

# The Project on Allyship to Combat Antisemitism

## *Allyship Between the Jewish and LGBTQ Communities: An Action Plan* *Corinne Blackmer*

Mainstream and Radical Wings of the LGBTQ Community (podcast overview)

The following description of the makeup of the LGBTQ community could be a podcast that would introduce the community to the public and give vital information about how to forge an allyship with the American LGBTQ communities—both the mainstream and radical wings. We would suggest that [Lillian Faderman](#) speak about the mainstream wing of the queer community, as she supports and represents that community, and that [Miriam F. Elman](#), the executive director of Academic Engagement Network (AEN), who has broad knowledge of all segments of the LGBTQ community, articulate the radical wing. At this point, the moderator, who would have introduced them in the beginning, can do a Q & A. As I've (Lillian Faderman) noted in my monumental history of the LGBTQ civil rights movement, *The Gay Revolution* (2013), since the late-1950s, there have been two contrasting factions within the queer community. As I will explain, the different worldviews of these two groups color prospects and strategies for achieving LGBTQ allyship with Jewish people.

The first—the quieter but larger group—focuses on inclusion and legal recognition within existing social, legal, and political institutions and frameworks. The second—a smaller but louder radical wing—seeks to overthrow such institutions, which it regards as founded on caste, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and imperialism. This revolutionary faction perceives mainstream queers (as well as mainstream women/feminists) as valuable allies worthy of consideration only to the extent that they can be harnessed to overthrow the status quo of Western imperialism. Both groups joined forces for emergency action during the existential crisis of HIV-AIDS (1980-2004) in organizations such as ACT-UP (founded 1987), and others.

Despite the persistence of the HIV-AIDS crisis, particularly in communities of color, after the emergence of efficacious retroviral medications for HIV-AIDS, they once again went their separate ways. Through organizations such as Human Rights Campaign (HRC 1980), the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD 2002), the National Coalition for Lesbian Rights (NCLR 1977), and the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD 1978), the mainstream wing worked tirelessly for equal rights and protections in public accommodations and facilities, education, marriage, military service, international LGBTQ rights, medical care and visitation rights, federally funded programs, housing, employment, inheritance, credit, jury service, and expanded definitions of family.

It's no exaggeration to say that, over the past four decades, mainstream LGBTQ people have at an ever-accelerating pace, enjoyed little less than remarkable success in achieving their goals. Although all dates for beginnings are contingent and contested, most historians, including Faderman and Martin Duberman, regard the June 1969 Stonewall

Riots, which protested police raids and Mafioso control of the Stonewall Bar in New York City, as inaugurating the contemporary LGBTQ civil rights movement. As important, the Stonewall Riots inspired the re-emergence of the radical wing of the queer rights movement, as seen in groups like the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), Lesbian Avengers, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, and Stonewall.

The mainstream triumphs canvassed above have occurred despite a dynamic of repeated setbacks and reversals across time, as witnessed most recently in anti-LGBTQ book and drag bans, anti-gay educational policies, and in restrictions placed on pre-adult transgendered medical care. Despite this, their overall accomplishments have been so impressive that other movements for social justice (e.g., Black, Latina, Women, Labor) have sought to learn from and, when applicable, emulate their attainments.

The mainstream wing of the LGBTQ movement possesses four salient features that have helped realize these felicitous outcomes: (1) rhetorically effective slogans, such as “Love Makes a Family;” (2) a resolute but non-threatening public demeanor; (3) demographics (which applies, of course, to both factions). LGBTQ people are *literally* everywhere: they live on Laguna Pueblo reservations, rural Georgian farms, large Northeastern cities, and small Southwestern desert towns. To the very large extent to which, to live a meaningful life, secure their safety, and deepen their social bonds, LGBTQ people have heeded the early 1970s call to come out of the closet, they have caused queer flowers to bloom across the US. No matter what the biological relation or social connection, Americans (except for older Evangelical Christians) report knowing someone who is LGBTQ. Fourth, mainstream LGBTQ people have kept their eyes on the prize and, largely speaking, have delivered on their promise to secure tangible improvements in the lives of most gay people, including the joys of seeing themselves represented in politics and the media.

