss Dr. Wilf’s new book, [“WE SHOULD ALL BE ZIONISTS”!](#)

ISRAEL & THE MIDDLE EAST

Anti-Feminism and Anti-Zionism

Two sister revolutions emerged from the enlightenment, only to find themselves under siege

BY EINAT WILF

JANUARY 09, 2018





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UNABASHEDLY PROGRESSIVE,
UNAPOLOGETICALLY ZIONIST.



UNDERSTANDING ANTISEMITISM: A GUIDE FOR OUR PARTNERS

Antisemitism is the world's oldest and most enduring hatred. Like anti-Black racism, antisemitism is systematic and institutionalized in every political movement, society, and economic system in the world. The insidious nature of this disease makes it harder to identify and disrupt than most other forms of bigotry. Consequently, anti-Jewish ideas may sit in our spaces, often taking the form of blind spots and biases. If left unchecked, it will erode our movements for justice as we fall for the trap white supremacy has laid for us: a scapegoat to distract from the real forces behind oppression of vulnerable minorities.

WHAT IS ANTISEMITISM?

- In the most simple sense, antisemitism is anti-Jewish bigotry, or a bigotry aimed at the Jewish people.
- Many people think of antisemitism as a form of religious bigotry. This stems from a general perception that Jews are a community with a shared religion (Judaism).
- However, in its modern form, antisemitism acts more like a form of racism. Jews aren't often attacked for their religious beliefs. We're attacked for being Jews—part of the Jewish nation.

HOW DOES ANTISEMITISM MANIFEST?

- Antisemitism is largely based on conspiracy theories that blame Jews for the problems, real or perceived, of a society or community. In these conspiracies, the Jews are the secret force harming one group of people, or the entire collective.
- White nationalists in America, for example, hate Jews because of our commitment to the Civil Rights Movement and supporting the civic and political power of non-white communities. "Jews will not replace us!" is not a chant about the small Jewish population (16 million globally) taking over the white race (note: to them, Jews are not white), but rather, that Jews are joined in a massive conspiracy to subvert the white race, by replacing white control and white culture in America with people of color.
- In some communities of color, the conspiracy is inverted: Jews may be viewed as the ultimate embodiment of the evils of whiteness and race-based oppression. For example, subscribers to Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam perpetuate a dangerous lie accusing Jews of controlling the Atlantic slave trade. Some fringe elements of the progressive movement, including some Jews, allege that Israeli Jews train American law enforcement to terrorize and murder Black Americans. In both cases, the slanderous accusation is that Jews (whether in America or in Israel) work to harm, maim, or kill Black people.



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HOW DO I SPOT ANTISEMITISM?

- There are many classical antisemitic tropes: messages that are recycled throughout the ages to scapegoat the Jews for whatever is viewed as the ultimate wrong in any given society in any given moment. For example, throughout history, Jews have been violently attacked in societies that have normalized language calling Jews powerful, manipulative, bloodthirsty, wealthy, greedy, or working toward world domination. Please check out our simple but comprehensive [resource](#) to become more familiar with these dangerous tropes.

WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL?

- Criticizing specific policies of any government, from a place of knowledge, is always appropriate, even passionately. Decrying specific politics or policies of the state of Israel is not antisemitic.
- However, demonizing Israel, calling the state illegitimate, or advocating for its dissolution, is perceived by the vast majority of Jews in the world as explicitly antisemitic. Unless coming from a principled anti-nationalist who does not believe in states or borders for any peoples, the implication that Israel should cease to exist as a Jewish state is anti-Jewish.
- Demonizing Zionism is antisemitic because it seeks to undermine the right of the Jewish people to be liberated and self-determined in a sovereign state for the Jewish people in our indigenous homeland. It is up to the Jewish people to determine what persecution against us looks and feels like, and given that more than 90% of American Jews identify as Zionist, calling oneself “anti-Zionist” is overwhelmingly perceived by Jews to be antisemitic.
- Pushing Zionist Jews (90%+ of all American Jews) out of progressive spaces, or holding American Jews accountable for Israel’s actions is highly problematic. Creating litmus tests for Jewish participation in domestic justice movements—especially those that affect our bodily integrity and our rights as women, LGBTQ+ individuals, Jews of Color, immigrants, refugees, etc.—is antisemitic in that it demands that we have, and declare, our positions on complex geopolitical issues in order to advocate for our rights in the countries in which we live and vote.

WHY SHOULD THIS BE SO IMPORTANT TO ME?

- Antisemitism erodes the very fabric of a healthy society. Where conspiracy theories thrive, democratic societies which protect civil rights for marginalized communities cannot survive. Therefore, this is genuinely a shared fight and a problem that affects all of us. A frequent refrain and warning is that “what starts with the Jews, never ends with the Jews.” Fighting antisemitism is an urgent mandate for every American.
- As Eric K. Ward, a Black man who infiltrated the white supremacist movement by presenting as an anti-Jewish bigot, wrote in his seminal piece, [Skin in the Game](#), antisemitism is the very nucleus and animating force of white supremacy and white nationalism in America. We cannot defeat these existential threats to the democratic experiment without vigilantly fighting antisemitism everywhere it manifests.
- Check out our resource “[How Antisemitism Weakens Our Movements](#)” for more details.

The Origin and Genesis of “Anti-Zionism”

Excerpted from Testimony by Amanda Berman, Esq., Founder and Executive Director, Zioness at the New York City Council, Committee on Higher Education Oversight
Hearing: Examining Antisemitism on College Campuses

Zioness launched after a number of high profile incidents in progressive organizing and coalition building spaces, in which Jews were targeted with litmus tests and, sometimes, outright, vitriolic antisemitism, as, quote-unquote, “Zionists.”

