2017

Handouts
for the NAI
Workshops and Modules

NETWORK AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

— A PROJECT OF JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE —

Jewish Voice
for Peace

Basic Definitions of Islamophobia
and Anti-Arab Racism

Islamophobia is close-minded prejudice against or hatred of Islam and Muslims.

- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), "[Same Hate, Different Target: Islamophobia and Its Impact in the United States](#)"

Islamophobia is "an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from America's social, political, and civic life."

- Center for American Progress, Fear, Inc., [The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America](#)

Islamophobia is a central, though not exclusive, aspect of the modern concept of race and the development of anti-Muslim racism.

- Junaid Rana, "[The Story of Islamophobia](#)"

Islamophobia is a contrived fear or prejudice fomented by the existing Eurocentric and Orientalist global power structure. It is directed at a perceived or real Muslim threat through the maintenance and extension of existing disparities in economic, political, social and cultural relations, while rationalizing the necessity to deploy violence as a tool to achieve "civilizational rehab" of the target communities (Muslim or otherwise). Islamophobia reintroduces and reaffirms a global racial structure through which resource distribution disparities are maintained and extended.

- Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project, Center for Race & Gender, UC Berkeley, "[Defining Islamophobia](#)"

I use the term "liberal Islamophobia" to make a distinction between the rhetoric of the right, which is more nakedly racist, and the rhetoric which emerges from the liberal establishment. At its core, liberal Islamophobia flows from the logic of liberal imperialism. As several scholars have argued liberal imperialism is based upon using liberal ideas to justify empire, and spans the gamut from the narrative about rescuing women and children from brutal dictators to fostering democracy. Liberal Islamophobia flows from this logic.

- "[Author Deepa Kumar on the Imperial Roots of Anti-Muslim Sentiment](#)"

"I use the term anti-Arab racism to locate Arab American marginalization within the context of U.S. histories of immigrant exclusion (e.g., the history of Asian exclusion, anti-Mexican racism, and Japanese internment) in which the racialization of particular immigrants as different than and inferior to white has relied upon culturalist and nationalist logics that assume that "they" are intrinsically unassimilable and threatening to national security (Naber, 2006). I would argue that anti-Arab racism represents a recurring process of the constriction of the Other within U.S. liberal politics in which long-term trends of racial exclusion become intensified within moments of crisis in the body politic, as in the contexts of World War II and the aftermath of September 11, 2001."

- ● Nadine Naber, "Introduction: Arab Americans and U.S. Racial Formation," in Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11, eds. Amaney Jamal & Nadine Naber.

Examples of Islamophobic Assumptions

- Islam is monolithic.
- Islam is separate from other cultures; it is the "Other."
- Islam is inferior to other religions.
- Islam is inherently violent.
- Islam is more sexist than other religions.
- Islam is a political ideology, not a religion.
- Muslims are incapable of reason/rationality.
- Muslims are incapable of democracy and self-rule.
- Muslims hate Jews.
- All Muslims are responsible for the acts of any Muslim.
- Islamophobia is not a "real" oppression, an assumption sometimes expressed by putting the term in quotation marks ("Islamophobia").

Some Misconceptions about Muslim and Arab Americans

Many people erroneously think that:

- Being Muslim American is synonymous with being Arab, Iranian, or South Asian, although Black American Muslims constitute more than one-quarter to one-third of Muslim Americans, and, among other Muslim Americans, an estimated 4% identify as Latino, 3% identify as "mixed/other," and 38% as white (European American converts to Islam, some Arab Americans, and others), with 28% identifying as Asian. An estimated 15-30% of enslaved Africans during the antebellum period were Muslims.
- Most Arab Americans are Muslim, although Arab Americans have always been majority Christian (more than 60%), with about one-fourth being Muslim, and smaller numbers being Jews and members of other religious groups.

Islamophobic Acts/Hate Speech and State-Sponsored Islamophobia

ISLAMOPHOBIC ACTS /HATE SPEECH	STATE-SPONSORED ISLAMOPHOBIA
Harassment by pedestrians or motorists of girls and women in hijabs	Courts and other public buildings that ban women in hijab, and the denial of these women's right to be public school teachers or police officers
Classmates' taunts of a Muslim boy, "You're a terrorist!"	Unwarranted surveillance of the Muslim community, including use of informers
Cable TV claim that Islam is a radical political ideology, not a religion	A "Muslim registry" and other policies that prevent from entering the U.S. or single out for deportation people from Arab and majority-Muslim countries
Violence (arson, bombing, shooting) at a mosque or other Muslim institution	Training for FBI, Homeland Security, and other agencies that demonizes Muslims and provides a general anti-Muslim narrative (often facilitated by trainers who have an anti-Muslim history)
Pamela Geller ads that equate Muslims with "savages"	The federal Countering Violent Extremism program and other government-supported programs and policies that threaten Muslims' freedom of speech, association, and religion
Individuals who claim that Muslims are trying to "take over" this country	State laws that ban the use of "Sharia law"

Read below for more specific information about some of the examples of state-sponsored Islamophobia cited above.

State-Sponsored Islamophobia: Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program

The federal government's latest anti-extremism program is known as Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which began in early 2015 with pilot programs in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis that all focused on the Muslim community. It is widely considered by human and civil rights groups to be discriminatory toward Muslims. A statement (signed by 42 Muslim, Arab, civil rights, and other groups, including JVP-Boston) points out that there is a lack of evidence of such programs reducing terrorism and that research does not support the idea that there is a connection between observable indicators and radicalization. These groups view CVE as threatening freedoms of speech, association, and religion by identifying people who engage in certain religious practices and political activism as "risks." (The Brennan Center for Justice at the NY School of Law has a fact sheet on CVE that "highlights five myths upon which these programs are based.")

In January 2017, the Obama administration's Department of Homeland Security announced the funding of the first round of CVE grants to 31 organizations—local governments, universities, and non-profits. The DHS press release highlights "organizations devoted specifically to countering ISIL's recruitment efforts in our homeland," plus one group that works with "former neo-Nazis and other domestic extremists." The CVE program is one in a long line of government initiatives—before and after 9/11—that have targeted Muslims and Arabs in the name of "security." Together with Muslim communities, JVP chapters and other partners can organize against state-funded Islamophobia.

State-Sponsored Islamophobia: The "Muslim Registry"

While media attention and some politicians have focused on the possibility of the new administration implementing a "Muslim registry," it is critical to remember that, as human rights attorney Diala Shamas has pointed out, "for the past 14 years, authorities have steadily and silently implemented variants of the proposed Muslim exclusion." Most notably, the NSEERS (National Security Entry Exit Registration System) Program, begun in 2002, required the registration of male noncitizens over the age of 16 from 24 Muslim-majority countries plus North Korea to register and be interrogated, photographed, and fingerprinted. Although no terrorism-related convictions resulted from NSEERS,

the program registered over 80,000 men, placed about 13,000 in deportation hearings, and detained many others.

Strong organizing by the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities and their partners contributed to the Obama administration's decision first to suspend NSEERS (2011) and then, to eliminate entirely (December 2016) a program that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) acknowledged was "obsolete" and "divert[ed] limited personnel and resources from more effective measures." Since 2002, community activism has included the creation of groups like the NYC Coalition Against Special Registration, vigils, know-your-rights trainings, support for refugee rights centers, strengthening the larger immigrant rights movement, continued advocacy with policy makers, and pressure on the DHS.

In early January 2017, DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving), a leader in anti-NSEERS organizing, and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Commenting on this action, CCR Legal Director Baher Azmy, said, "As with all historical reckonings, such as the Red Scare and Japanese internment, we can only fully and finally put to rest the folly of programs that target vulnerable communities in the name of national security if we have a full understanding of how they arose and operated." DRUM has called for pro-active and aggressive actions designed to block a Muslim registry: "Being mindful that our activism and allyship is not just performative (e.g. allies registering as Muslims) or symbolic, but that it is rooted in actual strategies, needs, demands, and sites of leverage that are drawn from the concrete experiences of impacted communities and that actually disrupt the functioning of unjust systems."

State-Sponsored Islamophobia: The Anti-Sharia Campaign: An Islamophobic "Solution" in Search of a Problem

What is Sharia?

Sharia governs every aspect of an observant Muslim's life. The sharia juristic inquiry begins with the Quran and the Sunna. The Quran is the Muslim Holy Scripture — like the New Testament for Christians or the Old Testament for the Jews. The Sunna is essentially the prophetic example embodied in the sayings and conduct of the Prophet Mohammed. (Abed Awad, "What Sharia Law Actually Means")

"Sharia literally means "path," and it is a set of interpretations that are dynamic and intended to accommodate the time, place, and laws (in our case the U.S. Constitution) of a particular community. Thus, Sharia is interpreted differently based on its surroundings. (CAIR, Securing Religious Liberty Campaign Handbook)

"Sharia, or Islamic law, is a complex system of moral codes that governs all aspects of Muslim life. More than simply 'law' in the prescriptive sense, it is also the methodology through which Muslims engage with foundational religious texts to search for the divine will. For devout Muslims, Sharia governs everything from the way they eat to how they treat animals and protect the environment, to how they do business, how they marry and how their estate is distributed after death." (Abed Awad, "The True Story of Sharia in America")

"There is no one thing called sharia. A variety of Muslim communities exist, and each understands sharia in its own way. No official document, such as the Ten Commandments, encapsulates sharia. . . . Sharia is not static. Its interpretations and applications have changed and continue to change over time. Sharia is overwhelmingly concerned with personal religious observance such as prayer and fasting, and not with national laws."(Wajahat Ali & Matthew Duss, "Understanding Sharia Law: Conservatives Skewed Interpretations Need Debunking")

What Is the Anti-Sharia Campaign, and Who Is Behind It?

The anti-Sharia campaign has taken advantage of fear of, and bigotry toward, Muslims and general ignorance about Sharia—arguing that Sharia is a "comprehensive, totalitarian, political-military code" that is central to an extremist strategy allegedly designed to gradually turn the United States into an Islamic state. In 2010, Oklahoma voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment banning Islamic law from courts, but it was blocked by a federal judge for violating the First Amendment and having "unfairly singled out Muslims." Since then, 10 states have passed anti-Sharia bills or amendments, and more than 80 pieces of anti-Muslim legislation have been introduced on state legislatures. In 2015 alone, 31 bills or amendments designed to ban Sharia were introduced in 31 states. To avoid First Amendment challenges like the one in Oklahoma, the anti-Sharia advocates have been drafting laws banning "any religious or foreign law," thereby threatening Muslim, Jewish, Native American, and other religious laws. A number of state and national politicians have called for "a federal law that says Sharia law cannot be recognized by any court in the United States." Yerushalmi views passage of the laws as secondary to getting people to ask about the alleged threat of Sharia.

The key individuals and groups behind this campaign include Islamophobic individuals and groups: (1) David Yerushalmi, whose "American Laws for American Courts" has provided legislatures with model legislation, and whose group, Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE), [proposes](#) to make it "a felony punishable by 20 years in prison to knowingly act in furtherance of, or to support the, adherence to Islam"; (2) Frank Gaffney, a Donald Trump policy advisor, whose Center for Security Policy published *Shari'ah: The Threat to America*, co-authored by Yerushalmi; and (3) Brigitte Gabriel, whose ACT! For America lobbies for anti-Sharia legislation. These individuals and groups are part of a national [Islamophobia network](#) of funders, misinformation experts, grassroots organizations, religious right, right-wing media enablers, and political players.

