



2025 ASSESSMENT

THE STATE OF ANTISEMITISM
IN PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC
ASSOCIATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Professional academic associations are an often unrecognized part of the higher education landscape, yet they are deeply influential in shaping the culture and intellectual contributions of academic fields and disciplines. As publishers and conveners, they play a vital role in the production and dissemination of knowledge. They also serve as a primary source of professional socialization for academics across campuses, and often set the standards for professional ethics.

Yet many of these organizations have fundamentally failed their membership by allowing, or even encouraging, antisemitism to thrive. In recent months, we've heard alarming stories from Jewish association members. Many report feeling physically unsafe at conferences, hiding their identities or self-censoring their speech for fear of losing professional opportunities, and being subjected to hostile content through association channels such as interest group listservs.

Antisemitism is showing up across associations and across the activities in which those associations engage, and few organizational leaders are responding forcefully. These reports are consistent with findings from a recent Anti-Defamation League/Academic Engagement Network survey of Jewish-identifying U.S.-based faculty members who were recruited through snowball sampling across ADL and AEN networks.¹ Of the 190 surveyed faculty members who are members of professional academic associations, 42% reported feeling unwelcome in their association because they are Jewish or perceived as Zionists.²

The Ratings and Assessments Institute (RAI) *2025 Assessment: The State of Antisemitism in Professional Academic Associations* offers the first data-driven assessment of how 20 major U.S.-based associations serving humanities and social and behavioral science fields and disciplines are experiencing and addressing antisemitism. Each association is assessed on the prevalence and severity of antisemitic activity and leadership response to antisemitism, including the provision and enforcement of strong institutional safeguards. Using public sources, association leader and member feedback, and vetted incidents reported to ADL, we provide a clear narrative description of the state of antisemitism in each association to inform association leaders, members and potential members, university administrators, funders, and policymakers and to drive urgent reform.

The goal of this report is to support professional academic associations in preventing, recognizing, and responding to antisemitism. Documenting antisemitism is a first step toward organizational accountability. To promote change, we conclude with some comments about the path forward. We have also included some actionable strategies for those seeking to raise concerns or advocate for change within their associations, as well as a checklist of concrete steps professional academic association leaders can take to prevent and appropriately respond to antisemitism.

We hope this report prompts institutional reflection and action. We encourage members, staff, and elected leaders of professional academic associations to use this as a springboard for meaningful dialogue and reform.

¹ Faculty Under Fire: Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias in Higher Education (2025) Anti-Defamation League and Academic Engagement Network. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/faculty-under-fire-antisemitism-and-anti-israel-bias-higher-education>

² Ibid.

ASSOCIATION ASSESSMENT

MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

American Anthropological Association
Association for Asian American Studies
American Psychological Association
American Studies Association
Middle East Studies Association
Native American and Indigenous Studies Association
National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies
National Women's Studies Association

ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

American Association of Geographers
American Educational Research Association
American Historical Association
American Sociological Association
International Studies Association
Modern Language Association

**ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED
AND IS UNDERWAY**

American Public Health Association

NO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

American Economic Association

American Philosophical Association

American Political Science Association

German Studies Association

Linguistic Society of America

SAMPLE SELECTION

We began with a broad review of hundreds of U.S.-based professional academic associations and ultimately narrowed our focus to those advancing humanities and social and behavioral science disciplines and fields, as this is where many of the most acute issues around antisemitism have been concentrated. We focused on national 501(c)(3) organizations of varying organizational sizes that primarily serve individual members. We sought to include a combination of associations for which there has been documented antisemitism and associations that seem to have successfully prevented or responded to antisemitism. Our initial assessment consists of 20 associations. Several were selected based on the existence of publicly available information, and private reports from members, about climate concerns, while others were included given the absence of such documented concerns.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Each association was evaluated based on the degree of severe and pervasive antisemitism within the association and institutional efforts to prevent and respond to antisemitism. Nine specific criteria were used to evaluate whether an association has a problem with severe and/or pervasive antisemitism. Some are related to general climate conditions, such as reports of antisemitic harassment at conferences and stifling of open discourse. Others relate to more formal organizational actions, such as whether an association has endorsed an academic boycott of Israel. Two additional criteria were used to evaluate leadership response to antisemitism. Did leaders, for example, respond swiftly, forcefully, and appropriately to antisemitism when it arose? For the full list of criteria, please see pages 12–13. The systematic assessment is portrayed qualitatively, offering a holistic picture of the state of antisemitism in each association in narrative form.

DATA COLLECTION

We took a multi-source approach, enabling a well-documented evaluation of each association's current climate and institutional response. First, we conducted extensive secondary research, reviewing, among other sources, association websites, newsletters, public statements, and conference materials, as well as relevant social media posts and conventional media coverage.

We sent a survey to the executive directors of the 20 associations to learn about their policies and procedures that might serve as institutional safeguards against antisemitism and to gather their insights on broader organizational efforts to prevent and respond to antisemitism. Recognizing that some important organizational efforts may not be reflected through the survey or public documentation, we also invited executive directors to talk with us. Despite repeated reminders, none of the executive directors responded to our

survey request, but two engaged in conversation with the research team. We also spoke with several former executive directors.

In addition, we interviewed more than 40 members across the associations under review, though we were unable to secure an interview with a member from every association due to the difficulty of identifying Jewish members in some. These personal accounts provide critical context that complements our secondary research, offering insight into lived experiences, organizational culture, and the practical realities of addressing antisemitism within these professional communities.

ADL incident reports were reviewed to identify cases involving antisemitism in professional academic association contexts. And, finally, we convened a small advisory panel with specialized expertise and experience in professional academic associations, higher education, and nonprofit governance to provide feedback on methodology and interpretation of findings.

DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

We use the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism, including its contemporary examples, which is the preeminent and most widely accepted definitional and learning tool used around the world when it comes to understanding manifestations of antisemitism today.³ This definition was embraced in the 2023 U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism and has been adopted or endorsed by more than half of the U.S. states as well as the District of Columbia.⁴ In addition to being used by both Democratic and Republican administrations in the United States, it is being used by hundreds of organizations, the European Parliament, and more than 40 countries.

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism specifies that “antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” A small number of critics mischaracterize the IHRA Working Definition by falsely claiming that it restricts free speech by preventing criticism of Israel. In truth, the IHRA Working Definition is only a tool to help identify and understand when something is antisemitism, in all of its forms. Critically, the definition makes clear that some criticism of Israel is antisemitic, while some is not. The difference is context-dependent, and the examples in the definition support contextual analysis.

To learn more about the varying manifestations of antisemitism, see:

<https://antisemitism.adl.org/>

³ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism. IHRA. Available at: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

⁴ About the IHRA working definition of antisemitism (2024) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/about-ihra-working-definition-antisemitism>

COMMON THEMES ACROSS ASSOCIATIONS

This research illuminated several key themes. We provide this overview to help frame the individual association narratives in broader context. As you read each of the profiles, you will see how the following problems play out in practice across multiple associations.

A CLIMATE OF MARGINALIZATION AND RISK. Many Jewish members feel unwelcome in association contexts. They feel alienated and even unsafe, for example, when anti-Israel protests erupt at conferences. They feel marginalized when Jewish perspectives are demeaned at professional development sessions and when antisemitic posts are shared on formal association interest group listservs. Some report self-censorship, fearing professional costs if they speak openly about their Jewish identity, antisemitism or Israel. These findings were also evident in the 2025 ADL/AEN survey, which showed that 25% of the 190 respondents who were members of professional academic associations reported feeling the need to hide their Jewish and/or Zionist identity from others in their association and 42% reported feeling unwelcome because they are Jewish or perceived as Zionist.⁵

DEPARTURES FROM CORE MISSION. A recurring theme is that many associations are focusing energy on political activity that is outside the scope of their organizational missions. In doing so, their core work is overshadowed, leaving members without the professional support they need. These associations no longer represent all of their members, but rather just some of the members who embrace a shared doctrine. Common professional interests no longer drive decisions in these associations. For many Jewish members, this translates to exclusion, hostility, and even the sidelining of their scholarship.

LEADERSHIP FAILURES. Few association leaders have demonstrated strength in actively and explicitly combating antisemitism. In some cases, leaders wilted in the face of criticism after they encouraged fidelity to mission and some seemed fearful of making what they perceived to be decisions that would be unpopular with particularly vocal members. In many other cases, leaders aligned with and enabled antisemitic activity and rhetoric in the association. And leaders of several associations failed to meaningfully address reported incidents of antisemitism.

ANTISEMITISM NOT TREATED AS A LEGITIMATE FORM OF DISCRIMINATION. Associations that historically spoke out strongly against other forms of discrimination have often failed to respond with equal seriousness to antisemitism. Jewish identity is not consistently recognized as a minority identity requiring protection, and policies and programming that might signal inclusion are rare. In fact, many Jewish members report being gaslit when they raise concerns about antisemitism, a finding underscored in the 2025 ADL/AEN survey, in which 45% of the respondents who are members of professional academic associations reported being told by others in their associations what is and is not antisemitism.⁶

⁵ Faculty Under Fire: Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias in Higher Education (2025) Anti-Defamation League and Academic Engagement Network. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/faculty-under-fire-antisemitism-and-anti-israel-bias-higher-education>

⁶ Ibid.

INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE STIFLED. One member described well what has been expressed across many associations: we are facing “a draconian standard of intellectual orthodoxy.” A prevailing false narrative about oppressors and oppressed, which fails to account for historical context, creates an environment in which Jewish people are villainized. Many Jewish members report that colleagues in their associations are unwilling to engage them in conversation about Israel, for example, because they see no room for discussion about a situation that they perceive to be so ethically clear. The invocation of terms including “genocide,” “scholasticide,” and “settler colonialism” further reinforce for some members that open inquiry is inappropriate in this context. These illiberal impulses are counter to fundamental academic values. Ironically, these same members often invoke academic freedom to defend antisemitic rhetoric and activity.

OUTSIZED ROLE OF ORGANIZED INTEREST GROUPS IN PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM.

Formal subgroups of associations, such as divisions and sections, have in many cases taken the lead in driving anti-Israel agendas. Some of the most virulent proposals for BDS, for example, have come through these subgroups, and subgroup listservs have been the locus of frequent and extreme antisemitic rhetoric. These are not independent organizations, but associations either don’t have rules to restrict activities that veer into discrimination or harassment or they fail to enforce their rules. In many associations, these relatively small, activist groups have been allowed to shape policy debates and election outcomes, creating - through panels, resolutions, protests, and more - the impression that their positions represent the will of the membership. Further, organizational policies can allow decisions to be made with very low voter turnout, enabling these small activist groups to disproportionately shape association policies. Even when these groups do not succeed, their vocal and persistent efforts often dominate the association’s attention.

NEW ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM. In response to the rise of anti-Zionist subgroups, Jewish members have responded by forming their own advocacy groups to push back against antisemitism and campaign for greater association accountability. Members share that these Jewish groups also provide a space to be with a community of colleagues with whom they can feel comfortable expressing their identity.

AN EXODUS OF JEWISH MEMBERS. Many associations are experiencing the quiet departure of Jewish members who no longer feel that their professional societies represent them. This loss can be profound for Jewish scholars who are deprived of the professional resources and networks that an academic association offers. This is harmful to the associations as well. Fewer members remain to voice concerns about antisemitism and hold leadership accountable, deepening the cycle of silence and exclusion.

Taken together, these patterns point to a set of systemic challenges: the normalization of antisemitic activity and rhetoric in professional settings, failure of institutional accountability, and the alienation of Jewish members from their own academic homes. Recognizing these challenges as recurring themes is critical for anyone engaging with the profiles that follow.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

WHY HAS ADL CONDUCTED THIS ASSESSMENT?

The purpose of this report is to support associations in preventing, recognizing, and responding to antisemitism. Documenting antisemitic activity is a first step toward accountability and improvement. We hope this project will compel professional academic associations to renew their commitments to pursuing exclusively mission-driven activity – producing and disseminating knowledge, supporting the professional development of members, fostering professional networks and inclusive intellectual exchange, and advocating for their respective fields and disciplines. In recent years, divisive anti-Israel agendas have increasingly displaced this core focus in many associations, eroding members' sense of community and trust. To remain credible and relevant, associations must commit to being inclusive spaces where all members, including Jewish members, feel respected, protected, and able to contribute freely. Protecting these spaces requires clarity of purpose and the courage to uphold core academic values of open inquiry and intellectual exchange.

HOW SHOULD ASSESSMENTS BE INTERPRETED?

This report is not intended to offer definitive judgment of associations and their members; rather, it provides an illustrative picture of the current context. Positive assessments reflect strong policy safeguards, responsible and responsive leadership, and organizational cultures that embrace inclusion and free inquiry. Organizations with negative assessments may also have some of these positive characteristics, some of which we have highlighted, but otherwise demonstrate severe and/or pervasive antisemitism across domains ranging from conferences to interest group listservs. In these cases, association leadership has so far failed to prevent and adequately respond to this activity. But negative assessments should not be interpreted to mean these associations are inherently problematic. To the contrary, in illuminating the problems, these assessments help point toward mechanisms for change, which we fully anticipate can be made.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS ASSESSMENT?

This report is intended to help association leaders evaluate their current policies and practices, identify areas for improvement, and take informed action to address antisemitism. The findings can also be used by a variety of constituents to advocate for accountability, contribute to constructive reform, and ensure that associations reflect the values of intellectual integrity, open inquiry, and respectful engagement. Members and potential members, for example, may use these data to consider whether their association remains a welcoming professional home and to advocate for specific changes. Academic administrators who are allocating college and university funds for association memberships and travel to association meetings may find these assessments helpful. And these data might support decision-making for foundation and government grantmakers, as well as for students who are choosing college majors.

WHAT IS ZIONISM AND WHY IS ANTI-ZIONISM ANTISEMITIC?

Zionism is the movement for self-determination and statehood of the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of Israel. By contrast, anti-Zionism rejects Israel as a legitimate member of the community of nations and denies the right for Jews to self-determination and to establish a state in the land of Israel.⁷

Most Jews around the world view a connection to Israel as part of their Jewish identity, with 82% of U.S. Jews reporting that caring about Israel is an essential or important part of what being Jewish means to them.⁸ Many of these Jewish people, including Israelis, regularly express criticism of specific Israeli governmental actions while remaining deeply committed to Israel's security, future, and right to exist. Just as criticizing U.S. government policies does not make someone anti-American, challenging Israeli decisions – whether on military operations, domestic law or other issues – does not

⁷ What Is... Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, Criticism of Israel? (2025) ADL.

Available at: <https://notoleranceforantisemitism.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/what-antisemitism-anti-zionism-criticism-israel>

⁸ U.S. Jews' connections with and attitudes toward Israel (2021) Pew Research Center.

Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/u-s-jews-connections-with-and-attitudes-toward-israel/>

make someone anti-Israel. While criticism of any government is valid, denying Israel's right to exist or calling for its destruction is a form of antisemitism. If one believes that only Jewish people don't have the right to self-determination, that is antisemitic. It is holding out Jews to a double standard one doesn't accord to other people.

For more information, see [Dispelling Common Anti-Zionist Myths and Allegations](#).

SOME OF THE CRITERIA REFER TO THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS (BDS) CAMPAIGN. WHAT IS THAT?

The international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Campaign (BDS) is aimed at delegitimizing and pressuring Israel through the diplomatic, financial, professional, academic, and cultural isolation of Israel, Israeli individuals, Israeli institutions and, increasingly, Jews who support Israel's right to exist. Many of the founding goals of the BDS movement effectively reject or ignore the Jewish people's right to self-determination, which is antisemitic. Further, if the goals of the BDS movement are realized, Israel, the world's only Jewish state, would be eradicated.⁹

SOME OF THE PROFILES REFER TO THE TERM "SCHOLASTICIDE." WHAT IS THAT?

The term "scholasticide," sometimes used synonymously with "educide" and "epistemicide," is used to describe systematic destruction of educational institutions and infrastructure. There is no evidence that Israel has deliberately and systematically targeted Palestinian schools or other educational institutions, and the accusation of scholasticide fails to account for the complex dynamics of the conflict and the legitimate security concerns posed to Israeli civilians by Hamas's military strategies. Despite this, the term was coined in 2009 specifically to be used in the Palestinian context.

WHY IS IT INACCURATE AND PROBLEMATIC TO CALL ISRAEL GENOCIDAL?

Genocide, as defined by international law, involves intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. Israel's military actions target terrorist groups, not civilians, and are often responses to indiscriminate attacks. Terrorist organizations intentionally use Palestinians as human shields, contributing to an increase in civilian deaths during fighting. Accusations of genocide misuse the term and distract from recognition of actual genocides.¹⁰

WHY IS CALLING ISRAEL AN APARTHEID STATE HISTORICALLY INACCURATE AND PROBLEMATIC?

Apartheid usually refers to the guiding policy of racial segregation in pre-1990s South Africa. Apartheid was a racist, repressive system. Within Israel, there are safeguards aimed at ensuring the equal treatment of all citizens. Arab citizens comprise over 20% of Israel's population and serve, for example, as judges, ambassadors, legislators, and journalists. While Israel's policies and practices can certainly be criticized, it is not factually accurate to say they are akin to a permanent and institutionalized system of segregation and discrimination motivated by racism.¹¹

WHY IS IT HISTORICALLY INACCURATE AND PROBLEMATIC TO REFER TO ISRAEL AS A SETTLER COLONIALIST ENTERPRISE?

Jews are indigenous to the land of Israel, rooted in nearly 4,000 years of religious, cultural and historical ties to and presence in the land. Unlike settler colonialism, Zionism did not involve a foreign imperial power conquering land for exploitation, but was driven by Jewish refugees seeking safety and autonomy from centuries of violent antisemitism. The modern state of Israel enjoys international legitimacy, including recognition by the United Nations. It is a democracy that extends rights and protections to all of its citizens - Jews and non-Jews alike.¹²

⁹ The Boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign (BDS) (2022) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/boycott-divestment-and-sanctions-campaign-bds>

¹⁰ Allegation: Israel commits genocide (2025) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/allegation-israel-commits-genocide>

¹¹ Allegation: Israel is an apartheid state (2021) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/allegation-israel-apartheid-state>

¹² Allegation: Israel is a settler colonialist enterprise (2021) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/allegation-israel-settler-colonialist-enterprise>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

WHY IS IT INACCURATE AND PROBLEMATIC TO BLAME THE OCTOBER 7 ATTACK ON ISRAEL?

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is long-standing and complex, with roots in the rejection of a Jewish state by Palestinian and Arab leaders following the 1947 UN plan for two states. Upon Israel's declaration of independence in 1948, neighboring Arab states attacked, aiming to destroy the new state. While Israel has signed peace and normalization agreements with some Arab countries, groups like Hamas and states like Iran continue to reject Israel's existence and promote violence. Legitimate criticism of Israeli policies exists, but justifying Hamas' October 7 attacks as a response to Israel's actions ignores Hamas' own extremist goals, including language in its charter calling for the destruction of Israel, and denies its responsibility. Beyond this, there can simply be no ethical justification for what happened on October 7.¹³

WHY IS IT INACCURATE AND PROBLEMATIC TO DESCRIBE ALL JEWS AS WHITE?

It is inaccurate to describe all Jews as white because the Jewish people are an ethnically and culturally diverse community. Jews today include Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi, Ethiopian, Indian, and other communities whose identities span multiple races, ethnicities, and geographies. Reducing Jews to "white" erases this diversity, ignores the experiences of Jews of color, and distorts the history of Jewish marginalization and persecution.

For more information about some of these questions, and others, please read [Questions, Complexities and Context: Insights Into Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.](#)

¹³ Allegation: Israel's treatment of Palestinians is the "root cause" of and largely to blame for the Hamas attack on Oct. 7.(2024) ADL.
Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/allegation-israels-treatment-palestinians-root-cause-and-largely-blame-hamas>

ASSOCIATION PROFILES

Professional academic associations, generally speaking, exist to advance fields and disciplines through the creation and dissemination of knowledge, provision of professional development support for members, fostering of a community for members, and engaging in advocacy efforts to support the profession and its professionals (e.g., advocating for federal research funding and the integrity of federal data used for research purposes). Board members of the twenty 501(c)3 associations assessed in this report, like those of any nonprofit organization, hold fiduciary responsibility for ensuring organizational wellbeing. The duty of care requires informed and carefully considered decisions that are believed to be in the best interest of the association. The duty of loyalty mandates acting in the best interest of the association as a whole, even if that is counter to personal interests or the interests of subgroups within the association. The duty of obedience obligates board members to ensure that the organization is following the law and exercising fidelity to mission.

This report is meant to support professional association boards in successfully meeting these responsibilities, thereby effectively preventing, recognizing, and responding to antisemitism. But these boards do not operate in a vacuum. This report is written for anyone with an interest in higher education who can support professional academic associations in combating antisemitism.

The following 20 profiles provide narrative assessments of the selected associations, highlighting both profound concerns and positive practices. Here we document antisemitism, giving voice to the Jewish and Zionist professional academic association members who have been ostracized, harassed, and boycotted by their colleagues. Documentation is, however, only a first step toward accountability. Now that the problem has been laid bare, it is incumbent upon professional academic association leaders to ensure Jewish and Zionist members are protected and fully included in the professional and intellectual life of their fields.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA BY ASSOCIATION

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	American Anthropological Association	American Economic Association	American Educational Research Association	American Historical Association	American Philosophical Association	American Political Science Association	American Psychological Association	American Public Health Association	American Sociological Association	American Studies Association
Hostile climate reported by Jewish members	✗		✗	✗			✗	✗	✗	
BDS endorsed	✗								✗	✗
Antisemitic public statement/advocacy effort (non-BDS) endorsed	✗								✗	✗
Antisemitic Public Statement/ Advocacy/ BDS Resolution Considered and Rejected or Under Review			✗	✗				✗		
Nonprogrammatic antisemitic activity at event (e.g., protest, harassment)	✗		✗	✗			✗	✗		
Against IHRA definition of antisemitism										
Antisemitic activity fostered by organized interest groups (e.g., divisions, sections)	✗		✗				✗	✗	✗	✗
Open discourse stifled	✗						✗	✗	✗	✗
Members leaving/ contemplating leaving the association due to antisemitic climate	✗		✗	✗			✗	✗	✗	✗
Leadership fails to respond swiftly, forcefully and/or appropriately to antisemitism	✗						✗		✗	
Board members, leaders of committees or leaders of subgroups (e.g., divisions, sections) actively participate in or lead antisemitic activity	✗		✗	✗			✗	✗	✗	✗
No major incidents reported		✓			✓	✓				

Note: Absence of an icon can mean one of three things: 1) true absence of that activity; 2) absence of reporting about the activity (i.e., it is happening but it hasn't been reported to ADL, reported by the media, or published on the website); or 3) organizational climate has rendered the activity almost impossible (e.g., so many Jewish members have left that it's hard for Jewish members to report a hostile climate). Often when the latter is the case, the association will meet the criterion for "open discourse stifled."

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Association of American Geographers	Association for Asian American Studies	German Studies Association	International Studies Association	Linguistic Society of America	Middle East Studies Association	Modern Language Association	National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies	Native American and Indigenous Studies Association	National Women's Studies Association
Hostile climate reported by Jewish members				✗		✗	✗			✗
BDS endorsed		✗				✗		✗	✗	✗
Antisemitic public statement/advocacy effort (non-BDS) endorsed				✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Antisemitic Public Statement/ Advocacy/ BDS Resolution Considered and Rejected or Under Review	✗			✗			✗			
Nonprogrammatic antisemitic activity at event (e.g., protest, harassment)	✗			✗			✗			✗
Against IHRA definition of antisemitism				✗		✗	✗			✗
Antisemitic activity fostered by organized interest groups (e.g., divisions, sections)	✗			✗				✗		✗
Open discourse stifled		✗		✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Members leaving/ contemplating leaving the association due to antisemitic climate				✗		✗	✗			✗
Leadership fails to respond swiftly, forcefully and/or appropriately to antisemitism	✗			✗			✗			
Board members, leaders of committees or leaders of subgroups (e.g., divisions, sections) actively participate in or lead antisemitic activity	✗	✗		✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
No major incidents reported			✓		✓					

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1902

MISSION: To advance anthropology as a discipline of scientific and humanistic research, practice, and teaching that increases our fundamental understanding of humankind, and applies this understanding in addressing the world’s most pressing problems.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	BDS BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS	 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

Following a decade of divisive member efforts to formalize an anti-Israel position for the association, in 2023 the American Anthropological Association (AAA) became the first major disciplinary association to endorse BDS.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

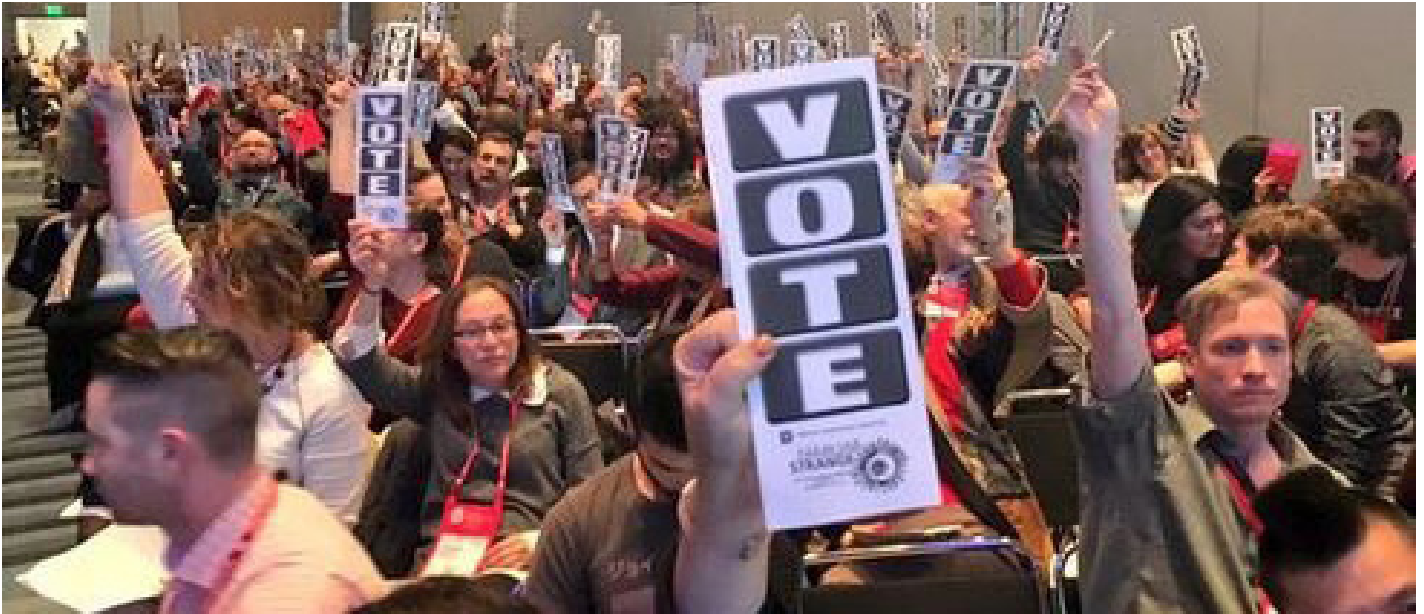
Reports of antisemitic activity at AAA conferences go back to at least 2014 when the program included several sessions on the BDS movement, most featuring pro-boycott perspectives.¹ A resolution opposing the academic boycott of Israel was brought to the business meeting that year, drawing a crowd of 700 attendees. Just 52 voted in favor of the resolution.² This foreshadowed what was to come.

