



MESSIAH MODE

How the Jewish far-right remade the mainstream in Israel and the US

A book proposal by investigative journalist David Sheen

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SUMMARY

Many ethnic groups have an eliminationist camp: an extreme right-wing faction that wants to expand their control and enslave, expel and exterminate others. But in recent decades, Israeli politics have been dragged so far to the far-right that a terrorist movement responsible for inciting race riots and inspiring dozens of lone-gun murders now sits in Israel's legislature, and is in the ascendancy. In November 2022 Israeli voters made them the third-largest party in parliament, and Benjamin Netanyahu made them the second-largest party in his new government, appointing its leader as National Security Minister, giving him control over Israeli police forces. Decades after the death of arch-racist American-Israeli Rabbi Meir Kahane, his messianic followers labor to realize his dreams to ethnically cleanse Israel and all the territories under its control of non-Jews, and to fuse state and synagogue, transforming Israel into a Jewish theocracy. In demanding that other communities sideline their hard-liners, while knowingly ignoring the most murderous forces in their own midst, are Jewish nationalists co-signing Israel's spiral into ever more frightening forms?

MARKET

Two valuable biographies of Meir Kahane were written during his lifetime: Israeli journalist Yair Kotler's [Heil Kahane](#), published in English in 1986, and American journalist Robert Friedman's [False Prophet](#), published in 1990, just before Kahane's assassination. For the next three decades, no book focused exclusively on Kahane and his followers, though a number of books devote chapters to the topic, enhancing our understanding of the movement: [Mount of Contention](#) (Hebrew, 1995), [Murder in the Name of God](#) (English, 1998) and [Jewish Terrorism in Israel](#) (English, 2009), among others. In 2019, the first two installments of a three-volume biography, [Rabbi Meir Kahane: His Life and Thought](#), were published by Kahane's widow; needless to say, her work is a hagiography. In 2021 a new biography of Kahane was authored by American academic Rabbi Shaul Magid, [Meir Kahane: The Public Life and Political Thought of an American Jewish Radical](#). The book almost exclusively explores Kahane himself and his impact upon American Jews, sidestepping his enormous significance in Israel, which is the focus of my work, *Messiah Mode*.

AUDIENCE

The amount of ink printed on paper about Israel*Palestine is staggering. But of the literature that doesn't whitewash Israeli history, most focuses on the figures and factions that make up the mainstream of the Zionist movement. There is a near-vacuum of analysis on how this one man, Meir Kahane, soaked up the most misanthropic writings of medieval sages and irrevocably altered the trajectory of the State of Israel by super-saturating it with calls for ethnic cleansing and stochastic ultra-violence. Some will buy this book and try (in vain) to find faults in it. Most early adopters who buy the book, though, will likely be social-media-savvy young progressives who have watched from afar Israel's steady descent into dominionism, and are now trying to make sense of how it was allowed to happen – a transformation that their trusted news sources utterly failed to chronicle.

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AUTHOR

Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, investigative journalist David Sheen now makes his home in Haifa, Israel. Since 2010, Sheen has worked across the country as a contract and freelance journalist, writing and producing text articles and video stories for [dozens](#) of local, regional and international outlets, from [Haaretz](#) to [Electronic Intifada](#). Among the most crucial stories he's exposed are the murder cases of two US citizens born here, and the kidnapping, trafficking and ransoming of African refugees in Israel and Egypt. Despite beatings from security forces and racist mobs, threats of lawsuits from powerful figures he reports on, and smear campaigns by critics who object to his egalitarian worldview, Sheen's reporting perseveres. He has given lectures at parliaments across Europe and at dozens of colleges across the US and Canada based on his on-the-ground reporting, which has been recognized by human rights groups and journalist unions around the world and at home, both Israeli and Palestinian.

RESEARCH

The Kahane movement and its satellite far-right factions have been a focus of David Sheen's reporting for over a decade. Since 2010, Sheen has published interviews with leaders and followers of the movement, reporting from their raucous street rallies and from the halls of the Knesset, Israel's parliament. When Israel's longest-serving prime minister began bringing known Kahanists into the Knesset in late 2018, Sheen probed deeper into the movement, conducting undercover research and gaining access to private archives, as well as interviewing movement whistleblowers and top Israeli and American law enforcement officials who investigated Kahanists for terrorism. Sheen has already published tens of thousands of words correcting the record of their crimes; see the two monograph sample chapters linked below for starters. The full-length book *Messiah Mode* will expose the extent of their perfidy and the dangers that they portend, as well as the powerful decision-makers in Israel and the US who paved their way to power.

PUBLICATIONS

MONOGRAPHS

[2023 Institute for Palestine Studies](#)

[2020 Americans for Middle East Understanding](#)

LECTURES

[2022 Washington](#)

[2022 Los Angeles](#)

[2022 Orange County](#)

[2019 Zurich University](#)

[2019 Philadelphia](#)

[2018 Amsterdam](#)

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ARTICLES

[MERIP](#)

[Mint Press](#)

[The Intercept](#)

[Palestine Chronicle](#)

[Middle East Eye](#)

[The Gray Zone](#)

[The New Arab](#)

[Al Jazeera](#)

[Truthdig](#)

[ETC.](#)

SKILLS

Research

Writing**Video production****Data visualization****Guided tours****972 Magazine****Al Araby Al Jadeed****Al Jazeera****Alternet****Black Agenda Report****Cannabis Culture****Daily Beast****Electronic Intifada****Forward****Grayzone****Hottest Place In Hell****Huffington Post**

Institute for Palestine Studies

Intercept**It's All Lies****Link****Local Call****Middle East Eye****Middle East Monitor****Middle East Research and Information Project****Mint Press News****Mondoweiss****Muftah****Nation****New York Amsterdam News****Open Democracy****Palestine Chronicle****Religion Dispatches****Root****Russia Today****San Francisco Bay View**

Seattle Lesbian

Truthdig**United Nations****Ventures Africa**

2022 FREELANCE INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST

2012 **Union of Journalists in Israel** member

2011 REPORTER & CONTENT EDITOR

2010 **Haaretz newspaper**

English website and print edition

2019 **Rory Peck Trust** (UK) for freelance journalists supports Sheen with a grant2017 **New Israel Fund** (Israel) supports Sheen with a grant2017 **Front Line Defenders** (Ireland) supports Sheen with a grant recognizes Sheen as a **Human Rights Defender**

2017 Letters of solidarity from journalist unions

Article 19**Canadian Journalists for Free Expression****International Federation of Journalists****International Press Institute****Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate**2010 **TEDx Johannesburg** (South Africa)Sheen lectures on **The Future of Architecture**2009 Film Festival screenings of Sheen's film **First Earth**

Ecolnoa Film Festival (Israel)

Seoul Ecological Film Festival (South Korea)

DAVID SHEEN

* Click on **bolded items** for online content**European Parliament, BRUSSELS, BE****University of Calgary, CALGARY, CA**

University of Alberta, EDMONTON, CA

Simon Fraser University, VANCOUVER, CA

Dalhousie University, HALIFAX, CA

McMaster University, HAMILTON, CA**University of Western Ontario, LONDON, CA**

York University, TORONTO, CA

University of Waterloo, WATERLOO, CA**McGill University, MONTREAL, CA**

University of Bern, BERN, CH

University of Zurich, ZURICH, CH**Charles University, PRAGUE, CZ**

College of International Relations, PRAGUE, CZ

German Parliament, BERLIN, DE

Irish Parliament, DUBLIN, IE

Bologna Municipality, BOLOGNA, IT

Tuscany Regional Council, FLORENCE, IT

Italian Parliament, ROME, IT

De Balie, AMSTERDAM, NE

University of Amsterdam, AMSTERDAM, NE

Dutch Parliament, THE HAGUE, NE

University of Science and Technology, ÅLESUND, NO

Norwegian Parliament, OSLO, NO

Arizona State University, PHOENIX, US

UC Berkeley, BERKELEY, US

Zaytuna College, BERKELEY, US**Pitzer College, CLAREMONT, US****Scripps College, CLAREMONT, US****UC at Los Angeles, LOS ANGELES, US**

University of Southern California, LOS ANGELES, US

San Jose State University, SAN JOSE, US

Trinity College, HARTFORD, US

Georgetown University, WASHINGTON, US

University of Delaware, NEWARK, US

Florida International University, MIAMI, US

University of Central Florida, ORLANDO, US

Florida State University, TALLAHASSEE, US

University of South Florida, TAMPA, US

University of Chicago, CHICAGO, US

Emory University, ATLANTA, US**Spelman College, ATLANTA, US****University of New Orleans, NEW ORLEANS, US**

Harvard University, BOSTON, US

Tufts University, BOSTON, US

University of Southern Maine, PORTLAND, US**Marygrove College, DETROIT, US****University of Missouri, COLUMBIA, US**

Drew University, MADISON, US

Princeton University, PRINCETON, US

Rutgers University, NEW BRUNSWICK, US

Colgate University, HAMILTON, US

Brooklyn College, NEW YORK, US

City University of New York, NEW YORK, US

College of Staten Island, NEW YORK, US

John Jay College, NEW YORK, US

Temple University, PHILADELPHIA, US

University of Pennsylvania, PHILADELPHIA, US

Swarthmore College, SWARTHMORE, US

George Mason University, FAIRFAX, US

Marquette University, MILWAUKEE, US

British Parliament, LONDON, UK

University College, LONDON, UK**University of London, LONDON, UK**

Oxford University, OXFORD, UK

PUBLICATIONS

LECTURES

HONORS

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#	TOPIC	TITLE
0	Introduction	Mixed Multitude
I	Causes	God of Vengeance
II	Goals	Josephic Messiah
III	Strategies	Josephic Messiah's Donkey
IV	Tactics	Little Phineases
V	Strongholds	Joseph Still Lives
TOTAL	~75,000 words	6 months for 1st draft

Introduction • Mixed Multitude

This book does not need to be prefaced by a biography of its author, who happens to be an Israeli citizen from birth, raised into the Jewish religion and educated into Jewish nationalism. The painstakingly researched facts in this book speak for themselves, and they are true no matter who narrates them. Still, the story of how this book came into being also answers a question that will surely trouble its readers: why has no other journalist managed to author it until now?

I. GOD of VENGEANCE The Causes

1 • 25 centuries

The Kahane movement specifically (and the modern Jewish messianic movement more generally) emerged in the 20th century from the traditions of Orthodox Judaism. But Orthodoxy is not the unadulterated original version of the Jewish religion, as its adherents often claim. Rather, its beliefs and practices have evolved over thousands of years. Briefly charting this theological evolution is vital to understand what the messianic Kahanist movement was modeled upon and meant to respond to.

2 • 19th century

Once Christian countries started to secularize two hundred years ago, Jews were no longer forced to find umbrage in a religious community in order to guarantee their personal rights. This newfound freedom led the vast majority of Jews living there to abandon the Orthodox Judaism of their parents. But how did these new forms of Judaism they then created contend with the most contentious issues of their time – racial supremacy and chattel slavery?

3 • 20th century

The mistakes of the 19th century were followed by absolute blunders in the 20th. While grassroots Jewish groups organized to undercut the Nazis before they could commit genocide, established leaders of the community derailed their efforts. European Jewry was all but extinguished; a Jewish state was created in the Levant, and within two decades it tripled its territory. Kahanism emerged as an answer to the moral failures of WWII and the military successes of the 1967 Six Day War.

II.

The JOSEPHIC MESSIAH

The Goals

4 • Enemies

Meir Kahane began his political career in the civil rights era as an agent of US intelligence, used to pit Jewish Americans against African Americans. He was then tapped by Israeli intelligence to fight against the Soviet Union, hoping to facilitate the emigration of its Jews to Israel, to augment Jewish dominance there. Once he immigrated to Israel, Kahane worked independently, focussing his fury on the Palestinians, and clamoring for Israel to continually expand its borders.

5 • Murderers

Among other acts of ultra-violence, Kahane and his ideology have inspired more than 20 men to commit over 60 murders – mostly of Palestinians in Palestine, but also others, including Jews, making it the Jewish political faction with the highest death toll in the last half-century. Although some Kahanist killers were prosecuted and punished, others got away with their crimes and reinvented themselves as legitimate political players in Israel.

6 • Monarchists

Expelling the non-Jews from Israel is just the first phase of the Kahanist blueprint. Their ultimate objective is to dissolve Israel's secular courts and Knesset, which they aim to replace with rabbinical tribunals and an anointed King to enforce religious rule; their final goal is to destroy the Muslim shrines at the center of Jerusalem, and in their stead build a Temple and abattoir for slaughtering over ten thousand animals a day.

III.

The JOSEPHIC MESSIAH'S DONKEY

The Strategies

7 • Rabbis

Half of Israel's Jews trace their ancestors to Muslim-majority countries. These communities, burnt by Israel's secular-nationalist founding fathers who hailed from northern Europe, account for much of the Kahanist rank and file. In Israel, the Sephardic rabbinical dynasties have incubated and buttressed the Kahanist project. In New York, too, where Sephardim are only a minority amongst Jewish Americans, the Syrian Jewish emigre community shores up support for Kahanist politics.

8 • Politicians

Kahane's ideas and the bloody track record of his followers should have made his movement persona non grata to the American political class. But because ultra-Orthodox Jews – his most loyal American constituency – are mainly concentrated in just a few New York City districts, US lawmakers have pandered to Kahanists for decades. Since New York traditionally votes Democrat, politicians from that party have been among the worst offenders.

9 • Lawyers

While the Kahane movement is infamous for its outspoken and unabashed racism, some of its greatest successes have been secured not by rowdy protestors or vigilante attackers, but rather by the movement's legal eagles. Over the years, the movement's terrorists-turned-lawyers have not only defended the movement's militants from criminal charges, but also secured government funds and convinced legislators to pass laws that they've authored.

IV.

LITTLE PHINEASES

The Tactics

13 • War on Man

Kahanists don't only want to expel Muslims from Israel and the occupied territories; they aim to kick out all Gentiles, including Armenian Christians, Asian laborers and African refugees, to name just a few non-Jewish communities in the country. When asylum-seekers fleeing ethnic cleansing in Sudan and dictatorship in Eritrea began arriving in Israel, Kahanists launched a new race war against them, campaigning to round them into camps and back to the tortures they fled from.

14 • War on Love

Cultural differences, segregated locales and a century of bloody conflict have made social and sexual intercourse a rarity between Jews and Palestinians. Lehava, the Kahanist street gang dedicated to combating miscegenation, hopes to eliminate interracial relationships altogether, and with them, any possibility of coexistence in the country. Now that their political patrons have secured parliamentary immunity and political power, Lehava is free to incite anti-Palestinian pogroms.

15 • War on Woman

For decades, New York supporters of the Kahane movement have helped sex criminals in their communities elude the law. Meanwhile, Israeli society has long suffered from the same sexist attitudes that plague the rest of the world, resulting in a rape culture that's rampant in every sector of society. Still, the misogynist men's rights movement never managed to gain a foothold in Israeli politics - until 2021, when the Kahanist party began to openly champion its cause.

V.

JOSEPH STILL LIVES

The Strongholds

10 • Tapuach

Kahanists long ago derailed the Oslo Peace Process, which was supposed to lead to a sovereign Palestinian state. But when it still appeared as if Israel might withdraw its army bases and civilian settlements from the West Bank, Kahanists plotted to hold onto that territory by force, with the help of heavy arms and ammunition they plotted to acquire from fellow Islamophobic fascists. Israeli state security foiled that plan, so instead the Kahanists hatched a canine fighting force.

11 • Yitzhar

Since Meir Kahane died in 1990, his successors have lived near Nablus, the largest Palestinian city in the northern West Bank. After Kahane's son and successor was killed there in 2000, his neighbor, another American-born rabbi, picked up the torch and now leads Israel's eliminationist camp. Yitzchak Ginsburgh has gathered around Nablus the country's most unruly youth - including Kahane's namesake grandson - and is inspiring a new generation of Kahanist killers.

12 • Caesarea

After Kahane's political career was cut short, his followers and funders hatched a plan to infiltrate the Likud, the largest right-wing party in Israel. Their Jewish Leadership faction gradually increased its influence over the party, and though it never managed to totally usurp power, it dragged the party further to the far-right than ever before. Today, the racist statements of the party's MPs are barely distinguishable from those of their explicitly Kahanist counterparts.

1

**MONOGRAPH
SAMPLE CHAPTER**



KAHANISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S DECADES- LONG COURTSHIP OF RACIST FANATICS

DAVID SHEEN

The Institute for Palestine Studies-USA is an independent 501(c)3 public charity dedicated to the documentation, preservation, and knowledge production on Palestinian Affairs. IPS-USA raises public awareness, informs policy, and engages with various constituencies on significant issues related to Palestine in the US and in the Middle East. IPS-USA is a sister organization of the larger IPS, founded in 1963 and headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon with an office also in Ramallah, Palestine.

CURRENT ISSUES IN DEPTH is a series from the Institute for Palestine Studies USA, which provides history, background, and analysis on pressing topics and events.

COVER PHOTO

JERUSALEM - 05/18/2023: A large yellow and black flag of the far-right Kahane movement flies amongst a sea of Israeli flags flooding the piazza facing Jerusalem's iconic Damascus gate; tens of thousands of young religious Jews marched through the Muslim Quarter of the Old City.

EYAL WARSHAVSKY/SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES



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CURRENT ISSUES **IN DEPTH**

KAHANISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S DECADES-
LONG COURTSHIP OF RACIST FANATICS

DAVID SHEEN

**KAHANISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS: THE DEMOCRATIC
PARTY'S DECADES-LONG COURTSHIP OF RACIST FANATICS**

David Sheen

KAHANISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS: THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S DECADES-LONG COURTSHIP OF RACIST FANATICS

Introduction

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY on Israel and Palestine lurched to the far right during Donald Trump's term as US president. Yet, replacing his administration has hardly remedied the damage his policies wrought; if anything, the situation is more dire for Palestinians.

During Trump's presidency, his son-in-law Jared Kushner and his bankruptcy lawyer David Friedman became, respectively, his special advisor and ambassador to Israel. Both men had previously donated money¹ to groups associated with the followers of deceased Rabbi Meir Kahane, who led the most racist and murderous Jewish political movement of the last half century. Rabbi Dov Lior, who heads Komemiyut, a Kahanist think tank Kushner and Friedman funneled money to,² has repeatedly praised one of the biggest mass murderers in Israeli history: "Baruch Goldstein is a holier martyr than all the holy martyrs of the Holocaust."³ Goldstein murdered twenty-nine Palestinians during prayers in 1994 while wounding another 120.

In appreciation of Trump's support for Israeli expansionism, Kahanist groups⁴ honored the twice-impeached POTUS by minting a coin with his face⁵ and gifting him with a silver Torah crown.⁶

During his last premiership, Benjamin Netanyahu took advantage of Trump's unmitigated support to oversee the installation of more illegal settlement infrastructure in occupied Palestine territories than had been built in the previous quarter century.⁷ Until that time, Netanyahu's terms as premier had overlapped with US presidents from the Democratic Party, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Netanyahu preferred for the Kahanists to operate independently, so that he could plausibly deny any relationship. But once the White House was occupied by Kahane

1 David Sheen, "The US and Israel's Radical Right Connections to the World's Most Racist Rabbis," *New Arab*, May 17, 2018, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/opinion/us-and-israels-radical-right-kahane-connections>.

2 David Sheen, "Trump's Envoys Enable Israel's Worst Extremists," *Electronic Intifada*, June 13, 2018, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/trumps-envoys-enable-israels-worst-extremists/24636>.

3 Sefi Rachlevsky, "The Extremist Rabbi Who Reigns Unobstructed," *Haaretz*, November 5, 2013, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/2013-11-05/ty-article/.premium/as-dark-descends-admit-it-destroyers-arising/0000017f-e9cb-d62c-a1ff-fdfb76120000>.

4 David Sheen, "How a Fascist Party Brought into Israel's Parliament by Netanyahu Helped Him Start the War He Wanted," *The Grayzone*, May 26, 2021, <https://thegrayzone.com/2021/05/26/fascist-party-netanyahu-israels-parliament-war/>.

