



# Academic Engagement NETWORK

## In This Issue

- Latest Updates
- Microgrant Events
- Interview with Azi Genack
- AEN Speakers' Bureau
- Campus Updates
- Member Writings

## Website

For more information and updates, please check out our [website!](#)

## Keep Up With Us



Facebook



Twitter

## October 2017 Newsletter

### Latest Updates

AEN now has **493 members on 187 campuses**. Since September, we have added 20 new members on 20 campuses.

### AEN in the News

In the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, AEN Advisory Board Chair Mark Yudof and Executive Director Ken Waltzer published an op-ed, "**Free Speech, Campus Safety, or Both,**" on the need to balance freedom of expression with reasonable regulations to prevent violence on campuses. "...[G]iven the high stakes on campuses in turmoil, there also is an acute need for thoughtful re-evaluation, discussion, and improved planning to find reasonable ways to sustain free speech and also protect campus constituencies."

AEN member Jonathan Marks wrote an analysis for *Commentary*, "**Professors Stand Up to BDS,**" in which he described the efforts of faculty-based groups, including AEN, to combat the influence of the BDS movement on their campuses and within academic associations. "The fight against BDS on our campuses is part

of a broader fight to preserve our colleges and universities as homes of reason...The antidote to academic BDS in the long run, as its most successful opponents grasp, is to foster an intellectual climate in which all participants in a controversy are expected to be rigorous, and to allow their views and lives to be shaped by good arguments." The article also mentions AEN's recently published *Guide and Resource Book for Faculty*.

### **AEN Website and Social Media**

This past month, AEN introduced its **redesigned website**. We hope you enjoy our new look.

We also encourage all readers to follow AEN on **Facebook** and **Twitter**, if you haven't already done so.

### **Regional Short Courses**

AEN announced its new **Regional Short Courses initiative**, being developed in partnership with the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies at Brandeis University. The courses will give AEN members an opportunity to learn more about contemporary Israel, develop strategies related to BDS, and defend academic freedom and free speech on campus. The first short course will take place January 14-17, 2018, in Atlanta, GA.

Course instructors will include Rachel Fish, David Ellenson, Ilan Troen, and Ken Stein.

To apply for the Atlanta short course, please fill out this **form**. The course is for AEN members only, and AEN members from the South and Mid-Atlantic regions will be given priority. Applications are due November 1, 2017.

### **AEN Engagements**

On October 15, Mark Yudof participated in a panel at the "Zionism 3.0" conference, held at the Palo Alto JCC, on *"Hate Speech vs Free Speech on Campus – Pressure Testing the First Amendment."*

From left to right: Ollie Benn (Executive Director, SF Hillel), Max Samarov (Executive Director of Research & Campus Strategy, StandWithUs), Mark Yudof (AEN), and Dan Mogulof (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, UC Berkeley). Photo credit: Palo Alto JCC.



From October 25-27, Ken Waltzer will be visiting the University of Houston (in advance of the National Students for Justice in Palestine conference taking place there at the end of the month). He will meet with faculty, students, and Hillel professionals.

From October 31-November 2, Ken will visit Portland State University. He will meet with administrators, faculty, and students, and deliver a keynote talk entitled, *"The Politics of Division and Fear: Finding Common Ground."*

### **Upcoming Events of Interest**

October 19: AEN member Jonathan Sarna will deliver a **lecture** on *"American Judaism Backwards and Forwards"*, 7 pm at the Bomberger Auditorium at Ursinus College in Collegeville, PA.

October 30-November 2: AEN member Alvin Rosenfeld will deliver lectures and participate in panel discussions about antisemitism and the Holocaust at Presidency College in Kolkata, India.

