

Network Against Islamophobia

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.

We created these materials--a two-session curriculum and resources; a series of modules; and a facilitator guide--so we can be effective, accountable partners in this work.

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Jewish Organizations and Islamophobia Module

Purpose of Module:

This module looks at the mainstream Jewish organizations that have a history of supporting Islamophobia and encourages participants to think deeply about who our Jewish allies and partners are. We think about the connections or experiences we have with different Jewish organizations and whether these organizations have promoted Islamophobia. We also consider how and whether we, as individuals and as part of groups, are able to maintain any connection to these organizations, and how we can hold groups accountable for their complicity with Islamophobia.

This is part of an analysis of the multiple and structural ways Islamophobia manifests itself--and needs to be challenged. We recommend using this module after, or in conjunction with, the [full NAI curriculum](#) or [Intro module](#). This module can also be used in conjunction with the [Liberal Islamophobia](#) and [Following the Funding](#) modules. Other ideas about how to use the NAI curriculum can be found in the Facilitator Guide.

Goals:

- To develop an understanding of the history or current complicity of certain mainstream Jewish organizations that have promoted Islamophobia
- To hold ourselves and our communities accountable to the ways we perpetuate or promote islamophobia AND to be sure we are, in fact, challenging all forms of islamophobia

- To analyze and think critically about who our partners are in the Jewish community in the fight against Islamophobia and about what it means to oppose all forms of Islamophobia

Materials:

- Handout #1: National Jewish Federations and Islamophobia
- Handout #2: The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Islamophobia
- Handout #3: The American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Islamophobia
- Handout #4: A Guide to Who’s Who in NAI’s “Following the Funding” and “Jewish Organizations and Islamophobia” Modules
- NAI [Readings and Resources on Islamophobia](#)

I. Introductions and Opening (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

5 minutes: Introductions; give a brief overview of the agenda and rationale for this module: to think about Jewish organizations that have a history of supporting Islamophobia, and to consider our connections with these organizations.

Ask participants to brainstorm mainstream Jewish organizations (ADL, JCRC, ZOA, etc.). Write names on chart paper/board. Then ask:

- Are there any connections you have seen or heard of between these Jewish organizations and Islamophobia?
- Any connections that you have seen or heard of between these Jewish organizations and anti-Islamophobia work?

Write associations on chart paper/board.

Participants:

5 minutes: Share thoughts with the person sitting next to you based on **Guiding Questions:**

- What Jewish organizations do you belong to/have you belonged to?
- Have you heard your organization propagate Islamophobic attitudes or agendas?
- What mainstream Jewish organizations or groups do you know about that have supported Islamophobia or been financially supported by Islamophobic funders?
- How have they done so/what have they done?

Participants can add notes to chart paper/board on the Jewish organizations identified throughout the session.

II. Handouts: examples of Islamophobia (45 minutes)

Facilitator:

25 minutes: Share Handout #4: A Guide to Who's Who in NAI's "Following the Funding" and "Jewish Organizations and Islamophobia" Modules for participants to have as a resource throughout the rest of the module. Divide participants into three groups and share handouts on Jewish Organizations and Islamophobia:

Group 1: National Jewish Federations and Islamophobia

Group 2: The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Islamophobia

Group 3: The American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Islamophobia

Ask each group to read their handout for an in-depth discussion. **Guiding Questions:**

- What are some examples of Islamophobia that this group has propagated?
- How does the group's history of Islamophobia affect how we think about the stances and actions they are taking today?
- Who should our allies be in the fight against Islamophobia?

20 minutes: Each group shares a summary of its group discussion with the whole group.

III. Jewish Groups with a History of Islamophobia (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

15 minutes: Discuss how many mainstream Jewish groups have responded to recent attacks on Muslim communities across the country by opposing the Muslim ban and other new government policies and condemning anti-Muslim hate crimes. However, many of these groups have a history of Islamophobia and of attempting to silence criticism of Israeli policy, and have failed to publicly renounce or apologize for their previous actions. Given this information, ask for initial thoughts and reflections on these **Guiding Questions**, each written on a separate piece of chart paper:

- Can we work with Jewish groups that have or have had a history of Islamophobia?
- Does working with these groups/co-sponsoring/signing joint statements legitimize their Islamophobia?
- If we were to work with these organizations, what would possible implications be for Muslim partners we work with or other targeted communities?

Guide a whole group discussion and take notes on the separate pieces of chart paper (to use for the museum walk in Activity V) as participants share their thoughts. Explain that we will return to these questions and responses again later in the module.

