



Israel, India AND THE Islamophobic Alliance

Richard Silverstein
Foreword by Dr. Hatem Bazian



ISLAMOPHOBIA STUDIES CENTER
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA



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Design and layout by Hani David Kharufeh.

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...in the sea of pro-Trump flags during the protests, what grabbed the eyes of many was the presence of the Indian tricolour. The tricolour was spotted in the crowd that allegedly also had Indian-origin backers alongside the Trump supporters.



FOREWORD

Hindutva, Zionism and Islamophobia in America

Dr. Hatem Bazian

The Islamophobia Studies Center's Israel, India and the Islamophobic Alliance report comes on the heel of two other publications that examined the rise of Hindu nationalism in India and the ongoing targeting of Muslim, Sikh, Dalit and Christian minorities in the country. The Center's research on Islamophobia covers a wide array of regions and topics, which is the logical approach considering the global nature of the islamophobia phenomena and the distinct features across different geographies, cultures, and nation-states. Here, Daniel Pipes' islamophobia hornet's nest, the Middle East Forum, is directly connected to a distinctive development, a partnership between Hindu nationalism and Israel. Importantly, U.S. based Hindu nationalist organizations and their lobbying arms have struck a strategic relationship with Islamophobic outfits and Zionist groups, which is increasingly visible in their public discourse. This report is intended to partly examine the recent developments and sheds some light on this relationship.

India, which promotes itself as the largest democracy in the world, has witnessed the emergence of Narendra Modi and his bringing into national power the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist violent vigilante organization that embraces Islamophobia as a central theme in its domestic and international policies. Modi's path to national power was forged in blood during his years as Chief Minister in the state of Gujarat, and witnessed his skill at stoking Hindu nationalism and riding it into an open pogrom and killing over 2,000 Muslims. Since Modi's rise to power the conditions in India for Muslims and minorities have only gotten worse, and this has begun to take on a transnational dimension that includes strengthening working relationships with Zionist and Hindu Nationalist groups here in the U.S., as well as in cementing military and strategic relations with Israel.

Visible crystallization of this shift of Hindu nationalism in India was witnessed in the U.S. on January 6th, 2021. The assault on the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. by Trump's supporters had Indian and Israeli flags among the few distinctive flags and banners in the mix. Yes, Trump's flags were seen everywhere but the two other flags could be clearly seen in the crowd. The Israeli and Indian flags presence within the predominantly White nationalist and QAnon conspiracy laden crowd points to a

steady shift towards extremist margins among the organized segment of the Indian diaspora and the pro-Israel groupings, which seem jointly to have hitched their political wagons to right wing political discourses in the U.S. and across Europe. Islamophobic discourses might be the thread that stitches all these groups together going back to the early 2008 elections and point to the deepening relationships between Hindu nationalist, pro-Israel Zionist, and Evangelical groups. This convergence of relations among these three groups can be illustrated in the battle over the California Model Ethnic Studies, which initially had recommended a forward-looking curriculum that addressed the multi-prong persistent omissions of Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian narratives. However, the mobilization of Zionist, Hindu nationalist, and right-wing evangelical groups led to a complete transformation of what was a promising beginning.

Indeed, the battle over California's proposed model ethnic studies curriculum brought to light a convergence of forces that managed to torpedo the inclusionary efforts within the state's educational space. In 2016, the California legislature adopted bill 327, which approved the creation of a high school-level ethnic studies curriculum that would recommend for students to finish one semester in Ethnic Studies before graduation. The bill offered educators flexibility within a broader set of guidelines, but the inclusion of Arab-American, and Palestinians in particular, led to the massive pushback and eventual silencing of the history and experiences of both groups.

Immediately after the bill passage, the state of California appointed an Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Advisory Committee, which produced a report that included Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians within the framework and made references to the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement. After the model curriculum release by the panel of Ethnic Studies experts, the ADL, AJC, JCRC, a number of other pro-Israel, right-wing, and Hindutva groups mounted a campaign using among other tools, the app Act.IL (a phone App. linked to the Israeli government and developed to rally pro-Israel support on various issues), which called on its users to oppose the implementation and demand a rewrite of the curriculum that removes any mention of Palestine and BDS.

