

## Facebook Is A Public Health Hazard

By: Abdul El-Sayed

The article first appeared in *The Incision*

On Tuesday, former Facebook data scientist Frances Haugen testified before a Senate subcommittee, putting words to what we all knew but couldn't quite articulate: Facebook is the modern-day Philip Morris, the tobacco giant that knowingly and intentionally advertised and sold cigarettes to children. Indeed, harrowing accounts portray Facebook's algorithm leading struggling teens down dangerous rabbit holes, promoting eating disorders and self-injury.

In simple, understandable terms, Haugen broke down the ways



that Facebook's algorithm intentionally feeds people content that prioritizes "meaningful social interactions," which is fancy corporate talk for the most inflammatory,

divisive, dangerous material from people inside your network. She broke down how Facebook targets young people — and how its own research demonstrated how their

engagement with platforms like Instagram both drive addiction and damage their mental health.

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## Op Ed: An Afghan Woman's Demand To The West, 'Decolonise Your Mind.'



By Shamayel Shalizi

Narratives around what is currently unfolding in Afghanistan continue to centre around a largely accepted idea that Afghans have no one else to blame but

themselves. Afghanistan armchair experts blame Afghan soldiers for the swift handover of power, pity the plight of Afghan women who are perceived as helpless

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## Islamophobia Is So Common That 2 Out Of 3 Muslims Report Experiencing Faith-Related Hate




by Aysha Qamar

After 9/11, Muslim Americans and people of color nationwide reported more incidents of hate than before. The

novel coronavirus has further contributed to this rise of hate crimes against communities of color, with data com-

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# Gabby Petito Died In The Same Place 700 Native Women Went Missing. Why Aren't We Looking For Them?

By: TMO Staff

The tragic case of travel blogger Gabrielle (Gabby) Petito has shed light on a number of issues. As her disappearance and presumed death drew massive media attention, advocates noticed the difference when it came to missing women of color. Daily Kos writer Laura Clawson accurately described the situation as a “classic case of Missing White Woman Syndrome.” According to NBC News, “missing white woman syndrome” has led to more tough-on-crime policies that disproportionately affect communities of color.

Many advocates and lawmakers highlighted this case as a reminder of the hundreds of Native American women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered in the U.S. and the resulting lack of media attention. Calls for justice have risen as advocates share that in the state of Wyoming, where Petito disappeared, more than 710 Indigenous people went missing between 2011 and 2020. Of those, 57% are female and 85% are children, data from the state’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Task Force found.

Additionally, the data found that while more than 20% of Indigenous people remain missing for 30 days or longer, only 11% of white people remain missing for the same time period. Another disparity was present in terms of media coverage: While 30% of Indigenous homicide victims made the news, more than 50% of white victims did.

“We’ve seen the stories, talked with families that are sad and hurt that this is the way that their loved one was portrayed,” said Emily Grant, a senior research scientist at Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center, who led research on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Task Force report. “But it was heartbreaking, to see the numbers and then to compare it to the stories



about white victims, or white missing people and see the discrepancy.”

According to The Guardian, stories of Indigenous people that make the news are often graphic and more likely include violent language that portrays the community in a negative light.

“Indigenous people — especially Indigenous women — are often negatively portrayed as sex workers, drug addicts, and criminals, while their non-Indigenous counterparts are depicted as respected family and community members,” the data report said.

Of the multiple cases featured in the report, one details a mother of two who lost both her daughters in the past two years—including one whose murder has yet to be solved. Despite the trauma she faced and the widespread searches she organized, the cases received little to no media attention.

“It’s like it makes you feel like we don’t matter; we’re just a statistic,” Nicole Wagon, the mother and member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe, told The Guardian. “And I’m like, my kids are not statistics. They were human beings. And they had lives. And regardless of what people may think, or assume, they don’t know their stories.”

But Wagon’s situation is not isolated. Teri Deschene shared that her daughter, Kiana Klomp, has also been missing for a year-and-a-half, yet

not one news outlet has mentioned her.

“All I got in my pocket is Facebook, and just social media. That’s all I got. I don’t get any help from any other place. I begged. I just feel left out and unimportant,” she said.

Others noted that while authorities worked feverishly to find Petito’s remains and kept an eye on the case, some Indigenous families in the state have been waiting 20 or 30 years with no leads or answers from authorities on their missing family members.

“Where’s the attention for ours? Where’s the attention for Ruthie Fawn Kindness?... Rosalita Longee, where’s her attention? She was a beautiful young Native woman, where’s the FBI searches and the camera crew and the dog squad to find her?” Carolyn DeFord, founder of Missing and Murdered Native Americans, a national advocacy and outreach organization, asked The Guardian.

While reports have found alarming statistics on the rate at which Native women experience violence, little to nothing has been done to address it. According to Daily Kos, Native Americans are three times more likely to experience violence than any other ethnic group in the United States and have little to no resources in comparison, as well. Additionally in 2012, the Justice Department found that on some res-

ervations, Native women are murdered at a rate more than 10 times the national average.

The movement for missing and murdered Indigenous people has received increased attention in recent years, but it is still not enough. It wasn’t until 2019 that Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon established the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Task Force and it was only a year ago that he signed legislation aimed at improving data collection of missing and murdered people.

As a result of the ongoing push, lawmakers including Deb Haaland, the first Indigenous Cabinet secretary in U.S. history, are focusing on the issue and working to bring not only more attention but action to investigate these issues. In a statement last month, Haaland called the violence against Native people a “crisis that has been underfunded for decades.” This week while giving her condolences to the Petito family, she shared that she also grieves for “so many Indigenous women? whose families have endured similar heartache “for the last 500 years.?”

“Hopefully the folks who are writing the news and broadcasting the news will understand that these women are also friends, neighbors, classmates, work colleagues,” Haaland said Thursday.

Referring to the photos of missing women she said: “I see my sisters,

I see my mother, I see my aunties or my nieces or even my own child.” Haaland emphasized the importance of equality and noted that every victim “deserves attention and deserves to be cared about.”

As head of the Interior Department, Haaland shared that one of her priorities will be addressing the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women. Earlier this year, she formed a unit within the Bureau of Indian Affairs to investigate missing and murdered Native Americans, adding that the task force would investigate a crisis that was “centuries in the making.”

While saddened that they have not received any support or answers to cases related to their family member’s death, individuals like Wagon are still hopeful. Following Petito’s case and calls for authorities to look into the cases of Indigenous people, Wagon shared that her family has suddenly received requests about her daughters’ stories from media outlets.

“Maybe it’s a blessing that the Petito case happened here, because all of this is shedding light to the state of Wyoming,” she said.

Others have shared similar sentiments about cases that went unnoticed before, including that of two Black men finally receiving media attention and care from authorities.

We cannot wait for authorities and the media to do what’s right. Now is the time to take action to ensure these numbers and this pattern don’t increase further.

We must not only uplift the voices of Indigenous women and people, but provide whatever support we can. Check out organizations like The National Indigenous Women’s Resource Center, Inc. (NIWRC) to see how you can help end violence against Indigenous people.





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# Op Ed: Why Christian Zionists Support Israeli's Occupation Of Palestine



*By Khalid Rizvi*

"I don't believe the Jewish state and Modern Zionism would be possible without Christian Zionism." Benjamin Netanyahu.

