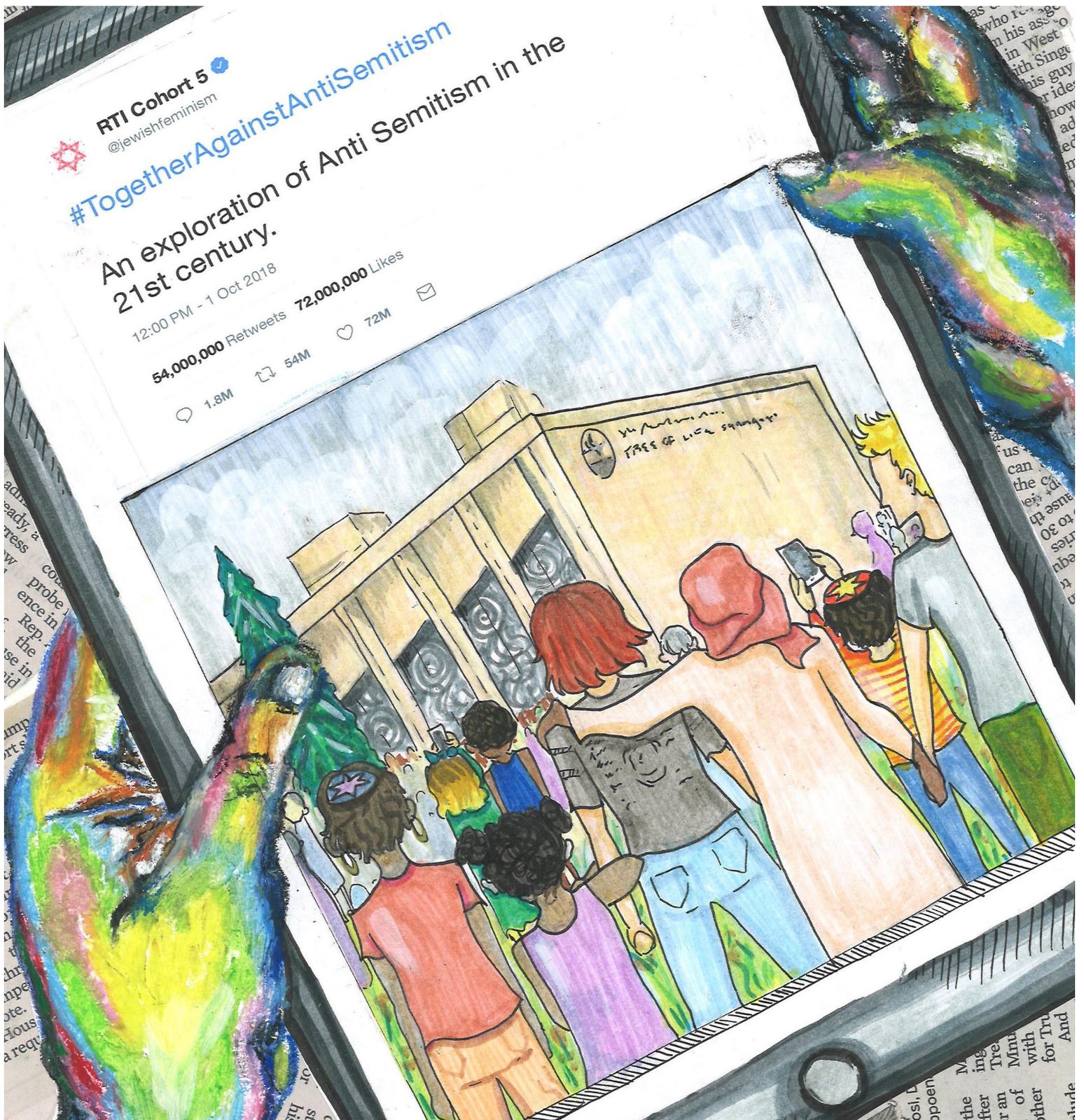


A Research Training Internship (RTI) Report | June 2019

Jewish United Fund  TOGETHER for GOOD

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge those who played an important role in supporting our research this year. First, we would like to thank Dr. Beth Catlett, Dr. Amira Proweller, and the DePaul University Library staff for being resources during our research. Thanks to Beckee Birger and Jesse Allen for all the work you put in all year to make everything happen.

We would like to thank all the RTI cohorts who paved the way and served as an inspiration for us, and we want to thank our families for driving us and supporting us through the many hours spent working on this project.

We want to acknowledge all Jews who have ever felt alone and all women who have ever felt powerless: we are here because of you.

Finally, we want to thank DePaul University, the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, all of our funders (listed below). Without your support and generosity, this work would not have been possible.



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Jewish holidays and rituals are critical pieces of Jewish life. They help us find meaning in joy and purpose in sadness.

Each research subgroup chose a Jewish ritual to connect our research to create ways for our readers to connect their everyday lives to antisemitism.

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Contributors

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Research Training Internship (RTI)

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RTI Cohort 5 Positionalities

As feminist researchers, we believe that our positions in the world (such as race, class, and gender) add important context and depth to our work. Instead of attempting to avoid all bias, we want to acknowledge that bias exists as part of life. By acknowledging our positionalities, we can help the reader situate the subjectivities and power structures that impact us as researchers and impact our research on antisemitism.

Alana Newberger
(she/her)

Lane Tech High School
11th grade

I am an ethnically Jewish, straight, white, cis girl. I feel this research is important to me because I can feel the rising antisemitism in my life and think that the most effective way to create change is to fully analyze the situation and evaluate what changes would be the most advantageous. More specifically, I feel that conducting research on the role of allyship was immensely impactful.



Ellie Goldsmith
(she/her)

Highland Park High School
10th grade

I am a conservative Jew, identify as white, straight, and cisgendered. I applied for RTI because of the frustration I feel regarding the lack of understanding of what feminism is. There are a lot of misconceptions, and I personally had a few that have been changed as a result of RTI. Furthermore, antisemitism is a rising problem in the U.S. that gets little to no recognition and this needs fixing. RTI has provided me with a space to combat sexism and antisemitism.



Ellie Ousley
(she/her)

Rochelle Zell Jewish High School
9th grade

I identify as a cisgendered, heterosexual, and an able-bodied Jew. As an African American and Sephardic Jew, I have always felt different from my community. Because of my differences, it is often hard for me to accept my Judaism in fear of being rejected by both communities. RTI has been a safe space where I am able to come to terms with who I am. RTI has taught me that my voice is as valuable as anyone else's. I now realize that thanks to my differences, I am able to share a unique perspective of my Judaism with others.



RTI Cohort 5 Positionalities

Estefani Smith (she/her)

Lincoln Park High School
10th grade

My important identity traits: Female, Jewish, Hispanic, bisexual, Guatemalan, upper middle class, cisgender, able-bodied. This research about antisemitism and working with my group on mental health is so important to me because I have experienced antisemitism throughout my life. Especially as a Jew of Color, I have overheard comments about Jews that I wasn't supposed to hear only because they thought I wasn't Jewish since I don't look "Jewish." I come from two different worlds since I am adopted, and I carry a unique story with me. I have struggled with mental health for a few years but having a support system in RTI and having resources to help me combat my problems has helped me drastically these past few months. Mental health is such a taboo topic that should be talked about more. Just like a person with a broken leg has to go to the hospital, a person struggling with a mental disorder needs help, care, and attention too. I hope people remember to reach out when someone is having a bad day, and keep in mind mental disorders are a real thing even if we can't see them.



Gwen Tucker (she/her)

Evanston Township High School
10th grade

I am a white, cisgender, Ashkenazi Jewish woman. These intersectionalities in my identities help me to better understand social justice and the concept that we can be both privileged and oppressed. By recognizing my privileges, my race, socioeconomic status, and more, I can better understand the power that I hold and my own ability to help others who are oppressed. Being an active member of the Jewish community through my synagogue, programs like RTI, and in other secular spaces has given me a unique perspective, especially on issues like antisemitism. With the rise in antisemitism around the world, I have become more and more aware of the space that my Judaism holds. In my personal life and in the political sphere, I often see issues of antisemitism being pushed to the side and disregarded. It has been so empowering for me to be able to use my voice along with my cohort to create an important conversation about this issue. It is sometimes very scary to be Jewish, but I am so proud of my identity and the perseverance of Jewish people and culture.



Julia Gershberg (she/her)

Walter Payton College Preparatory
9th grade

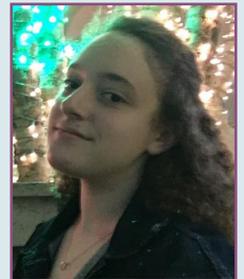
I am a cis, white, straight, upper middle class, first generation American, female. Recognizing my privilege and oppression has been an interesting topic to navigate while both conducting research and in discovering my identity. Antisemitism seemed like a prevalent topic to explore because, especially in recent times, it is widely persistent yet very much unrecognized. With the rise of social media and the ability to spread hate to millions in the matter of seconds, I was interested in not only researching how antisemitism affects teens but how it affects their mental health in particular. I have seen in my own community how antisemitism affects young adults in such sweeping ways.



Mariel Mudrik (she/her)

Glenbrook North High School
10th grade

At Glenbrook North, I am a member of Color Guard and a participant in various clubs such as After-School All-Stars and the School Magazine. I am a Jewish, sixteen-year-old, Caucasian, and cis-gender woman who aspires to connect people of different religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds through art. By going to Camp Nageela for four years and traveling to Israel for the past two summers, I have broadened my love and understanding for my Jewish heritage. As an American citizen and a child of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, I hear my parents speak about the antisemitism they experienced there and notice the same antisemitic patterns visible in modern American society. I truly believe that the most effective way to combat oppression in the 21st century is by diverse groups of people coming together and letting the general public know that they will support each other and not stand by while one of them is hurt.



