

David Yerushalmi: A Driving Force Behind Anti-Sharia Efforts in the U.S.

Updated: January 13, 2012

One of the driving forces behind Shari'a-related conspiracy theories and growing efforts to ban or restrict the use of Shari'a law in American courts is David Yerushalmi, an Arizona attorney with a record of anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant and anti-black bigotry.

In recent years, Yerushalmi has created a characterization of Shari'a law (i.e., Islamic law) that declares there are "hundreds of millions" of Muslims who are either "fully committed mujahideen" or "still dangerous but lesser committed jihad sympathizers" who, because of Shari'a law, would be willing to murder all non-believers unwilling to convert, in order to "impose a worldwide political hegemony." Meanwhile, Yerushalmi asserts, the U.S. government itself has consciously chosen to turn a blind eye to this threat.

To combat this alleged threat, Yerushalmi has vigorously opposed all perceived "inroads" of Shari'a law in the United States, even entirely innocuous measures such as American financial institutions creating financing packages designed to be compatible with Islamic restrictions against loaning money at interest.

"American Laws for American Courts"

Yerushalmi's latest weapon is model anti-Shari'a legislation he has titled "American Laws for American Courts," developed for a group called the American Public Policy Alliance (APPA). The group claims that "one of the greatest threats to American values and liberties today" comes from "foreign laws and foreign legal doctrines," including "Islamic Shari'ah law," that have been "infiltrating our court system." Yerushalmi's proposed legislation, which claims to "protect American citizens' constitutional rights against the infiltration and incursion of foreign laws and foreign legal doctrines, especially Islamic Shari'ah Law," has been the basis for anti-Shari'a measures introduced by state lawmakers in several states in recent years.

On its Web site, the APPA cites 17 cases where it claims that Shari'a has been introduced in state courts; this is its evidence of "creeping" Shari'a law within the United States.

A bill introduced by Sen. Alan Hays and Rep. Larry Metz in Florida to outlaw Shari'a (and other non-secular or foreign laws) in March 2011 is strikingly similar to Yerushalmi's model legislation. Tennessee, Louisiana and Oklahoma actually passed variations of Yerushalmi's legislation in 2010.

Although the bill in Oklahoma received support from 70% of voters, a January 2012 Federal Court ruling deemed the law unconstitutional. In response to the ruling, Yerushalmi co-founded the American Freedom

Law Center (AFLC), an organization dedicated to "aggressively fight those who seek to undermine and destroy our Nation's founding [Judeo-Christian] principles." Among the supporters backing Yerushalmi's new organization is Pamela Geller, a leading anti-Muslim activist and executive director of [Stop Islamization of America \(SIOA\)](#).

Yerushalmi has even testified in support of the anti-Shari'a legislative efforts based on his proposal. For example, in a hearing before the Alaska House State Affairs Committee in March 2011, Yerushalmi claimed that "today, we are far more likely than ever before to have foreign laws in American courts...There are plenty of occasions in which foreign law informs what Alaskan law could be."

Demonizing Islam

Yerushalmi has not only actively promoted his conspiratorial vision of Shari'a law, but has also sought to portray all Muslims as a threat. In one March 2006 article, for example, Yerushalmi even went so far as to claim that "Muslim civilization is at war with Judeo-Christian civilization...The Muslim peoples, those committed to Islam as we know it today, are our enemies."

That same year, Yerushalmi founded the Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE), a "think tank" that has published anti-Muslim, anti-immigration and anti-black materials, as well as New World Order-style conspiracy theories. In 2007, SANE, declaring itself "dedicated to the rejection of democracy and party rule and a return to a constitutional republic [of the original founders of the US]," launched a campaign fueled by suspicion of all Muslims.

That campaign, "Mapping Shari'a in America: Knowing the Enemy," sought to determine exactly what type of Shari'a every single mosque and Muslim religious institution in the U.S. was advocating. A June 2007 press release announcing the campaign indicated that SANE would work to "test the proposition that Shari'a amounts to a criminal conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government" by investigating and ranking the adherence to Islamic law of mosques and their associated day-schools throughout the U.S. The statement also promised to "advocate for the criminalization of Shari'a" if it felt its targeted investigation into mosques and Islamic day schools proved such a measure necessary.

SANE also proposed legislation that furthering or supporting adherence to Shari'a "shall be a felony punishable by 20 years in prison." It called on Congress to declare war on the "Muslim nation," which it defined as "Shari'a-adherent Muslims," and further asked Congress to define Muslim illegal immigrants as alien enemies "subject to immediate deportation."

