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How the Hindus Became Jews: American Racism after 9/11

In November 2001, I traveled to Washington, DC, for the second Annual South Asian Literary Festival. At a panel discussion, someone asked me a pointed question: “Last year you had come here to promote your book, *Karma of Brown Folk*, and spent quite a long time being critical of the concept of the model minority. Now, with all these *desis* being harassed after 9/11, what do you think of our being a model minority?”

Certainly, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, not to speak of the Indian American press and the social network of rumor, had alerted us to the large number of *desis* (those who claim South Asian origin) who have been hassled by airlines, by the police, and by strangers—all wary of those of us who look like terrorists. In a comprehensive review of over a thousand hate attacks on Arabs and *desis*, Human Rights Watch noted, “This violence was directed at people solely because they shared or were perceived as sharing the national background or religion of the hijackers and al-Qaeda members deemed responsible for attacking the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.”¹ A report from the South Asian American Leaders for Tomorrow found that in the week after 9/11, the U.S. media

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“reported 645 bias incidents directed towards Americans perceived to be of Middle Eastern descent.”²

Before the government reported on the details of the 9/11 attacks, ordinary people took it on themselves to punish anyone with a turban—that is, anyone with headgear that resembled the turban worn by Osama bin Laden. On 9/11, within *minutes* of the attacks, four men chased after a Sikh man who had escaped from the towers and now had to escape once more for his life. In Richmond, Queens, three white youth severely beat up a Sikh man, other men shot at two Sikh boys, and a white man began to yell at a Sikh man on the Northern State Parkway, “You fucking Arab raghead, you’re all going to die, we’re going to kill every one of you,” as all four of those in his car gave the Sikh man the finger. Men got the brunt of these attacks, because turbans are worn mainly by men. Those turbans served to distinguish the “evildoers.”

Women faced hostility in different spaces, generally not as routine assaults by those emboldened to be vigilantes for 9/11. But there are also women who faced the crowd: Meera Kumar, on September 12, 2001, was removed from an Amtrak train in Boston; in Huntington, New York, an elderly drunk driver tried to run down a Pakistani woman, followed her into a store, and threatened to kill her because she’s “destroying my country”; in Los Angeles, on September 13, 2001, an Iranian woman was punched in the eye by another woman who wanted to register her displeasure at those who look like terrorists; on September 15, 2001, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when Kimberly Lowe, a Creek Native American, stopped her car to confront a group of white males who had yelled, “Go back to your own country,” they pinned her down and drove over her till she died.

She was mistaken for the wrong kind of Indian.

So when the man at the panel discussion asked me if I had been mistaken about the term *model minority* after what had been called the “racial profiling” of *desis*, I took a few minutes to react. Well, a year ago, I had suggested that *desis* are whites on probation and that if we ever misbehaved, the power structure would revoke our privileges. So it was easy enough to say that our probation is over, and we are now to be served with a sentence of disapprobation.

But this is false. After all, within days, the attacks on *desis* began to diminish and the U.S. state resumed its general assault on the contingent class. Racism is not simply prejudice, although this is an important form of subordination. In advanced industrial societies where there is a “natural rate

of unemployment,” the contingent class that is either permanently unemployed or underemployed finds itself stigmatized as incompetent or worse. To keep this class in a subordinate position, the state intensifies its repression through systematic police brutality, incarceration, or harsh forced-work policies (workfare), and also by the disavowal of public education. That a disproportionate part of the contingent class is of color, and because of the culture of racism in U.S. history that has forged what it means to be both a danger (all but white) and a success (white), the form of subordination is almost identical to the architecture of U.S. racism.³ What *desis* experienced in the months after 9/11 was not state racism, which is reserved for the contingent class, but the enraged prejudice of society fostered by the corporate media and enflamed by the rash words of politicians.

The state’s response to 9/11 had little in common with the routine racial profiling against the contingent class; it had much more to do with the McCarthyism against Communists half a century ago. The government began to play the game of six degrees of separation, picking up anyone who knew anyone who knew one of the hijackers or worshiped at a mosque that they attended, or whose names appeared in their address books, or whose name came up in interrogation of anyone picked up for these reasons, or again, anyone who had been under the government’s dragnet as radical Islamists in one form or another. And then there were those Muslims who became accidental radical Islamists—pilots, students with expired visas, and youth with criminal records.⁴ The repression post-9/11 is akin to McCarthyism, but here the target is not communism, but Islam—and, ancillary to it, all political ideologies that challenge the hegemony of imperialist globalization. If guilt by association became acceptable due to McCarthyism, it has returned once again after 9/11 to make those who are Muslim culpable for 9/11. We are in the condition of the Green Scare.⁵

Those of us who look like terrorists but are not Muslims seem to want to carry a sign that says, “I am not a Muslim,” as if to say, “I am not a terrorist.”

Rumors flew about that the Indian Embassy in Washington asked its nationals to wear a *bindi*, to help distinguish “Indians” from Arabs and Afghans.⁶ A gay friend called to say that this was the first time that he knew of the Indian government asking its male citizens to adopt drag. Another friend bitterly mentioned that the *bindi* had once served as the accumulation of resentment against *desis*, at least in the 1980s, when the Dotbusters of New Jersey began a hate campaign against Indian immigrants. Now that Madonna had made the *bindi* fashionable, the rumor mills had begun to

offer it as protection against the revanchism that followed 9/11. Talk of the *bindi* went about as a way for some to suggest it as an adequate sign of being a Hindu, or at least not a Muslim.

What we miss is that as Islam becomes imperialist globalization's Green Menace, *Muslim* has come to stand in for those who look or sound like immigrants.

So if *Muslim* stands in for *immigrant*, we should follow philosopher Etienne Balibar's insistence that immigration "becomes the main name given to race within the crisis-torn nations of the post-colonial era."⁷ *Muslim* begins to be seen in the logic of race, with all those who *look like* Muslims being treated in a certain way, and all those who *are* Muslims being harassed by the state, but—and this returns to my point about the contingent class—whereas in France (Balibar's home terrain), Algerians *do* form part of the contingent class in sizable numbers, this is not the case in the United States. Black Muslims certainly figure among the U.S. contingent, but the harassment they face is mostly for being black in the contingent world.⁸

All Muslims are suspects by association, but those who had come into even fleeting contact with the organs of Islamic radicalism are fair game for arrest and interrogation.⁹

Many who are not Muslims try to tell the country that they are not the bad ones, that being Sikh or Hindu or even atheists they should not be harassed. But the gaze of imperial whiteness does not discriminate between the dusky bodies. In *its* eyes, we are all Muslims.

Because of the power of the state and the corporate media, we are not immune to this logic. We have begun to see ourselves through their eyes. As we walk down the street, whatever our religion or provenance, we wonder whether those around us see us as a problem. "Mom, look at the terrorist! I'm frightened!"

