

Why I Believe the Association of Jewish Psychologists Should NOT Be Awarded a Seat on APA's Council of Representatives

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Note: This open letter reflects my personal views and not those of any group with which I am affiliated. It is available online [here](#).

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Dear Members of the American Psychological Association's Council of Representatives:

It is my strong and informed opinion that the Association of Jewish Psychologists (AJP) should *not* be awarded an ethnic psychological association seat on APA's Council of Representatives. I hope you will review the significant concerns I describe below prior to casting your vote at the upcoming August Council meeting in Washington, DC. To offer a concise summary, I believe AJP is wholly unsuited for a Council seat for three compelling reasons. Each of these three is deeply concerning. Taken together, they should be disqualifying:

1. Contrary to any claims otherwise, AJP's values and priorities diverge significantly from those of a very substantial part of the American Jewish community.
2. AJP has supported Israel throughout its ongoing devastation and destruction of the Palestinian people — contrary to APA Council's [commitment](#) to “justice, human rights, fairness, and dignity for all.”
3. AJP has joined with other Israel advocacy organizations in weaponizing false claims of antisemitism against those who criticize Israel or speak out in defense of Palestinian rights — contrary to APA Council's [opposition](#) to “efforts aimed at silencing or punishing non-violent advocacy directed towards safeguarding human life and upholding human dignity and human rights.”

I recognize that, for some, these may be surprising assertions. I have therefore documented them in depth, including hyperlinks to articles and reports that merit your attention. As you consider the analysis that follows, please bear in mind this important point: *whether a Jewish organization should hold a seat on APA's Council is an entirely separate question from whether that group should be the Association of Jewish Psychologists. My focus is solely on the latter question.*

Before proceeding, I want to acknowledge the Jewish history of catastrophic loss and how this shared experience — including the horrors of October 7, 2023 — has understandably led to an abiding concern for safety in an all-too-often hostile world. In part, I know this from my own

family's personal [history](#). But like many of my Jewish colleagues, a key lesson I take from our history — and from Judaism's core teachings — is that “Never Again” must be understood as a commitment to protect vulnerable and scapegoated communities at risk of grievous harm *wherever they may be*.

I also believe these words from [Martin Luther King, Jr.'s address](#) at the APA's 1967 convention are worth bearing in mind, especially when pressured toward conformity and compliance:

“On some positions cowardice asks the question, ‘Is it safe?!’ Expediency asks the question, ‘Is it politic?’ Vanity asks the question, ‘Is it popular?’ But conscience must ask the question, ‘Is it right?!’ And there comes a time when one must take a stand that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular. But one must take it because it is right.”

1. AJP's values and priorities diverge significantly from those of a very substantial part of the American Jewish community

AJP's [mission statement](#) emphasizes that identification with the state of Israel is the common bond that unites all Jews as a people. This claim is *false*. Moreover, it dramatically distorts and denigrates what being Jewish means to many American Jews (including groups like [Jewish Voice for Peace](#), [If Not Now](#), [American Council for Judaism](#), [Jewish Diaspora Movement](#), [Jews for Racial & Economic Justice](#), [National Campus Jewish Alliance](#), and [Jewish Psychologists for Justice](#), among others).

***AJP misrepresents the American Jewish community's connection to Israel**

AJP's distorted perspective is apparent in findings from representative surveys of American Jews over the past several years. In a 2020 Pew Research Center [survey](#), only 25% reported feeling very emotionally attached to Israel. This figure was even lower — *only 6%* — among the quarter of American Jews who self-identified as non-religious. In a Washington Post [survey](#) from September 2025, only 24% of American Jews described themselves as feeling very emotionally attached to Israel while 20% responded that they *do not feel attached at all*. And in a Jewish Voter Resource Center (JVRC) [survey](#) earlier this year, 42% of American Jews said they were very emotionally attached to Israel while 17% said they *had no attachment whatsoever*. (Related, a 2025 [survey](#) from the Jewish Federations of North America found that only 37% of American Jews identify as “Zionist.”) Clearly, these survey findings contradict a fundamental claim about American Jews reflected in AJP's mission.

***AJP's membership demographics diverge significantly from the broader American Jewish community**

But there is another important way in which AJP is *not* representative of the American Jewish community: demographics. More specifically, [data](#) from the Pew Research Center show that approximately one-third of American Jews are 40 years-old or younger, and one-third are over 60. Compare that to AJP's own membership [survey](#) from last year¹: only 10% are 40 or under and more than half are over 60 years old. That older Jews are significantly over-represented in AJP is far from trivial — and highlighting this has nothing to do with ageism (I am 73) — because there is a profound and well-documented generational divide within the American Jewish community today, especially in regard to Israel.