IV. Defunding Islamophobia (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

10 minutes: As a full group, brainstorm steps groups can take when dealing with Jewish organizations that have financial connections to Islamophobia. **Guiding Question** (written on chart paper):

- What steps might your group take if you learn that the local Jewish federation or a Jewish funder (or other such group) funds Islamophobia or has provided financial or other material support (a platform for anti-Muslim speakers, sale of their books in the gift shop, etc.) to anti-Muslim individuals or hate groups?

Options could include a full-fledged defunding campaign, like with JVP and the Jewish United Fund in Chicago, or some chapters might want to meet with federation board members, or write letters to the local paper, or make a video denouncing the group's Islamophobic connections.

Take notes and add chart paper to the Museum Walk (next activity).

V. Allies/Partners Museum Walk (20 minutes)

Facilitator: Hang chart paper with the responses from Activities III and IV. In groups of 3, participants walk around to each chart paper and write follow-up thoughts or questions.

- Can we work with Jewish groups that have or have had a history of Islamophobia?
- What happens when our Muslim partners have entered into partnerships with these organizations? What should be our approach?
- Does working with these groups or co-sponsoring or signing joint statements legitimize their Islamophobia?
- If we were to work with them, what would possible implications be for Muslim partners we work with or for other targeted communities?
- What steps might your group take if you learn that the local Jewish federation or a Jewish funder (or other such group) funds Islamophobia or has provided financial or other material support (a platform for anti-Muslim speakers, sale of their books in the gift shop, etc.) to anti-Muslim individuals or hate groups?

Bring group back together for a wrap-up conversation about the museum walk. Ask participants to discuss any ways that their responses have changed or any new or lingering concerns they have about mainstream Jewish organizations and their connections to Islamophobia.

VI. Closing (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

20 minutes: Closing conversation on questions and thoughts or anything participants want to think more about or will take away with them. Go around room and answer **Guiding Questions**:

- Who/which Jewish organizations can you work with?
- What are some guidelines for choosing groups with which you feel comfortable working?
- How can groups with a history of taking money from questionable sources or supporting Islamophobic people/policies be held accountable?
- What are some of your next steps in your work with allies?

Further reading:

Hatem Bazian, "[Negotiating Alliances in the Age of Islamophobia: AJC's Role in Anti-Muslim Discourses](#)," hatembazian.com/, December 1, 2016.

Max Blumenthal, "[The Great Islamophobic Crusade](#)," *Huffington Post*, December 20, 2010.

Max Blumenthal, "[The Sugar Mama of Anti-Muslim Hate](#)," *The Nation*, June 14, 2012.

Elly Bulkin & Donna Nevel, "[How the Jewish Establishment's Litmus Test on Israel Fuels Anti-Muslim Bigotry](#)," *AlterNet*, September 7, 2012.

Elly Bulkin & Donna Nevel, "[How the Anti-Defamation League Fuels Islamophobia](#)," *AlterNet*, February 1, 2013.

Elly Bulkin & Donna Nevel, "[Follow the Money: From Islamophobia to Israel Right or Wrong](#)," *AlterNet*, October 3, 2012.

Elly Bulkin & Donna Nevel, "[How Pro-Israel Forces Drove Two Virulent Anti-Muslim Campaigns](#)," *AlterNet*, September 20, 2013.

Eli Clifton, "[Why Is a Mainstream Jewish Charity Funding Pamela Geller?](#)" *The Forward*, November 21, 2015.

Eli Clifton, "[The Jewish Communal Fund Invests in Islamophobia](#)," *LobeLog Foreign Policy*, December 15, 2015.

Eli Clifton, "[AIPAC Gave \\$60K to Architect of Trump's Muslim Ban](#)," *Lobellog Foreign Policy*, March 15, 2017.

Sarah Lazare, "[Why Some Are Calling Foul on a Muslim-Jewish Council Affiliated with a Pro-Israel Lobby Group](#)," *AlterNet*, December 9, 2016.

Mark Daalder, "[We Need to 'Defund Islamophobia?'](#)" *New Voices*, March 23, 2017.

Michael Deheeger, "[Why Is Chicago's Influential Jewish United Fund Still Silent on Bannon?](#)" *Crain's Chicago Business*, December 09, 2016.

JVP-Chicago & Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), a project of JVP, "[Defund Islamophobia: How the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago Supports Anti-Muslim Hate Groups](#)," JVP, March, 2017.

"[JVP-Chicago to Jewish United Fund: 'Defund Islamophobia'](#)"

Sarah Lazare, "[Pro-Israel Group that Claims to Renounce 'Hate' Has Been Quietly Funding Islamophobia Industry](#)," *AlterNet*, March 23, 2017.