Critiquing the Anti-Sharia Movement

. . . because Sharia "is overwhelmingly concerned with personal religious observance such as prayer and fasting, and not with national laws," characterizing it as a threat to our courts or country "is the same thing as saying that all observant Muslims are a threat," as "[i]t is impossible to find a Muslim who practices any ritual and does not believe himself or herself to be complying with Sharia." In short, "Muslims are suspect simply by virtue of being Muslims." (Wajahat Ali & Matthew Duss, "[Understanding Sharia Law: Conservatives Skewed Interpretations Need Debunking](#)")

The ACLU reviewed the court cases that anti-Muslim advocates have most frequently identified as supporting the existence of the so-called "Sharia threat." It concludes that "Far from confirming some fabricated conspiracy, these cases illustrate that our judicial system is alive and well, and in no danger of being co-opted or taken over by Islam." (ACLU, *[Nothing to Fear: Debunking the Mythic "Sharia Threat" to Our Judicial System](#)*)

We are lucky . . . to live in a country that has enshrined into its Constitution a uniquely broad understanding of religious liberty. Even so, such anti-Muslim bills violate our Constitution for two reasons: (1) the First Amendment's Establishment Clause prohibits government from condemning or endorsing any religion and (2) the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause guarantees all persons of faith equal liberty to practice their faith. (CAIR, *[Securing Religious Liberty Campaign Handbook](#)*)

. . . this type of relationship with religion applies to most devout Christian, Jews, Hindus and others, for religious principles and laws are very personal to all religious Americans. Whether it is Jews submitting to the jurisdiction of Rabbinic courts, Christians submitting to Christian Conciliation tribunals or US political activists advocating a religious position on abortion, capital punishment, sex

education, same-sex marriage and many other issues, religion and religious law [have] been alive and thriving in the US since its founding. Of course, the role of religious law or religious principles in the US court system continues to be subject to public policy and constitutional constraints. In the end, however, the US Constitution is the law of t he land. (Abed Awad, "Negative Connotations Surrounding Sharia Must Be Dispelled")

From a legal perspective, the wave of anti-Sharia legislation should be much ado about nothing. Sharia is as much a threat to our Constitution as Bible verses calling for the stoning of adulterers or the genocidal directive in Deuteronomy to leave "alive nothing that breathes." Like the Old and New Testaments, Sharia has its own conflicts and tensions with modern conceptions of gender equality and citizenship. (Abed Awad, "The True Story of Sharia in America")

Sharia principles can be used to guide Muslims in marriage contracts, business contracts, child custody agreements, dietary customs, non-interest-based financial agreements, wills and testaments, charitable giving, and more. . . . . Sharia can be considered and enforced by U.S. courts the same way other religious laws, or foreign laws can be applied that is in a manner consistent with public policy, such as Catholic Canon law and Jewish Halacha law. (CAIR, *Securing Religious Liberty Campaign Handbook*)

Liberal Islamophobia

At a time when there is so much focus on the rabid Islamophobia of those in the Trump administration and many of his most-outspoken supporters, we still need to be extremely mindful of the liberal Islamophobia that has, in significant ways, helped drive key aspects of U.S. domestic and foreign policy. We are far more likely to have liberal Islamophobes in our social circles and political groups than virulent anti-Muslim ideologues who believe that "Western civilization" is engaged in an implacable battle with Islam resulting from fundamental "cultural" differences.

Deepa Kumar, author of *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, makes a critical distinction when she says, "The way liberal Islamophobia works is that it roundly criticizes Islam-bashing, thereby preempting charges of racism, but then it goes on to champion programs that target and vilify Muslims."

Activist Kalia Abiade, an advisory board member of the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MuslimARC), explains some critical distinctions between these two kinds of Islamophobia. Compared with the "apocalyptic tone" of the 2016 Republican National Convention, she writes:

. . . the DNC has hosted its own forms of racism and liberal Islamophobia, though it's not always as easy to spot.

On Day 2, this became most clear during President Clinton's speech. Toward the end of his remarks, and after already taking subtle swipes at immigrants and black people, he suggested that Muslims need to prove love and loyalty to the United States and prove a hatred of violent extremism.

"If you're a Muslim and you love America and freedom and you hate terror, stay here and help us win and make a future together. We want you," he said. In Clinton's world, Muslims are inherently not from "here." And the right to exist here, as Muslims have done for centuries, is still conditional on an unflinching "love" for this country and not steeped in a basic recognition of humanity.

As Abiade explains further:

During the last eight years, and under the leadership of President Obama and former Secretary Clinton, we have witnessed the expansion of the war on terrorism, the repeal of due process, the premiere of discriminatory countering violent extremism (CVE) programs, the multiplication of drone killings targeting Muslims abroad, and the widespread surveillance of Muslims at home, all while "progressive leaders" celebrate a narrative of inclusion like that featured at the DNC.

Liberal Islamophobia often leads to the same scrutiny, surveillance, militarization, and warmongering as the more obvious right-wing Islamophobia. And because it comes in a nicer package, we need to be even more attentive in order to identify and stop it.

"Liberals and conservatives," argues Arun Kundnani, author of *The Muslims Are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror*,

. . . share the same starting point—there is a Muslim problem. Conservatives see that in terms of the clash of civilizations.

But liberals also come into this with some analysis and at the center of it is the notion of extremism. What you do when you use that word, you are avoiding the fundamental political issue. If you talk about religious extremism, you are externalizing the violence to the other guy and saying he is a fanatic. His violence comes out of extremism and does not have any wider political context. We ignore the violence of our own government, which is a part of this same cycle of violence.

We are constantly in this situation where there is state violence, and then non-state violence responds to that, then state violence responds and it goes round and round. Liberals and conservatives are wrapped in that loop of this circle of violence.

Liberals are typically bad on not acknowledging their part. Using these words like terrorism, extremism and radicalization is a way of defining the other guy's violence as barbaric and fanatic. Thus, your own violence is rational, necessary and legitimate. . . .

What I'm trying to do through this issue is get liberals to reflect more on this structural violence they end up supporting ideologically. . . .

So, a liberal might, for example, condemn the defacement of mosques or violence against individual Muslims, but support the New York City Police Department's discriminatory spying and profiling of Muslim, Arab American, and South Asian communities or be uncritical of U.S. drone attacks in Muslim-majority countries, because they think that such actions aren't Islamophobic but, rather, keep "us" safe.

Liberals often buy into the "good Muslim-bad Muslim paradigm (discussed in Handout #13 in relationship to Israel). They might, for instance, share the common, but erroneous, mainstream—and Islamophobic—views that, for example: (1) Muslims commit more violence than Jews or Christians; or (2) Muslims in the U.S., unlike those from other religious groups, have some fundamental responsibility to publicly condemn (over and over again) the violent acts of any Muslim who commits an act of violence. Such denunciations, the argument goes, are necessary if a Muslim wants to become someone liberals can view as a potential partner (that is, a "good Muslim"). Liberals might also lament that the "Muslim community" hasn't been "sufficiently" vocal in its condemnation of such violent acts. (Quite apart from the Islamophobic assumptions behind these expectations, research has found that "Islamophobic statements—released by a small group of anti-Muslim fringe groups—are much more likely to make their way into the American news cycle than statements made by Muslim advocacy groups denouncing terrorism.")

In addition, it is not uncommon for liberals, as well as those on the left who identify as deeply committed to women's rights, to articulate, rather than critically analyze, the narrative about Muslim women pushed by neoconservatives and anti-Muslim ideologues alike.

In "Imperialist Feminism and Liberalism," Deepa Kumar points out that, "As several Third World Feminists have argued, a historical weakness of liberal feminism in the West has been its racist, patronizing attitude towards women of color who have been seen less as allies/agents and more as victims in need of rescue. This attitude prevails both in relation to women of color within Western nation states, as well as women in the global South."

In "'Good' and 'Bad' Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and U.S. Orientalisms," Sunaina Maira provides a cogent intersectional analysis that challenges these problematic attitudes and narratives:

The preoccupation in the United States with women in hijab, or presumably "oppressed" Muslim and Arab women, coexists with a desire to rescue them from their tradition in order to bring them into the nation. At the same time, there is a deep anxiety about Muslim and Arab men as potential terrorists and religious fanatics who are antithetical to Western liberal democracy and ultimately inassimilable. Examining recent controversies about Islam, immigration, and culture in Canada and Norway, Sherene H. Razack argues that the figure of the "imperilled Muslim woman," who can be emancipated in the West and saved by Western feminists from "forced marriages, veiling practices, and female genital mutilation," provides "a rationale for engaging in the surveillance and disciplining of the Muslim man and of Muslim communities." The

tightening of borders in Fortress Europe–and the U.S. garrison nation–is intertwined with moral panics about defending the modern, liberal, European/"Western" individual against the racialized figures of the "dangerous" Muslim man and the oppressed Muslim woman.

The politics of rescue of Muslim women is also steeped in liberal concepts of individualism, autonomy, and choice that shape a binary and neo-Orientalist world view. A resurgent imperial feminism assumes that it is the United States or Western culture that must bring "freedom" to certain areas of the world, even if paradoxically via a military force–another case of white men (and white women) trying to save brown women from brown men. Missionary feminism has long produced a cultural discourse of saving Muslim women in different colonial encounters with terrorists or insurgents, ignoring the indigenous women's movements and the complexities of race, nationalism, and class at work. . . .

Maira goes on to comment that:

As Razack observes, contemporary imperial feminists are only concerned with the violence against Third World women associated with patriarchal traditions and not with "the violence of poor educational and job access or the dislocation and forced migration of large numbers of Muslims through war." These material issues of globalization and imperialism trouble "culture talk" and raise questions about the role of the United States. Such imperial feminists show little sympathy for the Afghan (and now Pakistani) women and children bombed by the United States and U.S.-backed forces, for girls who were raped and murdered by U.S. soldiers in Iraq, or for Palestinian women who live under an illegal occupation funded and supported by the United States.

Race, Racism, and Racialization

As the writers and activists we quote below make clear, there is no generic Muslim American or Arab American history or experience. Drawing primarily from the words of people from these communities, we have developed three separate brief handouts on race, racism, and racialization in relation to U.S. Muslims from Middle Eastern and South Asian Immigrant Communities; Arab Americans; and Black American Muslims.

<u>The Racial Diversity of Muslim Americans</u>: According to the Pew Research Center's 2014 <u>Religious Landscape Study</u>: 38% of Muslim Americans identify as white, 28% as Black, 28% as Asian, 4% as Latino, and 3% as "mixed/other."

<u>Defining "Racialization"</u>: In "<u>The Racialization of Muslims: Empirical Studies of Islamophobia</u>," Steve Garner and Saher Selod outline one way for us to think about racialization:

(1) "Race" has historically been derived from both physical and cultural characteristics: the long 19th century of body-fixated race theory is an anomaly in a longer history that evidences various combinations of culture and phenotype being combined to define racial characteristics.
(2) On the basis of these definitions, groups thus racialized (made into either de jure or de facto "races") are assigned to a hierarchy with white Europeans (later "Caucasians") at its summit, and other groups in their wake. The process of racialization entails ascribing sets of characteristics viewed as inherent to members of a group because of their physical or cultural traits. These are not limited to skin tone or pigmentation, but include a myriad of attributes including cultural traits such as language, clothing, and religious practices. The characteristics thus emerge as "racial" as an outcome of the process. Racialization provides the language needed to discuss newer forms of racism that are not only based on skin colour, as well as older forms.
(3) Muslims have historically been one of these groups that experience racism, as have other faith-based groups, most obviously Jews. Their racialization is accomplished not only by reference to religion but other aspects of culture such as physical appearance (including but not limited to dress).
(4) Muslims can be racialized, and the ways (plural) in which this occurs can be understood as constituting Islamophobia.
(5) Islamophobia is therefore a specific form of racism targeting Muslims, and racialization is a concept that helps capture and understand how this works, in different ways at different times, and in different places.

Race, Racism, and the Racialization of U.S. Muslims from Middle Eastern and South Asian Immigrant Communities

"Differently racialized populations in the United States—First Nations, Mexican, Asian, and more recently people of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent," Angela Davis writes, "have been targets of different modes of racial subjugation. Islamophobia draws on and complicates what we know as racism."