The term "Zionism" was first coined in late 1880, the drive for an exclusively Jewish state and referred to the movement for the return of the Jewish people to an assured and secure homeland in Palestine in accordance with Biblical prophecy. Still, It's ironic that this vision was nurtured mainly and shaped by Christian Zionists.

Therefore, Christian Zionism is a belief or conviction among certain Christians that the arrival of the Jews to the Holy Land and the creation of the Jewish state in 1948 is per Biblical prophecy and Judeo-Christian values.

Although The United Nations General Assembly strongly rejects policies and ideologies aimed at promoting ethnic cleansing in any form (Resolution 47/80 Dec 16, 1992), the Later UN Resolution 181, a partition plan, led to the destruction and injustices to indigenous Palestinians.

In the light of the above theological perspective, it is in the interest of Christian Zionists to push back Jewish from all over the world and facilitate gathering as the return of Jewish correlated with the return of Jesus Christ or the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ.

Hence, the Law of Return was passed unanimously by the Knesset, Israel's Parliament, on Jul 5 1950.

From a political perspective, It is important to note that most Evangelicals are Christian Zionists and the most influential political lobby in the U.S.

Well established organizations are Christian United for Israel (CUFI), including CUFI Canada and CUFI U.K and International Christian Embassy Jerusalem for achieving the objective of Christian Zionism as briefed:

Christians United for Israel (CUFI) is the largest evangelical pro-Israel organization in the United States; It represents over 10 million members and over 1.8 million Facebook fans. John Hagee is the founder of Christians United for Israel (CUFI). At the same time, CUFI Canada and CUFI U.K are also functional.

It's the prime objective of CUFI's Mission statement "to provide a national association through which every pro-Israel church, ministry, or individual in America can speak and act with one voice in support of Israel in matters related to Biblical issues."

As per John Hagee's interpretation of the Bible, Christian Zionists hoped that Jews would bring about the end time and Jews who didn't convert would be killed. Return of Jewish is the precondition of the 2nd coming of Jesus. It will be followed by the end time, and Armageddon (the mother of the Holocaust) means a final confrontation between good and evil. Only true believers of Jesus Christ will be saved, and those who follow the antichrist will be killed.

Here is another citation for the above belief:

The Jews and the Second Coming | Roy H. Schoeman | An excerpt from Salvation Is From the Jews

-Jews will be regathered to Israel from around the entire world. One such prophecy is Ezekiel 36:22-28. Although

often taken in a spiritual sense as fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, [6] it might well also refer to the Second Coming, for biblical prophecies frequently refer to different events taking place in different epochs:

Sometime before the Second Coming, two-thirds of the Jews in "the whole land" will be exterminated (Zechariah 13:8-9):

For many years now, Christians for Israel have offered assistance to Jewish to regather in Jerusalem from all over the world and hoped that Israel would bring about the end time and Jews who do not convert will be killed by God. What kind of Judeo-Christian alliance is this?

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was established in 1980 to recognize the Biblical significance of Jerusalem and its unique connection with the Jewish people. Today, it represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. The main objectives of the Mission Statement are to stand with Israel in support and friendship and bring Jews Home from all directions.

Reference and views of well-renowned Authors and Historians about Christian Zionism

Stephen Sizer, Chairman of the International Bible Society and author of the famous book "Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?"

He mentioned in his book that Christian Zionism has developed into a significant theological movement and has made a significant political impact in the United States. In contrast, the belief is incompatible with biblical faith.

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# Was The Withdrawal Of US Forces From Afghanistan The Right Decision?

by M. Basheer Ahmed,  
MD

During the month of August 2021, the withdrawal of US Forces from Afghanistan became a hot topic, with controversial opinions on whether the US should stay in Afghanistan or leave. The newspapers published multiple opinions as politicians expressed their different perspectives on this subject. I am summarizing the events that took place over the past years in Afghanistan and why the US had to withdraw now.

The story begins on September 11, 2001, when 19 terrorists crashed airplanes into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing 3000, people making it the deadliest attack on the U.S. in history. These al Qaeda-led attacks prompted President George W. Bush to declare a global "War on Terror" stating that The United States of America will use all our resources to conquer this enemy and it will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated." Those objectives were impossible to accomplish as there are tens of thousands "terrorist groups" scattered throughout the world. However, on October 7, 2001 airstrikes by the United States were launched in Afghanistan at Taliban and al Qaeda training camps when the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden and senior members of al Qaeda. It took only three months for the US army to control the entire country of Afghanistan. Instead of leaving in December 2001, the US decided to stay and train the Afghan army to prevent the re-emergence of the Taliban.

Mr. Karzai who was selected to lead Afghanistan in December 2001 envisioned a Taliban surrender that would keep the militants from playing any significant role in the country's future. The US was angry,



wanted revenge and was confident that the Taliban would be wiped out forever. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said that Americans had no interest in leaving Mullah Omar alive. A Taliban surrender could have halted America's longest war much earlier. Representatives of the warlords whose abuses of Afghan civilians in the 1990s had led to the Taliban's takeover of the country played an important role in forming the government with US approval. Unfortunately, the US has made a sincere effort to train the Afghan army and provided them with an advanced military arsenal and air force. Over 300,000 Afghan soldiers received military training for 20 years and should have been ready to take over the responsibility. The US has made several mistakes in training and trusting the Afghan army and the Afghan government, which has resulted in this fiasco.

President Biden opposed the war and escalation of forces during Obama's administration as he realized that the American effort to forge a decent Afghan political settlement failed when a surge of U.S. forces did not reverse the Taliban's recovery. Obama, under the pressure of military generals, especially General McChrystal, agreed to increase US forces to 100,000, although Karl Eikenberry, ambassador to Afghanistan, who was also the former general, strongly op-

posed increasing the US forces in Afghanistan. Richard Boucher, former Assistant Secretary of the State, expressed his concerns in 2015 by saying, "If we think our exit strategy is to either beat the Taliban, which can't be done given the local, regional, and cross-border circumstances, or to establish an Afghan government that is capable of delivering good government to its citizens using American tools and methods, then we have no exit strategy because both of those are impossible." His prediction was correct. (<https://www.rtt.com/op-ed/532856-declassified-files-us-afghan-calamity/>)

The Trump administration did not want to continue the Afghan war and he would have ended the war in 2017, but under military Generals' pressure, he postponed ending the war and started withdrawal of US forces, and in 2019 started peace talks with the Taliban. Trump

announced a total withdrawal of US forces by April 2021. This decision gave the Afghan government and military time to prepare to take full responsibility to govern the country.

The Afghan occupation cost the United States taxpayers 2 trillion dollars and the loss of more than 2,500 US soldiers. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans lost their lives too. The US public was misinformed that the US forces were building a democratic and inclusive government.

America helped in creating the Taliban in the 1980s to fight Soviet occupation without realizing that someday they would turn against Americans as foreign occupiers. The US had an incorrect impression that liberal, moderate, and non-practicing Muslims are the best leaders for Muslim countries. The American liberal secular system could never be too appealing to or com-

patible with any Islamic country, especially with the super-conservative Afghan society.

The cronyism, the bureaucracy, and the corruption that rotted the Afghan government and the military were major contributing factors. Many military officers in the Afghan army were installed due to their personal ties, not for their merits and credentials. These appointments had a devastating impact on the Afghan national army because these leaders lacked the military experience to be effective or inspire the confidence and trust of men being asked to risk their lives. Afghan officers proved less interested in fighting for the corrupt government in Kabul than securing their own benefits by siphoning American dollars. Many soldiers clearly saw the corruption of their officers and had little interest in risking death under

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# Swedish Cartoonist, Lars Vilks, Who Drew Prophet Muhammad Killed In Traffic Collision

by Rehan Qamar

Lars Vilks, the Swedish artist who sketched the Prophet Muhammad’s head on a dog’s body, has died in a traffic accident. No sign of foul play has been detected by police officials.

