

**Jewish United Fund of  
Metropolitan Chicago (JUF)**

**Donations to Anti-Muslim  
Hate Groups: \$783,750**

**#DEFUND  
ISLAMOPHOBIA**

2011-2014 4:00 Op:-0100010 Tot: \$783,750

2011	Middle East Forum - Daniel Pipes	\$608,750
2011	Donors Trust	\$100,000
2012	Investigative Project on Terrorism - Steven Emerson	\$26,000
2012	Middle East Forum - Daniel Pipes	\$19,500
2013	Middle East Forum - Daniel Pipes	\$20,500
2014	Middle East Forum - Daniel Pipes	\$9,000

**2011-2014: \$783,750.00**

GIFT RECEIPT

R116010000876



## Defund Islamophobia:

How the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago Supports  
Anti-Muslim Hate Groups

March 2017

Jewish Voice for Peace—Chicago  
Network Against Islamophobia, a project of Jewish Voice for Peace

Despite its stated commitment to “stand together to say ‘no’ to all forms of hate,” the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (JUF) funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars between the years 2011-2014 to groups the Southern Poverty Law Center labels “anti-Muslim fearmongers.”

We demand the JUF make a firm, public commitment to never again contribute to these Islamophobic groups or to others that share their ideology.

## Introduction

Today, Islamophobia, which has a long history in the U.S., is more blatant and dangerous than ever. After more than a decade of post-9/11 Bush and Obama administration policies of surveillance and deportation of Muslims, the current Administration under President Trump is greatly accelerating anti-Muslim policies, including an Executive Order intended to implement a Muslim travel ban and “extreme vetting” of refugees from certain Muslim countries, as well as campaign-trail threats of a “Muslim registry.” In this context, Muslims and those perceived as Muslims are facing increased Islamophobic attacks, including threats to mosques and Muslim community centers, harassment of women in hijab, and other public attacks, beatings, arson, and shootings.

This report shines a light on the role of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (JUF), led by President Steven Nasatir, in contributing to the political and ideological trends that have helped to mainstream Islamophobia in national policy. Despite its stated [commitment](#) to “stand together to say ‘no’ to all forms of hate,” JUF has funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars to anti-Muslim hate groups in the years 2011-2014 through its donor-advised funds.<sup>1</sup> In addition, JUF accepted \$5.1 million in 2013 from the [Donors Capital Fund](#), a major contributor to what the [Center for American Progress](#) calls the “Islamophobia network in America.”<sup>2</sup> These financial ties call into question JUF’s ability to live up to its [commitment](#) to “give hope and help to the most vulnerable.”<sup>3</sup>

By financing groups that promote the hateful ideologies it purports to oppose, JUF undermines efforts within the Jewish community to be a partner in combatting Islamophobia and all forms of racial and religious discrimination. JUF support for groups such as Daniel Pipes’ Middle East Forum and Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism—groups labeled “anti-Muslim extremists” by the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)—helps to spread the very Islamophobic ideologies that enable anti-Muslim policies.<sup>4</sup> Rather than acting as a partner for peace and religious pluralism, JUF is actively contributing to the current climate of intolerance and bigotry.

This report is intended to serve as a call to action. JUF [touts](#) itself as the “one organization that impacts every aspect of local and global Jewish life.”<sup>5</sup> It has deep ties in the Jewish community in Chicago and beyond. Thus, it is up to all of those linked to JUF—donors, organizational partners, recipients, board members—to demand that JUF live up to its stated values.

At a time when our government is disproportionately targeting Muslims with lethal consequences, we call on JUF to:

1. Immediately cut off all funding to anti-Muslim hate groups, through donor-advised funds or other funding streams;
2. Commit to rejecting future contributions from funders that are contributors to anti-Muslim hate groups;
3. Make a written and public statement addressing JUF funding of anti-Muslim hate groups and affirming JUF's commitment to the above actions.

## The Jewish United Fund and the Islamophobia Network

The recent spike in the number of anti-Muslim [hate groups](#), crimes, and policies is neither coincidental nor accidental.<sup>6</sup> We cannot understand the ascendance of blatant Islamophobia under the current Administration without recognizing the decades of work that groups and individuals in the Islamophobia network have dedicated to pushing Islamophobia into the mainstream.

