

# CONTEMPORARY JEWISH ANTI-ISLAMISM: JEWISH ZIONISM AND JEWISH INFLUENCE IN WESTERN ANTI-ISLAMISM

**Ömer Kemal Buhari**

Independent Researcher, Istanbul-Turkey

omerkemal@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2970-6985>

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## Abstract

The present academic literature hosts volumes of information on Muslim anti-Semitism, while Jewish anti-Islamism is hardly mentioned. With the aim of filling this scholarly gap, the article deals with contemporary Jewish anti-Islamism, principally focusing on Zionism's role in such anti-Islamism, by delving into the existing literature, news media, and online sources. Since the very birth of Zionism, Palestinians, Arabs, Muslims and, finally, Islam itself have primarily been seen as "obstacles" to Zionist goals. The "choseness," "promised lands," and "messianism" doctrines at the core of Zionism have led to the antagonization of the aforementioned. There appears to be a blatant overlap between anti-Islamism and Jewish voices in the media, the entertainment sector, popular bookshops, foundations, academia, think-tanks and the virtual world. Finally, pro-Israel influences in the West have catalyzed negativity about Islam and Muslims and propagated wars through lobbying activities. Jewish anti-Islamism is real and needs further scholarly investigation.

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## **Introduction**

There are a number of reasons for the controversial nature of the phenomenon of Jewish anti-Islamism. One reason is the relatively peaceful coexistence of Jews and Muslims throughout history. During the medieval period, Jews lived under Christian and Islamic rules in different regions. In general, it is maintained by a number of historians that while the Christian experience has not been very propitious for Jews, they have experienced more prosperity under Muslim rule. Some historians also denote such periods of prosperity as the “golden age of Jews.” Others understand the issue as a matter of survival, as asserted by the Jewish scholar Goitein (1958, 162): “It was Islam which saved the Jewish people.” Another reason is the expectation of empathy from a group of fellow humans who have experienced the negative consequences of discrimination and hostility for many centuries. Finally, the theological likeness between both religions makes the phenomenon particularly curious. Perhaps these and other reasons have given existence to historical Jewish figures who are sympathetic to Islam, as asserted by Lewis in his “The Pro-Islamic Jews” (1968). Nevertheless, it is possible to observe that such figures’ friendly presence has become less visible among Jews in contemporary times. There appears to be a blatant overlap between anti-Islamism and Jewish/pro-Israel voices in the media, the entertainment sector, popular bookshops, foundations, academia, think-tanks and the virtual world. However, contrary to the abundant literature on “Islamic/Muslim anti-Semitism,” the number of scholarly works on “Jewish” or “Zionist anti-Islamism” is relatively scarce. Aked (2015) makes the following observation in this regard:

Despite a wealth of empirical evidence, from overlapping board memberships among think tanks, to examples of Islamophobic tropes in pro-Israel propaganda, little scholarly attention has been paid to the overlap between Islamophobia and Zionism.

In his analysis of hostilities between world religions, Sloterdijk (2009, 48) finds Jewish anti-Islamism to be “faint and presumably little-examined.” Indeed, the literature contains a very limited number of works dedicated to understanding the phenomenon. Accordingly,

the main objective of this article is to investigate whether there is any evidence for the existence of “Jewish anti-Islamism.” The dearth of scholarly literature on the subject is a compelling reason to investigate the manifestations of the phenomenon in alternative information sources such as reports from organizations, newspaper articles, and online sources that nonetheless report real events and meet scholarly standards.