For example, last fall's Washington Post survey of American Jews presents some striking [contrasts](#) between those 18 to 34 years-old and those 65 and over. Regarding attachment to Israel, 64% of the younger group say they are “not too” or “not at all” emotionally attached, compared to 32% for the older group. Regarding antisemitism, only 10% of the younger group consider it antisemitic to criticize Israel for its actions in Gaza and only 32% consider it antisemitic to oppose university investments in companies that do business in Israel; the corresponding figures for the older group are much higher: 33% and 67% respectively. Almost half (49%) of the younger group believe the U.S. government is too supportive of Israel, compared to only 25% of the older group. And 44% of the younger group blame Israel more than Hamas for the civilian deaths in Gaza, compared to only 21% of the older group. Finally, the JVRC [survey](#) from this past spring found that fully 44% of those under 35 are in favor of “Establishing one state that is neither Jewish nor Palestinian, and includes Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza under a single government elected by Israelis and Palestinians”; the corresponding figure for the 65-and-older group is only 16%.

The bottom line here is that any claim that AJP is representative of the broader American Jewish community is without substantiation and unjustified.

2. AJP Has Supported Israel Throughout Its Devastation and Destruction of the Palestinian People

AJP's embrace of Israel goes much further than its mission statement alone. The organization is seemingly unwilling to even acknowledge — let alone actually criticize or oppose — the atrocities that Israel has committed against the Palestinian people, including the [deliberate targeting](#) of Palestinian children. Despite the broad [recognition](#) and growing [consensus](#), including among [Israeli scholars](#), that Israel's assault on Gaza constitutes a [genocide](#), AJP's leadership has apparently remained silent — even though the Washington Post [survey](#) mentioned earlier showed that 61% of American Jews believe Israel has committed *war crimes* in Gaza and 39% believe

Israel has committed *genocide* there. Meanwhile a former prime minister of Israel has [warned](#) that Israel is “conducting an organized, systematic, state-funded campaign of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” in the [West Bank](#). And in recent months, Israel has perpetrated [war crimes](#) in Lebanon, with Israel’s national security minister [saying](#), “All of Lebanon must burn!”

***AJP condemned the APA’s post-10/7 statement opposing collective punishment**

AJP’s leadership has taken affirmative steps to support and defend Israel’s unconscionable actions. Two days after the horrific Hamas-led attacks on October 7, 2023, Israel’s defense minister [announced](#), “We are imposing a complete siege on [Gaza]. No electricity, no food, no water, no fuel – everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we must act accordingly.” Shortly thereafter, the APA issued a [press release](#) noting, in part, “There can be no justification for cutting off access to basic necessities, such as electricity, food and medicine.” In their dismaying official [response](#) to the APA, AJP’s board of directors seemingly rejected this core humanitarian principle of international law, describing the APA’s condemnation of such collective punishment as “terribly naïve.”² In sharp contrast, that very same week, groups like [Rabbis for Ceasefire](#) were already calling for an end to Israel’s siege of Gaza. As far as I know, AJP’s leadership has never formally apologized for its stance.

***AJP opposed APA Council’s 2024 resolution calling for a humanitarian ceasefire**

Ten months later, at the August 2024 meeting of APA’s Council of Representatives in Seattle, Washington, an AJP director spoke in *opposition* to a [resolution](#) that called for an “immediate, permanent, and comprehensive ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict.” Months earlier, [hundreds](#) of organizations — including [Amnesty International](#), [Doctors Without Borders](#), [Oxfam International](#), [Save the Children](#), [UNICEF](#), the [United Nations General Assembly](#), the [World Food Programme](#), the [World Health Organization](#), and many other human rights groups, faith-based organizations, and labor unions—had already called for a ceasefire. In fact, a February 2024 [poll](#) from the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding had shown that more American Jews *supported* (50%) than *opposed* (34%) a ceasefire in Gaza — but apparently *not* AJP.

***AJP’s 2025 “mission trip” to Israel in ignored the suffering in Gaza**

As one more example of the organization’s unquestioning allegiance, in March 2025 AJP members embarked on a “mission trip” to Israel. The organization’s promotional [video](#) of the visit begins with an AJP leader explaining, “We are in solidarity with Israel.” It ends with an image of the Israeli flag and the playing of the Israeli national anthem. Gaza receives no mention. But for context, a week before the group arrived, Israel [suspended](#) the entry of all humanitarian aid into Gaza; and two days after their trip ended, Israel broke a fragile two-month ceasefire with surprise “gates of hell” [air attacks](#) across Gaza that killed over 400 Palestinians, including more than 170 children. Meanwhile, a September 2025 Ipsos [survey](#) revealed that, contrary to AJP’s apparent position,

only 31% of American Jews approved of Israel’s military campaign in Gaza over the preceding two years.