Scholars and activists focusing on Middle Eastern/South Asian immigrant groups explain this complication in various ways. "The basic argument," says Junaid Rana, "is about connecting Islamophobia to racism. Islamophobia is often seen as religious discrimination. And racism is usually thought of in terms of the body and particular kinds of genetic traits and phenotypic difference–that is, skin color, hair, eyes, etc. But as the scholarship on racism has shown, such biological determinism is almost always tied to culture."

Such analysis challenges assumptions that skin color and other phenotypic differences determine race and, thereby, identify the targets of racism. But, for many Muslims, the process by which they become "racialized" is quite different: "For example, ethnoracism . . . is a concept that incorporates cultural markers, such as clothing, language, and beliefs, as the basis for racism. Thus, cultural racism has become more prominent in understanding the complexity of racism for newer immigrant populations both in the United States and Europe . . . ."

Writing about such "cultural racism" in Nadine Naber expands on the construction of an "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" category:

. . . the arbitrary, open-ended scope of the domestic "war on terror" emerged through the association between a wide range of signifiers such as particular names (e.g., Mohammed), dark skin, particular forms of dress (e.g., a headscarf or a beard) and particular nations of origin (e.g., Iraq or Pakistan) as signifiers of an imagined "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" enemy. In this sense, the category "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" operated as a constructed category that lumps together several incongruous subcategories (such as Arabs and Iranians, including Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and all Muslims from Muslim-majority countries, as well as persons who are perceived to be Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim, such as South Asians, including Sikhs and Hindus). Persons perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" were targeted by harassment or violence based on the assumption

"they" embody a potential for terrorism and are thus threats to U.S. national security and deserving of discipline and punishment.

One facet of the assumptions that Naber describes is the different ways in which Muslim women and men are racialized. Numerous observers have noted how Muslim women (regardless of race or ethnicity) who wear hijab—a visible symbol of Islam—are targeted in public spaces for verbal harassment, physical threats, and assaults. Muslim men, however, especially working-class men, are more likely to be perceived by individuals and public officials as real or potential "terrorists." In this gendered context, Muslim women are "the terrorist's daughter" or sister—not the "terrorist," but a person (female) without agency.

For "newer immigrant populations," write Saher Selod and David G. Embrick, "Muslim signifiers and symbols have become riddled with essentialized racial meanings such as foreign, violent, aggressive, and misogyny. Taken together, these stereotypes result in the belief that a Muslim body is incapable of upholding democratic or Western ideals and values."

Arun Kundnani synthesizes many of the above points while focusing on systemic racism:

My emphasis is on Islamophobia as a form of structural racism directed at Muslims and the ways in which it is sustained through a symbiotic relationship with the official thinking and practices of the war on terror. Its significance does not lie primarily in the individual prejudices it generates but in its wider political consequences—its enabling of systematic violations of the rights of Muslims and its demonization of actions taken to remedy those violations. The war on terror—with its vast death tolls in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere—could not be sustained without the racialized dehumanization of its Muslim victims. A social body dependent on imperialist violence to sustain its way of life must discover an ideology that can disavow that dependency if it is to maintain legitimacy. Various kinds of racism have performed that role in the modern era; Islamophobia is currently the preferred form. The usual objection to defining it in this way is that Muslims are not a race. But since all racisms are socially and politically constructed rather than reliant on the reality of any biological race, it is perfectly possible for cultural markers associated with Muslimness (forms of dress, rituals, languages, etc.) to be turned into racial signifiers. This racialization of Muslimness is analogous in important ways to anti-Semitism and inseparable from the longer history of racisms in the US and the UK. To recognize this obviously does not imply that critiques of Islamic belief are automatically to be condemned as racially motivated; it does mean opposing the social and political processes by which antipathy to Islam is acted out in violent attacks on the street or institutionalized in state structures such as profiling, violations of civil rights, and so on.

Race, Racism, Racialization, and Arab Americans

When we talk about Arab Americans, we are mostly not talking about Muslims. Despite the common conflation of them with Muslims, Arab Americans have always been overwhelmingly Christian (more than 60%), with about one-fourth being Muslim, and smaller numbers belonging to Jewish and other religious groups. Khaled A. Beydoun explains that "since the first immigrant waves from the region came to the United States in the mid-Nineteenth Century, Christians have always been a considerable majority of the Arab American population. Arab Muslims, on the other hand, began to migrate to the United States in large numbers after 1965, and perpetually held the position of a minority within the Arab American population."

Arab Americans have long been, as Louise Cainkar writes, a racialized ethnic group:

Arabs had a unique experience with social construction in America. In their one hundred plus year history in the United States, their social status has changed from marginal white to a more subordinate status that shares many features common to the experiences of people of color. Just as one can document and measure the process of becoming white, a down-grading of the social status of Arabs in America through processes identified as racial formation is measurable: in public policies; mainstream representations; social patterns of discrimination, separation, and exclusion; and in self-identification. While the early Arab American experience (1880-1930) was largely similar to that of white ethnics as measured by residential, employment, and marital patterns as well as land ownership, voting, and naturalization rights (although there are some localized exceptions), the Arab American experience since the late 1960s has been decidedly different. After that moment in time, dominant themes of the Arab American experience have been exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, and selective policy enforcement . . . .

As with the racism that generally targets Muslims, we can best understand anti-Arab racism today in historical context. In her introduction to *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11*, Nadine Naber writes:

I use the term anti-Arab racism to locate Arab American marginalization within the context of U.S. histories of immigrant exclusion (e.g., the history of Asian exclusion, anti-Mexican racism, and Japanese internment) in which the racialization of particular immigrants as different than and inferior to white has relied upon culturalist and nationalist logics that assume that "they" are intrinsically unassimilable and threatening to national security (Naber, 2006). I would argue that anti-Arab racism represents a recurring process of the construction of the Other within U.S. liberal politics in which long-term trends of racial exclusion become intensified within moments of crisis in the body politic, as

in the contexts of World War II and the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Anti-Arab racism after World War II emerged as an interplay of U.S. military, political, and economic expansion in the Middle East, anti-Arab media representations, and the institutionalization of government policies that specifically target Arabs and Arab Americans in the United States. Since World War II, the proliferation of anti-Arab government policies and perceptions of "the Arab" as nonwhite Other within U.S. popular culture has coincided with the increasing significance of oil as a commodity to the global economy and the United States' expanding interests in military and economic intervention in the Middle East. . . . [T]he 1967 Arab-Israeli war signified a turning point in the impact of U.S. involvement in the Arab region on Arab diasporas in the United States. The 1967 war marked the U.S. state's confirmed alliance with Israel as well as an intensification of U.S. military, political, and economic intervention in the Arab region, anti-Arab media representations, and anti-Arab discrimination and harassment within the United States.

In recent years, attitudes toward and policies that target Muslim Arab Americans, as well as Muslims generally and those conflated with them, have been shaped by the "global war on terror." As Cainkar explains it:

Because the racialization of Arabs is tied to larger American global policies, the domestic aspect of this project is in the manufacture of public consent needed to support, finance, and defend these policies. For this reason, the most noted features of Arab exclusion in the United States are tactical: persistent, negative media representations, denial of political voice, governmental and non-governmental policies targeting their activism, and distortions of Arab and Muslim values, ways of life, and homelands (civilizational distortions). All of these actions are tied to the delegitimation of Arab claims and disenfranchisement of dissenting voices in order to assert an informational hegemony.

For more than 60 years, the government has classified Arab Americans as "white," even as it has largely viewed them as a suspect class. But the 2020 Census is making a change, asking them to check the white box under race or the new MENA (Middle East/North African) box, with the latter "formally shift[ing] the racial classification of Arab Americans from white to nonwhite. . . ." As Beydoun writes, "Within the context of the pronounced and protracted 'War on Terror,' the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] and the Census Bureau may be the only two government entities that still identify Arab Americans as white. Heightening state surveillance of Arab Americans, combined with rising societal animus, manifest a shared public and private view of the population as not only nonwhites, but also others, 'terrorists,' 'terrorist sympathizers,' 'fundamentalists,' and 'radicals.'" Beydoun asks a salient question that has been a matter of debate within Arab American communities: whether, given the government's push to collect data for "security" purposes, the Census reclassification of Arab Americans is a sign of "progress or peril."

Islamophobia, Racism, and Black American Muslims

Black American Muslims constitute an estimated 28% to one-third of Muslim Americans. They are overwhelmingly indigenous, with some mostly recent African, Afro-Arab and Afro-Latinx immigrants. This handout focuses on non-immigrant Black American Muslims. Prior to the Civil War, about 15-30% of enslaved Africans—60,000 to 1.2 million people—were Muslims.

As the writers quoted below illustrate, the existence and history of Black American Muslims challenge a range of misperceptions and falsehoods that hinder a complex understanding of Islamophobia: that "Muslim American" is synonymous with "Middle Eastern/South Asian"; that Muslims Americans are all immigrants; that Muslim Americans are "foreign" to this country and incapable of understanding "our" values; that Islamophobia began after or shortly before 9/11; and that Muslims do not have a long history of experiencing—and challenging—Islamophobia and anti-Black racism.

Margari Hill of the Muslim ARC (Anti-Racist Collective) offers a strong critique of histories and analyses that erase Black American Muslims. She writes: "Scholars and experts on Islam in America have drawn upon the analytical framework of critical race theory to explore the 'othering' and racialization of Muslims since 9/11. The 'us versus them' binary that posits Muslims as the foreign 'other' ignores the long history of Muslim[s] in North America, which predates the Declaration of Independence. This binary erases Black American Muslims whose Muslim identity is homegrown, with few ties to trans-national ethnic networks."

Hill is hardly alone in challenging the dominant narrative about Muslim American history. In "Islamophobia Did Not Start at Ground Zero," historian Zaheer Ali writes about enslaved African Muslims:

The first attacks on Islam in the Western Hemisphere had little to do with religion and more to do with suppressing Africans during slavery.

As early as the 1500s, European colonial powers began passing anti-Muslim legislation as a way to prevent the importation of African Muslims, who were often involved in slave rebellions in the New World. African Muslims led some of the earliest slave revolts in the Spanish colonies, played a role in the Haitian Revolution against France and led several major revolts against the Portuguese in Bahia, Brazil. From these early encounters, Islam came to signify a challenge to the authority of white slave owners and the state-sanctioned subjugation of African people.

While neither the American colonies nor the United States experienced the same kind of slave revolts seen in the rest of the New World, the presence of enslaved African Muslims in America who possessed

their own religion and culture challenged white attempts to portray Africans as a people in need of the 'civilizing' effects of slavery. . . .

Any effective strategy to combat the spread of Islamophobia, then, will have to take into account the historic relationship between anti-Muslim bigotry and anti-black racism.

Edward E. Curtis IV addresses this historic relationship while focusing in "[For American Muslims, Everything Did Not Change after 9/11](#)" on the recurring theme of Muslim American dissent:

For much of the twentieth century, it was not Muslim immigrants, but rather indigenous African American Muslims who were, from the point of view of federal authorities, the public and potentially dangerous face of American Islam. The parallels between earlier and later periods of state surveillance are striking. We seem to be living in a new age of consensus in which, like the late 1940s and 1950s, a vital center has identified Islamic radicalism, and by extension Muslim American dissent, as an existential problem, a dangerous expression of extremism. . . .

After World War II, federal agencies experimented with different approaches to neutralizing the political power of African American Islam, culminating in extensive counter-intelligence operations against the Nation of Islam and other Muslim groups. One strategy was the denial of First Amendment protections to Muslim prisoners. The Justice Department argued that since the NOI was not an authentic religious movement—but rather a "cult" that operated as political organization—its followers in prison did not have the right to meet or conduct religious services. . . .

. . . the Nation of Islam achieved success as perhaps the most prominent black nationalist organization in the late 1950s and early 1960s. . . . The NOI and African American Islam more generally also became a symbol of black American resistance to U.S. foreign policy in the developing world, especially in Vietnam. . . .