Ruth McCambridge, “[Jewish Federation Challenged on ‘Hate Grants’ Facilitated through Donor-Advised Funds](#),” *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, March 28, 2017.

Donna Nevel, “[Defund Islamophobia Now](#),” *Huffington Post*, March 24, 2017.

“[Open Letter to Progressive Jews: The ADL and AJC Are Not Our Allies](#),” *Mondoweiss*, February 17, 2017.

Ben Sales, “[When Politics Gets in the Way of Jewish Giving](#),” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, March 28, 2017.

Handout #1

National Jewish Federations and Islamophobia

There are [138](#) Jewish federations across the country. Although they are autonomous, they share a strong pro-Israel commitment and identify support for Israel as a central aspect of their mission, often refusing to take consistent, principled stands against Islamophobia. At times, Jewish federations have stood with Muslims across the country: [Ann Arbor](#) federation crowdsourcing for a mosque destroyed by arson; [Nashville](#) federation support for a controversial expansion of the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro; and public opposition to the Trump Muslim Ban 1.0 by [125](#) local Jewish federations. Yet, Jewish federations have both perpetuated Islamophobia and failed to challenge it.

Normalizing and Supporting Islamophobia:

- **Israel.** Pro-Israel forces frequently use anti-Muslim narratives to bolster support of the State of Israel. Prominent U.S. anti-Muslim ideologues are adamantly pro-Israel and are not alone in conflating Palestinians and Muslims (with both seen as existential threats to the United States and Israel). Israeli officials routinely dismiss Islamophobia as a problem: For example, while accepting a 2016 award from Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy, a leading anti-Muslim disinformation outfit, Israeli Ambassador to the United States Ron Dermer “[lambasted](#)” the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate crimes and hate groups, because it had, Dermer thought, “branded” as extremists Gaffney and others he views as just “activist critics of Islam.”
- **Islamophobic Event sponsorship.** Various individuals identified as anti-Muslim extremists by the Southern Poverty Law Center, [Center for American Progress](#), and others have spoken at events sponsored by Jewish Federations in Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere. A few examples since 2010 are: Steven Emerson, Brigitte Gabriel, Frank Gaffney, Pamela Geller, and Daniel Pipes.
- **Islamophobic campaigns.** The [Combined Jewish Philanthropies \(CJP\)](#), (Boston’s Jewish Federation)-- along with the local Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC)—provided public and implied support for those opposing the construction of a mosque in Boston. The anti-mosque campaign had as its centerpiece allegations that current or past local Muslim leaders included so-called “bad Muslims.” Both CJP and the JCRC had had, in their leadership, groups or individuals who had helped initiate or continue this 2002-2007 [anti-mosque campaign](#). The two organizations did not publicly challenge the message or tactics of Charles Jacobs of Citizens for Peace and Tolerance and the David Project, nationally prominent anti-Muslim ideologue Steven Emerson, the local ADL, and others who used guilt-by-association and fear-mongering to smear Islamic Society of Boston leaders. Subpoenaed emails made evident that the sole purpose for initiating a lawsuit against the ISB (dismissed in February 2007 as being “without merit”) was to find a media angle that would garner negative press for the Muslim community.

Following the Money

Some of these Federations have accepted substantial support from foundations that are part of “the Islamophobia network in America,” a network of anti-Muslim funders, misinformation experts, the religious right, the media, political players, and grassroots organizations¹:

- **Fairbrook Foundation.** Fairbrook has been a major financial supporter of such anti-Muslim groups as the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a key player in the “[anti-Muslim](#), anti-immigrant and anti-Black movements,” and a big funder of groups that share its hate-filled perspective; and the Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE), run by David Yerushalmi, Pamela Geller’s lawyer, who developed the legislative template for campaigns against the alleged threat of Sharia.