What started as an effort to address racism in education and a curriculum to remedy erasures of communities of color, ended up catering to the forces that are committed to silencing Arab-Americans and Palestinians while allowing a narrow consideration of the Muslim experience. Indeed, the curriculum included a single recommended lesson plan on Islamophobia but absent from it is the context of pro-Israel groups being a major funding source, and a driving force in policy circles, which provided the stage for mainstreaming anti-Muslim bigotry. Furthermore, the lessons on Islamophobia did not include or recommend an examination of the rising tide of Hindutva and RSS power in India and its impacts or involvement in the U.S.

To understand what happened and how the curriculum silenced the history and suffering of Arab-Americans and Palestinians with a veneer of concern over Islamophobia, Educator Jody Sokolower's critical comments are as follows:

“The California Department of Education disbanded the original advisory committee and the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC) was revised under a cloak of secrecy — they refused to release the names of the consultants or the writers in charge of the revisions. They did, however, continue to meet with pro-Israel lobbyists. Media headlines targeted the ESMC’s mention of BDS (the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel for its human rights violations against Palestinians) in a list of social movements students might want to research. But, in fact, the pro-Israel lobby’s opposition extended to any mention of Palestine or acknowledgment of Arab American studies as integral to ethnic studies.

Arab American, Asian American, and other ethnic studies educators, students, and community members started organizing to defend the ESMC. University faculty joined forces with K–12 teachers and community activists to enlist

support and public comment. The Association for Asian American Studies, the Arab American Studies Association, Black Lives Matter, Jewish Voice for Peace, veterans of the 1968 strikes, and internationally recognized scholars — including Angela Davis and Robin D. G. Kelley — all came out in support of the ESMC. Progressive Jewish educators and activists made it clear that the pro-Israel lobby does not speak for them.”¹

The outcome of the California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum illustrates the impacts of the convergence of Zionist, Hindu nationalist, and right-wing forces that all embraced Islamophobia for political and strategic purposes. While the curriculum battle might be seen as only a local or state level issue- a more accurate analysis points to the fluid nature of Islamophobia and the direct links between the local and transnational at once. Hindu nationalist and Zionist groups are utilizing Islamophobic discourses to maintain and expand their political, economic, and military interests, which have billions of dollars riding on them, and are centered on the structured demonization of Islam and Muslims. The Middle East Forum director Daniel Pipes never misses an opportunity to be Islamophobic and is allied with pernicious supremacist figures in India, the U.K., Netherlands, and France; with all of this being done in the hope of defending and protecting Apartheid Israel at all costs. Politics makes for strange bedfellows, but no one would have imagined the cast of characters, organizations, and supremacist ideologies coalescing around Islamophobia. The report is an early effort to map and connect the dots between the funding of Islamophobia on the one hand, and the Hindutva, Zionist, and White Supremacist groups that are fanning the flames of anti-Muslim bigotry on the other. We hope more work on this subject to be undertaken and a continued examination of these pernicious relations and groups that are impacting the democratic process and endangering the lives and well-being of Muslims at home and abroad.

1 <https://mondoweiss.net/2021/03/california-has-adapted-an-ethnic-studies-curriculum-but-palestine-has-been-scrubbed-out-of-it/> Accessed on June 2nd, 2021.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stands next to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a farewell ceremony upon Modi's departure from Israel at Ben Gurion International Airport, near Tel Aviv, Israel, 6 July 2017. (Photo: Reuters/Amir Cohen).

In this topsy-turvy world we're living in an [American president can embrace neo-Nazis](#), [neo-Nazis can embrace Israel](#), and [Israel \(if you're still following\) can embrace an Indian nationalist movement that once worshipped the world's greatest Nazi, Adolf Hitler.](#)

Over the past two decades, as Syria lapsed into civil war, and African states were assaulted by Islamist extremists like Boko Haram and al Qaeda of North Africa, hundreds of thousands of refugees made their escape toward Europe. They saw it as, a land of freedom and prosperity. But Europe didn't reciprocate. In fact, it shuddered in horror at the influx of Middle Eastern Muslims and Black Africans (many of them Muslim as well). Its right-wing politicians whipped them into a frenzy of xenophobia at the onslaught threatening to overwhelm these hitherto (largely) white Christian nations. Leaders like Marie Le Pen, Nigel Farage, Viktor Orban, and Jarosław Kaczyński built fences, rushed police to the border, and threatened the invaders with expulsion, all the while proclaiming fealty to their white Christian racial heritage. They promulgated an ultra-nationalist, anti-democratic, Christo-supremacist ideology suggesting the refugees were the first wave of Muslims seeking to overthrow Christendom and [replace it with a global Muslim caliphate](#).