While coming out can pose dangers, particularly if queers live among fundamentalist religious or political groups, nonetheless with knowledge generally comes acceptance, recognition, and a sense that mistreatment of LGBTQ people is fundamentally unfair and un-American. Indeed, a 2022 Gallup poll showed that 71% of adult Americans approved of marriage equality, while 89% of 18–29-year-olds did. That 71% of adult Americans agree on *this* issue but on hardly any other one to this extent shows the acceptance that LGBTQ people have achieved in recent times. Other polls report even higher numbers, which continue to grow upwards every year.

In the meantime, while those in the radical front of the LGBTQ movement have created brilliant and influential cultural, artistic, and theoretical works, led experimental lives, entered academia in record numbers, and dedicated themselves to left-wing political causes, mainstream gays, mostly in other employment venues, including the trades, law, business, leisure and entertainment, medicine, manufacturing, retail, and public relations, racked up an impressive series of practical wins. In 1974, the APA removed homosexuality from the DSM-II. *Romer v. Evans* (1996) overturned a Colorado law denying equal protection under the laws to gays and lesbians. The Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr.

Hate Crimes Act of 2009 amended an earlier statute to include sexual orientation, disability, and gender identity. In a watershed moment that, unfortunately, cemented differences within the gay community, SCOTUS found for marriage equality in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), the same year that LGBT people began to serve openly in the military. Even a SCOTUS with a conservative supermajority that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, found for LGBT employees in *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020), and other significant concurrent advances in political representation followed.

Contrasting portraits provide the clearest idea of the salient features of the mainstream versus the radical wings of the LGBTQ community and point towards best strategies for creating alliances with Jewish people.

Pete Buttigieg, currently the gay Democratic Secretary of Transportation in the Biden Administration, had been a mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and a presidential candidate who Biden said reminded him of his beloved deceased son Beau. A Harvard graduate and a Rhodes scholar who knows several languages and served as an intelligence officer in the US Navy in Afghanistan, Buttigieg subsequently married Chasten Glezman (now Chasten Buttigieg), a public-school teacher with whom Buttigieg adopted two newborn twins. A devout Episcopalian who has ambitions to eventually run again for the presidency, Buttigieg is a hero for mainstream LGBTQ people, and garners approval from considerable segment of the American public.

An advocate, of course, for the LGBTQ Equality Act, he has also proposed enacting the Douglass Plan (named after Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass), which would address systemic racism by supporting various initiatives, from funding Black entrepreneurship to passing an expanded Voting Rights Act. Buttigieg, significantly, strongly supports Israel and the two-state solution. In his positive views of Israel, he mirrors the overall opinions of mainstream LGBTQ people, for whom Israel is not only a crucial democratic ally in a “bad neighborhood,” but also an admirable and welcoming exemplar of gay civil rights protections. Mainstream LGBTQ people who can afford the costs often go to the annual world-famous tourist destination, the Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade.

As Miriam Elman explains, there is a bold contrast between the mainstream and radical wings of the community. For instance, the feminist and philosopher Judith Butler, the Maxine Elliott Professor of Comparative Literature and Critical Theory at UC Berkeley, identifies as a Jewish non-binary lesbian who prefers to use, they/them as pronouns. They live in Berkeley and New Jersey with their son and their partner, the political scientist Wendy Brown, whose recent work focuses on nihilism and climate change. Famous for their early volume, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler unsettles commonsense notions of sex and gender, and develops a theory of gender performativity, based on the idea that gender can be known only as a performance, usually unconscious, that upholds heteropatriarchy. In *Bodies That Matter* (1993), they postulate that sex does not exist in any meaningful fashion prior to cultural interpretations of it. Butler

reconfigures significations around biological sex in a trans-friendly fashion that has facilitated conceptions of sex as a spectrum rather than a male-female binary.

