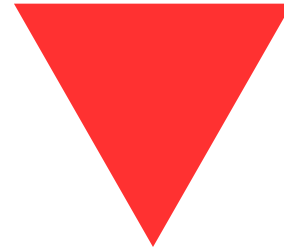


*Nothing Sacred:  
In Defense of the  
Squirrel Hill Vandal(s)*



2024



**Note:** *This is not a report back. The authors of this communique were not involved in the action and do not know who was (not that they would tell you if they did.) They are just some local antizionist Jews who want to set the record straight. They are not affiliated with Jewish Voice for Peace, nor do they wish to be.*

As you are probably aware if you live in Pittsburgh, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh and Chabad of Squirrel Hill were both vandalized overnight on July 29th.

If you were not already aware of this action, you will not be surprised to learn now that it made a lot of people *very* angry.



*Vandalism of the Jewish Federation sign (left) and the Chabad of Squirrel Hill (right). The JFed sign states “Jewish Federation FUNDS GENOCIDE, ♥ Jews, HATE ZIONISM.” The Chabad graffiti states “JEWS 4 PALESTINE ♥”*

The vandalism was immediately labeled “antisemitic.” Every news story described it as such without so much as adding quotation marks, and there seemed to be immediate consensus that phrases like “Love Jews, Hate Zionism” and “Jews 4 Palestine” were threatening.

Even Pittsburgh Jewish Voice for Peace issued an open letter distancing themselves from the graffiti— strange, considering most of its members would agree with everything the vandal(s) wrote.

Local Zionists seized on the vandalism as an opportunity to attack all antizionist Jews, of course. They make no distinction between antizionists who are respectable and those who break the rules.

Take, for example, this op-ed published in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle on August 7th:

“Spending years in feminist\* circles — coming into contact with scores of handmaidens groveling to men for favor, despite it being against their better interests —

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\* We thank the author of this op-ed for their poignant illustration of the weaponization of white feminism against communities of color.

*Glory to Our Martyrs!*



*“♥ Jews, HATE ZIONISM.”*

**Nothing Sacred:**

unapologetic critique of zionist institutions,  
from an antizionist Jewish perspective

<https://nothingsacred.noblogs.org>



— it's easy to understand why self-hating individuals defect and look to the other side. It is a survival mechanism as old as time and as vast as the globe, and Jews are by no means immune to the phenomenon. [...]

The recent vandalism in Pittsburgh — including graffiti declaring 'Jews 4 Palestine' — purportedly done in the name of Jews, is unfortunately just another escalation in the sinister trend of Western Jews seeking higher standing with demographics who fundamentally oppose them. Everyone has heard of the quintessential self-hating Jew, but it takes a special kind of self-deprecation to display such willingness to be used as a pawn, just to earn a seat at the table.”

Day after day they label us collaborators and *kapos*; over and over they try to exile us from a religion and culture they think they own. No wishy-washy open letter can save us. They will always treat us as spineless bootlickers willing to betray our ancestors “to earn a seat at the table.”

But what seats are we meant to be earning? And at whose table?

As the piece progresses, the author warns antizionist Jews that *they* will abandon us “at any hint of faltering allegiance to antisemitism.” She cautions that *they* “despise [our] unmasked true selves.” Though she is too cowardly to say it with her whole chest, what she means is that we are sucking up to our Arab and Muslim comrades to lower the likelihood that they will murder us someday.

This racist bile masquerading as a defiant broadside against antisemitism encapsulates the Zionist mindfuck so perfectly – they say they want to protect Jews, but all they mean is that they want to hurt Arabs and Muslims.

To stand in true solidarity, antizionist Jews must push back against this hatred at every opportunity. We cannot allow Zionists to control the narrative any longer. It is time for us to set the record straight.

In that spirit, we mount the following three-part defense of the vandalous, scandalous comrade(s) who took this anonymous, autonomous action:

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## Notes (continued...)

### 1) The graffiti is not a threat, but an affirmation.

This was not an expression of antisemitism, let alone a “hate crime.” This was a forceful affirmation of Jewish identity and its liberatory potential beyond Zionism. Indeed, the very phrase “Jews 4 Palestine” insists that Jewish-ness can and does exist outside the constraints of a 19th century settler colonialist ideology.