Islamophobia did not [begin](#) with 9/11.<sup>7</sup> However, the scope and influence of the Islamophobia network accelerated in the context of the “War on Terror,” which is premised on the idea that an entire religion is responsible for the acts of a small group claiming to speak in its name. Central to the mainstreaming of Islamophobia is the Islamophobia network, a well-coordinated group of bigots described by Nathan Lean, author of [The Islamophobia Industry in America](#), as “an interconnected, and highly organized cottage industry of fear merchants.”<sup>8</sup>

The leaders of the Islamophobia network, aptly described as “misinformation experts” in the Center for American Progress’ report [Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America](#), are important not just because they provide misinformation to Fox News and other media outlets, but because of the relationships they have with government officials and their influence on U.S. domestic and foreign policy.<sup>9,10</sup> This relationship, while mutually beneficial for Islamophobic politicians and misinformation experts, has devastating consequences for Muslim communities. Muslim bans, domestic spying, registry programs, “sharia law” bans, and foreign sanctions and interventions are all justified by “facts” provided by think tanks and “experts” of the Islamophobia network. Meanwhile, elected and appointed government officials lend credibility to these anti-Muslim bigots, allowing them to rake in [funding](#) from the government and private funders.<sup>11</sup>

The network cannot survive and thrive without funding, and the JUF enables the spread of anti-Muslim hatred in two concrete ways. In the past decade, it has made significant contributions through donor advised funds to two prominent [hate groups](#) in this Islamophobia network: Daniel Pipes’ Middle East Forum and Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism—groups that the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Center for American Progress, and other groups have identified as purveyors of anti-Muslim hate.<sup>12</sup> It has also accepted

millions of dollars from the Donors Capital Fund/Donors Trust, a leading funder of this Islamophobia industry, and has given \$100,000 to Donors Trust.

The following is a summary of the activities JUF has supported through its funding of anti-Muslim groups.

### Daniel Pipes and the Middle East Forum

Between 2011 and 2014, JUF gave \$648,750 to the Middle East Forum, founded by Daniel Pipes in 1990. Pipes is described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an influential propagandist “at the center of what is a large and evolving network of Islam-bashing activists.”<sup>13</sup> The following examples are just a few of the actions Pipes and his Middle East Forum have taken that fuel anti-Muslim sentiments and policies:

- Pipes views almost every possible Muslim activity as subversive and threatening. [Islamist Watch](#), an online project of the Middle East Forum, claims that “lawful Islamists” engage “quietly, lawfully, peacefully” in numerous activities related to political lobbying, the media, and the legal and education systems in order to “impose Islamic law [in the United States], win special privileges for themselves, shut down criticism of Islam, create Muslim-only zones, and deprive women and non-Muslims of their full civil rights.”<sup>14</sup>
- The Southern Poverty Law Center notes that “Pipes [endorsed](#) the internment of Muslims in America,” referencing WWII Japanese American concentration camps as a model to be used against Muslims today.<sup>15</sup>
- During the 2008 presidential campaign, Pipes published [claims](#) “proving” that Barack Obama was a Muslim.<sup>16</sup> Two years later, he [alleged](#) that President Obama “enforced Islamic law”—part of his larger thesis about the “threat” to the “West” of “lawful Islam.”<sup>17</sup>
- In 2014, the Middle East Forum successfully [lobbied](#) New York Life and Morgan Stanley not to sponsor future banquets of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which it falsely claimed is “terrorism-linked.”<sup>18</sup> Contrary to the Middle East Forum’s smear campaign, CAIR is a nationally-recognized civil rights organization that has received [praise](#) from seventeen U.S. Senators and 85 U.S. Representatives from both sides of the political aisle.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2017, Pipes praised President Trump’s Muslim travel ban Executive Order and [advocated](#) in the Middle East Forum’s publication [Middle East Quarterly](#) for even more “extreme vetting” of Muslim immigrants through interrogation that included use of, for example, lie detectors and social media surveillance.<sup>20</sup>

### Steven Emerson and the Investigative Project on Terrorism

In 2012, JUF gave \$26,000 to the Investigative Project on Terrorism, which Steven Emerson founded in 1995. Like Pipes, Emerson is identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an

“anti-Muslim extremist . . . frequently cited in public discourse.”<sup>21</sup> Despite his unbelievable statements, Emerson has found influential platforms to spread views such as the following:

- Starting in the 1990s, Emerson provided allegedly “expert” [testimony](#) in hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee and various congressional committees and government agencies.”<sup>22</sup>
- Immediately after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Emerson [claimed](#) on TV that the attack had “a Middle Eastern trait” because it “was done with the intent to inflict as many casualties as possible.”<sup>23</sup>
- In 1997, after Emerson [presented](#) the Associated Press with a purported Federal Bureau of Investigation [dossier](#) showing ties between Muslim American organizations and radical Islamist groups, AP reporters concluded that Emerson had forged the dossier himself.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2007, Emerson met with now-White House chief strategist Steve Bannon to discuss Bannon’s proposed film, “[Destroying the Great Satan](#): The Rise of Islamic Facism [sic] in America.” The proposal for the film lists Emerson as an executive producer.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2015, even Fox News felt the need to [apologize](#) after Emerson falsely claimed in an interview that Birmingham, England and other European cities were filled with “no-go zones” where non-Muslims and government officials don’t go.<sup>26</sup>