According to reports, Vilks who was under police protection following various threats was traveling in a civilian police vehicle which collided with a truck near the town of Markaryd in southern Sweden.

His cartoon, published in 2007, offended Muslims worldwide who regard visual representation of the Prophet as blasphemous. It came a year after a Danish newspaper published cartoons of the Prophet. Al-Qaeda in Iraq even offered a \$100,000 (£73,692) reward for his murder.

While it is unclear how the collision occurred, a statement from police confirmed no outsiders



were involved in the incident. “This is being investigated like any other road accident. Because two policemen were involved, an investigation has been assigned to a special section of the prosecutor’s office,” a police spokesperson told news agency AFP, adding that there was no suspicion of

foul play. One eyewitness told the Aftonbladet newspaper that the car Vilks was thought to be in seemed to lose control and came over to his side of the motorway at high speed. The truck in front did not have time to swerve and then they collided with a loud bang at “incredible speed”, he told

the newspaper. Stefan Sinteus, chief of the South Sweden regional investigation unit, told a press conference that officers were attempting to determine why the car had swerved off the road. “We don’t know yet the reason why the body-guard car was on the wrong side of the road,”

he said. “But we’re talking to witnesses, we have found remnants of tyres on the E4 road before the accident so we’re looking into the possibility that it could have been a tyre explosion or something similar.” Police officials also noted no threats were made against him recently.

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# The Middle East Is Becoming Uninhabitable

by Zaid Aleem

On what is fast becoming a salt plain, the boats that formerly shuttled visitors to and from the little islets in Iran’s Lake Urmia lie rusted and unable to operate. Urmia was the Middle East’s largest lake just two decades ago, with a flourishing tourist industry of hotels and restaurants. “People would come here to swim and bathe in the mud, which was used for medicinal purposes. They planned to remain for at least a few days “As he displayed CNN photographs of people enjoying the lake in 1995, Ahad Ahmed, a journalist in the old port town of Sharafkhaneh, remarked in this CNN report.

Lake Urmia’s collapse came quickly. According to the Department of Environmental Protection of West Azerbaijan, one of the Iranian regions where the lake is located, it has shrunk in size from 5,400 square kilometers (2,085 square miles) in the 1990s to barely 2,500 square



kilometers (965 square miles) now. There are now fears that it will vanish completely.

Many regions in the Middle East are experiencing similar issues, where water is just running out.

Drought has persisted throughout the region, as have temperatures that

are scarcely suitable for human existence. When you combine climate change with water mismanagement and misuse, the outlook for the future of water in this region is bleak.

Some Middle Eastern countries, including Iran, Iraq and Jordan, are

pumping huge amounts of water from the ground for irrigation as they seek to improve their food self-sufficiency, Charles Iceland, the global director of water at the World Resources Institute (WRI), told CNN. That’s happening as they experience a decrease in rainfall.

The consequences of water becoming even scarcer are dire: Areas could become uninhabitable; tensions over how to share and manage water resources like rivers and lakes could worsen; more political violence could erupt.

A large-scale advertisement for DTE CleanVision. The background is a grayscale image of a massive wind turbine, with its blades and central hub dominating the frame. The sky is overcast and hazy. In the top right corner, the 'DTE CleanVision' logo is displayed in white. In the bottom left, the text 'LEADING WITH A CLEAN VISION' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. To the right of this, a paragraph of text describes DTE's commitment to clean energy. At the bottom, a call to action invites viewers to visit the company's website.

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# Let's Make the USA a Start Up Nation Again

It is well known that the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S. has ended many lives and livelihoods. What is not as well known is that the pandemic economy has also given birth to an enormous number of business start-ups.

Those new businesses do not compensate for the tragic losses and the costs that the pandemic has imposed. They do provide, however, the opportunity and platform to make the USA a start-up nation again.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, applications it has received for the formation of new businesses have soared since the pandemic began. 2020 was the highest year ever for applications. There have been more than seven million applications since the pandemic began in March of 2020 through August 2021.

These breakout numbers that began during the economic crisis caused by the pandemic stand in stark contrast to the decline in business start-up activity caused by the Great Recession which began in December 2007 and ended officially in June 2009.

Things were not that great in terms of small business development even before the Great Recession. Small Business Administration and Bureau of Labor Statistics data show that from 1993 until 2001, small business births outpaced business deaths by about 25,000 a year.

From 2002 until 2008, births and deaths were about the same. Then, as the Great Recession struck, the bottom fell out for new business start-ups. Small business deaths lead births by over 44,000 in 2008, 162,000 in 2009, and 59,000 in 2010.

The contribution of small business start-ups to America's economy remained dismal even after the Great Recession ended. As Ben Casselman of the New York Times reports, "In 1980 12 percent of employers were new businesses; by 2018, the most recent year for



which data is available, that share had fallen to 8 percent."

Given the dramatic turnaround in new business creation during this pandemic, the questions become: Why did this occur? Is it sustainable? Will those businesses created survive? Will they make a positive difference for Americans and in the American economy going forward?

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the current new business creation trend. A pre-eminent one is undoubtedly the rapid closing of so-many "non-essential" businesses due to the pandemic.

Those closings caused those who had lost their jobs to either search for a new job in a job-starved market or to create a job for themselves by launching their own business instead. Many of these individuals chose the start-up route and became first-time entrepreneurs.

The Ewing Marion Kaufman Foundation (Kaufman Foundation) publishes a regular report on early stage entrepreneurship. The Foundation's early stage report for 2020 published in February of 2021 revealed that the rate of new entrepreneurs "increased substantially" in 2020. The "opportunity share," however, (the percentage of new entrepreneurs who created

a business out of choice instead of necessity) fell dramatically from 86.9 percent in 2019 to 69.8 percent in 2020.

While necessity may have been a primary driver for many first-time entrepreneurs, a factor for some was a desire to use this moment in time to reflect on what they wanted personally and to chart their own future course as an employer rather than an employee.

This course was abetted by the federal government's economic stimulus packages, which put spending money into the pockets of both the start-up owners and consumers. The fact that the recession precipitated by COVID-19 was the shortest in history, beginning in March and ending after April 2020 (the shortest recession before was in 1980 lasting six months), also ensured an economy that was receptive to new business development.

Time will tell whether the robust business start-up trend will continue post-pandemic. Distinguished professor of economics at the University

of Maryland — College Park, John Haltiwanger, who recently conducted a study for a working paper on Entrepreneurship During the COVID-19 Pandemic, published by the National Bureau

of Economic Research (NBER), believes that it will. In June after release of the NBER paper, he told Greg Rosalsky of NPR, "The surge continues. We're now convinced this wasn't just a blip."

Haltiwanger's study looked at "the surge" through May 2021. May was the second highest month for business applications, at nearly half a million, next to July 2020, which had more than 530,000. The Census Bureau's business formation statistics for June, July, and August show a decline in the number of start-ups after May 2021, with August standing at 427,000.