Countering effacement with defacement, it asserts:

***We are the future of Judaism, and if you will not see us then we will make ourselves seen.***

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### 2) Chabad is Bad\*\*

The Chabad-Lubavitch movement (which we refer to simply as Chabad from here on out) is an Orthodox Jewish tradition founded about 250 years ago. It has been hugely influential to modern Jewish life, operating thousands of “Chabad Houses” around the world including hundreds of centers on college campuses.

Chabad’s PR leads with warm fuzzy words about inclusion and belonging, and surely plenty of Jews do find those things at Chabad. We are not personally criticizing every single individual who has ever attended services at Chabad or participated in their events. Rather we are criticizing the institution and its role in propagating harmful ideology at both the national and local levels. If you scratch the surface you will find that Chabad’s official and formally stated position has quite a bit in common with the designs of Itamar Ben Gvir, Bezael Smotrich, and other Israeli fascists.

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\*\* Okay, it’s reductive to say Chabad is “bad,” but one of our authors thought it was kind of funny and then couldn’t come up with anything better.

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91. **challenging the initiative:** *Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Files Legal Challenges Against Proposed City Referendum Targeting Israel.* Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/bp65pt7h>
92. **a trio of Trump lawyers:** *Former Trump lawyers take aim at a popular initiative encouraging Pittsburgh’s divestment from Israel.* Pittsburgh City Paper. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/yb84mp6x>
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## Conclusion

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74. **since at least 2016:** *Jewish Delegate Assembly of Greater Pittsburgh Statement in Opposition to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement against Israel.* Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/25t6fzn7>
75. **Laura Cherner:** *Jewish Federation Community Relations Council Hires Laura Cherner for New Assistant Director Position.* Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2bspuv>
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Chabad makes no secret of its Zionist vision—it boasts openly that “the leaders of the Chabad Lubavitch were actively involved in [the] settlement” of Palestine, and indeed there are Chabad settlements in Israel today. One such settlement, Kfar Chabad, was founded by the sixth leader of Chabad (Rabbi Yozef Yitzchak Schneersohn.) It was built over the rubble of the Palestinian village of al-Safiriyya, which was ethnically cleansed in the Nakba.

al-Safiriyya was destroyed in 1948; construction of Kfar Chabad began in 1949.



*Residents of Kfar Chabad greet [Israeli] President Zalman Shazar in 1963. Photo and caption via Chabad website.*

The seventh leader of Chabad (Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson) carried on his predecessor's legacy of belligerent Zionism. While the world debated the “land for peace” proposals of the 1980s, the rabbi flatly opposed returning *any* land to Palestinians under *any* circumstances. He argued that giving up territory would necessarily put Jews in danger, and the Israeli government was therefore morally obligated to protect its people by crushing the Palestinian liberation movement. Any military intervention, no matter how brutal, could be justified because (Jewish) lives were at stake.

In one particularly despicable passage, written in 1982, the rabbi lamented that by negotiating with the PLO the Israeli government was eschewing “total victory” and instead “leav[ing] all the bacteria inside the wound, and just shift[ing] around the bacteria from one area to another.”

Palestinians are framed then, in Chabad's ideology, as agents of *disease*—foreign bodies invading and attacking healthy Jewish tissue. The movement for liberation is an infectious scourge that must be obliterated entirely, leaving no troublesome cells behind to reproduce and regroup. And these teachings of the rabbi are not some dark secret, or a relic of a different time that no longer represents the position of the organization. Rather, Chabad continues to promote the rabbi's writings on Israel as holy wisdom. The bacteria analogy above is included in a recent featured post on the Chabad website written in defense of Israel's indefensible actions in Gaza.



*Chabad having a normal one*

Even Chabad's less bellicose propaganda is deeply Zionist. Take this listicle, 23 Facts About the Land of Israel Every Jew Should Know — Chabad states as objective “fact” that Israel was gifted to the Jewish people by God and that the land remains their “eternal inheritance.” Another so-called fact: Israel's true borders extend beyond the state's current territory to include parts of modern-day Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The area under these imagined borders, also called “Greater Israel,” is apparently “uniquely endeared to the Jewish people.”