Cringe, cower, paste that sickly smile on your face, exaggerate your American accent, and disappear into the fantasy life in your mind: a renewed nostalgia for the homeland.¹⁰

Some Indian Americans sought shelter from this storm not so much in the category of "whiteness," but in an attempt to manufacture an alliance with Jewish American organizations. The game for this set of influential Indian Americans was to see in Jewish Americans a model for their own attempt not simply to gain respectability in mainstream America, but to gain power in Washington. These are the "Hindus" who want to repudiate the hundreds of millions of Muslims in South Asia, to create an image of

the Indian as a victim of Muslim terrorism in South Asia, and therefore the Indian American's dilemma as akin to the Jewish American's distress over Muslim terrorism in Israel. That those who operate with terrorist means are not simply Muslims is the exact idea that had to be demolished, because what allowed "Hindus" and "Jews" to become kin relied principally on the reduction of Palestinians and Kashmiris to "Muslim."

The text above slips between Indian and Hindu, and speaks of Muslim and Jew with confidence, although sometimes in quotes. The hesitancy comes partly because there is far too much heterogeneity within these categories: *Hindu* is not a coherent entity, rent as it is not only by theological disputes but also by the many political disagreements, as well as the everyday divides of gender and caste. But there is a far more particular reason for the tentativeness with these terms. If we run three of the terms in sequence (*Jewish-Hindu-Muslim*), one point is revealed: they are no longer terms that define only religions or religious experience. *Muslim* has come to refer to a global community of Muslims who adhere to a singular theocratic ideology (Islam) reinforced by a clergy that interprets a single book (the Koran). The varieties of religious experience within *Muslim* are rarely acknowledged, or else very rarely explored by the uninitiated. The term *Jewish* has come to refer less to religion and more to culture. We assume that regardless of their political or theological commitments, all those who are born in a Jewish family are Jews because of the culture of Judaism. The association of something called "Jewish culture" enables conservative activists of the Hindu Right to claim that regardless of one's religion or politics, any Indian is culturally a Hindu. Hindu culture, in this logic, is like Jewish culture, and the modular form of a religious culture being the culture of a people circumvents any suggestion of diversity within the category: all those who are Indian are part of Hindu culture, even if they are not Hindus, and Jews are always Jews because, despite their religious and political differences, they exist within Jewish culture. If "Muslims" form part of the global community of Islam, then Indian Muslims are more Muslim than Indian; if all those of India are Hindus, then Indian Muslims are Hindus when they deny their place in the global community of Islam. This conservative chain of command is of central concern for this essay, and even though I won't refer to this problem explicitly again, it forms an important consideration for us.

Events and processes that appear to be fundamentally outside the story of the United States, at least after 9/11, are a fundamental component of

domestic race and racism. It is my contention that race in the United States after 9/11 has to be seen on a global scale, because planetary events lean upon the social construction and reconfiguration of identity within the United States. Jewish American identity has, at least since 1967, been in direct contact with the place of Israel in world affairs, and since 9/11, the importance of the links between India and Israel have fashioned one section of the *desi* community. Those of us who study racism and racial formation in the United States need to pay more and more attention not to the comparative study of racism, but to the way race in the United States is constructed with an eye to global events. In my own earlier work I argued that the fear factor of “blacks” created the conditions for the construction of the Indian American (and the Asian American in general) as the model minority, whereas now I will argue that this is insufficient. It is the terror of the “Muslim” alongside antiblack racism that provides the political space for Jewish Americans and Indian (or sometimes *Hindu*) Americans to mitigate their cultural difference from the mainstream, but crucially to put themselves forward as those who, because of their experience with terrorism, become the vanguard of the new, antiterrorist battleship America.

An Axis of Good?

On September 8, 2003, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon arrived in New Delhi to spend the second anniversary of 9/11 with his Indian counterpart. This was the first visit by an Israeli prime minister in its five-decade history, and it came at a propitious time. Right-wing governments ruled in Tel Aviv, New Delhi, and Washington, and all three wanted to fashion an alliance against what they understood to be their principal adversary: what they called Islamic terrorism.¹¹

While the alliance emerged between the governments, others plotted an alliance between two minority communities within the United States: Jewish Americans and Indian Americans. If Israel and India (as well as the United States) formulated a new approach to each other, then Jewish Americans and Indian Americans might do so with each other. The idea that Jewish Americans are a valuable model for Indian Americans is not novel. In 1994, when Gopal Raju, the publisher of *India Abroad* (the leading Indian American weekly newspaper), founded the Indian American Center for Political Awareness (IACPA), he had much the same thing in mind. Raju’s worthy goal had been to draw Indian Americans into U.S. politics and to educate U.S. representatives on things Indian.¹² When Raju started IACPA,

he hired onto its staff Ralph Nurnberger. Nurnberger, who is now the governmental affairs counsel at the prestigious and controversial Washington lobbying firm Preston Gates,¹³ brought to IACPA his experience as the legislative liaison for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). A former staff member of IACPA told me that Raju hired Nurnberger because he believed that Indian Americans needed to follow the example of Jewish Americans.¹⁴ Another small minority within the United States, Jewish Americans, Raju is reported to have said, had made decisive inroads into the U.S. Congress on behalf of Israel. Indian Americans, he held, needed to adopt this strategy on behalf of India.

After 9/11 the links between Jewish American and Indian American groups, as well as members of Congress, increased astronomically. In the summer of 2002, two high-profile Indian American groups began talks with the two premier lobbying outfits that claim to represent both the Jewish American community and Israel, the American Jewish Committee (AJCommittee) and AIPAC. The Indian American groups wanted to learn how best to influence policy in Washington. Talks by AIPAC leaders and workshops by AJCommittee staff members introduced the Indian American organizations to lobbying in the corridors of American power. A year later, AJCommittee honored India's national security adviser at its annual dinner, while it held a special dinner for India's home minister. In addition, a host of U.S. congressional leaders gave talks at Indian American gatherings, favorably compared Indian Americans to Jewish Americans, and applauded the increased links between India and Israel. Leaders of the India Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives, elected officials from both the Democratic and Republican Parties, took turns praising Indian Americans, whose access to votes and cash appeals to politicians from heavily Indian American districts, including parts of New Jersey, Illinois, New York, and Texas. In such districts, Indian Americans have the highest per capita income.

For a community that numbers about 1.5 million, only about 0.5 percent of the U.S. population, such attention is unprecedented and incredible. For a community that is generally invisible in the halls of power, it came as a surprise to suddenly experience such attention.