In the second half of the 1960s, at the height of U.S. troop commitment in Vietnam and with the rise of Black Power groups like the Panthers, the federal government adopted even more aggressive techniques to either destroy or at least transform the Nation of Islam. Its weapon of choice was the Counter-Intelligence Program, better known as COINTELPRO. Though the FBI had long run surveillance on the Nation, COINTELPRO represented an escalation of government interference, a high water mark of pre-9/11 fears about the Muslim threat to the United States. . . .

Donna A. Auston focuses on the current moment in "[Mapping the Intersection of Islamophobia & #BlackLivesMatter](#)." As she writes, "Black Muslims exist right at the intersection of these two forms of racism," Islamophobia and anti-Black racism:

Parallels can be drawn fairly easily, of course, between Islamophobia and anti-black racism as specific manifestations of a similar impulse, but making the leap to consider them intimate bedfellows may

seem like an analytical stretch. In public discourse, we easily link anti-Muslim and anti-Arab discrimination as being nearly one and the same. Yet, in spite of the fact that a full one-third of the U.S. Muslim population are black, we rarely tend to think of issues of anti-black racism, poverty, mass incarceration, or police brutality as legitimate "Muslim" issues. This is because we rarely consider black Muslims.

. . . in this historic moment when we are presumably more attentive to the way that marginalization endangers the lives of the invisible, being cognizant of the ways that intersectional identities are easily erased is more important than ever. Just as much of the activism around police brutality has centered the experiences of black men while ignoring the deadly perils that black women also face from law enforcement, assumptions about who "American Muslims" are, and flattened representations of who constitutes the "black community" place black American Muslim experiences and challenges out of perceptual range.

Dominant narratives—in both media and scholarly literature tend to doubly efface the existence and voices of black American Muslims—even in this moment when black bodies are at the very center of the unrest. Black Muslims do not come to this issue as bystanders or allies—even well meaning ones. Yet we are often erased—even from the narrative of our own struggle. That erasure renders our communities even more vulnerable—to Islamophobia, to anti-black racism (including from WITHIN the Muslim community), and to all of the attendant perils that accompany them.

Introduction to Islamophobia, the U.S., and Israel

[See Powerpoint here.](#)

Below are three areas that connect Islamophobia, the U.S. and Israel Politics. For more information, please see full NAI Curriculum, Session 1 Part 2: Islamophobia and Israel, with accompanying handouts.

A) Islamophobia and Israel's anti-Palestinian Politics

- Pro-Israel advocates play a major role in advancing an Islamophobic narrative that helps deny justice and equal rights to Palestinians. Examples include:
    - Contribution to the creation, operation, and funding of Islamophobic groups and campaigns and to the spread of anti-Muslim narratives in the U.S.
    - Development strategies, resources, and infrastructures that unconditionally support Israel
    - Promotion of anti-Muslim attitudes in this country that contribute to hatred and fear of Palestinians and strong U.S. support for Israel
    - Financial support of virulently anti-Muslim groups. A small group of funders has given these groups millions of dollars (2011 [report](#), *Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*).

b) Islamophobia in the U.S. and the U.S. "War on Terror"

- Islamophobic framing that is part of U.S. foreign policy and messaging:
    - "Clash of civilizations," a post-Cold War concept: Muslim religion and "culture" as the main enemy of the United States
    - Palestinians (and other Arabs) = Muslims, and all Muslims = "terrorists," "terrorist" sympathizers, or potential "terrorists"
    - Israel as "Western Civilization's" last line of defense from the "hordes" of Muslims who are supposedly bent on destroying it

c) The "Good Muslim/Bad Muslim" Paradigm and the Israel Litmus Test

- Key cultural, social and political narrative that plays out in policy and beyond:

- The presumption that, until they can somehow "prove" they are "good," all Muslims, Palestinians, Arabs, South Asians, and others who are often conflated with Muslims are "bad" ("terrorists," violent extremists, a threat to Jews, plotters trying to take over the U.S. government)

Islamophobia and Israel's Anti-Palestinian Politics

Islamophobia plays a key role in building and sustaining public and U.S. government backing for Israel. Right-wing Christian and Jewish groups dedicated to denying the fundamental rights of Palestinians deliberately fuel fear of Muslims and Arabs (commonly assumed to be Muslims) to push their agenda in the Middle East. Unwavering support of Israeli policies contributes to the characterization of Muslims and all Arabs as the "enemy" and to the perpetuation of Islamophobia, or the failure to speak out against it. A money-Islamophobia-Israel network —bound by ideology, money, and overlapping institutional affiliations—both furthers a rabidly anti-Muslim climate in this country and helps bolster the state-sponsored Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian policies adopted and promoted by the U.S. government.

Anti-Muslim ideologues have Israel-right-or-wrong politics that they push, along with their Islamophobic beliefs, in the media, on college campuses, in government settings, and at gatherings of advocates of hardline Israeli policies. Pamela Geller, for example, who has instigated anti-Muslim campaigns across the United States, has written for *Arutz Sheva* , a media outlet of the Israeli settler movement; Steven Emerson, a key member of the "Islamophobia network in America" has spoken repeatedly about "Islamic radicalism" in the United States at AIPAC conferences; and Daniel Pipes, who focuses on the "threat" of "lawful Islam" in the West, supports student monitoring of professors for their views on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Similarly, the Clarion Fund, whose vehemently anti-Muslim, pro-Israel propaganda films have been funded in part by the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation and screened around the country by chapters of national mainstream Jewish organizations, links Muslims and Palestinians with Nazis and uses Islamophobia as a rationale for Israeli expansionism.

Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), FAQS ON U.S. ISLAMOPHOBIA & ISRAEL POLITICS

Islamophobia in the U.S. and the U.S. "War on Terror"

In the post-9/11 United States, those who are, or who are perceived as, Muslim or Arab live in a country driven by the domestic and global "war on terror." That "war on terror" overlaps with the U.S. alliance with Israel. Many within and outside the Jewish community view the U.S. focus on the domestic and global "war on terror" as integral to ensuring Israeli security and maintaining the United States' "special" relationship with Israel. Islamophobia shapes, and is shaped by, an interventionist U.S. foreign policy and support for Israeli policies.

An impetus for the view that Muslims are enemies of Israel and "the West" came from the introduction in 1990 and the subsequent popularization of the term "clash of civilizations": the idea that "Western civilization" is locked in an implacable battle with Islam resulting from fundamental cultural differences, not history, politics, imperialism, neo-colonialism, struggles over natural resources, or other factors. The virulently anti-Muslim "clash of civilizations" concept views more than a billion Muslims as belonging to a monolithic, insular, inherently backward, violent, and inferior culture that cannot be changed. It provides an ideological foundation for both the "war on terror" and the militantly pro-Israel belief that "the West" must back Israel, because of "fear of large Muslim minorities–unassimilated and unassimilable . . . ."

Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), FAQS ON U.S. ISLAMOPHOBIA & ISRAEL POLITICS

Key Concept: The "Clash of Civilizations"

1990—Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic*:
Ultimately, the struggle of the [Islamic] fundamentalists is against two enemies, secularism and modernism.

1991—Dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War

1993—Samuel P. Huntington, essay in *Foreign Affairs*, "The Clash of Civilizations?":
It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.

1996—Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Emerging World Order*

The Assumptions behind the "Clash of Civilizations" Concept

The core of Huntington's vision, which is not really original with him, is the idea of an unceasing clash, a concept of conflict, which slides somewhat effortlessly into the political space vacated by the unremitting war of ideas and values embodied in the un-regretted Cold War of which, of course, Huntington, was a great theorist.—Edward Said. "The Myth of 'the Clash of Civilizations'"

Civilizations are monolithic and homogeneous.

In addition to the mainstream or official culture, there are dissenting or alternative, unorthodox, heterodox, strands that contain many anti-authoritarian themes in them that are in competition with the official culture. . . . Like any other major world culture Islam contains within itself an astonishing variety of currents and counter-currents.—Said, "The Myth of 'the Clash of Civilizations'"

There is a "rigid separation assumed" between cultures and civilizations.

. . . [There is] overwhelming evidence that today's world is, in fact, a world of mixtures, of migrations and of crossings over, of boundaries traversed.—Said, "The Myth of 'the Clash of Civilizations'"

How does the clash of civilizations idea affect our understanding of Palestine?

- It makes the conflict into one that is fundamentally about religion and civilization, rather than about politics, land, and rights.
- It supports the narrative that, because Israel is the protector of "Western civilization," the United States must continue to back it financially and politically

The "Good Muslim-Bad Muslim" Paradigm
and the Israel Litmus Test

Many mainstream Jewish groups apply an Israel-related litmus test to Muslim or Arab American groups or individuals in an attempt to identify the "good" Muslims or Arabs with whom they consider it "acceptable" to work. This test demands that, as a precondition to collaboration with the Jewish group, Muslims or Arabs not criticize Israeli policies, publicly denounce anti-Semitism (something not demanded of prospective Christian partners), and publicly dissociate themselves from—and perhaps condemn—groups or individuals that are pro-Palestine or are allegedly linked with Hamas or "terrorism." Mahmood Mamdani, who introduced the "good Muslim-bad Muslim" concept, says that the "central message" behind it is that "unless proved to be 'good,' every Muslim was presumed to be 'bad.'"

Muslim and Arab Americans and others have sharply critiqued the "good Muslim/bad Muslim" paradigm and the Islamophobic assumptions behind it. These critics highlight the right of Muslim Americans "to express dissent, even 'radical' or heretical ideas"; and condemn "the prerequisite to speaking"—the demand that Muslims and Arabs must affirm their "loyalty" to U.S. and Israeli policy before they can even be "allowed" to speak.

Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), FAQS ON U.S. ISLAMOPHOBIA & ISRAEL POLITICS

Following Where the Money Goes

Many funders of the country's most prominent Islamophobes also finance U.S.-based groups that espouse hardline Israeli policies and, in some instances, back West Bank Israeli settlers. Almost all of these groups spread anti-Muslim/anti-Arab hate through public statements of support for Israeli policies that range from hawkish to staunchly pro-settler. Among the many groups that receive significant financial support from funders of the nation's Islamophobia network are: StandWithUs, which has sued BDS supporters and issued a comic book featuring Captain Israel that depicts Palestinians as vermin; and the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), whose leaders see Palestinians as having a "shocking difference in values from ours in America and the West." Such dehumanizing stereotypes are central to both Islamophobia and the right-wing pro-Israel narrative.

Network Against Islamophobia (NAI), FAQS ON U.S. ISLAMOPHOBIA & ISRAEL POLITICS

GRANTS FROM THE BECKER FOUNDATION TO:

Eight organizations in "the Islamophobia Network in America"*—$1,136,000

(Center for American Progress, Fear, Inc.)

Pro-Israel Groups*

Zionist Organization of America—$345,000
CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America)—$105,000
The Israel Project—$492,000
StandWithUs—$787,000

(Elly Bulkin & Donna Nevel, *Islamophobia & Israel*)

Organizing Against Islamophobia

The following include examples of organizing against islamophobia that jvp chapters have been a part of and suggestions for organizing within our communities as well as in solidarity with the Muslim community and with South Asians, Sikhs, and others who are impacted by the Islamophobia of individuals, government, and other institutions.

Engaging in coalition work with Muslim and other groups committed to challenging Islamophobia:

- JVP-Boston and JVP-Western MA are part of a coalition in Massachusetts to stop a dangerous surveillance program that will jeopardize Muslim communities' access to health and social services, as well as political dissidents and other committees of color.
- In North Carolina, when a neo-confederate rally initially targeted organizing led by UNC students of color to take down racist confederate memorials on campus, and the town of Chapel Hill's stance of welcoming Syrian refugees, the JVP-Triangle was part of a counter-demonstration to challenge Islamophobia and racism.
- JVP-Bay Area JVP, JVP-Metro DC, and other chapters worked in coalition with Muslim and other groups to protest Muslim-hating local Pamela Geller ads.
- JVP-Los Angeles provided court and other support to the Irvine 11, Muslim college students arrested for peacefully protesting a speech by the Israeli Ambassador.

