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CASE STUDY:

Two Jewish Campaign Consultants help Elect Hungary's Jew-Hating Victor Orban

“Republican” Southern Strategy Goes Global!

And both Jews and Democracy Worldwide Suffer the Consequences!!!

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- polarize the electorate,
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Is Nathan Hochman scion of former ADL leader Bruce Hochman applying the Birnbaum/Finkelstein strategy?

He says he is like Batman; he demonizes his incumbent rival by attacking George Gascon (a former police chief) with naked slurs, disinformation, and false accusations. For example, he says LA's DA is pro-criminal and endorses murderers and child abusers...

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THE INFAMOUS FINKELSTEIN CAMPAIGN MEMO TO NIXON (Southern Strategy articulated)

 ext link **The Finkelstein MEMO** to the Nixon Campaign

My Marked-up copy of the Memo downloaded from Nixon Library

Summary: Pick 3 Enemies, *but*

- One must be Blacks
- One must be weird
- One must be impossible for Democrats to disavow

Polarize, Pick on Blacks, Distort opponents' views, Demonize, Delegitimize, Demoralize the other side

–Arthur Finkelstein, Nixon/Reagan political consultant

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Lee Atwater's 1981 Interview Southern Strategy

IN 1981, THE LEGENDARILY BRUTAL
CAMPAIGN CONSULTANT
LEE ATWATER
WAS WORKING IN RONALD REAGAN'S
WHITE HOUSE WHEN HE WAS
INTERVIEWED BY ALEXANDER LAMIS.

The forty-two-minute recording, acquired by James Carter IV, confirms Atwater's incendiary remarks and places them in context.

By Rick Perlstein
November 13, 2012

It has become, for liberals and leftists enraged by the way Republicans never suffer the consequences for turning electoral politics into a cesspool, a kind of smoking gun. The late, legendarily brutal campaign consultant Lee Atwater explains how Republicans can win the vote of racists without sounding racist themselves:

You start out in 1954 by saying, “Nigger, nigger, nigger.” By 1968 you can’t say “nigger”—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states’ rights, and all that stuff, and you’re getting so abstract. Now, you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites.... “We want to cut this,” is much more abstract than even the busing thing, uh, and a hell of a lot more abstract than “Nigger, nigger.”

▶ [Read the full article \(MARKED UP VERSION\) with related stories](#)

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“Southern Strategy” Applied Globally

2019Jan20 Orban-The Unbelievable Story of the Plot against George Soros

How two Jewish American political consultants helped create the world's largest anti-Semitic conspiracy theory.

Source: [BUZZFEED](#) [Hannes Grassegger](#) [BuzzFeed Contributor](#)

Posted on January 20, 2019, at 9:57 a.m. ET

*The public campaign against Soros began in earnest **on Aug. 14, 2013**, around nine months ahead of the next election. It started relatively quietly, with an article in the government-aligned newspaper [Heti Válasz](#) attacking NGOs that were said to be controlled by Soros.*

The glass tower that houses George Soros's office in Manhattan is overflowing with numbers on screens, tracking and predicting the directions of markets around the world. But there's one that's particularly hard to figure out — a basic orange chart on a screen analyzing sentiment on social media.

The data, updated regularly since 2017, projects the reactions on the internet to the name George Soros. He gets tens of thousands of mentions per week — almost always negative, some of it obviously driven by networks of bots. Soros is pure evil. A drug smuggler. Profiteer. Extremist. Conspiracist. Nazi. Jew. It's a display of pure hate.

The demonization of Soros is one of the defining features of contemporary global politics, and it is, with a couple of exceptions, a pack of lies. Soros is indeed Jewish. He was an aggressive currency trader. He has backed

Democrats in the US and Karl Popper's notion of an "open society" in the former communist bloc.

But the many wild and proliferating theories, which include the suggestion that he helped bring down the Soviet Union in order to clear a path to Europe for Africans and Arabs, are so crazy as to be laughable — if they weren't so virulent.

George Birnbaum

Soros and his aides have spent long hours wondering: Where did this all come from?

Only a handful of people know the answer.

- On a sunny morning last summer, one of them could be found standing in front of the huge buffet in the Westin Grand Hotel in Berlin. **George Birnbaum** is built like a marathon runner — tall and slender, his head and face shaved clean. Elegant horn-rimmed glasses frame his piercing blue eyes.
- **Birnbaum — a political consultant who has worked in the US, Israel, Hungary, and across the Balkans** — had agreed to talk for the first time about his role in the creation of the Soros bogeyman, which ended up unleashing a global wave of anti-Semitic attacks on the billionaire investor. But he also wanted to defend his work, and that of his former mentor and friend, **Arthur Finkelstein**.
- **George Eli Birnbaum was born in 1970 in Los Angeles**, where his family moved after fleeing Nazi Germany. His grandfather was shot by the Nazis in front of his son, Birnbaum's father, who later survived Auschwitz. Anti-Semitism followed the family as they moved to Atlanta, where Birnbaum grew up, and where the Jewish school he attended was often defaced with anti-Semitic slurs. It left a mark.
- In an era when many American Jews drifted away from their specific identity, Birnbaum wasn't allowed to forget it. Every weekend his father handed him the Jerusalem Post.

“First you learn what’s going on with the Jewish people in the world, then you can worry about the rest of the world.”

“First you learn what’s going on with the Jewish people in the world, then you can worry about the rest of the world,” Birnbaum remembered his father saying. He grew up believing that only a strong nation, the state of Israel, could protect the Jews from a second Holocaust.

ANTI-SEMITIC CONSPIRACY PROMOTERS - George Birnbaum & Authur Finkelstein

All of which makes it bizarre that Birnbaum and Finkelstein’s ideas spawned a new wave of anti-Semitism, and that they did so in the service of an authoritarian leader, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, reviled around the world for his far-right views. The two men took all the arguments against Soros, from East and West, from left and right, and fused them together. **Two American Jews, one a towering figure in US politics, helped create a monster.**

Birnbaum doesn’t appreciate the irony, but there is little doubt he played a crucial role in the weaponizing of anti-Semitism.

And he did it by putting Soros on the chopping block.

Starting in 2008, Birnbaum and Finkelstein **worked in secret to get Orbán elected.** Their victory in Hungary — away from the intense political scrutiny of Western Europe — showed that constructing an external enemy could bring electoral success in the modern era. It allowed Hungary to give **birth to “Trump before Trump,” as Steve Bannon said.**

Birnbaum and Finkelstein’s work has provided a new **model for attack politics** in this era of global division.

They designed a **master plan for exploiting these divisions** that has worked in many different countries and contexts, and **helped create a Jewish enemy** that the far right has exploited to devastating effect. In 2016, when Trump ran his final TV ad ahead of the election, it came as no surprise that **Soros was featured as a member of “global special interests”** who don’t have “your good in mind.”

PHOTO - George Birnbaum in a 2015 appearance on Fox News. *Fox News / Via [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)*

Arthur Finkelstein (Birnbaum's mentor) – Machiavelli from Queens

To understand Birnbaum, you have to look backward, through the brutal Israeli politics of the 1990s to Washington, DC, in the 1970s, where a new profession known as political consultancy was devising a fresh set of tools for bringing people to power. There you find Birnbaum's spiritual father, Finkelstein.

Starting in the late 1960s, **Finkelstein was one of a handful of men reinventing the industry of political consulting in New York.** He would go on to help presidents and senators, to pioneer a slashing style of television advertising, and to build a generation of protégés.

Finkelstein isn't as famous as his contemporary **Roger Ailes**, but he is a hidden link that runs through the contemporary Republican Party, leading from the libertarian icon Ayn Rand to the cynicism of Richard Nixon and finally on to Trump.

Finkelstein was a New York City kid. The son of a cab driver, he met Rand while he was a student at Columbia University in the early 1960s. He went on to work briefly as a computer programmer on Wall Street before becoming an early exponent of the art of polling toward the end of the decade.

It was back then that **Finkelstein started developing a political method that now reads like a how-to guide for modern right-wing populism.** Finkelstein's premise was simple:

Every election is decided before it even begins.

Most people know who they will vote for, what they support, and what they oppose. It's very difficult to convince them otherwise, Finkelstein believed.

*****BCG Note: Finkelstein, who helped get radical Republican gay-haters elected, was gay. He married his partner of more than 40 years in 2004, and they were together until Finkelstein's death. Mr. Finkelstein was openly gay, although his sexual orientation was not common knowledge until it became the subject of an article in Boston Magazine in 1996. He married Donald Curiale, his partner of more than 50 years, in a civil ceremony in 2004. Few if any of his clients are reported to have attended his marriage..Ouch...AF was a self-identified libertarian.**

Finkelstein Formula#1 – Demonize, Delegitimize, Demoralize

It's a lot easier to demoralize people than to motivate them.

And the best way to win is **to demoralize your opponent's supporters**. That's what Trump did to great effect against Hillary Clinton, and what he meant when, after the election, he thanked [black Americans](#) for not voting.

Finkelstein had long been studying the big political trends, and he settled on simple issues that could do the most damage.

In the end, he noticed, it usually comes down to the same concerns: **drugs, crime, and race.**

These are the issues that create the most political division, [he wrote in a memo](#) to the Nixon White House in 1970.

[Hitler's Youth Brigade—The associate with Steve Bannon, Orban, and other White supremacists who are antisemitic to the core. Young men with Reactionary ideas and no integrity—[Arthur Finkelstein](#) (in 1970), and today [Ben Shapiro](#), [Stephen Miller](#),

Finkelstein's goal was to polarize the electorate as much as possible, to pitch each side against the other. The fuel: fear. **"The danger has to be presented as coming from the Left," a 25-year-old Finkelstein advised Nixon.**

Whoever doesn't attack first will be beaten, he argued.

And Finkelstein made things personal. Every campaign needs an enemy to defeat. He developed negative campaigning into a technique he called **"rejectionist voting"** — **to demonize the enemy so much that even the laziest of voters** would want to get out and vote, just to reject them.

In TV campaigns opponents were branded as "ultra liberal," "crazy liberal," "embarrassingly liberal," or "too liberal for too long."

Finkelstein Formula#2 – Demonize liberals & Democrats—Perfect for Fascists on Pulpits....

Finkelstein would also advise his clients not to talk about themselves, but instead to focus their campaigning on destroying their opponents.

He became notorious for turning "liberal" into a dirty word. In TV campaigns that no 1990s American could avoid, opponents were branded as "ultra liberal," "crazy liberal," "embarrassingly liberal," or "too liberal for too long."

Campaigners named his ideology "Finkel-Think." It was simple but effective. Friends of Finkelstein have often claimed that nobody got more politicians elected than he did.

Controversy occasionally surrounded his work. In the 1980s, while working for a Republican candidate, [he was criticized](#) for polling voters to see what they thought of the Jewish identity of his Democrat opponent.

By the time of his death in 2017, Finkelstein had left an indelible mark on national politics, having worked for **Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan**.

While working as a central campaign member for Reagan in 1980, a strangely gloomy advertisement appeared: “**Let’s make America great again.**”

He reportedly did [some work for the Trump Organization](#) in the mid-2000s — and later spoke of the “[mind-boggling](#)” power of Trump’s personality. When Trump finally ran for president, his campaign was stuffed with “Arthur’s kids” and friends: Larry Weitzner, Tony Fabrizio, and his old buddy Roger Stone.

Birnbaum was one of Arthur’s kids. After graduating **from Florida Tech** in the early ’90s, he first came into Finkelstein’s orbit in DC when the latter was working at the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

It was Birnbaum’s job to bring Finkelstein the latest polling numbers each morning. Everything Finkelstein did was based on analysis of his polls, Birnbaum remembered, who said no one could see the patterns like Finkelstein.

Birnbaum was blown away by Finkelstein’s brain, and his insights. But he also discovered the other Arthur.

Arthur Finkelstein - background

To the outside world, Finkelstein was an enigma, the strategist who worked for the right. But in private **he was a friendly, fun, brilliant, and yet unpretentious man**, full of anecdotes from the innermost circles of power.

Raised in a Jewish family in Queens, he made jokes about kosher rules. He was a nerd with the chest pocket of his blue button-down shirt full of pens and notes.

In the otherwise stuffy world of politics, Finkelstein kept his tie loose and could often be seen walking around the office in his socks.

He could do that because he was seen as **the right half of the right’s brain**. Finkelstein once told a friend that Reagan’s chief of staff thanked him in writing for “keeping your shoes on most of the time” while in the Oval Office.

Finkelstein’s passion was elections. Politics reminded him, he told students in Prague, of “waves on a beach that look alike, but over time are always different.”

His love, however, was for his two daughters — and for a man.

Finkelstein, who helped get radical Republican **gay-haters elected**, was gay. He married his partner of more than **40 years in 2004**, and they were together until Finkelstein's death.

A year after Birnbaum first met Finkelstein, he bumped into him again in an anonymous hallway of the NRSC. He told him that he wanted to work for him, to do polling for him. And he spoke Hebrew, too, if he would ever have a project in Israel.

PHOTO Right-wing Likud opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, May 26, 1996, in Tel Aviv. *Afp / AFP / Getty Images*

Finkelstein – Elects Netanyahu

The assassination of the Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, on Nov. 4, 1995, was a turning point for the country — and for Finkelstein and Birnbaum.

When elections for his successor were hastily arranged, a newcomer threw his hat into the ring. **Benjamin Netanyahu, a right-wing former corporate consultant**, was given no chance. He was running against Shimon Peres, a legendary figure, a Social Democrat from the founding generation of Israel who wanted to continue Rabin's peace process, which most people hoped would succeed.

Israelis initially sneered at Netanyahu's ambitions, and polls put him 20% behind. But seemingly out of nowhere, Netanyahu's Likud party started carpeting the country with sinister ads. "Peres will divide Jerusalem" went the slogan, even though Peres had no such intention. Similar attacks targeting Peres appeared on TV, on the radio, and in the press.

In the final TV debate, Peres stepped into the trap laid by Finkelstein. The first thing he did was to try to clarify that he had **no desire to divide Jerusalem** — the exact topic Finkelstein wanted him to raise. Netanyahu owned the debate.

On Election Day, the race between Peres and Netanyahu looked too close to call. Around 10 p.m. the TV stations reported a very close win for Peres, based on early projections. According to a [biography of Netanyahu](#), he grabbed the phone and called "Arthur" — his secret campaign manager. Finkelstein was in New York, but answered immediately, and told Netanyahu he shouldn't be worried. "I always win the close ones."

When the final count came in, Netanyahu was the new prime minister: 50.49% to 49.51%.

“Arthur always said that you did not fight against the Nazis but against Adolf Hitler. Not against al-Qaeda, but against Osama bin Laden.”

Netanyahu’s win made Finkelstein a star. He “changed campaigning forever,” according to the Haaretz newspaper. He had learned too that his formula could work outside North America. Finkelstein’s expertise became much sought after.

In 1998 Birnbaum received a call. It was Finkelstein, asking whether he would like to work for the Likud party in Israel, a dream come true for Birnbaum. It was here that the two became a team, with Finkelstein as captain and Birnbaum his first mate. While Finkelstein traveled between New York and Israel, Birnbaum kept watch in Israel, where he became the chief of staff for Netanyahu, organizing his appearances, representing him in front of the press, and sometimes even babysitting his kids.

The triumph in Israel marked the beginning of a new era. It was then that Finkelstein turned to Europe, and an even closer collaboration with Birnbaum. [From 2003 onward](#), the two men worked together as global political consultants, **applying Finkelstein’s formula to Eastern Europe and the Balkans, starting with successful election campaigns in Romania and Bulgaria.**

PHOTO Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán shakes hands with Netanyahu, July 19, 2018.

Finkelstein – Elects Orbán w/Antisemitic campaign against Soros

Finkelstein and Birnbaum’s electoral masterpiece was created in Hungary, and would have implications around the world.

It began in 2008, when Orbán decided to seek reelection. His old friend Bibi — as Netanyahu is known — [introduced him](#) to the two people who would guide his success. Before long, Finkelstein and Birnbaum were applying their formula to Orbán’s election campaign — and then turbocharging it.

Enemies were easy to find in Hungary. The country was an economic basket case and had to be bailed out in 2008. Austerity measures were demanded by their creditors at the World Bank, the EU, and the IMF. Finkelstein and Birnbaum told Orbán to target “the bureaucrats” and “foreign capital.”

Orbán won the 2010 election with a two-thirds majority as the country shifted to the right. Birnbaum is still amazed today how easy it was: “We blew the Socialist party off the table even before the election.”

“You need to keep the base energized, make sure that on Election Day they have a reason to go out and vote.”

Birnbaum and Finkelstein, now part of Orbán’s inner circle, found themselves with a problem. While the satisfied winner of the election started rewriting the constitution, they were now lacking an opponent. “There was no real political enemy ... there was no one to have a fight with,” Birnbaum remembered. The ultra-right Jobbik party and the Socialist party were beaten, the rest in splinters. “We had had an incumbent with a historic majority, something that had never happened in Hungary before.” To maintain that, they needed a “high energy level,” said Birnbaum. “You need to keep the base energized, make sure that on Election Day they have a reason to go out and vote,” he said. They needed something powerful, like Trump’s “Build the Wall!”

“It always helps rally the troops and rally a population” **when the enemy has a face, Birnbaum explained.** “Arthur always said that you did not fight against the Nazis but against Adolf Hitler. Not against al-Qaeda, but against Osama bin Laden.” Who could become that enemy in Hungary now that Orbán was in power — and wanted to stay there?

Orbán was busy creating a new, more dramatic story of the nation. Hungary, which had collaborated with the Nazis, was painted as a victim, surrounded by external enemies, under perpetual siege, first from the Ottomans, then the Nazis, and later the Communists. Hungary’s mission was clear: to defend against its enemies, and to preserve Christianity against encroaching Islam and secular forces.

Finkelstein SCAPEGOATS Soros, a classic antisemitic conspiracy theory

SCAPEGOAT - ALL-POWERFUL-GLOBAL-JEW: Against this backdrop, Finkelstein had an epiphany. What if the veil of the conspiracy were to be lifted and a shadowy figure appear, controlling everything? The puppet master. Someone who not only controlled the “big capital” but embodied it. A real person. A Hungarian. Strange, yet familiar.

That person was Soros, Finkelstein told Birnbaum.

Birnbaum was mesmerized: Soros was the perfect enemy.

At the beginning, it almost didn’t make sense. Why campaign against a nonpolitician? Although he was born in Hungary, Soros hadn’t lived there in years. He was an old man, known all over the country as a patron of civil society. He had supported the opposition against the Communists before the fall of the Iron Curtain, and financed school meals for kids afterward. In Budapest, he had built one of the best universities in Eastern Europe.

Orbán had even received money from Soros: During his time in the opposition, his small underground foundation [Századvég](#) published critical newspapers, created on a copy machine that was paid for by Soros.

Orbán was also one of the more than 15,000 students who received scholarships from Soros's Open Society Foundations. Thanks to Soros, Orbán studied philosophy in Oxford. The two men only met once: when Soros came to [Hungary in 2010 after a toxic spill](#) to provide \$1 million in emergency funds.

There didn't really seem to be a reason to turn against him in Hungary.

But Finkelstein and Birnbaum saw something in Soros that would make him the **perfect enemy**.

There's a long history of criticism of Soros, dating back to 1992, when Soros earned \$1 billion overnight betting against the British pound. For many on the left, Soros was a vulture.

But Soros used his sudden prominence to push for liberal ideas. He supported everything the right was against: climate protection, equality, the Clintons.

He opposed the second Iraq War in 2003, even comparing George W. Bush to the Nazis, and became a major donor for the Democrats.

He was soon a hate figure for the Republicans.

But there was more. **Finkelstein and Birnbaum** had expanded their work into exactly those countries where the **Open Society Foundations was trying to build liberal local elites and civil rights movements:**

Ukraine, Romania, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, Albania.

Birnbaum believed Soros stood for "a socialism that is wrong for these areas."

According to Birnbaum, Finkelstein was more practical about his opposition to Soros, whom he saw as simply a means to an end: "It wasn't an emotional thing."

Orban backs anti-Jew Demonization Strategy

It didn't take much for the two consultants to convince Orbán to take on Soros — the Hungarian prime minister had "an enormous amount of trust in Arthur's intellect," said Birnbaum. The anti-Soros campaign was useful for Orbán — and not just domestically. Externally, it would please his Russian neighbors. Putin was afraid of the so-called color revolutions like the one in Ukraine, and the Arab Spring, and had begun attacking Soros and his support for liberal causes.

The two men's work for Orbán is now part of Hungary's political legend. Finkelstein is an almost mythical figure, not least because Orbán has [barely mentioned his role](#) in public. His spokespeople did not reply to requests for comment about Finkelstein and Birnbaum.

Orban bashes Soros, Coward Birnbaum celebrates

Birnbaum was similarly **unforthcoming about the exact details of the work they did for Orbán**. He didn't want to discuss whether they had drafted slogans or just simple concepts, nor would he say how much control they had over the campaign itself.

The public campaign against Soros began in earnest **on Aug. 14, 2013**, around nine months ahead of the next election. It started relatively quietly, with an article in the government-aligned newspaper [Heti Válasz](#) attacking NGOs that were said to be controlled by Soros.

Next, the Hungarian government went after the allegedly Soros-controlled environmental organization **Ökotárs**, which received Norwegian and Swiss funding. Police stormed their offices and confiscated computers, while the government opened an investigation into their activities. The Hungarian investigators would eventually come up empty — but not before they had succeeded in spreading the image of a shadowy network of foreign NGOs run by Soros.

"The perfect enemy is one that you can punch again and again and he won't punch back."

Orbán and his team didn't stop there. By 2015, the European refugee crisis, in part stimulated by the war in Syria, had emboldened nationalists across the continent. So when Soros argued that the EU needed to develop a "common plan" for the treatment of refugees, and prepare for a million asylum-seekers per year, he became a welcome target once more for Orbán's team. On Oct. 30, 2015, Orbán made a [speech](#) in which he claimed Soros wanted to weaken the country and flood it with refugees.

- **The attacks came thick and fast after that.** Any organization that had ever received money from the Open Society Foundations was painted as "Soros controlled." Employees of the NGOs were described by government press as "mercenaries," financed by foreign powers. All of that was done through a series of sensational articles and official responses from members of government.
- **A crescendo was reached in July 2017**, when the whole country was plastered with ads showing Soros's face and the slogan "Don't let George Soros have the last laugh!"
- **The slogan "Stop Soros"** was repeated endlessly, everywhere. Manipulated photos showed him walking hand in hand with allies through a fence: Orbán's

fence, constructed to stop refugees crossing into Hungary. Orbán claimed Soros maintained a mafia network.

- **In the fall of 2017** the administration conducted a “national consultation.” Millions of citizens received questionnaires, in which they could choose whether or not they supported the “Soros plan” to allow a million people from Africa and the Middle East to enter Europe per year.
- It worked. A huge part of the country turned against Soros. Orbán won in 2014 and 2018, both times with an overwhelming majority.
- Soros was trapped. **“The perfect enemy is one that you can punch again and again and he won't punch back,”** said Birnbaum. If Soros had struck back, it would have just played into their hands, confirming that he had power and influence, said Birnbaum. Soros and the Open Society Foundations have tried to counter accusations and attacks, and have even sued the Hungarian government in the [European Court of Human Rights](#), but they couldn't enter the political arena. It would be unthinkable for the 87-year-old Soros to run against Orbán. “Mr. Soros is not a politician,” said his assistant Michael Vachon.

Modeled on Bibi's brand: Birnbaum is No Regrets, No Apologies, No Responsibility.

Despite everything that followed, **Birnbaum is proud of the campaign against Soros: “Soros was a perfect enemy. It was so obvious. It was the simplest of all products, you just had to pack it and market it.”**

The product was so good, it sold itself and went global. In 2017, Italians started talking about Soros-financed immigrant boats arriving on the shores. In the US, some people suspected Soros was behind the migrant caravan entering from Central America. A Polish member of parliament called Soros the “most dangerous man in the world.” Putin referred dismissively to Soros during a press conference with Trump in Helsinki. Trump even claimed that the demonstrations against Supreme Court candidate Brett Kavanaugh were sponsored by Soros.

Today Finkelstein and Birnbaum's work in Hungary has echoes everywhere. Birnbaum denied the suggestion that he had run anti-Soros campaigns outside of Hungary. But perhaps he didn't have to. Anyone could pick up the ideas and run with them. Finkelstein and Birnbaum had turned Soros into a meme. Right-wing sites like Breitbart, or the Kremlin-controlled Russia Today, could simply adopt the Hungarian campaign, translate it into other languages, and feed it with local arguments.

If right-wing movements want to campaign today, they can source Soros material from the internet. Anti-Soros material is a globalized, freely available, and adaptable

open-source weapon. Birnbaum said it was the common denominator of the nationalist movement.

PHOTO Soros was a target of demonstrators in Macedonia in 2017, when the country was debating whether Albanian should become an official language.

Orbán’s campaign against Soros never actually used the word Jew, but it was often implicit. Orbán told his people they would have to fight against an “enemy” who was “different,” who didn’t have a “home.” It was common to see [anti-Semitic graffiti](#) on the “Stop Soros” ads — voters knew what they were being told.

- Finkelstein and Birnbaum created a Frankenstein monster that found a new life on the internet. In that stew are the resentments for his assault on communism, and allegations that he’s a communist; anti-Jewish slurs and charges he’s a Nazi; and above all the old mix of European anti-Semitism.
- If you search today for Soros, you will immediately find images of his head with octopus tentacles, another classic anti-Semitic motif. Even Netanyahu’s son Yair posted an [anti-Semitic meme](#) in 2017 showing Soros and reptilians controlling the world.

“Our campaign did not make anyone anti-Semitic who wasn’t before. Maybe we were just drawing a new target, not more. I would do it again.”

- Members of the Jewish community in Hungary began to protest the Stop Soros campaign in 2017. The Israeli ambassador condemned it. When Zoltan Radnoti, a prominent Hungarian rabbi, learned that the campaign was led by two members of the Jewish community, he was shocked.
- The anti-Semitism that sprang out of the Soros campaign might not be too surprising, even if Finkelstein and Birnbaum did not intend it. They imported ancient themes and modern grievances into 21st-century communications technology. What was new: **They had turned Soros into their central political enemy.**
- The allegation that he was responsible for **anti-Semitism pains Birnbaum**. He just doesn’t see it. He decided to speak primarily because he wants to refute it. He is, after all, an observant Jew and member of many **pro-Israeli charities**.
- “When we planned the campaign,” he said, “we didn’t think a second about Soros being a Jew.” Birnbaum claimed he didn’t even know it back then, and that he never worked with anti-Semites.

Before working with Orbán, he checked in with informed circles in Israel to see how Orbán felt about Jews. He didn’t hear anything that would put him off — on the contrary,

he said, Orbán had fought against anti-Semitism and had even given his first daughter the Jewish name “Rahel.”

After all, “**can I not attack someone because he is a Jew?**” Birnbaum asked.

Whatever their intention, the anti-Soros invective has only increased, sometimes with deadly consequences. In October 2018, a Trump supporter sent a parcel bomb to Soros. Five days later a gunman entered a synagogue in Pittsburgh, killing 11 people. The attacker saw himself as part of a fight [against a Jewish conspiracy](#), which he believed was funding mass migration, and talked about the caravan and Soros on social media.

When asked if the Soros campaign in Hungary had stoked this anti-Semitism, Birnbaum admitted that with the benefit of hindsight, “it looks really bad,” but at the time it was the right decision to target Soros, he said.

Some months after the meeting in Berlin, Birnbaum went to the Trump hotel in DC, where a friend, Trump’s former campaign manager, **Corey Lewandowski**, was presenting his new book, *Trump’s Enemies*. Kellyanne Conway dropped by. Caviar was being sold, \$100 per ounce. Birnbaum chatted with the other guests and ordered a Moscow mule.

Had he changed his mind about the Soros campaign? Any regrets?

Birnbaum: DENIAL of Anti-semitism...Deflect, Deny, Double-down

“Anti-Semitism is something eternal, indelible,” said Birnbaum. **“Our campaign did not make anyone anti-Semitic who wasn’t before. Maybe we were just drawing a new target, not more. I would do it again.”**

PHOTO From left: Paul Curran, a one-time Republican candidate for governor of New York, Whitney North Seymour, the former US attorney for the Southern District in New York, and Arthur Finkelstein, June 8, 1983.

An earlier version of this article appeared in the [Swiss weekly Das Magazin](#).

CORRECTION

January 20, 2019, at 7:47 a.m.

The chart that measures social media reactions to George Soros is in his office in Manhattan, not the office of the Open Society Foundations.

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The Finkelstein Formula

The advisor Arthur J. Finkelstein helped Reagan and Netanyahu win. The campaign against George Soros, however, is his perfidious masterwork. His English collaborator speaks for the first time.

The conspiracy about Soros as the Anti-Christ

He is the antichrist. The most dangerous person in the world. An old rich man, a speculator who had caused the collapse of the British pound in 1992, the Asian crisis of 1997, and the financial crisis of 2008. First he destroyed the Soviet Union and then Yugoslavia to open easy passage for Africans and Arabs so that they could drive out the Europeans. He sponsors left-wing extremists, wants to depose the president of the U.S. and profits from drug dealing and financial crimes. On the side, he finances euthanasia, censorship and terrorism. Even as a child, he turned over Jews to the Nazis although he is himself Jewish.

That's what one learns on Facebook, YouTube or Twitter if one enters "Soros." George Soros is a Jew, that's true, but everything else is false, invented and put out into the world as part of one of the **most insidious and effective political campaigns of all time.**

Only a few years ago, George Soros was a billionaire whose fundamental critique of capitalism was treasured even at the world economic forum in Davos. A

currency trader who was once counted among the thirty richest people in the world but who donated the majority of his billions to his foundation. His Open Society Foundations are the third largest charitable organization in the world, just behind the Gates Foundation. While Bill Gates seeks to alleviate suffering in the world, e.g. by fighting malaria, Soros wants to better the world through, for example, building projects and starter capital for migrants. He seeks to realize the ideal of the open society that was formulated as the counterpart to totalitarianism by the philosopher he reveres, Karl Popper.

An office on the 38th floor of an angular glass tower in New York. There sits **Michael Vachon**, the personal advisor to Soros, with his head exploding. How is it possible that his boss was transformed from a globally respected philanthropist into one of the most hated people in the world? In 2017, Vachon began to poll public sentiment to see how big the problem is. An orange curve on his computer displays the results. It shows the reactions to the name of Soros on the net. Tens of thousands of mentions per week; in some weeks, almost one hundred percent negative. **The graph is a febrile curve of hate.**

George Eli Birnbaum-ATL to LA & global

Two people know the answer to Vachon's question. One is dead, the other waits on a sunny morning in June 2018 at the bounteous buffet of the **Westin Grand Hotel in Berlin**. A man with the body of a marathon runner, thin and stretched long. Skull and face are shaved perfectly clean; horn-rimmed glasses frame his piercing blue eyes. **George Eli Birnbaum came into the world in Los Angeles in 1970**, named, Birnbaum says, after his grandfather who was shot by the Nazis in front of his son, who barely escaped the Holocaust and fled to the United States.