It will be interesting to watch this play out over the last three months of 2021 and through the first three months of 2022. What will make it even more interesting and informative, regarding the potential for a sustained surge now that there is an agreement on a continuing budget resolution that keeps the government open until December 3, is what will happen on the debt ceiling, the bi-partisan infrastructure bill and

the Build Back Better Act.

Observing the business applications and formations for that additional time period will give us a better perspective on what the "new normal"

for business start-ups will be. Our best guess-timate now is that while business start-ups will not be maintained at the surge level for the next few years going forward, they will be sustained at a higher tide level than they have been for the past several decades.

Just as there is no guarantee on whether business start-ups will continue at a high level in the future, there is no methodology to predict with accuracy which ones and how many will survive in the short term and over the long term. The Kauffman Foundation though provides an indicator called the start-up early survival rate, which measures the percentage of new employer establishments that are still active after one year of operation.

The start-up early survival rate in 2020 was 78.1 percent compared to a rate for 79.4 for 2019. This was a slight decline, but since many of the businesses that were launched in 2020 had not been in business for one year the statistic for 2021 could, and most probably will, show a larger drop

in the survival rate.

As the Kauffman Foundation emphasizes, the early survival rate "indicator is an annual measure of immediate, and not long term, survival."

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## Op Ed: Muslim Americans 20 Years Later



by **Abdul El-Sayed**

*The article was first published in the Incision*

Saturday marks the 20th anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. Nearly 3,000 people lost their lives on that fateful day. We honor their memory.

As we approach the anni-

versary, I've been reflecting on what the past 20 years have meant for me and for the broader Muslim community in our country of which I am part. Indeed, few communities experienced the post-9/11 era quite like Arab and Muslim Americans (and the many other communities brown and other enough to be

rendered Arab or Muslim in the eyes of ignorant people). I wrote about my personal experience of 9/11 in my book *Healing Politics*:

"I watched terrorists with names like mine attack my country in the name of my faith. Three thousand of my fellow Americans were killed

in the craven terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. The attack devastated me.

For me, as a Muslim-American, the trauma of that day was compounded by having my names and faith targeted. When the Twin Towers fell, so did any

pretense I had of ethnic anonymity; I wasn't just another Brown kid anymore. That morning I had strutted into school with the confidence it takes sixteen years to develop and only a moment to take away. Within a few hours of the attack, Mom called me on my

*Cont. on page 10*

## Muslim Leaders Forgive Person Who Vandalized Mosque

By **TMO Staff**

Despite facing trauma and hate, leaders of a Rochester Hills mosque did not resort to anger, instead the mosque hit by vandals reached out to the person who intent intentionally damaged one of mosque doors, noting that they had forgiven him.

Surveillance video caught a man as he walked to the back of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community mosque to deface the property

"He can talk to us and see with his own eyes, how peaceful and loving this community is and what it is all about. Our rules include love for all hatred. So, that's the message that we wanted to communicate and convey to him," Director of outreach, Muhammad Ahmad said.

The leaders believe that by forgiving the vigi-



lante they may know and change the motive behind the damages.

"Our neighbors, they conveyed the well wishes to us and mentioned they're sorry it happened," Imam Shamshad A. Nasir said speaking of the support community

members were offering. Community members even came out to write messages of love outside the mosque's sidewalk.

"I believe everything I wrote out there and that was just my way of showing love and unity to the mosque members," the

one noted.

"We are really moved by the messages of love. That kind of gives us strength as a community that we are not alone in this," Ahmad said. He added that while the incident remains under investigation the mosque

does not plan to press any charges and hopes the person will come forward so they are able to speak to him about the incident.





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**Cont. from page 8.  
Muslim Americans**

blue Nokia brick to tell me that she was going to be picking up my brother from school. His name is Osama. I could come home if I wanted to.

“No, Mom. I’m going to stay, just in case.”

“In case what?”

“I don’t know . . . in case anyone gets picked on.” I had already started to hear epithets buzzing around. “Those damn Muslims did this. Fucking ragheads . . .”

At my school of approximately a thousand students there were about fifty Muslims—many more than in most public high schools, but too few to feel as if we had a presence. To be sure, there was little I could do if someone got picked on, but being there might help. It was the first time I felt responsible to people who shared my identity—because it was the first time our identity had been singled out on such a broad stage.

I heard the new brand of hate that would follow me after 9/11 for the first time a week later, on the football field. A hardworking if not gifted athlete, I made up for my deficits in size and speed—and generally everything else—with a decent mind for the game and the will to work harder than my peers. On defense, I often got double-teamed to make sure I couldn’t make plays or to prevent me from seeing the field. That day I was double-teamed the entire game—and when the refs weren’t looking, the players on the other side would punch and kick me, calling me names like “sandnigger” and “towelhead.” On more than one occasion, though, I saw a ref look right at us—and do nothing.

I was getting frustrated. After one play in the middle of the third quarter, one of the opposing players grabbed my face underneath my face mask, screaming, “Go

home, Osama!”

For the first time in the entire game, I hit back, socking the kid with an uppercut underneath his helmet. I’m not sure why I did it. It might have been the anxiety I knew my brother’s name was causing my family. It might just have been sheer frustration. We were winning the game, for God’s sake. I regretted it the minute I made contact.

The ref had turned around just fast enough to see me land the punch. His yellow flag went flying. I got yanked from the game.

Our defensive coordinator—who looked like Popeye’s forearms grew a human—grabbed my face mask and pulled it so close I could smell his Old Spice aftershave.

“What the hell was that?” he asked, his blue eyes piercing through mine. “Coach, he was—”

“Son, I don’t care what the hell he was doing, what the hell was that?”

“I lost my temper, Coach.”

“Damn obvious you did, son!”

“They were hitting me off play the entire game, and they were calling me names and making fun of my religion, and—”

His eyes warmed, his tone that of someone who didn’t want to have to tell you something that circumstances were forcing out of him: “Son, let me tell you something: you’re going to be Abdul El-Sayed for the rest of your life. You can either use it as an excuse or you can use it as motivation.”

I often reflect on that lesson, however unfair and frankly accommodating of bias it might seem in hindsight. Motivation toward what, exactly?”

We, as a country, yet struggle to define “what, exactly.” Twenty years has rendered it more clearly.

The terrorists who attacked our country that day only exploited Islam as a pretext for an act of violence rooted

in tribalistic grievance. They wanted chaos. The attacks sent our country into writhing convulsions of fury. Whether the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the stunning decimation of our civil liberties, or the polarization of American society, of which we are yet suffering the consequences today.

The logic of the post-9/11 era sacrificed our basic collective liberties, most of all against Muslim Americans. A whole new edifice of control, the Department of Homeland Security, was created in order to marshal the full might of a sprawling security state that confused ethnicity and faith for malintent. Shining its spotlight harshly on Arabs, South Asians, and Africans, it deliberately left the greatest threat to our security in the shadows — missing the most common source of American terrorism: “home-grown” and “radicalized” white men.

We fought 20 years of collective war through which we violated the basic rights of millions of non-combatants to make home, live prosperously, and thrive in the places in which they were born. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives. Thousands of U.S. service members and contractors died, too — most of them back home. Among veterans of these wars, death by suicide has been four times as common as death on the battlefield.

In an echo of the worst of our history — the decimation of Native Americans, the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Jim Crow segregation, Japanese internment — we did all of that in the name of an America founded on the self-evident truths that “all men are created equal.” Though the past 20 years have obscured their light, those ideals remain as luminescent as they were when they inspired our parents and our parents’ parents to come to these shores.