In Israel, a similar phenomenon was fueled by a [Judeo-supremacist ideology](#) which, at its founding, led to the expulsion of a million Palestinian residents during the 1948 Nakba, and the suppression of those who remained. Though citizens of the new Israeli state, these Palestinians remained second or third-class, viewed with fear and mistrust by the Jewish majority.

After 1967, when Israel conquered the West Bank and Gaza, it formally annexed East Jerusalem and the Golan, de facto absorbing all of this new territory, while implicitly rejecting the actual residents, the indigenous Palestinians. It had learned since 1948 to absorb the land, while offering the Palestinians none of the citizenship rights bestowed on 1948 Israeli Palestinians. The conquered people were treated far worse

than their Israeli brethren: denied rights, denied their lands, and treated as no more than a threat to Israeli supremacy.

Another injustice common to both India and Israel is the occupation and subjugation of territories containing Muslim majorities. The occupations of Jammu and Kashmir (India) and Palestine (Israel) have been denounced under international law and few foreign nations recognize their respective claims to sovereignty.

With the rise of al Qaeda after 9/11, Israel joined much of the western world in viewing the Muslim world as the cradle of terror. They [viewed](#) Palestinian terrorism as a product of Islamist fundamentalism, and Palestinians as integral to the global jihad movement. The world's struggle against the Muslim caliphate became Israel's as well. Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) shortly after the attack:

““We are benefiting from one thing, and that is the attack on the Twin Towers and Pentagon, and the American struggle in Iraq.” He added that these events “swung American public opinion in our favor.”

Over the past two decades, Israel's right-wing leaders have [ignored any distinction](#) between al Qaeda, ISIS, Hamas, Iran, or the Muslim Brotherhood. They are all lumped together as bloodthirsty terrorists seeking the overthrow of the Judeo-Christian West and along with it, the “Jewish state.”



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi performs the groundbreaking ceremony of a temple dedicated to the Hindu god Ram, in Ayodhya, India, on Wednesday, August 5, 2020. Photo: AP

Indian and Israeli Independence Led to Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing

Both Israel and India gained their independence in 1947-48. Then Britain, reeling from the enormous costs of war, gave up many of its colonies. British withdrawal led, in both countries, to war in Israel's case, and inter-religious slaughter in India's. Millions of Hindus and Muslims were expelled from their homelands in India and Pakistan and forced to relocate to a country they'd never known. Israel sought to ensure its Jewish majority by ridding itself of a million indigenous Palestinians in the Nakba. They were forcibly expelled from their homeland and made refugees in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza.

Despite the bloodshed, secular socialist governments took power (in India, the Congress Party; in Israel, the Labor Party). Despite some ideological commonalities, India's foreign policy championed the non-aligned movement, which was, in turn, sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. It made alliances with the Soviet Union, which provided much of its military hardware. The Russians also were the chief super-power ally of the Arab states and provided much of their military weaponry.

Israel, on the other hand, looked to the west for its economic and military support. Above all the US, and to a lesser degree Europe, became its guarantor and protector. Much of this alignment was dictated by the Cold War rivalry between the Soviet Union and this country.

The Rise of Religious Nationalism

In terms of Israeli domestic affairs, in 1977 the winds of change swept the secular left-wing Labor Party from its three-decade domination of the nation's political life. The right-wing Likud came to power for the first time since the state's founding.

In India, this process took longer. The Congress Party's never faced serious united opposition until the 1980s. Then, a new Hindu nationalist party arose from the ashes of an anti-Muslim movement, which had gone quiescent in the

aftermath of the 1948 partition of India and Pakistan. At the state's founding, Hindus either hewed to the tolerant, secular, non-violent nationalism of Mahatma Gandhi (whose followers became the ruling Congress Party) as they sought independence from Britain; or they followed the path of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu nationalist paramilitary movement. It maintained a mystical belief in the racial supremacy of the Hindu nation that was [modeled on German and Italian fascism](#).