But antisemitism followed the **family to Atlanta, where Birnbaum grew up**. Time and again, antisemitic slogans were spray-painted onto his private Jewish school. That left an impression. Every weekend his father would give him The Jerusalem Post to read: **"First, you worry about what's happening to the Jews, then you can turn your attention to the rest of the world,"** he said. Thus, George Birnbaum was raised with the conviction that only a strong state of Israel could protect the Jews from another Holocaust.

It is difficult for him to speak about it, and this is the first time that Birnbaum has talked to a journalist about the matter. But this George Birnbaum has contributed decisively to strengthening **the new right globally and to reviving antisemitism as a political weapon**. **Since he put a Jew in the crosshairs: George Soros.**

The Candidate - 1996 Netanyahu

It all began 23 years ago with the assassination of Minister President Yitzak Rabin. On November 4, 1995, Israel's greatest hope for peace bled to death. After the assassination, new elections were quickly instituted. The candidates: Shimon Peres, a social democrat of the founding generation who wanted to continue Rabin's peace process, and Benjamin Netanyahu, a management consultant, a newcomer and a

right-winger. **Many made fun of Netanyahu's ambitions. In polls, he was over 20 points behind Peres.**

But then suddenly Netanyahu's Likud Party bombarded the airwaves with ominous election ads: "Peres will divide Jerusalem," the slogan read. That discomfited many voters. Still, this was a baseless assertion: Shimon Peres had no such plans. The race between Peres and Netanyahu was extremely close on election day. About ten p.m., the television stations announced a razor-thin victory by Peres, according to the first tabulations. Consequently, Netanyahu asked for the telephone and called "Arthur"—his secret campaign coordinator. Arthur Finkelstein is in New York but gets on the phone right away. He says that Netanyahu shouldn't worry. **"I always win the close elections."**

"Arthur Finkelstein was a genius," Birnbaum says. Finkelstein was a numbers person, a pollster. Pollsters are political advisors who develop tactics and strategies based on polls. Pollsters try to recognize opinions, moods, commonalities or divisions in the population, and to use that knowledge for the benefit of their clients.

BIBI'S BRAIN

Sometimes pollsters develop campaigns. In Israel, Finkelstein even developed a candidate: Jener Benjamin Netanyahu, who arose in opposition to Shimon Peres, was his creation. **"Everything that Bibi did during the campaign was determined by Arthur,"** Netanyahu's biographers Ben Kaspi and Ilan Kfir write.

Finkelstein was a discreet person. Only two speeches by him can be found on the web. No one got a clear picture of him, not even his clients. He flew in, gave some suggestions and disappeared once more. He was never present on election day. **His people, Arthur's kids as he called them, worked on location.** One has to piece together information about Finkelstein. There are hints in the Israeli and Hungarian press. He is mentioned in documents. There are enormous holes in conversations with over a dozen insiders, including George Birnbaum himself.

Finkelstein is the common thread running through the recent history of the Republican Party, from Ayn Rand to Richard Nixon and on to Donald Trump. He became acquainted with Rand, the mother of the conservative movement, when he was in college. Later he helped the legendary **Barry Goldwater** who revitalized the Republican Party from the right in the 1960s. **Finkelstein** survived the Watergate scandal, was involved in Reagan's election win in 1980, worked for George Bush Sr. and also for a businessman named Donald Trump. He foretold Trump's political career. Trump's campaign team was studded with "Arthur's kids":

Larry Weitzner, Tony Fabrizio and his old friend Roger Stone. Also **Richard Grenell**, the U.S. ambassador in Berlin, had a connection to Finkelstein, just like **David B. Cornstein**, U.S. ambassador to Hungary.

The link between Finkelstein and modern Republican communications can be shown quite simply: **in his time as a central member of the campaign for Ronald Reagan,**

he sought votes for the candidate by means of the ominous, deeply reactionary slogan which is now known to all: **Let's make America great again.**

Fear as the Driver-Negative Campaigning

Finkelstein followed a formula in the campaign that he continued to develop later: **negative campaigning**. In this election strategy, it's a matter of attacking the opponent's campaign, rather than presenting an agenda of one's own. Finkelstein's starting point: **every election is already decided before the election**. Most people know at the start for whom they want to vote, what they are for and what they are against. And it is incredibly difficult to convince them otherwise.

Simply put, it's much easier to **demotivate people than to motivate them**. Thus, it's possible to cause the opponent to lose critical votes. Today that's called voter suppression. Brad Pascale, who led Trump's digital campaign, described this as one of the most important devices of the 2016 election. The method reads like a "how to" of modern rightwing populism.

Originally a programmer in the financial industry, Finkelstein turned pollster and elevated population statistics such as age, place of residence, preferred candidate, political inclination, and number of church visits. His talent lay in recognizing patterns.

For example:

- **what are the common themes, those that interest most people?**
- **Which ones cause the most pain?**

Basically, he soon noticed, it's often the same: **"drugs, criminality and skin color."** That is cutting, he wrote in a **memo to Richard Nixon in 1972**. Finkelstein's goal was to polemicize the electorate in the extreme. To inflame factions against each other.

The driving force: fear.

"It has to be done so that it seems the danger comes from the left," he advised Nixon. He had to establish the ideas that would induce fear in the populace.

The main thing was to be constantly on the attack. Whoever didn't strike first would be struck by his opponent. And Finkelstein made it personal. Every campaign **needed an enemy that had to be vanquished**. He developed negative campaigning into a technique that he **called rejectionist voting**. The idea is not to talk about the advantages of your own candidate but to **project all kinds of evil onto your opponent in order to destroy the confidence of his voters**. In doing so, he was not careful about niceties. He did his job, just as a lawyer defends a murderer.

In the final stretch, Finkelstein would **set a trap for the opponent, according to this method**.

- He would **publish a claim and count on the opponent to entrap himself** as he tried to contradict the claim.

- As soon as the opponent **reacts to the accusation**, he associates himself with it.
- If he ignores it, he lets it go **uncontradicted**.
- In the best case, the assertion is itself already **so strange or shocking** that the media will propagate it.

Finkelstein became famous for turning the word "liberal" into a curse word. He called his opponents "ultraliberal," "crazy liberal" or "shameful liberal." Mark Mellman, the campaign guru for the Democrats, calls that **Finkel Think**: "trademark someone as liberal, slander them, repeat endlessly." **The method was simple but effective**. Conceivably, no one has elected more people to Congress than Finkelstein.

To Europe

In Israel, Finkelstein follows the recipe to the letter in 1996: he targets Peres from all the television stations. His short, snappy slogans are in all the media. In the final television appearance, Peres falls into the trap: he wants to clarify immediately that he does not plan to divide Jerusalem. He surrenders the debate to Netanyahu. When Peres wakes up on the day after the election, Netanyahu is the prime minister: 50.5% to 49.5%.

Finkelstein's friend and client Ron Lauder, the billionaire cosmetics heir and then Netanyahu financial contributor, had connected him with the job in Israel. In the beginning, it was a sideline. In fact, Finkelstein worked on the campaign against Bill Clinton's reelection.

2001

Finkelstein finds out in Israel that his formula works elsewhere. After Netanyahu's victory, all the parties engage in negative campaigning, and Finkelstein is correspondingly in demand. He is behind **Sharon's surprise win in 2001**, followed later by Avigdor Lieber, a client still further to the right. **The triumphs in Israel mark the start of a new phase: Finkelstein turns to Europe.** To this end, he begins collaborating with George Eli Birnbaum, the man with the body of a marathon runner. Together they create a team that will later produce Finkelstein's enduring legacy—his monster.

Birnbaum is one of Arthur's kids. Birnbaum says that he met the secret Republican star in the mid-1990s in Washington. At the time, the young man delivered stacks of questionnaires every day. "Everything that Arthur does is based on numbers," recalls Birnbaum, "but nobody could read the numbers like Arthur."

To the outside world, Finkelstein was an enigma, the strategist who worked for the right wing. But Birnbaum quickly came to know the private side of Arthur. A friendly, witty, brilliant and even modest man, full of anecdotes from the innermost circles of power. The offspring of a Jewish family in Queens that kept kosher. A nerd, the breast pocket of his button-down shirt stuffed with pens and note paper, so he could write down his inspirations.

In the uptight world of politics, he kept his tie loose and ran around the office in his sox. He could do what he wanted because he was the right side of the brain of the right wing. Once, so Finkelstein told a coworker, Reagan's chief of staff had written him a thank you note for "keeping his shoes on most of the time" in the Oval Office. His passion was electioneering. He told students in Prag that it reminded him of a sandy beach which at first looks all the same but constantly changes. A wave comes, or a storm, and everything is different. His love belonged to his two daughters--and his husband. Arthur Finkelstein, who propelled radical Republican homophobes into public office, was homosexual. Donald Curiale was the love of his life. The captain and the helmsman.

1998

When in **1998 Finkelstein asks Birnbaum if he wants to work for Likud in Israel**, it is a dream come true. Even when Netanyahu's bid for reelection fails, the two become a team. Finkelstein is the captain, Birnbaum is the helmsman. As Finkelstein commutes between New York and Israel, Birnbaum runs the office in Israel, where he quickly comes to lead Netanyahu's office, organize his appearances, represent him before the press and sometimes tend his children.

2006

In **2006**, Birnbaum founds the firm **GEB International**—with Finkelstein as a partner. Together they want to do a rollout in eastern Europe. Birnbaum is looking for clients, selling Finkelstein's formula. They help **Calin Popescu-Tariceanu come to power in Romania; in Bulgaria they do the same for Sergei Stanischew.**

In Hungary in 2008, there's a man who wants to return to power. His name is **Viktor Orbán** and is the former premier. His old friend "Bibi"--Benjamin Netanyahu--is ready to help him. The two share a friendship of many years standing that is so close that some call it a "bromance." In fact, their greatest common ground is their work with Finkelstein and Birnbaum. **According to the daily newspaper Haaretz, Netanyahu passed on the two election gurus to Orbán.** It started in 2008, Birnbaum recalls, and they won a referendum right away that positioned Orbán and his conservative Fidesz movement for the 2010 elections.

FORMULA-Batter opponent's weaknesses, while keeping his own candidate out of the spotlight.

If Finkelstein is seen as an artist, he created his masterpiece in Hungary, together with Birnbaum. They were retained for a year in Hungary, officially for the Fidesz-affiliated Szádavég Foundation. **For the 2010 election, they relied on Finkelstein's patented election recipe of battering the opponent's weaknesses, while keeping his own candidate out of the spotlight.** The opposition, the ruling Social Democrats, were overwhelmed by the attacks. Even today, Birnbaum is stunned at how easy it was: "We had already blown the Social Democrats out of the water, even before the election."

New opponents are quickly found: Hungary is suffering at the time from the financial crisis and has to be saved by an influx of money. This in turn leads to belt-tightening measures dictated by the lender, the World Bank, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. The Americans recommend that Orbán declare "the bureaucrats" and foreign capital to be the enemy. There follows a massive **shift to the right in favor of Fidesz, and Orbán** wins the election with a two-thirds majority.

Birnbaum and Finkelstein, who from this point on belonged to **Orbán's innermost circle**, had a problem. While the satisfied victor in the election rewrote the constitution, Finkelstein and Birnbaum once again **lacked an opponent**.

"**There was no longer an opposition**," Birnbaum says. The ultra-rightist Jobbik Party and the Social Democrats were defeated, the rest were only splinter groups. "We had an officeholder with an historic majority, something that had never happened in Hungary. Birnbaum said that maintaining that state of affairs required a "high level of energy." "**You have to keep the base energized. Give them a reason to get out for the next election.**" Birnbaum said that it had to be something powerful, like Trump's "**Build the Wall**" today.

The Perfect Opponent

FORMULA-"The best way to rouse the troops," Birnbaum explains. "Arthur always said that the fight wasn't against the Nazis but against Hitler, not against Al-Qaida but Osama Bin Laden."

Finkelstein's formula says that every successful campaign needs an enemy. "The best way to rouse the troops," Birnbaum explains. "Arthur always said that the fight wasn't against the Nazis but against Hitler, not against Al-Qaida but Osama Bin Laden."

But who could this enemy be in Hungary? Where was the fire-breathing dragon that Orbán would fight with the help of the people?

Viktor Orbán was cooking up an alternative, more dramatic tale of his nation. A driving force is his close friend, the historian Mária Schmidt, whom he had elevated during his first term in 2002 to lead the national memorial for the victims of dictatorship.

- A feisty woman who had also inherited a lot of money. She imagines Hungary, which entered into a pact with Hitler, **as the innocent victim** that was surrounded by enemies and steadfastly guarded its original identity. For her, Hungary is a country in an **eternal state of occupation**.
- First the Ottoman Turks, then the Nazis, followed by the Communists. **Hungary's mission: protect against outside influences and defend Christianity.**
- Reflecting on this background, Arthur Finkelstein had an inspiration. It is a campaign idea so big and so Mephistophelean that it would outlive its creator.

- Basically, it is a continuation of the tale of "**big international capitalism**" that has banded together against little Hungary. But with a dramatic twist: What happens when the veil shielding the international capitalist conspiracy is ripped away and a figure enters who holds everything in his hands.
- **Someone who not only steers "big capitalism" but embodies it? A real person.** And furthermore a person born in Hungary. Foreign yet also familiar. This person is George Soros, Finkelstein says. And Birnbaum recognized immediately the genius of the idea: "Soros was the perfect enemy."

In this moment, the monster "George Soros" is born. A multibillionaire, so powerful and connected worldwide that, to defeat him, the whole nation has to unite behind Orbán. Here in Hungary, the demon is created that would soon be taken up by politicians all over the world. And up to and inside the German parliament and the parliament house in Bern.

At first glance, Finkelstein's suggestion seems somewhat bizarre. An election campaign against someone who is not a politician. A person who doesn't even live in Hungary. An old man who is known across the country as a patron and benefactor. Someone who, before the fall of the Iron Curtain, had supported the opposition against the Communists, and afterwards had donated school lunches to children, and later established in Budapest one of the best universities in Europe.

Even Orbán had once received donations from Soros: during his time in the opposition, his underground organization had published critical periodicals, produced on a copy machine that Soros had paid for. Orbán was also among the over 15,000 students who were awarded scholarships by the Open Society Foundations. Only thanks to Soros was Orbán able to study philosophy. The two met only once: when Soros came to Hungary after a catastrophic flood in order to offer a million dollars in emergency assistance.

There was really no reason to be against him.

A Means to an End

Finkelstein and Birnbaum saw something entirely different in George Soros.

There is a long history of criticizing Soros. It reaches back to 1992, when Soros earned a billion dollars overnight through currency trading--and earned himself the reputation as the person who had single-handedly driven British citizens into poverty. For many on the Left, Soros was a plague until he used his sudden fame to publicize leftist-liberal ideals.

He was for everything that the right was against:

- climate protection,
- redistribution of wealth,
- the Clintons.
- He opposed the second Iraq war in 2003,
- compared George W. Bush with the Nazis and

- turned into a heavy donor for the Democrats.

That's how he became the enemy for the Republicans.

But there was more. Finkelstein and Birnbaum had expanded their operations into the very countries in which the Open Societies Foundation had most intensively supported local liberal elites and civil rights movements: **Ukraine, Romania, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, and Albania. Birnbaum, the silent right-wing, rejects Soros.**

He finds that Soros stands for "**a socialism that is wrong for these regions.**"

But Finkelstein saw all this from a purely rational point of view: **Soros as the enemy was just the means to an end.**

Telephone polls are used to find out if George Soros' name is sufficiently well known, testing his name along with several other possible enemies, according to a person who was involved in the questioning. Birnbaum himself declines to confirm the polling in the Soros case.

Then Orbán had to be convinced. Birnbaum says, Orbán trusted Finkelstein "enormously." Orbán's spokesperson declined to comment. **"Nobody was more important for Orbán's politics than Finkelstein,"** a former Hungarian Fidesz pollster says. **"And Finkelstein never had a better pupil."**

For Orbán, the anti-Soros campaign made sense for both national and international politics. In international politics, it would **please their Russian neighbors.**

- Putin was afraid of so-called "color" revolutions like the Arab Spring or in the Ukraine and had started to combat Soros and his furtherance of liberal forces.
- They were united by a common enemy.
- At home, the complementary campaign was undertaken by Mária Schmidt who was convinced that Soros was the one behind the criticism from U.S. Democrats of her revisionist national fairy tale.
- She explained briefly to an American journalist in all seriousness that she had seen it on "Saturday Night Live."
- She said that in 2008 an actor appeared as "George Soros, owner of the Democratic Party" and Soros had never denied it.
- With that, the case was closed, as far as Schmidt is concerned.

The First Shot

People in Hungary still talk about **how Finkelstein and Birnbaum worked for Orbán.** Finkelstein is almost a mythic figure in Hungary.

Orbán, however, has never commented on Finkelstein's role, and his spokesperson refused to answer questions about it.

Birnbaum is the first person involved to speak, here in the "Magazin."

- He still leaves many questions unanswered.
- He doesn't want to remember details of their work together, whether slogans or guiding principles were created, or to what extent the campaign was directed.

But what has happened in the ensuing years in Hungary is plain to everyone. And what worldwide consequences flowed from that. In fact, all the campaign had to do was amass all the arguments and measures taken against Soros from East and West, left and right. The new part was simply making Soros the opponent in the election.

The first shot is fired exactly nine months before the next election. An article in the government-friendly newspaper "Heti Válasz" attacks the NGOs as supposedly directed by Soros.

- First, a picture is publicly drawn of a conspiracy against Hungary that is orchestrated by Soros.
- Next, there follows a fight by the Hungarian government against the environmental advocacy organization Ökotárs which is said to be controlled by Soros, though Ökotárs received funding from Sweden and Swiss government money in the form of developmental support from DEZA [Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit].
- Police storm the offices of the alleged Soros lackeys, confiscating computers.
- Investigations and legal proceedings against Ökotárs go on for months.
- Swiss money is impounded.
- Even though in the end the Hungarians find nothing, the picture of a dangerous, interconnected NGO-network has been established.

This is at the time of the war in Syria and the enormous increase in the number of people seeking help in the EU, the so-called refugee crisis.

While Finkelstein is sketching out an early campaign against the refugees, Soros publishes an essay in fall 2015 in which he urges adoption of a "common plan" by the EU to deal with the refugees.

He says, the EU must reckon with "a million refugees per year in the near future." A tasty morsel for Orbán.

Only days after the Hungarian government is forced to abandon the battle against Ökotárs, Viktor Orbán gives a speech.

He says that George Soros is the "agent" of that Western train of thought that seeks to "weaken the national state" and flood it with refugees. Here for the first time, Soros' aid for migrants is cast as part of a large conspiracy.

The attacks come ever more quickly at the end of 2015.

Every organization that had ever received funding from the Open Society Foundations is characterized as "controlled by Soros." Finally, employees at the NGOs are tarred as internationally financed "mercenaries."

All of this is achieved through a calculated ping-pong between sensational "revelation" articles and official "reactions" by representatives of the government. The smear campaign becomes increasingly untethered:

- Hungary copies Putin's move, to withdraw the license from a university in St. Petersburg that Soros is helping to fund.
- The attacks against Soros' Central European University, which is run by the Canadian Michael Ignatieff, start in February 2017.
- The respected historian had once been active politically in his homeland in opposition to the Conservative Party, for which Finkelstein worked.

The Embodiment of Evil

The temporary apex of the campaign against Soros is reached in July 2017 when the country is decked in posters that show his face and under it the sentence, "Don't let Soros have the last laugh!" **The slogan "Stop Soros" is repeated constantly.**

- Photomontage shows Soros arm in arm with supposed allies, who pass through a fence that has been cut open: Orbán's border fence against the refugees.
- Orbán claims that Soros supports a mafia network.
- In fall 2017, the government conducts a "national consultation." Questionnaires are sent to millions of citizens. They can make their mark showing whether or not they support "the Soros plan" to annually settle a million people from Africa and the Near East in Europe.
- The Open Society Foundations distributed about \$3.6 million in Hungary in 2016. The anti-Soros campaign of 2017 cost over ten times as much, a good €40 million. It was effective.
- Soros' favorability dropped. An entire country turned against the man. Soros had become the embodiment of evil.
- Soros himself fell into the trap. **"The more he fought back, the more he gave support to our claim that he was meddling in politics,"** Birnbaum says.

- It was unthinkable for the then 87-year-old to step forward as a candidate. "Mr. Soros is not a politician," says his advisor Michael Vachon. Soros was humiliated.

In Soros, Finkelstein had found his ideal opponent. The very "Mr. Liberal" that he wanted. The embodiment of all the contradictions that conservatives detest in economically successful leftists: a financial speculator, who simultaneously advocated for a more compassionate form of capitalism. And best of all: the opponent was not in politics nor even in the country. "The perfect opponent is one that you hit again and again, and he never hits back," says Birnbaum. Even today, he waxes enthusiastic. "It was readymade. It was the simplest of all products. One only had to package and sell it."

The "product" was so good that it sold itself and roamed the world. In 2017 in Italy, fabricated tales of Soros financing refugee boats were circulated. In 2018 in the U.S.A., it was speculated that Soros was behind the caravans of Mexican migrants. In Italy, Matteo Salvini denounced his opponents for taking money from Soros, as did Nigel Farage in the EU Parliament and Stephan Brandner and Jörg Meuthen of the AfD ("Alternative for Germany" Party) in Germany.

Anti-Soros sentiments surface from Columbia to Israel and in Kenya and Australia. A Polish member of parliament called Soros "the most dangerous man in the world." Putin disparaged him during his press conference with Trump in Helsinki. Trump included Soros at the end of 2016 in his closing election advertisement. And more recently he claimed that the demonstrations against his nominee for the Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh, were funded by Soros.

Hungary functioned as the bridgehead in the rhetorical teamwork by Putin and Trump. In Austria, the Soros name surfaced in the election context in connection with the "Silverstein Affair." It later came to light that, among other things, fake Facebook accounts were used to mention Soros' "plans." Right in the middle of the campaign team were Birnbaum and Finkelstein.

The Return of the Evil Jew

Birnbaum defends himself against the suspicion of leading other anti-Soros campaigns outside Hungary. Perhaps he didn't need to. He and Finkelstein had crafted the most powerful image of an enemy for the rightwing movement in modern times—perfect material for the internet. On the one hand, rightwing digital media like "Breitbart" and "Russia Today" took up the Hungarian campaign and translated it into other languages and nourished it with arguments. On the other hand, there are social networks through which the meme of evil George Soros could become a freestanding entity unto itself.

If rightwing movements want to campaign today, they can simply search for Soros material on the net. Anti-Soros is a globalized, freely applicable and adaptable open-source weapon. Birnbaum calls it the "common denominator of the nationalist movement." It is no accident that Steve Bannon drummed up the opposition to Soros when he wanted to become involved in the EU elections.

At this point, one must speak of an aspect of this story that is as strange as it is important: the two Jewish political advisors construct a campaign to target a Jew by using antisemitic slurs.

What Finkelstein and Birnbaum built tapped into one of the oldest antisemitic themes of western history: the evil, greedy Jew who wants to rule the world. Even if Orbán's campaign never used the word Jew: Orbán said he was fighting an "enemy" who was "different" and "without a homeland" and wanted to own the world. Logically, when Jewish stars were graffitied onto the Soros posters, the voters perfected the campaign. An internet search for Soros easily locates a photomontage: Soros' head atop the tentacles of an **octopus, a classic anti-Jewish motif**.

In 2017, the Jewish community in Hungary protested, and the Italian ambassador became active. When Zoltán Radnóti, a well-known Hungarian rabbi, learned that the campaign was led by two members of the Jewish community, he went public with the shock it produced in him. The Jewish world is divided whether the campaign is antisemitic. Once, Birnbaum recalls, a member of the Anti-Defamation League in the U.S. had taken him aside and spoken with him. The organization had monitored the growth of antisemitism on the net for years and in a study had devoted a stand-alone chapter to the harassment of Soros.

This question angers Birnbaum, who observes the Sabbath and belongs to numerous Israeli organizations. He says that in the campaign it was a matter of a "purely ideological" project. Soros stood for everything that Orbán was against. "When we planned the campaign, we did not consider for one second that Soros is a Jew." He states that he didn't know himself at the time. He claims that he never works with antisemites. He says that even before starting the collaboration with Orbán, he asked around in knowledgeable circles in Israel about Orbán's position regarding the Jews. He says he didn't hear anything suspicious. To the contrary, Orbán had persecuted antisemitism. He gave his first daughter the Jewish name Rachel. And besides, "Am I not allowed to attack someone because he's a Jew?"

Here one must object, since at that time both election campaign advisors had known the name of Soros for years, and already in the 1980s Finkelstein had been involved in a scandal because he had researched and instrumentalized antisemitic attitudes of the voters for a candidate. This time, the consequences are more dire. The campaign changed the world. From words, a reality came into being.

In the U.S.A., at the end of October, Soros receives a letter bomb from a Trump supporter. Five days later, an armed man storms a synagogue in Pittsburgh and murders eleven people. He saw himself as battling a Jewish conspiracy. On his social media account, he spoke of a "Soros caravan." Confronted with these facts, Birnbaum sounds depressed. "In hindsight, what we did looks crazy, but seen at the time, it was proper."

Only a New Victim

Six months after the meeting in Berlin, Birnbaum extends an invitation to the lounge of the Trump Hotel in Washington, D.C. A friend is having an opening event: Corey Lewandowski is introducing his Trump book. The presidential advisor Kellyanne Conway looks in; caviar is sold, \$100 per ounce. There's dance music, and the waiters are almost all dark-skinned, but the guests almost all White. Birnbaum chats with guests at the invitation-only party and orders Moscow Mules.

Has he changed his opinion about the Soros campaign? **"Antisemitism is eternal, something that cannot be extinguished,"** he answers succinctly. **"Our campaign didn't turn anybody into an antisemite who wasn't already one. Perhaps it revealed a new victim. Nothing more. I would still do exactly the same as before."**

In December, Ignatieff had to announce the relocation of the university from Budapest to Vienna. The Open Society Foundation moved its principal office to Berlin. Orbán is once again at work, expanding his media empire. At home, as well as in other countries. He has big plans. The European elections are in May. Hungary became a model for the right worldwide. And Orbán has a new form of government, explains a Fidesz insider. Every one of Orbán's moves is "polled" in advance. Politicians don't need a vision anymore but simply mirror what matters to the people. Orbán calls it an "illiberal state."

Arthur Finkelstein died in 2017. Hungary was his final project. In one of his last public speeches, in 2011, he said: "I wanted to change the world. I did that. I made it worse."

From <<https://truestoryaward.org/story/230>>

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Orban...

Press Clippings about Orban Case Study

Victor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary (two terms)

- **Term#2 29 May 2010 - Present**
- **Term#1 06 July 1998 - 27 May 2002 - conservative coalition government**

During the 2010 parliamentary elections, Orbán's party **won 52.73% of the popular vote**, with a **two-thirds majority of seats**, which gave Orbán enough authority to change the Constitution.[85] As a result, Orbán's government drafted and passed a new constitution in 2011. Among other changes, it includes support for **traditional values, nationalism, references to Christianity**, and a controversial electoral reform, which **lowered the number of seats in the Parliament of Hungary from 386 to 199**. The new constitution entered into force on 1 January 2012 and was later amended further.
-Source: [Wikipedia](#)

2015May15- Orbán: I met Finkelstein two days ago

May 15, 2015 at 6:35 p.m

https://rtl-hu.translate.google.com/translate/hirado/2015/05/15/orban-ket-napja-talalkoztam-finkelsteinnel/?x_tr_sl=auto&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=en

They are in regular contact, the last time American political adviser Arthur Finkelstein visited Viktor Orbán two days ago - this is what the Prime Minister told RTL Hírado. Prime Minister János Lázár said on Thursday that he had not even heard the name of the internationally known consultant. At the same time, neither Fidesz nor the government revealed who Finkelstein receives his salary from. The political consultant recently founded a joint company in England with Árpád Habony, adviser to the prime minister. According to Együtt, the relationships between Orbán and his advisors are opaque.

Video link - <https://rtl.hu/hirado/2015/05/15/orban-ket-napja-talalkoztam-finkelsteinnel>

https://rtl-hu.translate.google.com/translate/hirado/2015/05/15/orban-ket-napja-talalkoztam-finkelsteinnel/?x_tr_sl=auto&x_tr_tl=en&x_tr_hl=en

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2017Jul10- Hungary vilifies financier Soros with crude poster campaign

Published 10 July 2017

From < <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40554844> >

PHOTO A poster showing George Soros, saying "Let's not allow Soros to have the last laugh!". Someone has written "dirty Jew" on his forehead

By Nick Thorpe
BBC News, Hungary

Giant posters vilifying the financier George Soros have gone up all over Hungary - the crudest step in the latest campaign by the rightwing Fidesz government against the 86-year-old Hungarian-born philanthropist.

Many Hungarian Jews fear that open or concealed anti-Semitism lies behind the campaign. The government strenuously denies this.

The posters show a grinning Mr Soros beside the words, "Don't let Soros have the last laugh".

In smaller letters at the top of the poster is the message, "99% reject illegal immigration."

The government has spent an estimated 5.7bn forints (€19m; £16.3m; \$21m) on the campaign, which follows an earlier series of poster campaigns and "national consultations" designed to stir up public feeling against refugees.

- [Migrant vote sparks Hungarian poster war](#)
- [Hungary's poster war on immigration](#)

Hungarian-born Mr Soros, pictured in June 2017, has spent \$12bn on civil initiatives since the 1980s

Last year, Hungary granted protection to just 550 people, one of the lowest rates in Europe, and has refused to accept a single person from the 1,294 quota allocated by the European Commission in September 2015. With Slovakia, the Fidesz government has also taken the Commission to the European Court of Justice over the quota allocations.

The Fidesz government is also trying to close the Central European University, founded by Mr Soros in Budapest in 1992, and has passed legislation forcing non-governmental organisations to declare themselves "foreign-funded" - and therefore suspect, in the increasingly xenophobic atmosphere in Hungary.

That legislation targets Soros-funded NGOs in particular.

Why is Orban targeting Soros?

