



# Academic Engagement NETWORK

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## Website

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## Keep Up With Us



## May 2018 Newsletter

### Latest Updates

AEN now has **601 members on 212 campuses**. In April, AEN recruited 22 new members. So far in May, AEN has recruited 7 new members.

We would like congratulate AEN member Cary Nelson for receiving an **honorary doctorate** from Ben-Gurion University.

In response to antisemitic **remarks** made by Columbia University professor Hamid Dabashi, AEN member and Columbia faculty member Judith Jacobson helped to initiate an **open letter** addressed to Columbia's president and Board of Trustees.

### Jonathan Tobin and J. J. Goldberg at Ursinus College

On May 2, Jonathan Marks, Professor of Politics at Ursinus College, hosted J. J. Goldberg, editor at large at the *Forward*, and Jonathan Tobin, opinion editor at *JNS* and a *National Review* contributor, with the assistance of an AEN microgrant. Goldberg and Tobin engaged in a discussion, introduced by the Dean of the College and moderated by Marks, about critical issues relating to the State of Israel, including the two-state solution, the situation in Gaza, the BDS movement, and U.S.-Israel relations.

importance and possibility of civil disagreement, even about one's cherished convictions. Both speakers also dined with a smaller group of students and faculty at which they discussed, among other things, the importance of their common profession of journalism, which led them to value factual accuracy and eschew propagandizing and counter-propagandizing.



### **Ken Waltzer at UC-Davis**

AEN Executive Director Ken Waltzer visited the UC Davis campus May 10-11 for a series of talks with faculty, students, Hillel professionals, and senior administrators. The visit was organized by Davis Faculty for Israel (DFI), a campus faculty group which counts more than ten AEN faculty members among its members. On May 10, Waltzer, joined by deputy director Mike Atkins, led a dinner discussion at Hillel with

Right," which was organized by DFI, the student group Aggies for Israel, and Hillel, and co-sponsored by the Jewish Studies Program and the Israel Matters Committee of Congregation Bet Haverim. An estimated one hundred faculty and students attended the lecture, which was followed by a lively Q and A. The talk was recorded, and we hope to be able to distribute an edited version in video or written form late this spring or summer. On May 11, Waltzer met with Assistant to the Chancellor Karl Engelbracht to discuss UC Davis's progress in implementing the University of California Regents Principles against Intolerance into policy and practice.



### **AEN Short Course in Cleveland**

AEN is currently holding the second of our regional short courses, in Cleveland, OH. These courses are designed to give AEN members an opportunity to learn more about contemporary 21st century Israel, develop strategies to counter BDS on campus, and network with other interested faculty. At Cleveland, AEN members are

## Upcoming Events

### AEN National Workshop in Washington, DC

AEN's National Workshop will take place next week, May 22-24, in Washington, DC. We are pleased that more than 70 AEN members have registered to attend the Workshop. Participants will engage in a series of discussions about interrelated issues concerning changing realities in Israel and the Middle East, in our national politics, and in campus climates, and will explore the strategic implications these have for our work on campus. Registration for the Workshop is now closed. If you have questions, please contact **Brad Isakson** or **Mike Atkins**. A link to the program can be found [here](#).

### Israel at 70 Conference and Heterodox Academy Open Mind Conference

We wish to make AEN members—particularly those in the New York city area—aware of two events in early June which may be of interest.

On Sunday, June 10, the Israel Institute will be hosting a full-day conference, "Israel at 70," at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. The conference will consist of expert panels exploring Israel's evolution from its birth through the modern day, with discussions focusing on transformations within Israeli politics and society, the history and current state of U.S.-Israel relations, and challenges for American Jewish engagement with Israel. A keynote event will feature Professor Anita Shapira and Ambassador Shlomo Ben-Ami, discussing Israel in historical perspective. To view a program and to buy tickets to the conference, please visit the [website](#).

On Friday, June 15, Heterodox Academy will host its inaugural **Open Mind Conference** in New York City. This day-long conference will explore issues related to free inquiry, free speech, and viewpoint diversity on college campuses. It will include analysis from those navigating these challenges on their campuses; existing efforts to create positive change in higher education; and stakeholder-specific strategies for those wanting to improve campus climate. Mark Yudof, AEN's Advisory Board Chair, will be one of the conference speakers, and the conference fee will be waived for all AEN members (please enter the code COMP when you register). The full agenda will be posted [here](#) as it is updated. You can view a full list of confirmed speakers and their biographies, [here](#), and register for the conference, [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Laura Lalinde, who is managing this event, at [lalinde@heterodoxacademy.org](mailto:lalinde@heterodoxacademy.org).

## AEN Writings

In the *New York Times*, James Loeffler **explained** how the founders of the modern

Workshop. "The shared anniversary of Israel and the human rights project places in stark relief the double amnesia that ails the world today. The cost of that forgetting is the perpetuation of a false dichotomy between particularism and universalism. By recalling this twinned history, we can help the human-rights movement recalibrate its moral compass and expose the real dangers imperiling the Jewish people."

In *Legal Insurrection*, Miriam Elman **reflected** on the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. "In moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, President Trump isn't just fulfilling another campaign promise. The reality is that he's correcting a historic wrong done to an ally—and is also honoring the will of the American people."

In *Fathom*, Cary Nelson **reviewed** a new book promoting BDS in academia, highlighting its many poor arguments and inconsistencies. "To say the least, significant damage would be done if *Boycott!* were taught as a recommended model for how scholarly debate about Israel and the BDS movement should be conducted." Also in *Fathom*, Nelson **critiqued** a new anti-Zionist book published by the Presbyterian Church. "It represents established rhetoric on campus, but it leaves behind the theological ground that has been important in the churches, thereby completing a trend away from theology and toward politics among protestant denominations debating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

In *Commentary*, Jonathan Marks **highlighted** the fact that left-wing antisemitism on campus tends to be overlooked. "Left-wing anti-Semitism and right-wing anti-Semitism, then, need to be addressed, and no one who claims to care about anti-Semitism can address just one or the other. It must be said, however, that when it comes to campus anti-Semitism, our failure occurs almost wholly with respect to the left."

In the *Jerusalem Post*, AEN Senior Research Associate Linda Maizels **analyzed** the tendency of some black nationalist leaders to utilize antisemitic rhetoric. "Analysts must continue to explain that while threats to Jews can be expressed through religious, ethnic and racial hatred that share characteristics with classic elements of racism, the more dangerous elements of antisemitism are the fantastical conspiracy theories, canards about disproportionate power and influence in government and the corporate world, and allegations that Jews reap financial gain through cheating others."

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