



KAHANISM AND AMERICAN POLITICS

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

DAVID SHEEN

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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.

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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-dffa0ec0000>.

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/whatsapps-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-ef7e898e0000>.

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-af7f-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/3AqRphr>.

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 Tandler "acted appropriately because this was not a fair proceeding."¹⁵⁰

The following year—a week after Mordechai Tandler was suspended from his New York synagogue¹⁵¹—another of Moshe Tandler's sons, Aron Tandler, 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 Tandler," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 1, 2005, <https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/congregants-stand-by-rabbi-tandler/>.

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-mordechai-tandler.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, "Tandler Resigns Under Cloud," *Jewish Journal*, March 9, 2006, <https://jewishjournal.com/community/12777/>.

153 "Aron Boruch Tandler," Lukeford.net, accessed February 16, 2023, https://lukeford.net/profiles/profiles/aron_tandler.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/128100460833189121>.

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>.

210 “117th Congress, 2nd Session, Formerly the Office of Representative Theodore E. Deutch,” U.S. House of Representatives, October 3, 2022, <https://clerk.house.gov/members/FL22/vacancy>.

211 “Ted Deusch | AJC,” American Jewish Committee website, accessed June 26, 2023, <https://www.ajc.org/bio/ted-deusch>.

212 “Israeli Settler Cash Is Polluting US Politics,” *New Arab*.

213 Donald H. Harrison, “Re-elected Vargas Will Push Fight Against BDS,” *San Diego Jewish World*, November 8, 2018, <https://www.sdjewishworld.com/2018/11/08/re-elected-vargas-will-push-fight-against-bds/>.

214 Patrick Kingsley and Isabel Kershner, “Israel's Government in Crisis After Senior Lawmaker Quits Coalition,” *New York Times*, April 6, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/06/world/middleeast/udit-silman-israel-coalition.html>.

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>.

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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.

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