Engaging in community education and workshops within the Jewish Community:

- JVP-Atlanta wrote and publicized an open letter condemning the Islamophobic sermon of a prominent local rabbi.
- JVP-Philadelphia took the lead on an event co-sponsored by 5 other synagogues/Jewish organizations called "Challenging Islamophobia: A Shabbat Learning Workshop."
- NAI's community workshops

Offering support after Islamophobia incidents and hate crimes:

After an Islamophobic incident, contact your local mosque, Islamic center, or Muslim communal or political group to express support for its members and their safety.

Making our opposition to Islamophobia visible:

Write letters and op-eds to your local newspapers and to community publications, strongly challenging Islamophobia in all its manifestations, using concrete examples whenever possible. Reach out to local media with information and analysis and for interviews. (See NAI's talking points)

Canvass in neighborhoods, asking businesses to post in their communities Stop Profiling Muslims signs and Refugees Are Welcome Here signs (created in collaboration with NAI and JVP's Artists & Cultural Workers Council).
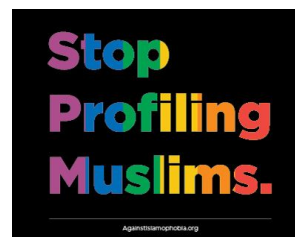
- The <u>JVP-DC Metro, JVP-New York City, JVP-Portland (OR), and JVP-Triangle (NC)</u> are among the many chapters that have canvassed in their communities.
- In a similar action, <u>JVP-Pittsburgh</u> painted the lettering for a banner that reads "Spread Light, Not Fear: Fight Racism and Islamophobia." They reached out to street-facing property owners all over Pittsburgh (commercial and residential) and asked them to display the banner for a week at a time, so that it will travel around the city to different neighborhoods over the next several months.

EXAMPLE OF A NATIONAL ACTION AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA:

CHANUKAH ACTIONS 5776

This past Chanukah, in 25 cities across the country, thousands of JVP members, together with partners from Muslim and other communities, rededicated ourselves to challenging Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism--holding signs in the shape of a giant menorah and reading aloud commitments in public spaces. <u>Learn more about the actions here.</u>

Commitments to Challenge Islamophobia and Racism

For Chanukah 5776/2015, NAI and the Jews Against Islamophobia in NYC (a coalition of Jews Say No! and Jewish Voice for Peace-NYC) made a list of eight commitments, one for every night of the holiday. Hundreds of JVP members and their friends and allies in over 16 cities rededicated ourselves to challenging Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Holding signs in the shape of a giant menorah and reading aloud commitments in public space, JVP members rekindled commitments to challenging Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism together from city to city, from community to community (www.jvp.org/NAI-action-wrapup).

The following 10 commitments are slightly expanded and revised versions of the eight Chanukah commitments.

- We will not be silent about anti-Muslim and racist hate speech and hate crimes;
- We condemn state surveillance of the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities;
- We resist the notion that Islamophobia is perpetuated only by the "fringe" or the "right-wing" and pledge to challenge it at all levels of government and in society at large;
- We challenge, through our words and actions, institutionalized racism and state-sanctioned anti-Black violence;
- We protest the use of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism to justify and perpetuate Israel's repressive policies against Palestinians;
- We fight anti-Muslim profiling and racial profiling in all its forms;
- We call for an end to racist policing #SayHerName, #BlackLivesMatter, #BlackTransLivesMatter;
- We stand against U.S. policies driven by the "war on terror" that demonize Islam and devalue, target, and kill Muslims;
- We stand strong for immigrants' rights and refugee rights;
- We pledge to visibly and consistently challenge Islamophobia and racism in all their manifestations.

The following pages contain background information on many of these signs.

WE WILL NOT BE SILENT ABOUT ANTI-MUSLIM AND RACIST HATE SPEECH AND HATE CRIMES.

Anti-Muslim hate speech and incendiary rhetoric have been factors contributing to the recent increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes. These acts of violence include, but are not limited to, the harassment of women wearing hijab (head covering), shooting of a Muslim cabdriver and a Muslim convenience store worker, attacks on Muslim schoolchildren and restaurant employees, and vandalism and arson targeting mosques and Islamic centers, as well as a Sikh temple (a target of anti-Muslim hate).

Anti-Muslim hate crimes have risen dramatically since the Paris and San Bernardino attacks.

THE SPIKE IN ANTI-MUSLIM ATTACKS
"The spike began with the Paris attacks and has intensified with what happened in San Bernardino and now with what Donald Trump is proposing," Ibrahim Hooper, lead spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said Wednesday. "I have never seen such fear and apprehension in the Muslim community, even after 9/11. . . . The ground had been primed for this kind of harassment by the ongoing demonization of Islam," said Hooper. "After 9/11 there were hate crimes on the edges of society, but now it's in the mainstream with the leading Republican presidential candidate saying Muslims are not wanted in America."
["Advocates Fear Rise in Anti-Muslim Attacks after Paris, San Bernardino"](#)

CAUSES OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE CRIMES
"There are numerous causes [for threats and violent attacks against Muslims in the United States], most of them obvious: 14 years of non-stop war waged by the U.S. and its allies in predominantly western countries; the U.S. media's [mainstreaming](#) of [anti-Muslim polemicists](#); the bile unleashed and legitimized by the Trump campaign; the vile and deeply irresponsible rhetoric coming from U.S. politicians such as Democratic Rep. (and Senate candidate) [Loretta Sanchez of California](#); the attempts to exploit attacks in Paris and San Bernardino for long-standing agendas designed to demonize Muslims and Islam. But whatever the causes, just imagine what it's like to be an American Muslim living under these threats and attacks."
Glenn Greenwald, "[Threats and Violent Attacks Against Muslims in the U.S., Just This Week](#)"

WE CONDEMN STATE SURVEILLANCE OF THE MUSLIM, ARAB, AND SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITIES.

Acts of violence against the Muslim community and those perceived to be Muslim take place in the context of ongoing surveillance and targeting of Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities.

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

The federal government's latest anti-extremism program is known as Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), which began to be piloted in early 2015 in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis. It is widely considered by human and civil rights groups to be discriminatory toward Muslims.

As with earlier such programs, the primary (if not only) target is the Muslim community. All three pilot cities are doing outreach to the Muslim community.

A statement (that was signed by 42 Muslim, Arab, civil rights, and other groups, including JVP) points out that there is a lack of evidence of such programs reducing terrorism and that research does not support the idea that there is a connection between observable indicators and radicalization. These groups view CVE as threatening freedoms of speech, association, and religion by identifying as "risks" people who engage in certain religious practices and political activism.

Murtaza Hussain, "Critics Say Bill Would Turn Muslim Communities into 'Mini-Surveillance States'"

FBI Use of Informants

"Since 9/11, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has greatly expanded the use of informants who, at the FBI's behest, infiltrate communities and spy on the activities of millions of law-abiding Americans. In 2008, the FBI disclosed that it had 15,000 informants on its payroll, the most the agency has ever had in history. The FBI has targeted Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities for surveillance and investigation by informants. A vast number of the FBI's informants are recruited to infiltrate mosques, businesses, and organizations within those communities and to report back on the activities of innocent individuals. The FBI frequently asks informants to monitor activities within the community without any reasonable suspicion that there is criminal activity afoot – a practice that is sanctioned by FBI guidelines.

"The FBI aggressively targets men of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian descent and attempts to get them to become informants against their own communities. Although a spokesperson for the FBI has stated that its agents are prohibited from using threats or coercion to recruit informants, the Attorney General's guidelines regarding the use of confidential informants do not explicitly ban this practice. Many individuals have publicly recounted how FBI agents threatened them with baseless terrorism charges or deportation in an attempt to coerce them into becoming informants, or have brought charges against them in retaliation for their refusal to work as informants. Organizations that engage in outreach and provide legal services to individuals within Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities

have also reported to us that the FBI's practice of using intimidation tactics to recruit informants among Muslim men is widespread."

NGO Shadow Report, "Suspicionless Surveillance of Muslim Communities and the Increased Use and Abuse of Muslim Informants"

State Surveillance and Profiling, NYC

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) spying and profiling program has targeted Muslim, Arab American, and South Asian communities based on religion and ethnicity, not because of indicators of criminal activity. A 2011-2012 series of Pulitzer Prize-winning Associated Press (AP) articles found that the NYPD had infiltrated about 250 New York mosques, targeted people because they "look Muslim," and monitored Muslim students in several Northeast states just because of their religion (documenting, for example, how often Muslim college students on a rafting trip prayed). As a 2013 AP article reports, the NYPD has also designated mosques as "terror organizations," placed informants in mosques, infiltrated at least one local Arab-American community organization, and videotaped and infiltrated the wedding of a young Muslim leader. With the support of the local JCRC and other members of the Jewish establishment, the mayor and his police commissioner have consistently stood firm behind a program that, according to a NYPD commanding officer in 2012, had "never generated a lead or triggered a terrorism investigation. . . .

WE RESIST THE NOTION THAT ISLAMOPHOBIA IS PERPETUATED ONLY BY THE "FRINGE" OR THE "RIGHT-WING" AND PLEDGE TO CHALLENGE IT AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND IN SOCIETY AT LARGE.

Steven Emerson maintains that Islam "sanctions genocide, planned genocide, as part of its religious doctrine" and was quick to claim on TV right after the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City that the attack showed "a Middle Eastern trait," although the attack was actually carried out by two right-wing, non-Muslim, U.S.-born white men with anti-government beliefs. Emerson, a member of what has been called the "Islamophobia network in America," has testified before congressional committees, frequently briefed government and law enforcement agencies, and garnered praise from former Counter-terrorism Chiefs at the FBI and the Chief Counter-Terrorism Advisor for the National Security Council, and several chairs of congressional committees.

Individuals like Emerson and groups like his Investigative Project on Terrorism "are important not just because they provide misinformation to Fox News and other media outlets, but because of the relationship many have with the U.S. government and the potential impact they have on U.S. domestic and foreign policy. This relationship is mutually beneficial. The ideologues provide government officials with 'facts' that support domestic spying, profiling of Muslims, and foreign sanctions and interventions. And the anti-Muslim ideologues increase their influence, credibility, and ability to rake in funding from the government and private funders by being able to publicize the 'invaluable' service they provide to congressional committees and homeland security personnel. They also help provide a conceptual framework—Islamophobic and Israel-right-or-wrong—for neoconservatives and others within and outside government who are unequivocal supporters of U.S. intervention in majority-Muslim countries and of hardline Israeli policies. As Deepa Kumar has argued in *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, 'the right-wing Islamophobes are not a fringe minority but rather part and parcel of the structures of mainstream American society.'"
Elly Bulkin & Donna Nevel, "[Follow the Money: From Islamophobia to Israel Right or Wrong](#)."

New York City Police Commissioner Ray Kelly appeared in *The Third Jihad* (2009), a rabidly Islamophobic propaganda film that was shown to nearly 1,500 officers at NYPD training sessions. Numerous anti-Muslim ideologues have trained local and federal law enforcement personnel, including people who believe that Americans Muslims "do not have a First Amendment right to do anything" and that "terrorism and Islam are inseparable."

Virulent anti-Muslim messages—such as linking Muslims and Palestinians with Nazis, contending that "the government is too afraid to name" the "Islamic enemy" trying to take over the United States, and viewing a "clash of civilizations" between "Islamic and Western civilizations" as inevitable—have been mainstreamed in the Jewish community. While right-wing purveyors of anti-Muslim hate created three films that push such narratives, they have been effectively mainstreamed through local showings between 2010 and 2012 sponsored by such establishment groups as Hillel and the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, and the Dallas Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and B'nai B'rith chapters.

