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Jewish politics

NYT 4/18

Anti-Semitism Should Have No Place in the Nicaragua Debate

To the Editor:

The only significant question before the American people with respect to Nicaragua is whether the appropriate response to the dangers posed by the Sandinistas is military assistance to the contras, as the Reagan Administration proposes, or more vigorous and more imaginative support for the Contadora process, as the Administration's critics and Latin American countries have urged.

If that is the question, then the debate between Rabbi Balfour Brickner of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, cited in your March 20 editorial, and Nathan Perimutter, director of the Anti-Defamation League (letter, April 5), about whether the Sandinistas are anti-Semitic or not could not be less to the point.

It may very well be that the Sandinistas did not desecrate and firebomb Managua's synagogue, as Rabbi Brickner reports. (In his rebuttal, Mr. Perimutter carefully avoids an explicit refutation of Rabbi Brickner's claim.) But does Rabbi Brickner really believe that Jewish life can flourish in a Marxist-Leninist regime? Surely, the plight of Soviet Jews and of the sad remnants of Jewish life in other Eastern European countries should have ended that illusion once and for all. Why, then, imply that if the Sandinistas did not firebomb the synagogue, Nicaraguan Jews have nothing to fear from the Sandinista regime?

Equally unfortunate are the implications of Mr. Perimutter's arguments. Granted that the Sandinistas are guilty of anti-Semitism and of cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, is that an argument for military aid to the contras? Many, if not most, of the contra commanders in the field are former officials of Anastasio Somoza Debayle. Would the Anti-Defamation League consider them philo-Semites? More to the point, were their outrages against their fellow citizens less repugnant than the anti-Semitism of the Sandinistas?

The apparent assumption of this Administration that all that American Jews need to be told to secure their support of aid to the contras is that the Sandinistas are anti-Semitic is insulting to the political maturity and integrity of American Jews. We know President Reagan's abhorrence of anti-Semitism to be genuine. And, of course, anti-Semitism should be identified and denounced wherever it appears. However, to invoke anti-Semitism as an expedient to gain support for controversial policies, not only brings these policies further into question, but also compromises the battle against anti-Semitism.

HENRY SIEGMAN
Executive Director
American Jewish Congress
New York, April 8, 1986

1A

I thought that you would like to know (in case you missed it).

Marc A. Pearl

Jewish Perceptions of the New Assertiveness
of Religion in American Life

by Milton Himmelfarb

Jewish politics

1. In 1966 Commentary published an article of mine titled "Church and State: How High a Wall?" It began: "The Jews are probably more devoted than anyone else in America to the separation of church and state." That is probably still so. The 1984 National Survey of American Jews, conducted for the American Jewish Committee by Steven M. Cohen, showed American Jews to be ambivalent about some things but not about separation.

Thus, in answer to one question in the questionnaire three in four agreed that they supported "such government programs as welfare and food stamps," while in answer to the very next question two in three agreed that "such government programs as welfare and food stamps have had many bad effects on the very people they're supposed to help." The successiveness of the questions should have discouraged contradiction and ambivalence. Apparently it did not.

Contrariwise, placing similar questions far apart could be expected to encourage forgetfulness, and therefore contradiction and ambivalence. With church-state issues that did not work.

Most Americans are for tuition tax credits for parents of children in private or parochial schools. Question 3 asked about that, and question 41 about tuition tax credits for

parents of children in Jewish day schools. The answers to both questions were essentially identical: of those having an opinion two to one against tuition tax credits, and only one in eleven or twelve not sure. Opposition to "a moment of silent meditation each day in the public schools" was even stronger: more than three to one, with one in eleven not sure.

In 1985 Cohen sent questionnaires to the same people who had answered the 1984 National Survey of American Jews, and got more than 500 returns. One question was designed to test whether the attitudes of American Jews toward abortion are the same for the United States and for Israel, or different. It turns out that they are much the same. About four in five were against both American and Israeli governmental prohibition of abortion except in the case of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's life, one in eight for the prohibition, and one in ten or twelve unsure.

On the other hand, there is a clear difference in response to "teaching about religion in the public schools." About the United States, Jews oppose such teaching more than three to one, while about Israel more--but fewer than half--favor than oppose it.

	Yes	No	Not sure
	(Per cent)		
U.S.	20	70	10
Israel	47	38	15

This last may be less inconsistent than it looks. Someone who is against teaching about religion in American public schools

but for it in Israeli public schools might try to justify himself in some such way as this: In America children study English literature, in Israel they study Hebrew literature. Though the King James Version is an English literary classic, you can teach English literature without the Bible. You cannot very well teach Hebrew literature without the Bible.

Note, however, that only about one in four said yes to teaching about religion in Israeli public schools and no to teaching about religion in American schools. Further, that fully three in eight American Jews oppose teaching about religion even in Israeli public schools shows a certain universalization of American values and practice.