As these examples demonstrate, AJP’s posture is deeply distressing from a human rights perspective, and it is also inconsistent with the views of a significant portion of the American Jewish community.

3. AJP Has Weaponized False Charges of Antisemitism Against Human Rights Defenders

AJP’s uncritical defense of Israel has also warped its advocacy on the issue the organization purports to care so much about: antisemitism, which scholars broadly [understand](#) as discrimination, prejudice, hostility, or violence against Jews as Jews.

***AJP ignores the most dangerous sources of antisemitism**

Evidence [shows](#) that the gravest threat posed by antisemitism emerges primarily from the [political right](#), where it is promoted by [Christian nationalists](#), by [white supremacists](#), and by the [Trump administration](#) itself. For example, consider that conservative commentator Tucker Carlson’s October 2025 softball [interview](#) with Nick Fuentes — an antisemite, a Holocaust denier, a Hitler admirer, and a believer in a “global Jewish conspiracy” — has been viewed online *tens of millions of times*.

American Jews understand this reality. Polling [shows](#) that they are more concerned about antisemitism from the political right than from the political left, and an overwhelming [percentage](#) (72%) believe the Trump administration’s claims of antisemitism are merely an *excuse* to attack higher education. But AJP seemingly rejects this outlook from fellow Jews. Rather than directing its efforts toward the most dangerous purveyors of Jew-hatred, the organization focuses instead on targeting those who support Palestinian rights — on college campuses and within the profession — by portraying them as antisemitic for opposing and calling out Israel’s violence and oppression. At the same time, AJP appears to ignore an uncomfortable truth: American Jews are increasingly [imperiled](#) by the genocidal words and actions of Israel’s leaders, who [falsely claim](#) that they are representing and defending “the entire Jewish people.”

***AJP promotes a biased and inaccurate account of antisemitism**

AJP’s misguided and counterproductive priorities regarding antisemitism are apparent in a range of contexts. For example, the organization’s webinar series regularly feature presenters — many of them AJP members — who apparently view antisemitism and criticism of Israel as nearly indistinguishable. In a session titled “The Crisis of Antisemitism on College Campuses,” the

presenter described universities as “hotbeds of antisemitism” and claimed that “Jewish students know that for every student who is vocal about their incitement of violence, there are many others who share the same views but just aren’t saying them out loud.” For another session, titled “Antisemitism in Medical and Mental Health Systems,” the promotional materials explicitly identified anti-Zionism as a form of antisemitism. In a third program, titled “Is It Really That Bad? Antisemitic Experiences Among Jewish Mental Health Professionals,” the presenters promoted their research as a “national study of Jewish mental health professionals” when in fact the data were collected from various pro-Israel organizations (including AJP) and from one of the researcher’s own Facebook and WhatsApp groups. (I’ve written about other serious problems with this research [here](#).) In yet another AJP webinar, titled “The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism: History, Merits, and Debates,” the presenter claimed that “ignorance is the basis” for opposition to the [highly controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition](#), which primarily focuses on [limiting criticism](#) of Israel. And AJP recently advertised another webinar titled “Sisterhood Is Antisemitic: How Feminist Ideas about Identity, Power, Feelings, and Belonging Justified October 7th.”

A similar troubling perspective is apparent in an [article](#) on antisemitism by six AJP board members that was published last year in the *American Psychologist*. I believe the article suffers from numerous shortcomings, distortions, and biases. (I unsuccessfully called for its [retraction](#).) Among the issues I consider most concerning are these: the authors dramatically exaggerate the prevalence of anti-Jewish hate crimes; they endorse the IHRA definition of antisemitism even though it conflates criticism of Israel and Jew-hatred; they present data and conclusions from pro-Israel advocacy groups without identifying those groups as such; they attribute causality to correlational relationships when explaining increases in antisemitism; they inaccurately present the findings of research studies they cite; and they make multiple provocative assertions with insufficient or inaccurate documentation (e.g., “Some [Jews] have supported sanctions against the state of Israel causing great harm to other Jews, especially students.”) In regard to one such instance, after the article was published online, the journal’s editors issued a rare [correction](#) and redaction “because appropriate context was not provided.” The article ends with a self-promotional appeal: that the APA should partner with AJP in combatting antisemitism.