### Donor Capital Fund/Donors Trust

JUF is linked in two known ways to the Donors Capital Fund and Donors Trust, two affiliated donor-advised funds with a long [history](#) of providing financial support to key organizations in the Islamophobia network and a commitment to keeping its donors anonymous.<sup>27</sup> According to federal 990 forms, the Jewish Federation gave [\\$100,000](#) to Donors Trust in 2010, while Donors Capital Fund gave JUF \$5.1 million in 2013.<sup>28</sup>

The Center for American Progress’ 2011 [Fear Inc.](#) report identified the Donors Capital Fund as one of the leading funders of Islamophobia in the United States. In 2008, it gave more than \$17 million to the Clarion Fund to distribute 28 million DVDs of the viciously anti-Muslim film [Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West](#) as newspaper inserts in presidential election swing states.<sup>29</sup> The film prominently features numerous Islamophobia Network leaders, including Pipes and Emerson.<sup>30</sup> Between 2001 and 2008, Donors Capital Fund also contributed \$2.3 million to Pipes’ Middle East Forum and \$400,000 to Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism—two anti-Muslim hate groups subsequently funded by JUF.

## JUF Contributions to the Islamophobia Network

A review of the 2011-2014 Form 990 [filings](#) from the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago reveal that JUF contributed \$783,750 through its donor-advised funds to the following organizations identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center and Center for American Progress as leaders in the Islamophobia network.<sup>31</sup>

According to JUF policy, donor-advised funds are strictly advisory, meaning that while individual donors can recommend organizations they wish to support, a JUF standing committee retains full discretion over the ultimate allocation of funds. This [committee](#) also has the power to “establish additional criteria for the evaluation of Outside Investment Advisors.”<sup>32</sup>

	Donors Trust	Investigative Project on Terrorism	Middle East Forum
2011	\$100,000		\$608,750
2012		\$26,000	\$19,500
2013			\$20,500
2014			\$9,000
Total (by organization)	\$100,000	\$26,000	\$657,750
Total to Islamophobia network			\$783,750

In addition to funding the Islamophobia network through its donor-advised funds, JUF [accepted](#) \$5.1 million from Donors Capital Fund in 2013.<sup>33</sup>

## JUF Contributions to Islamophobia Network Contradict Stated Values

“The majority of JUF donors and community partners are likely unaware of the extent to which JUF’s giving history undermines its public commitments to interfaith support and solidarity.” – Defund Islamophobia (2017)

JUF describes its philanthropy as made possible by the “incredible generosity of our community,” which [contributed](#) \$83,122,764 to JUF’s 2015 Annual Campaign.<sup>34</sup> Many donors are no doubt attracted to JUF’s ostensible [mission](#) to give “help and hope to the most vulnerable” in Chicago, regardless of faith.<sup>35</sup> The JUF also [claims](#) a “desire to enhance intergroup relations in Chicago’s diverse setting,” and JUF’s community relations arm, the Jewish Community Relations Council, is active in seeking relationships and partnerships with local Black, Latino, and Catholic community groups.<sup>36</sup>

Since the 2016 presidential election, JUF’s public messaging has stressed the importance of interfaith partnerships and, in particular, support for Muslim communities. On February 8, 2017, JUF hosted an “Interfaith Gathering Against Hate” with Jewish, Muslim, and Christian

community leaders. At the gathering, JUF President Steven Nasatir delivered [remarks](#) in which he called for Chicagoans to “stand together to say ‘no’ to all forms of hate.”<sup>37</sup> Similarly, at a 2016 interfaith gathering, JCRC’s Steven Dishler [offered](#) a “prayer for tolerance and acceptance.”<sup>38</sup>

The majority of JUF donors and community partners are likely unaware of the extent to which JUF’s giving history undermines its public commitments to interfaith support and solidarity. Its financial support of anti-Muslim hate groups is totally inconsistent with Nasatir’s public commitment to “say ‘no’ to hate.” Meanwhile, as one of the most recognizable faces of the Jewish community in Chicago, JUF’s funding of hate groups undermines real, accountable Jewish efforts to combat Islamophobia in all its forms.