October 31-November 2: Polling experts Khalil Shikaki and Tamar Hermann will be participating in numerous faculty events in NYC entitled *"What Are They Thinking? Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion on Peace."*

A full schedule and links to RSVP are below:

12:30 pm on Oct 31: a luncheon event at NYU **RSVP here**

12:00 pm on Nov 1: a luncheon event at Queens College **RSVP here**

6:00 pm on Nov 1: an evening/dinner event at Fordham University (Lincoln Center)

campus) **RSVP here**

12:00 pm on Nov 2: a luncheon event at Roosevelt House / Hunter College **RSVP here**

6:00 pm on Nov 2: an evening-dinner event at SUNY Global Center **RSVP here**

November 15-17: The American Zionist Movement will be holding its National Conference in Washington, DC. AEN Advisory Board member Stephen Trachtenberg will be speaking on "*Observations from the Contemporary University Campus.*" Please **register here** if interested.

## Microgrant Events

AEN micro-grants are available to AEN members in amounts of up to \$4,000 for the 2017-18 academic year. Initiatives may be aimed at confronting BDS and its claims about Israel, educating about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, affirming academic freedom and free expression on campus, exploring relevant aspects of Israeli society, culture, and diversity, and combating antisemitism. If you are interested in applying for an AEN micro-grant, please fill out the **application** on our website.

From September 7-9, Jonathan Goldstein of the University of Maine hosted Roger Brooks, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Connecticut College, a widely published scholar of both Biblical History and the Holocaust, and President of the anti-discrimination and anti-racism organization Facing History and Ourselves. Brooks gave three public talks: "Jerusalem From Antiquity to the Present," "Defining Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism," (which was supported with funding from AEN) and "Reconciling Jewish Theology with the Holocaust."