The following year, the report of the Task Force on AAA Engagement on Israel-Palestine was submitted to the board.^{3,4} The task force had been charged with

considering ways in which the association might address issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The report specifies that “the Task Force members, like most AAA members, do not have a deep history of expertise in the region.” Despite this acknowledgement, their work resulted in a 130 page document recommending that AAA take action of some kind, with a range of options offered for consideration, such as academic boycott of Israeli universities, making AAA members aware of individual economic boycott choices, and issuing a statement censuring the Israeli government.

Members of Anthropologists for Dialogue on Israel and Palestine (ADIP) argued that the report is a “tool of a political program” rather than “an instrument of education.”⁵ Further, they argued, the report “consistently misrecognizes crucial data, decontextualizes the discussion, empties it of real historical validity and shapes it as a series of stereotypic and erroneous images.”⁶ *Inside Higher Ed* reports that

¹ Redden, E. (2014) *At annual meeting, anthropologists discuss the academic boycott of Israel*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/12/05/annual-meeting-anthropologists-discuss-academic-boycott-israel>
² Redden, E. (2014) *Anthropologists reject a resolution opposing the academic boycott of Israel*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/12/08/anthropologists-reject-resolution-opposing-academic-boycott-israel>
³ *Report to the Executive Board: The Task Force on AAA Engagement on Israel-Palestine* (2015) American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/wp-content/uploads/151001-AAA-Task-Force-Israel-Palestine-1.pdf>.
⁴ Redden, E. (2014b) *Anthropology Group Creates Task Force on Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2014/09/09/anthropology-group-creates-task-force-israeli-palestinian-conflict>
⁵ Redden, E. (2016) *Opponents of Israeli-universities boycott allege bias in report commissioned by American Anthropological Association*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/04/15/opponents-israeli-universities-boycott-allege-bias-report-commissioned-american>
⁶ Ibid.



Members gathered at the 2015 AAA business meeting to vote on a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Source: X¹⁰

ADIP also “objects to the task force’s use of ‘settler colonialism’ as its guiding interpretive framework, arguing that...the use of a ‘settler colonial’ frame contributes to a pattern in which the task force report focuses on ‘biases, abuses, denials and prejudice presumably leveled in one direction only: by Israeli Jews against Palestinians...The ‘settler colonial’ frame encourages both extreme partiality and denial.”⁷ Another critique argued that “[b]y adopting a ‘settler colonial’ approach, the authors tainted the entire Report with political activism and anti-Israel bias baked into the methodology. The authors presumed the result from the methodology, and then set about to justify the result with a one-sided factual analysis.”⁸

Following submission of the task force report, members convened again at the 2015 conference where several antisemitic resolutions were passed at the business meeting. Among them was a resolution calling on AAA to boycott Israeli academic institutions, which passed with a vote of 1,040 to 136.⁹ The business meeting was not the final step in passing the resolution, however. The resolution next moved to a vote of the full membership.

In preparation for the membership vote on the boycott resolution, both sides engaged in advocacy efforts. Notably, AAA pointed members to the aforementioned problematic task force report as an educational tool to support decision-making.¹¹ In June 2016, with 51% of eligible members voting, the boycott measure was narrowly defeated, with 2,423 members opposing and 2,384 members supporting the resolution.¹² Despite the outcome, one interviewee felt that the close 2016 vote was a turning point. It was the first time they felt uncomfortable in the association, recognizing the scale of the anti-Zionist forces.

ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVISM CONTINUES

Despite the resolution’s defeat, the board decided to issue a condemnation of Israel because, the then-President said, “we had come too far.”¹³

AAA later reported that the vote had negative consequences for the association, even though it didn’t pass.¹⁴ The “experience involved extremely heated exchanges among a deeply divided membership, and

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jacobson, W.A. (2015) *American Anthropological Association facing self-destructive BDS resolution*, *Le gal In-sur-rec-tion*. Available at: <https://legalinsurrection.com/2015/10/american-anthropological-association-facing-self-destructive-bds-resolution/>

⁹ Redden, E. (2015) *Anthropologists overwhelmingly vote to boycott Israeli universities*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/11/23/anthropologists-overwhelmingly-vote-boycott-israeli-universities>

¹⁰ (2015) *Details on @AmericanAnthro vote to back boycott of Israeli universities*, X. Available at: <https://x.com/insidehighered/status/668165109961908224>

¹¹ Redden, E. (2016) *Opponents of Israeli-universities boycott allege bias in report commissioned by American Anthropological Association*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/04/15/opponents-israeli-universities-boycott-allege-bias-report-commissioned-american>

¹² Redden, E. (2016) *Anthropology group rejects resolution to boycott Israeli academic institutions*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/07/anthropology-group-rejects-resolution-boycott-israeli-academic-institutions>

¹³ Saltzman, C. (2024) *Revisiting the Boycott Campaign at the American Anthropological Association*, *Academic Engagement Network*. Available at: https://academicengagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AEN_Pamphlet_Saltzman.pdf

¹⁴ *Frequently Asked Questions - Israel-Palestine (no date)* American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/wp-content/uploads/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsRegardingEngagementWithIsraelPalestine.pdf>

harmful threats, including death threats, targeting AAA staff...AAA lost more than 200 members who felt it was inappropriate for AAA to entertain the prospect of an academic boycott... We lost one corporate sponsor who had contributed \$10,000/year for three years prior to the 2013 Business Meeting to help underwrite our annual meeting... We had multiple grant-making organizations reject our funding requests to support [our work] because they felt AAA was acting inappropriately for an educational and scholarly society.”¹⁵

Despite their fiduciary responsibility to try to keep such things from happening, the board did not encourage the association to cease engaging in political advocacy at the expense of mission. Antisemitic activity continued to permeate the association over the years. One interviewee described a business meeting soon after the vote, for example, as a hostile and emotionally charged space. The interviewee said an attendee stood up to say he felt marginalized by the group’s anti-Zionist rhetoric, and people in the room responded with booing and table-pounding. This moment left a lasting impression on our interviewee and epitomized the prevailing culture at the association.

A NEW BDS PROPOSAL PASSES IN 2023

In May 2023, a Referendum on a Proposed Resolution to Boycott Israeli Academic Institutions was submitted to the association with a request for a full membership vote.^{16, 17} Under the AAA bylaws, “a referendum may be conducted...upon...a signed petition of fifty (50) Members in good standing.” The referendum was submitted with 206 signatures, and a vote was scheduled.¹⁸

The resolution characterized Israel as complicit in “apartheid” and “ethnic cleansing,” while positioning the boycott as a human rights imperative.¹⁹ By invoking the Middle East Studies Association’s earlier boycott decision and claiming “broad scholarly consensus of area experts on this matter,” proponents created a false impression of academic legitimacy for their political position.²⁰

Again, advocacy efforts emerged from both sides trying to persuade members to vote one way or the other. Subgroups of AAA, including the Middle East Section and the Association of Black Anthropologists, endorsed the boycott, and a past president wrote a lengthy recitation of her reasons for voting to boycott Israeli academic institutions.^{21, 22}

The Alliance for Academic Freedom and the Academic Engagement Network released a statement on the resolution, which was endorsed by about 90 other groups including the Anti-Defamation League.²³

The statement focused on four main objections:

- The Resolution claims to support a “full embrace” of the AAA’s “deep commitment to academic freedom and open debate” despite the fact that academic boycotts are antithetical to these values.
- The Resolution will inevitably – and inequitably – result in the exclusion and isolation of Israeli academics.
- The Resolution paints a picture of a monolithic Israeli academy malevolently hostile to Palestinians when the reality is that there is a wide range of opinions and many Israeli academics object to the Israeli government’s policies and actions.
- The Resolution denies legitimacy to and respect for the valid and widely shared perspectives of most Israelis and turns the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a caricature. It singles out one side for blame and establishes a false binary of oppressor vs. oppressed.²⁴

The association put out an FAQ document that again pointed members to the biased 2015 report of the Task Force on AAA Engagement on Israel-Palestine as a source of information.²⁵ It offered other biased perspectives as well. For example, responding to the question “what has changed about Israeli government policies and practices towards Palestinian people since the last time AAA considered forms of

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ REFERENDUM ON A PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS (2023) American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/wp-content/uploads/ReferendumOnProposedResolutionToBoycottIsraeliAcademicInstitutions.pdf>

¹⁷ Quinn, R. (2023) A Revived Call to Boycott Israeli Universities, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2023/05/10/anthropology-group-again-vote-israeli-univs-boycott>

¹⁸ Bylaws of the American Anthropological Association (2015) The American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/about/bylaws/>

¹⁹ REFERENDUM ON A PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS (2023) American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/wp-content/uploads/ReferendumOnProposedResolutionToBoycottIsraeliAcademicInstitutions.pdf>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Middle East Scholars Endorse Boycott (2023) *AnthroBoycott*. Available at: <https://www.anthroboycott.org/statements/#h.qas7r9sopzeu>

²² Waterston, A. (2023) I am past president of the American Anthropological Association and this is why I am voting to boycott Israeli academic institutions, *Mondoweiss*. Available at: <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/06/i-am-past-president-of-the-american-anthropological-association-and-this-is-why-i-am-voting-to-boycott-israeli-academic-institutions/>

²³ Statement on the American Anthropological Association (AAA) Resolution to Boycott Israeli Academic Institutions (2023) AEN and AAF. Available at: <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/23808621-aaf-aen-final2/>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Frequently Asked Questions - Israel-Palestine (no date) American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/wp-content/uploads/FrequentlyAskedQuestionsRegardingEngagementWithIsraelPalestine.pdf>

engagement,” the FAQ document said, uncritically: “As the preamble to the resolution indicates, the Israeli government has continued to inflict harm on the Palestinian people and enact policies that consistently restrict engagement of Palestinian universities with international scholars.”²⁶

The FAQ document also pointed to “the likely impacts of taking such steps on the association,” including the various outcomes the association experienced when boycott was considered almost a decade earlier.²⁷ In addition, the document said, “[w]e may be significantly restricted in the choice of cities where future Annual and Section Meetings can be located, decreasing the affordability of participation for members. There are now 35 states that have adopted anti-BDS laws or executive orders. Of these, 22 states specifically ban contracts with entities who wish to contract with the state or its subdivisions, such as publicly operated convention centers, unless the entities certify that they do not advocate or subscribe to a boycott of Israel or its institutions. This would include cities such as Atlanta, San Francisco, Detroit, and Phoenix, among others.”²⁸

In June 2023, 37% of eligible members voted on the boycott proposal, and the proposal passed with 71% of the vote.²⁹ In its announcement of the results, the Executive Board shared its implementation plan for the resolution. Specifically, “the Executive Board... approved the following set of actions aligned with the Association’s core values and mission, barring Israeli academic institutions from: being listed in AAA’s published materials, including AAA’s AnthroGuide to Departments; advertising in AAA publications, websites and other communications channels, including the AAA Career Center; using AAA conference facilities for job interviews; participating in the AAA Graduate School Fair; participating in the AAA Departmental Services Program; participating in joint conferences or events with AAA and its sections; and where within AAA’s control, republishing and

reprinting articles from AAA publications in journals and publications owned by Israeli institutions.”³⁰

Significant criticism ensued, some of it calling for action against the AAA. The AMCHA Initiative, for example, said: “Now that AAA has taken this reprehensible and dangerous action and called for the substitution of bigoted and hateful political advocacy and activism for scholarship, it is high time university leaders unequivocally stand up, first and foremost, to protect their students, as well as for the bedrock principles of the academy. University presidents must immediately denounce academic boycotts and the AAA resolution, sever ties with the AAA to demonstrate to AAA and all other disciplines that they cannot politicize and degrade the academy with impunity, and implement safeguards to ensure that an academic boycott can never be implemented on their campuses.”³¹

The Academic Engagement Network said that “the resolution’s assertion that the boycott ‘will not target individual students or scholars’ is untenable. The boycott of Israel’s universities and colleges cannot be meaningfully separated from the faculty and students who work, teach, and study in them.”³²

Some members published a piece that said: “The boycott fails to reflect the humility required before wading into a conflict with a complicated history and a controversial present. The AAA’s decision to pursue such an intellectually and ethically shallow course is especially sad, given anthropology’s historic commitment to contextual understanding, deep description, and broad-mindedness. To cut off ongoing informed conversation and genuine dialogue is against anthropology’s mandate.”³³

Another piece said “the fact that the boycott overlooks countries with far worse records on human rights violations, and by sanctioning hate against the only existing Jewish-majority country and no others, the boycott is by extension, antisemitic according to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition.”³⁴

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Jaschik, S. (2023) *Anthropologists back boycott of Israeli academic institutions*, Inside Higher Ed. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/2023/07/24/anthropologists-back-boycott-israeli-academic-institutions>

³⁰ AAA membership endorses academic boycott resolution (2023) The American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/news/aaa-membership-endorses-academic-boycott-resolution/>

³¹ AMCHA CONDEMNS ANTHROPOLOGISTS’ ENDORSEMENT OF BDS (2023) AMCHA Initiative. Available at: <https://amchainitiative.org/statement-on-aaa-academic-bds/>

³² AEN Statement Opposing the AAA Vote to Ratify a Resolution to Boycott Israeli Academic Institutions (2023) AEN. Available at: <https://academicengagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/AEN-Statement-on-AAA-Resolution-to-Boycott-Israeli-Academic-Institutions-7.24.23.pdf>

³³ Saltzman, C. and Braswell, G.E. (2023) *Anthropology boycott of Israeli universities is misguided and discriminatory*, Algemeiner.com. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2023/08/31/anthropology-boycott-of-israeli-universities-is-misguided-and-discriminatory/>

³⁴ Saltzman, C. (2024) *Revisiting the Boycott Campaign at the American Anthropological Association*, Academic Engagement Network. Available at: https://academicengagement.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/AEN_Pamphlet_Saltzman.pdf



The 2023 conference was one of the first times I felt afraid professionally as a Jewish person. I felt very vulnerable. I was in another country. I didn't have allies in this conference. If I had been wearing a Star of David, which I wasn't, I would have taken it off. I did not feel safe."

Critics also pointed to the divisive nature of a boycott decision. "Ultimately, a boycott divides the AAA into camps, those for a boycott and those against, such that the organization can no longer purport to represent everyone's common interests. For Jews in the AAA who are Zionist or who identify with Israel in any way, along with the majority of American Jews, the AAA has become an unwelcoming place."³⁵ "In fact, whenever a collective academic body purports to speak with one voice, it necessarily censures those who do not agree with the view adopted and impinges on free inquiry and competing views. Inhibiting the full freedom of dissent therefore destroys the very conditions necessary to academic inquiry itself."^{36, 37}

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY AFTER OCTOBER 7

On October 30, 2023 AAA released a "Call for an End to the Violence in the Middle East" in which they expressed "deep compassion for the victims of the Oct 7 violence perpetrated by Hamas" and then qualified their compassion by saying "[w]e also understand the tragic process that produced the current war."³⁸

Just a few weeks later, some attendees commandeered the 2023 AAA annual meeting for the purpose of anti-Israel activism. One interviewee described the conference as "rife with antisemitism." A group called Anthropologists for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions advertised a series of events at the meeting, including a multi-day recitation of "the names of Palestinians murdered by the Israeli military since 10/7," a "grief ritual," and a "collective die-in to mourn the victims in Gaza."³⁹ A group was

organized to travel from the Toronto meeting location to protest at the U.S. Consulate, and there were several program sessions focused around an anti-Israel agenda.

The Anthropologists for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions website laid out detailed "guidelines for panels and presenters" which started with: "We recognize the importance of immediate expressions of real solidarity with Palestinians facing a genocide as we attend this conference. We recognize the need for meaningful political education at this time; for creating spaces to grieve, rage, and organize against a genocide."⁴⁰

Guidelines were then split into two categories— those for panel organizers who were "continuing with their panels as organized" and those for panel organizers "who want to go off script and convert their panel into a space for education on Palestine."⁴¹ The first group was encouraged to begin their panels with a number of steps, including "observing a moment of silence, for the lives and livelihoods lost to colonial violence; ask[ing] attendees to join the various actions that will take place during the conference; and call[ing] for an academic boycott at [attendees'] institution and an economic boycott of all Israeli products."⁴² Those planning to jettison their entire panels for political purpose were encouraged to take further steps including "shar[ing] strategies about how you bring Palestine into your classrooms" and "[p]lacing what is happening in Gaza today in the larger context of a 75 year regime of settler colonialism and apartheid."⁴³

Coming out of this experience, one interviewee said: "The 2023 conference was one of the first times I felt

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ MGSdII classroom collaboration professor writes 'anthropology boycott of Israeli universities is misguided and discriminatory' (2024) The Murray Gallinson San Diego-Israel Initiative (MGSdII). Available at: <https://mgsdii.org/anthropology-boycott/>

³⁸ AAA calls for an end to the violence in the Middle East (2023) The American Anthropological Association. Available at: <https://americananthro.org/news/aaa-calls-for-an-end-to-the-violence-in-the-middle-east/>

³⁹ Palestine @ AAA 2023 Meeting (2023) AnthroBoycott. Available at: <https://www.anthroboycott.org/palestine2023-meeting>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

afraid professionally as a Jewish person. I felt very vulnerable. I was in another country. I didn't have allies in this conference. If I had been wearing a Star of David, which I wasn't, I would have taken it off. I did not feel safe."

Like many academic associations, AAA has a number of subgroups with their own leadership and resources, and interviewees and incident reports to ADL suggest that the listservs and social media accounts of some of these groups serve as outlets for virulent antisemitism within AAA. For example, one section invited participation in a roundtable on the challenges of conducting ethnographic research with communities that are seen as "villainous." One of two examples of communities who are presented as "problematic or difficult to work with" was Israeli Zionists.

Members report that the constant hostility Jewish and Zionist members experience in so many corners of the association has created a perception of discrimination in professional opportunities, such as rejection of conference panel proposals. Jewish anthropologists report feeling marginalized in an association that has made opposition to the Jewish state a defining institutional position.

Interviewees report that colleagues have been dropping AAA membership over the last decade in response to the increasingly unwelcoming atmosphere, with many saying the boycott vote was the last straw. Jewish members with whom we spoke said they have left the association, and they report that many of their non-Jewish colleagues are leaving as well, feeling alienated by a culture in which there is no tolerance for dissenting views.

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1916

MISSION: To advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENT OR BDS UNDER REVIEW OR REJECTED	 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS
 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

Jewish members of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) report that the association’s environment has become suffused with anti-Zionist rhetoric and activity, and the association has failed to treat antisemitism as a legitimate form of discrimination.

RESPONSE TO OCTOBER 7 HAMAS ATTACKS

AERA’s approach to the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack stood in stark contrast to its responses to other domestic and international crises. While the association immediately issued a statement in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, for example, AERA remained silent following the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.⁴⁴ For many Israeli and Jewish members, this silence felt like betrayal, signaling that Jewish suffering does not warrant the same institutional concern extended to other communities.

ANTISEMITISM AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The perception of selective solidarity emerged from a broader context in which anti-Israel rhetoric has permeated the association. AERA’s 2025 conference programming offers a clear example.⁴⁵ The event featured a series of sessions with anti-Zionist rhetoric embedded in the descriptions. The description for one session advocated for campus-based encampments, many of which were characterized by a prevalence of antisemitism.⁴⁶ The description for another session, “The Imbrication of Israeli Higher Education in Colonial Violence,” characterizes Israeli schools as “hav[ing] been enlisted by Israel’s settler-colonial project.”⁴⁷

Yet another session description falsely claimed that Israel was committing “scholasticide” in Gaza, framing the argument with anti-Zionist language: “Scholasticide represents a form of settler-colonial praxis– marked by processes of erasure, extraction,

⁴⁴ AERA speaks out for Ukraine (2022) American Educational Research Association. Available at: <https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/AERA-Highlights-E-newsletter/AERA-Highlights-February-2022/AERA-Speaks-Out-for-Ukraine>

⁴⁵ Frankel, G. and Merksamer, N. (2025) The American Educational Research Association’s Hamas problem, *RealClearEducation*. Available at: https://www.realcleareducation.com/articles/2025/04/21/the-american-educational-research-associations-hamas-problem_1105495.html

⁴⁶ Decolonizing Dreamers for palestine: Reflections, Testimonios, activism, encampments, and the desire toward a third worlding university (2025) AERA Annual Meeting. Available at: Decolonizing Dreamers for palestine: Reflections, Testimonios, activism, encampments, and the desire toward a third worlding university (2025) AERA Annual Meeting. Available at: https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aera/aera25/index.php?program_focus=view_paper&selected_paper_id=2195582&cmd=online_program_direct_link&sub_action=online_program#selected_tag

⁴⁷ Settler universities: The Imbrication of Israeli higher education in colonial violence (2025) AERA Annual Meeting. Available at: https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aera/aera25/index.php?program_focus=view_paper&selected_paper_id=2193795&cmd=online_program_direct_link&sub_action=online_program

destruction, removal, and death— that is foundational to the political Zionist project.”⁴⁸ The description for “Intifada Isn’t a Metaphor” says “we enter into conversation with freedom fighters who are using intifada as an Arabic concept to ‘shake off’ oppression; not to metaphorical rebellion, but to active uprising.”⁴⁹

It is hard to reconcile these sessions with AERA’s stated expectation “that activities held under its auspices promote the full participation or engagement and belonging of all attendees, and are free of harassment, unwelcoming or exclusionary conduct, or discriminatory actions or innuendo.”⁵⁰ In fact, the AERA conference has been the site of even broader hostility. Members have attempted to disrupt presentations by circulating anti-Israel statements presenters can read from the podium, and members have handed out anti-Israel stickers to attendees. One interviewee reported that there was a whiteboard in the middle of the main entry floor which one passed on the way to the conference rooms on which “Free Palestine” had been written. As a result, one interviewee expressed discomfort expressing views on antisemitism or Israel and has decided to no longer attend AERA meetings. The interviewee shared that the association does not feel like a safe or supportive space.

ANTI-ISRAEL RESOLUTION FROM AN INTEREST GROUP

The Decolonial, Postcolonial, and Anticolonial Studies in Education Special Interest Group has emerged as a primary vehicle for anti-Israel activism within AERA. This group authored a “Resolution for Justice in Palestine” that pressed the association to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, condemn “scholasticide and the plausible genocide,” divest from

defense and military corporations, and “offer material support...to Palestinian scholars and students.”⁵¹

The resolution also stipulated that AERA should support members’ academic freedom, with special consideration for those who oppose “Zionist occupation.”⁵² Notably, there is no mention of protecting Jewish scholars, many of whom identify as Zionist, from harassment. The resolution rests on biased statistics and dismisses certain concerns about antisemitism as misrepresentation. To their credit, when the resolution was sent to the association’s leadership in March 2025, they chose not to support it or issue any public statements associated with its demands.⁵³

STRENGTH

American Educational Research Association’s Council chose not to support an antisemitic resolution submitted for their consideration by a Special Interest Group, thereby preventing it from being enacted.

