

What You Can Do About Antisemitism

1. Recognize, call out and organize against antisemitism on the right. Antisemitism is central to far right movements. People on the far right see Jews as the ones “pulling the strings” or “behind the scenes.” Jews are seen as responsible for “the great replacement” of whites by people of color. To defeat the right, antisemitism must be defeated as well.

2. Study right-wing antisemitism as well as its relation to racism. Some excellent resources include: [“Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism,” by Eric Ward](#), [“Antisemitism in Our Midst: Past and Present,” University of California, Berkeley \(orientation film\)](#)

3. Call out and stop antisemitism on the left. At Occupy in NYC, a sign said: “Google Jewish Bankers.” At Reno Occupy, one participant told a Jews-in-the-ovens joke. These are two of many examples of recent left antisemitism.

4. Study left antisemitism. In case you think left antisemitism does not exist and is a fiction created by conservative critics, listen to this recording of important leftists—such as Shane Burley, a Portland antifascist activist and theorist—discussing and debating different aspects of antisemitism on the left: [“Leftists on Left-Wing Antisemitism,” YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.](#)

5. Don’t participate in good Jew-bad Jew thinking. For many liberals, Jews are great because they are liberals! But, if they wear ‘funny’ clothes, ask to reschedule meetings for their holidays (or for time off for them), or pray in an ancient language, they are called primitive, pushy, superstitious, clannish or much worse. Jews, like all people, come in different varieties: religious and secular, liberal and conservative, Israel-centered and diaspora-centered, Reform and Orthodox. For too much of our history, we have been told that we are OK as long as we are, well, just like you.

6. Don’t assume Jews are white. Jews are varied. Some are white, some brown, some black. They come from the US, Europe, Africa, Latin America and more. Around 17% of Jews in the US are non-white, the majority of Jews in Israel are what in the US would be called people of color and the majority of Jews in the country with the third largest Jewish population, France, are from North Africa. In addition, while US liberals tend to think of Jews as white, white supremacists often think of Jews as non-white. As a result, even white Jews are not white in exactly the same way as other white people.

7. Be cognizant of how vulnerable Jews feel right now. Every day, we hear people on the far right shouting against Soros and Zuckerberg, we see references to “Jewish overlords” and “Jewish bankers” and we hear about violent attacks on Jews both in the US and around the world. Add to that the fact that most of us have relatives who were murdered by Nazis in Europe or were expelled from their countries in North Africa in mid-20th century and . . . we are definitely feeling vulnerable. We sometimes wonder why you are not more concerned for us—especially since we have been so active in liberal and left movements. If we are going to defeat the growing far right in the US, we must all pull together.

(Adapted by Deborah Achtenberg from “Making Our Movements Stronger by Resisting Antisemitism” by Jonah S. Boyarin & Dania Ajendra and from other sources with additions of her own, March 2022)