RTI Cohort 5 Positionalities

Rachel Fadem (she/her)

Whitney Young High School
12th grade

As a cisgendered, white-functioning female, I recognize my privilege. I have used this privilege to learn more about social justice and become an advocate for many causes. Outside of RTI, I advocate for mental health issues and have advocated against racism and antisemitism. I also enjoy writing and music and hope to one day become a journalist. I was fortunate enough to spend last summer in Israel, and that experience strengthened my Jewish identity. This research is important to me because as a proud Jew, I have been constantly discriminated against. I go to a super liberal and diverse school, and I have realized that discrimination against Jews is not something that is important to other people at my school. As a liberal Jew, I have found it hard to find my place within the political and social spectrum. Doing this research has helped me understand my intersectionalities better.



Rebecca Gross (she/her)

The Francis Parker School
10th grade

As a young Jewish female, this work has become increasingly important to me. From Vanessa Wruble getting kicked out by the Women's March, to a fellow Chicago high school girl holding up a cardboard swastika for a picture, to the two synagogue shootings this year, I feel that it is becoming more and more important to bring widespread awareness to the escalating issue of antisemitism.



Sabrina Goldsmith (she/her)

Lane Tech High School
10th grade

I am a white, female, middle class, first generation American. This research is important to me because I strongly see a need for more research and education on antisemitism throughout society. This is a bigger issue than just derogatory slurs or offensive "jokes", both of which I have personally experienced. People need to understand that antisemitism is a real, physical threat to all Jews. We shouldn't have to wait for another synagogue shooting to make people in power understand the impact of this threat.



Sara Grostern (she/her)

Walter Payton College Preparatory
11th grade

I was raised in a Jewish, upper-middle-class family in an urban environment and attended a majority white, privileged Jewish middle school. I am fortunate to experience rich diversity at my public high school. As a white, cisgender female, I understand my privilege and realize that this privilege impacts my everyday life and opportunities. The research we conducted during RTI this year is important to me because antisemitism is so widespread and rampant in society today and clearly needs to be addressed; RTI is an amazing opportunity to do something about this by spreading awareness about such an important problem in the Jewish community. I have a passion for understanding how social justice relates to Jewish identity and culture. I conducted in-depth research about this topic for one of my classes. I hope to continue to investigate how different Jewish issues and social justice issues are impacted by American society today, and RTI has given me the perfect platform to do so.



RTI Cohort 5 Positionalities

Scarlet Zell (she/her)

Walter Payton College Preparatory
11th grade

I identify as female, Jewish, white, cis-gender, heterosexual, upper-middle class and American. I understand that I have privilege and with it comes a responsibility to give others who do not have privilege a voice. This research is important to me because it has a direct effect on my life and the lives of others, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. I think it is important that everyone learns the prevalence of antisemitism in our society, especially now that it is on the rise.



Shaina Grossman (she/her)

Rochelle Zell Jewish High School,
10th grade

I identify as female, Caucasian, and heterosexual. I am an Ashkenazi Jew, and I have attended a Jewish day school or high school for fifteen years. The research we conducted in RTI is important to me because it has meaning, purpose, and instills a new understanding of antisemitism that is not taught in school. Antisemitism is prevalent both in our communities and beyond, and it is not given the platform it deserves. I hope that the research we conducted in RTI will shed needed light on this overlooked topic.



Sydney Kaplan (she/her)

Deerfield High School
11th grade

I am Jewish, female, Caucasian, and straight. This research is so important to me because antisemitism is so persistent in society today and antisemitism needs to be combated. I believe the researching antisemitism in the Chicagoland area is necessary in order to educate others so that they can use that knowledge to take key steps necessary to combat antisemitism. As a Jewish teen girl, doing this research helps me dig deeper into my identity and help the Jewish community I am apart of overcome antisemitism.



“Individuals bearing witness cannot do the work of social movements, but they can break a corrosive and demoralizing silence.”

~ Ellen Willis



Introduction

In the beginning of our year together, none of us knew where our research would lead us. The Research Training Internship, a program hosted by the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago in partnership with the DePaul University and the Beck Research Initiative for Women, Gender, and Community brought us fifteen exceptionally bright teens from the Chicagoland area. Our interns didn't know much about each other, nor did we know much about them, but we had a year to research social justice, feminist research methodology, and explore our Jewish identities.

This was, of course, not an easy year. We had to adjust and alter our planned curriculum various times because current events required us to pay attention and to create space for difficult conversations. In one of our earliest sessions, we paused to observe how racism and misogyny intersect one another in the unfair treatment at the US Open of Olympic athlete, Serena Williams. A few weeks later we found ourselves pausing again as Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified against the man who sexually assaulted her, a man who would ultimately end up on the Supreme Court, and more importantly, what happens when a survivor tells their story. There were joyous moments, too, where we paused to celebrate: in mid November, we printed the names and pictures of the unprecedented number of women elected in the midterm election. It wasn't just current events that got us off track. There was collective praise and sighs of relief as college acceptance letters were mailed out. We rooted for each other as skating and dance competitions and basketball

games took place. We giggled as feminist Jewish stand-up routines were crafted. We agonized over AP exams, the SAT, the ACT, and all the other demands of a busy school year. The more times we got off track, we began to realize just how vital it was to observe the world around us while building meaningful relationships with one another; we learned this was the right track all along.

These observations are what ultimately spearheaded our research. In October, we found ourselves coming together as a cohort in the freezing rain to mourn the brutal murder of eight Pittsburgh Jews in their house of worship and protest the largest antisemitic attack in US history. Again, we had to stop and grapple what it meant when a Minnesota congresswoman tweeted a antisemitic trope in her criticism of AIPAC. We found ourselves questioning whether antisemitism was present in leftist spaces as accusations came forward against the Women's March founders. Our RTIs sensed that modern antisemitism was a problem that not enough people were exploring. The mission of their research was to establish a conversation between people who are directly affected by antisemitism and their communities to foster solidarity through this dialectical exchange.

With the help of Dr. Beth Catlett and Dr. Amira Proweller, our RTIs learned the ins and outs of feminist methodology, as well as how to develop and orchestrate participatory action research. Driven by a desire to heal their communities, the RTIs decided to also explore how past and present antisemitism affects the

mental health of Chicagoland teens. Surveys were created and spread by the hundreds; dozens of interviews conducted; powerful testimonies were collected. Hours were spent at DePaul's Richardson library pouring over colonial historical texts as our RTIs charted the migration of 17th century American Jews. Meanwhile other RTIs explored the university's extensive database, finding the most breakthrough research on how trauma from the Holocaust can disrupt Jewish DNA sequencing. As feminist scholars, our research is not centered on discovering a "universal" truth or establishing hard and fast generalizations about our world, but rather to understand the experiences that are rooted within the margins. These experiences, often gendered and racialized, are powerful centers of empirical knowledge and offer us untold wisdom. It has been a superbly fantastic experience seeing our RTIs tap into these wisdoms and become sources of knowledge creation in their own right.

While we are sad that our year together is coming to a close, we are excited for our RTIs to present their research and disseminate their knowledge to their communities. They have worked incredibly hard and we know that their work will bring change, growth, and space for healing. We are also excited for what is to come for our RTIs; after witnessing all their accomplishments and growth throughout our time together, we know that there is no limit to what they can achieve.

What a year it has been!

Beckee Birger & Jesse Allen

The History of Antisemitism in America

We researched the history of antisemitism in the United States because, in order to understand current events, one must realize that everything repeats itself. Our goal as a cohort was to raise awareness of and combat antisemitism. By presenting you with this information, we hope you will understand the threats Jewish communities are facing and will be better equipped to handle them in an efficient manner. It is important to know where we as Jews started in order to understand how to move forward. By creating a timeline that clearly shows antisemitism is well and alive in America, we demonstrate that antisemitism is not just the Holocaust, it is a cycle of sustained oppression and discrimination.

- **1654**
Sephardic refugees arrive in North America.
- **1655-1666**
Peter Stuyvesant (1592-1672), the Dutch colonial governor of New Amsterdam seizes the Jewish colonists' possessions, auctions them, refuses to issue trade permits to Jewish settlers while legal restrictions are set on Jews throughout the American colonies barring Jews from practicing medicine, law, and art.
- **1759**
Jews are finally allowed to enter the French North American colonies. In New England, Jews are expelled.
- **1790**
Despite the U.S. constitution's separation of church and state, religious tests for holding public offices are established to sanction Jews from holding office.
- **1815-1861**
Two million German-speaking Europeans migrate to the United States, including thousands of Jews.
- **1820**
American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews is founded. This is a Christian movement designed to convert all Jews to Christianity.
- **1842**
Rhode Island finally permits white Jewish men the right to vote, 66 years after the Declaration of Independence.
- **1861**
Appellate Court of New York declares Christianity as "the acknowledged religion of the people."
- **1862**
During the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant expels all Jews from the military district under his control on the grounds that "they're profiting from trading with the Confederacy."
- **1868**
White Jewish men are granted the right to vote in North Carolina, 92 years after the Declaration of Independence.
- **1877**
White Jewish men are granted the right to vote in New Hampshire, 101 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
- **1885**
North Carolina removes the last of the laws restricting Jews in America, 109 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
- **1915**
Leo Frank is lynched in Georgia by a mob that believed he killed Mary Phagan, a young Christian girl. There with no evidence to back it up.
- **1922**
Harvard University limits Jewish students to only 10% of the total student body. Many other U.S. universities and colleges follow this trend.
- **1924**
The Johnson Act, which creates immigration quotas, cuts down on Jewish immigration.
- **1927**
Henry Ford funds, publishes, and distributes "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in the U.S. This text is a fabricated antisemitic tool claiming to describe a Jewish plan for global domination. The Nazis later use the document as propaganda against Jews.
- **1934**
Hank Greenberg, "The Hebrew Hammer", an American professional baseball player who refuses to play on Yom Kippur, is often called "Christ-killer" and is sent death threats. Pitchers are encouraged to throw pork chops at him.