The “what, exactly?” It’s nothing short of the America of her ideals.

On 9/11 millions of Muslim Americans were called to defend it. Admittedly, at first, we demurred. Our leaders told us this would pass. The best course of action, they said, was to keep our heads down, to “fit in” — change our names, fix our accents, and hide our heritage. The patriotic duty was to assent to the implication that we were guilty until proven innocent, to take our collective punishment with a smile for the privilege of playing our part in a war on terror increasingly defined in opposition to our very identities. Only in complicity could we prove that we were more “us” than “them.”

It only got worse, though. The cancer born of a bellicose white supremacy that has stained so much of our history metastasized still.

We saw it in the weapons shipped from wars abroad to wage war on our own streets, in the burgeoning prisons, and the extrajudicial murders of Black people. We saw it in the rise of an emboldened white supremacy with implied permission to say the quiet parts out loud. We saw it in the rise of hate speech on social media platforms we’d been told would do more to connect our communities than divide them. We saw it in the political rise of Donald Trump, a fitting id to the strain of nativism, white supremacy, and authoritarianism the “war on terror” had harbored.

Those of us too young to know a political reality before 9/11 would come to understand that silence was complicity. Our failure to stand up for ourselves was a failure to stand up for America itself.

We built bonds of love, coalition, and allyship with our sisters and brothers in communities that had long since suffered the white supremacy and xenophobia we’d only just begun to endure. We embraced our names, our stories,

and our heritage. We embraced America for what it was supposed to be, vying to do our part to defend it from what it was fast becoming — from what it, for too long, has been.

We decided that our stories were part of the American story, and told them to anyone who would listen. Muslims blazed trails in our public discussion, in magazines and newspapers and on screens, big and small. Hundreds of Muslims did the unthinkable and ran for office, aspiring to the highest ideal of citizenship in a country that had tried to deny us even citizenship’s most basic rights.

Hundreds more got engaged, showing up to protest the Muslim ban, then gun violence, then for Black lives. Millions more voted for the first time.

America is, and has always been, a struggle. Some want to tell us that America is “blood & soil,” their concept of history beginning conveniently after white people from Europe had decimated native people whose blood has inhabited this soil since before they ever arrived. Their vision of America necessarily excludes or subjugates those who don’t look like them, pray like them, or share their heritage.

But we believe that America can be more powerful than simply a place and a people — but a set of human ideals that necessarily embraces anyone committed to equity, justice, human dignity, and true liberty. Defending America should never have meant responding to tribalistic grievance with tribalistic grievance as so much of the post-9/11 era has been. Rather it should have meant embracing the ideals that transcend it.

That’s what it means to fight for America — it’s what it should always have meant. Twenty years on, I’m proud of my community for reminding us.

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**Cont. from page 7.  
USA a Start Up**

The long-term survival for all of these pandemic start-up businesses — whether they were born out of opportunity or necessity — will be driven by their ability to do the planning, organization, and management required to enable them to respond effectively and efficiently to market and customer needs and demands.

One thing that will definitely survive for the long term is the definitional impact that these pandemic start-ups are having on the nature of America's business landscape. "From a distance" has become the new business mantra, and the close proximity concepts of central business districts in mega-cities, large office towers, water cooler brainstorming, and coffee break collegiality, while not becoming things of the past, will certainly be recalibrated.

This reconsideration and reconstruction of the approach to doing business is being done by existing businesses of all sizes from large to small. The pandemic small business start-ups have occurred across the board, but as John Haltiwanger's research found, it accelerated the most in ten 3-digit NAICS (North American Industries Classification System) industries, accounting for 75% of the surge. Non-store retail applications accounted for one-third of that growth, with other high-growth application industries including professional, scientific and technical services; truck transportation; accommodations and food service.

In June, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce put forward two sets of business ideas for success during and post-pandemic. They ranged from personal training and fitness to home improvement, and delivery services. They also included more individually-focused activities such as app development, graphic design, and accounting services.

Putting this into context, millions of businesses have been put out of business because of the pandemic, so there are gaps that need to be filled and opportunities to be addressed. In addition, federal government spending due to the Biden administration's rescue plan — and the infrastructure bill if it passes — will create new needs and opportunities. The bottom line is that there is a potential solid bottom line for many start-up small businesses in these transitional times.

These start-up businesses and other existing small business will be critical to creating a positive future for the American economy. The pivotal importance of this rebuilding and restoration of America's small business sector cannot be overstated.

The 2020 Small Business Profile prepared by the Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy reports that in 2018 there were 32.5 million small businesses in the U.S., constituting over 99 percent of American businesses. Just over 6 million of those firms had employees. Nearly 26.5 million were non-employer firms. Those businesses employed more than 61.2 million people or 46.8 percent of the private sector workforce.

Small businesses are also innovators and difference makers. Various research shows that: small businesses represent 96% of employer firms in high patent manufacturing industries; small firms are much more likely to develop emerging technologies than large firms; and on an annual basis, small businesses account for well over 60% of all new jobs created in the United States.

Those numbers and facts attest to the pivotal role that the small businesses play in sustaining and growing the American economy. What they do not disclose is the shrinking size of the

small business sector in supporting the national GDP, and the decline of job creation in the small business sector over the past several decades.

An SBA report released at the beginning of 2019 showed that in the period from 1998 to 2014, the small business share of total GDP for the U.S. fell from 48.0 percent to 43.5 percent. The Kauffman Foundation examining jobs created by start-ups in their first year of operation in 2020 was 5.0, compared to nearly 8.0 in 1996.

In closing, it should be recognized that this surge in business applications and initial business formation is merely the starting point for start-up businesses. The total identified by the Census Bureau includes all applications. Within that group, the Census Bureau monthly identifies what it labels "High Propensity Business Applications," which have a "high propensity of turning into businesses with a payroll."

The high propensity applications before the pandemic ran about 40–45 percent of the monthly total applications. The high propensity applications since the pandemic have fallen to around one third of the total.

This indicates that considerably more of those applying now are first-time entrepreneurs establishing non-employer firms. It is likely that many of these entrepreneurs will be individuals who lost their jobs or microbusinesses during the pandemic.

Research indicates that those individuals who lost their jobs due to the pandemic were disproportionately women and minorities working in the leisure, hospitality, retail, personal service, and health care sectors. The businesses that were at greatest risk of closing were in those same industry sectors, with those most affected being the smallest small businesses, non-employer firms, businesses owned by African Americans,

immigrants, Latinx, Asians, and females, and main street businesses in smaller towns and urban neighborhoods.

Many start-up owners turn to their own savings/credit cards, friends, family, and the local bank for financial assistance.

These sources of assistance will probably be extremely limited in scope.

Therefore many of these first-time entrepreneurs will need assistance from another source. The federal government and the SBA can and could and should be a lender of first, and not last, resort for them.

The United States Congress and the SBA has done an excellent job in providing financial support through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the lesser known Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program to the small businesses impacted by the pandemic.

Under the direction of its new administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman, the SBA has increased access for the smallest and minority-owned businesses in areas that were largely ignored in the first round of PPP funding. In addition, since the SBA launched its portal for direct forgiveness of PPP loans of \$150,000 or less on August 4, it has processed more than 1 million applications.

The SBA needs to bring this targeted focus and lightning-like speed to assist small businesses being started up by first-time entrepreneurs with limited access to resources. As we have advocated for some time, the SBA should provide direct loans to small businesses — especially those in socially disadvantaged and economically distressed urban and rural areas.