Along with becoming embroiled in scandals around comments they made about the sexual harassment of a graduate student and definitions of Hamas and Hezbollah, they have written seminal books, lectures, and articles, and won several prestigious prizes. Most important, Butler is the most influential proponent of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in the US. In *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (2012), they call for Israeli Jews to become a minority in Palestine that abandons the Right of Return, Zionism, and political self-determination. Describing themselves as the avatar of an ethical Judaism that rejects the Jewish State because they eschew settler colonialism and state violence, in a recent article on the 2023 Israel-Hamas War, “The Compass of Mourning,” they asserted that the violence of Hamas, which rules Gaza as a state actor, must be understood in reference to the depredations of the past seventy years—a contextualization of unspeakably brutal antisemitic violence that has drawn the rebuke of many critics, who accuse them of countenancing Hamas’s genocidal intent and acts against Jews.

Butler, an idolized and famous model for the left-wing LGBTQ movement has, like most of the impressive numbers of preponderantly middle or upper middle class of students, readers, and scholars they have influenced, intransigent anti-Israel passions. Since they propound the BDS credo articulated by Palestinian activist and intellectual Omar Barghouti in 2003, there have been no opportunities for speaking with or influencing them, since they refuse to engage in debate with the other side. The usual rejoinder is that arguing with the other side is tantamount to arguing with Nazis about the Holocaust, which accompanies standard accusations against Israel of settler colonialism, genocide, apartheid, and racism.

Butler and other left wing LGBTQ intellectual influencers, such as Sarah Schulman, Jasbir Puar, Dean Spade, Angela Davis, and others in their orbit, work hard to instill anti-Israel sentiments in college students. To do so, they publish prolifically, serve as speakers, teach one-sided views of the Israel-Palestine conflict, and insert anti-Zionist topics into unrelated course materials, such as devoting sections on anti-Israel subject matter in classes on American Women’s Studies, Creative Writing, Information Science, Contract Law, or 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Literature, to name but a few examples.

They also search for new fields of knowledge in which they are not experts to further colonize Israel, such as occurred when Jasbir Puar, a post-colonial feminist, entered the field of Disability Studies in *The Right to Maim* (2017), to excoriate Israel. She erroneously contended that Israel and Palestine have the highest rates of disabled people in the world (that distinction belongs to China), that the Israeli government has provided LGBTQ Israelis civil rights only because, in having children in that pro-natal country, they produce future soldiers for the war against Palestinians, and that an Israeli pathologist used body parts from a Palestinian cadaver to conduct medical experiments (an expression of the medieval

antisemitic blood libel that was untrue: the cadaver in question was that of a Mizrahi Jew and the pathologist was arrested and prosecuted by the Israeli government). However, Puar won a prestigious prize from the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) for *The Right to Maim*. More broadly speaking, anti-Zionist factions have, sometimes in stealthy ways, overtaken an increasingly number of academic associations, beginning with the stridently anti-Zionist NWSA in 2015.

The Israel-focused work of most of these queer academic intellectuals, usually written in obscure academic prose, contains an endemic number of false, defamatory, antisemitic, and distorted statements about Israel, LGBTQ people, and Jews. But the publication process moves forward without self-reflective critical review because of the anti-Zionist policies of most university presses, which use anti-Israel readers who, unfortunately, are often known personally by prospective authors. In addition, in refusing to speak to critics with opposing views, anti-Zionists not only erode academic freedom, which depends on the open and free exchange of ideas, but also, ironically, rob themselves of opportunities to sharpen their anti-Israel arguments, many of which are unsubstantiated.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, the revolutionary queer faction abandons women and LGBTQ people when recognizing them interferes with their greater mission of promoting anti-Western causes. This occurs, for Butler, in *Prearious Life* (2004) and elsewhere, where they advise queers to make alliances with radical Muslims, despite the latter's homophobia and sexism. In addition, Puar, like other leftist queers, has taken sharp aim at mainstream LGBTQ people. She, like other revolutionary queers such as Schulman, Davis, and Spade, excoriate mainstream LGBTQ people for their happiness in "politically quiescent" lives of marriage, children, and housing and employment protections that in their view mirror heteropatriarchy.

