

THE ISRAEL LOBBY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

By David Cronin

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Introduction

According to British author George Orwell, political speech is 'largely the defence of the indefensible'. For example, in political speech the bombing of civilians may be called 'pacification', their forcible displacement the 'transfer of population', and their imprisonment without trial or execution the 'elimination of unreliable elements'.¹

Orwell's essay on 'Politics and the English language' was first published back in 1946; however, during the summer of 2014, Israel and its Western allies used a similar kind of political speech to distort reality. A United Nations (UN) inquiry found that Israel's military assault resulted in the death of 2,251 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly civilians, and 73 people in Israel, mostly soldiers;² nevertheless the Israelis named it 'Operation Protective Edge'. Palestinian children living in one of the most densely populated places on earth could be targeted, the Israeli military argued, because they were being used as 'human shields'.³ And any pause in the massacre was hailed as a 'humanitarian ceasefire'.⁴

Israel's political speech was echoed at the highest levels of European governments. As Israel began its assault on Gaza in July, French President François Hollande declared that 'it was up to the Israeli government to take all measures to protect its population'.⁵ A statement from British Prime Minister David Cameron's office 'reiterated the UK's staunch support for Israel' and 'underlined Israel's right to defend itself'.⁶ Michael Mann, the European Union's (EU) then spokesperson on foreign policy, said that Israel was resorting to 'retaliatory fire'.⁷

These statements failed to mention that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his fellow ministers had been extremely hostile to the reconciliation agreement between Hamas and its rival party Fatah in April 2014 and the subsequent formation of a Palestinian national unity government.⁸ They ignored how Netanyahu used the horrific killing of three teenage Israeli settlers in June as a pretext for a brutal wave of house demolitions, arrests and bomb attacks against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.⁹ And they disregarded how Israel had repeatedly violated the terms of a 2012 ceasefire agreement with Hamas.¹⁰

More fundamentally, in their haste to depict Israel as the victim, there was no mention of how Israel subjects the Palestinians to a brutal occupation and, in the case of the 1.8 million living in Gaza, an oppressive siege by land, sea and air. Nor was there any account of how Israel has been ethnically cleansing Palestinians from their homeland for decades, whether by demolishing their homes,¹¹ acquiring their land and building illegal settlements,¹² imprisoning them without charge,¹³ severely restricting their movement,¹⁴ or resorting to the full horror of military force.¹⁵

Nor did they refer to Israel as practicing apartheid. As defined by the UN, apartheid is the domination of one racial or ethnic group over another.¹⁶ Apartheid was originally an Afrikaans term; the Israeli establishment prefers the Hebrew word *havrada* (segregation) to describe its own policies.¹⁷ While Israel is not identical to South Africa under white minority rule, many of its practices are comparable. Both Israel and apartheid South Africa, for example, declared a 'state of emergency' in order to introduce measures to curb freedoms and discriminate against those deemed to have the 'wrong' colour or follow the 'wrong' creed.¹⁸

Western politicians' acquiescence to the Israeli narrative is made possible partly because there is a significant international network of groups dedicated to preserving the notion that 'a democratic Israel is merely acting in self-defence against Palestinian rocket fire'. These groups often work together or are aligned and many have close connections with the Israeli government and its diplomats. Collectively, they make up what is often known as the Israel lobby. In this report we use the term Israel lobby to refer to a range of think tanks, lobby groups, media related organisations and those that stand behind them in the Israeli government or in conservative foundations or other sources of funding.

The Israel lobby is perhaps not a capacious enough term to cover all of the groups and organisations that are part of the wider Zionist movement. For example the institutions of the Israeli state are not uncomplicatedly described as part of the 'Israel lobby'. Furthermore, the para-statal 'national institutions' of Israel are obviously a core part of the Zionist movement and have been since well before the creation of the state of Israel.¹⁹ Zionism in the period before the foundation of the state of Israel was often described as a 'movement'.²⁰ Thus, while we conceive of the transnational Zionist movement as a broader phenomenon, which stands in need of serious analysis, we use the term Israel lobby as a short hand in this report to refer to that part of the movement that is active in EU policy making.

Of course, the Israel lobby is by no means monolithic. Similar to American scholars Mearsheimer and Walt, we use the term to refer to the loose coalition of individuals and organisations that represent diverse interests, but which all actively work towards shaping foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction.²¹ As their seminal work published in 2006 on the Israel lobby in the United States argues, the lobby is also defined by the work that it does—both shaping and policing public debate, something we will highlight in the case of Europe as well. This work further limits the potential possibilities for resolving conflict. As former US Democratic Senator James Abourezk once wrote, 'I can tell you from personal experience that the support Israel has in the Congress is based completely on political fear — fear of defeat by anyone who does not do what Israel wants done.'²² That comment relates to US politics. The question we address in this report is to what extent is there an Israel lobby active at the EU level.

The most powerful political lobby groups are best known for influencing policy in London and Washington. Indeed, American corporations now spend about \$2.6 billion a year on reported lobbying expenditures—more than the \$2 billion allocated annually to the US Congress.²³ However, lobbying in Brussels has also become a billion dollar industry and influences, by some estimates, about 75 per cent of legislation.²⁴ In addition to governments, thousands of private companies, banks, law firms, PR consultancies and trade associations all employ lobbyists seeking to shape EU policy.

While lobby groups wield significant political power in today's world, they operate largely behind closed doors. In 2011, the European Commission (the EU's executive branch) and European Parliament launched a voluntary Joint Transparency Register to make lobbying in Brussels more accountable, and the parliament passed a law in 2014 calling upon the commission to make the register mandatory by 2017.²⁵ However, even when it is eventually made mandatory, the register will still not require lobby groups to report on their donors. And as this report details, following the money is essential.

It is important to emphasise that 'Israel lobby', or 'Zionist movement', are the correct terms here. Although some pro-Israel groups are dominated by Jews or have the word 'Jewish' in their names, the term 'Jewish lobby' is misleading. It implies that Israel speaks on behalf of and enjoys the blessing of all Jews, which it clearly does not.

Furthermore, there is a major difference between Judaism and Zionism. Yet because there is so much misinformation on these matters, it is necessary to spell out these differences.

Judaism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions. Discrimination against its adherents, the Jewish people, is just as abhorrent as any other form of racial or religious discrimination. For that reason, anti-Semitism must always be opposed—vigorously.

Zionism, on the other hand, is a political ideology dating back to the nineteenth century. It was initially unpopular in Jewish communities, in the US and Europe, only reaching an ascendancy, according to most historical accounts, shortly before the creation of the state of Israel. Numerous Jews have rejected Zionism.

That Zionism as a political project is based on immigrant Jews dominating over an indigenous people can be seen from the works of its pioneering theoretician, Theodor Herzl. The state Herzl proposed to establish in Palestine would, he argued, be 'a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism'.²⁶ As recently as 2012, Eli Yishai, then Israel's interior minister, reiterated this vision when saying 'Muslims [who] arrive here do not even believe that this country belongs to us, to the white man'.²⁷ He then vowed to employ 'all the tools to expel the foreigners, until not one infiltrator remains'.²⁸

Thus, when Israel and its supporters seek to conflate anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism in what they call the 'New anti-Semitism', they are deliberately seeking to silence any criticism of the crimes that the state of Israel, in the name of Zionism, commits and abets.

In fact, some of the key players in the Israel lobby are Christian Zionists who hold divergent views from many of their non-Christian counterparts. During the latest attack on Gaza, Israel's foreign ministry organised a briefing for the newly elected European Parliament. Hosted jointly by the ministry and European Friends of Israel (EFI), a cross-party alliance within the EP.²⁹ The event was chaired by Bas Belder, a Dutch Christian Zionist MEP.

The keynote speaker for the event was David Saranga. After spending three years as Israel's main contact with the European Parliament, Saranga served as head of the Israeli foreign ministry's *hasbara* department.³⁰ *Hasbara* is a Hebrew word often translated as 'explaining', but for many it has also become synonymous with Zionist propaganda. For example, Saranga has sometimes employed *hasbara* to promote Israel as an LGBT haven, claiming that it has 'some of the most advanced gay rights legislation in the world'.³¹

And yet Belder belongs to the Reformed Political Party – or SGP, to use its Dutch acronym – a party opposed to same-sex marriage in the Netherlands.³² Indeed, the SGP is not attracted to Israel because it is socially progressive (and, of course, Israel is not progressive on matters related to Palestinian rights), but rather for religious reasons, stating that it is 'committed to a secure existence for Israel in the territory that God has assigned to the Jewish people'.³³

Despite this paradox, Belder has positioned himself as one of Israel's top supporters in Brussels, sharing the stage with Saranga and others. Between 2009 and 2014, Belder was head of the European Parliament's delegation for relations with Israel's national assembly, the Knesset,³⁴ which allowed him to pose as an official EU spokesperson on the Middle East.

It is important to stress that the willingness of EFI to embrace religious extremists like Belder is not a sign of desperation, because the Israel lobby already enjoys considerable support from the EU's political and economic hierarchy, even though a number of the union's officials and representatives have privately told us that they are frustrated with Israel.

However, this does not mean that the Israel lobby will always have an easy time with the European Parliament - like it often does in Washington. As we will show later in this report, pro Israel lobbyists have on occasion been frustrated with how some MEPs have succeeded in delaying the implementation of dossiers aimed at boosting trade between the EU and Israel. It is entirely conceivable that more of these delays will occur in the near future.

While certain Israel lobby organisations enjoy some degree of autonomy, the lobby more generally works in close cooperation with the Israeli state. The talking points for pro-Israel groups in Brussels are largely identical to those drawn up by Israeli ministries or embassies. In fact, EFI posted a set of arguments in favour of the 2014 offensive against Gaza on social media, acknowledging that Israeli diplomats wrote them.³⁵

We also want to stress that we are not arguing that Zionists 'control' Western governments, as some conspiracy theorists (and elements of the far right) would have it. Israel is a valued client of and collaborator with the Western arms industry, and it is also located in a region with many natural resources that fuel Western economies, thus helping to secure the West's place at the centre of the international system. These simple facts, alongside historical developments and cultural ties, offer a stronger explanation for why the West so often overlooks Israel's abuse of Palestinian rights than the existence of pro-Israel pressure groups alone.

It is important to underscore, too, that there are a number of different powerful lobbies in Brussels. Corporate America wields considerable influence over EU policy, for example. It is currently seeking a trans-Atlantic trade and investment pact (TTIP), under which it could challenge social or environmental laws deemed inimical to the maximisation of corporate profits.³⁶ Furthermore, it was leaked in March 2016 that under the new pact, the unelected European Commission 'will be obliged to consult with US authorities before adopting new legislative proposals... leaving EU member states and the European Parliament further sidelined'.³⁷ But then some of the EU's most senior policymakers see bowing to the US and its business interests as necessary for economic growth. Catherine Ashton, then EU foreign policy chief, said in 2013 that the union wished to be America's 'most reliable partner'.³⁸

Perhaps this intense corporate pressure also helps to explain why the EU behaves in such an obsequious manner to the US on the Israel-Palestine dossier. Time and again, Israel destroys infrastructure in the Gaza Strip or West Bank with the aid of American weaponry; and yet it is usually Europe that foots much of the repair bill.³⁹

The Israel lobby is nonetheless influential, not least because there is considerable overlap between its agenda and that of the West's most powerful men and women. In at least one instance, a pro-Israel lobbyist has secured a job near the top of the EU's hierarchy. Before he was nominated as Italy's EU commissioner in 2008, Antonio Tajani was an MEP with Silvio Berlusconi's party, then called Forza Italia. He was also a political board member of EFi.⁴⁰

Holding the enterprise portfolio and the position of vice president for most of his time in the European Commission, Tajani often displayed a positive bias towards Israel. He visited Israel in October 2013, during rising diplomatic tensions with the EU over a new set of guidelines drawn up by EU officials stating that firms or institutions based in Jewish-only settlements in the occupied West Bank would not be eligible for subsidies.⁴¹ Accompanied by salespeople from Italy's leading weapons company Finmeccanica, Tajani encouraged Israel to take part in even more EU programmes,⁴² including Copernicus, an EU-financed satellite navigation scheme with a military dimension.⁴³ Tajani also told officials that Israel's technological prowess meant that it 'serves as an inspiration for Europe'.⁴⁴

Before his trip, according to internal documents, EU officials had advised Tajani that a blueprint for economic and political integration between the EU and Israel had already been 'tailor-made to reflect Israel's interests and priorities', stressing that the total value of EU exports to Israel came to €17 billion in 2012. He was also alerted to how the Israeli government was eager to give the private sector a major role in transport and other infrastructural projects.⁴⁵

This indicates that the EU perceives strong relations with Israel as being beneficial to corporate interests. The economic policies of Netanyahu's government resonate with those of the EU and Israel is hailed as being one of the 30 most 'competitive' economies in the world,⁴⁶ glossing over the fact that in 2013, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that Israel was the fifth most unequal state among its 34 members. The US, Israel's chief ally, was number four on the OECD's inequality table.⁴⁷

In another example of the Israel lobby's corporate outreach, this time in the United States, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) has been speaking out in favour of the Keystone XL pipeline, designed to bring highly polluting tar sands from Canada to Texas.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the AJC's Brussels office, known as the AJC Transatlantic Institute, has styled itself as a discussion forum dedicated to bolstering EU-US relations, including a mission statement that lists 'energy security' as one of its key topics of interest.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Israel's EU embassy enjoys comparably cordial ties to the business representatives and corporate-financed analysts who frequent the European quarter of Brussels. The embassy is a member of the European Policy Centre (EPC),⁵⁰ arguably the think tank with the highest profile in Brussels, often hosting events for top-level politicians and diplomats.⁵¹ For example, the EPC co-organised a breakfast briefing in 2011 with the Israeli embassy and Danny Ayalon, then Israel's deputy foreign minister.⁵²

One year earlier, Ayalon, a member of the far right Yisrael Beitenu (Israel Our Home) party, had proposed transferring Palestinian citizens of Israel from their homes in order to secure a Jewish-only state.⁵³ Note: the term 'transfer' is political speech for ethnic cleansing.

The Israeli state and wider Israel lobby have diligently sought to divert attention away from Israel's crimes. This report examines a number of groups in the lobby in Europe, seeking to cast light on their activities, personnel and networks as well as how they are funded and whom precisely they represent.

Figure 1: Map of known donors to the Israel lobby in Brussels



Methods

This report is based on a research approach best described as Power Structure Research. This has two key combined dimensions: network analysis and content analysis. The network analysis, as one of its chief exponents, William Domhoff, has noted, maps the people and organisations that 'make up the power structure', and their connections to and influence on government.⁵⁴ The content analysis then examines what goes on in the networks including as Domhoff puts it: 'an analysis of the ideology and policy preferences of the group or class under scrutiny. This is done by studying the written "output" of strategically located people or organisations in the network, that is, texts of speeches, policy statements, campaign literature, and proposed legislation.' We follow this approach but also add to it by using a range of investigative research techniques. These sift publicly available information to uncover hidden and obscure material and track down sources commonly overlooked or unexploited to build a better picture of powerful organisations and individuals.^{55/56}

The approach we chose was influenced by some basic assumptions about power, influence and the digitised world. The power and influence of lobby groups has to be approached by analysing the position of groups in the larger networks in which they are embedded. As Domhoff writes the issues facing lobby groups 'are too complex... for new policies to arise naturally from common interests and social cohesion alone. That is why a set of non-profit, ostensibly nonpartisan organisations is a necessary feature of the [policy] landscape. They take the form of charitable foundations, think tanks and policy-discussion groups... These organisations are the basis of a policy-planning process'.⁵⁷ A central assumption in this approach, which we share, is that lobby groups try to influence policy indirectly via other institutions as well as directly interfacing with policymakers.

Investigations

The internet has transformed the possibilities of research in this area and this study is but one example of that. As Val Burris has noted:⁵⁸

Until recently, most of the information needed to trace the webs of power in ... society could be obtained only through extensive library and archival research, close monitoring of the press, searches of government records and documents, and interviews with knowledgeable insiders. These remain important sources of data for power structure research, but today much of the information previously obtained in these ways can now be acquired more quickly and easily on the Internet.

Our approach to the content analysis part of the study relies on an investigative approach that pieces together a range of data sources to build a picture of the strategies and tactics utilised by pro-Israel groups. Investigative research can usefully be distinguished from 'co-operative' research, which seeks to develop collaborative relations of trust with research subjects, who are often members of powerless groups or populations. Investigative research is more appropriate when examining powerful or elite institutions such as corporate or state bodies.⁵⁹ Investigative research does involve the attempt to systematically collect data and to follow leads to get to the bottom of how institutions work. Data is collected from open and public sources as well as via materials which are disclosed via a variety of other processes including via court cases and legal proceedings, leaks, whistleblowing, disclosure and transparency legislation. It is important to note that investigative research makes use of well-known research techniques, but that it is the overall orientation towards investigations that gives the particular mix of methods its coherence and bite.⁶⁰ Investigative research is, as Ho et al note 'particularly suitable for uncovering, understanding, and reporting social phenomena that may be hidden from or not easily accessible to observers.'⁶¹ Below we discuss the methods used to complement the network analysis in this project.

Documentary sources

Documents generated by policy actors such as on organisational websites, policy documents, internal publications, 'grey literature' have been analysed. Grey literature is an increasingly important source of information because of the opportunities afforded by the internet for self

publication and is particularly relevant. Data for the content analysis was gathered using a range of desk research and investigative techniques.^{62/63} Documents released to the authors and others under EU access to documents provisions has been used to examine otherwise hidden data on Israel related policy processes or interactions.

Some material has been located via investigative research protocols including, most obviously the use of the Internet Archive (archive.org). This has been used to reconstruct and retrieve materials which have been used as primary sources to illuminate the relations between academics, corporations and government. Wherever possible we have relied on near contemporary historical records from the internet archive as opposed to current live web records. As well as allowing us to reconstruct activities from the time of the relevant issue, it also allows us to compare and contrast the materials subsequently published and to chronicle changes in narrative accounts about the various organisations we examine. Our research is also based on academic literature and news reports as well as interviews conducted by the lead author.

Following the money

A key element of our research draws on financial documents filed by US charities with the Internal Revenue Service and to a lesser extent charitable filings with the Charity Commission in the UK. These documents are an important source of data on money flowing into the various lobby groups. But they also provide us with clues on the organisations and individuals that fund the Israel lobby, which we can follow up by conducting research on the background and activities of such foundations and individuals that run them. This allows us to trace links to the economic and political interests underwriting support for lobby groups. It also enables us to place them politically by examining the other organisations that these foundations support. This is important because it is clear that the money is a decisive factor in facilitating the existence of these lobby groups. Without it they would not exist. It is this material factor that undergirds the existence and activities of the lobby groups and suggests that a full account of their activities needs to include this dimension in addition to analysis of their activities and arguments. In other words we reject those approaches that attempt to analyse lobby groups only in relation to the ideas and arguments that they make. Instead we insist on the need to examine their practices and as a corollary the material circumstances and resources that they need to function.

Most of the organisations in this report are opaque about their sources of funding and so we had to rely upon our own research to uncover their funders. Since US tax documents (and those of UK charities) are available online, this makes tracing American funders much easier than those in Belgium or Israel. Our findings are based on an analysis of financial documents stored at the Foundation Center's website,⁶⁴ where US charities' IRS 990 tax filings can be accessed online and on the website of the Charity Commission in the UK. However, not all of these documents contain searchable text, and thus a certain level of selection bias results from this limitation. In addition, while our research highlights the many connections between the Israel lobby in Europe and right-wing American individuals and groups, this does not mean that other support networks do not also exist. Indeed, it has become clear recently that oligarchs from the former Soviet Union also finance several of the groups detailed in this report. However, the New York-based Jewish American paper *Forward* has reported that funding for pro-Israel advocacy has generally 'been harder to come by in Europe' because 'Europeans prefer to maintain a separation between money and politics'.⁶⁵

It seems to us that any imbalance in funding is more likely to reflect the relative monetary strength of the Zionist movement in the US, rather than any intrinsic qualities of either Europeans or Americans – whatever their ethno-religious background. This impression is supported by the observation that significant numbers of the EU based Israel lobby groups are EU outposts of US lobby groups or were created by such groups.

Contents of this report

We start this report by examining, the two main 'Friends of Israel' groups in chapter one. European Friends of Israel, in particular, has become a focal point for pro-Israel activities in Brussels. We look at its neoconservative politics and at those of the Friends of Israel Initiative, as well as their less than transparent finances.

The second chapter deals with organisations that have recently established branches in Brussels, such as the American Jewish Committee and Christian Zionist groups like the Israeli Allies Foundation and European Coalition for Israel. We also examine the activities of some of the lesser-known pro-Israel and Zionist organisations in Brussels, including those that represent themselves as experts on terrorism.

The EU's close relationship with Israel is the focus of the third chapter, beginning with their growing trade relations. We then look at the announcement of new EU guidelines in 2013 restricting business with the settlements and the subsequent political fallout.

Chapter four details the Israel lobby's campaign to encourage the West to isolate, and at times even militarily attack, groups and states that resist Israel's occupation of Palestine.

And finally, in chapter five, we focus on the lobby's recent attempts to silence any criticism of Israel by claiming that its critics represent 'the new anti-Semitism'.

Chapter One:

Europe's new 'Friends of Israel'

In 2006 British Conservative party members created the European Friends of Israel (EFI), arguably one of the most influential Israel lobby groups in Brussels. EFI is modelled on the UK's Israel lobby, where there are powerful 'friends' of Israel organised in the Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI), Labour Friends of Israel and Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel. Even the right-wing nationalist UK Independence Party (UKIP) has a 'Friends of Israel'.

As journalist Peter Osborne reported in the *Telegraph* in 2012, the CFI grouping is exceptionally powerful in Britain: 'No other lobbying organisation – and certainly not one that acts in the interests of a foreign country – carries as much weight at Westminster. Every year, it takes a significant number of parliamentarians to Israel. Meanwhile, its sponsors play an important role in financing both the Tories nationally, and MPs at the local level.'⁶⁶ As a result, Osborne argues that the British government shows a 'reluctance to criticise Tel Aviv', despite what he calls Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 'path to self-destruction'.⁶⁷

The establishment of EFI in Brussels came at a time when far right factions in Europe were increasingly becoming pro-Israel. Timothy Kirkhope, a Conservative MEP for Yorkshire, currently serves as chairperson of CFI Europe.⁶⁸ In 2009, Kirkhope strongly defended controversial Polish right-wing politician Michal Kaminski, who was chosen as the new leader of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, a free-market transnational alliance in parliament.⁶⁹ *The Jewish Chronicle* reported that Kaminski was previously affiliated with 'a Polish far right group with an anti-Semitic background' and was opposed 'to a national apology for the wartime massacre of hundreds of Jews in a northern Polish town'.⁷⁰

Responding to the controversy over Kaminski, Antony Lerman, former director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, a London-based think tank working on issues affecting Jewish communities across Europe, pointed out that many far-rightists and former neo-fascists seeking political respectability 'now support Israel and see Israel-supporting Jews as potential allies in their fight against the "Muslim threat"'.⁷¹

The launch of the 'UK Independence Party Friends of Israel' is another case in point.⁷² UKIP is a right-wing anti-immigration organisation aligned with anti-Semitic parties in Europe and whose supporters and officials are often accused of anti-Semitism. Anna-Marie Crampton, a UKIP candidate in East Sussex, was suspended from the party in April 2013 after posting anti-Semitic comments online.⁷³ In October 2014, Jane Collins, UKIP MEP for Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire, was forced to apologise after retweeting a link to a virulently anti-Semitic blog.⁷⁴ The following December, the party's leader, Nigel Farage, told a London radio station that Muslims are responsible for the disturbing increase in anti-Semitism across Britain, even suggesting that their anti-Israel views were to blame.⁷⁵ Earlier that same year, UKIP MEP Gerard Batten, who represents London and is member of the party's executive, affirmed to the *Guardian* his belief that British Muslims should sign a special code of conduct and that it was a big mistake for Europe to allow 'an explosion of mosques across their land'.⁷⁶

Interestingly, one Conservative parliamentarian who was among EFI's delegation to Israel in 2011 defected to UKIP the following year: Roger Helmer, MEP for the East Midlands.⁷⁷

Perhaps this helps to explain why EFI is more associated with the political right in Europe. However, the more recently established Friends of Israel Initiative (FII) is even further to the right. Although

its founding members include many Europeans, its funders include key American players in the transatlantic Islamophobia network. This chapter examines the right-wing politics and financial backers of these two groups.

European Friends of Israel

The chief founder of European Friends of Israel, Stuart Polak, was the director of Conservatives Friends of Israel from 1989 until 2015.⁷⁸ Named as one of the UK's 100 most influential right-wing figures by the *Daily Telegraph* in 2007, he has been credited with doing more than anyone else in promoting Israel's case among British conservatives,⁷⁹ and was offered a peerage for his pro-Israel work in 2015.⁸⁰

As a pressure group within Westminster, CFI is perhaps unparalleled in terms of its influence. CFI claims that 80 per cent of Tory MPs are members of the organisation, including cabinet ministers.⁸¹ William Hague, who served as foreign secretary in recent years, joined CFI during the 1970s, when he was still a teenager.⁸²

Hannu Takkula, a Finnish Liberal MEP who has been involved with EFI since the beginning, confirmed that it is modelled on CFI. He explained to us that a number of MEPs had held discussions with representatives of the British Conservatives about forming a pro-Israel alliance that would act as a counterbalance to the growing Palestine solidarity movement.⁸³

At least three Tory MEPs – Charles Tannock, Geoffrey Van Orden and Timothy Kirkhope – attended the launch of EFI in September 2006. In a speech, Tannock said: 'We have been working very hard in the European Parliament for a number of years to build up a network of friends and tonight this is the realisation of our hard work.'⁸⁴

Despite the clear suggestion in his speech that he had personally taken part in some of the preparations for EFI's establishment, Tannock's office denied he had done so. After repeated requests for a comment, his assistant replied that Tannock was 'not involved in the setting-up of EFI at its inception nor was he involved with the idea of launching the group'.⁸⁵ A foreign affairs specialist, Tannock sat on EFI's political board between 2006 and 2011.