## Shared Agenda of Support for Israel

We believe JUF support for anti-Muslim organizations is at least in part related to their willingness to deploy anti-Muslim and anti-Arab tropes to bolster U.S. support for the State of Israel. This convergence of interests helps explain, in part, the alliance between pro-Israel American Jewish groups such as AIPAC and JUF and the far-right Islamophobia network. Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, also founded Campus Watch, an organization that has [compiled](#) dossiers on professors deemed too critical of Israel.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, Steven Emerson, founder of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, has repeatedly been [invited](#) to lead sessions at the American Israel Public Affairs Council’s (AIPAC) annual conference, where he has been able to spew his strongly anti-Muslim beliefs.<sup>40</sup> Recent revelations that AIPAC [contributed](#) \$60,000 to another Islamophobia network leader, the Center for Security Policy, also make clear how some pro-Israel actors see peddling Islamophobia as in the interests of the State of Israel.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, Steven Nasatir’s JUF would no doubt attest to its unconditional support for the State of Israel. Nasatir himself has [asserted](#) that Palestinians “revel in destruction” because of their “vile, extremist Islamic ideology.”<sup>42</sup> This shared interest in popularizing anti-Palestinian sentiments may explain why JUF has distributed [Emerson’s](#) and [Pipes’s](#) work in its email newsletter, and, at least on one occasion, in 2011, [invited](#) Emerson to address a student conference, calling him an “acclaimed author and intelligence expert.”<sup>43</sup>

Ties between Israel advocacy and the Islamophobia network are [well-documented](#), and we hope to further explore their ongoing ramifications in a future report.<sup>44</sup> For now, we raise this proverbial “elephant in the room” in order to understand the full context of the political landscape that has informed JUF’s participation in the Islamophobia network. JUF’s apparent vested interest in Islamophobia in the service of its pro-Israel agenda may also explain other JUF actions that have troubled Chicago’s progressive Jewish communities, such as its [refusal](#) to condemn President Trump’s appointment of Steven Bannon, whose far-right news outlet Breitbart regularly promotes both anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic ideologies.<sup>45</sup>

As an institutional pillar of the community, JUF is positioned to serve as a spokesperson of Chicago's Jewish communities. However, this report demonstrates how JUF funding of anti-Muslim groups is antithetical to the commitments to racial and religious equality shared by many in the Jewish community and beyond. We hope this report helps others feel empowered to raise their voices against JUF actions that make Muslim communities, and ultimately all racial and religious minorities, more vulnerable to today's political climate of violence and intolerance.

## Closing Recommendations

JUF's ties to anti-Muslim hate groups are fundamentally incompatible with its stated values and professed commitment to stand in solidarity with Muslim communities. We ask all organizations and individuals committed to combatting Islamophobia to join us in calling on JUF to take the following actions:

1. Immediately cut off all funding to anti-Muslim hate groups, through donor-advised funds or other funding streams;
  2. Commit to rejecting future contributions from funders that are contributors to anti-Muslim hate groups;
  3. Make a written and public statement addressing JUF funding of anti-Muslim hate groups and affirming JUF's commitment to the above actions.
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## Endnotes

1. Steven B. Nasatir, "[Nasatir: 'We Stand Together to Say 'No' to All Forms of Hate'](#)," JUF News, February 8, 2017.
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3. Jewish United Fund, "[About JUF](#)."
4. Southern Poverty Law Center, "[A Journalist's Manual: Field Guide to Anti-Muslim Extremists](#)," SPLC, October 25, 2016.
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7. Edward E. Curtis IV, "[For American Muslims, Everything Did Not Change After 9/11](#)," Religion & Politics, July 5, 2012.
8. Nathan Lean, [The Islamophobia Industry](#): How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims, 2012.
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- ["Exposed: The Dark-Money ATM of the Conservative Movement,"](#) Mother Jones, February 5, 2013.
28. 990 forms are available in the public domain via "[Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago](#)" and "[Donors Capital Fund Inc.](#)" Pro Publica.
  29. Ali et al, [Fear Inc.:](#) The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America.
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[Jewish Voice for Peace–Chicago](#) is a local chapter of the national, grassroots organization inspired by Jewish tradition to work for a just and lasting peace according to principles of human rights, equality, and international law for all the people of Israel and Palestine. JVP has over 200,000 online supporters, over 60 chapters, a youth wing, a Rabbinic Council, an Artist Council, an Academic Advisory Council, and an Advisory Board made up of leading U.S. intellectuals and artists. [www.jvp.org](http://www.jvp.org)

[The Network Against Islamophobia \(NAI\)](#), a project of Jewish Voice for Peace, was created to serve as a resource to, and work with, JVP chapters and other groups interested in organizing against Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism and to be a partner to the broader, Muslim-led movement against Islamophobia. NAI facilitates online resource-sharing of FAQs, public letters, press statements, articles, and other materials. NAI has also developed curricula and resources for those interested in holding community workshops and in becoming more knowledgeable, effective, and principled in NAI's work. [www.jvp.org/nai](http://www.jvp.org/nai)