



AEN Condemns Antisemitic Boston Mapping Project

WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 24, 2022 – The [Academic Engagement Network](#) (AEN) writes to express its deep dismay at and disgust over the “[Boston Mapping Project](#),” an anonymous online resource and organizing tool launched on June 3, 2022 which explicitly targets scores of Jewish institutions throughout the Boston area and across the state of Massachusetts. The Project identifies Jewish nonprofits, social-service organizations, philanthropic foundations, synagogues, and schools for their purported ties to the media, law enforcement, and other government agencies engaged in “U.S. imperialism” and the “colonization of Palestine.” AEN calls on university leaders to denounce this Project and to take necessary measures to support and protect Jewish members of the campus community who are now being threatened.

AEN is a nonpartisan, multidisciplinary educational organization which engages, educates, and empowers faculty on more than 250 campuses across the country to counter the delegitimization and demonization of Israel; promote academic freedom, intellectual exchange, and open inquiry in response to calls for academic boycotts; foster a rigorous and robust study of and discourse on Jewish identity and the Jewish experience; and combat antisemitism when it appears. Within AEN’s membership are academics who work and teach in Boston and Massachusetts, among them those whose programs and courses have been flagged in the “Boston Mapping Project” as legitimate targets to be “disrupted.”

Endorsed and promoted by BDS Boston, an organization that supports the divisive Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, and other anti-Israel groups, the interactive website views universities as “a central nexus that ties together many of the harms traced.” [Dozens of universities](#) are listed, including a dizzying array of public and private institutions such as Harvard, Clark University, Lesley University, MIT, Brandeis University, Tufts, and Salem State University.

The entries include numerous academic programs, like Boston University’s *Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies*; study abroad trips to Israel; research programs and internship opportunities with Israeli universities; organizations that support campus Jewish life including Hillel; interfaith programs, such as Boston College’s *Center for Christian-Jewish Learning*; Jewish student associations; and even specific courses—for example, a “Film and Society in Israel” class at UMass-Amherst and a “Palestinian-Israeli Peace Prospects” class at Wellesley College.

This Project was designed with an alarming purpose: to show “physical addresses, named officers and leaders, and mapped connections” of local Jewish communal institutions so that they can be “dismantled.” It accuses these Jewish entities of being complicit in a host of practices and policies that the mapmakers say “devastate” immigrants and minorities including policing, militarization, environmental racism, evictions, the privatization of public schools and others.



The project's creators visualize networks of Jewish power and influence in an attempt to demonstrate intersections between the oppression of people of color and Jewish institutions across Massachusetts, viewed as blameworthy solely because the American-Jews who work, teach, or worship in them have attachments to the State of Israel. The website does not reference or list any other religious or ethnic group—only Jews are singled out and scapegoated for their alleged complicity in America's ills.

The "Boston Mapping Project" defines Zionism, an essential component of Judaism for the vast majority of American-Jews, as a "form of white supremacy." It further accuses "Boston's Zionist leaders and powerhouse NGOs" of "buy[ing] legitimacy and support from universities" and using their "influence to enable a range of oppressive agendas." The project thus seeks to ostracize and demoralize Jews for their faith-based identities while trafficking in millennia-old tropes and canards about Jewish power, money, and undue influence. At a time when antisemitic incidents have reached an [all-time high](#) in the United States, it is reprehensible for the curators and promoters of this Project to draw a literal web of Jewish conspiracy that stokes fear and puts American Jews at risk.

AEN joins the many Jewish and civil rights organizations that have [condemned](#) this nefarious online website in recent weeks. We are heartened that city and state officials have also [spoken out](#) in support of the Jewish community in Boston and across Massachusetts and that a bipartisan group of lawmakers has now called for a [federal inquiry](#) into its possible use as a "roadmap to domestic terror or violence."

It is disappointing, however, that despite its swirling conspiracies which ensnare academic programs, courses, study abroad opportunities, and organizations supporting Jewish student life, university leaders in Massachusetts have yet to condemn the "Boston Mapping Project." We urge them to speak out and to guarantee that Jewish/Israel Studies classes and exchange programs can continue to thrive at their schools.

We further recommend that the targeted universities initiate educational programming, trainings, and professional development opportunities that raise awareness about antisemitism so that materials like the "Boston Mapping Project" and its "call to action" can be recognized for what they are: anti-Zionist and anti-Israel expression and activism that crosses a line into anti-Jewish hatred and that must be unequivocally and forcefully denounced as such.