When contacted by telephone, Van Orden, a retired brigadier-general in the British Army who served in NATO's headquarters during the 1990s and is presently the Conservatives' spokesperson for defence and security policy in the European Parliament, refused to answer questions about what precise role he had played in EFI's early stages.⁸⁶

Jean-Pierre Haber has a lower profile than the other founders of EFI. Now living in the south of France, he has considerable knowledge about the inner workings of EU institutions. From 1973 to 1984, he was an economics advisor to the European Progressive Democrats – a diverse political group in the European Parliament.⁸⁷ He also sat on a panel focusing on communications policy and appointed by Jacques Delors, the European Commission's then president, in the early 1990s, drafting that committee's final report.⁸⁸

Papers filed with the Belgian authorities state that EFI was officially established as a non-profit organisation by Stuart Polak, along with Marc Cogen, a Belgian academic, and Jean-Pierre Haber. According to these papers, its stated objective is to 'unify' the various pro-Israel groups within the national parliaments of EU countries by coordinating their activities and combining them into one group in the European Parliament.

Alongside its British founders, at least three Israeli diplomats who have worked in Brussels in recent years have collaborated with EFI to develop good relationships with MEPs.⁹⁰

One of the three is David Saranga, who has been portrayed as a 'rebranding' specialist by the *Jewish Chronicle*.⁹¹ Saranga has trained EFI staff on how to make optimal use of social media websites like Twitter and Facebook.⁹² While a media officer in Israel's New York consulate, he placed a feature in 'lad's magazine' *Maxim*, in which women who had served in the Israeli military were photographed in skimpy swimwear.⁹³

When Israel began a round of airstrikes against Gaza in October 2012, Saranga travelled to Strasbourg, where the European Parliament was meeting, so that he could brief EFI. His key message was that Israel was seeking to avoid harming civilians and that it was also providing Gaza with humanitarian assistance.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, Israel soon launched an all-out attack on Gaza, where 80 per cent of the inhabitants are dependent on foreign aid for survival.⁹⁵

The following year, in May 2013, Saranga accompanied Israel's ambassador in Brussels, David Walzer, to EFI's annual dinner.⁹⁶

Perhaps building on Saranga's efforts to rebrand Israel, EFI kicked off its activities in 2013 by hosting a conference within the European Parliament entitled 'Humanitarian aid – Israel as a world leader'. A blurb prepared for the event stated that whenever disasters occur around the world, Israel has teams ready to assist rescue efforts, adding that one of these teams was first on the ground after an earthquake devastated Haiti in 2010.⁹⁷

Similar positive material is frequently posted on EFI's Facebook page, which pays special attention to Israel's scientific and technological triumphs. For example, one Israeli innovation – a touch keyboard – will help the visually impaired.⁹⁸ Another will help save lives of children with special needs.⁹⁹ And finally, Israeli researchers are even using technology to help detect Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.¹⁰⁰

This apparent concern for civil liberties belies EFI's enduring connections with conservative political forces. In January 2014, EFI hosted an all-day conference on Iran, Syria and the Middle East 'peace process'.¹⁰¹ Amongst the invited speakers was Oren Kessler from the Henry Jackson Society, a neoconservative think tank in London known for its anti-Muslim bias, and which hosted the UK launch of the Friends of Israel Initiative.¹⁰²

Another speaker was Peter Neumann, director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR) at King's College London. Neumann founded ICSR along with Boaz Ganor, an Israeli academic at the Interdisciplinary Centre (IDC), Herzliya, a private Israeli university that has close ties to Israel's military and intelligence. Ganor has called on the Israeli army to undertake both 'pre-emptive and reactive strikes' against Palestinians.¹⁰³ After Israel's 2006 military assault on Lebanon, Ganor launched an initiative with the former dean of Syracuse University, Mitchel Wallerstein, to expand the categories of persons under the Geneva Conventions from 'just combatants' and 'non-combatants' to also include 'illegitimate non-state entities' not afforded the protection of the convention.¹⁰⁴

Friends of Israel Initiative

According to a statement on its website, the Friends of Israel Initiative, headed by former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, is a response to 'the unprecedented campaign of deligitimation against Israel waged by the enemies of the Jewish State and, perversely, supported by numerous international institutions'.¹⁰⁵ The statement goes on to warn: 'Israel is an inextricable part of the West. We stand or fall together.'¹⁰⁶

The initiative was launched in Paris on 31 May 2010,¹⁰⁷ on the same day that Israeli troops attacked in international waters the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish vessel attempting to break the blockade of the Gaza Strip, killing nine (civilian) activists.

In a 17 June 2010 article for *The Times*, Aznar (who is a board member of News Corporation, the owner of the paper at the time),¹⁰⁸ blamed the ship's sponsors for Israel's attack. He wrote that: 'In an ideal world, no state, let alone a recent ally of Israel such as Turkey, would have sponsored and organised a flotilla whose sole purpose was to create an impossible situation for Israel: making it choose between giving up its security policy and the naval blockade, or risking the wrath of the world.'¹⁰⁹

Aznar argued that 'Israel is our first line of defence in a turbulent region that is constantly at risk of descending into chaos,' adding that: 'If Israel goes down, we all go down.'¹¹⁰ This apocalyptic language developed into a narrative of civilisational decline, in which Aznar complained of a lack of 'moral and strategic clarity' in the West:

To a great extent, this confusion is caused by a kind of masochistic self-doubt over our own identity; by the rule of political correctness; by a multiculturalism that forces us to our knees before others; and by a secularism which, irony of ironies, blinds us even when we are confronted by jihadis promoting the most fanatical incarnation of their faith. To abandon Israel to its fate, at this moment of all moments, would merely serve to illustrate how far we have sunk and how inexorable our decline now appears.¹¹¹

The UK launch of FII was at the British House of Commons in July 2010. The event was hosted by neoconservative think tank the Henry Jackson Society, sponsored by Tory MP Robert Halfon, who at the time was political director of Conservative Friends of Israel, and attended by Aznar, as well as former president of the Italian Senate Marcello Pera and British historian and Henry Jackson Society signatory Andrew Roberts, both co-founders of FII.¹¹²

Henry Jackson Society signatory David Trimble, former First Minister of Northern Ireland, is another co-founder of FII. His role was widely seen as compromising his appointment as an observer to the Turkel Commission, charged by the Israeli government with looking into the Mavi Marmara affair.¹¹³ Although his international profile as a Nobel Peace Prize winner was rooted in his role in the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement, he was strongly critical of attempts to export the model of the Irish peace process to other conflicts.¹¹⁴

Some of the other co-founders of FII include: Robert Agostinelli, Italian-American billionaire; John Bolton, hawkish former US ambassador to the UN; Alejandro Toledo, former president of Peru; George Weigel, senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Centre; Fiamma Nirenstein, right-wing Italian politician, journalist and author; and Carlos Bustelo, the Spanish Industry Minister from 1977 to 1980.¹¹⁵

According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, Israeli government advisor Dore Gold backed the establishment of FII.¹¹⁶ Gold was an advisor to Israeli Prime Ministers Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon and has been president of the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs since 2000.

Right-wing politics

The rightward orientation of the European Friends of Israel and Friends of Israel Initiative is influenced by recent trends in the European right. Many far right groups are focusing less on anti-Semitism and turning towards Islamophobia.¹¹⁷ Amid increasing levels of international migration and economic austerity, this has somehow become a more acceptable form of racism. As Farid Hafez has argued, the shift from anti-Semitism to Islamophobia goes beyond European borders and enables Europe's far right to connect to Israeli parties and the far right in the United States (we discuss this further in our account of the American funders of the Israel lobby in Brussels in this chapter).¹¹⁸

An example of this can be seen in the signing of the 'Jerusalem declaration' in 2008 at the *Facing Jihad* conference in Jerusalem. The conference was organised by Arielel Eldad, a former member of

the Knesset for the extreme right-wing party Otzma LeYisrael (Strong Israel), seen by some as the ideological descendant of Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach Party, which was outlawed in 1988 by Israel for inciting racism,¹¹⁹ and declared a terrorist organisation by the United States in 1995.¹²⁰ The declaration's signatories included: Filip Dewinter (Vlaams Belang MP in the Flemish Parliament), Kent Ekeröth (International Secretary, Sweden Democrats), René Stadtkewitz (Leader, Die Freiheit, Germany), Heinz-Christian Strache (Leader, Austrian Freedom Party), Geert Wilders (Leader, Dutch Party for Freedom), and Elisabeth Sabaditsch-Wolff (Austrian counter-jihadist activist).¹²¹

Some settlers in the occupied territories have welcomed the European far right, despite its anti-Semitic past (and in some cases present). For example, in response to one delegation visiting Israel in 2010, David Ha'ivri, a spokesperson for the settlers, said: 'If these European leaders – with their ties to anti-Semitic groups and their past – come around and declare that Israel has a right to exist securely in all of the areas under our control, and that Europe has a moral responsibility because of the crimes of their past, then I believe that we should accept their friendship.'¹²²

Ha'ivri is a known follower of Kahane. According to an investigation by *The New York Times*, he 'has had several run-ins with the authorities in Israel over the last two decades, including an arrest for celebrating the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in a television interview and a six-month jail term in connection with the desecration of a mosque.'¹²³

But as Hafez points out, many of these far right Israeli groups are only able to align with centre and even liberal parties in Europe by presenting Islam as a threat to 'the spiritual foundations of the West', stressing values such as 'freedom', 'democracy' and the 'rights of women'. In this way, coming to the defence of 'liberal values' has become a key part of both the Israeli and European far right's strategy against Islam.¹²⁴

Similarly, EFI has enjoyed some success in straddling the political divisions within the European Parliament, with supporters ranging from individual Greens to the extreme right – although it has generally been shunned by MEPs from the far left. Nevertheless, EFI's relationship with academic Marc Cogen, in particular, pulls it towards the Islamophobic right-wing fringe.

Cogen spoke in 2007 at a counterjihad conference in Brussels featuring keynote speaker Robert Spencer, an American right-wing activist banned from entering the UK in 2013 for his extremist views.¹²⁵ Abe Foxman, the long time head of the US-based Anti-Defamation League, wrote an editorial in 2011 arguing that Spencer and others like him promote 'a conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda under the pretext of fighting radical Islam,' drawing comparisons between their worldview and the anti-Semitism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹²⁶

In his speech, Cogen unequivocally supported violating the right to due process in waging the 'war on terror', arguing that the detention of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay is permissible because members of what he called 'private armies' should be 'tried outside the common criminal justice system'. He also praised Israel for enabling the use of similar practices through its approval of the law on 'unlawful combatants' in 2002.¹²⁷

Speaking on Flemish television back in 2005, Cogen expressed strong support for US military action in the Middle East more generally, arguing 'that with some regimes, talking is useless'.¹²⁸ In January 2009, he and several politicians signed a letter to Flemish newspapers defending Israel's military attack on Gaza.¹²⁹

Both Polak and Cogen stepped down as administrators of EFI in November 2011.¹³⁰ The previous year, Cogen was reportedly suspended from his teaching post at the University of Ghent for 'inappropriate behaviour'.¹³¹ He was subsequently hired by the VUB, the main Dutch language university in Brussels.¹³² Cogen did not respond to requests for a comment, but a colleague of his at VUB confirmed in 2014 he was still working there.¹³³

Despite formally resigning from EFI, Cogen remains in contact with the Israel lobby. The 2013 annual report of NGO Monitor lists him as a member of its legal advisory board.¹³⁴ Run by Israeli academic Gerard Steinberg, NGO Monitor is dedicated to campaigning against the public financing of human rights and peace activists working towards equality for Israelis and Palestinians, accusing such activists of striving to 'eliminate' Israel.¹³⁵

In April 2014, EFI hosted a lunch for Naftali Bennett, then Israel's economy minister.¹³⁶ The leader of the party Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home), in 2013 Bennett had countered EU moves to bar firms and institutions based in Israel's West Bank settlements from receiving scientific research grants by saying that settlers should respond to such efforts with 'more kids, more trees, more vineyards, more homes' on occupied Palestinian land.¹³⁷ Bennett has often made racist remarks; he told a Palestinian Member of the Knesset in 2013 that: 'When you were still climbing trees, we had a Jewish state here... We were here long before you.'¹³⁸

EFI's leading members have similarly welcomed other right-wing Israeli politicians to Brussels. MK David Rotem was the featured speaker at a conference held on the European Parliament's premises in September 2013.¹³⁹ Representing the party Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home), Rotem once said: 'Every Jewish community needs at least one Arab. Otherwise, who will repair my fridge when it breaks down on the Sabbath?'¹⁴⁰

Dubbed a 'one-man legislative machine' in Max Blumenthal's book *Goliath*, Rotem has authored a series of measures aimed at making Palestinian citizens in Israel face new types of discrimination,¹⁴¹ including a bill requiring them to sign an oath of allegiance to a 'Jewish and democratic state' and a ban on funding organisations deemed to clash with 'Israeli values'. The latter initiative was originally known as the 'Nakba law'; it targeted Palestinian groups that held events commemorating the wave of ethnic cleansing at the time of Israel's establishment in 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes during what is known as the *Nakba*, after the Arabic word for catastrophe.¹⁴²

The conference at which Rotem spoke was organised by Dutch MEP and Christian Zionist Bas Belder, who sits on EFI's political board.¹⁴³ Belder defended Israel during its 2008-2009 assault against Gaza by saying that Israeli military forces displayed a 'real concern for Palestinian lives,' adding that Israel took many precautions during the operation.¹⁴⁴

Belder has combined his work for EFI with being chairperson of the European Parliament's delegation for relations with Israel, handling relations with the Knesset. Indeed, most members of EFI's political board also sit on this delegation.¹⁴⁵ This considerable overlap may have given EFI's activities greater weight. For example, Véronique de Keyser has described how some MEPs who later joined EFI signed a letter to *The Jerusalem Post* opposing Hamas' participation in elections held in early 2006, which created much confusion because many Israelis assumed it had an imprimatur from the entire European Parliament.¹⁴⁶

For its part, the Friends of Israel Initiative more directly espouses right-wing views. Founding member José María Aznar has strongly denounced the international nuclear agreement with Iran, arguing that confrontation with Iran is inevitable.¹⁴⁷

In 2014, Aznar published an article in *The Times*, co-signed by members of FII, arguing against recognising a Palestinian state at that time, and repeating the Israeli government's claim that Hamas and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria 'are part of the same Islamist front'.¹⁴⁸

Following the violent attack against the editorial staff of satirical French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, an editorial by one of FII's founding members and Israel's newly appointed ambassador to Italy, Fiamma Nirenstein, questioned whether or not 'moderate Islam actually exists' and called for the investigation of all Muslims and their institutions.¹⁴⁹ Previously, she had been a member of EFI.

Nirenstein currently lives in the Israeli settlement of Gilo in occupied east Jerusalem.¹⁵⁰ While serving in the Italian parliament, she refused to participate in a meeting with Iranian parliamentarians, saying that any 'dialogue with Iran's official representatives is completely pointless'.¹⁵¹ Regarding Hamas, she also discounted the possibility of negotiations, arguing that: 'You can not negotiate with cannibals, who eat human beings.'¹⁵²

FII's executive director Rafael Bardaji also responded to the attack against *Charlie Hebdo* with an Islamophobic editorial, writing: 'It is not a matter of publishing, or not, satirical images, but to think, or not, that Allah is our god and Muhammad is our Prophet. As we have seen since [ISIS] launched its offensive on Iraq, back in June, what awaits the non-believers is simple and clear: Deportation or death.' He added that the West and Islam are waging a 'civilisational war between modernity and barbarism'.¹⁵³

Another outspoken founding member of FII is Italian-American billionaire Robert Agostinelli, who made his fortune working in mergers and acquisitions in London in the 1980s before co-founding the private equity firm Rhone Group. He sits on the board of right-wing American magazine *National Review* and has provided funds for the US presidential campaigns of Republicans John McCain and Rudy Giuliani.¹⁵⁴

Agostinelli has called US President Barack Obama a 'soulless serpent from the deep' and considers him to be an agent of Marxists who have 'finally stuck the raw edge of their poisoned sword into the heart of the glorious genie of capitalism and freedom'.¹⁵⁵ He also once described the left as 'a cancer that needs to be eradicated'.¹⁵⁶

Funding

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), (then called Israel Aircraft Industries), was among the sponsors of the European Friends of Israel's launch.¹⁵⁷ IAI is one of the largest suppliers of weapons to the Israeli military. During the first nine months of 2006, IAI reported a profit of \$115 million, a 247 per cent increase over the same period in 2005.¹⁵⁸ This coincided with Israel's attack on Lebanon in the summer of that year. The offensive enabled Israel to 'battle-test' its armed drones for the first time,¹⁵⁹ and since then IAI has become one of the world's top drone manufacturers.¹⁶⁰

EFI founder Stuart Polak, meanwhile, doubles up as an arms industry lobbyist through The Westminster Connection (TWC), a political consultancy he co-founded.¹⁶¹ According to *The Sunday Times*, Elbit Systems, Israel's defence electronics giant, is one of TWC's clients.¹⁶² However, EFI's leading figures are reluctant to admit that they have received financial support from the arms industry. Gunnar Hökmark, a Swedish conservative MEP who was the first chairman of EFI's political board, declined to be interviewed on this matter.

Charles Tannock's assistant stated that the British MEP did not have 'anything to do with [EFI's] fundraising' nor did he have 'detailed knowledge of all the sponsors of EFI events'. Furthermore, he was not aware if 'Israeli defence contractors were closely involved with EFI... when he was involved with the group between 2006 and 2011'.¹⁶³

Like most Israel lobby groups, EFI does not publish details of its donors. Marek Siwiec, a former Polish Social Democrat MEP who chaired EFI's political board before the 2014 European election, contended that it is a 'transparent organisation' when asked about its finances in 2014; however, he then refused to reveal exactly how it is funded.¹⁶⁴

Before Siwiec's election to the European Parliament in 2004, he was head of Poland's National Security Bureau. He has close connections to the business tycoon Viktor Pinchuk, Ukraine's second richest man, according to *Forbes* magazine,¹⁶⁵ and sits on the board of Yalta European Strategy, which is run by Pinchuk and campaigns for Ukraine to become an EU member.¹⁶⁶ This organisation hosts an annual gathering of the world's wealthy and powerful; attendees have included former leaders such as UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, US President Bill Clinton and Israeli President Shimon Peres.¹⁶⁷

Although EFI has held various events on the European Parliament's premises and uses the institution's facilities, it is not subject to the same rules covering other cross-party alliances. Administrators of these *ad hoc* alliances – dealing with subjects as diverse as hunting, Tibet and minority languages – are required to declare all financial support that they receive.¹⁶⁸ As EFI functions largely in the same way as these other groups, we asked Martin Schulz, the European Parliament's president, why it was not registered as one. His office referred our question to a 'citizens' enquiries unit', which claimed that EFI is an 'informal grouping' comprised of both MEPs and representatives of national parliaments.¹⁶⁹

Thus, EFI is required to publish neither a full list of politicians affiliated with it nor even rudimentary details of how it is funded. Some officials privately told us that EFI ought to be considered a formal cross-party alliance and regulated as such.

It was possible, however, for us to confirm at least one known EFI donor. The Matanel Foundation, a non-profit organisation that operates in Israel and also works in Europe, Africa and South America, lists the EFI as an ongoing programme since 2007.¹⁷⁰

An EFI staff member, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that it relies mostly on 'private donors from Europe and Israel'.¹⁷¹ The source revealed that one of these donors has been Alexander Machkevitch, a controversial mining magnate with dual Kazakh and Israeli citizenship. In 2011, *Forbes* reportedly estimated his wealth at \$3.7 billion.¹⁷² How Machkevitch and his business partners 'got their connection to Kazakhstan's ruling family, and how they then came to dominate the country's mining industry is shrouded in mystery,' reports the *Telegraph*.¹⁷³ A mining company he co-owns, Eurasian Natural Resources Corporation, was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 2007, but according to the *Guardian*, after 'persistent allegations of corruption against the company,' including an investigation launched by the UK's Serious Fraud Office, as well as 'a string of corporate governance rows,' the company was made private again in 2013.¹⁷⁴

Since 2005, Machkevitch has served as president of Keren Hayesod – United Israel Appeal (UIA), one of the three 'national institutions' in Israel that has branches in 45 different countries around the world. Working closely with the Israeli prime minister's office, the UIA focuses mainly on bringing Jewish immigrants to Israel, helping them settle into the country, including in the settlements, and public relations outreach to Jews living outside Israel.¹⁷⁵

According to the EFI source, who requested anonymity, Machkevitch's support for EFI was limited to 'a single project': financing a visit to Israel and the occupied West Bank in February 2011.¹⁷⁶ This visit included 'a three-day policy conference in Jerusalem' for about 400 parliamentarians, including MEPs and members of the national parliaments of 37 European countries.¹⁷⁷ *The Jerusalem Post* described the visit as 'the largest ever mass gathering of European parliamentarians in Israel'.¹⁷⁸

The Israeli newspaper also reported that Machkevitch 'gives generously to Israeli and Jewish causes privately and through the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress that he heads'. Both the latter organisation and EFI are financial supporters of the annual conference held by the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya in Israel.¹⁷⁹

As EFI is dedicated to drumming up support for Israeli military policy among Europe's ruling classes, it is logical that the group would build alliances, whether formal or informal, with those who have broadly similar interests. Its relationship with IDC, Herzliya is not unique, as this institution has links with a number of Israel lobbyists and their funders.

Furthermore, the arms industry has also recently stepped up its lobbying activities in Brussels. For example, a think tank called the Security and Defence Agenda (SDA) was set up in 2002.¹⁸⁰ Until its merger with its parent organisation Friends of Europe, SDA had been pushing both for higher military expenditure and for the EU to finance the development of new weapons.¹⁸¹ Lockheed Martin, a principal beneficiary of US military aid to Israel, has funded many of SDA's activities,¹⁸² and several names of EFI staff can often be found in the lists of participants for the debates that SDA was organising.¹⁸³

EFI did not sign up to the official register of 'interest representatives' (a synonym for lobbyists) until August 2011 – almost five years after the group's inception. While it is still not mandatory for lobbyists working in Brussels to join this database, incentives are offered. Most significantly, obtaining an access badge to the European Parliament is conditional on taking this step.¹⁸⁴

EFI's entry in the register is scant on details. It says that the organisation had a total budget of €400,000 in 2012, all of which came from donations. Less than €50,000 of that sum was directly spent on 'representing interests to the EU institutions'.

According to the register, six EFI staff members had access badges for the European Parliament in 2014.¹⁸⁵ This includes its then director Elinadav Heymann, an Israeli who was previously a foreign policy adviser to Britain's Conservative Party and their colleagues from several other right-leaning parties in the European Parliament, and who has also served as an intelligence analyst in the Israeli Air Force.¹⁸⁶

In 2011, we asked EFI if it receives any money from Zionist organisations in the US. 'I promise you 100 per cent that no [we do not receive such funding],' an EFI spokesperson told us.¹⁸⁷

However, the New York-based Near East Forum reported on its 2009 tax forms that it had given \$33,027 to EFI. The forum is no longer active as a grant making body, but when we contacted its office we were told that its mission was to support 'organisations in Europe that help Israel' and that it was indeed Zionist in outlook.¹⁸⁸

The Near East Forum also gave \$53,040 to the European Jewish Development Fund (EJDF) in Brussels that same year. Describing itself as 'a source of centralised funding' for projects that promote Jewish culture and fight anti-Semitism, the EJDF also advocates for Israel.¹⁸⁹ There is only one organisation that is listed within the 'public affairs' category in the 'what we support' section of the EJDF's website: European Friends of Israel.¹⁹⁰

The level of financial support for EFI does not compare with an organisation like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), one of the most influential pressure groups in Washington. In 2011, AIPAC reported more than \$70 million in donations and grants. While there is much opacity surrounding the Israel lobby in Brussels, it is safe to assume that no organisation within it commands a remotely similar budget.

Yet EFI likely receives considerable support from high-ranking entrepreneurs, for example Yaron (Ronny) Bruckner. After his death in August 2013, EFI described the Belgian investor as one of the group's founders.¹⁹¹ Bruckner established Eastbridge Group, a Luxembourg-registered private investment fund that purportedly manages more than €1.5 billion worth of assets.¹⁹² For much of his professional life, he had concentrated on Europe, but became more active in the US during his last decade. In 2011, Eastbridge Group purchased a Manhattan skyscraper that had previously housed the insurance giant AIG.¹⁹³

A document filed with the Belgian authorities states that Bruckner was formally nominated as an administrator of EFI in November 2011. That document also stipulates, that EFI members may pay an annual subscription of up to €5 million,¹⁹⁴ which is dramatically more than the €1,000-per-year threshold for subscriptions that EFI had initially set upon its inception.¹⁹⁵ The difference indicates that EFI likely changed its funding policy to attract corporate members.