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the political wing of RSS. One of its most promising regional leaders was [Narendra Modi](#), who had risen to become Chief Minister of Indian state of Gujarat. In 2002, under his watch, Hindus [took revenge](#) on Muslims after a train carrying Hindu pilgrims [caught fire](#). They rampaged for days through Muslim neighborhoods. Nearly 1,000 died in the carnage. Modi was [barely heard from or seen](#)--until the worst was over. He refused to denounce the slaughter. Yet denied any responsibility for it.

Modi rode this wave of anti-Muslim fervor to national prominence and in 2014 toppled the Congress government, which had ruled the country almost uninterrupted for over six decades. Once in power, he repeated the strategy he had used in Gujarat. Through avoiding outright Islamophobic provocations and speaking of an India that was home to Muslims and Hindus alike, his policies and laws passed proved otherwise.

In 2019, Modi orchestrated his boldest anti-Muslim move yet. He rescinded the semi-autonomous status of the Muslim-majority enclaves of Jammu and Kashmir and declared martial law. The army and paramilitary forces invaded, arresting tens of thousands of political dissidents. That commenced a reign of terror which continues to this day.

Many see this leading inexorably to a full annexation of the state into India proper. This would lead to furious resistance from Pakistan, which has its own claim to the territory and sees itself as a defender of the Muslim inhabitants.

Similarly, in Israel the ultra-nationalist parties, which have ruled almost without interruption from 1977, have employed a creeping Palestinian land and resource appropriation. It has led to de facto annexation of the West

Bank, making Jewish settlers full citizens and Palestinians persona non grata. Until the Trump era, Israel had been restrained by the solidarity of the Arab world with the Palestinian cause. It feared formalizing annexation would increase its pariah status in the international community. But the recent normalization of relations with Bahrain, the UAE and other Arab states under the so-called Abraham Accords have [paved the way to eventual formal annexation](#).

Over the past few years, the ruling parties of Israel and India increasingly viewed themselves as facing a common Muslim enemy. For Israel, the enemy was Islamist groups like Hezbollah, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hamas. In India, it was the threat from militant groups like Jaish e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the rising Kashmiri protest movement against Indian rule. Furthermore, both Israel and India have substantial Muslim minority communities which the religious majority (in Israel, Jews; in India, Hindus) views as a threat to their dominant status.

These commonalities have thrown these two countries into each other's arms, literally. Modi and Netanyahu themselves have become brothers of sorts. In the past year, they exchanged visits to each other's countries, marking the first visit of an Indian premier to Israel and the first visit of the Israeli PM to India. Photographs of Modi welcoming Netanyahu to his country revealed the genuine delight they found in each other. It was a bromance founded on Islamophobia. The relationship also led to [increasingly close military and intelligence ties](#). Israel, which has a thriving arms export industry, has been the leading provider for India's military needs. Up to [half of Israel's overall arms sales go to India](#).

Israel and India: A Tale of Two Lobbies

Both Israel and India maintain powerful lobbies in the US to advance their respective interests. Given the religious extremism of the ruling parties in each nation, the domestic lobbies reflect the same level of Islamophobia. Among the Jewish community, scores of pro-Israel organizations offer tens of millions in support of Israel's settler colonies. Others offer political cover for Islamophobia, including the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Committee,

StandWithUs, Middle East Forum, Aish HaTorah, and Zionist Organization of America. Even more consequential is the funding provided to these groups by pro-Israel billionaire Islamophobes like [Sheldon Adelson](#), [Irving Moskowitz](#), [Barre Seid](#), [Nina Rosenwald](#) (Gatestone Institute), and [Aubrey Chernick](#) (Fairbrook Foundation). Jewish foundations too have been in the forefront of promoting Islamophobia including the Newton Becker Foundation, [Koret Foundation](#), Russell Berrie Foundation, and the Rosenwald Family Fund.

It's also no accident that right-wing Hindu-Americans have torn a page from the American Jewish community, building a network of think tanks, charitable foundations, and lobbying groups which promote Hindutva values. Among them are the [Hindu American Foundation](#) (HAF), the Dharma Civilization Foundation (DCF), Infinity Foundation, Hindu Pact (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and dozens of other charities.

The HAF "educates the public about Hindus and Hinduism and advocates...policies...that ensure the well-being of all people and the planet." But the Washington-based advocacy group believes that promotion of Hinduism goes hand-in-hand with the fight against Islam and Muslims. So much so, that it has made it its moral obligation to advocate for RSS racist views. It vigorously defends Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on Capitol Hill.