2. From an American perspective it is anomalous that most American Jews vote conspicuously to the left of their bankbooks, because other American religious and ethnic groups do not. From a worldwide Jewish perspective it is not at all anomalous, because at least until recently that is how most Jews in western countries have voted.

What is the right perspective for viewing the strong separationism of most American Jews? If the alternative to separationism is Throne-and-Altarism, then modern Jews everywhere are all separationists. Yet British Jews, and of late even some French Jews, find it hard to understand why American Jews are quite so intense in their dislike of such things as silent meditation or teaching about religion in the public schools. To which American Jews might answer that they have

higher expectations of the United States than British Jews have of Great Britain or French Jews of France. In the 1984 survey five of six Jews agreed that "the U.S. has offered Jews more opportunities and freedom than any other Diaspora country." (One in sixteen disagreed, and one in ten was not sure.)

How are we to understand the dominant attitude of American Jews toward, say, the Moral Majority?

1984 impression of	Generally favorable	Generally unfavorable	Mixed	No impression
		(Per cent)		
ACLU	42	13	24	22
NAACP	54	12	28	6
Moral Majority	7	69	14	10

Maybe our respondents answered in this way because they are Jews, maybe because on the whole they are educated Americans, and maybe because they are both. In 1984 only one in six had never been to college, three in five had graduated, and more had at least one graduate degree than the baccalaureate alone. About the Moral Majority, at any rate, the unpopularity-to-popularity ratio of ten to one would probably not be greatly different in any respectable faculty club. Which is to say that to Jews "Jerry Falwell"--the type, not the actual man--may look like Elmer Gantry as well as Torquemada.

In 1985 Cohen tempted his respondents to do as some neo-conservative intellectuals do, to think better of the Christian Right on account of Israel: "Since the Christian Right has been very pro-Israel, American Jews should overlook their

objections to the Christian Right's ideas about America and work more closely with it to help Israel." Though the wording took for granted Jewish "objections to the Christian's Right's ideas about America," few were mollified. Only a fifth agreed against the more than half who disagreed and the more than a quarter who were unsure. Particularist considerations--"help Israel"--are not allowed to prevail over loyalty to liberal "ideas about America," whether political or cultural. This loyalty, in turn, is itself not without a certain admixture of Jewish particularism. Liberalism has long been held to be not only good in itself but also "good for the Jews."

3. People use denial or evasion for dealing with conflict between one good and another. Dovishness is a liberal good. The 1985 questionnaire asked for agreement or disagreement with the proposition that "major reductions in U.S. defense spending...will weaken the security of the U.S." A clear majority disagreed--that is, those disagreeing exceeded the sum of those agreeing and those not sure. The contradictory desires for major reductions in defense spending and for national security are reconciled by denying that they are contradictory.

Denial or evasion is also at work in American Jews' assessment of the effects of religion on society. Asked in 1984 whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposition that "the decline of religion in American life has contributed to a decline in morality," the six in seven who had an opinion divided

about equally. It may be that some of those who said they disagreed actually did agree but did not want to say so, for fear of giving aid and comfort to the Moral Majority. But the reasoning, if that is the right name for it, could also have gone the other way: The Moral Majority is wrong; the Moral Majority says that the decline of religion in American life has contributed to a decline in morality; therefore the decline of religion in American life has not contributed to a decline in morality.

That is denial. Evasion could take this form: Decline of religion? What decline? The Christian Right and those scary pro-lifers are evidence for a rise rather than a decline of religion. Decline in morality? If by morality you mean chastity you are probably right, but morality is more than that. It also includes such things as tolerance and lack of prejudice. Since America is more tolerant and less prejudiced now than only a generation ago, you could as easily report a rise as a decline of morality. Besides, it is not as if we were against chastity. In the same survey three in four agreed that "adultery is wrong," against one in six disagreeing and one in ten not sure. (This recalls the old rabbinical--or is it generically clerical?--joke about the letter that the hospitalized rabbi receives from the secretary of the congregation: "Dear Rabbi, The trustees have instructed me to send you their best wishes for a speedy recovery, by a vote of five to four.")

4. After we dispose of the denial and evasion, we are still left with something serious that needs to be explained. The question about the decline of religion and morality is central. Put another way, it might be this: Is religion a Good Thing or a Bad Thing for society? Not every religionist will say that it is necessarily a good thing: Though peace is presumably good and the sword bad, the scriptures of a great religion promise not peace but a sword. Nor will every secularist say that religion is a bad thing. For personally irreligious people like Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, the very asking about the goodness or badness of religion for society might well have seemed as foolish as asking about the goodness or badness of breathing: No life without breathing, no social life without religion. The very philosophes whose battle cry was écrasez l'infâme, and who privately scoffed at the idea that their deistic deity had considerately provided an afterlife to mortal men and women, also were convinced that in order for society to endure, the masses must not be disabused of their belief in an afterlife of rewards and punishments.

5. Why then the even split between Jews agreeing and disagreeing about religious and moral decline in the United States? Let us imagine a Jew who is apprehensive about the new assertiveness of religion in American life. What might such a person say?