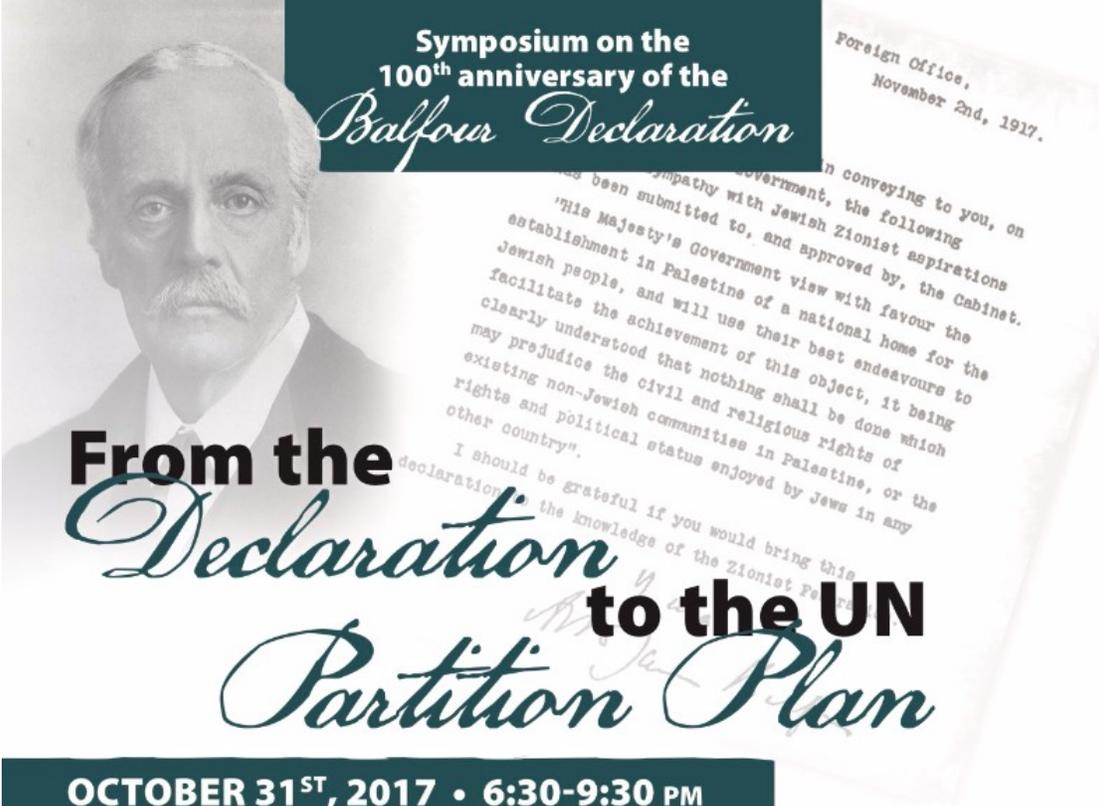
## Upcoming Events

On October 30, the Boalt Jewish Students Association (at Berkeley Law) will host retired IDF Colonel Kobi Marom, a leading authority on the complex security, social and humanitarian situation existing along Israel's border, with the assistance of an AEN microgrant award. The BJSA will be mentored by AEN Advisory Board member Steven Solomon for this event, which is open to both faculty and students. Many BJSA students had met Col. Marom during a Spring 2017 visit to Israel, when he spoke on the Syrian civil war, the refugee crisis, and the Northern border.

Also on October 30, Ken Stern, the Executive Director of the Justus and Karin Rosenberg Foundation, will host a program at Bard College called "Understanding Organized Hate, and What Works to Combat It," featuring four Bard students who interned with organizations dedicated to combating hatred and special guest speaker Eric K Ward, a researcher, activist, and former Program Officer on Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice at the Ford Foundation.

On October 31, Azi Genack and other colleagues at the City University of New York

(CUNY) will host a "Symposium on the 100th Anniversary of the Balfour Doctrine: From Declaration to Partition." The aim of the symposium is to encourage reasoned and respectful academic discourse about events important in the establishment of Israel as a sovereign state, and will feature multiple experts addressing the motivations behind and lasting impact of the Balfour Declaration. The symposium will be one of the first major public events on Israel held on a CUNY campus since Spring 2016, when the CUNY Doctoral Students' Council voted for a resolution asking CUNY to boycott Israeli academic institutions (CUNY leaders swiftly rejected the resolution).



**Symposium on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration**

**From the Declaration to the UN Partition Plan**

**OCTOBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2017 • 6:30-9:30 PM**  
**Martin E. Segal Theatre Center**  
First Floor: CUNY Graduate Center • 365 5th Ave, New York, NY 10016

SESSION I

Moderator: **Elissa Bemporad**, GC, Queens College

**Sara Reguer**, Brooklyn College  
*A British Wartime Commitment—  
the Balfour Declaration*

**Ronald Zweig**, New York University  
*The Balfour Declaration and Its Implementation  
in the Context of British Colonial Policy*

**KC Johnson**, GC, Brooklyn College  
*The United States, Wilsonianism,  
and the Balfour Declaration*

SESSION II

Moderator: **David Brodsky**, GC, Brooklyn College

**Louis Fishman**, GC, Brooklyn College  
*The Palestinians and the Balfour Declaration:  
from Ottoman Citizens to Resistance,  
Rejection, and Marginalization*

**Ilan Troen**, Brandeis/Ben-Gurion Universities  
*The Balfour Declaration:  
Historic Significance and Contemporary Relevance*



The symposium is sponsored by the GC Program in History and cosponsored by the GC Program in Political Science and the Center for Jewish Studies. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Office of the Provost and the Academic Engagement Network.

**Interview with Azi Genack**

Raeefa Shams spoke to Azi Genack, Distinguished Professor of Physics at Queen College, about the goals he and his colleagues have for the October 31 symposium on the Balfour Declaration:

**Why did you choose the Balfour Declaration as the topic for your program?**

Elissa Bemporad of the CUNY Graduate Center and Queens College responded to a call for suggestions for a possible event or symposium about Israel with the suggestion of a symposium on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. This made sense because the Balfour Declaration lies at the intersection of powerful forces that were made even more powerful by the Declaration. The consequences of the Declaration are still playing out in the Middle East of today. Among the actors are the British and Ottoman Empires, the Americans, Arabs and Jews in the Middle East and Jews in Europe.

