

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
of SCHOLARS

Instagram the Intifada

Mapping the Social Network of Students for Justice in Palestine

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*Mapping the Social Network of
Students for Justice in Palestine*

A report by the

NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION
of SCHOLARS

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About the National Association of Scholars

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The National Association of Scholars is an independent membership association of academics and others working to sustain the tradition of reasoned scholarship and civil debate in America's colleges and universities. We uphold the standards of a liberal arts education that fosters intellectual freedom, searches for the truth, and promotes virtuous citizenship.

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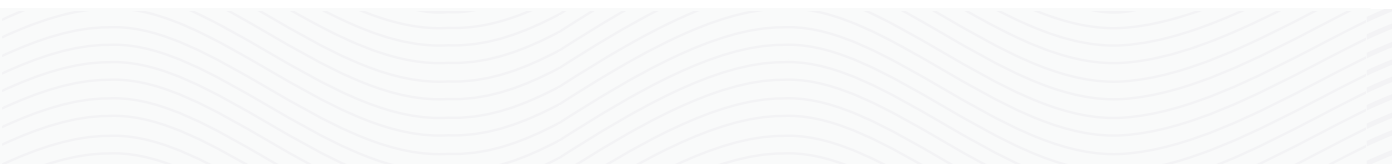
We publish a quarterly journal, *Academic Questions*, which examines the intellectual controversies and the institutional challenges of contemporary higher education.

We publish studies of current higher education policy and practice with the aim of drawing attention to weaknesses and stimulating improvements.

Our website presents educated opinion and commentary on higher education, and archives our research reports for public access.

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Our Recent Publications

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Disowned Yankees. 2024.

Diversity Statement, Then Dossier: The Rise of DEI Cluster Hiring. 2023.

Shifting Sands: Confounded Errors. 2024.

The Company They Keep: Dynamics of the BDS Movement. 2023.

In June of 2022, Representatives [Josh Gottheimer \(D-N.J.\)](#) and [Don Bacon \(R-Neb.\)](#) were joined by 35 other colleagues in a bipartisan request to Attorney General Merrick Garland, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas of the Department of Homeland Security, and Director Christopher Wray of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Their request was a call for federal law enforcement to investigate the malicious creation and use of “[The Mapping Project](#).” The map provides information about Jewish businesses and people in and around the state of Massachusetts, and was created by anonymous activists who claim that their “interactive map illustrates some ways in which institutional support for the colonization of Palestine is structurally tied to policing and systemic white supremacy here where we live, and to US imperialist projects in other countries.”

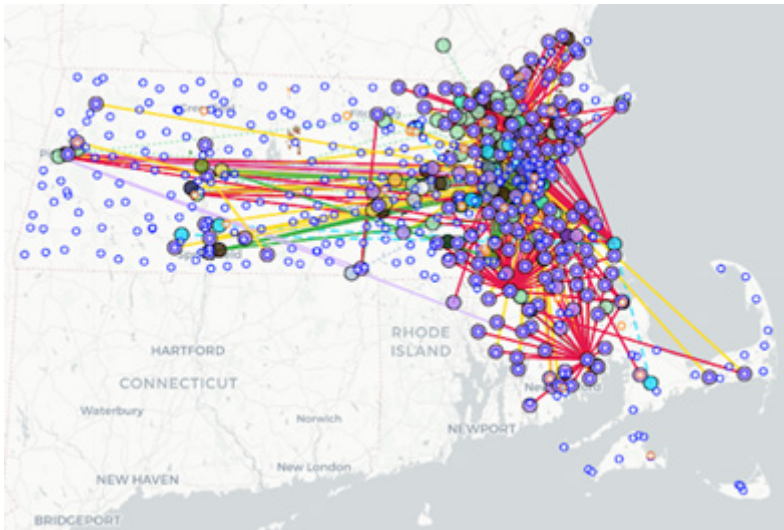


Figure 1: A Screenshot of The Mapping Project's Map

The signatories of Representatives Gottheimer and Bacon's letter to the Attorney General, DHS, and FBI enumerated their concerns as follows:

“We fear that this map may be used as a roadmap for violent attacks by supporters of the [[boycott, divestment, and sanctions](#)] movement against the people and entities listed... We ask that you investigate the use of the Mapping Project by extremist organizations, provide any necessary enhanced security for targets listed in the project, and work with social-media companies and Internet service providers to prevent its further distribution. We must not turn a blind eye to this dangerous incitement.”