He might start by saying that he was typical rather than untypical in being apprehensive--about the new assertiveness

of religion, of course, but also about nearly everything else. A kind of free-floating anxiety is the American Jewish norm. The same people who in 1984 said that Jews as a minority fared better in the United States than anywhere else also, and at the same time, denied, by almost five to four, with one in seven or eight not sure, that "antisemitism in America is currently"--currently, not in some all too possible future--"not a serious problem for American Jews." At a time when Jews have been more successful than ever before, above all in politics, they deny by almost two to one, with one in nine not sure, that "virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews." From the outside, American Jews must resemble the poor little rich girl.

The apprehensiveness of us Jews is not altogether without locus or focus. Mostly we see unfriendliness, if not downright hostility, more among the rich and powerful than among the poor and powerless. (We make an exception for blacks. In 1984 a little more than half of us thought most or many blacks antisemitic.) About Republicans 29 per cent of us thought they were all or mostly antisemitic, about Democrats only 6 per cent; about conservatives 35 per cent, about liberals 7 per cent. Averaging those antisemitism ratings, we arrive at something like a 15 or 20 per cent antisemitism rating by Jews for all Americans--white Americans?--in their secular capacity. In their religious, Christian capacity we think them more antisemitic than that: In 1984, 40 per cent

of us thought Catholics all or mostly antisemitic, 42 per cent mainstream Protestants, and 46 per cent fundamentalist Protestants. In 1985 one of the questions asked about American Christians, American Jews, and Israelis was whether each of these groups was "basically like me." Naturally, American Jews got the highest vote, more than three quarters. Next came Israelis, with something less than half. Only a little more than a third considered American Christians to be "basically like me."

6. And what is this talk about the new assertiveness of religion? (The representative Jew is still talking.) People speak not language in general but a language in particular, and they profess not religion in general but a religion in particular. It is not a new assertiveness of religion that makes Jews uneasy, it is the new assertiveness of Christianity, or of some movements and tendencies in Christianity. Nor is the assertiveness new. It is simply renewed. Some of us experienced it when we were young.

Warner and Srole's Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups, published in 1945, is about a New England city ten years earlier. In the public schools the Lord's Prayer was recited every morning. When the authors asked a Jewish boy what he did about it, he answered that he recited it too, "because when in Rome do as the Romans do." When in America do as the Americans do. Americans recite the Lord's Prayer. Since it is a Christian prayer, the real Americans must be

Christian. Since it is not my prayer, I, the Jewish schoolboy, must be something other or less than a real American.

Morris B. Abram, more conservative now than he used to be, still writes about how "very uncomfortable" he was "as a child in the South Georgia public school system--really a Protestant operation supported by public funds--when the time came to recite the hymns and mumble the prayers." At the end of August 1985 a letter to the editor of the Washington Post protested the linkage, or hyphen, in Secretary of Education William Bennett's reference to America's "Judeo-Christian" heritage:

> It is almost as though the users of the phrase believe...that Jews should not be critical of the users' religious agenda as long as that agenda begins with the prefix "Judeo."...I grew up as a member of one of three Jewish families in a town of 1,600 in northern New Jersey. Each day in public school we read from the Bible, said the Lord's Prayer and sang "Jesus Loves Me."...To most of us, school prayer means the prayers of other people's faiths...and reemphasis of our status as a "minority" religion....

To young American Jews in the bad old days the assertiveness of religion in American life meant conformity, keeping a low profile, not making waves--prudence at the expense of self-respect. It fostered Jewish self-hate, the internalization of the Other's image of Jews as alien and inferior.

Young Jews today have it better than their grandparents had when young, and one reason may be that the Lord's Prayer is no longer recited in public schools. We are not nostalgic about those days, and we doubt that some of the new asserters of religion in American life are equally lacking in nostalgia.

In 1985 Senator Boschwitz of Minnesota sent to a Jewish list a fund-raising letter on behalf of the 1986 reelection campaign of Senator Specter of Pennsylvania. (Both are Republicans and both are Jews.) Boschwitz's letter stressed Specter's part in the legislative fight against mandating or allowing prayer in the public schools and urged his reelection for guarding the wall of separation against those who would breach it. The result in money raised was phenomenal, perhaps a record.

7. A penultimate word about Orthodox Jews. Qualitatively of great and growing importance in the American Jewish community, quantitatively they are a small minority, fewer than ten per cent. On the one hand, they generally are no less suspicious than other Jews of Christian intentions, though from a different angle: interreligious dialogue, for example. On the other hand, they are less separationist, if only from self-interest. Probably a majority--certainly a plurality--of the parents of children in Jewish day schools are Orthodox and resent the opposition of most other Jews to tuition tax credits.

8. My own views have changed little in the almost twenty years since that Commentary article of mine. I have quoted

its first sentence. Its last sentence was Robert Frost's "Something there is that doesn't love a wall."