¹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/reports/2011/08/26/10165/fear-inc/>

- The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles [received](#) more than \$5.5 million between 2005 and 2010 from the Fairbrook Foundation.
- **Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation**, identified by the Center for American Progress as a main funder of the Islamophobia industry. In addition, in 2013 and 2014 alone, Becker gave nearly \$1.1 million to the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. The Federation board includes two members (previous Federation board chairs) who are members of the Becker board.
 - The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles received \$550,000 between 2010 and 2014 from the Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation.
 - The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma accepted nearly \$700,000 between 2010 and 2014 from the Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation.
- **Adelson Family Foundation**. Since 2011, the Adelson Family Foundation, which has a long history of supporting anti-Muslim groups, gave substantial grants to the Zionist Organization of America, whose national president, Morton Klein, is a fan of the current administration's [Muslim Ban](#); Islamophobes Steve [Bannon](#) and Pamela [Geller](#); the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) and David Horowitz Freedom Center, two organizations identified as part of the Islamophobia network in America; and Americans for Peace and Tolerance, a Boston group whose head, Charles Jacobs, has [engaged](#) in more than one “destructive campaign against Boston’s Muslim community, which is based on innuendo, half-truths and unproven conspiracy theories.” Adelson [distributed](#) to young people on Birthright-sponsored tours to Israel copies of the anti-Muslim video *Obsession*, which the [New York Times](#) found, had “attracted his support.”
 - The Jewish Federation of Las Vegas accepted nearly \$7.5 million between 2011 and 2014 from the Adelson Family Foundation.
 - Combined Jewish Philanthropy, Greater Boston’s Jewish Federation, accepted \$6.8 million from Adelson between 2011 and 2015.
- **Donors Capital Fund**, along with its affiliated donor-advised fund Donors Capital Fund, has a long history of providing financial support to key organizations in the Islamophobia network.
 - A [report](#) by JVP-Chicago and the Network Against Islamophobia found that the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (JUF) received \$5.1 million in 2013 from Donors Capital Fund.

Funding Islamophobia

Some Federations (or their affiliated funders) have given substantial funding to groups run by some of the country’s most prominent Islamophobes:

- **Clarion Fund**. According to the Center for American Progress, the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco gave the [Clarion Fund](#) \$75,000 between 2008 and 2009. The Clarion Fund is an offshoot of Aish HaTorah, a strong supporter of radical Israeli settlers, and was a major force behind the distribution in 2008 of *Obsession* and *The Third Jihad*.
- The Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (JUF) funneled through donor-advised funds hundreds of thousands of dollars between the years 2011-2014 to groups the Southern Poverty Law Center labels “anti-Muslim fearmongers” and “anti-Muslim extremists.” JUF’s support for groups like Daniel Pipes’ Middle East Forum and Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism helps to spread the very Islamophobic ideologies that enable anti-Muslim actions and policies.
- The Jewish United Fund gave \$100,000 to Donors Trust in 2010.

Handout #2 The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Islamophobia

The ADL bills itself as an organization [committed](#) to securing “justice and fair treatment to all...” Since 2010, the ADL has backed mosque construction, condemned anti-Muslim hate speech and various acts of individual anti-Muslim violence, and opposed the state anti-Sharia laws that are part of a nationwide Islamophobic smear campaign to promote the baseless accusation that Muslims plan to take over the U.S. legal system. It has also issued “backgrounders” on Pamela Geller, David Yerushalmi, and other members of the national Islamophobia network. But there is another side to the ADL, where “justice and fair treatment to all” notably excludes Muslims and Arab Americans.

The ADL’s History of Normalizing and Supporting Islamophobia includes:

- **Illegal spying** against Arab-American [groups](#) and such groups as the ACLU, ACT UP, Artists Against Apartheid, Americans for Peace Now, NAACP, New Jewish Agenda, and the United Farm Workers, as well as sharing [information](#) about these groups with the FBI.
 - After a class action suit coordinated by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), the ADL was [fined](#) in 1999 and “under the permanent injunction issued by Federal Judge Richard Paez... [was] permanently enjoined from engaging in any further illegal spying against Arab-American and other civil rights groups.”
- **Supporting proponents of Islamophobia**
 - The ADL supported the 2003 [appointment](#) by President George W. Bush of Daniel Pipes to the board of the United State Institute for Peace. Pipes is a prominent anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist. The Center for American Progress identifies Pipes, who founded the Middle East Forum in 1990, as a leading “misinformation expert” in its 2011 report [Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America](#). In 2003, an ADL [press release](#) praised Pipes for his “important approach and perspective.”
- **Silence in the face of state-sponsored Islamophobia.** During the many years in which the NYPD engaged in surveillance of Muslim communities, the ADL, despite its stated mission of protecting “civil rights for all,” was [notably silent](#).
 - ADL gave an [award](#) to the commanding officer of the NYPD Intelligence Division that had implemented the discriminatory surveillance program, even after 2011 [AP revelations](#) revelations about these operations.
- **Islamophobic assumptions.** In 2010, ADL Director Abe Foxman [criticized](#) the proposal for Park51, a proposed Muslim community center in lower Manhattan, on the grounds that it would be in the vicinity of Ground Zero. The campaign against Park51 was instigated by Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and other purveyors of anti-Muslim hate. Foxman perpetuated the idea that, because a small number of Muslims attacked the World Trade Center, all Muslims were responsible—a type of collective guilt never assumed about other religions.
- **Silencing.** The ADL tries to [silence groups](#) silence groups speaking out for justice in Palestine/Israel and students doing pro-Palestine organizing at [Brooklyn College](#), [Florida Atlantic University](#), [University of California](#) Davis, and other college campuses.
- **Amplifying anti-Muslim hate.**
 - The Dallas ADL chapter was among numerous Jewish institutions that helped mainstream anti-Muslim hate by [sponsoring](#) a local showing of the [Clarion Fund’s](#) *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West*, a militantly anti-Muslim propaganda film. The Dallas event concluded “with an opportunity to support the Federation’s Israel Crisis Fund.

