

# COMBATING ANTISEMITISM

A WORKSHOP FOR MUSEUM EDUCATORS  
**COUNCIL OF AMERICAN JEWISH MUSEUMS**  
DECEMBER 8, 9, 15 & 16, 2020

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**F**vents of the past two years have raised pressing concerns about antisemitism, racism, and hate-based violence in America. In response, many museums have placed new emphasis on countering hate through their work.

The Council of American Jewish Museums, with generous support from The Natan Fund, has developed this four-day workshop for museum educators and others on the front lines of discourse about antisemitism and racism. The workshop brings together a mix of thought leaders and practitioners to examine historic and contemporary antisemitism, and to develop new approaches for addressing it.

We invite you to join us in this important effort, and look forward to your participation and insights.

—Avi Decter & Gabriel Goldstein  
*Program Co-Chairs*

—Melissa Martens Yaverbaum  
*Executive Director*

DAY ONE | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

12.08

11 AM EST | SESSION A1

**WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND MEETING THE MOMENT**

11:25 AM EST | SESSION A2

**ANTISEMITISM AND THE AMERICAN PAST**

Americans were stunned when gunmen murdered Jews in synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway—though this violence stands atop a long history of antisemitism in America. Historian Pamela Nadell provides us with an American context for antisemitism—including considerations of gender, immigration, and prejudices against other groups—to help us grapple with antisemitism in our own times. *Presentation followed by Q&A*

SPEAKER:

**Pamela Nadell** (American University)

12:20 PM EST | BREAK

1 PM EST | SESSION A3

**A FRAMEWORK FOR ANTISEMITISM**

This conversation with historian Deborah Lipstadt will shed light on antisemitism and its evolution—from its global roots to classic tropes and nomenclature—and how we recognize it. It will provide a theoretical and structural framework for comprehending antisemitism, and will prepare us to better navigate contemporary issues. *Conversational presentation*

SPEAKERS:

**Deborah Lipstadt** (Emory University)

**Carole Zawatsky** (Independent Consultant)

2 PM EST | SESSION A4

**REAL ENCOUNTERS, REAL RESPONSES**

Participants will work together in small groups—each tackling an instance of antisemitism experienced in our museums or communities. How do we understand these contemporary challenges? How can we respond as museum educators? And how do such experiences change our work and inform new approaches? *Working groups*

FACILITATORS:

**Ilana Benson** (Yeshiva University Museum)

**Amanda Coven** (Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education)

**Jordanna Gessler** (Holocaust Museum LA)

**Luna Goldberg** (Jewish Museum of Florida/FIU)

**Ari Goldstein** (Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust)

**Leah Simpson** (CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center)

11 AM EST | SESSION B1

## IN CONTEXT OF OUR MUSEUM NARRATIVES

Different types of Jewish museums employ different approaches to antisemitism. Given the missions, storylines, and priorities of our museums—how does antisemitism operate within those frameworks? What assumptions, perspectives, and institutional biases do we bring to our education programs, and how might these affect our presentation of antisemitism? This session will set up questions and dilemmas, highlight examples, and allow participants to explore these through a writing exercise.

*Conversational presentation followed by personal writing exercise*

SPEAKERS:

**Fred Wasserman** (Independent Consultant)

**Carole Zawatsky** (Independent Consultant)

NOON EST | SESSION B2

## SIGNALING VALUES & MODELING DECENCY

Jewish museums serve a wide variety of audiences. How do we provide our users with safe spaces for addressing difficult or contentious issues? How do we welcome and engage users, including those we actively don't like? How do we represent the values of our institutions and model decency? And what are the outcomes we desire (that is, how do we want our visitors to feel—resilient, angry, guilty, inspired, informed, ready for action)?

*Panelist presentation with Q&A*

SPEAKER:

**Elaine Heumann Gurian** (Independent Consultant)

12:45 PM EST | BREAK

1:30 PM EST | SESSION B3

## IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT OF RACE & JUSTICE

How can Jewish museums address antisemitism as a timely, contemporary issue while also taking into account pressing issues of racial injustice in America? How might culturally specific museums reconsider and recalibrate their own stories of persecution within the American narrative of race, and how can these related—but very different—stories work together appropriately and authentically, with expertise, nuance, and accountability for their own pasts?

*Panelist presentations followed by Q&A*

SPEAKERS:

**Melanie Adams** (Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum)

**Sol Davis** (Jewish History Museum)

**Lisa Sasaki** (Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center)

**Moderator: Judy Margles** (Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education)

2:30 PM EST | SESSION B4

### **RESISTING OPPRESSION AND HATE THROUGH MUSEUM PROGRAMS**

Museums have the ability to build relationships and expand knowledge to challenge hate and oppression in communities. This session will introduce several foundational lenses that the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience uses in building its programming, asking: who are we working with, what place are we in, what stories can we share, and what changes do we seek?