Since the mid 1980s, Mr Soros has spent \$12bn, mostly through his Open Society Foundations, on civil initiatives to reduce poverty and increase transparency, and on scholarships and universities around the world, especially in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

These usually have a strong human rights component, which have made him the bogeyman of many nationalist and illiberal governments.

His civil society initiatives have made him unpopular with nationalist governments, like the one in Hungary

What appears to have irritated the Hungarian government most is a series of statements by Mr Soros over the past two years in favour of controlled immigration to Europe, the US and Canada.

[In an article in the journal Foreign Policy in July 2016](#), Mr Soros suggested that Europe might accept 300,000 refugees a year directly from Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. He also sees selected immigration as one of the solutions to labour shortages in many fields in Europe, from IT to care homes.

Like the Hungarian government, however, he emphasised that refugee resettlement and relocation programmes must be voluntary, not compulsory.

Is the campaign anti-Semitic?

The Hungarian government also stands accused of whipping up anti-Semitism with the anti-Soros posters. Mr Soros has Jewish roots, and as a nine-year-old during the Holocaust in German-occupied Hungary, he helped warn Jewish families about imminent deportations.

Many government posters have had anti-Semitic graffiti scrawled on them. The posters on the floors of Budapest trams were deliberately placed so passengers would have to tread on Mr Soros's face.

Andras Heisler, leader of the Jewish community in Hungary, personally appealed to Prime Minister Viktor Orban to end the poster campaign.

Mr Orban rejected the appeal and suggested that Hungarian Jews do more to oppose Muslim immigration to Europe.

The controversy is already overshadowing the planned visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Hungary on 18 July.

Israel's ambassador to Hungary initially denounced the anti-Soros campaign, saying it "sows hatred and fear", but then Israel's foreign ministry issued its own statement **critical of George Soros. According to Israeli reports, the change in tone had been ordered by Mr Netanyahu's office.**

The ministry complained that the philanthropist "continuously undermines Israel's democratically elected governments by funding organisations that defame the Jewish state and seek to deny it the right to defend itself".

The government has spent an estimated 5.7bn forints (€19m; \$21m) on the campaign

There is little love lost on Mr Soros's side towards Mr Orban, even though his foundation once funded a young Mr Orban's scholarship to study at Oxford University.

"I admire the courageous way Hungarians have resisted the deception and corruption of the mafia state Orban has established," [Mr Soros told the European Parliament on 1 June](#), "and I am

encouraged by the European institutions' energetic response to the challenges emanating from Poland and Hungary."

One small opposition party, Together, has already begun tearing down the posters in the 16th district in Budapest, and hopes to initiate similar actions elsewhere.

From < <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40554844>>

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Bibi backers naked land-grab & power-grab—the chauvinistic 3D definition of antisemitism denies any dissent against Tzar Bibi.

KEY EXCERPTS FROM THIS ARTICLE!

Gary Rosenblatt theatlantic.com

[Is Anti-Semitism the New Normal in America? - The Atlantic](#)

UNIVERSITY WARFARE **NATAN SHARANSKYHere is the Essence of Bibi-Apologists–Don't Complain about Israeli Policy******

- Jews are contending with a growing effort on **university campuses to demonize Israel as a racist, illegitimate state, and thus define Jewish students who support Israel as untouchable**. As a result, such students are frequently excluded from liberal groups that support causes such as:
 - Black Lives Matter,
 - gay rights, and
 - combatting climate change.

[why? Because many/most Haredi Jews are anti-equality for women, blacks, gays—and Likud conservatives cater to the religious fascist just like Republicans do]

- To distinguish between legitimate criticism of Israel and racism, the Soviet refusenik turned Israeli politician **Natan Sharansky applies “the three D’s”**: delegitimization, demonization, and subjecting Israel to a double standard. Among many on the left, Israel, once admired for boxing far above its weight in a chaotic region, is viewed now as a pariah state.

[bingo ADL Foxman - TRUTH DECAY - and who other than TRUMP et al. is driving us to lose confidence in our government and institutions? 3Ds!!!]

Anti-Semitism is being fed by religion, politics, economics, and social issues, he added. The “firewalls” of protection that worked in the

past—a common base of truth and facts, a shared consensus, fairness and accountability, a media that educates—“no longer have credibility. They’re gone,” Foxman said. “It’s like a perfect storm.”

BLINDLY BACKING BIBI = PRO-ISRAEL, CRITICISM = ANTISEMITISM

Defenders of the president emphasize his bold steps on behalf of Israel: moving the American embassy to Jerusalem and seeking to resolve the **Israel-Palestine conflict by openly backing the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** and **placing the onus and pressure on the Palestinians**. And they say that an executive order issued in December will be highly effective in combatting anti-Semitism on college campuses.

[so pro-bibi is supporting Israel and Jews, and disagreeing is antisemitic]

▶▶ [READ THE FULL ARTICLE BELOW - LINK](#)

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2023Sep15 JustSecurity- Tucker Carlson, Viktor Orbán and the Anti-Democracy Playbook

by [Norman L. Eisen](#) and [Tom Joscelyn](#)

September 15, 2023

With Tucker Carlson’s exit from his perch on Fox News, his activities are in the news less, but they continue to be influential for millions who now watch his broadcasts on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. Case in point is his alarming [interview](#) late last month with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Orbán has transformed Hungary into what he describes as an “[illiberal state](#)” – openly embracing autocracy – and recently [declared his intent](#) to **stay in power for more than another decade**.

MODEL AUTOCRACY for American Fascists]

To Tucker and many on the American right, Orbán's government is a model to emulate in the United States. That should be concerning to any American who values their own democracy. And this isn't the first time Orbán has had a prominent U.S. platform – just a year ago, he [spoke](#) at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas, [warning ominously](#), "Politics are not enough. This war is a culture war."

Carlson's dialogue is the latest alarm bell about the threat posed by Orbán and the disinformation spread by him and his authoritarian compatriots.

- For example, Carlson claimed that Hungary's press "is much freer than ours." That's not true. Orbán and his allies have wrested [control](#) of much of the country's media, a classic tactic of autocrats as they consolidate their rule.
- Carlson also praised Orbán for supposedly winning a "fair election" in 2022. That is not true either. Independent observers concluded that the election was [neither free, nor fair](#), because it did not provide opposition parties with a "[level playing field](#)."

Redefining Freedom as Anti-Freedom]

In the interview, Orbán claimed that his liberal critics in Washington are the ones who are "against freedom" and an "enemy of freedom." That is also false. Orbán's democratic backsliding has been widely documented. As a result, Freedom House, an independent democracy watchdog, has downgraded Hungary to only "[partly free](#)" in its most recent rankings.

Americans should pay close attention to how Hungary lost its democracy. Leaders on the American right seem to be embarking on a similar course. It is easy to see the parallels between the Hungarian prime minister and the policies of [former President Donald Trump or Florida Governor Ron DeSantis](#). And the political movements of Trump and his imitators like DeSantis are intertwined with Orbán's.

Always Conspiracies- Refer to Birnbaum/Finkelstein–the Jewish Conspiracy campaigners]

For example, a key pillar of Orbán's and Trump's political program is **conspiracism – a reflexive belief that dark forces are undermining the will of the people.**

- In typical autocratic fashion, Orbán and Trump claim that only they can save their people from these nefarious actors. In fact, Orbán told Carlson that only Trump "can save the Western world."
- Carlson is America's **chief propagandist for this conspiratorial and apocalyptic worldview.** It is inherently corrosive for democracy. In this view, American politics are no longer about differences over policy, but instead part of an epic and zero-sum civilizational struggle.

[note Carlson's dad ran the US Information Services, which is the information arm of the State Department-VOA, Radio Free Europe, etc–Does Tucker have Daddy issues?]

- Consider the “**great replacement theory**,” which is based on the belief that the Western elite seek to replace white Americans and Europeans with immigrants of color. This racist allegation was once confined to the fringes of the internet, on websites where white nationalists and other extremists stewed in their imaginary grievances. It is no longer fringe. Orbán made it central to his political program, while Carlson promoted it on his highly rated cable show. During his May 2022 inauguration speech, Orbán [claimed](#) he was defending Hungary against the “great European population replacement program, which seeks to replace the missing European Christian children with migrants, with adults arriving from other civilizations.” Meanwhile, Carlson [insisted](#) on his former Fox News show that the “great replacement theory” wasn’t crazy, [InfoWars-style](#) content, but instead the Democrats’ “electoral strategy.”

Trump and Carlson **wield conspiracy theories as weapons against the U.S. government.**

- Carlson eagerly promoted Trump’s lie that the 2020 presidential election was [“rigged.”](#)
- After thousands of Trump’s enraged supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, Carlson lied on their and Trump’s behalf – falsely claiming that the **U.S. government had somehow tricked Trump’s “patriots.”** This is obviously nonsense, yet many on the American right believe it.

[refer to George Washington’s warnings in his 1795 farewell address about the enemies within the State as America’s greatest enemy–like Tucker Carlson, Rupert Murdoch, (maybe Mark Zuckerberg, etc., elitist Republic election deniers, - who try to undermine our confidence in our democracy)]

- The cumulative effect of the conspiracy theories promoted by Trump, Carlson, and their ilk, is to **undermine confidence in America’s democracy.** As a result, most Republicans [still believe](#) that the 2020 presidential election was somehow stolen from Trump.
- The truth is that Orbán is an expert at **altering the rules of the game in his favor.** Hungarians vote in every election, but in a tilted system that all but guarantees victory for Orbán and his Fidesz party. Orbán and Fidesz have rewritten Hungary’s constitution to change how votes are cast and counted. These changes have benefited Fidesz, while making it much more difficult for opposition parties to compete and win.

[usa - voter suppression, gerrymandering, rigging the Supreme Court with fascists, etc...same thing happening in the USA as Republican-controlled legislatures attempt to suppress voter turnout and de facto disenfranchise groups that tend to vote for their opponents]

- After his party won the 2010 election with more than **50 percent of the vote and captured two-thirds of the seats in parliament**, for instance, Orbán and his legislative minions [amended](#) the Hungarian constitution to **cut the size of the parliament in half**. Fidesz then [gerrymandered Hungary's voting districts](#) to favor conservative rural areas over the comparatively more liberal cities. As a result, urban voters are underrepresented in Hungary's parliament.
- Across two of Hungary's election cycles, [from 2014 to 2018](#), Fidesz used this rigged system to consolidate its power even while failing to win 50 percent of the nationwide vote. Only in 2022, after severely restricting opposition media and enacting other anti-democratic measures, did Fidesz finally again garner more than half of Hungarians' votes.
- In a **functioning democracy, Orbán's overreach would be held in check by an independent judiciary**. But here, too, Orbán has followed the autocrat's path by [stacking the courts with loyalists](#) and establishing a [parallel administrative court system](#) that is loyal to him, not the rule of law.

[fascist hate the independent judiciary–Bibi-ultra-orthodox, Trump-fascist Christian leaders, Bolsanaro]

- It's easy to see why Carlson and his followers may find Orbán's autocratic approach to be appealing. Trump and other far-right leaders are popular in America's predominantly white rural counties, but far less so in the more diverse and populous metropolitan areas.

[this is a global problem, the rural-urban divide—we need stronger democratic leadership in our rural areas, and we need the benefits of globalization to be redistributed from those becoming ultra-rich due to globalization to those people who are becoming worse off due to globalization, whether its due to loss of jobs and industries in the West to sweatshop industrialization and exploitation of people and the environment in the developing world]

- That is why Carlson and other rightwing extremists need something like Orbán's seizure of all the main levers of political, judicial and media power if they have any prospect of transforming America along the anti-democratic lines they envision.

In a 2021 speech in Hungary, Carlson began by minimizing his role, remarking that “we just in the end run a cable show, we're not elected to anything, we have no actual power.” He no longer has his cable show, but he continues to spread his anti-democratic conspiracy theories and anti-government extremism to millions on social media. Americans must pay very close attention to Carlson and to Orbán so that the style of governance they are advocating never takes root on American soil.

IMAGE: Tucker Carlson speaks during the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC) Feszt on August 7, 2021 in Esztergom, Hungary. The multiday political event was organized by the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC), a privately managed foundation that had recently received more than \$1.7 billion in government money and assets. The leader of its main board is Balazs Orban, who is not related to Prime Minister Viktor Orban, but was a state secretary in the prime minister's office

at the time and currently serves as his political director. Balazs Orban said at the time that MCC's priority is promoting "patriotism" among the next generation of Hungary's leaders. In the foreground of the photo is a woman, seen from behind, holding a dog and wearing a red hat that, according to another photo in the series, says, "Tucker MAGA." (Photo by Janos Kummer/Getty Images)

[Norman L. Eisen](#)

Ambassador Norman Eisen (ret.) ([@NormEisen](#)) served in the White House as special counsel and special assistant to the president for ethics and government reform and as ambassador to the Czech Republic under President Barack Obama, as well as special counsel to the House Judiciary Committee from 2019–20, including for the first impeachment and trial of President Donald Trump.

[Tom Joscelyn](#)

Tom Joscelyn ([@thomasjoscelyn](#)) was a senior professional staff member on the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol and has testified before Congress on more than 20 occasions. He is a Senior Fellow at the Reiss Center on Law and Security.

From <https://www.justsecurity.org/88319/tucker-carlson-viktor-orban-and-the-anti-democracy-playbook/>

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2015MAR19- Bill O'Reilly's Anti-Semitic Tropes: George Soros Is A Tentacled "Puppet Master"

Written by Zachary Pleat & Craig Harrington
2015MAR19

mediamatters.org

Fox News host Bill O'Reilly resorted to anti-Semitic imagery in an effort to smear George Soros, describing the Jewish philanthropist and businessman as a "shadow puppet master" who "has his tentacles into political organizations."

On the March 18 edition of *The O'Reilly Factor*, O'Reilly warned viewers that the American people have a responsibility to counter so-called "anti-capitalist violence on display" in Europe. He deplored what he claimed is "crazy left-wing economic stuff" on its way to taking root in the United States as a result of the economic agenda championed by President Obama, Senators Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Elizabeth

Warren (D-MA), and 84-year old philanthropist George Soros, whom O'Reilly declared “the most frightening of all.” He continued (emphasis added):

O'REILLY: Soros has now taken his ill-gotten gains and is financing the most radical left-wing organizations in America. **He is the shadow puppet master** behind corrupt far-left groups like *Media Matters*. **Soros has his tentacles into political organizations** like the Center for American Progress, which has provided operatives for the Obama administration, some of whom are now going over to Hillary Clinton's campaign. Few Americans even know who Soros is, but the 84-year old uber-leftist is behind much of the political strife in this country.

Depictions of Jewish people as "[puppet masters](#)" [controlling](#) the government and the media are [anti-Semitic stereotypes](#) that go back decades. O'Reilly's claim that Soros' “tentacles” have infiltrated the upper echelons of political society is also a play on overtly anti-Semitic imagery. The white supremacist, neo-Nazi online forum [Stormfront.org](#) contains a trove of examples, including a March 19, 2013 [post](#) called “The 6 Tentacles of Jewish Supremacy Revealed.” The image of a Jewish octopus engulfing the globe or ensnaring political institutions dates back to at least the 1930s, when it was a common theme in [Nazi propaganda](#).

In 2010, then-Fox News host Glenn Beck was [condemned](#) by [Jewish groups](#) in part for using similar negative stereotypes and for [accusing](#) Soros of being a Nazi collaborator who helped “send the Jews” to “death camps.”

[Bill O'Reilly's Anti-Semitic Tropes: George Soros Is A Tentacled "Puppet Master" | Media Matters for America](#)

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2020Sep23 Reuters- Fact check: False claims about George Soros

By Reuters Staff

2020Sep23

Further details have been added to paragraph six of this article so that it covers Soros' description of his time in hiding as a teenager. Social media users have been sharing an image online that makes several disparaging and false claims about George Soros. Some of these claims include Soros being a former Nazi, Soros “swearing to destroy the U.S.A.”, Soros owning ANTIFA and Black Lives Matter, and Soros paying for protesters. Examples can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).

George Soros is a billionaire philanthropist and founder of Open Society Foundations. He has been the target of multiple conspiracy theories and misinformation on social media ([here](#)). Previous Reuters fact checks debunking claims about Soros can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Open Society Foundations told Reuters via email that the claims made toward Soros in these posts are “false” and “do a disservice to the very bedrock of our democracy, as enshrined in the First Amendment.”

SOROS IS NOT A FORMER NAZI

Reuters debunked a false claim that a photograph shows a young Soros in a Nazi uniform ([here](#)). During the time Nazis were active, Soros would not have met the age requirements to be in the Schutzstaffel. Soros and his family were Hungarian Jews who lived in Budapest during the war, disguising their identities for safety. In 1947 at the age of 17, Soros moved to London to attend university (more [here](#)).

By the time Soros was 17, the fall of Nazi Germany had already happened. Soros could not possibly have been involved in the Nazi party which was active between 1920-1945. He is also a Hungarian Jew, further disproving this theory. In a 1998 60 Minutes interview (youtu.be/AiqHiQYuoOs) Soros says his father forged his family’s identity to protect them. Soros, as a teenager, was placed under custody of a government official with the premise of being his godson. During this time, Soros witnessed (but did not actively participate in) the confiscation of Jewish property ([here](#)). In the interview, Soros says he doesn’t feel guilt looking back at these events, mentioning that he was a child at the time and that he was a “spectator” to something that would have happened regardless of his presence.

SOROS NEVER SWORE TO “DESTROY THE USA”

Reuters found no evidence of Soros ever saying this. Other fact checkers have also debunked this specific “quote” ([here](#), [here](#)).

An older version of the quote attributes it to a Newsweek interview but there is no evidence Soros said this in their archive. One article quotes Steve Bannon comparing politics to war, saying, “They fight, look at [George] Soros and these other NGOs...they destroy you.” The article also states that, according to Bannon, Soros threatened to “destroy him personally.” ([here](#)).

SOROS DOES NOT “OWN” ANTIFA AND BLACK LIVES MATTER

George Soros does not “own” ANTIFA or Black Lives Matter.

A spokesperson for Open Society Foundations told Reuters via email: “We proudly support organizations that promote civic engagement and champion the right of all Americans to petition their government for redress of grievances. Those protesting the death of Mr. Floyd and police brutality across the nation do so out of a deep and abiding

concern for country; they don't do so for pay from these foundations or any other, as some cynics claim."

Black Lives Matter is a largely horizontal, grassroots, global organization ([https:// bit.ly/373z22H](https://bit.ly/373z22H)). Its co-founders, Opal Tometi, Patrisse Cullors, and Alicia Garza started the movement in 2013, after the death of Trayvon Martin. The co-founders [recently told the New Yorker](#) that Black Lives Matter "has always been somewhat decentralized" and operates in a horizontal manner: "We have always said the power goes on in the local chapter because they know what is going on".

The organization recently set up a \$12 million grant to help organizations fighting institutional racism, after an upsurge in donations amid the current protests. Beyoncé and Prince are among the celebrities who have donated to Black Lives Matter in previous years ([here](#)).

Open Society Foundations donates to groups worldwide ([here](#)). Some of their previous donations - including to Black Lives Matter and Planned Parenthood - have been subject to controversy in the U.S. ([here](#), [here](#)). It is unclear if the foundation has donated to Black Lives Matter again in the last month.

Antifa, short for "anti-fascist," is an amorphous movement whose adherents oppose people or groups they consider authoritarian or racist, often using aggressive tactics, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which monitors extremists ([here](#)). Horizontal in nature and largely lacking official organization, it is unclear how Antifa is funded, if at all ([here](#)).

SOROS DID NOT PAY FOR PROTESTERS AFTER TRUMP'S ELECTION

Following Trump's 2016 election win, some far-right claims suggested actors including Soros funded the 'Not My President' protests. Open Society Foundations denied paying these protesters in any way ([here](#), [here](#)).

Soros has been mistakenly accused of sponsoring protests after Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court appointment and protests against racism in Ferguson, Missouri ([here](#), [here](#)).

Open Society Foundations recently explained in a tweet: "We do not pay protesters. Neither does our founder George Soros. Claims that we do serve to delegitimize those who are exercising their Constitutionally-protected right to protest peacefully and petition their government for redress of grievances." ([here](#))

VERDICT

False. Conspiracy theories about George Soros visible in this post are unfounded.

This article was produced by the Reuters Fact Check team. Read more about our work to fact-check social media posts [here](#).

Source [Fact check: False claims about George Soros | Reuters](#)

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2023Sep13 Time- History of Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories, from the Rothschilds to George Soros

By [Olivia B. Waxman](#)

[The History of Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories, from the Rothschilds to George Soros](#)

Jewish families are gathering to mark Rosh Hashanah (Sep. 15-17), the start of the new year in the Jewish calendar, and fast for Yom Kippur (Sep. 24-25), a day of atonement. Yet the holiest days of the year for those who observe come during [a record year](#) for tracking antisemitic incidents, according to the Anti-Defamation League, and a new book looks at one aspect of what is driving the [rampant antisemitism](#) today by focusing on the history of the legendary family of German financiers, the Rothschilds.

In *Jewish Space Lasers: The Rothschilds and 200 Years of Conspiracy Theories*, out Sept. 19, author Mike Rothschild (no relation to the bankers he writes about) tracks how this one wealthy family became the subject of myriad far-right conspiracies. While the family still makes real headlines—the first North American auction of items and art from the Rothschild family’s collection on Oct. 11 is expected to bring in about \$50 million—there are countless false stories about them that the journalist debunks in his book. The author Rothschild is an expert on conspiracy theories, and his last book was about the origins of QAnon.

TIME talked to Rothschild on Aug. 28 about where the conspiracy theories about the Rothschild financiers fit in the larger history of antisemitism.

The following conversation has been lightly edited and condensed.

1. Who is the real Rothschild family?

The Rothschilds were one of a number of wealthy German Jewish families in Frankfurt and they simply went out into the banking capitals of Europe at the right time. They made an enormous amount of money off of the Napoleonic Wars, and invested that into railroads, mining, real estate, media.

2. Descendants of the family still exist. What do they do now?

There are many, many descendants of the Rothschild family. Some are involved in banking, some have nothing to do with banking. There's one who is an environmentalist and adventurer currently dating Angelina Jolie. There's another one who was mixed up with **Paul Manafort and Oleg Deripaska**. One thing that they really have in common though is they have a real **aversion to the media**. Occasionally one will be interviewed about banking or art or wine or some new philanthropic venture they're interested in, but they are very, **very publicity shy**, which is a big change from many of the other wealthy families we've seen dominating the landscape over the last few decades.

3. How did the Rothschild family become a target of conspiracy theorists? Was there a turning point?

This pamphlet that came out in **Paris in 1846**, written by an anonymous pamphleteer who **went by "Satan."** One is that Nathan Rothschild, the best known son of the original Patriarch Mayer Rothschild, had **known the outcome of the battle of Waterloo in advance**. Now this pamphlet came out **30 years after the Battle, and Nathan had been dead for 10 years at this point.**

The other accusation in this pamphlet is that Nathan's brother James, who is based in Paris, had owned a railroad and neglected the maintenance on it. And there was an accident on it, and a bunch of people were killed. So you have this idea that the Rothschilds are greedy, they are manipulators, but they're also cheap, and they don't care about the lives of ordinary men.

This pamphlet was a massive hit in Paris. It sold **tens of thousands of copies**. After that, there is a massive industry of **Rothschild conspiracy theories**, some of which are just invented on the spot, and others utilize tropes like Jews being cheap, Jews being greedy, Jews being clannish, keeping their money to themselves. This was really the first instance of a specifically antisemitic anti Rothschild conspiracy theory becoming a major driver of commerce—that essentially went viral to use our current parlance. Throughout a lot of the 20th century, the Rothschilds were seen in antisemitic propaganda as the kings of Jews—the string pullers of the string pullers.

4. Your book talks about the roots of antisemitism and how Jews became associated with being good with money because of how they grew up learning arithmetic very young. How did that get twisted by conspiracy theorists?

There were a number of prohibitions in the Middle Ages in Europe on what Jews were **allowed to do and what Christians were allowed to do as far as money.**

USURY: It was considered a mortal sin by Christians to lend money at too high an interest rate—that was considered usury. It was on par with murder and incest as just the worst thing you could do.

JEWISH FINANCING: At the same time, these growing Christian communities needed money to build their churches, to build their castles, to equip their army, so they had to go somewhere to get it. They ended up going with Jewish communities where they had access to wealth, they were able to lend money at interest. So you had this **dichotomy of we have to go to these people for money, but we also loathe them** because they have the money to lend us.

Jews got this reputation as being good with money, as being able to sort of conjure money out of thin air, but also very suspicious because they were good with money. It's very **contradictory**.

5. Did you find any key differences between antisemitism about the Rothschilds in the U.S. compared to in Europe?

I was really surprised to learn that there was **never a Rothschild branch of the family in the U.S.**

- But the volume of conspiracy theories about the family is enormous, and really started with the initial diaspora of Europeans to the U.S. A lot of these people really did extol the Rothschilds as paragons of virtue and the example to which all Jews should look up to.
- And a lot of Christian papers of the time found it just baffling and found the Rothschilds figures of fascination—and of course, that very quickly curdles into antisemitism.
- In Europe, the Rothschilds are really visible. They've got their **palaces everywhere**. They've built railroads. Their names are on hospitals.
- But in America, they were **objects of curiosity, and curiosity can very easily turn into suspicion**.

6. It's like, if you don't see physical evidence of these people, then people's imaginations run wild.

That's exactly it.

7. Let's talk about the title of your book, Jewish Space Lasers. What's that conspiracy? Where does that conspiracy fit in the history of conspiracy theories?

MTG–ANTI-JEWISH WITH OUT SAYING JEIWSH.....That specific phrase “Jewish space lasers” is the one that is supposedly uttered by [Marjorie Taylor Greene](#) in her **2018 Facebook post**, accusing the **Rothschilds of using a space-based solar generator to start [the California wildfire](#)** that turned out to be one of the worst in the state's history.

This post—which I think had been deleted pretty quickly after it went up—was **found again in 2021**, just after she took office, and it started this whole round of memes and jokes about how Marjorie Taylor Greene thinks the Rothschilds own a laser and use it to control the weather.

Now, one of the interesting things that I found is that in that Facebook post, she never uses that term. She never says “Jewish space lasers.” She **never even says Jewish**.

She talks about the Rothschilds and how it's interesting that a board member of **Pacific Gas and Electric—who were found negligent for the fire—was also a senior executive at Rothschild Inc.**

But her conspiracy theory is so cockamamie and so unfollowable that you don't even really understand what role the Rothschilds are supposed to play in all this. It's really

- an example of not even so much an antisemitic conspiracy theory
- **but how conspiracy theories are so needlessly complicated**, and
- serve as much more histrionic explanations to obscure what's really going on—which of course, in this case is something like climate change [making every forest fire much worse](#).

8. How would you describe the state of antisemitism in the U.S.?

There is a major, major upswing in public antisemitism,

- certainly in antisemitic acts of violence, acts of vandalism, flyers being distributed around neighborhoods, by these very internet-savvy young racists who are getting attention for themselves.
- Some of these big social media influencers talk constantly about Jewish influence, Jewish power, the Jewish ability to get away with things nobody else can get away with.
- We've really dropped the veneer that there's any kind of separation between the Rothschilds and just the rank and file Reform Jew who goes to synagogue once a year.

9. Where does the Donald Trump era sit in the history of antisemitism in the U.S.?

I don't think Trump made America more antisemitic. America has always been antisemitic.

- What Trump did was give us permission to say this stuff,
- give us permission to really expound on these cockamamie theories.

10. Are there similarities or differences between the antisemitic myths around the Rothschilds and George Soros?

The book finishes with how Soros has become the Rothschild of the 21st century.

There's always going to be a need for someone to blame when things go wrong—someone who has gotten too powerful, too rich, and needs to be knocked down a peg.

For a long time, the Rothschilds really filled that role. It was really about 2004, when George Soros got involved in American politics and helped fund the John Kerry campaign that this **rightwing media machine that had spent generations** attacking the Rothschilds very quickly and very vociferously pivoted to George Soros.

Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly did hour-long specials on him as a puppet master.

- Alex Jones, who talks constantly about the Rothschilds, constantly about George Soros, was inspired by some of the most prolific anti-Semites of the 20th century.
- He talks all of the time about how the book *None Dare Call it Conspiracy* was a huge influence on him when he was a teenager. That book is full of Rothschilds conspiracy theories. What we're seeing now is this repurposing of antisemitic conspiracy theories for a new generation of people who are just discovering them, and it really runs through the Rothschilds.
- Nowadays, with the [2024 presidential election coming up](#), we're definitely seeing the idea that Soros is funding all the Democrats, [funding all the district attorneys](#) who are indicting Trump. It's all part of some plan to keep Trump out of office, and it's all Soros's doing.

11. Is there a takeaway you want people to come away with after reading your book?

Antisemitism is very easy to couch in euphemisms.

When you hear terms like **“globalists,” “foreign bankers,” or “London financiers,”** that usually has some reference to the Jews.

- Unfortunately, these theories travel much faster than any kind of debunking will ever be able to stop.
- The truth is always going to travel slower than the lies, and we have an election coming up that is very susceptible to being influenced by this constant stream of conspiracy theories.

Write to Olivia B. Waxman at olivia.waxman@time.com.

2018Oct11 ADL- The Antisemitism Lurking Behind George Soros Conspiracy Theories

[The Antisemitism Lurking Behind George Soros Conspiracy Theories | ADL](#)

Published: 10.11.2018

- [Antisemitism Globally](#)
- [Antisemitism in the US](#)

Hungarian Jewish billionaire, philanthropist and Holocaust survivor George Soros is widely recognized for funding progressive political and social causes, usually through grants made by his Open Society Foundations. As a result, Soros has become a lightning rod for conservative and right-wing groups who object to his funding of liberal causes.

In far-right circles worldwide, Soros' philanthropy often is recast as fodder for outsized conspiracy theories, including claims that he masterminds specific global plots or manipulates particular events to further his goals. Many of those conspiracy theories employ longstanding antisemitic myths, particularly the notion that rich and powerful Jews work behind the scenes, plotting to control countries and manipulate global events.

The right-wing government of Viktor Orbán in Hungary have [attacked Soros for years](#), claiming that he seeks to undermine Hungary's national ethos. The vehemence of the anti-Soros campaigns is chilling. For example, [a slew of posters](#) that appeared in Budapest last summer reminded many observers of Nazi-era propaganda used to stir up hatred and violence against Jews.

However, such anti-Soros activity is not unique to Hungary. [Soros long has been a punching bag of authoritarian regimes across Eastern Europe](#) where resentment lingers for his work to build democratic institutions and governments after the fall of the Iron Curtain. And voices in some liberal democracies like Israel [cast Soros as a central figure](#) trying to undermine the national interest.