To the position that has been dominant in the American Jewish community for the past forty years or so Naomi Cohen, in her Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States 1830-1940, contrasts an earlier position:

> ...Jews usually meant a neutral-to-all religions rather than a divorced-from-religion state. Indeed, the later concept...was as abhorrent to Jews as it was to most Americans. Rabbis, long the most influential leaders of the community, taught that religion was a vital component of the good life and, like Christian clergymen, inveighed against the inroads of secularization. Louis Marshall, the national spokesman of American Jews on the eve of World War I, found nothing intrinsically offensive about Bible reading in the public schools, so long as it did not become sectarian.

New is not necessarily improved.

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CHRISTIAN AMERICA OR SECULAR AMERICA?

THE CHURCH-STATE DILEMMA OF AMERICAN JEWS

"The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." This statement, found in Article 11 of a 1797 treaty between the United States and the Bey and subjects of Tripoli, encapsulates what may safely be seen as a near unanimous Jewish view on the relationship of church and state in America. It is a manifestly negative view, a statement of what America is not. It also turns out to be somewhat of a fraud, since the article in question does not appear in the Arabic original of this treaty -- a fact only discovered some 133 years later. It is however a classic text, "cited hundreds of times in numerous court cases and in political debates whenever the issue of church-state relations arose,"[1] to reassure the faithful that no religion obtains special treatment in America. Christianity might be the law of the land in other countries; here, American Jews have insisted, religious liberty is guaranteed by the Constitution itself.

But what does religious liberty mean? How are those who adhere to the religion of the majority, those who adhere to the religions of the minority, and those who adhere to no religion at all supposed to interrelate? And if America is not a Chris-

tian society, what kind of society is it and what is the relationship of that society to the state? American Jews, especially since they have insisted that the "Christian America" model is wrong, have an obligation to respond to these questions and to propose alternative models of what the relationship of church and state in America should be. How well they have fulfilled this obligation remains unclear, since no full-scale account of American Jewish thinking on these matters has yet appeared, and most of the literature that does exist is unfortunately more polemical than scholarly. Yet even the superficial survey I have undertaken here is sufficient to warrant the following conclusions: (1) American Jews <u>have</u> put forward alternative models, (2) their views on church and state have been more diverse than generally imagined, and (3) that in struggling with these issues they have confronted two basic challenges: (a)the challenge to participate as equals in majority society without embracing the majority's religion; and (b) the challenge to decide whether Jewish interests are better served under a system that guarantees equality to <u>all</u> religions or one that mandates complete state separation from <u>any</u> religion.

1

The idea that America is a Christian nation has it roots in the colonial period and continues as an unbroken tradition down to the present day. "From the beginning," Robert Handy explains, "American Protestants entertained a lively hope that some day the

civilization of the country would be fully Christian. The ways in which the hope was expressed and the activities it engendered varied somewhat from generation to generation, but for more than three centuries Protestants drew direction and inspiration from the vision of a Christian America. It provided a common orientation that cut across denominational differences, and furnished goals toward which all could work, each in his own style and manner."[2] The Constitution and the Bill of Rights (which, of course, applied only at the Federal level, and did not become binding upon the states until the twentieth century) did not dampen the ardor of those who embraced the Christian America ideal, for they interpreted these documents narrowly. Their reading -- and whether it was a correct one or not is less important than the fact that they believed it to be true -- was summed up by Justice Joseph Story in his famous Commentaries on the Constitution (1833):

> The real object of the amendment was, not to countenance, much less to advance Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any ecclesiastical establishment, which should give to an hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government.[3]

Story's view was buttressed by various notable court decisions which, in accordance with British precedent, assumed that "the Christian religion is recognized as constituting a part of the common law."[4] Chancellor James Kent, chief justice of New York's highest court, held in 1811 that religious freedom and church state separation did not stand in the way of a common law

indictment for malicious blasphemy, for "We are a christian people and the morality of the country is deeply ingrafted upon christianity." One hundred and twenty years later, in 1931, the same phrase -- "we are a Christian people" -- was used by the United States Supreme Court in a decision known as U.S. v. Macintosh. In 1939, the Georgia Supreme Court in upholding a Sunday closing law, forthrightly declared America to be "a Christian nation."[5]

Individual Americans have been even more outspoken in associating the state with the religion of the majority. Daniel Webster, for example, argued eloquently before the Supreme Court in the case of Vidal v. Girard's Executors (1844) that "the preservation of Christianity is one of the main ends of government," that a school "derogatory to the Christian religion," or even a school "for the teaching of the Jewish religion" should "not be regarded as a charity," and that "All, all, proclaim that Christianity . . . is the law of the land." He lost his case, but won cheers from members of the Whig Party. Furthermore, his views with regard to the illegitimacy of schools "for the propagation of Judaism" won support from the Court, even as it rejected his claims on other grounds.[6] Webster may well have changed his mind later on.[7] Still, the views he expressed in this case clearly reflected the sentiments of a significant minority of Americans, in his day and many decades afterward as well.