Before pivoting my career to build Zioness full-time, I worked as an attorney who helped victims of antisemitism—including its contemporary manifestation in “anti-Zionism”—know their rights, and enforce them legally. One of the cases I am most proud to have worked on was a groundbreaking pair of lawsuits against San Francisco State University (SFSU) for its pervasive antisemitism. In order to avoid trial in which a powerful case was to be presented showing a pervasively hostile environment of antisemitism at SFSU, the university issued a public statement recognizing that “for many Jews, Zionism is an important part of their identity.” The litigation set a crucial precedent that is urgent for this committee to understand: **college campuses that do not recognize the fundamental, inarguable fact that Zionism is intrinsic and inseparable from Jewish identity, and actively protect Jewish and Israeli students and faculty members from antisemitism that targets Jews as “Zionists,” will be vulnerable to similar legal consequences.**

In both my work as an attorney and my work leading Zioness, a national grassroots movement which has created a community that invites terrified Jews around the country to “come out” in progressive spaces as Zionists, I have had unique, and deeply distressing experience with the form of contemporary antisemitism known as “anti-Zionism.” There are those—on college campuses, in progressive movements, and beyond—who argue that “anti-Zionism” cannot be antisemitism, because it is nothing more than “criticism of Israel” or “advocacy for the Palestinian people.” I genuinely wish this were true, as I personally criticize Israel frequently and believe fervently in the Palestinian peoples’ right to self-determination, but the claim is fundamentally wrong, irresponsible, and intentionally misleading.

Those who call themselves “anti-Zionist,” or associate Zionism with the worst evils of the world (like colonialism, apartheid, genocide, racism, etc.), are using a core part of Jewish identity—Zionism—as a slur, thereby demonizing and ostracizing nearly the entire American Jewish community. Indeed, using the term “Zionists” to stigmatize Jews did not originate in the American left, but in the dustbin of history, becoming a global phenomenon with the publication and worldwide distribution of The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion in the early 1900s. This noxious text, a conspiracy theory which accused villainous, supernaturally powerful, greedy Jews—aka, the “Elders of Zion”—of planning global domination by exercising complete control over the economy, media, and government. The Protocols are widely recognized as inspiring violent Russian pogroms against Jewish communities, Henry Ford’s rabid antisemitic conspiracizing in The Dearborn Independent, and ultimately, Hitler’s Mein Kampf—and the Nazi Holocaust, which involved the slaughter of six million Jews and the intended extermination of the Jewish people. It is critical to note that The Protocols was published 43 years before the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the land of Israel in 1948, and yet the hallmarks of genocidal antisemitism were encapsulated in a book describing the so-called “elders of Zion.” **Demonizing Jews as “Zionists,” also-known-as “anti-Zionism,” is a form of bigotry that long predates Israel, let alone the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.**

Since archetypal “anti-Zionism,” The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, originated in czarist Russia, it should come as no surprise that the contemporary “Zionism is Racism” declaration, which is often extended to associate Zionism with colonialism, genocide, apartheid, and imperialism, perverts a concept which is central to Jewish identity, and which radiates from parts of the progressive movement, including on college campuses, comes from the Cold War Soviet Union. In 1975, the Soviet Union introduced a shameful resolution at the United Nations declaring that “Zionism is racism,” a declaration that inverts reality, divides the progressive movement and leads to virulent and violent attacks against identifiable Jews in all corners of the globe. What many don’t know is that the resolution was a KGB “anti-Zionist” disinformation campaign being internationalized to protect Soviet Cold War interests—namely, to attack American influence (Israel) in the Middle East. After the vote to adopt the “Zionism is racism” resolution (which has now been rescinded in shame), U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and later New York’s revered Senator Daniel Patrick Moynahan, gave a historic speech describing its catastrophic consequences far better than I could:

“The UN is about to make antisemitism international law...[the U.S.] does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act...A great evil has been loosed upon the world. The abomination of antisemitism has been given the appearance of international sanction. The General Assembly today grants symbolic amnesty — and more — to the murderers of the six million European Jews.

What we have here is a lie. The lie is that Zionism is a form of racism. The overwhelmingly clear truth is that it is not...In logic, the State of Israel could be, or could become, many things...but it could not be and could not become racism unless it ceased to be Zionist.”

The same is true for those for whom the State of Israel is our only place of refuge in a world which has, constantly and for millennia, shown its contempt for Jewish life. While of course an individual person who is a Zionist could also be a racist, **Zionism—the liberation and self-determination movement of the Jewish people in our ancestral homeland—could never be racism, as it liberates the world’s oldest and most enduring persecuted minority community, Jews of all colors and races and cultural backgrounds, from thousands of years of violent oppression in the diaspora.** Denying the Jewish people this right, aiming to leave us in statelessness and systemic powerlessness forever—“anti-Zionism”—is much closer to racism than Zionism ever could be.

I’d like to close by saying three things clearly and unequivocally:

First: **fighting antisemitism should never be considered controversial.** Recognizing and responding to this ubiquitous, historical, shape-shifting threat—to the Jewish people, to our city and our country, to our whole world—is not controversial. Anyone who says otherwise is more concerned with politicizing antisemitism than fighting it.