- **1936**
Roman Catholic priest, Father Charles Coughlin, preaches on the radio the Great Depression is the Jews' fault.
- **1938**
Gallup polls reveal: about 50% of Americans have a negative view of Jews, 54% believe persecution is "partly the Jews' own fault", about 60% agree that Jews are "greedy, dishonest, and aggressive," 12% claimed that events like Kristallnacht would be supported in America.
- **1939**
Over 900 Jews fleeing Germany on the ship SS St. Louis are turned away and sent back. More than 250 of them are killed by Nazis while Congress rejects a bill to take in about 20,000 Jewish refugee children from Europe.
- **1941**
Charles A. Lindbergh advocates against American involvement in World War II, blaming the British, the Jews, and the Roosevelt administration for getting America involved.
- **1953**
Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, accused of espionage, are executed even though they claim innocence. American Jews fear an increase in antisemitism because of these events.
- **1973**
Jews for Jesus, a religious organization seeking to steer Jews towards the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, is founded.
- **1977**
Illinois Supreme Court rules that the National Socialist ("Nazi") Party of America have a First Amendment right to demonstrate in Skokie.
- **1986**
The Supreme Court Case of Goldman v. Weinberger denies a Jewish air force officer his right to wear a kippah with his uniform.
- **1991**
Northwestern University prints Bradley Smith's ad titled "THE HOLOCAUST STORY: How Much is False? The Case for Open Debate," claiming the Holocaust never happened.
- **1999**
Five people, including four children, are injured at the Los Angeles Jewish Community Center by a white supremacist gunman.
- **2000**
Joe Lieberman is added to the 2000 Democratic presidential ticket; Lieberman is the first observant Jewish candidate to run on a major party presidential ticket. Almost immediately, there are multiple online attacks against the Jewish community in response.
- **2011**
Supreme Court rules in favor of Westboro Baptist Church (an anti-gay, antisemitic organization) after they picket the funeral of Matthew Snyder, a U.S. Marine killed in the Iraq War.
- **2016**
Congressman Steve King meets in Austria with leaders of the far-right Freedom Party, a group founded and affiliated with former Nazis. Over the course of his congressional career, Rep. King goes on to meet with various far-right leaders from multiple nations. After being re-elected in 2018, Rep. King asks, "white nationalist, white supremacist, Western civilization — when did this language become offensive?" during an interview with the New York Times.
- **2017**
The Anti-Defamation League cites over a thousand incidents of harassment, 163 bomb threats, 950 vandalisms, and 19 assaults happened against Jews. This includes 25 instances of harassment, and 22 acts of vandalism against Jews specifically in Illinois.
- **2017**
The Unite the Right Rally, a group composed of neo-Nazis and Klansmen, descend upon Charlottesville, chanting "Jews Will Not Replace Us." The following day, a woman counter-protesting is killed after a car plows intentionally into a crowd. President Donald Trump responds by stating that there are "very fine people on both sides."
- **2018**
A shooting occurs at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA resulting in 12 deaths and 10 injuries. This is the deadliest antisemitic attack on Jews in U.S. history.
- **2018**
Two days after the attacks in Pittsburgh, Vice President Mike Pence invites Loren Jacobs, a Messianic "rabbi" to offer a prayer for the victims and their families. Jacobs is affiliated with a movement that appropriates Jewish customs and culture to promote Christian evangelism.
- **2019**
In her tweet "It's all about the Benjamins baby," Rep. Ilhan Omar implies that a pro-Israel lobbyist group, AIPAC, is bribing American politicians. Omar later apologizes for her use of an antisemitic trope.
- **2019**
Louis Farrakhan, leader of Nation of Islam, a political and religious movement, claims that "the wicked Jews," want to use him "to break up the women's movement."
- **2019**
A gunman opens fires inside the Chabad of Poway synagogue, in Poway, California. The attack is staged on the last day of Passover. One woman is killed and three other people are injured.

A RITUAL FOR ...

Honoring Jewish heroes through costume on Purim

Purim is a celebration of survival. It is a celebration of a people who, through the courage of Queen Esther, survived a massacre. When we celebrate Purim by dressing up as various heroes from the story, we show how valuable our history can be to us. We use our history as inspiration for the future. What many people don't realize is that Jewish history doesn't end at the last word of the Torah. Jewish history continues through every Jewish person today. We suggest that you bring our research into your lives by choosing to wear Purim costumes representing the many Jews who have stood up for their communities through history.

Below are some examples of Jewish people you may want to dress up as for next year's Purim



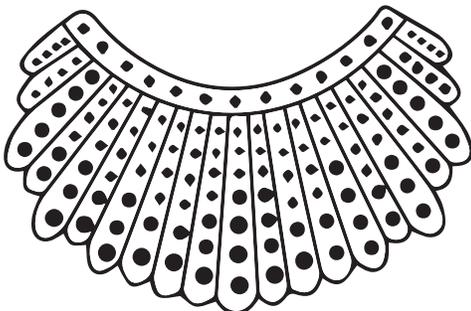
Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a Supreme Court justice who has worked to further women's rights.

How to dress like RBG:

A long, flowy black robe, glasses, earrings, and hair tied in a bun.

RBG has many different collars which she wears over her robe. Each neckpiece means something special to her. Add a necklace or piece of jewelry which is meaningful to you.



Sandy Koufax

Sandy Koufax was a former American Major League Baseball player who did not participate in a 1965 World Series game because it fell on Yom Kippur.

How to dress like Koufax:

A white T-shirt over a blue long sleeved shirt, blue baseball cap, white pants, black belt, and black shoes.

For an added touch, decorate your shirt by writing Dodgers in cursive and a big 32 with a blue marker.

Emma Lazarus

Emma Lazarus was an advocate for refugees, a writer, and a poet whose poem, The New Colossus, is inscribed on a plaque on the base of the Statue of Liberty.

To honor Lazarus, dress as the Statue of Liberty:

A flowy green dress, a green wig, a torch (stick with orange paper attached), green crown and a copy of the Declaration of Independence of the US.

Share Lazarus' poem, The New Colossus, by wearing a copy as a part of your costume.



L'dor V'dor: Antisemitism in Daily Life

L'dor V'dor is Hebrew for “from generation to generation.” L'dor V'dor entails making connections between different generations. This research explores how different generations view and experience antisemitism. In order to investigate the prevalence of antisemitism in America today, we wanted to understand how different generations of Chicagoland Jews view antisemitism. We approached this subject in two parts. We sent out a survey and conducted interviews with Chicagoland Jews of various generations. In the survey, we hoped to find general trends about where antisemitism manifests itself and how it personally impacts the daily life of respondents. Below you'll find results from our survey and interviews.

Survey qualitative responses:

Q: How have you seen antisemitism in your daily life?

Many people that we surveyed have seen antisemitism in their daily lives. However, the forms in which they manifest are different. A large amount of those surveyed have seen antisemitism on social media and through off-handed comments and jokes. One respondent even explained how they had been preached to about being a lesser human, told they will be enslaved, and told the Holocaust was the correct thing to do. Many antisemitic comments clearly arise out of ignorance, however one response exemplifies this: “At the University of Illinois, my dorm neighbors asked to see my (and my roommates’) tail and horns. These college students did not believe they were antisemitic. Their request was serious.” Individuals recounted times that they were both physically and emotionally attacked, showing how antisemitism is clearly a prominent problem in society today.

Q: How have you reacted to antisemitism?

There is no uniform way in which people react to antisemitism. Many people have said that they remain quiet due to feeling uncomfortable standing up for themselves. Even those who have attempted to call people out for saying antisemitic remarks noted that the offenders often continued spreading hateful rhetoric.

Q: How have people around you reacted to antisemitism?

Many respondents said that they have not seen their non-Jewish peers stand up to antisemitism, because they believe others may feel uncomfortable speaking out against it. However, one respondent noted that after the Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, many of their community members and members of other religions came together to show their support for the Jewish community. Although people have allied with the Jewish community during instances of extreme, violent antisemitism, one respondent noted that “many people let... careless remarks pass without notice, but I do not.”

Q: How do you think American society reacts to major acts of antisemitism in comparison to other acts of oppression?

Many of those surveyed believe that society does not regard antisemitism as a hate crime as much as it should. There is a belief that people do not want to recognize Jewish oppression due to the idea that it is not as serious as other forms of oppression. Due to this mindset, many Americans do not act in the face of antisemitism, so there is less of a reaction outside of the Jewish community.

Q: Has the recent rise in antisemitism caused you to change the way you live your life? If so, how?

Antisemitism has not uniformly affected the ways in which respondents live their daily lives. Some respondents mentioned how they have found themselves to be more aware and wanting to further educate themselves on the topic. On the other hand, some respondents did not think that there was a rise in antisemitism, but a rise in showing it, meaning it is more openly acceptable to perform antisemitic acts.

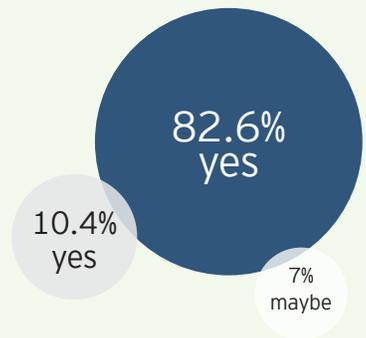
Q: Do you think it is worth distinguishing between right-wing and left-wing antisemitism, or do you think that they're arising from similar things and it is more helpful to think of them together?