Less than two years later, violent anti-Semitism and anti-Americanism have swept the nation, particularly on college campuses, led by a new project: Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP). SJP has defaced monuments, occupied buildings, set up camps, clashed with police, called for an “Intifada” (i.e., armed rebellion), and continues to do so. SJP also remains openly supportive of Hamas, a terrorist group, and questions about SJP’s organization, leadership, affiliations, and funding abound but have largely gone unanswered.



Figure 2: An SJP affiliate stands in front of the defaced statue of George Washington at an SJP encampment. George Washington University, Washington, DC — Photo by Mason Goad, May 2024

We sought to answer the first three of those questions—in regard to organization, leadership, and affiliations—by mapping out the Students for Justice in Palestine’s social network on Instagram, but unlike Students for Justice in Palestine and the creators of the aforementioned Mapping Project, we are not hiding behind anonymity. We are not calling for violence, the destruction of property, or the destruction of the United States and her government. Our efforts are intended to assist law enforcement and other investigative entities / interested parties (such as researchers like ourselves, or members of the public), who are rightfully concerned with SJP’s actions and rhetoric. We simply want to understand the organization of SJP, to identify SJP’s true leadership, and to determine the groups that SJP is most closely associated with and influenced by.

To accomplish this, we sampled 100 colleges and universities across the United States, as well as five geographic regions, and constructed a dataset of the “following” lists (as opposed to the “followers” lists) of 111 public accounts on Instagram

that claim to be SJP chapters. Data collection and analysis took place from June to October of 2024, and while many of these accounts may have been deleted by their owners or removed by Instagram's moderators since then, this new dataset provides the public with novel insights into Students for Justice in Palestine's social network. The 100 universities we sampled were:

American University	Smith College
Arizona State University	Stanford University
Bard College	Stony Brook University
Binghamton University	Suffolk University
Boston University	Swarthmore College
Brandeis University	Syracuse University
Brown University	Temple University
Butler University	Texas Tech University
California State University—Channel Islands	The New School
Claremont University	Tufts University
Clark University	University of California - Berkeley
Cleveland State University	University of California - Davis
Colgate University	University of California - Irvine
Columbia University	University of California - Los Angeles
Cornell University	University of California - Merced
Dartmouth College	University of California - San Diego
Drexel University	University of California - Santa Cruz
Duke University	University of Colorado - Boulder
Emerson College	University of Connecticut
Emory University	University of Delaware
Fordham University	University of Georgia
Gallaudet University	University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign
George Mason University	University of Maryland
Georgia Institute of Technology	University of Massachusetts - Amherst
Georgia State University	University of Massachusetts - Lowell
Georgetown University	University of Michigan - Dearborn
Hampshire College	University of Michigan - Flint
Harvard University	University of Mississippi
Howard University	University of Montana
Humboldt State University	University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
Ithaca College	University of Oregon
Kennesaw State University	University of Pennsylvania

Kent State University	University of Pittsburgh
Louisville University	University of Southern California
Loyola Marymount University	University of South Florida
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Tennessee - Knoxville
Miami University (Ohio)	University of Virginia
Middlebury College	University of Washington
New York University	University of Wisconsin - Madison
Northeastern University	University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
Northwestern University	Vanderbilt University
Oberlin College	Virginia Commonwealth University
Occidental College	Wellesley College
Ohio State University	West Virginia University
Pennsylvania State University	William and Mary College
Princeton University	Yale University
Purdue University	Youngstown State University
Rice University	William and Mary College
Rutgers University	Yale University
San Francisco State University	Youngstown State University
Sarah Lawrence College	William and Mary College
Seattle University	Yale University
Skidmore College	Youngstown State University

And the five geographic regions were:

1. Students for Justice in Palestine - Chicago Coalition
2. Students for Justice in Palestine - Colorado Coalition
3. Students for Justice in Palestine - DC, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) Coalition
4. Students for Justice in Palestine - National Coalition
5. Students for Justice in Palestine - Southern California Coalition

With these lists of SJP-followed accounts—over 32,000 objects across 111 lists—we built an association matrix (sometimes referred to as a link-analysis matrix) by looking at the duplicates in the data set. The more SJP chapters follow one account, the more we should be able to confidently conclude that entity's importance and influence within Students for Justice in Palestine's social network. The entire de-duplicated list is available below, but for our purposes here, if one account is followed by 20 or more distinct SJP chapters, the entity affiliated with that followed account

is likely quite essential and influential to Students for Justice in Palestine's network as a whole, and deserves further investigation.