The focus on the Balfour Declaration is provocative because it appears to feed into the narrative that Israel is a colonialist project. But the colonial power was the British Empire, and it was the Jews who were attempting to gain independence and to be free as well from Ottoman and Arab hegemony. It was the tragic abandonment of the principles of the Balfour Declaration in various [subsequent] British White Papers that halted Jewish emigration in response to Arab protest and violence just when doors were closing to Jewish refugees around the world.

A full symposium featuring distinguished faculty from CUNY and other universities and supported by the Provost's Office, [as well as by AEN], demonstrates that free and open discussion thrives at CUNY.

One of the speakers, Ilan Troen from Brandeis and Ben-Gurion Universities noted:

The most important and long-lasting impact of Balfour, is the recognition of Jews as a "people," The implications of that were explicitly written into the League of Nations and recognized by the United Nations. That is, that the Jews had the right to "re-constitution." The important part of that is the "re" which leads to the right to re-turn, re-store, re-build and more. That is, Jews were there in the past and the Jews of the present have a vital continuity with the Jews who had lived there.

The reason why this should be emphasized is that the current anti-Israel discourse has removed Jews from history. They are [often represented as] a colonial-settler society, which, by definition, is a foreign element with no inherent or explicit or certainly legitimate connection to the land. Others may be natives or indigenous but not Jews. Balfour is the key modern statement that argued for the Jewish return to history.

There is more. The Balfour Declaration stands in opposition to traditional Christian

opposition or supersessionism. That theological statement has been secularized in some groups, including many on the left. Some in academia teach the colonial-settler paradigm. It is heard in the BDS movement. It is echoed at the debates at the professional associations such as Anthropology, Modern Language, American Historical, Middle Eastern Studies and more. It is in the textbooks. Balfour stands in contrast and had a profound impact at the time granting legitimacy to a Jewish national home.

**Who is your primary audience? What do you hope they take away from the event?**

We are interested in attracting a broad audience, including students who may know little about Israel, faculty who are experts on the Middle East, and people who are supportive, curious, or even hostile to Israel. This is a purely academic event with plenty of time reserved for give-and-take. People will form their own opinion based on facts and historical forces.

I hope attendees get a sense of history – that the breakup of the Ottoman Empire led to the formation of many new states in the Arab world. But the legitimacy of only a single state is questioned and subject to the threat of an academic boycott. I hope people get an idea of the enormous human, security and political challenges that Israel has faced throughout history and still does.

I hope those in the audience will see that there is strong support for Israel's legitimacy. This will foster an atmosphere of free academic exchange in which all views are given a fair hearing.

**You work in a scientific field. What are some ways in which faculty in the sciences can develop effective on-campus programming on Israel?**

Science can only thrive in a free and open environment that knows no borders. Israel participates actively in all scientific fields. It is simply inconceivable to the vast majority of active scientists that students or anyone else should dictate to them with whom they should interact. But scientists are becoming more aware of the threat to academic freedom posed by BDS and the possibility of building a network with other faculty and students to support academic freedom and combat the demonization of Israel.

## **AEN Speakers' Bureau**

We would like to remind you of our **Speakers Bureau** for the 2017-18 academic year. One new speaker has been added: **Ran Kivetz**, the Philip H Geier chair in Marketing at the Columbia School of Business and an expert in behavioral economics.

These AEN members have been selected for their expertise on BDS and on ways to

challenge the BDS narrative; on Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict; on Zionism and anti-Zionism; and on several related subjects. One new emphasis this year, in keeping with a grant from the **Natan Fund** through its "Confronting Antisemitism" initiative, is consideration of rising antisemitism on campus and in society as a whole.

Members of the Speakers Bureau are available for individual subsidized visits to campuses through AEN member invitations. Each speaker will receive a \$1000 honorarium from AEN for a campus visit. AEN will also help contribute to travel and lodging costs, when appropriate. We expect a program with a visiting speaker to include a public talk and also a participatory session with students and faculty in a class or small group setting.