5 Shaun De Waal, "Trump Pays in Messiah Money," *Mail & Guardian*, July 5, 2019, <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-07-05-00-trump-pays-in-messiah-money/>.

6 Josh Mintz, "WATCH: Group of 150 Orthodox Jews Present Trump With Torah Crown," VIN News, July 12, 2023, <https://vinnews.com/2023/07/12/watch-group-of-150-orthodox-jews-present-trump-with-torah-crown/>.

7 Dror Erkes, "Illegal Israeli Settlements: Construction Creep in Occupied West Bank," *Al Jazeera English*, posted June 30, 2021, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXgzXkh35Jc&t=147s>.

supporters, Netanyahu openly embraced and secured seats in the Israeli parliament for the terrorist movement.⁸

Kahanists have quickly built on their electoral success, establishing a foothold in the Israeli mainstream. Two months after his 2021 election to the Knesset—which conferred upon him parliamentary immunity—Kahanist Jewish Power party leader Itamar Ben Gvir organized anti-Palestinian pogroms across the country—race riots that Israeli Police Commander Kobi Shabtai characterized as “a Jewish intifada.”⁹ According to statistics gathered by Israeli liberal watchdog group Darkenu, local television channels now give Ben Gvir and his racist incitements more screen time than any other Knesset member.¹⁰ The uncritical coverage helped the Kahanists place third in the November 2022 elections, winning fourteen of 120 seats in the Knesset and transforming Ben Gvir into the kingmaker of Israeli politics.

Returning to power, Netanyahu has installed Ben Gvir as his national security minister and given him unprecedented power over Israel’s security forces,¹¹ including the power to relax open-fire regulations, permitting them to gun down Palestinians with even greater impunity.¹² It has also tabled a bill that would give Ben Gvir additional authorities until now only wielded by Israel’s Defense Minister: the power to restrict any person’s movements, employment and communications, and even to imprison them for up to six months at a time, all based on secret evidence.¹³ The new Likud-Kahanist government has also announced its intention to pass a new law permitting Jewish business owners—including medical personnel—to deny services to non-Jews¹⁴ and to overturn an old law that disqualified the Knesset candidacy of unabashed racists who openly call for non-Jews to be expelled from the country.¹⁵

Former US Vice President Mike Pence had already made official the Republican Party’s support for Kahanism in March 2022, when he toured Hebron, the largest city in the West Bank and home to some of the most reactionary Jewish settlers, as a guest of the Kahane movement. There, Pence visited the Ibrahim Mosque—where

8 Sheen, “How a Fascist Party.”

9 Sheen, “How a Fascist Party.”

10 Shira Rubin and Claire Parker, “How Media Exposure Helped Propel Israel’s Far Right to Election Triumph,” *Washington Post*, November 3, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/11/03/israel-election-netanyahu-ben-gvir/>.

11 Owen Alterman, “Israel: Passed Law Grants Ben-Gvir Unprecedented Power over Police,” *i24News*, December 28, 2022, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/politics/1672228055-israel-knesset-passes-law-granting-ben-gvir-unprecedented-power-over-police>.

12 Josh Breiner, “Far-right Ben-Gvir’s Deal with Likud Lets Him Relax Police Open-Fire Regulations,” *Haaretz*, December 29, 2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-12-29/ty-article/.premium/far-right-ben-gvirs-deal-with-likud-lets-him-relax-police-open-fire-regulations/00000185-5e83-dc45-a7ed-7f8308d40000>.

13 “Israel’s Path to a Ben-Gvir Police State,” editorial, *Haaretz*, June 18, 2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/editorial/2023-06-18/ty-article/.premium/israels-path-to-a-ben-gvir-police-state/00000188-cac5-d33a-a1d9-dffda0ec0000>.

14 “Netanyahu’s Far-right Allies: Doctors Could Refuse Treatment on Religious Grounds, Hotels Can Refuse LGBT Guests,” *Haaretz*, December 25, 2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-12-25/ty-article/netanyahu-far-right-allies-doctors-could-refuse-treatment-on-religious-grounds/00000185-48e7-d75d-a5d5-6aef3d370000>.

15 Michael Hauser Tov, “Netanyahu, Kahanist Ally Agree to Nix Knesset Ban on Parties Inciting Racism,” *Haaretz*, December 22, 2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-12-22/ty-article/.premium/netanyahu-kahanist-ally-agree-to-nix-knesset-ban-on-parties-inciting-racism/00000185-3a05-d723-a3d5-7e2ddd770000>.

Goldstein committed his massacre—accompanied by Ben Gvir. “Stay strong, and we’ll stand with you” were the warm words Pence used to bless Ben Gvir.¹⁶

The Christian American far right is embracing the most extreme Zionists: Kahanist terrorists. Meanwhile, the Jewish American far right—which dominates the American Zionist lobby—is embracing the most extreme Christian nationalists: the US Senate, House, and gubernatorial candidates who supported the January 6 insurrection. The most powerful of these pro-Israel lobby groups—the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)—has issued public statements of support for more than a hundred supporters of the Trump-led January 6 riots.¹⁷

At the same time, AIPAC and its various sister PACs have been taking millions of dollars¹⁸ from supporters of Kahanist¹⁹ causes²⁰ and pouring millions of dollars into Democratic primaries to ensure that those races are also won by enthusiastic supporters of Israeli apartheid.²¹ AIPAC’s underhanded attempt to purchase bipartisan support for Israeli dominance is by no means the first time that Democratic Party politicians have vigorously courted the Jewish far right. For decades, ostensibly liberal lawmakers at the highest levels of the Democratic Party have actively courted Kahanists, pandering to those who have enthusiastically promoted the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Most American Jews Are Democrats

After leaving the Oval Office in 2021, Trump claimed that “Israel had absolute power over Congress,”²² positing such a situation as a positive one. “Israel had such power,” Trump added. “And rightfully.”²³

It is “rightful” for Congress to serve Israel, Trump said. Furthermore, he claimed, if Jewish Americans don’t vote for lawmakers like himself who believe Israeli power should trump American interests, they’re either stupid or traitors. “I think any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat, I think it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty,” Trump said in 2019.²⁴ In 2021, Trump revisited

16 Hezki Baruch, “Mike Pence to Ben-Gvir: ‘Stay Strong, and We’ll Stand with You,’” *Israel National News*, March 9, 2022, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/323621>.

17 Ruth Messinger and Mik Moore, “AIPAC vs. Democracy,” *The Nation*, August 12, 2022, <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/democracy-middle-east-israel-palestinians/>.

18 Ben Samuels, “WhatsApp Inventor Makes Record-breaking \$2m Donation to AIPAC,” *Haaretz*, July 21, 2022, <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2022-07-21/ty-article/.premium/whatsapp-inventor-makes-record-breaking-2m-donation-to-aipac/00000182-20f5-d82b-a1eb-3af7da310000>.

19 Asaf Elia-Shalev, “WhatsApp’s Reclusive Founder Has Quietly Become a Megadonor to Jewish Causes,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, June 15, 2022, <https://www.jta.org/2022/06/15/united-states/whatsapp-s-reclusive-founder-has-quietly-become-a-megadonor-to-jewish-causes>.

20 Jill Jacobs, “American Jews, Stop Funding Jewish Terrorism,” *Haaretz*, May 2, 2021, <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2021-05-02/ty-article-opinion/.highlight/american-jews-stop-funding-jewish-terrorism/0000017f-ef1e-d4cd-af7e-fef7e898e0000>.

21 Messenger and Moore, “AIPAC vs. Democracy.”

22 Corbin Bolies, “Trump Claims Jews Had ‘Absolute Control’ over Congress in Antisemitic Interview,” *Daily Beast*, December 17, 2021, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/donald-trump-says-jewish-people-had-absolute-control-of-congress-in-antisemitic-interview-with-barak-ravid>.

23 Ben Samuels, “Trump: Israel ‘Literally Owned Congress’ until a Decade Ago,” *Haaretz*, November 1, 2021, <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2021-11-01/ty-article/trump-israel-literally-owned-congress-until-a-decade-ago/0000017f-da80-d42c-af7e-dff2f2cc0000>.

24 Jonathan Lemire and Darlene Superville, “Trump: Any Jew Voting Democratic Is Uninformed or Disloyal,” *Associated Press*, August 21, 2019, <https://apnews.com/article/benjamin-netanyahu-religion-israel-middle-east-race-and-ethnicity-1bc3065eb2e4414289ef0ac1ac4ebaf7>.

this theme, bemoaning that most Jewish Americans are not in thrall to a foreign state. In his words: “Jewish people who live in the United States don’t love Israel enough.”²⁵

Trump’s assessment of American Jews as insufficiently Zionist had a caveat: “I’m not talking about the Orthodox Jews,” he added.²⁶ Trump’s racist comments unintentionally revealed a truth about the Jewish American electorate: it is multipolar.

When flattened into a single voting block by ethnicity, Jewish Americans are overwhelmingly liberal. In every single US presidential election over the last century, Jewish Americans voted²⁷ for the Democratic candidate in larger proportions²⁸ than the general population.²⁹ That pattern was only broken once: In 1920, Jewish Americans snubbed the Democratic nominee and voted in higher numbers for the Socialist Party candidate Eugene Debs.

Seventy-one percent of Jewish Americans voted Democrat, according to a 2020 Pew poll. But a closer look at the numbers reveals that the Jewish vote is actually bipolar. Take Jewish Americans unaffiliated with any specific sect or affiliated with a liberal stream of the religion, Conservative or Reform: 75 percent of these Jews vote Democrat, according to the poll. But the same poll also shows that 75 percent of Americans who identify as Orthodox Jews vote Republican.³⁰ Fewer than one in ten Jewish Americans identify as Orthodox.³¹

The Orthodox embrace of Judeo-Christian ultranationalist politics is, however, relatively recent. Orthodox Jews—in the United States and in other parts of the world, including Palestine—were initially lukewarm on the Zionist project to create a secular state of Israel. And Orthodox Jews in the United States—certainly in New York City and throughout New York state, where they are most concentrated—had voted en masse for Democratic Party candidates for decades.

Both past political trends collapsed for the same reason: The growing ability of the Israeli state to ward off any military threat without paying any political price. For some Orthodox Jews, Israel’s triumph over multiple Arab armies in the 1967 war—which more than tripled the country’s land mass and conquered contested

25 Sam Sokol, “Trump Says U.S. Jews ‘Don’t Love Israel Enough,’” *Haaretz*, June 17, 2021, <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/2021-06-17/ty-article/.premium/trump-says-u-s-jews-dont-love-israel-enough/0000017f-e368-d38f-a57f-e77af6790000>.

26 “Trump Says US Jews ‘Don’t Love Israel Enough,’ Because They Didn’t Vote for Him,” *Times of Israel*, June 18, 2021, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-says-us-jews-dont-love-israel-enough-because-they-didnt-vote-for-him/>.

27 “U.S. Presidential Elections: Jewish Voting Record (1916–Present),” Jewish Virtual Library, accessed February 15, 2023, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-voting-record-in-u-s-presidential-elections>.

28 David Sheen, “False Messiah’s Donkey [FULL],” posted November 24, 2022, YouTube video, 1:36:20, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzPEr9VU9rQ&t=1198s>.

29 “List of United States Presidential Elections by Popular Vote Margin,” Wikipedia, accessed February 15, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_presidential_elections_by_popular_vote_margin.

30 “Three-Quarters of Orthodox Jews Identify with or Lean toward the Republican Party,” Pew Research Center, May 4, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/u-s-jews-political-views/pf_05-11-21_jewish-americans-08-0/.

31 “Compared with Older Jews, Youngest Jewish Adults Include Larger Shares of Both Orthodox and People with No Denominational Identity,” Pew Research Center, May 4, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/pf_05-11-21_jewish-americans-00-1/.

holy sites—inaugurated a pre-messianic era, in which Jews should not strive for coexistence among the nations, but rather, dominance of them.

The Effects of the 1967 War on Jewish Movements in Israel and the United States

Rabbi Kahane founded the Jewish Defense League (JDL) in 1968 to spread his doctrine of Jewish exceptionalism. Incited by Kahane, the JDL shot up homes,³² torched cars,³³ bombed boats,³⁴ and burned bookstores.³⁵ By the mid-1980s, Jewish supremacists were considered one of the top domestic terrorist threats in the United States, according to the FBI.³⁶

By that point, Kahane had already immigrated to Israel, where he was elected to parliament. The founding father of Israel's unabashed fascist movement campaigned for the outright expulsion of all Palestinians—or, as he termed them, “germs that are poisoning us.”³⁷

Kahane's backers included Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik (1903–93), the spiritual leader of Orthodox Jewry's flagship religious seminary, New York City's Yeshiva University. When Kahane was first elected to the Knesset in 1984, Israeli President Chaim Herzog (father of current Israeli President Isaac Herzog) received a scathing letter from Soloveitchik for not inviting Kahane to talks for the formation of the new Israeli government.

In 1987, Kahane spoke at Shaare Zion in Brooklyn, the largest Sephardic congregation in the United States, in the presence of Rabbi Abraham Hecht—who served as president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America, a New York-based organization of eight hundred Orthodox rabbis, until his death in 2013.

After Kahane had concluded his prepared remarks, Rabbi Hecht spoke up, publicly committing himself to Kahane's cause: “What this man speaks is truth. Real truth. We should help him.”³⁸ When one excited synagogue member suggested that the synagogue funnel donations to Kahane's purse, Hecht explained that the contributions could not be explicitly connected to Shaare Zion.

“Well, you can't do it through the synagogue ... we know better about that,” Hecht said. He turned to the event organizer and told him, “You know what I'm talking about. We have to work it out in such a way.”

32 “Mayor Edward Koch Monday Denounced Rabbi Meir Kahane, Founder,” *UPI*, November 16, 1981, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1981/11/16/Mayor-Edward-Koch-Monday-denounced-Rabbi-Meir-Kahane-founder/9820374734800/>.

33 Howard W. French, “3 J.D.L. Members Seized in Bombings,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1987, <https://www.nytimes.com/1987/05/09/nyregion/3-jdl-members-seized-in-bombings.html>.

34 “South Bay History,” *Daily Breeze*, Internet Archive, January 13, 1953 (accessed February 15, 2023), <http://web.archive.org/web/20131025235316/http://blogs.dailybreeze.com/history/2011/08/03/carib-star-bombing/>.

35 “The City; Bomb Damages 21st St. Bookstore,” September 7, 1981, *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/09/07/nyregion/the-city-bomb-damages-21st-st-bookstore.html>.

36 US Department of Justice–FBI, “FBI Analysis of Terrorist Incidents and Terrorist Related Activities in the United States 1985,” December 31, 1985, <https://bit.ly/434Fhjm>.

37 Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God: The Plot to Kill Yitzhak Rabin* (London: Granta Publications, 1998), <http://bit.ly/3McIRmF>.

38 “Rabbi Meir Kahane,” David Betesh, YouTube video, posted January 8, 2016, 1:25:44, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRHiUKiuT-M&t=3850s>.

Orthodox support for Kahane was not confined to the community mainstream. Kahane and his followers had long counted on the support of even the most liberal Orthodox rabbis.

Rabbi Avi Weiss began his career at Yeshiva University—he was ordained there and stayed on as a lecturer for decades. But, unlike the vast majority of his colleagues, Weiss supported the ordination of women as Orthodox rabbis. He established his own seminary, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, to train them for that role. When the Rabbinical Council of America refused to accredit female graduates of his coed seminary, he resigned from the organization in protest.

Though he represents the most liberal position of Orthodox Judaism, Avi Weiss is also counted amongst Meir Kahane’s most important supporters. Weiss “felt drawn to Rabbi Kahane from the beginning”³⁹ and consistently provided a platform for Kahane to express himself, normalizing his hateful invective. “Because of my affinity for him, I invited Meir many times to speak at my synagogue,” Weiss wrote in his autobiography. “He spoke for almost two hours. The synagogue was packed and the congregation was riveted; no one moved.”⁴⁰

Even when Kahane was jailed in the United States, Weiss stood up for him, trying to convince the judge that Kahane meant no harm, despite all evidence to the contrary, including letters from Kahane directing his followers to “blow up the Iraqi Embassy in Washington” and “get someone to shoot a Russian diplomat.”⁴¹

“I had also testified on his behalf at his trial,” Weiss wrote in the chapter of his autobiography dedicated to their relationship.⁴²

Weiss also went to bat for other Jewish supremacist terrorists, including the Jewish Underground. In the early 1980s, a network of Orthodox Jewish Israelis committed a series of terrorist attacks on Palestinian civilians. They bombed the cars of three Palestinian mayors, blowing off the leg of Ramallah’s mayor and both legs of the mayor of Nablus. They also bombed Hebron University, murdering three of its students and wounding dozens more.

For decades, ostensible liberal lawmakers at the highest levels of the Democratic Party have actively courted Kahanists, pandering to those who have enthusiastically promoted the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

39 Avraham Weiss, *Open up the Iron Door: Memoirs of a Soviet Jewry Activist* (New Milford: The Toby Press, 2015), <http://bit.ly/40MkwHB>

40 Weiss, *Open up the Iron Door: Memoirs of a Soviet Jewry Activist*, <http://bit.ly/40MkwHB>

41 Robert Friedman, “The Sayings of Rabbi Kahane,” *New York Review of Books*, February 13, 1986, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1986/02/13/the-sayings-of-rabbi-kahane/>. <http://bit.ly/3Gh5MIH>

42 Weiss, *Open up the Iron Door: Memoirs of a Soviet Jewry Activist*, <http://bit.ly/40MkwHB>

Israel finally arrested the terrorists of the Jewish Underground just before they were about to murder dozens more Palestinians. Brought to trial for their crimes, they received an outpouring of support from Orthodox groups in Israel—and the United States. Their American supporters included Rabbi Weiss, who denied that the men deserved to be called terrorists. He argued that Jewish supremacist militia members “deserve our commendation.”⁴³

In spite of his open support for Jewish supremacist terrorism and for Kahane, its foremost proponent, Avi Weiss positioned himself as an unbiased advocate for Jewish rights—and even convinced some Democrats of it.

In late 1990, Israeli messianists announced plans to enter the holiest Muslim site in the country, the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, and to lay a cornerstone of the Jewish temple that they want to build on its ruins. When thousands of Palestinians rushed to al-Aqsa to defend it, Israeli police mowed down the crowd, killing nineteen men in one day. After the United Nations General Assembly condemned Israel for the massacre, Weiss organized a demonstration under the banner “The UN is anti-Israel.” He convinced Democratic mayor Ed Koch and Democratic city comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman to attend.⁴⁴

Kahanist Rabbis and New York Democratic Politicians

The most racist of the pro-Kahane Orthodox leaders went on to become spiritual advisors to top Democratic Party politicians. Rabbi Moshe Tendler—who died in 2021—was the headmaster of the rabbinical seminary of Yeshiva University. He was a follower⁴⁵ and friend of Meir Kahane—he gave the main eulogy at his 1990 funeral service in New York City. Before a crowd of thousands of mourners, Tendler mocked Jews who did not embrace Kahane’s call to ethnically cleanse Arabs from Israel/Palestine, disparaging them as “self-hating Jewish assimilationists.”⁴⁶

Tendler also played a pivotal role in the election campaigns of the highest law enforcement official in New York’s Rockland County, District Attorney Kenneth Gribetz. Gribetz’s twenty-year run as DA made him “one of New York’s most prominent Democrats,” according to *New York Magazine*.⁴⁷ The magazine described Tendler as Gribetz’s “mentor,” “secret weapon,” and “guardian of his political fortune,” noting that “[y]ear after year, Tendler delivered the votes for Gribetz.”⁴⁸

Tendler continued to have the ear of Democratic lawmakers in New York state well into the 2000s. At an annual dinner of the far-right Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) in 2004, just after the passing of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, Tendler slurred Arafat’s successor, Mahmoud Abbas. Inspired by

43 Jerry Schwartz, “Funds Raised to Aid Men Charged with Murder,” *Panama City News Herald*, September 28, 1984, <https://bit.ly/3mYR1DT>.