On the same day that Bruckner was appointed as administrator, Paris-born Marc Grosman became EFI's vice president and treasurer.¹⁹⁶ The two businessmen were acquainted with each other before then; Grosman had served on the supervisory board of Eastbridge Group.¹⁹⁷ However, he is better known as the owner of Celio, a men's clothing retailer with more than 1,000 stores in 60 different countries.¹⁹⁸

Another businessman who has been involved with EFI is Belgian native Isidore Leiser, currently head of Stratus Packaging, a leading manufacturer of adhesive labels.¹⁹⁹ Leiser sat on EFI's board from 2007 to 2012.²⁰⁰ Confusingly, EFI has both a political board – comprised of MEPs – and a board of administrators. When we contacted Leiser at his Brussels home in 2014, he would only say that he was no longer active in EFI 'because I finished my mandate'.²⁰¹

Neither Leiser nor Grosman responded to queries in 2014 about whether or not they had helped EFI financially.

Vladimir Sloutsker, who has been the president of EFI for most of its history, has a background in banking and private equity.²⁰² He was also a Russian senator from 2002 to 2006. The extent of his fortune is unknown, but he helped his wife Olga launch World Class, a highly lucrative chain of gyms, in 1993 by lending her \$400,000.²⁰³ When he became president of the Russian Jewish Congress in 2005, *Haaretz* described him as a 'Jewish oligarch' who has close ties to the Kremlin.²⁰⁴ The newspaper added that he and his wife 'are at the very heart of the business and political elite of Moscow'. He has a reputation for giving generously to causes and individuals, reportedly donating \$250,000 to the Russian Jewish Congress in 2005 and again in 2006.²⁰⁵

Sloutsker holds extreme views about Palestinians. Speaking at the Jerusalem Press Club in November 2014, he declared that 'if today the State of Palestine is recognised as a sovereign member of the international community, it opens the door for terrorists world wide to reach their own political targets and to create a sovereign territorial entity ruled by them,' adding that, 'to recognise a Palestinian state is to encourage terrorism world wide'.²⁰⁶

In the same speech he also mentioned his concern that some Islamic movements in European countries are demanding the establishment of 'sharia law' in the districts where they live. Earlier, during Israel's 2014 war against Gaza, he told Knesset members that the situation for European Jews was 'intolerable, unacceptable and inexcusable,' even suggesting that: 'We are potentially looking at the beginning of another Holocaust now.'²⁰⁷

Similar to EFI, the Friends of Israel Initiative also does not disclose its sources of funding. However, the organisation openly raises money through its American branch The Friends of Israel Initiative Inc. (FII Inc.), based in Miami, Florida. FII Inc.'s president is Rafael Bardají, FII's executive director who served as a national security advisor to José María Aznar.²⁰⁸

Between 2010 and 2013, the last year it filed taxes, FII Inc. raised \$5,778,135. Although US charities are not required to report their sources of funding, only the amounts raised, searching through the database of IRS files stored at the Foundation Center's website,²⁰⁹ we were able to uncover some of FII's American funders, as detailed in *Table 1*. The conservative leanings of these donors is perhaps best exemplified by the Joyce and Donald Rumsfeld Foundation. Rumsfeld, who served as secretary of defence under two Republican administrations, was one of the key architects of the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Table 1: Known funders of the Friends of Israel Initiative (2010-2013)

Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
Abstraction Fund	\$90,000	Clarion Fund, CAMERA, Central Fund for Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of Ir David, Henry Jackson Society, Middle East Forum, MEMRI and Zionist Organization of America
Adelson Family Foundation	\$2,000,000	Donated almost \$80 million to Birthright Israel during this time, in addition to funding Christian United for Israel, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund and MEMRI
Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston	\$50,000	Donor advised fund
Hertog Foundation	\$25,000	American Friends of Beir Orot, American Friends of the College of Judea and Samaria, American Friends of IDC, American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, Central Fund of Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of Ir David, Friends of the IDF, George W. Bush Foundation, Israel Independence Fund, MEMRI, Middle East Forum and WINEP
Joyce and Donald Rumsfeld Foundation	\$15,000	David Horowitz Freedom Center and MEMRI
Marcus Foundation	\$115,000	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Christians United for Israel, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of ELNET, Friends of the European Foundation for Democracy, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund and MEMRI
Middle East Forum	\$93,750	American Friends of IDC, American Jewish Committee, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Gatestone Institute and MEMRI
Newton and Rochelle Becker charities	\$50,000	American Jewish Committee, Clarion Fund, American Friends of the IDC, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel, Christians United for Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of the IDF, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, Israel Allies Foundation, MEMRI, Middle East Forum, StandWithUs, WINEP and ZOA
Schwab Charitable Fund	\$10,000	Donor advised fund

FII's largest known American donor is Sheldon Adelson, the world's 18th wealthiest billionaire.²¹⁰ Adelson is a conservative Jewish casino billionaire who owns several right-wing Israeli media organisations, including *Israel Hayom*, *Makor Rishon* and *Maariv*. He contributes a considerable sum to the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs headed by Dore Gold, and in 2007 he donated \$4.5 million to establish a research centre at the right-wing Shalem Center in Jerusalem (now known as Shalem College).

In 2012, Adelson donated \$32 million to Taglit-Birthright Israel, amounting to about 40 per cent of its annual budget.²¹¹ Birthright is a Zionist organisation based in West Jerusalem that arranges and finances trips to Israel for Jewish young adults around the world aged 18–26 years old, aiming to strengthen their relations with the State of Israel. In 2013, the Birthright Israel Foundation in New York reported an income of \$74,221,738.

In 2014, Adelson announced a \$25 million grant to Ariel University, formerly known as the College of Judea and Samaria, with the intention to help strengthen the foundations of Zionism in the region'.²¹² The University is built entirely on an illegal settlement in the West bank on land occupied by force by Israel in 1967.²¹³

Roger Hertog is another Conservative Jewish-American businessman turned philanthropist that funds FII, as well as the American Jewish Committee, (which is discussed in the following chapter). Hertog is chairperson of the Tikvah Fund, established by Jewish-American billionaire Zalman Bernstein, and helped to found the Shalem Center. Tikvah continues to fund Shalem College today (it donated \$2,656,250 in 2013), and also finances right-wing settlement projects in the occupied territories. Between 2012-2013, Tikvah funnelled money to the following Israeli settlements: \$40,000 to an institute in Efrat; \$166,150 to Herzog College in Gush Etzion; \$587,217 for a leadership programme in Alon; and \$663,821 to Kfar Adumim.

Board members of the Tikvah Fund include: Elliot Abrams, national security advisor during the George W. Bush administration; William Kristol, founder and editor of the right-wing political magazine *The Weekly Standard*; and Sallai Meridor, former Israeli Ambassador to the United States.

Middle East Forum is another notable donor of FII. It performs the role of both a think tank and distributor of funding to the transatlantic Islamophobia network. The Philadelphia-based forum was founded in 1994 by Daniel Pipes, a scholar of the Middle East who since the mid-1980s has worked largely as a right-wing essayist and activist. According to former Middle East Forum board member Jerry Sorkin, the forum began to adopt a particularly extreme pro-Israel position after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington,²¹⁴ becoming increasingly strident about the supposed threat posed by Islam and Muslims in America. The Center for American Progress has argued that both the Middle East Forum and Pipes are part of a network of 'misinformation experts' that 'peddle hate and fear of Muslims and Islam'.²¹⁵

FII hosted an event in 2014 celebrating 'twenty years of the Middle East Forum with Daniel Pipes'. During the event, Pipes interviewed Aznar, who said that 'Israel is a nation in the Middle East but it is not a Middle Eastern country. Through its history and roots of Judeo-Christian civilisation – its values, institutions, and procedures are similar to any other liberal Western democracy. This makes Israel a vital part of the Western world with its scientific, technical, cultural, and security related contributions'.²¹⁶

The Middle East Forum also passes funds to various right-wing causes, including Nina Rosenwald's Gatestone Institute, currently chaired by former US ambassador to the United Nations John R. Bolton,²¹⁷ who is also one of the co-founders of FII. In turn, Rosenwald's foundation the Abstraction Fund generously finances Middle East Forum, giving almost \$3 million between 2009 and 2013. Its contributions to FII have so far been more modest, totalling \$90,000 between 2011 and 2012.

Meanwhile, it also helps to finance Israeli settlements, supporting both the Central Fund of Israel and Friends of Ir David.²¹⁸ Based in New York, the Central Fund of Israel supports a Jewish state in all of historical Palestine.²¹⁹ It channels donations to Palestinian Media Watch,²²⁰ and other right-wing Israeli groups including Im Tirtzu,²²¹ a far right extra-parliamentary youth movement that has campaigned against universities, non-governmental organisations and peace groups.²²² Its IRS forms do not list any trustees or board members, but vice president Arthur Marcus signed the paperwork and the foundation is registered at the same address as Marcus Brothers Textiles Inc. According to *Mondoweiss*, members of the Marcus family run the fund: 'Jay Marcus, a settler in Efrat, is listed as the administrator of the Central Fund. A pro-Israel website lists the Central Fund/Jay Marcus and then directs Jews to "browse" settlement communities to figure out to whom they wish to earmark their Central Fund contribution'.²²³

The Ir David Foundation, also known as Elad, is an Israeli organisation seeking to 'Judaize' occupied east Jerusalem. The Israeli government has officially legitimised Ir David by allowing it to manage

the national park in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan. According to Israeli economist Shir Hever: 'this national park is used by Ir David to try and prove that the biblical King David was an historical figure, and that his kingdom in ancient Jerusalem justifies the Israeli occupation of the region and efforts to Judaise it (and to expel the indigenous Palestinian population through various means).'

²²⁴

Our research on the sources of funding of the Israel lobby in Brussels has not succeeded in identifying all funders, due to the non-transparent nature of the lobby groups. However, it is notable that most of the known funders supporting FII also finance other groups that have recently established offices in Brussels, as detailed in the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Entrenching the lobby in Brussels

For more than a decade, pro-Israel groups similar to the European Friends of Israel and Friends of Israel Initiative have also established their presence in Brussels, creating a powerful transatlantic lobby in the heart of the European Union. The rationale for developing closer ties was summarised in 2004 by David Harris, director of the American Jewish Committee, at the opening of its Brussels branch, officially known as the AJC Transatlantic Institute. Noting that the EU was about to expand from a club of 15 to 25 countries, Harris said: 'We need to be here, just as we need to be at the United Nations.'²²⁵

The lobby's growth has coincided not only with the tightening of Israel's grip on the West Bank and the imposition of a strict blockade on the Gaza Strip, but also with a surge in Palestine solidarity activism that has clearly left Israeli officials discomfited. In 2010, the Reut Institute – a Tel Aviv-based think tank with close connections to the Israeli government – warned about how a 'delegitimisation network' in the West was seeking to turn Israel into a pariah state.²²⁶ Since then, the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel has increasingly entered the public imagination in a way similar to how the mobilisation against apartheid South Africa took off during the 1980s. A promotional deal between the Hollywood actress Scarlett Johansson and SodaStream, which manufactures fizzy drinks machines in an Israeli settlement on occupied Palestinian land, garnered mainstream attention for the BDS movement.²²⁷ More importantly, there is sustained campaigning against the Israeli occupation on university campuses, outside (and sometimes inside) supermarkets, on crowded shopping streets and in community centres.

The Israel lobby has made serious efforts to fight the growing movement for justice in Palestine at the street, campus and policy levels. During Israel Apartheid Week – an annual series of awareness-raising events at universities around the world – teams of pro-Israel advocates are dispatched to tell, for example, British students that Israel is not practicing racist policies.²²⁸

Lobby groups have also tried to compensate for the huge distrust towards Israel among the general European population by courting their politicians. This might explain why some groups that are ensconced in Washington have also decided to set up offices in Brussels. A timeline of this growth in Brussels is illustrated in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2: Timeline of the Israel lobby in Brussels



EFI also has direct ties to Washington lobby groups. For example, Raanan Eliaz, who had previously worked with the Israeli National Security Council advising prime ministers Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert, has stated that he was 'instrumental' in establishing EFI,²²⁹ and he was also a staff member of AIPAC back in 2004.²³⁰ He later co-founded the pro-Israel European Leadership Network, discussed in detail below.

Dimitri Dombret, EFI's first director, confirmed in 2009 that he had met AIPAC representatives in Washington a number of times.²³¹ In 2013, EFI sent as many as 70 delegates to the annual AIPAC conference.²³² AIPAC has itself acknowledged that EFI 'consistently hosts the largest delegation of internationally elected officials' at its yearly events.²³³ Although EFI has not published the names of those in these delegations, a note on its website states that they include 'leading parliamentarians, business executives from across Europe, experts in foreign policy and policymakers relating to the Middle East'.²³⁴

More recently, in an interview featured on AIPAC's website, Elinadav Heymann, then executive director of EFI, said that, 'We have been very fortunate to have worked so closely with AIPAC over the years, and have gained a lot from this cooperation.'²³⁵

However, a number of other newly established pro-Israel groups in Brussels have even more direct links to the lobby in Washington, as well as American funders. Others have links to the Israeli government or Ukrainian oligarchs. A partial list follows.

AJC Transatlantic Institute

The American Jewish Committee was founded in 1906 and defines itself as a 'global Jewish advocacy organisation' focusing on domestic and foreign policy.²³⁶ One programme is bringing foreign politicians and civil society leaders to visit Israel.²³⁷ But AJC also has 33 chapters across the US that engage in pro-Israel propaganda and operate a network of front groups and affiliated organisations working on different geographical areas and issues.

For more than six decades, *Commentary* magazine was one such example. Published by AJC until 2007 and initially focusing on the Jewish left, *Commentary*, according to its own account, 'emerged as the flagship of neoconservatism in the 1970s'.²³⁸ Indeed, the magazine's long-time editor, Norman Podhoretz, is considered a founder of neoconservatism.²³⁹

Among *Commentary*'s board members are right-wing billionaires Paul E. Singer and Roger Hertog.²⁴⁰ Both men have donated millions of dollars to the Republican Party, conservative causes and pro-Israel groups. As discussed below, their affiliated foundations fund some of the newly established pro-Israel and anti-Islam groups in Brussels.

Another AJC-affiliated project is UN Watch. Based in Geneva, the organisation monitors and challenges the world body's alleged anti-Israel bias. Morris Abram, former permanent US representative to the United Nations and honorary president of AJC, established UN Watch in 1993. However, in January 2001, AJC assumed full control of the organisation through an agreement with the World Jewish Congress.²⁴¹

UN Watch's international advisory board includes several members that have either expressed or supported hostile attitudes towards Muslims and Islam.²⁴² For example, Lord David Trimble, former first minister of Northern Ireland, is a founding signatory of the anti-Muslim Henry Jackson Society,²⁴³ as well as the Friends of Israel Initiative.²⁴⁴

Another board member is Swiss journalist Jean-Claude Buhrer, who responded to a controversial Swiss Muslim convert's support of Neo-Nazis by writing: 'This is tantamount to a marriage between the swastika and the (Islamic) crescent'.²⁴⁵ He also once suggested that using the concept of Islamophobia was an affront to freedom of speech.²⁴⁶

Former chess champion Garry Kasparov, also a UN Watch board member, recently penned an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* arguing that Islamists were waging a ‘global war on modernity,’ setting ‘the time machine to the Dark Ages’.²⁴⁷ In a much earlier op-ed, he said that Palestinians refugees do not deserve the right to return because they willingly left in 1948 ‘as a result of the Arabs’ own enmity for Israel’.²⁴⁸ He then went on to compare their plight with that of German occupation forces in Eastern Europe after World War II.

David Harris has served as AJC’s executive director since 1990.²⁴⁹ According to *Haaretz*, his right-wing agenda has caused the AJC to experience troubled relations with its Jerusalem office. Michael Oren, Israel’s former ambassador to the US, only lasted one year in his term as its Jerusalem director (no longer mentioned in his biography) and Yossi Alpher, a retired Mossad intelligence officer and a renowned Middle East researcher, served for five years but left acrimoniously. The newspaper reports that ‘political disagreements with Harris — Alpher is known for his dovish views on Israel, while Harris is aligned with a more hawkish approach — contributed to Alpher’s resignation,’ adding that ‘Alpher was also frustrated with what he saw as the AJC’s condescending approach toward secular Israelis.’²⁵⁰

The next director, Eran Lerman, a retired Israel Defense Forces colonel, held views close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and left the organisation to work as a senior member of Netanyahu’s National Security Council.²⁵¹

American-Jewish businessman Robert H. Elman, former president of AJC, currently serves as chair of the AJC Transatlantic Institute,²⁵² and Daniel Schwammmenthal, former writer for the *Wall Street Journal Europe*, is its director.²⁵³ According to its financial records, AJC has allocated \$4,767,225 to its Brussels initiative since 2005 out of a total income during that time of \$391,363,529. Known American funders of the organisation are listed in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Known funders of the American Jewish Committee between (2009-2013)

Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
Ben and Esther Rosenbloom Foundation	\$45,000	Central Fund for Israel, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund, Middle East Forum and WINEP
California Community Foundation	\$20,000	Donor advised fund
Eugene and Emily Grant Family Foundation	\$297,500	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Central Fund of Isreal, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund, MEMRI, Middle East Forum, One Israel Fund, StandWithUs, WINEP and ZOA
Frieman Foundation	\$360	American Friends of Ateret Cohanim, American Friends of Bet El, American Friends of Kedumim, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel Friends of the IDF, Friends of Ir David, Hebron Fund, MEMRI, One Israel Fund and ZOA
Goldhirsh family foundations	\$150,000	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Friends of Ir David, Jewish National Fund, MEMRI, StanWithUs and WINEP

Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
Hertog Foundation	\$30,000	American Friends of Beir Orot, American Friends of the College of Judea and Samaria, American Friends of IDC, Birthright Israel, Central Fund of Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of Ir David, Friends of the IDF, Friends of Israel Initiative, George W. Bush Foundation, Israel Independence Fund, MEMRI, Middle East Forum and WINEP
Jacobson family foundations	\$7,696	American Friends of IDC, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Friends of the IDF, Friends of Ir David, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Jerusalem Foundation, MEMRI and WINEP
Jewish Communal Fund	\$2,157,400	Donor advised fund
Klarman Family Foundation	\$3,485,000	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of ELNET, Friends of IDF, Friends of Ir David, Jewish National Fund, Middle East Forum, MEMRI, StandWithUs and WINEP
Koret Foundation	\$99,500	American Friends of IDC, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of ELNET, Friends of the IDF, Henry Jackson Society, Jewish National Fund, Middle East Forum, MEMRI, StandWithUs and ZOA
Leichtag Foundation	\$25,466	Birthright Israel, Friends of the IDF, Jerusalem Foundation, Jewish National Fund and StandWithUs
Lisa And Michael Leffell Foundation	\$50,180	Friends of IDC, Friends of the IDF, MEMRI and WINEP
May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation	\$25,000	American Friends of the Hebrew University
Michael Koss Charitable Foundation	\$2,400	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Friends of ELNET, Jewish National Fund, Henry Jackson Society, Jewish National Fund and StandWithUs
Middle East Forum	\$136,169	American Friends of IDC, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of ELNET, Friends of Israel Initiative, Gatestone Institute and MEMRI
Milken family foundations	\$13,000	Aish HaTorah, American Friends of Ariel, Ariel University Center of Samaria, Central Fund of Israel, CAMERA, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund, MEMRI, StandWithUs and ZOA
Milstein Family Foundation	\$42,000	Aish HaTorah, American Friends of IDC, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Christians United for Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Centre, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF, Middle East Forum and WINEP
MZ Foundation	\$421,000	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Central Fund for Israel, Christians United for Israel, David Horowitz Foundation, Israel Allies Foundation, Middle East Forum, One Israel Fund, StandWithUs, WINEP and ZOA
Nathan Seter Foundation	\$1,000	American Friends of Bet El, American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF and One Israel Fund

Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
Newton and Rochelle Becker charities	\$115,000	Clarion Fund, American Friends of the IDC, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel, Christians United for Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of the IDF, Friends of Israel Initiative, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, Israel Allies Foundation, MEMRI, Middle East Forum, StandWithUs, WINEP and ZOA
Randolph Foundation	\$1,500	David Horowitz Freedom Center, MEMRI and Middle East Forum
Russell Berrie Foundation	\$1,226,000	Funds American Friends of IDC, Friends of Ir David, Jerusalem Foundation and MEMRI
Samuel H. & Maria Miller Foundation	\$2,500	Aish HaTorah, Central Fund of Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Jewish National Fund and MEMRI
Schwab Charitable Fund	\$509,604	Donor advised fund
Seymour Feldman Foundation	\$1,500	Jewish Defense Fund, WINEP
Shillman Foundation	\$15,000	CAMERA, Christians United for Israel, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund and ZOA
Snider Foundation	\$20,500	CAMERA, Central Fund for Israel, Clarion Fund, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of ELNET, Friends of the IDF and Middle East Forum
Steinfeld Foundation	\$4,000	Friends of ELNET, Friends of the IDF and StandWithUs
Tides Foundation	\$36,000	Funds Jewish National Fund and StandWithUs
Vanguard Endowment Charitable Fund	\$622,350	Donor advised fund
Waldorf Family Foundation	\$1,000	David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of ELNET, Friends of the IDF, MEMRI, Republican Jewish Coalition and StandWithUs
William P. Goldman and Brothers Foundation	\$128,948	Birthingright Israel, CAMERA, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund and Middle East Forum
Yad Charity Foundation	\$25	Aish HaTorah, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel, Clarion Fund, Hebron Fund, One Israel fund, ZOA and Zo Artzeinu

Robert Hertog's foundation, which funds the Friends of Israel Initiative, also provided modest funding to AJC. However, the Klarman Family Foundation, run by Jewish American billionaire Seth Klarman, is by far its largest known donor. *Forbes* currently estimates the businessman turned philanthropist is worth \$1.39 billion.²⁵⁴

Jewish-American newspaper *Forward* describes Klarman as a 'wealthy American Jewish investor... following in the footsteps of Sheldon Adelson and Ron Lauder [president of the World Jewish Congress and an ally of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] in acting on his belief that coverage of Israel within Israel itself is unbalanced and unjustifiably hostile — and that he can do something about it.' The Jewish daily also reports that Klarman is a Republican donor.²⁵⁵

Between 2010-2012 the Klarman Family Foundation donated \$125,000 to the Friends of Ir David and in 2010 it gave \$150,000 to the Central Fund of Israel, both pro-settler groups. Nevertheless, Klarman told *Forward* that he opposes Israeli settlements. 'We think it was a bad policy from the beginning and continues to be a bad policy,' he said in 2012.²⁵⁶

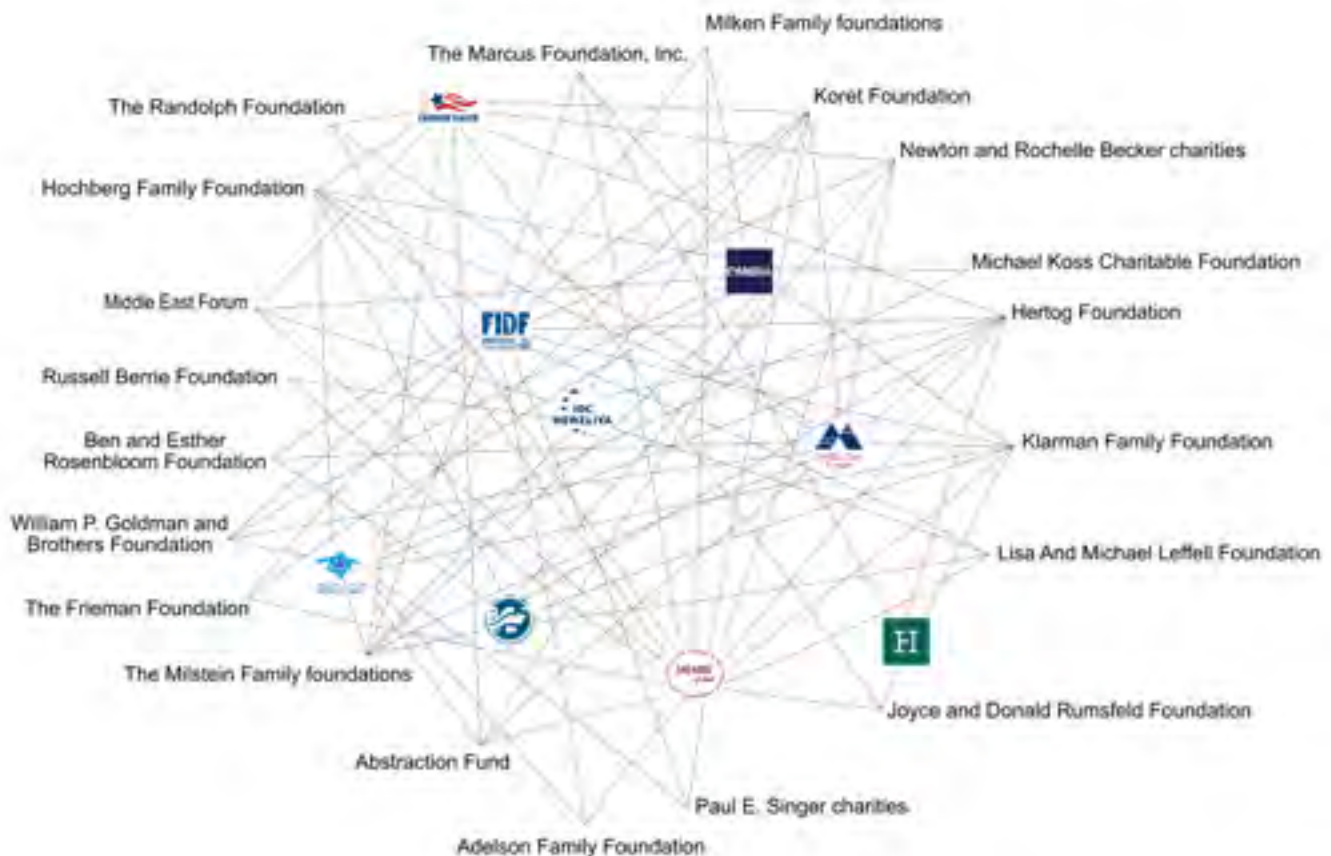
In addition to the Middle East Forum and Middle East Media Research Institute, both of which Klarman funds, three other Islamophobic organisations commonly share funders with AJC: the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), and the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

CAMERA is based in Boston and its stated mission is to monitor media coverage of Israel. However, according to a 2015 report published by the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, in reality it 'is an Islamophobic watchdog organisation that bullies media outlets into producing pro-Israel coverage'.²⁵⁷ CAMERA's website has an extensive database of journalists that it has targeted over the years, including many prominent Israelis.²⁵⁸

Based in Washington, WINEP was co-founded in 1985 by Martin Indyk, a former US ambassador to Israel, and Barbi Weinberg, a former president of the Jewish Federation in Los Angeles and the wife of AIPAC Chairman Emeritus Lawrence Weinberg.²⁵⁹ In its first year of operating, AIPAC provided WINEP both office space and services.²⁶⁰ Its board of advisors includes formerly high-ranking US security officials, such as: R. James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Richard Perle, former assistant secretary of defence; and Robert McFarlane, former national security advisor.

