

NCJW Antisemitism Position Statement

Definition:

Antisemitism is the form of oppression that is hostile toward Jewish people. It is a systemic oppression that takes many forms, such as, stereotypes and myths about Jews, false conspiracy theories, holocaust denial, religious intolerance, overt discrimination, physical violence, destruction of Jewish communal spaces and monuments, blaming societal problems on the Jewish people, and holding individual Jewish people accountable for governmental affairs, domestic or foreign.

NCJW affirms that:

- We are a multi-racial, multi-ethnic Jewish community, made up of individuals who have a range of relationships to power, privilege, and oppression. We strive to understand antisemitism in a broader analysis of structural power and white supremacy.
- The ways in which antisemitism manifests and functions today originated in medieval Christian Europe; then, as now, antisemitism in the United States and Europe often functions to uphold existing power dynamics by diverting blame for disease, economic hardship, and other societal problems away from those in positions of power and instead place it onto the Jewish people.
- The Talmud teaches us that we are all are responsible for one another (Talmud Shavuot 39a). Therefore, we have a responsibility to speak up when we witness anti-Semitism by Jews or non-Jews, and to work on the ways in which we have, individually and communally, internalized antisemitic tropes and beliefs.
- Antisemitism must be eradicated in all its forms, be it from the left, right or center, yet we understand the extreme urgency and threat of antisemitism coming from right-wing white nationalist movements in this moment. While we take seriously antisemitism from all political orientations, antisemitism from the far right in the United States causes more bodily harm and serious damage than other forms in the present moment.
- There is room for challenging conversation and debate around Israel; we hold true that criticism of Israel and anti-Zionism are not inherently antisemitic. We also acknowledge that criticism of Israel is sometimes weaponized as a cover for antisemitic beliefs and actions.

- We recognize that Jewish people are often held to different standards than their non-Jewish counterparts with regards to their relationships to and opinions on Israel, particularly in spaces that do not involve work on Israel. Holding Jews to political standards not otherwise required for non-Jewish people in the same space is deeply misinformed and damaging. We seek to build relationships, coalitions, and communities where Jewish people can fully participate as their authentic selves without fear of backlash due to real or perceived relationships to Israel. We also affirm the importance of building coalitions across lines of difference and know that asking that non-Jewish partners, or even Jewish partners, have the same relationships to Israel than we do can be counterproductive.
- Judaism believes that the commandment to love one's neighbor includes holding people accountable as a necessary part of relationships of love, care, and connection. We endeavor to try to remain in relationship with coalition partners who are still learning and growing in their understanding of antisemitism, and commit to supporting their growth and learning where we are able and when it is appropriate. Like all obstacles that come with being in relationship with other people, situations like this are often messy and unclear. We look to each other for support in determining the best course of action in any given situation.
- Fighting antisemitism is both a critical part of Jewish liberation and of the larger work of creating a world in which all people are free from oppression and hate. The Torah's assertion that all people are created in the divine image (Genesis 1:27) obligates us to work towards a world that reflects this essential truth.

We remain committed to holding all of these truths together, in all of their complexity.