Responses to this question were mixed. Some people thought it was all the same. For example, one respondent said, "Antisemitism is antisemitism." Others thought it was important to distinguish. "I think it's better to address them separately because they are arising from different things. Right-wing antisemitism comes from a place of hatred and neo-Nazis, whereas left-wing antisemitism is usually found when people don't like Israel but don't understand where attacking Israel stops and Judaism begins, or when they can't categorize Jews as having a certain amount of privilege."

Q: In what ways is contemporary antisemitism different from earlier forms of antisemitism that you have studied?

Social media has changed the nature of antisemitism, and it is clearly emphasized in the responses. Social media allows antisemitism to be under the radar and seldom discussed. Jews used to be attacked and expelled from places, but antisemitism is infiltrating the Jewish communities themselves. Many surveyed also believe that Israel has become a major scapegoat for antisemites and that much of antisemitism stems from ignorance.

When asked, "Have you seen or experienced any form of antisemitism in your life? (slurs, jokes, discrimination, etc.)?"



86 responses total

Many surveyed believe that Israel has become a major scapegoat for antisemites and that much of antisemitism stems from ignorance.

In our interviews, we looked for more detailed insights about how the Holocaust impacts modern-day antisemitism. The interviews were beneficial in providing more nuanced responses about how different generations view modern-day antisemitism. The interviewees were selected from four age groups: high school students, millennials, 40-70 year-olds, and Holocaust survivors. All interviewees were asked the same questions, but due to the different ages, experiences, and backgrounds, their answers and opinions were varied. Here are their answers, organized by question.

Through this research we realized that Jews all have different experiences with antisemitism. While there are some trends, we decided that by drawing conclusions about each generation, we discredit the experiences of those not interviewed. Instead of drawing a general conclusion, we decided to include shortened responses from the interviews that we conducted in order to highlight individual views on antisemitism, and this will allow readers to get a sense of how different individuals (from different ages, backgrounds, etc.) experience and are affected by antisemitism.

High school students	Millennials	Ages 40-70	Holocaust survivors
Jordyn - Age 16	Hannah* - Age 33	Rebecca* - Age 47	Beatrice - Age 85
Lily - Age 17	Pierce - Age 21	Rachel* - Age 50	Steen - Age unknown
		Jeff - Age 60	Ralph - Age unknown

*Names have been changed as requested by participants

Do you think that antisemitism has changed since the Holocaust? What do you think antisemitism looks like now?

Jordyn: She said that antisemitism comes from a lack of knowledge. Whether it is saying the Holocaust didn't exist or that a horrible conspiracy about Jews is real, hearing something like this in the media does not mean it is true. Media misrepresentations of Israel can lead to antisemitism because it reflect badly on Jews, as Israel is the Jewish homeland. She believes antisemitism has changed since the Holocaust because it is more subtle and not as outright.

Lily: She said that antisemitism is not as bad as it used to be, but it still exists. She notices microaggressions that stereotype Jews and more extreme situations, like a bomb threat at her synagogue. She believes that a large issues lies with white supremacists groups who want to convert Jews and blame them for things, but that's not most of America.

Hannah: She said that she was more worried about the emergence of "quiet antisemitism." Things like Charlottesville and various Alt-Right movements make it easy to identify what that form of antisemitism looks like. Twitter's reluctance to censor hate speech (particularly antisemitism), and the presence of antisemitic tropes in media are more alarming to her. She said that it is scary to think about what the fanatics and extremists are doing, but it's also frightening to think that there is institutional level hatred for the Jewish people that the majority of Americans are okay with.

Pierce: He thinks the stereotypes remain, and the way that it's conveyed is shown through anti-Israel rhetoric. It's easier for people to rationalize antisemitism when it's targeted at a place instead of directly targeted at the people.

Rebecca: She thinks that antisemitism isn't openly denounced currently, so it is allowed to continue. Things like college campuses with the Boycott Divest Sanction (BDS) movements and the measles outbreak in a Hasidic community have spurred antisemitism.

Rachel: She said that today it looks like people being anti-Israel and anti-Jewish. White nationalists show a lot of general antisemitism and a lack of understanding and openness to differences. She thinks the global anti-Israel sentiments are deeply rooted in antisemitism. People tell her that this is the best time to be Jewish because Jews aren't oppressed in the U.S. (Jews can go to college, get jobs, etc.). She is also aware that right before the Holocaust, Jews in Germany had incredibly vibrant and free lives, so she sees parallels there.

Jeff: When he was growing up, he experienced and noticed anti-Jewish sentiment. It used to be more anti-religious. Now there is antisemitism by omission, and the anti-Zionist movement is on the rise. He said that antisemitism has gone and continues to go through many forms. There is the old hooked-nose Jew propaganda which represents the conspiracy that Jews are trying to take over the world. There is a new form of hatred that is directed at Israel.

Beatrice: She said that antisemitism isn't openly apparent. She believes that recently, especially in the age of social media, antisemitism has become more underground and thus more dangerous. During a talk she gave in Indiana, someone said to her, "When did you people [Jews] all decide to write books?" The "us vs. them" narrative has led her to 'feel like a virus' as a Jew. She thinks we see pauses in antisemitism, and then, boom, it comes

It is hard for Steen to understand why people haven't learned from the past. He believes over the last five to ten years, there has been more antisemitism than in the previous ten to twenty years.

back. She said President Trump has caused that boom to escalate in ways she hasn't seen since the Holocaust.

Steen: He believes that today there is more antisemitism in Europe and other countries than before. It is hard for him to understand why people haven't learned from the past. He believes over the last five to ten years, there has been more antisemitism than in the previous ten to twenty years. He said he is partially more aware of this antisemitism now because he speaks to students all the time.

Ralph: He said that the antisemitism we are experiencing now is on an even greater level than what we have seen in prior years. The difference is in its new political roots. He believes once people started to view Jews as a race instead of a religion, that was inherently antisemitic because race is actually based on physical characteristics and has nothing to do with religion. Common physical characteristics do not define Jews because Judaism is a religion. He believes that antisemitism changed immediately after the Holocaust. This is partly due to the fact that antisemites denied the Holocaust ever happened. He thinks white nationalists groups still seem to follow the teachings of Adolf Hitler. Additionally, he believes with the movement of Muslims immigrating to many countries, antisemitism is now growing because he thinks most antisemites are now Muslim whereas they used to be Christian.

Have you noticed antisemitism in politics and in rhetoric from political parties? Is it worth distinguishing between right-wing and left-wing antisemitism?

Jordyn: Jordyn has seen that there is a misconception that anyone who supports Israel supports Jews and anyone who has negative views on what is going on in Israel has negative views on Jews. This correlation occurs in politics. She believes all antisemitism stems from a lack of knowledge and lack of ability to see connections between Jews and other religions, so she thinks all antisemitism stems from the same things. She said that you can work to end antisemitism on the right and the left with similar tactics, but recognizing the differences in the two can help too.

Lily: She said that she hasn't really noticed a trend in political antisemitism.

Hannah: She is deeply bothered by the growing number of right-wing leaders and pundits who use antisemitism to promote thinly-veiled Islamophobia or outright racism. Antisemitism is a very real problem, but let Jewish people tell you what is or isn't antisemitic and what actions we wish to take towards ending it. Erasure and silencing our voices is an antisemitic act in itself.

Pierce: Right-wing anti-Semitism isn't as focused on in the media as left-wing antisemitism, and he thinks that is problematic. Right-wing politicians seem to get a pass because of the way they treat Israel, and left-wing politicians are shown in a very negative antisemitic ways. He doesn't believe that all left-wing politicians are "squeaky clean"; both sides have issues. In the news you're more likely to see Rep. Ilhan Omar than you would any offensive antisemitic politicians on the right.

Rebecca: She thinks it is important to distinguish between antisemitism on the right and the left to get to root

causes. She said it is worth digging down to the source because we can't have healthy dialogue if we don't know the source. She believes we have to understand where they come from and why that shapes the way they look at the world. For example, we have to try to empathize with Rep. Ilhan Omar instead of resist engaging. She was very upset about President Trump's election, and since he's been in office, she has been more involved in politics. She believes that leaders have a significant impact on creating culture, and she fears that the "cancel culture" that is happening in politics right now causes people to close their minds.

Rachel: She thinks that any time there are individuals in society who don't have opportunity, there is a tendency to blame the Jews, whether that is on the right or the left. Jews are perceived to be wealthy and have all of the opportunities, control the banks, etc. She doesn't think the political antisemitism that is happening now is different from any other time.

Jeff: Antisemitism works by putting Jews in power and attempting to get Jews on board with any political movement. He said that people believe that if one Jew believes something then all Jews will believe that. He believes that the Right works through a White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant (WASP) view of America that does not include Jews. These people think Jews destroy the fabric of the WASP America. The Left is caught up in equations of Israel. Jews have been called Nazis due to Israel's actions, and people on the left believe that Jews are intolerant of other minorities. He said that in the end antisemitism is the hate of the Jew, so the end result is the same.

Beatrice: She said that President Trump didn't happen overnight. His election is a demonstration of something that's been happening for years. She believes we ignored a whole American population that was never doing well and never had a voice, and then President Trump came, giving that population a voice. We elected a president who's entire platform is run by fear, hatred, and racism. She said that right-wing antisemitism is more apparent, outward, and hate-fueled. She thinks Charlottesville is an example of what antisemitism is like on the right. The left-wing is also guilty of antisemitism. Israel is a country, and if you omit politics of government, is there another country anyone wants to take off face of the earth? One can be critical of administration in Israel, but wanting to eradicate whole country is antisemitic. She said that she doesn't see people blaming Christians in governments of other countries for causing problems.