In the United States, Soros long has been a favored target of the so-called alt right and other right-wing extremists. Their online echo chambers [reverberate with conspiracies about Soros](#), accusing him of attempting to perpetrate “white genocide” and push his own malevolent agenda. In a [report published earlier this year](#) that analyzed antisemitic speech on Twitter, ADL found that Soros figured prominently in a significant number of [antisemitic tweets](#). One noteworthy allegation claimed that [Soros was responsible for the deadly “Unite the Right” rally in August 2017 in Charlottesville](#), Va. Other tweets referred to his Jewish heritage in pejorative terms and claimed that he’s trying to undermine all of Western civilization.

More recently, we have seen conspiracy theories surface that blame Soros of funding protests against the appointment of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. [A series of hateful posters on this topic were plastered on colleges campuses](#), all part of a campaign engineered by the neo-Nazi [Daily Stormer](#) website. And just this week anti-Muslim advocate [Frank Gaffney](#) sent an e-mail blast to his supporters asking, “Is George Soros the anti-Christ?” and suggesting that his record “is one of such malevolence and destruction that he must at a minimum be considered the anti-Christ’s right-hand man.”

But it’s been equally troubling to see claims of Soros-driven conspiracies move into the mainstream. Even if unintentional, politicians and pundits repeating these unsubstantiated conspiracies essentially validate the same hateful myths propagated by antisemites.

A person who promotes a Soros conspiracy theory may not intend to promulgate antisemitism. But Soros’ Jewish identity is so well-known that in many cases it is hard not to infer that meaning. This is especially true when Soros-related conspiracy theories include other well-worn antisemitic tropes such as control of the media or banks; references to undermining societies or destabilizing countries; or language that harkens back to the [medieval blood libels](#) and the characterization of Jews as evil, demonic, or agents of the antichrist.

Even if no antisemitic insinuation is intended, casting a Jewish individual as a puppet master who manipulates national events for malign purposes has the effect of mainstreaming antisemitic tropes and giving support, however unwitting, to bona fide antisemites and extremists who disseminate these ideas knowingly and with malice.

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**2020Jun02 ADL- Soros Conspiracy Theories and The
Protests: A Gateway to Antisemitism**

Published: 06.02.2020

[Source: ADL](#)

As protests – still largely peaceful, but increasingly marked by violent confrontations, looting and vandalism -- continue in response to the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis, right-wing pundits and an ideologically diverse crew of conspiracy theorists have alleged that [George Soros](#) has played a role in fomenting the chaos.

Aggressive language towards Soros has exploded on social media sites like Twitter, where a sample assessment showed that negative tweets about Soros rose from 20,000 per day on May 26 to more than 500,000 per day on May 30.

The vast majority of these tweets allege that Soros is paying protestors to riot, and that he funds [antifa](#). A smaller number claim that he plans to radicalize African Americans in order to undermine society and enable the globalist takeover of America, while some go so far as to claim that George Floyd's death was actually a false flag deployed by Soros in order to precipitate the current crisis.

This comes as social media was already rife with Soros [conspiracy theories](#) alleging he is responsible for the spread of COVID-19, and that he will use efforts to fight the virus using contact tracing to implement mass surveillance.

Numerous right-wing pundits and activists are now alleging that Soros is funding the protests following the murder of George Floyd. Prominent among them is Candace Owens, who [wrote](#), "As he did with Antifa, Democrat George Soros has these thugs on payroll. He is funding the chaos via his Open Society Foundation." DeAnna Lorraine, the Republican candidate for Congress who ran unsuccessfully against Nancy Pelosi in March 2020, [asked her 261k followers](#) to "bring attention to this very organized takeover" of the country by getting #sorosgate and #soros to trend on Twitter.

When President Trump tweeted (about the protests), "It's ANTIFA and the Radical Left. Don't lay the blame on others!," former game show host Chuck Woolery disagreed. "It's George Soros," [he tweeted](#). David Wohl, Trump surrogate and father of [disinformation activist](#) Jacob Wohl, [agreed](#), saying, "Soros funded rent-a-mobs no doubt."

Actor-turned-right-wing-Twitter-pundit James Woods, referring to a "night of savage anarchy" on May 30, [wrote that](#) "[when] George Soros rules our streets, we are doomed. #TakeAmericaBack."

Others used more conspiratorial and sinister language to describe their theories about Soros' involvement. Posts in several anti-Soros Facebook groups recirculated a 2016 article claiming that a leaked memo revealed that Soros planned to "use Black Lives Matter to federalize U.S. police."

"Network marketing" entrepreneur Laire Lightener [wrote to her 84k Facebook followers](#) that "George Soros #1 goal in life is destroy America so that globalists can take over. He funds the #BLM movement & riots happening across the nation every time the globalists decide they need a new race war started." Numerous posts on social media have cited

a fabricated 2014 “quote” from Soros: “I’m going to bring down the United States by funding Black Hate groups. We’ll put them into a mental trap and make them blame white people. The Black community is the easiest to manipulate.”

Some go so far as to say that the death of George Floyd, which precipitated the protests and rioting of recent days, was a false flag event orchestrated by George Soros. One lengthy post on a Facebook group with 25k members claimed, “the Floyd event was staged...with the purpose of creating racial tensions and driving a wedge in the growing group of anti-deep state sentiment from common people, that have already been psychologically traumatized by Covid 19 fears... You can draw your own conclusions, but this appears to have all the earmarks of George Soros. Please open your eyes!!!!”

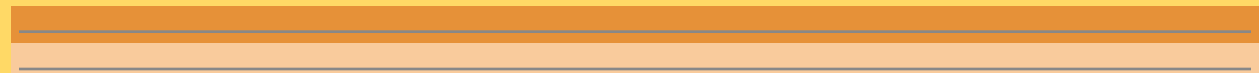
Although the vast majority of Soros-related conspiracy theories do not mention his Jewish heritage, the concern remains that they can serve as a gateway to the antisemitic subculture that blames Jews for the riots. This type of content can be found on mainstream platforms; a Twitter user wrote, “George Soros is paying for this he is a Jew America bows to the Jew [sic],” while another tweeted, “Antifa are on the payroll of the Jewish financier George Soros who often uses these paid thugs to intimidate any opposition towards the status quo that he and his Zionist allies have set up to control us.” Yet another claimed, “Soros is every bit the subversive, parasitic conspirator these people make him out to be. The problem they always neglect to mention is the fact that he’s a Jew.”

Similar sentiments can be found on sites frequented by white supremacists and antisemites. White supremacist Kyle Hunt wrote that the Jewish-controlled “ZOG” ([Zionist Occupation Government](#)) “are starting a race war so people don’t rally against ZOG” in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd. A poster on 4chan claimed, “the jews are just playing with us with their rent a crowds at this point.”

An anonymous post on 8kun theorizes, “the Marxist democrat kikes that run twitter and faceberg used their social engineering platforms to whip this up and organize these riots. Soros used his subversion NGO shock troops to organize and direct the riots. Niggers burned down and looted their own cities with the encouragement of billionaire kikes, which will make them poor and cause crime to increase in their shitholes long term. Everyone who is rational will move away and all that will be left will be an economic desert poverty like Compton California, a once thriving crime free city.”

<https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/soros-conspracy-theories-and-protests-gateway-anti-semitism>

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Obituaries for Arthur Finkelstein

Obituary NYT- Arthur Finkelstein, Innovative, Influential Conservative Strategist, Dies at 72

Aug. 19, 2017
nytimes.com

Arthur Finkelstein, a reclusive political Svengali who revolutionized campaign polling and financing and helped elect a bevy of conservative candidates, including President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, died on Friday night in Ipswich, Mass., where he lived. He was 72.

His family confirmed the death in a statement. The cause was lung cancer.

Mr. Finkelstein was among the first political strategists in the late 1970s to grasp the potential of a United States Supreme Court ruling that allowed putatively independent political committees to spend money on behalf of individual candidates and causes.

Putting Money in Politics / Micro-Polarizing Electorate]

The decision led to a proliferation of fund-raising vehicles that were supposed to be beyond the control of candidates or party officials but that in fact often worked in concert with their campaigns. One such group, the muscular National Conservative Political Action Committee, was established with Mr. Finkelstein's help.

He also pioneered sophisticated demographic analyses of primary voters and methodical exit polling, and of using a marketing strategy, called [microtargeting](#), to identify specific groups of potential supporters of a candidate regardless of their party affiliation.

He would bombard them with appeals to support a candidate through direct mail and phone calls, coupled with television advertisements that mercilessly exploited a rival's vulnerabilities

"The numbers spoke to him," Kieran Mahoney, his frequent campaign collaborator and one of his many protégés, said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Finkelstein's combative campaigns helped elect or re-elect the Republican Senators James L. Buckley and Alfonse M. D'Amato of New York, Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina, Orrin Hatch of Utah, Jesse Helms of North Carolina, Connie Mack III of Florida, Don Nickles of Oklahoma and Strom Thurmond of South Carolina.

“Arthur was responsible for electing more people to the United States Senate than any other political consultant,” Mr. D’Amato said in an interview.

In the process, Mr. Finkelstein **transformed liberal into a dirty word**.

His conservative political action committee was instrumental in the surprise unseatings of liberal Democratic stalwarts in 1980, including Senators Birch Bayh of Indiana, Frank Church of Idaho and George S. McGovern of South Dakota. He also collaborated with fellow Republicans in establishing another fund-raising behemoth, the National Congressional Club

In 1994, Mr. D’Amato and Mr. Finkelstein engineered the defeat of Mario M. Cuomo, New York’s three-term governor, by George E. Pataki, an obscure state senator. Mr. Pataki’s resonant rationale was that Mr. Cuomo was “too liberal for too long.”

A canny Brooklyn-born brawler who made his political debut on a Greenwich Village soapbox, Mr. Finkelstein was adept at **aggressively wooing disaffected Democrats to his Republican clients’ camps** in statewide campaigns. His strategy was largely to ignore party labels and focus on the basic beliefs that moved these Democrats.

“I have been criticized for 20 years for running ideologically arched campaigns,” [he told the National Conservative Political Action Conference in 1991](#). “I plead guilty. I will continue to run ideologically arched campaigns as long as there are more conservatives than there are liberals, rather than more Democrats than there are Republicans.”

He refused to acknowledge, though, that he **engaged in negative campaigning**. That phrase connotes false accusations, he said, when “it just means that you speak about the failings of your opponent as opposed to the virtues of your candidate.”

Rather, he called his strategy “**rejectionist voting**” — a formula built on slogans that disparaged adversaries. (He would often count on a third contender to siphon votes from the rival who posed the most serious threat to a client).

Prime examples of that strategy were Mr. D’Amato’s upset win over Senator Jacob K. Javits, the venerable liberal Republican incumbent, in the 1980 primary, and Mr. D’Amato’s re-election squeaker against the Democratic state attorney general, Robert Abrams (“hopelessly liberal,” Mr. D’Amato said), in 1992, when Bill Clinton swept the state with a 1.2-million-vote margin on his way to winning the presidency.

“I never once put him on television to talk,” Mr. Finkelstein said of Mr. D’Amato. “He was completely irrelevant to the campaigns.”

Those campaigns were “vicious and mean,” [he told a college audience in Prague in 2011](#). “Negative, negative, negative — ‘cause you can’t possibly win otherwise.”

The negatives used in the primary — portraying Mr. Javits, at 76, as sick and aging — were tempered in the 1980 general election campaign by an ad that famously featured

Mr. D'Amato's mother, armed with bags of groceries, lamenting the struggles of the middle class and urging, "Vote for my son, Al."

"That humanized me," Mr. D'Amato recalled.

Mr. Finkelstein said, "We had to prove Alfonse had a mother."

Mr. D'Amato narrowly defeated his Democratic rival, Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, in the general election, in which Mr. Javits ran on the Liberal line.

As a gay, Jewish libertarian, Mr. Finkelstein helped elect homophobic candidates, once polled South Carolinians on whether they would support a rival candidate identified as a Jewish immigrant, and supported gay rights and abortion rights as what the political consultant Roger Stone, another of his protégés, called, in a phone interview, "a situational conservative."

Still, Mr. Finkelstein suggested, he was not a hired gun who would provide his services to just anyone.

"It would be very hard for me to work with somebody with whom I have fundamental disagreements, against someone with whom I agree," he said.

Mr. Finkelstein insisted that he never lied — "I do not slander somebody without proof," was how he put it — but he acknowledged a generation ago that truth was fungible.

"The most overwhelming fact of politics is what people do not know," he told the college students in Prague. "In politics, it's what you perceive to be true that's true, not truth. If I tell you one thing is true, you will believe the second thing is true. A good politician will tell you a few things that are true before he will tell you a few things that are untrue, because you will then believe all the things he has said, true and untrue."

Arthur Jay Finkelstein was born on May 18, 1945, in the East New York section of Brooklyn, the son of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. His father, Morris, was a cabby. His mother was the former Zella Ordanski. The family moved to Levittown, on Long Island, when he was 11, then to Queens, where he graduated from Forest Hills High School.

In 1967, Mr. Finkelstein earned a bachelor's degree in economics and political science from Queens College. As a student, he sometimes shared a college radio program with Ayn Rand, the author and philosopher whose laissez-faire capitalism he would fiercely defend in street-corner debates in Greenwich Village.

After he volunteered in **Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign**, F. Clifton White, the architect of the Draft Goldwater movement, became his patron and recruited him to James Buckley's Senate race in 1970 as the candidate of the fledgling Conservative Party.

Invoking Richard M. Nixon's silent majority, Mr. Finkelstein encapsulated Mr. Buckley's message in the catchphrase "Isn't it time we had a senator?"

Mr. Buckley went on to defeat the Republican incumbent, Charles E. Goodell, and the Democratic challenger, Representative Richard L. Ottinger.

In 1972, Mr. Finkelstein founded the Westchester County-based Arthur J. Finkelstein & Associates with his brother Ronald. In the 1976 presidential campaign, he was credited with helping Reagan, in an unsuccessful bid to deny President Gerald R. Ford the nomination, win crucial Republican primaries in North Carolina and Texas.

He later choreographed campaigns by his friend Ronald S. Lauder, the cosmetics heir, against Rudolph W. Giuliani in the 1989 Republican mayoral primary; a referendum to impose term limits on New York City elected officials; and races in Eastern Europe and in Israel, where he was recruited by supporters of Mr. Netanyahu and other conservative candidates of the Likud Party.

[In his work for Mr. Netanyahu](#), the incumbent prime minister, in 1999, Mr. Finkelstein took on the Labor Party challenger, Ehud Barak (who was being advised by the Democratic consultants James Carville, Bob Shrum and Stanley Greenberg), with the campaign slogan "Ehud Barak: Too Many Ambitions, Too Few Principles."

Mr. Netanyahu was defeated in that campaign, but Mr. Finkelstein returned to Israel [to help Ariel Sharon oust Mr. Barak](#) and later re-elect Mr. Netanyahu, taking back power for the Likud Party.

"I would always say, 'Arthur, do you realize how much we're changing history?' " his colleague George Birnbaum recalled. "He would say, 'I don't know how much we're changing history; we're touching history.'"

Philip Friedman, another political consultant, told The New York Times in 1994:

"Finkelstein is the ultimate sort of Dr. Strangelove, who believes you can largely disregard what the politicians are going to say and do, what the newspapers are going to do, and create a simple and clear and often negative message, which, repeated often enough, can bring you to victory."

Thanks largely to his brother's financial discipline, the messenger's firm prospered, too.

"Early in our friendship," Craig Shirley recalled last January on [nationalreview.com](#), "I asked him whether it was 'Finkelsteen' or 'Finkelstine' (with a long i), and Arthur characteristically replied, 'If I was a poor Jew, it would be Finkelsteen, but since I am a rich Jew, it's Finkelstine.'"

Mr. Finkelstein was openly gay, although his sexual orientation was not common knowledge until it became the subject of an article in Boston Magazine in 1996. [He married Donald Curiale](#), his partner of more than 50 years, in a civil ceremony in 2004.

His survivors include Mr. Curiale; their daughters, **Jennifer Elizabeth Delgado and Molly Julia Baird-Kelly; a granddaughter; and his brothers, Ronald and Barry.**

Mr. Finkelstein smoked heavily, loved to gamble and was habitually rumped.

“He’d walk through the door carrying a poll tucked under his arm and take off his shoes and unfasten his tie, leaving the ends dangling, and start pacing up and down in his stocking feet,” Richard Morgan wrote in “The Fourth Witch” (2008), describing a strategy session of the National Congressional Club. “Then Tom Ellis would growl, ‘O.K., you’ve told me about the poll. Now tell me the ad,’ and without blinking Arthur would go into a kind of trance and just dictate a 30-second ad.”

Rarely photographed or interviewed, Mr. Finkelstein was unusually reflective during his 2011 public appearance in Prague, in which he discussed his accomplishments, the goals of negative campaigning and how television and the internet have altered politics since the eras of Goldwater, who remained one of his heroes, and Reagan.

“I went into this as a kid to change the world, because I was an absolute ideologue,” he said. “I would stand outside on soapboxes in Greenwich Village at 3 in the morning and argue with people about the nature of freedom.

“I said I wanted to change the world, I said I did, I made it worse,” he added, without amplifying and, perhaps, with a dollop of self-deprecation. “It wasn’t what I wanted to do.”

A correction was made on

Aug. 20, 2017 A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 23 of the New York edition with the headline: Arthur Finkelstein, Guru Of Conservative Politics And Strategy, Dies at 72.

[Arthur Finkelstein, Innovative, Influential Conservative Strategist, Dies at 72 - The New York Times](#)

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Obituary WAPO- Arthur Finkelstein, quietly influential GOP campaign mastermind, dies at 72

By Matt Schudel
August 19, 2017 at 10:37 a.m. EDT
washingtonpost.com

Arthur J. Finkelstein, whose sharp, relentless attack ads helped elect dozens of conservative political candidates in the United States and abroad and made him a kingmaker in Republican circles for decades, died Aug. 18 at his home in Ipswich, Mass. He was 72.

The cause was metastasized lung cancer, his family said in a statement.

Mr. Finkelstein cultivated an image as a reclusive, behind-the-scenes figure, seldom granting interviews and rarely drawing attention to himself in public — all of which lent him a mystique as a pollster, campaign manager and ruthless operative in electoral politics.

He became a prominent political power broker in the 1970s who helped propel the careers of Republican senators such as James L. Buckley (N.Y.), [Jesse Helms](#) (N.C.), Orrin G. Hatch (Utah) and Alfonse D'Amato (N.Y.), as well as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Mr. Finkelstein's influence extended to two generations of Republican political consultants who launched their careers on his campaigns.

Mr. Finkelstein was considered a master at developing simple campaign messages, which were repeated in such a steady barrage of negative television commercials that he was sometimes called the “merchant of venom.” As much as anyone, he was responsible for making the word “liberal” a political slur.

Arthur Finkelstein, right, with Sen. Alfonse D'Amato R-N.Y.) in 1998. (Gary Maloney)

He was also something of a political conundrum — especially after it was revealed in 1996 that his private life as a gay man was in sharp contrast to the views of some of the conservative firebrands he helped elect. Helms, for instance, often railed against the “homosexual movement,” which he said “threatens the strength and the survival of the American family.”

In 1996, New York Times columnist Frank Rich described Mr. Finkelstein as someone who “sells his talents to lawmakers who would outlaw his family’s very existence.”

Mr. Finkelstein was credited with helping raise Ronald Reagan's national profile during the 1976 Republican primary campaign. Ultimately, the nomination went to President [Gerald R. Ford](#), who lost the general election to Democrat Jimmy Carter.

Reagan's insurgent campaign against a sitting president laid the groundwork for his overwhelming presidential victory in 1980. Mr. Finkelstein was seen as one of several GOP strategists, including Roger Ailes, [Lee Atwater](#) and Charlie Black, who were instrumental in helping shape what became known as the Reagan Revolution.

“Without Arthur Finkelstein, Ronald Reagan might never have become president of the United States,” historian and Reagan biographer Craig Shirley wrote on the website of National Review magazine in January 2017.

During Reagan's eight years in the White House, Mr. Finkelstein was an informal adviser to the administration and managed congressional and gubernatorial campaigns across the country.

"He uses a sledgehammer in every race," political scientist Darrell M. West told the Boston Globe in 1996. "I've detected five phrases he uses — ultraliberal, superliberal, embarrassingly liberal, foolishly liberal and unbelievably liberal."

Notable deaths in 2017

Remembering those who died in 2017.

Mr. Finkelstein was 25 when he helped Buckley, a registered member of New York's Conservative Party, win a six-person race for the Senate in 1970. Two years later, Mr. Finkelstein's polling and political guidance helped Helms become the first Republican elected to the Senate from North Carolina since the 19th century.

As other victories piled up, Mr. Finkelstein became one of the GOP's top campaign masterminds and the chief strategist of the National Conservative Political Action Committee. In 1980, his efforts helped defeat such longtime Democratic stalwarts as [Sens. George S. McGovern](#) (S.D.) and Birch Bayh (Ind.).

Mr. Finkelstein was also the architect of D'Amato's unexpected 1980 Senate victory in New York, where he upset four-term incumbent [Jacob K. Javits](#) in the Republican primary.

Following Mr. Finkelstein's recommendation, D'Amato — who once trailed in the polls by more than 60 points — made Javits's little-known diagnosis of Lou Gehrig's disease an issue in the campaign. One often-aired commercial, reportedly written by Mr. Finkelstein, ended with the line, "And now, at age 76 and in failing health, Jacob Javits wants six more years."

D'Amato won a three-way general election against Democratic Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman and Javits, who entered the race as a third-party candidate after his loss in the primary. D'Amato, who went on to serve three terms in the Senate, once said that Mr. Finkelstein's "political skills are second to none."

In 1994, Mr. Finkelstein was the driving force behind Republican George E. Pataki's upset victory over New York Gov. [Mario Cuomo](#) and devised the campaign's inescapable slogan: "Too liberal for too long."

Dozens of well-known Republican political operatives worked on campaigns with Mr. Finkelstein over the years, including **Ari Fleischer, Roger Stone, Alex Castellanos, Frank Luntz, Beth Myers, Tony Fabrizio, Gary Maloney and Larry Weitzner.**

In National Review, Shirley, the Reagan biographer, called Mr. Finkelstein "simply the greatest and most controversial, **the most ethical** and most successful political consultant and pollster in the history of American politics."

Others were not so charitable.

“He makes James Carville look like Mary Poppins,” GOP strategist Mike Murphy told The Washington Post in 1996, referring to Bill Clinton’s 1992 campaign manager. “He has contempt for a lot of the party establishment. He is brilliant, crazy and secluded.”

A 1996 CNN report described Mr. Finkelstein as “the stuff of Hollywood: A man who can topple even the most powerful foes, yet so secretive that few have ever seen him.”

He registered at hotels under assumed names and avoided photographers.

While directing Netanyahu’s successful campaign for Israeli prime minister in 1996, he described his approach to politics in a rare interview with the New York Times magazine.

“I think I’m the playwright or the director, and not the actor,” he said. “And the actors need to be onstage, not the director. And I think it’s absurd that people who do what I do become as important, as celebrated, as the ones who are running.”

Arthur Jay Finkelstein was born May 18, 1945, in Brooklyn and grew up in Queens and later Levittown, N.Y. His father was a cabdriver.

Mr. Finkelstein adopted hard-line conservative views early in life and, in his teens, supported the 1964 presidential bid of conservative Sen. [Barry Goldwater](#) (R-Ariz.).

While attending Queens College, a branch of the City University of New York, he worked on a radio program with author [Avn Rand](#), whose writings have had a strong influence on generations of conservative and libertarian thinkers.

After graduating in 1967, Mr. Finkelstein worked in the **computer department of NBC News**. When he began his career in politics, he used polling results to **build campaign themes around voters’ social, financial and emotional needs**.

Mr. Finkelstein’s office in Irvington, N.Y., was managed by his brother [Ronald Finkelstein](#), but he lived for many years in Ipswich and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

In 1996, [Boston magazine noted that Mr. Finkelstein was gay and lived with a longtime partner, Donald Curiale](#), and their two daughters. When **Mr. Finkelstein and Curiale** were married in 2005, few if any of his political clients attended the wedding.

Survivors include his husband, of Ipswich and Fort Lauderdale; two daughters, Jennifer Delgado of Danvers, Mass., Molly Baird-Kelly of Alpharetta, Ga.; two brothers; and a granddaughter.

Finkelstein-Election engineering worldwide: Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, Victor Orban & others]

- After engineering **Netanyahu's victory in Israel in 1996**, Mr. Finkelstein increasingly concentrated on international elections. He helped [Ariel Sharon](#) become Israel's prime minister in 2001 and was active in electoral campaigns in Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Kosovo, Ukraine and other countries.
- Mr. Finkelstein said he considered himself a libertarian, and the candidates he supported in the United States were exclusively Republicans.
- “The political center has disappeared,” he told the Israeli newspaper Maariv in 2004, “and the Republican Party has become the party of the **Christian right** more so than in any other period in modern history.”
- As the party swung further to the right, Mr. Finkelstein **did not acknowledge any role** he may have played in that shift. But in another respect, his political instincts proved prophetic, more than a decade before the 2016 presidential election.
- “In terms of the Republicans,” he quipped to Maariv in 2004, “Hillary Clinton is a wonderful candidate for the presidency.”

Source: [Arthur Finkelstein, quietly influential GOP campaign mastermind, dies at 72 - The Washington Post](#)

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Obit: AAPC ARTHUR FINKELSTEIN Obituary

(1945-2017)

Posted by: **American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC)** [Arthur Finkelstein – AAPC](#)

Arthur Finkelstein was a well-known Republican political consultant who successfully steered the campaigns of numerous national and international leaders.

BIO

Arthur Finkelstein was a well-known Republican political consultant who successfully steered the campaigns of numerous national and international leaders, including Jesse Helms, Strom Thurmond, Alfonse D’Amato, Connie Mack III, George Pataki, and Benjamin Netanyahu over his four decades long career. He served as a pollster for President Richard Nixon and crafted Ronald Reagan’s stance on the Panama Canal which ultimately lead to his successful bid for the White House in 1980. He is credited

with pioneering the concepts of the primary voter list and independent expenditures (IEs), which are now a major force in political campaigns.

His obituary can be found [here](#)

[Arthur Finkelstein – AAPC](#)

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Wikipedia Excerpt - Arthur Finkelstein

Finkel-Think (Oxymoron-means Don't Think) - Bob Dole applies

Finkel-NON-think SLOGANEERING - "Tax & spend liberals"

Finkelstein was not a consultant to the Dole Presidential campaign, despite his closeness to several of its top staffers. But, in the election's waning days, *Time* magazine reporter Erik Pooley detected the New Yorker's influence on strategy, writing:

For Arthur Finkelstein, this week might have been a vindication: Bob Dole finally started labeling Bill Clinton a **"spend-and-tax liberal," using a crude but often effective strategy known as "Finkel-think" by some Dole advisers, because the secretive Republican strategist has been deploying it on behalf of his clients for 20 years ...** These days, Finkelstein is exercising a kind of remote control. The Senator's latest brain trust is dominated by "Arthur's Boys" ... And Dole is rushing around the country chanting the Finkelstein mantra. **"Liberal! Liberal! Liberal!" he cried in St. Louis, Missouri.**^[125]

Early life and education

Finkelstein grew up in a lower-middle-class [Jewish](#) family, living in [Brooklyn's East New York](#) section until age 11, then in [Levittown, New York](#), and later [Queens](#). He and his two brothers attended local public schools; Finkelstein ultimately graduated from [Forest](#)

[Hills High School](#). Their parents were immigrants from Eastern Europe,^[1] and the father worked as a cabdriver^[2] and did various jobs in the garment trade. While a student at [Columbia University](#), Finkelstein interviewed and helped produce radio programs for author/philosopher [Ayn Rand](#),^[3] and was a volunteer at the New York headquarters of the [Draft Goldwater Committee](#) in 1963–64 (the famous "Suite 3505").^[4] He eventually earned a bachelor's degree in [economics](#) and [political science](#) from [Queens College](#) in 1967. **[what happened at Columbia???**^{[1][4]}

Career

1968–76: Buckley, Nixon, Helms, and Reagan

NEWS / ELECTION POLLING- In 1968, Finkelstein did behind-the-scenes election analysis for [NBC News](#), part of the network's team working under former Census director [Richard M. Scammon](#) and exit-polling pioneer Irwin A. "Bud" Lewis.^[4]

DATA PROGRAMMING / FINANCIAL SERVICES- In 1969–70,

- he worked as a computer programmer in the Data Processing department of the [New York Stock Exchange](#) at its offices on [11 Wall Street](#) in lower Manhattan. During this period, he was a familiar face in [Greenwich Village](#), where he often argued politics from a street-corner soapbox.^[4] In his spare time, he aided State Senator [John Marchi](#) in his unsuccessful Republican-Conservative campaign for Mayor of New York City in 1969.^[5]

[CAMPAIGN MENTOR- F. Clifton White](#), mastermind of the [Draft Goldwater Committee](#), was Finkelstein's political patron and consulting partner in the early 1970s in the firm, DirAction Services.