Yerushalmi's Allies and Associates

Since founding SANE, Yerushalmi, who received his law degree from Arizona State University College of Law, has been involved with several notable anti-Muslim groups and campaigns, often providing legal services for them:

- Yerushalmi works closely with Pamela Geller, head of the anti-Muslim [Stop Islamization of America \(SIOA\)](#). For example, in September 2010 Yerushalmi represented Geller and Florida attorney John

Stemberger when Omar Tarazi, a Columbus, Ohio, attorney sued them for allegedly saying he had contacts with terrorists. Tarazi had represented the parents of Rifqa Bary, a Christian teenager who fled to Florida, saying she feared harm from her Muslim mother and father. In his lawsuit, Tarazi said Geller wrongly linked him to Hamas. Yerushalmi reportedly incorporated the American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI), the non-profit organization through which Geller and Robert Spencer publish their blogs. He also defended AFDI ads on New York City buses opposing a planned mosque near Ground Zero that juxtaposed an image of an airplane headed toward the burning World Trade Center with another building labeled "WTC Mega Mosque" and the words "Why There?" Yerushalmi and Geller were also involved in a bus ad campaign in Miami that read: "Fatwa on your head? Is your community or family threatening you?"

- Yerushalmi was the attorney for the Stop the Madrassa Community Coalition in New York City, which lobbied for the Bloomberg administration to shut down the Khalil Gibran International Academy, an Islamic school, and requested the firing of its founding principal, Debbie Almontaser.
- In December 2008, the Thomas More Law Center filed suit against the federal government, claiming the government's loan to American International Group (AIG) was illegal because the insurance company had financial products that the group claimed promote Islam and are anti-Christian. Yerushalmi handled the case for the Center. In an article written around the same time, Yerushalmi even went so far as to suggest that U.S. companies that offer Shari'a-compliant finance measures might violate the Sedition Act.
- Yerushalmi is General Counsel to the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Security Policy, founded by Frank J. Gaffney. Gaffney has been active in opposing mosque construction and has made several statements about Islam that raise concerns. For example, in a 2009 article in the *Washington Times*, Gaffney claimed that "there is mounting evidence that the president not only identifies with Muslims, but actually may still be one himself." In 2010, the Center for Security Policy published the book *Shari'ah: The Threat To America, An Exercise in Competitive Analysis, Report of Team 'B' II*, co-authored by Yerushalmi. The book repeated Yerushalmi's theories about a vast Shari'a threat to America.
- Yerushalmi has for many years been associated with the Institute for Advanced Strategic & Political Studies (IASPS), a right-wing think tank based in Israel and the United States, even serving as its chairman for five years, as well as writing a number of articles for it. IASPS now primarily supports the projects of SANE.

Other Hostile Views

Yerushalmi's main instrument, SANE, is also openly hostile to undocumented migrants in the United States. It advocates somehow sealing all American borders and building "special criminal camps" to house undocumented migrants, where they would serve a three-year detention sentence, then be deported. SANE also argues that the "immigration debate" should take into account that America was "founded and made strong by immigrants from western European countries with Judeo-Christian roots."

Yerushalmi has also claimed, as he wrote in a 2006 article, that the United States is in trouble because it "rejected its Christian roots, the Constitution and federalism," and because it "embraced democracy" and multi-culturalism. This has rendered it "incapable" of "overcoming the World State ideology of the Liberal

Elites." These beliefs have caused Yerushalmi to defend people accused of anti-Semitism such as Mel Gibson and Pat Buchanan because they "have the potential to save the West from itself and from Islam." Liberal Jews, on the other hand, according to Yerushalmi are "the leading proponents of all forms of anti-Western, anti-American, anti-Christian movements, campaigns, and ideologies," and to argue otherwise one would have to be "literally divorced from reality." Liberal Jews, according to Yerushalmi, have also destroyed "their host nations like a fatal parasite."

Nor has Yerushalmi neglected the subject of race. Articles Yerushalmi has written for the SANE Web site argue that the "most of the fundamental differences between the races is genetic." In a 2006 essay for SANE entitled, "On Race: A Tentative Discussion," Yerushalmi claimed that "some races perform better in sports, some better in mathematical problem solving, some better in language, some better in Western societies and some better in tribal ones." He also contended that African-Americans are a "relatively murderous race killing itself." For Yerushalmi it was obvious: "If evolution and the biologists who espouse the theory are correct, then the idea that racial differences included innate differences in character and intelligence would[,] it seem[,] be more likely than not."