- **Supporting anti-Muslim campaigns.**
 - ADL New England was part of a 2002-2007 [anti-mosque campaign](#) that used guilt-by-association and fear-mongering to smear Islamic Society of Boston leaders, while giving cover and credibility to Islamophobic anti-Muslim forces that included anti-Muslim ideologues Steven Emerson and Robert Spencer.

Following the Money

- **Adelson Family Foundation.** The ADL has taken \$550,000 between 2007 and 2013 from the [Adelson Family Foundation](#).
 - Between 2011 and 2013, Adelson gave [\\$1,225,000](#) to groups in the Islamophobia network. These include, for example, Americans for Peace and Tolerance, which campaigns against Muslim leaders in the Boston area; and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting (CAMERA), whose “media monitoring” reflects its strong anti-Muslim agenda.
 - According to the *New York Times*, Sheldon Adelson provided “[support](#)” to the viciously anti-Muslim video, *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West* (2008); the Clarion Fund distributed 28 million DVDs of *Obsession* during the 2008 presidential election.
 - Adelson has a history of backing anti-Muslim national politicians, including Newt Gingrich, who received at least [\\$10 million](#) from Adelson and his wife during the 2012 presidential primary, and has [stated](#) that Shariah (“[Islamic religious principles](#)”) “is a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it”; and Donald Trump, whom Adelson gave a [reported](#) \$35 million, with the [expectation](#) that Trump will be “the best president for Israel ever.”
- **Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT).** The ADL Foundation gave \$10,000 in 2012 and again in 2013 to the Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT), which Steven Emerson founded in 1995.
 - In 2007, Emerson met with former Trump 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.
 - 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.” The actual perpetrators were right-wing domestic terrorists. Even Fox News felt the need to [apologize](#) in 2015 after Emerson inaccurately 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. Emerson repeatedly [attacked](#) the Obama Administration for allegedly collaborating with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Handout #3 The American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Islamophobia

AJC describes itself as “the leading global Jewish advocacy organization,” which is “building a safer, more secure future for the Jewish people, Israel, and all humanity.” Like many other mainstream Jewish groups, AJC currently puts itself forth as an ally of the Muslim community. AJC:

- Appointed Robert J. Silverman in early 2016 as its first U.S. Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations—an action it [describes](#) as “a major expansion of existing AJC programmatic activities aimed at deepening Muslim-Jewish understanding and engaging in constructive, cooperative interactions”;
- Touts on its website support for Jewish-Muslim dialogue;
- [Supported](#) a Muslim woman fired by Abercrombie & Fitch for wearing a hijab;
- Opposed an Oklahoma laws measure discriminatorily targeting “Sharia (religious) law”;
- [Called](#) on President-Elect Trump not to implement a “Muslim registry.”

Hypocrisy

A few days after the 2016 election, AJC announced that, along with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), they had launched the [Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council \(MJAC\)](#).

- Although AJC [announced](#) the Muslim-Jewish Council as emerging from a meeting convened by AJC and ISNA, ISNA [clarified](#) that they were “surprised to receive the announcement about ISNA’s collaboration with AJC on the formation of the MJAC.” While expressing support for the MJAC’s “action items,” the ISNA statement said, “Lastly, ISNA leadership reiterates that even as ISNA is represented on the MJAC, our principled commitment to domestic and international causes of concern to Muslims will remain strong. We specifically would like to reiterate support for the right of individuals and organizations in the U.S. to peacefully work for human rights and the right of self-determination of Palestinians without fear of legal sanction.” These priorities are very far from those of AJC.
- In response to the AJC’s launch of a Muslim-Jewish Council, [Muslim, Jewish](#), and other anti-Islamophobia activists called on the AJC to dissociate itself from and rescind awards to rabidly anti-Muslim individuals and groups and to apologize for past actions. The AJC’s [Silverman](#) has refused to take a position on these actions—accusing critics of anti-AJC “cherry-picking” and smearing (without evidence) one critic, Americans Muslims for Palestine (AMP).