A full list of Speakers Bureau members, as well as their biographies and proposed topics, can be viewed **here**. If you are interested in hosting a speaker, please apply using this **application form**.

## Campus Updates

### Melissa Landa at the University of Maryland

Melissa Landa, an AEN member and award-winning educator praised by both students and colleagues, was **not renewed** in her position as assistant clinical professor at the College of Education at the University of Maryland in early June, with no warning or explanation.

There is concern that the decision not to renew Landa's contract may have been provoked - at least in part - by her pro-Israel activism, including her membership in AEN. The University's Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct is investigating this as an incident of retaliation and "religious, political, or national origin discrimination." AEN is closely following developments in this case.

### ICC Report on Anti-Israel Activity on Campus

The **Israel on Campus Coalition** (ICC), a national organization that supports pro-Israel students, has released a **new report** that summarizes the findings from nearly 1200 anti-Israel activities that took place on U.S. colleges during the 2016-2017 academic year.

The report highlights a 40% decrease in BDS campaigns—from 33 in 2015-2016 down to 20 over the last year—and a 20% decline in overall anti-Israel activity during the same period. However, the report also notes that anti-Israel campaigns have become more intense and divisive.

Miriam Elman, in *Legal Insurrection*, provided her own **analysis** of the report's findings, emphasizing the geographic concentration of many anti-Israel activities,

the increasingly aggressive tactics used by anti-Israel groups, and the support provided to these groups by outside professional organizations.

### Second Annual "Nakba Tour"

Elman also wrote to **express concern** about the second annual "Nakba Tour," a speaking event that brings several Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to universities, churches, and other venues across North America. Elman outlines the flaws of this campaign, provides information about its sponsors, and includes a **schedule** for the tour.

## Member Writings

In *Commentary*, Jonathan Marks **expanded** on the results of a recent **survey** conducted by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) on student attitudes towards free speech. "Many students, though they profess support for free speech in the abstract, are prepared to limit it in those cases in which it is most controversial. But they are certainly not hardened against free speech, and despite genuinely disturbing individual news stories, our colleges and universities are not bastions of intolerance."

In *Real Clear Politics*, Charles Lipson **asserted** the value of studying the "great works" of Western literature. "Gender and inequality are vital topics, but to study them seriously requires a background in history, philosophy, sociology, politics, and economics. Today's students lack it—and think they don't need it. But how would they even know if they haven't read foundational thinkers such as Locke, Voltaire, Tocqueville, and Mill—or Lincoln's second inaugural address..."

In *Fathom*, Donna Robinson Divine **discussed** the experiences of early Zionist immigrants to Palestine. "Few have ever asked how ordinary Jews who came to live in Palestine in the 1920s experienced the Land of Israel. Did they really find a new home to which they felt belonging? How did Palestine's Jews live in the shadow of the radical difference between the home they left behind and the homeland they encountered? Are we sensible of the traumas and the losses these pioneers endured?"

In *National Affairs*, Ruth Wisse **articulated** a theory of antisemitism as a political strategy. "Politics organized against the Jews has been practiced, at one time or another, in every Western society and throughout the Middle East for more than a century. This organizing principle has been adapted to the purposes of communism, fascism, pan-Arab nationalism, and progressivism, and it has persisted as an anti-liberal force that appeals to extremists on the right and the left."

In *Tablet*, Richard Landes **profiled** the feminist activist Phyllis Chesler, who has often criticized her fellow feminists for their anti-Israel views. "Certainly, if young

women and men want to make a difference in our world, want to contribute to a genuine *tikkun olam*, they could hardly do better than looking to Phyllis Chesler's long, productive, passionate, and courageous career for inspiration."

We know that our members have lots to say and share about developments in the US, Israel, and around the world. If you are writing, speaking, blogging, or tweeting, please let us know!

*Copyright © 2017, Academic Engagement Network, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

---

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)  
Academic Engagement Network · P.O. Box 34640 · Washington, DC 20043 · USA

MailChimp