Second: Jewish identity is not based exclusively on Jewish religion, and antisemitism in 2022 is very rarely a religiously-motivated bigotry (despite the way hate crimes statistics against Jewish communities are often recorded). The Jewish people are members of a nation, a distinct people with distinct religious and cultural practices, a people with Indigenous ties to the land they now inhabit in the State of Israel, a people with shared history, language, ancestry, and even DNA. **To flatten Jewish identity to a religious practice is to ignore its core, which is nationhood/peoplehood.**

Third: Zionism is not a political ideology. The contemporary political Zionist movement, from approximately 1897 to 1948, was about the creation of a sovereign state, not the politics of the state. The State of Israel has politics and policies, like every sovereign state on earth, and those politics and policies are legitimately vulnerable to criticism. But Zionism, the movement for Jewish liberation and self-determination in the Jewish people's ancestral homeland, is a reflection of Jewish nationhood, Jewish history, Jewish identity, Jewish religion, and Jewish cultural practices—not politics. Zionists hold political views that range the entire spectrum, and calling Zionism political in a way that subsumes it within our polarized American political paradigm is deceptive and inaccurate. **Zionism is about self-determination for a persecuted minority community; it is a movement supported by Jewish and non-Jewish people across the political/ideological spectrum; and it long predates the modern state of Israel (and any politics or policies associated with it).**

DEESCALATION WHEN EXPERIENCING ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Escalation is a continuous, worsening of anti-Jewish or anti-Israel sentiments that could include failing to allow Jews to define who they are, erasure of Jewish history, experience, and seeking to intentionally misconvey Jewish values or positionalities. This often occurs while minimizing how Jews experience antisemitism and the presence of conspiracy theories (global control, government, media, entertainment, economy). Further, elevation of tensions and anti-Jewish hate often raise parallel to international affairs which could include global pandemics, and economic crises (recession, economic collapse), and elevated conflict in the middle east.

Deescalation, by extension, is the intentional intervention to prevent this risk of escalation by specific, calculated measures and behaviors meant to diffuse situations of potential harm, while prioritizing safety and security. Deescalation refers to the process of diffusing conflicts as they begin to prevent them from getting worse or potentially violent.

While on campus, operating as a Jew or a Zionist may activate bigotry, intolerance and discrimination from campus community members, and you may receive unwarranted, unfair and unjust comments or treatment. In addition to reporting injustices and inequities to positions of power and authority, we want to best prepare you for these occurrences as they may arise, which is why we are sharing some examples of escalatory incidents and tips for deescalation below. We also always invite you to join a Zioness chapter in your city to connect with other people who are progressive and Zionist for shared experience, advocacy tools, training opportunities and more.

INTERPERSONAL DE-ESCALATION: GOALS

- Re-humanize the parties involved.
- Defuse the situation by shifting the energy.
- Create space for potential conflict transformation (justice/sustainable peace)

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION: GOALS

- Re-humanize the parties involved, particularly the person being harassed.
- Defuse the situation by shifting the energy.
- Unleash the constructive power of the person being harassed.

DEESCALATION WHEN EXPERIENCING ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

PUBLIC INVALIDATIONS AND INJUSTICES

Example: you have shared a part of your family's experience in Yemen in a Sociology class on ethnicity, and a peer cross-talks, stating that Jews from the Middle East are simply Arabs with a different religion.

- This hurts because it is invalidating to your lived experience, personal narrative and your family's story and journey. In this situation, the injustice has also occurred in a public space with an audience. Speaking over others is disempowering.
- Do not feel compelled to respond immediately. Take a breath. You know your story and you are the expert of your experience, nobody else.
- If you engage, do so in a composed tone, name misconduct and feeling, and express that you are a willing partner in constructive dialogue [only].
- "I appreciate that you shared your thought. As a Yemenite Jew, we do have a distinct ethnic identity, culture, linguistic identity, and lived as a separate minority in Yemen. This is a common misconception and I can see how it might make sense to some. Instead of speaking in generalizations, it's usually better to let equity-seeking group define their own experiences."
- If the peer continues to engage in invalidation, micro- or macroaggressions, you can always close a conversation by using I- statements such as: 'I do not feel comfortable continuing this conversation at this time, but would you be open to continuing this conversation at a different time?' Or 'rhetoric like this can be really harmful. I don't think I can be the one to walk you through this learning, but I can share resources,' or plainly, 'I am respectfully walking away from this conversation.'

PERSONAL ACCOSTING AS 'THE JEW IN THE ROOM'

Example: you are attending an intercultural Freshman Week event to learn about diversity on campus where each registered student-led group has a booth with cuisine, beverages, arts and culture such as poetry, music, and films. You stop by the Mexican booth for agua horchata and tamales, you stop by the First Nations and Native American booth to try bannock, and you stop by the Jewish booth, hosted by Hillel, to try the sfinge (Moroccan Jewish donut eaten on Chanukah), kugel (Ashkenazi casserole dish) and fresh hummus.

DEESCALATION WHEN EXPERIENCING ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

While standing wearing your Star of David among several Jewish classmates and friends, a group of students from a nearby booth approaches and tells you that “Jews stole hummus, their language, culture, foods, from Palestinians and other Arab groups in the Middle East and there is no such thing as Jewish food or Jewish culture.” You are a Zionist because it’s important to your identity, but you’ve never been to Israel and you are attending an event on an American college campus as an American Jew.

- This hurts because it positions Jews as being responsible for responding to circumstances across the world, that one might not even be familiar with, and employs antisemitism by making all Jews accountable for the accused wrongdoing of a foreign nation, which is not acceptable when targeted toward other Diaspora groups.
- You could say:
 - I don’t feel that I have enough information to comment on any situation outside of America, but me and my family members have been eating ‘Jewish food’ for generations!
 - It is harmful to make generalizations about entire groups of people and like all groups, Jewish people are diverse. If most Middle Eastern nations share similar cuisines, could it be possible that Jewish people, who have lived in the Middle East for thousands of years, also eat similar foods too?
 - Projecting your worldview and biases onto others before entering into any mutual conversation or dialogue feels threatening and does not typically lead to safe or productive conversations. Maintaining a campus culture of safety and security is important. You can express when you feel that sentiments are entirely unwarranted and inappropriate.

