

Lina Morales Bio

Lina Morales was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of a Mexican immigrant father and a Jewish American mother of Litvak heritage. She was raised in a leftist household, and was lucky enough to be exposed to movements and leftist thought from an early age. She started being radicalized on the issue of Palestine when she went on a Birthright trip in 1998 and saw for herself the undeniable parallels between systematic racism and segregation in Chicago/the US and in Israel/Palestine.

After going to college at MIT, she was involved in many struggles over the years, including transgender rights, radical queer activism, housing rights, anti-police brutality organizing, while staying active in Palestine solidarity work. Looking to ground her Palestine work in a broader context, she studied the history of Zionism and learned Yiddish, and through the community of Yiddishists was able to make connections to broader Jewish communities than she grew up, especially including religious Jews, Israelis, and Mizrahi/Sephardi Jews.

She got involved with JVP first in Boston in 2013, helping to organize the youth of JVP Boston, leading a series of talks on Radical Jewish History, talking on panels, speaking at protests, and becoming a founding core member of the Jews of Color, Mizrahim and Sephardim Caucus in 2015. She recently moved to NYC in 2017 to start a tech career and wants to help move JVP forward in strategy and vision to put an end to Israeli apartheid within our days.

Statement

What is your history of working within JVP and other organizations in the movement? I got active after going on a Birthright in 1998, first via Palestine@MIT and then through other smaller organizations such as IJAN and Boston Coalition for Palestinian Rights. I started getting active with JVP Boston in 2013 and led organizing for Young Jewish Voice for Peace - Boston (YJVP) and also led a series of lectures on Radical Jewish History about various topics. In addition, I was a core member at the foundation of the Jews of Color, Mizrahi and Sephardi Caucus in 2015 and have been an active member ever since. I've organized protests, spoken on panels, and written articles on a number of topics, including the complexities of Jewish pro-Palestinian activism.

Why do you think you would make a good nominee for board elections this year? I was raised in the left, giving me crucial perspective about the long-term success of movements and fluency in leftist analysis. In addition, I am from the younger generation that is increasingly detaching from Zionism, and am intimately involved in communities of younger jews that are looking for a political way forward. I am also a biracial jew of color, who was raised in a community targeted by structural racism, and I have an intimate knowledge of the challenges of organizing between white Ashkenazi Jews and people of color in general, and with JOCMS (jews of color, Mizrahim & Sepharadim) in particular, along with the promise of such coalition work.

These are some of the qualities we are looking for in potential nominees. Please put a star(*) next to those qualities you think you would be able to bring to JVP's Board : (these are broad categories we are using to match potential nominees with our understanding of JVP's needs right now. We don't expect every prospective nominee to possess every quality):

- Leadership and governance experience in large and/or fast growing nonprofits, particularly political and/or membership organizations.
- Strategic leadership in grassroots activism, policy advocacy, and/or cultural work related to justice in Palestine and Israel. *
- A commitment to ending oppression in all forms. *
- Leadership experience at the local, regional and/or ideally national levels of JVP or other organizations in our movement. *
- Fundraising skills
- Knowledge of one or more of JVP's strategic focus areas: Campus Organizing; Interfaith; Legislative Advocacy; Arts and Culture; Jewish Community Transformation; Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaigns *
- Intersectional political analysis and ability to build and sustain alliances between JVP and other social justice organizations and sectors. *
- Understands the experiences of Jews who are marginalized within mainstream Jewish communities and has a commitment to challenging ashkenasi centrism *
- Excellent interpersonal skills in collaborative/work with a diverse group of interested and influential individuals; volunteers, allies and staff. *
- Other:

What are other skills, networks, perspectives, or experiences you think you would bring as a board member? I can speak Yiddish and through that and other communities, I have more experience with sectors of the Jewish community you don't often meet at JVP, including Orthodox Jews, working class Jews, and Mizrahi/Sephardi Jews. Without sacrificing our principles, I think there is a great opportunity for JVP to start communicating in a way that will come off better to these other sectors of Jews, that is more grounded and historical, that will prove that our solidarity with Palestinians is not a rejection of Jewishness but grounded in our identity and history. In addition to everything I have mentioned above, I have made it a priority to not just reject Zionism, but also think deeply about the historical context from which the Zionist movement came from, in order to better fight against it and reclaim the political diversity that was common in Jewish communities before the success of the Zionist project.

Of any of these qualities, are there particular areas where you think you would especially shine? Definitely in helping JVP actually become an anti-racist organization within itself and build successful coalitions with other anti-racist and anti-imperialist organizations. I think JVP is at a crossroads in terms of moving forward with a more radical and pointed political stance, and I want to help JVP to "lean in" to anti-Zionism. Also, I have some global connection among diaspora Jewish organizations that share our politics, and I would love to put together a network of diaspora Jewish organizations opposed to Israeli apartheid.

Anything else you'd like to tell us about yourself? JVP has been my activist home for five years now and I'm excited to help move JVP forward!