44 Associated Press, “Pro-Israel Rallies Protest U.N. Acts,” *Post-Standard*, October 22, 1990, <http://bit.ly/3ZIBGVp>.

45 Jean Herschaft, “Social Calendar,” *Indiana Jewish Post and Opinion*, November 14, 1990, <https://bit.ly/3NeZAVI>.

46 Ari L. Goldman, “Grief and Anger at Kahane’s Funeral,” *New York Times*, November 7, 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/07/nyregion/grief-and-anger-at-kahane-s-funeral.html>.

47 David France, “The Fall of Boss Gribetz,” *New York Magazine*, June 5, 1995, 28, <https://bit.ly/3NboTb7>.

48 France, “The Fall of Boss Gribetz,” 29, 30.

Tendler's rhetoric, then Democratic candidate for New York City mayor, Anthony Weiner took the microphone and called for an end to all US aid to the Palestinian Authority, proclaiming, "My name is Anthony Weiner and I am from the ZOA wing of the Democratic Party."⁴⁹

Access to New York's most powerful lawmakers did not temper Tendler's extremist streak and over the years he continued to stake out the Jewish community's most reactionary political positions. In 2008, Tendler dismissed the doctrinal rulings of Israel's top rabbis⁵⁰ and broke the religious ice, becoming the first prominent Orthodox rabbi from the United States to ascend to Jerusalem's Holy Esplanade.⁵¹

The site of two Muslim holy shrines—the silver-topped Al-Aqsa Mosque and the golden-topped Dome of the Rock—the esplanade is also called the Temple Mount, as Jewish temples stood there thousands of years ago. Tendler was escorted to the site by the Temple Institute, a group that works to replace the Muslim shrines with a new Jewish temple, and Yisrael Ariel, the institute's chief rabbi who ran for Knesset with Meir Kahane and has called for Israel to conquer the entire Middle East, killing any Muslim or Christian that refuses to renounce their religion.⁵²

In 2010, after hundreds of Israeli rabbis signed a decree forbidding Israeli Jews from selling or renting apartments to non-Jews,⁵³ almost all American rabbis—including Orthodox ones—distanced themselves from the pronouncement. Tendler was the only prominent US rabbi to openly support the racist edict. "I think it's part of a concern—and I believe a rightful one," said Tendler. "There's a war going on, and we're trying our best to maintain normalcy."⁵⁴

From a Kahanist Terror Squadron to the New York State Assembly

In 1983, the Kahanist movement made unprecedented political inroads, securing a seat for one of Kahane's top henchmen, Dov Hikind, in the New York State Assembly. Hikind was a close confidant of Kahane,⁵⁵ a former leader of the JDL that Kahane founded,⁵⁶ and the head of one of the JDL's underground offshoots called SOIL, which carried out a number of terrorist attacks in New York. He also served as a New York state assemblyman between 1983 and 2018—as a Democrat.

49 *New York Sun* Contributor, "Weiner, Brown Back Israel at ZOA Dinner," *New York Sun*, December 13, 2004, <https://www.nysun.com/article/new-york-new-york-desk-2004-12-13>.

50 "SHOCKING: Rabbi Tendler Says Poskei Hador Not Talking Halacha but Issuing Political Statement," *Yeshiva World*, September 4, 2008, <https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/general/23062/shocking-rabbi-tendler-says-poskei-hador-not-talking-halacha-but-issuing-political-statement.html>.

51 Nadav Shragai, "Ultra-Orthodox Prohibition on Entering Temple Mount Splinters," *Haaretz*, July 8, 2008, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5000196>.

52 Sheen, "How a Fascist Party."

53 Patrick Martin, "Israel Rabbi's Edict Targets Arabs," *Globe and Mail*, Internet Archive, December 12, 2010 (accessed February 15, 2023), <http://web.archive.org/web/20101216174119/https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/africa-mideast/israel-rabbis-edict-targets-arabs/article1834933/>.

54 Josh Nathan-Kazis, "U.S. Rabbis Offer Rare Rebuke of Israeli Edict," *Forward*, December 15, 2010, <https://forward.com/news/133983/us-rabbis-offer-rare-rebuke-of-israeli-edict/>.

55 Ari L. Goldman, "Outpouring for Kahane: Pity or a New Respect?" *New York Times*, November 8, 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/08/nyregion/outpouring-for-kahane-pity-or-a-new-respect.html>.

56 Activity Report, Jewish Defense League, January 25, 1972, <https://bit.ly/40DmadV>.

In the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic was decimating gay communities across the country. Open homophobia was commonplace and civil rights laws had not yet been amended to outlaw discrimination against LGBT citizens on the basis of their sexual identities. Gay Americans took to the streets to demand the protection of the law, and state legislatures across the country began to listen to them.

But Dov Hikind, a Democratic state representative, would have none of it. In 1983, he spearheaded efforts to torpedo a bill that would have made it illegal to terminate the employment contracts and property rental contracts of LGBT Americans. “This legislation is dangerous,” Hikind argued.⁵⁷ In the state assembly and in the media, Hikind complained that passage of the law would lead to homosexuals demanding that the government “present their lifestyle as perfectly legitimate,” saying he feared a future where public school textbooks would depict “two men holding hands and two women holding hands.”⁵⁸

His views on race were just as retrograde. As Hikind fought to withhold rights from marginalized communities, he also fought to preserve privileges for the most powerful groups in society. In 1986, Hikind organized New York State Assembly hearings to scrutinize affirmative action programs, terming them “reverse discrimination.”⁵⁹

Three decades later, Hikind’s views on race were still stuck in the pre-civil rights era. In 2013, at a holiday party, Hikind dressed up as a basketball player, wearing blackface. When he was inevitably challenged on his choice to paint his face, Hikind said that he would “do it again in a minute.”⁶⁰

Despite his contemptible opinions, his violent past, and his continued support for the most racist Jewish political figures of the twentieth century, Hikind has never been challenged in party primaries.⁶¹ The Democratic Party didn’t even pull back from Hikind after he was charged in 1997 with receiving bribes from a nonprofit he had helped funnel state funds to. The following year, a jury convicted the head of the nonprofit, Rabbi Elimelech Naiman—a friend of Hikind and an admirer of Meir Kahane⁶²—of bribing Hikind with \$40,000 worth of gifts, but oddly exonerated Hikind of receiving those same bribes.⁶³ Democratic Party politicians in the city and state of New York have deferred to Hikind for decades, because they believe him to be the “gatekeeper of Orthodox Brooklyn.”⁶⁴

57 United Press International, “Assembly OKs Gay Housing Rights Bill,” *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, June 26, 1985, Newspaper Archive, <https://bit.ly/3owBLYM>.

58 Associated Press, “Assembly Rejects ‘Gay Rights’ Bill,” *Herkimer Evening Telegram*, May 10, 1983, Newspaper Archive, <https://bit.ly/3V85iea>.

59 Associated Press, “Legislator Wants Investigation of Discrimination against Whites,” *Herkimer Evening Telegram*, June 19, 1986, Newspaper Archive, <https://bit.ly/3AxHWot>.

60 Hunter Walker, “Dov Hikind Parties Down for Purim in ‘Black Basketball Player’ Costume,” *PolitickerNY*, February 25, 2013 (accessed February 15, 2023), Internet Archive, <http://web.archive.org/web/20130812121155/http://politicker.com/2013/02/dov-hikind-parties-down-for-purim-in-black-basketball-player-costume/>.

61 Vince Beiser, “Hikind’s on the Rise,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 13, 1995, LexisNexis, <https://bit.ly/3NcxJFQ>.

62 Goldman, “Grief and Anger at Kahane’s Funeral.”

63 Lawrence Cohler-Esses, “Juror: Hikind Acquittal Was Easy,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 17, 1998, <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/juror-hikind-acquittal-was-easy/>.

64 Adam Chandler, “Dov Hikind Apologizes for Real This Time,” *Tablet*, February 26, 2013, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/dov-hikind-apologizes-for-real-this-time>.

Orthodox support for Kahane was not confined to the community mainstream. Kahane and his followers had long counted on the support of even the most liberal Orthodox rabbis.

Hikind was able to deliver the votes of his constituents for thirty-five years because his Brooklyn district of Borough Park contains the largest concentration of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jews in the United States—conservative communities that zealously obey the decrees of their religious leaders. “The concept is a very simple one: a bloc vote,” Hikind has explained. “You know, sometimes I have to go out and convince you to vote for me. Then I have to convince your wife, then your son. But in this community, when I get the [rabbi] ... I’ll get the whole community.”⁶⁵

By running as a Democrat, Hikind ensured that no alternative candidate could challenge him from the left. Once the Borough Park assembly seat was secured, Hikind consistently crossed the aisle, campaigning in the Orthodox community and urging his constituents to elect Republican lawmakers to other government posts.⁶⁶

“[US Senator] Al D’Amato won with less than one percent of the vote. And my community was responsible for that difference! And I was involved in that race day and night,” Hikind told the *San Diego Jewish World*. “And then, the following year, it was [New York City Mayor Rudy] Giuliani. And the following year, it was [New York Governor George] Pataki. I endorsed all those people!”⁶⁷

D’Amato, Giuliani, and Pataki met at the Sheraton Hotel in New York in May 1995 to pay tribute to the Kahanist Representative Hikind. None of the men balked when Hikind was introduced to the audience as an acolyte of “our late hero, Meir Kahane.”⁶⁸ Hikind had direct access to the state’s top decision-makers, enabling him to influence their thoughts and actions pertaining to Israel.⁶⁹

The payback did not take long to come. After his election, Pataki—who governed New York state from 1995 until 2006—hired Hikind’s wife, Shani, also a Kahanist,⁷⁰ as his director of community relations for New York City.⁷¹ In June, Pataki attended a fundraising dinner for Shani Hikind’s other employer, the Jerusalem Reclamation Project, the US fundraising arm of the Kahanist settler

65 Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*, 154.

66 Beth Sarafraz, “Hikind Reflects on Long, Passionate Career,” *San Diego Jewish World*, December 10, 2018, <https://www.sdjewishworld.com/2018/12/10/hikind-reflects-on-long-controversial-career/>.

67 Sarafraz, “Hikind Reflects on Long, Passionate Career.”

68 Beiser, “Hikind’s on the Rise.”

69 Beiser, “Hikind’s on the Rise.”

70 Robert Friedman, “Radical Jews,” *New York Magazine*, November 20, 1995, <https://bit.ly/3Lsnqfp>.

71 Clifford J. Levy, “Indicted Assemblyman Was a Fighter, and Still Is,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/08/08/nyregion/indicted-assemblyman-was-a-fighter-and-still-is.html>.

organization Ateret Cohanim.⁷² Days later, Senator D’Amato introduced a bill in Congress hobbling US aid to the Palestinian Authority.⁷³

For decades, the Jerusalem Reclamation Project has been spearheaded by Hikind’s hero,⁷⁴ Joseph Frager, the editor of a seven-volume compendium of Rabbi Meir Kahane’s racist writings.⁷⁵

Ateret Cohanim itself was founded by Meir Kahane’s younger brother Nachman Kahane. The headmaster of its flagship seminary is Shlomo Aviner, a rabbi related to Meir Kahane by marriage (their children-in-law are siblings) and who has openly praised his path;⁷⁶ the yeshiva’s educational director is Rabbi Mordechai Ettinger, Kahane’s son-in-law.

After Kahane

From the time he immigrated to Israel, and for the next two decades until his death, Kahane would regularly return to New York to give lectures to American crowds, especially at Yeshiva University, and to raise funds from his supporters in the United States.

Kahane was an expert at crowdfunding, quite literally. New York City’s Salute to Israel Parade was an annual opportunity for him to soak up the (financial) love of his supporters. Dozens of his adherents would wear matching movement regalia and chant his name and racist slogans, such as “Jews in, Arabs Out!” An aide would walk around with a cardboard box, collecting cash donations from the crowds that lined Fifth Avenue. Kahane’s US fundraising trips were immensely profitable, as some of his benefactors were among the wealthiest philanthropists in the Jewish community.⁷⁷

In 1988, Kahane’s party was projected to win between 5–10 percent of the seats in Israel’s legislative elections. Such a result would have likely made him a minister, but his candidacy was disqualified due to his overt racism, which was seen as damaging to Israel’s public image. Two years into that session of parliament, Kahane was killed by an assassin’s bullet. As Kahane’s death shocked and galvanized his followers, it also challenged the oligarchs who bankrolled them: Which projects should they fund to achieve his objectives posthumously?

In the years and decades that followed, the Kahane movement’s richest patrons decided to diversify their budget. They simultaneously funded Kahanist projects, including Ateret Cohanim, and also the political career of a reactionary rising star in the Likud party who had been the celebrated speaker at Ateret Cohanim’s

72 Beiser, “Hikind’s on the Rise.”

73 Beiser, “Hikind’s on the Rise.”

74 Daniel Perez, “NY, Israeli Leaders Pay Tribute to Top Activists,” *Israel National News*, February 13, 2013, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/165208>.

75 Libby Kahane, ed., *Rabbi Meir Kahane: Beyond Words, Selected Writings, 1960–1990* (New York: Kahane, 2011).

76 Roy Sharon, “Rabbi Aviner: Surely Rabbi Kahane was Right” [in Hebrew], March 21, 2009, <https://www.makorishon.co.il/nrg/online/1/ART1/869/096.html>, English translation: <https://bit.ly/3Ar2mzz>.

77 Robert I. Friedman, *The False Prophet: Rabbi Meir Kahane, from FBI Informant to Knesset Member* (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill Books, 1990), <https://bit.ly/3N6zgNz>.

first New York fundraising dinner: Benjamin Netanyahu.⁷⁸ The ultra-Zionists who have funded both Kahanist initiatives and Netanyahu's personal war chest include Manfred Lehmann, Reuben and Rose Mattus, Irving Moskowitz, Kenneth Abramowitz, Simon Falic, and Sam Domb, among others.

American Officials Funded by Kahane Movement Supporters

In late 1990, a mere month after Kahane was killed, Likud party supporters in New York were already showering Kahane's followers with honors. The Jabotinsky Foundation⁷⁹—named for the founder of the movement that would become Likud—granted its top award, worth \$100,000, to Likud party leader and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. But at a posh ceremony at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, the Jabotinskyites also distributed "Defenders of Jerusalem" medals to a host of Kahanists, including Rabbi Abraham Hecht, Representative Dov Hikind, financier Manfred Lehmann,⁸⁰ and Ateret Cohanim fundraiser Joseph Frager.⁸¹

Cochairing the lavish Likud-Kahanist crossover event was a major contributor to both camps—to the Kahanist Jerusalem Reclamation Project⁸² and to the aspiring Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu.⁸³ New York hotel tycoon Sam Domb.

In every decade since the 1980s,⁸⁴ tenants' rights advocates have accused the real estate magnate Domb of shady business practices. After amassing a fortune by converting hotels into upscale condominiums, Domb began using his affluence to buy influence in the Jewish community and beyond. Among his first acquisitions was the high holiday of New York City's Zionist community, the biggest public celebration on its calendar: the annual Salute to Israel Parade down Fifth Avenue.

In 1991, the parade costs amounted to \$300,000. In exchange for footing the bill, Domb was given the title of grand marshal and permitted to handpick his

78 Joseph Frager, "Ateret Cohanim is Now 36 Years Old," Zion's Corner (blog), *Israel National News*, June 21, 2015, Internet Archive, <http://web.archive.org/web/20150621185413/https://www.israelnationalnews.com/Blogs/Message.aspx/7137>; Sharon, "Rabbi Aviner."

79 "Eryk Spektor," Jabotinsky Institute in Israel, accessed February 15, 2023, <http://en.jabotinsky.org/archive/eryk-spektor/>.

80 On Lehmann's politics: after the 1994 massacre by Baruch Goldstein, Lehmann published op-eds heaping praise on Goldstein and lamenting that leftists would not acknowledge that he was a "hero." See "One Year Later: Purim Hebron Remembered," Manfred R. Lehmann website, accessed February 15, 2023, <https://www.manfredlehmann.com/sieg440.html>.

81 "Yitzhak Shamir Receives \$100,000 Defender of Jerusalem Award," *PR Newswire*, December 10, 1990, <https://bit.ly/3HbO0XK>.

82 "Clouds of Last Year Won't Rain on This Year's Parade for Israel," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 19, 1994, Jewish Telegraphic Agency Archive, <https://bit.ly/3L6W4Ki>.

83 Ami Pedahzur, *The Triumph of Israel's Radical Right* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012).

84 For the 1980s, see J. J. Goldberg, "Sam Domb Buys a Parade," *Jerusalem Report*, June 6, 1991, LexisNexis, <https://bit.ly/3HYHbZP>; for the 1990s, see Joel Siegel, "Rudy Pal Got OK on Illegal Rehab," *New York Daily News*, November 10, 1995, LexisNexis, <https://bit.ly/3LPsidA>; for the 2000s, see Dept of Housing Preservation & Development v. Domb, May 13, 2009, CityAdmin Online Library, http://archive.citylaw.org/oath/09_Cases/09-586.pdf; for the 2010s, see Michael Gartland and Stephen Rex Brown, "Owner of Upper West Side Homeless Hotel Sought Access to Mayor de Blasio through Corrupt Donors: Documents," *New York Daily News*, September 28, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-deblasio-sam-domb-homeless-hotel-20200928-siagw65avayxn4zyv2dspbnhq-story.html>.

fellow marshals. Among those who Domb chose were the Kahanists Hikind and Frager.⁸⁵

The event grew to include a concert in Central Park, featuring speeches from some of the most racist figures in the Jewish community.

New York City politicians from both sides of the aisle have attended the concerts. Former Congressman Anthony Weiner, former State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and State Assemblyman David Weprin⁸⁶ have been among the attendees from the Democratic Party.⁸⁷

Likewise, the recipients of Domb's donations include politicians from both major political parties in the United States. In 2020, Domb helped fund Democrat Bill de Blasio's run for the US presidency; Domb gave the maximum legal contribution to New York City mayor's war chest personally and through a hotel he owns.⁸⁸

"I do not donate to parties, but rather to people who support Israel," Domb told Haaretz in 2003, noting that he had funded Bill Clinton's presidential campaign "even before he officially declared his candidacy."⁸⁹

At a public function earlier that same year, Clinton noticed that Domb was also in attendance. Clinton abandoned the circle he was mingling in, made a beeline for his political patron, and "hugged Domb warmly and seemed as happy to see him as if he were greeting a family member he had not seen in a long time."⁹⁰

The public display of affection was a demonstration of loyalty to his donor, after Domb had embarrassed Clinton in a national security scandal a decade earlier.

In the fall of 1993, Domb attended a White House dinner hosted by Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, bringing along Latvian-born billionaire Grigory Luchansky as his guest. At the event, Clinton, Domb, and Luchansky chatted and then posed for a photograph. That photo was subsequently published in a Russian newspaper, boosting Luchansky's standing back home. Domb followed up with a \$160,000 donation to the Democratic National Committee.

It later emerged that Luchansky was implicated by Western intelligence agencies—including the CIA and Interpol—of smuggling drugs, weapons, and nuclear materials, and of money laundering at a colossal scale.⁹¹ "It would be unwise in the extreme for there to be any ties between the US government and Luchansky," said then CIA Director James Woolsey.⁹²

85 Goldberg, "Sam Domb Buys a Parade."

86 "17th Annual Israel Day Concert in Central Park," *Jewish Star*, May 14, 2010, 28, http://cdn3.creativecirclemedia.com/jewishstar/files/88a7558adc2010_05_star-05_14_2010.pdf.

87 "16th Annual Israel Day Concert in Central Park," *Jewish Star*, May 29, 2009, 12, https://cdn3.creativecirclemedia.com/jewishstar/files/35ef57556a2009_05_click-here-for-the-print-edition-for-may-29-2009.pdf.

88 Donna Rachel Edmunds, "Jewish Businessman at Center of Controversy after Hotel Used for Homeless," *Jerusalem Post*, August 19, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/jewish-businessman-at-center-of-controversy-after-hotel-used-for-homeless-639213>.

89 Shlomo Shamir, "Sam Domb—A One-Man Organization," *Haaretz*, December 10, 2003, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.4782831>.

90 Shamir, "Sam Domb."

91 S. C. Gwynn and Larry Gurwin, "The Russia Connection," *Time*, July 8, 1996, <https://time.com/vault/issue/1996-07-08/page/38/>, pp. 32-6.