The Myth of the "Same Extremist Enemy"

Shortly after 9/11, a group of Indian Americans formed the Indian American Political Action Committee (INAPAC) in New Jersey. Not long after

its creation, INAPAC substantially dissolved, and another lobbying group emerged in Washington: the United States India Political Action Committee (USINPAC). It took over the space opened up by INAPAC and allowed itself to be adopted by AJCommittee and AIPAC. USINPAC held two related briefs: to ensure that Indian Americans enjoy the same amount of political power it feels is held by the Jewish American community, and to deploy that power in the service of India, preferably in an Indo-U.S. alliance in the image of the U.S.-Israeli entente. The ideological unity between Israel, India, and the United States preached by USINPAC is this: to fight terrorism, namely “Islamic militancy,” “Islamic fundamentalism,” “Islamic extremism,” or, in the words of Congressman Tom Lantos (Democrat from California), “mindless, vicious, fanatic Islamic terrorism.”¹⁵ If we all agree that the enemy is Islamic terrorism, then the United States, Israel, and India have an urgent need for an axis.

INAPAC, and then USINPAC, has worked closely with members of the AJCommittee and AIPAC. Ann Schaffer, director of the AJCommittee’s Belfer Center for American Pluralism, said of the AJCommittee’s assistance toward INAPAC, “We shared with them the Jewish approach to political activism. We want to give them the tools to further their political agenda.” When asked about the common “political agenda” between Jewish Americans and Indian Americans, the AJCommittee’s Washington, DC, regional director, Charles Brooks, said, “We’re fighting the same extremist enemy. We want to help them become more effective in communicating their political will.”¹⁶ Who is that global enemy? The proffered answer is Islamic extremism, but in some incarnations, the enemy seems to be global Islam in general, or else anyone who dares to challenge the supremacy of the current geopolitical dispensation (which goes by many names: free-market theorists call it globalization, whereas its critics call it imperialist globalization; the U.S. State Department describes it as the export of democracy, whereas its critics call it U.S. imperialism). What is crucial to my analysis is that U.S. power does not target global Islam as its enemy, even as al-Qaeda is the current assailant. The animus of U.S. imperialism is directed at all those forces that resist its hegemony, from the guerrillas in the Americas (FARC in Colombia, for example) to the North Korean regime. It is convenient for al-Qaeda, Sharonism, and Hindutva (Hinduness) to reduce U.S. policy to an enmity against Islam itself for their own reasons (for al-Qaeda, to appeal to its radical Islamist base; for Sharonism and Hindutva, to purport that their state policy is identical to U.S. state policy).

The chairman of the board of trustees for INAPAC, Jesal Amin, argued that the “terrorists” who target Israel are “interconnected with the Muslim terror groups operating elsewhere in the Middle East and South Asia.” Amin, who is active in the Republican Party in a very prosperous and overwhelmingly white area of New Jersey, adopts the view that is commonplace among Israeli conservatives that any Muslim who acts against the interests of Israel, or here India, is a terrorist, whether it is the Palestinian Liberation Organization or Hamas, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front or the Lashkar-e-Toiba. But he is not alone in this strategic reduction. Sue Ghosh Sticklett, a member of USINPAC’s Defense and Strategic Affairs Committee, told a conservative publication, “Our no. 1 legislative priority in 2004 is terrorism. . . . the terrorism directed against India is the same as that directed against the United States and Israel. We would like to see closer ties between the United States and India. Right now, India feels that Israel is a closer friend than the United States, and we would like to change that.”¹⁷ In other words, it is valuable to reduce all forms of violence to “terrorism” in order to facilitate a geopolitical, economic alliance between India and the United States—regardless of the costs that others must bear for the prosperity that it will generate for a few.

Since the 1980s, one strand of the Indian American community has made it very clear that it lives within a worldview known as Hindutva (Hinduness). A political ideology within India that draws from European racist ideas of nationhood, Hindutva has taken the view, since its emergence in the 1920s, that Muslims do for it what Jews do for Nazism. In the United States such a view makes no sense, and it is translated into what I have called “Yankee Hindutva,” where the Hindutva adherent relies upon liberal multiculturalism to give it space to develop its generally illiberal political identity that opposes not only Muslims, whether conservative or liberal, but also anything that it deems to be progressive and therefore a challenge to Hindutva. If there is any movement that cannot be held at bay, such as feminism, Hindutva attempts to accommodate it by attempting to glorify women who are independent and “traditional.”¹⁸ Amin and Ghosh Sticklett’s theory is so common now among upwardly mobile Indian Americans that one of its children, twenty-one-year-old Nishkam Gupta, enlisted to fight in the 2003 U.S. war in Iraq as part of his desire to “fight the larger war against terrorism, a war that would directly benefit Hinduism and its cause.”¹⁹ Kapil Sharma, a consultant for the generally liberal IACPA, says, “We should be educated about each other’s issues, so we can talk about Kashmir and Palestine”—the

two areas of the world that, in the Indo-Israeli convergence, are now considered as parallels.²⁰ The Hindutva-Sharonist framework has leaked into the lives of those generally not predisposed to cruel and macho nationalism.

There are several problems with the formulation offered by people such as Amin, Sticklett, and the AJCommittee. They assume that the Jihad International grows out of whole cloth from Islam, from a few *suras* in the Koran, or else from the medieval history of Arabia.²¹ There is a complete disregard for the history of the Jihad International—how it came to be, its social forces, how the United States and the Saudis, for instance, encouraged and financed it as an alternative to the growth of republicanism and communism.²² The Jihad International draws from the frustrations of a generation of mainly men who had been betrayed by the states that claimed the mantle of anticolonial republicanism. Drawing from the detritus of social thought in their home regions, these groups remained largely anachronistic and without strength until the United States gave them legitimacy and the Saudis began to fund them, principally for the Afghan campaign against the Soviets, but also in the war over Marxist South Yemen.²³

Groups like Hamas and the various factions in Kashmir certainly share ideological resources with the broader Jihad International, but they are also rooted in nationalist struggles.²⁴ There is little doubt that Hamas and the various *jihadi* factions in Kashmir are a serious problem for the social development of their respective regions. Although Hamas does provide basic social services alongside its general policy of violence, this welfare is hardly to be considered valuable given the context within which it is offered. But to cast the Palestinians and the Kashmiris and others as the “extremist enemy” without a sense of how such factions attained prominence in their various struggles is to miss the hand of imperialism. Such a view also omits the many other Palestinian and Kashmiri organizations that revile the tactic of terror and the general social vision of Hamas and the Kashmiri groups, as well as the views of those who want as much to make a living as to change the world. To leave all this out erases the visions of social justice in such places, renders Islam itself into a one-dimensional tragedy, and casts out any hope for the progressive elements that strive against immense odds to turn the direction of the struggle around.

Furthermore, to render “terrorism” and “terrorists” as the enemy fails to distinguish between the *tactics* that a people use and the *social and political conditions* that generate their hostility: to defeat those who use terrorism, one has to understand and deal with the conditions that produce those who take to terror.²⁵ All this is irrelevant to AIPAC-USINPAC.