THREAT OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE OR ASSAULT

Example: you are walking to the Students’ Union Building to get lunch at the Kosher café located near the library. You are wearing your kippa, blue jeans, your favorite sports team jersey and your backpack. Upon entering the building, a rowdy group of male peers snatch off your kippa and start tossing it back and forth between one another. Initially, your reaction is to wait for them to tire and give it back or just throw it on the floor like others have before, but they start escalating. After a few minutes it’s clear by their words and attitudes that this situation could escalate to violence.

DEESCALATION WHEN EXPERIENCING ANTI-ZIONISM AND ANTISEMITISM

- Your personal well-being, security and safety are the most important factor.
- If it is safe to do so, leave, immediately and report this to the nearest campus security or visible staff person. Do not continue to engage and do not try to respond.
- Have someone stay with you while you make a report to official law enforcement, but ensure that this is also documented with campus security.
- Ensure that you are protecting your emotional self as well, and call-in support of a parent, community member, friend, therapist or mental health professional to process what has happened.

Active Bystander Intervention and De-Escalation by DC Peace Team Bystander intervention (ABI) refers here to when you are a third party to someone else being harassed, abused, or harmed.

Interpersonal de-escalation (DE) refers here to when you are being harassed, abused, or harmed.

RESOURCES

Introduction to Nonviolent Communications:

- Nonviolent communication and self awareness with [Maria](#) (11);
- Short animated introduction to non-violent communication with [Yoram](#) (12);
- Nonviolent communication with [Dr. Roxy](#) (30);
- [How to use Nonviolent Communication](#)
- [Human Needs Chart for Nonviolent Communication](#)
- [Requests that help us meet needs for Nonviolent Communication](#)

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

Zionism

the progressive movement of collective liberation and self-determination for one of the world's most enduring persecuted minority communities, the Jewish people, in their ancestral homeland.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

"Anti-Zionism"

the desire to return the Jews to a state of total systemic powerlessness, vulnerable to the whims of social and political movements that have, throughout history and in every society, exhibited their contempt for Jewish life.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

Zionism

the rebirth of the Jewish homeland in the place of Jewish indigeneity, giving renewed life, meaning and substance to the cultures, beliefs and practices that united the Jewish people in the diaspora, during their exile from the land of Israel, for thousands of years.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

"Anti-Zionism"

The belief that Jews are not entitled to collective liberation or the ability to create a self-determined community where Jewish culture, religion and connection can thrive—and that instead, Jews should be forced to assimilate in the countries to which they were exiled, over and over again throughout history, no matter the dangers of practicing Jewish religion or living a fully authentic Jewish life.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

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Zionism

A declaration of the Jewish story, which began on Mount Zion (Jerusalem), describes the Jewish people as the children of Zion, revolves around Zion (with chants of "Next Year in Jerusalem" at all major Jewish holidays and life events), and unites us in our everlasting longing for Zion.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

"Anti-Zionism"

An attempt to deny and invalidate Jewish peoplehood, Jewish (and world) history, Jewish indigeneity to the land of Israel, and the intrinsic and inseparable Jewish connection to Zion.



ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
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Zionism

The movement for recognition of Jewish peoplehood, as distinct from Judaism as a religion, and the fundamental right of the Jews as a people—irrespective of Jewish religious observance—to collective liberation, sovereignty and self-determination in our indigenous homeland (Judea/Israel).

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

“Anti-Zionism”

The erasure of Jewish peoplehood and flattening of Jewish identity, claiming that behavior that targets Jews as a people entitled to collective liberation, but does not interfere with Jewish religious observance, should not be considered antisemitic.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

Zionism

The embodiment of the incredible racial and cultural diversity of the Jewish people, the physical and spiritual descendants of the Jews of antiquity, who were driven from Israel (otherwise known as Zion or Judea) into exile and scattered across the globe—yet remained united, generation after generation, in custom, peoplehood, and prayer—directed toward Zion.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

“Anti-Zionism”

An attempt to paint all Jews as "white" and "powerful" "oppressors," and completely ignore both the incredible diversity of the Jewish people and the intersection of racism and antisemitism, in order to justify anti-Jewish bigotry and the denial of the Jewish peoples' right to collective liberation and self-determination.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

Zionism

The very definition of anti-colonialism, the return of a former British colony—which had been previously colonized by the Greeks, the Romans, the Ottomans, and numerous other imperial powers—to its indigenous people, the Jewish people, in the same geographic location of the original Jewish civilization.

ZIONISM VS ANTI-ZIONISM

ZIONESS
@ZIONESSMOVEMENT

“Anti-Zionism”

The application of a grossly oversimplified narrative in which Jews are called “white” and “powerful” in order to claim Zionism is colonialism and imperialism—its absolute opposites. This narrative requires the erasure of 60% of Israeli Jews who are Jews of color; the 850,000 Mizrahi and Sephardic Jewish refugees who fled violent pogroms across the Arab world; Ethiopian and Soviet Jews who, by the hundreds of thousands, escaped religious persecution by emigrating to Israel; and Asian, Indian, and other Jews who found refuge and liberation in the Jewish indigenous homeland.

THE DANGERS OF DURBAN

ZIINESS

ANTI-JEWISH RACISM INFECTED THE UN'S CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered about the origin of the phrase “Zionism is racism”? Do you know people who have spread it without understanding its history? Were you aware that it was Cold War Soviet propaganda?