WE PROTEST THE USE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA AND ANTI-ARAB RACISM TO JUSTIFY ISRAEL'S REPRESSIVE POLICIES AGAINST PALESTINIANS.

Islamophobia plays a key role in building and sustaining public and U.S. government backing for Israel. Right-wing Christian and Jewish groups dedicated to denying the fundamental rights of Palestinians deliberately fuel fear of Muslims and Arabs (commonly assumed to be Muslims) to push their agenda in the Middle East. Unwavering support of Israeli policies contributes to the characterization of Muslims and all Arabs as the "enemy" and to the perpetuation of Islamophobia, or the failure to speak out against it. A money-Islamophobia-Israel network—bound by ideology, money, and overlapping institutional affiliations—both furthers a rabidly anti-Muslim climate in this country and helps bolster the state-sponsored Islamophobic and anti-Palestinian policies adopted and promoted by the U.S. government.

Anti-Muslim ideologues have Israel-right-or-wrong politics that they push, along with their Islamophobic beliefs, in the media, on college campuses, in government settings, and at gatherings of advocates of hardline Israeli policies. Pamela Geller, for example, who has instigated anti-Muslim campaigns across the United States , has written for *Arutz Sheva* , a media outlet of the Israeli settler movement; Steven Emerson, a key member of the "Islamophobia network in America" has spoken repeatedly about "Islamic radicalism" in the United States at AIPAC conferences; and Daniel Pipes, who focuses on the "threat" of "lawful Islam" in the West, supports student monitoring of professors for their views on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Similarly, the Clarion Fund, whose vehemently anti-Muslim, pro-Israel propaganda films have been funded in part by the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation and screened around the country by chapters of national mainstream Jewish organizations, links Muslims and Palestinians with Nazis and uses Islamophobia as a rationale for Israeli expansionism.

WE FIGHT ANTI-MUSLIM PROFILING AND RACIAL PROFILING IN ALL ITS FORMS.

In the United States, Muslims are profiled simply because they are Muslim.

The profiling of Muslims is based on Islamophobic and racist assumptions, such as the belief that (unless they can "prove" otherwise) Muslims are, because of their religion, inherently violent, dangerous, and "anti-American" and a threat to our society. Muslims of color get profiled on the basis of both their religion and race.

Some behaviors that grow out of these Islamophobic assumptions and that we have seen taking place increasingly in recent weeks include violent attacks against two hijab-wearing woman as they left a mosque, the bullying of Muslim children in middle school and at the playground, the vicious beating of a Muslim deli owner, death threats sent to Muslim organizations, and attempts to burn down mosques and Islamic centers.

On an institutional level, these Islamophobic and racist assumptions contribute to Muslims being profiled and targeted by private and government institutions.

One of numerous examples of institutional profiling relates to "Flying while Muslim." This simple act of traveling for pleasure or business has resulted in Muslims having to undergo invasive security procedures, being refused permission to board a plane, being thrown off a plane, or being berated by other passengers—actions that might be triggered by a Muslim's appearance, such as a beard or hijab, or by such behavior as praying in a quiet corner of the airport or speaking Arabic to a travel companion.

Local and federal governments have long targeted Muslims and implemented various anti-Muslim and anti-Arab "security" programs, which have increased significantly since 9/11. The federal government's latest anti-extremism program, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), is based on a discredited (though widely used) theory that identifies as signs of radicalization Muslim religious behaviors (e.g., not drinking, praying five times a day). More recently, the government has also identified such alleged indicators of radicalization as social marginalization, alienation, having psychological disorders, and political grievances.

Similarly, the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) spying and profiling program has targeted, for more than a decade, Muslim, Arab American, and South Asian communities based on religion and ethnicity, not because of indicators of criminal activity. Profiling is central to this NYPD program.

Government programs that profile Muslims also affect non-Muslims. The Bush-administration-initiated special Muslim registration program (NSEERS), for example, detained at least a dozen Iranian Jews in Los Angeles during the program's initial phase in 2003. These arrests are one illustration, as Nadine Naber has pointed out, of "the arbitrary identity of groups linked to

'militant Islam.'" Similarly, the New York City Police Department's aggressive and discriminatory surveillance program of the Muslim community spied on Syrian Catholics, a Syrian community that was mostly Jewish, and a sizable, primarily Jewish Long Island Persian community.

WE STAND AGAINST U.S. POLICIES DRIVEN BY THE "WAR ON TERROR" THAT DEMONIZE ISLAM AND DEVALUE, TARGET, AND KILL MUSLIMS.

The U.S. "war on terror" contributes to a worldview that targets particular communities as "enemies" at home and abroad.

It is characterized by pervasive civil liberties violations and by policies and actions that make clear that the U.S. government views the rights and lives of some people as far more important than the lives of others. As Sunaina Maira has written, "The racism and Islamophobia of the domestic war on terror are not simply a problem of religious difference or multicultural tolerance within the nation but are linked to global histories of U.S. involvement in the Middle East and South Asia."

US CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (USCIS)

"Under President Obama, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) have routinely denied thousands of law-abiding people – mostly Muslims – citizenship, permanent residency and visas through the little-known Controlled Application Review and Resolution Program (CARRP). The program mandates that immigration services field officers deny or delay, often indefinitely, any application with a potential "national security concern," which is defined incredibly broadly by USCIS. Some applicants have waited 14 years for a process that should take six months. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, which filed a lawsuit last year against the government over this scheme, more than 19,000 people from 21 Muslim-majority countries or regions were subjected to the programme between 2008 and 2012. Those who have had their applications denied have no means of discovering why, or any meaningful opportunity to respond."

Moustafa Bayoumi, "[It's Not Just Trump: The U.S. Is Gripped by Anti-Muslim Hysteria](#)"

THE "NO-FLY LIST"

"Another tool disproportionately affecting Muslims is the "no-fly list," a database of individuals who are denied boarding any commercial flights to or from the United States. In 2013, there were reportedly [468,749 names](#) on the watch list. Based on all the publicly known examples that I am aware of, and all of my clients, the no-fly list is almost entirely populated by Muslims or individuals assumed to be Muslim. Federal courts have ruled that the process to challenge one's placement on this list is constitutionally [inadequate,](#) and there have been some recent, limited [revisions](#) to this process. But it remains arduous and unpredictable, the criteria for placement on the list remains too broad and the list — which likely continues to grow — is riddled with errors."

Diala Shamas, "[Four Ways the U.S. Is Already Banning Muslims](#)"

NSEERS (NATIONAL SECURITY ENTRY EXIT REGISTRATION SYSTEM) PROGRAM

Shortly after 9/11, the government instituted NSEERS (National Security Entry Exit Registration System) Program, which required non immigrant males 16 years and older from 24 Muslim countries (and North Korea) to register at an immigration office, where they were fingerprinted, photographed,

and interviewed at length. Those who did not comply, and many who tried to comply, were detained and deported. NSEERS affected more than 80,000 Muslim men and their families.

The government suspended NSEERS in 2011 and ended it in 2012 after the current administration concluded that it had not improved security. There is the danger that a future administration could resurrect this program. In her piece, "Four Ways the U.S. Is Already Banning Muslims," Diala Shamas (formerly from CLEAR, Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility) describes NSEERS as "a very recent historical precedent for Trump's proposal." Like others, she points out how it has an effect on "thousands of families to this day."

FBI STING OPERATIONS

". . . the FBI under the Obama administration has routinely set up vulnerable losers in terrorism sting plots that in all likelihood would never have happened without the FBI's dirty work and offers of handsome payouts. During the sentencing phase in one of these cases, the judge herself said it was 'beyond question that the government created the crime here', criticising the FBI for sending informants 'trolling among the citizens of a troubled community, offering very poor people money if they will play some role – any role – in criminal activity'."
Moustafa Bayoumi, "It's Not Just Trump: The U.S. Is Gripped by Anti-Muslim Hysteria"

BANNING "SHARIA LAW"

Seven states have banned "Sharia law" (Alabama, Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee), while more than two dozen have considered such bans, which forbid judges from consulting Sharia or foreign law. "Sharia, or Islamic law, is a complex system of moral codes that governs all aspects of Muslim life" (Abed Awad). This is an issue of freedom of religion.

KILLING MUSLIMS

"We all know the 'war on terrorism' kills more civilians than terrorism does; but we tolerate this because it is 'their' civilians being killed in places we imagine to be far away. Yet colonial history teaches us that violence always 'comes home' in some form: whether as refugees seeking sanctuary, whether as the re-importing of authoritarian practices first practised in colonial settings, or indeed as terrorism. The same patterns repeat today in new forms."
Arun Kundnani, "Violence Comes Home: An Interview with Arun Kundnani"

Network Against Islamophobia (NAI)
Poster Canvassing Toolkit for JVP chapters

We are so glad you are going to help **make visible in your communities your commitment to challenging Islamophobia and racism.** *Here are some things to ensure the canvassing goes smoothly!*

Table of contents:
1. Things to take with you
2. Pro-tips
3. What to say!
4. NAI resources and analysis
5. Contact info for support

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1. Things to take with you
- ❏ sign-in sheet
- ❏ poster(s) you will use:
    - ❏ Refugees Welcome Here posters
    - ❏ **Standing with Muslims against Islamophobia and Racism posters**
        - ❏ Color
        - ❏ Black and white
    - ❏ Stop Profiling Muslims posters
        - ❏ Dark Background
        - ❏ Light Background
- ❏ Tape (to hang the posters!) and scissors

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2. Pro-tips

WHERE TO CANVASS!

Visible locations in your community:
- local businesses/stores
- street-facing homes and apartment buildings
- community center
- congregations
- government official's offices (city council, alderman, congressperson)
- Note: do not put posters on lampposts, walls, train or bus stations, etc.

Some things to keep in mind:
- For greater visibility: once you have the consent of the owner/manager, place posters on the very visible windows of businesses/stores that are on busy streets or central thoroughfares.
- To save time: skip businesses/stores that are part of a chain. They almost always have a chain-wide policy, so nobody you speak to will have the authority to let you put up a poster.
- To save time: check out a window before entering to canvas. Some windows clearly have no space for a poster, and some only have in their window posters related to their sale prices, items they sell, etc.
- For congregations, community centers, and, very occasionally, stores, you might, with permission, put up posters in an inside bulletin board.
- Several weeks after your initial canvassing, check to see if the posters are still up, and, if necessary, see again about putting up the posters.

SUGGESTIONS OF HOW TO RECRUIT CANVASSERS (* In this moment, there are lots of people who are anxious to canvas.)

THREE SIMPLE STEPS:
- **MAKE A LIST:** It's good to invite 4-5 times as many people as you want to come! Make a list of 25-50 people who would be interested in canvassing.

  Think about people you know from…
  - **Social circles:** friends (and their friends), community groups,
  - **School networks:** conferences, unions, activism
  - **Activism:** JVP, other activist groups/coalition partners, PTA
  - **Family:** your family--and everyone else you know's family!
  - **Work**: co-workers, unions, conferences, professional networks
  - **Religious/Cultural Community:** committees, study groups

- **INVITE**: The more personal the invite the better--call up people on the phone if you have their numbers; send an individual email or a Facebook message!

- **FOLLOW-UP:** Keep a list of who has confirmed, who said maybe, and who you haven't heard from. Follow-up with all of them a day or two before your canvass to confirm that they're coming, and see if they've recruited anyone else!

DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT!

Since we want to be as visible as possible, *take pictures. This will provide visibility and will also inspire others to host their own neighborhood canvass!*

HOW TO TAKE A GREAT PHOTO:
You don't have to be an expert photographer or have a fancy camera to take a photo that can sharply and powerfully convey your message.

Ask yourself these simple questions to take better photos:

- *Who and what is in the picture and who/what is not?* Cut out unnecessary space.