### **I. Theory and Praxis: Core Doctrines of Jewish Zionism and Anti-Islamism**

Emerging in the nineteenth century within the post-Enlightenment secular environment of European nationalism (Hertzberg 1997, 15), Zionism was a prevalent ideology among freshly emancipated Jews who were in the midst of the process of rebuilding their identity in line with newly emerging conditions. Zionism’s primary goal was to build a state for Jews in Palestine, which was achieved in 1948, thirty-one years after the British occupation of Jerusalem and the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and sixty-eight years after the first wave of Jewish settlers in the 1880s. Zionism is regarded by some as the most significant cornerstone in modern Jewish history. Maier (1988, 663) claims that “up until the hegemony of the Zionist movement, it has not been suitable at all to speak of ‘Judaism,’ since the definitions of Judaism have significantly differed in individual directions.” Gorny (2003, 477) analogously argues that “during the past two generations, Zionism became the greatest collective achievement of the Jewish people throughout their history.” For Gorny (2003, 481), “Zionism was a pluralistic movement that, based on consensus, succeeded in concentrating within itself various and conflicting ideological currents and political groups: religious and secular, political and practical, socialist and middle-class, liberal and totalitarian.” Whereas support for Zionism is much lower among diasporic Jews, a recent poll conducted by the Herzl Center (Harkov, 2016) proclaimed that ninety percent of Jews in Israel identify themselves as Zionists.

Having established the significance of Zionism for Judaism, the following connections might be inferred between the movement’s core doctrines and anti-Islamism. According to three core doctrines of Zionism, which are claimed to have been derived from Jewish scriptures, (I) Jews are the “chosen people” by God; (II) The lands between the Nile and Euphrates rivers, symbolized in the Israeli flag

with two blue lines, are promised by God to Jews; (III) In order for the Messiah to come, Jews must establish a Jewish state in Palestine that is empty of gentiles. Although the first and second doctrines are common and largely unquestioned among Zionists, the third doctrine is criticized by some who argue that redemption can only occur with the appearance of the Messiah himself.

The following points can be deduced about the relationship between these three items and anti-Islamism. (I) Various interpretations are provided for the concept of “chosenness.” Briefly, there are two contrasting views. In the first, Jews are considered to have a special position among other people in terms of responsibility, and in the second, Jews are considered to have an ontological/biological superiority over other people. At first sight, it appears that while the first interpretation does not necessarily lead to anti-Islamic consequences, it is the second interpretation that causes hubris and antagonism. Nevertheless, both of these interpretations give birth to the belief of “Jewish exceptionalism.” Both assert that God regards Jews in a special and exceptional way. This leads to the logical conclusion that others, including Muslims, are “unchosen” and only secondary in the divine hierarchy and plan. Accordingly, these others’ beliefs, rights, and destinies become less significant. It is a striking point in this regard that from the beginning, the Zionist ideologues have not reserved any significant place for a discussion of the consequences of the Jewish restoration for the Palestinian people. For instance, Hertzberg’s *The Zionist Idea*, a standard collection of Zionist writings, utilizes the designation “Palestinian” mainly to refer to the Jews in Palestine. Herzl even employs dehumanizing and utterly aggressive language by comparing the native populations in Palestine to “bears” and suggests “organiz[ing] a great and cheerful hunt, gather[ing] the beasts together and throw[ing] a melinite bomb into their midst” to get rid of them (Herzl 1920, 23).

(II) The second doctrine, which assumes God’s promise of Palestinian lands to Jews, is closely connected to the first doctrine. If the Jews have a God-given right to live in Palestine (and eventually in the rest of the “promised lands”), others, who mainly happen to be Muslims, must be evacuated. Pinsker and Herzl accordingly preached the total evacuation of gentiles from Palestine (Hertzberg 1997, 16). As early as 1930, Magnes empathetically predicted the long-term moral consequences of the establishment of the Jewish state:

Palestine is holy to the Jew in that his attitude toward this Land is necessarily different from his attitude toward any other land. He may have to live in other lands upon the support of bayonets, but that may well be something which he, as a Jew, cannot help. But when he goes voluntarily as a Jew to repeople his own Jewish Homeland, it is by an act of will, of faith, of free choice, and he should not either will or believe in or want a Jewish Home that can be maintained in the long run only against the violent opposition of the Arab and Moslem peoples. The fact is that they are here in their overwhelming numbers in this part of the world, and whereas it may have been in accord with Israelitic needs in the time of Joshua to conquer the land and maintain their position in it with the sword, that is not in accord with the desire of plain Jews or with the long ethical tradition of Judaism that has not ceased developing to this day. (Hertzberg 1997, 449)

