

Zionism Funds Islamophobia

Zionism marries Islamophobia*

Israel and its defenders, aware that their longstanding attempts to influence public opinion in favor of Israel are faltering, are investing over \$300 million in propaganda, surveillance, and lawfare directly aimed at silencing dissent and solidarity with Palestine. These defenders include a small group of donors who run their money through family, public, and community foundations and donor-advised funds, and who are funding Zionist backlash in campuses and communities across the United States and the Islamophobia network—the network of organizations promoting virulent anti-Muslim propaganda, media, and policies in the United States.

Financing Backlash*

Since the late 1960s, US-based Zionist institutions have collaborated in attacks on movements for justice because they have seen their interests as aligned with those of the US state. Zionist institutions have played a prominent role in supporting the US government's campaigns to undermine and discredit radical Black, Chicano, and Indigenous people's movements. These attacks are designed to promote the interests of the state of Israel and the Zionist movement at all costs, and in the process undermine hard-won civil rights legislation, legally protected political activity, and serve to invisibilize the real victims of racism and statebacked repression. Much of the funding of the Zionist backlash network comes from 11 extraordinarily wealthy individuals, many of whom acquired their wealth and retain investments in industries that directly profit from Israeli domination of Palestinians, Islamophobia, wars in the Middle East and environmental degradation. Together, their foundations represent over \$10,000,000,000 in assets, which does not include their private wealth and individual giving. These individual donors and their foundations mask their involvement in funding Zionist backlash and Islamophobia through providing grants to donor-advised funds, community foundations and other intermediaries. Intermediaries or "anonymizers" are foundations that serve to obscure the identities of major donors.

Backlash Funders: Funding Priorities*

Donor	Assets	Investments & Sources of Profits	Funding Priorities
Koch Brothers	\$115 billion	Manufacturing, refining and distribution of petroleum; pipelines; fertilizers; chemicals; energy; chemical technology equipment; finance	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, anti-environment, anti-immigrant, anti-women, anti-LGBT, privatization of education, anti-labor, privatization of healthcare, Tea Party and other right wing political organizations, pro-war, universities, neoliberal think tanks, pro-corporate power
Sheldon Adelson	\$37.6 billion	Las Vegas Sands Casino Group	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, anti-labor, conservative politicians
Schusterman Family Foundation	\$2 billion	Energy, deepwater developments (Bucksin & Moccasin), oil	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, privatizing education
Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation	\$630 million	Oil, weapons, Monsanto, energy, finance	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, anti-environment, anti-women, anti-LGBT, neoliberal ideology, anti-labor
Becker Foundations (Including JCF – LA)	\$548 million	Israel Bioengineering, Amphenol Corp, Air Products and Chemicals, Energen Corp, Questar Corp, Bear Sterns (finance)	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, pro-war, neoliberal think tanks, conservative politicians
Seth Klarman Family Foundation	\$300 million	Oil, tobacco, energy	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, Israeli settlements, opposing poverty relief, pro-war
Sarah Scaife Foundation	\$270 million	Oil, weapons, housing crisis, government debt & finance	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, neoliberal think tanks, privatization of public education, privatization of healthcare, anti-environment, anti-affirmative action, pro-surveillance, anti-immigrant, universities, pro-war
Russell Berrie Foundation	\$200 million	Goldman Sachs & Bear Sterns (finance)	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, universities
Koret Foundation	\$165 million	"Emerging markets" -industry and finance in places with few labor or environmental regulations	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, pro-war, privatization of healthcare, universities, neoliberal think tanks
Moskowitz Foundation	\$47 million	Buying and "flipping" hospitals, casino	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, Israeli settlements, far right political organizations
Fairbrook Foundation	\$45 million	Software, National Center for Crisis and Continuity Coordination (NC4) – serving aerospace and defense, banking and finance, government, law enforcement, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals and biotech, manufacturing, retail and telecommunications	Zionist backlash, Islamophobia, Israeli settlements, climate change denial, neoliberal think tanks, far-right political organizations



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Normalizing Islamophobia

Anti-Muslim narratives are used to bolster support of the State of Israel. Prominent U.S. anti-Muslim ideologues are adamantly pro-Israel and are not alone in conflating Palestinians and Muslims (with both seen as existential threats to the United States and Israel). Israeli officials routinely dismiss Islamophobia as a problem. For the Jewish Federations across the country to fund American Freedom Law Center that targets Muslim religious identity is yet another injury to the Muslim community, which took place while interfaith efforts were underway across the country. Interfaith dialogue is meaningless and insulting if funding for Islamophobic groups is undertaken within the same mainstream organizational infrastructure. Review of extensive tax return from multiple Jewish Federations across the country reveal a funding of projects undertaken by community groups, organizations, and universities, which are all worthwhile and inspiring considering the commitment and commendable high levels of generosity regularly demonstrated by the Jewish community. However, the funding directed at Islamophobic groups, Geert Wilders's neo-Nazi Freedom Party, US Tea Party Patriots, and others stains and undermines the good that is done. The issue at hand is the split personality of the organized American Jewish community which can be seen on the one hand in the high levels and well-established records of generosity, funding the building of hospitals, endowments for schools and colleges, backing liberal political positions and offering support in defense of civil rights for all. The history and work of the American Jewish community is inspiring and gives hope to the challenges facing Muslims in today's America. However, on the other hand, the same mainstream Jewish community groups acting on behalf of Zionism and seeking to protect Israel's interests can exhibit the most reactionary and racist discourses when it comes to Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and their allies. A moment of deep reflection is urgently needed by the Federations, the Diller Foundation and all the groups that have adopted Islamophobia as a weapon in defense of Israeli Apartheid.