92 Congressional Record—House, US House of Representatives, May 21, 1998, <https://bit.ly/3LovE8h>.

When 60 Minutes asked Domb for comment, he hung up on them. Mike Wallace then showed up at his office to get an in-person response. “Off camera, Domb told us that he was simply trying to do business with Luchansky and was trying to impress him by taking him to meet the president,” said Wallace. But when CBS cameras arrived, Domb ducked into the stairwell and fled.⁹³

Kahanists Back Netanyahu’s First Campaign for Prime Minister

One month before Bill Clinton dined at the White House with Domb and Luchansky, Israel signed the Oslo Accords with the PLO, under Labor Party Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Emissaries of Israel and the PLO had first met face-to-face in secret meetings a decade earlier, in Europe and the United States. But when Rabin returned to the premiership after a fifteen-year absence, defeating the right-wing Likud party, the opportunity to negotiate with the PLO became a real possibility for the first time.

In response, the Kahanist community of New York City waged a war against the Oslo agreement and the Labor government. Hours before the treaty was even signed on the White House lawn, a Kahanist threw eggs at Rabin’s ambassador to the United States, Itamar Rabinovich, at a New York City synagogue.⁹⁴

From his first public handshake with Arafat in September of 1993, to his assassination in November of 1995, Israeli incitement against Rabin paled in comparison to the hateful campaign waged against him by right-wing Jews in the United States. At a raucous rally in Times Square in December 1993, Domb and Democratic New York City Councilman Anthony Weiner riled up a crowd⁹⁵ carrying placards that called Rabin a murderer. Kahanist State Representative Dov Hikind added fuel to the fire, warning that Rabin was leading Israel to national suicide.⁹⁶ One rally attendee told the Village Voice that “Rabin is worse than Hitler ... Rabin should be killed.”⁹⁷

In November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli Jew who was inspired by the Kahanist killer Baruch Goldstein. Six months later, Benjamin Netanyahu became prime minister of Israel, with the help of Kahanists. When Netanyahu won the Likud Party leadership in 1993, he did so with funding from Kahanist American billionaire benefactors, including Irving Moskowitz and Domb.⁹⁸ In 1996, Netanyahu clinched the premiership with help from Hikind, who utilized the same tactics that had proved successful back in Brooklyn.

93 Grigori Louchansky; Questions Surround an Alleged Russian Mobster Who Has Been Investigated by Several Countries, Including the US, but Has Attended DNC Fund-Raisers for President Clinton, *60 Minutes*, transcript, CBS News, December 6, 1998, LexisNexis, <https://bit.ly/444v8DF>.

94 “Mike Guzofsky Throws Eggs at Traitor Ambassador Rabinowitz,” OdKahaneChai, posted June 6, 2007, YouTube video, 00:00:25, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msFt11FDILL>.

95 Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*, 136.

96 Friedman, “Radical Jews.”

97 Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*, 136.

98 Pedahzur, *The Triumph of Israel’s Radical Right*, 111.

“ **As Kahane’s death shocked and galvanized his followers, it also challenged the oligarchs who bankrolled them: Which projects should they fund to achieve his objectives posthumously?**”

“There were people from America involved in the Israeli campaign,” Hiking admitted. “I was in Israel during the election, and it was a remarkable thing to watch in the community of the observant and the Hasidic community. An incredible effort was made to get the Orthodox community to be unified, every single one of them. I sat with the Belzer Rebbe and had a long talk with him a few days before the election. I didn’t tell him what to do, but he knew where I stood. And I met with the Gerer Rebbe, and I met with the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, and I met with many others in the last four, five days before the elections.”⁹⁹

Chabad, the largest ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect in the world—which had long been in close alliance with the Kahanists¹⁰⁰—also played a pivotal role in Netanyahu’s election. To ensure Netanyahu would win, the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s ambassador to Israel,¹⁰¹ millionaire Joseph Gutnick, funded a countrywide campaign supporting Netanyahu’s candidacy.

Back in New York, the Jewish far right breathed a huge sigh of relief. In 1992, Prime Minister Rabin had harshly chastised AIPAC’s leaders, alleging that they had sabotaged sensitive diplomatic relations between his government and the American administration.¹⁰² One of the AIPAC officers that Rabin had dressed down, Thomas Dine, stepped down from his role as executive director. Malcolm Hoenlein—the right-wing executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations—was expected to follow suit.¹⁰³

But with Netanyahu replacing Labor in the elections following Rabin’s assassination, Hoenlein was able to retain his leading role in the Conference of Presidents. And, on the same day that Netanyahu was elected Israeli prime minister, AIPAC announced it would install Howard Kohr, a Likud party supporter, as its executive director.¹⁰⁴ As of 2022, both men still lead their respective lobbying groups.

99 Karpin and Friedman, *Murder in the Name of God*, 155.

100 David Sheen, “Three Decades After His Death, Kahane’s Message of Hate Is More Popular Than Ever,” *Middle East Report Online*, February 2, 2021, <https://merip.org/2021/02/three-decades-after-his-death-kahanes-message-of-hate-is-more-popular-than-ever/>.

101 Dianna Cahn, “Netanyahu Patron Vows to Invest in Hebron Settlers,” *Associated Press*, January 20, 1997, <https://apnews.com/article/8c2294bf5a4c13628dbb8855c12e86e3>.

102 Jonathan Broder, “AIPAC Shrugs off Rabin’s Attack,” *Jerusalem Report*, September 10, 1992, <https://bit.ly/3V5TmJz>.

103 Jonathan Broder, “Tom Dine Gives Up the Reins at AIPAC,” *Jerusalem Report*, November 5, 1992, <https://bit.ly/3ApgfhK>.

104 Matthew Dorf, “AIPAC Executive Director Resigns to Take New Post,” *Daily News Bulletin*, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 29, 1996, <https://bit.ly/3n5H6wf>.

Meanwhile, Neal Sher—the caretaker director replaced by Kohr at AIPAC¹⁰⁵—went on to work for the far-right American Center for Civil Justice, working opposite Keith Israel Fuchs,¹⁰⁶ a Kahanist suspected by the FBI of committing a string of bombings that killed two US citizens—including Palestinian-American Alex Odeh—in 1985.¹⁰⁷

Kahanist Rabble-Rouser Does Public Relations for Democrats

After Netanyahu’s election, Ronn Torossian, a Kahanist parishioner of Rabbi Avi Weiss,¹⁰⁸ flew to Israel to support Ateret Cohanim in its efforts to dispossess Palestinians and Judaize East Jerusalem. Torossian was both the US president of the youth wing of Likud and the US campus coordinator of the Kahane movement.

Eight months after the 1994 Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, Torossian served as the master of ceremonies at the annual memorial service for Meir Kahane at the Young Israel of Ocean Parkway Synagogue, sharing the stage with Kahane’s son and successor, Binyamin Kahane. Torossian praised the elder Kahane as “the greatest Jewish leader ever” and exclaimed, “The only solution is the Kahane revolution.”

In September 1997, Torossian and Ateret Cohanim leader Yossi Kaufman¹⁰⁹ occupied two Palestinian properties in the neighborhood of Ras al-Amud.

Torossian then joined up with fellow Likud party activists and future Knesset members Danny Danon and Yoel Hasson to form Yerushalayim Shelanu (Jerusalem Is Ours), a secular support group for the mostly religious settler movement.¹¹⁰ In 1998, the trio privately hired bulldozers to destroy Palestinian homes and hasten the construction of the illegal settlement of Har Homa in Jerusalem. The theft of Palestinian property and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians were funded by Netanyahu backer Joseph Gutnick.¹¹¹

“The world needs to understand that Har Homa is ours, whether it likes it or not,” Torossian boasted to the *Toronto Star*.¹¹²

In theory, Torossian’s antics should have put him beyond the pale for the Democratic Party, with Bill Clinton still in the White House, publicly urging Netanyahu to keep pursuing peace with the Palestinians. But with George Pataki,

105 Dorf, “AIPAC Executive Director Resigns to Take New Post.”

106 Engelberg v. Perr, correspondence to Judge Stephen A. Bucaria from Elan E. Weinreb, July 25, 2016, <https://bit.ly/3L6dtCZ>.

107 David Sheen, “Decades after a Palestinian American Activist Was Assassinated in California, Two Suspects in His Killing Are Living Openly in Israel,” *The Intercept*, February 6, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/06/alex-odeh-bombing-israel/>.

108 Nathaniel Popper, “Publicist Scores with Rappers, Right-Wing Politicians,” *Forward*, April 2, 2004, <https://forward.com/news/israel/5408/publicist-scores-with-rappers-right-wing-politici/>.

109 “Monday Night: Moskowitz Participated in Ras el-Amud Ceremony to Mark Doorposts of Jewish Homes,” *Globes*, September 16, 1997, <https://en.globes.co.il/en/article-350332>; Deborah Horan, “Middle East: Hardliners Ignore Netanyahu’s Criticism of Settlers,” *Inter Press Service*, September 15, 1997, <http://www.ipsnews.net/1997/09/middle-east-hardliners-ignore-netanyahus-criticism-of-settlers/>.

110 Ruthie Blum Leibowitz, “One on One: It’s All about Shaping a Story,” *Jerusalem Post*, August 5, 2009, <https://www.jpost.com/features/in-the-spotlight/one-on-one-its-all-about-shaping-a-story>.

111 Lawrence Cohler-Esses, “Chabad under Fire,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, November 27, 1998, <http://web.archive.org/web/20200423222809/https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/chabad-under-fire/>.

112 Martin Regg Cohn, “Israel Honours 19,000 War Dead,” *Toronto Star*, April 29, 1998, <https://bit.ly/3n27J5b>.

the Hikind-backed Republican governor of New York, up for reelection in the fall of 1998, his Democratic challenger felt the need to publicly demonstrate an affinity for Israel. Hence, Peter Vallone Sr.—the speaker of the New York City Council who would eventually be defeated by Pataki—asked Torossian to arrange a tour of Israel for him, with media coverage.¹¹³

Torossian convinced the Democratic councilman to visit as many illegal settlements as possible—especially those of former New York residents who had settled on Palestinian land. “There’s no Arab voting bloc in New York,” Torossian told Vallone. “What’s your downside? Who are you going to alienate?”¹¹⁴

Despite Vallone’s defeat, the experience taught Torossian that his media savvy and hyper-aggressive personality were valuable PR skills. He promptly moved back to New York City and reinvented himself as a public relations professional. Trading on his reputation as “a Jewish bad boy from the Bronx,”¹¹⁵ in just a few years Torossian built up one of the largest and most successful PR agencies in New York City, and indeed the United States,¹¹⁶ “attracting Sean “Diddy” Combs, Sienna Miller, Nick Cannon, Paris Hilton, Harvey Weinstein, and so many others.”¹¹⁷

Still, Torossian’s Kahanist ideals haven’t dulled over the years. In 2008, the Atlantic reported that Torossian still saw Palestinian civilians as deserving of death. “I think we should kill a hundred Arabs or a thousand Arabs,” Torossian emphasized.¹¹⁸

Above his office work desk, Torossian used to have a framed photograph of himself shaking hands with Hillary Clinton.¹¹⁹ As recently as 2010, he advised Democratic Congresswoman Yvette Clarke in her successful reelection race.¹²⁰

New York Politicians Plead for Kahanist Endorsement

When Ronn Torossian returned to the United States in 1999, Hillary Clinton—then first lady—launched her own political career, preparing to run as a Democrat for one of New York’s seats in the Senate. Since the state had never been her place of residence, she was vulnerable to being called a carpetbagger. And, a year earlier, she had said that it was “in the long-term interests of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state,”¹²¹ which caused an uproar among anti-Palestinian fanatics.

Kahanists like Dov Hikind understood this and hyped up the antagonism toward Clinton, hoping to badger her—and perhaps even the president—into

113 Steven Kurutz, “Brash P.R. Guy Grabs Clients, Ink,” *New York Times*, February 20, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/20/nyregion/thecity/brash-pr-guy-grabs-clients-ink.html>.

114 Kurutz, “Brash P.R. Guy Grabs Clients, Ink.”

115 Popper, “Publicist Scores with Rappers, Right-Wing Politicians.”

116 “5WPR Named to List of Top U.S. PR Firms 2021,” *PR Newswire*, April 7, 2021, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/5wpr-named-to-list-of-top-us-pr-firms-2021-301263912.html>.

117 “5WPR: Now a Top 20 Public Relations Agency,” Ronn Torossian website, December 27, 2011, <https://ronntorossian.com/5wpr-pr-agency/>.

118 Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Jewish Extremists Behind ‘Obsession,’” *Atlantic*, October 27, 2008, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2008/10/the-jewish-extremists-behind-quot-obsession-quot/9006/>.

119 Kurutz, “Brash P.R. Guy Grabs Clients, Ink.”

120 “Torossian to the Rescue,” *New York Daily News*, December 18, 2010, <https://bit.ly/3Nbr0vz>.

121 Joel Siegel, “Battling for Jewish Vote: Hil Scrambles to Regain Favor With Vital Group,” *New York Daily News*, July 20, 2000, <https://bit.ly/41XPqgy>.

“**The power accrued by Kahanist rabbis in New York has done major damage to the Democratic Party over the years, pushing its politicians to take reactionary positions on Israel that deepen the dispossession of the Palestinian people.**”

adopting at least some of their reactionary positions. “What she can expect at this moment is a lot of opposition and a lot of anger,” Hikind told the *Jerusalem Report*. “If she doesn’t do more than she’s done up to now, you’ll see a strong resistance to her.”¹²²

Hikind’s scare tactics worked; to curry favor with the Israeli lobby, Clinton the candidate strayed from the official policies of her husband’s administration, announcing her support for moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,¹²³ calling it the “eternal and indivisible capital of Israel.”¹²⁴

After marching in the Salute to Israel Parade, Clinton eventually hosted Hikind’s brother at the White House, hoping to appease the Kahanists. The attempt at a truce failed; Hikind and other Kahanists held a protest outside her election campaign headquarters, berating her.

Still, Clinton and her campaign manager, future New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, held out hope that Hikind would give her his precious endorsement. The following month, Sheldon Silver, Democratic speaker of the New York State Assembly, arranged a private meeting between the two, in which Hikind laid out another demand: that Clinton get her husband to grant clemency to Jonathan Pollard, an American citizen convicted of spying for Israel.

Although Pollard’s case had long been championed by the Jewish far-right, most Jewish Americans were embarrassed by his acts of espionage. Earlier that year, Israel’s Supreme Court ruled that although Pollard had spied on the state’s behalf, it could not be compelled to actively secure his release from US custody. Pollard’s lawyer in that lawsuit was Baruch Ben Yosef¹²⁵—one of the Kahanists who had represented Yitzhak Rabin’s assassin and who is himself was suspected by the FBI of murdering two US citizens in 1985.¹²⁶

Even as Clinton humbled herself before him, Hikind held firm: If Clinton refused to advocate for Pollard, she could expect Hikind’s electorate to shun her at the polls.

122 Yigal Schleifer, “Critics Partly Mollified by Hillary’s Jerusalem Letter,” *Jerusalem Report*, August 2, 1999, <https://bit.ly/3AqRphT>.

123 Joel Siegel, “Standing Near Her Man: Hil Grabbing Bill’s Coattails, but She’s Keeping 1 Hand Free,” *New York Daily News*, August 12, 1999, <https://bit.ly/3LuWb44>.

124 Schleifer, “Critics Partly Mollified by Hillary’s Jerusalem Letter.”

125 Siegel, “Standing Near Her Man.”

126 Sheen, “Decades after a Palestinian American Activist Was Assassinated in California.”

Weeks later—a month before the Senate election—Clinton buckled. In October 2000, Clinton told a synagogue on Manhattan’s Upper East Side that she had appealed to her husband, the president, to release confidential evidence that had been used to prosecute Pollard.¹²⁷ Still, Hikind would not grant Clinton his endorsement.¹²⁸ In any case, Clinton won the election.

Five months later, Clinton donated \$1,200 to Hikind’s fund for settlers in occupied Palestine.¹²⁹

Pollard was paroled in 2015 and immigrated to an illegal settlement in 2020. Although the Kahanist movement never managed to secure clemency for convicted criminals, the willingness of Democratic lawmakers to advocate on behalf of said felons is a telltale sign of the influence that Kahanists wield in the United States.

Kahanists Have Been Key for Top Democrats to Secure Power

Another New York PR guru with Kahanist sympathies and Democratic Party ties is Ronn Torossian’s regular coauthor of fanatically pro-Israel screeds, Hank Sheinkopf.

In the op-eds that he coauthors with Torossian, Sheinkopf’s bio line describes him as a former advisor to US President Bill Clinton and other Democratic lawmakers over the years. No mention is made of the fact that Sheinkopf has also lobbied for Donald Trump.¹³⁰ Wherever he has set up shop, Sheinkopf has been scrutinized for unethical business practices. In one case, his firm was found to be advising two different candidates running in the same local race.¹³¹

Sheinkopf has long been among the most-quoted¹³² and most sought-after¹³³ political strategists in the United States. He has cultivated a reputation as being aggressive and unscrupulous: of the infamous “Nasty Boys” who ran Bill Clinton’s successful presidential reelection campaign in 1996, Sheinkopf came to be known as “the man the Republicans fear most.”¹³⁴ A former police officer and bounty hunter,¹³⁵ Sheinkopf cites Machiavelli to make moral arguments¹³⁶ and views his profession of public relations in cutthroat terms. “Terror tends to work, because it is so easy to make people hate,”¹³⁷ Sheinkopf said in 1994. “I subscribe to terror.”¹³⁸

127 Robert Hardt Jr., “Hill: I Wouldn’t Hug Suha Now—Affirms ‘Support for Israel,’” *New York Post*, October 6, 2000, <https://nypost.com/2000/10/06/hill-i-wouldnt-hug-suha-now-affirms-support-for-israel/>.

128 Yigal Schleifer, “Educating Hillary,” *Jerusalem Report*, December 4, 2000, <https://bit.ly/3n1SaKW>.

129 Melissa Radler, “Brooklyn Bridge,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 22, 2001, <https://bit.ly/41C2kAY>.

130 Dominic Carter, “Famed Political Consultant Hank Sheinkopf Talks Corona Virus Politics & Presidential Race,” August 7, 2020, in *Conversations with Dominic Carter*, podcast, 19:00, <https://www.audible.com/pd/Famed-Political-Consultant-Hank-Sheinkopf-talks-Corona-Virus-Politics-Presidential-Race-Podcast/B08KLDYCYZT>.

131 James Ledbetter, “Making the Rounds: A New York Consultant Took Two Clients Last Year—in the Same Race,” *Campaigns & Elections*, January 1993, <https://bit.ly/41A3dtN>.

132 Douglas Bloomfield, “Rabbi Hank Sheinkopf,” *Times of Israel* blog, September 16, 2011, <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/rabbi-hank-sheinkopf/>.

133 Stefan Ruzas, “Im Wechselseifer,” *Werben und Verkaufen*, April 17, 1998, <https://bit.ly/41W5s8ri>.

134 James Adams, “Nasty Boys Lead Clinton Election Fight,” *Sunday Times*, October 22, 1995, <https://bit.ly/3V1qDFX>.

135 Bloomfield, “Rabbi Hank Sheinkopf.”

136 Hank Sheinkopf, “In Our Political Times: In the Political Game,” *Mishpacha*, March 28, 2018, <https://mishpacha.com/political-times-in-the-political-game/>.

137 Adams, “Nasty Boys Lead Clinton Election Fight.”

138 “Consultants over Principles,” editorial, *St. Petersburg Times*, October 29, 1995, <https://bit.ly/3L8OZc6>.

Sheinkopf studied under a rabbi of the Kahane-linked Chabad movement. In 2001, he was ordained as an Orthodox rabbi himself. From then on,¹³⁹ his client roster¹⁴⁰ and his comments on Israel¹⁴¹ became even more extremist.

“We should be worried only about what God is thinking about us and about how to safeguard the extraordinary piece of property He gave us,” Sheinkopf told the *Jewish Press*, a New York newspaper Meir Kahane regularly wrote for, in a 2009 profile. Because “the world does not mind if we get killed,” Jews should focus on “our right, given to us by God, to property that He owns.”