Steen: He believes that antisemitism comes more from the right-wing than the left-wing.

Ralph: Ralph personally feels that antisemitism in America is very much a right-wing thing rather than a left-wing thing. He sees antisemitic acts coming from the right-wing in America and Europe much more than from the left-wing, and this does not seem coincidental to him. Ralph brought up how in Charlottesville the neo-Nazis talking were right-wing.

When asked, "How concerned are you about violence directed at Jews, Jewish symbols, and Jewish institutions in America?"

44.2% said extremely concerned

41.9% said concerned

12.8% said somewhat concerned

1.2% not at all concerned

How do you think Jews are portrayed in the media and on social media?

Jordyn: Jordyn has felt misrepresented as a Jew by the media since she has gotten comments saying you look Jewish or you look Israeli. For example, she once wore glasses to school, and a boy commented that her glasses brought out her Jewish nose. This has created a stigma that Jewish girls need a nose job in order to look beautiful. She also believes that the rise of social media and mass communication have made antisemitic comments more accepted.

Lily: She said that there isn't a lot of representation of Jews in the media. When she thinks about it, she can't think of many Jewish characters. When she does think of Jewish characters, they are very stereotypically Jewish in that they are nice Jewish boys. She thinks the representation is mostly pretty neutral. The most stereotypical representation is from the television show *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, but she doesn't think it's a poor representation of Jews because it is about Jews in the 1950s. Lily considers herself a pretty secular Jew, but she only sees religious Jews in the media, so she would like to see more representation of different types of Jews.

Hannah: She says she is always worried by the amount of antisemitism younger generations are exposed to. She grew up right before social media became a staple of our lives, and if she had

grown up seeing and hearing hatred towards Jewish people, she probably would have hidden that part of her identity. She claims that it's very easy to assimilate when you're already feeling the effects of systemic hatred and oppression.

Pierce: He said it depends but usually relatively good! Shows like *Broad City* and *New Girl* have allowed for some people to see that Jewish people exist and have problems. *Broad City* does a good job at showing the average American twenty-something and their struggles. You don't see the main characters, Abbi and Ilana, in towering unrealistic New York City mansions. They both have roommates and have money problems and are more relatable.

Rebecca: Jews have the reputation of being privileged, wealthy, intelligent, successful, and favored in some ways. There is backlash because of this reputation, but at the same time, going back to Charlottesville, there is the amplification of antisemitism as a result because of the feeling that Jews are taking over the world. There is probably an uptick in antisemitism as a result of that.

Rachel: She believes that social media narrows people's news sources, and it is creating an echo chamber which

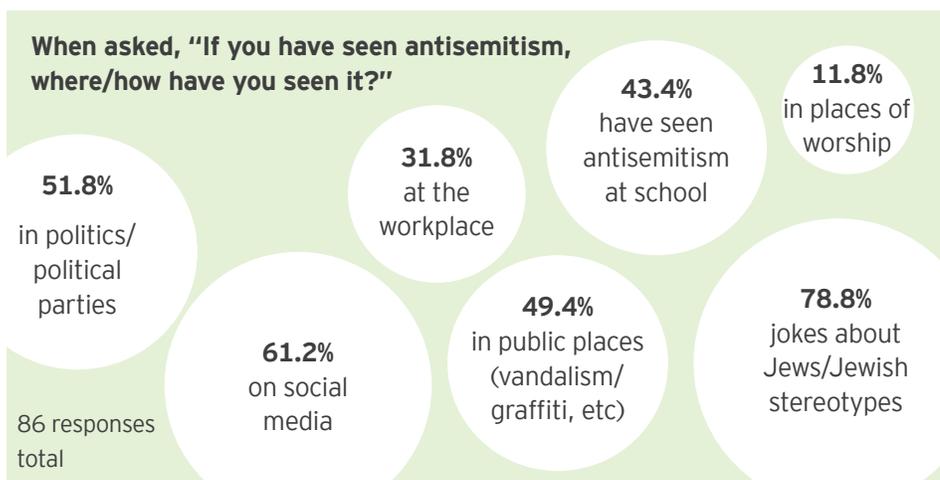
happens on both sides. There isn't a middle ground anymore.

Jeff: He said social media has unleashed hate, not only antisemitism. Anonymity of social media allows for the worst to come out. People are angry, and social media allows them to unleash anger. He believes the media isn't telling both sides. We don't teach enough history, and every student should be required to take a world religions class. People are ignorant about Judaism and who Jews are, and this begins with education. Debate is valued in Jewish culture, and Jews are not a monolithic block of people who believe one thing.

Beatrice: She said that lots of other minorities are highly represented in the media, but she has never seen Jews depicted as a whole. This is due to the "mindset" that Jews are already rich and successful, and that every Jew has already made it.

Steen: He sees that there is a stigma around Jewish people since they are perceived as being successful in business and banking and that Jews tend to be better off than the average person. He does not feel personally misrepresented other than the Holocaust. He believes social media is a very big factor that is responsible for Holocaust denial.

Ralph: He said over the years, the media has portrayed Jews as in control of the media. He also says that Jews were portrayed as being rich and controlling of money. This was symbolic of what it meant to be Jewish in the 1700s and 1800s when Jews could only have certain jobs as money lenders since they could not trade or own land. He said people used to blast antisemitic comments on the radio. Today he feels that politicians on the left and right are careful not to speak as antisemites because they would lose support if they did. The media does not necessarily have antisemitic things in it, however, the news does make a lot of comments about antisemitic acts.



How have you personally seen people combat antisemitism? How have you coped with antisemitism?

Jordyn: Knowledge is the key to combating antisemitism. After a student wrote antisemitic comments on the pizza box at Israel club, she talked to her principal and had a conversation with the student. Jordyn has a strong connection to Israel, speaks Hebrew, and practice Jewish values. She believes being strong in your values and knowledgeable is most important in order to combat antisemitism.

Lily: She doesn't think she hasn't seen a lot of people combat antisemitism because it isn't really present in her daily life. She hasn't been personally targeted, but after the bomb threat at her synagogue, there was a service for everyone at the synagogue which made her feel like she had a stronger community there.

Hannah: While she doesn't believe in "cancel culture," she does believe setting up self-care boundaries. She says she refuses to talk or work with people – regardless of political affiliation – who make assumptions about her based on her Jewish identity or do not believe in her humanity. She cited James Baldwin as inspiration: "We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."

Pierce: He thinks the best and most effective way to combat antisemitism is just being there for another person. There will be a time where an incident happens in class or in everyday conversation, and you have to be ready to support the people effected in the way that they ask and surround yourself with people with a similar mentality.

Rebecca: She has been a part of different educational experiences where Jews are educated on how to combat antisemitism but also educational programs that bring different religions together to spread awareness about antisemitism. She personally tries to educate and open up conversations about antisemitism and Jewish culture. She intentionally joined a non-Jewish sorority in college. As a result, she came across people who had never met Jews, so she tried to educate them about Jewish culture and looked at this as an opportunity to educate people, but it wasn't always easy.

Rachel: She has personally combatted it when she has explained to people that general comments about the wealth of Jews isn't true and shared facts about how Jewish people have the same level of wealth and poverty as anyone else. She tells people how she delivers meals to Jewish people, and how there are poor elderly Holocaust survivors. She said that she copes by continuing to be herself even after facing antisemitism, especially in her work. She said it helps knowing that she isn't alone in being a minority and in being oppressed.

Jeff: He said he once filed a lawsuit against a school where headmaster said antisemitic comments. He wants people to teach the real history of the holocaust and show where antisemitism can lead. It is important to learn the dangers. The Anti-Defamation League is great at combating antisemitism. It is important to speak out against antisemitism.

Beatrice: Silence is never golden. She said when companies want to expand to minority groups, they think Black, Latino, or even Muslim, but Jews are never regarded as a minority to consider. She said that she won't wear a diamond because during the Holocaust when Jews were escaping, they brought their diamonds with them into America, so once the Jews arrived in America, they could sell these diamonds for money. This made people begin to associate Jews with having diamonds and wealth, and she feels if she walked around with a diamond on her finger, people would think she was a Jew. She is not sure if by doing this she is giving into antisemitism or combating it.

Steen: He has seen people combat antisemitism by educating others, and that is why he talks to over 70,000 people about his experiences. Right after the Holocaust, since he lost his father, he wanted to be as far away from Judaism as he could be. He had suffered in concentration camps for 18 months and wasn't sure if the Holocaust could rise again, so he didn't want to be brought up with Jewish faith.

Ralph: At his Passover seder today, he reminds the people who have gathered about what their experience was like in Germany, and he teaches children to be upstanders. He said he tried to explain how Nazis gained strength in the early years because no one seemed to care about the antisemitic bias. He believes the key to combating antisemitism is teaching and being an upstander. He also explained how in his opinion the birth of Israel in 1948 has made Jews more observant.

"We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."
~ James Baldwin

A RITUAL FOR ...

Educating others about antisemitism for Hanukkah

Through our studies of how people from different generations viewed antisemitism, we found out that many people believe antisemitism stems from lack of education. By reimagining Hanukkah gifts, you can give the gift of knowledge to eight separate people on the eight days of Hanukkah in order to bring awareness to and combat antisemitism.

Night 1

Tell someone about how antisemitism has personally affected you and how it made you feel.

Give a Jewish Star to show perseverance and Jewish faith in the face of antisemitism.