At this point, unfortunately, the SBA can only be a guarantor of loans provided to small businesses through certified lenders. If the \$3.5 trillion Build Back

Better Act passes this will change.

Sec.100502 of that Act will provide \$4.465 billion over a ten-year period to fund a direct loan product under the current 7(a) lending program administered by SBA. Some of that money should be dedicated to small business start-ups and non-employer firms that would have the greatest difficulty in securing access to capital from traditional lenders.

The direct loan program for these businesses should provide an initial grant for the operational assistance and sustenance during the business' launch period. It should also provide technical assistance to these start-up entrepreneurs to help them refine their business model and to develop business plans for taking their business forward.

The period of the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of great uncertainty on all fronts. Early on it was thought that COVID's impact would be short-lived. It was not.

In July 2021, after a large number of vaccines had been administered, it appeared that the country had turned the corner on the pandemic. It did.

Then, it ran into the Delta variant which has caused a COVID resurgence across the nation. Now, in October, it is difficult to predict what lies ahead on the COVID front with any certainty.

What is certain is that if these business start-ups do not get support and the economy is throttled by a continuing pandemic, they will be challenged for survival. By implementing a direct loan program, the SBA can help these businesses make it through these uncertain and challenging times. In return, they will make the essential contribution they must to ensure the United States becomes a start-up nation again.

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CONTINUED STORY

**Cont. from page 3.**  
**Occupation Of Palestine**

Furthermore, in his book titled “Zion’s Christian soldiers ? The Bible Israel and the Church”, He mentioned that many Bible-believing Christians are convinced that God blesses those nations that stand with Israel and curses those that don’t. The impact of this belief has had a significant influence on attitudes toward the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. And he challenged the belief based on the misinterpretation of the Bible.

Likewise, he contended misinterpretation of the relationship between Israel and Church and answered seven Biblical issues as,

Search for: Seven Biblical interpretations contended by Stephen Sizer ( a Comprehensive guide)

Ilan Pappé ( Renowned

Israeli Historian)

It is the consequence of those misinterpreted beliefs as mentioned above ( Seven Biblical interpretations); Zionists have been systematically erasing the culture and history of indigenous Palestinians to justify their forced and the theft of their land in his book “The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine.”

As excerpted from his book “The 1948 Palestine -Israel war is known to Israelis as “The War of Independence, but for Palestinians, it will forever be NAKBA, the ‘catastrophe’ Along with the creation of the state of Israel, the end of the war led to one of the largest forced migrations in modern history. Around a million people were expelled from their homes at gunpoint, civilians were massacred, and hundreds of Palestinian villages were deliberately destroyed. Though the truth about the mass expulsion has been systematically distorted and

suppressed, had it taken place in the twenty-first century, it could only have been called “ethnic cleansing.

The above fact had been declassified in 1998 and exposed that it was a meditated plan and structured idea: How to turn Palestine or an Arab country into a Jewish State?

The Holocaust and the Nakba (A New Grammar of Trauma and History) Edited by Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, a groundbreaking book, leading Arab and Jewish intellectuals to examine how and why the Holocaust and the Nakba are interlinked without blurring fundamental differences between them.

I want to conclude my article here. Undoubtedly, it’s a deep-seated religious conviction of Christian Zionism to support Israel to fulfill biblical prophecies about Armageddon, 3rd temple, and Jesus 2nd coming under the umbrella of influential organiza-

tions, i.e., CUFI and The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. On the other hand, it’s dangerous and shocking for Modern human civilization that the theological perspective of Christian Zionism superseded International Human rights, which justifies the illegal occupation of Israel, ethnic cleansing of Palestine. Would it not be termed fanaticism or Nazims?

And What is the moral position of Christian Zionists organization like CUFI to support the illegal occupation of Israel, the genocide of Palestinian, forced eviction of indigenous Palestinians from their Home?

It concludes that Zionism is racism, whereas not synonymous with Judaism, All Jews are not necessarily Zionists. They also consider the countries like others in which they live as their homeland. In fact, many Jews are anti-Zionists.

With this fact that every human soul is precious

in the plan of God, What is the moral position of Christian Zionism to support the racism of Israel against Palestinians?

Peace or tranquility is only possible among Israel – Palestine, and also in the Middle East if the matter is resolved by International human rights organizations and the United Nations based on Human rights and morality instead of adopting a passive attitude and allowing absurd justification of Biblical prophecies as a pretext for committing injustices, tyranny and grabbing land of indigenous people of Palestine. It may lead to chaos and anarchy in other parts of the world if you grab land obsessed with religious scriptures. It is ridiculous that any religion or scripture is sufficient for the demarcation or owning land and even encourages massacre, genocide, and ethnic cleansing of indigenous people.

**Cont. from page 4.**  
**US Forces From Afghanistan**

their command. (Opinion | I Commanded Afghan Troops This Year. We Were Betrayed).

American leaders have known, for well over a decade, that the Afghan military and government was incompetent and corrupt and therefore not likely to survive or be capable of fighting without the US strategic and air support. But every president and senior general hid these truths and continued the war. The reality became obvious as soon as the US withdrawal of troops began; President Ashraf Ghani and the top military echelon fled the country in a hurry.

The only group which benefitted from this fiasco in Afghanistan was the US military-industrial complex. For over 20 years and four Presidents, both Republicans and Democrats supported military contractors who gained billions of dollars through this unjustified war. Just imagine if those trillions of dollars would have been spent on health and education, the USA might have been

on the top of the world today.

The main reason that the Taliban ultimately won this war was that they were willing to die for a cause, to preserve their religious culture and ethnic identity. On the other hand, the Afghan government, the President, the Chief of the Army, and most senior members of the Afghani armed forces were not. They did not have the desire and spirit to fight for their own country.

President Biden said that “no amount of military force would ever deliver a stable, united, secure Afghanistan.” Mr. Biden made a rational decision to withdraw all American troops, as keeping them for another few years would not have made any difference. The Afghan government and the military showed no interest in helping the people of Afghanistan.

Current situation and challenges Taliban are facing.

Taliban took a lot of land and territory in a short period of 3 months, but can it govern and control without foreign aid which will be dried up in a couple of months? Af-

ghanistan may revert to its prior history of chaos were in the past four or five different warlords controlled certain parts of the country. Al-Qaeda members are coming back from Pakistan and ISIS in Afghanistan tries to exert more control and take advantage of what is a very chaotic security situation as was evident by their attack on departing US forces which resulted in the death of 13 US soldiers and the death of over 200 Afghans who were trying to leave the country. ISIS was recruiting a lot of disenchanted Taliban fighters who felt like the movement wasn’t going in the direction it should be going.

The Taliban had a very short experience of running the government between 1996 and 2000. Due to their extremist position of implementing the Sharia law, they had a bad reputation and a bad image in the world, so many governments are hesitant to support them because they do not want to see Afghanistan turn into a medieval government with strict implementation of their version of Sharia laws. They have made the

announcement and given an assurance that they would grant amnesty to officials and soldiers of the former government, would allow women to work and get an education, and that they would also form a representative government preserving the individual rights of minorities like Shias. It is very hard to predict whether they will follow their public assurances. Recent news shows that they have violently dispersed the peaceful demonstration of women and children for education. I have just seen their announcement of the cabinet, and most of the senior positions are occupied by the leaders which served the previous Taliban government (or their children), which brutally enforce strict interpretations of the Islamic law. It appears that the group’s conservative and theocratic goals will remain unchanged. We can only see and hope that they will bring the change that is necessary for their survival.