In the runup to the 2009 New York City mayoral election, Sheinkopf was tapped to advise incumbent Mayor Mike Bloomberg as he sought a third term.¹⁴²

In the last decade, Sheinkopf seemed to lose some of his political luster. As multiple candidates he backed for New York City Council failed to get elected,¹⁴³ Sheinkopf took on fewer political leaders and more religious leaders as clients.

Kahanists Use Political Influence to Protect Sex Criminals

The power accrued by Kahanist rabbis in New York has done major damage to the Democratic Party over the years, pushing its politicians to take reactionary positions on Israel that deepen the dispossession of the Palestinian people.

The promising political career¹⁴⁴ of Rockland County District Attorney Kenneth Gribetz ended in 1995, when he was convicted of defrauding the government. But after a short suspension of his legal license,¹⁴⁵ he returned to private practice, putting his legal skills at the disposal of Kahanist Rabbi Moshe Tendler’s spiritual flock.¹⁴⁶ In recent years, Gribetz has made a career of defending Orthodox men charged with sex crimes against teenagers and children, with the number of cases entering double digits.¹⁴⁷

The Tendler name has also been mired in sex scandals. The elder Tendler rallied to the side of his son Rabbi Mordecai Tendler in 2005, when the latter was accused by multiple women of sexual harassment. Although the son, Mordechai, became the first rabbi expelled by the Rabbinical Council of America for sexual ethics

139 Adam Nagourney, “Cuomo-McCall Contest Quickly Turns Nasty,” *New York Times*, April 12, 2002, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/12/nyregion/cuomo-mccall-contest-quickly-turns-nasty.html>.

140 Will Evans, “Clarion Responds, as New Details Emerge about ‘Radical Islam’ DVD,” *NPR*, September 26, 2008, https://www.npr.org/sections/secretmoney/2008/09/new_details_emerge_about_radical.html/.

141 “Israeli Tank & Troop Buildup on Israel-Lebanon Border; Lebanese President Says Army Ready to Defend Lebanon; New Hezbollah Rockets Hit Haifa in Northern Israel; Strategy of Kidnapping Soldiers; Alberto Gonzales Praises Bush’s Immigration Plan; House Holds a Hearing On Expanded Fence Along Border with Mexico,” *Lou Dobbs Tonight*, CNN, July 21, 2006, <https://bit.ly/3ArY0bG>.

142 Bloomfield, “Rabbi Hank Sheinkopf.”

143 Ross Barkan, “NYCLASS Hires Sheinkopf to Steer Mail Blitz,” *New York Observer*, August 13, 2014, <https://observer.com/2014/08/nyclass-hires-sheinkopf-to-steer-mail-blitz/>.

144 “Focus on Issues: Should Religious Jews Be Held to a Higher Ethical Standard?” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, June 12, 1995, <https://www.jta.org/1995/06/12/archive/focus-on-issues-should-religious-jews-be-held-to-a-higher-ethical-standard>.

145 Joseph Berger, “Disgraced, Ex-Lawman in Rockland Avoids Jail,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/09/14/nyregion/disgraced-ex-lawman-in-rockland-avoids-jail.html>.

146 France, “The Fall of Boss Gribetz.”

147 “Orthodox Jews that Kenneth Gribetz Defended on Charges of Sex Crimes Against Teenagers and Children,” <https://bit.ly/3V2usuu>.

violations,¹⁴⁸ he would be vigorously defended by a series of editorials in the Kahanist news outlet, the *Jewish Press*.¹⁴⁹

Henry Sheinkopf also came to the Tendlers' aid, attacking the Rabbinical Council's probe as "reminiscent of the Salem witch trials" and insisting that Mordechai Tendler "acted appropriately because this was not a fair proceeding."¹⁵⁰

The following year—a week after Mordechai Tendler was suspended from his New York synagogue¹⁵¹—another of Moshe Tendler's sons, Aron Tendler, resigned from the California synagogue where he served as senior rabbi,¹⁵² in the wake of allegations of sexual misconduct with multiple minors.¹⁵³

Another Kahanist cleric in New York, Herbert Bomzer, used his considerable influence in the Democratic Party to ensure that the sexual predators in his Orthodox community faced no accountability for their crimes.

Bomzer (who died in 2013) was the Rosh Yeshiva, or headmaster, of Yeshiva University, where he taught Talmud and pedagogy,¹⁵⁴ and the chair and president of the rabbinical committee that adjudicates Jewish law for Young Israel of Ocean Parkway.

When his longtime friend¹⁵⁵ Meir Kahane was alive, Bomzer regularly arranged for him to give speeches in Brooklyn at a Yeshiva University high school for boys¹⁵⁶ and at the house of worship he led, Young Israel of Ocean Parkway.¹⁵⁷ When Kahane was assassinated in 1990, his New York funeral services were conducted by Bomzer at his synagogue.¹⁵⁸ Outside, dozens of young men held up signs reading "Revenge" and "Death to Arabs."¹⁵⁹ After Kahane's death, Bomzer continued to publicly praise Kahane at his annual memorial services.¹⁶⁰

148 Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "Congregants Stand by Rabbi Tendler," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 1, 2005, <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/congregants-stand-by-rabbi-tendler/>.

149 "Jerusalem Bet Din Reaffirms," *Jewish Press*, Internet Archive, April 28, 2005 (accessed February 16, 2023), http://web.archive.org/web/20051219132054/http://www.thejewishpress.com/news_article.asp?article=4933; "An Inappropriate Process," The Awareness Center Inc., April 6, 2005 (accessed February 16, 2023), <http://theawarenesscenter.blogspot.com/2008/07/case-of-rabbi-mordecai-tendler.html>.

150 Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "Orthodox Group Expels Rabbi," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 25, 2005, <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/orthodox-group-expels-rabbi/>.

151 Jeane MacIntosh, "Rabbi Expelled from Shul—Claims Conspiracy in Shocking Sex Scandal," *New York Post*, March 1, 2006, <https://nypost.com/2006/03/01/rabbi-expelled-from-shul-claims-conspiracy-in-shocking-sex-scandal/>.

152 Amy Klein, "Tendler Resigns Under Cloud," *Jewish Journal*, March 9, 2006, <https://jewishjournal.com/community/12777/>.

153 "Aron Boruch Tendler," Lukeford.net, accessed February 16, 2023, https://lukeford.net/profiles/profiles/aron_tendler.htm.

154 Yosef Caldwell, "Rabbi Chaim Zev (Herbert W.) Bomzer, z'l," *Hamodia*, February 12, 2013, <https://hamodia.com/2013/02/12/rabbi-chaim-zev-herbert-w-bomzer-zl/>.

155 "Thousands Mourn Extremist Rabbi," *News & Record*, November 6, 1990 (updated January 24, 2015), https://greensboro.com/thousands-mourn-extremist-rabbi/article_9264c7a2-4a79-5efe-9336-f9158d787d56.html.

156 "About Marsha Stern," The Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy/Yeshiva University High School for Boys website, accessed February 22, 2023, <https://yuhsb.org/discover/our-name/>.

157 Rabbi Shlomo Moriah, "Thirty-Six Little-Known Admirers of Rabbi Meir Kahane," *Jewish Press*, November 18, 2016, <https://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/interviews-and-profiles/thirty-six-little-known-admirers-of-rabbi-meir-kahane/2016/11/18/>.

158 Herschaft, "Social Calendar."

159 Goldman, "Grief and Anger at Kahane's Funeral."

160 Fern Sidman, "Ground Zero Event for Rav Kahane," *Israel National News*, November 9, 2010, <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/140535>.

Bomzer also leveraged his priestly prestige to oppose justice for child victims of sexual abuse. Bomzer served as a rabbinical advisor to the deceased former Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes—a Democrat who was accused of stalling efforts to bring sex abusers to justice in order to appease Orthodox community leaders.¹⁶¹ This was indicative of how the rule of American law could be bent to the will of the Kahanists, even in regard to the most disgraceful crimes.

After Avrohom Mondrowitz, a man that Bomzer hired to counsel boys at an Orthodox school,¹⁶² was charged with eight counts of sexual molestation against minors,¹⁶³ he fled to Israel, where he continued to teach at a yeshiva and counsel children.¹⁶⁴ Anti-abuse activists estimate that the actual number of children abused by Mondrowitz could be between one hundred and three hundred.¹⁶⁵

For the first few years after Mondrowitz fled to Israel, authorities could not lay their hands on him, because the extradition agreement between the United States and Israel did not cover his crimes. Even after the extradition treaty was modified, Brooklyn DA Hynes waited until 2007—nearly two decades after the spate of sexual assaults—to issue an extradition request for Mondrowitz. When the case reached the Israeli Supreme Court in 2010, the judges dismissed the request to extradite Mondrowitz, saying that too much time had passed since the crimes he was alleged to have committed.¹⁶⁶

Though DA Hynes denied impeding efforts to bring Mondrowitz and other accused Orthodox abusers to justice, a 2012 New York Times investigation revealed that he gave Orthodox rabbis great latitude in dealing with sex abusers in their own communities, a dereliction that experts said “made it harder to curb sexual abuse.”¹⁶⁷

Hank Sheinkopf explained to the Village Voice why the opinions of Orthodox rabbis like Bomzer were so important to local politicians like Hynes: since they hold tremendous sway over their flocks of eligible voters, rabbinical endorsements are worth their weight in votes. “The rabbis are very important because they tell their followers who to get behind,” Sheinkopf said. For a politician, he said, that means “you have to play to them.”¹⁶⁸

In the years that followed, Sheinkopf ensured that this dynamic would repeat itself in the New York City mayor’s office. In 2009, with Sheinkopf advising

161 Nathaniel Popper, “Victims Press Brooklyn DA to Seek Abuse Suspect’s Extradition from Israel,” *Forward*, July 28, 2006, <https://forward.com/news/524/victims-press-brooklyn-da-to-seek-abuse-suspect-e2-80-99/>.

162 Roxanna Sherwood, “Child Sex Abuse Case Still Haunts,” *ABC News*, October 11, 2006, <https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/story?id=2555575>.

163 Ben Harris, “Israel Court Rules to Extradite Accused Pedophile to U.S.,” *Jewish Times*, November 18, 2007 (accessed February 16, 2023), Internet Archive, <http://web.archive.org/web/20071122192050/http://www.jewishtimes.com/News/7183.stm>.

164 Aviva Lori, “Accused Child Molester Wins First Battle Against Extradition to U.S.,” *Haaretz*, January 20, 2010, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5087345>.

165 Michael Orbach, “Unmolested,” *Tablet*, August 11, 2011, <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/unmolested>.

166 Lori, “Accused Child Molester Wins First Battle against Extradition to US.”

167 Ray Rivera and Sharon Otterman, “For Ultra-Orthodox in Abuse Cases, Prosecutor Has Different Rules,” *New York Times*, May 10, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/11/nyregion/for-ultra-orthodox-in-child-sex-abuse-cases-prosecutor-has-different-rules.html>.

168 Kristen Lomarbdi, “Silence of the Lam,” *Village Voice*, July 25, 2006, via The Awareness Center Inc., accessed February 16, 2023, <http://theawarenesscenter.blogspot.com/1984/12/case-of-rabbi-dr-avrohom-mondrowitz.html>.

his reelection campaign,¹⁶⁹ Michael Bloomberg boasted that he had received an endorsement from the Vaad Harabbonim (Rabbinical Committee) of Flatbush—a group headed by Herbert Bomzer.

“The Va’ad Harabbonim of Flatbush is an organization that plays an important role in providing thousands of New Yorkers spiritual guidance and essential services,” Bloomberg said in a statement. “It is because of this that I am honored today to receive their endorsement.”¹⁷⁰

Kahanist Racist Incitement Thrives in Democratic Strongholds

With Herbert Bomzer’s passing in 2013, his executive vice-president¹⁷¹ Rabbi Melvin Burg took over as the chief rabbinical authority of the Vaad Harabbonim.¹⁷²

But more than a decade earlier, Burg had already begun taking over for Bomzer as the host of New York City’s annual memorials to Meir Kahane. In 2000, on the tenth anniversary of Kahane’s death, Burg proudly accepted an award from the Rabbi Kahane Memorial Fund for this service of “courage and integrity.”

For his part, Rabbi Burg felt that it should be his Brooklyn synagogue, Pri Etz Chaim, that was thanking the Kahanists—and the terrorist who organized them, Mike Guzofsky,¹⁷³ part of a Kahanist terror cell that shot and wounded half-a-dozen Palestinian workers in 1984—for choosing to hold their ceremonies at his synagogue.

“Many people say we’re closet supporters of Rabbi Kahane,” Burg said at the 2002 memorial he hosted. “Unfortunately, it takes a 9/11, it takes a bombing in Bali, it takes a bombing in the Philippines, in order for people to wake up and realize that maybe Rabbi Kahane had something on the ball. Maybe he had a lot on the ball. Maybe we didn’t agree with him, maybe we should have agreed with him.” Burg easily trafficked in the post-9/11 rhetoric of paranoia to justify the killing of Palestinians.

Other featured speakers at memorials hosted by Burg have included two other American-born Israelis who are West Bank settlers, who together have done more than almost anyone else to spread Kahane’s openly eliminationist ideology in occupied Palestine: Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh and Seth Shmuel Sackett.

Ginsburgh is the author of the pamphlet titled *Baruch the Man*, which lauds Baruch Goldstein’s 1994 mass murder of Palestinians. He is also the publisher of *The King’s Torah*, a book that sanctions the killing of Palestinian babies. As

169 Bloomfield, “Rabbi Hank Sheinkopf.”

170 “Video: Vaad Harabbonim of Flatbush PAC Endorses Bloomberg,” Matzav.com, March 26, 2009, <https://matzav.com/video-vaad-harabbonim-of-flatbush-pac-endorses-bloomberg/>.

171 Azi Paybarah, “Rabbis for Bloomberg,” *New York Observer*, March 26, 2009, <https://observer.com/2009/03/rabbis-for-bloomberg-2/>.

172 “Rabbi Moshe (Myron E.) Rakowitz, Z’L,” *5TJT*, April 27, 2017, <http://www.5tjt.com/rabbi-moshe-myron-e-rakowitz-zl/>.

173 Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perliger, *Jewish Terrorism in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 90, <https://bit.ly/40Ds8eL>.

president of the Od Yosef Chai Yeshiva in the illegal West Bank settlement of Yitzhar, Ginsburgh has trained a generation of hilltop youth to dismiss the value of Palestinian lives—a concept his students have often put into practice with ghastly violence.¹⁷⁴

Shmuel Sackett, a lifelong devotee of Kahane, directed Ginsburgh’s publishing company, Gal Einai, and founded the Kahanist Jewish Leadership faction within Likud, the political party headed by Benjamin

Netanyahu that has ruled Israel for much of the last forty-five years. Sackett once told an audience at Burg’s Pri Etz Chaim Synagogue: “After we drive out the Arabs, we drive out the Armenians! And we drive out the Christians!”

At another New York memorial ceremony for Meir Kahane also hosted by Burg, Sackett entertained the crowd by sharing Kahane’s opening words to the fourth estate upon being elected to the Knesset in 1984. Kahane’s first order of business, he said, would be legislating his right to hold a blade to the penis of every Palestinian baby. “I’m going to pass a series of laws. And let me tell you about the first law I’m going to pass, it has two parts. Part A is that every male child in the entire country—Arab, Jew, it doesn’t matter, anybody—has to have a circumcision. And part B is that I be the mohel [circumciser].” The congregation roared with laughter.

Sackett explained how the Kahanist faction that he founded was carrying out a “takeover of the Israeli government.”

“I started a group in Israel called Manhigut Yehudit. And we formed a bloc inside Likud, Israel’s ruling party. And we’re attempting to take over the Likud party,” said Sackett. “We had a sweeping victory last week, we’re now the largest independent bloc in all of Likud.”

Sackett served as deputy to Moshe Feiglin—Manhigut Yehudit’s candidate for Likud Party leader, who would fail three times to beat Netanyahu. But the bloc’s impact on the internal makeup of the Likud has still been significant. Before Feiglin quit the party in 2015 to form his own faction, his bloc commanded authority in Likud, and the party’s top leaders vied for its approval.¹⁷⁵

Feiglin has since folded his faction and returned to Likud party;¹⁷⁶ now there is no longer a need to obscure his own Kahanist origins. Feiglin was a guest speaker at

“**As long as Kahanism has adherents in the United States, they will attempt to influence US politics. Efforts to mollify them are included in the calculus of countless political decisions.**”

174 Natasha Roth-Rowland, “How One Hilltop Became an Incubator for Israeli Settler Violence,” *972 Magazine*, January 2, 2020, <https://www.972mag.com/yitzhar-hilltop-settler-violence/>.

175 Phineas Wolf, “They Gave an Open Check? The Likud Members of Knesset Celebrated at the Wedding” [in Hebrew], February 2, 2011, <https://news.walla.co.il/item/1788210>, English translation: <https://bit.ly/3V1z8Rt>.

176 “Former Zehut Party Head Moshe Feiglin Announces Return to Likud,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 8, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/former-zehut-party-head-moshe-feiglin-announces-return-to-likud-673272>.

the movement's 2021 memorial service to Kahane in Jerusalem. There Feiglin recalled his personal connection to Kahane. Kahane had attended Feiglin's wedding. Feiglin also professed his affection for the Kahane movement's leaders, calling them "old friends."¹⁷⁷

And he decidedly endorsed Kahane's political plan, publicly pledging his allegiance to the rabbi. "He was right," Feiglin told the crowd of hard-core Kahanists, working into his eulogy the movement's infamous slogan, "Kahane was right." "What can you do?" Feiglin said with mock resignation. "He was right."¹⁷⁸

Twenty years have passed since Feiglin's right-hand man laid out their plan for a "takeover of the Israeli government" at the Kahane memorial at Pri Etz Chaim Synagogue in Brooklyn, New York. From a distance of two decades, Shmuel Sackett's boasts don't seem so bombastic—today it is difficult to distinguish the anti-Palestinian rhetoric of Likud lawmakers from that of the Kahanists.

The rabbi who hosted that pronouncement, Melvin Burg, is also believed to be the only American to host a meeting of a congressional subcommittee in his synagogue—a 1992 quorum, assembled by the Democratic Senator for New York and now Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer.¹⁷⁹

Burg, who died in 2021, remained a Kahanist¹⁸⁰ and a fixture in Democratic politics until the end. In 2018, he received a community leadership award from the Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, chapter of the Democratic Party. It also donated funds to Burg's charity organization, which still contributes to illegal settlement activities in occupied Palestine.¹⁸¹ In 2020, Burg was even elected to the Brooklyn Community Board 15,¹⁸² thanks to a nomination from Democratic New York City Councilman Chaim Deutsch.¹⁸³

Burg's son, Steven, is the CEO of Aish HaTorah,¹⁸⁴ a chain of right-wing Orthodox yeshivas that used to house the offices of Irv Rubin, the Jewish Defense League national chairman.¹⁸⁵

177 Channel 7, "Memorial to Rabbi Meir Kahane HY"D on the 31st anniversary of his murder," streamed live October 24, 2021, YouTube video, 2:24:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYqF6-2rOk&t=4591s>.

178 Channel 7, "Memorial to Rabbi Meir Kahane HY"D on the 31st anniversary of his murder."

179 "Bias Crimes," Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice of the Committee of the Judiciary, US House of Representatives, 102nd US Congress, Second Session, May 11, 1992, p. 1–22, <https://bit.ly/3ApiLVp>.

180 "This Coming Monday January 2, Yahrzeit Event in Brooklyn, NY, Honoring Rav Binyamin Ze'ev and Talia Kahane HY"D," *Israel Truth Times* (blog), December 20, 2016, <https://israeltruthtimes.blogspot.com/2016/12/this-coming-monday-january-2nd-yahrzeit.html>.

181 Ari Kagan (@AriKagan47), "Was thrilled to honor outstanding leaders @ Bay Democrats Jewish Community Leadership Awards Ceremony & to donate money to their amazing charity organizations. Rabbi Melvin Burg & Rebbetzin Pearl Burg, Rabbi Benzion Laskin & @AlexRapaport are everyday heroes - w/@ChaimDeutsch," Twitter, March 17, 2018, 7:34 p.m., <https://twitter.com/AriKagan47/status/975168622170660864/photo/2>.