Zionism is liberation, self-determination and freedom for the world's oldest persecuted minority community. And while the UN rescinded its own shameful 1975 “Zionism is racism” resolution in 1991, the phrase—and the rabid anti-Jewish hatred it inspired—had already infected parts of the progressive movement, especially after it was quasi-ratified in Durban, South Africa in 2001. **Twenty years later, this disgraceful phrase inverts reality, divides the progressive movement and leads to virulent and violent attacks on Jews.**

SOVIET ANTISEMITISM

Political “anti-Zionism” originated in the Soviet Union. Attempts to assimilate long-oppressed Soviet Jews exposed their distinctness as a people and a religious group—seen by Stalin as a direct threat to Soviet unity. After Israel's reestablishment in 1948, Stalin murdered prominent Jews, accusing them of “Zionist disloyalty.” Soviet Jews faced rampant discrimination, but to maintain “progressive” credibility, Stalin's antisemitism was cloaked: Jews were called “Zionists” and marginalized using the same tropes from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion—which originated in pre-Soviet Moscow in 1905. After Israel won a 1967 defensive war waged by Soviet-supported Arab states, **a KGB “anti-Zionist” disinformation campaign was internationalized to protect Soviet Cold War interests—namely, to attack “American influence” (Israel) in the Middle East.**

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379 (1975)

In 1965, the U.S. and Brazil introduced a proposal to condemn antisemitism and recognize it as a form of racism, along with Nazism and Apartheid. Fearing it would lead to inquiries into Soviet domestic antisemitism, and to further a proxy war against Western capitalism and influence, **the Soviets added Zionism as a condemnable ideology to the proposal, perversely comparing Zionism—the national liberation movement of the Jewish people—to Nazism, the genocidal ideology that had led to the extermination of 6 million Jews only 2 decades prior.** In coalition with communist, dictatorial, anti-democratic, openly antisemitic, and pan-Arab UN member states, the Soviets succeeded in leading the passage of a UN resolution (3379) declaring that “Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.”

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379 (1975)

U.S. Ambassador to the UN (later renowned Senator) Daniel Patrick Moynahan gave a historic speech after the vote: **“The UN is about to make antisemitism international law...[the U.S.] does not acknowledge, it will not abide by, it will never acquiesce in this infamous act...A great evil has been loosed upon the world.** The abomination of antisemitism has been given the appearance of international sanction. The General Assembly today grants symbolic amnesty – and more – to the murderers of the six million European Jews.

What we have here is a lie. The lie is that Zionism is a form of racism. The overwhelmingly clear truth is that it is not...In logic, the State of Israel could be, or could become, many things...but it could not be and could not become racism unless it ceased to be Zionist.”

THE DANGERS OF DURBAN

ZIINESS

ANTI-JEWISH RACISM INFECTED THE UN'S CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

RESOLUTION 3379 REPEALED

In 1991, 85 nations cosponsored and 111 nations (out of 166) supported a resolution to repeal “Zionism is racism”—including the then-former Soviet Union and states of the Soviet bloc. The Deputy U.S. Secretary of State said Res. 3379 “demonstrated like nothing else before or since, to what extent the Cold War had distorted the UN’s vision of reality, marginalized its political utility and separated it from its original moral purpose.”

Those who continue espousing that “Zionism is racism” are in league with some of the world’s worst human rights violators: the Communist countries that voted against repeal—Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—and those that voted to equate Zionism to racism in both 1975 and 1991: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Algeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran and Iraq.

DURBAN I

In 2001, the UN held the “World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance” (WCAR/“Durban I”) in Durban, South Africa. The U.S. initially intended to participate, but withdrew before the conference institutionalized the phrase “Zionism is racism” and platformed virulent antisemitism and Holocaust denial and revisionism. The Protocols—the noxious Jew-hating text that inspired the Holocaust—were widely circulated. Pamphlets were distributed with caricatures of hook-nosed, cash-carrying, bloody-fang-adorned Jews depicted as Nazis stabbing Palestinian children, with missiles bulging from their eyes. Jewish delegates, including students, were intimidated and threatened with chants of “You don’t belong to the human race!” and “Hitler was right!”

DURBAN II

In 2009, the UN hosted the “Durban Review Conference” (“Durban II”) in Geneva, ostensibly to review implementation of the action plan from Durban I. It was boycotted by 10 countries including the U.S., Australia, Canada, and Germany, **known to be a platform to promote antisemitism, ignore homophobia, advance “blasphemy laws” protecting authoritarian regimes, and target the West without confronting gross human rights abuses in the developing world.** Then-Iranian President Ahmedinejad, the world’s most notorious Holocaust denier, used the platform to advance genocidal ambitions toward the Jewish state. Diplomats from every EU country walked out during his speech, while delegates from remaining states raucously applauded. South Africa’s U.N. ambassador demanded participants stop referring to the meeting as “Durban II” because “it is maligning my country.”

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 3379 (1975)

Today, September 22, 2021, the UN General Assembly is holding “Durban IV” in New York: yet another attempt to implement the action plan and ostensible anti-racism principles of Durban I. **Given the continued, rampant, overt antisemitism and obsession with Israel at the UN, at least 31 countries are boycotting the event, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, the U.K., Germany, France, and many others.**

Senator Moynahan, in his 1975 speech, was prescient when he said, “the terrible lie that has been told here today will have terrible consequences . . . serious, grave and perhaps irreparable harm will be done to the cause of human rights itself . . . **the damage we now do to the idea of human rights and the language of human rights could well be irreversible.**” **The perversity of the “Zionism is racism” resolution has divided and destroyed countless global attempts at peacemaking and protecting marginalized peoples on every continent,** and undermined the credibility of the UN and human rights community. Antisemitism is a toxic, destructive force that harms us all—Jewish or not.

