

JVP Chicago Statement of Support for Chicago Dyke March Collective



**Chicago Jewish Voice for Peace Statement of Solidarity
with Chicago Dyke March Collective**

As a Jewish organization dedicated to justice for Palestinians and opposition to all forms of bigotry, including antisemitism, Jewish Voice for Peace-Chicago affirms our support for the Chicago Dyke March Collective, a powerful force for justice and queer and trans liberation in our city. While we also hear those who are concerned at the perception that Jewish participants were singled out at the march, we ask that everyone reflect on how events actually unfolded, how Israel has appropriated Jewish identity and symbols, and how that impacts our movement spaces.

On Saturday at the Chicago Dyke March, a small number of members and staff of A Wider Bridge challenged the inclusion of Palestinian human rights as an issue supported by Chicago Dyke March. A Wider Bridge has the explicit purpose of “building a movement of pro-Israel LGBTQ people and allies.” “Pro-Israel,” for a Wider Bridge, has included organizing war rallies cheering on the Israeli military during [the massacre of civilians in Gaza in August 2014](#) and [partnering with Israeli consulates](#) in the US in organizing pinkwashing propaganda tours.

The A Wider Bridge contingent loudly encouraged fellow participants to erase mentions of Palestine during solidarity chants. When Palestinian attendees approached them, they became hostile while expressing explicit support for Zionism, which was one of the ideologies that march organizers had disavowed because it has led to decades of displacement and violence against Palestinians. After a two hour conversation with organizers and other members, the attendees were asked to leave for not respecting the community norms, including opposition to all forms of racism and violence. One of the people asked to leave was Laurel Grauer, Midwest Manager from A Wider Bridge (AWB), who held a rainbow flag with a blue Star of David identical in color, size and placement to the one on the Israeli flag.

Many other Jews, including members of Jewish Voice for Peace-Chicago, were present at Dyke March wearing Jewish symbols, including Stars of David, t-shirts with Hebrew, kippot, and sashes with Yiddish script, and none of them were asked to leave the event, interrogated about their politics, or were the target of any complaints because of their visible Jewish presence.

The Star of David is a Jewish symbol not inherently connected to the State of Israel. Since much of the media coverage has centered on whether Palestinians can justifiably feel unsafe around a blue Star of David in the center of a flag, we believe it is worth remembering that in the West Bank, Israeli flags bearing a blue Star of David fly above military installations and settlements. Stars of David are painted onto Palestinian homes to intimidate people, near Hebrew graffiti calling for “Death to Arabs.” Palestinian homes are demolished and replaced by Jewish homes flying the Star of David on an Israeli flag.

While for many this incident may have evoked fears engrained in our collective memory of instances in which Jews have been singled out, we believe this incident is a sad reminder of the destructive impact of the State of Israel's appropriation of Jewish symbols and identity.

As Jewish Voice for Peace-Chicago, we share the Chicago Dyke March Collective's opposition to state violence, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-Black, anti-immigrant, anti-queer and trans, anti-woman and anti-Person of Color bigotry. As a Jewish organization committed to justice and equality for Palestinians, we invite everybody to work with us in opposing the State of Israel's use of Jewish identity, trauma and symbols in its oppression of Palestinians.

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