2

American Jews have, broadly speaking, offered two meaningful alternatives to the claims of "Christian America." Both of them

are historically well grounded, both appeal to American Constitutional ideals, and both claim to promote American and Jewish interests. One stresses the broadly religious (as distinct from narrowly Christian) character of the American people, the other stresses church-state separation and the attendant secular nature of the American government. They reflect different readings of history, involve Jews with different kinds of friends and allies, and translate into radically different policy positions.

The first response conjures up an image of Americans as a religious people, committed to no religion in particular but certain that some kind of religion is necessary for the wellbeing of all citizens. This idea finds its most important early legislative expression in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 where "religion, morality and knowledge" -- not further defined -- are termed "necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind." Leading Americans from Benjamin Franklin (who proposed that non-denominational prayers be recited at the Constitutional Convention) to Dwight D. Eisenhower ("Our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is") have championed similar views, as have some proponents of what is now known as civil religion.[8] The concept is somewhat nebulous, and means different things to different people. What is important here, however, is the existence of an ongoing tradition, dating back to the early days of the republic, that links Americans to religion without entering into any particulars. It is a tradition that counts Judaism in among all other American faiths, Christian and non-Christian

alike.

This tradition, although rarely appealed to by American Jews today, forms the basis for almost every important American Jewish call for religious freedom in the early decades following independence. A 1783 Jewish petition to the Council of Censors in Pennsylvania , for example, attacked a test oath demanding belief in the divinity "of the old and new Testament," on the grounds that it conflicted with the state's own declaration of rights -- "that no man who acknowledge the being of a God can be justly deprived or abridged of any civil rights as a citizen, on account of his religious sentiments." That this declaration of rights, while inclusive of Jews, allied the state with theism did not trouble Jews at all; indeed, Jonas Phillips, in another petition on the same subject, declared that "the Israelites will think themself [sic] happy to live under a government where all Religious societies are on an Equal footing." Jews, in short, sought religious equality, not a state divorced from religion altogether. Jacob Henry of North Carolina, when efforts were made in 1809 to deny him his seat for refusing to subscribe to a Christian test oath, underscored this point: "If a man fulfills the duties of that religion which his education or his Conscience has pointed to him as the true one; no person, I hold, in this our land of liberty has a right to arraign him at the bar of any inquisition."[9]

Nowhere in any of these statements do Jews suggest that their rights should stand on an equal basis with those of non-believers. Nor did Jews protest when several states, including

Pennsyvania and Maryland (in the famous "Jew Bill" of 1826), accorded them rights that non-believers were denied. Instead, most early American Jews accepted religious freedom as a right rooted within a religious context; they defined it, in the words of Mordecai Noah, perhaps the leading Jewish figure of the day, as "a mere abolition of all religious disabilities." Jews did not mind that America firmly committed itself to religion; their concern was mainly to ensure that this commitment carried with it a guarantee to them that, as Noah put it, "You are free to worship God in any manner you please; and this liberty of conscience cannot be violated."[10]

Jewish support for this essentially pro-religion position remained strong throughout the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. One well-versed student of the subject, Shlomith Yahalom, concludes in her recent doctoral dissertation that American Jews during this period were concerned with "freedom <u>of</u> religion and not freedom <u>from</u> religion." Rather than siding with the demands of anti-religious organizations, she writes, many Jews supported "impartial aid to <u>all</u> religions."[11] A prime example of this may be seen in the Civil War when advocates of "Christian America" limited the appointment of chaplains to those who were termed "regularly ordained minister[s] of some Christian denomination." When a Jewish chaplain was refused on this basis, Jews naturally responded with vigorous protests. What they sought, however, was not an abolition of the chaplaincy, as a secularist interpretation of America's religious tradition might have demanded, but only religious equality. When the law was changed so that the word "Christian" was construed to mean "religious,"

allowing chaplains of the Jewish faith to be appointed, the Jewish community pronounced itself satisfied.[12] Nor was this a unique case. As Professor Naomi Cohen explains in her recent book on German Jews in the United States:

> The Jewish pioneers for religious equality generally asked for government neutrality on matters of religion . . . . a neutral-to-all-religions rather than a divorced-from-religion state. Indeed, the latter concept, which in the climate of the nineteenth century was tantamount to an anti-religion stance, was as abhorrent to Jews as it was to most Americans. Rabbis, long the most influential leaders of the community, taught that religion was a vital component of the good life and, like Christian clergymen, inveighed against the inroads of secularization.[13]