THE DANGERS OF DURBAN

ZIINESS

ANTI-JEWISH RACISM INFECTED THE UN'S CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM

PROF. COTLER ON DURBAN'S HEINOUS IMPACT

Internationally-lauded human rights attorney and global justice icon Irwin Cotler, who was present at Durban, describes the stain of Durban on humanity, from 2001 to the present: "The indictment of Israel as an apartheid state was born in Durban. It was triggered in Durban. Durban became the tipping point for the demonological antisemitism that we see today, where Israel is blamed for all the evils of the world, that Israel and the Jewish people are the enemy of good, the embodiment of all those evils. . . I spoke to a colleague and she said to me **9/11 was now the Kristallnacht of terror and Durban was the 'Mein Kampf.'** Those of us who were at Durban would have understood that statement because it was the blueprint, the tipping point, the trigger for the old-new global antisemitism that we're now experiencing."

ZIINESS

Unabashedly Progressive, Unapologetically Zionist.



WHAT IS THE BDS (BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS) MOVEMENT?

- The BDS Movement originally called for targeted economic discrimination against Israeli businesses and businesses doing business in Israel or with Israelis. **While its founders at one point claimed that it was about “criticism of Israeli policy” and its goal was to end Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, its founders are now clear the aim of BDS is to isolate, delegitimize and ultimately destroy the Jewish state entirely.**
- Realizing that the economic goals of BDS were unlikely to seriously harm the state of Israel, BDS expanded its goals to call for an “academic and cultural boycott” which targets Israeli and Zionist professors, academics, artists, musicians and wages campaigns calling them, as individuals, human rights abusers.
- BDS also calls for adoption of a policy called “anti-normalization,” which requires the disruption and silencing of any viewpoint relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that recognizes the actual existence of the state of Israel, arguing that open dialogue “normalizes” Israel’s existence. “Anti-normalization” is what plays out on American college campuses, and ultimately, it is not Israelis, but American Jews, who are the targets. The application of “anti-normalization” serves to bar Israelis, the vast majority of Jews, and anyone else who acknowledges Israel’s actual existence from publicly expressing themselves on any issue, including domestic progressive issues like women’s reproductive freedom, racial justice and LGBTQ equality. BDS activists shame American Jews for their Zionist identities (meaning they inherently believe in the movement for Jewish collective liberation) and for their support of Israel’s existence, which unfortunately has led many American Jews to remove themselves from the progressive movement entirely—at the expense of our progressive Jewish ideals.
- **BDS ultimately targets and harms American Jews far more than it hurts Israel’s economy.**



ZIONESS



WHY IS BDS ANTISEMITIC?

- **Targeting or discriminating against a person or company because of its ethnicity or national origin is racist, and is illegal under New York's Human Rights Law.** We appropriately call it racist when Chinese Americans are marginalized and attacked because of the wrongdoing of the Chinese government vis-a-vis Covid, and we would vociferously fight against a proposed boycott of a local Chinese restaurant to protest the Chinese government's treatment of the Uyghurs. No American of conscience would refuse to purchase from an African American retailer to declare their condemnation of the government of Sudan. By the same token, it is fundamentally anti-Jewish to hold Jewish Americans — even Israeli Americans — accountable for the wrongdoing, real or perceived, of a foreign government.
- BDS is not the first iteration of an antisemitic attempt to economically starve Jewish businesses to harm Jewish people:
 - In 1933, less than 3 months after coming to power in Germany, Nazi leadership implemented a boycott of Jewish businesses, claiming that the Jews were spreading "atrocious stories" to damage Germany's reputation to the world. Nazi Storm Troopers stood in front of Jewish-owned stores holding signs and shouting slogans such as "Don't Buy from Jews" and "The Jews Are Our Misfortune." This was the beginning of the campaign against Jews that ended with the Holocaust.
 - In 1945, the Arab League conceived of and implemented the Arab League Boycott — 3 years prior to Israel's founding in 1948 — in an attempt to financially undermine Jewish state-building and deter Jewish immigration during the British Mandate. While BDS activists often claim they are fighting against Israeli occupation which began after the 1967 "Six-Day War," in reality, these boycotts began 3 years before Israel was even recognized as a member of the international community.
 - The modern BDS movement is a vengeful derivative of the Arab League boycott, except that BDS claims to be grassroots while the Arab League Boycott is implemented by sovereign governments. Regardless, the two campaigns are synonymous in their motives and goals: they incite economic warfare against a principal U.S. ally, Israel, home to more than half of the Jewish people in the entire world, in an attempt to destroy the world's only Jewish state.
- **While it cannot be said that every BDS advocate feels hatred for Jews, the movement is inherently and undeniably antisemitic in that its goal is to return the Jewish people to a state of total systemic powerlessness (which has led to unimaginable bloodshed throughout history).** BDS is not pro-Palestinian, it is only anti-Israel. Liberation for both Jews and Palestinians is not, and simply cannot be, a zero-sum game, yet BDS demands adherence to a dehumanizing binary.



ZIONESS



IS BDS REALLY PRO-PALESTINIAN?