⁴⁸ “Destroy the schools, erase a people”: Scholasticide as settler-colonial praxis (2025) AERA Annual Meeting. Available at: https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aera/aera25/index.php?program_focus=view_paper&selected_paper_id=2193794&cmd=online_program_direct_link&sub_action=online_program

⁴⁹ Intifada isn’t a metaphor: Enacting education research that shakes sh*t off and heals us (2025) AERA Annual Meeting. Available at: https://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aera/aera25/index.php?program_focus=view_session&selected_session_id=2194287&cmd=online_program_direct_link&sub_action=online_program

⁵⁰ AERA policy guidance on inclusive and welcoming meeting and Event Environments (2023) American Educational Research Association. Available at: <https://www.aera.net/events-meetings/AERA-2025-Annual-Meeting/Meeting-Services/AERA-Policy-Guidance-on-Inclusive-and-Welcoming-Meeting-and-Event-Environments>

⁵¹ Petition for a resolution for justice in Palestine (written by the decolonial, postcolonial, and anticolonial studies in education SIG) (no date) Google. Available at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdnKQvzBLcdOr1VPkDknU6KKszEckrdnXEoXgJKUBWeAiNwA/viewform>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Response to AERA council (2025) Response to AERA Council - by Insurgent Decolonial Thought. Available at: <https://jairofunesubstack.com/p/response-to-aera-council>

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1884

MISSION: To provide leadership for the discipline and promote the critical role of historical thinking in public life.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENT OR BDS UNDER REVIEW OR REJECTED	 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS
 MEMBERS LEAVING	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

The American Historical Association’s (AHA) Council (board) has to date respected its fiduciary duties and sought to keep the association’s work aligned with mission. But several AHA members recently ran for AHA leadership positions on explicitly anti-Israel platforms and won.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND NEW RESOLUTION

Anti-Israel activists began advocating for resolutions at the American Historical Association in 2015 and have been unrelenting since then.⁵⁴ In 2015, a proposed resolution was voted down on procedural grounds. In 2016, a proposal was defeated by a wide margin in a vote at the annual business meeting.⁵⁵ And in 2017, activists petitioned the Council directly and were rejected. The next effort to sway voters at the business meeting was in 2020, and again the anti-Israel position was rejected.⁵⁶

Efforts to convert AHA from a scholarly association to an anti-Israel political organization are led in large part by an external group of historians called Historians for Peace and Democracy (H-PAD).⁵⁷ Started in 2003 as Historians Against the War, the group was renamed in 2018 and in October 2023 formed the “Israel-Palestine Working Group” which has “been working to end unconditional US support for the cruel, arguably genocidal military campaign waged by Israel in Gaza in response to the savage attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023.”⁵⁸

In 2024, H-PAD submitted “A Resolution to Oppose Scholasticide in Gaza,” which accused Israel of “the systematic obliteration of education through the arrest, detention or killing of teachers, students and staff, and the destruction of educational infrastructure.”⁵⁹ The resolution required AHA to “condemn the Israeli violence in Gaza that undermines... the right of all peoples to freely teach and learn about their past;...call for a permanent ceasefire to halt the

⁵⁴ Flaherty, C. (2017) *Historians Reject Anti-Israel Petition*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2017/01/12/historians-reject-anti-israel-petition>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Moshe, S. (2020) *American Historical Association rejects anti-Israel resolutions for fourth time*, *Algemeiner.com*. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2020/01/06/american-historical-association-rejects-anti-israel-resolutions-for-fourth-time/>

⁵⁷ (No date) *Historians for Peace and Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.historiansforpeace.org/>

⁵⁸ H-PAD - About Us (no date) *Historians for Peace and Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.historiansforpeace.org/about-us/>

⁵⁹ H-PAD ‘Resolution to Oppose Scholasticide in Gaza’ (2024) *Historians for Peace and Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.historiansforpeace.org/scholasticide-in-gaza/>

scholasticide;...[and] form a committee to assist in rebuilding Gaza's educational infrastructure."⁶⁰

The resolution was scheduled to come before the AHA's membership at the 2025 business meeting.

INCIDENTS AT ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The "scholasticide" resolution and other anti-Israel activity hung over the 2025 AHA annual convention. There were protests and sessions on the program including "Scholasticide in Palestine and the American Historical Profession" and "Genocide in Palestine."^{61, 62}

When H-PAD's resolution came to the floor of the business meeting, the setting was described by interviewees as "like a wild mob" and "chaotic and hostile," and by the New York Times as "a sometimes raucous debate."⁶³ One interviewee said that the environment created a chilling effect that will continue into the future.

The executive director spoke to the business meeting attendees, saying: The AHA cannot, does not, and should not intervene everywhere. We don't

comment on controversies in other disciplines. As a membership association, we keep our distance from issues that are controversial within and among our members. And we keep in mind that our effectiveness rests on our legitimacy, our reputation for even-handedness, professional integrity, and appropriately narrow boundaries.⁶⁴ A supporter of the resolution characterized the executive director's statement as "finger-wagging" and "in the style of a papal bull," and his argument, along with the points made by others against the resolution, was clearly dismissed by voters who supported the scholasticide resolution 428-88.⁶⁵

The resolution then went to the Council for consideration, where it could have been endorsed, vetoed, or sent to the membership for a vote.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSE

The Council was lobbied during this period by individuals and groups advocating for both sides. Anti-resolution members, for example, reportedly encouraged the Council to maintain the integrity of AHA's Guiding Principles on Taking a Public Stance



A pro-resolution flyer encouraging attendees to come to the 2025 AHA business meeting. Source: X.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Quinn, R. (2025) *Historians' Council Vetoes Gaza Scholasticide Condemnation*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/shared-governance/2025/01/17/historians-council-vetoes-gaza-scholasticide>

⁶² (2025) AHA 2025 Program. Available at: <https://www.historians.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2025-Annual-Meeting-Program.pdf>

⁶³ Schuessler, J. (2025) *Leaders of Historians' Group Veto Measure Condemning 'Scholasticide' in Gaza*. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/17/arts/historians-group-veto-gaza.html>

⁶⁴ Nath, D. (2025) *The American Historical Association Council Betrayed its Members and the People of Gaza*, *Left Voice*. Available at: <https://www.leftvoice.org/the-american-historical-association-council-betrayed-its-members-and-the-people-of-gaza>

⁶⁵ Quinn, R. (2025) *Historians' Council Vetoes Gaza Scholasticide Condemnation*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/shared-governance/2025/01/17/historians-council-vetoes-gaza-scholasticide>

⁶⁶ X Post (2025) X. Available at: <https://x.com/PalStudies/status/1877448214661435718>



The AHA cannot, does not, and should not intervene everywhere. We don't comment on controversies in other disciplines. As a membership association, we keep our distance from issues that are controversial within and among our members. And we keep in mind that our effectiveness rests on our legitimacy, our reputation for even-handedness, professional integrity, and appropriately narrow boundaries.

that focus efforts around the chartered purpose of the association, “the promotion of historical studies.”⁶⁷ And the Anti-Defamation League sent a letter encouraging the Council to veto:^{68, 69}

The AHA has been a respected source for evidence-based, nonpartisan historical perspectives for more than a century. Associating with such a resolution risks diminishing the trust of policymakers, journalists, and the public. “Scholasticide” refers to the intentional mass destruction of an educational system. There is no evidence of this intent by Israel in Gaza or elsewhere. The destruction of institutions, including educational ones, is an unfortunate byproduct of war, exacerbated when terror groups like Hamas embed their operations within school buildings.⁷⁰

There was similarly concerted effort from H-PAD and others to sway the Council's vote toward endorsement.

The Council vetoed the resolution with a vote of 11-4 and one abstention and pointed to the resolution's lack of mission alignment to explain their decision.⁷¹ But they also lent credence to the resolution's unsubstantiated accusation of “scholasticide.” The Council began its Business Meeting Resolution Update by saying they “deplore any intentional destruction of Palestinian educational institutions, libraries, universities, and archives in Gaza. The

Council considers the ‘Resolution to Oppose Scholasticide in Gaza,’ however, to contravene the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, because it lies outside the scope of the Association's mission and purpose.”⁷² After articulating the mission and purpose of the association, the Council then expressed appreciation for the work of Historians for Peace and Democracy.⁷³ The Council voted on this language and it was supported 10-0 with three abstentions.⁷⁴ One interviewee expressed a sense that the AHA leaders felt there were limits to how assertively they could act, suggesting ongoing institutional vulnerability to organized pressure campaigns.

STRENGTH

American Historical Association's Council vetoed an antisemitic resolution that had been supported by majority vote of the membership at the 2025 annual business meeting, citing the need for adherence to mission.

⁶⁷ *Guiding principles on taking a public stance* (2017) AHA. Available at: <https://www.historians.org/news/guiding-principles-on-taking-a-public-stance/>

⁶⁸ Pierre, D.J. (2025) ADL denounces 'partisan' anti-Israel resolution passed by American Historical Association, *Algemeiner.com*. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2025/01/17/adl-denounces-partisan-anti-israel-resolution-passed-american-historical-association/>

⁶⁹ ADL Letter to AHA (2025) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/media/16890/download>

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Quinn, R. (2025) *Historians' Council Vetoes Gaza Scholasticide Condemnation*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/shared-governance/2025/01/17/historians-council-vetoes-gaza-scholasticide>

⁷² *Business Meeting Resolution Update* (2025) AHA. Available at: <https://www.historians.org/news/business-meeting-resolution-update/>

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Responding to the veto decision, a co-chair of Historians for Peace and Democracy said “we are extremely shocked by this decision, and disappointed. It overturns the democratic decision at that huge business meeting and the landslide vote.”⁷⁵ H-PAD then circulated a petition to urge the Council to reconsider, and it was submitted with 1,887 signatures. To our knowledge, the petition did not yield reconsideration.⁷⁶

ANTISEMITISM BEYOND THE CONFERENCE AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS

H-PAD then escalated its organizing efforts and decided to run candidates for top leadership positions in the next AHA election.⁷⁷ Efforts were made to prevent these candidates from getting elected to top AHA leadership positions, including a letter signed by 27 people, 12 of whom are past presidents, encouraging members to vote for candidates who were nominated by the Nominating Committee.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the rallying cry of “Democratizing the AHA!” was successful.⁷⁹ Four of H-PAD’s six endorsed candidates won their elections.⁸⁰ That means two new Councilors and two new Nominating Committee members are going to be fighting for anti-Israel efforts from the inside moving forward. One interviewee was not surprised by the election outcome and shared the perception that it would be difficult today for an openly Zionist candidate to be elected to an AHA leadership position. Another interviewee expressed fear that the association’s climate will worsen with the election of people who are focused on a political agenda for AHA. The Council’s protective efforts may be eroding.

It is important to note that the association’s increasingly unwelcome climate for Jewish and Zionist members has not been limited to activity at the conference. One interviewee reported, for example, reading biased, anti-Israel content on association listservs. Others report a perception that the work of Jewish and Zionist scholars is being rejected for presentation and publication based on the identity or views of the authors. The mere perception of

such discrimination creates a chilling effect that damages the association’s commitment to intellectual pluralism. Interviewees expressed that they do not feel comfortable expressing their pro-Israel views in AHA settings, expecting that they would be shouted down or otherwise met with hostility.

Given this context, some members have already left the association, disgusted with the constant political refrain that increasingly permeates AHA spaces, and others are contemplating leaving. One Jewish member shared that the sheer prevalence of these resolutions- and the constant need to mobilize against them- has been both time-consuming and exhausting, underscoring how the burden of countering antisemitism falls disproportionately on Jewish and Zionist members of associations.

⁷⁵ Quinn, R. (2025) *Historians’ Council Vetoes Gaza Scholasticide Condemnation*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/shared-governance/2025/01/17/historians-council-vetoes-gaza-scholasticide>

⁷⁶ *H-PAD Letter to the Members of the AHA Council* (2025) *Historians for Peace and Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.historiansforpeace.org/>

⁷⁷ Gosse, V. (2025) *Challenging the Silence over Palestine in the American Historical Association*, *The Nation*. Available at: <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/palestine-israel-gaza-genocide-complicity/>

⁷⁸ Scott, J.W. (2025) *On the electoral tactics of the American Historical Association*, *Informed Comment*. Available at: <https://www.juancole.com/2025/07/electoral-historical-association.html>

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Historians for Peace and Democracy: Democratizing the AHA!* (2025) *Historians for Peace and Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.historiansforpeace.org/2025/07/29/democratizing-the-aha/>

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1892

MISSION: To promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY	 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED
 MEMBERS LEAVING	 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

Antisemitism has had a presence in the American Psychological Association (APA) since the 20th century, and current leadership has done nothing to stem its modern variant. In February 2025, a letter written by Psychologists Against Antisemitism, and signed by almost 4,000 people, was sent to the APA board asking them to take meaningful action.⁸¹ It laid out a stunning indictment of an association with a “serious and systematic problem of antisemitism/anti-Jewish hate” which has been documented in an archive of examples.⁸²

RESOLUTION ON ANTI-SEMITIC AND ANTI-JEWISH PREJUDICE

While in 2005 APA released a Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice, which it then amended in 2007, that committed the association to “tak[ing] a leadership role in opposing anti-Semitism,” there has been a fundamental failure in implementation.⁸³

ANTISEMITISM IN APA DIVISIONS

Much of APA’s work is done through its 56 divisions, some of which have been the locus of profound antisemitic rhetoric and activity. APA-hosted division listservs, for example, have circulated posts with statements like “Kudos to Hamas” and “Intifada, Intifada” as well as calls for BDS. Jewish members have also faced harassment and calls for exclusion on these listservs for pro-Zionist views, leading to suppression of voices.⁸⁵

Division 39, Society of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology, has been among the worst offenders.⁸⁶ The division was led by President Lara Sheehi, who labeled Zionists as “genocidal f**ks” and defended the D.C. shooting that killed Israeli embassy staffers as a justified response to a “genocidal” state.^{87, 88} She called the belief in Israel’s right to exist a “psychosis.”⁸⁹ As Jewish members registered concern about the division president’s leadership, there was

⁸¹ Psychologists Against Antisemitism 2025 Letter (2025) Adobe Acrobat. Available at: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:f3856273-a580-4b3d-88e8-a8d5146a4619?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish prejudice (2005) APA. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/antisemitic.pdf>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Psychologists Against Antisemitism 2025 Letter (2025) Adobe Acrobat. Available at: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:f3856273-a580-4b3d-88e8-a8d5146a4619?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

⁸⁶ Mills, J. (2024) Moral crisis in psychoanalysis: anti-Israel hate allowed in the profession. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/02/29/moral-crisis-in-psychoanalysis-anti-israel-hate-allowed-in-the-profession/>

⁸⁷ Deutch, G. (2025) The Psychology of Denial: American Psychological Association struggles to confront antisemitism in its ranks, Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/07/american-psychological-association-antisemitism-jewish-israel/>

⁸⁸ ADL and AEN urge the American Psychological Association to address antisemitism (2025) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/adl-and-aen-urge-american-psychological-association-address-antisemitism>

⁸⁹ Psychologists Against Antisemitism 2025 Letter (2025) Adobe Acrobat. Available at: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:f3856273-a580-4b3d-88e8-a8d5146a4619?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

STRENGTH

Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice

Adopted by the Apa Council of Representatives August 2005/Amended August 2007

Therefore be it resolved, that the American Psychological Association condemns all antisemitic attitudes and actions, both overt and covert, and will use its influence to promote fairness, respect, and dignity for all people, regardless of religion or ethnicity, in all areanas in whihc psychologists work and practice, and in society at large.

Therefore be it further resolved, that the American Psychological Association will take a leadership role in opposing anti-Semitism.

Therefore be it further resolved, that the American Psychological Association encourages all psychologists to act to eliminate all discriminnation of an anti-Semitic nature.

Therefore be it further resolved, that the American Psychological Association encourages research to better understand the characteristics, causes, and consequences of both overt and covert anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish prejudice.

Therefore be it further resolved, that the American Psychological Association will include appropriate information on anti-Semitism in its multicultural and diversity training material and activities, and that diversity and multicultural efforts will take cognizance of antiSemitism, whether subtle or not, and will attempt to overcome it.

Source: APA Website⁸⁴

extensive listserv discussion about Sheehi and her positions, again bringing antisemitic rhetoric to the fore and prompting Jewish members to feel unwelcome in the division.

Section IX, Psychoanalysis for Social Responsibility, is a subsection of Division 39. On October 17, 2023, the section's board of directors issued a "Statement in Support of Palestine."⁹⁰ "We are unanimous," the board said, "in our solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle and our condemnation of the Zionist ideology that has resulted in the occupation, oppression, and dispossession of the Palestinian people. We unequivocally denounce genocide...These conditions of apartheid, colonization, and genocide can only inevitably result in increasing levels of violence... In this, we have consensus in our position as one ethical voice/stance of Section IX's leadership... As psychoanalytic and dynamic practitioners, we recognize that the horrors that surfaced in the

attacks of October 7th cannot be separated from the 75-year history of Palestinian displacement, and thus are inextricably linked to the oppressive regime against which they emerged...We are clear that one source of antisemitism is, in fact, Zionist ideology... Committing to anti-Zionism is a powerful way to make the Palestinian struggle visible, shift the discourse to address the roots of the problem, and join a growing movement to build solidarity in ending Islamophobia, anti-semitism, apartheid, and genocide." They conclude with calls to action, including joining the BDS movement and "educat[ing] yourself using Palestinian-centered media."⁹¹ To the best of our knowledge, APA failed to either formally object to this statement or remove it, underscoring the association leadership's unwillingness to confront antisemitism within its own ranks.

The climate created in this division has prompted resignations.⁹² One public resignation letter written to the board of the division, for example, says: "I will

⁸⁰ Section IX Board of Directors Statement in support of Palestine (2023) *The Psychoanalytic Activist*. Available at: <https://psychoanalyticactivist.com/2023/12/02/section-ix-board-of-directors-statement-in-support-of-palestine/>

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mills, J. (2023) *Resigning from the American Psychological Association, Critical Therapy Antidote*. Available at: <https://criticaltherapyantidote.org/2023/12/28/resigning-from-the-american-psychological-association/>

no longer support, let alone finance, an organization that has become unethical and politically-ideologically corrupt. The Division's Board has become a hotbed of antisemitism and Jew-hatred based upon its continued endorsement of Lara Sheehi who is an open supporter of Hamas...Political activists who are currently on the Board of Division 39 have signed petitions supporting The Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel while in office, which advocates for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state...And those on the Board who do not share these views are still complicit in cravenly allowing the ideological regression in the Division that places identity politics over ethical principles and the broader interests of the larger group membership. What is most repugnant, is that the entire Board of Directors of Section IX... had obscenely issued a public statement shortly after the October 7th pogrom in support of the Liberation of Palestine. Not only is this anti-Zionist/antisemitic statement a racist tract, it is callously insensitive to the Jewish people in the wake of their collective suffering."⁹³

Many other divisions and groups have engaged in similar rhetoric and action. Jewish psychologists have reported that the chair of another division, for example, has published opinion pieces on the division listserv referring to Israel as a colonizer state committing genocide, and he has organized similarly oriented webinars. Others report that divisions have made uninformed public statements and been unwilling to give antisemitism the same attention they give to other forms of discrimination. The American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Psychological Association (AMENA) group, for example, released a statement calling on "allies" to: "Support the Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which seeks to promote the human rights of Palestinians and hold Israel accountable for crimes of apartheid and persecution."⁹⁴

CLIMATE ACROSS THE ASSOCIATION

The hostile climate for Jewish members extends beyond the divisions. Interviewees describe feeling unsafe in association spaces and anticipating hostility

when sharing their Jewish and/or Zionist identity. There have been reports of Jewish members hiding outward signs of their identity at meetings, and those who have tried to speak up with their colleagues report being shamed and silenced. Programming at the 2025 annual conference alienated many Jewish members.⁹⁵ On the program were sessions like "Truth-telling as Resistance: Decolonial Understandings of Palestine and the Encampments" and "Cross-Racial Solidarity Resisting Anti-Palestinian Racism: Accomplice Actions and Development," the latter eligible for continuing education credits.⁹⁶

During the conference, Psychologists for Justice in Palestine (PJP) distributed flyers containing antisemitic content. These flyers were placed in conference meeting rooms, the hallways, and bathrooms. The group also distributed ribbons saying "Stop the Genocide. Free Palestine" to conference attendees. One interviewee also reported being accosted and physically intimidated by another conference attendee when attending a PJP meeting.

Antisemitic content has even reached the APA's

STRENGTH

A session was offered at the 2025 APA annual conference called "We Need to Talk about Antisemitism (in Professional Psychology)" for which participants could earn continuing education credit.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ AMENA-Psy Stands in Solidarity with the People of Palestine (no date) AMENAPSY. Available at: <https://www.amenapsy.org/>

⁹⁵ Deutch, G. (2025) *The Psychology of Denial: American Psychological Association struggles to confront antisemitism in its ranks*, Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/07/american-psychological-association-antisemitism-jewish-israel/>

⁹⁶ Ibid.

flagship journal in a special issue called “Practicing Decolonial and Liberation Psychologies.”⁹⁷ The Anti-Defamation League issued a statement about the issue, expressing particular dismay about the article “Supervision as Decolonial Love: Toward a Transformative Training Process for Palestinian Community Health Workers,” that “repeatedly labels Israel a ‘settler colonial’ and ‘apartheid’ state, accuses it of ‘genocide,’ and refers to ‘Palestinian freedom fighters,’ language that distorts history, legitimizes violence, and erases Jewish self-determination.”⁹⁸ In its statement, ADL also points to the special issue’s concluding article which “reduces antisemitism to ‘religious intolerance,’ overlooking the many contemporary dimensions of antisemitism.”⁹⁹ ADL contextualizes its comments: “While we are firmly committed to the principles of academic freedom and intellectual exchange, we also stand in support of academic integrity. We are therefore speaking out about this special issue because, while it is positioned as a scholarly work, it instead advances an ethically compromised and biased narrative that depicts the State of Israel— and by extension, those who support it— in a profoundly negative light.”¹⁰⁰

Concerningly, this article introduces the notion of “Zionist Psychologies,” which it defines as “the multiplicity of violent logics and practices that make the daily colonial conquest of our Palestinian lives and lands possible,” as well as “theories and practices in psychology that work to exclude Palestine and imagine a world without Palestinians.”¹⁰¹ The authors go further, suggesting that “Zionist psychologies uniquely legitimize the Israeli settler colonial project.”¹⁰² This framing is particularly troubling because the term “Zionist Psychologies” has no recognized academic or professional grounding.

There is also an active debate in the association about the definition of antisemitism. In August 2024, a petition called “Petition Urging APA to Protect pro-Palestine Speech,” and developed by Psychologists for Justice in Palestine (PJP), began circulating within APA.¹⁰³ This prompted a massive response, with well over 500 members sending a letter to APA leadership.¹⁰⁴

[The petition] calls upon APA to repudiate and rewrite the 2007 Resolution on Anti-Semitic and Anti-Jewish Prejudice on the grounds that APA’s resolution is congruent with (or “parallel to”) the International Holocaust Remembrance Association’s (IHRA) “working definition” of antisemitism. Ironically, the APA 2007 Resolution long preceded the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The IHRA is a legally non-binding definition which, as of 2023, was adopted by more than 40 countries and by hundreds of NGOs around the world including the United States Department of State...

[Psychologists for Justice in Palestine] (PJP) claims that the APA’s 2007 resolution on antisemitism will be used to “silence” or “criminalize” pro-Palestinian speech alongside any criticism of the state of Israel. Yet PJP provides no evidence of such censorship in the seventeen years since the resolution was enacted...PJP asserts that: “Like the IHRA, the APA resolution on antisemitism has . . . wrongly labeled criticism of Israel as antisemitic.” This is demonstrably untrue...Nowhere does the APA resolution state – or even imply – that any criticism of Israel or Zionism is inherently antisemitic. Similarly, the IHRA definition of antisemitism, upon which the APA resolution is based, contains the crystal-clear statement that “... criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.” The APA resolution likewise does not prohibit any criticism of Israel. But it does acknowledge the measurable correlation between the spread of virulent anti-Israel rhetoric and antisemitic behavior on a global scale...The PJP claims that “. . . the APA’s conflation of antisemitism with criticism of Israel [is]...inherently at odds with the APA ethics code . . .” That claim is baseless...Lastly, PJP makes the grotesque

⁹⁷ Special Issue: Practicing Decolonial and Liberation Psychologies (2025) American Psychological Association. Available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/psycARTICLES/journal/amp/80/4>

⁹⁸ ADL issues joint statement with Academic Engagement Network & Psychologists Against Antisemitism (2025) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/adl-issues-joint-statement-academic-engagement-network-psychologists>

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Special Issue: Practicing Decolonial and Liberation Psychologies (2025) American Psychological Association. Available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/psycARTICLES/journal/amp/80/4>

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Petition urging APA to protect pro-Palestine speech (2025) Psychologists for Justice in Palestine. Available at: <https://www.psy4jp.org/actions/petition-urging-apa-to-protect-pro-palestine-speech/>

¹⁰⁴ Psychologists Against Antisemitism Letter (2024) Facebook. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/PsychAAS/posts/august-16-2024-to-the-american-psychological-association-re-psychologists-for-ju/804111371931163/>

claim that Israel has engaged in “genocidal actions.” The genocide charge against Israel has been debunked...Again, a fact that PJP ignores.