Sure enough, the account that appeared most often across all lists was @nationalsjp, the National Students for Justice in Palestine coalition. The Columbia University SJP chapter placed third, with Harvard and Boston University chapters placing seventh and eighth, respectively. Excluding the trends of SJP chapters following each other—a trend that appears to reveal the relative importance of individual SJP chapters in the eyes of SJP's (inter-)national leadership and membership—the data also reveals several journalists and various organizations that SJP appears to hold in high regard, as each account was followed by at least 20 of the 111 SJP chapters. By order of appearance, and thus presumed importance and influence to SJP leadership, they are:

1. Palestinian Youth Movement (@palestinianyouthmovement)
2. Eye on Palestine (@eye.on.palestine)
3. Jewish Voice for Peace (@jewishvoiceforpeace)
4. Palestine Legal (@pal_legal)
5. IMEU (@theimeuVerified)
6. US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (@uscpr)
7. Mohammed El Kurd (@mohammedelkurdVerified)
8. Bisan Owda (@wizard_bisan1Verified)
9. Motaz Azaiza (@motaz_azaizaVerified)
10. Noura Erakat (@nouraerakat)
11. Let's Talk Palestine (@letstalkpalestine)
12. BDS Movement (@bdsnationalcommittee)
13. The Electronic Intifada (@electronicintifada)
14. Palestinian Feminist Collective (@palestinianfeministcollective)
15. Adalah Justice Project (@adalahjusticeproject)
16. Al Jazeera English (@aljazeeraenglishVerified)
17. Mondoweiss (@mondoweiss)
18. US Palestinian Community Network (@uspcn)
19. Visualizing Palestine (@visualizing_palestine)
20. Hidden Palestine (@hiddenpalestine)
21. Plestia Alaquad (@byplestiaVerified)
22. Palestine Action (@pal_actionus)
23. Watan (@watanpalestine)
24. subhi (@sbeih.jpgVerified)
25. Coalition for Peace (@fsucfp)

26. Palestine Solidarity Committee (@psc_atx)
27. DISSENTERS (@wearedissenters)
28. Institute for Palestine Studies (@palestinestudies)
29. Al Jazeera AJ+ (@ajplus)
30. American Muslims for Palestine (@ampalestine)
31. Eyewitness Palestine (@eyewitnesspalestine)
32. Muna ElKurd (@muna.elkurd15Verified)
33. Palestine Community Initiative (@pcihouston)
34. (u)PAO (@up.against.the.occupation)
35. Law Students for Palestine (@lsfpnational)
36. Miko Peled (@mikopeled)
37. Addameer (@addameer_pal)
38. PaliRoots (@paliroots)
39. The People's Forum (@peoplesforumnyc)
40. Scientists for Palestine (@scientists4palestine)
41. #freepalestine (@savesheikhjarrahnw)
42. Wear the Peace (@wearthepeace)
43. Writers Against the War in Gaza (@wawog_now)
44. @disorientalizing
45. Gaza Poets Society (@gazapoets)
46. Museum of the Palestinian People (@museumpalestinianpeople)
47. Palestinian American CC (@paccusa)
48. alQaws (@alqaws)
49. Chicago Palestine Film Fest (@chipalfilmfest)
50. Democracy Now! (@democracynow)
51. Marc Lemont Hill (@marclamonthill)
52. Remi Kanazi (@remikanazi)
53. CODEPINK (@codepinkalert)
54. Gaza Mutual Aid Collective (@gizamutualaid)
55. Ahmed Eldin (@ahmedeldin)
56. The Mapping Project (@mapping_project)
57. Middle East Monitor (@middleeastmonitor)
58. Palestine Solidarity Working Group (@palestineswg)
59. Palestine Writers Festival (@palestinewrites)
60. #Africa4Palestine (@africa4palestine)
61. Linda Sarsour (@lsarsour)
62. The Red Nation (@rednationmovement)

63. Slow Factory (@theslowfactory)

64. We Are Not Numbers (@we_are_not_numbers)

(Notice that “The Mapping Project” ranked 56th, justifying the early concerns of Congress.)