Night 2

Educate someone about the history and impact of the holocaust on the Jewish people.



Give a yearzeit candle to commemorate a Holocaust survivor.

Night 3

Tell someone about a false Jewish stereotype and why it is harmful.



Give chocolate 'gelt' as a way to talk about the stereotype that "Jews control all the money."

Night 4

Teach someone about hate symbols in our society, such as swastikas, and the strategies used to respond and eliminate them.

Give a hamsa to show that symbols can be optimistic and positive too.



Night 5

Educate someone about left- and right-wing antisemitism.



Find a politician you feel is thoughtful about fighting antisemitism and donate to their campaign.

Night 6

Educate a college student on how to combat antisemitism on college campuses.



Donate to a Hillel in the student's honor.

Night 7

Educate someone about how to combat antisemitism in the media.



Follow @combatingantisemitism on Instagram to keep your Jewish faith in the media!

Night 8

Encourage someone to learn about another group (outside of Jewish people) who are suffering under oppression.

Give a gift card to a coffee shop so they can meet with someone from another minority group for coffee to talk.



Jews, Mental Health, and Antisemitism

“What is required to face trauma is the ability to mourn, fully and deeply. All that has been taken from us only through mourning everything we have lost can we discover that we in fact survived; that our spirits are indestructible.”

~Aurora Morales Levins

Children of Holocaust survivors often present with unresolved anxiety and anger. Intergenerational transition of trauma is widespread and varied, and can include psychodynamic, socio-cultural, familial, and biological effects. Antisemitism can be tied to mental health in a plethora of ways. Not only does it impact the daily life of Jewish people around the world by making them feel inferior and unworthy, but has significant biological ties to past trauma. This suggests a correlation between the holocaust and mental health issues

Epigenetics, literally meaning “above the genome,” is gaining traction within the scientific community. Researchers in this field are studying how traits expressed can be changed even when DNA stays the same based on changes in the nucleosome. These changes are triggered by disruptions in environmental factors and have the ability to instruct genes to turn on and off. Furthermore, these traits remain stable, meaning the altered DNA is passed down for future generations. Though this is still a developing field, the hypothesis behind epigenetic studies is that major traumatic events – such as the Holocaust– can cause physiological trauma far beyond its initial occurrence. When a person experiences PTSD along with high levels of stress, this triggers the

release of cortisol, and the effects transcend the individual and can be passed along to future generations. The antisemitism many believe is in the past still lives in the DNA of youth today.

Holocaust survivors experience many triggers in their daily life. These triggers can range from prodding during a health exam as a result of treatment in concentration camps, to a fear of Jewish holidays, when many Jews were rounded up and killed by Nazis. It seems like these triggers would exist in a vacuum, but by studying the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, we may debunk the notion that the trauma of the Holocaust is isolated to individuals directly affected. In a study where adult mice were shocked when they smelled cherry blossoms, their children also became nervous when they smelled cherry blossoms, despite experiencing no trauma themselves. Jewish people could be impacted in the same way, and experience triggers despite not having experienced the direct trauma of the Holocaust.

Our subgroup focused on the correlations between mental health and antisemitism. Our research was sparked by current events that specifically target and affect Jews and the idea that traumatic events happen

in a vacuum. We chose to use a survey to explore whether antisemitic events affect multiple generations and to explore the combinations of epigenetic and societal expectations on Jewish mental health.

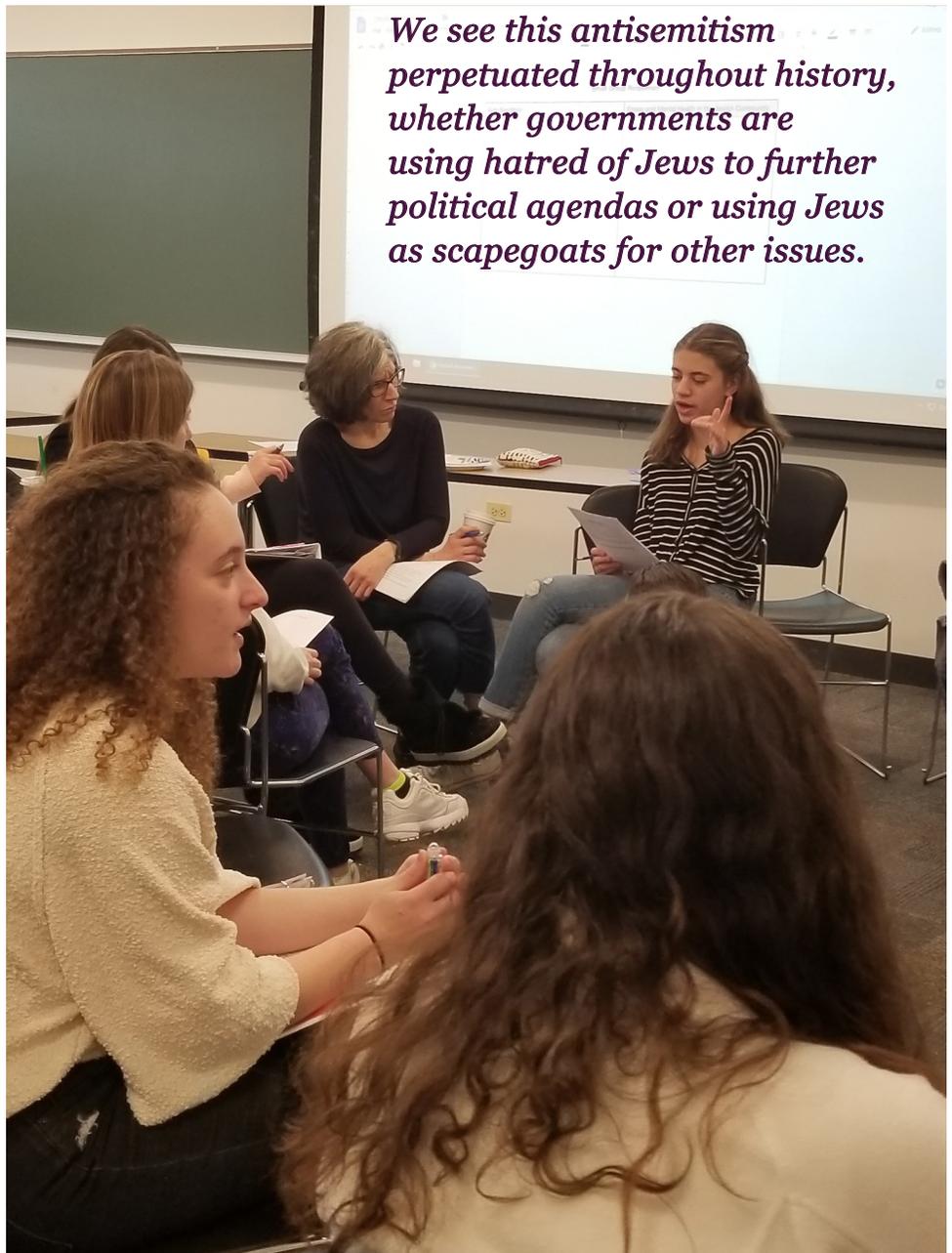
First, we wanted to see if Jewish individuals were more likely to suffer from a mental illness as opposed to people of other faiths. We gathered responses from ninety individuals, the majority were teens residing in the Chicago area. 47.3% surveyed were non-Jewish while 52.7% were Jewish. A vast majority (80.2%) of people who took our survey identified as female. 18.6% of people identified as male, and 1.2% of people identified as non-binary. While analyzing our data, we uncovered that twenty-one Jews surveyed did not suffer from mental illnesses, while 24 reportedly did. From our research, we learned that the most common mental illness was anxiety. About seventeen Jews and sixteen non-Jews surveyed reported suffering from anxiety. Those who suffered from anxiety were more likely to have parents who suffered as well, suggesting epigenetics may be at play.

One important data point we found was that 56% of people who had suffered from the effects of the Holocaust had previously or are currently experiencing a mental health illness.

If we look at the national average of people suffering from mental health illnesses, we see that approximately one in five adults and teens in America suffer. Our survey also found a 36% increase in mental health illnesses with people associated with the Holocaust as opposed to Jews who are not directly affected by the Holocaust. We define directly effect as being a survivor or having a family member who is or was a survivor. This suggest a correlation between the Holocaust and mental health issues.

When asked where people see antisemitism most frequently, mass media was mostly commonly cited, with political groups coming in at a close second. 65.6% of respondents credited mass media (including social media) for perpetuating antisemitism, and this may be due to the fact that hateful information can be spread to millions of people in a matter of seconds. Take the most recent antisemitic attack in San Diego, where a man shot congregants at a synagogue and his hateful monologue was shared globally through social media. The ability to spread hate so easily is one of the main contributors to mental health issues and makes Jews scared for their lives every day. Half of people also answered that political groups were main perpetrators. We see this antisemitism perpetuated throughout history, whether governments are using hatred of Jews to further political agendas or using Jews as scapegoats for other issues. The ever-present nature of these two social systems perpetuating antisemitism may explain the reason for increased depression within the Jewish community as opposed to the rest of the people we surveyed (23.4% for Jews compared to 19% for non-Jews).

It is important to note that one hurdle to exploring the connections between epigenetics and antisemitism is Jewish internalized antisemitism. Sometimes a group that is suffering from



oppression can internalize the negative stereotypes that society says about them, and we call this internalized oppression. In our survey, 80.8% of Jewish respondents said antisemitism affects their mental health very little or not at all. Meanwhile, only 6 out of 47 Jewish participants said they see no antisemitism in their daily lives. The disconnect between these two numbers leads us to believe that many Jews are internalizing the constant refrain that antisemitism "isn't that bad" or "doesn't matter that much".