In sum, it is on a platform of serial misinterpretations that the PJP urges the APA to revise the APA resolution by omitting language regarding biased and inflammatory language against Israel. By contrast, we urge the APA to allow this resolution to stand in its concise, reasoned, empirically supported form. When the time comes for review of the resolution, we expect APA to consult with Jewish psychologists and antisemitism experts in other disciplines...who represent the majority views of the Jewish community to determine if and how the resolution should be modified. Any revisions to the resolution must consider the IHRA definition...We do not regard PJP as a credible participant in defining and addressing antisemitism—in any of its forms.¹⁰⁵

Several divisions supported the petition, further alienating many Jewish and Zionist members. The petition was sent to the APA Board and members of the Council of Representatives in July 2025 as a new business item by Division 35 and Division 39. While it was sent in too late to make it onto the agenda in August 2025, it is expected to be proposed again as a new business item in the new year

LACK OF LEADERSHIP RESPONSE

Despite paying lip service to the idea of addressing antisemitism in the association, APA’s leadership has taken no meaningful action to protect and support its Jewish members. This is so even though members report that concerns about antisemitism were brought to association leadership’s attention as far back as 2000. The association’s website has a long page on “Hate, bias, and intolerance: Antisemitism,” which

does not include the words Israel or Hamas or mention the tremendous increase in antisemitic incidents since October 7, 2023.¹⁰⁶ In a statement APA’s senior director for strategic external communications and public affairs sent to a reporter in July 2025 “outlining the organization’s pledge to fight antisemitism...she ignored a question about Jewish psychologists who feel they have been targeted for being Zionists.”¹⁰⁷ She did not refer to Israel or Zionism in her statement.¹⁰⁸

There is a perception that “the organization has been almost paralyzed in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas terror attacks and ensuing war, seemingly afraid to take sides between the Jewish psychologists seeking support and an increasingly vocal contingent of anti-Israel voices in the field, some of whom have described Zionism as a pathology to root out.”¹⁰⁹ “They’re between a rock and a hard place,” said one member. “They’re trying to appease different constituents, and I feel like they’re appeasing the ones who are loudest and bigger, and that’s not the Jewish professionals.”¹¹⁰

Members report that formal complaints are routinely ignored. And Psychologists Against Antisemitism noted in their letter “the stark contrast between APA’s swift response to other issues and its relative silence on antisemitism.”¹¹¹

The association has seemingly washed its hands of responsibility for addressing problems with divisions, despite the fact that the divisions are not independent organizations. When the Section IX statement was brought to the attention of the APA, the APA spokesperson said they had not been aware of it before receiving the inquiry. “Divisions,” the spokesperson said, “are loosely affiliated with APA and are largely autonomous, with their own missions and leadership. They are, however, covered under our Association Rules, which detail the operational and managerial authority needed to conduct the affairs of the association under the APA Bylaws. As such, they are required to comply with APA’s policies and not to take public positions that do not comport with those of APA.”¹¹² Nevertheless, there was no real enforcement.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hate, bias, and intolerance: Antisemitism (no date) American Psychological Association. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/antisemitism-religious-hate>

¹⁰⁷ Deutch, G. (2025) *The Psychology of Denial: American Psychological Association struggles to confront antisemitism in its ranks*, Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/07/american-psychological-association-antisemitism-jewish-israel/>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Psychologists Against Antisemitism 2025 Letter (2025) Adobe Acrobat. Available at: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:f3856273-a580-4b3d-88e8-a8d5146a4619?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

¹¹² Frazer, J. (2023b) *American Psychological Association rejects call from member group for ‘liberation from Zionist aggression’*, Jewish News. Available at: <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/exclusive-american-psychological-association-distances-itself-from-internal-calls-for-liberation-of-palestine-from-zionist-aggression/>

Further, the many examples of antisemitic rhetoric on APA listservs demonstrate that rules for civility on email lists and APA listserv rules are routinely ignored by members without any consequence.^{113, 114} When the Division 39 listserv exploded with messages about its controversial President, APA's Chief of Professional Practice weighed in not to enforce the association's rules, but to warn people to protect themselves from legal or other "unscrupulous" repercussions. He wrote: "I want to offer a gentle reminder that this is a public listserv. All comments are considered in the public forum and theoretically could be obtained and used in legal matters or by the media/social media, even in an unscrupulous manner...I am not a lawyer, and this is not legal advice. The emotional tone of the conversation has heated considerably in the past 24 hours with sarcasm and barbs. So I offer this kind reminder to please be careful not to post things that purposefully jab at colleagues or could land someone in hot legal or media waters." This followed many messages from members that were hostile to Zionists.

And to the profound dismay of many members, the President of Division 39 retained her position while publicly espousing vitriolic antisemitic rhetoric. "It is incomprehensible how the APA leadership would continue to incorrigibly champion a defender of a terrorist group," wrote one psychologist.¹¹⁵

LISTENING SESSIONS ORGANIZED

When the Psychologists Against Antisemitism submitted their letter to the APA board detailing the many variants of antisemitism currently at work in the association, they got no response – not even an acknowledgement of receipt, let alone a substantive response that could have been shared with the roughly 4,000 signatories.¹¹⁶ When asked for comment by The Free Press, an APA spokesperson said, "The American Psychological Association stands against hate and discrimination in all its forms."¹¹⁷ It wasn't until Congressman Ritchie Torres got involved that

an invitation to a series of stakeholder meetings was issued to discuss antisemitism.^{118, 119} But the invitation was not reflective of a genuine effort to learn from the Jewish members who had experienced antisemitism. To the contrary, APA invited people from across different divisions and groups, the majority of whom were from among the worst perpetrators of antisemitism, including the President of Division 39.

"The stakeholders should include people who have expertise, not the ones who are promoting antisemitism, where we're tokenized. It's an absolute lose-lose situation, and hostile," said a leader of the Psychologists Against Antisemitism.¹²⁰ "I'm not going to sit in that farce of a meeting," she said.¹²¹ Another leader of the effort to combat antisemitism at APA said, "Could you imagine APA having a listening session for LGBTQ+ individuals, which includes people who are known to be homophobic?"¹²² A senior national correspondent at JewishInsider said, "That the APA would host a meeting about addressing antisemitism where the 'stakeholders' included both Jews who have scrupulously documented harassment and bias within the organization's ranks for months, as well as some of the people they identified as the perpetrators of that harassment, is, according to Jewish psychologists, evidence of how this historic organization has lost its way and ceded its moral voice."¹²³

Interviewees report that the stakeholder meetings on antisemitism were forums where Jewish members' painful experiences were invalidated by anti-Zionist participants who dominated the conversation.¹²⁴

Indeed, anti-Zionist participants accused Jewish and Zionist participants of overreacting to perceived antisemitism. When a Jewish Zionist participant tried to respond to this invalidation, APA leadership reportedly discouraged him from "debate."

Nevertheless, some positive steps emerged. APA is planning a special issue of *American Psychologist* on the psychology of antisemitism, due to be published in 2026. And APA amended its listserv usage rules

¹¹³ *Civility on email lists* (2025) American Psychological Association. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/about/division/digest/leader-resources/civility-email-lists>

¹¹⁴ *American Psychological Association Listserv Usage Rules* (no date) American Psychological Association. Available at: <https://lists.apa.org/archives/infopages/APARules.html>

¹¹⁵ Mills, J. (2024) *Moral crisis in psychoanalysis: anti-Israel hate allowed in the profession*. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2024/02/29/moral-crisis-in-psychoanalysis-anti-israel-hate-allowed-in-the-profession/>

¹¹⁶ *Psychologists Against Antisemitism 2025 Letter* (2025) Adobe Acrobat. Available at: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:f3856273-a580-4b3d-88e8-a8d5146a4619?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

¹¹⁷ Satel, S. (2025) *American Psychological Association slammed for 'virulent' Jew hate*, The Free Press. Available at: <https://www.thefp.com/p/american-psychological-association-antisemitism-complaint>

¹¹⁸ *Letter to APA from Congressman Ritchie Torres* (2025) Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://image.jewishinsider.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/28162351/APA-Letter-With-Watermark.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Deutch, G. (2025) *The Psychology of Denial: American Psychological Association struggles to confront antisemitism in its ranks*, Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/07/american-psychological-association-antisemitism-jewish-israel/>

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

to specifically ban antisemitic content. Rule #1 is now: “Do not use the forum for illegal purposes, including but not limited to defamation, violation of intellectual property laws, violation of antitrust or unfair competition laws, racism, antisemitism, other forms of discrimination, or violation of criminal laws.”¹²⁵

STRENGTH

APA amended its listserv usage rules to specifically ban antisemitic content.

After a July 10 public forum to discuss outcomes of the listening session, an online discussion emerged in which several psychologists refuted the concerns of their Jewish colleagues. One Jewish psychologist expressed confusion: “We take identity very seriously. We realize that it intersects with both risk and protective factors. That’s a given in our field, and APA seems willing to recognize that for several identities or groups. But it’s seemingly unwilling to address such concerns for the Jewish community. I can’t understand why.”¹²⁶

REQUEST FOR RESOURCES TO COUNTER ANTISEMITISM REJECTED

Around the same time, the president-elect of Division 36, Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, wrote to the APA CEO and Executive Vice President with concern about an image APA used that some members perceived as glorifying antisemitism. After having received many complaints from members, the APA removed the image from the website. But soon thereafter it was posted again. No

explanation was given to the Jewish members who had originally expressed distress. The letter explained to the CEO that “values of diversity and inclusion are not being applied equitably to Jewish psychologists.” The CEO did not respond for several weeks. When a response finally came, the division president-elect was invited to schedule a meeting to discuss the issue.

As follow-up to the meeting, the division president-elect sent a message indicating that he had more than 20 members of his division lined up to help “implement inclusive, solution-focused programming... [to]... build bridge across identity lines and align with APA’s broader DEI mission and welcome Jewish psychologists into the organization.” He then made a monetary request to support a detailed coordinated response over two years with several components including personnel, educational programming, strategic visibility, and bridge-building. In response, the division president-elect was told that several efforts were already underway in the association to prevent antisemitism and elevate Jewish voices through a process of deep listening and data gathering.

Through a subsequent series of messages, the initial writer made clear that it was too late for exploratory conversation. “The urgency of this moment demands more than dialogue. It demands action...Right now... continued meetings, conversations, and discussions feel less like preparation and more like avoidance.” Ultimately APA offered to explore a “joint fundraising initiative.” The response clearly demonstrated the double standard enacted by APA when it comes to antisemitism as a form of discrimination. “The suggestion that Jewish psychologists — who have stepped forward to help APA address antisemitism from within — should now also lead the charge to fundraise for these efforts, is deeply troubling. APA leadership has presided over the environment in which this problem grew. Turning to those most impacted to generate resources for their own protection raises serious concerns...good faith of Jewish members cannot substitute, or be a condition,

¹²⁵ American Psychological Association Listserv Usage Rules (no date) American Psychological Association. Available at: <https://lists.apa.org/archives/infopages/APARules.html>

¹²⁶ Deutch, G. (2025) *The Psychology of Denial: American Psychological Association struggles to confront antisemitism in its ranks*, Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/07/american-psychological-association-antisemitism-jewish-israel/>

for APA's own investment," said the member who sent the initial request.

Another member then circulated an action alert asking Jewish psychologists to send a message to the APA leadership expressing concern about continued antisemitism. "Asking Jewish psychologists to fundraise for our own inclusion," the message said, "is not only inappropriate— it is offensive. It further marginalizes our voices and signals that we are not worthy of protection by the very systems that exist to serve us. APA has an opportunity to lead, to heal, and to act."

CALLS TO ACTION

To address antisemitism, APA leadership doesn't have to start from scratch trying to figure out how to recognize, prevent, and respond to antisemitism in the association. They have received several letters, including from Psychologists Against Antisemitism, Congressman Ritchie Torres, and the Anti-Defamation League and Academic Engagement Network, laying out clear steps for reform. As part of the joint ADL-AEN letter to the association, ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said, "This moment calls for more than passive acknowledgment – it demands urgent and unequivocal action from APA leadership. Rather than fostering a space of intellectual rigor, inclusion, and professional respect, the APA has too often allowed antisemitic rhetoric and anti-Israel bias to fester unchecked within its ranks."

Congressman Torres lays out the consequences of failure to act: "The APA's legitimacy as a scientific and professional institution is at stake."¹²⁷ Further, the Psychologists Against Antisemitism say: "This situation has severe consequences for the education and training of students in APA-accredited programs, the welfare of Jewish Patients, the mental and spiritual health of Jewish mental health professionals, and the credibility of the psychology profession as a whole."¹²⁸

¹²⁷ ADL and AEN urge the American Psychological Association to address antisemitism (2025) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/adl-and-aen-urge-american-psychological-association-address-antisemitism>

¹²⁸ Psychologists Against Antisemitism 2025 Letter (2025) Adobe Acrobat. Available at: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:va6c2:f3856273-a580-4b3d-88e8-a8d5146a4619?viewer%21megaVerb=group-discover>

AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED AND IS UNDERWAY

FOUNDED: 1872

MISSION: To build public health capacity and promote effective policy and practice.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENT OR BDS UNDER REVIEW OR REJECTED	 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

The American Public Health Association (APHA) offers a very clear example of how organized anti-Zionist activism can permeate an association over almost 20 years, reshaping its activities, culture, and environment. A working group dedicated to “Palestine Health Justice” (PHJWG), for example, has dominated the activities of APHA’s International Health Section (IHS) and, over a number of years, has solicited and organized numerous anti-Zionist sessions for the APHA annual meeting and pushed for anti-Israel policies, including boycotts of Israel.

The results of the efforts of PHJWG and other anti-Israel activists is an organizational environment that many Jewish public health professionals experience as hostile. Yet, while some section leaders have promoted antisemitic activity, recent measures taken by the association’s leadership — including code of conduct enforcement and enacting policies to

create a safe conference environment — indicate a meaningful shift toward greater accountability and institutional progress.

A HISTORY OF ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVISM WITHIN THE ASSOCIATION

Antisemitic activity at APHA began in 2008 with the first of a number of attempts to pass a policy statement that demonized Israel. When that effort failed by a single vote in APHA’s Governing Council, anti-Israel activists developed a sophisticated, long-term advocacy strategy involving, among other efforts, policy proposals and conference programming.

Historian Angela Davis, for example, was invited to give a keynote address at the conference in 2012. It was reported that “[Davis] maligned the Jewish nation including using loaded, inapplicable phrases such as

‘Jim Crow,’ ‘black freedom struggle’ and ‘apartheid in South Africa’ in falsely equating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with that of African Americans against segregationists in the United States and black South Africans against their country’s apartheid system of enforced separation. Davis’ condemnation of Israel received thunderous, sustained applause and cheers at its conclusion.”¹²⁹

Activists proceeded to repeatedly submit anti-Israel resolutions for consideration, aligning with the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. In 2013, for example, a proposal called “APHA Calls for Improved Health in Palestine Occupied Territory,” submitted for membership vote by four subsections of the association, pointed positively to the BDS movement.^{130, 131}

While anti-Israel resolutions have repeatedly been defeated through significant efforts by opposing members, their persistence requires ongoing vigilance and mobilization of those who want APHA to remain focused on its core mission. One interviewee expressed feeling as though the association has been infiltrated by a small group of anti-Israel actors who exert outsized influence - particularly in the IHS and other sections where they have recruited like-minded colleagues – and whose core priority appears to be promoting anti-Israel positions rather than advancing public health.

The PHJWG routinely makes accusations of Israeli genocide, settler colonialism, and apartheid under the guise of public health concerns. In 2021, the PHJWG chair posted on Twitter a “Palestine Health Justice Working Group Statement on Spring 2021 Attacks on Health in Palestine” with a call for signatures.¹³² This call is considered a turning point for Jewish members because it marked the beginning of a new wave of persistent anti-Israel/anti-Zionist activity in the association. There was no effort by the Association’s leadership at that time to respond to emergent antisemitism.

CLIMATE WITHIN THE ASSOCIATION POST-10/7

Jewish members report that they experienced unprecedented levels of antisemitic intimidation and harassment at the November 2023 APHA annual meeting, just weeks after the October 7 attack. PHJWG submitted a last minute (referred to as a “latebreaker”) policy proposal demonizing Israel, labeling it as a settler colonial and apartheid state and accusing it of ethnic cleansing and genocide. To accompany the proposal, PHJWG also organized a “silent protest” during a meeting of the Governing Council (the larger, representative legislative body; not the board). The protest involved more than 50 members wearing signs and displaying a large banner who booed and harassed speakers and members in the gallery. They blocked access to meeting room doors.

The situation deteriorated further at the 2024 annual meeting, where PHJWG held more than ten sessions addressing the Israel-Hamas war, with many containing anti-Zionist content. Activism was introduced in sessions that had no substantive connection to the Middle East. One member who was supposed to talk about environmental research, for example, stated upon arrival to the podium that he was changing his subject to Gaza. It was reported that “when the moderator cut him off after several minutes, many in the room gave him a standing ovation and followed him out to continue the discussion.”¹³³

During the 2024 Governing Council meeting, protesters in the gallery stood and displayed hands covered in red (for blood) before marching through the exhibit hall with megaphones chanting “APHA you can’t hide, you’re supporting genocide” and “resistance is justified when people are occupied.” As a result of the “red hands” protest, all attendees were eventually ordered to leave the gallery. Given how disruptive and intense the protests were, several interviewees report that some Jewish members had to be taken to a safe room to shelter.

¹²⁹ Kaplan, M. (2013) *Maligning Israel at American Public Health Association annual meeting*, CAMERA. Available at: <https://www.camera.org/article/maligning-israel-at-american-public-health-association-annual-meeting/>

¹³⁰ Sousa, C., Hagopian, A. and Stoller, N. (2014) *Issues of Evidence, Ethics, Social Justice, and Action in APHA Policy Development: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as a Case Study*, Research Gate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266785936_Issues_of_Evidence_Ethics_Social_Justice_and_Action_in_APHA_Policy_Development_The_Israeli-Palestinian_Conflict_as_a_Case_Study

¹³¹ Note, the proposal was previously available via the Israel and the Academy website, which has since been suspended.

¹³² *Palestine Health Justice Working Group Statement on Spring 2021 Attacks on Health in Palestine – Signatures of Support from Public Health Professionals* (2021) USA Palestine Mental Health Network. Available at: <https://usapalmhn.org/portfolio-item/palestine-health-justice-working-group-statement/>

¹³³ Isaacs, E. (2024) *Opposing Genocide at the American Public Health Association Convention 2024*, The Multiracial Unity Blog. Available at: <https://multiracialunity.org/2024/11/03/opposing-genocide-at-the-american-public-health-association-convention-2024/>

The environment has been so laden with vitriolic antisemitic threats over recent years that in advance of the 2025 meeting some Jewish members have reportedly considered hiring personal security. Hostility is not aimed only at those who speak out in defense of Israel; some people have allegedly been



Protesters “opposing genocide” at the 2024 APHA conference by wearing red gloves to represent blood. Source: *The Multiracial Unity Blog*.¹³⁴

targeted simply for being Jewish. One interviewee expressed fear of hostility when wearing a Star of David given the visibility of Jewish identity it conveyed. Further, members who have tried to engage the anti-Israel faction in meetings and online communications report being met with derision and ridicule.

The impact of APHA’s longstanding failure to quickly condemn and contain antisemitic activity in the association extends beyond the physical fear created at meetings. Jewish members report that they also fear exclusion from professional opportunities. There is a perception that conference submissions from Zionist and Jewish members through certain subgroups, for example, will be — and have been — rejected.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSE

Leadership response to formal reports of code of conduct violations has reportedly been slow. Many complainants who filed reports following the events of the 2024 conference, for example, waited for months to have an initial interview scheduled. Some interviewees report that a number of complaints are still pending. This failure to move quickly on allegations of antisemitism is allowing individuals who have potentially violated conduct standards to continue to submit abstracts for presentations, participate in planning anti-Israel disruptions at the annual meeting, and hold leadership positions in the association.

An interviewee shared an understanding that one complaint had led to sanction, but the sanction was not enforced. The incident reportedly included an association member posting an anti-Zionist message on the APHA member communication portal after October 7, leading to a code of conduct complaint and suspension from using the portal for three months.¹³⁵ However, APHA ostensibly did not monitor this and the member who filed the complaint saw that the member who originally posted the message reposted shortly after being suspended.

The association’s top leadership has, however, taken some important, proactive steps to combat

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Rosenzweig, M. (2025) *Codes of conduct, codes of repression*, *The Multiracial Unity Blog*. Available at: <https://multiracialunity.org/2025/07/25/codes-of-conduct-codes-of-repression/>

antisemitism in the association and prevent future incidents. For example, in response to a 2025 finding that the chair of the International Health Section participated in reported antisemitic behavior, the Governance Committee of the Executive Board did take a significant step toward organizational accountability by issuing meaningful disciplinary actions. The chair was suspended from membership, leadership and participation in association meetings, events, and Governing Council activities for about fifteen months based on two code of conduct violation complaints, details of which were widely distributed by the chair herself. The first complaint was related to participation in the 2024 “red hands” protest. The second was related to an email the chair sent to the IHS group that suggested that those who were not aligned with BDS were not welcome to participate in the Palestine Health Justice Working Group.

In response to the suspension, a petition began circulating calling on APHA to reinstate her.¹³⁶ The suspension remains, which reflects a significant step toward organizational accountability. In fact, in advance of the 2025 conference, APHA’s Executive Board sent a letter to members and Annual Meeting attendees assuring them that the decision was made using code of conduct complaint procedures with “due process built into every stage.” The association’s leadership also took a positive step recently by adding a clause to the bylaws stating that “[t]he presiding officer of a meeting may order that an attendee be removed from a meeting after an initial verbal warning to maintain order or to ensure the safety of others.”¹³⁷

In advance of the 2025 Annual Meeting, the association’s leadership proactively took several important additional steps to ensure the safety and professionalism of the conference as a whole, including the Governing Council meeting. APHA has ensured, for example, that last year’s protest activity can’t be repeated. A policy has been shared with the membership that says, “For the safety of attendees, protests and demonstrations will not be allowed inside the Annual Meeting venues including in meeting rooms, the exhibit hall and public areas. Groups will be asked to leave the building and protest outside to the extent in compliance with Center policies and as permitted under applicable D.C. and federal laws.” Crucially, the policy goes on to specify consequences of violating the policy: “If demonstrators do not leave, their badges will be revoked for this year, and they will not be able to attend the 2026 Annual Meeting and Expo.”

The association also has a “presenter attestation” policy which specifies that “[p]resenters must attest that they will present content consistent with their accepted abstract. Presenters understand that presenting unrelated material may result in immediate cessation of a presentation and exclusion from this and future events hosted by APHA including future Annual Meetings, Policy Action Institutes and member meetings.” This will preclude Jewish members from inadvertently going to sessions that are focused on attacking Israel, as happened last year. These new policies are coupled with a strong Meeting and Events Code of Conduct.

STRENGTH

In 2025, the association suspended a section leader from membership and leadership following an investigation finding that she “had participated in antisemitic behavior.”

¹³⁶ *Public health professionals object to suppression of views within American Public Health Association, and punishment of professor hagopian in the struggle for health in Palestine* (2025) Google. Available at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdXXIP-fIZh_Tqy7VRPH-aJ7LqaJ_wutpeqWZt2uFWf_hP6JdA/viewform

¹³⁷ *Bylaws of the American Public Health Association* (2025) APHA. Available at: https://www.apha.org/getcontentasset/ca296d0a-ea7f-419a-88e7-7c1a581df507/7ca0dc9d-611d-46e2-9fd3-26a4c03ddcbb/apha_bylaws.pdf?language=en.

Further, in advance of the conference, the Secretary of the Governing Council sent a message to the Governing Councilors and Proxies with detailed reminders of rules and expectations for the meeting. In addition to disallowing protests and demonstrations, the “display of signs, banners, posters, and other items is strictly prohibited in the Governing Council and Gallery.” Councilors have been reminded to refrain from “attack[ing] or question[ing] the motives of other Councilors and must confine remarks to the question that is subject to debate.” Several additional rules are specified as well. These actions signal a purposeful, positive effort to maintain respectful discourse at the meeting. Further, the leadership’s proactive communication tells members that the association is planning to be serious about enforcement.

STRENGTH

In advance of the 2025 Annual Meeting, APHA leadership communicated to members about a host of policies designed to make the meeting safer and more professional. Among them are a policy that forbids protests and demonstrations at meeting venues and a policy mandating that presentation content be “consistent with their accepted abstract.” Member were also reminded of the Code of Conduct and the consequences of violations.

MEMBER EFFORTS TO ADDRESS ANTISEMITISM

While a handful of Jewish colleagues worked together in 2008 to fight antisemitic activity in the association, they became more organized in 2013, and mobilized even further to respond to the 2021 “Palestine Health Justice Working Group Statement on Spring 2021 Attacks on Health in Palestine” Twitter post.¹³⁸ These members continued their work to defeat the 2023 anti-Israel latebreaker. Their success in advocating for organizational response and change demonstrates that strategic organization can achieve results even in institutions overtaken by anti-Zionist activism. Key elements of their approach include coordination with external organizations like the Academic Engagement Network, persistent engagement with APHA’s leadership, peer reviewed publications to counter anti-Israel articles, and solicitation of abstracts that reflect the work being done by Israel to improve public health.

STRENGTH

Invited sessions on antisemitism were held at both the 2024 and 2025 APHA Annual Meeting & Expo, with the 2025 session being on “October 7th, its Aftermath, and the Resulting Rise of Antisemitism.”

¹³⁸ Palestine Health Justice Working Group Statement on Spring 2021 Attacks on Health in Palestine – Signatures of Support from Public Health Professionals (2021) USA Palestine Mental Health Network. Available at: <https://usapalmhn.org/portfolio-item/palestine-health-justice-working-group-statement/>



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1905

MISSION: To serve sociologists in their work, advance sociology as a science and profession, and promote the contributions and use of sociology to society.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS	BDS BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

While the leadership of the American Sociological Association (ASA) initially tried to steer the association away from taking an official position on the Israel-Hamas war, they ultimately failed to proactively defend against the efforts of a vocal group of members who succeeded in their campaign for an antisemitic resolution. Jewish members report feeling isolated and abandoned by the association when antisemitic rhetoric and activity became prolific as the campaign unfolded.

LEADERSHIP REMAINS SILENT FOLLOWING OCTOBER 7

Many Jewish members of the American Sociological Association note that the organization's climate became hostile almost immediately following October 7, 2023. Just weeks after Hamas' attack, more than 2,000 sociologists, including a then-current ASA Council (board) member, a chair of a standing

committee, past presidents, and other member volunteers, signed an open letter titled "Sociologists in Solidarity with Gaza and the Palestinian People."¹³⁹ With no recognition of the depravity of October 7, the letter stated: "We are witnessing internationally supported genocide. This latest siege comes as a continuation and escalation of the daily violence Palestinians faced for decades from Israeli colonization; an apartheid regime whose occupation is in clear violation of international law, but persists with the support of powerful governments globally."¹⁴⁰

A group of "members of the Israeli sociological community along with concerned sociologists and other academics around the globe" released a public response to the open letter:

[T]he letter is shocking for its moral blindness and lack of concern for empirical facts, contexts, and a sociological perspective.

¹³⁹ Sociologists in Solidarity with Gaza and the Palestinian People. (2023) S4P. Available at: <https://www.sociologistsforpalestine.org/solidarity>

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

While the October 7th events do not justify hurting uninvolved civilians in Gaza, the omission of any substantive acknowledgment and condemnation of Hamas's acts dehumanizes the victims and adds to the deep sadness, trauma, and despair we are experiencing in the wake of October 7th...[T]he sociologists' letter has issued a one-sided statement that undermines their moral stance in the name of professional recognition of "relationships of power and inequality"... The Hamas massacre reminds us to avoid simplistic divisions between oppressor and oppressed. The commitment to social justice should never forget to respect all humans—of all sides.¹⁴¹

In this context, during the weeks immediately following October 7, various members requested that the ASA leadership make statements along the spectrum of possible positions, while others—arguing that it was inappropriate for the association to take sides on a contested political issue—implored ASA to remain silent.

