



Jewish Voice for Peace

DC Metro

Orientation Sheet

Last Updated: Fall 2019

BRIEF HISTORY

Nationally, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) is the largest Jewish U.S.-based grassroots organization dedicated to promoting full human rights, equality, democracy, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians. JVP was started in 1996 in the San Francisco Bay Area, specifically to promote this mission. It grew into a national organization, which today has over 18,000 members. Jewish and non-Jewish members alike are welcomed. Learn more about JVP at

<https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/faq/>

Jewish Voice for Peace is a grassroots organization with over 70 chapters across the U.S., which includes our chapter in the Washington D.C. metro area. JVP—DC Metro's goals, structure, project committees, meeting arrangements, events, achievement highlights and resources are introduced below. Learn more about us below at <https://jvpdc.org/>

GOALS

1. JVP—DC Metro campaigns to change U.S. policy and shift U.S. discourse to create political conditions that promote:
 - An end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza
 - Justice, equality, security, and self-determination for Palestinians and Israelis
 - The right of return for Palestinians in accord with international law
 - An end to all violence against civilians
 - Peace and justice for all peoples of the Middle East
2. JVP—DC Metro works to overcome antisemitism and all bigotry and hate. We strongly believe that being anti-Zionist is not the same as antisemitic.
3. JVP—DC Metro collaborates with other local social justice and community-based organizations to achieve shared goals. An example of this is the Occupation Free DC campaign to end DC Metropolitan Police Department participation in US-Israeli "counter-terrorism" police exchanges. The chapter collaborates in this work with groups, such as Black Lives Matter, BYP100, Justice for Muslims Collective, Sanctuary DMV, and Stop Police Terror Project. To learn more about this work, visit <https://occupationfreedc.org/>

STRUCTURE

Steering Committee: JVP—DC Metro is managed by a Steering Committee. Typically, Chairs from each Committee are also members of the chapter Steering Committee.

Committees: JVP—DC Metro currently has the following committees:

- **Legislative:** This committee arranges legislative meetings and other activities to brief local, state and federal legislators on issues related to Israel/Palestine, Middle East peace and Israeli training of DC Metropolitan Police Department and other US police officers.

- **Membership & Education:** This committee conducts outreach to new members and organizes the chapter's monthly meetings, events, and book groups.
- **Communications:** This committee runs our social media accounts, maintains our websites, manages our internal list-serv and external mailing list, engages with press, and designs digital and printed materials as needed..

MEETINGS

General Chapter Meetings: The chapter holds monthly meetings open to the public, which plan and report on events and feature in-depth discussions on relevant topics, such as Jewish values and Palestinian rights.

Committee Meetings: Each Committee arranges its own meetings as needed.

EVENTS

JVP—DC Metro organizes and sponsors many events, including:

- Annual Jewish observances and celebrations such as a collective ritual for Tashlich, a community-wide seder for Passover, and events for Chanukah.
- Protests, demonstrations and other direct actions, such as protesting against the annual AIPAC and CUFI conferences,) demonstrating against American and Israeli wars, demanding accountability for local acts of police violence, and asking for an end to concentration camps at our border.
- Presentations by public speakers, book talks, film screenings, and discussions addressing topics such as the Palestinian Nakba, Islamophobia, non-violent grassroots organizing in Israel/Palestine, and ending Israeli-U.S. police exchanges.
- Internal discussions on topics, such as antisemitism, the rise of fascism, Zionism, and policing.

HIGHLIGHTS

Some highlights of our work include:

- **Performing Arts:** “It’s What We Do: A Play About the Occupation”, a play written and directed by JVP—DC Metro member Pamela Nice, won the DC Capital Fringe Festival most-outstanding performance award in both years it was performed. A video of the play has been produced for educational purposes and can be found here: <https://www.iwwdplay.org/>
- **Seder:** Our annual Passover seder averages 100 participants. Our seder promotes Palestinian and Israeli human rights and welcomes religiously observant and secular people alike. Our seder is typically led by a local Rabbi and features both Muslim and Christian clergy as speakers.
- **Occupation Free DC:** While Occupation Free DC acts as its own independent organization now, with a separate leadership structure, it originally began in 2017 as a campaign developed as our chapter’s local response to the Deadly Exchange campaign (<https://deadlyexchange.org/>) run by Jewish Voice for Peace nationally. Some highlights of the campaign have been collecting thousands of petition signatures from local residents, publicizing the results of our successful FOIA request which detailed our local police department’s participation in U.S.-Israel exchanges, and appearing in multiple press outlets to discuss Mayor Bowser’s trip to Israel.
- **BDS Campaigns:** We support the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement in DC by organizing and supporting campaigns locally. For example, our consumer boycott protest of SodaStream helped to get SodaStream off the shelves of major American stores, like Macy’s.

RESOURCES

JVP—DC Metro can supply numerous informational resources upon request. To begin, here are few resources on Israel/Palestine we recommend:

Videos:

- *Gaza in Context* (<http://www.gazaincontext.com/>)
- *It's What We Do* (<https://www.iwwdplay.org/>), written and directed by chapter member Pamela Nice.
- JVP—Boston's Film Library
(<https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/60-films-israelpalestine-worth-watching/>)
- Israel Palestine Conflict 101 (<https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/israeli-palestinian-conflict-101/>), JVP's short animated introduction to the Israel Palestine conflict

Books:

- *Reclaiming Judaism from Zionism: Stories of Personal Transformation* (<https://reclaimingjudaismfromzionism.com>), edited by JVP—DC Metro chapter member Carolyn L. Karcher.
- *On Antisemitism* (<http://onantisemitism.com/>), published by Jewish Voice for Peace
- *Confronting Zionism* (<https://www.jvpnyc.org/confronting-zionism-book/>), published by the New York City chapter of JVP.
- *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Primer* (<https://www.tni.org/en/publication/understanding-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict>), by Phyllis Bennis
- *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (<https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=26507>), by Noura Erakat

Podcasts:

- *Diaspora* (<https://diasporapodcast.simplecast.com/>), a new podcast from Jewish Voice for Peace
- *Unsettled* (<https://www.unsettledpod.com/>),
- *The Electronic Intifada Podcast* (<https://electronicintifada.net/blog/electronic-intifada-podcast>)
- *Palestinians Podcast* (<https://www.palestinianspodcast.com/>)
- *Treyf* (<https://www.treyfpodcast.com/>)