## Notes (continued...)

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54. **“tidal wave of hate”**: *This Is What It's Like to be a Jew at UCLA*. Chabad House on Campus. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/ymdukbyv>
55. **“worse than you can imagine and more disgusting than you can envision”**: *Mothering Jewish Students in the Shadow of the Hateful Encampments*. Chabad House on Campus. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/4dcmvesm>
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### Section 3: “The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh *does* fund genocide.”

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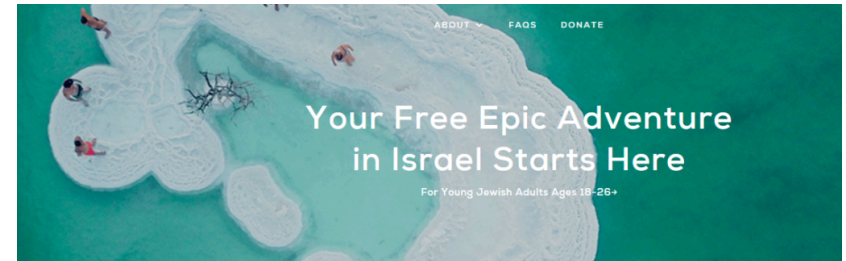


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37. **explained at the time:** *Full Exposure: Pittsburgh University Executives See Israel For Themselves.* Chabad House on Campus. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/yvtke5j5>
38. **collecting donations to send to IDF soldiers:** *Help Us Support the Brave Soldiers in the IDF.* Chabad at Pitt. Instagram: <https://tinyurl.com/3cubn5yr>
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Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2fstjev8>
40. **Pastor John Hagee:** *He Claimed God Sent Hitler to Create Israel. Now He’s Speaking at the Pro-Israel Rally.* What? Mother Jones. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9nfneb>
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45. **“highlight”** : Instagram: @sara.weinstein.39 Link: <https://tinyurl.com/3s5ek6b6>
46. **Chabad at Carnegie Mellon:** *Free Israel Trips.* Chabad of Carnegie Mellon University.  
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51. **5 Reasons Why the Events in Gaza are Not “Genocide”:** *5 Reasons Why the Events in Gaza Are Not “Genocide.”* AJC. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/rm7jvw3z>
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Are you beginning to see why it’s a problem that Chabad has embedded itself so deeply in Jewish communities and college life?

Chabad is a visible presence on university campuses around the world, offering benign social activities like challah braiding workshops and potlucks even as it works to indoctrinate young people into Zionism. Prime example of its insidious influence: Chabad is a huge proponent of Birthright trips, free 10-day propaganda-filled vacations to Israel available to all American young adults of Jewish descent.\*\*\*



Screengrab from <https://www.birthrightisrael.com/about-the-trip>

These trips are cynically designed to catch young Jews at their most impressionable and instill in them a lifelong love for the West’s favorite settler colony. *Go on a hike, go clubbing, go sightseeing, then go back home and tell all of your friends how cool Israel is!*

It bears pointing out that the state of Israel is practically begging Jews to visit even as they deny Palestinians the right of return. Young Jewish Americans are taught that this land is their God-given entitlement, while Palestinian refugees are forbidden to come home to the places where they and their ancestors were born.

But Chabad doesn’t just lead propaganda trips for students– for example, Chani Altein, Rebbetzin at the Chabad of Squirrel Hill, has personally led several trips to Israel designed for adult women. These trips were coordinated through the Momentum program, which has been described as Birthright for moms. Participants only have to pay the cost of airfare as the bulk of the trip is underwritten by the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh... and by the Israeli Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.

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\*\*\* Jewish descent in this specific context is defined very broadly - anyone with even one Jewish grandparent, regardless of the individual’s level of religious observance or lack thereof, is eligible to go on Birthright. Compare and contrast this attitude with the way Zionists decide who “counts” as Jewish when Jews start criticizing Israel.