Just as pro-Israel organizations like the [Shusterman Foundation](#) have funded Israel studies positions on major American campuses as part of an effort to promote favorable views of Israel in academia, American Hindus have adopted the same strategy. The goal of DCF and Infinity Foundation is to [penetrate the curricula of American universities](#) with Hindutva-oriented ideology. It has appointed Dharma studies professors at a number of California campuses including the University of Southern California, UC Irvine, and Claremont Lincoln University. This project has introduced terms like Hinduphobia into academic discourse. Thus, appropriating identity politics on behalf of Hindu supremacy.

The Israeli flag was spotted at the rally for U.S. President Donald Trump that would end in the storming of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, on January 6, 2021. (Tyler Merbler/CC BY 2.0)





Members of the Indian community in Israel celebrate during an event marking 25 years of good relations between Israel and India during the official visit of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the Convention Center in Tel Aviv, on July 5, 2017. (Tomer Neuberger/Flash90)

The Lobbies: A Match Made in Heaven (or Hell)

Individual groups within these two national lobbies have developed close ties. A case in point is HAF and the Middle East Forum. MEF's founder, Daniel Pipes, is a failed academic who switched gears and became a leading pro-Israel intellectual thug. Norwegian neo-Nazi mass murderer, Anders Breivik, was an enormous admirer of Pipes, mentioning him sixteen times in his political screed. Like his fellow Jewish Islamophobes, Pam Geller and David Horowitz, Pipes' attacks are riddled with outright hate, falsehoods, and twisted logic. He advocated genocide as a suitable method of dealing with so-called Palestinian terrorism. [Writing in the Jerusalem Post](#), he said:

I called for...the death penalty against murderers, and razing villages from which attacks are launched. Then and now, such responses have two benefits: First, they send a strong deterrent signal "Hit us and we will hit you back much harder" thereby reducing the number of attacks in the short term. Second, they impress Palestinians with the Israeli will to survive, and so bring closer their eventual acceptance of the Jewish state."

MEF is a key member of the American Jewish Islamophobia movement. It also reaches out to Islamophobic groups worldwide, including the English Defense League's, Tommy Robinson, whose anti-Muslim street protests it funded. Holland's Geert Wilders, whose political party is now second-largest in the Dutch parliament, has also been feted and funded by MEG.

Of late, MEF and its male staff have been [embroiled in a major sex scandal](#) (a story I broke here) with multiple former female employees suing for alleged sexual harassment. Virtually all its senior staff is male, and all of the victims were women serving in less senior roles. Misogyny was clearly rife within the organization. And a Good Old Boys network run by Pipes himself protected the alleged perpetrator. This system mirrors the profound levels of misogyny and sexual violence prevalent in both Israeli and Indian societies.

NEW DELHI, INDIA - DECEMBER 7: Dr. Daniel Pipes, President, Middle East Forum gestures during an interaction session on the second day of the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit on December 7, 2013 in New Delhi, India. (Photo by Mohd Zakir/Hindustan Times via Getty Images)



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MEF's Role in India's Campaign to Justify Kashmir's Annexation

HAF [hosted MEF staffers](#) Clifford Smith and Sam Westrop on their June 2020 That's So Hindu podcast. The subject? The influence of Islamist ideology on the Kashmir conflict and how it has spread around the world. Westrop is a rabid Islamophobe, known for falsely accusing people of terrorism. He was [ordered by a UK court](#) to pay £140,000 for wrongful allegations of terrorism against a Tunisian.

The MEF returned the favor by [hosting a webinar](#), "Judeophobia and Hinduphobia by Islamists in America." None other than HAF Managing Director Samir Kalra was the guest of honor. He attacked organizations critical of the Indian government's anti-minority policies. These groups speak for the marginalized and persecuted in Indian states from Uttar Pradesh to Kashmir to Delhi itself. They are, like Jewish groups critical of the Israel lobby, thorns in the side of the establishment.