In this regard, it has historically been maintained that:

For many Zionists, beginning with Herzl, the only realistic solution lay in transfer. From 1880 to 1920, some entertained prospect of Jews and Arabs coexisting in peace. But increasingly after 1920, and more emphatically after 1929, for the vast majority a denouement of conflict appeared inescapable. Following the outbreak of 1936, no mainstream leader was able to conceive of future coexistence and peace without a clear physical separation between the two peoples — achievable only by way of transfer and expulsion. (Morris 1999, 139)

(III) The third doctrine, which is also denoted as “self-redemption,” assumes the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine with a majority of Jews so that the Messiah appears. It was noted above that this can only succeed if Palestinian inhabitants are “evacuated.” In this regard, Pappé and other “New Historians” have pointed out the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians during the establishment of Israel. In fact, since its foundation, the territories of Israel have continuously been expanding to the detriment of the Palestinians. Another less well-articulated issue in this regard is the Zionist project of “rebuilding the Temple.” Referring to the project, Aviner posits (Halsell 2003, 88) that “the Temple is the top of the pyramid.” Accordingly, the al-Aqṣá Mosque, which is one of the holiest locations for Muslims, must be destroyed so that the “Third Temple” can be rebuilt at its place. In Hertzberg’s collection of Zionist ideas, there is no mention of this issue. However, Shahak (2008, 128)

calls it a “growing movement.” It has historically been maintained that:

Regarding the attacks on *al-Aqsa* Mosque during the period 1967–1990, 40 attacks were carried out against it. Neither the peace settlement nor the Oslo Accords were instrumental in stopping these attacks. So during the period 1993–1998, 72 attacks were recorded, indicating a rise in the intensity of the fierce campaign against one of Islam’s holiest sites. During the period 21/8/2008–21/8/2009, they totaled 43 attacks. (Saleh 2012, 25)

The Israel-Palestine conflict, ongoing since 1948 and perhaps the most contested issue in international world politics, is an historical stage where the intimate relationship between Zionism and anti-Islamism becomes tangible. The accounts and scholarly narratives of what happened prior to, during, and in the aftermath of 1948 and of how to give meaning to these happenings vehemently differ from each other, and due to spatial limitations, it is not possible to juxtapose and evaluate the current perspectives in this article in a satisfactory way. However, the following might be stated about the general frameworks of the contrasting narratives and arguments.

According to Zionist accounts, Jews have suffered from anti-Semitism everywhere. Hence, they had moral justification for and an obligation to establish a homeland (Herzl 1896, 9). Being part of the Diaspora meant being dependent in “material, political, spiritual, cultural and intellectual” terms, and it was necessary for Jews to break with this dependence (Hertzberg 1997, 607-618). This homeland had to be established in the Holy Lands because God promised it to and even ordered that it be given to the chosen people in the Bible (Hertzberg 1997, 105). The ancestors of Jews were the real owners of these lands (Goldenberg 2007, 241), and as a secular justification, Palestine was proclaimed “a land without people for people without land” (Zangwill 1901, 15). The Jewish restoration to the Holy Lands was considered comparable to the Western discovery of the New World (Hess 1918, 149). When Israel was established, the Palestinian rulers themselves ordered their people to abandon their homes (Morris 1990, 5). Throughout the entire conflict, Israel has solely been interested in self-defense, while Palestinians and surrounding Arab states have been the aggressors. Crimes against humanity, civilian killings, massacres and terrorist attacks have been committed by Arabs (Dershowitz 2003).