The ASA leadership's initial decision to remain silent in October 2023 led a Council member to resign publicly in protest, posting on social media: "[B]y ignoring the atrocities that are being committed with the help of the US, ASA leadership is contributing to the erasure of settler colonialism and the ethnic cleansing and mass murder of thousands of innocent people. We either stand with all oppressed groups who are racialized, Othered, and suffer under systems of oppression and white supremacy—like Critical Race Theory teaches us— or we engage in necropolitics, deciding whose lives matter and whose don't...[T]aking no stance is taking the side of the oppressor." Many members celebrated the Council member's decision and statement on social media and, subsequently, pressure on the ASA Council to make an anti-Israel statement only increased.

In December 2023, ASA leadership received a letter signed by more than a hundred sociologists, including past ASA presidents and current committee leaders, calling on the association to release a statement titled "ASA Statement in Support of an Immediate Ceasefire and Humanitarian Aid."¹⁴² It read: "As a discipline rooted in a critical analysis of power and inequality, we understand that Israel's latest assault on the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank is a continuation of longstanding practices of domination and displacement...We grieve the loss of hundreds of civilian lives in the Hamas-led attack on October 7. Yet, as sociologists, we cannot de-contextualize this attack or evaluate it in isolation from the long decades of Israel's displacement, dispossession, occupation, and oppression of the Palestinian people."¹⁴³ The submitters requested that the Council schedule an emergency meeting to approve the statement.

ASA FOCUSES ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Council acceded to the request to schedule a special meeting, and at that January 2024 meeting rejected the proposed statement and instead issued a "Statement on Academic Freedom in the Face of Global and National Crises."¹⁴⁴ Released in February 2024, it said:

The American Sociological Association (ASA) expresses deep concern and dismay regarding the loss of civilian lives in the context of continued violence in Gaza and Israel as well as other contexts of conflict and suffering unfolding across the globe. We join sociologists across the world in calling for conditions that will support lasting peace. Many scholars have faced doxing, harassment, censorship, and threats to their...safety by virtue of expressing their scholarly positions on this and other global

¹⁴¹ Pierre, D.J. (2023) *Moral Blindness: Israeli, Allied Academics Respond After Sociologists Express 'Solidarity With Gaza'*, *Algemeiner.com*. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2023/10/24/moral-blindness-israeli-allied-academics-respond-after-sociologists-express-solidarity-with-gaza/>

¹⁴² *SAP proposed ceasefire statement 2023* (2023) SAP. Available at: <https://www.sociologistsforpalestine.org/s4p-proposed-ceasefire-statement-2023>

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Statement on Academic Freedom in the Face of Global and National Crises* (2024) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/asa-statement-academic-freedom-global-national-crises-feb-2024.pdf>

and national crises. The ASA condemns... these encroachments on academic freedom. Academic freedom and corresponding unfettered inquiry are absolutely essential to the pursuit of knowledge and a functioning democratic system...We stand in support of all sociologists in their efforts to express their scholarly perspectives without retribution.¹⁴⁵

The statement was roundly panned on social media by members who wanted ASA to accuse Israel of settler colonialism and genocide. The following tweets are illustrative of the response:



Wow. Did ASA leadership really buy into the myth that it would be anti-semitic to condemn the ongoing genocide in Gaza? This statement is giving "All lives matter" and it's not a good look.



The racist and colonial side of @ASAnews issued this whack non-statement. I'm relieved that the sociologists I engage with are all speaking against this but ashamed that my membership fees contribute to this shameful 🤢



They're Zionists.



There are two sides to sociology: the side that is committed to social justice & the other that is racist & colonial...The @ASAnews clearly chose the latter. Very disappointing. #FreePalestine.

Sources: X.

STRENGTH

When the Council was initially asked to release an anti-Israel statement on behalf of ASA, they instead released a statement on "academic freedom in the face of global and national crises."

ANTISEMITIC RESOLUTION SUBMITTED TO THE ASSOCIATION

In response to ASA's rejection of the proposed statement, some sociologists organized Sociologists for Palestine (S4P), which they described as a "democratic and plural collective of sociologists who support the cause of Palestinian liberation."¹⁴⁶ They articulated a number of "unity principles," including "support the call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions."¹⁴⁷

S4J began to solicit signatures to petition ASA to take three actions:

1. Be it resolved that the ASA, on behalf of its members, shall issue a call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza;
2. Be it further resolved that the ASA disclose its financial investments to the membership and, should it hold investments in defense and military corporations, to withdraw investments immediately;
3. Be it further resolved that the ASA supports members' academic freedom, including but not limited to defending scholars' right to speak out against Zionist occupation.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ About S4P (no date) S4P. Available at: <https://www.sociologistsforpalestine.org/about>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Resolution for Justice in Palestine (no date) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/about/governance-and-leadership/election/resolution-for-justice-in-palestine/>

This effort was enabled by a bylaws provision allowing member petitions for public policy positions of the Association.¹⁴⁹ If a petition is submitted with signatures from just three percent of the voting members of the Association, the ASA Council is compelled to either approve the proposed position or send it to the membership for a binding vote.¹⁵⁰ Over a few days, the petition was circulated widely on section listservs (formal ASA channels for groups of members with shared scholarly interests) and elsewhere, and in February 2024 it was submitted to the Council. The ASA bylaws required the Council to then vote on the petition at its next scheduled meeting.¹⁵¹

As the petition circulated, antisemitism became pervasive on some of the section listservs. Some illustrative examples follow:

- One section pointed to an essay on its blog called “Defetishizing Israel and the Importance of BDS.”¹⁵² The announcement said “the essay argues that humanitarianism’s language obscures the underlying social relations and power structures contributing to the genocidal violence observed in Palestine. The author presents the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement’s decolonial praxis as an alternative.”
- Another section circulated its newsletter with an opening message from the editors that uncritically used Hamas’ name for its October 7 attack, “the al-Aqsa Flood.”
- Multiple sections advertised the externally-hosted “Feminists for a Free Palestine” webinar. Its description included: “We, feminists, are bearing witness of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, a continuation of more than 75 years of Israeli settler-colonial violence against Palestinians...From transnational feminist perspectives that interrogate US hegemonic political and theoretical frames, we want to reflect on the relationship between racism and imperialism, war and capitalism. We want to imagine a world in which Palestine is free.”
- After a section hosted “The Palestine Exception” teach-in, notes from the event were shared. It was reported that, when discussing “[m]anaging charges of anti-Semitism” in the classroom, attendees were told: “Don’t let this take up a lot of activism space. Acknowledge anti-Semitism is real and condemn as you condemn other forms of racisms and bigotry if that is your position; highlight that anti-Semitism is coming from right-wing and historically emerged from Europe.”

LEADERSHIP RESPONSE

The Council met in March and discussed the “Members’ Resolution.” It determined that the call to divest from military and defense corporations was an operational issue, rather than a public policy position of the Association, and therefore not petitionable under the bylaws. Nonetheless, the Council agreed to consider divestment at its next meeting in August.

When the Council reported that the divestment question would not be decided immediately by the board or sent to the membership for a vote, a tirade of social media posts ensued, many accusing ASA of being a genocidal organization. Some of these responses brought to the fore enduring antisemitic tropes such as the image of the smirking merchant with a large nose causing trouble and the Jewish puppet master controlling world politics.

The Council rejected the remaining two action items in the resolution, which meant the resolution, minus the call for divestment, would go on the spring election ballot for a membership vote. In the case of a rejected Members’ Resolution, the bylaws provide an opportunity for the Council to place an alternative resolution on the ballot.¹⁵³ Rather than proposing an alternative that directly countered the S4P resolution, the Council opted to reiterate its support for academic freedom: “ASA has a membership composed of sociologists from a range of backgrounds and with a variety of perspectives, and the association strives to reflect this. A key unifying concern for sociologists is the fundamental importance of academic freedom. Recognizing that shared

¹⁴⁹ Bylaws (2023) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/about/governance-and-leadership/bylaws/>

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Das, P. (2024) *Defetishizing Israel and the importance of BDS*. Available at: <https://marxistsociology.org/2024/02/defetishizing-israel-and-the-importance-of-bds/>

¹⁵³ Bylaws (2023) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/about/governance-and-leadership/bylaws/>



The most important accomplishment of the @Soc4Pal Resolution, whether it passes or not, is that all the genocidal fanatics in our field are taking their masks off to oppose it... don't forget who they are."

concern...ASA released a Statement on Academic Freedom in the Face of Global and National Crisis."¹⁵⁴ Some Jewish members were deeply upset that the Council did not more explicitly defend its rejection of the resolution, provide full rationale for the decision, or even offer a forum for debate.

PRO-RESOLUTION ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

In contrast to the Council's silence in the time leading up to the close of the member vote, S4P organized a teach-in to support its resolution, featuring a past president, a past Council member, and other well-known members. It was widely publicized through section listservs and beyond. S4P also organized a campaign asking ASA members to make videos explaining why they were voting for the resolution. Among the responses posted on social media:

- As a scholar of race and racism, I believe it is crucial to speak out against all structures of apartheid.
- I'm voting YES because sociology teaches us how power operates & flattens the playing field, and a genocidal assault on a besieged population backed by the most powerful military in the world is not a "conflict" between "two sides."
- [A]s human beings and sociologists with integrity and decency our fealty should always, without exception, be with the oppressed and the dispossessed.

People also commented on the sheer number of sociologists expressing their support for the resolution. "As video after video and tweet after tweet roll in of sociologists loudly declaring their support for the

@ASANews resolution organized by @Soc4Pal, I have NEVER been more proud to be in the discipline," said one sociologist. Another said, "[s]eeing all these statements on why folks are supporting @Soc4Pal initiative at @ASANews is one of the best moments of collective effervescence i've ever had in this discipline."

But many members were deeply disturbed by the resolution.¹⁵⁵ "I'm in favor of a ceasefire," said one twitter user, "[b]ut the resolution denies Israelis humanity or peoplehood and is divisive virtue signaling." Another twitter user said "...why the hell write the Zionist occupation? I really don't understand this style, it sounds like Khamenei."

Another member shared his concerns with colleagues:

I'm a deeply committed Jew and I fear that this resolution, should it be adopted, would do significant damage to the Jewish community...[E]ven if you support this resolution, you should know that there are colleagues who believe it will impact them negatively, and you should be in conversation with them. And vice versa. Surely we wouldn't want to vote on a resolution that some fellow sociologists think will harm them (and harm sociology) without hearing why this is. And if you suspect they are a minority, surely you don't want to ignore a minority that's feeling threatened by an action you are about to take...In my view, the proposed resolution also has the effect (however unintended) of alienating Jewish sociologists and anyone who experiences antisemitism as a real, ongoing phenomenon.

¹⁵⁴ Response from the ASA Council to the member petition (2024) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/about/governance-and-leadership/election/response-from-the-asa-council-to-the-member-petition/>

¹⁵⁵ Quinn, R. (2024) Sociology group divided over call for ceasefire resolution, Inside Higher Ed. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2024/04/04/sociology-group-divided-over-call-ceasefire>

When a Jewish member posted criticism of the resolution on X, not only was she attacked with antisemitic commentary, but a threat was issued to those who were against the resolution: “The most important accomplishment of the @Soc4Pal Resolution, whether it passes or not, is that all the genocidal fanatics in our field are taking their masks off to oppose it...don’t forget who they are.”

Over many months, several section chairs frequently posted anti-Israel messages on their respective listservs. Yet when an Israeli section chair shared a message that said “[s]ingling out Israel in a unique way raises concerns about antisemitism,” there was outrage. The section chair was accused of abusing his power by using the listserv for this message, while the appropriateness of anti-Israel messages was not questioned. One member, directing a comment to the section chair, said, “You’re a genocide apologist, a fucking bastard, or a moron. Or all together.” Another said, “Many institutions researchers & profs UNDER T/GUISE OF ACADEMIA use their status, position & educ to become purveyors & maintainers of ZIONIST HASBARA (see what is white supremacy) BULLSHIT. HES ANOTHER.”

The pro-resolution position was given further official weight within the organization when most of the living past presidents offered an endorsement.

Within this context, in May 2024, after more than 25 years of membership and almost 8 years of executive leadership, ASA’s Jewish executive director left the association. She noted that she no longer felt welcome in the organization given her connection to Israel and the prevailing illiberal culture that subjugated sociological science to activism.

RESOLUTION PASSES AND THE LEADERSHIP SUPPORTS DIVESTMENT

Later that month, the membership voted to support the S4P resolution. *Inside Higher Ed* reported that approximately a third of the members voted, with 59% of voters saying yes to the resolution.¹⁵⁷ The petition process led the association to take an official position on an issue that was clearly contentious with the backing of fewer than 20% of its members. Following the vote, ASA issued a call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and support for “members’ academic freedom, including but not limited to defending scholars’ right to speak out against Zionist occupation.”¹⁵⁸

Resignations from Jewish members followed. One longstanding active member said that there was no choice but to leave given the antisemitism informing the activities of the anti-Israel activists in ASA and the endorsement given to those activities by so many ASA members and past presidents. Nevertheless, this

Nineteen ASA Presidents Endorse the Resolution for Justice in Palestine

April 28, 2024

Nineteen former ASA presidents signed an open letter endorsing the Resolution for Justice in Palestine. Join them, and vote YES on the Resolution. The ballot closes on May 20, 2024 at 5pm EDT.

Source: S4P website.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Nineteen ASA Presidents Endorse the Resolution for Justice in Palestine (2024) S4P. Available at: <https://www.sociologistsforpalestine.org/news>.

¹⁵⁷ Quinn, R. (2024) American sociological Assoc. members call for Gaza ceasefire, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2024/05/24/american-sociological-assoc-members-call-gaza-ceasefire>

¹⁵⁸ Statement on the 2024 member resolution for Justice in Palestine (2024) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/statement-memres-may-2024.pdf>

member expressed feeling pain from the loss. Another Jewish member saw the statement as both antisemitic and without scientific integrity, prompting a decision not to renew. This member reflected that ASA had strayed from its core academic mission by enabling activist-driven positions instead of using complex issues as opportunities for scholarly education and critical teaching moments.

A member of 49 years shared publicly: “Now that the ASA has endorsed the S4P...resolution, I am embarrassed to be associated with my professional association.”¹⁵⁹ He enumerated several objections to the resolution, including:

The resolution dismisses antisemitism as a legitimate concern, despite extensive research documenting its resurgence. In his S4P teach-in, [a past president] even warns Jews that they themselves are responsible [for] increasing antisemitism by supporting Israel. This is itself a classic strategy of Jew-hatred...The S4P resolution has now committed ASA to opposing “the Zionist occupation” of Palestine. To what does this refer? To the West Bank? To Israel itself? Should this opposition be pursued “by any means necessary”? This vague language can easily be interpreted to imply that the ASA has joined Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis in calling for the annihilation of the Jewish state. Sociology has apparently turned its back on precision...Violent antisemitism has increased exponentially over the past year. The ASA resolution dismisses concern about antisemitism, and this appears to be the ASA position now.¹⁶⁰

Members who shared their reasons for non-renewal with the association were even further alienated when their departures and explanatory messages were not acknowledged. One member expressed sadness at this lack of concern.

Minutes from the August 2024 Council meeting indicate that “the Council moved into executive session...to discuss a member proposal to divest from military and defense corporations.”¹⁶¹

No outcome from the discussion was noted in the minutes, but about two weeks later Sociologists for Palestine put out a press release, “American Sociological Association Agrees to Divest from Weapons Manufacturing Companies.”¹⁶² The press release quotes an S4P organizer: “ASA is showing the way forward...Colleges, universities, and academic associations can divest from arms manufacturers and companies profiting from the Israeli occupation.” The only reference to this decision from ASA about which we are aware was a short item in the November member newsletter that said the Council “voted to support a member request to further reduce our already low exposure to weapons manufacturing companies.” Although the Council did not explicitly tie this announcement to the Sociologists for Palestine proposal, no other member proposal was shared publicly.

CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN A BDS-SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION

In the wake of the successful resolution and the divestment decision, one of our interviewees, who is Israeli, informed the association that a section chair had been engaging in discrimination on the basis of national origin in the course of doing section-related work. While the interviewee was not informed of the process that was undertaken – who made the decision and on what grounds – the section chair was removed from the leadership position. While it is commendable that ASA took action in this situation, according to the interviewee no announcement was made about the reason for a change in leadership and section members were left to speculate. This situation may have presented a clear opportunity to condemn antisemitism and discrimination based on national origin, and the association did not take that opportunity.

¹⁵⁹ Phillips, B.A. (2025) *Letter of resignation from the American Sociological Association*, *Telos Insights*. Available at: <https://insights.telosinstitute.net/p/letter-of-resignation-from-the-american>

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ American Sociological Association August 13-14, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes (2024) American Sociological Association. Available at: <https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Council-Minutes-2024.08.13.pdf>

¹⁶² American Sociological Association Agrees to Divest from Weapons Manufacturing Companies (2024) S4P. Available at: <https://www.sociologistsforpalestine.org/news>

Faced with another opportunity to take a stand against antisemitism, ASA leadership once again declined. In July 2025, the International Sociological Association suspended collective membership of the Israeli Sociological Society, which the Jerusalem Post characterized as “a significant win for the BDS movement.”¹⁶³ Opponents of the suspension organized an email campaign challenging this decision, sending hundreds of messages to the leadership of the International Sociological Association, ASA and other organizations. Included in the campaign was the following call to ASA leadership:

To the leadership of the American Sociological Association– which maintains ties to [the International Sociological Association]– [a call] to immediately and unequivocally denounce this discriminatory and antisemitic act. Silence in the face of academic exclusion based on nationality or Jewish identity is complicity. The ASA must not legitimize bigotry disguised as social justice, nor continue any cooperative engagement with [the International Sociological Association] until this unjust suspension of the Israeli Sociological Society is reversed. As a national organization that claims to uphold equity, diversity, and inclusion, the ASA has a moral obligation to publicly and forcefully reject this disgraceful action.

As of November 2025, ASA is still listed on the International Sociological Association’s website as a dues-paying member of the Council of National Associations.¹⁶⁴

STRENGTH

A special session was offered at the 2025 ASA Annual Meeting called “The Resurgence of Antisemitism in the 21st Century: Patterns, Trends, Solutions.”

¹⁶³ Heller, M. (2025) *Int'l Sociological Association suspends Israeli membership for Gaza War: The Jerusalem Post*. Available at: <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-859668>

¹⁶⁴ *National Associations (Regular Members)* (no date) ISA. Available at: <https://www.isa-sociology.org/en/national-associations/na-regular-members>



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1951

MISSION: To promote the development and dissemination of interdisciplinary research on U.S. culture and history in a global context; to support scholars and scholarship committed to original research, critical thinking, and public dialogue.

 BDS BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

The American Studies Association (ASA) was among the earliest American academic associations, and perhaps the most well known and largest at the time, to endorse an academic boycott of Israeli institutions in 2013.¹⁶⁵

BDS ADOPTED IN 2013

The ASA’s path to endorsing an academic boycott of Israel began with conversations as far back as 2006.¹⁶⁶ After several years of systematic organizing by a number of bodies in the Association, in 2012 the Academic and Community Activism Caucus (ACAC) proposed a formal resolution for consideration.¹⁶⁷

The groundwork for debate within ASA was laid during its 2013 convention planning. The Program Committee created space for discussions around boycott, resulting in eight sessions on “Middle East American Studies,” including four centered on United

States/Israel/Palestine. Additional panels reinforced this focus, with the Ethnic Studies Committee hosting two sessions equating Israel with settler colonialism, and the ACAC organizing a panel promoting “Boycott as a Non-Violent Strategy of Collective Dissent.” These programs amplified boycott narratives without any acknowledgment of the harmful impact such discourse can have on Jewish members of the association.

Before the Council made its decision about the resolution, they received a letter from 70 members encouraging them to reject the boycott.¹⁶⁸ This letter, with signatories including past presidents, past Council members, and ASA award winners, said: “If upheld, [the resolution] would set a dangerous precedent by sponsoring an inequitable and discriminatory policy that would punish one nation’s universities and scholars and restrict the free conduct of ASA members to engage with colleagues in Israel.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Council statement on the resolution (2013) American Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/node/4804>
¹⁶⁶ Ibid.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid.
¹⁶⁸ Letter in opposition to the ASA’s ‘proposed resolution on Academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions’ (2013) Scribd. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/187635747/Letter-in-Opposition-to-the-ASA-s-Proposed-Resolution-on-Academic-Boycott-of-Israeli-Academic-Institutions>
¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

On December 4, 2013, the ASA's Council voted unanimously to endorse a boycott of Israeli academic institutions.¹⁷⁰ The Council's statement expressed "anticipat[ion of] strong and potentially divided feelings on this question."¹⁷¹ Rather than recognizing that such a division indicated lack of consensus from a scholarly perspective and that making a statement in the case of such division would alienate some portion of the membership, the Council decided instead to ask members to endorse the resolution in a vote.

As the member vote proceeded, eight past presidents signed a letter opposing the boycott, calling it "antithetical to the mission of free and open inquiry for which a scholarly organization stands."^{172, 173}

The past presidents also expressed concern that the Council provided members with only the resolution and a link to a website supporting it. "Despite explicit requests," they said, "the National Council refused to circulate or post to the ASA's website alternative perspectives. That the membership vote is being undertaken with only one side of a complex question presented seems to us to amplify the profound contradictions of the academic boycott strategy, and to compound its potentially pernicious consequences."¹⁷⁴

In the end, 66% percent of the members who voted supported the boycott.¹⁷⁵

The boycott resolution characterized Israeli institutions of higher learning as "a party to Israeli state policies that violate human rights and negatively impact the working conditions of Palestinian scholars and students," while positioning the boycott as necessary for ensuring academic freedom for Palestinians.¹⁷⁶

In articulating points of implementation, the association indicates that the boycott prohibits formal collaborations with Israeli academic institutions and their official representatives, but allows individual

Israeli scholars to participate in conferences and academic exchanges.¹⁷⁷ However, this distinction proves largely meaningless in practice, as the boycott creates a hostile environment for Israeli academics and those who support Israel.

BDS GENERATES EXTERNAL PRESSURE ON THE ASSOCIATION

The boycott decision triggered outrage from outside the association. More than 250 universities announced their opposition, with some withdrawing from institutional membership in the ASA.¹⁷⁸ One university president said, "This boycott is a contradiction, one that threatens what it purports to protect: the freedom of thought and expression that is the heartbeat of our academic community."¹⁷⁹ Further, 69 Democrats and 65 Republican Members of Congress signed a letter condemning the association's decision.¹⁸⁰

This boycott only reinforces dangerous stereotypes that limit mutual understanding and cooperation—two things that should be at the very heart of our academic endeavors... the decision to blacklist Israeli academic institutions for Israeli government policies with which ASA disagrees demonstrates a blatant disregard for academic freedom... Even more concerning is the singular targeting of Israel for boycott. Like all democracies, Israel is not perfect. But to single out Israel, while leaving relationships with universities in autocratic and repressive countries intact, suggests thinly veiled bigotry and bias against the Jewish state... Academic cooperation can be an important tool to help foster peace between Israelis and Palestinians, but you have chosen the unproductive path of isolation.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁰ Boycott of Israeli academic institutions (2013) American Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/about/advocacy/resolutions-actions/resolutions/boycott-israeli-academic-institutions>

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Redden, E. (2013) Round-up on lobbying over American Studies Vote on Israel boycott, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/12/12/round-lobbying-over-american-studies-vote-israel-boycott>

¹⁷³ American Studies Association Presidents' letter (update) (2013) Scribd. Available at: <https://www.scribd.com/document/190928854/American-Studies-Association-Presidents-Letter-update>

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Shwayder, M. (2013) US scholars' group votes in favor of academic boycott of Israel, *The Jerusalem Post*. Available at: <https://www.jpost.com/international/us-scholars-group-votes-in-favor-of-academic-boycott-of-israel-335178>

¹⁷⁶ Boycott of Israeli academic institutions (2013) American Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/about/advocacy/resolutions-actions/resolutions/boycott-israeli-academic-institutions>

¹⁷⁷ What does the boycott mean? (no date) What Does the Boycott Mean? Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/node/4805>

¹⁷⁸ Jacobson, W.A. (2013) List of universities rejecting academic boycott of Israel, *Legal Insurrection*. Available at: <https://legalinsurrection.com/2013/12/list-of-universities-rejecting-academic-boycott-of-israel/>

¹⁷⁹ Redden, E. (2014b) Presidents denounce the academic boycott of Israel, but on some campuses faculty and presidents clash, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/01/02/presidents-denounce-academic-boycott-israel-some-campus-faculty-and-presidents>

¹⁸⁰ Shwayder, M. (2014) 134 members of US Congress denounce Asa's Israel boycott, *The Jerusalem Post*. Available at: <https://www.jpost.com/international/134-members-of-us-congress-denounce-asas-israel-boycott-338607>

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

The ASA also faced legal challenges, including a threat to its tax-exempt status and a lawsuit from a group of members who alleged a number of claims including corporate waste, breach of contract and violation of the D.C. Nonprofit Corporation Act.^{182, 183}

ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVISM UNIMPEDED IN RECENT YEARS

In 2021, the association issued a Statement of Continued Responsibility of American Studies to Palestine, labeling their endorsement of an academic boycott of Israel “a catalytic event in the history of the organization, building on principled traditions of anti-colonial, anti-imperial, internationalist, antiracist, and abolitionist forms of scholarship, pedagogy, and praxis.”¹⁸⁴ The association further called on members to build “on the ASA’s academic boycott resolution by refusing complicity with Israeli academic institutions and rejecting participation in Israeli-sponsored or funded programs, including Study Abroad programs in Israel.”¹⁸⁵

On October 21, 2023, the association’s Executive Committee released a Statement on Gaza that reflected upon “the violence of the last twelve days.”¹⁸⁶ That line was later amended to be encompassing of October 7 after a group of approximately 70 members released a letter criticizing the Executive Committee’s failure to mention the October 7 attacks.¹⁸⁷ Ironically, given the association’s continuing academic boycott, the statement also reaffirmed its “unwavering commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression.”¹⁸⁸ The reaffirmation was said to be “in light of the doxxing and harassment of students and faculty who express solidarity with Palestine and protest Israeli militarism and occupation.”¹⁸⁹ The member letter urged the Executive Committee to extend its concern to Jewish students and faculty who have been harassed, but such a revision to the statement was not made.¹⁹⁰

On October 31, 2023, the CACA issued a Statement on Gaza, Palestine, and Israel, the United States, and Canada that failed to denounce Hamas’ attack on Israel and described Israel’s actions in Gaza as a “genocide.”¹⁹¹ It further characterized institutions across North America, Europe, and Australia as supporting “dehumanization of colonized people” and “ethnic cleansing.”¹⁹² The statement concluded with reaffirmation of “commitment to the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, to decolonization, and to liberation for all people in Palestine.”¹⁹³

The ASA’s subsequent 2024 Statement on Campus Protests and Movement for Palestinian Freedom falsely accused Israel of committing scholasticide, while defending campus encampments that became sites of antisemitic harassment and violence nationwide.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸² Redden, E. (2014) *Challenge to American Studies Group’s tax-exempt status*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2014/01/07/challenge-american-studies-groups-tax-exempt-status>

¹⁸³ Redden, E. (2017) *Lawsuit accuses American Studies Association officers of concealing their plans to boycott Israeli universities*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/12/11/lawsuit-accuses-american-studies-association-officers-concealing-their-plans-boycott>

¹⁸⁴ *Statement of continued responsibility of American Studies to Palestine* (2021) American Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/node/7842>

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Statement on Gaza - Asa Executive Committee* (2023) ASA Executive Committee. Available at: <https://theasa.net/gazastatement>

¹⁸⁷ Greenberg, S.H. (2023) *American Studies Association members criticize Gaza statement*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2023/11/08/american-studies-association-members-criticize-gaza-statement>

¹⁸⁸ *Statement on Gaza - Asa Executive Committee* (2023) ASA Executive Committee. Available at: <https://theasa.net/gazastatement>

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Greenberg, S.H. (2023) *American Studies Association members criticize Gaza statement*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2023/11/08/american-studies-association-members-criticize-gaza-statement>

¹⁹¹ *Caucus on academic and community activism* (no date) American Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/communities/caucuses/caucus-academic-community-activism>

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Statement on Campus Protests and Movement for Palestinian Freedom* (2024) American Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.theasa.net/about/campus-protest-statement>

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GEOGRAPHERS



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1904

MISSION: To bring together members of the global geographic community.