It's no accident therefore that MEF's Westrop wrote an [attack piece](#) published in Newsweek, accusing the Indian Muslim American Council (IAMC), a prominent diaspora advocacy group, of being an "anti-Hindu, Islamist organization" with alleged links to a terrorist organization in India. The allegation Westrop mentioned was sourced from a report prepared by the HAF to defame critics of Hindu supremacism. But terrorism isn't what worries HAF. The IAMC stands to protect India's pluralistic tendencies and champions secularism as an important and valuable principle. That is a threat to Hindu supremacy that must be eradicated at all costs.

After the Muslim group protested, Newsweek editor Josh Hammer removed the phrase "anti-Hindu" from Westrop's smear piece, but retained the claim that IAMC supported "terrorism." Hammer himself is a [product of the far-right media mafia](#). His resume includes stints working for "Ted Cruz, the Federalist Society, and the Claremont Institute as well as Ben Shapiro's Daily Wire."

One of MEF's leading 'experts' on jihadism [penned another attack](#) on IAMC's Chicago chapter in an Indian newspaper founded by a senior BJP politician and ex-minister, MJ Akbar.

The article (like virtually all the MEF-produced media hit pieces it's published) is so steeped in internal Indian politics that it's doubtful Benjamin Baird, credited as the author, wrote it at all. I strongly suspect it was ghost-written for him by someone at HAF, or tasked by the group to do this.

The article attacks the Indian student activists who founded the movement against [India's racist citizenship law](#), which de-naturalizes millions of Indian minority citizens who've lived in the country for years. The law is a naked attempt to decrease the minority population and retain the supremacy of the Hindu majority. It precisely mirrors Zionist proposals going all the way back to David Ben Gurion to transfer or expel millions of Palestinians in order to preserve Israel as a majority Jewish state.

The article also attacked Hamid Ansari, the former Vice President of India, who vocally defends the interests of the country's Muslim minority. It also slimed Harsh Mander, a noted columnist and internationally-acclaimed activist known for his contributions to peace and social justice in India. His sin? He allegedly signed "numerous petitions" seeking to avoid the death penalty for Pakistani terrorists.

Like MEF, Akbar is "[enjoying his own #MeToo moment](#)" as several prominent Indian women have accused him of sexual assault. After the accusations became public, he was forced to resign his ministerial post in 2018. He sued a female journalist who was one of the victims and lost in court.

Another key MEF-affiliated Indian Islamophobe is Tarek Fatah, listed on its website as the organization's "Robert and Abby Levine Fellow." He is the Canadian equivalent of [Zuhdi Jasser](#), an American Muslim who exploits his religious heritage to criminalize his own fellow Muslims. Echoing Pipes' modus operandi, Fatah's social media content is [filled with fakery, lies and distortion](#), concocted to show Indian Islam in the most unflattering, prejudicial way possible. Until recently, Fatah was the only MEF-associated individual writing about Kashmir. As one might expect, his views were harshly anti-Pakistani.

That changed in 2018, after India cancelled the autonomous status Kashmir had enjoyed, launching a massive military assault. Following India's invasion, the Hindu lobby mounted a massive campaign in the United States to

neutralize criticism. When Indian-American Rep. Pramila Jayapal [proposed a House resolution](#) condemning India's violence, HAF sprang into action. It met with the foreign affairs committee chair, Eliot Engel who, despite promising to bring it to a vote, actually smothered it to death. Afterward, HAF boasted that it had strangled the "baby" to death. Perhaps not coincidentally, Engel lost his bid for re-election to a Democratic progressive candidate.

India also sought to demonize US domestic opponents of the annexation. MEF dutifully played a role in this. When a group from the Kashmiri Diaspora founded [Stand With Kashmir](#), to protest India's annexation, a staffer with MEF's Islamist Watch affiliate took pen to paper to [express her outrage](#) on behalf of India. The article was published in the Indian English-language media outlet, The Print. It contained much of the same drivel common to all these anti-Muslim screeds, claiming SWK "supports violent Islamists and terrorists."

In this context, it's worth remembering that just as Israel has labeled activists for Palestinian rights as terrorists for decades, so the strategy is being applied regarding Kashmir as well. One person's terrorist is another freedom fighter.

Westrop once again stepped forward as a useful ally in the war against Indian Muslims when he published an article in the Indian outlet, First Post, attacking a seemingly unending list of Muslim charities operating openly and legally in India. In the author's vivid imagination, all are jihadi groups which raise millions to support a shadowy army of terror conspirators under the auspices of Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI. Their ultimate goal? The overthrow of India's government.