They accuse mainstream LGBTQ people who critique Islamic homophobia or who visit Israel of "pink washing;" meaning, the sidelining of Palestinian and Muslim immigrant struggles against Islamophobia and Western imperialism in favor of lauding pro-gay democratic norms and enjoying queer tourism in LGBTQ friendly Israel. Of course, this formulation obliterates the realities and concerns of LGBTQ Muslims, who are caught in the crosshairs of their experience of Islamic homophobia on the one hand and denials in the name of avoiding Islamophobia on the other. The revolutionary queer wing has also attacked mainstream LGBTQ people for their rescue efforts for gays in dangerous homophobic countries where they stand in peril of long prison sentences or losing their lives. Puar, for her part, reduces these humanitarian endeavors to a racist matter of "white gays" trying to rescue "brown gays" from "brown men" (*Terrorist Assemblages* 2007). Finally, with a few exceptions, leftwing queers regard the civil rights achievements of mainstream LGBTQ people as mainly having scant value because they are mere laudatory imitations of normative Western values.

These attacks are particularly harsh and remorseless against Jewish LGBTQ people, particularly youth, who commit, in the eyes of revolutionary Jewish queers, the cardinal sin

of supporting Israel as Zionists. On American campuses, particularly prestigious ones that host active chapters of Students for Justice Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP)—the latter which the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as a hate group—they have recently, since October 7<sup>th</sup> and the genocidal attack on Israeli Jews—been hounded, harassed, intimidated, and hectored at Ivy League and other prestigious colleges. For the most part, university administrators have failed to protect Jewish students, and thus have become subject to accusations of tolerating endemic antisemitism. However, as seen in the large-scale anti-Israel campus and urban protests that have erupted since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas War, the revolutionary wing of the LGBTQ movement has substantial traction with collegiate queer youth that should not be underestimated. The fervent queer young people protesting today against what they perceive as gross injustices against the Palestinians, will become the future leaders of the US—in public-facing sectors like non-profit organizations, media, journalism, law, and, most important, government. Finally, over the past seventy plus years, the inferior caste status of Palestinians has ossified, a fact that poses considerable obstacles not only to peace but also to possibilities of queer left-wing allyship with Jewish people.

### **Acquiring Foundational Knowledge**

Adjunctive to this introduction to the LGBTQ community is basic knowledge that necessary to communicate with and understand this community.

**Terminology:** Jews who purport to be allies with the LGBTQ community should understand and know how to use terms that are crucial to that community. These include but are not limited to homophobia, gender dysphoria, gender expression, gender identity, gender recognition certificate (GRC), heterosexism, heteropatriarchy, heteronormativity, biphobia, spectrum, transgender woman, transgender man, butch, femme, intersex, bisexual, cis-gendered (or cis), non-binary, queer, questioning, asexual, pansexual, coming out, transitioning, the closet, pronouns, passing, and others found in the following comprehensive list: [LGBTQ terms and definitions](#). Being conversant with at least the most major of these terms will help convince LGBTQ people that we care enough to understand and know how to use applicable language.

**News and Newsworthy Events:** To help persuade the LGBTQ community that we are serious and informed allies, we should not only know the meaning of crucial terms, but also be reasonably conversant with important news and newsworthy events impacting the community on an updated basis. We can use search engines to look under, for instance, “current LGBTQ news,” or set up Google notifications for LGBTQ news and noteworthy events for up-to-date notifications. NBC News has a particularly useful and complete list offering at [NBC News Out](#), but there are many others, including queer owned or operated venues such as [LGBTQ Nation](#), [Advocate](#), and other [major LGBTQ news outlets in the USA](#) that have various specific foci, from the [Washington Blade](#) (politics) and [Queerty](#) (entertainment and queer celebrities) to [Out Magazine](#) (TV, movies, video, music, and

travel) and [GLAAD](#) (a queer anti-defamation publication that has extensive information on LGBTQ culture, media, and public representation).