Photo published in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle. Original caption: Momentum's Pittsburgh cohort in 2018  
(Photo courtesy of Chani Altein)

Rebbetzin Altein's Momentum trips are customized specially for yinzers to include a two-day stopover in Karmiel, one of Pittsburgh's "sister cities." Located in northern Israel, Karmiel got its start in 1964 when it was built over the ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages of Bi'na, Deir Al Asad, and Nahf as part of Israel's plan to "Judaize the Galilee."

Today the city's population is about 94% Jewish, and its government is working hard to keep it that way.

"We need to prevent unnecessary conflict between Jews and Arabs," deputy mayor Oren Milstein explained... "We should be living one next to the other and not in such close proximity. Carmiel already has 1,000 Arab residents, and soon they will want a mosque."

— Excerpt from '*Carmiel is a Jewish city*,' court tells Arab students seeking transportation, November 2020, Times of Israel

The city is so hostile to Arab residents that it simply refuses to provide transportation to school for Palestinian children living in the district. Israeli courts have ruled this perfectly legal under the 2018 "nation-state" law. According to the presiding judge himself, "the construction of an Arabic-language school or providing transportation for Arab students, wherever and whoever wants it, could change the demographic balance and the character of the city." This would, of course, be unacceptable.

## Notes (continued...)

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# Notes

## Introduction

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3. **Take, for example, this op-ed:** *Not in our name.* Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/3r985pp3>
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## Section 1: "The graffiti is not a threat, but an affirmation."

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## Section 2: "Chabad is Bad."

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9. **Bezael Smotrich:** *Smotrich says there's no Palestinian people, declares his family "real Palestinians."* The Times of Israel. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/mwnt3ar8>
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To put it plainly, our sister city is an apartheid town built on stolen land, and Chabad of Squirrel Hill takes moms there for fun little female bonding trips. This is no different than vacationing in India in 1920 or South Africa in 1985; the experience is made possible only through the brutal oppression and exploitation of the indigenous population.

Chabad doesn't even limit its use of propaganda tourism to the Jewish community. Chabad at Pitt actually offers tours of Israel tailored to "top level [university] administrators, who determine campus policy" and led one such trip in 2018. Rabbi Shmuel Weinstein of Chabad at Pitt explained at the time that the tour was meant to counter "false depictions of Israel as an Apartheid state."

**Please understand us:** Chabad has actively participated in pro-Israel indoctrination and lobbying in our community for years, and this activity has only intensified since October 7th.

As early as October 9th, Chabad at Pitt was collecting donations to send to IDF soldiers.

**HELP US SUPPORT THE  
BRAVE SOLDIERS IN THE IDF**

**EVERY PENNY GOES TOWARDS IDF SOLDIERS  
AND PROTECTING THE JEWISH PEOPLE!**

**MARC RUBIN IS THE  
BROTHER OF A  
MEMBER OF THE  
PITT COMMUNITY.  
HE IS FIGHTING ON  
THE FRONTLINES AS  
A TANK DRIVER**

**VENMO:  
@CHABADATPITT**



Chabad at Pitt collaborated with Hillel at Pitt to bus students to the March for Israel in Washington D.C. on November 14th of last year. The event featured Christian Zionists like Pastor John Hagee who, frankly, could not care less if Jews live or die.





Chabad at Pitt also promoted an event back in January organized by the Student Coalition for Israel at Pitt which brought an “IDF commando veteran” onto campus to speak about his recent service in Gaza.



In July, Sara and Rabbi Weinstein of Chabad at Pitt visited Israel for the international Chabad on Campus convention. The convention featured a special meeting between Prime Minister Netanyahu and the leaders of Chabad on Campus programs; this was about six weeks *after* the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced his intention to seek arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant.

We have also seen the argument that the graffiti’s appearance in the same neighborhood as Tree of Life indicates a particularly vicious intent on behalf of the vandals, and frankly we think this is asinine too. We cannot help it that some of the institutions funding genocide in our community are located in Squirrel Hill. We cannot help it that some of them are Jewish. These organizations cannot, ***must not*** be immune from criticism simply by virtue of their location or their religious affiliation.

**To our fellow antizionist Jews:** It is time for us to openly and unapologetically critique these mighty Zionist institutions. Palestine cannot wait.