And finally, there is the David Horowitz Freedom Center, founded in 1988 by conservative activists David Horowitz and Peter Collier. A 2011 report by the Centre for American Progress listed David Horowitz Freedom Center as part of the Islamophobia network in the United States.²⁶¹ The anti-Muslim author and activist Robert Spencer currently serves as its 'Jihad Watch Director'. Spencer and Pamela Geller co-founded the group Stop Islamization of America, which the Southern Poverty Law Centre classifies as a hate group.²⁶² Both have both been banned from entering the UK.²⁶³

Figure 3: Selected grantees of all known funders of the Friends of Israel Initiative and American Jewish Committee (2009-2013 excluding donor advised funds)



Israel Allies Foundation

The Israel Allies Foundation (IAF) originated in a 2004 initiative taken by Binyamin Elon, then a member of the Knesset and leader of the right-wing Moledet party, to forge links with Christian lawmakers in various parts of the world. Elon lives in Beit El, an Israeli settlement in the occupied West Bank, and has been active in promoting the settler movement for some time. Indeed, according to *Salon*, he has a 'reputation as one of the least tractable and most radically right of Israel's political leaders'.²⁶⁵

In the early 1990s, Elon established the Beit Orot Yeshiva on the Mount of Olives in occupied east Jerusalem.²⁶⁶ He led a group of religious students in 1998 in taking over a compound in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, encouraging the Israeli government to start subsidising the illegal settlement of Jews there.²⁶⁷ In 1999, Elon attempted to take over another property in Sheikh Jarrah, this one owned by the Abu Jibna family.²⁶⁸ Despite the Israeli government's intervention by making religious claims to the site, the settlers' effort was unsuccessful when a court ruled in favour of the family's ownership.²⁶⁹

While serving as a government minister, Elon reportedly took part in a mob attack against the Palestinians living in Sheikh Jarrah, during which settlers reportedly 'threw a child out of the broken window' that they had entered by.²⁷⁰

On a trip to Washington in 2003, Elon urged the 'transfer' of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan; although he claims that any such 'transfer' ought to take place on a 'voluntary' basis, his plan would render Palestinians stateless if they refused.²⁷¹ He also suggested denying Israel's Muslim citizens the right to vote.²⁷²

Salon reported at the time that Elon was in Washington to establish relations with the Christian right under the pretence of discussing tourism to Israel, leading to unease even among some Zionist groups. 'I'm worried about Elon's influence,' said Lewis Roth, assistant executive director of Americans for Peace Now, the US branch of Shalom Achshav, an anti-settlement but pro-Zionist lobby group.

Nevertheless, during Israel's 2006 military campaign against Lebanon, the US House of Representatives responded to Elon's IAF initiative by establishing the Congressional Israel Allies Caucus (CIAC),²⁷³ which according to its website is 'the only bipartisan, pro-Israel caucus in Congress'.²⁷⁴ CIAC is part of Elon's greater international initiative, which has so far established 30 similar IAF caucuses in parliaments around the world, including at the European Parliament.

CIAC is co-chaired by Brad Sherman (D-CA), a hawkish friend of Israel. Sherman has received campaign funding from the family of casino magnate Irving Moskowitz,²⁷⁵ who once remarked to *The Washington Post* that his desire is to 'do everything I possibly can to help reclaim Jerusalem for the Jewish people'.²⁷⁶ In 2010, Sherman told reporters that he intended to seek the prosecution of US citizens who were aboard or involved with the Freedom Flotilla to end the Israeli siege of Gaza.²⁷⁷ Eliot Engel (D-NY) and Trent Franks (R-AZ) are also notable co-chairs of CIAC. Like Sherman, both are outspoken Zionists.

Engel currently serves as chair of the International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians,²⁷⁸ a project supported by the Israeli Knesset. He told an Israeli newspaper in 2014: 'my heart tells me that every Jew has the right to live in any place in Israel and that includes Judea and Samaria,' the name given by the Israeli's to the occupied West Bank.²⁷⁹ Later that year, he appeared at a pro-Israel rally in New York with controversial anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller.²⁸⁰ Geller has made headlines in recent years for sponsoring advertisements that imply Muslims are 'savages'.²⁸¹

For his part, Franks issued a statement in April 2014 on behalf of CIAC that 'slams' US Secretary of State John Kerry for criticising Israel's construction of new illegal settlements in occupied east Jerusalem.²⁸² A year earlier, he had introduced a bill in Congress to recognise Jerusalem and the Golan Heights as Israeli territory and to move the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.²⁸³

IAF's European director, Hungarian Andras Patkai, explained that IAF chose to become active in Brussels in 2012 because the Belgian capital is a 'strategic location'. As well as forming a caucus in the European Parliament, he said that the IAF has used Brussels as a base from which to make 'connections to members of parliament all over Europe'.²⁸⁴

The Jerusalem Post reported that the move to open a Brussels office was in response to the EU's move to ban Israeli institutions in the settlements. Patkai told the newspaper that the European continent was experiencing an 'identity crisis' as a result of targeting 'democratic' Israel, arguing that 'Of all people, Europeans know best that Jews have a historical and legal right to be in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.'²⁸⁵

Patkai told us that his office promotes the idea that 'Israel should be considered a strategic ally' for the EU, adding that IAF 'complements the work' of European Friends of Israel. 'We wish there were more [pro-Israel] organisations in Europe,' he added. 'We see deficiencies in Europe, compared to America. There are fewer organisations here.'²⁸⁶

The IAF has won some support from MEPs who had already been active in EFI. Finland's Hannu Takkula has combined sitting on EFI's political board, with chairing the European Union Israel Allies Caucus.²⁸⁷ Another EFI board member, Bas Belder from the Netherlands, joined a 2013 tour of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, as did Roger Helmer, an MEP with UKIP.²⁸⁸ The visit was organised by IAF against the backdrop of a political row between the EU and Israel over a document stating that activities undertaken in Israeli settlements should not be financed from the union's budget.

Helmer stated that he joined the trip 'because I wanted to understand the situation better, and I came away with the view that in terms of history and moral right, Israel has a credible claim on the West Bank'. Asked if he was involved in EFI and IAF, he replied: 'The organisations you speak of are informal. I couldn't tell you whether I was a member or not, in any formal sense. But I am happy to support the only free-market democracy in the region as it faces existential threats from its neighbours.'²⁸⁹

The IAF's entry to the EU's Transparency Register suggests that it had a budget of €1.2 million for the year 2012.²⁹⁰

The IAF also has a US fundraising arm in Washington. Elon is president and Uri Bank, who was also a leading figure in Moledet, is a board member. Known as the International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation Inc., it receives funds from individuals who have invested heavily in Israel's illegal settlement activities, as detailed in *Table 3*.

Table 3: Known funders of the Israel Allies Caucus Foundation Inc. in Washington (2009-2013)

Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
Abstraction Fund	\$15,000	Clarion Fund, CAMERA, Central Fund for Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of Ir David, Henry Jackson Society, Middle East Forum. MEMRI and ZOA
Christian Broadcasting Network	\$6,000	
Daniel and Arlene Stein Family Foundation	\$25,000	Donated \$34,850 to the Central Fund of Israel
Jewish Communal Fund	\$50,000	Donor advised fund
Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco	\$300,000	Donor advised fund
Moses Feldman Family Foundation	\$25,000	Also donated \$185,000 to the anti-settlement New Israel Fund
Moskowitz family foundations	\$760,000	Moskowitz and his family contributed over \$11 million to organisations directly supporting illegal Israel settlements
MZ Foundation	\$100,000	American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Central Fund for Israel, Christians United for Israel, David Horowitz Foundation, Middle East Forum, One Israel Fund, StandWithUs, WINEP and ZOA
Newton and Rochelle Becker charities	\$115,000	American Jewish Committee, American Friends of the IDC, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel, Christians United for Israel, Clarion Fund, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of the IDF, Friends of Israel Initiative, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, MEMRI, Middle East Forum, StandWithUs, WINEP and ZOA
Thomas Jefferson Rosenberg Foundation	\$27,500	CAMERA, Christians United for Israel, Friends of the IDF and Jewish National Fund

Irving Moskowitz's foundation donated \$250,000 to the IAF in Washington, while his wife Cherna's foundation gave an additional \$310,000. Moskowitz has been buying property in occupied east Jerusalem for decades.²⁹¹ In 1985, he bought the Shepherd Hotel, a building dating from the 1930s that had previously served as the residence of Haj Amin Hussein, Jerusalem's grand mufti, but which was captured by Israel after it illegally annexed East Jerusalem in 1967.²⁹² In 2010, Moskowitz demolished the hotel so that it could be replaced with apartments for Israeli settlers, a plan approved by the Israeli authorities.²⁹³ Between 2009-2013, Moskowitz and his family

contributed over \$11 million to organisations directly supporting Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.²⁹⁴

vzvreported in June 2015 that Moskowitz's American Friends of the Everest Foundation was 'developing' a property that it had recently acquired on Palestinian farmland between the cities of Bethlehem and Hebron, leading some Israeli activists and advocacy groups to suspect that he is launching 'a secret initiative to establish a new settlement in the occupied West Bank that would further complicate the peace process'.²⁹⁵ According to the newspaper, the property was a church-run hospital in the 1950s.

Other donors to IAF include Newton Becker, whose family charities donated \$115,000 between 2009-2013. Becker died at the age of 83 in 2012, but during his lifetime he funded some of the most hawkish Zionist groups, such as Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), StandWithUs, and the Clarion Project, which produced the notorious anti-Islam film *Obsession*. Alongside right-wing groups such as the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI),²⁹⁶ Clarion is labelled by the Center for American Progress as part of the US Islamophobia network and has been connected to the conservative Zionist movement Aish HaTorah. 'Clarion's address, according to Manhattan directory assistance, is the same address as Aish HaTorah International,' the group's fundraising arm,' noted the *Tampa Bay Times* in 2008.²⁹⁷ Robert Shore, also known as Rabbi Raphael Shore,²⁹⁸ is Clarion's president and the producer of *Obsession*. Ronn Torossian, a spokesperson for Aish HaTorah in New York, once told writer Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic* magazine that, 'I think we should kill a hundred Arabs or a thousand Arabs for every one Jew they kill,' adding that: 'If someone from a town blows himself up and kills Jews, we should wipe out the town he's from, kill them all.'²⁹⁹ Clarion Project relocated to Washington DC in 2013.

The Daniel and Arlene Stein Family Foundation in New York donated \$25,000 to IAF in 2010. The Steins have similarly made contributions to the Friends of Nahal Haredi, a battalion in the Israeli military, and the Jewish National Fund, which is complicit in uprooting Palestinian Bedouins in the Naqab (Negev) desert.³⁰⁰

Europe Israel Press Association

Another recent addition to the Israel lobby in Brussels is the Europe Israel Press Association (EIPA). It was formed in mid-2012 as a kind of public relations consultancy that puts journalists in contact with spokespersons for the Israeli state.³⁰¹

EIPA is similar to the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM) in London. Both organisations strive to ensure that the mainstream media treats Israel in a sympathetic manner. BICOM has sought to attain that objective by cultivating relationships with influential newspapers and broadcasters. A leaked 2011 email message from Lorna Fitzsimons, BICOM's then director, explained how she had briefed the *Financial Times* as the newspaper was preparing a leader on the Middle East.³⁰² The resulting editorial echoed a key Israeli demand that Palestinian refugees should not exercise their right to return home.³⁰³

When we asked Yossi Lempkowicz, EIPA's founder and the Brussels correspondent for the *European Jewish Press*, if his association was modelled on BICOM, he replied 'not at all'. He argued that 'EIPA is focused on the media, on helping journalists understand the complexities of Israel;' whereas 'BICOM is different' because 'it is working with politicians,' before adding that: 'We are not working with politicians.'³⁰⁴

But while BICOM may work with politicians, it also focuses on the media and EIPA's own website acknowledges that BICOM had contributed to some of its published material.³⁰⁵ For his part, Lempkowicz claimed that his cooperation with BICOM was mainly limited to 'exchanging news, what is happening in the media in the UK'.³⁰⁶

EIPA does not disclose any information about its finances. Lempkowicz would only say that it is a 'privately-funded non-governmental organisation'. Asked why it has not signed up to the EU's Transparency Register, he said: 'I really don't know.' He also insisted that EIPA 'is not a lobby. We do not consider ourselves a lobby.'³⁰⁷

Keren Ribo, EIPA's communications manager, previously worked as an editor of *IsraelDefense*,³⁰⁸ a magazine that regularly features interviews with Israeli generals and carries advertisements from Israeli weapons companies with slogans like 'There's no better way to spy'.³⁰⁹ She has also worked with the Global Research in International Affairs Center at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya.³¹⁰

One of the main perks that EIPA offers to journalists is the chance to go on press junkets to the Middle East. The itineraries for these tours have included visits to Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. Reports on the trips in the Israeli media indicate that they are carefully choreographed: in 2013, journalists were shown factories on occupied land where Palestinians are employed in an effort to depict the settlements as beneficial to the people they dispossess,³¹¹ what one pro-settler newspaper labelled 'Jewish-Arab cooperation in Samaria'.³¹² The reporters who took part worked for Italy's *La Stampa*, Spain's *El País* and Austria's *Wiener Zeitung*. The trip was coordinated with Shay Attias, who has worked as a high-level official in Israel's public diplomacy ministry.³¹³ Attias is the chief executive of the Israeli Council for P2P Diplomacy (P2P stands for 'peer to peer'). Its Facebook page states that 'the days of government propaganda in which the nation state was the sole actor in international relations has ended,' contending that the advent of 'social media' means that 'more and more "regular" civilians are replacing diplomats'.³¹⁴

The following year, EIPA teamed up with the Jewish National Fund, European Jewish Association, World Forum of Russian-speaking Jewry and the public diplomacy group known as 'Face of Israel', to bring journalists on an 'intense and informative' tour of Israel and the occupied territories, which stressed Israel's prowess in the field of technology, according to the *European Jewish Press*.³¹⁵

The Jewish National Fund directly owns 13 per cent of the public land in Israel,³¹⁶ most of it acquired after the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948.³¹⁷ Over the past few years, the fund has been reaching out to influential figures in Brussels, hosting a visit to Israel by Amanda Paul, a foreign policy analyst with the European Policy Centre, a corporate financed think tank.³¹⁸ It has also organised seminars inside the European Parliament to promote itself as an ecological organisation planting trees in the desert.³¹⁹

European Foundation for Democracy

A pro-Israel organisation in Brussels with a more expansive focus is the European Foundation for Democracy (EFD), established in November 2005.³²⁰ EFD is a think tank closely associated with a transatlantic network of neoconservative and Islamophobic activists. It focuses on 'raising awareness about the threat of terrorist ideologies in Europe', while promoting 'universal human rights', 'individual liberty' and 'liberal Islam'.³²¹

One of its founders is Nicola Dell'Arciprete,³²² who previously worked as an assistant to Fiorello Provera, an MEP with the far right Italian party Lega Nord (Northern League). In that capacity, Dell'Arciprete undertook a tour of occupied East Jerusalem hosted by Ateret Cohanim, an organisation affiliated with Israeli settlers.³²³ Dell'Arciprete is also a founder of the multilingual magazine *Café Babel*; in 2006, he published a blog post suggesting that the only people at risk from Israel's attacks against Lebanon were 'supporters of terrorism'.³²⁴ According to an investigation by Human Rights Watch, the vast majority of the 1,109 Lebanese killed in Israel's 2006 war were non-combatants.³²⁵

When we contacted Dell'Arciprete in 2014, he distanced himself from the EFD, stressing that he had not been involved with the think tank for 'a very long time', even though he had only stepped down from the foundation one year earlier. He also argued that: 'Before that, I was not really involved in management.'³²⁶

The EFD has adopted a number of political campaigns that echo policies advocated by the Israeli establishment.³²⁷ Its experts have, for example, proposed a ban on television channels linked to Hamas and Hizbullah³²⁸ and argued that the EU should place both the political and military wings of Hizbullah on its list of terrorist organisations.³²⁹ EFD has also hosted events to mobilise for tougher action against Iran over its alleged quest for nuclear weapons.³³⁰

In addition, EFD participated in the now defunct Coalition against Terrorist Media, founded by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), a conservative think tank in Washington. Clifford May, former communications director at the Republican National Committee, is the foundation's president,³³¹ and R. James Woolsey, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is currently its chairperson.³³² Eli Clifton of *Salon* recently called FDD 'Washington's premiere hawkish think tank,' reporting that it is heavily funded by Republican donors including Paul E. Singer and Sheldon Adelson.³³³ Its stated mission on tax documents is 'to conduct research and provide education on international terrorism and related issues'. While active, the coalition focused mostly on banning Hizbullah's *al-Manar* television channel and al-Aqsa, affiliated with Hamas.³³⁴

The EFD is heavily reliant on US funding and has received substantial contributions from the US government. Some €70,000 of the foundation's declared €520,000 budget between January and September 2012 came from a US State Department grant.³³⁵

The EFD also receives tax-exempt funds from the Washington-based Friends of the European Foundation for Democracy (Friends of EFD). The charity raised \$1,002,500 in 2011, \$703,000 in 2012 and \$983,000 in 2013, paying more than \$481,028 during this time to an American-registered consulting firm run by Roberta Bonazzi for her firm's management services.

Roberta Bonazzi, the EFD's current director, serves as Friends of the EFD's executive director, but several other members of its staff have direct links with the Israel lobby in Washington. Its president is Talton Gibson, formerly director of The Israel Project, a public relations firm that tries to place articles favourable to Israel in the mainstream press.³³⁶ In addition, Toby Dershowitz, Friends of the EFD's treasurer, worked as a spokesperson and media relations director with AIPAC for 14 years.³³⁷ She is now vice president of FDD.³³⁸

Nevertheless, Bonazzi denied that it is a pro-Israel group, saying: 'We try to not get involved in the Israel-Palestine issue.' She added that: 'We don't feel able to add anything. We don't think we can do it well.'³³⁹ She also provided a contradictory explanation about her ties to FDD. At first, she told us in 2014 that her foundation and FDD were 'two completely separate organisations, financially and legally separate'. However, when asked why documents transmitted to the US authorities indicate that there is a financial relationship between the two foundations, she replied: 'That is because most of our fundraising is done in the US. [The FDD was] our contact. Grants were sent to them and then to us.'³⁴⁰

Our research also shows that in 2009, FDD provided a direct grant of \$478,829 to EFD. Bonazzi herself was paid by FDD for 'networking and research' activities. In a 2007 declaration to the US Treasury, she was named as FDD's highest paid 'independent contractor for professional services', receiving \$168,000. *Table 4* lists the known American funders of EFD passing money through its 'Friends of'.

Table 4: Known funders of the Friends of the European Foundation for Democracy (2009-2013)

Foundation	Amount donated to EFD	Notes
Bodman Foundation	\$50,000	Commentary magazine, Gatestone Institute and Middle East Forum
Hochberg Family Foundation	\$50,000	American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of ELNET, Friends of the IDF, MEMRI, Middle East Forum, One Israel Fund and WINEP
Marcus Foundation	\$800,000	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Christians United for Israel, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of ELNET, Friends of Israel Initiative, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund and MEMRI
Paul E. Singer affiliated foundations	\$1,000,000	Aish HaTorah, Birthright Israel, Friends of the IDF, Israel Independence Fund and MEMRI

Friends of the EFD and FDD also share two significant American funders. The first is Paul E. Singer, another board member of the Republican Jewish Coalition. According to Eli Clifton, Singer contributed \$3.6 million to FDD between 2008-2011.³⁴¹ In addition, his affiliated foundations donated \$1 million to Friends of the EFD in 2011.

Singer's foundation has also supported Birthright Israel, Friends of the Israel Defense Forces and Israel Independence Fund. The latter is headed by New York venture capitalist Kenneth Abramowitz, who serves as the national chairperson of American Friends of Likud. According to *Haaretz*, in 2007 Abramowitz appeared on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 'list of millionaires' – i.e., potential donors.³⁴² The Israel Independence Fund's website lists a number of projects in the settlements and occupied east Jerusalem.³⁴³

The second major funder of both groups is The Marcus Foundation Inc., based in Atlanta, Georgia. Founded by American billionaire pharmacist, retail entrepreneur and philanthropist Bernard Marcus, who also sits on the board of directors of the Republican Jewish Coalition, the foundation granted a total of \$800,000 to Friends of the EFD and \$10,830,000 to FDD between 2009-2013. It has also funded the Birthright Israel, Friends of the IDF, the Jewish National Fund and Christians United for Israel. The latter was founded by controversial American televangelist John Hagee, who said that because US President Barack Obama does not accept the legitimacy of Israeli sovereignty over east Jerusalem, 'God is watching and he will bring America into judgment,' before adding that 'There are grounds to say that judgment has already begun,' citing the Ebola crisis in West Africa as an example.³⁴⁴

Both Singer and Marcus fund the Middle East Media Research Institute, co-founded in 1998 by Yigal Carmon, a former Israeli military intelligence officer, and Meyrav Wurmser, an Israeli-born American political scientist, to provide free English language translations of Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Pashto and Turkish media reports. The Center for American Progress has called MEMRI 'the Islamophobia network's go-to place for selective translations of Islamist rhetoric abroad'.³⁴⁵ One of its directors is Steve Emerson, a media 'terrorism expert' who in January 2015 falsely told Fox News that Birmingham is a 'Muslim-only city' where non-Muslims 'don't go'. The subsequent public outcry forced him to apologise.³⁴⁶

European Coalition for Israel

According to its website, the European Coalition for Israel is a Christian Zionist alliance 'determined to show genuine Christian love and solidarity towards the nation of Israel'.³⁴⁷ The coalition rejects the recognition of a Palestinian state, saying 'it violates the legitimate legal claims of the State of Israel with respect to Jerusalem and the West Bank'.³⁴⁸

Launched in 2003, the coalition is headed by Finnish journalist Tomas Sandell,³⁴⁹ who regularly appears on a television show sponsored by the coalition and broadcast from within the European Parliament. He previously blogged for *The Times of Israel* and in one post, he argued that: 'There can be no reconstitution of a Jewish state without historical Jerusalem, that is the Old City of Jerusalem,' which the UN recognises as occupied territory.³⁵⁰ In another post, he suggests that European criticism of Israeli settlements helps to encourage violence against the settlers, insisting that the settlers 'are not obstacles to peace'.³⁵¹

The European Coalition for Israel reported a budget of €330,000 in 2012. The coalition does not disclose its sources of funding, but making donations is possible on its website, which states that UK taxpayers may 'Gift Aid' their donations.³⁵² This allows the coalition to reclaim the basic rate income tax paid on the gift from the British government.