Critics emphasize, on the other hand, several points to indicate that Zionist arguments are not justifiable. Zionism is based on a series of myths (Rose 2004). The thesis of Israeli exceptionalism is unjustifiable (Shahid Alam 2009). The narrative of the promised lands is theologically untenable (Burge 2013). Anti-Semitism in the West and Russia cannot be a justification for seizing the lands of Palestinians, which are not located in the West or Russia. Jewish suffering is being capitalized on, distorted, and misused for the aim of exploiting it (Finkelstein 2000, 2005). “[M]uch of the Zionist public discourse [has] proceeded as if Palestine were a *terra nullius*” (Prior 1999, 180), yet, “[i]n no matter how backward, uncivilized, and silent they were, the Palestinian Arabs *were* on the land” (Said 1980, 9). Today’s problem is the need to recognize the fact that Palestinians also have the right of national self-determination (Chomsky 1999, 300-301). Racism, violence, terrorism, and territorial expansion are characteristics of the Zionist settler-state (Sayegh 1965, 21-39). Israel conducted a planned and systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people during the establishment of Israel in 1948 (Pappe 2006). Pro-Zionist scholarship produces fraudulent views on the issue (Said 1988). To conclude, “[i]n sheer numerical terms, in brute numbers of bodies and property destroyed, there is absolutely nothing to compare between what Zionism has done to Palestinians and what, in retaliation, Palestinians have done to Zionists” (Said 1980, x).

In sum, the three core doctrines of Zionism prove to be in line with anti-Islamic antagonism in terms of their theological premises, theoretical implications, short-term and long-term goals, and implementation into the reality of historical events. As will be elucidated below, considering Muslims’ solidarity with Palestine, it is a useful policy for Zionists to fuel anti-Islamism in terms of realpolitik. Calculating events that would provoke a negative reaction from the world community as well as the evacuation of millions of people from Palestine and the destruction of al-Aqṣá is only imaginable if Islam is vilified and Muslims are dehumanized. In this case, the question that must be asked is whether there is any evidence to link Zionism with anti-Islamism.

## **II. Evidence: The “Overlap”**

As stated in the introduction, unlike “Muslim anti-Semitism,” “Jewish anti-Islamism” is not a social phenomenon that is frequently investigated by scholars. Despite some recent findings on the subject,

Jewish anti-Islamism has long been regarded as an “anti-Semitic conspiracy theory.” However, certain scholars have pointed to the “overlap” between Jewish Zionism and anti-Islamism. For instance, according to Kalmar and Ramadan (2016, 367), there is a disproportionate correlation between contemporary pro-Israel and Jewish figures and anti-Islamism:

On the other hand, the pro-Israel camp provides some of the most vocal proponents of Islamophobia. The authors of “works” on *dbimmitude* and of websites that “unmask” double loyalty and double talk among Muslims are disproportionately, though not entirely, supporters of Israel and typically Jewish.

Aked’s (2015) remarks similarly point to the strategic nexus between Zionism and anti-Islamism:

On a more structural level, racialisation of Palestinian suffering under Israel’s occupation, discrimination and war crimes, also allows them to be dehumanised in the eyes of large sections of the world’s media. It functions to devalue Palestinian lives and render them expendable. In fact the demonisation of an imagined and universally savage Muslim enemy enables right-wing Zionists to rationalise almost anything - including the slaughter by Israel, last summer, of 500 children in Gaza, by gesturing towards racist tropes of sly and yet simultaneously irrational Muslims who love death more than their own children and deliberately employ them as human shields. The discourse of “radicalization” and “Islamic extremism” offer pseudo-scholarly theories with which to globalise and explain away through ideology the specific political factors and socio-economic context fuelling violence in Palestine. Thus in Zionism and Islamophobia, we find two sets of ideas which are not synonymous and cannot be reduced to one another but are often fostered in the same environments. The connection is a marriage of convenience born of a coincidence of interests - and a particularly a toxic combination.

In fact, among Muslims, there has long been a notion of systematic anti-Arab and anti-Islamic propaganda by Hollywood, which is historically known to be a foundation of Eastern European Jewish entrepreneurs (Gabler 1989). Aside from newspaper articles (Stein 2008), several high-caliber Hollywood figures, including Marlon Brando, Mel Gibson, Gary Oldman, and Oliver Stone, have made supportive remarks on Jewish control over Hollywood. In 1999, Atia argued in *al-Abrām* that Hollywood advanced anti-Muslim interests,