- *Could a viewer tell where we are?* Get people by a sign or a recognizable landmark

- *Are faces visible in the photo?* Make sure people aren't in shadow or blocked.

- *Less is more!* People respond to seeing faces, so pictures with fewer people in them are actually better!

- *Match the mood .* Challenging Islamophobia and racism are serious--best not to have people smiling widely in the photos.

Take lots of photos, play around with angles and distance, and send us the best ones!

Social Media: Post photos and quotes on Facebook. Use Twitter tag @jvplive and hashtags like #Islamophobia, #WeStandTogether.

Press: Here are press outreach templates to use. Get in touch with naomi@jvp.org for local press lists and questions.

SEND US A REPORT BACK!
- Email organizing@jvp.org with the contents of your sign-in sheet, photos of your canvass, and a quick report on how it went!

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3. WHAT TO SAY!
These are just some tips--obviously you have to say your own way! Main thing to remember is to be kind!

TO THE STORE EMPLOYEE….
- I am part of a local group called Jewish Voice for Peace-__your town__. *If you are canvassing with other groups, mention them as well.
- We are concerned about the growing Islamophobic sentiment in this country.
- We are hoping you share this concern, and that in this season you are open to displaying a message of welcome and support for the Muslim community.
- We have posters we would love for you to hang in your window. Is it OK to hang them?
  - No: Manager/Owner has to decide
    - Great! I will just leave them with you and call or come back. When do you expect them in?
  - Yes: Great! I will tape it up now!
  - No: We don't want to have political statements in our window.
    - I am disappointed to hear that. But thanks for your time!

AT SOMEONE'S HOME…
- Hi! I am part of a local group called Jewish Voice for Peace-__your town__.

- We are concerned about the growing Islamophobic sentiment in this country and the increase in acts of violence toward Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim in the streets.
- We are hoping you share this concern. and that in this season you are open to displaying a message of welcome and support for the Muslim community in your window.
- We have posters we would love for you to hang in your window. Are you interested in having one or both of them?
    - No thanks.
        - OK. Thanks for your time!
    - Yes: Great! Wonderful! Also, if you want to find out more about our work, you can find us on Facebook or email us at…

TO YOUR ELECTEDS:

- Hi! I am part of an organization called Jewish Voice for Peace-__your town__. We have more than 60 chapters and over 200,000 members and supporters around the country.
- (If your chapter has met with Rep. X before) Our chapter has met with Rep. ___ in the past and (if you can say something) we are grateful for their leadership on ____.
- We are concerned about the growing Islamophobic sentiment in this country and the increase in acts of violence toward Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim, and we hope that you share this concern.
- We are asking our elected officials to take a leadership role by speaking out against the Islamophobia and hate and instead offering welcome and support to refugees and to Muslim communities.
- One easy way to do this is to display a message of welcome and support for the Muslim community in your window. (Or, if they don't have windows that would be visible outside, within the office itself).
- We have posters we would love for you to hang in your window. Are you interested in having one or both of them?
    - No thanks.
        - OK. Thanks for your time!
    - Yes: Great!
- THANK YOU!

**What you will say may differ based on whether you do this as a JVP action or if you are doing it together with other groups, as some chapters have been doing. If the latter is the case, you will of course say you are coming with different groups, etc. and will determine together how you will move forward canvassing.

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4. NAI statement on how Muslims are profiled (Information about one of the posters)

In the United States, Muslims are profiled simply because they are Muslim.

The profiling of Muslims is based on Islamophobic and racist assumptions, such as the belief that (unless they can "prove" otherwise) Muslims are, because of their religion, inherently violent, dangerous, and "anti-American" and a threat to our society. Muslims of color get profiled on the basis of both their religion and their race.

Some aggressive and violent behaviors that too often accompany these Islamophobic assumptions and that we have seen taking place increasingly in recent weeks include harassing women wearing hijab (head covering) on

the street, bullying Muslim children in school and at the playground, viciously attacking Muslim cab drivers, trying to burn down mosques and Islamic centers, and more. We have seen an increase in such violence before and more so since the election, which has unleashed a new, virulent round of Islamophobia and hate.

On an institutional level, these Islamophobic assumptions contribute to Muslims being profiled and targeted by private and government institutions.

One of numerous examples of institutional profiling relates to "Flying while Muslim." This simple act of traveling for pleasure or business has resulted in Muslims having to undergo invasive security procedures, being refused permission to board a plane, being thrown off a plane, or being berated by other passengers—actions that might be triggered by a Muslim's appearance, such as a beard or hijab, or by such behavior as praying in a quiet corner of the airport or speaking Arabic or Urdu to a travel companion.

Local and federal governments have long targeted Muslims and implemented various anti-Muslim and anti-Arab "security" programs, which have increased significantly since 9/11. The federal government's latest anti-extremism program, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), is based on a discredited (though widely used) theory that identifies as signs of radicalization Muslim religious behaviors (e.g., not drinking, praying five times a day). More recently, the government has also identified such alleged indicators of radicalization as social marginalization, alienation, psychological disorders, and political grievances.

The New York City Police Department's (NYPD) spying and profiling program has targeted, for more than a decade, Muslim, Arab American, and South Asian communities based on religion and ethnicity, not because of indicators of criminal activity. Even the head of the NYPD Intelligence Division acknowledged that the program never generated a lead or triggered a terrorism investigation. Profiling is central to these programs.

Government programs that profile Muslims also affect non-Muslims. The Bush administration-initiated special Muslim registration program (NSEERS), for example, detained at least a dozen Iranian Jews in Los Angeles during the program's initial phase in 2003. These arrests are one illustration, as Nadine Naber has pointed out, of "the arbitrary identity of groups linked to 'militant Islam.'" Similarly, the New York City Police Department's aggressive and discriminatory surveillance program of the Muslim community spied on Syrian Catholics, a Syrian community that was mostly Jewish, and a sizable, primarily Jewish Long Island Persian community.

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5. Contact info for support

Once you have your time, date and location set, email Jesse@jvp.org with the details. He will be sending an email to everyone in your area on our list to let them know about it so they can join in. Be sure to let Jesse know the best contact info to include for interested people to RSVP or ask a question of you. f you need general organizing support, you can email organizing@jvp.org If you have political analysis questions about fighting Islamophobia, email nai@jvp.org

What Does Solidarity Look Like? Questions & Lessons in Organizing against Islamophobia: An Interview with Beth Bruch and Noah Rubin-Blose

May 19th, 2016

NAI asked Beth Bruch and Noah Rubin-Blose, two white queer southern Jews from the JVP-Triangle chapter, to share their thoughts with us about their organizing against Islamophobia and racism. We asked them about the challenges they face, the questions they reflect upon as they do their work, and their thinking about working in solidarity with Muslim groups, with communities of color, and as a Jewish voice for justice. We are excited to share some of their thinking with you, since it has been inspiring for us and has helped shape and inform our own thinking and analysis.

Getting Started

Beth: Our work grew out of responding to Islamophobic instances in North Carolina. In early 2015, our chapter issued a statement responding to Duke University's decision to cave to pressure incited by Christian evangelist Franklin Graham to cancel students broadcasting the Adhan, or call to prayer, from the bell tower on the campus. While this statement was in process, we learned from a Muslim organizer we were in relationship with about the harassment and mistreatment of Imam Khalid Griggs at Wake Forest University, inspired by alumnus Donald Woodsmall and fueled by the anti-Muslim Clarion Project. We were able to incorporate this instance of campus Islamophobia into our statement and further build our relationships and demonstrate solidarity. NAI resources proved invaluable in tracing the Clarion Project's connection to Israeli settlement expansion and a broader Islamophobia funding network. North Carolina's gratuitous anti-Sharia law bill, which passed in 2013, also paved the way for these aggressions.

Tragically, this climate of Islamophobia in early 2015 was present when Craig Hicks, an atheist passionate in his hatred of religion, repeatedly threatened and ultimately murdered students Deah Barakat, his wife Yusor Abu-Salha, and her sister Razan Abu-Salha. These horrific incidents and the vigils raising up the lives of "Our Three Winners" made the connections between Islamophobia and harsh violence so chillingly real.

Noah: Like Beth said, we started doing this work a little over a year ago because of the intense Islamophobic attacks taking place here. It's really true that there are no shortcuts. Since answering the call to do this work, we have been building together by showing up over and over again: showing up to meetings and study groups, showing up to demonstrations and street actions and vigils; showing up to plan canvassing and write statements when shit goes down; showing up to do admin work and media work and speak on panels and attend panels to support Muslim communities. **For me, like with any solidarity work, it has been about bringing our best thinking and skills to the table and not being shy to**

do that, to take risks and offer up ideas and take leadership when necessary, while also really being willing to take a backseat when necessary, listening/asking for direction from the people being targeted, and speaking up without speaking for people who actually can and are speaking for themselves. So it is about doing the work consistently, in many forms: showing up consistently with real investment and emotion and realness, and without ego.

We were also able to answer the call to respond to these Islamophobic attacks because of relationships that people in our chapter had begun to build with folks in Muslim communities here over the year and a half before this -- relationships built through interfaith social events and organizing like our Drop G4S campaign, which got Durham to cancel its contract with G4S, an international security firm that is involved in detaining and oppressing Palestinians.

Beth: This ongoing work largely takes place through the Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia (MERI) Network, which has 16 member organizations and is anchored by Muslims for Social Justice (MSJ). JVP-Triangle members participate in and lead many aspects of MERI's work.

DEVELOPING OUR ANALYSIS

Beth: The work we are doing around Islamophobia in particular and in connecting liberation struggles in general (looking at the Black Lives Matter movement and its ties to Palestinian solidarity, looking at pinkwashing in Israel and the way it mirrors American gay and lesbian respectability politics, etc.) helped to inform our analysis around the most recent Israeli military assaults against Palestinian civilians. And our relationships with Muslim organizers, specifically a young woman of color, helped transform my analysis yet again. In a meeting, she verbalized her concern that Palestinians are consistently portrayed without agency, as victims, by those who would claim to help them. Her pride in Palestinian resistance to colonization and oppression and her connections to the Black Lives Matter uprisings made me realize my own oversimplifications and the shortcomings in my thinking and opened up a broader opportunity for solidarity work. I also appreciate her push to deal with education with our lack of comprehensive understanding of the way Islamophobia operates in the U.S. and the tight linkage of Islamophobia to U.S. foreign policy (and I owe a lot of gratitude to JVP's framing of the occupation in Israel/Palestine and unflinching acknowledgement of U.S. military and fiscal interference in self-determination). Within the MERI Network, we are doing a reading group to inform our media activity and better prepare us to train others about Islamophobia.

There are no shortcuts in doing the work! Being in long-term partnership with Muslim organizations and Muslim-led coalitions has meant the world to me, and my willingness to speak about U.S. foreign policy and specifically our relationship to Israeli colonialism helped pave the way for these relationships. The relationships with these Muslim organizers have repeatedly informed and transformed my analysis.

I want to echo that we are learning learning learning, and trying things as we go—and that these attempts lead to greater learning and understanding. And it's hard and intensely painful, because we learn in part through trying new things, and all attempts don't pay off the way we'd like. Sometimes acting with integrity means straining or jeopardizing relationships with family members and folks with different analyses. I become frustrated with myself for not always having the skills to make a rationally or emotionally compelling enough case to change hearts and minds. And then sometimes I'll say something messed up and get corrected, and that's actually quite useful for me. At the same time, it's

still crappy to know I've put Muslims or Black or Brown folks in a position to have to choose whether or not to educate me and that I have also reinscribed other harmful messages and have potentially undermined the trust that I've developed.