This is precisely the rhetoric favored by Pipes and other counter-jihadis here in the US, some of whom have urged in the past that American Muslims be interned in camps where their loyalty to this country would be vetted. The presumption is that Muslims are an enemy force seeking the overthrow of America's Judeo-Christian way of life. The evidence for this conspiracy theory is non-existent. But merely planting such seeds of doubt helps, for example, fuel sweeping legislative efforts to outlaw use of Sharia law to resolve legal disputes. Such laws have been proposed in 43 states and enacted in 14.

MEF's Clifford Smith published another article in

India's The Print, [BDS and the Islamic lobby in US has found a new target after Israel — democratic India](#), which managed to unite the bêtes noire of both Israel and India into a single neat package. According to his report, BDS has expanded beyond its original mission to destroy democratic Israel, to also sabotage Indian democracy. There is one small problem with the theory: the author acknowledges "Nobody has called for a boycott against India."

The piece is especially pernicious due to claims such as the following--BDS's new-found alliance with pro-Kashmir activism is linked in some unspecified fashion with the Islamist jihadi movement: "Israel's foes in the West, driven largely by theocratic Islamic organisations and their allies on the far-Left, now use this sort of rhetoric as a matter of course." Such vacuous claims echo Israeli attacks on BDS, regularly accusing it of a global campaign to destroy the "Jewish state" and engaging in terror to do so. They never offer any proof, convincing or otherwise. Nor does Smith disappoint in that regard.

In another First Post article, Smith links Hamas to a worldwide conspiracy on behalf of Islamist domination throughout South Asia (especially India) and the Middle East. Because some pro-Kashmir activists waved the flag of Hamas during protests against Israel's 2014 invasion of Gaza, Smith draws this breathtaking conspiracy:

This striking display of trans-national unanimity is a perfect example of a larger truth: the enemies of Israel and India are increasingly making common cause. Whereas once the alliance was primarily an abstract ideological bond, now the Islamists of West Asia and South Asia are openly mobilising their networks, coordinating and campaigning for each other's causes. The Islamist ummah is uniting like never before.

According to Smith, even US Congress members like Rep. Rashida Tlaib and academics like Marc Lamont-Hill are sworn advocates of Muslim domination merely because they protest India's policies in Kashmir:

Of course, this collaboration is not purely tactical. In significant part,

it is ideological. While there are fair-minded critiques of India's and Israel's governments, their most steadfast critics are not enlightened advocates of liberty, but theocrats who recognise no higher good than Islamist rule.

In a separate First Post piece, Smith [expands his theory](#) of Islamist triumphalism by claiming that toppling Jewish rule in Israel and Hindu rule in India isn't merely an attempt to impose Islam on these countries, but an act of historical redemption of lands which once were Muslim. The enemy of Hindu and Judeo-supremacy is jihadis seeking a restoration of Islam's supposed rightful claims to these lands:

For Islamists in South Asia and West Asia, the reality of Hindu and Jewish sovereignty in lands that were formerly ruled by Islam strikes a nerve, thereby fueling accusations of injustice and human-rights violations, which while seemingly founded in good-nature, genuinely conceal a dark ulterior motive: the revival of Islamist rule.



Both Hindutva (right-wing Hindu nationalism) and Zionism share a common goal: nationalistic, racist, and religious supremacist states. (Photo Credit: US Campaign for Palestinian Rights)

Hindutva-Zionist Triumphalism

What's common to both religio-nationalist movements is the creation of an over-arching Hindu-Zionist triumphalist historical myth. This narrative, such as the notion that God gave the land of Israel to the Israelites, thereby ratifying Israeli control today, is stitched together from disparate threads to serve a modern power grab.

Another common thread running through arguments offered by MEF and its Hindutva partner, HAF, is that both India and Israel, western-style democracies rooted in secular concepts of liberty and freedom, are opposed by dark, medieval forces of religious oppression. In this view, Israel's and India's Islamists enemies seek to impose an oppressive theocracy on their otherwise peace-loving societies:

“Protestors are hardline Islamist groups whose goal in Kashmir is not the creation of a modern, secular, democratic state in South Asia, but rather a theocracy which would be in direct opposition to the principles of secular pluralistic democracy upon which India was founded,”

The truth is entirely otherwise. One might make a reasonable argument that both states were once democracies. But with the rise of Hindutva supremacism and Judeo-supremacism, each is at best an ethnocracy privileging the religious majority (Hindus, Jews) over the minority (Palestinians, Indian Muslims). At worst, they have become, or are rapidly becoming theocracies themselves.

