

Policy Statement, November 9, 2012

# LA JEWS FOR PEACE

## **Islamophobia, the New Anti-Semitism**

We are living in troubled times. Many Islamic Americans, our neighbors, are being demonized in a nation-wide, loosely organized campaign referred to as "Islamophobia". This is the most recent episode of a group of Americans being scapegoated.

As Jews who suffered discrimination and persecution for centuries in the name of Anti-Semitism, we are particularly sensitive to the evils of Islamophobia. We recognize Islamophobia as the new Anti-Semitism. Muslims today are identified as "the other," just as Jews were so identified for a millennium. Fear of "the other," be it Judaism and Jews or Islam and Muslims, is irrational.

Islamophobia is not only unjust at its core, but it also divides us from one another. This fear distracts us from coming together across class lines, race lines, and bolsters ethnic and religious differences at the expense working toward a better world for ourselves and our children.

As Jews we are particularly appalled that Jewish organizations and Jewish-led secular organizations are involved in Islamophobia. Established Jewish organizations were wrong to oppose the Islamic center a few blocks from the site of the World Trade Center, as were groups who opposed Synagogues in the 1940s. Other groups are wrong to place advertisements in public transport facilities asserting Muslims are savages, just as groups were wrong who identified Jews as monkeys and pigs.

Anti-Semitism evaporated in the U.S. in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. But unfortunately, Islamophobia has increased in this country in the past decade.

**LA Jews for Peace calls on all Americans to unite against Islamophobia.**

**LA Jews for Peace calls on all Americans to defend any ethnic or religious group that is being attacked.**

**Together we can create a better country and more equitable world.**

There was no basis for Anti-Semitism in the past when Jews were scapegoated. There is no basis for Islamophobia now as Muslims are being scapegoated.

**Anti-Semitism was wrong then; Islamophobia is wrong now.**