While this response to the challenge of "Christian America" never completely lost its appeal, Jews in the last third of the nineteenth century found to their dismay that calls for religious equality fell more and more on deaf ears. The spiritual crisis and internal divisions that plagued Protestant America during this period -- a period that confronted all American religious groups with the staggering implications of Darwinisim and biblical criticism -- drove evangelicals and liberals alike to renew their particularistic calls for a "Christian America." Evangelical leaders championed antimodernist legislation to protect the "Christian Sabbath," to institute "Christian temperance," to reintroduce Christianity into the schoolroom, and to write Chris-

tian morality into American law codes.[14] Liberal Christians may have been somewhat more circumspect, but as Robert Handy indicates their goal too was "in many respects a spiritualized and idealized restatement of the search for a specifically Christian society in an age of freedom and progress."[15] The implication, spelled out by one writer in the American Presbyterian and Theological Review, was that non-Protestants could never win full acceptance as equals:

> This is a Christian Republic, our Christianity being of the Protestant type. People who are not Christians, and people called Christians, but who are not Protestants dwell among us, but they did not build this house. We have never shut our doors against them, but if they come, they must take up with such accomodations as we have . . . If any one, coming among us finds that this arrangement is uncomfortable, perhaps he will do well to try some other country. The world is wide; there is more land to be possessed; let him go and make a beginning for himself as our fathers did for us; as for this land, we have taken possession of it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if he will give us grace to do it, we mean to hold it for him till he comes.[16]

A proposed "Christian Amendment" designed to write "the Lord Jesus Christ" and the "Christian" basis of national life into the text of the Constitution attempted to ensure that these aims would be speedily realized.[17]

Jews, new to America and all-too-familiar with the anti-Jewish rhetoric of Christian romantics in Europe, were understandably alarmed by these efforts. As in the old world so in the

new, they thought, proponents of religion were allying themselves with the forces of reaction. In search of a safe haven, many Jews now settled firmly down in the freethinking liberal camp; it seemed far more hospitable to Jewish interests. Jews also turned increasingly toward a more radical response to "Christian America" -- the doctrine of strict separation.

3

Church-state separation is, of course, an old idea in America; its roots lie deeply imbedded in colonial and European thought. The idea in its most radical form was embraced by Thomas Jefferson who believed, at least for much of his life, that the state should be utterly secular, religion being purely a matter of personal preference. "The legitimate powers of government," Jefferson wrote in his Notes on Virginia, "extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God." Jefferson refused to proclaim so much as a Thanksgiving Day, lest he "indirectly assume to the United States an authority over religious exercises." We owe to him the famous interpretation of the First Amendment as "a wall of separation between church and state."[18]

It is by no means clear when Jews first began to express support for this model of "secular government." In the election of 1800, a majority of the few thousand Jews in the country supported Jefferson, but not on the basis of his religious views. Indeed, Benjamin Nones, a Philadelphia Jewish merchant and bro-

ker, pointed out in Jefferson's defense that the future president "in his very introduction to the Declaration of Independence, declared all men equal, and implores a Divine Providence" -- a clear indication of where Nones's own priorities lay.[19] Isaac Leeser, the most important Jewish religious leader of the pre-Civil War period, stood much closer to the radical Jeffersonian view. He repeatedly invoked the principle of church-state separation in defense of Jewish rights, took an active role in the battle for Jewish equality on the state level, and was vigilant in his opposition to such alleged Christian intrusions into American public life as Sunday closing laws, Christian pronouncements in Thanksgiving proclamations, official references to Christianity in state and federal laws, and Christian prayers and Bible readings in the public schools. Even Leeser, however, was primarily motivated by a desire to assure Jews equal rights and to prevent their assimilation into the mainstream. While he was more wary of religious intrusions into public life than were some of his Jewish contemporaries, he did not literally advocate a secular government, much less an atheistic one.[20]

It was, then, only in the post-Civil War era, with the revival of efforts to create a "Christian America" and the resulting ties between Jews and advocates of religious radicalism and freethought (themselves on the rise during this period), that American Jews began unequivocally to speak out for a government free of any religious influence. Leading Jews participated in such groups as the Free Religious Association and the National Liberal League, and many Jews, among them such notable Reform

Jewish leaders as Rabbis Isaac Mayer Wise, Bernhard Felsenthal, and Max Schlesinger, as well as the Jewish lay leader Moritz Ellinger, came to embrace the separationist agenda spelled out in such periodicals as The Index, edited by Francis Abbot. As Professor Benny Kraut has pointed out, during this period "the issue of church-state relations precipitated a natural, pragmatic alliance uniting Jews, liberal Christians, religious free-thinkers, and secularists in common bond, their religious and theological differences notwithstanding."[21] The result, particularly in terms of Reform Jewish thought, was a clear shift away from emphasis on Americans as a religious people, and toward greater stress on government as a secular institution. Thus, in 1869 Isaac Mayer Wise proclaimed that "the State has no religion. Having no religion, it cannot impose any religious instruction on the citizen, adult or child."[22] Bernhard Felsenthal, in an 1875 polemic written to prove that "ours is not a Christian civilization" went even further:

> God be praised that church and state are separated in our country! God be praised that the constitution of the United States and of the single states are now all freed from this danger-breeding idea! God be praised that they are "atheistical," as they have been accused of being by some over-zealous, dark warriors who desire to overcome the nineteenth century and to restore again the fourteenth century. God be praised that this has been accomplished in our Union and may our constitutions and state institutions remain "atheistical" just as our manufactories, our banks,

and our commerce are.[23]

This soon became the standard Jewish line on church and state. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, founded in 1875 (and not originally an organ of the Reform movement), devoted one of its first resolutions to an expression of support for the "Congress of Liberals" in its efforts "to secularize the State completely."[24] The Central Conference of American Rabbis, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress expressed like support for "strict separationism" early in the twentieth century.[25] Even as late as the early 1960s, a recent study indicates, no significant deviation from this position was yet in evidence:

> American Jews under the leadership of their defense organizations went on record time after time in significant court cases on behalf of separation. . . .For the most part they eschewed completely the idea of equal government recognition of all religions or of non-denominational religious practices, and they called for non-recognition of any form of religion."[26]

More recently, however, the coalition between Jews and secularists has come under increasing pressure. Beginning in the 1960s, Orthodox Jews abandoned their opposition to state aid to parochial schools in the hope of obtaining funds for their own day schools. They argued, as Catholics had before them, that education in a religious setting benefited not only members of their own faith, but also the nation as a whole, and that funds used to support secular studies at these schools should not be

denied just because the schools happened to teach religious subjects on the side. They also cast doubt on the whole Jewish separationist approach to the problem of church and state, terming it "robot-like" and "unthinking."[27]

Major Jewish organizations were actually not quite as committed to the secularist agenda on church and state as their opponents imagined. Taxation of church property, elimination of chaplains from the public payroll, opposition to the phrase "In God We Trust," and related efforts to outlaw all manifestations of religion in American life never found significant support in Jewish quarters, probably because they failed to comport with Jewish interests, that were, in the final analysis, not totally secular at all.[28] But these rarely talked about exceptions did not alter the overall thrust of Jewish rhetoric on the matter of church and state, much less Jewish policy on most issues of contemporary concern. In insisting that significant policy changes should take place, Orthodox Jews, later joined by neoconservatives and others, argued that the whole alliance with strict separationists should be abandoned. They sought in its stead a new partnership with groups laboring to shape government policy in a pro-religion direction. They considered this -- a position better rooted in American Jewry's past than they realized -- to be in the best interests of Jews and Judaism, and good for interfaith relations as well. Where major Jewish organizations in the twentieth century feared erosion of the "no establishment" clause of the First Amendment, they stressed the need to champion "free exercise" of religion through laws and government programs designed to make it easier for observant Jews

to uphold the tenets of their faith. To their mind, the threat posed by rampant secularism was far more imminent and serious than any residual threat from the forces of militant Christianity.

4

The breakdown of the twentieth-century American Jewish consensus on the subject of church and state should not be surprising. If anything, the fact that the consensus lasted as long as it did is surprising for it effectively masked an agonizing dilemma on the question of religion and state that characterizes much of modern Jewish history.

On the one hand, history teaches Jews to favor strict church-state separation as the only defense against a Christian dominated state. Those who emphasize this reading of history think that sooner or later "so-called non-denominational religious exercises" inevitably acquire "sectarian additions and deviations," and that "non-denominational" then becomes the majority's term for what the minority views as decidedly partisan. They fear that calls for religion in American life will, given the record of the past, likely turn into calls for a "Christian America." To prevent this, they argue for "a fence around the law so as to avoid approaches to transgression as well as actual trangression." They understandably worry that once religion gains entry into the public square, majority rule will come trampling down over minority rights, Christianizing everything in its path.[29]

On the other hand, history also teaches Jews to oppose secularization as a force leading to assimilation, social decay, and sometimes to persecution of all religions, Judaism included. Those who emphasize this reading of history welcome appropriate manifestations of religion in American life, and propose a less absolutist approach to church-state separation -- freedom <u>for</u> religion. They insist that "support for religion is basic to the American system," and fear that completely divorcing religion from national life will result in "a jungle where brute force, cunning, and unbridled passion rule supreme." Only the idea "that wrongdoing is an offense against the divine authority and order," they argue, can protect society against delinquency and crime. They also point out that Jews, as a small and often persecuted minority, should be wary of setting themselves too far apart from the majority lest anti-Semitism result.[30]

What then of Jews in "Unsecular America?" They are caught between two positions both of them historically legitimate, ideologically convincing, and fraught with dangers. Experience has taught Jews conflicting lessons, for those who have held aloft the banner of religion and those who have trampled down upon it have, at different times, proved both friendly and unfriendly. Jews, as idealists, may seek to promote a utopian society in America where they and their neighbors can live as equals, safe from the fire and brimstone of the Christian state <u>and</u> the desolate barrenness of the secular one. How best to realize such a society, however, remains an unsolved riddle.