Noah: One thing I'm seeing in the community conversations we're having here is how important it is to keep structural Islamophobia and structural racism central. We need a power analysis of racism and how it is not just about having another interfaith dinner or cross-race dialogue (though for us, showing up to dinner along with organizing is also a good thing). And I have learned so much, so much credit for that is due to Black and Brown Muslim women and trans people who are doing this work. My analysis has been shaped through what folks have shared in the work -- specifically framing Islamophobia within a sharp critique of anti-Black racism in the U.S., and deeply connected to U.S. imperialism. This learning is what allows me to do the work.

DOING ANTI-ISLAMOPHOBIA COALITION AND SOLIDARITY WORK

Noah: For me, there is something about recognizing both the parallels and the distinct differences between us as JVP organizing in Jewish communities and the world at large against Israeli apartheid, and the Muslim folks we are working with organizing in Muslim communities and the world at large with a social justice analysis and liberation there. I feel a lot of kinship [as a trans, queer, anti-Zionist, non-Christian], while I also recognize the huge privileges I and my communities have as white Jewish people.

Jews and Muslims are both being ostracized from our mainline communities -- because we are anti-occupation, pro-Palestine, pro-Black, anti-Zionist, Jews of Color, half-Jews, queer, trans, anti-imperialist, radicals, not fully versed in our own religious literature (Torah/Quran, etc.). There are many parallels here: for example, for Jewish/Muslim queer, trans, and gender non-conforming people; and silence in our communities around Zionism and imperialism. But there are also some distinct differences, such as the severe potential impact or punishment for Muslim folks who have radical/leftist politics, given the war-on-terror surveillance going on in Muslim communities, and, because of that, how hard it is for Muslim people trying to do community organizing for collective liberation. This is true in both Black and Brown Muslim communities, and it is connected to newer, post-9/11 policies, as well as the long history of anti-Black surveillance policies, such as COINTELPRO. [1] This is very different from mostly-white Jewish communities that are not targeted by these policies at all.

So one way that our coalition work is functioning, one way we have talked about it, is that there are ways that each of us can be helpful in having conversations with the other's communities that are harder for us ourselves to have; and that working together and with churches or Christian groups all together can make it more possible to do that work in both synagogues and mosques. It's more complicated than this, of course. We'll see how it plays out as we continue to move forward.

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[1] COINTELPRO, short for Counter Intelligence Program, was a program of the FBI that sought to destroy Black liberation and other leftist movements in the 1960s-80s through infiltration, "dirty tricks," harassment through the legal system, and extralegal force and violence.

I think this speaks to how our work is about supporting the work that Muslim folks are doing in their communities -- which are being targeted/devastated by Islamophobic war-on-terror policies, anti-Black racism, and capitalism -- to build power there; doing the work in our Jewish communities; keeping an eye to making sure we are challenging anti-Blackness in all of these conversations; and doing the work with a broad power analysis, together in non-Muslim and non-Jewish communities of color and white communities, to build collective power to challenge Islamophobia in a way that doesn't blame Jews, Muslims, or Black or Brown people for U.S. imperialism.

And there is something too about doing this work as Jews in the South that is about understanding a stake that we have, even as white Jews, who have been and still are targeted by active white supremacist groups like the Klan. The far right that has ties to these groups is very vocally and actively targeting Muslims right now. Like we wrote about in our [chapter's statement in Fall 2015](#), we know that they hate us too and that our liberation is bound up together with Muslims, people of color, Black people, queers, immigrants, and everyone else who they target.

Beth: I really appreciate Noah's points and want to add that class is also bound up in all of these issues as well. We imagine there may be similarities in the ways respectability politics play out for poor and working class Jews in synagogue culture and for Muslims, particularly in immigrant communities, whose culture is also shaped in part by U.S. visa requirements. Also, with regard to which groups are blamed for U.S. imperialism, there is a dangerous tendency, even in supposedly progressive circles, of characterizing poor and working-class white folks as responsible for intolerance and bigotry towards Muslims and people of color in general, when it is wealthy people, foundations, and politicians who are funding and promoting Islamophobic agendas.

DEALING WITH CHALLENGES IN OUR ROLE AS PARTNERS/ALLIES

Noah: There are questions about when we should take leadership to act as non-Muslims or (for those of us who are also) white people in solidarity with Black and Brown Muslim communities -- when it's helpful to have that Jewish voice standing on its own, when it is more strategic or powerful to do it together, OR when to back up Muslim folks taking leadership, and to make sure we're not stealing the spotlight away from folks speaking for themselves. Cause the media loves to frame Jews as white people (ignoring Jews who are also Black or Brown people) and white people as reasonable and give white people credit for everything, when we know, for myself even, so much of my analysis around Islamophobia and my ability to do any work on it all has been shaped by the leadership and analysis of Muslims who are people of color, QPOC, immigrant Muslims deeply committed to solidarity with Black communities, and Palestinian and Black organizers of various faith traditions. We need to make sure they get credit for their work, and we need discernment around when we should speak as JVP and when to center Muslim or POC voices rather than white Jewish voices.

Beth: I truly admire Noah's knowledge of (and acting on the knowledge of) when to talk to media and when to redirect media to people of color event organizers. This seems pretty straightforward—if there are POC event organizers, the media should go to them. But I really appreciate his thoughtfulness and clarity in the midst of actions when a lot is going on, people are hounding him to speak, and there is a temptation (here I project) to get our message out.

I know sometimes I can get ahead of myself in talking about Israel/Palestine and BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) in the context of Islamophobia to folks who are possibly sympathetic, but

are generally new to the topic. And I think it is really hard, if not impossible, to understand Islamophobia and its impact on Muslims without the context of U.S. foreign policy and our disregard for Muslim life and humanity. And I am deeply offended by the rhetoric describing Israel as "the only democracy in the Middle East," when so many Arabs and Palestinians cannot vote, are subject to a separate legal code, and are being subject to verbal attacks from cabinet members—Palestinian mothers being referred to as vipers who need to be eliminated along with their brood, and physical attacks with housing demolitions, administrative detention, and extrajudicial killings at the hands of soldiers and settlers alike. When we lift up an apartheid colonial occupation as a beacon of hope, we are supporting the erasure of people that accompanies genocide. This justification of and silence in the face of oppression is one of many true impacts of Islamophobia. Being able to see these dynamics helps us shed light on our own nation's practices and erasures as well.

As we all know, it's really difficult to talk about this without being called anti-Semitic and self-hating, even as Jews, let alone as anybody else. This dynamic is why I feel it is incumbent upon us as Jews to do the work while also amplifying the amazing work being done by Palestinians themselves, and the academic and solidarity work by Muslims and people of various faiths and backgrounds all over the world, and by Black poets and scholars and community members in this country, etc.

So maybe the real reason is not so much what we're repeatedly told, by Christians in particular, that people need to hear about Israel/Palestine from Jews to have permission to think thoughts without fear of being called anti-Semitic, when there are so many non-Jews who have been doing the work for so long. It is one of the many frustrating aspects of racism that white Jews in particular carry "respectability," and it is important to consider when we try to use this privilege to meet a particular audience where they are at versus creating space that might facilitate their listening to someone directly impacted. I think that assurance from coalition partners that it is helpful to have Jews speak to this issue is key. But then, for me it's also about living my life with integrity as someone who AIPAC and Jewish Federation folks want to deny a voice to, while being clear about what my own survival does and does not require.

Bringing Palestine into Anti-Islamophobia Organizing

Noah: Our situation is one where the Muslim groups we're working with are <u>not</u> asking us to keep silent about Palestine at all. It's the opposite, which is different from how it is for some other JVP chapters. And this is because we're in close partnership with MERI and MSJ, who have a strong analysis of the ways that Islamophobia is inextricably linked with U.S. international policies, war, and occupation.

I think it has been helpful for us, as a Jewish group, to be present in coalition, because other Jewish groups have explicitly said, "We are against Islamophobia, but can't participate if you are going to bring <u>that</u> up"—Israel/Palestine, or U.S. imperialism in the Middle East. Muslim folks would have been clear on that regardless of us being there. But, because we were there, it helps prevent our position from being framed as anti-Semitism.

In terms of analysis of the occupation, I believe that Islamophobia is one of the beliefs that underlies the occupation and Israeli settler-colonialism, as it underlies most U.S. Middle East foreign policy — specifically the clash-of-civilizations framework. For example, "Israel is the only democracy in the

Middle East" or "Muslims/Palestinians are out to kill all Jews"; it's Muslims/Arabs vs. "the West"/white people; framing Palestinian people as "savages." There are parallels here to U.S. settler-colonialism too. And that U.S. Islamophobic/war-on-terror framing around the Muslim=terrorist narrative completely contributes to that. And that Islamophobia is a form of racism, and that Israeli occupation is racism. So it is about the funders on one level, but on another level it is about how we are challenging these frameworks of dehumanization and "other"ing that allow the occupation to continue.

Some folks we know have organized a speaker series at a local synagogue, that has amazingly allowed the congregation to learn and dialogue about Israel/Palestine, human rights, and even BDS in new ways. As part of this, they hosted a speaker on Islamophobia. I went prepared for the worst, because the speaker was a Zionist Jew who will not use the word "Islamophobia" and whose work focuses on how to counter "violent extremism." I certainly did not agree with everything he said (he wasn't good about acknowledging the existence of Black Muslims or white supremacist terrorism/violence) -- but, he actually spoke about structural Islamophobia and about Jewish responsibility to challenge Islamophobia, because of how many of the family foundations that fund Islamophobic media stuff and how many individual Islamophobes, like Pamela Geller, are Jewish. He also talked about how the same funders are funding settlements in the West Bank, etc. But I was most upset not by anything he said but by how, despite how incredibly un-offensive anything he said was for a Zionist/very pro-Israel audience (in my opinion), the questions the attendees asked were so full of Islamophobic assumptions.

I was really struck by how, even though his message was so moderate, it still did not get through. I'm not sure what to make of this, given conversations we've been having about the fear of having folks run away if we talk about Palestine, because my sense is there is some truth to that. But it was like they were running away anyhow or at least not picking up the message. They asked questions like "Should we be infiltrating mosques to make sure folks aren't hatching terrorist plots?" and "How do we protect ourselves from Muslim extremism?" even after he'd [cited](#) and explained the statistic of only 45 people have been killed by Muslim "extremists" in the US since 9/11, compared to over 200,000 homicides. Someone asked, "Why are Muslim women so timid?" and, after the moderator refused to ask the question because he felt it was too offensive, the person got really angry and felt that they were "censored." Maybe it's just that this is an ongoing process for folks to change, not a one-off event.

I have been seeing how Islamophobia runs rampant in Jewish and white Christian communities, if you scratch just even the surface. It is really devastating. For me, to go in to have these conversations is intense, painful, sickening, and necessary. It is not shiny, glossy fun work at all. But we do need to do it.

Beth Bruch and Noah Rubin-Blose are queer white southern anti-Zionist Jews committed to fighting racism and decolonizing our traditions. Some nights they don't go to meetings.

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Some of Many Groups to Work with and Support in Muslim and Other Impacted Communities

Muslim and other impacted groups are in the forefront organizing against Islamophobia and racism—and for justice—locally, statewide, and nationally. Through our own work and reaching out to our partners in Muslim communities, we have begun a list of groups in Muslim and other targeted communities to know more about, to work with, and to support. We have worked with many of these groups directly.

There are many, many more groups across the country, and we will continue to list them as we learn about, and work together with them. The list also doesn't include countless groups doing powerful work locally. We urge all of us to reach out to groups within our communities, to be present, and to be consistent, accountable partners.

- Arab American Action Network
- CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations)
    - o CAIR, with national headquarters in Washington, DC, has chapters in 20 states. Click on the link to see if there is a CAIR chapter near you.
- CLEAR (Creating Law Enforcement Accountability & Responsibility)
- DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving)
- MPower Change
- Muslim ARC (Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative)
- Muslim Legal Fund of America
- Muslim Wellness Foundation
- Muslim American Women's Policy Forum
- Muslims for Social Justice
- National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms
- Pillars Fund
- South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
- Take on Hate