In the past, the European Coalition for Israel has received financial support from the Tennessee fundraising arm of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ). In 2012, ICEJ hosted in Israel 6,000 Evangelical Christians from over 100 countries with the help of the Israeli Tourism Ministry.³⁵³ Jan Willem van der Hoeven, a former ICEJ spokesperson, once reportedly said: 'The Palestinians have taken everything by the sword that doesn't belong to them. The Palestinians are under Israeli occupation because they asked for it'.³⁵⁴

One of the core groups represented by the coalition, Christians for Israel International, encourages its supporters to help finance projects in Israeli settlements.³⁵⁵ Founded in 1979 by Karel van Oordt and Pee Koelewijn, Christians for Israel International is based in Holland and coordinates a number of 'Christians for Israel' global affiliates.³⁵⁶ It has a webshop where it sells copies of a book called *Judea & Samaria*, which argues that 'the so-called "occupied" West Bank' is 'the historical and prophetic heartland of biblical Israel'. According to its 2013 annual report, Christians for Israel Affiliates have now been established in 20 key countries and the movement works with the Jerusalem Fund and pro-settler Christian Friends of Israeli Communities inside Israel and the occupied territories.³⁵⁷

European Leadership Network

The European Leadership Network (ELNET) was founded in 2007 by American Larry J. Hochberg and Israeli Raanan Eliaz. According to Forward, it was launched to counter the widespread criticism of Israel in Europe since the outbreak of the second intifada.³⁵⁸

Hochberg is a Jewish businessman and philanthropist who previously was chairperson of the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces and a national officer for AIPAC. He continues to finance and serve as a board member of StandWithUs.³⁵⁹ MJ Rosenberg, a senior fellow at Media Matters for America, says the latter works on the premise that 'the only way to support Israel is to oppose a diplomatic solution to the conflict'.³⁶⁰

For his part, Eliaz is the former head of the European and NATO Affairs Division at the Israeli National Security Council under Israeli prime ministers Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert. He has held positions at the right think tank Washington Institute and Hudson Institute, as well as in AIPAC. According to his biography, he 'was instrumental in the creation of Europe Near East Forum and European Friends of Israel'.³⁶¹ He frequently writes for *The Times of Israel*, making the case for Brussels to strengthen ties with Israel.³⁶²

Others involved in the leadership of ELNET include: Dan Meridor, former deputy prime minister of Israel and minister of Intelligence and Atomic Energy; Pierre Dassas, advertising and public relations specialist and member of the Hudson Institute; and Elliot Abrams, former US national security advisor and board member of the Tikvah Fund.³⁶³

ELNET's website states that it is funded by 'private philanthropists and foundations in Europe, North America, Australia and Israel. The organisation does not receive any direct financial support from governments, although some programs have been co-sponsored by Ministries in Germany, France, Spain, and Poland'.³⁶⁴

The network has a US fundraising arm based in Illinois called Friends of ELNET, which has raised \$5,833,454 since its formal establishment in 2011. Before that, fundraising was under the supervision of StandWithUs, which transferred \$3,961,001 in assets (\$965,354 in cash) to the newly established 'Friends of' in 2011.³⁶⁵ Many donors have given to both causes; the list of known donors to Friends of ELNET is detailed in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Known donors to Friends of ELNET (2009-2013)

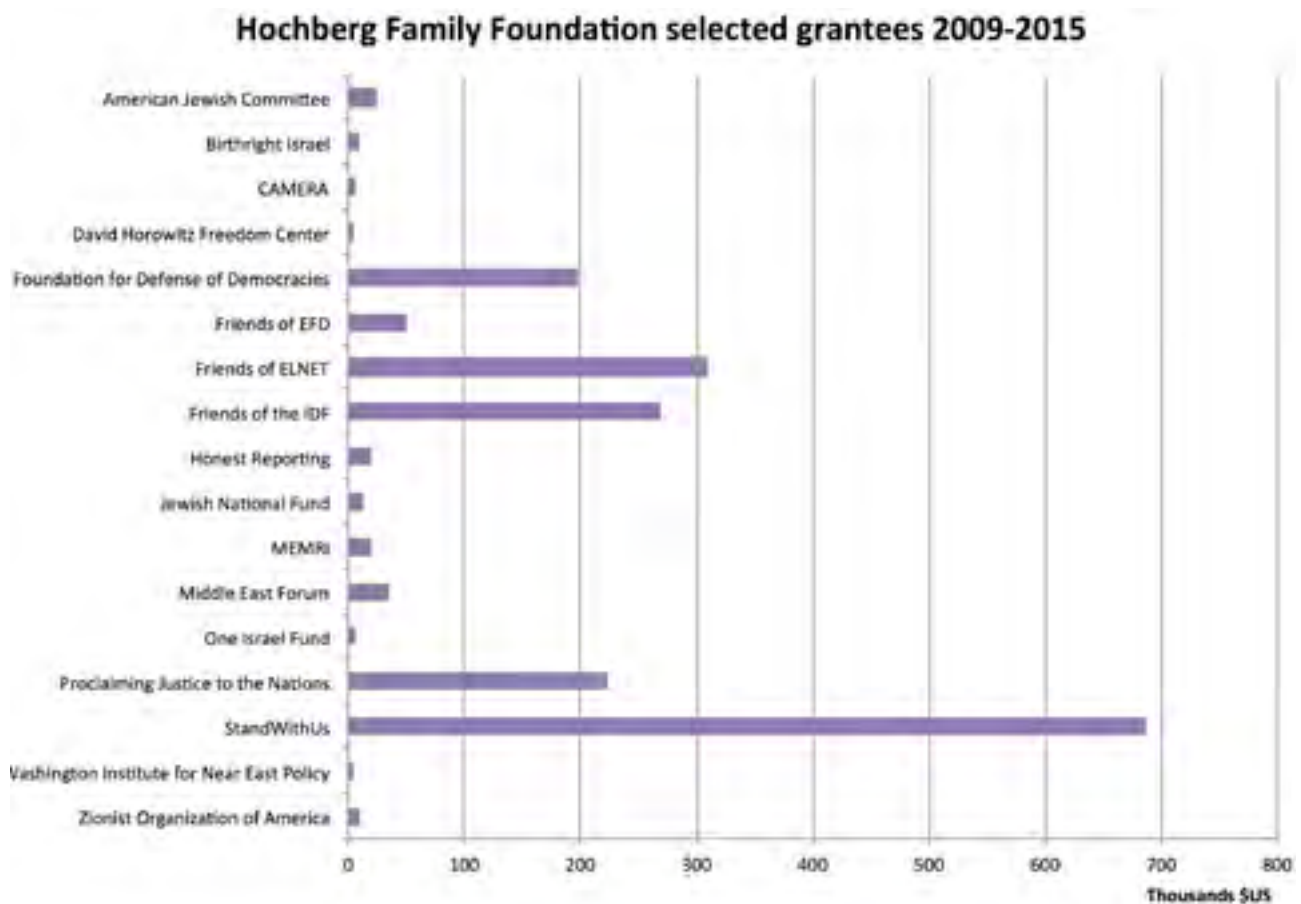
Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
California Community Foundation	\$11,000	Donor advised fund
Emerson Family Foundation	\$25,000	Central Fund of Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF, Middle East Forum and StandWithUs
Eris & Larry Field Family Foundation	\$2,000	Central Fund of Israel, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF, Middle East Forum and StandWithUs
Greater Miami Jewish Federation	\$10,000	Donor advised fund
Gutman Family Foundation	\$12,500	Birthright Israel and Jewish National Fund
Hochberg Family Foundation	\$309,393	American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the EFD, Friends of the IDF, MEMRI, Middle East Forum, One Israel Fund and WINEP
James & Roslyn Marks Charitable Trust	\$1,000	Friends of the IDF
Jewish Communal Fund		Donor advised fund
Klarman Family Foundation	\$25,000	American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Central Fund of Israel, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of IDF, Friends of Ir David, Jewish National Fund, Middle East Forum, MEMRI, StandWithUs and WINEP
Koret Foundation	\$20,000	American Friends of IDC, American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF, Henry Jackson Society, Jewish National Fund, Middle East Forum, MEMRI, StandWithUs and ZOA

Foundation	Amount donated	Also funds
Marcus Foundation	\$100,000	Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Christians United for Israel, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of Israel Initiative, Friends of the EFD, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund and MEMRI
Michael Koss Charitable Foundation	\$200	American Jewish Committee, Birthright Israel, CAMERA, Jewish National Fund, Henry Jackson Society, Jewish National Fund and StandWithUs
Middle East Forum	\$10,000	American Friends of IDC, American Jewish Committee, CAMERA, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of Israel Initiative, Gatestone Institute and MEMRI
Mills Family Charitable Foundation	\$5,000	Friends of the IDF
Rita & Irwin Hochberg Family Foundation	\$5,000	Aish HaTorah, American Friends of Bet El Yeshiva, CAMERA, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF, Jewish National Fund, Middle East Forum, WINEP
Snider Foundation	\$7,500	American Jewish Committee, CAMERA, Central Fund for Israel, Clarion Fund, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Friends of the IDF and Middle East Forum
Steinfeld Foundation	\$1,500	American Jewish Committee, Friends of the IDF and StandWithUs
Waldorf Family Foundation	\$1,000	American Jewish Committee, David Horowitz Freedom Center, Friends of the IDF, MEMRI, Republican Jewish Coalition and StandWithUs
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	\$150,000	Funds a range of philanthropic causes, including progressive or liberal think tanks

Hochberg and his son Harry both serve as board members and Mark Moskowitz, the son of New York real estate investor and founder of The Argo Corporation, Henry Moskowitz, is listed on tax forms as the charity's former president.

Larry and his son Harry also run the Hochberg Family Foundation, which funds a number of right-wing pro-Israel and Islamophobic groups, as detailed in *Figure 4*, including both the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and European Foundation for Democracy.

Figure 4: Selected grantees of the Hochberg Family Foundation between 2009-2013 in US\$



Jewish News One and the European Jewish Parliament

Two controversial Ukrainian billionaires, Igor Kolomoisky and Vadim Rabinovich, launched Jewish News One (JN1) and the European Jewish Parliament (EJP) in 2011. Both are owners of JN1, and respectively president and vice president of EJP.³⁶⁶

Until its demise in 2014, JN1 channel was arguably the broadcasting arm of the Israel lobby in Brussels. Joël Rubinfeld, a veteran pro-Israel advocate from Belgium, was a frequent contributor to its news reports.³⁶⁷

Rubinfeld also serves as chairperson of EJP. At one point Vladimir Sloutsker, Russian oligarch and former president of European Friends of Israel, served as vice president of EJP. Intriguingly, EJP's members are actually elected through an online poll. Rubinfeld himself claimed that he was put forward as a candidate without his knowledge and that he was surprised to learn of his 'election' in 2012.

When we contacted Rubinfeld to ask him about the Internet vote, he said 'it was an original way to do it,' before adding that, 'I probably wouldn't have done it this way.' Although he still asserted that he was 'democratically elected' to the parliament, it is difficult to believe that such an opaque and easily manipulated electoral procedure could ever be truly representative of European Jews.³⁶⁸ Such a point has even been made by other Zionist movement activists after it emerged that football player David Beckham and movie star Sacha Baron Cohen were among those nominated as candidates; Serge Cwajgenbaum, secretary-general of the European Jewish Congress, argued that the initiative 'does not look serious'.³⁶⁹

Kolomoisky and Rabinovich are also intriguing characters. One of Ukraine's richest men, Rabinovich was imprisoned by the Soviet Union in the 1980s for unauthorised business activities.³⁷⁰ He reportedly had a travel visa revoked by the US in 1995 because of his business dealings with Nordex, a Swiss-Austrian firm accused by the CIA of money laundering and trading in illicit weapons.³⁷¹ Rabinovich has invested heavily in a number of media outlets and the football club Arsenal Kiev.³⁷² In 2013, he survived a bomb attack.³⁷³ The following year he ran unsuccessfully for president of Ukraine.³⁷⁴

In June 2015, Rabinovich came under fire for meeting with Marine Le Pen, head of the far right French party Front National, known for anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. The two were joined by 10 members of nationalist parties within the Europe of Nations and Freedom Bloc. The president of the European Jewish Congress, Moshe Kantor, condemned the meeting, stressing: 'That any European Jew would ever consider themselves available to fig-leaf racists and anti-Semites is shocking in the extreme.'³⁷⁵

For his part, Kolomoisky earned his fortune by investing heavily in PrivatBank, one of Ukraine's largest commercial banks, and the oil and gas firm Ukrnafta.³⁷⁶ A ruling from Britain's High Court declared that he was regarded as a 'corporate raider' because of his aggressive attempts to take over companies.³⁷⁷ Following the 2014 coup in Kiev, he was appointed governor of Dnipropetrovsk, an eastern region of Ukraine.³⁷⁸

Kolomoisky is also a divisive figure. Several leading figures in the European Council for Jewish Communities stepped down from that umbrella organisation, protesting at how he had been appointed as its president in return for a hefty donation.³⁷⁹ According to an article in *Haaretz*, he is intentionally provocative; he was once photographed proudly wearing a tee shirt with the name of Stepan Bandera, the leader of a Ukrainian national movement known for carrying out pogroms and mass murders of Jews before and during World War II.³⁸⁰

During Israel's eight-day offensive against Gaza in November 2012, both men – accompanied by Rubinfeld – delivered aid packages that reportedly included religious literature to Israeli soldiers.³⁸¹ That assault killed 167 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to human rights monitors, without any Israeli deaths.³⁸² Yet Tomer Orni, a lobbyist who helped set up the EJP, described the bombardment as a 'just and right move by Israel'.

A few months later, Orni engaged in discussions with Marine Le Pen, which left him 'assured' that she was 'ready to support Israel'.³⁸³ Also in 2012, the EJP won praise from the Israeli press for making a 'landmark visit' to Bahrain, where delegates were greeted by a royal family that had recently ordered the brutal suppression of pro-democracy protests.³⁸⁴

Kolomoisky has been involved in both EJP and an organisation called the European Jewish Union, which he heads. Although Rubinfeld told us that EJP was a 'separate entity' from the European Jewish Union, he also acknowledged that the former has received financial support from the latter. In a 2014 interview he told us that Kolomoisky has been 'so involved today in the Ukrainian crisis that he has no time to deal with Jewish organisations. Today I can tell you that we are not any more funded by the European Jewish Union'.³⁸⁵

At the time of writing, the EJP is neither formally listed as an association by the Belgian authorities nor signed up to the EU's Transparency Register. Rubinfeld noted that he was 'not familiar' with this register. Further decisions had to be taken by the organisation on its founding statutes, he told us in 2014, before it could become a 'formal entity'. However, he added: 'In general, transparency is a very good thing.'³⁸⁶

In 2003, Rubinfeld, along with former French intelligence agent Claude Moniquet and a few others, set up a francophone think tank called the Atlantis Institute.³⁸⁷ According to a paper it submitted to the Belgian authorities, the institute is dedicated to promoting the 'necessity of a strong relationship between Europe and the United States of America', as well as defending 'human rights wherever they are threatened'.³⁸⁸

In 2004, Moniquet described Israel's assassination of Ahmed Yassin, a founding member of Hamas, as 'good news'.³⁸⁹ Amnesty International condemned the attack as an extrajudicial execution of a 66-year-old paraplegic and reported that like many similar 'targeted assassinations', the attack resulted in civilians being killed in an unlawful fashion.³⁹⁰

European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre

Moniquet is a senior fellow with Atlantis and has served as president of the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Centre (ESISC), a Brussels-based think tank that has a 'branch specifically dedicated to lobbying'.³⁹¹ He has also worked closely with Dimitri Dombret, the former secretary-general of the European Friends of Israel, who himself was a researcher on the Middle East with the ESISC from 2002 to 2010.³⁹²

When we contacted Moniquet in 2014, he said the ESISC shares some perspectives with the Israeli government on anti-terrorism issues, but that he 'strongly disagree[s] with the general views of the current government,' referring to the leadership of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, adding that he has always been opposed to 'colonisation in the West Bank'.³⁹³

Moniquet said the ESISC has an annual budget of between €1 and €1.5 million. According to him, it is a 'purely commercial organisation, exclusively funded by its intelligence and analysis contracts,' adding that its clients include police agencies, foreign ministries and global firms.³⁹⁴

ESISC's website indicates that its lobbying activities are focused on, although not limited to, the European Union and its governments.³⁹⁵ However, Moniquet justified the centre's decision not to join the EU Transparency Register on the basis that 'we have very few lobbying activities and none of them are directed to the European institutions'.³⁹⁶

Figure 5: Key American funders of the Israel lobby in Europe and affiliated organisations



Key American funders of the Israel lobby in Europe and affiliated organisations

Sheldon Adelson: Casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson is an avid supporter and long-time friend of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, using his media empire in Israel to support him politically.³⁹⁷ *Forbes* lists his fortune at about \$27 billion,³⁹⁸ and he has donated such vast sums to the Republican Party in recent years that political commentators Bill Moyers and Michael Winship have called him the 'Godfather of the Republican right'.³⁹⁹ Adelson sits on the board of directors of the Republican Jewish Coalition and holds extreme views: he has called for nuking Iran,⁴⁰⁰ and denies the existence of a Palestinian people.⁴⁰¹ According to *Forward*, he stopped supporting AIPAC in 2012 because it had recommended funding the Palestinian Authority.⁴⁰²

Newton and Rochelle Becker: The late Newton Becker and his wife Rochelle established two foundations that support pro-Israel and Islamophobic causes: the Newton and Rochelle Becker Foundation and Newton and Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust. A 2011 report by the Center for American Progress names both as among the seven top contributors of Islamophobia in the United States, contributing \$1,136,000 to Islamophobic organisations between 2001 and 2009.⁴⁰³ In addition, their foundations support various pro-Israel causes, including the Central Fund of Israel and Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces. According to StandWithUs, Newton Becker 'shifted the paradigm of pro-Israel activism. Without him, the pro-Israel community would not be as strong and effective as it is today.'⁴⁰⁴

Roger Hertog: Another wealthy Conservative Jewish-American businessman turned philanthropist. Between 2009-2013, his eponymous foundation donated a total of \$1,211,800 to the following: the American Friends of Beir Orot, American Friends of the College of Judea and Samaria, and Friends of Ir David. The latter is by far the foundation's largest recipient, and it was earmarked at least another \$500,000 in 2014. Hertog is also chairperson of the Tikvah Fund, a pro-settler charity based in New York.

Larry S. Hochberg: An American Jewish businessman and philanthropist. Hochberg is major contributor to many organisations that support Israel. Hochberg was also active in lobbying Washington to reject a nuclear agreement with Iran.⁴⁰⁵ In 2010, he sat on the planning committee of a conference organised by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies on 'Countering the Iranian Threat'.⁴⁰⁶ The committee was chaired by Bernard Marcus. His family-run foundation supports a range of right-wing causes including the pro-settler One Israel Fund and the Christian Zionist Proclaiming Justice for the Nations.

Bernard Marcus: A co-founder of the American retailer Home Depot, Marcus is a Republican billionaire based in Atlanta. Marcus serves as a director of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which he also generously funds (he gave a total of \$10.8 million between 2009-2013). He is a Republican party donor and has been a vocal critic of the Obama administration, calling it 'amateurs in the White House' and 'amateurs surrounded by amateurs'.⁴⁰⁷

Irving Moskowitz: One of the most generous American contributors to pro-Israel causes, Moskowitz is a California-based bingo millionaire. He initially made his money by buying up hospitals in the US only to sell them off for a profit, which he then spent on land purchases in Jerusalem, and donations to settlers in the West Bank and Gaza.⁴⁰⁸ The foundations run by him and his wife Cherna have donated many millions to Republican causes and candidates. Between 2009 and 2013, they gave at least \$11,864,300 to different 'American Friends of' Israeli settlements and related groups. According to tax records, the Moskowitz family has even established a Moskowitz Prize for Zionism, which in 2012 and 2013 was awarded to at least four Israeli settlers.

Daniel Pipes: A right-wing, pro-Israel neoconservative with anti-Muslim views, Pipes created widespread controversy in 2002 when he launched a website called Campus Watch, which posted dossiers on academics critical of Israel and encouraged students to report comments or behaviour that might be considered hostile to Israel.⁴⁰⁹ The dossiers were removed after only two weeks, but the website continues to solicit student complaints. Pipes published a series of articles in 2007-2008 arguing that Obama was a Muslim as a child and converted to Christianity as an adult. He concluded: 'One must assume that some Islamists would renounce him as a *murtadd* (apostate) and would try to execute him.'⁴¹⁰

Nina Rosenwald: An heiress to the Sears Roebuck fortune, Rosenwald is an influential neoconservative activist and operator in many activities of the pro-Israel lobby in the United States. Journalist Max Blumenthal has dubbed Rosenwald 'the sugar mama of anti-Muslim hate' for using 'her millions to cement the alliance between the pro-Israel lobby and the Islamophobic fringe'. Among the writers whose work the Gatestone Institute has published are Peder Nøstvold

Jensen (who previously wrote under the pseudonym of Fjordman), a far right blogger 'idolised' by Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik;⁴¹¹ and Robert Spencer. Abe Foxman, former head of the US-based Anti-Defamation League, wrote an editorial in 2011 arguing that Spencer and others like him promote 'a conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda under the pretext of fighting radical Islam,' drawing comparisons between their worldview and the anti-Semitism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁴¹²

American Friends of IDC: The Interdisciplinary Centre (IDC), Herzliya was the first private institution of higher education in Israel and houses one of Israel's most influential security institutes. It has close connections to the Israeli government and military. The board of directors of its International Institute for Counterterrorism (ICT) includes Shabtai Shavit, former director of the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service, and Boaz Ganor, former member of the advisory committee of the Israel National Security Council on Counter-Terrorism.⁴¹³ IDC founder Uriel Reichman told *The Jerusalem Post* in 2007 that a central mission of the university is the 'strengthening and development of Israel's security forces.'⁴¹⁴ The US fundraising arm reported contributions of \$8,337,149 in 2013.

Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America: Based in Boston, CAMERA runs various projects both in the United States and United Kingdom to monitor media coverage that is critical of Israel. In 2003, it organised nationwide protests against what it alleged was anti-Israel bias in *National Public Radio's* news coverage.⁴¹⁵ CAMERA currently runs BBC Watch to counter alleged anti-Israeli bias in reporting by the British Broadcasting Corporation, and also launched CiF Watch to monitor the *Guardian* newspaper's 'Comment is Free' section, which was subsequently renamed UK Media Watch.

David Horowitz Freedom Center: A neoconservative think tank, the Anti-Defamation League charges that the David Horowitz Freedom Center has 'consistently [vilified] the Islamic faith under the guise of fighting radical Islam' and 'introduced a growing number of Americans to its conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda.'⁴¹⁶ In 2009, Horowitz paid Geert Wilders for making two speeches in the United States, during which time he organised an event where the Danish cartoons lampooning the Prophet Mohammed were auctioned.⁴¹⁷

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces: Based in New York, Friends of the IDF is the US fundraising arm of the Israeli military and occupation forces—its largest single international donor. In 2013, the charity reported funds of \$72,377,566.

Middle East Forum: MEF is a think-tank based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, founded in 1994 by Daniel Pipes. The Center for American Progress has argued that both MEF and Pipes are part of a network of 'misinformation experts' that 'peddle hate and fear of Muslims and Islam'.⁴¹⁸ MEF controversially funded anti-Muslim Dutch politician's Geert Wilders' legal defence in 2010 and 2011 against charges of inciting racial hatred in the Netherlands.⁴¹⁹ MEF reported an income of \$5,594,514 in 2013.

Middle East Media Research Institute: MEMRI is an American-Israeli organisation that provides free English language translations of Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Pashto and Turkish media reports. Brian Whitaker, a journalist for the *Guardian*, has criticised MEMRI for posing 'as a research institute when it's basically a propaganda operation'.⁴²⁰ It reported an income of USD\$4,847,860 in 2012, the last year it filed taxes. Jihad Watch's Robert Spencer hails MEMRI as 'a goldmine of translated material' and discredited 'terrorism expert' Frank Gaffney at the Center for Security Policy calls it 'indispensable'.⁴²¹

Pro-settlement charities: In addition to those already mentioned in this report, including the Central Fund of Israel, Friends of Ir David, Jewish National Fund, Israel Independence Fund and Tikvah Fund, the American funders of the Israel lobby in Brussels support an array of charities financing Israeli settlers. These include 'friends of' the settlements, such as American Friends of Ariel,

American Friends of Kedumin and American Friends of Bet El, as well as the Zionist Organization of America, a right-wing member of the World Zionist Organization that actively seeks to undermine more liberal Jewish groups. ⁴²²

StandWithUs: California-based Jewish-Americans Roz and Jeremy Rothstein launched the staunchly right-wing pro-advocacy group StandWithUs in 2001. The organisation targets primarily American university students and is known to work closely with the Israeli government. Thus far, it has launched 18 offices across the US, with its headquarters in Los Angeles and branches in Israel, France, the United Kingdom and Toronto. ⁴²³ StandWithUs supports the settlement project, claiming it is legal and distributing material saying that the West Bank is not occupied land. ⁴²⁴ In 2015, the Israeli government granted the organisation 'NIS 1 million (\$250,000) to help spread government-backed advocacy messages' – paying students to disseminate propaganda. ⁴²⁴ This means the tax-exempt charity is required by law to register as a foreign agent; ⁴²⁶ however, no names related to it have been registered. ⁴²⁷ It files taxes under the name Israel Emergency Alliance and raised \$8,046,019 in 2013 alone. Newton and Rochelle Becker have both served as board members, as well as Larry S. Hochberg and Rita and Steven Emerson (of the Emerson Family Foundation).

Chapter Three:

EU-Israeli trade relations

The European Union is by far Israel's biggest trading partner and the lobby's scramble to open up branches in Brussels has economic implications. Israel was given special trade incentives in the 2000 EU-Israel Association Agreement, although goods produced in the occupied territories are technically excluded from its terms.