since “Jews [...] invented and remain in charge of Hollywood” (Chidester 2004, 14; cf. Cohn-Sherbok, Chrystides, and Hasan 2019, 222). Nonetheless, such claims have usually been categorized as “Muslim anti-Semitic conspiracy theories” (Perry and Schweitzer 2012, 213). A scholarly elaboration of Hollywood’s negative portrayal of Arabs and Muslims was finally realized in 2001 (Shaheen 2001), yet it lacked reference to the Jewish founders and current Jewish control over Hollywood that appears to be a politically tabooed issue leading to anti-Semitism allegations.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was made in a postcolonial framework, Said’s critique of Zionist scholar Lewis in *Orientalism* and *Covering Islam* might be regarded as an early scholarly observation of a correlation between Zionism and anti-Islamism (Said 1997, 149; 2003, 316, 318). It should be noted here that Huntington’s controversial “clash of civilizations” thesis, which is regarded by scholars as the declaration of the new enemy after the Cold War period, was first introduced by Lewis (1990, 56), who thus appears to have made a heavy contribution to anti-Islamic antagonism. Giving the impression of being an ambivalent and intersubjective text, Lewis’ “The Roots of Muslim Rage” is historically the first piece that announces a “clash of civilizations” between “us – the Judeo-Christian West” and “them – Islam,” which, as a zero-sum game, is again in perfect accordance with the Zionist realpolitik.

Although the case of Lewis might be regarded as an early example in this regard, the ties between Jewish Zionism and anti-Islamism were not solidly established until recently. In fact, some (CST 2011) have even suggested dismissing alleged ties as merely a “conspiracy theory.” Nevertheless, the pioneering “Fear, Inc.” report of the Center for American Progress (CAP 2011) discovered concrete financial ties between the donors and ideologues of anti-Islamism, which was a breakthrough in the field. Although neither the initial report nor the follow-up (CAP 2015) referred to the keyword “Zionism,” evidence can be found that three foundations with organic ties to Israel were among the so-called “top seven funders of Islamophobia.”<sup>1</sup> Together with the Fairbrook Foundation, four of them were reported to have

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1 These are the “Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation,” “Russell Berrie Foundation,” and “Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund.”

also donated to Israel-related causes, which, for Aked (2015), signifies an “undeniable overlap.” Building on their effort, Bulkin and Nevel (2014) published four well-sourced articles of investigative character about how the “Jewish Establishment” or “Pro-Israel forces” have been fueling anti-Islamism on several occasions. Bulkin and Nevel criticized the CAP report, specifically for “failing to make a connection between Islamophobia and Israel” and included further Israel-related actors, such as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), in the cardinal list of anti-Islamists. Bulkin and Nevel had a particular significance since, as the founding members of “Jews Against Islamophobia Coalition (JAIC),” together with other Jewish groups, such as “Jewish Voices for Peace (JVP)” and “Jews Against Anti-Muslim Racism (JAAMR),” they constructed solid evidence for the existence of Jewish figures who were aware of the phenomenon of Jewish anti-Islamism and were taking initiative against it. Aked (2015), in this regard, makes a further political separation between “liberal” Zionists and “right-wing” Zionists, arguing that much of the problem is caused by the latter. Other significant contributions were made by JAAMR, Jews SAY NO!, and Jewish Voice for Peace-New York City (JVP-NYC) in a report disclosing more than two million dollars of support given from the Jewish Communal Fund of the UJA-Federation of New York to six anti-Muslim hate groups between the years 2013 and 2017 (JAAMR, Jews SAY NO!, and JVP-NYC 2018).

There are further points of intersection between Zionism and anti-Islamism that become manifested in “isolated” instances. A considerable number of anti-Islamists in the West are observed to be Jews or pro-Israelites. David Yerushalmi, a Hasidic Jewish attorney, is regarded as the architect of the so-called “anti-Sharī‘ah laws” in the United States of America (ADL 2012). Pushing the unsupported premise that Muslims were attempting to introduce Sharī‘ah in the United States, Yerushalmi caused mass hysteria in US society that had direct, anti-Islamic consequences. Most significantly, anti-Sharī‘ah campaigns have been a golden opportunity for anti-Islamists to spread anti-Islamic images and discourses in society, particularly in terms of the status of women in Islam. Referred to as a “solution to a nonexistent problem” by many, anti-Sharī‘ah laws were introduced by twenty-six states in the United States of America.