3RD PARTY CONSERVATIVE ELECTION UPSET-1970 campaign for James Buckley (brother of [William F. Buckley Jr.](#) commentator/pundit/lead conservative intellectual)

- The young pollster's first electoral success came at age 25 in 1970, with the independent Conservative campaign of [James L. Buckley](#) for senator from New York. This was one of several New York statewide contests where he was able to maneuver his clients to victory in three-way scenarios. Buckley won a plurality upset victory over GOP incumbent [Charles Goodell](#) and favored Democrat [Richard Ottinger](#). Of that election night, Buckley later wrote, "By 10 pm, ... Finkelstein (my volunteer analyst who called the final results within one-tenth of one percent based on a Sunday-night telephone survey) assured me that I had won."^[6] Finkelstein encapsulated Buckley's message in the catchphrase, "Isn't it about time we had a Senator?"^[4]

Nixon Campaign & far worse Ultra Reactionary Racists

- Finkelstein's work in New York led to his serving in 1971-72 as one of several pollsters for President [Richard M. Nixon's re-election campaign](#) developing sophisticated [demographic](#) analysis.^[7]
- The 1972 election also saw the first of his three victorious campaigns to elect [Jesse Helms](#) as U.S. senator from North Carolina.^[8] After the election, Finkelstein worked with Helms political aides [Tom Ellis](#) and [Carter Wrenn](#) to establish a permanent conservative organization, the [National Congressional Club](#),^[9] which lasted until 1995.^[10]
- **Finkelstein and White went their separate ways in the mid-1970s**,^[5] and he founded his own firm, Arthur J. Finkelstein & Associates (often later shortened to AJF & Associates).^[1] In the 1976 presidential primaries, White supported [Gerald Ford](#),^[11] while Finkelstein worked for [Ronald Reagan's](#) insurgent campaign.
- **REAGAN.** He helped Helms's Congressional Club turn around the **faltering Reagan effort** with a victory in the April North Carolina primary.^[3] His work continued in the subsequent Texas primary. "Finkelstein had been a key figure in 1976, when he helped orchestrate Reagan's campaign-saving comeback in North Carolina" which was crucial in Reagan's further political advancement.^[12]
- **REAGAN.** At Finkelstein's urging, Reagan made a major issue of the impending [Panama Canal Treaties](#), which [Gerald Ford](#) was negotiating and which infuriated conservative voters. (This proved to be Reagan's signature issue throughout the late 1970s.) As [Jules Witcover](#) later reported, "Tens of thousands of [Wallace](#) voters were gradually cut adrift during his slide [in the primaries] ... and Reagan media man Arthur Finkelstein recruited a Wallaceite from Fort Worth to radio and television spots for Reagan ... It was dynamite."^[13] The [Associated Press's](#) Mike Robinson wrote Finkelstein was "viewed by many as instrumental in Gov. Reagan's 1976 primary successes in North Carolina and Texas."^[14]

1975–80: NCPAC, Senate, and Reagan–POLARIZING, DEMONIZING LANGUAGE

PUSHING MONEY INTO POLITICS. Finkelstein ... pioneered the concept and execution of [independent expenditure](#) campaigns, which would operate as a third force in an election beyond the control of candidate or party officials.^[1]

Beginning in 1975, Finkelstein was the chief strategist behind the most successful IE operation of this period, the [National Conservative Political Action Committee](#) (NCPAC).^[15] Its Executive Director was Finkelstein protégé [Terry Dolan](#). In 1981 New Right activist [Richard Viguerie](#) wrote, "NCPAC relies heavily on research and polling, a reflection of one of its founders, conservative pollster Arthur Finkelstein."^[16]

In 1978, NCPAC was instrumental in the defeat of Democrats [Dick Clark](#) in Iowa and [Thomas J. McIntyre](#) in New Hampshire. Both liberal senators were replaced by

committed conservatives.^[17] NCPAC ran hard-hitting ads for television, radio and newspapers, crafted by Finkelstein. A central idea behind the strategy was to

expose the liberal words and actions in Washington of elected officials, usually senators, whose moderate or conservative public image at home was at odds with their actual voting record.^[18]

NCPAC hit its peak in 1980, operating IEs in six states, its ads and organizing efforts helping to topple liberal Democrats in Iowa ([John Culver](#)), Indiana ([Birch Bayh](#)), Idaho ([Frank Church](#)) and South Dakota ([George McGovern](#)).^[19] Less well-known were NCPAC's TV ads in the presidential contest, both negative (one featuring [Jimmy Carter](#) in a 1976 debate, another with [Edward Kennedy](#) shouting "And no more Jimmy Carter!") and positive (footage of [Ronald Reagan](#) speaking on values); Finkelstein concentrated these ad buys in closely contested Southern states (e.g., Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama), all of which switched from Carter to Reagan in 1980.^[20]

WINS

- [Orrin Hatch](#). Reagan backer and political unknown [Orrin Hatch](#) won a resounding 56% victory in Utah in 1976 against a three-term Democratic incumbent.
- [Jesse Helms](#). In 1978, NC of [Jesse Helms](#)
- [Strom Thurmond](#) 1978 SC.
- [Carroll Campbell](#) 2002. to his first win in South Carolina's Greenville-area 4th Congressional District.^{[8][24]}
- interlude early in **1979 as adviser to conservative** Congressman [Phil Crane](#),^[25] Finkelstein returned as one of the pollsters advising [Ronald Reagan](#)'s primary campaign.^[26]
- His services were also reportedly sought by the [George H. W. Bush](#) campaign.^[5]
- In 1980, [Alfonse D'Amato](#) over incumbent [Jacob Javits](#), another three-way contest where the Democrat (Congresswoman [Liz Holtzman](#)) was favored.^[2]
- [Don Nickles](#) for U.S. Senate from Oklahoma.^[28]
- [John East](#) in the North Carolina Senate contest;^[29] East was a little-known professor who used a wheelchair, recruited for the race by [Jesse Helms](#) and elected through the efforts of Ellis, Wrenn, Finkelstein and the Helms organization.^[10]
- [Duncan Hunter](#) (1980) in California and
- [Denny Smith](#) in Oregon (both 1980), defeated [Ways and Means Committee](#) chair [Al Ullman](#).

WHY DID HE LOSE THESE ELECTIONS ??

- Finkelstein also had his share of Senate losses, including two by previous client [James Buckley](#) (1976, New York,^[30] and 1980, Connecticut),^[31] and
- with [Avi Nelson](#) (1978, Massachusetts).

- Maryland Congressman [Robert Bauman](#), who **narrowly lost his seat after he was charged in DC with homosexual solicitation**, one month before the November election.^[32]

1980s

During the 1980 campaign Finkelstein was a Reagan pollster and had been "aboard the Reagan campaign" since mid-1979.^[33] from the early primary days all the way through November. Having ridden (and driven) the Republican wave of 1977–80, he found the 1980s a period of consolidation, helping clients grow their base and win re-election.

In 1981, Finkelstein was one of four pollsters designated to do work on behalf of the Reagan White House, paid by the [Republican National Committee](#). (The others were [Richard Wirthlin](#), [Robert Teeter](#) and Tully Plesser).^[34] [Newsweek](#) reported in 1982 that "each of the President's top three advisers has his own numbers man: "Wirthlin became [Edwin Meese's](#) pollster, Teeter became [James Baker's](#) and now Finkelstein has become [Michael Deaver's](#)."^[35]

Cheating the 'chinese wall' between PAC and Political Campaign

Failed in several others (e.g. Maryland),^[42] and thereafter declined in influence. The pitfalls of running IEs and campaigns at the same time were illustrated when NCPAC was sued for running ads in early 1982 against New York Sen. [Daniel Patrick Moynihan](#)—around the same time as Finkelstein was working for GOP Senate candidate [Bruce Caputo](#).^[43]

In 1986, a federal court ruled against NCPAC, and [The Washington Post](#) editorialized, "**Both NCPAC and the Caputo campaign used the same pollster, Arthur Finkelstein. They could hardly be said to be independent unless the Caputo side of Mr. Finkelstein's brain refrained from communicating with the NCPAC side.**"^[44] (Finkelstein himself was not sued or charged; ironically, Caputo's campaign had imploded after revelations he'd lied about serving in the military, and Moynihan was never seriously challenged.)^[45] As late as 1987, Finkelstein was doing surveys for NCPAC (e.g. in New Mexico).^[46]

George H.W. Bush-Not Voodoo Psycho enough for Finkelstein

- At this time, the Reaganite Finkelstein was not a fan of the current Administration of [George H. W. Bush](#). In a rare public appearance in February 1991, after the GOP's poor national showing in the November 1990 elections, he reminded a conservative audience that Reagan prospered through unabashed ideological appeals that drew crossover votes from sympathetic Democrats.
- But Bush and other GOP candidates "kicked that away" in 1990 **by raising taxes, sidestepping abortion and other social issues, and soft-pedaling their anti-communism** while rooting for [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) to succeed. "We are going to have to go back to the things that got us here," Finkelstein said.^[87]

Finkel-Think (Oxymoron-means Don't Think) - Bob Dole applies the SLOGANEERING

Finkelstein was not a consultant to the Dole Presidential campaign, despite his closeness to several of its top staffers. But, in the election's waning days, *Time* magazine reporter Erik Pooley detected the New Yorker's influence on strategy, writing:

For Arthur Finkelstein, this week might have been a vindication: Bob Dole finally started labeling Bill Clinton a **"spend-and-tax liberal," using a crude but often effective strategy known as "Finkel-think" by some Dole advisers, because the secretive Republican strategist has been deploying it on behalf of his clients for 20 years ...** These days, Finkelstein is exercising a kind of remote control. The Senator's latest brain trust is dominated by "Arthur's Boys" ... And Dole is rushing around the country chanting the Finkelstein mantra. **"Liberal! Liberal! Liberal!" he cried in St. Louis, Missouri.**^[125]

FINKELStein LOSSES 1996

- Senator [Larry Pressler](#) (South Dakota) and
- ex-Senator [Rudy Boschwitz](#) (Minnesota) both losing,
- [Bob Smith](#) survived with a 49% plurality win.
- New Jersey Congressman [Dick Zimmer](#) was defeated in his Senate bid against [Robert Torricelli](#).^[126]

ISRAEL BIBI: FINKELStein BRAND Bibi to Victory

Earlier in 1996, he also helped [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) oust [Shimon Peres](#) as Prime Minister of Israel in a close upset.^[127] According to [The Jerusalem Post](#),

"Finkelstein was largely responsible for the strategy that brought Netanyahu victory in the 1996 general elections."^[128]

According to the [Times of Israel](#), **"Finkelstein was behind the "Peres will divide Jerusalem" slogan** that helped Netanyahu overcome Shimon Peres who had been forecast to sweep to power in the wake of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin the previous November.

That election was credited with changing the **tone of Israeli campaigns, bringing more American-style, aggressive and negative campaigning to Israel.**^[129] But his expertise helped in subtler ways as well; biographer Neill Lochery wrote in 2016

that Finkelstein was behind such ideas as dyeing Netanyahu's salt-and-pepper hair gray to give him a more statesmanlike appearance.^[130]

Jeff Barak of *The Jerusalem Post*, a harsh critic of Finkelstein and Netanyahu, called the strategist "the brains behind Netanyahu's first election victory in 1996. Netanyahu's campaign back then, from which he has never wavered, was that **you're either for him or an enemy of the people.** [GEORGE W. - WITH US OR AGAINST US]

His campaign **slogan at the time**, 'Netanyahu is good for the Jews,' encapsulated this.

By implication, if you're not for Netanyahu then **you're not good for the Jews, and therefore an enemy.** And if Netanyahu is good for the Jews, then this also not-so-subtly hints that Netanyahu's bad for the Arabs, regardless of the fact that they are supposedly citizens of equal standing who comprise around 20% of the country's population."^[131]

Finkelstein's greatest personal challenge that year came with the August issue of *Boston magazine*, which revealed his private life as a homosexual;^[132] the ostensible excuse for the outing was that several Finkelstein clients had voted against gay-rights measures in Congress, and his work to elect them was therefore inconsistent and/or hypocritical.

The Democratic primary was ultimately between Queens politician [Geraldine Ferraro](#) and U.S. Representative [Charles Schumer](#) of Brooklyn. Finkelstein prepared for both eventualities. When Schumer won by a surprisingly large margin, he immediately began ads that raised questions about the candidate's work ethic. (As Congressman, Schumer had missed an inordinate number of committee meetings.)^[143] The unexpected line of attack stymied the Democrat in late September and early October, and despite his weaknesses D'Amato gamely held onto a lead.^[144]

- All this collapsed in late October, after a remarkable show of hubris and bad judgment at a closed-door meeting with Jewish supporters in Brooklyn.^[144] First, D'Amato did a waddling impression of then-obese Democratic U.S. Rep. [Jerrold Nadler](#).^[145] Later in the meeting, he referred to Schumer as a "putzhead" (a mangling of the [Yiddish](#) vulgarism "[putz](#)"). He later denied using this characterization, during questions from reporters (but was swiftly contradicted by his own supporters, present at the meeting, including [Ed Koch](#)).^[146] Film of the denial was turned into a Schumer TV ad within days.^[147]
- Finkelstein's tracking survey the night of D'Amato's "putzhead" comment showed the senator leading Schumer by 10 points with two weeks to go. But the meltdown was quick and decisive, especially among Jewish voters,^[148] with Schumer's ads relentlessly driving the message of D'Amato's dishonesty and dislikeability. The Democrat's closing tagline was itself a homage to Finkelstein: "D'Amato: Too many lies for too long." Schumer won, 55% to 44%—a 20-point turnaround.^[149]

"Arthur's Kids"

Over four decades, Finkelstein was responsible for the early hiring and training of many successful Republican consultants, operatives and managers—collectively called "Arthur's Kids"^[197] or "Arthur's Boys"^[125]—including [Tony Fabrizio](#), [Alex Castellanos](#), James Hartman, [Craig Shirley](#), [George Birnbaum](#), [Beth Myers](#), [Mitch Bainwol](#), [Ari Fleischer](#),^[1] Carter Wrenn, Kieran Mahoney,^[198] [Zenia Mucha](#),^[199] Jon Lerner,^[182] Rick Reed, Patrick Hillmann,^[200] Jim Murphy, the pollster brothers John and Jim McLaughlin,^[201] Rob Cole,^[202] Ron Wright, and Adam Stoll.^[164] Others who worked with Finkelstein and have gone on to have successful independent careers include [Frank Luntz](#), [Larry Weitzner](#), [Charles R. Black Jr.](#), [Roger Stone](#),^[203] Chris Mottola,^[125] [John Heubusch](#), [Barney Keller](#), [Gordon Hensley](#),^[204] and [Gary Maloney](#).^[205]

Personal life

In 1996, [Boston Magazine](#) [outed](#) Finkelstein as a homosexual in a feature story. In April 2005, Finkelstein acknowledged that in December 2004, he had married his partner of forty years in a civil ceremony at his home in [Massachusetts](#).^[206]

Finkelstein was a self-identified [libertarian](#) conservative, and once did polling work for the Free Libertarian Party.^[5] In his final years he increasingly distanced himself personally from [social conservative](#) elements within the Republican Party while nevertheless still working for many conservative candidates.^[206] In a 1979 interview, he denied he was "a hard-core right-winger," but noted there was hardly "a serious conservative over the last 10 years [i.e. 1969-79] whom I haven't been involved with."^[5]

Finkelstein died of lung cancer on August 18, 2017, aged 72, in [Ipswich, Massachusetts](#).^{[207][208]} Survivors included his husband, Donald Curiale, of Ipswich and Fort Lauderdale; two daughters, Jennifer Delgado of Danvers, Mass., Molly Finkelstein of Alpharetta, Ga.; two brothers; and a granddaughter Maryn Baird-Kelly.^[152]

Quotes

- **"A crook always beats a fool."** (frequent saying)^[209]
 - VARIANT of above: "When you allow people to choose between the corrupt and the stupid, they will go for the corrupt." (Said in reference to a 2003 Israeli campaign)^{[210][211]}
- **"The most overwhelming fact of politics is what people do not know."** (frequent saying)^[1]
- **"Stupid people say stupid things."** ([Hebrew language](#) paper [Maariv](#) in 1999)

- "I have been criticized for 20 years for running ideologically arched campaigns. I plead guilty. I will continue to run ideologically arched campaigns **as long as there are more conservatives than there are liberals, rather than more Democrats than there are Republicans.**" (Speech to Conservative Political Action Conference, 1991)^[1]
- Finkelstein insisted he never lied – "I do not slander somebody without proof."^[1]
- **"In politics, it's what you perceive to be true that's true, not truth.** If I tell you one thing is true, you will believe the second thing is true. **A good politician will tell you a few things that are true before he will tell you a few things that are untrue, because you will then believe all the things he has said, true and untrue.**" (2011 speech in Prague)^[1]
- "The political center has disappeared, and the Republican Party has become the party of the Christian right more so than in any other period in modern history ... Bush's victory **not only establishes the power of the American Christian Right in this candidacy, but in fact established its power to elect the next Republican president.**"^{[212][211]}
- "From now on, anyone who belongs to the Republican Party will automatically find himself in the same group as the opponents of [abortion](#), and **anyone who supports abortion will automatically be labeled a Democrat.**"^[212]
- "She will put off Democrats from the center. **In terms of the Republicans, Hillary Clinton is a wonderful candidate for the presidency.**" ([Maariv](#), 11/04)^[212]
- "I think I'm the playwright or the director, and not the actor. And the actors need to be onstage, not the director. And I think it's absurd that people who do what I do become as important, as celebrated, as the ones who are running."^[152]
- Speaking to GOP congressional hopefuls in 1978: **"If any of you do get elected, and chances are 19-to-1 you won't ... don't run your own campaign; don't let your spouse do it; and don't listen to the nice lady who praises the brilliance of your speech—she probably was the only one in the audience who thought so."** He said [Proposition 13](#) (just passed in California) shouldn't be interpreted as **"evidence people want services cut. They want taxes cut,"** and voters aren't sophisticated enough to understand that one leads to the other.^[213]
- He cited the 1965 New York mayoral campaign of [John Lindsay](#), elected because **"he promised to cut the budget in half and double the services. Four years later, when it was apparent that he had doubled the budget and cut**

services; Lindsay said, 'Yes, I made a mistake,' but he was re-elected when he promised to help end the Vietnam War.'^[213]

- Said in 1979 that there are three kinds of candidates' wives—the wife "**who hates politics and refuses to come out of the house,**" the wife who is reluctant but "**will do what she is asked,**" and the wife "**who wants to be the candidate and loves politics more than her husband does.**" He put [Rosalynn Carter](#) and Arlene (Mrs. Phil) Crane in the last category.^[6]
- After being praised for his winning advice in a Nassau County election: "**I'm a hero, but the first time a town clerk loses an election after my figures show him winning, I will be over the hill and a bum.**"^[5]
- Longtime associate [George Birnbaum](#): "I would always say, 'Arthur, do you realize how much we're changing history?' He would say, '**I don't know how much we're changing history; we're touching history.**'"^[4]
- In 2011, in one of his last public speeches, he said: "I wanted to change the world. I did this. I made it worse."^[214]

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NOTE - this is the Nixon FOUNDATION, NOT the Nixon Library [Welfare Reform Begins with Nixon Administration](#)

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Birnbaum's Company Page (webarchive) -

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FOUNDER & CEO – GEORGE E. BIRNBAUM

Raised on the blood sport politics of the American South, nurtured through experience as a key staffer at a national Republican Party committee in a tumultuous election cycle, and forged through more than a dozen international campaigns, George E. Birnbaum is one of America's leading international political consultants. From polling and strategy to paid media and grassroots coalition building, Birnbaum is a leader in developing and implementing campaign strategies for victory.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, Birnbaum came of age during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. He took his first paid position in a political campaign in 1992, signing onto Ohio Republican Congressman Bob McEwen's tough reelection campaign. In the years following, he worked on more congressional races, including campaigns in North Carolina, Florida and Virginia.

During the 1996 cycle, Birnbaum served as the deputy political director and director of survey research under National Republican Senatorial Committee Chairman Alfonse D'Amato. While Bob Dole was running the national GOP ticket to an embarrassing defeat, Birnbaum's work on two dozen key races helped ensure that Republicans broke the historical pattern and actually netted a two-seat gain, to help maintain their hold on the U.S. Senate.

Following the 1996 cycle, Birnbaum accepted the task of managing **Charlie Crist's 1998 challenger campaign against incumbent Senator Bob Graham in Florida**. Though unsuccessful – Graham is one of the few politicians in American history to have won statewide races at least five times, with no defeats – the campaign is widely credited with setting up Crist for his later successful runs for state education commissioner, Attorney General, and Governor.

It was after the 1998 cycle that Birnbaum's career took an international turn, when he agreed to **consult for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's campaign**.

Birnbaum eventually served as Netanyahu's chief of staff, a position he held for a year and a half.

After serving Prime Minister Netanyahu, Birnbaum took a hiatus from political work, spending the next two years concentrating on international philanthropy and charitable work.

In 2003, Birnbaum went into partnership with legendary American conservative political consultant Arthur Finkelstein to create an international political consulting firm.

Since then, the two have consulted and managed campaigns throughout Europe and the Middle East. They are credited with having elected Prime Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon, Chancellor of Austria Alfred Gusenbauer, Prime Minister of Bulgaria Sergey Stanishev, Prime Minister of Romania Colin Taricaneau, Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, and President of Serbia Boris Tadic. In 2008, they helped elect Nir Barkat as Mayor of Jerusalem, and in 2009 they helped Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party become the 3rd largest party in Israel – a position of strength which resulted in Mr. Lieberman's ascension to the position of Foreign Minister in Prime Minister Netanyahu's cabinet.

In addition to the partnership's continued work with many of these leaders, Birnbaum is currently working with opposition leaders in Hungary, Albania, and the Czech Republic, among others.

Working for so many different clients in so many different political environments has taught Birnbaum the value of approaching each campaign as a unique enterprise, with no preconceived notions, and without any kind of baggage. Each contest requires its own strategy, and each campaign needs its own combination of message, manpower, and money.

Source

<https://web.archive.org/web/20100426112258/http://www.gebinternational.com:80/about-us>

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2016Dec13 Trump Thanks Blacks Who Didn't Vote

From

<<https://web.archive.org/web/20161214174843/http://www.diversityinc.com/news/trump-thanks-blacks-didnt-vote/>>

Published December 13, 2016

By Kaitlyn D'Onofrio

According to President-elect Donald Trump, Black voters who stayed home on Election Day were “almost as good” as the ones who voted for him, who came through for him “big league.”

“The African American community was great to us. They came through, big league. Big league,” he said at a rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan. “And frankly if they had any doubt, they didn’t vote, and that was almost as good because a lot of people didn’t show up, because they felt good about me.”

The rally on Friday was part of the president-elect’s “Donald J. Trump USA Thank You Tour 2016,” in which he is traveling to each state he defeated his Democratic challenger, Hillary Clinton. Trump won Michigan by a very small margin, 47.6 percent to 47.3 percent, according to [CNN’s exit poll](#).

Trump received about just 8 percent of the Black vote nationally, according to exit polls. He was widely considered unfavorable by Blacks throughout his campaign. But Clinton failed to garner as much African American support as President Barack Obama did in 2012, at which time 93 percent of Black voters voted for him. About 88 percent voted for Clinton this year. In 2012, Republican candidate Mitt Romney received 6 percent of the Black vote.

[Related Story: Trump: Black Americans Live in ‘Ghettos’](#)

The fact that Trump garnered more of the Black vote nationally than Romney did in 2012 was unexpected given some of his campaign rhetoric. He repeatedly made false statements about all Black Americans living in poverty and inner cities. He repeatedly told Black voters at rallies, “What do you have to lose?”

At an Ohio rally in October, Trump said Blacks live in inner cities and “ghettos.” The word “ghetto” is widely considered an outdated term and is no longer used in mainstream media discussions.

[Related Story: Dear Trump: Not all Black People Live in Inner Cities](#)

New Voter ID Rules Pass in Michigan House

Trump’s rally came just two days after Michigan’s house, which is Republican-led, passed a very strict voter ID law. Michigan voters can cast a provisional ballot without showing photo ID, but they must present a photo ID to their local clerk’s office within 10 days of the election for their vote to be counted. The measure passed 57-50.

Originally, the law allowed voters to cast ballots without showing photo ID, but they had to sign an affidavit and faced perjury if they were lying about their identity. According to The Detroit News, 18,388 residents of Michigan voted this way, of whom about half were from Wayne County — where Clinton won 66.8 percent to 39.9 percent. Wayne

County, according to [Census data](#), is 39.1 percent Black. Overall, the state of Michigan is just 14.1 percent Black.

According to Rep. Lisa Lyons (R-Alto), who sponsored the legislation, the bill will “deter and detect fraud, however widespread it may or may not be.”

No cases of voter fraud were reported, according to the [Michigan Secretary of State's office](#). Despite repeated studies showing that voter fraud is virtually nonexistent, Trump and other Republicans have insisted it is a rampant problem across the country.

Rep. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor) pointed to the inevitable confusion the new requirements will create.

“This is going to cause confusion and chaos at the polls,” he said. “There’s going to be arguments, voters aren’t going to understand, and long lines are going to get even longer. Maybe that’s the point.”

As the legislation currently reads, \$8 million will be dedicated to “election modernization, voter education and implementation” of the requirements, \$2 million will be allocated for free birth certificates and \$1 million will be put toward a free ID program.

But Melissa Kovach, a member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Michigan, said this does not cover all costs the bill will burden voters with.

“Waiving the cost of a photo ID does not account for other significant costs that voters will have to pay, including transportation, waiting in line, time away from work or acquiring the underlying documents like a birth certificate,” she wrote in a blog post. “The practical effect of these bills will be to disenfranchise the vast majority of eligible voters who don’t have photo ID or show up on Election Day without it.”

Republicans also represent the majority of the state’s Senate, 27-11. It is unclear if Gov. Rick Snyder (R) will sign the bill, should it pass.

“Gov. Snyder doesn’t decide whether or not he will sign a bill until he is sent the final version as passed by both chambers and has a chance to thoroughly review it,” a spokeswoman for the governor said.

From

<https://web.archive.org/web/20161214174843/http://www.diversityinc.com/news/trump-thanks-blacks-didnt-vote/>

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Israel's Bibi & Roger Stone meddle in U.S. Elections - October Surprise

Roger Stone - One of "Arthur's Kids"--Trained by Finkelstein----Stone is a Bad Guy [hetero-straight, hungarian, italian Catholic]

Excerpt: Conspiring against Hillary Clinton with Israelis

[Wikipedia bio - Roger Stone](#) According to [The Times of Israel](#), Roger Stone "was in contact with one or more apparently well-connected [Israelis](#) at the height of the 2016 US presidential campaign, one of whom warned Stone that Trump was "going to be defeated unless we intervene" and promised "we have critical intell[sic]." The exchange between Stone and this Jerusalem-based contact appears in FBI documents made public".^{[134][30]}

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2020April30 Stone connection - FBI documents suggest Israeli link to Trump's 2016 campaign

Roger's Stone's Jerusalem Connection.

Heavily redacted affidavits hint of the involvement of a prime minister and a minister without portfolio

[▶▶ Overview - FBI documents suggest Israeli link to Trump's 2016 campaign | Middle East Eye](#)

[▶▶ Related Articles-Israel & Election Meddling](#)

[▶▶ Excerpt: Roger Stone threatening Kushner](#)

Overview - FBI documents suggest Israeli link to Trump's 2016 campaign | Middle East Eye

By [MEE staff](#)

Published date:30 April 2020 16:25 BST | Last update:3 years 5 months ago

Newly released FBI documents, which are heavily redacted, hint of Israeli links to Donald Trump's confidant Roger Stone during the height of the 2016 US election campaign.

The [FBI material](#) is comprised of affidavits which were submitted to get a search warrant as part of an investigation into links between the Trump campaign and Russia, carried out by US Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

A quote from one affidavit reveals that Stone was told by a contact based in Jerusalem about the possible defeat of Trump, saying:

"He is going to be defeated unless we intervene. We have critical intell. The key is in your hands!"

Another series of references includes a meeting with a prime minister in Italy in 2016, though the name and nationality of the premier were redacted.

It reads:

"On or about June 28, 2016, [NAME REDACTED] messaged STONE, "RETURNING TO DC AFTER URGENT CONSULTATIONS WITH PM IN ROME. MUST MEET WITH YOU WED. EVE AND WITH DJ TRUMP THURSDAY IN NYC."

Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu was on a state visit to Rome** at the end of June, but it's unclear if the FBI document refers to him, [according to Haaretz newspaper](#).

The FBI document also makes mention of a **"minister without portfolio in the cabinet dealing with issues concerning defence and foreign affairs"**.

Tzachi Hanegbi was appointed in May 2016 as the minister for defence and foreign affairs, but Hareetz also said that it's unclear if the minister mentioned is an Israeli.

The most direct mention or hint towards Israel is an entry in an affidavit from **August 2016**.

A Jerusalem-based contact messaged Stone about the potential scenario of Trump's defeat.

According to the affidavit, the entry says:

“On or about August 12, 2016,” reads: “[NAME REDACTED] messaged STONE, ‘Roger, hello from Jerusalem. Any progress? **He is going to be defeated [sic] unless we intervene.** We have critical intell. The key is in your hands! Back in the US next week. How is your Pneumonia? Thank you. [REDACTED] STONE replied, ‘I am well. Matters complicated. Pondering. R., [REDACTED] Thank You.’”

From <[FBI documents suggest Israeli link to Trump's 2016 campaign | Middle East Eye](#)>

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FBI Transcript Link & Screenshots

[Link to PDF File - Courtlistener](#)

Offenses).

5. As set forth below, in May 2016, Jerome CORSI provided contact information for [REDACTED] to Roger STONE. In July 2016, [REDACTED] also told STONE that he needed to meet with then-candidate Trump “alone.” In August 2016, [REDACTED] told STONE that there was an “OCTOBER SURPRISE COMING” and that Trump, “[i]s going to be defeated unless we intervene. We have critical intel.” In that same time period, STONE communicated directly via Twitter with WikiLeaks, Julian ASSANGE, and Guccifer 2.0. On July 25, 2016, STONE emailed instructions to Jerome CORSI to “Get to Assange” in person at the Ecuadorian Embassy and “get pending WikiLeaks emails[.]” On August 2, 2016, CORSI emailed STONE back that, “Word is friend in embassy plans 2 more dumps. One shortly after I’m back. 2nd in Oct. Impact planned to be very damaging.” On August 20, 2016, CORSI told STONE that they needed to meet with [REDACTED] to determine “what if anything Israel plans to do in Oct.”

¹ Federal law prohibits a foreign national from making, directly or indirectly, an expenditure or independent expenditure in connection with federal elections. 52 U.S.C. § 30121(a)(1)(C); *see also id.* § 30101(9) & (17) (defining the terms “expenditure” and “independent expenditure”).

██████████ email.

43. On or about May 1, 2016, CORSI emailed ██████████ (on Target Account 1) three times and ██████████ sent him two responses. On or about May 2, 2017, ██████████ (on Target Account 1) emailed CORSI.

44. On or about May 17, 2016, STONE emailed Jerome CORSI, "send me ██████████ e-mail address." CORSI wrote back, "Roger[,] ██████████ (Target Account 1) also seems to work as ██████████⁴

45. That same day, STONE emailed ██████████ at Target Account 1. STONE wrote that he would have to move "our meeting to Wednesday. I am uncomfortable meeting without Jerry." As described further below, it appears that "Jerry" is Jerome CORSI. STONE and ██████████ exchanged additional emails about setting up dinner, and ██████████ emailed back, "RS[,] Confirming dinner Wednesday at 7PM at Club 21, JC included."

46. On or about that same day, May 17, 2016, ██████████ on Target Account 1, emailed CORSI.

47. On or about June 3, 2016, CORSI emailed ██████████ on Target Account 1.

E. ██████████ Stone, and Corsi's Text Messages about "October Surprise" and "Critical Intel."

⁴ The period in a ██████████ email account is not read as a character. Therefore, ██████████ and ██████████ are the same account.

