

JVP News

Nov. 2014

Israelis and Palestinians – Two Peoples, One Future

How you
can help us
sustain dramatic
growth.



Liza Behrendt
JVP Organizer
Boston Chapter

JVP ORGANIZERS MAKE AN IMPACT

When you make a contribution to Jewish Voice for Peace, a portion goes to support our on-the-ground organizers who work in communities and on college campuses. Part strategist, part counselor, and part politician, organizers do the impossible every day. They support volunteer JVP leaders to run and win campaigns, influence elected officials, and educate the public. The difference an organizer makes is often exponential. In fact, the only complaint we have about JVP's organizers is that we don't have enough of them.

We asked Liza Behrendt, Boston chapter organizer, to tell us about what it's like to organize with JVP.

How did you get involved?

I went on a Birthright trip while Israel was bombarding Gaza during Operation Cast Lead in 2008, and I was shocked by the trip leaders' disregard for Palestinian life. Back home, my Jewish community refused to act in the face of this injustice, so I joined Students for Justice in Palestine and later co-founded a JVP campus chapter.

After graduating from Brandeis, I interned with the organizing team, and then joined the national board.

JVP mentorship over the years made a huge difference to my leadership, understanding, and skills. For example, JVP organizers helped us respond

when our campus Hillel's refusal to admit the JVP chapter became a national story.

What does an organizer do?

I think the most important thing is listening: gaining a deep enough understanding of other activists' vision so that you can support them in bringing those ideas to life. That

listening happens everywhere: in meetings, on the phone, over breakfast, late at night. On a typical day, I might edit press releases, lead a training on meeting facilitation, ask members to

flier for our Boycott SodaStream campaign, and juggle dozens of phone calls and emails in-between.

*There's no work
I'd rather be
doing.*

Continued on back page

SUSTAINING ONE OF AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

In just a few months, JVP has grown from 41 to 72 chapters, and we now have 9,000 members and nearly 200,000 online supporters. This is a critical period for us: to sustain this dramatic growth, your contributions will go to supporting members, existing, and emerging chapters, so we can build even more powerful grassroots campaigns to reach a lasting and just peace.



Emily & Andrew, UC Santa Barbara

After returning from Israel/Palestine, we knew that we wanted to continue to fight for justice and an end to the occupation in Palestine. We were eager to help start a local chapter because we knew that having JVP on our campus could help shift the conversation on Israel/Palestine and increase campus activism for a just peace.



Elena Stein, South Florida

The South Florida chapter grew out of the urgency of the Israeli assault on Gaza this summer. We're humbled to join the larger JVP network in organizing to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, for a just solution for Palestinian refugees, and for respect for the human rights and self-determination of all people.



Amanda Lundquist, Western Mass.

I'd been wishing there were a chapter in Western Mass. It didn't occur to me that I could start one myself. Thankfully it occurred to Dori Midnight, who had a suspicion that we'd all be looking for each other after this summer's heartbreaking siege on Gaza.

Jewish Voice for Peace by the numbers

CHAPTER GROWTH



41 CURRENT CHAPTERS
72 TOTAL CHAPTERS
31 CHAPTERS IN DEVELOPMENT

ORGANIZERS ON STAFF



SUSTAINABILITY

1:9 CURRENT RATIO OF ORGANIZERS TO CHAPTERS
1:3 MINIMUM SUSTAINABLE RATIO



Daniel Klein, Pittsburgh, PA

After moving here from Tel Aviv, I have met a number of Pittsburghers who said they felt left out of the Jewish community because of its unconditional support for Israel. Israel's actions over the summer created urgency around this issue, highlighting for our small group of chapter leaders the fact that if we did not build our own community then we would continue to be isolated and irrelevant.



Ted Brown, Rochester, NY

My moment came in August 2014. I had retained a vague and romantic commitment to "liberal Zionism" most of my adult life, but after visiting Israel several times in the 1990s and 2000s I grew increasingly dismayed and angry about the directions in which Israeli society and politics were moving. This summer's assault on Gaza pushed me to action and I helped create a Rochester JVP chapter.



Sarah Blume, Ann Arbor, MI

After University of Michigan's divestment campaign and sit-in last year, I found myself – along with quite a few other Jewish students – extremely frustrated by our campus' attitudes and reactions. We felt that JVP was a necessary space for us to express our views, as Jews, against the occupation, pro-divestment, and in solidarity with the Palestinian students.



We're not waiting. 2015

Jewish Voice for Peace
National Membership Meeting
March 13th - 15th, Baltimore, MD

Register today at jvp.org/nmm

Continued from front page

How did JVP-Boston respond to Israel's attack on Gaza this summer?

We were inspired by Palestinians' resiliency, in Gaza and around the world. It was time to fill the streets, speak truth to elected officials, interrupt corporate complicity, and stop Jewish leaders from supporting a massacre in our names.

We worked with a dozen other peace and justice organizations to form the #Boston4Gaza coalition, which turned out 2,000 people for an emergency rally. We held the street outside the State House, suspending business as usual, for more than three hours. It was a display of power that almost every news outlet in Boston – print

and tv and radio – covered. Social media lit up. Politicians could not leave work without seeing a die-in on their front steps. As night fell, local Palestinian activists read the names of people killed in Israel's attacks, and our community cried and mourned together.

During Cast Lead, I remember feeling confused, helpless, and like opposing the war was a fringe position. This summer, I was just as devastated and outraged, but I felt clear, focused, and like part of a growing global consensus. Whether we demonstrated against an occupation-profiteering corporation or a Jewish community pro-war rally, we did it as part of JVP and the Palestinian-led BDS movement. There's no work I'd rather be doing.

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