In addition to determining which SJP chapters, other organizations, and individual persons are seemingly most important and influential to SJP leadership at the national level, SJP leadership of local chapters often followed their leadership, as well as faculty and staff sympathetic to the SJP movement. This is not to say that every local account followed by individual SJP Chapters is sympathetic to the SJP movement. After all, it is not only possible, but likely, that more than a few people are followed by SJP for the purposes of terroristic intimidation. This is only to say that, based on our sampling, such sympathy toward SJP appears most often the case. Further research at the local level of who these leaders are is warranted, but not within the scope of this brief report on the analysis of this dataset.

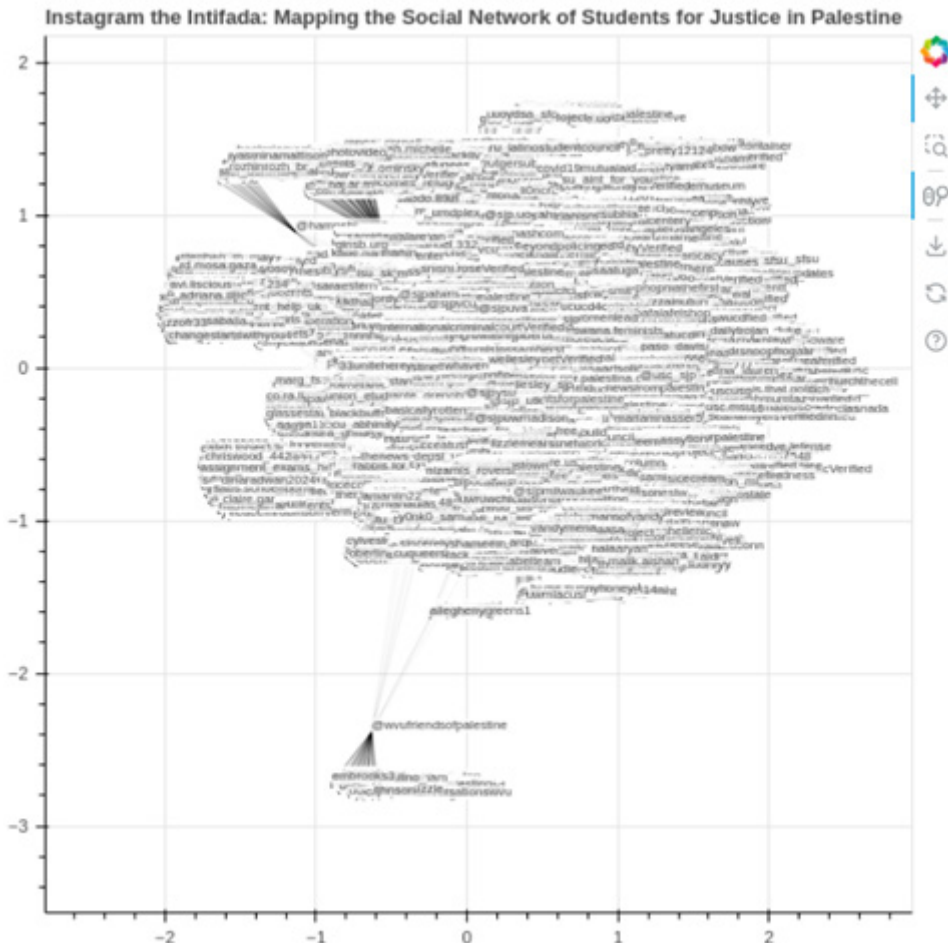


Figure 3: A Network Web of Instagram Accounts Followed by Students for Justice in Palestine

Finally, in addition to the full and de-duplicated datasets (available for download [here](#), and [here](#), respectively; the latter of which serves as the association matrix), we have also visualized the data by creating an interactive network graph of the entire dataset—available to view and download [here](#)—which we invite the public to further explore. Additionally, the script needed to recreate the graph is available for download [here](#), but one will also need to have installed the [bokeh](#), [matplotlib](#), [networkx](#), [numpy](#), and [pandas](#) libraries for the Python programming language, as well as have a fairly powerful computer, as it took ours a half hour to render figure 3.