 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENT OR BDS UNDER REVIEW OR REJECTED
 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

The American Association of Geographers (AAG) has a relatively short history of antisemitic activity, but significant, organized efforts pushing for BDS have emerged since October 7.

ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVISM AT 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

A group of geographers calling themselves Geographers for Justice in Palestine (Geog4Pal) emerged in recent years and successfully influenced both the programming and the environment of the AAG annual conference in Detroit in March 2025.¹⁹⁵ The group organized seven sessions at the meeting focused on demonizing Israel and promoting BDS, including, for example, “On Divestment and the Role of Geographers” and “On Teaching Palestine in an Age of Genocide.”¹⁹⁶ There was a session on how to “escalate” campus anti-Israel encampments– the same encampments that

became sites of anti-Jewish hostility, harassment and violence on many campuses.¹⁹⁷

ESCALATE! THE CAMPUS ENCAMPMENTS - WHAT WORKED, WHAT DIDN'T?

Dismantling the Palestine Exception 4

Source: Geog4Pal website.¹⁹⁸

One attendee said that these sessions “centered not on scholarly exploration, but on academic boycott and divestment campaigns. These are political actions, not scientific ones, and they directly undermine the values of academic freedom and open discourse.”¹⁹⁹ One interviewee reported that these sessions contained no academic discussion of geography

¹⁹⁵ Geographers for Justice in Palestine (no date). Available at: <https://geog4pal.netlify.app/>

¹⁹⁶ Sessions at AAG 2025 Geographers for Justice in Palestine (no date). Available at: <https://www.geog4pal.org/aag/sessions/>

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Cohen, H. (2025) American Association of Geographers wants to take Israel off the map, Jewish Insider. Available at: <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/08/association-american-geographers-israel-boycott-resolution>

and were instead entirely propagandistic in nature. A Jewish interviewee, after attending some of these sessions, noted that the problematic nature of several sessions moved them to tears. When a concerned member raised objections about this programming, the team responsible for organizing the meeting claimed that the association accepts all abstracts and permits any session that doesn't violate the organization's code of conduct.

Geog4Pal extended its anti-Zionist presence beyond sessions. Attendees report that activists were wearing anti-Israel badges and urging attendees to sign petitions. And while Geog4Pal is a group external to AAG, they gained institutional acceptance not only through organizing sessions but also by acquiring endorsements from five of the 69 formal specialty groups of the AAG.

A BDS CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

All of this conference activity was connected to a signature-gathering campaign for a petition calling for a special meeting of the association to discuss a BDS resolution. Specifically, the resolution calls for AAG "to endorse the academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions" and for "financial disclosure and divestment of any AAG funds invested in corporations or state institutions profiting from the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people."²⁰⁰

These efforts prompted ADL and the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) to issue a joint letter urging the association's leadership to reflect on the broader impact of the AAG annual meeting sessions organized by Geographers4Palestine and the group's call for divestment and academic boycott of Israel.²⁰¹ The letter urged action, including ensuring viewpoint diversity on Israel, offering professional development on the Jewish experience, facilitating open dialogue, rejecting BDS and academic boycotts, and condemning antisemitism.²⁰²

AAG's bylaws stipulate that "[m]embers may call for a special meeting by petition of at least 10% of the members."²⁰³ Geog4Pal was able to gather the requisite number, and a special meeting was scheduled for October 3, 2025. The association's leadership ended a letter sent to the membership announcing the meeting by stating the association's commitment to "principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion," and claiming opposition to both Islamophobia and antisemitism. This language obscures the discriminatory nature of singling out the Jewish state and its institutions for boycott.

On October 3, 2025, the AAG convened the special meeting to discuss the boycott petition. During the session, leadership outlined the process for receiving member feedback and shared a confidential report detailing the petition, as well as broader information about academic boycotts and related implications. Following the meeting, AAG announced a 60-day comment period and two virtual listening sessions to provide members with opportunities to express their perspectives on the issue.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ ADL and AEN Letter to the AAG (2025) ADL. Available at: <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/2025-03/letter-re-aag-meeting-resolution.pdf>

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Governance - AAG (no date) AAG. Available at: <https://www.aag.org/governance/>

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1959

MISSION: To advance the discipline of International Studies and to build knowledge communities across global divides.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENT OR BDS UNDER REVIEW OR REJECTED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS	
 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 OPPOSES IHRA	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY	
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

Jewish members of the International Studies Association (ISA) report that “the atmosphere [in ISA] is very hostile.” One member described it as being “like a mudslide. It was so incremental and then suddenly—boom! That’s what antisemitism feels like at ISA...It was subtle before October 7, and then there was this ginormous effect.”

CHALLENGES TO IHRA WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Members reported that, in early November 2023, about a month after October 7, ISA released a public statement that was almost immediately withdrawn after criticism was levied that it was biased against Israel. That withdrawal infuriated some members who then proceeded to escalate their campaign to bring BDS to ISA. In December 2023, a second statement was released that focused primarily on academic freedom,

something important to all scholars irrespective of political perspective.²⁰⁴ But the statement was upsetting to some Jewish members because it reiterated a commitment to the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, instead of the more comprehensive IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.²⁰⁵

A Message from ISA Regarding Academic Freedom

posted on December 14, 2023 09:00

We write to you, in a period of intense horror and deplorable violence in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to reaffirm the ISA’s commitment to academic freedom... In these difficult times...[w]e remind ISA members that the Academic Freedom Committee has previously noted the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism which colleagues are encouraged to consult.

Source: ISA website.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ A message from ISA regarding academic freedom (2023) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/News/ID/6373/A-Message-from-ISA-Regarding-Academic-Freedom>

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.



...like a mudslide. It was so incremental and then suddenly-boom! That's what antisemitism feels like at ISA...It was subtle before October 7, and then there was this ginormous effect."

Reflecting on this, one Jewish member said, "I would have preferred that they have a discussion and adopt the real definition...The result is one that discriminates against me."

PRO-BDS ACTIVISM

The day before ISA's March 2024 Governing Council (GC) meeting, a group of members asked to add endorsement of BDS to the meeting agenda. Given the lateness of the submission, procedure required that a vote at the GC meeting be taken to make the addition to the agenda. The motion was defeated in a divided vote. One of the arguments that many members believe influenced the defeat was that BDS would violate the association's Policy on Non-Discrimination, which includes national origin.

Nevertheless, while taking a BDS vote at the meeting was rejected, a motion passed requesting the academic freedom committee to evaluate how best to facilitate discussion of BDS in the coming year.

Two weeks after the Governing Council meeting, members convened at the 2024 annual conference, where BDS discussion was pervasive. Sessions purportedly about standard scholarly topics were commandeered by panelists instead advocating for BDS, upsetting Jewish members.

The fallout from the ISA presidential address delivered during the conference is still being felt. At the start of her time at the podium, the president indicated that she was going to step out of her presidential role for a moment to speak in a personal capacity and share her concern about what was happening in Gaza. She then shifted back into her presidential address. Just as she was completing her talk, a large group of protesters, angry at the association's unwillingness to support BDS,

lined up in front of the podium holding protest signs. When the president finished speaking, protesters came to the microphone to denounce ISA leadership and demand a revote of the decision taken at the Governing Council meeting two weeks prior. Protesters did not face consequences.

After that, the president was criticized by some members for politicizing her role, given her opening comments about Gaza. She was also criticized by BDS supporters for not standing with them on the podium. The BDS supporters proceeded to launch a relentless campaign of social media harassment, along with almost daily emails to ISA leadership, demanding reconsideration of BDS.

The unrelenting vitriol prompted the president to take a period of leave from her university position and the executive director to retire a year earlier than originally planned. "I just didn't want to spend all day, every day answering angry emails," the former executive director said. "It was ugly from multiple directions, especially as no one wanted to listen to anyone else. The dynamics were unprofessional, including repeated ad hominem attacks, so I decided to step away."

Under the guise of its new mandate to consider how to facilitate BDS discussion, the Academic Freedom Committee began proposing statements about Gaza, including one making accusations of "scholasticide." When these did not pass through the executive committee, the chair of the Academic Freedom Committee reportedly became angry at the lack of support for the committee's work and resigned.

Members say that the March 2025 Governing Council meeting devolved into chaos, with BDS proponents hurling insults. But, again, a BDS discussion was not supported. The sitting president reportedly asserted that a discussion of BDS would violate the association's Constitution.

STRENGTH

“ISA is protected right now by our policies”

– Jewish Member

Constitution. Article II. Purpose.

3. The Association...may take positions on issues if they are immediately and directly concerned with the purpose...

Policy on Making Any and All Official Public Statements on Public Issues

ISA may choose to make public statements in two types of circumstances. The first are in cases where academic freedom is at risk...The second...is on issues of concern to the field of international studies as a profession.

Policy on Non-Discrimination

The International Studies Association does not condone discrimination based on any real or perceived affiliation or group membership, including those based on...national origin.. Such discrimination is antithetical to the spirit and purpose of this organization.

Sources: *ISA Policies*.^{207, 208, 209}

Antisemitism was prevalent at several sessions during the 2025 convention. For example, the description for one session, sponsored by the association’s Academic Freedom Committee, includes:

Gaza is facing a scholasticide...[a]nd in the West, IHRA definition on antisemitism is used to foster an environment of censorship, political suppression, and intimidation, which has only intensified since Israel’s war on Gaza, which many experts consider genocidal. This roundtable thus focuses on a ‘Palestine exception’ to academic freedom, locating it within the present and historical

politics of imperialism, settler colonialism, racism, and racial capitalism.

Jewish members felt isolated in a conference session about antisemitism and anti-Israel bias. One attendee said, “we were left to talk among ourselves. I found myself in the odd position of feeling like it was my first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. I came out as a Jew.”

There was also individual-level harassment at the conference. One Jewish member approached another member in the bathroom with a compliment about what she was wearing. What began as a friendly conversation quickly took a turn when the second member realized the other was Jewish. “She threatened me and screamed at me...you’re a racist colonial bitch.” While this constituted a seemingly egregious violation of appropriate conduct, the association’s leadership shrugged. “All they did was say ‘sorry this happened to you.’”

IMPACT OF CLIMATE ON JEWISH MEMBERS

The Academic Freedom Committee continues to be a source of anti-Zionism in the association. While debating resolutions condemning genocide and scholasticide in Israel, a Jewish member of the committee tried to engage in a dispassionate discussion of the committee’s mandate. “My inquiries were on the level of ‘why are we considering this an academic freedom issue and we’re not considering issues more directly related to academic freedom nor the consequences of any other conflict in the world.’” The inquiries were met by dead silence. “I was entirely marginalized.”

Debate over different approaches continued for over a year, with the Executive Committee in August 2025 finally approving a watered-down version of a Statement of ISA on Gaza and Palestine proposed by the Academic Freedom Committee, which included a reaffirmation of the association’s commitment to the Jerusalem Declaration’s definition of antisemitism.²¹⁰ This latest statement further reflects a double standard based in a deeply ingrained hostility toward the State of Israel. As the aforementioned Jewish member of

²⁰⁷ ISA Constitution (2021) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Constitution>

²⁰⁸ ISA Policy on Making Any and All Official Public Statements on Public Issues (2025) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy-and-Procedures/ID/6095/ISA-Policy-on-Making-Any-and-All-Official-Public-Statements-on-Public-Issues>

²⁰⁹ ISA Policy on Non-Discrimination (no date) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy-and-Procedures/ID/5459/ISA-Policy-on-Non-Discrimination>

²¹⁰ Statement of ISA on Gaza and Palestine (2025) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/News/ID/6630/Statement-of-ISA-on-Gaza-and-Palestine>

the Academic Freedom Committee put it, “Hiding behind the Jerusalem Declaration to counter charges of antisemitism, some members implicitly turn the tables by suggesting that those who support Israel engage in a double standard by not holding the state accountable for its actions. In truth, the pro-BDS faction directs its action not at policies of the government, but rather at the very legitimacy of the Jewish state.”

ISA members report that expressions of concern sent to the ISA Governing Council about resolutions that deviate from the core mission of the association have gone unanswered. Jewish members say that BDS resolutions are considered without room for deliberation. “There’s almost a draconian standard now, which is no variation from the party line,” says one. “There hasn’t been room for debate. There’s no discussion about other conflicts in the world. There’s an assumption that if it’s post-colonial it’s brown and if it’s colonial it’s white, which is absurd for Israel.” Another says, “What’s amazing to me is that regardless of the quality of an academic paper, it gets dissected from every standpoint, but when it comes to taking a resolution, they move in lockstep. Nobody wants to be an outsider.”

Again, Jewish members point to the importance of the protective governing documents and policies that have prevented BDS from being adopted to date, including the Constitution, the policy on making public statements, the non-discrimination policy, and the prohibition on subgroups (e.g., regions, sections, caucuses) “mak[ing] official statements on public issues.”^{211, 212, 213}

Yet there is fear among Jewish members that these could be insufficiently protective in the long run. This concern is in part ascribed to changes in the intellectual foci of the association. “I don’t know what will happen in the future,” said one member. “Younger people have gone through these programs in which there is the post-colonial influence of [scholars who] frame Israel as a colonial enterprise. And everyone says colonists did terrible things. We don’t have a lot of counter framing. That’s not a conversation people are having. And the ISA leadership is under a great deal of pressure each year to issue a BDS statement and to say there is scholasticide in Gaza.”

It is reported that this intellectual orientation is represented disproportionately in some formalized sections of the association, where “Jews and Israelis are more likely to have problems.” The ISA Governing Council includes the head of each section of the association, so as the field evolves intellectually, those sensibilities are then transferred into governance decisions. Notably, the chair of each section gets one vote, irrespective of the size of the section, so the largest sections, such as international security and foreign policy, have “lost” influence with the proliferation of smaller sections that are more likely to be sympathetic to the BDS movement.

One member summed up the sense of many of their colleagues that, without meaningful organizational change, “I do not think that signs bode well for the future.” Jewish members already feel discrimination in multiple domains. One Jewish member said, “Now that [I’m senior] I’m thinking maybe I’ll run for leadership. But... my last name would handicap me.” The same member said, “Whether the perception is accurate of scholars being kicked out, excluded, isolated from publication venues or maybe I’ve just internalized this is a likelihood, I’ve built in safety nets for myself.”

A member indicated that, when it came to continued membership, “I don’t have that many options. But if I had enough other conferences...I wouldn’t deal with antisemites. And I’m not dismissing the possibility of saying goodbye if they continue on that path. I’m not going to be a member of an organization that is trying to go after me.” Another said that, after decades of membership, when his expiration date comes there is “no chance I will re-up.”

²¹¹ ISA Constitution (2021) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Constitution>

²¹² ISA Policy on Non-Discrimination (no date) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy-and-Procedures/ID/5459/ISA-Policy-on-Non-Discrimination>

²¹³ ISA Policy on Making Any and All Official Public Statements on Public Issues (2025) International Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.isanet.org/ISA/Governance/Policy-and-Procedures/ID/6095/ISA-Policy-on-Making-Any-and-All-Official-Public-Statements-on-Public-Issues>

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1966

MISSION: To foster the study of the Middle East, promote high standards of scholarship and teaching, and encourage public understanding of the region and its peoples through programs, publications and services that enhance education, further intellectual exchange, recognize professional distinction, and defend academic freedom.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	BDS BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS	 OPPOSES IHRA
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 MEMBERS LEAVING	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

The Middle East Studies Association's (MESA) activities have been disproportionately focused on criticism of Israel, including support for BDS.

BDS PASSES IN 2022 AFTER 17-YEAR DISCUSSION

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) was one of the first associations to begin contemplating

BDS as an organizational position.²¹⁴ In announcing the passage of a BDS Resolution in 2022, the MESA President said, "[s]ince 2005, the BDS vote has been discussed among MESA members."²¹⁵

After the vote to adopt BDS, the President said, "MESA's Board will work to honor the will of its members and ensure that the call for an academic boycott is upheld."²¹⁷

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON
March 23, 2022

Middle East Studies Association Members Vote to Ratify BDS Resolution in Referendum

*80% of MESA's Participating Members Voted in Favor of
Resolution In Solidarity With Palestinians Seeking Education
Rights*

Source: MESA website.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Middle east scholars vote to endorse BDS (2022) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/news/2022/03/23/middle-east-scholars-vote-to-endorse-bds>

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

ANTISEMITIC, ANTI-ZIONIST, ANTI-ISRAEL STATEMENTS SINCE 10/7

The association, through its Board and Committee on Academic Freedom, has subsequently released more than 30 statements and advocacy documents related to Israel. These represent the vast majority of the association's public outreach over the past few years, with far more limited attention given to the rest of the Middle East. Some illustrative examples follow.

OCTOBER 2023

Statement on Palestine and Israel

"[T]he decades-long Israeli military and government attacks... are part of a broader political, administrative, and legal system of racial discrimination and domination—regularly enforced through violence—that has defined the Israeli government's treatment of the Palestinian people."²¹⁸

DECEMBER 2023

Letter of concern to Congress regarding HR 894's equation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism

"We...express our concern about the provisions in article 4 of House Resolution 894...explicitly equating antisemitism with anti-Zionism... In March 2021, the Board of MESA expressed its grave concern [about the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism], which has been adopted or endorsed by some government agencies and university administrations."²²¹

MARCH 2024

Statement regarding the ongoing genocidal violence against the Palestinian people and their cultural heritage in Gaza

"The Board...and its Committee on Academic Freedom condemn in the strongest possible terms the ongoing attack on Gaza by the state of Israel...Israel is engaging in cultural genocide...with the active support of its American and European allies...This deliberate destruction...constitutes war crimes."²²³

NOVEMBER 2023

Letter to Israeli government officials demanding an end to Israel's military assault on Gaza's educational sector

"We demand that you assume your responsibilities as an occupying power."²¹⁹

Letter to Biden Administration on ceasefire in Gaza

"We...call on your administration to support an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire by all parties in the occupied Gaza Strip and Israel."²²⁰

JANUARY 2024

Letter to Israeli government officials condemning the devastating military campaign in Gaza

"We...call in the strongest possible terms for an immediate cease-fire, a lifting of the siege and termination of what appears to be a genocidal campaign against the people of Gaza."²²²

APRIL 2024

Statement concerning escalating repression of protest on campuses

"The Board...and its Committee on Academic Freedom view with increasing alarm the growing number of attempts to intimidate, repress, and criminalize campus protests against the ongoing Israeli state violence against Palestinians and the US diplomatic, military, and economic support for it."²²⁴

²¹⁸ MESA Board statement on Palestine and Israel (2023) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2023/10/16/mesa-board-statement-on-palestine-and-israel>

²¹⁹ Letter demanding an end to Israel's military assault on Gaza's educational sector (2023) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2023/11/21/letter-demanding-an-end-to-israelis-military-assault-on-gazas-educational-sector>

²²⁰ Mesa Board Letter to Biden Administration on ceasefire in Gaza (2023) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2023/11/21/mesa-board-letter-to-biden-administration-on-ceasefire-in-gaza>

²²¹ Letter of concern regarding House resolution 894's equation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism (2023) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2023/12/07/letter-of-concern-regarding-house-resolution-894s-equation-of-anti-zionism-with-antisemitism>

²²² Letter condemning the devastating military campaign in Gaza (2024) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2024/01/25/letter-condemning-the-devastating-military-campaign-in-gaza>

²²³ MESA Board Joint Statement with CAF regarding the ongoing genocidal violence against the Palestinian people and their cultural heritage in Gaza (2024) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2024/03/11/mesa-board-joint-statement-with-caf-regarding-the-ongoing-genocidal-violence-against-the-palestinian-people-and-their-cultural-heritage-in-gaza>

²²⁴ MESA Board joint statement with CAF concerning escalating repression of protest on campuses (2024) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2024/04/24/mesa-board-joint-statement-with-caf-concerning-escalating-repression-of-protest-on-campus>

MAY 2024

Letter to Senate leadership urging them to oppose H.R. 6090 which codifies the flawed IHRA definition of antisemitism

"We note...that in addition to declaring the IHRA definition of antisemitism the only definition to be used by the federal government, H.R. 6090 explicitly rejects the use of any other definition of antisemitism, because doing so allegedly 'impairs enforcement efforts by adding multiple standards and may fail to identify many of the modern manifestations of antisemitism.' We find this assertion absurd and call your attention to...the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism."²²⁵

Statement updating and responding to campus repression

"The basic demands of these Palestine solidarity protests have been and remain an end to the genocide in Gaza, a permanent ceasefire and divestment from the Israeli military campaign. Yet media coverage and commentary have...adopted two false narratives which put the protesters in peril: first, that they are chaotic and dangerous, and second, that they are antisemitic in comportment and demands."²²⁶

MARCH 2025

Letter to the leadership of Columbia University urging it to reject the Trump Administration's ultimatum of 13 March 2025 and stand firm in defense of academic freedom & the university's independence

"The letter [from the Trump Administration] also demands...that the university 'formalize, adopt, and promulgate a definition of antisemitism' and that '[anti Zionist discrimination against Jews in areas unrelated to Israel or Middle East [sic] must be addressed.' We have repeatedly pointed out...the problems with the IHRA definition of antisemitism and its accompanying examples...as well as the dangers inherent in the conflation of criticism of Israel and Zionism with antisemitism."²²⁸

SEPTEMBER 2024

Letter to the Biden Administration condemning the decimation of the education sector in Gaza

"In addition to the massive destruction of Gaza's physical infrastructure...the systematic killing of our Palestinian colleagues in Gaza needs to be highlighted. Scholars... have been targeted and murdered."²²⁷

IMPACT ON JEWISH MEMBERS

Members report that, over time, these unrelenting attacks against Israel have resulted in most Jewish members dropping out of the association. One member said there didn't seem to be any hope for change as MESA leadership has made no visible or meaningful efforts to address antisemitism within the association. A Jewish scholar of the Middle East says "MESA hates us. We don't have any space we can speak there."

²²⁵ Letter to senators Schumer and Sanders urging them to oppose H.R. 6090 which codifies the flawed IHRA definition of antisemitism (2024) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2024/05/03/letter-to-senators-schumer-and-sanders-urging-them-to-oppose-h.r.-6090-which-codifies-the-flawed-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>

²²⁶ MESA Board Joint Statement with CAF updating and responding to campus repression (2024) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2024/05/06/mesa-board-joint-statement-with-caf-update-on-campus-repression>

²²⁷ MESA Board Joint Letter with CAF condemning the decimation of the education sector in Gaza (2024) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/2024/09/12/mesa-board-joint-letter-with-caf-condemning-the-decimation-of-the-education-sector-in-gaza>

²²⁸ Letter to the leadership of Columbia University urging it to reject the Trump administration's ultimatum of 13 March 2025 and stand firm in defense of Academic Freedom & the University's Independence (2025) Middle East Studies Association. Available at: <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2025/03/17/letter-to-the-leadership-of-columbia-university-urging-it-to-reject-the-trump-administrations-ultimatum-of-13-march-2025-and-stand-firm-in-defense-of-academic-freedom-and-the-universitys-independence>



ISSUES IDENTIFIED – MEANINGFUL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1883

MISSION: To promote the study, teaching, and understanding of languages, literatures, and culture.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENT OR BDS UNDER REVIEW OR REJECTED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS
 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 OPPOSES IHRA	 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED
 MEMBERS LEAVING	 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

Members have been urging the Modern Language Association (MLA) to take anti-Israel stances for almost two decades, resulting in endless contentious debates at the annual Delegate Assembly meetings (a group of almost 300 members charged with selected leadership responsibilities). While these positions were sometimes supported by the Delegate Assembly, they have historically been thwarted by the Executive Council (board) or failed to clear a vote of the full membership. Nevertheless, the ceaseless focus on this issue, unrelated to the association's mission, has created a distressing climate for many Jewish members. One interviewee indicates that marginalization for Jewish and Zionist members has grown over time given the constant anti-Israel rhetoric in so many of the association's spaces.