AJC’s History of Normalizing and Supporting Islamophobia:

Between 2001 and 2015, AJC Executive Director David Harris [broadcast](#) his adamantly pro-Israel, virulently anti-Muslim message to millions of people through his biweekly regular 60-second spot on 400 CBS radio stations: describing as “[must-reads](#),” for example, books by such anti-Muslim “[misinformation experts](#)” as Steven Emerson and Daniel Pipes.

- **Public Statements.** Commenting about a 2001 AJC [report](#) report that questioned whether there were really 6 million Muslims in the United States, Harris said, “It would mean that Muslims outnumber Jews in the U.S., and it would buttress calls for a redefinition of America's heritage as 'Judeo-Christian-Muslim,' a stated goal of some Muslim leaders," as well as threatening to reduce Jewish political power and increase that of Muslims. From Harris’ perspective, the Muslim American community poses a demographic threat to the ability of Jewish Americans to lobby effectively to maintain the “special relationship” between the United States and Israel.
- **Supporting proponents of Islamophobia.** Harris [wholeheartedly backed](#) the appointment by President George W. Bush of Daniel Pipes to the board of the United State Institute for Peace. In 2001, Pipes, speaking to an American Jewish Congress convention, [commented](#): “The increased stature and affluence and enfranchisement of American Muslims will present true dangers to American Jews.”

- **Normalizing Islamophobia.** The AJC’s Harris has lauded anti-Muslim books on the airwaves written by such pillars of the Islamophobia network in America as Steve Emerson, author of *Jihad in America*, who has claimed that Islam “sanctions genocide, planned genocide, as part of its religious doctrine”; and Daniel Pipes, author of *Militant Islam Reaches America*, who believes that “militant Islam” is “infiltrating America” and whose Campus Watch project supports student monitoring of professors for their views on Israel and Palestine.
 - AJC publicly described the 2011 anti-Muslim congressional hearings led by Representative Peter King that perniciously equated Islam and terrorism as “necessary” and a “welcome development” and submitted written testimony to the committee.
 - Although it made a “vigorous” and very public protest in 1986 to the nomination of then-Senator Jeff Sessions to the U.S. District Court in Alabama because of his repeated racist comments, the AJC was silent when Trump appointed him as the U.S. Attorney General.
 - It failed to oppose anti-Muslim ideologue, white nationalist, and key presidential advisor Stephen Bannon, a key author of the Trump administration's initial “Muslim ban” and a vigorous proponent of the idea that Islam is at war with the “West.”
 - Despite its role in creating the “Muslim-Jewish Council” and its appointment to its staff of a U.S. Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations, the AJC was silent when Trump called in December 2015 for a ban on entry by all Muslims to the United States.
- **Legislation.** The AJC has supported legislation like the Patriot Act that targeted and disproportionately criminalized those in Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian communities.

Following the Money

- AJC has received substantial [funding](#) from three of the seven funders identified in the Center for American Progress’ *Fear, Inc. The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America* as major funders of this network between 2001 and 2009: Newton and Rochelle F. Becker Foundation—\$1,136,000; Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation—\$5,370,000; and Richard Mellon Scaife foundations—\$7,875,000.
- AJC has also received funding from an intermediary organization run by Daniel Pipes, a major Islamophobia “misinformation expert.”

Handout #4
A Guide to Who's Who in NAI's "Following the Funding" and "Jewish Organizations and Islamophobia" Modules