182 "Members," NYC Brooklyn Community Board 15 website, accessed February 16, 2023, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/brooklyn15/about/members.page>.

183 *2019 Community Board Profiles: Members and Demographics Report*, Brooklyn Borough, 2020, <http://web.archive.org/web/20210726215842/https://www.brooklyn-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BKBH-CB-2019-Report-2.pdf>.

184 Rabbi Steven Burg, "Rabbi Melvin I. Burg, z'l, Spiritual Leader of Ocean Avenue Jewish Center," *Jewish Press*, October 14, 2021, <https://www.jewishpress.com/review/in-print-review/rabbi-melvin-i-burg-ztl-spiritual-leader-of-ocean-avenue-jewish-center/2021/10/14/>.

185 Cheryl W. Thompson, "LA Synagogue Bombing Seen as Hate Crime Unrelated to Gulf," *Orange County Register*, January 11, 1991, <https://bit.ly/3LtVN5u>.

Orthodox Synagogue Association Has Long Supported the Kahanes and Their Followers

In 2016, the New York City memorial to Kahane was moved from Melvin Burg's Pri Etz Chaim back to a synagogue associated with the Kahanist National Council of Young Israel.¹⁸⁶

In 2019, when Netanyahu ended his reticence to associate publicly with the Kahanists and began openly courting them, hoping to get them elected to the Israeli parliament so they could join his next government,¹⁸⁷ the National Council of Young Israel publicly backed his efforts. Only one of Young Israel's hundred-plus synagogues chose to secede from the network following its decision to endorse Netanyahu's political rehabilitation of the Kahanists.¹⁸⁸

The following year, Young Israel's longtime national president Steven Shlomo Mostofsky¹⁸⁹ – who listed Kahane's assassination first and foremost in a screed cataloging anti-semitic incidents in the US¹⁹⁰ – was elected to the New York Supreme Court's Second Judicial District¹⁹¹ after winning the endorsement of the Democratic Party.¹⁹²

The judge's older son, Nachman Mostofsky, works for top Kahanist fundraiser and Young Israel First Vice President Joseph Frager, leading YI's lobby group Chovevei Zion.¹⁹³ Nachman is also an open enthusiast of Meir Kahane¹⁹⁴ and a defender of white supremacists,¹⁹⁵ including a congressman¹⁹⁶ who cheered on¹⁹⁷ the invasion of the US Capitol on January 6, 2021. The judge's younger son, Aaron Mostofsky, was sentenced to eight months in jail for being one of the fur-pelt-clad invaders.¹⁹⁸

186 "This Coming Monday January 2, Yahrzeit Event in Brooklyn, NY, Honoring Rav Binyamin Ze'ev and Talia Kahane HY"D," *Israel Truth Times* (blog), December 20, 2016, <https://israeltruthtimes.blogspot.com/2016/12/this-coming-monday-january-2nd-yahrzeit.html>.

187 David Halbfinger, "Netanyahu Sparks Outrage Over Pact With Racist Party," *New York Times*, February 24, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/24/world/middleeast/benjamin-netanyahu-otzma-yehudit-jewish-power.html>.

188 Dave Schechter, "Young Israel of Toco Hills Votes to Part Ways," *Atlanta Jewish Times*, June 13, 2019, <https://atlantajewishtimes.timesofisrael.com/young-israel-of-toco-hills-votes-to-part-ways/>.

189 "Shlomo Z. Mostofsky," *Jewish Press* website, accessed February 16, 2023, <https://www.jewishpress.com/author/shlomozmostofsky/>.

190 Shlomo Z. Mostofsky, "Never Again," *Jewish Press*, January 19, 2005, <https://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/front-page/never-again/2005/01/19/>.

191 "Steven Mostofsky," Ballotpedia website, accessed February 16, 2023, https://ballotpedia.org/Steven_Mostofsky.

192 Reuvain Borchardt, "Judge Steven Mostofsky to Be Nominated for State Supreme Court," *Hamodia*, August 5, 2019, <https://hamodia.com/2019/08/05/judge-steven-mostofsky-nominated-state-supreme-court/>.

193 Joseph Frager, "Kudos to the National Council of Young Israel," *Jewish News Syndicate*, December 27, 2020, <https://www.jns.org/kudos-to-the-national-council-of-young-israel/>.

194 Nachman Mostofsky (@Mostofsky), "@Muqata @JewishPress @moshefeiglin @haivri The Knesset hasn't had a true speaker for Am Yisroel like this since Meir Kahane was there," Twitter, November 26, 2012, 3:20 p.m., <https://twitter.com/Mostofsky/status/273174457911238656>.

195 Nachman Mostofsky (@Mostofsky), "funny. @JackPosobiec is a friend of mine. I'm Jewish. Orthodox too. Yarmulka & tzitzis. The other guy, an Orthodox Rabbi. Not too sure you understand how White Supremacy [sic] work," Twitter, July 8, 2020, 6:17 p.m., <https://twitter.com/Mostofsky/status/1281004608333189121>.

196 Nachman Mostofsky (@Mostofsky), "I think now @mattgaetz needs to #SueTheView for hinting to him being a pseudo-Nazi. I take umbrage with this, as I know him & his wife personally, and this is the furthest from the truth. As an Orthodox Jew, Nazis – 'neo' & otherwise – don't tend to be friends w/ ppl like me," Twitter, July 27, 2022, 12:34 p.m., <https://twitter.com/Mostofsky/status/1552346729877569539>.

197 Ewan Palmer, "Matt Gaetz Mysteriously Sought Trump Pardon Way before Jan. 6—Committee," *Newsweek*, June 24, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/matt-gaetz-pardon-december-trump-jan6-1718777>.

198 "Brooklyn Judge's Son Sentenced to 8 Months in Prison for Role in Capitol Riot," *NBC New York Channel 4*, May 6, 2022, <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/investigations/brooklyn-judges-son-sentenced-to-8-months-in-prison-for-role-in-capitol-riot/3676554/>.

The young Mostofskys of Young Israel are not alone; their far-right views are shared by a super-majority of their Orthodox peers.¹⁹⁹ Many of them look at the Middle East, and they observe that Israel has, or nearly has, full spectrum supremacy over all of historic Palestine; every other fighting force in the region is in its shadow. Its lobby is the most powerful in Washington. As the Israeli regime passes laws that explicitly legitimize state discrimination against Palestinians, US state legislatures penalize even nonviolent efforts to end Israeli impunity. In an Orwellian inversion, they vote to define opposition to Israel's state racism as a form of racist discrimination against Jews.²⁰⁰

They believe that we have entered messiah mode and have embraced the messianic politics of Meir Kahane.

Half a Century After It Began, the Kahanist Impact on Democratic Party Politics Continues

New York-born Rabbi Meir Kahane immigrated to occupied Palestine half a century ago and founded Israel's modern messianic camp. He was not the first Israeli political leader who labored to dispossess Palestinians, but he was the first Israeli leader to openly campaign for the Knesset on a platform of ethnically cleansing the country of non-Jews.

Though most American Jews reject the rabid racism of Meir Kahane and of those who pine for his genocidal political program to be implemented in Palestine,²⁰¹ some US politicians continue to pursue endorsements from his followers, the Jewish community's biggest racists. Kahanists have for decades wielded a staggering level of influence on American politics, especially in the state and the city of New York, on Democrats just as much as on Republicans—if not more.

For as long as Jewish Americans have numbered a significant proportion of the population of New York—more than a century now²⁰²—many politicians have sought their votes by appealing to them not as New Yorkers, but as Jews, by vowing to advance so-called Jewish interests.

“There used to be three I's in New York politics: if you're running for office, you had to go to Italy, Israel, and Ireland,” said Democrat party strategist Hank Sheinkopf.²⁰³

199 i24NEWS, “US Orthodox Jews overwhelmingly support Trump, poll reveals,” *i24NEWS*, October 15, 2020, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/americas/1602736564-us-orthodox-jews-overwhelmingly-support-trump-poll-reveals>.

200 “Texas Becomes First US State to Officially Adopt IHRA Definition of Antisemitism,” *i24 News*, June 16, 2021, <https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/americas/1623868137-texas-becomes-first-us-state-to-officially-adopt-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism>.

201 Ali Abunimah, “A Third of Young US Jews See Israel as Genocidal, Poll Finds,” *Electronic Intifada*, July 15, 2021, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/third-young-us-jews-see-israel-genocidal-poll-finds>.

202 “Studies in the New York Jewish Population,” New York: Bureau of Jewish Social Research, 1928, https://www.jewishdatabank.org/content/upload/bjdb/531/C-NY-New_York-1925-Main_Report.pdf.

203 Ben Adler, “Why New York's Mayoral Candidates Are Challenging the Pro-Israel Status Quo,” *American Prospect*, May 21, 2021, <https://prospect.org/politics/new-york-mayoral-candidates-challenging-pro-israel-status-quo/>.

Kahanists capitalized on this phenomenon and mobilized to leverage the votes of their constituencies to curry favors from high-level lawmakers across the political spectrum, including some of the biggest names in the Democratic Party.

A generation ago, they managed to get the Democratic party's most powerful political family, the Clintons, to accepting their political litmus test: public support for their poster boy, Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard.

As long as Kahanism has adherents in the United States, they will attempt to influence US politics. Efforts to mollify them are included in the calculus of countless political decisions.

Today, pro-Israel extremists, who have worked within the Democratic Party for decades, lament what they see as an ebb in the power of their lobby. Politicians who refuse to pander to it no longer "risk losing one of the major ethnic groups in New York," said Sheinkopf. "Those days are now firmly in the past."²⁰⁴

But the pandering continues—and it still reaps rewards. Heading into the decisive 2021 Democratic primary for New York City mayor, Eric Adams made one of the most sycophantic pro-Israel pledges of allegiance in the history of US politics: "I love the people of Israel, the food, the culture, the dance, everything about Israel," said Adams, vowing to move to Israeli-occupied territory once he retires. "I've visited Israel twice, I am going back again, and I'm going to try to find a plot of land so it can be my retirement place," Adams said, adding, "in the Golan Heights"²⁰⁵—that is to say, occupied Syria.

It came as little surprise when Adams won the Democratic nomination and the general election, beginning his tenure as New York City mayor earlier this year.

Other Democratic legislators aren't ashamed to be on the payroll of the Kahane movement's top financier for the last decade: Florida duty-free magnate Simon Falic, the man who escorted Mike Pence on that chilling visit to Hebron.²⁰⁶ Falic organized Pence's public endorsement of the Kahane camp there, at the very site of the Ibrahimi Mosque massacre it perpetrated—the massacre it continues to celebrate every year on its anniversary.²⁰⁷

Florida congressional representatives Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Lois Frankel, and Ted Deutch have benefited from \$1.3 million in donations to Democratic Party politicians from the Falic family.²⁰⁸ Continuing a tradition handed down since

204 Mike Wagenheim, "Middle East Conflict Impacts New York City Mayoral Race," *Jerusalem Post*, June 23, 2021, <https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/middle-east-conflict-impacts-new-york-city-mayoral-race-671866>.

205 Yochonon Donn, "For Eric Adams, Steady Wins the Race," *Mishpacha*, May 11, 2021, <https://mishpacha.com/for-eric-adams-steady-wins-the-race/>.

206 Lara Friedman (@LaraFriedmanDC), "More on Mike Pence's visit with the Hebron settlers [accompanied by Simon Falic (Duty-Free America)], via the Hebron Fund," Twitter, March 10, 2022, 2:08 p.m., <https://twitter.com/larafriedmandc/status/1502013590580211714>.

207 Mike Pence (@Mike_Pence), "Great honor for @KarenPence and I to travel to Hebron today to visit the Tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs at the Cave of Machpelah that Abraham bought to bury Sarah nearly 4,000 years ago," Twitter, March 9, 2022, 10:33 a.m., https://lukeford.net/profiles/profiles/aron_tandler.htm.

208 "Israeli Settler Cash Is Polluting US Politics. It's Time Democrats Turned it Down," *New Arab*, August 30, 2019, <https://medium.com/thenewarab/israeli-settler-cash-is-polluting-us-politics-its-time-democrats-turned-it-down-58678c17dd57>.

Kahane's death three decades ago, the Falics of Florida are the top funders of Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu and of the Kahane movement in Israel²⁰⁹—from its colonizing arm, Ateret Cohanim, to its urban shock troops, Lehava. In 2022, Deutch retired from Congress before the end of his term²¹⁰ to take over as CEO of the American Jewish Committee,²¹¹ an Israel lobby group.

Two Democratic lawmakers from New Jersey have also received substantial donations from the Kahane-funding Falics: US Representative Josh Gottheimer and US Senator Bob Menendez; the latter chairs the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee.²¹²

US Representative Juan Vargas, a Democrat from California's 51st Congressional District, is also a recipient of Falic's cash. Four years ago, when Netanyahu started openly courting the Kahanists, Vargas felt emboldened to do the same in his own district of San Diego. Pandering to the supremacist vote, Vargas said in an interview with the San Diego Jewish World that Israeli occupation forces should not withdraw from any territory—or even limit itself to historic Palestine, for that matter. Israel should vastly expand, said Vargas—or, in his own words, “take in Lebanon, parts of Syria, Jordan, and some portions of Egypt.”²¹³

If the upper echelons of Vargas' Democratic Party have yet to match his reactionary rhetoric, they have nonetheless labored to removed obstacles from the Kahanists' path to power. In May 2022, just after Israel's thirty-sixth government lost its majority,²¹⁴ and early polling pointed to its impending demise,²¹⁵ the US State Department announced that it no longer considered the Kahanist group Kahane Chai to be a terrorist organization.²¹⁶ The move sent a clear signal to Netanyahu that US President Joe Biden did not object to his including the Kahanists in any future government.

True to form, US-Israel relations have remained warm even as Netanyahu has returned to power and appointed Kahanists to top posts.²¹⁷ Meanwhile, a dark horse Democrat challenging Biden for the 2024 presidential nomination has been openly

209 Uri Blau and Josef Federman, “US Duty Free Magnates Fund Controversial Israeli Settlements,” *Associated Press*, July 1, 2019, <https://apnews.com/article/87e58e1f3779432fb353bb786794c6b7>.

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215 “Opinion polling for the 2022 Israeli legislative election,” Wikipedia, accessed June 26, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_2022_Israeli_legislative_election.

216 “Revocation of Five Foreign Terrorist Organizations Designations and the Delisting of Six Deceased Individuals as Specially Designated Global Terrorists,” U.S. Department of State, May 20, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/revocation-of-five-foreign-terrorist-organizations-designations-and-the-delisting-of-six-deceased-individuals-as-specially-designated-global-terrorists/>.

217 Ambassador Michael Adler (@USAmbBelgium), “Honored to have hosted members of the Belgian Jewish community and the visiting Interparliamentary Task Force to Combat Online Semitism, co-chaired by my dear friend Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, as we work together to combat the spread of online discrimination, including antisemitism,” Twitter, June 29, 2023, 11:52 a.m., <https://twitter.com/USAmbBelgium/status/1674340013427904512>.

ving for the Kahanist vote. In July, after promising that “As President, my support of Israel will be unconditional,”²¹⁸ Robert Kennedy Jr. made a public pilgrimage to the home of Dov Hikind and received the Kahanist’s glowing endorsement.²¹⁹

Thirty-two years after his death, Meir Kahane’s political end goal—a Jewish-only theocracy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, and well beyond—has become more popular than ever among Israeli Jews. Now that they have taken the reins of power, the Kahanists’ influence will increase exponentially. Returning to the office of Israeli prime minister, Netanyahu made Itamar Ben Gvir his national security minister, giving the Kahanist party leader unprecedented power over the state’s police forces. Two years ago, Israeli Police commissioner Kobi Shabtai accused Ben Gvir, then a newly-minted Member of Knesset, of inciting countrywide race riots. But since that time, Shabtai has warmly embraced his new boss, both figuratively and literally.²²⁰ In June, he whitewashed the 2021 anti-Palestinian pogroms and walked back his condemnation of the Kahanists: “I never said there were terrorists on both sides.”²²¹

The followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane have reentered the Knesset as conquerors, thanks to the Jewish community’s worst racists, and politicians of all stripes, including and especially in the Democratic Party, who aided and abetted them.

218 Robert F. Kennedy Jr (@RobertKennedyJr), “Biden admin extends U.S. habit of interfering in other countries’ domestic politics. Now it’s threatening Israel with the ending of the special relationship between our two nations. As President, my support of Israel will be unconditional. #Kennedy24,” Twitter, July 19, 2023, 10:21 p.m., <https://twitter.com/RobertKennedyJr/status/1681746133427658754>.

219 New York Post, “Robert Kennedy Jr. meets with Assemblyman Dov Hikind,” posted July 25, 2023, YouTube video, 0:52, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USlJQ0gt-4g>.

220 Jeremy Sharon, “Police Chief Embraces Ben Gvir Despite Having Blamed Him for 2021 Riots,” *Times of Israel*, November 14, 2022, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/police-chief-embraces-ben-gvir-despite-having-blamed-him-for-2021-riots/.

221 Josh Breiner (@JoshBreiner), Twitter, June 16, 2023, 2:44 p.m., <https://twitter.com/joshbreiner/status/1666048387748118529>.

DEDICATED TO
Yossi Gurvitz, 1970-2023

KAHANISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS: THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S DECADES-LONG COURTSHIP OF RACIST FANATICS

DAVID SHEEN

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY on Israel and Palestine lurched to the far right during Donald Trump's term as US president. Benjamin Netanyahu took advantage of Trump's unmitigated support for Israel to oversee the installation of more illegal settlement infrastructure in occupied Palestine than had been built in the previous quarter century. Sadly, replacing the Trump administration with a Democratic one has hardly remedied the damage his policies wrought; if anything, the situation is more dire for Palestinians. For over half a century, followers of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, colloquially called Kahanists – the most racist and most murderous Jewish political movement of modern times – have cultivated an alarming level of influence on both sides of the aisle. This installment of Current Issues in Depth by investigative journalist David Sheen uncovers how for decades, ostensibly liberal lawmakers at the highest levels of the Democratic Party have actively courted and embraced Kahanists, pandering to those who have sabotaged the struggle for Palestinian rights and enthusiastically promoted their ethnic cleansing.

CURRENT ISSUES IN DEPTH

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UPDATE:

The LATEST on the SUSPECTED MURDERERS of ALEX ODEH



by
David Sheen

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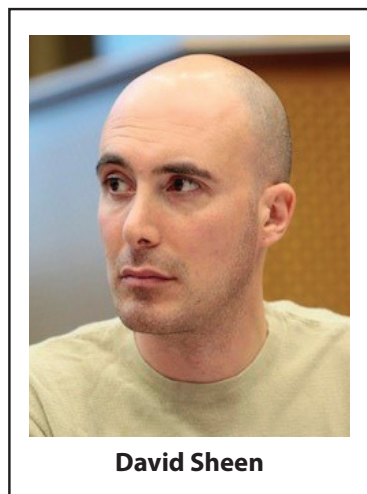
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Dear Reader,

Our July-August 1989 issue of *The Link* featured an interview with Ellen Nassab, sister of Alex Odeh, the slain Southern California Regional Coordinator of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). In that interview Ellen cited a LA Times article that named a member of the Jewish Defense League as a suspect in her brother's murder.

A second *Link* in 2016 by Richard Habib cited a Washington Post article of Nov. 17, 1987 that referred to an FBI memo stating that "several key suspects in the [Odeh] investigation have fled to Israel."



David Sheen

Who are these suspects? What are they doing in Israel? Why have they not been extradited to face trial in America? These are questions posed by David Sheen in this our third issue on a subject that, now 35 years after Alex's assassination, cries out for justice.

David Sheen is an investigative journalist living in Israel. Since 2010, he has reported on racial conflict and religious extremism in Israel/Palestine, writing for dozens of local, regional and international news outlet. Since 2014, he has lectured on these topics at dozens of U.S universities and more than half a dozen European parliaments. In 2017, he was recognized for his reporting and named a "Human Rights Defender" by the Front Line Defenders.

The manuscript David submitted to us came with 164 footnotes, far too many to publish. Readers interested in the source of any particular claim should email me at ameu@aol.com and I will send them the relevant footnote.

