



July, 2023

**The Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry -ASSJ- statement regarding the American Anthropological Association (AAA) vote to boycott Israeli universities.**

The recent decision of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) to endorse a boycott targeting Israeli academic institutions inappropriately singles out a group of our colleagues. Boycotts of academic institutions are fundamentally illiberal and contradict academic values of open inquiry, unrestricted pursuit of knowledge and understanding, and collaboration across differences. The ethics of academic life demand a comprehensive, inclusive, and respectful approach toward our epistemic communities.

We reject the AAA's misguided efforts to advocate for a political cause by undermining the core values and norms of the global academic community.

While acknowledging the concerns and complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, boycotting Israeli universities is not the solution. Israeli universities and academic colleges are home to research, knowledge, and science that promote cognition and recognition, defense of democracy, and academic and scientific freedom. Boycotting them undermines their efforts and curtails the potential for transnational collaboration and solidarity.

We note, as indicated in a FAQ on the AAA website, that the organization has never implemented a boycott of a nation's academic institutions before, including in cases where it has criticized, censured, and condemned national and state governments or in any other region experiencing political conflict. We regret having to ask: Does the AAA's decision constitute a biased imposition of penalties on the academic institutions of only one country in the world, Israel, that the AAA has been unwilling to impose on academic institutions anywhere else?

We strongly believe that our universalistic vocation is betrayed when the struggle for a cause implies the denial of the Other. Academic associations should build bridges, not burn them through the prejudiced disqualification of their peers. Ultimately, universities are the home and substratum of academics who pursue truth and strive to make the world a better place.

Therefore, the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry – ASSJ – condemns the vote, calls on the AAA to recognize the damage its boycott will cause to the academic world and the values it purports to uphold, to reconsider their vote and avoid taking steps to implement its injudicious decision immediately.