- **BDS groups are not engaged in humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, nor are they invested in the future of a Palestinian economy, infrastructure, or functioning representative government.** They demonize Israel and anyone who recognizes its legitimate existence, but they do not do anything to affirmatively aid the Palestinians, who are indeed oppressed. Real efforts to effectively support and uplift the Palestinian people are necessary, but BDS does not even claim to be such an effort.
- While largely unsuccessful from an economic standpoint, on rare occasions, BDS efforts have led to the relocation of Israeli companies operating in the West Bank that employed Palestinians and paid them better wages than the Palestinian economy could sustain. For example, when the Israeli company SodaStream, which was operating in the West Bank, faced an international boycott campaign, it closed its West Bank operations and moved to the Negev Desert within Israel proper. Because of security checkpoints and the challenges of receiving Israeli work permits, 500 Palestinian SodaStream employees lost their jobs, while BDS activists celebrated.
- According to BDS, it is impossible to hold the view that **both** the Jewish and Palestinian people are entitled to liberation and sovereignty, and one must pick a side. This is wrong. **Supporting the collective liberation of the Jewish people in the land of Israel is not mutually exclusive with supporting Palestinian liberation in a state alongside it. In fact, this was the offer of the international community in the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, which would have created two independent states. While the Jews accepted this resolution, Palestinian leadership did not.** 72 years later, the BDS Movement continues to deny that the Jewish people have any claim whatsoever to a state in the region, and this refusal to accept the reality of Israel's existence harms the millions of Palestinians who want to live peaceful, prosperous lives, not live in perpetual war.
- Given recent developments in the Middle East, with Israel joining warm peace treaties with several Arab and Muslim nations including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco, it has become exceedingly clear that demonizing Jews and Israel, including through “anti-normalization,” is not effective in the pursuit of peace or coexistence.
- Coexistence is the only hope for the human dignity, self-determination and political independence of both peoples, which requires supporting the liberation of both Jews and Palestinians — and rejecting BDS.



DOES ANTI-BDS LEGISLATION VIOLATE FREE SPEECH?

- No politician or American of conscience should support the criminalization of speech or advocacy, which is quintessentially protected under the First Amendment and Article I Section 8 of the New York Constitution. **Despite often disingenuous messaging, opposing BDS is not “criminalizing speech or advocacy.”** Elected leaders have every right to exercise their own First Amendment-protected speech and declare their opposition to BDS, or any other idea or agenda they find offensive.
- **While advocacy, including independent consumer purchasing decisions, is protected speech, commercial discrimination is conduct which can and often is regulated.** Just as public officials can choose not to invest public funds in gun manufacturing or tobacco production, they can choose not to invest in funds that single out and discriminate against the Jewish state, by engaging in a commercial boycott (which is conduct, not speech).
- The difference between speech/advocacy and conduct is straightforward: The CEO of a Fortune 500 company can go on CNBC and declare proudly that she encourages all the viewers to make personal consumer decisions not to buy Israeli goods. **She cannot then walk into her boardroom and commit to a corporate policy that discriminates against Israeli or Jewish businesses, based on the national origin, ethnicity, or religion of the company’s leadership.**
- State anti-BDS laws are constitutional because—and only to the extent that—they apply exclusively to conduct, not speech. Most pieces of anti-BDS legislation adopted by states around the country are perfectly constitutional, as they prohibit only discriminatory commercial conduct and not individual consumer decision-making or advocacy.
- Unfortunately, **Governor Cuomo’s Anti-BDS Executive Order is plainly unconstitutional** because it says “BDS activities targeting Israel’ means to engage in any activity, **or promote others to engage in any activity**, that is intended to penalize, inflict economic harm on, or otherwise limit commercial relations with Israel...”
 - Regardless of the intent in signing or implementing the EO, using the word “promotion” is a straightforward facial violation of the First Amendment. The EO could chill free speech by making individuals or corporations afraid that if they advocated for or promoted BDS, they would be ineligible for state investments.
 - The constitutional way to accomplish the EO’s laudable goal is to make clear that advocacy will never be punishable under the EO and that even individuals or corporations clearly advocating for BDS will never be blacklisted unless they also engage in prohibited commercial conduct.



OPPOSING BDS AND WORKING WITH ISRAEL AND ISRAELI COMPANIES IS GOOD FOR NYC

- The BDS Movement has had almost zero impact in harming Israel's economy. NY — Israel trade and collaboration is important and hugely benefits our city, our state, and our country. BDS does, however, have an effect on Jewish people, which is why New York's Jewish community overwhelmingly opposes it as anti-Jewish and discriminatory. This is reason alone to oppose it.
- According to an independent study conducted by Stax Inc., and reported in the [New York - Israel Economic Impact Report](#), Israeli-founded businesses contribute significantly to the New York State economy and have helped New York establish itself as a global innovation leader. The study finds that Israeli enterprises generate substantial revenue, draw capital investment, and create jobs throughout the state. Specifically, the Impact Report reveals that:
 - **Israeli-founded companies accounted for more than 20% of the total capital raised in New York State in 2016**
 - **5 Israeli-founded startups valued at \$1 billion and above are based in NYC (Compass, Lemonade, Payoneer, Taboola, and WeWork)**
 - **In 2018, Israeli-founded companies generated \$18.6 billion in the New York local economy**
 - **24,850 New York jobs were created by Israeli businesses directly, plus 27,502 indirect jobs based on the additional support required to service the Israeli companies**
 - **506 Israeli-founded businesses call New York home**
- In 2012, a joint academic venture was launched between Cornell and Technion—Israel Institute of Technology on Roosevelt Island in Manhattan. Cornell Tech is a technology, business, law, and design campus which brings national and international thought leaders from academia, business, government, science, medicine and technology to explore and create groundbreaking solutions to the most vexing challenges facing New York City and the world. The work happening at Cornell Tech is astonishing. ([Read More.](#))
- Five Israeli energy companies are partnering with New York state to support the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the most aggressive climate program in the nation, which is driving the state to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050. ([Read more.](#))
- The administration and several major New York health care institutions have signed a series of agreements with Israeli entities in the UAV/drones, transportation, energy, cybersecurity, financial technology and health care industries. ([Read more.](#))