**Research and Analysis:** In addition to being LGBTQ literate about terminology, current news, and newsworthy cultural and political events, allies of the LGBTQ community need, to have helpful, current knowledge of research about and analysis of salient queer topics and demographic data. As a comprehensive source of knowledge about everything from the percentage of LGBT people in each state, in addition to their socioeconomic status and encounter(s) with bias to levels of education and HIV/AIDS+ status, the [Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law](#) is the gold standard. The Williams Institute measures the percentage of the population who are LGBTQ (1 in 6 Americans under 18 identify as LGBTQ), in addition to sundry other percentages by race, region, religion, and socioeconomic status. They chronicle LGBTQ people's struggles with bullying, discrimination, rejection, and mental and physical health issues and disparities, as well as the special challenges faced by transgender people, particularly adolescents and young adults, among other topics.

The research of the Williams Institute also tracks LGBTQ issues and proposed laws worldwide, as does the excellent [Human Rights Watch](#) site. HRW takes the pulse of current developments regarding denial of rights or criminalization of LGBTQ rights throughout the world, which is propelled principally by the two forces that have oppressed LGBTQ people for 2,000 years: heteropatriarchy/sexism and fundamentalist Christianity and Islam. Also, there is a the section of the [Pew Research Center](#) dedicated to LGBTQ trends and analyses. The Pew Research Center focuses on the relationship between the LGBTQ community and the behavior, beliefs, and attitudes of non-LGBTQ people, making this a superb site for exploring general societal attitudes towards queer people in the USA, which have improved greatly over time and across generations. They, for instance, track the percentage of same-sex marriages in countries or jurisdictions where it is legal, and compare their findings to other statistics for marriage and attitudes towards marriage equality. Pew also reports the much greater use of online dating by LGBTQ as opposed to straight people, as well as the percentage (7%) of the American population who identify as LGBTQ. Both the Williams Center and Pew also do outstanding work documenting the experiences and attitudes toward non-white, non-binary, and transgender people across age groups, regions, and socioeconomic status.

The [Anti-Defamation League](#) (ADL) site has excellent resources for the relationship between Jews and the LGBTQ community and exhibits, like an excellent ally, a sustained commitment to equal rights for queer people. They address their outreach to educators, law enforcement, and parents, families and caregivers, of particular note is the ADL's materials for educators.

Further, the [NIH \(National Institute for Health\)](#), has excellent analyses of how the rapidly changing growth and acceptance of LGBTQ populations poses challenges for analysis (a concern that is also echoed and investigated by the Williams Center and Pew), as numbers

and the assumptions behind them are evolving rapidly in the very dynamic arena of LGBTQ lives. They also track the LGBTQ community's continued struggles achieving parity in health care. Also, [American Progress](#) has a superb analysis of the ethical and practical challenges of obtaining accurate, quality information about LGBTQ populations given the dynamic historical relations and inadequate incorporation of this population into standard research surveys, such as, for instance, the American Community Survey.

Becoming conversant with LGBTQ research and analysis also enables LGBTQ allies to grasp the importance of and speak competently about controversies within the LGBTQ community in compassionate and respectful ways that do not distort, exacerbate divisions, or encourage adverse reactions. The major controversy rocking the LGBTQ community in 2024 (and likely beyond)—both internally and in relation to the non-queer world—pertains to certain issues around transgender individuals. Much helpful information can be obtained at the [National Center for Transgender Equality](#).