ANTI-BOYCOTT RESOLUTION

In 2017, members who were tired of this unrelenting focus on Israel thought perhaps the situation would improve after the Delegate Assembly voted against endorsement of an academic boycott of Israel and instead adopted, albeit by a small margin of 101 to 93, an anti-boycott resolution.²²⁹ The anti-boycott resolution, which required MLA to refrain from endorsing a boycott, passed a membership vote as well.²³⁰ The resolution passed with 1,954 votes (just above the threshold needed), with 885 people in opposition.²³¹

One of the leaders of the group opposing a boycott told *Inside Higher Ed*, "This is a good outcome for the MLA and for higher education. It affirms the principle

²²⁹ Redden, E. (2017) *MLA Delegate Assembly rejects boycott of Israeli universities*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/01/09/mla-delegate-assembly-rejects-boycott-israeli-universities>

²³⁰ Jaschik, S. (2017) *MLA votes by large margin to 'refrain' from backing Israel boycott*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/15/mla-votes-large-margin-refrain-backing-israel-boycott>

²³¹ Ibid.

that scholars should not boycott scholars. The MLA membership does not want to be pulled into political controversies that have little or nothing to do with the mission of the association. Instead, at a time when the humanities face major threats, we have crucial battles before us concerning funding for public universities, the status of non-tenure-track instructors, and the future of the NEH. It is time to put the divisive boycott debate behind us and to unite as a professional association to meet these challenges.”²³²

STRENGTH

In 2017, MLA’s membership voted to support an anti-boycott resolution.

ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVITY PERSISTENT IN THE ASSOCIATION

Just one year later, a group of members organized a meeting during the MLA conference called “MLA Vote for Justice in Palestine,” a planning session about how to promote BDS in the MLA.²³³

In 2022, the Executive Council approved the MLA Committee on Academic Freedom and Professional Rights and Responsibilities’ Statement Endorsing the AAUP’s Statement “Legislative Threats to Academic Freedom: Redefinitions of Antisemitism and Racism.”²³⁴ The statement denigrated the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of antisemitism, mischaracterizing it as a text that

equates criticism of the Israeli government with antisemitism. In fact, the definition explicitly states that “criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic.”²³⁵ In writing about the statement, members said, “The MLA action regrettably encourages biased anti-Zionist teaching and scholarship among its members and levies moral disapproval on those members who argue that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve fair political representation.”²³⁶

In 2024, the Delegate Assembly passed an “emergency motion,” brought forward by the MLA’s Radical Caucus, stipulating that the association should urge departments and administrators to “defend from threats, harassment and violence...faculty members, students, and staff” who have criticized the Israeli government and the US government for its support of the Israeli government and those who “rejected the proposition that anti-Zionism is antisemitism.”²³⁷ This was contrasted against another motion being debated that asked to defend people on campuses “regardless of their position on the conflict in the Middle East.”²³⁸ This second motion was roundly defeated. “Those who... advanced [the] second resolution,” wrote one member, “that would have advocated for a blanket protection against harassment regarding campus debate on the conflict, were all very clear that Palestinian and pro-Palestinian students and faculty should be protected. We merely wanted to extend that protection to Jews and those who support the Jewish state. Jews are under threat on campuses across the country, and the MLA explicitly chose not to offer them any protection.”²³⁹

During deliberation about the motions, an Israeli member shared his support for the second motion.²⁴⁰ *Inside Higher Ed* reports that as this member “mentioned Hamas terrorists raping Israelis, some attendees of the open hearing made a hissing sound.”²⁴¹ Leadership reportedly stood by passively and subsequently allowed another speaker to “ferociously denounce” Zionists. An interviewee reported that expressing pro-Israel views at the MLA is “brutal.” When the first motion prevailed, there was applause. Ultimately, however, after the conference the resolution was vetoed.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Jewish Journal (2018) *Judith Butler plans a stealth MLA presidency*, *Jewish Journal*. Available at: <https://jewishjournal.com/commentary/opinion/229428/judith-butlers-plans-stealth-mla-presidency/>

²³⁴ Summary: Statement Endorsing the AAUP’s Statement “Legislative Threats to Academic Freedom: Redefinitions of Antisemitism and Racism” (2022) *Modern Language Association*. Available at: <https://www.mla.org/Resources/Advocacy/Executive-Council-Actions-Tool-Kit/Summary-Statement-Endorsing-the-AAUP-s-Statement-Legislative-Threats-to-Academic-Freedom-Redefinitions-of-Antisemitism-and-Racism>

²³⁵ What is antisemitism?: IHRA working definition (no date) IHRA. Available at: <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>

²³⁶ Nelson, C. and Lockard, J. (2022) *The Modern Language Association, antisemitism and anti-zionism*, *Fathom*. Available at: <https://fathomjournal.org/the-modern-language-association-antisemitism-and-anti-zionism/>

²³⁷ Emergency Motion 2024-1 as amended and passed by the 2024 Delegate Assembly on 6 January 2024 (2024) *MLA Delegate Assembly*. Available at: <https://mla.hcommons.org/docs/emergency-motion-2024-1-text/?bp-attachment=Emergency-Motion-2024-1-Text.pdf>

²³⁸ Quinn, R. (2024) *MLA delegates pass motion defending pro-Palestine speech*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2024/01/08/mla-delegates-pass-motion-defending-pro-palestine#>

²³⁹ Saenger, M. (2024) *The decline and fall of the Modern Language Association*, *Times of Israel*. Available at: <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-decline-and-fall-of-the-mla/>

²⁴⁰ Quinn, R. (2024) *MLA delegates pass motion defending pro-Palestine speech*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2024/01/08/mla-delegates-pass-motion-defending-pro-palestine#>

²⁴¹ Ibid.

LEADERSHIP ACTIONS

In advance of the 2025 conference, a resolution to endorse BDS, including a charge of scholasticide, was submitted to the association.²⁴² Procedures mandated that the resolution went first to the Executive Council for a “legal and fiduciary review” before going to the Delegate Assembly.²⁴³ In this case, the Council unanimously rejected the resolution, thwarting the effort to move it forward for broader consideration.²⁴⁴

STRENGTH

In 2025, MLA’s Council rejected a BDS resolution.

The Executive Council circulated a lengthy explanation of its decision, focusing on potential legal and financial implications that the association’s attorney advised were serious.²⁴⁵ Instead of strongly condemning the statement, they took every opportunity to make clear that they were not happy about having to make this decision. “We reluctantly concluded,” they said, “that we couldn’t advance the resolution, and we made this decision even though individually the council’s members are horrified by the level of violence employed by the Israeli government in Gaza during the conflict.”²⁴⁶

Further, the Executive Council went out of their way to identify alternative approaches for the proposal submitters:

The council encourages a robust discussion about this topic both during the Delegate Assembly meeting and across multiple planned sessions at the convention...There are ways in which the MLA membership

might wish to express its sentiments about the events in Gaza that would not endanger the association’s ability to provide publications and services. Could not a motion calling for a statement protesting scholasticide in Gaza, while not focusing on BDS, be a powerful expression of solidarity? In addition, if members would like to move Executive Council legal and fiduciary review to take place after DA discussion of resolutions, so that resolutions can be debated whether or not they meet legal or fiduciary standards, they can propose a constitutional amendment to that effect. If members would like to propose any other changes in the consideration process for resolutions, such as a pre-submission legal and fiduciary conversation with members of council while the wording on resolutions can still be changed, they can do so as well.²⁴⁷

Two Council members resigned from their positions because of the decision to reject the resolution.²⁴⁸

And a group of eight former presidents of the MLA called for a vote on the resolution, arguing that the Council provided insufficient substantiation for their argument to reject the proposal.²⁴⁹ Broader outrage ensued. When learning of this decision, the proposal submitter said, “We’re not going to let go of this. I think the hope of the MLA leadership was to kind of sweep this under the carpet or to avoid discussion of it, and that will not happen.”²⁵⁰

ACTIVISM DURING 2025 CONFERENCE

Protests erupted at the 2025 conference, with members expressing fury at being denied the opportunity to discuss the BDS proposal. “I Stand with Palestine #BDS” stickers were distributed to attendees to put on their name badges, and anti-Israel statements were distributed to presenters to read before their panels. As the Delegate Assembly prepared to begin its meeting, protesters gathered

²⁴² MLA resolution to endorse the 2005 Palestinian BDS call (2025) Google. Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTfBE0ph1AUmgsK8YhBDN39erHACHZDsJO45SoINi3R8ayLVS_u71_q8XFVvX7izadThonNR98P7LH/pub?urp=gmail_link

²⁴³ Quinn, R. (2024) MLA leaders won't let members vote on pro-boycott resolution, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2024/11/06/mla-leaders-wont-let-members-vote-pro-boycott>

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Report to the MLA Delegate Assembly from the Executive Council on Resolution 2025-1 (2024) Modern Language Association. Available at: <https://www.mla.org/About-Us/Governance/Delegate-Assembly/Agenda-for-the-2025-Delegate-Assembly-Meeting/Report-to-the-MLA-Delegate-Assembly-from-the-Executive-Council-on-Resolution-2025-1>

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Newfield, C. (2024) MLA and BDS 1: The resolution, the blocked debate, some responses, two resignations, *Remaking II: Long Revolution*. Available at: <https://utotherescue.blogspot.com/2024/12/mla-and-bds-resolution-blocked-debate.html>

²⁴⁹ Former Modern Language Association presidents call for BDS Vote (2024) Literary Hub. Available at: <https://lithub.com/8-former-modern-language-association-presidents-call-for-bds-vote/>

²⁵⁰ Quinn, R. (2024) MLA leaders won't let members vote on pro-boycott resolution, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2024/11/06/mla-leaders-wont-let-members-vote-pro-boycott>

outside and staged a die-in.²⁵¹ Some held a banner saying “MLA is Complicit in Genocide,” and others held signs with the names of scholars “martyred” in Gaza.²⁵² When the Delegate Assembly was called to order, the protesters entered the room, read the text of the BDS resolution, chanted “Free free Palestine” and “the more they try to silence us, the louder we will be.”²⁵³ Then, as one protester described it, “we dispersed, off to listen to panels about scholasticide.”²⁵⁴ With them, this protester reported, went many of the delegates who had signed in to the meeting.²⁵⁵



Protesters at the 2025 MLA annual convention.²⁵⁶
Source: Instagram.

IMPACT OF ASSOCIATION'S CLIMATE

Given the long history of antisemitism in the association, some members express profound feelings of alienation and marginalization. One member shared dismay that his academic home, to which he had once been deeply committed, has now embraced dogmatic political positions.

Of particular concern is a perception several members shared that there is systematic discrimination against Jewish scholars in MLA's professional activities. One interviewee, for example, reported that academic journals have recently declined offers to review submissions, something suspected may be linked to the proposed reviewer's public stance on antisemitism and anti-Zionism within the association. Irrespective of whether such suspicion is accurate, it comes from being in an environment in which hostility to Jews and Zionists has become commonplace and permitted. Members also pointed to one of the association's journals, *PMLA*, as having become heavily politicized, often reflecting anti-Zionist and decolonial ideologies in the context of Israel.

MLA membership is shifting as a result of its political activism. While some members have expressed their commitment to fighting antisemitism from within the association, many Jewish and Zionist members have left, or are considering leaving, the association, given the organization's long-term, ongoing focus on Israel and the hostile atmosphere that creates at the conference and in other contexts. In addition, MLA Members for Justice in Palestine started a campaign calling on MLA members to pledge not to renew their membership “because of the association's complicity with genocide.”²⁵⁷



MLA Members for Justice in Palestine Campaign Against Member Renewals. Source: Instagram.²⁵⁸

²⁵¹ Quinn, R. (2025) *Denied vote on pro-BDS Resolution, MLA members protest, Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2025/01/11/denied-vote-pro-bds-resolution-mla-members-protest>

²⁵² Manshel, H. (2025) *Invitation to a die-in: Reflections on the MLA walk out for Palestine, Literary Hub*. Available at: <https://lithub.com/what-follows-whereas-reflections-on-the-mla-walk-out-for-palestine/>

²⁵³ Quinn, R. (2025) *Denied vote on pro-BDS Resolution, MLA members protest, Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/faculty-issues/academic-freedom/2025/01/11/denied-vote-pro-bds-resolution-mla-members-protest>

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *MLA members for Justice in Palestine on Instagram*. (2025) Instagram. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/mlamjp2025/reel/DF8ZMcwycrA/>

²⁵⁷ *MLA members for Justice in Palestine on Instagram*. (2025) Instagram. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DEwBgw7RGfG/>

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

NATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1977

MISSION: To illuminate the ways in which women’s studies are vital to education; to demonstrate the contributions of feminist scholarship that is comparative, global, intersectional and interdisciplinary to understandings of the arts, humanities, social sciences and sciences; and to promote synergistic relationships between scholarship, teaching and civic engagement in understandings of culture and society.

 HOSTILE CLIMATE	<u>BDS</u> BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS
 ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES AT EVENTS	 OPPOSES IHRA	 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED
 MEMBERS LEAVING	 LEADERSHIP DOESN'T RESPOND	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

The National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) was, in 2015, one of the early backers of BDS, with one former Jewish member reflecting that the association eventually made Palestinian liberation a core part of its mission, aligning with BDS and related rhetoric.

BDS PASSES AND GUIDES ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

In a “Statement in Opposition to the NWSA Resolution on BDS,” published several weeks before the 2015 vote, a Jewish member wrote:

...When I read the BDS resolution proposed for endorsement by the NWSA, and the

supporting FAQs, I am deeply offended. The material in support of the resolution states: “What is really anti-Semitic is to define all Jews with a philosophy that many find abhorrent to the traditions of social justice and universality that Judaism enshrines.” I am angry to have my Judaism defined for me and to be told by NWSA what is “really anti-Semitic.” While I can convey my progressive politics in Jewish groups, increasingly, I do not feel I can express my Jewish voice within...NWSA, which has been one of my homes for many years...

...[I]n spite of this proposed resolution, there has been little dialogue about Israel and Palestine...The BDS...rhetoric turns a complex issue into a two-sided one that erases many narratives. It equates supporting BDS resolutions with a pledge of solidarity with Palestine while placing those who question that strategy in the enemy camp, assumed to be opposed to justice and even made the objects of scorn and vitriol...

It is anti-Semitic. I would ask those who villainize Israel while insisting they do not hate Jews to consider Audre Lorde's words: "I urge each of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there"...I cannot allow the words of this resolution and these FAQs to tell me whether a "good" Jew is one who sides with those who see Israel as a demonic entity or to imply that if I do not, I do not deserve to be heard, to be seen, perhaps even to live. I am not among those who feel that they can be Jewish without supporting the existence of the state of Israel. I know too many people who would have no home without that home. I am shocked and offended that an academic organization that prides itself on "difficult dialogue" would adopt any sort of boycott of ideas....²⁵⁹

Despite such opposition from some members, the BDS advocates prevailed.²⁶⁰



November 30, 2015

Another Association Backs Israel Boycott

The National Women's Studies Association becomes the latest scholarly group to join the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against Israel.

...In a vote that involved 35 percent of the association's total membership, 88.4 percent... voted in favor of a boycott measure. Members of the NWSA's executive committee then took their own vote...to approve the membership's recommendation that the association support BDS.

The NWSA measure does not limit itself to a boycott just of Israeli academic institutions, but rather affirms the association's endorsement of "the 2005 call by Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) of economic, military and cultural entities and projects sponsored by the state of Israel."...

"We're basically redefining feminism and putting solidarity with Palestine into that definition of what it means to be a feminist," said [one of the co-founders of Feminists for Justice in/for Palestine, the ad-hoc group that initially brought the resolution to the association]...

In a press release with quotes from BDS supporters, [one supporter] described the NWSA resolution as being "a long time in the making; it reflects broader changes within NWSA, especially the browning and the radicalization of the organization and the challenges it waged against white supremacy and neoliberalism which went hand in hand with Zionist influence in the women's movement and women's and feminist scholarship."

Source: *Inside Higher Ed*.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ A statement in opposition to the NWSA Resolution on BDS (2015) Brandeis University. Available at: <https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/blog/2015/1109-statement.html>

²⁶⁰ Redden, E. (2015) National Women's Studies Association joins Israel Boycott Movement, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/12/01/national-womens-studies-association-joins-israel-boycott-movement>

²⁶¹ Ibid.

Shortly after the vote, Feminists for Justice In/For Palestine (F4JP), was given formal organizational status as an NWSA Interest Group.²⁶²



Source: Critical Ethnic Studies website.²⁶³

And in 2018 NWSA gave the following award:

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Book Accusing Israel of Sparing Palestinian Lives 'In Order To Control Them' Wins Women's Studies Award

A Rutgers University professor who accused Israeli forces of deliberately sparing the lives of Palestinians in order to debilitate them has been awarded by the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA).

Source: *The Algemeiner*.²⁶⁴

Over the next several years, the association took opportunities to reiterate its anti-Zionist position including, for example, in the 2021 statement "Palestinian Solidarity is a Feminist Issue," which said, "we will never choose the side of the oppressor, which

means that we will always speak up against injustice, no matter what the cost."²⁶⁵

NWSA "RECOMMIT[S] TO BDS AND FEMINIST ACCOUNTABILITY"

The association then had an organizational crisis in 2023 after the President went on a Christian Zionist religious trip to Israel. F4JP was outraged by the "crossing [of] the picket line." In a statement, the group called upon NWSA to "reaffirm its unwavering commitment to Palestinian liberation and feminism, including BDS."

...We write this letter, with alarm and disappointment, to name the ways that the BDS commitment has been violated by the organization's president, to explain the profundity of this violation, to query the apology letter that was offered..., and to propose a path forward that will re-center the multiple radical commitments that prompted and sustained the movement for BDS at NWSA...This trip brings to light the direct harm caused by the larger institution of Christian Zionism, which is one of the bulwarks of the Israeli Apartheid state. Excursions to Palestine for "religious and familial reasons" ...not only contribute to the Israeli economy and the Israeli state's racialized and militarized management of the holy sites of multiple religions, but crucially, also help to legitimize the settler colonial Apartheid Zionist state. Drawing on centuries of Orientalist and Zionist tropes about Palestine and the surrounding countries, such religious trips frame occupied lands as the site of religious fulfillment and joyful spiritual "homecoming" for foreigners, while most of the land's indigenous people cannot even travel safely through their lands...

F4JP then withdrew from the 2023 NWSA conference, where it had planned to sponsor several activities.

²⁶² Why we withdrew from NWSA's annual meeting? A statement by Feminists for Justice in Palestine (2023) Critical Ethnic Studies. Available at: <https://www.criticalethnicstudiesjournal.org/blog/2023/10/27/why-we-withdrew-from-nwsas-annual-meeting-a-statement-by-feminists-for-justice-in-palestine-1>

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Moshe, S. (2018) Book accusing Israel of sparing Palestinian lives 'in order to control them' wins women's studies award, *Algemeiner.com*. Available at: <https://www.algemeiner.com/2018/09/12/book-accusing-israel-of-sparing-palestinian-lives-in-order-to-control-them-wins-womens-studies-award/>

²⁶⁵ (2021) NWSA: Palestinian Solidarity is a feminist issue. Available at: https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NWSA/7a8ba6a5-3bb1-4957-937f-39be8a6ac88f/UploadedImages/Statements/2021/Palestinian_solidarity_feminist.pdf

In its statement of withdrawal, F4JP said:

[They were] horrified that NWSA leadership is seeking to gender- and sexual-wash its failure to be accountable and transparent about their egregious violations of the BDS resolution... Our reason for withdrawing from the conference is primarily due to the decision by [the] NWSA president... to travel to settler Israel on a Christian Zionist normalization trip in 2022... Since that violation, the NWSA has insisted upon and even surpassed the cover up of its President's violations... Also disturbing are other statements issued by [the President], including a... statement falsely conflating opposition to Zionism and Palestinians' freedom struggle with the racist ideology and practice of antisemitism... It seemed that NWSA leadership was endorsing the IHRA definition of antisemitism.²⁶⁶

Rather than developing programming for the conference, F4JP held an "Open Classroom teach-in series starting with an emergency teach-in on the genocide in Gaza."²⁶⁷

F4JP specified a long list of ways in which NWSA could begin to "repair the harm done to the Palestinian liberation struggle by the NWSA," and the association responded in the spring of 2024 by "recommitting to BDS and feminist accountability."²⁶⁸ In the NWSA statement issued under the new President, the association took responsibility for many things it conceded were problematic over the previous period of time. These included, for example, "the genocidal war on Gaza was only mentioned at the end of the 2023 opening plenary in a video" and a newsletter was published that "egregiously conflated anti-Zionism and antisemitism."²⁶⁹ "We also learned," the statement said, "of even more harms done, including portraits of Golda Meir displayed by the officially-contracted hotel during our conference in Milwaukee."²⁷⁰ The 2023 calls for a "Ceasefire and Negotiations to end Gaza Siege and Israeli Apartheid" and an "End to Israel's War on Gaza"

were deemed "too little too late."^{271,272} The association committed to relevant programming at the 2024 conference, a delegation to Palestine, and a series of virtual teach-ins, among other things.

NWSA also "proud[ly]...endorses[ed] and support[ed] our membership attendance to the 2024 People's Conference for Palestine."²⁷³ The description for this conference included the following language: "All backers of Zionism, Israel, and US imperialism have been put on notice. The perpetrators of genocide and occupation have names and faces, and the masses of people around the world stand against them in the millions."²⁷⁴

ANTI-ISRAEL ACTIVITY AT 2024 CONFERENCE

The association did, in fact, focus substantial attention during the NWSA 2024 conference on its BDS commitment, including a plenary session and a session sponsored by F4JP.

(RE)THINKING FEMINIST MOVEMENTS: PALESTINE IS A FEMINIST ISSUE

Friday, November 15th

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM | Grand Riverview Ballroom B

For a number of people, the focus and commitment to a Free Palestine began on October 7, 2023. Other educators, artists, and organizers aligned with this global movement beforehand as Israel's colonial-supported genocidal war on Palestinians began with the Nakba of 1948, when more than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or forced to flee from their homeland. Palestinian scholars in our field have been particularly attentive to Israeli occupation and Palestinian resistance, because Palestine is a feminist issue. If we are concerned with the complex relationships between gender and sexuality, race, class, age, and other positionalities, we must be concerned with Palestine. If we are concerned with global capitalism, neocolonialism, and other systems of power and dominance, we must be concerned with Palestine. If we are concerned with amplifying and honoring the righteous resistance of the subjugated and oppressed, then we must be concerned with Palestine. As Rabab Abdulhadi writes in "Living Under Occupation" (2012), "*Consciousness of gender inequality (or any other structural inequality or injustice) can supersede, accompany, or result from awareness of other systemic oppression. In other words, as there are many sources of oppression, there are many paths to consciousness and liberation.*" In addition to situating Palestine as a feminist issue, Abdulhadi, Chair of the NWSA Feminists for Justice In/For Palestine Interest Group; Huwaida Arraf, Malak Mattar; and President Heidi R. Lewis will discuss the ways we can continue working together to understand and end the occupations of Palestine, Okinawa, Kashmir, Tigray, and all other colonized lands.

Source: NWSA 2024 conference program book, p.39.²⁷⁵

²⁶⁶ Why we withdrew from NWSA's annual meeting? A statement by Feminists for Justice in Palestine (2023) *Critical Ethnic Studies*. Available at: <https://www.criticalethnicstudiesjournal.org/blog/2023/10/27/why-we-withdrew-from-nwsas-annual-meeting-a-statement-by-feminists-for-justice-in-palestine-1>

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ NWSA recommit to BDS and feminist accountability (2024a) NWSA. Available at: https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/NWSA/7a8ba6a5-3bb1-4957-937f-39be8a6ac88f/UploadedImages/Statements/2024/NWSA_Recommits_to_BDS_and_Feminist_Accountability_1_.pdf

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ NWSA calls for an end to Israel's war on Gaza. (2023) NWSA. Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/nwsa/nwsa-calls-for-a-ceasefire-and-negotiations-to-end-gaza-siege-and-israeli-apartheid-450830>

²⁷² NWSA calls for a ceasefire and negotiations to end Gaza siege and Israeli apartheid (2023) NWSA. Available at: <https://mailchi.mp/nwsa/nwsa-calls-for-a-ceasefire-and-negotiations-to-end-gaza-siege-and-israeli-apartheid-450822>

²⁷³ The People's Conference for Palestine (2024) National Women's Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.nwsa.org/events/event-description?CalendarEventKey=1cad1630-9711-4882-858b-018ee5b87e0b>

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ National Women's Studies Association (2024) 2024 44th annual conference program, NWSA. Available at: https://issuu.com/nationalwomenstudiesassociation/docs/nwsa_program_book_2024_v3-compressed

FEMINISTS FOR JUSTICE IN AND FOR PALESTINE: PALESTINE SOLIDARITY AND DECOLONIZATION AT THE NWSA CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the Feminists for Justice in/for
Palestine Special Interest Group

Saturday, November 16th

3:30 PM - 4:45 PM | 142C

We formed Feminists for Justice in/for Palestine between the annual meetings of 2014 & 2015. In 2014, Israel's bombardment of Gaza shocked the world, and expressions of Palestine solidarity erupted at the NWSA's meeting in Puerto Rico, breaking the organization's long silence on the issue. One year later, we organized to ensure that NWSA's bid to join the Boycott, Divestment, & Sanctions movement achieved a landslide victory.