The Myth of the Pro-Israel Lobby

On July 16, 2003, the AJCommittee, the AIPAC, and the USINPAC held their first joint briefing. Congressman Frank Pallone, a New Jersey Democrat and former cochair of the India Caucus of the U.S. Congress, said, “One of the first things I would hear whenever I went around to the Indian American communities was how we can emulate the Jewish community, particularly how can we emulate AIPAC—in terms of their lobbying abilities, their grass-roots abilities, their ability to organize the community politically.”²⁶ Kumar Barve, the highest elected Indian American and majority leader in the Maryland House of Delegates, told the *Washington Post*, “I think Indian Americans see the American Jewish community as a yardstick against which to compare themselves. It’s seen as the gold standard in terms of political activism.”²⁷ “A lot of folks in the Indian American community,” reported Ajay Kuntamukkala, the president of the South Asian Bar Association of Washington, DC, “look at what Jews have done and try to model themselves after it.”²⁸

There are fewer than 6 million Jews in the United States, just about 2 percent of the population. If *they* can determine U.S. foreign policy, then they should certainly be a model for all communities that have the same agenda.

AIPAC, without a doubt, is a very strong lobbying organization. With an annual budget in excess of \$15 million, a group of registered lobbyists, and a staff in the hundreds, AIPAC can send out the troops to patrol the halls of Congress if any bill inimical to Sharonist interest appears on the floor. The genius of AIPAC is that it sits at the center of almost a hundred pro-Israel groups and coordinates their donations. These myriad political action groups—“which draw money from Jewish donors and operate under obscure-sounding names—are operated by AIPAC officials or people who hold seats on AIPAC’s two major policymaking bodies.”²⁹ Money lubricates the U.S. political system, and AIPAC has been able to strategically use its funds to gain the support of a slew of elected representatives.

Political scientist Stephen Zunes points out, “The Aerospace Industry Association which promotes these massive arms shipments to Israel is even more influential” than the pro-Israel lobby. The “general thrust of US policy would be pretty much the same even if AIPAC didn’t exist. We didn’t need a pro-Indonesia lobby to support Indonesia in its savage repression of East Timor all these years.”³⁰ In other words, AIPAC is powerful not because of its use of money alone, but decisively because of the strategic convergence of interests between Israel, AIPAC, and the U.S. Congress.³¹

The U.S. Congress stands united behind Israel. Any dissension is met with the reproach of anti-Semitism. If this is the work of the pro-Israel lobby, then it has achieved a remarkable feat: a totally bipartisan Congress with little opposition to its general goals. However, as most electoral and campaign finance data show, most American Jews tend to lean toward the Democratic Party, so why should the Republicans come out so strongly for Israel?³²

Two public policy organizations give us a sense of an answer: the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA). Martin Indyk, who worked as research director at AIPAC, founded WINEP in 1985 to produce policy papers on Israel in order to strengthen U.S.-Israeli relations. In 1988, WINEP published *Building for Peace: An American Strategy for the Middle East*, which focused on what the Bush administration must do about the Israeli-Palestinian process. WINEP concluded that the U.S. government should “resist pressures for a procedural breakthrough until conditions have ripened,” that is, until the Palestinian resistance had been broken. Six members of the WINEP study group that wrote this report entered the administration of George H. W. Bush, which, as it happened, adopted the Sharonist line to alienate the PLO despite its recognition of Israel at the Palestinian National Council of November 1988.³³

While WINEP tends to hew the line of whatever Israeli party comes to power, JINSA is the U.S. offshoot of the Likud Party. Set up in 1997, both JINSA and the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) drew from the most conservative hawks in the U.S. establishment for its board of directors: Richard Cheney (now vice president), John Bolton (now undersecretary of state), Douglas Feith (now undersecretary of defense), Paul Wolfowitz (now deputy of defense), Lewis Libby (now the vice president’s chief of staff), Zalmay Khalilzad (now U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan), Richard Armitage (now deputy secretary of state), Elliott Abrams (now National Security Council adviser), and Richard Perle (formerly on the Defense Policy Board). Perle and Feith, among others, drafted a paper titled “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm,” published by the Institute for Advanced Strategic Political Studies (Washington and Jerusalem), that urged the Israeli government to repudiate Oslo, to permanently annex the occupied territories, to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein (and restore the Hashemite monarchy)—this last, “an important Israeli strategic objective in its own right.” Netanyahu, as prime minister of Israel at the

time, rejected the report, particularly the adventurism against Iraq. When George W. Bush came to power in 2001, he adopted it, not because he was pushed by the pro-Israel lobby but because of the U.S. neoconservative vision for U.S. power in the world.³⁴

The idea of the power of the pro-Israel lobby is attractive because it draws upon at least a few hundred years of anti-Semitic worry about an international conspiracy operated by Jewish financiers to defraud the European and American working poor of their livelihoods. The “Jew,” without a country, but with a bank, had no loyalty to the nation, no solidarity with fellow citizens. The anti-Semitic document *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is a good illustration of this idea.³⁵ The Nazis stigmatized the “Jew” as the problem of poverty and exploitation and obscured the role played by capitalism in the reproduction of grief. The 6 million Jews in the United States do not determine U.S. foreign policy, nor are they united as one. Jews in America, like other communities, are rent with division, not united behind one agenda. When Charles Brooks of the AJCommittee says, “We’re fighting the same extremist enemy,” the question to ask is, Who is included in “we”?

AJCommittee and AIPAC do not speak for all Jews in the United States, for the mythical “American Jewish community.” The community is fractured on its support for the various political parties and agendas in Israel, as well as the importance of being behind Israel at all. Those who dissent from Sharonism are, however, part of a weakened tradition that has been unable to combat the overwhelming but incorrect notion that any criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic.³⁶ In my two decades in the United States, in almost all the struggles with which I have been involved (from the antiapartheid movement to the El Salvador solidarity work to labor struggles to antiwar work, to work against the destruction of the U.S. welfare net, and so on), there have always been those of Jewish ancestry. The river of radicalism runs deeply through the world of American Jewry. This tradition is well analyzed by the philosopher Judith Butler:

The ethical framework within which most progressive Jews operate takes the form of the following question: will we be silent (and thereby collaborate with illegitimately violent power), or will we make our voices heard (and be counted among those who did what they could to stop that violence), even if speaking poses a risk? The current Jewish critique of Israel is often portrayed as insensitive to Jewish suffering, past as well as present, yet its ethic is based on the experience of suffering, in order that suffering might stop.³⁷

The strand of anti-Sharonist politics among American Jews draws strength from the litany of anti-Sharonist organizations within Israel itself.³⁸ Again, this is a weak tradition with limited traction over a society that has produced an overwhelming consensus.