**To our Arab and Muslim comrades:** We are sorry that it took us so long.

**To all of our allies & accomplices:** We will have to work harder than ever before to keep each other safe.

This will not be easy, but nothing worth fighting for ever is.



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“The Pittsburgh Jewish community, which continues to bear the scars of the Oct. 27, 2018, Pittsburgh synagogue shooting as well as Hamas’ Oct. 7 terrorist attack, remains concerned with the rise in antisemitism, said Rabbi Henschel Rosenfeld, director of Chabad Young Professionals. He recalled a recent text he received.

‘They said to me, ‘Rabbi, what’s next? Is it going to be Kristallnacht?’” referencing the 1938 pogrom carried out in Germany by the Nazi party.

Rosenfeld said that the biggest difference between 1938 and now is evidenced by the politicians and police standing behind him “to make sure we can continue to be loud and proud in our Judaism.”

– *Pittsburgh Jewish community targeted with antisemitic graffiti* (7/29/24) in Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle

We agree with Rabbi Rosenfeld that the support of politicians and police is a big difference between this instance of petty vandalism and the Nazi pogroms of the late 1930s. The terror of Kristallnacht, of the Holocaust as a whole, is precisely that it had the backing of the state and that its perpetrators acted on behalf of the powerful. This framing of Zionist Jews as a marginalized, vulnerable class completely inverts the true power dynamics at play.

Our president is a Zionist. Our senators are Zionists. Our governor is a Zionist. Most of our local politicians and all of our loudest and most obnoxious local media personalities are Zionists. And, of course, Zionists are the only Jews the local media ever seem to have time to interview.

The “biggest difference” between European Jews in 1938 and Jewish American Zionists in 2024 is that ***Zionists are not being persecuted.*** Which is to say, the contexts are as different as they could possibly be.

We are similarly disgusted by those who invoke the 2018 Tree of Life massacre in their condemnations of this vandalism. We cannot believe we have to say this, but spray-painting an empty building overnight is not the same as murdering 11 people during a religious service. Get a fucking grip.

Sara Weinstein posted a few pictures from the meet and greet on Instagram, noting in the caption that meeting Netanyahu was a “highlight” for her husband.



*Rabbi Shmuel Weinstein of Chabad at Pitt meets war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu in July 2024*

Chabad has also attacked our movement locally.

Last Fall the Rabbi of Chabad at Carnegie Mellon told the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle that in his view protest chants which use the word *intifada* are “openly calling for violence.” He stated that he had contacted the CMU administration to request that students participating in these chants “be held accountable.”

When the Pitt Student Government Board released a statement in solidarity with encampment protesters, Chabad at Pitt and Hillel swiftly responded with a statement of their own. They described the protests as “inaccurate, hateful, and harmful to Jewish students” and referred readers to a listicle called 5 Reasons Why the Events in Gaza are Not “Genocide.” The piece was published by a pro-Israel lobbying group.

Unsurprisingly Chabad at Pitt condemned the second Pitt encampment too, alleging that the encampment demands were “abhorrent, discriminatory, and entirely driven by hate”

This histrionic language is entirely in line with the thousands of other statements, op-eds, essays, and news stories in which Chabad representatives intentionally stoke fear about antisemitism on college campuses. The president of Chabad at UCLA claimed that being a Jew at the university was like encountering a “tidal wave of hate,” a Chabad emissary at the University of Chicago said that the campus climate was “worse than you can imagine and more disgusting than you can envision,” another essay posted on the Chabad website warned that “modern post-colonial theory” is “no different than the beast that lurked beneath the cloaks of Hitler’s Nazi professors,” and so on and so forth, with infinite examples.

So how much longer are we supposed to sit quietly and let them call us Nazis?

Why can’t we stand up to the racist and Islamophobic organizations that malign our cause?

And how much more harm should we allow our religious institutions to inflict before we begin to challenge their sanctity?

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### 3) The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh *does* fund genocide.



