

ADL-AEN Call to Action: Tell the AAUP: Stop Marginalizing Jewish and Zionist AAUP Members

Target Facing Components

Target(s): American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Leadership

Target Email Subject Line: Respect Jewish and Zionist AAUP Members

Target Email Body:

Dear President Wolfson and Vice President Lumbantobing,

As a member, I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the AAUP's sponsorship and active participation in the "National Day of Action for Higher Education" held on April 17, 2025.

While the Day of Action claimed to focus on academic freedom and faculty rights, the AAUP's execution of it — through partnerships with groups promoting virulently anti-Zionist rhetoric — turned it into something exclusionary and harmful. A historic academic outfit that, for a century, did not politicize academic freedom and faculty governance, now appears to have become yet another anti-Zionist labor union — further antagonizing Jewish and Zionist faculty. This shift not only undermines the integrity of the AAUP but threatens its ability to represent all faculty with fairness.

By co-sponsoring the National Day of Action alongside groups such as Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine (FSJP), and the Institute for the Critical Study of Zionism (ICSZ), the AAUP has lent its platform and legitimacy to organizations that have consistently engaged in campaigns that demonize Israel, support boycotts of Israeli academic institutions, and at times trafficked in antisemitic rhetoric. More information on the problematic activities of these groups can be found here: <https://www.adl.org/resources/article/institute-critical-study-zionism-five-things-know> and <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgroundunder/jewish-voice-peace-jvp>

The events on April 17 — including rallies, walkouts, teach-ins, and town halls at nearly 200 campuses nationwide — were heavily promoted by the AAUP. The publicity materials prominently featured the AAUP's logo alongside those of fringe and radical anti-Zionist organizations. Toolkits and event resources distributed for the day were rife with inflammatory and misleading information about Israel's defensive actions against Hamas, including highly charged and exclusionary language that alienates Jewish and Zionist students, staff, and faculty, such as the promotion of the slogan "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

This disturbing trend is not new. On March 6, a coalition of five respected Jewish and academic organizations — ADL, AEN, AJC, Hillel International, and JFNA — wrote to AAUP leadership expressing serious concerns about the "Scholasticide in Palestine" webinar, which presented inflammatory and one-sided content without debate or balance. The coalition proposed a number of constructive remedies — such as a follow-up panel with diverse views and antisemitism training — but the AAUP has not even acknowledged receipt of the letter.

This pattern of rhetoric and action has had damaging consequences that are concerning to ADL and AEN:

- **It is exclusionary of Jewish and Zionist members of AAUP** who now find themselves sidelined in an organization meant to uphold the rights and inclusion of all faculty.
- **It forces local AAUP chapters and their members** to align themselves, either implicitly or explicitly, with organizations that advocate academic boycotts (BDS) — a position antithetical to the AAUP's own long-standing commitment to academic freedom and open inquiry.
- **It conflates legitimate concerns about academic freedom with inflammatory anti-Israel activism**, thus gaslighting Jewish students, faculty, and staff at a time of rising antisemitic harassment and discrimination on campuses across the country.

AAUP leadership should not overlook the very real harm caused by these affiliations. By aligning with groups that marginalize segments of the academic community, the AAUP undermines its credibility as a defender of academic freedom and inclusion.

I respectfully urge the AAUP to publicly acknowledge the concerns raised by Jewish and Zionist members of the academic community, reaffirm its commitment to the principles of true academic freedom and open inquiry, and adopt safeguards to ensure that future advocacy efforts do not exclude or endanger minority communities within academia.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.