AIPAC and its confreres are powerful, but they do not determine U.S. foreign policy. They are powerful not just because of their money, but because their views converge with those of the neoconservative elements that dominate the Middle East policy formation team of the ruling coalition in Washington. Until the 1967 war, few American Jews wanted to identify themselves with Israel. In his 1957 survey of Jewish American attitudes, the sociologist Nathan Glazer found that Israel “had remarkably slight effects on the inner life of American Jewry.”³⁹ Only one in twenty American Jews traveled to Israel before June 1967, and intellectuals at an AJCommittee symposium on Jewish identity held a few months before the war barely considered Israel in their comments. After the war, when Israel became a crucial player in U.S. strategy, Israel became, according to Norman Podhoretz, editor of the neoconservative *Commentary*, “the religion of the American Jews,” at least of the mainstream Zionist organizations.⁴⁰ When AIPAC and the AJCommittee go to Washington now, they meet receptive, even eager ears. The lobbyists did not create the conditions for Israel’s elevation. U.S. foreign policy did the work for them.

The Myth of the Model Minority

If AIPAC does not have a major, or decisive, impact on U.S. foreign policy, it has certainly come to play a crucial role in the Jewish American community. As Esther Kaplan of Jews for Ethnic and Racial Justice said on her radio show, *Beyond the Pale*, in 2002, groups like AIPAC and AJCommittee leverage their closeness to U.S. power to claim the mantle of the Jewish American mainstream for themselves. Even if AIPAC does not represent the majority or the plurality of American Jews, it claims to be representative and attempts to fulfill its claim. AIPAC’s proximity to Sharonism and its claim to be the representative of Jewish America mean that the community appears to be far more conservative than it perhaps is. Do all Jewish Americans align with the views of AIPAC and the AJCommittee, or indeed with Sharon? No. What is more important is the way immigrant or ethnic organizations pose as representative to the power structure regardless of their actual depth in their community.

Immigrants in the United States have an idiosyncratic relationship to the world of politics. Take the case of *desis*. Despite the racist divisions in our civil society, there is no referendum or election process for the leader of each of the social communities. So how does “ethnic leadership” emerge? There are some organic processes—for example, the efforts of community organizations that not only represent the community but also constitute and reproduce it. The regional and linguistic groups (Gujarat Samaj, Tamil Sangam) are one example, and so are the national professional groups (Asian American Hotel Owners Association, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin). Then there are those groups that work within the community to transform practices undesirable to some or to fashion a new *desi* social culture (women’s rights groups, gay and lesbian groups, workers’ rights groups). The people who could be leaders are those who put their energy into these organizations and into the reproduction of the *desi* community through the festivals and protests, the gatherings for joy and justice. But, as with most post-1965 immigrant groups, the leaders of these organizations are not the most visible representatives of the community in the realm of electoral politics.

It takes little to set up a political shop: the name of an organization, a patron among one or the other party or lobby group, some letterhead, a fairly dynamic leader, and preferably a photograph or two of this leader with an important white politician from one of the two major parties and/or an important politician from the homeland. The picture with the white politician is almost sufficient to indicate that our fearless leader has cachet in the world of Washington, and his or her backdoor to power allows him or her to play a disproportionate role as the “representative” of the immigrant community before the established power structure. These figures become brokers for the major parties as they try to reach out to the immigrant communities for votes, and they become symbolic figureheads for the community itself. USINPAC is one such immigrant entity.

AIPAC and the Indian American high-profile groups not only use their closeness to U.S. power; they also wield the myth of the model minority to capture the hearts and minds of their constituency and to make a broader appeal in a country wedded to antiblack racism. The Indian American community is rent with divisions, and within U.S. domestic politics the tendency has been for Indian Americans to lean toward liberalism (in its organized form, the Democratic Party).⁴¹ While there is no good survey data on Indian American social and political attitudes, my own reading of the ethno-

graphic literature and my own political involvement in the community suggest that the bulk of *desis* are against immigration controls and the death penalty, for the right of a woman to control her own body (or at least against the ban on abortion), for better wages for working people, for better care for the elderly, for health insurance coverage. Among second-generation *desis* the trend of liberalism runs deeper.⁴² With the fear of terror, manipulations by groups like USINPAC, and the consolidation of professional success for a sizable section of the community, there has been a perceptible turn to conservatism.⁴³

Jesal Amin, of INAPAC, praises Indian culture for its emphasis on higher education: "We have made the American dream come true. Many Indians are professional. One of the reasons for working together with the Jewish community is that we are so similar in terms of education, and from an economic point of view."⁴⁴ Tom Lantos, a Jewish Democrat from California and an immigrant from Hungary, goes over the top: "There is a natural symbiotic relationship between the Indian community and the Jewish community," he said. "It begins with respect for life. There is no community for whom the sacredness of life is as prominent in its philosophy than the Indian community and we Jews — when we drink, we say 'Rafiat' which means life." On a more practical level, he says, "there is a profound relationship in our passionate commitment to education. We have a passionate commitment to respect for others, for the rule of law and for democracy, and lately, we've been brought together by our joint fight against mindless, vicious, fanatic Islamic terrorism."⁴⁵

How does one even begin to analyze these banal generalities? Do all Jews and Indians have a passionate respect for others? Even those Indians (perhaps he means Hindus) who killed innocent people in Gujarat in 2002, or those Jews (as Israeli citizens) who killed the Palestinians of Jenin in 2002? Is the assumption that a people have a culture that is singular not itself a species of racist thinking that we must abhor? These are some basic questions that are worth posing.⁴⁶ When Congressman Lantos says that Jews and Indians are passionate about education, when Amin says that Jews and Indians are similar in terms of education, do they mean that there are people in the world who are *not* interested or invested in education, who would *prefer* illiteracy? What does it mean to say that some people are favored, are chosen, if not to also say that there are others who are misbegotten?

In 1965, after a century of struggle and sacrifice, the movement for civil rights won an impressive victory. The U.S. state adopted a bill that gave every

citizen formal equality before the law, thereby annulling the premise of Jim Crow segregation. The victory was immense, but partial. It demolished formal equality, but it did not say anything about the everyday inequality that had been structured into every aspect of social life. As one of the architects of the classical civil rights movement, Bayard Rustin, put it, "The very decade which has witnessed the decline of legal Jim Crow has also seen the rise of *de facto* segregation in our most fundamental socioeconomic institutions."⁴⁷ The movement against racism was interested in much greater freedoms than simply the right to vote, one of which was the demand for reparations or a transfer of capital stolen from labor that had not been paid for centuries. The famous 1963 march on Washington was called, for instance, the March on Washington for Civil Rights *and Jobs*. The reforms of the U.S. state did not address this crucial demand. When the generally peaceful and hopeful civil rights movement transmuted into the more violent and embittered Black Power movement, the U.S. state and its intellectuals revised their older racist notions and practices for what has been called the New Racism of our epoch. That is, the state must now treat everyone equal before the law, economic demands are left outside the purview of the question of race, and certain previously oppressed people (such as Jews and Asians) can obtain some privileges, while those who are the descendants of enslaved people are left penniless, hopeless, and therefore one step from criminality.