We believe that one step to battling antisemitism and mental health issues in our community is to think more about the ways antisemitism might play a role in Jewish mental health. In general, there needs to be more research about how trauma affects subsequent generations, because the more understanding we have about what affects our own mental health, the more healing is possible.



Using mikveh to cleanse ourselves after an act of antisemitism

Our research focused heavily on the pain and trauma brought forth by antisemitism, both past and present, but we also wanted our research to uncover how Jews in Chicago have and gather resilience. We chose to reimagine the Jewish ritual of the Mikveh to heal our community.

The Mikveh is a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion; traditionally, in Judaism, the Mikveh is used to achieve ritual purity. The word "Mikveh" comes from the Hebrew word for "collection" referring to a collection of water. This Jewish tradition can be used to convert someone to Judaism, before and after surgery, before someone reads the Torah for the first time, becoming a grandparent, or any other spiritual cleansing.

Traditionally, taking a bath in the Mikveh is used as a return to purity. We would like to stress that the Mikveh is all about the immersion of the soul, not being physically dirty or clean. We have decided to reimagine the role and practice of the Mikveh to heal from current and ongoing effects of antisemitism. The Mikveh is usually an individual experience, but we expanded this ritual to suit a group. Although individual healing is important, we are using our Mikveh to heal our community collectively, emphasizing the vital importance of solidarity.

How to guide for our mikvah:

Step 1: The water of the Mikveh is traditionally collected from bodies of running water, gathered from rain or

collected from rivers or oceans. We ask everyone coming to our Mikveh to bring a small amount of water. This represents that we all bring our separate strengths and tools to healing from the pain of antisemitism.

Step 2: Each person should sit down and compose a free write about past painful experiences, both first hand and the trauma experienced by our ancestors.

Step 3: As a group, we must ask ourselves to consider what healing looks like. We will practice saying positive affirmations aloud to one another.

"If I have anxiety, I know there will be a safe place to collect my thoughts."

"If someone says something hateful to me, I know I will have allies in my community that will support me."

"I know that if I feel pain, I have the resilience to heal."

Step 4: The water is pooled together into a clear bottle, vase, or pitcher. We do this as a reminder that when we see our reflection in the glass, we are reminded of our own courage and endurance.

Step 5: The pitcher is passed around, and everyone is asked to cleanse their hands. In a traditional Mikveh, an individual steps foot into a pool and is immersed. Wash our hands is well-suited to a group, and symbolically honors the work our hands do in creating coalitions and partaking in activist work.

Step 6: When everyone has cleansed their hands, we say three prayers as a conclusion of our ritual. These prayers have been adapted to reflect upon the specific injustices of our time. They also serve as a meditation for the work we have been doing and the work that must still be done.

Prayers

"We are many identities, heritages, and loves, many genders and none. May this in-between light illuminate our way to God."

"May I be released from the pain of the past as I enter this new phase of my journey."

"As I leave these waters, may I be filled with renewal, energy, power, and direction."

Although individual healing is important, we are using our Mikveh to heal our community collectively, emphasizing the vital importance of solidarity.

Learning From Our Allies: Lessons From Other Oppressed Groups

When attempting to combat antisemitism, we must look at the ways that our allies combat their oppression in order to work together to end all oppression. We worked as a group to interview various organizations and individuals who combat specific types of oppressions*. Our goal was to find common trends for strategies that were successful in combating various types of oppression in order to apply those strategies to our lives when combating antisemitism. We conducted interviews with various organizations and asked them to share a story that represents a time where they had to combat oppression and were able to do it successfully.



"The RAC mobilizes around federal, state, and local legislation; supports and develops congregational leaders; and organizes communities to create a world overflowing with justice, compassion, and peace." The Religious Action Center's branch in Illinois is relatively new, but they have had a lot of success, primarily working in coalition with other organization from the area. For example, they worked to pass the Voices Act, a bill that would allow undocumented victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking to report these crimes to law enforcement without fear of deportation. Although this bill was vetoed by Governor Bruce Rauner, it was able to secure enough votes to overturn the veto. RAC did this through a type of community organizing called the Relational Organizing Model. This model builds power by developing relationships with people based on issues they are passionate about, and then the RAC mobilize those people into coalition work.



"Keshet is a national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life." In 2011, Keshet worked with the Jewish community in Massachusetts to solve an important issue affecting the lives of transgender individuals. Keshet worked to stop the repeal of a transgender rights law; its repeal would have made it legal to discriminate against transgender people. Keshet was able to mobilize the Jewish community to take a strong and unequivocal stance against the law. They did this by telling the story of transgender people's lives and showing the devastating effect the repeal would have. They also mobilized congregations to go door-to-door, campaigning against the law. With the effort of many, they were successful in making sure the law protecting transgender rights stayed in place.



Jewish Council
on Urban Affairs

"JCUA and its members are powerful allies and advocates for positive social change in Chicago. We combat poverty, racism and antisemitism in partnership with our city's diverse communities." JCUA uses various types of strategies to combat oppression, including community organizing and legislation. One issue JCUA is working on is police accountability and police brutality. Their goal is to make larger, systemic change through people power. They want to educate people and put pressure of Chicago's government to make legislative changes. JCUA also works on immigration issues. While working on this issue at the state level, they have had success in legislation, such as the Trust Act, which prohibits state police officers from acting as unofficial Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers, and the RISE Act, which allows undocumented students to have access to state-funded education grants and scholarships.

** We recognize that we were unable to interview organizations combating all types of oppression and want to acknowledge that our intent was not to discriminate or say one type of oppression is more important than another. We interviewed the people that we had access to.*

When reading over the various stories that these organizations and people shared, there are many common trends in the ways to combat various types of oppression. Although different situations require different techniques, the concept of community organizing is an underlying theme in successfully combating oppression. Whether it is education, storytelling, political campaigning, or changing legislation, these strategies all include community organizing to be successful. Building coalitions in a community is the first step to combating oppression.

In our world today, there is a lot of ignorance towards oppression as a whole. People do not have an understanding of how oppression functions in society, and more specifically, how to identify and stop oppressive actions. A common technique used to stop oppression is education and storytelling, and the impacts of this technique are extremely underrated. A simple understanding of what oppression is and how it functions can truly change a person's opinion. Furthermore, sharing your story is extremely impactful in educating others because people need to understand the topic, such as race or gender, and how the oppression stops an individual from reaching his or her full potential in order to become an ally. Simply educating people can stop further oppression.

A lot of community organizing is focused around changing opinions and moving people. The first way that organizers move people is through advocacy. Advocacy is focused on moving political representatives. This movement could happen through actions like calling representatives, canvassing, or holding rallies outside of where the legislative bodies meet. 'People power' is mobilizing the community to fight for an issue that they care about. In order to have people interested in the fight, organizations must connect with people and talk about why they

are passionate about the issue. An organization like JCUA focuses on mobilizing the Jewish community to fight against different types of oppression.

It seems that, living in America today, legislation can be one of the most direct ways of creating change. Through campaigning and speaking to people, politics appear to be effective in educating people. In conducting our research, we found that many organizations saw political movements as the crux of spreading their message. Through having a politician who supports a cause or a movement, this person can share the issues on a broader scale. Often times, people are attached to a candidate and can

The first way that organizers move people is through advocacy.

learn from their beliefs. Similarly, when a small idea becomes a political movement, it can spread nationally and reach more people than a local organization could.

In terms of campaigning, organizing can be focused around voting. This can look like registering people, especially those who have been culturally disenfranchised, to vote. It can also look like educating those who are already planning to vote about candidates and the issues. That way, when someone goes into a voting booth, they know they are picking a candidate who is actively fighting against different types of oppression. Policy and legislation can drive movements that protect oppressed people. Whether people support those movements or not they are often the strongest voices of people that are silenced.

Intersections

For this project, we talked to a lot of different people about the types of oppression that different groups face. We found that although antisemitism is unique, it has much in common with other types of oppression. In conducting interviews about xenophobia, we talked to Fr. Corey Brost, one of the founders and leaders of Viator House of Hospitality. He said one thing that really stuck out: antisemitism is "one of the fingers on the hand of xenophobia and white supremacy." This was a powerful moment of realization. We saw that antisemitism and its victims do not stand alone.

We must recognize that antisemitism is unique from other types of oppression. Antisemitism tells other people that Jews are responsible for everyone's problems because Jews are in control in some way. In this way, Jews are often scapegoated. Additionally, because antisemitism depends on the fact that Jewish people have power that they are using negatively, Jews must have relative power in society in order to be oppressed. Antisemitism as a system functions to push Jews up to a higher status so that people can antagonize them, whereas a system such as racism pushes down people of color to make way for that similar antagonization. There are also relative privileges associated with being a white Jewish person. White Jewish people, especially those who are less religious, could have an ability to hide their Jewish identity that many people of color facing oppression do not have. Despite these differences, there are still strong similarities.

Antisemitism and xenophobia are strongly linked. By definition, xenophobia is the fear of the 'other.' Throughout history, Jews have been considered the 'other'. We have been ostracized and discriminated against because of our differences. Brost said that "people... are taught to be afraid

by people in power like the president and right-wing nationalists. [They] feed people misinformation that... helps them blame their problems on people who are different by religion or ethnic background." In America now, many of us have heard statements like "I can't get a job because immigrants are taking all the jobs," or "I can't get a job because Jews control business." This rhetoric blames larger societal problems on one group in order to reduce personal and governmental accountability.