The Taliban must make a drastic change in their ideology and develop a national unity government including a

major ethnic and tribal group and show some understanding about handling the younger generation. The Taliban face financial challenges as sanctions are placed on foreign aid which has been its major economic support. These questions cannot be answered at present. The Taliban must show tolerance towards people of all faiths and aqeedas and build harmonious relationships within community groups not by fear but by acceptance. They must develop cordial relationships with their neighbors and must fully commit to building a country that can focus on industrial development by higher education so that they can survive in this competitive world.

Wars and foreign occupation are not a solution to any country’s problems.

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CONTINUED STORY

Cont. from page 1.  
Afghan Woman

and paint Afghan men as savage and barbaric. What these narratives fail to include are the nuances of how foreign interference, including from the U.S., U.K., NATO, Israel, House of Saud and Pakistan, have for decades directly contributed to destabilizing the country.

Foreign governments must be held accountable for enabling the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding now – and what has been happening for the past 20-40 years. Part of keeping foreign governments in check is for their populations to do their part in staying educated and vocal about Afghanistan. As an Afghan woman, I call for the public, particularly in the West, to take responsibility in learning and understanding how colonial history is at the crux of the inevitable abandonment of Afghanistan.

I am the daughter of two Afghans from two different backgrounds, ethnically as well as socially, who were living in Moscow when I was born. They were living in Moscow for a set of

reasons, one being the destruction of Afghanistan just 40 years ago, by the same forces that are destroying it now. The U.S.S.R. had just fallen. I then spent the first 6 years of my life living happily in the new Russian Federation. I even experienced visiting the very first McDonald's in the U.S.S.R. — a joyous moment in a time where capitalism was seen as a beacon of opportunity, innovation and security.

Eventually, after my parents separated, I moved to the U.S. and quickly learned that everything that was apparently so great about the capitalist West was a facade. My father worked in sustainable farming counter to opium production (wherein he would introduce crops such as angora goats and saffron, which are more lucrative, to the market to counter the poppy trade), returning to Afghanistan right at the start of the American invasion, and what did his helping Afghans get him? Patriot Act-ed. Never allowed to return to the U.S. again, while myself, my mother and our entire family were constantly tailed by the F.B.I./C.I.A., our phones tapped, questioned for hours randomly.

Why would helping our people especially in such a holistic way get my father targeted by the American government? This marked the start of my critical analysis of the U.S., and thus an advocate for my Afghan people and the injustices they have faced at the hands of foreign forces.

All that being said: I am here to tell you, respectfully, that everything you have heard in the West about my homeland is a lie.

Like many other Afghans, I am no stranger to dealing with ignorant, prejudiced people in the West based on my ethnic background. I look Afghan, or at least to them, 'Other.' I get asked where I am from, asked about my story, ("oh, you lived in Kabul?! How was that?") all the time. The amount of mis/disinformation and confusion people regurgitate about Afghanistan is terrifying. Terrifying because it is also a reflection of the failure of Western education and one's own awareness of how their home country's government has actively destabilized my family's homeland, yet have spun propaganda to place the onus only on the Afghan

people. It is also linked to the post-colonial, capitalist, white heteropatriarchy lens that the West perpetuates everything in.

I share this condensed version of my story as a starting point for the world to start listening more closely to Afghan voices and mobilize with us as allies. So, what can you do to be a better ally to Afghan people not only today but into the future, knowing that foreign interference and falsehoods spouting from the West about Afghanistan will continue?

First, read. In particular, read "US-Imposed Post-9/11 Muslim Holocaust and Muslim Genocide" by Gideon Polya, read "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving" by Lila Abu-Lughod, "Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from Afghanistan War" by Svetlana Alexievich, and "Ghost Wars" by Steve Coll, and familiarise yourself with the outside perspectives of Afghanistan.

Second, humanise Afghans by consuming their arts and culture. Go online and check out darya.net and watch the Afghan film archives, the Afghan serials we have made in the past years,

and humanise our people through their own art (I have no commercial affiliation with darya.net – it's simply a wonderful way to view the type of Afghan media that Afghans themselves consume).

Third, follow Afghan voices on social media to hear Afghan perspectives on the current crisis and what Afghans want for their country's future. If you don't know where to start, I encourage readers to check out my Decolonial Therapy – Unpacking Afghanistan's History series on Instagram (@blingistan), where I have essentially compiled a crash course on everything you need to know about Afghanistan through a decolonised lens. I regularly feature other Afghan voices, including Mina Sharif (@missminakabul), whom you are also encouraged to follow.

Now, more than ever before, Afghans need their allies. If the West does not do their part to listen and support Afghans, not only will the 40 years of Western occupation in Afghanistan be in vain, but Afghan lives will continue to be in danger.

Cont. from page 1.  
Islamophobia

piled by the FBI finding alarming rates of incidents reported in 2020 compared to 2019. Amid the alarming rise of hate crimes, a string of hate crimes against Muslim Americans in the last month has prompted advocates to call for investigations into incidents of Islamophobia.

A new survey exploring the lives of Muslim Americans supports the reports in the rise of hate crimes nationally—the survey found that more than two-thirds of U.S. Muslims personally experienced Islamophobia. Additionally, the survey found that this rate was higher in Muslim women, with nearly 75% of participants believing women are more at risk of experiencing Islamophobia. About 77% of Muslim women reported that they experienced incidents of Islamophobia personally compared to

58.6% of men.

The report, "Islamophobia through the Eyes of Muslims," was released on Sept. 29 by the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California at Berkeley. More than 1,123 Muslims in the U.S. participated in the 2020 survey, which was virtually conducted between Oct. 14 and Nov. 2. The participants were made of up various ages, socioeconomic statuses, and ethnic and racial backgrounds.

"The survey, conducted two decades after the 9/11 attacks which led to a surge of hate crimes and prompted government policies targeting Muslims, provides insight into the experiences, lived realities, and psychological impacts of Islamophobia on millions of US residents," a press release announcing the survey said.

According to the report, the goal of the survey "was to ask US Muslims

to assess the impacts of the othering and discrimination they face because of their religious affiliation."

More than half of respondents—about 52%—identify themselves in everyday encounters as Muslim American, Basima Sisemore, a researcher for the Global Justice Program at the Othering & Belonging Institute, told Religion News Service. "It goes to speak to the sense of belonging that Muslim Americans feel and have in being in the United States.

"They have a strong desire for their children to have a sense of belonging and to feel part of U.S. society and that they have a place here," she continued.

Instead of solely analyzing media coverage or documenting negative statements, the report focuses "on the people living with Islamophobia, documenting their collective experiences and

registering their voices."

"I don't know why, but that was always in the back of my mind," Zainab Ramahi, a Muslim American woman, told the SF Chronicle regarding a warning her father gave her to always be vigilant about her surroundings. "And maybe I do know why. Maybe it's because Muslims are constantly being talked about in this awful way. There's this assumption that we are a threat to national security, that we are not indigenous to the United States."

Islamophobia is not a new phenomenon, yet the results of the survey shocked many advocates who hoped the survey would make Muslim Americans feel like they were not alone.