Anti-Muslim Individuals and Groups

- The **Clarion Fund/Project** has produced several hateful anti-Muslim videos, including *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West* (28 million DVDs distributed in swing states of it during the 2008 presidential election); and *The Third Jihad: Radical Islam's Vision for America*, (shown to nearly 1,500 officers at NYPD trainings). Among the featured interviewees are Steven Emerson, Brigitte Gabriel, and Daniel Pipes in *Obsession* and former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former NYPD Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly in *The Third Jihad*.
- **Steven Emerson** (Investigative Project on Terrorism; Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation/CTSERF) has [claimed](#) that Islam “sanctions genocide, planned genocide, as part of its religious doctrine.” A frequent mainstream media figure, he has a long history of making baseless, inflammatory anti-Muslim claims, such as his assertion on Fox News that Birmingham, England and other European cities were filled with “[no-go zones](#)” where non-Muslims and government officials don’t go. In 2007, Emerson met with former Trump White House chief strategist Steve Bannon to discuss Bannon’s proposed film, “Destroying the Great Satan: The Rise of Islamic Facism [sic] in America.”
- **Brigitte Gabriel** (ACT for America) [maintains](#) that a “practicing Muslim who believes in the teachings of the Quran cannot be a loyal citizen of the United States of America.” The Southern Poverty Law Center [describes](#) ACT as “the largest grassroots anti-Muslim group in America.” ACT gave an [award](#) in 2016 to CIA Director Mike Pompeo. Gabriel has visited the White House and [posted a photo of herself](#) with Trump at Mar-a-Lago.
- **Frank Gaffney** (Center for Security Policy), a leading anti-Muslim “disinformation expert,” is a “birther” and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense who [views](#) mosques as “Trojan horses” that Muslims use to promote “sedition.” He provided [debunked](#) poll data used by the Trump administration to justify the “Muslim ban.”
- **Pamela Geller** (American Freedom Defense Initiative/AFDI, Stop Islamization Of America/SIOA, and Stop Islamization Of Nations/SION) has been described as “[the queen](#) of Muslim-bashers.” She has spearheaded—and been the public face of—campaigns in numerous cities and towns that involved posting vile anti-Muslim messages at train stations and on buses. Former senior presidential advisor Steve Bannon has had Geller on his [Breitbart](#) radio show seven times and has lauded her as “one of the great American patriots.”
- **David Horowitz** (David Horowitz Freedom Center): DHFC projects include *FrontPage Magazine*, a major online purveyor of anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. The Southern Poverty Law Center has [described](#) Horowitz as “the godfather of the modern anti-Muslim movement,” He has [called](#) Black Lives Matter the “most vicious racist movement this country has seen since the Ku Klux Klan at its heyday.” Horowitz is long-time mentor to White House Advisor [Stephen Miller](#) (author of the recent Muslim immigration ban) and Attorney General [Jeff Sessions](#).
- **Representative Peter King**: In 2011, King, chair of the House homeland Security Committee, launched a series of hearings focusing solely on “Muslim radicalization” during a period of [rapid](#)

[expansion](#) of radical right hate groups and “extremist vigilante organizations.” King previously [maintained](#) that “there are too many mosques in this country” and promoted Steven Emerson’s debunked claim that “80 to 85 percent of mosques in this county are controlled by Islamic Fundamentalists.” King has appeared on Frank Gaffney’s [radio program](#) and Brigitte Gabriel’s [cable television](#) show.

- **Daniel Pipes** (Middle East Forum) [believes](#) that “militant Islam” is “infiltrating America” and “has [endorsed](#) the internment of ethnic Japanese in American prison camps in World War II and held that up as a model for dealing with Muslims today.” MEF’s [Campus Watch](#) project promotes student monitoring of professors on their campus for their views on “the Arab-Israeli conflict” and other topics to ensure that they are not critical of Israel. MEF is an intermediary organization that also funds other anti-Muslim hate groups.
- **Robert Spencer** (Jihad Watch; co-founder Stop the Islamization of America, America Freedom Defense Initiative): Spencer is a self-taught, self-styled “expert” on Islam, who has [claimed](#) that it “is the only major world religion with a developed doctrine and tradition of warfare against unbelievers.” With Geller, he was [banned](#) in 2013 from entering Great Britain to speak at a rally of the anti-Muslim English Defense League, on the grounds that their presence “is not conducive to the public good.” His writing has been recommended by the [FBI](#) for training recruits, and he has led seminars for numerous agencies in of the U.S. intelligence community.
- **David Yerushalmi** (American Freedom Law Center; Society of Americans for National Existence/SANE), lawyer for Pamela Geller and other anti-Muslim ideologues, developed the legislative template for campaigns against the [mythical threat](#) of “Sharia law.” A white supremacist who has [said](#) that “most of the fundamental differences between the races are genetic,” he has [supported](#) legislation making “adherence to Shari’a” (something done by all observant Muslims) a felony, punishable by up to 20 years in prison. He also called in 2007 for deporting all Muslim non-citizens and banning Muslim immigration.

Jewish Organizations

All of these organizations routinely smear and attempt to silence groups speaking out for justice in Palestine/Israel and those doing pro-Israel organizing on college campuses and elsewhere. We believe their support for anti-Muslim organizations and programs relates, at least partly, to their willingness to use anti-Muslim and anti-Arab tropes to bolster U.S. support for the State of Israel.