According to EU records,⁴²⁸ in 2013 Israel imported 33.9 per cent of all goods from the EU and exported 27.6 of its own goods to Europe. Israel's total trade with EU countries accounted for 30.9 per cent of its total trading activities, with the US in the second highest position at 18.6 per cent, followed by China, Switzerland, Turkey and India.

However, occasional political pushback in Europe against trade relations with Israel has resulted due to its continued occupation of Palestine. For example, when the EU agreed to upgrade relations in June 2008, it did so for the first time conditionally, requiring Israel to continue peace negotiations with the Palestinian Authority.⁴²⁹

Several months later Israel conducted a massive military campaign against the Gaza Strip, and in response the EU froze any upgrade in bilateral relations. *Table 6* illustrates the accompanying drop in trade in 2009, although it recovered the following year.

Table 6: EU trade flows with Israel (2004-2014)

Year	Imports (€millions)	Growth (per cent)	Exports (€millions)	Growth (per cent)
2004	8,765	n/a	12,893	n/a
2005	9,752	11.3	13,502	4.7
2006	9,966	2.2	13,850	2.6
2007	11,344	13.8	14,299	3.2
2008	11,251	-0.8	14,067	-1.6
2009	8,913	-20.8	11,493	-18.3
2010	11,144	25.0	14,526	26.4
2011	12,769	14.6	16,892	16.3
2012	12,709	-0.5	17,058	1.0
2013	12,481	-1.8	16,930	-0.8
2014	13,071	4.7	16,982	0.3

Source: European Commission

In 2012, while the Middle East 'peace process' was stalled and only two months after the EU's foreign ministers unanimously condemned Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes, its continuing settlement expansion in the occupied territories and the rise of settler violence against Palestinians, the EU offered Israel upgraded trade and diplomatic relations in more than 60 areas, restoring trade relations to near previous levels.⁴³⁰

Furthermore, no trade restrictions were imposed as a result of Israel's 2012 and 2014 military offensives against Gaza. The latter assault was even bloodier than that of 2008-2009. A UN inquiry concluded that Israel killed 2,251 Palestinians during the 2014 hostilities, including 1,462 civilians, of whom 299 were women and 551 children; and wounded 11,231 Palestinians, including 3,540 women and 3,436 children, of whom 10 per cent suffered permanent disability as a result. Fifteen thousand homes were destroyed.⁴³¹

Israel's repeated military offensives against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, a population already suffering under a siege, and its expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem suggest that any EU mechanisms for promoting the 'peace process', either through increasing or restricting trade relations, have so far failed.

And importantly, there are also military transfers to consider. According to the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement: 'In the period 2005-09, EU countries granted arms exports licenses to Israel worth €7.47 billion. Weapons exports from the EU to Israel during 2012 were worth €613 million, up 290 per cent on the previous year.'⁴³² This chapter provides further insight into EU-Israeli military and trade relations.

Growing EU-Israeli trade in weapons

One of Israel's most lucrative industries is for arms. Israel's own figures, which include additional covert trade, place it in fourth place for global arms exports ahead of Britain and Germany, surpassed only by the US, Russia and France.⁴³³ According to Israeli Defense Ministry data, about 75 per cent of Israeli defence production is for export.⁴³⁴

According to *Haaretz*, about 6,800 Israelis deal with arms exports.⁴³⁵ Journalist Jonathan Cook notes: 'The importance of the arms trade to Israel can be gauged by a simple mathematical calculation. Last year Israel earned nearly \$1,000 from the arms trade per head of population—several times the per capita income the US derives from military sales.'

The international market is especially lucrative for Israeli drones. A 2013 study published by the business consultancy Frost and Sullivan revealed that between 2005 and 2013, Israel exported €4.1 billion worth of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), making it the largest exporter of drones in the world.⁴³⁶

Europe is one of the primary markets for these drones, and several Israeli arms manufacturers are actively involved in the EU's research activities. Two recipients of EU grants – Elbit Systems and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) – supplied the drones that the Israeli military used to bomb civilians in Gaza during the 2008-2009 and 2014 wars. Elbit also provided the surveillance equipment used for the apartheid wall in the West Bank,⁴³⁷ which the International Court of Justice ruled illegal in 2004. This judgment states that authorities around the world also have a duty not to assist in any abuses of international law.⁴³⁸

Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, the EU's commissioner for research between 2010-2014, has claimed that the research being funded in Israel is purely for civilian purposes.⁴³⁹ However, a number of the EU's projects actually relate to drone uses that are primarily designed for espionage and war.⁴⁴⁰ In fact, the Israeli recipients exploit this as a selling point: Elbit's catalogue for its Hermes drone boasts that the weapon is 'operational in the Israel Defense Forces' and 'battle-proven'.⁴⁴¹ IAI, another Israeli drone-maker, directly received almost €8 million euros in EU science grants between 2007 and 2013, making it one of the top ten Israeli beneficiaries from the union's research programme.⁴⁴²

But although research cooperation continues, several European states have also made moves to assert their independence in drone technology. In May 2015, Italy, France and Germany announced a plan to create a European-based drone development programme that would reduce their countries' reliance on Israeli and American technology.⁴⁴³

And in late 2015, the heads of leading Israeli defence firms requested a meeting with the prime minister to discuss 'a significant crisis in the defence industries'. According to media reports, the letter warned that, 'The defence industry in Israel is in the midst of a major crisis: military exports have dropped from \$7.5 billion in 2012, to \$6.5 billion in 2013, and further to \$5.5 billion in 2014. This year we are expecting exports to total \$4-4.5 billion.'⁴⁴⁴ Israeli defence officials blame the global economic slowdown for the decline.

The lobby's role in warming relations

EFI responded to news of the EU renewing trade relations with Israel in July 2012 with a note on its Facebook page stating: 'It is precisely for these kinds of headlines that the European Friends of Israel exist. We would like to think our hard work among the parliamentarians across Europe during the last seven years contributed to this decision.'⁴⁴⁵

An earlier landmark in EU-Israeli trade relations was the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of Industrial Products (ACAA). A European Commission memo in 2009 on relations with Israel stated that the agreement would mark Israel's 'first entry' into the European Union's 'single market' for goods and services,⁴⁴⁶ thus enabling Israeli exporters to be treated equally to their counterparts based in the EU's member countries.

The agreement was the first in a series of similar accords that the EU aims to reach with its neighbours. Its main effect is that the standards applying to particular goods in Israel are recognised as valid by the EU authorities. Israeli manufacturers are, therefore, spared the hassle and expense of having to undergo quality checks when shipping their goods to Europe.⁴⁴⁷ While the agreement with Israel is initially limited to pharmaceutical products, it contains a clause stating that its scope may be broadened to cover other goods in the future.⁴⁴⁸

The agreement, reached in 2009, did not enter into force until 2013, largely because the European Parliament delayed it in response to Israeli policies. After Israeli forces shot dead nine Turkish activists taking part in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla on 31 May 2010, the parliament's committee on international trade decided to postpone its discussions on the dossier indefinitely. This decision was taken unanimously by the committee's coordinators, which included members of all the main political groupings in the assembly.⁴⁴⁹

When discussions of the dossier were blocked, EFI's supporters publicly voiced their frustration. In February 2011, Charles Tannock blamed the 'anti-Israel lobby' for the deadlock. In an article for *Conservative Home* website, Tannock indicated that EFI was active in trying to move ACAA – 'the latest milestone in EU-Israel relations', as he described it – forward.⁴⁵⁰ This work would soon start to show results: the following month, a majority in the parliament's Liberal group voted that discussions on the agreement should be reopened.⁴⁵¹

As the Liberals were the third largest group in the assembly at the time – behind the centre-right European People's Party and the centre-left Social Democrats – their position was often crucial in determining the eventual outcome of particular debates. In this case, the Liberals convinced themselves, as one of their MEPs put it, that blocking ACAA was 'not the appropriate way' to register disquiet over the expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.⁴⁵² When the agreement went before the full assembly in October 2012, 42 of the 73 Liberal MEPs present voted 'yes'. As a result, the Liberals helped the more right-wing groups in parliament form a majority in favour of the agreement.⁴⁵³ Finnish Liberal Hannu Takkula stated that EFI played 'quite an important role' in realising that success.⁴⁵⁴

Véronique De Keyser, then an MEP with Belgium's Socialist Party, said that EFI exerted 'hellish pressure' to support the agreement. De Keyser, who has a long track record of support for Palestine, added that EFI persuaded the Liberals to 'swing from left to right'.⁴⁵⁵ Her compatriot Frédérique Ries helped secure that swing. First elected as a Liberal MEP in 1999, Ries is one of EFI's most prominent supporters, currently serving as vice president of its political board.⁴⁵⁶

Cleverly, Ries and other EFI members argued that because the agreement covered pharmaceuticals, it had an altruistic rationale. Teva, an Israeli firm, has been named the world's largest manufacturer of generic drugs by *The Wall Street Journal*.⁴⁵⁷ Seizing on this ranking, pro-Israel advocates argued that by facilitating more imports from Teva, the availability of cheaper medicines would benefit ordinary Europeans and, in Ries' words, 'the health of the world's citizens'.⁴⁵⁸ Teva itself also became involved in the debate, hiring D&D Consulting Services, a public affairs company run by EFI's former director Dimtri Dombret, to offer the firm advice.⁴⁵⁹ Details supplied by Dombret to the EU's Transparency Register indicate that Teva had been his main client for a number of years.⁴⁶⁰

Dombret had been monitoring activities within the Parliament focused on the right to affordable medicines and is also a former parliamentary assistant to Ries.⁴⁶¹

Sarah Ludford, then an MEP with Britain's Liberal Democrats, was another important player in the ACAA debate, despite the position of her party. The Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine pointed out that the party's 2009 annual congress had formally endorsed a call for the 'association agreement' underpinning the EU's relations with Israel to be suspended if Israel failed to lift its blockade of Gaza, ACAA having been negotiated as a follow-up to the 2000 Association Agreement, a letter signed by several Liberal Democrats in the British Parliament requested that Ludford step down as a party spokesperson on justice and human rights if she was not prepared to support the party's formal position on Israel. In response, Ludford accused her colleagues of conducting 'witch-hunts'.⁴⁶²

Although Ludford had in the past called upon Israel to end the siege of Gaza,⁴⁶³ rather than follow party policy on ACAA she teamed up with MEPs from more right-wing parties to support the agreement. In a joint opinion piece with Charles Tannock, she argued that the 'provision of effective and less costly medicines is highly relevant in the current economic climate and will be even more so in the future as Europe's population continues to age rapidly. The significance of increased EU-Israeli trade in pharmaceuticals, which totalled approximately €1.1 billion in 2010, is thus essential for Europe's better health and well-being.' Opponents of the agreement were trying to 'prevent EU citizens from gaining access to high-quality and affordable medicines,' they added – an unfair allegation, considering that Israeli drugs were already available in European pharmacies.⁴⁶⁴

This position echoed that of EFI's then director Elinadav Heymann, who portrayed ACAA as the antidote to Europe's economic woes. 'In these times of austerity, where cutbacks are biting into health provision, this is a win-win situation for Israel and Europe,' he wrote in an article.⁴⁶⁵

Ludford confirmed to us that she is a member of EFI, as well as being a leading figure in a pro-Zionist committee in the Liberal Democrats. She refused, however, to give any details about her contacts with Israeli diplomats concerning ACAA and other matters, apart from saying that she had a 'few meetings with Brussels and London-based embassy staff'. But she did point out that, 'There is nothing of any great interest in any case in my exchanges with the Israeli authorities – an occasional briefing or invitation to meet the ambassador, which is fairly natural as I am vice president of the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel'.⁴⁶⁶

EU announces new guidelines

In summer 2013, an unnamed diplomat quoted in the Tel Aviv daily *Haaretz* described a four-page EU policy paper about Israeli settlements as an 'earthquake'.⁴⁶⁷ The paper stated that activities in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights would not be eligible for grants or loans from the EU. From the beginning of 2014 onwards, Israeli firms

and institutions would be also required to submit a declaration that they are not based in those settlements when applying for EU assistance.⁴⁶⁸

As the EU had always considered such settlements to be illegal, the document did little more than reiterate a long-standing policy. Nevertheless, the EU's embassy in Tel Aviv promptly drew up a 'frequently asked questions' memo that provided advice on how the guidelines could be circumvented. According to the memo, firms headquartered within Israel's pre-1967 borders could apply for EU grants even if they have offices in the West Bank.⁴⁶⁹ Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, then the EU's commissioner for scientific research, also stressed that efforts were being made 'to find flexible ways of implementing the guidelines'.⁴⁷⁰

Daniel Schwammenthal, director of the AJC Transatlantic Institute, suggested in 2014 that by issuing these guidelines, the EU and its governments had 'significantly assisted the mainstreaming' of the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel by taking action against the settlements, thus harming the 'peace process'.⁴⁷¹

The 'earthquake' also drew a reaction from the highest levels of the Israeli government. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu depicted the guidelines as a threat to Israeli sovereignty, vowing not to accept 'any external diktats about our borders'.⁴⁷² The surrounding issues dominated the EU's dialogue with Israel for the next few months, before the crisis in relations ended when negotiations between Tzipi Livni, Israel's justice minister at the time, and Catherine Ashton, then EU's foreign policy representative, produced an agreement.⁴⁷³

According to *Haaretz*, Israel was initially opposed to the EU demand that an appendix be attached to the pact stating that the conditions of the agreement would not prevent the EU from implementing its new settlement guidelines. However, 'the parties decided to formally agree to disagree. The EU would add the above-mentioned appendix, while Israel would attach an appendix [of its own] in which it declare[d] that it objects to the guidelines regarding the settlements from both a legal and political perspective'.⁴⁷⁴

The two sides also agreed that 'any Israeli entity that operates within the Green Line can apply for European loans;' however, 'both sides would examine ways to make sure that the money would be restricted and not reach the settlements in any form'.⁴⁷⁵

This paved the way for Israel to take part in Horizon 2020, the EU's ambitious new science programme with a budget of almost €80 billion between 2014 and the end of the decade.⁴⁷⁶ Under the terms of the agreement, Israel has the same access to the programme as EU member states and other associated countries in return for contributing to the budget.⁴⁷⁷

Thus the Livni-Ashton accord allowed one of the more lucrative aspects of Israel's relationship with the EU to continue.

The lobby redoubles its efforts

Since 1996, Israel has been a full member of the EU's multi-annual programme for scientific research.⁴⁷⁸ Israel's technological savvy means it is able to receive more of the subsidies on offer than many of the EU's own member countries, being particularly adept at accessing grants under the heading 'security research'.⁴⁷⁹

Zionist propaganda has long touted Israel's scientific achievements. One of the most prominently displayed books in Tel Aviv's Ben-Gurion Airport over recent years is called *Start-Up Nation*. In November 2011, Israel's EU embassy jointly organised with New Direction, a right-wing think-tank that lists Margaret Thatcher as a patron, a visit to Brussels by Saul Singer, the book's author. Singer lauded how Israel spends an impressive 4.5 per cent of its gross domestic product on research and development (R&D),⁴⁸⁰ more than twice as much as the collective expenditure for the EU's member countries.⁴⁸¹

Pro-Israel groups have often made liberal use of such talking points while unsuccessfully trying to torpedo the settlements guidelines. The European Jewish Congress, for example, bought a full-page advertisement in the *Financial Times*, the most widely read newspaper among the Brussels elite, arguing that the EU would require cooperation with Israel for the union's own technology sector to flourish.⁴⁸² The guidelines placed such cooperation in jeopardy, according to Moshe Kantor, the group's president, who signed the ad.

A November 2013 letter to the EU's foreign ministers signed by José María Aznar and other founders of the Friends of Israel Initiative, such as David Trimble and Alejandro Toledo, described Israel as a 'hothouse for new ideas in American high tech industries'. FII concurrently published a policy paper critical of the EU settlement guidelines, arguing that they harm prospects for peace between Israel and the Palestinians.⁴⁸³

The following year, at around the time of Israel's offensive in Gaza, FII published a policy paper about Israeli settlements, raising questions about whether or not they even violated international law and suggesting that European states were employing 'double standards against the Jewish state' by 'saying that commercial agreements with Israel should not be applied to territories where Israel's sovereignty is not recognised'.⁴⁸⁴

Some EU representatives merely echoed the commercial rhetoric. Weeks before the Livni-Ashton accord was clinched, the EU's newly appointed ambassador in Tel Aviv, Lars Faaborg-Andersen, expressed hope that Israel would be able to participate in Horizon 2020, saying that the programme was a 'tremendous opportunity for both Israel and Europe to develop key, cutting-edge technologies and partnerships, a real win-win situation'.⁴⁸⁵

Three years earlier, Stefan Füle, while serving as the EU's commissioner for neighbourhood policy, wrote an opinion piece for *The Jerusalem Post* citing estimates that Israeli scientists were taking part in 800 EU-funded projects with a total value of €4.3 billion. He added that Europeans 'are beginning to discover that Israel is a "start-up nation" – a high tech and entrepreneurial centre of global importance'.⁴⁸⁶ These figures have subsequently risen: between 2007 and the end of 2013, Israeli firms and institutions signed 1,458 grant agreements with the EU; the total value of these projects was more than €8.7 billion.⁴⁸⁷

The EU's executive body largely adopted a 'business as usual' attitude throughout the controversy over the guidelines. In October 2013, the EU's then enterprise commissioner, Antonio Tajani, visited Israel accompanied by representatives of the Italian weapons-maker Finmeccanica,⁴⁸⁸ where he signed a new plan to increase EU-Israel cooperation on industrial policy with Naftali Bennett, at the time Israel's economy minister and a leading advocate of settlement expansion.⁴⁸⁹ In his previous role as an MEP for Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, Tajani sat on the political board of European Friends of Israel.⁴⁹⁰

The United States also applied pressure – Secretary of State John Kerry publicly called on the EU to 'suspend or delay' their implementation to avoid imperilling his peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.⁴⁹¹ Daniel Mariaschin, the vice president of B'nai B'rith International, a Zionist organisation headquartered at K Street, the hub of political lobbying in Washington,⁴⁹² alleged that by preparing these guidelines, the EU was 'undercut[ing] the recent efforts' of Kerry to restart negotiations. He claimed that: 'For years, the Palestinians have refused to sit down with Israel. This EU move can now only further set back that eventuality. The EU cannot be seen as an objective player in the peace process while issuing restrictions like these.'⁴⁹³ In February 2014, Mariaschin further argued that in setting the guidelines, the EU was now following the United Nations' lead in becoming a 'cheerleader for the Palestinian side'.⁴⁹⁴

David Harris, director of the American Jewish Committee, also employed the 'peace process' as a means to attack the guidelines: 'The key to achieving a two-state solution – which we wholeheartedly support – is by encouraging direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, not taking steps now to penalise one party, in this case Israel, while emboldening the other.'⁴⁹⁵

To counter the EU guidelines, the Israel lobby in the United States has campaigned vociferously for anti-BDS legislation. In June 2015, President Obama signed a law passed by the Congress making a rejection of the Israel boycott a key objective in negotiations with the EU over the trans-Atlantic trade and investment pact.⁴⁹⁶ However, the US State Department later backed down from the firm language of the legislation, suggesting that it would not apply to boycotts of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.⁴⁹⁷

Several US states are also pursuing legislation. New York state senator Michael Gianaris (D-Astoria) announced the following November 2015 that he would introduce legislation requiring states to cut ties with companies involved in the BDS movement.⁴⁹⁸ Earlier, South Carolina passed a law restricting state contracting with those who boycott on a nationality basis and Illinois to prevent its pension fund from holding stock in boycotting companies.⁴⁹⁹

And yet despite the strong statements by US politicians and pro-Israel lobbyists, the EU guidelines are actually quite limited. They only apply to the settlements and do not take into account the systematic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of present-day Israel. Under the Livni-Ashton accord, for example, Haifa University and other Israeli colleges that have banned Palestinian students from staging protests against the Israeli government's policies, thus restricting their freedom of speech, remain eligible for EU funding.⁵⁰⁰

Hebrew University of Jerusalem is also allowed to continue receiving EU subsidies, even though it is based in occupied East Jerusalem. A memorandum drawn up by the EU's embassy in Tel Aviv states that the union considers the university to be located within the 1967 lines that demarcate Mount Scopus as international territory, even though the campus has subsequently expanded beyond these lines and now encroaches into the nearby Palestinian village of Issawiyeh.⁵⁰¹ Nevertheless, the guidelines state that the university is still eligible, 'as long as the funded activity also takes place inside the 1967 lines or is for an activity that is carried out in the territories but that aims to benefit protected persons... who live in these territories and/or aims to promote the Middle East peace process in line with EU policy' – the critical word being 'or'.⁵⁰²

The EU is soon expected to announce yet another set of guidelines requiring Israel to label products made in the settlements if they are to be exported to the 28-nation bloc. EU officials reportedly said in June 2015 that the EU's 'foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, told European foreign ministers last month that work is "underway" and that a set of guidelines will be "finalised in the near future"'.⁵⁰³ Once again, strong pushback from the Israel lobby is likely, both in Europe and the United States.

Ahead of this, Likud MK Miki Zohar submitted a bill to the Knesset in November 2015 that would require Israeli retailers to apply warning labels to products that are manufactured in those countries that are calling for a boycott of Israel.⁵⁰⁴

Chapter Four:

Criminalising resistance

Whether by designating armed Palestinian and Arab groups as terrorists or by legally preventing Palestinians from holding demonstrations, the Israeli government has long attempted to criminalise both violent and non-violent resistance to its occupation of Palestine and the neighbouring countries. Since the launch of the 'war on terror', Israel has also had some success in exporting this framework to its Western allies, conflating the ideological threat posed by al-Qaeda and the Palestinian struggle for justice.

This effort to criminalise resistance has also extended to transnational civil society. In the years following the 9/11 attacks, the US government 'designated more than 40 [Muslim] charities internationally as terrorist financiers'.⁵⁰⁵ The Holy Land Foundation, once the largest Muslim charity in the US, was almost immediately targeted in December 2001. Founded in 1989, the Texas-based foundation helped to raise funds primarily for Palestinian refugees, but also helping victims of tornadoes, earthquakes and floods around the world.

US federal prosecutors accused the Holy Land Foundation and its members of providing financial assistance to individuals and organisations linked to Hamas, claiming that this constituted 'material support for terrorism' because the money the foundation was sending to zakat associations in Gaza, to build hospitals and feed the poor, relieved the social organisations affiliated with Hamas of carrying out this responsibility. None of the zakat associations were listed as terrorist organisations at the time.⁵⁰⁶

Nevertheless, President George W. Bush called the closure of the foundation 'another step in the war on terrorism',⁵⁰⁷ and the government 'publicly named more than 300 individuals and American Muslim organisations as "unindicted co-conspirators"', without allowing them to hear the evidence against them or defend themselves in court.⁵⁰⁸

The American Jewish Committee, which had established a Division on Middle East and International Terrorism back in 1999,⁵⁰⁹ released a statement calling the closure of the charity 'a bold and welcome step' and urged the Bush administration's move to cut sources of funding for Hamas to be matched by similar steps by European governments.⁵¹⁰

Importantly, most of the Muslim charities targeted by the US government have had their assets frozen and their offices shut down without ever being formally prosecuted or convicted of any crime.⁵¹¹ The few federal cases that have arisen against them have been legally problematic because Washington has adopted loose interpretations of 'material support for terrorism', and used *ex post facto* relationships to prove that suspects are 'otherwise associated with' terrorists according to President Bush's Executive Order 13224 of September 24, 2001.⁵¹²

The loose interpretation of 'material support' and the targeting of respected charities have created a climate of fear that has allowed the Israel lobby to strengthen its call for European countries to classify Palestinian and Arab non-violent resistance to Israeli aggression, even in the charitable sector, as criminal. As discussed in more detail below, the Israel lobby has largely focused on criminalising two groups, Hamas and Hizbullah, as well as the Iranian government. As demonstrated in a 2004 report published by AJC, entitled 'Al-Qa'ida, Iran, and Hizballah [sic]: A continuing symbiosis',⁵¹³ the lobby has often sought to conflate these groups with Al-Qaeda to exaggerate the threat they pose to the West.

The campaign against Hamas

In June 2002, the EU placed both the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the armed wing of Fatah, on its terrorist list.⁵¹⁴ Although the EU did not include the political wing of Fatah in this designation, the following year it decided to list the entire Hamas movement.

According to scholar Azzam Tamimi, the Palestinian leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood decided to launch Hamas in 1987 because they believed a resistance movement was necessary to challenge the daily humiliation, violence and injustice that Palestinians experience under Israeli occupation.⁵¹⁵ Although Hamas' leadership has been subjected to Israeli repression since the movement's inception,⁵¹⁶ most of the group's armed attacks against Israelis occurred during the second intifada (2000-2005) and have de-escalated since.⁵¹⁷ Indeed, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs lists the last 'terrorist' attack for which Hamas claimed responsibility to be in 2005.⁵¹⁸ The party won a majority in the 2006 Palestinian election, and after a US-sponsored coup attempt,⁵¹⁹ it established a government in the Gaza Strip that was separate from the Palestinian Authority in the occupied West Bank.

