

# Antisemitism at ASU? Being Jewish on Campus



# Jewish Population

- The Jewish people make up 0.2% of the world population
  - 6.9 billion people total in the world\*
  - 14.5 million Jews world wide

\*These figures based on the 2018 World Jewish Population study published in the 2018 American Jewish Yearbook.

# What is Antisemitism?

“The belief or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews.”

–  
<https://www.adl.org/anti-semitism>

**ANTISEMITISM EXPLAINED**

#phillyremembers



- Exaggerated features referencing antisemitic stereotypes include: dark, curly hair; enlarged, hooked nose; snarling facial expression.
- The British flag symbolizes Jews' perceived loyalty to Great Britain and disloyalty to Germany.
- The hammer and sickle and the dollar sign denote contradictory stereotypes, presenting Jews as both Communist traitors and greedy capitalists.

# What is Antisemitism?

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

–International Holocaust  
Remembrance Alliance, 2016



*image from Capital riots, January 6, 2021*

# How antisemitism relates to other forms of hate & how is it different

Antisemitism is a particular manifestation of a broader phenomenon:

## **XENOPHOBIA**

*Intense or irrational hatred or fear of the other, of strangers or the unfamiliar*

# How antisemitism relates to other forms of hate & how is it different

- Antisemitism often includes the belief that Jews have extraordinary power with which they conspire to harm or control those outside the Jewish community. It is frequently a motivation for scapegoating Jews as the cause of a variety of societal problems.
- ***“Because modern antisemitic ideology traffics in fantasies of invisible power, it thrives precisely when its target would seem to be least vulnerable.” — Eric Ward, Senior Fellow, Race Forward & a national expert on the relationship between hate violence and preserving democratic institutions, governance, and inclusive societies***

# Diversity of Today's Jewish College Students



**70%**  
of non-Orthodox Jewish students have only **one Jewish parent**  
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY REPORT OF CHILDREN FROM INTERFAITH MARRIAGE



**20%** identify as a **Jew of Color**  
BECHOL LASHON & JEWISH POPULATION STUDY

**20%** identify as having a **disability**  
RUDERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

**1/3** Jews born after 1980 identify as **Jews of no religion**  
PEW SURVEY OF US JEWS

# Jewish students express their identity through connection to...

Ritual

Culture

Belief

Israel

Social  
Justice

Family  
Traditions

People/  
Community

- Antisemitic hate crimes and bias incidents on college campuses more than tripled from 2012 through 2019 (ADL)
- 180 antisemitic incidents in 2019–20 on Hillel’s North American campuses, an all-time high
  - 101 involved a swastika/defacement
  - 70 involved hate speech
  - 47 connected to anti-Israel activity

# Student Experiences of Antisemitism

“ After returning \$5 to a classmate that I had borrowed the day before, he told me he was surprised I paid him back. He said he thought Jews didn't repay people after borrowing money.”

“ In a meeting for my sorority, one member minimized the presence of antisemitism at the University and in the county because 'Jewish people are white.' No one disagreed with her. ”

“ I was in office hours with a professor when the subject of antisemitism came up. He told me antisemitism was not real because all oppression has a class component and since 'Jews are all rich and powerful' they can only be the oppressors. This conversation took place less than two weeks after the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting, and he said even that was not valid evidence of antisemitism. I reported this to the school and nothing was ever done about it.”

“ Someone left a note on my door that said, 'Jews created COVID-19 to subvert the white race.' This note was covered with stickers of various Jewish caricatures. A bag of rat poison was taped to the bag.”

“ During a tutorial section for a History of International Relations class, a student began openly denying the scope and mechanisms of the Holocaust. Everyone knew I was Jewish. I had non-Jewish friends in this class. The TA said nothing. Nobody said anything. Distraught and angry, I stormed out of the room and had a full blown panic attack. As the descendant of Holocaust survivors, I was stunned.”



**\* It is not antisemitic to criticize the policies, practices, or members of the Israeli government.**

(Unless that criticism relies on antisemitic tropes - such as global control, power, money, sneakiness, etc.)

# Anti-Zionism

- Anti-Zionism opposes the Jewish movement for self-determination and the right of the Jewish people to a homeland in the State of Israel.
- It exists both inside and outside the Jewish community
- It *may* be motivated by or result in antisemitism
- It *may* include:
  - Threats to destroy the State of Israel or otherwise eliminate its Jewish character
  - Unfounded and inaccurate characterization of Israel's power in the world
  - Language or actions that hold Israel to a different standard than other countries

# How Anti-Zionism Can Lead to Exclusion of Jewish Students

- Pushing Jews out of student government
- Excluding progressive Jews from social justice spaces

A member of the Student Assembly who had just voted yes on the BDS resolution said in her defense that there were “way worse genocides than the Holocaust.”

A student with an “I Stand With Israel” sticker on her laptop found that “someone had put a piece of paper with ‘burn dirty Jew’ written on it and a swastika” in her backpack.

A Jewish member of student government was subjected to a formal disciplinary process for refusing to recuse himself from involvement in a referendum on training campus police in Israel.

# What does this look like at ASU

- Flyers
- Calls for boycotts
- Intimidation at event



August 2020



November 2019

## University statement, August 2020:

"This was brought to the university's attention Sunday morning. The flyers were removed immediately after the university was notified. ASU Police was made aware of it, and they helped remove them. Ensuring the safety and security of our students is a top priority, and the university undertakes extensive efforts to ensure student safety is not compromised. ASU is a community that values diversity, tolerance, respect and inclusion. We support open debate and honest disagreements and we reject and will not accept antisemitism or hateful rhetoric of any kind, ASU is investigating this incident."

# Hillel's role - Students

- Creating a culture of pluralism and inclusion
- Build strong, educated Jewish leaders
- Coaching and teaching students such that they feel comfortable engaging in difficult conversations



# Hillel's role - University

- Educate, advocate for Jewish students' needs
- Seek to support and understand minority students needs on campus
- Support students navigating reporting processes
- Encourage students' involvement in campus
- Refer students to relevant resources



## Sources

- IHRA Website: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>
- ADL - <https://www.adl.org/anti-semitism>
- <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/tempe-breaking/2020/08/31/posters-hitler-anti-semitic-comments-found-asu-tempe-campus/3447676001/>
- <https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/authorities-investigating-posters-with-swastikas-found-on-asu-campus-in-tempe>
- <https://www.stopantisemitism.org/antisemitic-incidents-62/auschwitz-camp-capitol-hill-rioter-identified-as-robert-packer>
- <https://www.philaholocaustmemorial.org/antisemitism-explained/>

## Resources

- <https://www.hillelasu.org/>
- <https://hillel.org/>
- <https://newsroom.asu.edu/press/standing-anti-semitism>
- Hillel International Racial Justice and Equity Guide - <https://hillel.org/get-involved/hillels-racial-justice-and-equity-guide>