Another well-known anti-Islamist with ties to Israel is David Joel Horowitz, who coauthored *Islamophobia: Thought Crime of the Totalitarian Future* with Robert Spencer and is the founder-president

of the David Horowitz Freedom Center. Arguing in his work that “Islamophobia” is a coinage of the Muslim Brotherhood used to stigmatize critical views about Islam, Horowitz launched the “Jew Hatred on Campus” campaign in 2015 through his Horowitz Freedom Center, where he accused various Muslim groups in the United States of “Jew hatred.” According to Horowitz, American campuses with their left-leaning, multicultural, and politically correct ideology are “probably as important as a domestic supporter of Islamic terror as the mosques” (David Horowitz Freedom Center 2015). It appears from his doublespeak strategy that for Horowitz, the concepts of “Islamophobia/anti-Islamism” and “anti-Semitism/Jew-hatred” are weapons of an ideological battle more than they are social phenomena.

Daniel Pipes, the founder-president of the Middle East Forum sponsors a number of projects, including Campus Watch, Islamist Watch, the Legal Project, the Israel Victory Project, the Washington Project, and Jihad Intel. According to the description on its homepage, the Middle East Forum claims to “promote American interests in the Middle East, protect Western values from Middle Eastern threats [...]; focus on ways to defeat radical Islam; work for Palestinian acceptance of Israel; develop strategies that contain Iran; [...] emphasize the danger of lawful Islamism; [and] protect the freedoms of anti-Islamist authors, and activists [...]” Together with the Horowitz foundation, Pipes’ Middle East Forum also financially contributed to the legal expenses of Dutch anti-Islamist Geert Wilders after he faced charges for comparing the Qurʾān to Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.

The self-contradictory attitude is evident in the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and American Jewish Committee (AJC), which claim to combat anti-Semitism and “all forms of bigotry,” as these organizations have been shown to fuel anti-Islamism on several occasions (AMP 2014; 2016). The anti-Islamic movie titled “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War against the West” has been distributed by the *New York Times*, and Safi (2011) pointed to the film’s Israeli ties. In 2012, anti-Islamic banners were hung by Geller’s “American Freedom Defense Initiative” at various places in American cities, calling on people to defend “civilized” Israel against the “savage” Muslims (BBC 2012; cf. Davidson 2011, 93). A German right-wing news site by the name of “Politically Incorrect” has been observed to be one of the major channels of anti-Islamic

dissemination for German-speaking audiences (Bayraklı and Hafez 2016, 188), and the website's guidelines describe its position as "pro-American," "pro-Israel," and "against the Islamization of Europe." Meetings of the anti-Islamic right-wing movement PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) are attended by Israeli speakers who exclaim "I see here no Nazis. [...] The real Nazis are inside Islam's mentality" (Brenner 2015). Robinson (aka Laxley-Lennon), a leader of PEGIDA UK, which is the movement's branch in the United Kingdom, shared a picture of himself on social media holding a rifle and standing next to Israeli soldiers on an Israeli tank in the occupied Golan Heights (Hooper 2016). Breivik, the perpetrator of the Utoya and Oslo terror attacks, employed the anti-Islamic "Eurabia" thesis of the Israeli Bat Ye'or (aka Gisèle Littman) in his manifesto (Breivik 2011). It has been reported (Abunimah 2011) that several commentators in Israel's mainstream media and Internet forums expressed understanding for Breivik's motives. These examples can easily be added to: further examples include Henryk Broder (2013), Ralph Giordano (1991), Oriana Fallaci (2002), Sam Harris (2014), Pamela Geller (2012), Leon de Winter (Schneiders 2015, 12), Babu Suseelan (Musaji 2012) and Bill Maher (Norton 2013). The so-called "native Islamophobes," such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Irshad Manji, Nonie Darwish, Wafa Sultan and Brigitte Gabriel, can also be added to the list (Sheehi, 2011, 91-94). Almost all of these figures can be revealed to be both anti-Islamic and pro-Israel. There are also points of intersection on the Internet where pro-Israel and anti-Islamic content collides (Oboler 2013, 23-24). These separate events, considered together, lend gravity to the thesis of a collective Jewish-Zionist project to fuel anti-Islamism in contemporary times.