***AJP partners with Israel advocacy groups that weaponize false claims of antisemitism**

More generally, AJP routinely collaborates with other Israel advocacy organizations that insist criticism of Israel’s actions, institutions, or founding principles is intrinsically antisemitic. As one example, the organization has created a partnership with the Anti-Defamation League. The ADL’s CEO Jonathan Greenblatt has [called](#) progressive *Jewish* organizations “hate groups, the photo inverse of white supremacists” and has [equated](#) anti-Zionism with antisemitism. And yet when trillionaire Elon Musk — who has allowed pro-Nazi accounts to [flourish](#) on X — gave a [Nazi salute](#) at Trump’s inauguration celebration last year, Greenblatt described it as merely an [“awkward gesture.”](#)

Beyond Greenblatt's irresponsible statements, the ADL's data that sensationalize the spread and extent of antisemitism in the U.S. have been thoroughly [discredited](#). Their statistics are absurdly [distorted](#) because they count anti-genocide and related [protests](#) (*including by Jews*) as antisemitic. In fact, according to their preposterous [methodology](#), apparently any student who sees an "anti-Zionist flyer" on their college campus can justifiably claim to have been the victim of an antisemitic incident. For a more serious perspective, a [survey](#) by the Jim Joseph Foundation, conducted at the height of the encampments in the spring of 2024, found that 16% of Jewish students reported that they had been personally targeted by antisemitic comments or threats. The same survey found that 13% of Jewish students described their own mental health or emotional well-being as "poor" (compared to 10% of non-Jewish students). Figures like these certainly shouldn't be ignored. But they are far from the epidemic levels of trauma that the ADL and AJP claim.

Taken as a whole, and much like other Israel advocacy groups, AJP's stance toward antisemitism seems to prioritize defending Israel over protecting Jewish Americans.

Conclusion: AJP Should *Not* Be Awarded an APA Council Seat

AJP's leaders may insist that their history of offering unwavering support to Israel and equating criticism of Israel with antisemitism represents the perspective of the American Jewish community.³ *But as I have documented here, this is untrue.* Indeed for many American Jews, including Jewish psychologists, our religious and moral convictions compel us to demand justice for Palestinians and oppose the ugly realities of [occupation](#), [apartheid](#), [war crimes](#), and [genocide](#). To be very clear, defending Israel and protecting Jews from antisemitism are *not* at all the same thing — and, in important ways, they conflict with each other. Moreover, AJP's positions on these core issues prevent it from building partnerships with non-Jewish marginalized groups that, especially today, share similar concerns about looming threats to their communities.

It should also be noted that key elements of AJP's perspective and agenda appear to be inconsistent with two important resolutions that were overwhelmingly adopted at your Council meeting this past February. The policy statement on [Reaffirming APA's Commitment to Human Rights and Freedom of Expression](#) emphasizes that APA rejects "the claim that criticism of any government's policies or actions is intrinsically racist, xenophobic, antisemitic, transphobic, anti-Muslim, misogynistic, ableist, or prejudiced" and opposes "efforts aimed at silencing or punishing non-violent advocacy directed towards safeguarding human life and upholding human dignity and human rights." And the [2026 Resolution on Antisemitism](#) highlights that "the weaponization of antisemitism...creates significant adverse consequences for Jews and non-Jews who oppose the state of Israel's actions and support Palestinian rights."

In sum, the grounds for rejecting AJP's efforts to obtain an APA Council seat are clear, strong, and abundant. As noted earlier, whether there should be a Jewish organization represented on APA's Council is an entirely different question. *However, if AJP does obtain a seat, it will effectively block any other organization that might better reflect the values and priorities of the American Jewish community from ever serving in that role.*

I recognize that my letter will not be well-received by some, but I believe it is necessary, and I share my opinions here in good faith. I also expect that AJP leaders, and perhaps others, may contest my analysis. If so, I encourage you to evaluate their contrary claims carefully — as you should my own. Thank you.

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¹ Perhaps because these demographics are not favorable to AJP's claims of representation, the membership survey report is no longer readily accessible on the AJP website. But it is available [here](#) via the Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine."

² Perhaps recognizing that the statement raises significant questions about AJP's suitability for an APA Council seat, AJP has removed the statement from its website, as though it never existed. But it remains available [here](#) via the Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine."

³ The "Collaborative of Jewish Psychologists" (CJP) has apparently voted to endorse the awarding of an APA Council seat to AJP. I question the value of this vote given that at least two-thirds of CJP members are also members of AJP (in fact, several of them are leaders in AJP). I have previously shared my broader concerns about CJP, including its lack of diversity, [here](#).