



September 12, 2024

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Dear Officers and Members of the Executive Committee of the AAUP,

We are writing as the Executive Committee of the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), the world's largest professional society for Jewish Studies, regarding your recently revised policy about academic boycotts.

In view of AJS's long-standing commitment to the free exchange of ideas, we oppose academic boycotts adopted by institutions, such as academic institutions or any units within them.

We especially oppose institutional academic boycotts that exclude people on the basis of national origin or entail political or religious litmus tests. The use of such tests for eligibility to participate in an academic community may be discriminatory in addition to breaching academic freedom.

The Association recognizes the right of individual faculty members to exercise their freedom by choosing not to partner or cooperate with other individual faculty members or academic institutions with whom or with which they disagree and to do so absent the threat of institutional reprisal or sanction. We believe, however, that when such noncooperation takes the form of an academic boycott implemented by an institutional employer, such as a university department, faculty senate, or a professional organization, it threatens the principle of academic freedom and scholars' right to make their own determinations.

We understand that cruelty, injustice, and suffering may inspire moral indignation. However, we resist the argument that institutions should respond to such circumstances by limiting their fundamental commitment to the free exchange and expression of ideas or by ostracizing members of the scholarly community. Instead, we assert that cutting off contact with each other will not solve the problems of today, and hearing each other's perspectives might lay the groundwork for a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Laura Leibman, President, Association for Jewish Studies.
Helen Kim, VP of Program, Association for Jewish Studies
Laura Lieber, VP of Publications, Association for Jewish Studies
Hartley Lachter, VP of Membership and Outreach, Association for Jewish Studies
Lila Corwin Berman, Secretary/Treasurer, Association for Jewish Studies
Robin Judd, Past President, Association for Jewish Studies