Follow the Money

An approximate 70% of the funding for the Islamophobia Industry comes from the pro-Israel/Zionist sources for which concrete evidence is slowly emerging. To date, the single largest expenditure to push Islamophobia in the US came in the form of the Clarion Fund paying upward of \$17 million to produce and distribute 28 million copies of the documentary *Obsession* in the run-up to the 2008 elections. This Clarion Fund expenditure was followed by another outlay for the more Islamophobically horrific documentary, *The Third Jihad*, framing the American Muslim community civic engagement programs as a threat to the country and collectively can't be trusted. The recent reports on the San Francisco Jewish Federation and the Diller Foundation funding for the granddaddies of the Islamophobia Industry make the initial estimates very conservative.

Adelson Family Foundation**

The ADL has taken \$550,000 between 2007 and 2013 from the Adelson Family Foundation. Between 2011 and 2013, Adelson gave \$1,225,000 to groups in the Islamophobia network. These include, Americans for Peace and Tolerance, which campaigns against Muslim leaders in the Boston area; and the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting (CAMERA), whose "media monitoring" reflects its strong anti-Muslim agenda. According to the New York Times, Sheldon Adelson provided "support" to the viciously anti-Muslim video, *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West* (2008); the Clarion Fund distributed 28 million DVDs of *Obsession* during the 2008 presidential election. Adelson has a history of backing anti-Muslim national politicians, including Newt Gingrich, who received at least \$10 million from Adelson and his wife during the 2012 presidential primary, and has stated that Shariah ("Islamic religious principles") "is a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it"; and Donald Trump, whom Adelson gave a reported \$35 million, with the expectation that Trump will be "the best president for Israel ever."

Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT)**

The ADL Foundation gave \$10,000 in 2012 and again in 2013 to the Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT), which Steven Emerson founded in 1995. In 2007, Emerson met with former Trump White House chief strategist Steve Bannon to discuss Bannon's proposed film, "Destroying the Great Satan: The Rise of Islamic Fascism in America." The proposal for the film lists Emerson as an executive producer. Immediately after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, Emerson claimed on TV that the attack had "a Middle Eastern trait" because it "was done with the intent to inflict as many casualties as possible." The actual perpetrators were right-wing domestic terrorists. Even Fox News felt the need to apologize in 2015 after Emerson inaccurately claimed in an interview that Birmingham, England and other European cities were filled with "no-go zones" where non-Muslims and government officials don't go. Emerson repeatedly attacked the Obama Administration for allegedly collaborating with the Muslim Brotherhood.

The American Jewish Committee (AJC)**

AJC describes itself as "the leading global Jewish advocacy organization," which is "building a safer, more secure future for the Jewish people, Israel, and all humanity." Like many other mainstream Jewish groups, AJC currently puts itself forth as an ally of the Muslim community. AJC has received substantial funding from three of the seven funders identified in the Center for American Progress' *Fear, Inc.* The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America as major funders of this network between 2001 and 2009: Newton and Rochelle F. Becker Foundation—\$1,136,000; Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation—\$5,370,000; and Richard Mellon Scaife foundations—\$7,875,000. AJC has also received funding from an intermediary organization run by Daniel Pipes, a major Islamophobia "misinformation expert."

Jewish Federations**

The Jewish Federation of North America has 148 local member federations and 300 network communities in the United States and Canada. While each federation is autonomous, support for Israel is central to their common mission. Some Jewish federations have strongly supported Muslims: when arson destroyed a mosque; an Islamic center sought to expand; and Trump proposed Muslim Ban 1.0 (publicly criticized by 125 local Jewish federations). But some federations have helped amplify anti-Muslim hate by sponsoring public events featuring anti-Muslim extremists like those described above. Some have accepted hundreds of thousands—even millions—of dollars from foundations that are part of the Islamophobia network in America. Some federations (or their affiliates) have given substantial funding to groups run by some of the country's most prominent Islamophobes. Some have provided support—through word, deed, or silence—for Islamophobic campaigns, actions, and individuals: opposing the building of an Islamic center, or having as a keynote speaker at major events the Commissioner of the NYPD

Jewish Communal Fund (JCF)**

The JCF is a donor-advised fund that "invests in Islamophobia." The United Jewish Appeal-Jewish Federation of New York has a "controlling financial interest" in JCF. Between 2001 and 2013, JCF gave approximately \$1.5 million to groups that are part of the Islamophobia network in America. The Southern Poverty Law Center has identified the founders of all of these groups as "anti-Muslim extremists." The JCF contributed \$100,000 to the American Freedom Defense Initiative between 2012 and 2013; contributed \$477,190 to The Investigative Project on Terrorism between 2006 and 2013; \$250,020 to the David Horowitz Freedom Center between 2005 and 2013; and \$659,060 to the Middle East Forum between 2001 and 2013.

Jewish United Fund (JUF) of Metropolitan Chicago**

The funding arm of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago (Jewish Federation): JUF has recently stressed the importance of interfaith partnerships, especially with Muslims. Yet, JUF has supported Steven Emerson's Investigative Project on Terrorism and provided major funding to Daniel Pipes' Middle East Forum. JUF also accepted \$5.1 million in 2013 from the Donors Capital Fund, a leading funder of Islamophobia. JUF refused to condemn Trump's appointment of Steve Bannon, whose Breitbart news outlet regularly promotes both anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic ideologies.

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*International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network Report: Business of Backlash

** JVP's Jewish Organizations & Islamophobia Module