Controversial issues in this area, most of which are prominent in external culture, as well as in political battles, include: 1) use of bathroom facilities that match one's gender identity as opposed to the sex one was assigned at birth; 2) concerns for the safety of cis-gendered or biological females if previously all-biological female spaces are open to transgender individuals; 3) the participation of transgender women in cis-gendered female sports, with all the advantages, depending on several variables, that those assigned the male sex at birth have over those assigned as females at birth have in athletic performance; 4) the appropriate age at which transgender individuals can or should obtain transgender surgeries or medications; 5) concerns over the suicidality and/or mental health of transgender people who cannot, for whatever reasons, access gender transitioning medical care; 6) controversies over whether sex, biologically speaking, is a binary of male and female or, alternately, an array of possibilities that exists on a gender spectrum; and 7) the conviction, among some LGB people that LGB is about sexuality difference rather than gender identity, and that T, which concerns gender identity and expression, does not belong in the same category.

We, as allies, should be able to articulate informed perspectives that neither erase other views nor engage in polemics, denial, or distortion. One such very useful and wide ranging YouTube [conversation](#) took place between Neil DeGrasse Tyson and Ben Shapiro on the issue of whether sex is a biological male/female binary or a gender spectrum. Tyson states that what science determines as "truth" is far less important than the liberty of Americans to express themselves on a spectrum—a decision that should not concern Shapiro unless he's using biological science to advance his *political* agenda. They also discuss transgender women in sports, the appropriate age of transitioning, and other topics bearing on transgender concerns. But because of the way Tyson frames the discussion, he avoids divisive polemics while giving free expression to all sides of this issue and not reaching for answers prematurely. Allies should find venues that enable them to take such clear but sophisticated stances on these and related matters of controversy in the LGBTQ community.



### **Historical Narrative and Knowledge:**

Understanding the basic outlines of LGBTQ history is crucial for being an effective, particularly given the salient proximities of issues in Jewish and LGBTQ history, respectively. In essence, as explored in [World History Encyclopedia](#), gay and transgender/transsexual relationships were so accepted in the ancient world from Mesopotamia and China to North Africa and Greece/Rome, that no particular note is taken of their “significance” in the lives of men. The only exception is the unease apparent when adult males assume the passive role in same sex sexual relations, which demonstrates, along with the general erasure of women, the patriarchal nature of these ancient civilizations. With the advent of Christianity and Islam, however, which sought to crush male (and female) same-sex relations because of their intimate relationship within pagan religions, homosexuality was severely repressed and persecuted throughout the world for 2,000 years. As chronicled in the [Trevor Project](#), starting in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the adumbration of historical and scientific knowledge and the expansion of democratic norms in the Western world, the 2,000 year old silencing and persecution of LGBTQ people began to unravel, first with Magnus Hirschfeld’s work on the history of homosexuality in Weimar, Germany, then with the 1969 Stonewall Riots in NYC, which inaugurated the contemporary LGBTQ civil rights movement. Finally, it is helpful to have a basic knowledge of some of the most influential and world-changing LGBTQ famous historical individuals, from Socrates, Alexander the Great, Sappho, and Julius Caesar, to Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Oscar Wilde, Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolf, Josephine Baker, Frieda Kahlo, Alan Turing, Bayard Rustin, James Baldwin, Andy Warhol, Freddie Mercury, and many others.

### **Proximate Alliances: Drawing Jewish and LGBTQ Communities Together Using Social Media Platforms**

Constructing social media sites of various focal points, lengths, formats, areas of knowledge, and agendas will be central to forging allyship between Jewish and LGBTQ communities. Because most material on social platforms, with some exceptions, will need to be maintained and updated on a regular basis, high school or college students, likely LGBTQ Jewish individuals, should be employed to fulfill this task to the extent that they are able. In other cases, larger changes will need to be made that will necessitate the participation of major content creators.

**Using Tik Tok for Personal LGBTQ/Jewish Narrative:** Although the future of Tik Tok remains uncertain in the USA, efforts to ban this highly useful and persuasive social media will likely not ultimately succeed. For the purposes of the Jewish-LGBTQ Allyship project, 60 second to 3-minute (the latter is the maximum allowed) informational or personal narrative videos would be highly effective in forging closer alliances and reaching younger audiences. These Tik Tok videos could be branded as belonging to the Jewish-LGBTQ Allyship Project.