48. On or about May 17, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "Hi Roger, I hope all is well. Our dinner tonight for 7PM is confirmed. I arrive at 4PM. Please suggest a good restaurant that has privacy. Thank you. See you soon, [REDACTED]" STONE responded, "See e-mail."

49. On or about May 19, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "Hi Roger, It Was Great Seeing You Again Last Night At Dinner. Did You Talk To Trump This Morning? Any News? Thank You. Best, [REDACTED]" STONE responded, "Contact made – interrupted – mood good." [REDACTED] and STONE continued to text about arranging a meeting with then-candidate Trump.

50. On or about June 21, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "RS: Secret | Cabinet Minister [REDACTED] in NYC Sat. June 25. Available for DJT meeting. [REDACTED]" According to publicly-available information, during this time [REDACTED] was a Minister without portfolio in the [REDACTED] cabinet dealing with issues concerning defense and foreign affairs.

51. On or about June 25, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged Stone, "Roger, Minister left. Sends greetings from PM.⁵ When am I meeting DJT? Should I stay or leave Sunday as planned? Hope you are well. [REDACTED]"

52. On or about June 26, 2016, STONE messaged [REDACTED] "I am better but turn out to have been poisoned. Completely out of action for 3 days-apologize to Minister for me. I would not leave as we hope to schedule the meeting mon or tues."

53. On or about June 28, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "RETURNING TO DC AFTER URGENT CONSULTATIONS WITH PM IN ROME.MUST MEET WITH YOU WED. EVE AND WITH DJ TRUMP THURSDAY IN NYC. [REDACTED]"

⁵ Based on [REDACTED] statements here and below, I believe "PM" refers to the [REDACTED] Prime Minister.

54. On or about Jun 29, 2016, STONE responded, "Monday meeting collapsed after DJT cleared his schedule to deal with the money crisis. I am waiting the new schedule. Will try for Thursday."

55. On or about June 30, 2016, STONE messaged [REDACTED] "Revised - meeting now 1pm July 6."

56. On or about July 1, 2016, [REDACTED] wrote back, "Thank you my friend . I will plan to be back in NYC on July 5th for the meeting with DJT on the 6th at 1pm. THAY YOU ROGER." STONE responded, "Sorry this took so long. R."

57. On July 5, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "Roger, I am here, ready for the meeting with DJ Trump at 1PM tomorrow. Let's you and I meet at 10.30AM at the St. Regis Lobby. Thank you. [REDACTED]"

58. On July 6, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "At St Regis With Lt General. Waiting For You Thank You. [REDACTED]" STONE wrote back, "[REDACTED] - I am down with a nasty cold and too ill to travel- I have arranged for Jerri to take u in at 1 rather than lose the appointment -- please connect with Jerri -- Let me know how the meeting goes .DJT expecting u. R" Based on STONE's contacts and emails described above, investigators believe that the "Jerri" referenced in the message refers to Jerome CORSI.

59. [REDACTED] wrote back, "Thank U Very Much[.] I Have To Meet Trump Alone After A Brief Introduction by Jerry Thanks Roger." STONE wrote back, "As long as u get the meeting -- I am very sorry I cannot attend -- have a high fever and no voice."

60. On July 8, 2018, ^{2016 ACM} [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "Hi Roger. Have you rescheduled the meeting with DJT? The PM is putting pressure for a quick decision. Thank you for all your help! [REDACTED]"

67. On or about August 12, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE, "Roger, hello from Jerusalem. Any progress? He is going to be defeated unless we intervene. We have critical intell. The key is in your hands! Back in the US next week. How is your Pneumonia? Thank you. [REDACTED] STONE replied, "I am well. Matters complicated. Pondering. R." [REDACTED] wrote back, "Thank You." No additional messages appear in STONE's iCloud between STONE and [REDACTED] until October 30, 2016.

68. As described above, on October 7, 2016, WikiLeaks began releasing the emails hacked from John Podesta's account.

70. On October 30, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE: "Roger, you are doing a great job !!! I am in NY-met with DJT and helping. Victory is in sight. HK says hello. Thanks, [REDACTED]"

71. On Thursday, November 3, 2016, [REDACTED] messaged STONE: "Roger, European country ready to release secret tapes to DESTROY objective. Can we meet ASAP? 4 star General will join. [REDACTED]" STONE responded, "Yes let's talk thurs." [REDACTED] wrote back, "Must meet in NYC Thursday AM."

[REDACTED] (the Target Account) is [REDACTED] Google Account, which [REDACTED] used to communicate with STONE and CORSI.

18. On August 5, 2016, Roger Stone published an article on Breitbart.com entitled, "Dear Hillary: DNC Hack Solved, So Now Stop Blaming Russia." Stone wrote: "It doesn't seem to be the Russians that hacked the DNC, but instead a hacker who goes by the name of Guccifer 2.0." Stone embedded publicly available Tweets from Guccifer 2.0 in the article and wrote: "Here's Guccifer 2.0's website. Have a look and you'll see he explains who he is and why he did the hack of the DNC." Stone also stated: "Guccifer 2.0 made a fateful and wise decision. He went to WikiLeaks with the DNC files and the rest is history. Now the world would see for themselves how the Democrats had rigged the game."

19. On August 8, 2016, Stone addressed the Southwest Broward Republican Organization. During his speech, he was asked about a statement by WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to Russia Today (RT) several days earlier about an upcoming "October Surprise" aimed at the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign. Specifically, Stone was asked: "With regard to the October surprise, what would be your forecast on that given what Julian Assange has intimated he's going to do?" Stone responded: "Well, it could be a number of things. I actually have communicated with Assange. I believe the next tranche of his documents pertain to the Clinton Foundation but there's no telling what the October surprise may be." A few days later, Stone clarified that while he was not personally in touch with Assange, he had a close friend who served as an intermediary.

20. On August 12, 2016, Guccifer 2.0 publicly tweeted: "@RogerJStoneJr thanks that u believe in the real #Guccifer2." That same day, Guccifer 2.0 released the personal cellphone numbers and email addresses from the files of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC).

Related Articles-Israel & Election Meddling

More nefarious connections can be found in this investigative article that I found today. The writer works for his dad's healthcare firm. He's pointed out information about Birnbaum, the Israeli security industry, and the Trump campaign that fits squarely in his research area of interest, but I can't endorse his work without speaking to him because I don't see any affiliations with any media companies, which could vouch for his

credibility. His sourcing is consistent with his story, but I don't know how he knows...That said—Here's the links.

Related articles about the nexus of campaign advisors meddling in election in the USA, Ukraine, and elsewhere..

▶▶ [The Israeli Private Intelligence Industry and the 2016 Trump Campaign | by Peter Grant | Oct, 2023 | Medium](#)

▶▶ [Firms Recruited by Paul Manafort Are Investigated Over Foreign Payments - The New York Times](#)

Bio of Peter Grant

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Excerpt: Roger Stone threatening Kushner

From

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ex-trump-adviser-roger-stone-suggested-jared-kushner-needs-to-have-a-beating/>

November 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Cliff Owen)

WASHINGTON (JTA) — On US president Donald Trump's last day in office, Roger Stone was furious that his old friend declined to pardon a bevy of Stone's associates and fellow travelers. The longtime political trickster blamed Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and he had a plan.

"In two weeks he's moving to Miami," Stone told Enrique Alejandro, his employee, referring to Kushner. "He's going to get a beating. He needs to have a beating. And needs to be told, 'This time we're just beating you. Next time we're killing you.'"

Alejandro was wary of the Danish documentary team filming this exchange, and urged Stone to explain he was joking, according to a Washington Post report posted on Friday.

No, he wasn't kidding, Stone said. "No, no, it isn't joking. Not joking. It's not a joke," he said.

The Post was the first to review hours of footage by the Danish documentarians, who followed Stone for two years. Stone told the Post his remarks were removed from context but did not explain how.

Stone himself was pardoned by Trump in December 2020 for his conviction on charges of obstruction, making false statements and witness tampering in relation to an investigation into interference in the 2016 election. Before becoming an adviser to Trump, Stone had been known for his capacity for "dirty tricks" in his role campaigning for President Richard Nixon.

Speaking directly to the documentarians, the Post reported, Stone likened his appeals to Trump to preemptively pardon his associates to appeals to president Franklin Delano Roosevelt to **stop the Nazi genocide**. He threatens to expose personal details of **Pat Cipollone**, the White House counsel who advised Trump to avoid some of the more far-fetched pardon requests, include some advocated by Stone. From <[Ex-Trump adviser Roger Stone suggested Jared Kushner 'needs to have a beating' | The Times of Israel](#)>

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NYTimes 1973Articles about - Roger Stone Dirty Tricks:

▶▶ [1973 - Nixon, Stone, Dirty Tricks - The New York Times](#) U.S.C.'s relentlessly Republican politics produced a whole pep squad of Nixon aides including Chapin, Ziegler, Herbert Porter, Strachan, Tim Elbourne, one of Ziegler's assistants, and Mike Guhin, a member of Kissinger's staff—not to mention an older generation of Trojans: Herb Klein, Robert Finch and Herbert Kalmbach. And the politics could get rough.

List of Names

- Ron Ziegler, the Presidential press secretary
- Herbert Kalmbach
- Robert Finch
- Herb Klein
- Mike Guhin
- Tim Elbourne
- Herbert Porter
- Gordon Strachan

Another “dirty tricks” operation was under way at this time—under the supervision of Jeb Magruder, with funds paid out by Bart Porter, frequently carried out through the CREEP Youth Division, with ideas reportedly conceived by [Chuck Colson](#). According to one CREEP official, Colson's role aroused some friction. The official recalls Magruder saying, “That goddamn Colson, he just sits there and dreams up this crap!” The projects carried out were varied and imaginative. Porter dispatched Roger Stone, the head of the District of Columbia Young Republicans, to New Hampshire to make a contribution to the McCloskey campaign on behalf of the Gay Liberation Front. (At the last moment, he balked at identifying himself as a homosexual and made the contribution instead in the name of the Young Socialist Alliance.)

▶▶ [The Story of Roger Stone and WikiLeaks - The New York Times](#)

▶▶ [In Commuting Roger Stone's Sentence, Trump Goes Where Nixon Would Not - The New York Times](#)

▶▶ Roger Stone, the 'Trickster' on Trump's Side, Is Under F.B.I. Scrutiny - The New York Times

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General Mike Flynn

Retired Lt. Gen. [Michael Flynn: Government insider to holy warrior](#) retired three-star general who served as Trump's national security adviser

<https://www.dia.mil/About/History/Directors-of-DIA/LTG-Michael-T-Flynn-USA/>

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2020Mar15 Atlantic- Is Anti-Semitism the New Normal in America?

Gary Rosenblatt theatlantic.com
[Is Anti-Semitism the New Normal in America? - The Atlantic](#)
2020MAR15

Is It Still Safe to Be a Jew in America? As society has grown more polarized, classic forms of hatred have increased dramatically.

Bibi backers naked land-grab & power-grab—the chauvinistic 3D definition of antisemitism denies any dissent against Tzar Bibi.

KEY EXCERPTS FROM THIS ARTICLE!

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[Is Anti-Semitism the New Normal in America? - The Atlantic](#)

UNIVERSITY WARFARE **NATAN SHARANSKYHere is the Essence of Bibi-Apologists–Don't Complain about Israeli Policy******

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 - **gay rights, and**
 - **combatting climate change.**

[why? Because many/most Haredi Jews are anti-equality for women, blacks, gays—and Likud conservatives cater to the religious fascist just like Republicans do]

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Anti-Semitism is being fed by religion, politics, economics, and social issues, he added. The “firewalls” of protection that worked in the past—a common base of truth and facts, a shared consensus, fairness and accountability, a media that educates—**“no longer have credibility. They’re gone,”** Foxman said. **“It’s like a perfect storm.”**

BLINDLY BACKING BIBI = PRO-ISRAEL, CRITICISM = ANTISEMITISM

Defenders of the president emphasize his bold steps on behalf of Israel: moving the American embassy to Jerusalem and seeking to

resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict by openly backing the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and placing the onus and pressure on the Palestinians. And they say that an executive order issued in December will be highly effective in combatting anti-Semitism on college campuses.

[so pro-bibi is supporting Israel and Jews, and disagreeing is antisemitic]

Members and supporters of the Jewish community come together for a candlelight vigil, in remembrance of those who died earlier in the day during a shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh. (ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS / AFP via Getty)

On a blustery Baltimore night in the late 1980s, I went to hear Louis Farrakhan speak to a packed crowd at Morgan State University, a historically black college. For more than five decades, the Nation of Islam leader has railed against Jews, variously describing them as “satanic,” “bloodsuckers,” and “termites.” He was at the peak of his influence at the time. As the editor of the weekly *Baltimore Jewish Times*, I wanted to experience firsthand the impact his hate-filled invective had on audiences.

I went with a fellow editor from the paper, and ours were among a handful of white faces in the large crowd. In one of his long and angry tirades that night, Farrakhan focused his venom on white people, Jews, and the media.

[Eliot A. Cohen: Socially acceptable anti-Semitism](#)

Taking notes as surreptitiously as possible, my colleague and I exchanged worried glances, keenly aware that we represented a trifecta of evil in Farrakhan’s world. We sensed some hard stares from those around us, and as the gifted orator ratcheted up his pitch, rousing his listeners, we feared for our safety. A word from the reverend and the crowd might have turned on us. But then, as he neared the end of his rant, his pace slowed, his voice lowered, and he called on his listeners to show their pride and dignity when encountering television reporters outside the auditorium.

Farrakhan’s words had an immediate calming effect. I remember feeling a tug of gratitude for the shift in his tone and message, and noted how quickly a crowd can be stirred up or calmed down.

Amid the terrifying wave of anti-Semitism in the United States of late, I have thought of that scene and wondered what has stirred up such anger against Jews now.

How do we explain Jews being shot to death at Shabbat prayer in their synagogue by hate-filled white nationalists in Pittsburgh and Poway, California; and visibly Orthodox men and women violently attacked in Brooklyn and Monsey, New York, and shot down next door to a synagogue in Jersey City, New Jersey?

These headline-grabbing incidents are part of a broader pattern. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) began tracking anti-Semitic hate crimes four decades ago. This past year brought the third-highest spike on record. Jews make up less than 3 percent of the American population, but the majority of reported religiously based hate crimes target Jewish people or institutions. In a new study by the American Jewish Committee, 35 percent of American Jews said they had experienced anti-Semitism in the past five years, and one-third reported concealing outward indications of their being Jewish.

In nearly 50 years of reporting on the American Jewish community—19 years as an editor in Baltimore and the past 26 as the editor and publisher of *The Jewish Week* of New York—I've written about a wide range of incidents that ratcheted up anti-Semitic sentiment in America.

I wrote about the threat of a neo-Nazi march, four decades before Charlottesville, in the quiet Chicago suburb of Skokie, Illinois—chosen because its heavily Jewish population included a large number of Holocaust survivors. And I covered the aftermath of the Crown Heights riots in the summer of 1991, which targeted Jews in a Brooklyn neighborhood where many Lubavitch Hasidim lived. A 29-year-old rabbinical student was stabbed to death, and some black leaders, including Al Sharpton, stoked the fury of the crowds, calling for violence against Jews.

But in all those years, I never encountered such a level of palpable fear, anger, and vulnerability among American Jews as I do today, with attacks—verbal, physical, and, in two tragic cases, fatal—coming from the far left and the far right of our own society, and from attackers whose only common denominator is hatred of Jews. We had believed that such worries were relegated to our brothers and sisters in Europe, with its centuries of ugly history of Jew hatred and pogroms, culminating in the Holocaust. Now the attacks are *the* main topic of discussion among an American Jewish community shaken to its core.

Is it still safe to be a Jew in America?

The quintessential Jewish telegram is said to read: “Start worrying. Details to follow.”

Pessimism runs deep in the Jewish psyche, with, tragically, good cause. Anti-Semitism goes back to the very beginnings of Jews as a people. Since biblical days, Jews have been seen as “the other,” outsiders, victims of conspiracy theories and myths that have no rational source. The pages of Jewish history are bloodstained from countless persecutions and pogroms. Jews have been accused of being too wealthy and too poor, too powerful and too weak, communists and financiers.

Anti-Semitism drove Jews to the New World, and it followed them there. In 1654, Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor of the colony of New Amsterdam, sought to expel Jews as “deceitful,” “very repugnant,” and “hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ.” The Brandeis University historian Jonathan Sarna points out that Stuyvesant also railed against “the Lutherans and the papists,” noting that “in America, the fate of

Jews and the fate of other persecuted minority groups were, from the very beginning, entwined.”

- Even as Jews gained greater acceptance in American society, anti-Semitism persisted. During the Civil War, **General Ulysses S. Grant moved to expel “Jews, as a class,”** from the war zone he commanded. Leo Frank, an innocent man, was accused of murdering a 13-year-old girl in Atlanta in 1913. Two years later, when his death sentence was commuted, he was taken from jail by an angry mob and lynched.
- **In the 1920s, Henry Ford wrote a series of articles in his newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*, accusing Jews of being part of a worldwide conspiracy based on an anti-Semitic forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.** In the 1930s, Father Charles Edward Coughlin, a Detroit-based precursor to today’s talk-radio shock jocks, drew up to 30 million listeners to his weekly program, on which he spewed pro-Hitler and anti-Semitic vitriol, until the show was canceled in 1939.

During World War II, an estimated half million American Jews served in the armed forces, and many encountered anti-Semitic verbal attacks from fellow soldiers questioning their loyalty to the U.S. After the war, anti-Semitism was often more subtle but still present, with quotas on Jews in universities still in practice, and Jews restricted from many neighborhoods and professions.

In recent years, as overt anti-Semitism has declined, criticism of Israel’s policies from the left has often morphed from anti-Zionism into anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism from the right has been more direct, and violent; both of the men charged with the fatal synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway claimed that Jews are a threat to the white race.

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Upside - Non-Hateful non-reactionary Jews are thriving

- At the same time, Jews are thriving in America as never before. Ivy League universities that once employed quotas to restrict the number of Jewish students now have Jewish presidents at the helm. Joseph Lieberman, an observant Jew, was almost elected vice president in 2000—the Democratic ticket won the popular vote—and his religious beliefs were not a major campaign issue. Michael Bloomberg mounted a serious campaign for the presidency; Bernie Sanders remains in contention for the Democratic nomination. And Jews are prominent as leaders in business, medicine, science, fashion, theater, and other professions.

[Walter Reich: Seventy-five years after Auschwitz, anti-Semitism is on the rise](#)

This paradoxical pattern—success paired with persistent discrimination—is as old as anti-Semitism itself. What is different today, and what offers a degree of consolation, is that following the recent rash of attacks, government officials—at the national, state, and local levels—have spoken out forcefully and taken steps to counter anti-Semitism. The Jewish community’s efforts in recent decades to align itself with other minorities in the face of racial, ethnic, and religious prejudice are now bearing fruit. In contrast with communities over the centuries that have turned their back on Jews in distress, if not actively abetting their persecutors, Americans of all faiths have expressed solidarity with their Jewish neighbors in condemning all forms of bigotry.

Abraham Foxman, a child survivor of the Holocaust who led the ADL for five decades, describes anti-Semitism as “**an ancient virus without an antidote or vaccine.**”

He told me that throughout history, depending on the circumstances, the virus of anti-Semitism has lain dormant or become more virulent. “We’re living in an environment today that is more user-friendly to the virus,” he said, “a time of incivility, lack of tolerance, no respect for the truth. And with it comes politicization, polarization, frustration, anger, hate—all the elements that fuel the virus.”

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- Some critics attribute the recent spate of anti-Semitic violence, at least indirectly, to the rise of **Donald Trump**, a charge that reflects the deep political and cultural

divide in American society. They say that his rhetoric and tweets, his targeting of minorities, his bullying and name-calling have created an atmosphere conducive to such attacks.

- Recent data indicate that the attitudes of most Americans toward Jews have not changed significantly in the past 25 years—about 11 percent hold “intensely” anti-Semitic views, according to a new ADL poll. What has changed, according to the ADL’s CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt, **is that “more of the millions of Americans holding anti-Semitic views are feeling emboldened to act on their hate.”**
- The **president’s harsh criticism of immigrants and minorities**; his reluctance to condemn white supremacists, such as David Duke; and his comment that there were “very fine people on both sides” of the neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville, Virginia, combine to **foster an ugly and confrontational atmosphere.**
- In her book, *How to Fight Anti-Semitism*, the *New York Times* writer and editor Bari Weiss decries **Trump’s “shameless and savage style of politics.”** Trump, she writes, “dismissed civility and decency as virtues for chumps, and cultivated a climate of rage and paranoia that has already proven deadly.”

His attitude toward Jews is more complicated.

The president is deeply proud of his daughter Ivanka, an observant Jewish convert, and he has been an outspoken and forceful supporter of Israel. He brought two trusted associates, both observant Jews, into the government, appointing David Friedman as the U.S. ambassador to Israel and having Jason Greenblatt work closely with Jared Kushner in developing the administration’s Mideast peace plan.

Defenders of the president emphasize his bold steps on behalf of Israel: moving the American embassy to Jerusalem and seeking to resolve the **Israel-Palestine conflict by openly backing the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** and **placing the onus and pressure on the Palestinians.** And they say that an executive order issued in December will be highly effective in combatting anti-Semitism on college campuses.

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Ellie Cohanin, the deputy special envoy to combat anti-Semitism, a State Department position, praises the president for his strong stand against Iran and his forceful and frequent statements decrying anti-Semitism, which he has called “the vile, hate-filled poison ... that must be condemned and confronted everywhere and anywhere it appears.” She says the executive order is a “game changer” for Jewish students who have felt under rhetorical siege on campus.

Cohanin, who as a child fled Iran with her parents in 1979, told me that one lesson she learned from the experience was never to be complacent, and noted that Iran had been

home to Jews for 2,500 years and had been “moving toward enlightenment.” “Everything can turn overnight,” she said, referring to the Islamic Revolution that deposed the shah, who had been friendly to the Jewish community.

Yet in his statements and tweets, Trump sometimes sounds like a classic anti-Semite. In a speech to the Israeli American Council in December, Trump made several comments that drew criticism from the American Jewish Committee and other Jewish organizations for “money references that feed age-old and ugly stereotypes.” (The group also expressed appreciation for the president’s “unwavering support for Israel.”)

During his 45-minute talk, Trump said: “A lot of you are in the real-estate business, because I know you very well. You’re brutal killers, not nice people at all.” He added that some American Jews “don’t love Israel enough,” and that “some of you don’t like me. Some of you I don’t like at all, actually.” He told the crowd that they would be his “biggest supporters” because they care about their wealth, and liberal Democrats advocate for a major wealth tax.

Jews like to tell ourselves that anti-Semitism isn’t really a Jewish problem. Rather, it’s a manifestation of a society’s fears and flaws acted out on a people seen as alien. While Jews are often the initial target of bias and hatred when a scapegoat is sought, they are never the only minority to suffer.

It follows, then, that any attempt to address anti-Semitism will have to be as multifaceted as the problem itself.

[Simone Rodan-Benzaquen: Europe’s lessons for the struggle against anti-Semitism](#)

What is required, experts agree, is more security and law-enforcement patrols as a deterrent; greater efforts to treat mental-health issues (about one-third of the recent attacks in New York were committed by people with previous psychiatric problems); a more effective way to deal with juvenile offenders (responsible for most of the New York attacks); and various forms of education to counter racism and hate, and to promote a healthier society.

In New York, the relationship between African Americans and Jews has added another layer of complexity to the problem. In the civil-rights era, prominent Jews fought alongside Martin Luther King Jr. in his struggle for equality. But after King’s assassination in 1968, Black Power advocates, frustrated with the results of peaceful marches, took the stage. Leaders such as Stokely Carmichael, Jesse Jackson, and Louis Farrakhan blamed Jews for oppressing blacks and aligning with Israel, condemned by these critics as an apartheid state.

Jackson’s brief run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 was derailed, in part, after he used the words *Hymie*, in reference to Jews during a private conversation, and *Hymietown*, in reference to New York City. After initially denying the comments, Jackson publicly apologized before a Jewish audience, saying that “however innocent and unintended, it was wrong.”

But things are changing. Public expressions of anti-Semitism have become more and more taboo in American society over the past three decades, as Jewish organizations have been more aggressive in calling out offenders—from professional athletes to government officials—as well as more proactive in seeking alliances with minority communities.

It took Sharpton 28 years, but in May he publicly acknowledged his “cheap” rhetoric at the time of the Crown Heights riots, telling a Reform Jewish convention that he could have “done more to heal rather than harm.” Sharpton, whose reputation has been rehabilitated in recent years and who now hosts a talk show on MSNBC, strongly condemned the recent anti-Semitic attacks on Jews, “particularly because they were perpetrated by members of the African American community.” Other African American religious and political leaders in New York have issued similar statements.

African Americans and religious Jews have lived in close proximity in Brooklyn neighborhoods for decades. In the late '60s, at the height of the white flight from the area, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the revered leader of the Lubavitch Hasidim, called on his followers to stay put in Crown Heights, and they did. Media coverage of attacks by African American youngsters against Hasidic men, women, and children has been intense in recent months, but Jewish residents say that such problems have occurred sporadically over the years, away from the spotlight. And they are upset at the previous lack of outrage from the Jewish community and civic leaders.

Some view the problem more through the lens of economics and gentrification than religion. With rising housing costs in the neighborhood, some African Americans have had to move, replaced by white people—and that anger and resentment has focused on the white neighbors who live in closest proximity. Today, many in New York's Jewish community are calling for more of the kind of under-the-radar but effective black-Jewish community coalition efforts in schools and between youths and civic leaders that emerged after the 1991 riots.

But not everyone is on board with that approach.

The rabbi of the largest Orthodox congregation in Teaneck, New Jersey, an affluent suburb of New York, wrote in a recent blog post that American Jews should learn from Israel's experience that “Jewish blood is not cheap,” adding that “no Jew should stand by and idly and passively watch another Jew being beaten or harassed.”

That sort of rhetoric echoes the kind of vigilante efforts that made Meir Kahane admired and loathed when he founded the Jewish Defense League in late-'60s Brooklyn. Proclaiming “Every Jew a .22,” he urged young Jews to arm themselves in the face of gang violence.

But Kahane's already limited popularity dropped dramatically after his movement turned to violence, including a fatal bombing in the New York office of the impresario Sol Hurok.

While the Teaneck rabbi cautioned Jews not to be “over-aggressive, disproportionate in response,” he wrote that they “should respond blow for blow—two blows for every one blow—to every unprovoked attack.”

The great majority of American Jews, though, reject such vigilantism, instead favoring heightened security and police protection for Jewish neighborhoods and institutions. With significant financial aid from the government, the Jewish community has invested heavily in proactive security efforts in the past several years. Seeing professionals or volunteer guards outside synagogues, Jewish community centers, and religious schools is now common. Community and political leaders are now calling for major increases in such protection from would-be attackers, and government officials are responding positively.

The question is whether an armed presence will be enough to stave off physical attacks even as the long-standing effort to minimize, if not eradicate, anti-Semitism continues. The governor of New York is proposing the nation’s first domestic-terrorism law. And in New York City, a hate-crimes office has been created and a plan is in place to provide Holocaust education in all public schools.

Such moves toward increased action and vigilance may not eliminate the feelings of vulnerability a congregant might have in their synagogue. But knowing that the levers of government have been pulled in their direction should provide American Jews a measure of comfort, a feeling that we are not alone.

American Jews have long felt sorry for European Jews who feared to wear a *kippah* or Star of David in public in large cities such as London and Paris, where violent attacks and desecrations of gravestones and synagogues have become commonplace. *But never here in the U.S.*, we thought. *Never in the most welcoming country Jews have ever known.*

[Read: Is it time for Jews to leave Europe?](#)

Now we’re not so sure. Are Jews to accept that the new normal in the land of the free is that they must hide signs of their identity, avoid synagogues, and downplay support for Israel, as in much of today’s Europe?

Over the past century, American Jews have found their finest hours rising up to help others in danger, first with their endeavors, mostly financial, on behalf of Israeli statehood in the years before and after 1948, and then with the grassroots movement in the ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s, to free the Jews of the Soviet Union from religious persecution.

These efforts were in some ways a response to the community’s feeling of guilt for not doing more to speak out on behalf of European Jews during the Holocaust and its failure to pressure Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s administration to take action. Since World War II, and especially after the founding of the Jewish state, American Jews have become far more organized, outspoken, and effective lobbyists.

In addition to private diplomacy, public rallies—most notably a 250,000-person march on Washington, D.C., in 1987—resulted in more than 1 million Jews emigrating from behind the Iron Curtain to live in freedom, primarily in the U.S. and Israel.

Today, though, the challenge is closer to home. I take inspiration from the biblical charge to “choose life,” seeking a life of affirmation and dignity rather than one of fear. Another mandate, that of *tikkun olam* (“to improve the world”), has been embraced by a younger generation of American Jews with a more universalistic view of the world than their elders. Whatever vision they embrace, Jews can take pride in asserting their identity, carrying forward an ancient tradition whose gifts to the world include monotheism, the Sabbath, and the belief that each person is created in the image of God.

On a cold Sunday afternoon in December, more than 20,000 Jews and others held a public rally, on short notice, in Brooklyn to protest the recent wave of anti-Semitic attacks. “No hate, no fear” was the theme, and government officials, including the governor, marched in solidarity. Many in the crowd recalled with pride the 1987 protest in D.C., but this was different. They were not marching for their brothers and sisters facing persecution in faraway countries. They were marching for their neighbors and families—and themselves.

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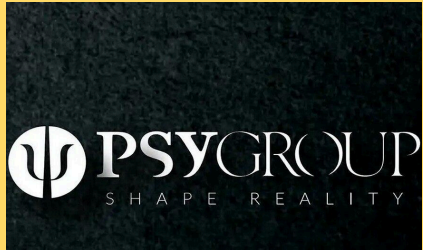
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The Republican Campaigning

2023Oct17 Medium- The Israeli Private Intelligence Industry and the 2016 Trump Campaign



[Peter Grant](#) Oct 17 2023



This story describes the interactions between the Trump campaign and the Israeli private intelligence industry. It further explores the links between the Trump campaign and the Israeli right. Lastly, it describes how a failed coup in Montenegro, which occurred less than a month for the 2016 U.S. election, brought together all of these elements with Russian military intelligence.

It is part one of the series, "Convergence of Shadows: Israel, the Gulf States, and Erik Prince in the 2016 Election."

You can find my collected writings [here](#).

NOTE: This article was written in the context of an unreleased book I wrote about the 2016 election. At the time of its release on Medium, Israel was recently the victim of a coordinated, horrific, and utterly unjustifiable terrorist attack. My sincere condolences go out to the people of Israel, and to the people of Gaza being used by the terrorist organization Hamas as human shields.