The revision of the EU's terrorism list followed a sustained campaign by Israel and its supporters. The campaign relied heavily on the new industry of so-called terrorism experts that emerged following the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. The neoconservative Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), discussed in chapter two, played a considerable role. In August 2002 its senior fellow on terrorism studies, Matthew Levitt, addressed a US Senate hearing on 'the financing of terrorist activities'. Levitt is one of the most commonly cited 'experts' on terrorism by pro-Israel groups;⁵²⁰ however, his work has been criticised extensively by both journalists and academics.⁵²¹

Levitt's 2006 book on Hamas is particularly notable for failing to distinguish between the movement's political, social and military activities, instead even conflating them. For example, under the subtitle, 'Muddying the Waters', he writes: 'Inside the Palestinian territories, the battery of mosques, schools, orphanages, summer camps, and sports leagues sponsored by Hamas are integral part of an overarching apparatus of terror.'⁵²²

In addition to WINEP, Levitt sits on the boards of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Centre, Herzliya⁵²³ and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington.⁵²⁴ All three receive funding from charities and foundations that support the Islamophobia industry and Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine, as *Figures 3, 5 and 6* illustrate, not to mention the Israel lobby in Brussels.

During the aforementioned Senate hearing, Levitt alleged that the EU's decision 'adopts the fallacy of drawing a distinction between the non-violent activities of terrorist groups and the terror attacks that they carry out'. Distinguishing between 'the terrorist and welfare wings of Hamas,' he said, meant that the EU had 'lent legitimacy to the activities of charitable organisations that fund and facilitate terrorist groups' activities and operations.⁵²⁵ In other words, he argued that civilian officials working for Hamas are as complicit in military campaigns as soldiers fighting in the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades.

Both Israel and the lobby intensely pressured the EU to reverse its position. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a pro-Israel group headquartered in Los Angeles that has faced controversy in recent years over its efforts to build a so-called Museum of Tolerance on an ancient Muslim cemetery in Jerusalem, claimed that it had mobilised 'tens of thousands' to call for the blacklisting of Hamas, particularly focusing on France and Germany.⁵²⁶

In September 2003, in the midst of the second Palestinian intifada, the EU caved in and declared Hamas a terrorist organisation. Scholar Adeeb Bader writes that, 'The British government played an important role among the European states after US President George W. Bush had expressed Washington's frustration with the EU because "the US was left to do the 'heavy lifting' with Israel".'⁵²⁷

According to *Haaretz*, then British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw had been lobbying the union to join the US in outlawing the political wing of Hamas.⁵²⁸ Indeed, former British diplomat Alistair Crooke recalls how earlier in 2003 he was in Downing Street meeting with the prime minister's foreign affairs adviser when Straw burst into the room to announce that he had convinced Joschka Fischer, then German foreign minister, to add Hamas to the EU list of terrorist organisations.⁵²⁹

Cristina Gallach, the EU's spokesperson on foreign policy at the time, said that the decision to add the political wing of Hamas to the list was taken because the movement had broken 'seven weeks of ceasefire' the previous month. 'Hamas leaders know that if they reverse their position, renounce violence and enter the political process, they can come off the list,' she explained.⁵³⁰

However, it was Israel that had actually broken the ceasefire by killing a leading member of Hamas, Ismail Abu Shanab.⁵³¹ Hamas entered the political process after Gallach made those comments, and has observed a number of lengthy truces. Yet the movement's political and military wings both remain on the terrorist list.

Despite this victory, the Israel lobby has continued to wage an international campaign against Hamas. For example, in 2006, the American Jewish Committee published a document about the movement, in which it warned: 'Hamas presents a threat not only to Israel. Its radical ideology targets all Westerners and those who support the freedoms of liberal societies. Hamas seeks to make Islam the dominant religion worldwide, and to forcefully impose its strict interpretation of Sharia, Islamic law, upon all people.'⁵³²

However, the campaign in Brussels has mostly involved lobbying against any move to include Hamas in the peace process or to secure EU funding of the Gaza Strip.⁵³³ In April 2009, the European Friends of Israel organised a conference at the European Parliament entitled 'Hamas: Obstacle to peace'. The conference featured the controversial figure Nonie Darwish, a former Muslim from Egypt turned pro-Israel activist who once predicted that Islam 'will destroy itself because it's not a true religion'.⁵³⁴

Robert Leikind, the Boston director of AJC, struck a similar chord in a 2014 op-ed, in which he argued that Hamas attempted to stop Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip in 2014 by turning the 'citizens of Gaza into human shields and every Palestinian killed into a trophy with which to sway public opinion against Israel'.⁵³⁵ Leikind then concluded that, 'an organisation capable of the depravity demonstrated by Hamas is a bulwark against peace.'⁵³⁶

In the aftermath of Israel's 2014 attack, EFI organised another event in Brussels entitled 'Is EU aid going to Hamas? How to protect taxpayer's money' that was hosted by German MEP of the Conservatives and Reformists Group Arne Gericke. During the event, Gerald Steinberg presented NGO Monitor's blacklist of EU-funded non-governmental organisations that criticise Israel, including mainstream groups like Amnesty International and Oxfam,⁵³⁷ and Gericke warned that without proper oversight, EU funding allocated to the rebuilding of Gaza could instead directly contribute to the building of 'terror tunnels' and weapons.⁵³⁸

One week after the EFI event, Italian MEP Fulvio Martusciello, chairperson of the European Parliament's pro-Israel caucus, officially requested for EU foreign affairs chief Federica Mogherini to explain exactly how and why EU aid to Gaza was being spent.⁵³⁹

But then, suddenly, in December 2014, the European Union Court of Justice ruled that the 2003 blacklisting of Hamas had been based on 'factual imputations derived from the press and internet' rather than hard evidence,⁵⁴⁰ and therefore it decided to annul the EU's decision to keep the movement on its list of terrorist groups.

David Harris, director of the AJC, responded by writing an editorial in the *New York Jewish Week* saying that: 'One can only conclude that the court's ruling is based, at best, on a willful denial of reality. At worst it reeks of an anti-Israel bias.'⁵⁴¹

The Jerusalem Post reported that 'Israel was furious when the decision was handed down, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying it was an example of "staggering" European "hypocrisy"'.⁵⁴² Pressured by both Israel and the lobby, the EU appealed against the court ruling the following month and also decided to keep Hamas on the terrorism list while the appeal was being made. Susanne Kiefer, a spokesperson for the European Council, confirmed on Twitter that 'Hamas stays on list during Council's appeal to December judgement'.⁵⁴³ A spokesperson for Hamas, Fawzi Barhum, denounced the EU decision to keep the movement blacklisted, pointing out that it contradicts the court's ruling.⁵⁴⁴

Incidentally, the EU also decided in 2014 to remove the Holy Land Foundation from its terrorism list, commenting that the relevant member states that had originally blacklisted the now defunct foundation have since 'changed their minds'.⁵⁴⁵

When the United Nations published the independent report it commissioned on Israel's 2014 attack against the Gaza Strip, EFI supported a campaign led by UN Watch (funded by AJC) to reject the findings, saying they incentivised Hamas' 'terrorism'.⁵⁴⁶

To strengthen its sanctions regimes against Iran, Syria and Russia, as well as non-state groups like Hamas, the European General Court approved in February 2015 the use of confidential evidence. As *The Wall Street Journal* reports, a number of Iranian, Syrian and other parties had successfully challenged the bloc's asset freezes and travel bans because some member states were 'unwilling to share sensitive intelligence information demanded by the courts'.⁵⁴⁷ According to *Aljazeera*, the new rules mean that 'While the executive and judiciary will be able to see secret material, people targeted by intelligence who bring legal challenges will not,' thus violating due process.⁵⁴⁸

The US undoubtedly had put pressure on the EU to approve the rules on secret evidence. Washington's ambassador to the EU Anthony Gardner said one month earlier that the US was becoming 'increasingly concerned about weaknesses in the European sanctions mechanism' that could allow opponents 'to evade the bite of restrictive measures'.⁵⁴⁹

The blacklisting of Hamas has had profound consequences for Palestinians, with the EU refusing to accept the outcome of a Palestinian legislative election in 2006 because Hamas won a majority of votes. When Hamas established a government in the Gaza Strip, the terrorist designation limited its ability to trade and rebuild after three devastating Israeli wars.

By targeting both Hamas and its supporters, the EU also has assisted Israel in implementing a crude divide and rule strategy. Despite a nominal policy of not interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries, the EU has repeatedly shown favouritism towards Fatah over Hamas. Javier Solana, the union's former foreign policy chief, went so far as to praise the Fatah-controlled police in the occupied West Bank for how it 'managed very well' when faced with protests against Israel's three-week attack on Gaza in late 2008 and 2009.⁵⁵⁰ This involved a wave of arbitrary arrests against Fatah's political opponents, which a team of UN investigators found was in violation of international law.⁵⁵¹

In April 2014 – following the breakdown of US-sponsored 'peace talks' between the Palestinian Authority and Israel – Hamas and Fatah announced a reconciliation deal. Although the EU claims to have been in favour of the reconciliation, Lars Faaborg-Andersen, the EU's ambassador in Tel Aviv, responded by declaring Hamas 'a terrorist organisation – designated as such under EU law' and insisting that 'only a Palestinian government of independent figures, committed to non-violence, accepting previous agreements and Israel's right to exist will be acceptable to us'.⁵⁵²

The Palestinian unity government that was eventually formed was indeed comprised 'of independent, technocrat ministers', according to Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*.⁵⁵³ But although the US, EU and UN all pledged to work with it,⁵⁵⁴ the unity government started to unravel when it became clear that the Palestinian Authority was refusing to pay the salaries of Hamas' civil servants in Gaza due to the international legal restraints on Palestinian banks.⁵⁵⁵ At the time of writing, the government was facing a debt crisis.

Interestingly, on 8 September 2015, Washington suddenly decided to blacklist three individual members of the military wing of Hamas: Mohammed al-Deif, Yahya Sinwar and Rawhi Mushtaha. According to *Al-Monitor*, this was the first time that any leaders of the movement had been designated.⁵⁵⁶ Three days later, the US Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on four other Hamas members: Saleh al-Arouri, a member of the movement's political bureau; and Maher Jawad, Khayri al-Agha and Mohammad Reda, all financial officials who fund the military operations of the movement.⁵⁵⁷ The move came against the backdrop of escalating tensions between the Israeli government and the Obama administration over the nuclear agreement with Iran.

The campaign against Hizbullah

On 18 July 2012, five Israeli tourists were killed when a bus carrying holidaymakers to Bulgaria's Burgas airport was bombed. Without evidence, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately stated that, 'All signs point towards Iran.'⁵⁵⁸ The next day, he was even more categorical, pinning the blame on Hizbullah in Lebanon, which he alleged is 'Iran's leading terrorist proxy'.⁵⁵⁹

While the US and Israel have long considered Hizbullah a terrorist organisation, the EU has not. Hizbullah was launched in 1982 by an oppressed community of Lebanese Shi'is in response to Israel's invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon. Such sectarian militias were common throughout Lebanon's civil-international war (1975-1989) and were often assisted by foreign powers. Hizbullah was no different and initially received support and training from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

After the Taif accords officially ended the fighting in Lebanon, Hizbullah was the only sectarian militia legally allowed to maintain its arms because at the time Israel was still occupying southern Lebanon and Hizbullah was generally seen by the Lebanese people to be leading the national resistance against the occupation. Shortly after the war ended, Hizbullah also established a political party and entered electoral politics, successfully winning elections and participating in the Lebanese government ever since.

Like Netanyahu, American officials were also quick to blame Hizbullah for the attack in Bulgaria. On 19 July 2012, *The New York Times* reported that 'the current American intelligence assessment was that the bomber... had been "acting under broad guidance" to hit Israeli targets when opportunities presented themselves', and that Iran had given this guidance to Hizbullah.⁵⁶⁰

The Bulgarian authorities were, however, more cautious. 'We're not pointing the finger in any direction until we know what happened and complete our investigation,' Nickolay Mladenov, Bulgaria's foreign minister, said in an interview with the newspaper.⁵⁶¹

Visiting Brussels the following week, Israel's then Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman urged the EU to designate Hizbullah a 'terrorist organisation'. However, his Cypriot counterpart Erato Kozakou-Markoullis explained that any such move required a unanimous decision by the union's governments, and as things stood, there was 'no consensus' on the matter.⁵⁶²

The US-Israeli campaign for the EU to designate Hizbullah a 'terrorist organisation', thereby requiring the EU to freeze the organisation's assets, was not new. Back in 2003, the American Jewish Committee published a report on Hizbullah to coincide with its annual meeting claiming that the movement had 'demonstrated long-term capabilities to carry out attacks worldwide' and warning that 'the only deterrent will be increased international cooperation to counter Iran's offensive in the name of Hezbollah [sic]'.⁵⁶³

According to the World Jewish Congress, in 2006 around 300 members of the US Congress wrote to the EU requesting for the EU to blacklist Hizbullah.⁵⁶⁴ MEPs active in the European Friends of Israel have echoed that call. In a 2008 'written declaration', a small cross-party alliance in the European Parliament alleged that Hizbullah was using its affiliated television channel *al-Manar* to incite violence and to glorify 'suicide bombers'.⁵⁶⁵

The European Jewish Congress also submitted a proposal for the designation to top-level EU officials one year before the Burgas bombing. It reacted to the atrocity in almost identical terms to Netanyahu. Moshe Kantor, the EJC's president, said that the Union must act immediately against Hizbullah.⁵⁶⁶ He requested an 'urgent' meeting of the Union's foreign and interior ministers 'in order to add Hizbullah to the EU list of terrorist groups'.⁵⁶⁷

The lobbying continued. In the autumn of 2012, Kantor met with Laurent Fabius, the French foreign minister. France had until then been reluctant to place Hizbullah on the EU's terror list. A statement issued by Kantor after the meeting cited unnamed 'intelligence experts' who believed 'Hizbullah is able to recruit and raise money in Europe freely'.⁵⁶⁸

An August 2012 New York Times article quoted an assertion by Alexander Ritzmann, then a senior policy advisor at the European Foundation for Democracy, that Hizbullah had 'real, trained operatives in Europe that have not been used for a long time, but if they wanted to become active, they could'.⁵⁶⁹ Back in 2007, Ritzmann, a former member of Germany's parliament with the right-wing Free Democrats, spoke at a hearing organised by the foreign affairs committee in the US House of Representatives. He encouraged the US authorities to 'apply pressure' on Europe 'in a low-profile way' with the objective of having Hizbullah blacklisted, arguing that it would be most effective to 'work with select European allies and to provide additional information, intelligence and constructive arguments that these allies can use within Europe'.⁵⁷⁰

AIPAC also actively supported the campaign aimed at outlawing Hizbullah in Europe, asking Washington-based politicians to raise this matter with EU authorities.⁵⁷¹ Members of the US Congress subsequently sent a letter calling on the EU to emulate the ban it imposed on Hizbullah back in 1996.⁵⁷² Another letter expressed the 'fear that failure to add Hezbollah [sic] to the terror list will allow, perhaps even encourage, the terror organisation to exploit the lack of unity in the European Union member states, and attempt to launch additional attacks on civilians'.⁵⁷³

On 5 February 2013, Bulgaria's Interior Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov announced that his government now believed that two of the people behind the 18 July bombing were members of the military wing of Hizbullah. *The New York Times* reported that, 'With help from the United States and Israel, investigators [in Bulgaria had broken] the case – and linked it to Hezbollah [sic] – using a tip from a secret source and some old-fashioned detective work, tracing the printer that had produced two forged licenses back to Lebanon'.⁵⁷⁴

However, the newspaper also noted that Amin Hotait, a retired general in the Lebanese Army, criticised the Bulgarian decision for lacking 'unequivocal evidence', adding that Hizbullah does not usually 'retaliate against Israeli attacks... by killing civilians,' referring to the assumption that the Burgas attack was in response to the assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists.⁵⁷⁵ Europol issued a statement saying that the suspects had a 'possible link' to Hizbullah, but that 'a final determination of responsibility ha[d] not been made'.⁵⁷⁶

Nevertheless, in response to Bulgaria's announcement, US secretary of state John Kerry promptly called the EU's then foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton to discuss the alleged danger presented by Hizbullah, and released a statement urging governments around the world, particularly in Europe, 'to take immediate action to crack down on Hezbollah [sic]'.⁵⁷⁷

Daniel Schwammenthal, director of the AJC Transatlantic Institute, responded by writing an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* arguing that 'the EU must stand by Sofia' and blacklist Hizbullah.⁵⁷⁸ Three months later, officials of the newly elected government in Bulgaria backed down from the

claim of their predecessors. Foreign Minister Kristian Vigenin warned that the evidence implicating Hizbullah in the attack was not explicit, pointing out that in making the decision to designate Hizbullah a terrorist organisation, 'we cannot take decisions with important consequences for the EU based on indirect data'.⁵⁷⁹

In the end, the EU attempted to steer a middle path, listing the armed wing of Hizbullah as a terrorist organisation in July 2013, but not banning the political party outright.⁵⁸⁰ Despite the partial victory for the Israel lobby, David Harris of the American Jewish Committee argued that pro-Israel campaigning on this issue should continue 'until the EU joins the US, Canada and the Netherlands in recognising that Hezbollah [sic] is a unified, not a bifurcated terrorist organisation'.⁵⁸¹ Subsequently, the Friends of Israel Initiative published a policy paper in which Benjamin Weinthal, a journalist for the *Weekly Standard* and research fellow for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies,⁵⁸² called dividing the political and military wings of Hizbullah a 'false distinction'.⁵⁸³

However, the changing dynamics in the region, including the rise of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and the nuclear negotiations with Iran, have softened the US position on Hizbullah. In fact, in February 2015, the US National Intelligence agency suddenly removed both Iran and Hizbullah from its list of terrorism threats.⁵⁸⁴

Nevertheless, in April 2015, the US State Department designated two suspects in the Burgas bombing who are reportedly affiliated with Hizbullah - Meliad Farah, an Australian national, and Hassan al-Hajj Hassan, a Canadian national - as 'specially designated global terrorists'.⁵⁸⁵

Waging war against Iran

On any given day, it is likely that key figures of the lobby in Brussels are actively propagating the view that the Islamic Republic of Iran is an imminent threat to Israel and the West. Speaking on his *Counterpoint* radio show in November 2013, Daniel Schwammmenthal, director of the AJC Transatlantic Institute, warned that Iran 'has enough material for six [nuclear] bombs, if that material was further enriched,' adding that, 'It could produce a bomb in six or seven weeks'.⁵⁸⁶ Schwammmenthal did not cite a source for his claim, which even US intelligence has contradicted in the past.⁵⁸⁷ The National Intelligence Council in Washington stated with 'high confidence' back in 2007 that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons programme in 2003,⁵⁸⁸ and a White House spokesperson said in August 2012 that 'we continue to assess that Iran is not on the verge of achieving a nuclear weapon'.⁵⁸⁹

During a 2013 meeting organised by the European Parliament's delegation to Israel, Schwammmenthal repeated comments made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the UN general assembly in an attempt to shore up the argument that 'a credible military threat [against Iran] is, as counterintuitive as it may be, key to a peaceful, diplomatic solution' to the nuclear stalemate.⁵⁹⁰ Netanyahu had been lampooned in the media for using a crude cartoon of a bomb as a prop when addressing the previous year's general assembly,⁵⁹¹ and a recent leak reveals that Israel's secret service, Mossad, actually contradicted the prime minister's UN statement on Iran.⁵⁹²

Moshe Kantor, president of the European Jewish Congress, has also taken a hawkish position on Iran. As well as heading the EJC, he presides over the International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe. The forum was established in 2007 to promote 'arms limitation and reduction' by fighting the 'escalating danger of nuclear terrorism and attempts by separate states to gain access to nuclear materials and technologies'.⁵⁹³ Hans Blix, the former weapons inspector in Iraq ahead of the 2003 US-led invasion, serves on its board, along with former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger,⁵⁹⁴ who is quoted dismissing the health and environmental impacts of testing atomic bombs in the Pacific with the words: 'There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?'⁵⁹⁵

In 2010, Kantor warned of a 'domino effect' if Iran 'acquires the bomb'.⁵⁹⁶ Writing for the *Wall Street Journal*, he added: 'Nuclear weapons would become so commonplace that any of the more than 100 current conflicts around the world could come to a devastating conclusion with a flick of a switch'.⁵⁹⁷ But whereas Iran does not have nuclear weapons and has signed up to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Israel does have nuclear weapons and has refused to sign the treaty, with the result that its nuclear ambitions have been pursued in secret. In 1999, the US Defense Intelligence Agency estimated that Israel had between 60 and 80 nuclear warheads.⁵⁹⁸ In an apparently off-guard moment, Ehud Olmert, Israel's former prime minister, acknowledged the existence of these weapons in a 2006 TV interview.⁵⁹⁹

In 2011, Kantor and other representatives of the International Luxembourg Forum demanded that the EU impose 'crippling sanctions' on Iran to prevent what he described as 'the undisputed ascension of an ideology that seeks to draw the world into conflict'.⁶⁰⁰ Kantor has also likened Iranians involved in the nuclear project to 'Nazi industrialists and scientists' who 'all but brought Hitler close to the nuclear bomb'.⁶⁰¹

In October 2012, the EU banned a wide range of transactions between European and Iranian banks.⁶⁰² These sanctions and similar ones introduced by the US were so comprehensive that they reduced the supply of medicines to Iranian hospitals as pharmaceutical companies were hampered from doing business through the conventional banking system.⁶⁰³ *The New York Times* reported the following month that the cancer treatment Herceptin had nearly disappeared from Tehran's pharmacies and hospitals as a result.⁶⁰⁴

Nevertheless, pro-Israel lobbyists have denied the damage done by the sanctions. Speaking on the *Aljazeera* programme 'Inside Story', Joshua Goodman, a senior figure in the AJC Transatlantic Institute, said: 'Sanctions are not preventing the entrance of medicines and food and basic supplies to Iran. That's completely unfounded'.⁶⁰⁵

In March 2013, the US began a series of secret talks with Iranian officials, which ultimately led to a 'joint plan of action' for comprehensive talks between Iran and the P5+1 powers—the five permanent Security Council members, the US, UK, France, Russia and China, plus Germany.⁶⁰⁶ The plan involved Iran limiting its nuclear programme in exchange for a selected lifting of sanctions and unfreezing of assets. On 20 January 2014, the EU 'suspended certain EU restrictive measures against Iran for a period of six months'.⁶⁰⁷

Further talks ensued and were extended several times, until it was announced on 14 July 2015 that a historic deal was reached in Vienna. According to its terms, 'Iran [would] dismantle much of its nuclear infrastructure, while the UN, US and EU [would] take down a wall of sanctions built around Iran over the past nine years'.⁶⁰⁸

Prior to the announcement, the Friends of Israel Initiative published two policy papers warning against the nuclear agreement with Iran. The first, by Dore Gold of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, focused on Iran's alleged quest to dominate the Middle East.⁶⁰⁹

The second was by Shmuel Bar, director of studies at the Institute of Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya. Bar predicted catastrophic consequences for the region, arguing that: 'The scenario of a "poly-nuclear" Middle East is therefore not only a "worst case scenario" [of any deal] but rather one with high probability and high risk'.⁶¹⁰

For his part, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vocally opposed the deal, saying that it is a 'big, big mistake' and calling it deadly.⁶¹¹ But although the Security Council ratified the deal, his government and the Israel lobby were offered some hope for scuppering the deal when US President Barack Obama granted the US Congress a deciding vote. Congress requires a two-thirds majority to override any presidential veto on the deal.

Subsequently, the Israel lobby in the US was in overdrive, led by AIPAC. The American Jewish Committee and its Brussels-based initiative also lobbied strongly against the nuclear deal with Iran.⁶¹² Several prominent Democrats, including Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ), decided to oppose the deal.⁶¹³ In the end, Obama secured enough Democratic votes on 17 September 2015 to secure the deal.⁶¹⁴

Largely targeting Democrats, the bitterly vicious tone of the campaign by Netanyahu and pro-Israel groups against the nuclear agreement with Iran created new and unprecedented partisan tensions in Washington's relationship with Israel. 'The problem is the campaign was so intense that it has left scars that are difficult to heal,' said Greg Rosenbaum, chairperson of the National Jewish Democratic Council.⁶¹⁵

Indeed, it was reported in December 2015 that the White House was so concerned with Netanyahu's lobbying efforts that it had authorised the National Security Agency to spy on the Israeli prime minister, and a number of members of the US Congress and Zionist groups. According to the *Guardian*, 'the surveillance allegedly revealed how Netanyahu and his advisers had leaked details of the US-Iran negotiation'.⁶¹⁶

Chapter Five: Silencing dissent

In recent years, Israeli officials have started to respond to their government's increasing political isolation by accusing its opponents of anti-Semitism. During Israel's attack against Gaza in summer 2014, for example, mass protests were held in major cities around the world, including Dublin. Nurit Tinari-Modai, Israel's then deputy-ambassador in Dublin, condemned some of the Irish protesters, claiming that they were 'ignorant, anti-Semitic, with an intensely rooted hatred of Jews'.⁶¹⁷ Earlier in the year, MK Motti Yogev from the party Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home) told *Israel Radio* that diplomatic pressure from US Secretary of State John Kerry's 'may have anti-Semitic undertones'.⁶¹⁸ In late 2015, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's appointment of Ran Baratz, who lives in Kfar Adumim settlement,⁶¹⁹ as media advisor caused controversy after it was revealed that he had previously accused US President Barack Obama of anti-Semitism for criticising Netanyahu.⁶²⁰

The Israel lobby has followed suit. Douglas Murray, associate director of the pro-Israel think tank Henry Jackson Society, penned an article in summer 2014 for *The Spectator* under the headline, 'London's pro-Palestine rally was a disgusting anti-Semitic spectacle'.⁶²¹

In summer 2015, *Haaretz* revealed that Israel's military intelligence was given the responsibility of watching over pro-Palestinian groups internationally.⁶²² A senior intelligence official told Israeli journalist Yossi Melman that, 'the smear campaigns to undermine the legitimacy of Israel, including expelling it from international bodies and appealing to the International Court of Justice, must be considered the "new intifada"'.⁶²³

This led Melman to criticise what he called 'self-victimisation' in Israel, 'characteristic of consecutive right-wing governments which claim that the entire world is against us'.⁶²⁴

But despite this kind of criticism, some EU officials have also conflated criticism of Israel's human rights abuses with anti-Semitism. By doing so, they have allowed a few highly partisan organisations to dictate what is legitimate criticism of Israel and what is not. Such organisations have even succeeded in convincing some authorities that those who are vociferous in opposing Israel's crimes are guilty of a new form of anti-Semitism.