When the mainly black community of Watts, Los Angeles, rose in rebellion in 1965, the U.S. state appeared incensed and shocked. In a mainstream periodical in 1966, one of the first positive articles about Asians appeared. Once reviled as the Yellow Peril, Chinese Americans, the article said, believe in "the old idea that people should depend on their own efforts—not a welfare check—in order to reach America's 'promised land.'" This autonomous effort, the magazine noted, came at "a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions of dollars be spent to uplift Negroes and other minorities."⁴⁸ That same year, Irving Kristol asked in the *New York Times Magazine*, "Can the Negro be expected to follow the path of previous immigrant groups [Jews and Italians] or is his a special, 'pathological' case?" What is being said is this: the Asians work hard without complaint, and so should the blacks; the Jews work hard, and so should the blacks. This erases the hard work and low pay endured by African Americans, most of whom, because of the incomplete dismantling of the Jim Crow structure, did not have access to any other kind of work. Kristol wrote, "The real tragedy of the American Negro today is not that he is poor, or black, but that he is a latecomer—he

confronts a settled and highly organized society whose assimilatory powers have markedly declined over the past decades.”⁴⁹ But Africans had been brought to the Americas long before Jews and Italians, so that when Kristol says “latecomers,” he must mean to the feast of capital, since most blacks worked to produce the bounty that was divided among some whites in an earlier time. By this logic, blacks are blamed for the failures of American history.⁵⁰

Jews, long reviled by the U.S. power structure, like Asians, became acceptable only in the late 1960s, as beneficiaries of the New Racism and of the victory of Israel in 1967.⁵¹ The Indians that came to the United States because of the 1965 immigration reforms also benefited from this New Racism: before these laws we were regarded as blacks, but after them we could aspire to whiteness. Arriving in the United States in droves between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s, Indian Americans rose in the ranks of their professions and made very high salaries. But their attainments are *not* caused by natural or cultural selection. If this were the case, the 1 billion Indians in India would all be doctors and nurses, engineers and scientists. Rather, it was the result of *state* selection, whereby the U.S. state, through the special skills provision in the 1965 Immigration Act, fundamentally configured the demography of Indian America. Between 1965 and 1977, 83 percent of the migrants came with advanced degrees.

State selection, not the natural selection of millennia, brought highly qualified *desis* to the United States. Those who hold power in the United States use the anomalous demographic of professional *desis* to show that we succeed while other minorities fail, that we succeed because we work hard, while they fail because they are either incapable or lazy. The history of why we succeed is lost in this simple story. And thanks to its loss of history, the stereotype tends to confirm antiblack racism.

Why should Jewish Americans and Indian Americans get together? Because they are human beings, because some may share ideological positions, because a few may share personal tastes—these are less offensive ways to create solidarity than to bear heavily upon us with the burden of stereotyped traditions (peaceful people, etc.) or else to leverage our friendship on the backs of blacks. The latter, as the novelist Toni Morrison wrote, is a typical, homespun strategy for advancement in the United States: the immigrant, she noted, must participate “freely in this most enduring and efficient rite of passage into American culture: negative appraisals of the native-born black population. Only when the lesson of racial estrangement

is learned is assimilation complete. Whatever the lived experience of immigrants with African Americans—pleasant, beneficial, or bruising—the rhetorical experience renders blacks as non-citizens, already discredited outlaws.”⁵² Jews and Indians, both of whom live in a racist polity, take shelter in the false praises of their greatness. Far better to be seen as good than evil, but at what social cost do a people want acclaim? Who pays for *desis* to be the “model minority”?

The high-profile organizations leverage their proximity to power and their ideology of the model minority to attract large numbers of *desis* into their ranks, or else into the tug of their beliefs. The cost of this, however, is to leave *desis* outside the major struggles for social justice that is the best thing about America.

Strange Bedfellows

Politics does make strange bedfellows. Two decades ago, the alliance between Indian American and Jewish American groups would have seemed impossible.⁵³ For one, the Indian government was not openly in favor of the Israeli state—a mark against it, from AIPAC’s point of view. When it declined to issue visas to Israeli delegations, particularly to sports teams, the Indian government earned the ire of U.S.-based Jewish organizations. In 1987, the Anti-Defamation League, for instance, wrote, “It is time for the international community to let India know that unless it ceases to inject its anti-Israel policies into events aimed at furthering the spirit of international cooperation, it will be forced to forfeit its frequent role as host nation.”⁵⁴

The alliance between Indian American and Jewish American mainstream organizations plainly has little to do with “cultural values,” but a lot to do with the geopolitical alliance between India and Israel. When it comes to Israel, the AJCommittee and the AIPAC will make alliances with anyone who, for whatever reason, is willing to defend the right of the Sharonists to make mayhem in West Asia. Jason F. Isaacson, director of government and international affairs of the AJCommittee, told the press, “All three countries [India, Israel, and the United States] really need to stick together not only because of the common threats of terrorism but because of commonalities and values, and that is the message we are going to convey.”⁵⁵ These common values are not shared by all Indians, Israelis, and Americans in the same way: they may want to do different things when faced with specific forms of terror that come from very particular social forces.

What does this have to say about race in post-9/11 America? As the “Muslim” increasingly bears the mark of Cain, it opens up immense opportunities for middle-class people of color to demonstrate their patriotism in anti-Islamic terms. For the contingent working class, such an opportunity is not afforded, as I suggested in the opening section. Those who are of color in this class fragment bear the brunt of systemic racism, and their patriotism is easily eclipsed by their imputed immorality and criminality. Those who are not prone to functional unemployment or contingent status and are of color as a block are mainly immigrants like those from South Asia. Race, since 9/11, has not included *desis* as victims of racial profiling and thereby expanded the targets for state racism. It has instead fashioned a complex racial landscape where groups jockey to get out from under the racist gaze of society and the racist policies of the state. For such immigrants, the post-9/11 scenario offers few decent options: either claim solidarity with a people who have become the image of international terrorism, or else pledge your patriotism through abjuration of any cultural links with Islam or Muslims, indeed to make the “Muslim” your enemy. If the “Muslim” becomes your enemy, and if you have the cultural capital to fly above the quicksand of the contingent class, then you have the opportunity to be “American.”