These figures, who seek to influence public opinion, frequently employ derogatory and accusatory language towards Islam and Muslims, spread anti-Islamic hatred and conspiracy theories to incite anti-Islamic feelings and arouse panic and anxiety in various societies. It appears from their words and actions that for pro-Israel anti-Islamists, Muslims and Israel are in a zero-sum game, which explains these figures' persistent pro-Israel and anti-Islamic bias. Common elements in their narratives include calls to defend the "civilized and victimized Israel, ally of the West and its values," against "a violent and aggressive majority of Muslims" within "the Judeo-Christian West versus Islam" mind map; a cynical and derogatory choice of vocabulary apropos Islam; distortion of Islamic

concepts for propaganda purposes; alarmism and anxiety; the denial of Islam's religious character and the equating of Islam to a political and fanatical ideology; and hypocrisy in pointing to Muslim anti-Semitism while also engaging in blatant forms of religious discrimination.

To summarize, until the CAP report was released, the ties between Zionism and anti-Islamism, though manifesting in certain public spheres, remained as narratives of postcolonialist scholarship or unproven public notions. By analyzing financial ties between the "Islamophobia network" and Israel-related causes, a number of scholars have established the alleged ties in quantitative terms. In addition, a significant number of anti-Islamic public figures are Jews or prove to have ties to Israel. Therefore, it appears that the theory of a cooperative, Zionist, anti-Islamic antagonism is not to be dismissed as a "conspiracy theory."

### **III. Lobbies and Alliances: Jewish Influence in Western Anti-Islamism**

The designation "Judeo-Christian Western civilization" has acquired common usage in the contemporary West. However, it should not be forgotten that the standard narrative of Western historiography embraced Judaism as a pillar only after the defeat of national-socialist Germany. Throughout the Middle Ages, Christians regarded Jews as the "internal enemies" and Muslims as the "external enemies," and the two were linked to each other through their "evil" (Arjana 2015, 13, 26). The attribution of "Judeo-Christian" in its contemporary sense was first used in the twentieth century and became more common after the Second World War.<sup>2</sup> It is thought provoking that the concept cannot be found in the writings of Western Christian thinkers before the twentieth century, since Judaism did not "miraculously" appear in the West after the Second World War. However, in the postwar West, a Judeo-Christian political alliance was established, and it persists in the twenty-first century.

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2 The term "Judeo-Christian" is used first in the nineteenth century referring to Jewish converts into Christianity. The contemporary political usage of it goes back to 1935, the beginning of the Second World War, where it was a "unifying slogan to rally Christians and Jews together for the aid of European Jews" (Kurian 2015: 203).

Pointing to 9/11 and its accelerative effect upon the narrative of the “Judeo-Christian West,” Marranci (2004, 106) argues that “after September 11<sup>th</sup>, the myth of a Europe founded on Judeo-Christian values has been reinforced by marking the differences between Islam and the West.” This grand narrative that builds on the aforementioned early work of Lewis has been the justification of numerous figures for their anti-Islamic words and actions (cf. Schneiders 2015, 15).