Finally, on page 16, we have placed a "Gift Subscription" form. For \$20 we will send a year's subscription to *The Link*, along with recent AMEU publications, to the person or persons you enroll.

John F. Mahoney
 Executive Director

Alleged Assassin of Alex Odeh Finds Safe Harbor in Israel

by David Sheen

An independent investigation into the 1985 murder of Palestinian-American activist Alex Odeh has revealed that one of three suspected assassins has been living openly in Israel ever since, hiding in plain sight.

One of the FBI's suspects, Robert Manning, is currently serving a life sentence in an Arizona jail for another, unrelated murder. A second suspect, Keith Israel Fuchs, has mostly maintained a low profile in a small settlement in the West Bank, steering clear of social media.

But the third suspect has not been hiding in some small corner of the country, working at a mundane trade where the chances of his past catching up to him are remote. Rather, he has remained in the public eye all along, peddling his supremacist ideology, courting controversy, and thumbing his nose at the law – for decades.

On the very day of the attack, October 11, 1985, Andy Green was identified as a suspect in the bombing of the Santa Ana, California offices of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), where Odeh served as the organization's regional director for the West Coast. Since that time, for the last thirty-four years, Green has lived in Israel and Israeli-occupied territories under the Hebrew name Baruch Ben Yosef.

In the intervening decades, Ben Yosef earned a law degree from Israel's Bar-Ilan University and has worked as an attorney out of offices in downtown Jerusalem for a quarter-century. During this period, he has appeared dozens of times in front of Israel's Supreme Court, defending fellow followers of the late far-right Rabbi Meir Kahane, and filing suits against numerous Israeli ministers and prime ministers, demanding increased rights for Jews, to the detriment of the local Palestinian population.

Ben Yosef is one of the pioneers of Israel's settlement movement and its modern-day Jewish Templar movement. The Templars seek to supplant the Dome of the Rock – the iconic gold-domed Jerusalem shrine considered the third-holiest site in the world to Muslims – with a temple to Jehovah, in which they intend to mass-sacrifice cattle, over ten thousand on every major Jewish holy day.

Ben Yosef is thought to hold the record for the Jewish citizen who has sat the longest in an Israeli jail under the controversial protocol of administrative detention: once for six months in 1980 with Meir Kahane himself, and again for six months in 1994, together with Kahane's other top lieutenants. The measure allows Israel to incarcerate suspected terrorists without allowing them to see the evidence against them, and is used almost exclusively against Palestinians.

Retired US law enforcement agents who worked on the Odeh investigation confirmed to this reporter that Ben Yosef, along with two other followers of Kahane, Keith Israel Fuchs and Robert Manning, have been the government's top suspects. Agents currently working the case also affirmed that the three are still the top suspects in the murder.

Reached for comment on the findings of this investigation, Ben-Yosef said in an email, "I categorically deny any connection to the matters mentioned in your letter," and would not answer any other questions.

Who Is Andy Green?

Raised in the Bronx, Andy Green immigrated to Israel in February 1976. In interviews, he has recalled being

inspired by the Revisionist Zionist movement, which developed into Israel's ruling Likud party, and by the Jewish Defense League of Rabbi Meir Kahane, who combined the secular Likud's hardline nationalism with Orthodox Judaism's religious fundamentalism.

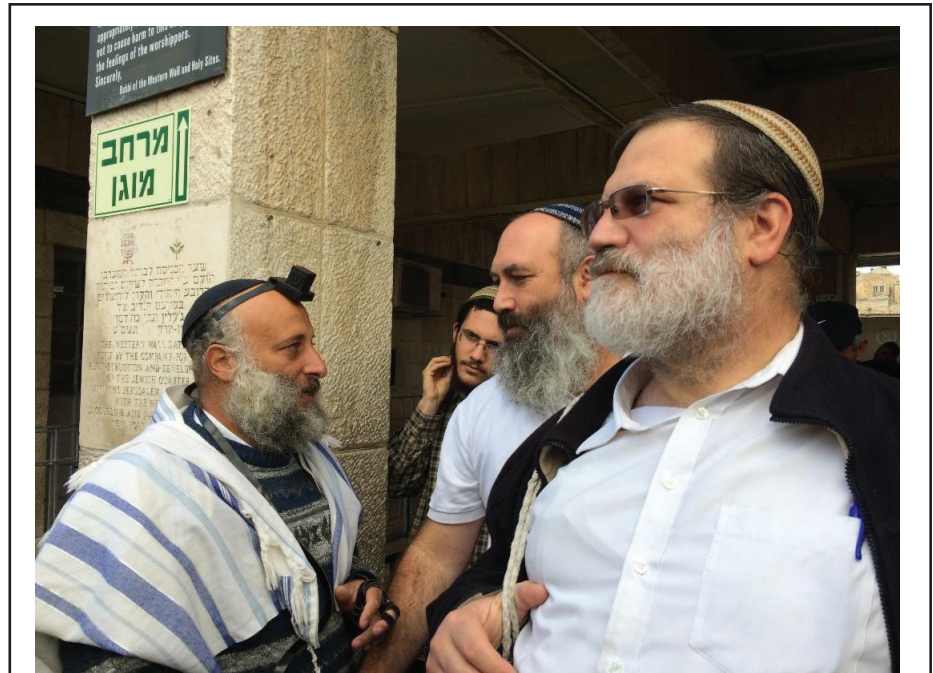
Revisionist Zionists fight for an Israeli state that is dedicated first and foremost to the welfare of its Jewish citizens. But the original Revisionists wanted the character of that state to be secular. Orthodox Jews, on the other hand, have long prayed for a future age in which everyone in the world, Jew and Gentile, would submit to their religious rulebooks. But traditionally, Orthodox rabbis resolved to wait for the arrival of a messiah strong enough to bend the nations of the world to his will; until then, they would remain passive in the Diaspora.

When Kahane fused the two philosophies in the late 1960s, he retained the worst aspects of each, jettisoning the built-in safety valves that prevented either of their worst excesses. Kahane candidly called to turn Israel from a secular ethnocracy into a Jewish theocracy governed by the laws of the Talmud, and to purify the entire Land of Israel of its non-Jewish occupants. And he called on his followers to stop waiting for that Arab-free future to come to pass on its own, but rather for them to do whatever was necessary to make it manifest as soon as possible.

During his lifetime, Kahane openly called for ethnic cleansing and genocide. For decades, in English and Hebrew, in the Knesset and in the streets, from Jerusalem to New York – where he was born, and where he died from an assassin's bullet in 1990 – Kahane advocated expelling by force Arabs and other non-Jews from Israel and the occupied territories.

On Israeli TV, Green explained the philosophy of his former mentor thus. “He said, I want the goyim [non-Jews] to look at Jews and think they are beasts, that they're bullies. And be afraid of them.”

Moved by Kahane's ideas, Green started going by his



Baruch Ben Yosef (right) with Jewish Temple movement activists at the entrance to the Maghrabi Gate in the Haram al-Sharif, Jerusalem.
Credit: Dan Cohen

Hebrew name Baruch, and later adopted the last name Ben Yosef, after Shlomo Ben Yosef, a Jewish immigrant to mandatory Palestine who was sentenced to death by the British for attempting to blow up a busload of Arabs. Upon arriving in Israel, Ben Yosef moved to the West Bank, becoming one of the pioneers of the movement to settle Jews there following Israel's 1967 conquest of the territory. While he waited to be inducted into the Israeli army, Ben Yosef joined a group of religious Jews and together they established the first Israeli settlement in the northern West Bank, the town of Kedumim, near the Palestinian city of Nablus.

He then joined the Israel Defense Forces in August 1976, serving amongst the last groups of recruits to the elite Shaked commando unit before the army brass disbanded

it. After his discharge, Ben Yosef left Kedumim, saying that it had “a leftist leaning to it”, and moved instead to the Hebron-area settlement of Kiryat Arba, a hotbed for followers of Kahane.

In the New York Village Voice and in *The False Prophet*, his 1990 biography of Kahane, the late investigative journalist Robert I. Friedman chronicled Ben Yosef’s violent adventures following his army discharge.

Friedman notes that in 1978, Ben Yosef was arrested for bombing a Palestinian bus and for conspiring to bomb the offices of Jerusalem’s Arab Student Union. Two years later, then-Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin ordered Kahane and Ben Yosef be placed under administrative detention for six months under a 1945 British colonial law that predated Israel’s establishment in 1948. The law’s application against Ben Yosef and Kahane was its first use against Jews since the earliest days of the state.

In May 2019, Carmi Gillon, the former head of the Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security services, revealed on Israeli TV the reason for Ben Yosef’s incarceration: he had plotted to destroy one of the holiest Muslim shrines in the world.

“Kahane planned, with another member of the group, Baruch Ben Yosef, to shoot a M72 LAW rocket at the Dome of the Rock. And he hoped that in the wake of that, all the Muslim states will launch war against Israel. That’s the war of Gog and Magog. And he was arrested under emergency regulations, just like a Hamas terrorist,” Gillon said.

Ben Yosef seemed confident that the winner of such an apocalyptic war would be an Israeli state with far fewer Arabs in its midst. According to an Israeli media report on another Ben Yosef arrest years later, the purpose of the plot he hatched in 1980 had been to “attack Arabs and incite them, until the government would have no choice but to carry out a massive exile of Arabs.” In other words, it was not only an effort to lay waste to a Muslim sanctuary, but also a bid to catalyze an ethnic cleansing.

In August 1983, a 24-year-old Ben Yosef moved back to

the United States in order to run Kahane’s New York City operations.

Three months later, in November, Jesse Jackson announced his candidacy for leadership of the Democratic party. The move made Jackson, a former disciple of Martin Luther King Jr., the first African American man to run a country-wide campaign for the US presidency. Kahane and Ben Yosef interrupted the launch with shouts of “racist anti-semitic” and “enemy of our people”, and were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

Kahane and Ben Yosef targeted Jackson because he had met with the PLO’s Yasser Arafat as early as 1979, and called on the US government to engage him in dialogue, when the PLO was still a guerilla group. Jackson had advocated for the Palestinian cause when it lacked legitimacy in Washington; another decade would pass before US President Bill Clinton hosted Arafat at the White House, where he signed a peace treaty with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in September 1993.

While Jackson’s campaign for the US presidency was effectively torpedoed, Kahane returned to Israel to compete in national elections for the fourth time, and in July 1984, after a decade of failed attempts, he achieved his goal, earning himself a single seat in the Knesset. Just as Kahane’s campaigning in Israel finally bore fruit, Ben Yosef chose to remain in the US.

That year, Alex Odeh and other ADC staffers began to receive menacing telegrams and phone calls from a public payphone near the Jewish Defense League’s LA office. They were from people who claimed to be with the JDL. Those violent threats would soon be carried out.

The ADC had been founded in 1980 to counter media smears against the Arab community, and to lobby for their interests. Those interests included curtailing the billions of dollars in annual aid money that the US government gives to the Israeli military. By 1985, the ADC was taking out full-page adverts in major US papers, calling to keep those

funds in the USA.

That activism made the ADC enemies of the Kahanists, but also of the pro-Israel lobby group AIPAC, and of another powerful group that the ADC once saw as their Jewish corollary: the Anti-Defamation League. For a decade, the ADL had published reports on Arab-American organizations, calling them a “propaganda apparatus” and accusing them of being either “PLO fronts” or “part of the Arab master plan”.

The anti-Arab campaigns of AIPAC and the ADL successfully stripped communal voices like the ADC of their legitimacy; so much so that US campaign donations from Arab-Americans were regularly returned to their donors by local, state and federal politicians – including, just the previous year, the Democratic candidate for US President, Walter Mondale.

But the Kahanists believed that Arab-American voices should not only be politically excluded, but physically silenced, as well.

Exactly half a year before the attack on Odeh, the head of the Jewish Defense Organization, a JDL spinoff faction, managed to track down the ADC’s office in New York City even before its opening had been announced to the group’s own members. In the weeks and months that followed, unknown thugs attempted to break into the office and sprayed the word “ragheads” outside the office entrance. Crank calls from individuals identifying as the “Jewish Defense League” quickly became commonplace. “Listen well you PLO scum,” said one caller on the ADC’s answering machine. “Sabra and Shatilla are going to seem like nothing in comparison to what we’re going to do to you Palestinians.”

As Robert Friedman recorded, Amihai Paglin, the Jewish terrorist who had orchestrated the 1946 bombing of Jerusalem’s King David Hotel, had been training JDL members in bombcraft since at least the early 1970’s. But

with Baruch Ben Yosef back in the US, Kahane’s henchmen could now also depend upon the tactical expertise he had picked up during his service in the now-defunct Israeli commando unit Shaked.

A JDL plot to assassinate James Abourezk, the first Arab-American Senator who founded the ADC, was uncovered and foiled by the FBI. But in the second half of 1985, ADC offices on both coasts were bombed, and the perpetrators were thought to be Jewish terrorists inspired by Kahane, who had held rowdy protests outside the group’s Washington, DC headquarters.

On the East coast, a police officer suffered ghastly injuries, incurred while attempting to disable a pipe bomb planted at the ADC offices in Boston on 16 August 1985. Randy LaMattina lost all of his original teeth and his career with the Boston Police Department that day; his fingers, ripped to shreds by the bomb, still do not have feeling in them.

On the West coast, seven people were injured and Alex Odeh lost his life when a bomb exploded as he entered the ADC offices in Santa Ana, California on 11 October 1985.

“I was afraid. I wanted him to quit the ADC,” Odeh’s widow Norma Odeh told Robert Friedman. “I told Alex the JDL would kill him, and they did.”

When Odeh’s body was buried on October 15, security for the service at St. Norbert’s was especially tight, since the church had received multiple bomb threats.

But the official JDL leadership did not wait for Odeh’s body to be buried before they began to smear his memory. “I have no tears for Mr. Odeh,” said JDL national chair Irv Rubin. “He got exactly what he deserved.”

As for the perpetrators of the crime, “the person or persons responsible for the bombing deserve our praise,” Rubin added.

When the city of Santa Ana erected a statue of Odeh

to honor his legacy, on what would have been his fiftieth birthday, Rubin appeared on the scene, approached Odeh's daughter Helena and issued the same gruesome message.

"He started walking in my direction," Helena recalled on the 34th anniversary of her father's murder, "looked me straight in the face and told me my father deserved to die."

Her voice welled up with tears as if she was reliving that very moment. "My dad missed out on everything, he missed out on seeing his daughters, he missed out on his grandchildren," she said. "How can somebody have that much hate in their heart?"

Alex Odeh

Alex Odeh was born in the West Bank village of Jifna in 1944, when the land was called Palestine and the military rulers were British. After studying in Egypt and then immigrating to the United States, Odeh was hired by the ADC to speak up for Arab-Americans, Muslims and Middle Easterners in general, who were then maligned in the media at least as much as they are today, if not more.

Odeh came from a Christian family, but he aspired to see peace in Palestine for all its inhabitants, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others. In fact, he was scheduled to speak at a local Reform synagogue, Congregation B'nai Tzedek, on the very day that he was murdered. And his calls for compromise were not just virtue signaling or political posturing; Odeh had openly advocated for a two-state solution in the Holy Land years before the PLO adopted partition as its official policy.

But as he told Robert Friedman, Baruch Ben Yosef did not share that vision of peace. "The Arabs have no claim to the land. It's our land, absolutely. It says so in the Bible. It's something that can't be argued. That's why I see no reason to sit down and talk to the Arabs about competing claims. Whoever is stronger will get the land," said Ben Yosef.

In a Village Voice article by Friedman published a month after Odeh's assassination, Ben Yosef insisted upon the right to bomb Palestinian civilians to death. "[Zionist militia] Irgun leader David Raziell planted a bomb in an Arab market in 1939, killing 15 or 20 Arabs," said Ben Yosef. "And do you know how many streets are named after Raziell in Israel? If it was alright for him, how come it's not alright for us?"



Above, Alex and his wife Norma; below, Alex with his three daughters Helena, Samya and Susan

If Ben Yosef's justification is sickening, his argument is still sound; in addition to numerous streets, Israel has also named a school, and even a settlement, after Raziell.

Now this logic legitimizing lethal violence against Palestinians was being imported to the US half a century later. From the perspective of ADC co-founder and attorney

Abdeen Jabara, the timing of the Odeh assassination was not coincidental; it occurred just when Arab Americans had begun to assert themselves as active participants in US politics.

“That violence is intended to chill the exercise of the constitutional rights of Arab-Americans,” Jabara told the US House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice on 16 July 1986, nine months after the Odeh murder. “That violence is intended to stop a nascent voice, because Arab-Americans began to organize themselves, for the first time to play a role in this society with their fellow Americans, standing shoulder to shoulder in the marches for jobs, peace, and justice, in the corridors of power, and because of that they have been targeted for attack.”

At the same House hearing, another ADC co-founder noted that the physical attacks against the ADC from the Jewish Defense League had been preceded by negative PR offensive by other, more mainstream, Jewish groups.

“The campaigns of vilification and the violence against Arab American organizations and leaders fit into a coherent pattern, and the sources of both the vilification and the violence can be seen as sharing a common political agenda,” said James Zogby. “I am not suggesting that AIPAC, the ADL and the JDL are collaborators. They do, however, share a common political agenda, and their tactics in fact converge to create a personal and a political threat to the civil rights of Arab Americans and their organizations.”

When Zogby made those remarks, fresh in his mind must have been a three-month-old incident that left him embittered towards the ADL. Per Zogby’s description, two ADL leaders had visited a Democratic Party chapter chair in upstate New York and urged him not to endorse Zogby for State Assemblyman, alleging the latter was a “Libyan agent”.

But Zogby was correct in noting that ADL and JDL campaigns were consistently converging on shared targets. A decade previous, in 1976, a JDL front group called SOIL

(Save Our Israel Land) had attacked a dozen New York City banks – firebombing some and smashing windows of others – just days after the ADL announced that those banks didn’t conduct business in Israel. And now the ADL’s smears against the ADC had been followed by the JDL’s fatal attack on Alex Odeh.

To be fair, it is unlikely that Kahanists would have needed any tailwind support from conservative community groups to convince them to eliminate an outspoken Palestinian-American activist.

Likewise, it is also unlikely that a trained JDL cell motivated to murder Odeh would have needed any outside intelligence in order to carry out that task. If they had required such sensitive information, however, it could have been provided; at the time, the ADL’s top spy Roy Bullock had infiltrated the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, and had even obtained a floor plan and a key to Alex Odeh’s office.

Years later, when the FBI realized the vast extent of the ADL’s spy operations – which included information on hundreds of US groups and over ten thousand US citizens – Bullock denied any involvement in the Odeh murder, but admitted that among the dozens of groups he had infiltrated on behalf of the ADL were both the San Francisco and Los Angeles-area offices of the ADC.

“The Bureau was interested -- they had traced the three or four guys they thought did it,” Bullock told the San Francisco Police Department in January 1993 about the FBI’s investigation into the Odeh murder. “I missed going to the office by one day; I might have been there to open the door instead of him because he allowed me to go into the office if I was down there; just by sheer coincidence it wasn’t me.”

As an ADL agent posing as a solidarity activist volunteering with the ADC, Bullock amassed information on thousands of the group’s members and tried to recruit suspected anti-Semites into the ADC in an attempt to

discredit it.

“He was one of our most vocal members,” ADC President Albert Mokhiber said of Bullock after his espionage became public knowledge. “He portrayed himself as someone sincerely interested in Arab civil rights and someone dedicated to the principles of our organization, and everyone believed him to be so.”

The full extent of the ADL spy saga will likely never be known; in 1993, the year that the scandal broke, Project Censored named it one of the year’s most censored stories.

Despite the extent of its colossal spy apparatus, the ADL never chose to turn its sights on the reactionary factions it would have been best positioned to infiltrate: violent Jewish groups like the JDL.

“The League doesn’t officially investigate the JDL, it just isn’t something they do,” Bullock explained to the SFPD. “They have written one special report denouncing them, as inflammatory bigots and zealots, but they don’t officially launch investigations against them.”