Notes

This essay draws from the last chapter of my book *Namaste Sharon: Hindutva and Sharonism under US Hegemony* (New Delhi: LeftWord, 2003). Thanks to Prakash Karat and Sudhanva Deshpande for their commentary on it. I began to write on these themes because of a provocation from Toufic Haddad and Tikva Honig-Parnass of the magazine *Between the Lines* (Jerusalem). The essay developed thanks to extended discussions from a host of colleagues, notably Elisabeth Armstrong, Ania Loomba, Sunaina Maira, and Magid Shihade. Ania Loomba read the essay very carefully and gave me several important suggestions, notably to expand upon the categories of Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, and Indian and to bring back the excised point on the *bindi*. I gave this essay as a talk at Cornell University (thanks to Shelly Wong and Viranjani Munasinghe), the University of Pennsylvania (thanks to Dharma Naik, and to Howard Winant for his question afterward), the University of California, Davis (thanks to Sunaina Maira and Wendy Ho), and in the Lowell Lecture series at the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights (thanks to Loretta Williams). I am grateful to John Jackson for asking me to contribute to this issue, and for his patient solidarity.

- 1 Amardeep Singh (for Human Rights Watch), “*We Are Not the Enemy*”: *Hate Crimes against Arabs, Muslims, and Those Perceived to Be Arab or Muslim after September 11* (New York: HRW, 2002), 3.
- 2 South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow, *American Backlash: Terrorists Bring War Home in More Ways Than One* (Washington, DC: SAALT, 2001), 3. The project leader

- for this report was Debasish Mishra, with Deepa Iyer, Kiran Chaudhri, Kulmeet Dang, Poonam Desai, Ankur Doshi, Parvinder Kang, Sunny Rehman, and Vivek Sankaran.
- 3 I make this argument in *Keeping Up with the Dow Joneses: Debt, Prison, Workfare* (Boston: South End, 2003).
 - 4 For an excellent study of the state's pressure on Muslim youth, see Sunaina Maira, "Citizenship in a Time of War: South Asian Muslim Youth in Cambridge after 9/11," *Subcontinental* 1.1 (2003): 41–52. It has been suggested to me on a number of occasions that the hatred is directed not at "Muslims" but at "Arabs," or at least at "Muslims and Arabs." This might be so. It would require far more specific analysis than I can do in this space. Few would be able to distinguish between Arabs and Persians, Arabs and South Asians, or indeed between the various and distinguishable Arabs who live across the Arab lands from the Mashreq to the Maghreb. On this point my analysis is vulnerable from lack of more ethnographic work. I am looking forward to the completion of Sunaina Maira's extensive research on South Asian Muslims after 9/11 in the Boston region, of Louise Cainkar's research project on the impact of 9/11 on Arab and Muslim communities in the United States (an early example of Cainkar's work is in her "No Longer Invisible: Arab and Muslim Exclusion after September 11," *MERIP* 224 [2002], available at www.merip.org/mer/mer224/224_cainkar.html), and of Salah D. Hassan's work on Arabs after 9/11, notably in "Arabs, Race, and the Post-September 11 National Security State," *MERIP* 224 (2002) (available at www.merip.org/mer/mer224/224_hassan.html), as well as Columbia University's large-scale project titled "Muslims in New York City" (including Amaney Jamal's work on mosques in the life of Muslim Americans, with an eye to 9/11, and Hisham Aidi's work on Islam and inner-city youth).
 - 5 Vijay Prashad, "The Green Menace: McCarthyism after 9/11," *Subcontinental* 1.1 (2003): 65–75. The color green is generically used by Muslims as Islam's standard.
 - 6 An Indian magazine article reported just after 9/11, "In this atmosphere thick with fear, talk that the Indian embassy had asked Indian women to use the bindi—to identify themselves as not Arab or Afghan—got around fast. The embassy, of course, denies it ever issued any such directive" (Kamla Bhatt, "Alone in the Crowd," *Outlook*, October 1, 2001).
 - 7 Etienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, ed. Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991), 51.
 - 8 For an early note on the status of migrants from North Africa in France, see Mahfoud Bennoune, "Maghribin Workers in France," *MERIP Reports* 34 (1975): 1–12. For a general statement, see Janet Bauer and Vijay Prashad, "Dilemmas at the Border: An Introduction," *Cultural Dynamics* 12 (2000): 275–81, an introduction to a set of essays including Leora Auslander, "Bavarian Crucifixes and French Headscarves: Religious Signs and the Postmodern European State," *Cultural Dynamics* 12 (2000): 283–309.
 - 9 For an excellent analysis of the new racial category "Middle Eastern, Arab, or Muslim," see Leti Volpp, "The Citizen and the Terrorist," *UCLA Law Review* 49 (2002): 1575–1600.
 - 10 All this is a poor imitation of Frantz Fanon's "The Fact of Blackness," in *Black Skin, White Mask* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968).
 - 11 The details are in my *Namaste Sharon*, but for a liberal view of it, see Robert Hathaway's "Washington's New Strategic Partnership," *Seminar* 538 (June 2004).
 - 12 The IACPA's greatest contribution to Indian American visibility in Washington has been

- its internship program. After opening its office in 1996, IACPA hosted young Indian Americans for a summer and placed them in the offices of congressional figures who are, in one way or another, crucial in Indian American- and Indian-related matters. The interns got an education in the mendacity of the political process, and the lawmakers had a crash course in Indian American lives and issues. By all accounts the internship program has worked very well, and many former interns remain active in the policy field.
- 13 Preston Gates has represented the Choctaw Indians for a gaming concession, and it represented the antilabor elements that continue to block labor laws and regulations in the Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory in the South Pacific. Jim Vandehei, "Mississippi's Choctaw Indians Find an Unlikely Ally in a GOP Stalwart," *Wall Street Journal*, July 3, 2000, and Jim Vandehei, "Saipan Looks to Powerful Lobbyist," *Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2000.
 - 14 Debasish Mishra, former executive director of IACPA, told me this on May 23, 1998. While Raju was more interested in creating power for Indian Americans in Washington, it seems that Nurnberger might have had an ideological ax to grind. "The three democracies [India, Israel and the United States] are now poised to cooperate in counter-terrorism efforts. It must be stressed this is not a Christian-Jewish-Hindu coalition gearing up against Islam. Rather it is an effort by civilized, democratic nations to combat terrorism by extremists." Bhaskar Dasgupta, "Brajesh Mishra Proposes India-Israel-America Axis to Combat Terror," *Hindustan Times*, June 27, 2003. As we will see below, this verbal posture is not tenable.
 - 15 Alan Cooperman, "India, Israel Interests Team Up," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2003.
 - 16 Larry Ramer, "Pro-Israel Activists Seeking Allies among Immigrants from India," *Forward*, October 11, 2002.
 - 17 Joseph D'Agostino, "Conservative Spotlight: USINPAC," *Human Events*, December 11, 2003.
 - 18 Vijay Prashad, *Karma of Brown Folk* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 133-56.
 - 19 Mira Kamdar, "A Move to the Right? The Shifting Sands of South Asian American Politics," *Subcontinental* 1.2 (2003): 65.
 - 20 Ramer, "Pro-Israel Activists."
 - 21 For an excellent refutation of this view, see Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
 - 22 For more on this, see Vijay Prashad, *Darker Nations: The Rise and Fall of the Third World* (New York: New Press, forthcoming 2005).
 - 23 For Yemen's story, see Fred Halliday, *Arabia without Sultans* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1974), and "Arabia without Sultans Revisited," *Middle East Report* 27.3 (1997).
 - 24 On Hamas, see Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), and on the Kashmiri struggle, see Manoj Joshi, *The Lost Rebellion: Kashmir in the Nineties* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1999).
 - 25 "Terrorism is a tactic, not an enemy," wrote former senator Bob Kerrey ("Fighting the Wrong War," *New York Times*, April 11, 2004).
 - 26 Aziz Haniffa, "The Sacredness of Life Is Most Prominent in Indian and Jewish Philosophy," *India Abroad*, July 25, 2003.
 - 27 Alan Cooperman, "India, Israel Interests Team Up."