- **Opposition to the City Divestment Ballot Initiative**

JFed’s CRC also led the charge against the recent ballot initiative to implement city-wide divestment from Israel. On August 14th JFed announced that it was challenging the initiative with the help of Julie Paris’ lobbying firm StandWithUs and a trio of Trump lawyers. In a remarkable coincidence, Mayor Gainey’s Director of Communications Maria Montano was forced to resign that very same day for having signed the petition.

After the petition was withdrawn due to the legal challenge, JFed chalked it up as a “victory.”



*Left to right: CRC Director Laura Cherner, Trump lawyers Efrem Grail, Carolyn McGee and Ronald Hicks, lobbyist Julie Paris, and JFed CEO Jeff Finkelstein pose for a celebratory photo to commemorate the withdrawal of the divestment petition.*

Here’s how JFed described the ballot initiative, by the way–

“The Jewish Federation views this initiative as a direct threat to the operations, well-being and security of Jewish institutions and synagogues across Pittsburgh. The Federation is committed to defending the community against this attack and ensuring that Pittsburgh remains a place where all can live and worship in peace and security.”

“Direct threat.” “Attack.” If we showed you the above paragraph with no context, you would probably assume it was written in reference to the vandalism of Chabad. But no, this is just how they talk about everything that we do no matter how legally or peacefully we organize.





**Part VII Investments - Other Securities.**

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" on Form 990, Part IV, line 11b. See Form 990, Part X, line 12.

(a) Description of security or category (including name of security)	(b) Book value	(c) Method of valuation: Cost or end-of-year market value
(1) Financial derivatives		
(2) Closely-held equity interests		
(3) Other		
(A) INVESTMENTS IN GEN PARTNERSHIPS	265,005	F
(B) INVESTMENTS IN LTD PARTNERSHIPS	21,325,734	F
(C) ISRAEL BONDS	8,536,285	F

This should be enough to convince you of JFed’s complicity in genocide, but (unfortunately) there is more.

JFed also supports a number of nonprofits based in Israel, and one of the primary goals of its Israel programs is encouraging diasporic Jews to make Aliyah (move to Israel). This is no surprise when you consider that Jewish Federations of North America, a membership organization to which JFed belongs, funds the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) – an organization dedicated specifically to facilitating Jewish immigration to historical Palestine. According to JAFI’s publicly available impact report, they helped 76,261 people immigrate to Israel in 2022 alone.

One of the JAFI projects funded directly by JFed is the Selah Absorption Center located in our dear apartheid sister city of Karmiel. These ominously named absorption centers “offer a ‘soft landing’ and transitional housing for new immigrant families and adults” to help them integrate into Israeli society. The center in Karmiel caters specifically to “recent high school graduates from the Former Soviet Union” and features a mandatory army preparatory course. At the end of the 10 month program, these newly minted citizens head off to serve in the IDF.

JFed also funds a JAFI-operated pre-army leadership academy in Karmiel. When participants complete the program, they head off to (you guessed it) serve in the IDF.

A third JFed-funded program of particular interest operating in Karmiel is a paramilitary terrorist organization called HaShomer HaChadash. They are a right-wing Zionist militia notorious for terrorizing Palestinian families and attempting to drive them off their lands, and JFed reported in December that its parent organization, Jewish Federations of North America, had just gifted them another \$300,000.

Though the JFed post about their recent donation to HaShomer HaChadash suggests that the organization’s mission is addressing food insecurity, the post nonetheless includes five separate images of men carrying weapons. The photos in the post were taken by Pittsburghers on a recent “solidarity mission” to Israel; some of the men in the photographs appear to be wearing the badge of the Israeli Border Police.



Photos from JFed; collage created by authors

If that still – *still* – isn’t enough, JFed also engages in pro-Israel lobbying via its Community Relations Council (CRC).

The JFed CRC has officially opposed the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement since at least 2016. The hiring announcement for Laura Cherner, the current Director of the CRC, stated outright that her job duties would include working to “combat” BDS. The JFed CRC’s lobbying efforts were instrumental to passing our state anti-BDS law, and according to JFed’s tax returns they spent \$288,000 on legislative lobbying efforts from 2019-2022 alone.

The CRC has not limited itself to lobbying at the state level either; it has targeted our pro-Palestine community right here in Pittsburgh at every opportunity.