The local accounts (such as SJP Chapter affiliates and leaders, sympathetic faculty and staff, and innocents who have no further connection with SJP) are often clustered around the edges of the network web, as these are the accounts followed by only one SJP Chapter, most often their local SJP Chapter. Figure 4 below zooms in on the network of @wvufriendsofpalestine (the West Virginia University SJP Chapter), which is the southernmost cluster in figure 3.

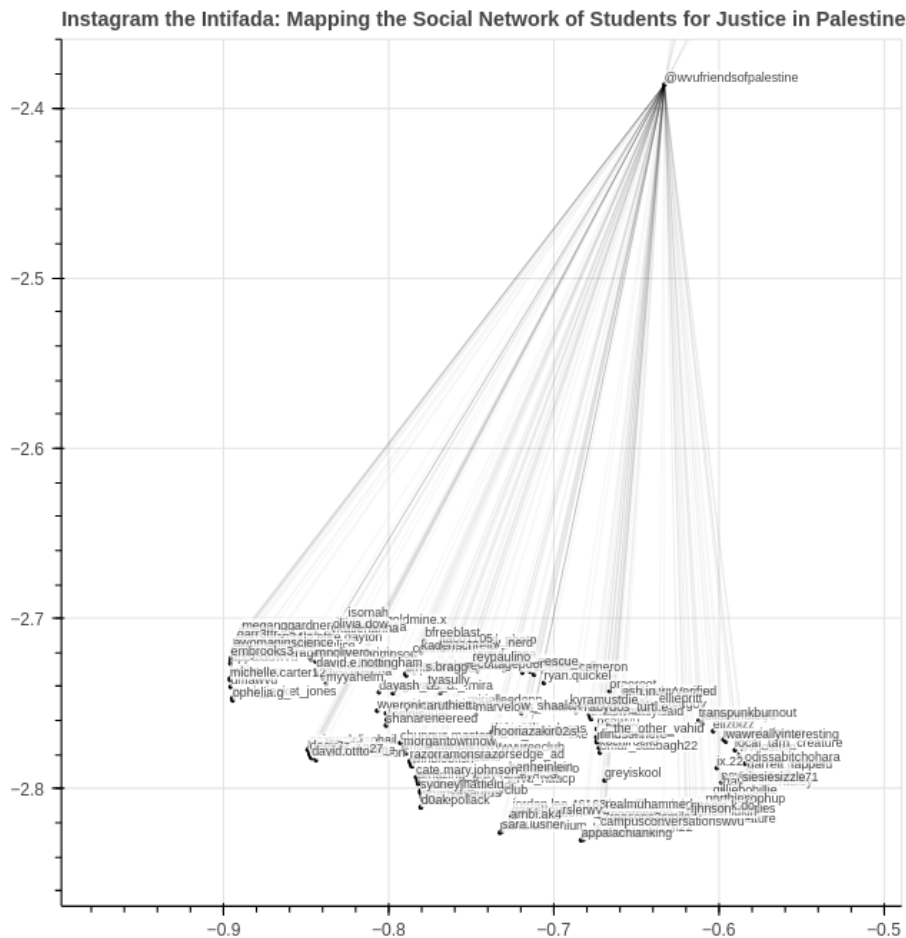


Figure 4: Network Web of the Students for Justice in Palestine West Virginia University Chapter Account

It has been just over a year since the October 7th attacks in Israel occurred, and Students for Justice in Palestine has celebrated the anniversary of the slaughter. The SJP Chapter at Swarthmore College [posted](#) a link on Instagram, with the caption: “Happy October 7th everyone! In honor of this glorious day and all our martyred revolutionaries, donate here.” Brown University [suspended](#) its SJP chapter due to the “severity of alleged threatening, intimidating and harassing actions,” and many other universities have done the same. A similar student group, Columbia University Apartheid Divest (CAUD), openly praised Hamas and called for additional violence, prompting [Senator Joni Earnst \(R-IA\) and Representative Elise Stefanik \(R-NY\)](#) to ask the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate the CAUD’s activities and affiliations.

The SJP camps may have been cleared out, and the intensity of their protests may have waned, but this organization’s presence on campuses and the threat it presents has gone nowhere. There is still much left in the data to be explored, too much to do on our own. With the creation and release of this original dataset, we hope to offer other researchers and law enforcement officials an extensive list of leads for further inquiry into the organization and leadership of Students for Justice in Palestine, its ties to other organizations, and persons of interest.

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