On August 3rd, 2016, Donald Trump, Jr. met in Trump Tower with George Nader, an emissary representing the Gulf monarchies of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and Joel Zamel, the head of the Israeli private intelligence firm Psy Group.

The meeting had been arranged and was attended by Erik Prince, America's most infamous private military and intelligence contractor and an ardent supporter of Donald Trump.

The content of the meeting consisted of an offer to assist Trump's candidacy through a sophisticated online and social media influence campaign.

The genesis of the meeting began months earlier.

[George Birnbaum and the Israeli Right's Connection to the 2016 Trump Campaign](#)

On March 29th, 2016, the conservative political consultant George Birnbaum met with Trump campaign Deputy Chairman and longtime Paul Manafort employee Rick Gates at the Mandarin Oriental hotel in Washington, DC.



Photo Conservative political consultant George Birnbaum

Gates and Birnbaum were [introduced by their mutual friend Eckart Sager](#).

Sager, a former CNN producer turned press relations expert, had assisted Manafort and Gates in disseminating negative press about the client Viktor Yanukovych's chief domestic [political opponent, Yulia Tymoshenko, in the U.S. media](#).

Yanukovych had served as the kleptocratic and pro-Kremlin President of Ukraine prior to being deposed in the Maidan Revolution.

Read my article on Manafort's efforts before joining the Trump campaign to launder Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's reputation [here](#).

Sager also listed the government of Azerbaijan among his clients, and according to the *OCCRP* received over \$2.6 million dollars from a shell company that sat at the heart of a \$2.5 billion money laundering operation [known as the Azerbaijani Laundromat](#).

Nor was Sager the only link connecting Birnbaum to Manafort and Gates' work in Ukraine.



Photo 2016 Trump Campaign Chairman Paul Manafort (left) and Deputy Chairman Rick Gates (right)

Birnbaum works for Mercury Public Affairs, the same political strategy and consulting firm enlisted by Manafort [to assist his efforts in Ukraine](#).

Birnbaum lists the former Chancellor of Austria [Alfred Gusenbauer as one of his clients](#). Gusenbauer was a key figure in the Hapsburg Group, a collection for former EU leaders organized by Manafort [to lobby on behalf of Viktor Yanukovych](#).

Years after the Yanukovych government fell in Ukraine, Birbaum pitched his political consulting services to Yulia Tymoshenko, proposing to burnish her image in the US media, exactly the opposite of [Manafort and Sager's efforts years earlier](#).

Gates and Birnbaum's meeting took place during a time in which the Trump campaign was worried the Never Trump Republicans might try to steal the nomination from him through a delegate revolt at the convention. Gates brought up "the challenge of the delegates," with Birnbaum, and asked if there was "any Israel[i] technology that could help us with some of these goals?"

Gates wanted help with identifying which delegates were pro-Trump, which were anti-Trump and which hadn't made up their minds yet.

Regarding the latter category, Gates wanted to know whether they could potentially use social media to influence their decision and get them to support Trump.

Gates was also interested in using publicly available information to gather opposition research on Clinton and "up to ten of her closest circle."

Birnbaum had deep connections to Israel.

In 1996, he worked beneath the Republican strategist Arthur Finkelstein in support of the right-wing Likud Party challenger Benjamin Netanyahu's successful run to become the Israeli Prime Minister.

Birnbaum later served as Netanyahu's chief of staff.



Photo Political Consultant George Birnbaum with his client, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Netanyahu's use of American political consultants provided an important lesson to future campaigns around the world.

"It's not so easy to replicate America to any country, let alone Israel, a multiparty parliamentary system with so many dividing lines," Birnbaum later told *The Jerusalem Post*. "But the 1996 race changed the dynamics of elections. No one thought Netanyahu would win, [and everyone attributed it to Arthur.](#)"

Birnbaum's close association with Netanyahu makes it unsurprising that he supported Trump. For years, Netanyahu's relationship with Barack Obama had been deteriorating.

According to Adam Entous of *The New Yorker*, the Israeli Prime Minister believed that Obama had "[no special feeling](#)" for the Jewish state.

Obama, having won a majority of American Jewish voters, resented the charge.

Unable to reconcile their opposing views regarding the two-state solution, Obama and Netanyahu's relationship further soured when the latter all but officially endorsed his old friend Mitt Romney, Obama's 2012 Republican challenger.

Despite Netanyahu's denials, the Obama team was convinced the Israeli leader [had attempted to interfere in the election](#).

Relations reached a nadir after Obama signed a nuclear treaty with Iran, which Netanyahu vehemently opposed.

Republicans in the U.S. Congress invited Netanyahu to address the chamber, and he [used the opportunity to attack the deal](#).

Netanyahu also had ties to the Trump clan.



Photo Benjamin Netanyahu with Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner

He was close friends with Jared Kushner's father, Charles Kushner. The Kushners had for years donated Israeli causes, including to the yeshiva at the Beit El settlement, located in the West Bank.

Netanyahu was close enough to the Kushners that he often visited their home in New Jersey, sometimes staying over for the night and sleeping in Jared's bedroom, while the younger Kushner found lodging in the basement.

Netanyahu and his party Likud were closely connected to the Republican Party. His campaign manager in 1996, and George Birnbaum's mentor, was Arthur Finkelstein.

The late Finkelstein, who died of lung cancer in 2017, was legendary among political strategists despite the fact that he was notoriously private and camera shy.



Photo Republican political consultant Arthur Finkelstein (left) with his client Benjamin Netanyahu

While at Columbia, he [studied with the libertarian author Ayn Rand](#).

In the 1970s, Finkelstein was one of the first to understand the implications of a Supreme Court decision that allowed independent political committees to spend money on candidates and causes.

He helped develop advanced demographic analyses of primary voters, the use of exit polling, and applying the marketing strategy [known as microtargeting to political campaigns](#).

Finkelstein worked for numerous Republicans ranging from Richard Nixon to Ronald Reagan.

In an echo of Roy Cohn, Finkelstein was gay and later married his long term partner, all the while supporting opponents to gay rights.

Finkelstein was famous for [turning the term “liberal” into a dirty word in American politics](#).

In the 1970s, he developed the “Six-Party Theory,” which divided the electorate into ideological and racial groupings and predicted that Republicans could win elections if they peeled off support from Conservative Democrats.

As early as 1996, Finkelstein encouraged Republican candidates to go negative and “[polarize the electorate](#).”

At its core, Finkelstein’s strategy relied on demoralizing his opponents’ supporters to keep them from voting.

This strategy was embraced by the Trump campaign, as well as the Russian election interference and social media disinformation campaigns contemporaneously targeting the United States.

In a [rare recording](#) of Finkelstein dating back to a 2011 presentation made in Prague, he presages not only the rise of right wing populism, but also the candidacy of Donald

Trump, who at that time was propagating the lie that Barack Obama was born outside of the United States.

Arthur Finkelstein speaking at the CEVRO Institut forum in Prague in 2011

The economic crisis that shook the world after 2008, according to Finkelstein, “appears, at least from my travels around, to be much worse than it feels to most of us. There is real anger.”

He continued, “the anger is at the Mexicans. Not even all Hispanics — the Mexicans.”

In such an environment, Finkelstein predicted that “from nowhere politicians” could rise to the fore. He suggested that “we’re looking at business people to become leaders.”

Finkelstein then brought up Trump. “I don’t know if anybody here is watching Donald Trump in the US, but it’s mind-boggling. It’s just pure personality.”

Finkelstein didn’t just predict the rise of right wing populists, he helped make it happen. He and George Birnbaum had been working on political campaigns across Eastern Europe since 2003.

In 2008, after an introduction provided by Netanyahu, Finkelstein and Birnbaum worked to help re-elect Viktor Orbán to power in Hungary.

According to Steve Bannon, Orbán’s populist political rhetoric made him “Trump before Trump.”

Orbán had once been a pro-democracy critic of Russia and Putinism. However, after 2009, the Hungarian leader notably changed his tune and became a right-wing populist and arguably the number one Putin cheerleader within the EU.



Photo Russian President Vladimir Putin with Hungarian President Viktor Orbán

According to the Russian publication *The Insider*, this may have had something to do with the fact that the powerful and Russian intelligence connected Eurasian crime lord Semyon Mogilevich, who for years used the Hungarian capital Budapest as the base of his operations, reportedly possessed kompromat in the form of a video of **Orbán accepting a**

suitcase full of cash as a bribe [that he may have turned over to Putin](#).

Read my description of Semyon Mogilevich, his connections to Russian intelligence, and his sophisticated financial crimes, [here](#).

After Orbán's initial victory, Finkelstein landed on a key insight that he would use to devastating effect in Orbán's future campaigns: he needed to invent an enemy for Orbán to run against that personified the collective fears of the electorate.

According to George Birnbaum, [who discussed the matter with Swiss reporter Hannes Grassegger](#), the man Finkelstein settled on to fill this role was the Hungarian-born Jewish financier, Holocaust-survivor and liberal philanthropist George Soros, founder of the Open Societies Foundation.



Photo Billionaire financier and philanthropist George Soros.

Soros' financial support of liberal causes had already made him a despised figure on the American right, just as his support of civil society and liberal democracy initiatives in Eastern Europe also made him an enemy of Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin.

By the time the Trump campaign got into gear, Finkelstein had not only laid the intellectual foundations for the electoral strategy it pursued, but sat at the nexus of many key figures backing Trump's improbable run.

Finkelstein had reportedly done work for the Trump Organization, though what exactly and when is not clear.

Finkelstein got the job working for Netanyahu after being recommended by Ronald Lauder, a close personal friend [who goes back decades with Trump](#).

Roger Stone, Trump's oldest political advisor, and **Tony Fabrizio**, the Trump campaign pollster brought on by Paul

Manafort whose data was shared with alleged Russian intelligence officer Konstantin Kilimnik, were both part of a group of Republic consultants known as “**Arthur’s kids,**” meaning they had learned the tricks of the trade [under Finkelstein’s tutelage.](#)

Peter Geoghegan of *openDemocracy* wrote that Finkelstein, who had done campaign work himself in Ukraine, had introduced Manafort to a number of “[pro-Russian Ukrainian oligarchs.](#)”

Court documents later accused Paul Manafort of coordinating with a “senior Israeli official” in 2012 to spread a story accusing Yulia Tymoshenko of semitism during the course of his work supporting Viktor Yanukovich.

The day after this news broke, both [Haaretz](#) and [The Jerusalem Post](#) speculated that the official in question was the Soviet-born, Israeli official Avigdor Lieberman.

Read my description of the suspicious connections between Lieberman and Russia, as well as Eurasian organized crime, [here.](#)

According to *The Times of Israel*, Finkelstein, while being assisted by George Birnbaum, “masterminded” the October 2012 alliance [between Netanyahu’s Likud Party and Lieberman’s Yisrael Beytenu party.](#)

[Psy Group, iVote Israel, and Ronald Lauder](#)



A day after Birnbaum met with Trump campaign deputy chairman Rick Gates, he reached out to Eitan Charnoff, a project manager at an Israeli private intelligence firm called Psy Group.

Birnbaum was connected to Charnoff by Kory Bardash, the head of the group Republicans in Israel.

In addition to his role at Psy Group, Charnoff was also the director of iVote Israel, an ostensibly nonpartisan get-out-the-vote campaign [encouraging Israeli-Americans to vote.](#)

Founded in 2012 during the lead up to the Obama-Romney race, iVote Israel was initially run by Elie Pieprz, a former member of the Republican Jewish Coalition who later immigrated to Israel and joined the group Republicans Abroad Israel.

iVote Israel's first campaign strategist, Aron Shaviv, [was a former campaign staffer for Avigdor Lieberman](#).



Photo Aron Shaviv

In 2016, Shaviv worked as a consultant for the Democratic Front, a pro-Russian political opposition party in Montenegro that was later involved in [an attempted Kremlin-backed coup](#).

Montenegrin prosecutors at one point believed that Shaviv was one of the conspirators in the planned [violent overthrow of the government](#).

The failed coup involved Russian military intelligence, the GRU, and was funded by Oleg Deripaska, who [owned major aluminum assets in the country](#).

We shall return to the events in Montenegro, but first a bit more about iVote Israel and its reputed patrons.

Despite being a 501(c)4 so-called “dark money” nonprofit, which is not required to list its donors, **iVote Israel has been linked to the American billionaire heir Ronald Lauder.**

According to the Sunlight Foundation, the nonprofit behind iVote Israel shares the [same address as the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation](#).

Lauder, a staunch supporter of Netanyahu, has been personally connected to Donald Trump for decades, [the two were childhood friends](#).

Lauder's mother, the cosmetics magnate Estée Lauder, socialized and was friends with [Trump's personal lawyer and mentor Roy Cohn](#).

In *The Art of the Deal*, Trump claimed that he first met the Soviet Ambassador to the United States, **Yuri Dubinin, at a luncheon held by Ronald's brother, Leonard Lauder.**

As Trump tells it, the surreptitious meeting led to a series of events that culminated in Trump's first visit to Moscow.

Ronald Lauder later became a major donor to the 2016 Trump campaign and [Trump supporting Super PAC's](#).

Lauder became politically involved during the Reagan years and in 1986 was made the US Ambassador to Austria.

Three years later, he unsuccessfully ran to be the Mayor of New York City against Rudy Giuliani. Lauder's campaign was managed by Arthur Finkelstein and the later [chairman and CEO of Fox News Roger Ailes](#).

In addition to funding Netanyahu's first run for Israeli Prime Minister in 1996, Ronald Lauder introduced him to Finkelstein, who subsequently joined his campaign and [played a decisive role in its victory](#).

In the late 1990s, Lauder also negotiated with Syria on behalf of Israel and during this time of shuttle diplomacy between Jerusalem and Damascus was accompanied by George Nader, the convicted pedophile representing the interests of the UAE and Saudi Arabia who would later accompany Erik and Prince and Joel Zamel in their meeting with Donald Trump Jr.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Lauder used connections he gained as an Ambassador in Vienna to pursue business opportunities in Eastern Europe, some of which brought him into contact with individuals with ties to Eurasian organized crime.

In 1995, he established Central European Media Enterprises (CME), which purchased dozens of commercial television stations across Eastern Europe.

That same year, in the course of attempting to purchase a television station in Ukraine, Lauder met with an advisor to Ukraine's famously corrupt President Leonid Kuchma named Oleksandr Volkov, who was later [investigated for money laundering and corruption](#).

Read my description of Kuchma, Volkov, and the seizure of post-independent Ukraine by Kremlin-backed Eurasian organized crime [here](#).

Oleksandr Volkov, a close aide of Kuchma's, was a [representative of an international company called Seabeco](#), owned by the Russian Boris Birshtein.

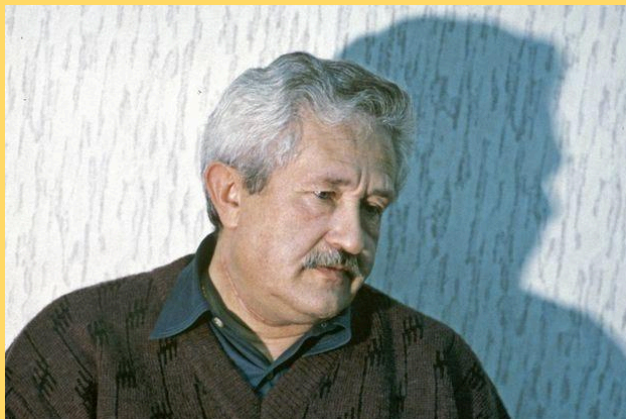


Photo Alleged organized criminal and Russian intelligence asset Boris Birshtein

Birshtein has been linked to organized crime by the FBI and according to a former KGB officer [who spoke with The Financial Times](#), and the book [Putin's Kleptocracy](#) by Karen Dawisha,

[among other sources](#), Birshstein was one of the businessmen cultivated by the KGB to launder Communist Party funds out of Russia and to develop international business interests.

Read my article about the KBG's efforts to launder Communist Party money out of the Soviet Union, and Birshstein's involvement in the process, [here](#).

Birshstein's (now former) son-in-law, Alexander Shnaider, invested in the [Trump organization development Trump Tower Toronto](#).



Photo Alexander Shnaider, Boris Birshstein's former son-in-law shaking hands with Donald Trump at an event for the opening of Trump Tower Toronto

Read my article about Shnaider's involvement in Trump Tower Toronto and corruption in other Trump Org real estate developments [here](#).

On Volkov's suggestion, Lauder's CME purchased a stake in Studio 1 + 1, then co-owned by the [Ukrainians Vadim Rabinovitch and Boris Fuchsmann](#).

According to the FBI, Boris Fuchsmann, was a gold smuggler and embezzler with links to organized crime.

Vadim Rabinovitch is a Ukrainian ex-convict and alleged organized crime boss who worked as the Ukrainian representative of Nordex, a commodities firm established by Grigori Luchansky (AKA Loutchansky) that is allegedly associated with [both Russian intelligence and Eurasian organized crime](#).



Photo Vadim Rabinovitch

In 1994 Rabinovitch attended a meeting in Tel Aviv with Semyon Mogilevich, Solntsevskaya criminal syndicate head Sergei Mikhailov and other major Eurasian organized crime figures including Viktor Averin, Boris Birshstein and Arnold Tamm, [where the sharing of criminal assets in Ukraine was discussed](#).

Read my article where I describe this meeting, and place it in the wider context of Eurasian organized crime in Israel and around the world, [here](#).

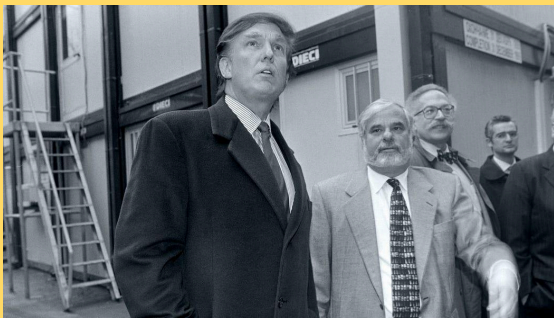
CME was later investigated for offering up to \$1 million in bribes to Ukrainian officials, though no charges ever appear to have been filed.

Though Rabinovich sold his stake in the television station, he remained closely connected to its investors.

In 2007, the Ukrainian oligarch Ihor Kolomoyskyi purchased 3% of the company. Kolomoyskyi, who has been accused by the Department of Justice of involvement in a [massive international money laundering scheme](#), co-founded the [European Jewish Union with Rabinovich in 2011](#).

When later attempting to explain how they could have gone into business with Rabinovich, CME executives claimed to have been impressed by a picture he had on his wall showing him with then-President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore [at a 1995 Democratic fundraiser in Miami](#).

The man who brought Rabinovich to the event, Bennet S. LeBow traveled to Moscow with Donald Trump in 1996 to investigate potentially investing in a Trump Tower Moscow.



Donald Trump and Bennett LeBow in Moscow in 1996

Read my description of Trump and LeBow's 1996 visit to Moscow [here](#).

Nor was the **Rabinovich-LeBow axis the only link Lauder** has had with corrupt figures from the former Soviet Union who have had interactions with Trump.

In his capacity as the President of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), Lauder has had multiple interactions with Alexander Mashkevich, the Israeli-Kazakh billionaire who served as the President of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress until 2011, [a regional subsidiary of the WJC](#).



Photo Alexander Mashkevich

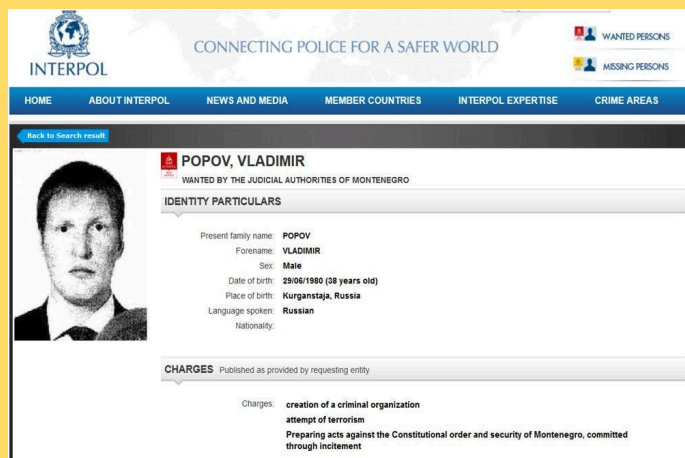
Mashkevich once worked for the suspected KGB money laundering outfit Seabeco, underneath the alleged KGB-linked organized criminal Boris Birshstein, whose former son-in-law [invested in Trump Tower Toronto](#).

Mashkevich himself was [listed as an investor in Trump Tower Soho](#).

Read my in-depth article on the Trump Tower Soho project, including the involvement of Felix Sater and reportedly Alexander Mashkevich, [here](#).

Returning to iVote Israel, when it's former campaign strategist Aron Shaviv worked on behalf of the pro-Kremlin Democratic Front (DF) opposition party in Montenegro, a number of disparate threads relating to the Russian interference in the 2016 US election and figures within the Trump campaign appear to have come together.

While certain details of the October 2016 alleged coup attempt remain controversial, international investigators from *Bellingcat* have confirmed that the GRU officers Eduard Shishmakov and Vladimir Popov (aka Vladimir Nikolaevich Moiseev) [were involved in the plot](#).



The plot was [directly supported by Oleg Deripaska](#), who had major business interests in the country.



Photo Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska with Vladimir Putin

Another Russian oligarch involved was Konstantin Malofeev, who also played a key role in the Kremlin's efforts to influence events in Ukraine, particularly in [Crimea and the separatist provinces in the East](#).

Paul Manafort, who had worked on behalf of Oleg Deripaska's interests in Montenegro as far back as 2005, was also in contact with figures in the DF in the Fall of 2016, immediately after he had [resigned from his position as chairman of the Trump campaign](#).

Read my article about Manafort and Deripaska's involvement in Montenegro in 2005 [here](#).

According to the US Treasury Department, Victor Boyarkin, the former GRU officer who later worked on behalf of Deripaska and chased down Manafort over his debts to the oligarch during the 2016 election, was also [involved in providing funding for the DF](#).

In addition to accusing Aron Shaviv of assisting the ultimately failed coup, on October 16th Montenegrin authorities arrested the alleged conspirators prior to the plot being enacted, prosecutors also allege that an ex-CIA officer named Joseph Assad was tasked with [evacuating the coup plotters out of the country](#).

Psy Group and the Trump Campaign

As mentioned, after speaking with Trump campaign deputy chairman Rick Gates, George Birnbaum was connected to Eitan Charnoff, who was a project manager at the Israeli private intelligence firm Psy Group, as well as the director of iVote Israel, by Kory Bardash, the head of the group Republicans in Israel.



Photo Eitan Charnoff

“I have spoken to both of you about the other,” Kory Bardash wrote to Birnbaum and Charnoff. “Hopefully you can [have a mutually beneficial chat](#).”

In connecting with Psy Group via Charnoff, Birnbaum was reaching out to the world of Israeli private intelligence firms. In his later testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee, Birnbaum indicated that he well knew who he was getting involved with.

“These guys came out of the military intelligence army unit, and it’s like coming out with a triple Ph.D. from MIT,” Birnbaum testified.

“The amount of knowledge these guys have in terms of cybersecurity, cyber-intelligence... they come out of a unit in which their minds in terms of understanding cybersecurity—the algorithms that they can create — it’s just so beyond what you could get [with] a normal education that it’s just unique ... there are hundreds and hundreds of Israeli start-up companies that the founders are guys [who came out of this unit](#).”

The Israeli private intelligence industry emerged in the 2000s. Organizations such as Mossad and the Israeli Defense Force’s Unit 8200, an elite signals intelligence unit, had been tracking and conducting influence operations on terrorists and perceived enemies of Israel for years.

From this firmament emerged multiple successful technology startups, as well as a number of private intelligence firms.

The first of these, Terrogeance, was established in 2004 by Gadi Aviran, the former [head of an Israeli military intelligence team](#).

Four years later in 2008, Israeli's Shalev Hulio and Omrie Lavie established NSO Group, which gained infamy for providing the Saudi government with software that allowed it to track dissidents including Jamal Khashoggi, who was [later murdered by the regime](#).

2011 saw the founding of Black Cube by ex-Israeli intelligence officers Dan Zorella and Avi Yanus, known for its aggressive clandestine operations [conducted on behalf of its clients](#).

Black Cube, which features two former heads of Mossad on its board, provided services to the [disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein](#).

The interweaving nature of these organizations, with Israeli state backed intelligence organizations sitting at the nexus of them all, raises the question of just how independent these groups are from the Israeli government and intelligence establishment.

Operating under the motto "Shape Reality," Psy Group was founded in Israel on December 22nd, 2014. The private intelligence firm specialized in the collection and analysis of information, particularly online and on social media, and offered services related to online reputation management as well as sophisticated, targeted influence campaigns.

Psy Group was founded by Joel Zamel, an Israeli born in Australia in 1986. Zamel's co-founders included Daniel Green and Elad Schaffer. Psy Group's CEO, Royi Burstein, was a lieutenant colonel in Israeli military intelligence.

According to the Psy Group's promotional literature, the company specialized capabilities include Financial intelligence, Cyber intelligence, Targeting & Monitoring, Online reputation management, Offline/Online campaigns and "Honey Traps."

After detailed descriptions of these capabilities, the company described itself as being "managed by an elite group of high-ranking officers from one of the [world's most renowned intelligence agencies](#)."

Psy Group was not Zamel's first foray into the world of private intelligence.

In 2010, he co-founded a "crowdsourced" geostrategic consulting firm called Wikistrat. Despite being based in Washington, DC, Wikistrat is essentially Israeli. Elad Schaffer, who later founded Psy Group alongside Zamel, served as Wikistrat's COO.



JOEL ZAMEL

Founding Director & CEO
Wikistrat
Tel-Aviv, Israel

joel@wikistrat.com

Joel is the Founding Director and CEO of Wikistrat Ltd, a technology start-up developing systems and methodologies for strategic analysis, modeling, and planning. Joel also developed the strategic planning methodology of Collaborative Competition, on which Wikistrat's flagship system is based. Joel has a Bachelor of Mining Engineering from the University of New South Wales and a Masters Degree in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy from the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (Israel), specializing in Counter-Terrorism and Homeland Security.

Photo Screen shot of an old Wikistrat bio of Joel Zamel

The majority of Wikistrat's clients were foreign governments, yet it was extraordinarily well-connected to senior officials [within the U.S. intelligence community](#).

Members of its board included former CIA and NSA director Michael Hayden, former national security advisor James L. Jones, former deputy director of the National Security Council Elliott Abrams and the former acting director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) David Shedd.

Shedd [worked beneath Michael Flynn](#).

In 2015, Wikistrat ran simulations exploring what would happen if a foreign government attempted to interfere in the American political process and compiled a report on the subject.

The report discussed the possibility, which later became a reality, *that Russian trolls might target the United States*.

"At the time we were discussing the subject of cyber-interference in democratic processes, it seemed and felt like just another idle intellectual exercise and scenario planning project for political scientists," a Wikistrat analyst who worked on the report told *The Daily Beast*.

"But retrospectively, it feels [a bit too on-the-nose not to be disturbing](#)."

Wikistrat's 2015 report contained prescient analysis at a time when the Internet Research Agency (IRA) was already targeting the US.

The report refers to the "Internet Research Group," almost certainly a reference to the IRA.

"[T]hese 'cyber-trolls' are trained controversialists: they openly engage in public controversy... People are drawn to the excitement of controversy and these cyber-trolls are experts in sensationalizing a political issue. The objective of cyber-trolls is not to convince explicitly, but rather subconsciously, by inserting a seed of doubt that leads to confusion and encourages fact-skepticism.

"They are not afraid to use provocative and confrontational language, as it is to their advantage if it leads to an emotional rise in the reader because the reader is then more likely to engage in

debate, which in-turn, creates more buzz and attracts a greater audience, increasing the potential number of people exposed to this misinformation campaign.”

Psy Group's Opaque Corporate Structure, and its Links to Russia and Walter Soriano



According to Zamel, Psy Group was composed of a Cyprus-registered parent company, IOCO Ltd., and a subsidiary company based in Israel called Invop Ltd.

Zamel described himself as the majority shareholder for IOCO Ltd, which was responsible for business development, contracting and marketing. Invop was [responsible for operations in Israel](#).

Zamel gave no explanation as to why the company was structured this way, nor did he explain several other oddities, most of which seemed to point to a remarkable number of connections to Russia.

IOCO Ltd was managed by a Cyprus-based holding company administered by two Cypriot directors named Ria Chistofides and Giannakis Ermogenous, who also served as the official affiliates of the Russian state-owned Vozrozhdenie Bank and Promsvyazbank and the privately held Avtovazbank.

Through an analysis of incorporation documents, author and investigative reporter Scott Stedman found that Christofides and Ermogenous “have the power to decide over the activities and conduct of the company. They are involved in all of the decisions concerning the company and have to fulfill certain duties [towards the enterprise and its other members](#).”

From its inception in 2014 until July of 2016, IOCO Ltd was owned by a rotating cast of shell companies. Two of these companies were registered in the British Virgin Islands, Prime Nominees Ltd and Sea Holdings Ltd.

Both of these companies were under the control of a Swiss lawyer named Judith Hamburger. Hamburger worked for two UK-based companies which from 2010–2016 listed their ultimate beneficiary as the Russian national Alina Zolotova, wife of the Russian banker Georgy Bedzhamov, who fled to Monaco in December of 2015 after being accused of embezzling \$3.4 billion from Vneshprombank.



Photo Alina Zolotova and Georgy Bedzhamov (source rucriminal.info)

In July of 2016, ownership over IOCO Ltd was transferred to a British Virgin Islands-based shell company called Protexer Ltd.

Protexer's subsidiaries contain multiple links to Russia.

Protexer-owned MGMT Financial Services Limited is controlled by a multi-billion dollar Russian consortium called the Metropole Group.

Based out of Moscow, Metropole Group is controlled by a Russian billionaire and former member of the state Duma for Vladimir Putin's party United Russia named Mikhail Slipenchuk.



Photo Mikhail Slipenchuk

Protexer Ltd itself is a subsidiary of the Cyprus-based Trident Trust, which provides corporate, trust and fund services. Protexer is just one of sixteen subsidiaries owned by Trident.

Of those, five were owned by Slipenchuk, three feature Directors that are affiliated with numerous Russian banks and one used the same Cyprus-[based secretarial services as Paul Manafort](#).

According to documents seen by [The Times of Israel](#), the anonymously owned Protexer is associated with Gazprombank and Gazprom Media, the largest media holding company in Russia and a subsidiary of Gazprom.