"We need to expose and reject the logic of laws and legal affiliations that aim to single out Muslims and use them as a scapegoat for our own political, social and

economic challenges and failures," said Elsadig Elsheikh, director of the institute's Global Justice program. "We really need to think about the visibility of Muslims in our media because that will help us to prevent normalizing fear and alienation of Muslims."

He connected the "element of suspicion" injected into daily Muslim life after the 9/11 attacks when the FBI teamed up with local law enforcement agencies to surveil Muslim communities, leading many to think, "Maybe it's better for me not to have a connection with people that I don't know."

Not only does Islamophobia physically impact Muslim Americans, it severely impacts their health and well-being. According to the survey nearly all respondents, about 93.7%, said that Islamophobia impacts their health.

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Facebook**

For those who were with us at The Incision's inception, you'll remember that our very first post cut into the ways social media has driven disinformation and so much of modern society's discontents. Haugen's testimony brought back to public view why and how Facebook needs to be regulated. Here's what it'll take to get there.

**We need a new crop of legislators — and a new agency.**

One of the ongoing subplots of the effort to regulate Facebook and Big Tech is the fact that the elected officials responsible for regulation lack a basic understanding of Big Tech — or any tech at all.

Just last week, the chairperson of the subcommittee to which Haugen testified asked a Facebook executive, "Will you commit to ending 'finsta'?" For the uninitiated, Finsta is an internet slang term for a fake Instagram account meant only for close friends. Beyond the gauche usage of a term rarely spoken by septuagenarians, it portrayed a clear lack of what the problem really is. It recalls a moment in 2018 when Republican Senator Orrin Hatch asked Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, "So, how do you sustain a business model in which users don't pay for your service?" Zuckerberg deadpanned, "Senator, we run ads."

More generally, as the challenges facing 21st

century America accelerate, Congress simply needs more people who came of age in this century. Our system of politics, which tends toward ossification, concentrates power in the status quo, necessarily older and further out of touch.

That said, they're learning. The questions Democrat Sen. Blumenthal and Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn, ranking member of the subcommittee, asked were thoughtful, articulate, and elicited important information from Haugen. It's clear they've hired a crack team of staffers ... who actually use Instagram.

The challenges with Big Tech aren't going anywhere. Facebook has blown the lid off Pandora's Box. And given how ill-equipped our legislators are to deal with it, we need a new arm of government, akin to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau or the Food and Drug Administration. The Federal Communications Commission, which should ostensibly have oversight power over Big Tech, was founded way back in 1934 to regulate radio. Needless to say, telecommunications have evolved since then. If regulation were left to the FCC, it would need a massive retool in scope, size, and capacity to oversee some of the world's biggest and most powerful corporations effectively.

**We need to differentiate between regulating Facebook's antisocial behavior and its monopolistic practices****— and solve both.**

Facebook is, by far, the world's largest social media company, comprising Facebook itself, as well as Messenger, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Facebook didn't build the latter two companies, it simply bought them in an effort to stem their competition.

And those are just the competitors it's purchased. They've attempted to copy others, like Snapchat and TikTok, out of existence. Indeed, Facebook is also working on a clone of the new popular audio-based social network Clubhouse.

This has prompted a growing call to "break up" Facebook, championed by former Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes in an op-ed in the New York Times.

Coming out of Haugen's testimony, some have argued that breaking up Facebook would simply limit our ability to regulate them effectively, creating multiple problematic social media companies out of one.

But this misses the point. We need to both regulate Facebook and break it up. One addresses the most blatant issue with Facebook's behavior, and the other addresses the circumstances that created it. It is precisely because Facebook has used its market dominance to acquire, copy, and kill off its competitors that it hasn't faced any market pressure to change. There are so few alternatives, after all. Perhaps advertisers would choose to advertise on a friendlier platform

if others with the same reach even existed. The problem is they don't.

There's another aspect to this. When Facebook went dark for six hours on Monday, thousands of small businesses that rely on its tools did too. Facebook's size and scale coupled with their monopolistic behavior has left little alternative to companies that rely on social media to do business. Their outage this week showed just how crippling that can be.

**Government regulation won't be enough. We also need a consumer-led movement.**

There's a ton that the federal government can do to hold Facebook accountable for its behaviors. But it won't happen until we change the dynamics of its business model.

Again, the history of cigarette regulation is helpful here. The tobacco industry has faced regulation at almost every level of government, from limitations on where it can sell or advertise its products, to requirements to put public health warnings on its packaging, and sin taxes that raise the price of its products. They've been forced to pay out millions of dollars in damages in class action lawsuits.

But while those regulatory and legal actions helped curb their power, the most lasting gut-punch has come from consumers across the country quitting smoking or never picking it up in the first place. Smoking rates have plummeted because of the public

recognition that smoking is dangerous — and that Philip Morris and its counterparts are selling poison.

If we are to truly curb the power of Facebook, it's going to come from all of us withholding our eyeballs that they so efficiently monetize until they commit to being better. It's going to take holding advertisers accountable for choosing to advertise with Facebook, and calling on them to put their advertising dollars elsewhere so long as Facebook does not change. This kind of consumer-led movement often precedes government action, creating an implicit permission structure for it.

Of course this isn't as straightforward as it is with a cigarette company whose products offer no benefit, only harm, and profit directly from the consumption of their product. Thousands of companies rely on Facebook every day. And much of the content shared on Facebook truly does bring us together. But that's exactly why this approach could be so powerful: Facebook has an alternative. Rather than being a troll cesspool that makes people feel bad about themselves and society, it actually can choose otherwise and remain extremely profitable.

It's not that we need no Facebook — we just need a better Facebook.

**Cont. from page 13.  
Islamophobia**

Many even noted that they have censored themselves out of fear of how others may react to them. This included 91.8% of women who said they

"censor their speech or actions out of fear of how people might respond or react to them." Younger Muslims also expressed they are more likely to conceal their religious identities in order to avoid confrontation.

But Islamophobia isn't just experienced at the hands of bigots. According to the survey, more than 50% of respondents said they were treated unfairly by a law enforcement official due to their religious identity.

As a result, about 85.6% noted that they did not feel comfortable calling law enforcement for help or protection.

Nearly all participants—99%—agreed that all races and ethnicities

of people should be treated equally.

**If you want to write for TMO, Please email:  
editor@muslimobserver.com**





# AFMI



The last year was a tough one for many people around the world. For the second time in a row, we will be observing Ramadan in a pandemic. Millions have been left destitute & without income because of the pandemic & its effect on the Indian economy.

In this last year, AFMI has been reaching out with support to the neediest in India

AFMI's initiatives in the last year include: Should read as follows

- ❖ Provided safe drinking water to thousands of flood-affected families in Hyderabad.
- ❖ Launched safe drinking water facility in Rajasthan which currently supports twenty-two villages.
- ❖ Provided meals to thousands of families across India.
- ❖ Helped teaching and other staff of schools with income supports.
- ❖ Provided scholarships to students.
- ❖ Helped schools with construction projects in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and elsewhere.
- ❖ Provided ventilators to hospitals in Gujarat.
- ❖ Provided shelter and clothing to families affected by the pandemic and economic distress.



The need is great, & our resources limited. Let us come together & resolve to do whatever we can to improve the conditions of the needy. Through our collective efforts, we can work wonders.

Please donate generously to AFMI's projects which have real-life impacts on thousands of lives. Donations can be made securely online at [www.afmi.org](http://www.afmi.org)

May these blessed days be a means for us to connect with our Lord and our community, & to share together in gratitude.

**Ramadan Mubarak!**



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