



PUBLIC STATEMENT FROM ADL, AEN, AND AJC REGARDING THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION'S TASK FORCE REPORT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND TENURE

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), American Jewish Committee (AJC), and the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) are deeply troubled by the recently released report of the National Communication Association's Task Force on Academic Freedom and Tenure. The report repeatedly advances a series of libels, mischaracterizing Israel as a "settler-colonial state" engaged in "genocidal violence" and outrageously suggests that some "Zionists" are engaging alongside white supremacists in efforts to undermine academic freedom. The repeated use of these contested terms and conspiracy theories forecloses critical inquiry rather than advancing it, while advancing unfounded accusations against Israel and its supporters that have become vehicles for anti-Jewish animus in academic communities and beyond.

The Task Force was established to examine the serious and escalating challenges to academic freedom and tenure in the United States and around the world - an urgent and critical undertaking. Instead of offering a balanced and rigorous analysis, the report adopts ideologically charged language that distorts the Task Force's mandate and undermines the credibility of the final document. More centrally, it is an egregious moral lapse for an academic association's report to resort to antisemitic conspiracy theories in order to account for the current state of academic freedom at American universities.

Equally concerning is the report's treatment of surging antisemitism. Despite extensive [evidence](#) of and [reports](#) from [Jewish students](#), [staff and faculty](#) facing harassment, exclusion from campus spaces, targeted intimidation at protests, classroom bias, property destruction, and physical threats, the report dismisses these documented harms as inventions or manipulations designed to suppress criticism of Israel.

The report claims, among other things, that:

- Supporters of Israel and Zionism have maintained hegemonic control over what passes for acceptable scholarship and knowledge production. Anyone in opposition to this perceived ideology is inherently disadvantaged in any evaluation of merit.
- Descriptions of antisemitic incidents on campus function as a pretext for targeting and deporting protesters.
- The "communicative construction of antisemitism" is being used to "silence...critiques of Israel and its settler colonial practices."
- "Israeli settler colonialism" strategically "mobilizes the trope of antisemitism" to suppress academic speech.

These claims deny the reality that many Jewish students, faculty, and staff are experiencing very real antisemitism in higher education environments. They also invert the problem: instead of acknowledging that antisemitism is resurging, the report suggests that Jews (or “Zionists”) are weaponizing antisemitism claims [to exert control](#). This narrative is not only false but dangerous, reinforcing harmful patterns of victim-blaming that excuse wrongdoing and shift responsibility away from perpetrators.

Perhaps most alarming is the report’s implication that “powerful donors, trustees, and politicians” aligned with Zionism are orchestrating attacks on academic freedom. This framing draws directly from [long-standing antisemitic tropes](#) about Jewish influence operating behind the scenes to control institutions. The use of such language in a report ostensibly dedicated to safeguarding academic freedom is deeply irresponsible.

Additionally, the report encourages exploring ways to “place the necessary pressure on Israeli institutions.” Calls to isolate or penalize academic institutions based on political context constitute [academic boycotts](#) that harm individual scholars and are fundamentally incompatible with the principles of scholarly freedom, the open exchange of ideas, and research collaboration that the report claims to defend.

We call on the National Communication Association to reject the report in its present form and to ensure that future scholarship and guidance on academic freedom reflects rigor and factual accuracy, and does not resort to perpetuating harmful stereotypes, conspiracies, or other libels.

A legitimate defense of academic freedom, including the NCA’s, must steer clear of tropes that blame Jews for the issues currently impacting the field, which are indeed significant and require concerted and unbiased critical attention.

Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Academic Engagement Network (AEN)
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