- **AJC**, “[Global Jewish Advocacy](#)”: AJC has opposed the religious-based firing of a Muslim woman; hired a Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations; opposed legislation targeting “Sharia (religious) law”; and formed a Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council. Nonetheless, it supports Islamophobia through Executive Director Davis Harris’ virulently anti-Muslim message, broadcast biweekly since 2001 on CBS radio stations. It normalizes Islamophobia through promoting anti-Muslim books on the airwaves; publicly describing as “necessary” Rep. Peter King’s 2011 anti-Muslim congressional hearings; and remaining silent when Trump first called for a Muslim ban. AJC has received several hundred thousand dollars from funders in the Islamophobia network in America.
- **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)**: The ADL has backed mosque construction, condemned anti-Muslim hate speech and acts, opposed state anti-Sharia laws and Trump’s Muslim ban, and issued “backgrounders” on various anti-Muslim ideologues. However, the ADL engaged in illegal spying, starting in the 1950s, on Arab-American and other progressive groups; and has a long

history of [labeling](#) Muslim community groups as “terrorist sympathizers” and trying to exclude them from the public sphere. The ADL was notably silent during the many years in which the NYPD engaged in discriminatory surveillance of Muslim communities, even giving an award to the commanding officer of the NYPD Intelligence Division that had implemented the surveillance program. The ADL has taken money from such funders of anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian hate as the [Adelson Family Foundation](#). The ADL Foundation has given grants to Steven Emerson’s [Investigative Project on Terrorism](#).

- **Jewish Federations**: The [Jewish Federation of North America](#) has 148 local member federations and 300 network communities in the United States and Canada. While each federation is autonomous, support for Israel is central to their common mission. Some Jewish federations have strongly supported Muslims: when arson destroyed a mosque; an Islamic center sought to expand; and Trump proposed Muslim Ban 1.0 (publicly criticized by [125](#) local Jewish federations). But some federations have helped amplify anti-Muslim hate by sponsoring public events featuring anti-Muslim extremists like those described above. Some have accepted hundreds of thousands—even millions—of dollars from foundations that are part of the Islamophobia network in America. Some federations (or their affiliates) have given substantial funding to groups run by some of the country’s most prominent Islamophobes. Some have provided support—through word, deed, or silence—for Islamophobic campaigns, actions, and individuals: opposing the building of an Islamic center, or having as a keynote speaker at major events the Commissioner of the NYPD during a period of religious profiling and pervasive violation of Muslims’ civil liberties.
- **Jewish Communal Fund (JCF)**. The JCF is a donor-advised fund that “[invests in Islamophobia](#).” The United Jewish Appeal-Jewish Federation of New York has a “[controlling financial interest](#)” in JCF. Between 2001 and 2013, JCF gave approximately \$1.5 million to groups that are part of the Islamophobia network in America. The Southern Poverty Law Center has identified the founders of all of these groups as “[anti-Muslim extremists](#).” The JCF [contributed](#) \$100,000 to the American Freedom Defense Initiative (Pamela Geller) between 2012 and 2013; [contributed \\$477,190](#) to The Investigative Project on Terrorism (Steven Emerson) between 2006 and 2013; [\\$250,020](#) to the David Horowitz Freedom Center between 2005 and 2013; and [\\$659,060](#) to the Middle East Forum (Daniel Pipes) between 2001 and 2013.
- **Jewish United Fund (JUF) of Metropolitan Chicago**, the funding arm of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (Jewish Federation): JUF has recently stressed the importance of interfaith partnerships, especially with Muslims. Yet, JUF has [supported](#) Steven Emerson’s [Investigative Project on Terrorism](#) and provided major funding to Daniel Pipes’ [Middle East Forum](#). JUF also accepted \$5.1 million in 2013 from the Donors Capital Fund, a [leading funder](#) of Islamophobia. JUF refused to condemn Trump’s appointment of Steve Bannon, whose Breitbart news outlet regularly promotes both anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic ideologies.
- **Zionist Organization of America (ZOA)**, “the oldest pro-Israel organization in the United States”: The ZOA is unapologetically anti-Muslim. It has sponsored talks by Pamela Geller and [refused](#) to condemn her repugnant anti-Muslim bus ads. ZOA President Morton Klein has supported [profiling](#) Muslims and Trump’s [Muslim ban](#); and accepted (with Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer) the Freedom Flame Award from the [Center for Security Policy](#), the organization headed by anti-Muslim conspiracy theorist Frank Gaffney.