

This final question may be at the heart of the matter for progressives currently working with, or invited to work with, the ADL: How does one relate to an organization that supposedly helps police to be less biased and actively helps police refine their existing practices of **racial profiling** and **suppression of popular resistance**? An organization that may sometimes oppose real anti-Semitism but also weaponizes the label to **muzzle human rights defenders**? A **white-led organization** that claims a role as civil rights leader, but **shouts down communities of color** advocating for their own rights, and recommends **infiltrating** and filming protests? An organization that sometimes lifts up Black civil rights activists and organizations but is willing to discard them when they support **Palestinian rights**? Is this a partial friend, or no friend at all?

For many progressives, the answer is clearly the latter:

### **The ADL is not an ally.**

Internally, the ADL is a large and varied organization. Within it there are progressive people who use their positions to do the best work possible. Some individual anti-bias trainers of the ADL are appreciated as skilled facilitators who are committed to their work. Some ADL clubs in schools may offer good guidance to students thinking through implicit bias.

At the same time, **the ADL as a larger institution converts that good will into a tool to legitimize and deflect attention away from its repressive practices.** We who are committed to a vision of collective liberation cannot aid the ADL in projecting a false badge of progressivism that helps advance a racist agenda.

# **The ADL is Not an Ally**

The **Anti-Defamation League** (ADL) has branded itself as a civil rights organization in ways that conceal and legitimize its right-wing activities **undermining** the rights of Black, immigrant, queer, Muslim, Arab, and other **marginalized communities.**

Many progressive individuals and organizations partner with the ADL not knowing its **ongoing legacy of supporting racist policing, surveillance, colonialism, and the silencing of social justice activism.** Misinformation about the ADL's work, and its credibility in progressive circles, are what allows the ADL to continue harming social justice movements.

We cannot lift up or partner with the ADL on progressive causes, because the ADL's credibility as a social justice organization is precisely what allows it to undermine the rights of marginalized communities, shielding it from criticism and accountability while boosting its legitimacy and resources. **We cannot collaborate with the ADL without betraying our movements.**

This brochure is a summary of *The ADL is Not an Ally*, a primer put together by [Drop The ADL](#), a collaboration of *more than 200* civil rights activist groups across the U.S. **Find the full primer here -->**



The ADL has a history of **targeting and surveilling progressive movements**. An extensive report by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN) outlining attacks on social justice movements worldwide contains more than 40 mentions of the ADL. The IJAN report touches on the ADL's longtime surveilling of progressive movements as a proxy for the US and Apartheid South Africa governments.

The ADL provides **extensive support for racist, militarized policing**. Today, the ADL is the single largest non-governmental police trainer in the country. The ADL 2016 annual report boasted that 100% of major US metropolitan police departments have sent participants to Israel and the ADL's Advanced Training School in Extremist and Terrorist Threats. These trainings deepen the militarized, racialized policing of US neighborhoods, treating low-income neighborhoods and communities of color as counterinsurgent "human terrain," just as Israeli forces view the Palestinian communities they occupy.

The ADL **has not hesitated to work to take down any progressive organization or leader of color** — no matter what their track record of support for marginalized communities or present-day efforts to fight for justice — **if they cross the ADL's line of what constitutes legitimate discussion on Israel**.

The ADL, along with a crew of right-wing groups, blasted the Movement for Black Lives in racist, patronizing terms for discussing Israel's treatment of Palestinians as a form of genocide. The ADL attacks the growing queer movement to stop pinkwashing and to support Palestinian queer groups' calls to end Israeli apartheid as a necessary precondition for queer/gender self-determination. It has attacked Jewish public figures who speak out against apartheid — and against the ADL's own tactics — as "anti-Semitic."

The ADL **represses Palestinian rights, smearing critics of colonialism as "anti-semites."** While presenting itself as "the premier civil rights group" in the United States, the ADL has built a major, less-publicized role in advancing pro-Israel US foreign policy and repressing the movement for Palestinian rights. Since the 1950s, the ADL has leveraged its strong media operation and its relationships with lawmakers both to quash Arab American community efforts to participate in US politics, and to defend Israel from widespread criticism of its system of segregation and apartheid, mass incarceration, racial profiling, torture (including of children), political repression, war crimes, *and genocide*.

The ADL has **promoted blatantly false information about Islam, Muslims in the Middle East, and the aims of Palestinian rights movements**. Such disinformation provocatively suggests that Islamophobia is necessary for Jewish safety. It suggests that only irrational, "hateful" people (lumped together as "Muslims" or "Arabs") object to Israeli colonialism — erasing the objections to violence, colonization, and racism that keep Palestine a core part of global human rights efforts. The ADL's repressive practices have also **targeted student organizations and faculty members who teach, write, or advocate on Palestine**. The ADL often works on the same campaigns and attacked the same community groups and individuals as overtly right-wing organizations like Campus Watch and AMCHA. In some cases, the ADL's advocacy has been successful in shutting down discussion of Palestinian rights by falsely portraying it as a violation of Jewish students' rights. The ADL's impact on campuses is enabled by its larger public role as a "rights advocate." When the ADL asserts that discussing the state of Israel or Palestinians makes Jewish students unsafe and is exempt from academic freedom, universities take the ADL's claims as authoritative. Most students and faculty targeted by the ADL's campaigns are not supported by any equivalent organization.