Last October, another Hindutva think-tank, the Usanas Foundation hosted an online webinar, [Islamising the West: Muslim Brotherhood, Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-i-Islami](#). The panelists were from MEF and an MEF-funded counter-jihadi group, the Investigative Project on Terrorism, founded by one of America's leading Islamophobes, Steven Emerson. Over the past decade, MEF has transferred \$1.5-million to IPT. As the title of the program indicates, it followed a similar conspiratorial pattern, suggesting Muslims are infiltrating western societies and institutions in order to bring about their violent overthrow.

The fact-free nature of the evidence offered can be seen in [this smear](#) of the Council of American-Islamic Relations:

Another important group is the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) founded in 1994. The organisation operates under the guise of a civil rights group. It has roots in a Muslim Brotherhood-created, Hamas-support network called the Palestine Committee. The committee was set up to advance Hamas' goals financially and politically in the U.S.

In fact, CAIR is a civil rights group. It has neither 'roots' nor branches in the Muslim Brotherhood and has never had anything to do with Hamas. Nor does the organization seek to "Islamize" the west as the webinar title implies. All of these claims are lies. But as we've seen over the past four years of a Trump presidency, a single lie may not damage a society. But an unending stream of thousands of lies has a cumulative effect. It damages confidence and trust in institutions. It also suppresses society's collective immune system, designed to repel such hate. Hear enough of these lies, and one becomes accommodated to them and more receptive to the underlying message.

The Hindutva movement understands that the world, and many Indians themselves will not, by itself, embrace the concept of a Hindu-supremacist state. But if it repeatedly beats people over the head with cries of terrorism, genital mutilation, misogyny, domination, cow-eating, etc. even the most resistant individual begins to question their prior beliefs. Then the world becomes much more receptive to the overall strategy of Hindutva. From there, it is only a few steps to an India shorn of its traditional secular democratic values, and replaced with a stifling, intolerant Hindu theocracy.

Anders Breivik, who admired Pipes as I mentioned above, was also a [disciple of Hindutva](#):

[He] talks of Hindutva elements as allies and urges them to fight shoulder to shoulder with his “knights.” His mission: to stem the spread of Islam in Europe. That India occupied a large part of his perverse mindscape is clear from

the 100 pages he dedicates to the country. He...supports “dharma movements and Indian nationalists in general.” He provides the BJP and RSS websites as references for more information. The Indian government should have insisted on a name change of the Hindu Kush mountains in Afghanistan, because they were named after Hindus...massacred there. Modern India, he says, “white-washed this Hindu genocide,” which he likens to “Auschwitz.”

Daniel Pipes is one of the leading counter-jihadi intellectuals whose goal is nothing less than the subjugation of a world religion with 1.8-billion adherents. Such dangerous delusions will inexorably lead to massacres not just between individual religious communities as in Gujarat, but between major religious groups on a national scale. It could also lead to war between nuclear-armed nations themselves.

Another organization closely tied to the Usanas Foundation is Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF). In 2016, the latter brought Pipes to India for a session with leading Hindutva intellectuals, journalists, government ministers, and military and intelligence officials. Pipes warned them about the dangers of global jihad, specifically in the Middle East. But of course, he warned that what happens in the Middle East doesn't stay in the Middle East. This is a message that was certainly music to ears of his Indian Hindu elite audience.

Among Pipes' arguments was that Islamism is not:

...A perversion of Islam but [is] Islam, which the radical Islamists across the Middle East are trying to impose on the free secular world.

He...stressed that the political version of Islam practiced in countries like Turkey is far more threatening than the violent form of Islam practiced by the Islamic State (IS). Continuing in the same vein, he argued that Islamists who work within the system, especially in countries like the United States and India, are even more threatening than the IS.

We have seen this sort of sweeping hatred before: in Nazi Germany it targeted Jews, Gypsies, Communists, gays and the disabled. In Rwanda, it targeted the minority Tutsi. In Bosnia it targeted the Muslims massacred at Srebrenica. In Israel, it targets the Palestinians.

Israel, India and the Islamophobic Alliance



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