



**Statement by the Academic Engagement Network on The
Rejection of Anti-Israel Petitions at the American Historical Association**

January 10, 2017

The Academic Engagement Network (AEN) wishes to commend the American Historical Association (AHA), the country's largest organization of professional historians, for rejecting two petitions that singled out Israel for criticism.

Prior to the AHA's 2017 meeting, a group called Historians Against the War submitted two petitions to the AHA's Council, the first calling for an AHA investigation into "violations of academic freedom in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories," and the second calling for a condemnation of blacklists that single out pro-Palestinian students.

The Council decided to take no action on the first petition. Regarding the second, it chose to issue a more general statement in favor of academic free speech and against blacklists which neither mentioned Israel or Palestine at all.

The AEN was on record in a letter to the AHA Council in early December arguing against the merits of both petitions. The letter critiqued their one-sided nature, their lack of context, and their unfounded accusations against Israel, while highlighting how they ignored Palestinian restrictions on academic freedom. AEN's letter also emphasized that the AHA lacked the requisite expertise and experience to fairly and effectively monitor developments in the region.

The AHA's rejection of this resolution comes on the heels of other defeats for the BDS movement within academic associations, including the Modern Language Association's rejection of a resolution to boycott Israeli academic institutions at its annual meeting on January 7, 2017, and a narrow defeat of a boycott resolution by a membership referendum in the American Anthropological Association in June 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth Waltzer".

Kenneth Waltzer
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Yudof".

Mark Yudof
Chair of the Board