*Facilitated workshop*

FACILITATOR:

**Braden Paynter** (International Coalition of Sites of Conscience)



**DAY THREE | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15**

10:45 AM EST | SESSION C1

### **LEARNING ABOUT AND FROM THE HOLOCAUST**

With many of our museums founded in reaction to the Holocaust—what lessons do we draw that apply to antisemitism? Some focus on the Holocaust as part of Jewish history, while others frame it as part of WWII, as an instance of genocide, or as part of the human struggle with hatred and human rights. What is most relevant and useful in the lessons of the Holocaust for educating about antisemitism? What's problematic? What needs clearer definition through our work?

*Panelist presentations followed by analysis*

SPEAKERS:

**Edna Friedberg** (US Holocaust Memorial Museum)

**Sholom Friedmann** (Amud Aish Memorial Museum)

**Tomasz Kuncewicz** (Auschwitz Jewish Center)

**Ruth Lichtenstein** (Project Witness)

**Judy Margles** (Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education)

NOON EST | SESSION C2

### **VISIBLE COMMUNITIES, VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES**

In addressing antisemitism, how do museums account for the ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity of Jewish people? And how are antisemitism and prejudice experienced differently? This session will shed light on how museums might better address these storylines and work with new audiences.

*Panelist presentations followed by Q&A*

SPEAKERS:

**Bryant Heinzelman** (Independent Consultant)

**Gugulethu Moyo** (Jewish History Museum)

**Jill Vexler** (Independent Consultant)

1 PM EST | BREAK

1:45 PM EST | SESSION C3

**UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL COMMUNITIES AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH ANTISEMITISM AND THE PANDEMIC**

We are currently living through a pandemic that affects almost every part of life and our museum work. For those seeking to comprehend and discuss antisemitism, the dialog surrounding COVID-19 is a highly charged and sensitive one. This session will help us to better understand and engage Haredi stakeholders, audiences, and priorities—what can we learn from and about these communities and from their historic and contemporary interactions with prejudice and victimization? *Conversational presentation followed by Q&A*

SPEAKERS:

**Nesha Abramson** (Vaad Refuah)

**Jonah Boyarin** (New York City Commission on Human Rights)

**Ayala Fader** (Fordham University)

**Yosef Rapaport**

2:45 PM EST | SESSION C4

**OY VS. JOY!**

Jewish museums are often caught between the narratives of “oy” and “joy.” How do we present, encourage, or inculcate positive Jewish identity and enduring faith in Judaism alongside thousands of years of persecution? How do we understand joy and hope alongside a truthful understanding of the Jewish past and recurring patterns of history (and antisemitism)? This session will examine how we balance these issues in our museums and how we can use unique museum assets in analyzing the breadth of the Jewish experience. *Panelist presentations followed by Q&A*

SPEAKERS:

**Judith Joseph** (Orot)

**Samuel Klein** (Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle)

**Deborah Sacks Mintz** (Hadar’s Rising Song Institute)

**Jane Sherwin Shapiro** (Orot)

11 AM EST | SESSION D1

## **WORKING WITH COMMUNITY VOICES**

Museum education efforts often rely heavily on volunteers, Holocaust survivors and family members, interns, and board members. As programs built on community involvement, how can we use such knowledge and experiences to maximum advantage? What other voices might we include as representatives and narrators to educate about the issues of our times? How do we best pair community voices with those of academics, museum staff, and historical resources? This session will envision new and exciting configurations for addressing antisemitism, given diverse human and historical resources. *Presentations and conversation*

SPEAKERS:

**Elizabeth Diament** (National Gallery of Art)

**Sean Kelley** (Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site)

**Laura Schiavo** (George Washington University)

NOON EST | SESSION D2

## **STRATEGIES AND IMPLICATIONS**

Participants will work together in small groups to discuss strategies for moving the work of confronting antisemitism forward in our museums. *Working groups*

1 PM EST | BREAK

1:30 PM EST | SESSION D3

## **IN THESE TIMES**

In his writings, Eric Ward emphasizes that in order to understand the threat posed by the white nationalist movement, we must come to terms with the centrality of antisemitism to white nationalist ideology. Over this past year, how have these ideologies grown side by side, and what might we anticipate in these times of populism? *Presentation followed by Q&A*

SPEAKER:

**Eric Ward** (Western States Center)

2:30 PM EST | **WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TOGETHER?**

Workshop leaders will summarize what was explored during the course of the workshop and ask participants to share their views on its impact. *Discussion and feedback exercise*