

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

September 4, 2014

Dear Prof Heller and Colleagues,

Thank you for the quick reply and for continuing the conversation. We understand that the issues of Israel/Palestine have been of increasing concern in the US media, and that some members in the AAA are interested in using the AAA to put political pressure on Israel and the Israeli government. The AAA should avoid, however, the often shallow and zero-sum images common in the media and in world politics. We believe that the AAA, as an academic organization, bears a special responsibility to strive to be inclusive. We should all seek to think broadly, creatively and with flexibility that would increase the understanding and the dialogue across known political divides.

Most importantly and pragmatically, we were surprised to learn now that an AAA Task Force is planning to begin working this month on issues relating to Israel/Palestine. This appears to recapitulate the experience of many colleagues here who, like most AAA members, only learned about the AAA plans to hold boycott discussions at a very late stage, the end of April 2014. By that time it was already impossible to propose other sessions that could have contributed to the fruitful conversation we all hope to hold at the upcoming AAA meeting.

We are concerned then whether the Task Force you mention will in fact succeed in representing multiple perspectives. We ask you to have on board this committee AAA members who are knowledgeable about Israel/Palestine from a range of different points of view (with special attention to academic life and especially anthropology), including those who take a critical stance regarding academic boycotts. Following consultations with my colleagues, I would be pleased to suggest some well qualified individuals.

Finally, and taking a quick glance ahead, in addition to respecting the rules about the submission of motions, we would appreciate your taking steps in advance to inform anyone affected by a suggested motion, and to allow sufficient time to consider the submission of an alternative motion.

Sincerely,



President, Israeli Anthropological Organization