Xenophobia also has become strongly tied to fear of immigrants. With the recent rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States and the world, no one is surprised to hear that Jews are mobilizing and getting involved in large numbers. This is our story! Before and during the Holocaust, many Jewish people attempted to flee Nazi-dominated Europe out of fear. When the refugees tried to come to the United States, they were turned away by the thousands because they were seen as a threat to national security. The rhetoric used in the 1930s and '40s about Jews is far too similar to the fear-inducing and dehumanizing statements made against Muslim and Latin immigrants today. Today, Jews are targeted for their work in modern-day immigration activism. At the neo-Nazi Charlottesville riots of 2017, protestors chanted, "Jews will not replace us." We remember thinking how peculiar of a statement that was, especially considering the fact that Jews account for less than 2% of America's overall population. Later, we found out that marchers were not referring to Jews themselves, but the belief that Jews were conspiring to help undocumented immigrants replace "Americans." Even the shooter in the

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terrible hate crime that took place in the Pittsburgh synagogue railed against Jews' support of immigrants. Historically and in modern times, Jews have been either direct or indirect victims of xenophobia, so our oppressions are very intertwined.

Islamophobia and antisemitism are also connected. Both groups have suffered under Christian hegemony and white supremacy. As Christianity became the dominant hegemonic force in Europe and other parts of the world, both Jews and Muslims became victims of systemic violence and discrimination. During the Spanish Inquisition of the 14th and 15th centuries, both Jews and Muslims were considered a threat and were consequently expelled from the country. Recently, there has been a rise in hate crimes targeted at both Jewish and Muslim communities. The rise in this hate is strongly linked. When hate crimes against Muslim people approximately doubled, the same patterns occurred in Jewish communities.

There are also parallels between racism and antisemitism. To understand this complicated and nuanced topic, we must first recognize that not all Jews are white. Jews are a racially and ethnically diverse religious group.

Currently, somewhere between 11% and 20% of Jews in the United States are Jews of Color. While white Jews experience racism and antisemitism only as parallels, Jews of color experience these systems as an intersection. To an extent, the oppression that European Jews faced was based in racist ideals. Jews were targeted and profiled as a biologically inferior race. Although this is not the way in which we think about antisemitic tropes now, it is a valid and important part of our history. After the Holocaust, when many Jews came to America, there were a number that became very involved in the civil rights activism of the '50s and '60s. They saw their story reflected and wanted to work to make change. Many people involved in the Jewish community, primarily in the North, were extremely involved with Black leadership. In the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Jewish organizations like the Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Congress submitted briefs to the court in support of *Brown*. Jewish people made up about 30% of white volunteers who rode on freedom buses in the South, despite making up a much smaller part of the population.

There are many similarities and differences, but at the end of the day, all of our oppression is connected. We have a common interest in standing together and standing up for each other's rights. Fighting antisemitism is fighting xenophobia is fighting racism is fighting islamophobia. White supremacy attempts to separate us. It pits us against each other in a fight for our basic human rights. We must radically resist this separation, because the only way we can end all oppression is by fighting together. We are truly stronger when we are united.

We are truly stronger when we are united.



Thinking about allyship and antisemitism at Passover

As the leader of the Seder, please read the following aloud:

Passover is rooted in remembering the suffering and oppression that the Israelites faced when they were in Egypt. Part of this holiday is recognizing how special it is to be free. We want to recognize that there are people who are still being oppressed because of their identities. Although this holiday is meant to be a joyous celebration of our freedom, we want to take a moment of silence for those who have been victims of hate crimes. May we honor their memory and fight for a better future. *(Please take a moment of silence now).*

Passover emphasizes the fact that we were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Because of this, we as Jews can empathize with the experiences of many oppressed people. We also have a responsibility to stand with them in solidarity. We are going to talk about our own identities and oppressions, as well as what we can do to help fight for fair treatment of others.

Please go around in a circle and have each person answer the following questions:

1

How would you describe your identity?

Please give 4-6 identities that influence the way you walk through life.

Example: Sally Stein – white, Jewish, female, cisgender, bisexual

2

How have you experienced oppression or hate as a result of your identities?

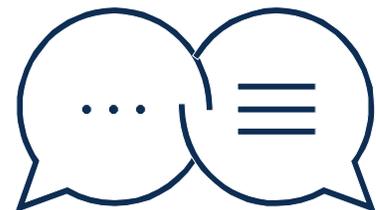
Example: Because I am a woman, I experience sexism. That looks like not getting paid equally for equal work.

3

What is one way that you are going to personally work to combat oppression/hate?

Example: I will call people out when I hear them make antisemitic jokes.

The point of this exercise is to understand the combination of privilege and oppression in all of our identities and to recognize that we can use our privilege to help others who are suffering under oppression.



We know we won't solve antisemitism over night, but we are here for the long fight. Here are the steps we think can help end antisemitism for the future.



Live Jewishly

If you are Jewish, celebrate it through your actions. Celebrate holidays, go to synagogue, listen to Israeli music — it doesn't matter how you express it, just that you do! If you are a Jewish ally, make space for your Jewish friends to be Jewish, such as trying not to schedule things on Jewish holidays or having kosher food as an option when you hang out.

Organize in your community

Be vocal about ending antisemitism when it happens. Go to marches and protests, canvass, attending public meetings. Make your voice heard!

Connect with people who are already as engaged as you are

Reach out to people you know who are care about fighting antisemitism and start to build coalitions. We're stronger together.

Involve people in power

Talk to people who have the power to make systemic changes, big and small. You can call a legislator or your principal, but talk to the people who have the ability to change processes.

Educate people who are open to learning

A powerful tool is moving people who might want to help us if they knew more. Be open to talking to people about antisemitism, and don't assume anyone should 'just know'.

We need allies to win

We cannot end antisemitism by isolating ourselves. We need to build diverse coalition across many spectrums to win. Remember that having allies also means being a good ally and showing up when people need you.

Testimonials

I loved RTI because it provided me with the knowledge I need to be an impactful debater, feminist and person alone. RTI has taught me, not only how to effectively go about researching quantifiable topics of interest, but how to gain knowledge and use it in conversation. I feel beyond grateful for the things I have learned in this internship. I always knew I cared about types of oppression, but never delved deeper into the specifics of the systems. Now, I understand different types of oppression, and know how to continue to educate myself on them and combat them.

~ Alana Newberger

As a Jew living in the metropolitan area of Chicago, there aren't many other Jewish people that I could talk and relate to. RTI has given me the space to enhance my perception of what it means to be a Jewish teen girl and has allowed me to have rich conversations and research with girls like me, something I've never gotten to do. I not only learned how to research and compile data but was able to discover answers to questions about antisemitism that I had been curious about all year.

~ Julia Gershberg

I liked RTI because it was a great space to have my voice heard and expand my knowledge on my own opinions. I learned a lot about others' experiences being a Jew in Chicago and in America from people of all age ranges, and had the unique opportunity to compare them to my own.

~ Rebecca Gross

RTI has truly been one of the most incredible experiences of my life. I have gotten to meet absolutely wonderful people who I look up to. I have learned so much about oppression and privilege and huge world issues, while also exploring my own identities. I love RTI!

~ Gwen Tucker

RTI has been a truly rewarding experience. It has taught me about the various ways I can advocate for my beliefs and the importance of listening to people's stories. From riveting discussions centered around social justice to our exploration of the ways rituals could be adapted to modern life, RTI really shaped my beliefs regarding the world I live in. RTI has helped me grow as a Jew, a woman and an advocate for human rights, and I am thankful for being able to take this amazing opportunity.

~ Mariel Mudrik

The reason I joined RTI was to meet people who have the same passion and love for learning as I do. Throughout RTI, I was able to be a part of enriching discussions and debates about topics that I care deeply about. I have learned history, terminology and new ways to conduct research that have helped elevate my vocabulary as well as influence the way I present myself and my knowledge.

~ Shaina Grossman

I enjoyed RTI because it was a space where I could explore my feminism and Judaism simultaneously with girls my age. I learned valuable research skills, such as collaboration and listening. I also learned about antisemitism, its impact and what we can do to combat it.

~ Scarlet Zell

RTI has provided me with a space to be my most authentic self, while also teaching me about myself and who I want to be as a person. I have not only learned about the ways of oppression and the flaws in society, but I have learned how to be a good leader, how to take a step back when necessary, and how to use my privilege in a positive way. This opportunity has been incredible and I have met some of the most wonderful, kind and inspirational people.

~ Ellie Goldsmith

I loved being a part of RTI because it allowed me to more deeply explore my Jewish identity from a new perspective. It gave me a place where I could feel completely comfortable asking questions and expressing my opinion on important and controversial social justice and political issues in society today. I learned so much about how feminism interacts with Judaism and how I can employ my Jewish values to make the world a better place. I also had the privilege of meeting such amazing, strong and intelligent young women who shared so many similarities with me but could also teach me so much about the world around me.

~ Sara Grostern

RTI has been one of the most incredible experiences. I have grown so much and have learned educational and life skills. RTI has changed how I view social activism and intersectionality. I struggled with the intersectionality of my female and Jewish identity. Through RTI I was able to embrace both my identities. I was able to have amazing conversations in a safe space that I could not have anywhere else. The time I spent at RTI is a time I will never forget.

~ Rachel Fadem

Resources

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In memoriam

*To all those affected by the shootings at
Tree of Life Synagogue and Chabad of Poway:*

*We mourn those who died and
stand in solidarity with those who survived.*

Our work is dedicated to you.

*Mir veln zey iberlebn
We will outlive them*

**JUF amplifies our collective strength
to make the world a better place — for everyone.**

Community powered, we consider the totality of local and global Jewish needs and how to address them. From generation to generation, we help people connect to Jewish life and values, fueling a dynamic, enduring community that comes together for good.



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