OPPOSING BDS IS A BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS, INCLUDING AMONG MANY PROGRESSIVE LEADERS

- By working to delegitimize Israel and suggest that, because of the wrongdoing (real or perceived) of its government, the state should cease to exist, the BDS movement and its supporters regularly espouse the dismantling of the world's only Jewish state. This is why, after "Squad" member **Rep. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts voted to support an anti-BDS resolution in Congress, she tweeted, "What I heard resounding in [my] community was that voting yes on this resolution affirmed to my constituents raised in the Jewish faith Israel's right to exist, a view I share as a supporter of a two state solution."**
- A central tenet of the BDS movement is its commitment to "anti-normalization": a refusal to engage with individuals who recognize the actual existence of the Jewish state of Israel—so, about 95%. **This is why rising progressive star, Rep. Ritchie Torres, the first openly gay Afro-Latino to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, tweeted about those who "decline[] to affirm that the state of Israel should exist: 'Insane' is the word that comes to mind."** Anti-normalization requires people to either ignore, or verbally attack those who recognize Israel, even if they are highly critical of the Israeli government. This refusal to engage with Jews on any issue is patently antisemitic, which is why Rep. Torres calls BDS "the definition of discrimination."
- **Reverend Raphael Warnock, national progressive leader, pastor of the iconic Ebenezer Baptist Church, and first Black Senator from the state of Georgia, recently wrote that he "firmly oppose[s] the global BDS movement, its anti-Semitic overtones and its refusal to acknowledge Israel's right to exist."** He declared that the Black and Jewish communities are united because of "our respective histories of oppression and our shared perspective against bigotry, racism and xenophobia," and quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in saying that "Israel's right to exist as a state in security is incontestable."
- **New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio says supporting Israel "is a matter of being consistent with progressive values" and "an understanding that we must always learn the painful lessons of history and do something about it."** He rightfully declared that the BDS movement "seeks to undermine the economy of the State of Israel and makes it harder for Israel to exist - therefore, renouncing the very notion that the Jewish people need a homeland in a still dangerous and unsettled world ... We in the United States, or in any nation, you can disagree with a particular government's policy at that moment in time, but that doesn't mean that you don't believe in that nation, or its right to exist, or its founding ideals."
- **U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Caucus Chair Hakeem Jeffries did not mince his words when describing the caucus's fervent opposition to BDS:** "As it relates to BDS, we spoke pretty clearly with a resolution that both condemned the BDS movement and articulated our strong support for a robust two-state solution where Israel and the Palestinians can live side by side in peace and prosperity. We passed that resolution with only 17 members of the House voting against it...that's pretty much an overwhelming repudiation of the BDS movement."



ZIONESS

UNABASHEDLY PROGRESSIVE,
UNAPOLOGETICALLY ZIONIST.



WHEN YOU SHOW UP AS ALLIES: A SIMPLE GUIDE FOR ZIONESS ACTIVISTS

This is a simple guide for showing up fully and authentically for communities and issues that matter, while building connection through allyship and activism.

WHAT IS ZIONESS?

You say:

We are a coalition of Jewish activists and allies who stand against all forms of oppression. We show up to fight for justice in America, without abandoning our identities as Zionists, which means we support the right for Jewish national self-determination in our indigenous/ancestral homeland.

ARE YOU A ZIONIST?

You say:

When you ask a Jewish person that question, the answer is almost always yes. For us, Zionism is a liberation movement for a long-enduring persecuted minority — the Jewish people. I believe in liberation for all, including my community.

WHAT ABOUT THE PALESTINIANS?

You say:

Zionism is the movement for Jewish liberation. It is not about any other peoples. However, we believe in liberation for all, which is why Zioness supports a two-state solution to ensure dignity and self-determination for Palestinians.

IF THEY CRITICIZE ISRAEL AND/OR ZIONISM AND/OR ZIONISTS:

You say:

I'd happy to talk about this in depth over coffee. However, we're here today as allies for **[issue]** because **[your personal motivation]**. Like you, we are showing up with our full selves. I'd love to learn what brought you here today?

HOW CAN YOU BE A ZIONIST AND A PROGRESSIVE?

You say:

Zionism is, by definition, a progressive movement of liberation. I believe in a future where free peoples can self govern, without oppressive structures fueled by racism, classism, and other forms of bias. As a Jew I am dedicated to Jewish liberation. As a progressive, I am dedicated to liberation for all.

ZIONISTS AREN'T WELCOME HERE!

You say:

Zionism is about Jewish liberation after millenia of oppression. More than 90% of Jews believe in sovereignty and self-determination, so when you say Zionists aren't welcome, what we hear is that Jews aren't welcome. I'm sure that's not your intention, though. We're here as allies to support **[issue]** because **[your personal motivation]**. I'd love to learn what brought you here today? **Note: while showing up as a group will always help, if you feel unsafe, don't stay. Seek to de-escalate and reinforce that we're here as allies.**

WHY ARE YOU BRINGING THE CONFLICT INTO THIS SPACE?

You Say:

The vast majority of American Jews support Jewish self-determination. Unfortunately, some have decided that disqualifies us as progressives. Rather than let Jews get pushed out of these spaces, Zioness gives Jews a community where we can show up as allies in the fight for a more just, more free, more equal America.