Various Jewish groups are known to exert a considerable amount of political influence within Western societies, particularly in the United States. Referred to as the “Israel lobby,” these groups have been playing a significant role in Western politics. Some Jewish figures vehemently oppose the idea of there being an Israeli lobby (Foxman 2007), while others (Khodr 2001; Dershowitz 2017) verify its existence. Meanwhile, some scholars (King 2016) claim that the lobby is also strong and influent in the European context. Two Al Jazeera documentaries on the issue, titled “the Lobby” (2017) and “the Lobby – USA” (2018), in which undercover journalists secretly filmed various agents of the lobby, give us an idea of the extensive network Israel controls in the United Kingdom and United States. The Israel lobby has also been a key player in determining the foreign policy of the United States, especially in the Middle Eastern region. Mearsheimer and Walt (2006, 32) claim that the policies of the United States in the Middle East have negative consequences for the US but positive consequences for Israel. The United States provides almost endless financial, intelligence, diplomatic, and military support, making “America’s support for Israel [...], in short, unique.” Mearsheimer and Walt provide evidence for the role of Israel and the lobby in the United States’ wars in the Middle East (2006, 53, 59-60), as well as for the support of the lobby from so-called “Christian Zionists” (2006, 40).<sup>3</sup> The links between Israel and neo-conservatives, who have played a major role in the wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, corroborate this perspective (Sniegowski 2008, 11-23).

Apart from the aforementioned findings, ADL and AJC, together with the Simon Wiesenthal Center, opposed the building of a Muslim

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<sup>3</sup> The relationship between Jewish and Christian Zionists is of utmost importance for the focus of this paper. However, due to its extensive scope, the relationship should be the focus of additional research. The researcher also deals with this subject in an upcoming publication titled “(Fr-)enemies: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Islamism in Christian Zionism.”

community center (Park51) in New York through the anti-Islamic hate campaign launched by two Zionist anti-Islamists, Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller (Swaim 2012, 287). Another prominent member of the Jewish lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), has also been reported to have fueled anti-Islamism on several occasions. Well-known anti-Islamists such as Steven Emerson, Nina Rosenwald, Sheldon Adelson, Daniel Pipes, and Frank Gaffney have donated to AIPAC, were financially supported by the organization or appeared as speakers at the organization's summits (Gharib 2016; cf. Santos 2014, 614).

Furthermore, particular alliances have been observed between some of the European far-right organizations and Israel, which has caught the attention of several media outlets (Tharoor 2018; Baer 2019; Sofuoglu 2019; Baroud and Rubeo 2019; Alterman 2019). The Spanish Vox, the AfD in Germany, nationalist leaders in Central Europe and the Lega Nord in Italy are some examples. While perhaps surprising at first sight, the alliances between Israel and formerly anti-Semitic actors in Europe have several reasonable causes. Perhaps most importantly, the European far-right perceives an imminent threat towards its identity because of Muslim immigrants, which makes Muslims the common enemy and Israel "the lesser of two evils" in their eyes (cf. Camus 2013, 108). Another reason appears to be the quest of far-right organizations for legitimacy by distancing themselves from accusations of anti-Semitism by befriending Israelis. Seen from the Israeli perspective, having allies in various countries and handing over the role of "enemy" to another actor are politically desirable outcomes.

In short, Jewish-Zionist and pro-Israel actors have been exerting considerable influence within Western politics to defend the interests of Israel, and their efforts include providing financial and political support to anti-Islamists, allying with anti-Islamic actors in Western politics, and pushing for military aggressions against Muslims in numerous countries.

## **Conclusion**

A theoretical insight into the core doctrines of Zionism, which are chosenness, promised lands, and messianism, suggests that Islam and Muslims pose an obstacle to the ultimate goals of Zionism. It does not seem possible that the Zionist agenda of evacuating Palestinians from

“Zion” and destroying the al-Aqṣá mosque could be implemented without the propaganda effects of anti-Islamism. Hence, it appears to be a strategical move that Zionists are catalyzing anti-Islamic feelings in global terms. Evidence in the “overlap” section is self-evident insofar as numerous Jewish public figures in various spheres of life are directly connected to anti-Islamic propaganda and actions. Finally, allied with the so-called Christian Zionists, Jewish Zionists have been relatively active and successful in stimulating the United States of America and its allies to enter into wars in the Middle Eastern region, the casualties of which, mostly Muslim civilians, are expressed in millions.

To conclude, data gathered from the literature, news media and online sources reveal that “Jewish anti-Islamism,” with its latent and manifest forms, is a vehement and minacious reality of the contemporary world, and much scholarly work is needed to establish a solid framework for this subject.

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