For the past decade, we have represented feminist Palestine solidarity at the NWSA and beyond, connecting with movements opposing colonization, military occupation, indigenous genocide, caste oppression, carceral governance, and the sexual and gender-based violence that attends such neocolonialisms. This roundtable offers reflection on this decade of work, a recognition of the ongoing fight against the genocide in Gaza and settler colonialism across Palestine, and an appeal to build the next phase of liberatory feminist struggle in concert with revolutionary movements across the globe.

Source: NWSA 2024 conference program book, p.67.²⁷⁶

F4JP was even given a special shout-out in the program book.

FEMINISTS FOR JUSTICE IN/FOR PALESTINE



We hold a particular level of appreciation for our colleagues in our Constituency Group, Feminists for Justice in/for Palestine (F4JP), for their collaboration and grace in this season of growth for the National Women's Studies Association. Our leadership is strengthened by our partnership and restorative work to embody all that it means to champion the liberation of Palestine as a feminist issue.

Source: NWSA 2024 conference program book, p.13.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

And in a list of highlights provided after the conference, the association reported raising \$3,925 “via ticket sales and donations in support of a liberated Palestine.”²⁷⁸ It seems that members wanting to participate in some of the conference activities could only do so if they were comfortable with proceeds going to specified recipients, such as the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.



**FREEDOM
FLOTILLA
COALITION**

WE SLAY NWSA DRAG SHOW AND DANCE PARTY

Friday, November 15th

9:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Portside Ballroom, 2nd Floor

The NWSA is excited - literally doing metaphorical backflips and shoulder shimmies - to partner with Slay Events & Entertainment, a local woman-owned business that uplifts the Detroit community through a combination of creating safe spaces and philanthropy. We're hosting an event that melds music, dance, freedom of expression, and joy during our 44th Annual Conference. Our very first drag show will feature local QTBIPOC performers and a DJ to turn this show into a dance party following the show. By purchasing a ticket, attendees will be raising funds for local drag artists and the movement for a Free Palestine as the Association will be donating proceeds to the Freedom Flotilla Coalition.

Source: NWSA 2024 conference program book, p.88.²⁷⁹

IMPACT OF ASSOCIATION'S CLIMATE

One former member who left the association when they felt membership had come to conflict with their values shared that all of their colleagues who were pro-Israel had also left the association, feeling there was no place for them. Members shared feeling overwhelmed and marginalized by the pervasive anti-Zionist rhetoric.

²⁷⁸ NWSA, *A History 2024 - 44th National Conference (2024) National Women's Studies Association*. Available at: <https://www.nwsa.org/annual-conference/past-future-conferences/highlights-2024>

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

ASSOCIATION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1979

MISSION: To serve as a primary research and teaching hub for Asian American Studies, an interdisciplinary field born out of the 1960s movements for racial justice, third world liberation, and student activism.

BDS BDS ENDORSED	 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHICANA AND CHICANO STUDIES



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 1972

MISSION: To advance the interests and needs of the Chicana and Chicano community; to advance research in Chicana and Chicano Studies; to advance the professional interests and needs of Chicanas and Chicanos in the academy.

BDS BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS	 ANTISEMITIC SIG ACTIVITY
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM	

NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES ASSOCIATION



MAJOR CONCERNS – SUBSTANTIAL ACTION REQUIRED

FOUNDED: 2007

MISSION: To support scholars and others who work in the academic field of Native American and Indigenous Studies.

BDS BDS ENDORSED	 ANTISEMITIC STATEMENTS
 OPEN DISCOURSE STIFLED	 BOARD, COMMITTEE OR SUBGROUP LEADERS PROMOTING ANTISEMITISM

Several associations focused on ethnic studies have been at the forefront of antisemitic and anti-Zionist activity. While these are relatively small associations, their influence can be outsized.

The **Association for Asian American Studies** (AAAS) led the way. In 2013, *Inside Higher Ed* reported that AAAS was “the first scholarly organization in the U.S.” to endorse the boycott of Israeli universities.²⁸⁰



Inside Higher Ed April 23, 2013

The general membership of the Association for Asian American Studies unanimously approves a resolution endorsing the boycott of Israeli universities.

Source: *Inside Higher Ed*.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Redden, E. (2013) *Asian American Studies Association endorses the boycott of Israeli universities*, *Inside Higher Ed*. Available at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/04/24/asian-american-studies-association-endorses-boycott-israeli-universities>

²⁸¹ Ibid.

Addressing the vote, the then-past president of AAAS said, “We would discourage partnerships with Israeli academic institutions, whether they’re curriculum partnerships or study abroad partnerships, because that would be becoming complicit with the discriminatory practices of Israeli institutions.”²⁸²

The **Native American and Indigenous Studies Association** (NAISA) followed later that year with a unanimous vote of its elected Council.²⁸³

NAISA Council Declaration of Support for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions

Approved by NAISA Council, 13 December 2013

Source: *NAISA website*.²⁸⁴

The association’s anti-Israel commitment has not abated. In April 2024, the NAISA Council released a “Statement on Palestine,” expressing that “[we] issue this current statement in the spirit of our 2013 statement.”²⁸⁵ In 2024, the NAISA leadership said:

We, as members of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, condemn in the strongest possible terms the Israeli genocide in Gaza and the ongoing settler colonial elimination targeting Palestinians... We extend our deepest solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, the occupied territories, and those living in the diaspora as they strive to survive this genocidal onslaught by all means necessary... We reject the framing of this conflagration as a “conflict” that began on October 7, 2023... Genocide is inherent to settler colonialism as a process that attempts to eliminate and replace Native peoples.²⁸⁶

In 2015, the membership of the **National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies** (NACCS) voted

unanimously to support a resolution to boycott Israeli academic institutions.²⁸⁷ Almost a decade later, NACCS continued its anti-Israel activism with the 2024 release of a “Call for Action for a Liberated Palestine,” put forth by three of its Caucuses.²⁸⁸

The National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies joins the world in resisting the genocidal attack on Palestinians in and outside of Gaza and Palestine...[W]e call for...persistent escalated action to stop the genocide in Palestine. We urge the United States government, universities, and colleges to divest from funding the state of Israel and its military...We deplore the scholasticide underway...We oppose...false narratives of victimization, which aim to further legitimate Israel’s colonial project.

We reject pink-washing and all attempts to use queer, trans, and non-binary people’s identities as tools to demonize and dehumanize Palestinians and to justify the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. We recognize that queer, trans, and nonbinary Palestinian folks are especially targeted by Israeli apartheid and genocide... We express our commitment to supporting and affirming students and faculty experiencing...Zionist silencing, harassment, and punitive attacks...

We stand with the “stop cops on campus” and prison abolitionist movements and understand that our struggle for abolition from the police, prison, ICE, and detention regime violence is a joint struggle with the liberation of Palestine as the genocide is waged with militarized technologies and tactics that surveil and attack our shared communities...This moment beckons the transformation of the colonial university itself and is another iteration of the struggle for Ethnic Studies.²⁸⁹

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ NAISA Council Declaration of Support for the Boycott of Israeli Academic Institutions (2013) Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Available at: <https://naisa.org/about/council-statements/naisa-council-declaration-of-support-for-the-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions/>

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ NAISA Council statement on Palestine - Free Palestine Movement (2024) Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Available at: <https://naisa.org/about/council-statements/naisa-council-statement-on-palestine/>

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies endorses boycott of Israeli academic institutions (2015) US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. Available at: <https://usacbi.org/2015/04/national-association-of-chicana-and-chicano-studies-endorses-boycott-of-israeli-academic-institutions/>

²⁸⁸ Call for action for a liberated Palestine (2024) NACCS. Available at: <https://www.naccs.org/NewsBot.asp?MODE=VIEW&ID=30456>

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

ASSOCIATIONS WITHOUT REPORTS OF ANTISEMITISM TO ADL

AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION

NO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

FOUNDED: 1885

MISSION: To encourage economic research, especially the historical and statistical study of the actual conditions of industrial life, to issue publications on economic subjects and to encourage freedom of economic discussion.

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

NO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

FOUNDED: 1900

MISSION: To promote the discipline and profession of philosophy, both within the academy and in the public arena.

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

NO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

FOUNDED: 1903

MISSION: To support excellence in scholarship and teaching and informed discourse about politics, policy and civic participation; to promote a lively, diverse community of scholars, teachers, students, and practitioners who bring wide-ranging interests, methodologies, and perspectives to the analysis and conduct of government and politics.

GERMAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

NO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

FOUNDED: 1976

MISSION: To promote research and study of German-speaking countries' diverse histories, cultures, languages, and politics in global contexts.

LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

NO SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IDENTIFIED

FOUNDED: 1924

MISSION: To advance the scientific study of language.

We are unaware of these associations meeting any of our negative assessment criteria. ADL has not received reports from members, and secondary source searches have not revealed problems.

Notably, these associations have in place several policies that align with our recommended best practices for addressing antisemitism in professional academic associations (see the ‘Take Action’ section for reference). While we encourage all associations to adopt these best practices, adoption alone is insufficient. Association leaders also must enforce their policies. The associations on this page appear to be following and enforcing their policies, and it seems this has made a difference in protecting the climate for their members.

Below we point to some of the tangible things these associations are doing that likely contribute to their success in maintaining inclusive climates that are free of antisemitism.

Several associations have provisions to ensure their public statements do not deviate from mission. For example, the **Linguistic Society of America (LSA)** only “considers taking public positions when issues fall within one or both of the following domains: a) when there is a consensus within the linguistic scientific literature that points to a particular policy approach or assessment of a public concern, b) when a policy or public concern relates to the well-being of Linguistics as a discipline or profession.”²⁹⁰

And the **American Philosophical Association’s** bylaws specify four conditions under which a resolution would be out of order:²⁹¹

Association Bylaws

5.5. Resolutions.

E. Any resolution purporting to represent the sense of a division or the association on a matter of public policy, and any other resolution for which the chair of the board determines it is appropriate, shall be reviewed by the board of officers prior to being implemented or being put to a vote. Such a resolution is not in order and may not be put to a vote if the board of officers finds that any of the following conditions obtains:

1. The resolution is inconsistent with the APA’s mission and purpose.
2. The resolution impedes the board’s ability to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities.
3. The resolution contains erroneous, tortious, or possibly libelous statements.
4. The resolution may pose a threat to the association’s continuing operation as a tax-exempt organization.

Source: APA’s website²⁹²

The **American Political Science Association’s (APSA)** bylaws set strict guardrails preventing the association from committing itself on questions of public policy, and organized sections of the APSA are not permitted to independently issue public statements.^{293, 294} The APSA Organized Section Handbook²⁹⁵ stipulates that “Sections are legally part of APSA, thus, sections are required to receive Council approval for any public statements.”

APSA also has the RESPECT campaign, which “encourages ‘professional respect’ by and towards all APSA annual meeting attendees and participants at all times.” This initiative is supported with a meeting ombuds and onsite bystander intervention training.^{296, 297}

In addition, APSA has terms and conditions regarding appropriate participation for online community forums that encourage free inquiry and intellectual exchange. Among other things which users agree they will not do is “restrict or inhibit any other user from using and enjoying the Communication Services.”²⁹⁸ APSA developed these long-standing and comprehensive policies to help foster a safe and welcoming environment for all members and to address all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment.

²⁹⁰ LSA Advocacy (no date) LSA Advocacy Efforts. Available at: <https://www.lsadc.org/advocacy>

²⁹¹ Association bylaws – The American Philosophical Association (no date) American Philosophical Association. Available at: <https://www.apaonline.org/page/bylaws>

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Bylaws of the Association of the American Political Science Association (no date) American Political Science Association. Available at: https://apsanet.org/Portals/54/governance/APSA%20Bylaws_2017.pdf?ver=2017-08-18-122510-007

²⁹⁴ APSA public statements and letters (2025) American Political Science Association (APSA). Available at: <https://apsanet.org/about/apsa-public-statements-and-letters/>

²⁹⁵ APSA Organized Section Handbook (2024) APSA. Available at: <https://apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/APSA-OS-HANDBOOK-FINAL-8.12.2024.pdf>

²⁹⁶ About the RESPECT Campaign (no date) APSA. Available at: <https://connect.apsanet.org/respect/about-respect/>

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ APSA Terms (no date) American Political Science Association (APSA). Available at: <https://apsanet.org/Terms/>

The **German Studies Association** (GSA) has a conduct and anti-harassment policy, which is important in itself. Adding to its value is the fact that people have to agree to follow the policy when they join the association or register for an event.²⁹⁹

GSA Conduct and Anti-Harassment Policy

Acknowledgement of This Policy

In applying for membership in the GSA or signing up for participation in any GSA-sponsored activity, including as a vendor, staff member, or volunteer, individuals must be given a link to this policy and actively signal that they have read it. Hence participation in any GSA event constitutes acknowledgement of, and agreement to abide by this policy.

Source: GSA.³⁰⁰

The **American Economic Association** (AEA) also has a Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation. Adding to its value is a clear process for reporting antisemitism that is available on the association's website.³⁰¹

AEA Formal Complaint Procedures

AEA members may file a formal complaint about another member, or about conduct in connection with an AEA-sponsored activity, if they believe the **AEA Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation** has been violated.

[Learn how to file a formal complaint](#)

[View formal complaint procedures](#)

Source: AEA.³⁰²

We commend these associations for their focused, mission-driven work on advancing specific fields and disciplines. Association leaders should turn to these exemplars for guidance. We encourage these associations to continue leading the way in protecting their Jewish members from antisemitism.

²⁹⁹ GSA Conduct and Anti-Harassment Policy (no date) German Studies Association. Available at: <https://www.thegsa.org/about/policies-and-documents/conduct-and-harassment-policy>

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ AEA Ethics/Ombuds (no date) American Economic Association. Available at: <https://www.aeaweb.org/ethics>

³⁰² Ibid.

TAKE ACTION

Are you an association leader seeking better understanding of how to prevent and appropriately respond to antisemitism? The following checklist offers clear, tangible, realistic steps you can take.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING ANTISEMITISM IN PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC ASSOCIATIONS: A CHECKLIST FOR LEADERS

Ensure board members understand and respect their fiduciary responsibilities to the association.

- ☐ We offer board training that includes discussion of fiduciary responsibility.
- ☐ Board members are required to engage in professional development activities to become better informed about antisemitism and the needs and concerns of Jewish, Zionist, and Israeli members.

Create organizational policy stipulating that public statements and advocacy efforts must directly align with the mission of the association, and enforce those policies without exception

- ☐ We have a policy specifying that all public statements made on behalf of the association must directly align with the organizational mission.
- ☐ We have a policy specifying that all of the association's public policy advocacy efforts must directly align with the organizational mission.
- ☐ Official subgroups of the association (e.g., divisions, sections) are not permitted to independently issue public statements or engage in public policy advocacy.

Establish and uphold a clear code of ethics, non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, and a code of conduct to guide member behavior and create accountability. These policies should be enforced for antisemitism with the same strength and consistency as for any other infractions.

- ☐ Our diversity statement encompasses Jewish people, including those for whom Zionism is a central component of their faith.
- ☐ Antisemitism and anti-Zionism are explicitly included in our non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.
- ☐ Members have to agree to abide by non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies when they join and renew.
- ☐ We have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of antisemitism and provide educational materials for members to explain the relevant historical context and rationale.
- ☐ Staff members are required to engage in professional development activities to become better informed about antisemitism and the needs and concerns of Jewish, Zionist, and Israeli members.

TAKE ACTION

- ☐ We offer educational programming for members that addresses the multifaceted nature of antisemitism.
- ☐ We have criteria for evaluating the appropriateness of potential organizational partnerships that would disallow collaboration with organizations that promote discriminatory, biased, or exclusionary belief or action.

Develop clear and easy processes for reporting antisemitic rhetoric and activity in the association, and commit to investigating and responding to reports in a timely, transparent and serious manner.

- ☐ We have a clear and easy process for reporting antisemitism that is available on the association's website.
- ☐ We have clearly specified investigative steps that are taken in a timely manner when a report of antisemitism is submitted.

Protect open inquiry and intellectual exchange.

- ☐ We have an anti-boycott policy.
- ☐ We have rules regarding appropriate participation for listservs and community forums, and these channels have moderators.
- ☐ There is an expectation that content the association disseminates in written or spoken form does not promote discriminatory, biased, or exclusionary belief or action, and these expectations are proactively communicated to leaders of formal subgroups (e.g., divisions, sections).

Adopt a policy disallowing investment decisions to be driven by politically motivated ideologies.

- ☐ Our investment policy specifies that investment decisions may not be based on political beliefs.

Establish and enforce policies to ensure safe and full participation for all attendees at association events.

- ☐ We have an event code of conduct that attendees have to agree to follow when they register.
- ☐ We have a policy disallowing protests that disrupt programming at events, which attendees agree to follow when they register.
- ☐ We have a policy to ensure that conference presentations relate to the association's mission.
- ☐ We consider the Jewish holiday calendar when planning major organizational events or deadlines.

Are you a member who has experienced antisemitism in your association?

Following are some steps you can consider taking to advocate for yourself, for others, and for the integrity of your professional community.

REPORT TO ADL. If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of antisemitism, please **contact ADL** at <https://www.adl.org/report-incident>. Irrespective of the details of the specific situation, reporting serves to support YOU and support efforts to track antisemitic and hate incident trends. All reports submitted to ADL are confidential unless you grant express permission to share information.

CONSIDER REPORTING TO YOUR ASSOCIATION. The decision to report is a personal one. You may want to consider the potential negative consequences of reporting including, for example, the loss of professional opportunities and harassment, in addition to the potential benefits of prompting accountability and reform.

If you decide to report, we recommend including the following components in your letter:

1. **Detailed documentation of the problematic activity or incident.** Make an evidence-based claim of antisemitism using ADL resources. The more specific your argument and detailed your presentation of the facts, the more likely it is that the association leadership will take your complaint seriously.
2. **Assert a violation of a particular law, policy or organizational commitment, if possible.** In many cases, this is not possible, but if there is a violation of the code of conduct, for example, the report can be tied to it. Search your association's website for the following, or similar, documents: bylaws, mission statement, diversity policy, code of ethics, code of conduct, and anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy.
3. **A description of the impact the activity/incident had on you, if you feel comfortable sharing that.** How did it make you feel emotionally? Were there professional implications for you?
4. **Clearly articulated outcomes you hope will result from filing the report.** Request tangible action that is appropriately responsive to what happened. This can range from revision of relevant organizational policies to sanctions of individual members. Provide the best practices checklist, above, for leaders addressing antisemitism in professional academic associations.
5. **A specified date by which a substantive response is requested.** Hold the association accountable for taking your report seriously. Generating a response usually requires coordination among several organizational leaders, so it is reasonable to offer a couple of weeks unless the situation demands more urgency.

TAKE ACTION

If there are clear reporting procedures on the association's website, follow them. Otherwise, address your letter to the full board, but email it to the CEO/Executive Director and the President/Chair of the board with a note asking them to pass it along to the full board. If you are able to identify other members of an executive committee, typically a subset of the board, it is a good idea to include them on the email as well. Do not send the letter to only one person. Sending to multiple people forces an immediate conversation. But sending to the full board directly may create chaos.

CONSIDER COLLECTIVE ACTION. Generate collective action against antisemitism in your association. Try not to let a small group of members hijack the organization. Encourage colleagues to come forward and join your efforts. This can take the form of action against a specific activity, like a boycott proposal, or it can involve the formation of a group to address antisemitism in the association more holistically.

CONSIDER OBTAINING A LEGAL EVALUATION. Depending on the nature of the situation, you may want to consider getting advice from an attorney. You can of course retain private counsel. There are also organizations with missions related to countering antisemitism that provide legal representation in certain circumstances, sometimes pro bono. ADL's National Litigation team is one such resource – their legal work includes cases fighting antisemitism in schools, universities, workplaces and businesses. You can learn more about ADL's litigation efforts on the following page.

ADL Legal Action Network, powered by Gibson Dunn and supported by law firms nationwide, is designed to provide victims of antisemitism and extremism with access to legal services. ADL has built an unmatched army of some of the top litigators and legal minds in America to protect the Jewish people.

ADL fights for justice on behalf of victims of antisemitism, extremism and hate. With ADL Legal Action Network, ADL is equipped to provide victims with access to a national response system and a nationwide network of law firms.

Jews and Jewish institutions across the country are experiencing a troubling rise in antisemitism. ADL provides legal expertise and support. We are a community — don't face hate alone.

ADL Legal Action Network is powered by Gibson Dunn and has a steering committee of additional law firms including Cooley LLP; Covington & Burling LLP; Morgan Lewis; Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein LLP; and Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP. More than 40 law firms across the U.S. are available to provide support as co-counsel and referral counsel.

Submit a report to ADL Legal Action Network at www.adl.org/adl-legal-action

Areas of Focus

- Protecting the Jewish Community — Combat antisemitism, including physical harm, harassment and doxxing, or prevention of religious exercise.
- Education — Secure justice and challenge antisemitism and hate at K-12 and university levels, including antisemitic curriculum or building takeovers.
- Fighting Extremism — Counter extremist organizations and individuals, including those funding terrorism, providing material support for terrorism or disrupting government functions.
- Business and Employment Discrimination — Fight discriminatory business or employment practices, such as denials of service, firings, demotions, denial of religious accommodation, or damage at Jewish-owned businesses.

Examples of ADL Litigation Impact

Jerusalem Coffee House

ADL filed its first lawsuit fighting discrimination in public accommodations in February 2025, suing an Oakland, California café for refusing service to a Jewish customer, ejecting him and subjecting him to antisemitic slurs. Not long after, the café reportedly marked the first anniversary of the October 7 attack on Israel by introducing menu items apparently glorifying violence against Jews, including drinks named “Iced In-Tea-Fada” and “Sweet Sinwar,” and decorating the menu with Hamas symbols.

IMPACT: This case seeks to reinforce that antisemitic discrimination by businesses is illegal, deter discriminatory business practices and protect Jewish customers.

Occidental College

In April 2024, ADL filed a Title VI civil rights complaint against Occidental College for failing to protect Jewish and Israeli students from severe antisemitic bullying, intimidation and physical threats after October 7. The complaint alleged Jewish students were verbally harassed, had pro-Israel materials destroyed and were subjected to antisemitic harassment from peers. One professor expressed feeling “invigorated” by the attacks and encouraged students to share their excitement, which led to applause. Despite knowing about these incidents, the college did not act swiftly to safeguard the students or address the hostile campus climate.

IMPACT: As part of the settlement, Occidental agreed to undertake reforms to repair the campus climate, including adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism when reviewing complaints of antisemitic harassment and discrimination and holding campus-wide Title VI trainings for both faculty and students, including specific sessions on antisemitic harassment.

The School District of Philadelphia

In July 2024, ADL filed a civil rights complaint on behalf of Jewish parents whose children had been subjected to “severe and persistent harassment and discrimination” at the hands of fellow students and teachers in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The Title VI complaint, filed with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, alleged that over the nine months after October 7, SDP had knowingly allowed its schools to become “viciously hostile” environments for Jewish students, while failing to address numerous incidents of antisemitic harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

IMPACT: As part of the resolution agreement, SDP agreed to actions to address and mitigate discrimination such as issuing and widely disseminating an anti-harassment statement, reviewing its policies and procedures to ensure they adequately address the Title VI prohibition on discrimination, revising its policies and procedures accordingly and submitting them to the Office for Civil Rights for approval, and providing annual training to all administrators, faculty, and staff on Title VI’s prohibition of discrimination.

ADL National Litigation

In 2023, ADL launched its in-house National Litigation Department, adding the power of legal action to our longstanding efforts to combat antisemitism, extremism and hate. ADL’s litigation work influences laws, policies and attitudes by pursuing justice through the courts. In response to the high demand for legal assistance, ADL established ADL Legal Action Network in 2025, to amplify the pursuit of justice and legal accountability for antisemitism and extremism.

LEARN MORE
ABOUT ADL’S
LITIGATION
WORK AND
IMPACT HERE



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THE PATH FORWARD

We commend those professional academic associations, such as the American Economic Association and the American Political Science Association, that focus exclusively on their core mission of advancing a specific field or discipline and turn to them as exemplars. We encourage them to continue to lead the way in supporting the professional needs of all of their members and protecting their Jewish members from antisemitism in their professional associations.

Many other associations, such as the American Anthropological Association and the American Psychological Association, claim to embody values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and yet they engage in actions that alienate many Jewish members, as well as many others who desire a

professional organization that focuses on its core academic mission. We implore these associations to read this report with purpose and take proactive steps to make change. ADL remains ready to partner with association leaders - from associations assessed here and others - in supporting these efforts.

Without change, these associations will continue to violate core values of academic culture, such as respect for free inquiry and intellectual exchange, and it is not only Jewish people who suffer as a result. Antisemitism in the academy and in adjacent academic institutions, such as the ones assessed here, destroys our educational system, ultimately rendering our next generation unable to examine evidence, think analytically, and be open to diverse ideas. And, of course, it is hateful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to extend our deepest thanks to all those who made this project possible.

Most importantly, we thank the association members and staff who shared their experiences with us. Many of them have endured antisemitism within the very organizations that should have been their professional homes, and some were ultimately forced to leave. Their courage in coming forward and recounting these painful realities is what made this report possible, and we are deeply honored by their trust.

Thank you to the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) for connecting us with faculty members who were willing to speak out about their experiences within their associations.

Thank you to Jay P. Greene and Frederick M. Hess for generously sharing the data they collected for their 2024 American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research paper “Scholarly Associations Gone Wild: Stop Publicly Funding Scholarly Groups That Trade Academics for Advocacy.”⁰⁰

And, finally, we are profoundly grateful to our expert advisory panel for sharing their insights and guidance throughout the development of this report. Their expertise was invaluable.

⁰⁰ Scholarly Associations Gone Wild: Stop Publicly Funding Scholarly Groups That Trade Academics for Advocacy (2024) American Enterprise Institute.
Available at: <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/scholarly-associations-gone-wild-stop-publicly-funding-scholarly-groups-that-trade-academics-for-advocacy/>

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