One example would be a compact version of the personal narrative that opens my book, *Queering Anti-Zionism: Academic Freedom, LGBTQ Intellectuals, and Israel/Palestine Campus Activism* (Wayne State UP 2022). In my personal narrative, I describe how I was the object of antisemitic/anti-Zionist and homophobic hate crimes that erased the antisemitic aspect of the crimes and focused wholly on the homophobia. I would continue to briefly explain how this mischaracterization was driven by antisemitism and anti-Zionism and that it compromised efforts to identify the perpetrator(s) of the crime. Finally, I would say that the crime spurred me to “come out of the closet” as a Jew and work toward lessening anti-Zionism by creating a course in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at my university.

To this narrative could be appended many and various others, including, for instance, the experiences of college age students with homophobia and anti-Zionism/antisemitism on campuses, not to mention stories about the pain and isolation caused by divisions between the narrator’s identities as a Jew and queer person, respectively. Stories of students and, in addition, professors and staff, experiencing antisemitic bullying, harassment and even physical assault could be added, with an emphasis on the unfairness and bias of these situations, not to mention the fear they caused. Stories of LGBTQ (or not) Jews off-campus would also be useful as, for example, the narratives of rabbis and congregants (queer or straight allies) who had helped others deal with antisemitism and homophobia. Crucial within these narratives will be the voices and stories of non-LGBTQ Jewish allies committed to and knowledgeable about the fight against homophobia.

**Informational Narratives on Tik Tok.** In addition to personal narratives, Tik Tok could be used as an ideal stage for conveying crucial information about Jews and Judaism relevant to the LGBTQ community that, to the extent possible, showcased the familiarity of Jews with LGBTQ concerns. While the number of possible topics is immense, emphasis should be placed on the following areas: How, since the late 1990s, the major sects of Judaism (Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative) outside of Orthodoxy, abandoned homophobic policies, as well as interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, making mainstream forms of Judaism true allies of the LGBTQ community. Such informational videos could briefly explain the hows and whys of biblical reinterpretation, interesting facts surrounding them, and the status, in Judaism, of King David and Jonathan as ancient same-sex warrior lovers. Other narratives could feature LGBTQ couples leading up to or following their marriage ceremonies, as well as information on their vows, the content of their celebrations, and their future. Still other informational Tik Tok videos could focus on Jewish holidays such as Pesach, Yom Purim, and Hannukah, etc., and explain them and how many had adapted them to be LGBTQ friendly and inclusive. All these informational videos could and should include mention of Jewish ally’s support for the Equality Act, including an explanation of the Equality Act and how it also helps Black Americans and others in substantial ways. Finally, and most important, informational/narrative videos could make direct appeals to LGBTQ audiences, explaining how and why it made sense for Jews and LGBTQ people to become close allies. Such indispensable videos could focus on how the similar challenges and histories of Jews and LGBTQ people made them natural partners. These factors

include: 1) how Jews and LGBTQ people have, for 2,000+ years, both been targeted for persecution and appropriation by Christianity and Islam, and other religions that came within the orbit of these two major monotheistic faiths. In the case of Judaism, this occurred because Jews refused to abandon their national ambitions and religious specificity to Roman imperialistic ambitions and, in the case of LGBTQ people, because they were associated with the sexual ethos of earlier polytheistic religions and ancient cultures, which Islam and Christianity sought to eliminate. 2) How, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this antisemitism and homophobia became a dominant Nazi theme that led to the elimination and/or persecution of them under the Nazis, so that Jews wore the yellow star, gays the pink star, and lesbians the black star. Post-Holocaust, both Jews and LGBTQ people are the ongoing targets of religion-based bigotry and intolerance, both on national and international arenas. Finally, emphasis should be given to the fact that, relative to their percentage of the overall population, both Jews and LGBTQ people led in the incidence of hate crimes in the USA, as both were the focus of increasingly visible, violent, dangerous, and murderous right wing hate groups. These videos could be updated on a regular basis to respond to hate crimes or incidents of bias and misinformation around everything from gender reassignment therapies to bans on LGBTQ (and, in some cases, Jewish) books, and the motivating forces behind such bans.