The 'New anti-Semitism'

While people harbouring anti-Jewish ideas are sadly not something from Europe's historical past, the Israel lobby's renewed focus on anti-Semitism at the EU level can be traced back to an opinion poll undertaken with EU funding in 2003. When a sample of 7,500 people was presented with a list of 15 countries and asked which of them represented a threat to world peace, 59 per cent named Israel.⁶²⁵ The findings indicate that respondents regarded Israel as the most dangerous of the countries listed – ahead of Iran, North Korea and the US.⁶²⁶

The poll drew an angry response from pro-Israel groups. Abraham Foxman, then director of the US based Anti-Defamation League, said the results 'confirmed a dynamic that has been underway in Europe for some time – that excessive criticism of Israel is fanning hostilities and hatreds across the continent and contributing to anti-Semitism'.⁶²⁷

When news of the poll broke, Romano Prodi, then the European Commission president, agreed to meet Foxman and the leaders of both the World Jewish Congress and American Jewish Congress at short notice.⁶²⁸ Prodi stated that he was 'very concerned by the survey's findings: they reveal a prejudice that must be condemned without hesitation'.⁶²⁹

As a follow-up to those discussions, the European Commission and the European Jewish Congress jointly hosted a seminar on anti-Semitism in February 2004. Nathan Sharansky, Israel's then minister for Jerusalem and diaspora affairs, travelled to Brussels for the event. In his speech, he argued there was a 'fine dividing line' between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. He cited comparisons between Adolf Hitler and Ariel Sharon, Israel's then prime minister, as an example of crossing the line that typified the 'new anti-Semitism'.⁶³⁰

However, drawing comparisons between Israeli leaders and Nazis is nothing new. At a protest against the then prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in Jerusalem's Zion Square on 5 October 1993, Israelis reportedly displayed posters showing Rabin in an SS uniform.⁶³¹

Also, ironically, members of the Israel lobby have themselves made a similar comparison between the former president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Hitler,⁶³² with Benjamin Netanyahu even saying that Ahmadinejad was actually worse than Hitler.⁶³³

More recently, some Israelis employed the Nazi analogy to criticise Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. After Rivlin expressed shame in July 2015 that settlers had burned a Palestinian family alive, he was reportedly deluged with threats on social media calling him a 'traitor' and depicting him in mock photographs as a Nazi with a Hitler moustache.⁶³⁴

Meanwhile, in the US, pro-Israel supporters responded similarly to Representative Jerrold Nadler's (D-NY) decision to support the international nuclear agreement with Iran. *The New York Times* reported that: 'On his Facebook page, Mr. Nadler has been called a kapo: a Jew who collaborated with Nazis in the World War II death camps. One writer said he had "blood on his hands." Another said he had "facilitated Obama's holocaust"'.⁶³⁵

In 2004, the European Union's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) published a 344-page study on how anti-Semitism manifests itself, noting that while the 'basic premise for a valid monitoring and analysis of a phenomenon is an adequate definition', the EU's governments did not have a common definition of anti-Semitism.⁶³⁶

In an attempt to rectify this shortcoming, the EUMC held discussions with a number of pro-Israel organisations, including the Community Security Trust, European Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Committee and Stephen Roth Institute at Tel Aviv University. According to Antony Lerman, author and former director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, Rabbi Andrew Baker, director of international Jewish affairs at AJC, 'knew that those invited to the meeting would need to be broadly sympathetic to the concept of the "new anti-Semitism" and... he was able to determine who attended'.⁶³⁷

The result of their talks was the drafting of a 'working definition' on anti-Semitism. Purporting to be a practical guide, it listed examples of what could be viewed as anti-Semitism. Some of these examples – such as calls for violence against Jews – are correct and non-controversial; others indicate a desire to stifle debate about Israeli policies and practices. The definition suggested, for example, that it could be anti-Semitic to describe 'the existence of Israel as a racist endeavour' or to compare Israeli violence with that of the Nazis.⁶³⁸

The EUMC adopted the 'working definition' in 2005, but only unofficially — its controversial nature is perhaps best reflected by the fact that it was never translated from English into any other language for dissemination.⁶³⁹ Ken Stern, a representative of the AJC, said that the 'key components' of the 'working definition' had been agreed at a meeting held between Beate Winkler, then the EUMC's director, and some of his AJC colleagues.⁶⁴⁰

In 2007, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) was established to replace the EUMC and the 'working definition' faced greater scrutiny. The British government published a progress report in 2008 by the 'All-Party Inquiry into anti-Semitism' that stated: 'The FRA has confirmed that the definition is still seen as a work-in-progress that requires further testing and comment from

stakeholders as to its practical use and effectiveness in supporting data collection. Initial feedback and comments drew attention to several issues that impacted on the effectiveness of the definition as a data collection support tool.⁶⁴¹ The report added that any work to follow-up 'the consultation has not yet been completed'.⁶⁴²

In 2012, Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, head of the FRA's Equality and Citizens' Rights Department, told *The Electronic Intifada* that: 'during discussions of racism and xenophobia monitors throughout the EU "it became evident that there was no interest by primary data collectors to adopt or use" the working definition. He also confirmed that the Fundamental Rights Agency "will not follow-up [the draft working definition] any further," adding that the body "has no legal competence to develop itself any such 'definitions'".⁶⁴³

FRA eventually dropped the 'working definition' from its website altogether in 2013, prompting Rabbi Baker of AJC to comment: 'It is puzzling and unfortunate that the working definition has disappeared from the FRA website, and hard to believe that this was just the result of tidying up some virtual space. I urge its return both in recognition to the important legacy of the EUMC as well as the obvious value it can still provide'.⁶⁴⁴

Although FRA reportedly never viewed the document as a valid definition, Rabbi Baker also noted that it had been included in training materials prepared by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and recommended by inter-parliamentary commissions in the United Kingdom and Canada. Nevertheless, agency officials told the *Times of Israel* that 'the document had been pulled offline "together with other non-official documents".⁶⁴⁵

Censoring criticism of Israel

While none of the European Union's governments ever formally approved the EUMC's 'working definition', it has still carried political weight. As Ben White reports, 'A working group on "combating Anti-Semitism" at the Israeli government's 2009 Global Forum gathering, chaired by the Community Security Trust's Michael Whine, described the draft definition as "the European Union's own definition of anti-Semitism".⁶⁴⁶

The implications for freedom of expression in Europe have been far-reaching. In January 2011, Mike Prysner, a US army veteran turned anti-war activist, told students in Birmingham University that 'Gaza quite literally is one massive concentration camp' and that Palestinians were denied rights by Israel 'like Jews were denied rights in Germany'.⁶⁴⁷

Such language may be harsh, but it is not unusual. Back in 2004, before the Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip even began, Israel's former national security advisor Giora Eiland referred to Gaza as 'a huge concentration camp' in a security briefing with other officials.⁶⁴⁸ One decade later, during Israel's 2014 war against Gaza, the UK's former deputy prime minister, John Prescott, also described Gaza as a 'concentration camp'.⁶⁴⁹ Furthermore, Moshe Feiglin, then deputy-speaker of the Knesset, actually proposed for Gaza's civilian population to be 'concentrated' into 'tent encampments' on the strip's border with the Sinai.⁶⁵⁰

However, pro-Israel activists at Birmingham University protested over Prysner's remarks and its students' union (the Birmingham Guild of Students) responded by passing a resolution. All of the university's societies and clubs were required to avoid language that could be considered anti-Semitic under the EU's unofficial 'working definition'.⁶⁵¹

One consequence of this vote is that it is limiting critical discussions about Israel. Later in 2011, another event focused on the Middle East was held at Birmingham University's debating society. When an audience member asked if Israel was an apartheid state, the chairperson of the debate replied, 'I've been told I can't have that as a question'.⁶⁵²

In February 2012, the University of Paris VIII planned a conference titled, 'Israel: An apartheid state?' However, under pressure from the Israel lobby, Pascal Binczak, the university's president

at the time, banned the conference. When the students organising it vowed to continue with the event, Binczak shut down the campus the day the conference was scheduled to take place (it was moved to another venue nearby at short notice).⁶⁵³ The Simon Wiesenthal Centre was one of the groups that objected that speakers at the conference favoured a boycott of Israel, contending that such moves to 'delegitimise and isolate the Jewish state' were 'a clear violation' of the working definition of anti-Semitism.⁶⁵⁴

The Israel lobby in France also campaigned to ban Professor Farid Esack, a celebrated anti-apartheid activist and chair of South Africa's Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions committee, from speaking in March 2015. Esack was scheduled to speak at several French universities during Israeli Apartheid Week, an annual awareness-raising event held on university campuses worldwide; however, the lobby was falsely accusing him of anti-Semitism. A petition garnering hundreds of signatures from international academics and personalities, including South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace prizewinner,⁶⁵⁵ ensured he was able to successfully complete his speaking tour.⁶⁵⁶

Nevertheless, at times the lobby's efforts at undermining academic freedom have been more effective. In April 2015, Southampton University planned a conference on 'International law and the State of Israel: Legitimacy, responsibility and exceptionalism'. Again under intense pressure from the Israel lobby, the university cancelled the conference, citing 'health and safety' concerns.⁶⁵⁷ As *Spinwatch* researcher Hilary Aked notes, an application at the High Court denied organisers a judicial review, 'despite many academics writing to the university expressing their dismay and a petition which garnered wide public support'.⁶⁵⁸

Later in 2015, UK Communities Secretary Greg Clark announced a move to ban local councils from joining BDS campaigns against Israel and the arms trade, claiming that it cost British jobs and 'poisoned' community relations.⁶⁵⁹ The Labour-run Leicester council had passed a motion in 2014 boycotting produce from illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. In a briefing on the government's new policy, the Conservatives even accused trade unions and campaigners of 'fuelling anti-Semitism'.⁶⁶⁰

Perhaps most disturbing, however, was the decision in October 2015 by the French Supreme Court to uphold earlier rulings that found promoters of a boycott against Israel guilty of inciting hatred or discrimination. According to *Forward*, French activists had been found guilty for staging protests in 2009 and 2010 at supermarkets near the eastern city of Mulhouse while 'wearing shirts emblazoned with the words: "Long live Palestine, boycott Israel." They also handed out fliers that said that "buying Israeli products means legitimising crimes in Gaza"'.⁶⁶¹ The activists appealed the ruling, citing their freedom to express their opinion, but France's highest court of appeals ruled against them. *The Jewish Press* covered the news under the headline 'France outlaws BDS anti-Semitism'.⁶⁶²

Developments in North America have also been chilling because they serve to further normalise the EUMC 'working definition'. In 2008, the US State Department issued a report, providing the government's only official definition of anti-Semitism, which adopted the EUMC 'working definition' as 'a useful framework for identifying and understanding the problem' of anti-Semitism.⁶⁶³ In a section on 'conspiracy theories,' the report cites one example of anti-Semitism that is more related to geopolitics than any religious or ethnic bias: suggesting that the December 2004 tsunami in South Asia could have been caused by a joint US-Israeli underground nuclear test.⁶⁶⁴ Another example is more representative of the effects of Islamophobia: that the US and Israel have created an 'American Quran'.⁶⁶⁵

While Abe Foxman, then head of the Anti-Defamation League, applauded the report for highlighting 'how the expanding global scope of anti-Semitism is manifested today and its nexus with virulent demonisation of Israel and of Zionism',⁶⁶⁶ civil rights activists responded by arguing that the State Department definition includes 'prohibitions that are so vague that they could be, and have been, construed to silence any criticism of Israeli policies'.⁶⁶⁷

Gregg Rickman, then special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism at the State Department, spearheaded the 2008 report. Rickman was formerly director of congressional affairs for the Republican Jewish Coalition (Israel lobby donors Sheldon Adelson, Bernard Marcus and Paul E. Singer are on the coalition's board of directors) and subsequently served as deputy director of policy and government affairs for AIPAC.⁶⁶⁸

In 2012, the California State Assembly, the lower house of the state legislature, invoked the State Department's working definition when it passed a non-binding resolution urging college campuses to clamp down on anti-Semitism. According to *Forward*, 'the resolution condemned calls to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel as a "means of demonising Israel," and included as examples of "anti-Semitic discourse" assertions that "Israel is a racist, apartheid, or Nazi state [and] that Israel is guilty of heinous crimes against humanity, such as ethnic cleansing and genocide".'⁶⁶⁹

The assembly's move took place against the backdrop of a campaign by University of California Santa Cruz lecturer Tammi Rossman-Benjamin to have some of her California colleagues punished for delivering lectures critical of Israel and Zionism, a campaign so vitriolic that it was even criticised by Kenneth Stern, then director on anti-Semitism, hate studies and extremism at the American Jewish Committee.⁶⁷⁰

Rossman-Benjamin, together with Leila Beckwith, professor emeritus at University of California Los Angeles, co-founded the AMCHA Initiative, a non-profit organisation that aims to remove anti-Israel arguments from college campuses by pursuing state legislation that bans pro-Palestinian activism. If its efforts are successful, Rossman-Benjamin told *Forward* that: 'BDS would, in principle, be seen as anti-Semitic... So would protests in which activists erect a wall to symbolise Israel's separation barrier... Demonstrations in which activists distribute mock eviction notices... would also be deemed anti-Semitic.'⁶⁷¹

In May 2015, the California State Senate, the upper house, passed a nonbinding resolution urging the University of California system to adopt the State Department's working definition. *Forward* reports that 'student bodies on the university's Berkeley, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles campuses have also approved measures adopting the State Department language.' The University of California's president, Janet Napolitano, publicly supported the move, but the Anti-Defamation League chose not to officially endorse it.⁶⁷² In the end, the regents of the university decided to drop the matter entirely and instead elected 'to have a discussion about "tolerance" in general at their meeting in the autumn'.⁶⁷³

More generally, the Israel lobby in the United States is waging a similar campaign against Palestine solidarity activism on college campuses across the country. Indeed, in autumn 2015, Jewish Voice for Peace published a report entitled 'Stifling dissent: How Israel's defenders use false charges of anti-Semitism to limit the debate over Israel on campus'. According to the report, Sheldon Adelson, the casino magnate and donor to several of the Israel lobby organisations detailed in this report, held a secret Las Vegas summit in June 2015 that raised up to \$50 million dollars to fight the BDS movement on campuses.⁶⁷⁴

The Jewish Voice for Peace report details a number of examples where Hillel, the largest Zionist student organisation in the world, has targeted student supporters of the group. With an annual budget of tens of millions of dollars, Hillel works with Birthright Israel to organise trips for thousands of American students to travel to Israel,⁶⁷⁵ sponsors students to participate in various pro-Israel training programmes across the country,⁶⁷⁶ and coordinates national speaking tours exclusively for pro-Zionist advocates on college campuses.⁶⁷⁷ Since 2002, Hillel has had a partnership with the Israel on Campus Coalition, whose foundational purpose is to advocate unconditionally for Israel on college campuses.⁶⁷⁸

The report also cites 'numerous examples of different groups', including the ADL and AMCHA Initiative, 'threatening faculty and administrators over planned campus events that feature speakers highly critical of Israeli behaviour.'⁶⁷⁹ In addition, it highlights particular threats to academic freedom by citing campaigns against eight respected faculty members.

At around the same time, the Center for Constitutional Rights and Palestine Legal, a non-profit legal and advocacy organisation supporting Palestine activism, co-published a report on the Israel lobby's threat to free speech, entitled 'The Palestine exception to free speech: A movement under attack in the US'. The report details how between January 2014 and June 2015, Palestine Legal responded to nearly 300 incidents of suppression: 85 per cent targeting students and professors on a total of more than 65 US college campuses.⁶⁸⁰

The EUMC definition has had an even bigger impact in Canada. In November 2010, a conference bringing together members of parliament and scholars from 50 different countries was held in Ottawa. The 'Ottawa protocol' resulting from that meeting exhorted universities to use the 'working definition' as a 'basis for education, training and orientation'.⁶⁸¹ The Canadian government formally signed the protocol in 2011, becoming the first in the world to do so,⁶⁸² after its ministers had issued a series of statements criticising the students responsible for organising Israel Apartheid Week. According to Jason Kenney, a government minister, the organisers of Israel Apartheid Week created 'a toxic environment that prevents meaningful dialogue on important issues from taking place'.⁶⁸³

Of course, the same groups that are silencing dissent are themselves complicit in Israel's continuing crimes. *Figure 6* illustrates those American funders of the Friends of Israel Initiative, AJC Transatlantic Institute, Israel Allies Caucus, European Foundation for Democracy and European Leadership Network that are also giving thousands or even millions of dollars annually to organisations that are either based in the settlements in the occupied territories or which provide funding to projects supporting Israeli settlers.

Figure 6: All known American funders of the Israel lobby in Europe that are also financing settlements in occupied Palestine (excluding donor-advised funds)



Blaming 'radical Muslim elements'

Rabbi Andrew Baker of the American Jewish Congress, who was involved in drawing up the EU's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia 'working definition', admitted in 2011 that it had been encountering resistance from within the Fundamental Rights Agency.⁶⁸⁴ However, Baker still insisted that the definition 'bears repeating whenever possible'.⁶⁸⁵

But although the FRA generally did not refer to the 'working definition' in any of its publications on anti-Semitism, during a 2011 private meeting, the agency assured pro-Israel advocates that the 'working definition' was still 'open to use by all'.⁶⁸⁶

We asked the FRA if it recognises that there is a difference between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism. Friso Roscam Abbing, a spokesperson for the agency, replied that the data sources on which it bases much of its analysis 'do not make this distinction'. We also enquired if the agency had reached out to any Jewish organisations that have explicitly rejected Zionism. Roscam Abbing responded that the agency has 'contact with official Jewish representative organisations' through the 'umbrella organisation, the European Jewish Congress'.⁶⁸⁷ In other words the agency has no contact with anti-Zionist Jewish groups. The leaders of the European Jewish Congress are not elected by direct democracy. Furthermore, as the EJC is clearly supportive of Israel, this raises questions of whether or not it should have the key role in determining what the parameters should be for Europeans discussing Israel's policies and practices.

This kind of selection bias is not uncommon. When the agency was preparing to undertake a study about hate crimes and anti-Semitism in selected EU countries, it solicited comments from Israel lobby groups about which questions should be asked in the poll. In April 2012, the European Jewish Congress submitted a paper to the FRA, contending that:

The survey should explain that the new form of anti-Semitism, which emanates from pro-Palestinians, from Arabo-Muslim extremists [sic], is today considered by European Jews as a real threat, which creates fear and tension among European Jews. Therefore, the definition of anti-Semitism should be clarified: the new form of anti-Semitism emanates from Arabo-Muslim extremists, from pro-Palestinians, being one-way importers of the mid-East conflict into Europe.⁶⁸⁸

An email message sent by the European Jewish Congress to the agency the following month made a similar argument. 'The main concern today is a new form of anti-Semitism, which emanates from some radical Muslim elements,' the congress stated. 'This is why the definition of anti-Semitism should reflect this unfortunate new reality in Europe.'⁶⁸⁹

The FRA's subsequent approach to anti-Semitism has been contradictory. It argued that the survey 'cannot from the outset adopt certain assumptions on anti-Semitism nor on the profile of the perpetrators because this would jeopardise the objectivity of the results'. But in a March 2012 meeting with pro-Israel groups, the agency also undertook to regard 'anti-Israel sentiments' – including calls for a boycott of Israel – as anti-Semitic.⁶⁹⁰ It is important to note that Palestinians have called for a boycott of Israeli goods and institutions, not individual Israelis or Jews, in addition to stressing their opposition to anti-Semitism and other forms of racial and religious discrimination.⁶⁹¹

Nevertheless, the Israel lobby continues to argue that BDS and criticism of Israel is extremist. The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs published a report in December 2014 by Dan Diker, research fellow at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the IDC, Herzliya, and former secretary general of the World Jewish Congress, entitled 'Unmasking BDS: Radical roots, extremist ends'.⁶⁹² In the report, Diker falsely claims that the BDS movement flatly rejects the two-state solution and therefore its 'objectives parallel Hamas' war goals'.⁶⁹³ He adds that, 'BDS leaders and organisations are also linked to the Palestinian Authority leadership, the radical Muslim Brotherhood, other radical groups, terror-supporting organisations, and in some cases even terror groups themselves such as Hamas'.

The following year, IDC Herzliya, hosted a conference on 'Antisemitism & BDS – Is there a connection?' Speakers included Diker, Avital Leibovich, Jerusalem director of the American Jewish Committee and former spokesperson of the Israeli Defense Forces, Gerald Steinberg, founder of NGO Monitor, and Miri Eisin, ICT associate, and a former international media advisor to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.⁶⁹⁴

This follows several incidents where Israeli officials have publicly called BDS a form of terrorism. In June 2015, newly elected Likud MK Anat Berko said that the Palestinians' efforts to ban Israel from FIFA, football's world governing body, 'was terrorism no matter how you look at it'.⁶⁹⁵ Explaining further, she told *Al-Monitor* that, 'What is happening now is that efforts are underway to shift terrorism to the diplomatic arena.'⁶⁹⁶ Meanwhile, that same month Yesh Atid MK Yair Lapid told a synagogue in New York that those behind the BDS movement 'are the people responsible for 9/11, for the terror attacks in Madrid and London, and for the 250,000 people already killed in Syria'.⁶⁹⁷

These developments show that many of those waging the campaign against 'the new anti-Semitism' are at best seeking to censor any criticism of Israel and at worst guilty of Islamophobia. This trend is even more dangerous at a time when there are increasingly frequent anti-Muslim and anti-Arab attacks in Israel and the occupied territories.⁶⁹⁸

Conclusion

As this report describes, in recent years the Israel lobby has increasingly sought to establish a firm presence in Brussels. While groups like the European Friends of Israel, Europe Israel Press Association and European Coalition for Israel may be a natural outgrowth of previously existing lobbies within the European Union, other groups like the Friends of Israel Initiative, AJC Transatlantic Institute, Israel Allies Caucus, European Foundation for Democracy and European Leadership Network have strong connections, both organisationally and through their funders, to the right-wing pro-Israel movement in the United States, which has Islamophobic tendencies and partnerships with extremist Israeli settlers. Furthermore, some of these groups and others like the European Jewish Parliament are linked to shady oligarchs from ex-Soviet countries who are aligning with the extreme European right. The negative implications for a just peace in Israel and Palestine could not be more far reaching.

The lobby appears increasingly nervous that the European Union will finally take some concrete measures against Israel. European Friends of Israel asked candidates standing in the 2014 European Parliament elections to sign a pledge that they would oppose a boycott of Israel.⁶⁹⁹ Elinadav Heymann, EFI's then director, warned that he expects the idea of labelling goods produced in Jewish-only settlements in the occupied West Bank to 'gain momentum', arguing that this will be a challenge for EU-Israel relations.⁷⁰⁰

In January 2014, Yair Lapid, then Israel's finance minister, also warned that if 'a European boycott begins, even partially, Israel's economy will go backwards'. A study undertaken for his ministry predicted that Israeli exports to the EU could drop by one-fifth.⁷⁰¹ Gidi Grinstein, head of the Reut Institute, has called the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement 'a strategic threat' to Israel, 'potentially an existential threat'. Because the movement causes Israel to have a 'legitimacy deficit; it takes away our legitimacy', he has argued that 'we need to create a legitimacy surplus in other areas'. Promoting Israel's achievements in science and innovation would be an important step towards achieving that 'surplus', he suggested.⁷⁰²

While Israel is undoubtedly successful in those particular sectors, this focus on achievements is a clear attempt to change the conversation away from the government's continuing crimes against the Palestinian people amid increasing international isolation. And as this report details, many of those who back Israel's burgeoning Brussels lobby are also complicit in the expansion of Israel's illegal settlements and the peddling of hate speech against Arabs and Muslims.

Similar to the unequal struggle inside Israel and Palestine, there is anything but balance between the Israel and Palestine lobbies. In contrast to the well-financed pro-Israel groups in this report, the European Coordination of Committees and Associations for Palestine had just over €11,000 at its disposal for its Brussels office in 2012.⁷⁰³

This funding imbalance suggests that a just peace in Israel and Palestine requires firm action by the EU's governments against individuals and groups that are working to sustain the ongoing occupation of Palestine.

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