The connection is through yet another sister company to Psy Group, the Protexer-owned Benton Solutions Ltm.

Registered in Cyprus, Benton's shareholder was listed as Ecofran Marketing, Consulting and Communication Services Company Limited, itself a subsidiary of Gazprom Media, which is owned by Gazprombank.

Russian corporate documents show that Ecofran provided millions of dollars in loans to a [variety of companies owned by Gazprom Media](#).

Psy Group's clients also reveal multiple links to Russia.

In or around 2015, Psy Group was hired by Oleg Deripaska to conduct an intelligence operation codenamed "Project Starbuck" that involved a business dispute Deripaska was having with a large Austrian company possibly involving real estate.

Deripaska enlisted Psy Group to dig up derogatory information on the Austrian company, though Psy Group CEO Royi Burstein, who may have met with Deripsaska in Switzerland to discuss the project.



Photo Former Psy Group CEO Royi Burstein

Burstein told the Senate Intelligence Committee that Psy Group was unable to dig up any negative information on the company. The publicly available details of Psy Group's work for Deripaska remain scant.

Another Russian oligarch that hired Psy Group was Dmitry Rybolovlev. As previously covered, Rybolovlev purchased a Florida mansion from Donald Trump in 2008 for \$95 million, approximately \$50 million more than Trump had [bought it for in the height of a recession](#).



Photo Russian oligarch Dmitri Rybolovlev

Read my article about Rybolovlev's purchase of the Trump property [here](#).

Rybolovlev engaged Psy Group to perform an intelligence project involving a dispute the billionaire Russian oligarch was having with the Swiss art dealer Yves Bouvier. Psy Group was paid \$150,000 to collect derogatory information on Bouvier.

Oleg Deripaska was put in touch with Psy Group by a mysterious British-Israeli citizen named Walter Tvzi Soriano, who had worked in the past for Deripaska and was also [present at Psy Group's meetings with Rybolovlev](#).



Photo Former Israeli intelligence officer Walter Tvzi Soriano ([CREDIT: Eddie Mulholland](#))

Soriano is an Argentinian-born, former Israeli intelligence officer who operates a [London-based consultancy USG Security](#).

While very little information appears about him online, due to his scrupulous attempts to avoid being photographed or attract attention to himself, Soriano enjoys elite connections to both the Israeli government and powerful Russian oligarchs.

Soriano is a close friend and associate of Benjamin Netanyahu's. He produced a documentary about the Prime Minister's brother, who died while leading [an Israeli raid on Entebbe Airport in Uganda in 1976](#).

After losing to Ehud Barak in 1999, Netanyahu briefly left politics and entered the private sector with Soriano, where they invested in a number of US based technology ventures.

In 2002, Soriano arranged for Netanyahu to deliver lectures at a Mexico City-based charity, the Lev Malka Organization, for which he was paid \$180,000. Soriano had described his and Netanyahu's relationship as being based on "[years of deep friendship, devoid of any external interests](#)."

In an explosive allegation that both Soriano and Netanyahu deny, Israeli press has reported that the Israeli police believed that Netanyahu hired Soriano to surveil police officers who were [investigating the Prime Minister on corruption charges](#).

Prior to establishing USG Group, in 2002 Soriano founded the similarly named Universe Security Group, an international security based out of London he owned with Israeli's Guy Nagar and Yitzhak Molcho.

Molcho served in a longtime capacity as Benjamin Netanyahu's private attorney, and is a close [associate and legal partner of David Shimron](#), Netanyahu's cousin and attorney who later became caught up in one of several corruption cases swirling around the Prime Minister which included [accusations of bribery and money laundering](#).

The company's board of directors included Nahum Admoni, the director-general of Mossad from 1982–1989, Uri Sager, the former head of Israel's Military Intelligence Directorate and Albert Raes, Director of the Belgian State Security Service from 1977–1990.

United Security Group appears to have done contracting work with the CIA through its connection with Kyle "Dusty" Foggo, at one point the third highest ranking member of the CIA.

The company was liquidated in 2009 after one of its clients, Graff Diamonds in London, [was robbed and the board resigned en masse](#).

Soriano subsequently established USG Security.

Soriano's relationships with Russian oligarchs are extensive.

According to the journalist Raviv Drucker, who Soriano unsuccessfully sued for defamation, Oleg Deripaska hired Soriano while he was involved in a legal dispute with Mikhail Chernoy in British court.

Read my description of Mikhail Chernoy, his connections to the Izmaylovskaya criminal syndicate, and his business relationship with Oleg Deripaska, [here](#).

It has been publicly alleged (and disputed) that in 2014, USG Security was hired by a Deripaska-linked company to provide security at Sochi Airport during the 2014 Winter Olympics.

[NOTE: The original source for the above claim was an article written by the reporter Scott Stedman. Stedman was sued for defamation by Soriano in the United Kingdom. Fifteen press freedom organizations [decried](#) the suit as a SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) law suit. As part of a settlement with Soriano, the article was taken down. It is the opinion of the author, who cannot independently establish the validity of the Sochi/Deripaska claim, that Soriano utilizes expensive and time consuming litigation for the purposes of intimidation.]

According to [Intelligence Online](#), Soriano was also involved in Oleg Deripaska's attempts to silence Nastya Rybka while she was imprisoned in Thailand.



Photo Belorussian escort Nastya Rybka riding on a yacht with Oleg Deripaska.

Read my description of Deripaska's involvement the Nastya Rybka affair [here](#).

In addition to working for Oleg Deripaska and Dmitry Rybolovlev, Psy Group has also done work for an as yet unknown client attempting to discredit Ukrainian anti-corruption activists, which would have been in the interests of the Kremlin and/or its supporting oligarchs in Ukraine.

In the Summer of 2017, Psy Group was allegedly behind a disinformation campaign targeting the Anti-Corruption Action Center (AntAC) run by a [Ukrainian activist named Daria Kaleniuk](#).

AntAC was a key proponent of establishing the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), a law enforcement body [dedicated to rooting out corruption](#).

Kaleniuk is also an [associate of Serhii Leshchenko](#), the Ukrainian lawmaker and investigative journalist who helped publicize the “Black Ledger” of illicit payments made by the Yanukovich regime that led to Paul Manafort’s [resignation from the Trump campaign](#).



Photo Ukrainian anti-corruption activists Daria Kaleniuk (second from the left) and Serhii Leshchenko (center)

Read my description of the story behind the “Black Ledger” and Paul Manafort’s resignation from the Trump campaign [here](#).

Project Rome: Psy Group Devises a Plan for the Trump Campaign



Following his meeting with Rick Gates, **George Birnbaum** contacted Psy Group project manager Eitan Charnoff.

On March 30th, Charnoff emailed his Psy Group colleagues Royi Burstein and Arnon Epstein, among others, to alert them to the new opportunity to work for an American presidential campaign.

Charnoff said that he and Epstein had been in touch with “a major American campaign consultant who [had] been tasked by the [T]rump campaign.”

He further explained that “[t]hey want us to [use] social platform analytical tools as well as our Rublik department capabilities to identify who is truly with [T]rump and who isn’t and then run an influence campaign to impact their decision using avatars and creating third party assets and outreach.”

Charnoff ended by saying “[b]y the end of today they want a rough estimate of what it will cost,” as well a timeline and more exact cost estimate within three days.

Charnoff divided the potential work for the Trump campaign into two distinct projects. The first involved gathering opposition research on “the female opposing candidate,” meaning Hillary Clinton, by means of “dig[ing] up dirt as well as active [information] gathering on associates.”

The second project would consist of looking into state delegates who would be voting at the Republican National Convention to determine which delegates were “pro [T]rump, against and unknown.”

The delegates who fit into the latter two categories would then be targeted by a social media influence campaign specially designed to get them “to support [T]rump and not change the convention rules.”

On April 1st, Arnon Epstein sent an email with the subject line “Project D-Day” in which he suggested that Psy Group had been authorized to “move to the planning phase of the activity,” following “several conversations last night with George [Birnbaum]”

Epstein included a screenshot of Birnbaum’s communications suggesting that the Trump Campaign was not “intimidated” by the budget numbers being discussed and was anxious to receive proposals from Psy Group within days. Epstein also elaborated on the oppo research against Clinton.

“As for the intel on the lady and her team, he’s talking about up to 10 people in her inner-inner circle,” Epstein wrote.

“We told him an estimate of 10 people and her would be around \$250K for passive work + very light active. We explained we suggest not to go heavy active at the moment because of the issues we discussed. We spun it a bit and said we are not concerned for us, but wish to prevent any blow back or flags raising pointing to him at this point.”

In another email sent April 1st, Birnbaum offered guidance to Charnoff and Epstein on how to draft the proposal for the Trump team, suggested that they “run intensive influence campaigns on the unknown delegates themselves and on the influencers of the delegates,” and “[f]or the Clinton Proposal... run an intensive, deep open source opposition research campaign on Hillary and her 10 closest associates (names to be supplied by [the] campaign). Depending on information found, apply a second layer of info gathering to make sure no stone was left unturned. Anything else you might want to add as well.”

“Project D-Day” initially envisioned up to 53 Psy Group employees being involved in the effort, divided into four teams: Team Black, Team Rubik, Team Blue and Team Red. Four days later, on April 5th, Epstein reached out to Birnbaum with an updated plan, now being referred to as “Project Rome.”

According to the renamed proposal, Psy Group would conduct “influence services” on behalf of the Trump campaign targeting Republican convention delegates.

The proposal also called for conducting “opposition intelligence research” on the Clinton camp.

The cost estimate for the “influence services” targeting the Republican delegates was \$3.1 million, plus \$100k for media expenses, while the opposition research was priced at \$400k.

In addition to these proposals, Epstein’s email to Birnbaum included a “sample report” on an actual California Republican delegate named Felicia Michelle Tweedy.

Psy Group’s “sample report” included biographical data related to Tweedy including her place of residence, employment status, marital status, political and religious beliefs and personal interests.

According to the report, while Tweedy was “a strong supporter of Donald Trump, and therefore no active influence is required at this point,” it recommended “infrequent monitoring (monthly) to check whether any changes in opinions or sentiments towards Trump.”

It was explained that the information contained in the sample report had been gathered through “available OSINT (Open Source Intelligence),” and promised that “[i]n the event that additional information is required, Psy Group can carry out various active intelligence activities to extract additional information [based on the needs and directions.](#)”

According to documents [seen by The New York Times](#), Psy Group promised that “veteran intelligence officers” would look through social media accounts and other publicly available information to produce similar dossiers on the psychology of every persuadable Republican delegate.

It further promised upwards of 40 Psy Group employees would then target up to 2,500 individuals with tailored messages to sway them towards Trump.

The messages would also target Trump’s chief rival for the Republican nomination, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas.

Targeted messages appearing to come from former Cruz supporters or influential people within the Republican Party would highlight Cruz’s “ulterior motives or hidden plans.”

The influence campaign would consist of both “online and offline approaches,” and even potentially involve telephone calls. Psy Group further promised that it could gather “unique intel” through both “covert sources” and “tailored avatars.”

George Birnbaum informed Rick Gates that he had received proposals from Psy Group. Gates then told Birnbaum to send the proposals to an individual named Scott Wilkerson. Though Birnbaum wasn’t familiar with Wilkerson, he sent the information to him anyway.

Conversations regarding the project continued with Psy Group.

In a May 8th email chain under the subject “campaign work,” Psy Group employees discussed developing “psyop campaigns” against Trump’s “opposition,” which would consist of “[h]undreds of avatars driving negative messaging,” and [“physical world ops like counter protests, hecklers, etc.”](#)

Despite these discussions, the initial communications between Psy Group and the Trump campaign do not appear to have led to the two moving forward with “Project Rome.”

Birnbaum later claimed to have never heard back from Gates or the Trump campaign and subsequently canceled his meetings with Psy Group.

Joel Zamel and Psy Group, however, continued their efforts to offer their services to the Trump campaign.

In May of 2016, Zamel emailed the former Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, who had only just endorsed Trump for President that month, suggesting that he could offer the Trump campaign powerful tools that could utilize social media to help it in the election. Zamel suggested that they meet to discuss the issue.

Gingrich forwarded Zamel’s email to Jared Kushner, who ran the idea by Brad Parscale, the Trump campaign’s digital director. Parscale reportedly [rebuffed the offer.](#)

Despite this seeming failure, Zamel would ultimately secure a meeting with Donald Trump Jr. in Trump Tower. The story of how he achieved such a coup will be the subject the next article in this series.

From

<https://medium.com/@petergrant_14485/the-israeli-private-intelligence-industry-and-the-2016-trump-campaign-1db a413d5e77>

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2018Apr07 A suitcase full of cash from the Solntsevo Mafia: Does Putin have a video kompromat on the Hungarian leader?

[Anastasia Kirilenko](#) 7 April 2018

From <[A suitcase full of cash from the Solntsevo Mafia: Does Putin have a video kompromat on the Hungarian leader?](#)>

Today Vladimir Putin is arriving on an official visit to Hungary, where he will meet Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, one of the European leaders seen as among the most loyal to the Kremlin. As The Insider discovered, one of the reasons for his loyalty might be a video with compromising info on Orbán, filmed back in the mid 1990s by crime kingpin Semyon Mogilevich. As a result, the Russo-Hungarian friendship is growing, while money from joint contracts flow to opaque offshore accounts.

In 1998, when the leader of the Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) Viktor Orbán was first elected Prime Minister, unlike his predecessors, he skipped visiting Moscow and often chastised Russia, particularly after Vladimir Putin came to power. For example, in 2007, Orbán [harshly lambasted](#) the Government for being «blind» to the «growing influence» Russia wielded via its vast energy giants, and suggested that Hungary should play it European. “Those young people following us should not allow Hungary to become Gazprom’s most cheerful barracks,” [said](#) Orbán, alluding to Hungary’s pre-1989 status as “Moscow’s most cheerful barracks.” In 2008, he continued to criticize the Kremlin, [calling](#) other European governments “Moscow’s puppets,” and deeming the endorsement of the “South Stream” project by the previous government as high treason.

Suddenly in 2009, everything changed. Orban unexpectedly showed up at the “United Russia” convention in Saint Petersburg, where he met Putin. He immediately ceased criticizing Russia, and a year later, when Orbán became the Hungarian Prime Minister, he became one of the key Putin apologists in Europe. Whatever happened to Orbán in such a short period of time? Could it be the arrest of criminal kingpin Semyon Mogilevich in Moscow, that influenced the Hungarian leader?

[A suitcase full of cash](#)

In reality, the story began way earlier, back in the mid 1990s. We learned about it thanks to a German journalist, Jürgen Roth, who managed to loosen up the lips of businessman Dietmar Clodo and to get him to talk (Roth published their conversation in his recent book “Dirty

Democracy.”) Clodo is a German national who in his youth was involved with RAF (Red Army Faction, a leftists terrorist organization, which was active in Western Germany in the 1970s.) He also founded the SAS Security Company, which provided protective escorts for cash transportation and security services in Germany, France, and Russia. In the 1990s, Clodo lived in Budapest and was a section chief of the Hungarian Commercial and Industrial Chamber. Clodo spent eight and a half years in Hungarian jail for bomb manufacturing (he claimed to be innocent) and was released in 2011. He allegedly had ties with various intelligence services. He met Mogilevich through Sergei Mikhailov’s (Mikhas’, one of the leaders of the Solntsevo mafia) nephew, whom Clodo in turn met in Afghanistan. Here is a written statement (an affidavit) signed by Dietmar Clodo (The Insider has a copy):

“In the 1990s I lived in Budapest, where I was doing consulting and owned a private security company SAS. There I met a well-known businessman Semyon Mogilevich. We established relations of trust, partially because both of us were religious Jews. In the mid 1990s, actually between 1993 and 1996, he asked me to hand over cash to various people. One of them was Sándor Pintér (the current Hungarian Minister of Interior Affairs, The Insider.) At that time I only knew that he was a senior police officer and that he was working for Mr. Mogilevich. I was officially introduced to him later, after he quit his job with the police. It happened in 1996/1997. Semyon Mogilevich asked me to hand him money, and I did so. It was clear to me that these people were influential. For me Sándor Pintér was just one out of many corrupt people to whom I handed envelopes with cash on behalf of Mogilevich. He and other people used to come to my home on Meggy Utca 19, in the third district of Budapest. They used to take money in envelopes, 10,000 Deutsche Marks each. This practice continued through 1996, later the money was transferred through somebody else. Once in the spring of 1994, on the eve of the parliamentary elections, Mogilevich’s interpreter brought me a suitcase with almost one million Deutsche Marks.

This money was supposed to be handed to a young man. However, the young man refused to enter my home. I told him: “Listen, I have the suitcase with the damn money, and I am not going to step out to the street with this cash. If you refuse to enter, I’ll give the suitcase with the million back to Mr. Mogilevich. I don’t care.” He went up to my place with another older-looking gentleman, and I handed over the suitcase with cash. I didn’t care who he was. Only after the parliamentary elections I realized that the young man was Viktor Orbán from the Fidesz. Mogilevich called it “a crucial contribution to the electoral campaign.” Other people who regularly visited me to collect their fees include László Tonhauzer, who at that time was the head of the Budapest Police Organized Crime Division, former Senior Police Investigator István Sándor, and László Jusst, an influential media man.



«The young man from the Fidesz” Viktor Orbán

The main reason why I was assigned for this money-transferring task was the fact that I had nothing to do with the Russians, and as the international section chief of the independent Hungarian Commercial and Industrial Chamber I was seen as a serious man. I declare, under penalty of perjury, that I was telling the truth.

Regensburg

06/15/2016»

Dietmar Clodo also gave [an interview](#) to the Austrian TV channel ORF, in which he said that in the 1990s, Sándor Pintér was receiving 10,000 Deutsche Marks monthly for “Hungarian police turning the blind eye on the Mogilevich’s scheming with Ukraine and Russia.” The criminal kingpin’s main office was located in Budapest.

Former Hungarian education minister Bálint Magyar, who wrote the famous book “Post-Communist Mafia State: The Case of Hungary,” revealed corruption schemes to The Insider that the ties between Sándor Pintér and Dietmar Clodo were long known: “We had suspicions about these ties back in the 1990s. In 1998, the party “Alliance of Free Democrats” even held a press-conference on the corrupt links between Sándor Pintér and Dietmar Clodo.”



Dietmar Clodo

However, Hungarian politicians and law-enforcement officials deny any knowledge of Dietmar Clodo. Back in 1999, Sándor Pintér declared to the Hungarian media that once he was present at business negotiations where Dietmar Clodo's wife was a secretary, but it was a coincidence. Yes, he has heard of this man, but hasn't met him personally. Government spokesman Zoltán Kovács refused to comment to *The Insider* on the information regarding these corruption links.

Clodo's accusations are easy to ignore, since he is a man with a questionable reputation. However, the tables would be turned if these charges can be verified with documents. And Mogilevich would be the man who could have such evidence.

The real reason why the envelopes with cash were supposed to be handed over inside Clodo's house and not outside was not because he was afraid about the money being stolen. A hidden camera, "as a precautionary measure," recorded the procedure of money transfer, and the films were handed over to Mogilevich.



Photo of that hidden camera published in local press in 1999

Mogilevich's deal

Semyon Mogilevich moved to Budapest in 1990 and lived there through the early 2000s (his home was located 300 meters from the Russian Embassy.) He managed to take control over an armaments factory during the period of privatization in Hungary by using various schemes. According to the FBI, his main business was money laundering for the Solntsevo crime syndicate.

Mogilevich is currently one of the FBI's top ten most wanted criminals . He attracted the attention of the FBI, the Italian police, and Swiss law-enforcement agencies back in the 1990s, and in 2003, Interpol included him on the international most wanted list. As a result, he moved from Budapest to his Moscow suburban dacha and has not left Russia since then. The Mogilevich issue was raised again in 2000, when a Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) major Melnichenko made his famous [tapes](#) public: in one of his recorded conversations with former President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, former head of the SBU Leonid Derkach mentioned that, though officially Mogilevich lived in Hungary, “he became a neighbor of (the Russian Communist leader) Gennady Zyuganov, whose Moscow suburban dacha was adjacent to that of Mogilevich.” Responding to Kuchma’s surprised reaction, Derkach specified: “well, he maintained good relations with Putin from the Leningrad times.” “We should be careful about him,” noted Kuchma. Meanwhile, in 2005, the SBU mysteriously destroyed the Mogilevich file.

In the first stage of his new Moscow life, Mogilevich didn’t face any challenges. According to 1998 FBI [info](#), he owned the luxurious Balchug-Kempinski hotel, located right next to the Kremlin. Today the Balchug-Kempinski belongs to an offshore company, and according to Fox, a Slovakian company [wants to buy it](#). The Swiss Service for Analysis and Prevention (DAP) (currently a part of the Federal Intelligence Service (NDB)) suspected that Mogilevich had colluded with Russia’s special services. Here is what a DAP report [said](#) in 2007:

It is long presumed that many organized crime leaders were protected by the state agencies, i.e. the FSB. For example, Semyon Mogilevich, one of the most powerful honchos of Russian organized crime, has been wanted by the FBI since 2003 for fraud and money laundering. Russian law enforcement agencies have never bothered him. He was allegedly present at the Russian-Ukrainian negotiations on natural gas supplies. So far none of the organized crime leaders have been prosecuted in Russia, and not because of lack of evidence against them. Quite the opposite: the leaders of criminal organizations enjoy protection at the very top level.”

However, in 2008, after this report was written, Mogilevich was arrested in Moscow, not as a result of an FSB request, but for tax evasion in relation to the “Arbat Prestige” case. Mogilevich spent a year and a half in jail, and was released in June under written undertakings not to leave Moscow. Soon the case was closed “due to insufficient crime elements.” Dietmar Clodo believes that in order to secure his release, Mogilevich yielded some of his assets and shared his documents compromising Viktor Orbán with the Kremlin.



Semion Mogilevich

“Unfortunately, Orbán is a puppet today, who follows Putin’s instructions,” – commented Clodo to The Insider. He believes that Mogilevich, in exchange for his freedom, handed over the compromising tapes to the former FSB Director Nikolai Patrushev. At any rate, Orbán was suddenly invited to visit Moscow right after Mogilevich’s arrest, and this was the exact moment that Orbán made a sharp U-turn in his policies.

The Solntsevo Mafia and restoration of the Monument to Suppression of the Budapest Uprising

One of the testimonies of friendship between Orbán and Putin was the decision to restore monuments to the Soviet soldiers in Budapest: those who liberated Hungary from fascists and those “who perished while suppressing the Hungarian Uprising of 1956.” It should be noted that in Communist Hungary they used the term “uprising,” while after the fall of Communism, Hungarians define this event as the “1956 Revolution.” In order to understand the significance of this event for the Hungarian people, one should read the national Constitution, which stated: “our present freedom is grown from the soil of the 1956 Revolution.”

The Insider reporter failed to find a single supporter of the Russian World in Budapest. Hundreds of thousands of people left Hungary to Europe and the U.S. after Soviet tanks cruelly suppressed the mass protests. They lived in refugee camps; almost every family in Hungary was impacted by the tragedy. Some of the refugees and their descendants returned to Hungary after 1989. No one regrets the “uprising” even though it was unsuccessful. The Hungarians love to talk about the “Goulash Socialism” of János Kádár. It is widely believed that after the bloody events of 1956, the Communist dictatorship became significantly milder in Hungary, and some

elements of the market economy were allowed. Some Hungarian historians, like Andreas Oplatka, believed that Hungary started its countdown to capitalism in 1956 since “after the Revolution, only the facade of Socialism was preserved.”



Hungary 1956

What really counts is not the fact that a Soviet monument was restored, but who did it. It [was done](#) by a “respected (in the criminal world)” businessman Andrei Skoch, who, like Mogilevich, is closely associated with the Solntsevo mafia. In 2012, Skoch [restored](#) monuments to the Soviet soldiers who “perished while suppressing Hungarian Uprising of 1956” in a joint effort with the Russian Foreign Affairs and Defense ministries. In 2015, Skoch succeeded in his endeavor, and his files incriminating his ties with organized crime mysteriously disappeared under unexplained circumstances from the DGSI (The General Directorate for Internal Security of France) archives. However, this incident became well known, and the agency [has launched](#) an investigation of the case.

In 2012, Skoch made an entry in his LiveJournal blog, which was later removed, describing his “noble” mission to Budapest: “Both sides agreed that not only the cemetery was to be restored, but the reputation of the Russian state as well. The restored memorial will be a symbol of total mutual understanding of the most complicated historic events, and openness of the Hungarian government would certainly improve relations between both nations on a state level.” So far, the “total mutual understanding” faces challenges. In 2015, when Putin laid a wreath to the monument for those who died during the suppression of the “Hungarian Uprising,” a [scandal erupted](#). The Hungarian media have accused the Fidesz government of violating the Constitution.

The Joint Business

It can't be ruled out that the Kremlin never used the Mogilevich compromising documents against Orbán, and might be not even aware of it, and Orbán's visit to Moscow was a simple coincidence. However, the Kremlin uses not only the stick, but the carrot as well. Russia has been actively developing an economic cooperation with Hungary, and both Hungarian and Russian taxpayers benefit from it. Since he became Prime Minister, Orbán had repeatedly met with Vladimir Putin.

«...Put aside principles, ideologies and look at the interest... that's the Hungarian approach; ...You should know that the Crimea issue is a complicated international law issue... the EU...needs a free trade zone from Lisbon to Vladivostok.» - said Orbán in [an interview to Politico](#) after Putin's visit to Hungary in 2015. He also indicated that “sanctions are not the

proper way” in dealing with Russia, though he admitted that he did not intend to veto the renewal of the sanctions on Russia.

On the eve of Putin’s visit to Budapest today, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó [noted](#) that “international sanctions have seriously impacted the relationship between Hungary and Russia.” Besides the sanctions, there is another important subject: the Paks nuclear power plant enhancement worth €10 bln. This project is funded by Russia: this is officially a credit. The Hungarian government, in order to secure the nuclear power plant success, has introduced a tax on solar batteries.

Bálint Magyar firmly believed that both leaders have a share in this deal. He pointed out that when the government of Hungary spoke for enhancement of the Paks nuclear plant, Rosatom had already been selected for this project [without any bidding](#), while the contract documents were classified for 30 years. When the European Commission opened an in-depth investigation for the deal had opaque nature. The Hungarian government argued that the investigation had “political undertones.” As a result, the investigation brought no results. Magyar has explained: EU has no supranational bodies to investigate corruption: there is the European Anti Fraud Office (OLAF), however its task is to assist national agencies to fight corruption. In other words, Hungarian officials were the ones who were in charge of the European Commission investigation: exactly the same people who were suspected in corruption.

Not only did the nuclear plant deal raise concerns, but other energy contracts as well. 50 bln. HUF (€161 million) were [diverted](#) to a Swiss intermediary MET Holding AG account. The identity of its true beneficial owner is remains a mystery.

From <[A suitcase full of cash from the Solntsevo Mafia: Does Putin have a video kompromat on the Hungarian leader?](#)>

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2021Oct08 FT- Republicans look to Hungary's Orban for road map to power: GLOBAL INSIGHT WASHINGTON Edward Luce [Asia Region]

[Luce, Edward](#) | [Financial Times](#) ; **London (UK)**. 08 Oct 2021: 3.

Donald Trump's former chief strategist, Stephen Bannon, once described Hungary's Viktor Orban's "the most significant guy on the scene right now". Nowadays, Hungary's self-professed champion of illiberal democracy looms even larger on America's populist right.

US conservatives used to admire Orban from a distance. Now they want to emulate him from close up. The reasons for Orban's ascent in the eyes of Republicans also offer a road map on how the party plans to return to power.

It is not only about re-electing Trump in 2024 — although the ex-US president has made no secret of his Orbán envy. After Germany's Angela Merkel steps down, Orbán will become Europe's longest-serving leader at 15 years and counting. Budapest is the first, and often only, stop on the foreign itinerary of US conservative thinkers.

In August, Fox News' Tucker Carlson conducted an admiring interview with Hungary's leader. Others, including the American Conservative's Rod Dreher and the University of Notre-Dame's Patrick Deneen, have talked glowingly about Orbán. The Conservative Political Action Committee, which holds the US right's largest annual gathering, is planning a conference in Budapest in 2022, its first on European soil.

What makes the leader of a small central European country so appealing to conservatives in the world's richest democracy? Because Orbán shows how the switch to illiberalism can be done. Success breeds imitation.

The first time Orbán was in power — in 1998 — he led a pro-small government free market party. He was defeated in 2002. In those days his Fidesz party had a lot in common with Reagan Republicans. When Orbán returned to power in 2010, it was with a very different ideology. He was "Trump before Trump" as Bannon put it. The libertarian philosophy had been replaced by the politics of resentment. European identity made way for talk of defending Hungary's Christian civilisation. The new Orbán was an enemy of independent media, courts and universities. He also became Europe's chief scapegoater of immigrants.

Unlike Trump, who promised to build a wall on the US-Mexico border, but only partially delivered, Orbán blanketed Hungary's southern borders with barbed wire fencing. In 2015, the year after his party won the two-thirds majority he needed to overhaul Hungary's constitution, Orbán said: "We are experiencing the end of all the liberal babble. An era is coming to an end." The jury is still out on " whether he was right. Among US conservatives, however, the road map he has provided is too relevant to ignore.

Peripheral Hungary is a surprisingly good model for the Republican heartlands of small town and rural America. Just as Orbán harvested resentment of the networked metropolitans of Brussels, Berlin and Paris, so today's Republicans rail against New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Red state America is subsidised by its more urban Democratic counterparts — the fiscal transfer from urban to non-urban America grows larger every year. Hungary, too, is dependent on massive subsidies from the EU. Both resent the cosmopolitan hands that feed them.

Orbán has tilted Hungary's electoral system against opposition parties and shown how to win super-majorities without a majority of voters. In the country's 2018 elections, Fidesz won 67 per cent of the seats with 49 per cent of the vote. Orbán's governance model is even more relevant. Having secured a stranglehold on power, he has parcelled out EU-funded largesse to allies on a grand scale.

Almost half of Hungary's public contracts have just one bidder. This would be hard to replicate in a federal democracy the size of the US. But there are many pages that can be taken from Orbán's book, including how to win a culture war with the urban elites.

The US right's love affair might well outlast Trump. Last month, Mike Pence, the former vice-president, and 2024 hopeful, visited Hungary and praised Orbán's pro-family policies. On the Christian right, Orbán is seen as anti-LGBTQ, hostile to immigration and a defender of western civilisation. With US-Mexico border crossings rising, and a growing backlash against

more diverse curricula in US schools, including "critical race theory", Orban's playbook is too pressing to ignore. The Hungarian leader's strategy could prove as relevant to the Republicans' future as Trump himself.

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