Like other conservative community organizations, the ADL condemned fanatical Jewish groups in public, but cooperated with them in private when they shared objectives. In 1986, long-time ADL spymaster Irwin Suall admitted to the Washington Post that he regularly traded information with Mordechai Levy, the leader of the JDL splinter group JDO. Levy’s JDO had harassed, defaced and menaced the ADC’s offices in the run-up to the Odeh assassination, and Levy himself continued to distribute an “Enemies of the Jewish People” list which included on it the ADC, even in the weeks following Odeh’s murder.

Extradition

In the years that immediately followed Alex Odeh’s murder, the fortunes of the Kahanist movement took a nosedive. In advance of Israel’s 1988 national elections, polls

predicted Kahane to sweep into the parliament with up to twelve seats, a result which would certainly have earned him a ministry post. In October of that year, however, the Knesset disqualified Kahane’s Kach party from the running, on account of his unabashed racism.

In November 1990, Kahane himself was assassinated in New York City by a Muslim militant, in what, years later, some would claim to be the first attack by the group that would ultimately come to be known as Al Qaeda. At his funeral, one of the largest in Israel’s history, Kahane was passionately eulogized by Israel’s then-Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu.



Robert Manning in West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba. RandomPottins photo

Four months later, Kahane’s loyal followers Robert and Rochelle Manning were arrested at their home in Kiryat Arba. Although Manning was also suspected of involvement in Odeh’s assassination, he and his wife were only indicted for another murder-for-hire, unrelated to their supremacist beliefs.

It had taken years to secure the arrest of the Mannings for that 1980 murder, in part because of a 1978 Israeli law which severely restricted the conditions under which a citizen could be extradited. On the day it passed, that law’s

sponsor urged the Israeli parliament to protect not only citizens who had committed crimes while travelling abroad, but also foreign-born Jewish criminals who might flee to Israel and receive citizenship upon their arrival, by virtue of their ethnic origin.

“Recall the case of Zeller, whose extradition was requested by the United States over the accusation of murder,” said David Glass, then chair of the Knesset’s Constitution, Law and Justice Committee. Jerome Zeller, another American-born follower of Meir Kahane, was accused of planting a bomb in the Manhattan offices of the legendary arts impresario Sol Hurok in 1972, killing Hurok’s 27-year-old Jewish secretary, Iris Kones. “The State of Israel, via the Justice Ministry, asked to delay extradition proceedings due to the circumstances of the case,” said Glass.

Hurok had promoted performances of the Bolshoi Ballet and other Russian art ensembles, and this had raised the ire of Kahanists, who demanded a blanket boycott on all things Soviet, until the USSR would agree to let its Jewish citizens emigrate. In the Knesset plenum on January 3, 1978, Glass argued that the Israeli government had acted correctly when it had given Zeller safe harbor five years earlier, citing a biblical passage from the Book of Deuteronomy which forbids the returning of escaped slaves to their former masters.

“He is an Israeli citizen, but he committed the crime before he was an Israeli citizen. Do you think that Zeller would have received a just trial, taking into account all the special circumstances of the incident, even in New York or in Los Angeles?”

Zeller is believed to have lived in the settlements since 1972, evading any legal consequences for the death of Iris Kones.

Two decades later, however, in 1992, Robert and Rochelle Manning came up for extradition. Seemingly

certain that he faced no serious legal risks himself, Baruch Ben Yosef did not hesitate to lead local efforts to thwart the Mannings’ extradition.

“I’ve been very involved with the anti-extradition program. There’s the Manning case, where we’ve been trying to fight the extradition of the Manning couple, residents of Kiryat Arba. Last year we organized a demonstration. We succeeded in getting almost every rabbi connected with the Rabbi Kook movement and the settlement rabbis to sign a letter calling for the cessation of the extradition,” Ben Yosef told a conference of far-right Anglophones at that time, praising the Mannings as Jewish heroes.

“Here we have the opportunity to stop the extradition of Jews who have been fighting for the Jewish people for the last twenty years!” he exclaimed.

Carmi Gillon, who headed Israel’s Shin Bet and was the organization’s first department chief to be tasked with tackling Jewish domestic terrorism, told this reporter that he recalls monitoring the movements of Manning, and remembers Ben Yosef for his ultra-nationalist activities. But Gillon says that he never knew that the two were suspected of having committed mortal crimes in the US in 1985.

“I really don’t know about that. On my life. I’m hearing it for the first time, from you,” Gillon told this reporter in late 2019. “I never heard of it. I didn’t know that Baruch Green ever returned to the US.”

Moreover, Gillon claims, even if the FBI had asked the Shin Bet for intelligence on Ben Yosef, Fuchs and Manning, it would not have been forthcoming. “Israel worked very well with the Americans since the time of Khrushchev in the 1950s. But there were issues that were taboo. Israel never transferred information about Jews, like the JDL,” said Gillon.

“There was no cooperation on Jewish issues,” Gillon affirms. “During my time, there was no cooperation at all.”

The Kahanists

In September 1993, the Israeli government reversed its long-standing policy to never negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization, and signed a peace treaty with its chairman, Yasser Arafat. The framework of those Oslo Accords provided for the establishment of a Palestinian police force that would maintain law and order in the West Bank and Gaza.

Unsurprisingly, Kahane's followers poured scorn over the peace treaty, and vowed that they would shoot the newly-deputized Palestinian police officers on sight. "We can't share the land," Ben Yosef told the same Los Angeles Times that had just three years earlier reported the murder allegations against him, as Andy Green. "They will run like dogs when the time comes. And we would like to take revenge too. Revenge is a godly idea, and they deserve it."

Months later, another American-born Kahanist would carry out the most murderous attack in the movement's history. On February 25, 1994 – a Jumu'ah prayer day during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan – Dr. Baruch Goldstein walked into a West Bank mosque and murdered Palestinians in prayer.

Goldstein, who had run for a Knesset seat in 1984 with Kahane's Kach party, entered the Cave of the Patriarchs, a Hebron shrine revered by both Jews and Muslims, and gunned down 29 Palestinian men and boys, wounding 125 more. Goldstein's slaughter took place on Purim, a Jewish holiday that glorifies a mythical slaughter of Israel's enemies.

In the wake of the massacre, the Kach party and one of its offshoots, Kahane Chai, were declared illegal in Israel, and Ben Yosef was once again jailed under administrative detention, this time with other top Kahanist leaders. But Ben-Yosef's incarceration would last the longest, and restrictions placed upon him following his eventual release were the harshest.

Years later, Ben Yosef recalled the incarceration of the Kahanist leadership as a "privilege". "We were in HaSharon Prison together, after our friend Baruch Goldstein cleaned out the cave, the Cave of the Patriarchs, from the garbage there," he says, describing scores of unarmed men and boys shot while kneeling in prayer. "We were together for the Passover Seder, it was a very special Passover Seder. The greatest of the generation."

Ben Yosef breaks out into a laugh. "We planned the revolt!"

Last year, a few weeks before the twenty-fifth anniversary of the massacre, videos of Ben Yosef praising Goldstein in Hebrew and English were uploaded to Youtube.

Every year on the anniversary of the horrific massacre, Ben Yosef listens to the reading of the Purim Megilla at the tomb of the mass murderer Baruch Goldstein in Kiryat Arba, a short distance from the scene of his vile crime. In December 2019, the Israeli government began renovating the public park named after Rabbi Meir Kahane, where the tomb is located.

On the same day, Israel's Defense Minister Naftali Bennett announced that Hebron's former fruit and vegetable market, which has been boarded up and devoid of Palestinians ever since the 1994 massacre, will soon be rebuilt as a new Jewish neighborhood, in order to double the number of Israeli settlers in the city.

In the years following the Hebron massacre, Ben Yosef defended in Israeli court Netanel Ozeri, the Kahanist author of "Baruch HaGever," a collection of essays heaping praises upon the mass-murderer Goldstein. Ben Yosef describes Ozeri as Kahane's top student, who not only recorded Kahane's speeches and published his writings, but also developed strategies and tactics that were then used by Jewish settlers to expand Israeli control over increasingly large swaths of Palestinian territory. "He in fact became what some people think is the father of the hilltop youth,"

Ben Yosef said, referring to the settler strike force of the millennial generation.

If Ozeri was the father of the hilltop youth, Ben Yosef could be considered their uncle, passing on the skill sets he'd developed over time to avoid criminal conviction. In the years that followed his second administrative detention, Ben Yosef served as an instructor at the West Bank settlement summer camp "Fort Judea", teaching a new generation of young Kahanists how to resist the interrogation tactics of the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security services.

Over the course of his legal career, Ben Yosef would also argue one of the most infamous cases of Israeli law, representing the man who would go on to become the leader of the reconstituted Kahanist camp, Itamar Ben Gvir.

While Ben Yosef and the rest of the Kahanist leadership were jailed under administrative detention, Ben Gvir, then all of 17 years old, stepped up to lead the movement in their absence.

In 1995, Ben Gvir appeared on a political talk show on Israeli state television, arguing against peace talks with Palestinians, and defending the views of his hero, Meir Kahane. On live TV, Israeli journalist Amnon Dankner, later editor-in-chief of the national newspaper *Ma'ariv* – said "Kahane was a Nazi" and called Ben Gvir "that little Nazi". When Ben Gvir sued Dankner for slander, his legal counsel was Baruch Ben Yosef.

The case dragged through the courts for over a decade, and the suit was finally settled by Israel's Supreme Court in November 2006. The High Court ended the legal saga by affirming the 2002 ruling of the Jerusalem Magistrate's Court, which found that Dankner had indeed libeled the Kahanist Ben Gvir.

However, because there was "a similarity of ideas in the teachings Ben Gvir believes in and those of the Nazis," the judge only obliged Dankner to pay damages of a single Israeli shekel – the equivalent of an American quarter-dollar.

As Ben Gvir took his libel lawsuit to the High Court, his mentor Baruch Ben Yosef recused himself from the case to focus on opposing the proposal of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to disengage unilaterally from the Gaza Strip. By removing the eight thousand Jewish settlers and the Israeli army units protecting them from Gaza, Sharon could claim that Israel's occupation had ended, and subtract from the state's population registry the strip's Palestinian citizens, whose numbers then totaled almost a million and a half. At the time, a majority of Israeli Jews agreed with him that maintaining Jewish numerical superiority in the territories the country controlled directly was worth the cost: ceding sovereignty over a sandy strip of land smaller than 150 square miles in size.

But a significant number of Zionists vociferously oppose retreating from any terrain conquered by Israel, as a refutation of their Biblical blueprint to institute religious rule over all of God's holy land.

In the summer of 2004, Ben Yosef and other Kahanists ran a camp to train Gaza Strip settlers to forcefully resist the planned withdrawal. "The resistance will be proportional to the force exerted against us," Ben Yosef told AFP. "If it's verbal, we'll answer with words, if we're hit with sticks, we'll use sticks, and no one will take guns, but if we're shot, we'll shoot back."

At the time, Israel's Internal Security Minister didn't only fear that the Gaza Strip settlers would physically resist when Israeli soldiers were sent in to evict them. He was also worried that far-right activists would attack the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem in an attempt to derail the project.

Such a scheme would not have been unprecedented in Israeli history. When the Israeli government agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt a quarter-century earlier, a group of Jewish settlers started conspiring to blow up Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock, knowing it would outrage

Muslims around the world, and believing the fragile peace deal with Egypt would likely collapse as a result, and the planned Sinai withdrawal along with it.

That plot was never carried out, but as Israel prepared for another withdrawal on its western flank, its security establishment estimated that a similar plan to attack the Al Aqsa compound may have been in the offing. Among the scenarios they considered were aerial attacks on the Haram Al-Sharif, from either a kamikaze pilot flying a light aircraft or a drone loaded with explosives.

In late July 2004, Israel's Internal Security Minister Tsachi HaNegbi told a television interviewer he feared the far-right was now discussing such strategies not only in a philosophical sense, but in practical terms, too. "There is a danger that they'll want to make use of the most sensitive site and then hope that the chain reaction will lead to the collapse of the political process."

Three days later, Baruch Ben Yosef dispatched an angry letter to HaNegbi, demanding that he apologize for alleging that Templar activists such as himself were a security threat to the state. Ben Yosef added that if HaNegbi failed to atone for misspeaking, he could expect a protest campaign against him.

Two weeks later, Ben Yosef, his protégé Itamar Ben Gvir, and a dozen other Kahanists organized a protest outside HaNegbi's home in the town of Mevaseret Zion, where former Shin Bet chief Carmi Gillon had not long before been elected mayor. After the protest went on for some time, an armored vehicle pulled up to the house, and HaNegbi emerged. Instead of retreating into the protection of his home, HaNegbi immediately approached Ben Gvir and extended his hand to wish him well, for having gotten engaged the previous week. "I understand that congratulations are in order," he said, and explained that he wanted to talk.

"You want to shut the mouths of people who were basically your students," charged Ben Gvir, accusing him of

preparing the public for administrative detentions and other draconian measures against them and others protesting the planned Gaza pullout.

Calling Ben Yosef and Ben Gvir students of HaNegbi was no exaggeration. In the early 1980's, HaNegbi had been a prominent far-right activist leading the resistance to Israel's pullout from the Egyptian Sinai, along with hard-core Kahanists. A decade earlier, HaNegbi was in fact one of the first Israeli students at the school Rabbi Meir Kahane established in downtown Jerusalem to spread his reactionary version of Zionism.

HaNegbi sat down and spoke with the activists, and according to one Israeli press report, promised them that the government would not rubber-stamp any detention requests from the Shin Bet.

The "HaNegbi-Ben Gvir Barbecue", as that Israeli outlet described it, elicited an angry response from liberal activists at Peace Now. "We remind Minister HaNegbi that the Kach organization was made illegal," said the group in a statement, calling on him to quash the group's activities, "instead of sitting and chatting with its activists."

Press photos of the protest-turned-pow-wow showing HaNegbi casually conversing with Ben Yosef and Ben Gvir outside his home were used by the Kahanist movement to make the argument that they couldn't possibly represent real security threats. "It would be like the director of the FBI accusing a group of trying to blow up the White House and then just strolling out of his house to chat with them," said Mike Guzofksy, a top Kahane movement activist.

The Aramaic Curse

That fall, at the annual memorial service to Meir Kahane, Ben Yosef denounced Israel's planned disengagement from Gaza, and called instead for holy war.

"What will bring redemption is war. But today we're going in exactly the opposite direction," said Ben Yosef,

in a clip that was later broadcast on PBS in an episode of Frontline entitled 'Israel's Next War?'. "There's an attempt to prevent war, at all costs. And if we can force the army to go back to being offensive, an army of revenge, an army which cares about Jews more than anybody else, then we'll be able to bring the final redemption, in the only way possible: through war. War now."

Ben Yosef was among the Israelis filmed that year loudly protesting Sharon's planned withdrawal from the strip, chanting, "Hang the traitors! Gaza for the Jews!"

Soon he started to make it personal. At one such anti-pullout protest outside the Knesset that featured a crowd of thousands, Ben Yosef taunted Sharon with the suggestion that he would soon join his late wife in the grave. "Sharon, Lily is waiting for you," he said, grinning.

In September, Israeli media outlets published threats by Ben Yosef to perform a medieval curse of death upon Prime Minister Sharon, unless he agreed to cancel the government order to evacuate Jewish settlements and settlers from the Gaza Strip, then occupied throughout its interior by the Israeli army.

The following summer, Ben Yosef made good on his threat. On July 26, 2005, twenty days before the Israeli army's deadline to Jewish settlers to willingly evacuate the Strip, Ben Yosef accompanied fellow Kahanist leader Rabbi Yosef Dayan and performed the Pulsa Dinura death curse.

Dayan had levied the same Aramaic curse against then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin a decade earlier, in an attempt to sabotage the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. On the eve of Yom Kippur in 1995, Kahanists gathered outside Rabin's residence and wished the worst on him: "All the curses of the world must rain down on him, he must eat his excrement and drink his urine."

One month later, on 4 November 1995, Rabin was shot to death at a pro-peace rally in Tel Aviv, assassinated by another far-right Israeli who had studied law at Baruch Ben Yosef's alma mater, Bar Ilan University.

If Dayan's first curse seemingly succeeded, supernaturally slaying Rabin and knocking the peace process off course, perhaps another Pulsa Dinura from Dayan could sideline Sharon and put the kibosh on his planned pullout from Gaza?

This time, the curse would be conducted at the old Jewish cemetery in Rosh Pina in the Upper Galilee, at the grave of Shlomo Ben Yosef, hung by the British for attempting to blow up a bus full of Palestinians in 1938, and whose surname Andy Green adopted as his own.

"We read the Pulsa Dinura prayer so God will take the murderous dictator who is murdering the Jewish nation," Ben Yosef told Israel's highest-selling newspaper Yediot Ahronot after taking part in the Kabbalistic ritual.

"We hope that God will take him from us," said Ben Yosef. "We called upon angels of terror."

In response to a query from Yediot, Israel's Justice Ministry stated that "after listening to and reading about the matter, [it] will consider whether to open a criminal investigation against those involved in the ceremony."

Five months later, on January 4, 2006, Sharon suddenly suffered a debilitating stroke, putting him in a vegetative state that would last for eight years.

Two days after Sharon passed, the Jerusalem Post published an article entitled "Extremists boast they cursed Sharon," quoting Baruch Ben Yosef taking credit for Sharon falling gravely ill.

"I take full responsibility for what happened," Ben-Yosef told the Post. "Our Pulsa Denura kicked in. Nothing could kill Sharon, and he said his ancestors lived until they were over 100 years old, but we got him with the Pulsa Denura."

The article, authored by Yaakov Katz – now the Jerusalem Post's Editor-in-Chief – also cites Ben Yosef's successor as chief Kahanist litigator, Itamar Ben Gvir.

“There is a judge in this world,” Ben-Gvir told Katz. “Yitzhak Rabin was killed on the fifth anniversary of Meir Kahane’s murder and Sharon fell ill on the anniversary of Binyamin Kahane’s murder.” The latter is a reference to Meir Kahane’s second son, who had in fact been murdered five years earlier.

When Sharon finally slipped out of his coma and died eight years later in 2014, Ben Yosef and Ben Gvir offered free legal services to any Israeli Jew charged with celebrating his passing.

What Next?

Immigrating to Israel from the Bronx and transforming himself into Baruch Ben Yosef, Andy Green became the vanguard of the violently racist Kahane movement. The parliamentary records of both the US Congress and the Israeli Knesset have documented Ben Yosef’s supremacist activities. Various mainstream media outlets have reported that he is a suspect in the murder of the Palestine-born American citizen Alex Odeh. Numerous US law enforcement officials past and present have affirmed to this reporter that this is still the case, even today.

And yet Ben Yosef continues to live openly in occupied Palestinian territory, arguing in Israel’s highest courts for a Jewish takeover of the country’s holiest Islamic shrines, and openly advocating for an ethnic cleansing of the country’s Arabs.

More than this: he is regularly interviewed in Israeli newspapers and on prime-time Israeli television, identified as a long-time leader of the Kahanist movement. In the last thirty years, the Israeli press has often covered Ben Yosef’s far-right activism, but in all that time has not once mentioned the American allegations against him.

If Alex Odeh had never been assassinated and instead lived out his days in good health, he would now be 76 years old and surrounded by his family and friends.

Instead, 61-year-old Baruch Ben Yosef is celebrating more than three decades of impunity for his alleged crimes, and the knowledge that the Kahane movement he has served for his whole adult life is on the road to returning to the corridors of political power, under the leadership of his protégé, Itamar Ben Gvir.

These successes are in no small measure thanks to the guiding hand of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has labored to rehabilitate the Kahanist camp. In the last election cycle, Netanyahu’s support included offering Jewish Power party leader Ben Gvir an ambassadorship and a promise to change Israeli law to permit Israel’s most notorious racists to run alongside him. “Years ago he wouldn’t have done something like that,” Ben Yosef told Israeli TV of Netanyahu’s newfound embrace of Kahanism. “Maybe the demon isn’t so scary now.”

Affirming that the Kahanist movement is now mainstream, former Shin Bet chief Carmi Gilon envisions Kahane himself looking on from the next world, pleased as punch. “I think that today he is not spinning in his grave. He’s lying in his grave, sees what’s happening in Israeli politics, and says, ‘Hell yeah! I did it!’” ■

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