Tik Toks should address and condemn acts against the LGBTQ community as they arise, including book bans, curtailments on teaching LGBTQ materials in K-12 schools, disruptions (by various hate groups) of drag queens reading to children, and violent hate crimes involving injury or death, such as what occurred at the Pulse Nightclub in Florida.

### **Ted Talk “Type” Formats (You Tube)**

However, much of the content that needs to be shared in this Jewish-LGBTQ Allyship project cannot be contained within the 3-minute scope of a Tik Tok video. Some other materials, particularly those of a contested or controversial nature, are better suited to Ted Talk “type” formats that could feature one or, preferably, two or more speakers in constructive, informative dialogue about an important issue—for example, the relationships between the American LGBTQ community and Israel. Since, in radical queer quarters, LGBTQ views of Israel are negative (as well as ill-informed), the fashion in which the Jewish-LGBTQ Allyship Project frames this relationship is all-important.

For an interactive discussion about the relationship between the American LGBTQ community and Israel, we advise, in the first place, a framing that places Israeli laws and policies towards its LGBTQ community within a comparative international context and clarifies that Israel matters to the American LGBTQ community because Israel is a pro-LGBTQ democracy. We suggest that [Professor R. Amy Elman](#), a well respected political scientist who specializes in antisemitism and the politics of Israel, do this comparative framing. Professor Elman could compare Israel’s policies and laws towards LGBTQ people with those of others in Middle and Near Eastern nations considering a brief review of their histories and forms of government. Prof. Elman should address the “pink washing”

allegation directly, which refers to the non sequitur argument that Israel burnishes its pro-queer image only to sideline its denial of political rights for Palestinians. Elman should emphasize how this argument erases the concerns of LGBTQ Palestinians and LGBTQ Muslim European and American migrants, who disappear between the cracks. However, she should also mention the growth, activities, and philosophies of pro-LGBTQ Palestinian groups in the West Bank such as [Aswat](#) and [alQaws](#). These groups reject what they regard as Western style “gay liberation politics” based on sexuality identities. Rather, they accept living and working within a traditional (and homophobic) culture that, they say, does not differ from homophobic Jewish subcultures such as Iranian and Orthodox cultures. After Prof. Elman has contextualized Israel, we advise that two scholars (we suggest [Andrew Pessin](#) and [Anne Bayefsky](#)) address the four most common major accusations made against Israel (apartheid, settler colonialism, racism, and genocide) and, in answering them, name and respond to the strongest arguments forwarded by the opposition. They should also address how Israel, a pro-LGBTQ democracy, works as a model that serves the interests of queer people everywhere.

## Podcasts

Pertaining specifically to the recent Israel-HAMAS War, a well-regarded social scientist or historian such as [David Hirsch](#) or [Bennie Morris](#) (among others), can once again provide the context of the conflict, discussing the origin and development of HAMAS, their agenda and ideology, and the solid *proof* of their actions against Israelis on October 7, combined with conspiracy theories that have developed around these events and the basic reasons for these theories’ proliferation. As in the case of other podcasts, this one should be moderated, interactive, and critically designed to give voice to and answer opposing viewpoints.

A second podcast on the Israel-HAMAS War should focus both on the reaction of some American students to it, but with the major emphasis falling on the on-the-ground realities and difficult decisions surrounding this conflict. We strongly suggest that this podcast feature [Malcolm J. Nance](#) and [John Spenser](#), both of whom are internationally recognized experts in asymmetrical and urban warfare, respectively, in addition to counterinsurgency and terrorism. They are both capable of giving detailed, factual, hard hitting analytical information about the tactics and strategies involved in this war, including the functions of the tunnels, the use of supposed “dumb” bombs, the means necessary to destroy HAMAS and so forth.