- 28 Eric Fingerhut, "A Growing Partnership: Jewish, Indian American Communities Working Together," *Washington Jewish Week*, October 24, 2002. Then comes the fawning: Professor Ram Roy, a political scientist who spoke at a 2003 conference on Jews and Indians in Washington, DC, said, "It is heartening to note this powerful, well-organized experienced group [A]Committee is trying to establish an alliance with Indian groups." Aziz Haniffa, "How to Make Uncle Sam Listen: Tips from Jewish Americans," *India Abroad*, July 25, 2003.
- 29 John J. Fialka, "Linked Donations? Political Contributions from Pro-Israel PACs Suggest Coordination," *Wall Street Journal*, June 24, 1987.
- 30 "US Aid to Israel: Interpreting the Strategic Relationship: Report from a Palestine Center Briefing by Stephen Zunes," *For the Record*, February 1, 2001, 50–52. My analysis is entirely the other side of Jeffrey Blankfort's otherwise very thoughtful "The Israel Lobby and the Left," in *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, ed. Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair (Oakland: AK, 2003).
- 31 The spy scandal of 2004 had no traction in Washington, even though it involved AIPAC. The FBI alleges that the lobbying group had a direct pipeline to both the Pentagon and the Israeli government and that it funneled classified information. There is no yellow tape around the AIPAC office, and the scandal has all but disappeared.
- 32 In recent years, the American Jewish vote for the Democratic Party has begun to split. Murray Friedman, "Are American Jews Moving to the Right?" *Commentary*, April 2000.
- 33 Joel Beinin, "Pro-Israel Hawks and the Second Gulf War," *MERIP*, April 6, 2003.
- 34 There is an account of the convergence between the neoconservative agenda and Sharonism in Michael Lind, *Made in Texas: George W. Bush and the Southern Takeover of American Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), chap. 6, "Armageddon."
- 35 The classic text that covers this history is Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Serif, 1996).
- 36 Indeed, there is even no agreement on the role of "anti-Semitism" in U.S. progressivism, for on one side is Ellen Willis, whose essay "Is There Still a Jewish Question? Why I'm an Anti-Anti-Zionist" argues that the Left's anti-Zionism is pretty much anti-Semitism, whereas Philip Green's "'Anti-Semitism,' Israel, and the Left" argues that the charge of anti-Semitism is leveled against anyone who disagrees with the pro-Israel orthodoxy. Both essays are in *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, ed. Tony Kushner and Alisa Solomon (New York: Grove, 2003). A forceful dissent from the Willis view, and a more philosophical analysis than Green's, is available in Judith Butler's "The Charge of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel, and the Risks of Public Critique," also in the Kushner and Solomon volume. Esther Kaplan's "Globalize the Intifada" points out that although "the road to victory will be littered with email postings that are a bit strident and flyers that are insensitive to Jewish history, . . . this new wave of activism has healthy roots, ones that tap deep into despair at the worsening occupation and anger at US complicity—not into ancient wells of Jew hating" (Kushner and Solomon, *Wrestling with Zion*, 87–88).
- 37 Judith Butler, "No, It's Not Anti-Semitic," *London Review of Books*, August 21, 2003. A revised version of this essay appears as "The Charge of Anti-Semitism" in Kushner and Solomon, *Wrestling with Zion*.

- 38 For a full rendition of this strand, see Tom Segev, Roane Carey, and Jonathan Shainin, eds., *The Other Israel: Voice of Refusal and Dissent* (New York: New Press, 2002).
- 39 Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 114.
- 40 Norman Podhoretz, *Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980), 335. See also Norman G. Finklestein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (London: Verso, 2000), 19–21.
- 41 There is almost no literature on the political attitudes of South Asian Americans. One poll shortly before the 2004 presidential election found that Indian Americans favored the candidacy of John Kerry by a wide margin (53 percent to 14 percent, but with 30 percent undecided). Richard Springer, “Indian Americans Favor Kerry in New Poll,” *India West*, October 1, 2004; Jim Lobe, “Asian Americans Lean toward Kerry,” *Asia Times*, September 16, 2004; and George Joseph, “Poll Finds 20 Percent of Asian Americans Are Undecided Voters,” *India Abroad*, September 24, 2004.
- 42 The ethnographic literature is well represented by Madhulika Khandelwal, *Becoming American, Being Indian: An Immigrant Community in New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); Padma Rangaswamy, *Namaste America: Indian Immigrants in an American City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Sandhya Shukla, *India Abroad: Diasporic Cultures of Postwar America and England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).
- 43 As Kamdar points out in “A Move to the Right?”
- 44 Ramer, “Pro-Israel Activists.”
- 45 Aziz Haniffa, “The Sacredness of Life.”
- 46 And I have done so in *Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon, 2001).
- 47 Bayard Rustin, “From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement,” in *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 112.
- 48 “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.,” *U.S. News and World Report*, December 26, 1966.
- 49 Irving Kristol, “The Negro Today Is Like the Immigrant Yesterday,” *New York Times Magazine*, September 11, 1966, 138.
- 50 See Prashad, *Karma of Brown Folk*, 167–68.
- 51 See Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
- 52 Toni Morrison, “On the Backs of Blacks,” *Time*, Fall 1993 special issue, 57.
- 53 But not nearly as strange as that between Christian dispensationalists and Zionists.
- 54 Anti-Defamation League, *India’s Campaign against Israel* (New York: ADL, 1987), 7.
- 55 Suman Guha Mozumder, “Indo-Israeli Groups to Co-Host Reception on Capitol Hill,” *India Abroad*, July 11, 2003.