

On Antisemitism

IPMN stands against all forms of bigotry, discrimination, and hate, including antisemitism* and Islamophobia. And we maintain that being anti-Zionist is not the same as being antisemitic. Education and advocacy for justice in Israel-Palestine require clarification of important distinctions between Judaism and Zionism.

Jewish Voice for Peace differentiates the two clearly:

Zionism is a political ideology; Judaism and Jewish identity encompass a diversity of religious and secular expressions and a robust, varied set of traditions, cultures, and lived experiences. ... Definitions of antisemitism that treat criticism of Israel or of Zionism as inherently antisemitic are inaccurate and harmful.

(jvp.org/antisemitism)

The majority of Jews are not Israeli, and not all citizens of Israel are Jewish. Not all Jews are Zionists; Israel does not represent or speak for all Jews. Criticism of the discriminatory policies and practices of the state of Israel — which privilege Jews over non-Jews — is not inherently antisemitic, in the same way that criticism of Trump Administration policies is not un-American. To reiterate, anti-Zionism is not antisemitism.

IPMN maintains that as a state, Israel must be held to the same standards as other countries. It must be accountable for its actions under international human rights laws. To hold Israel to a different standard because it is a Jewish state, or to give it a free pass on flagrant violations of international law is a form of exceptionalism that is in fact antisemitic because to consider Jews as better than or worse than other people is antisemitic.

Through its 2018 Jewish Nation State Law, Israel has formally codified conditions that meet the definition of the crime of apartheid under international law. IPMN has condemned this law because it precludes recognition of equal rights for all citizens of Israel. Advocating equality and human rights for Palestinians is not in itself anti-semitic; labeling it as such is a hurtful slur that defames the humanity and dignity of Palestinians.

We conclude that the best way to stand against antisemitism is to stand in solidarity with all struggles for justice against all racism, bigotry, oppression and injustice. Today's heightened moment of focus on human rights presents the challenge to overcome privileging white supremacy and settler colonialism, demanding that we organize across issues, boundaries, and movements to create multicultural, democratic societies in which all people have equal value and equal rights.

*IPMN has adopted this spelling in accordance with the rationale of not using the European-created racial category, "Semite." This rationale is explained by Jewish Voice for Peace under their policy statement "Fighting Antisemitism": "We have chosen to use the spelling 'antisemitism,' following the advice of scholars in Jewish Studies who have made a compelling case for this spelling. The category 'Semite' was developed as a part of European pseudo-scientific theories of race in the 19th century. We want to be clear that the spelling of 'antisemitism' should not be used to further the separation of 'Arabs' and 'Jews.' (For more, see Wilhelm Marr, "The Way to Victory of Germanism over Judaism," 1879)



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