NOTES

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3. Joseph Story, Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States (Boston, 1833), III, par. 1865 as quoted in Chester J. Antieau et al, Freedom From Federal Establishment (Milwaukee, 1964), p.160; cf. Michael J. Malbin, Religion and Politics: The Intentions of the Authors of the First Amendment (Washington, D.C., 1978).

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5. People v. Ruggles, 8 Johns Rep. (N.Y.) 294 (1811); U.S v. Macintosh 283 U.S. 605 (1931); Rogers v. State, 60 Ga. App. 722, cf. John Webb Pratt Religion, Politics and Diversity (Ithaca, N.Y.., 1967), pp.138,142; Leonard W. Levy, Treason Against God (New York, 1981), pp.334; Meislin, "Jewish Law in America," p.159.

6. The Works of Daniel Webster (Boston, 1951), VI,pp. 175, 166,176; cf. Anson P. Stokes and Leo Pfeffer, Church and State in the United States (rev. ed., New York, 1964), p.105; Borden, Jews, Turks and Infidels, pp.102-103.

7. Ferenc M.Szasz, "Daniel Webster -- Architect of America's 'Civil Religion'," Historical New Hampshire 34 (1979), pp.223-243; Max J. Kohler, "Daniel Webster and the Jews," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society 11 (1903), pp.186-187.

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9. These documents are conveniently reprinted in Morris U. Schappes, A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875 (New York, 1971), 64,68,122 (italics added).

10. Ibid, 279; cf. Jonathan D. Sarna, Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah (New York, 1981), 132-135.

11. Shlomit Yahalom, "American Judaism and the Question of Separation Between Church and State" (Ph.D., Hebrew University, 1981), English section, p.14; cf. Hebrew section p.260.

12. Bertram W. Korn, American Jewry and the Civil War (New York, 1970), pp.56-97.

13. Naomi W. Cohen, Encounter With Emancipation (Philadelphia, 1984), p.77.

14. Ferenc M. Szasz, "Protestantism and the Search for Stability: Liberal and Conservative Quests for a Christian America, 1875-1925," in Jerry Israel (ed.) Building the Organizational Society (New York, 1972), pp.88-102; Paul A. Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age (DeKalb, Ill.,

1971); Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace (New York, 1981).

15. Handy, A Christian America, p.101.

16. American Protestant Theological Review 5 (July 1867), pp.390-391.

17. Borden, Jews, Turks, and Infidels, pp.62-74. Cohen, Encounter With Emancipation, pp.254-256.

18. Quoted in Stokes, Church and State in the United States 1964), pp.52-53; W.A. Blakely (ed.), American State Papers Bearing on Sunday Legislation (New York, 1891), p.57.

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23. Reprinted in W. Gunther Plaut, The Growth of Reform Judaism (New York, 1965), pp.180-181.

24. The full text of this July 1876 resolution is reprinted in Where We Stand: Social Action Resolutions Adopted By the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (New York, 1960), p.14.

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26. Naomi W. Cohen, "Schools, Religion, and Government -- Recent American Jewish Opinions," Michael 3 (1975), pp.343-344; cf. Murray Friedman, The Utopian Dilemma (Washington, 1985), pp.28-31.

27. Marvin Schick quoted in Cohen, "Schools, Religion and Government," p.377, cf. pp.366-369.

28. Yahalom, "American Judaism and the Question of Separation Between Church and State," pp.17-28.

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"...Thou shalt not kill."

	Applies Fully	Applies to Limited Extent	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
Italy	96%	2%	2%	1%
United States	93	4	1	2
Republic of Ireland	93	4	2	2
Norway	93	3	2	2
Northern Ireland	92	6	2	0
Great Britain	90	6	3	1
Denmark	90	4	2	5
Sweden	90	4	4	2
West Germany	88	9	2	2
Netherlands	82	9	4	6
Spain	81	9	6	4
Belgium	80	9	6	6
France	80	9	8	4
Finland	79	10	5	6

"...Thou shalt not commit adultery."

	Applies Fully	Applies to Limited Extent	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
United States	87%	8%	3%	2%
Northern Ireland	86	9	4	1
Republic of Ireland	85	7	5	3
Great Britain	78	12	9	2
Sweden	70	15	10	5
Norway	69	21	7	2
Finland	67	19	7	7
Denmark	67	11	9	13
West Germany	64	22	8	5
Italy	62	14	21	2
Belgium	61	20	11	9
Spain	58	24	13	5
Netherlands	50	23	21	5
France	48	18	29	5

"...Thou shalt not steal."

	Applies Fully	Applies to Limited Extent	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
United States	93%	5%	1%	2%
Italy	93	4	2	1
Norway	92	4	2	2
Northern Ireland	91	7	2	0
Republic of Ireland	88	7	2	2
Sweden	88	5	4	3
Great Britain	87	8	4	1
Denmark	84	9	2	5
West Germany	81	14	2	2
Netherlands	79	12	6	4
Spain	78	11	7	4
Finland	78	10	6	6
Belgium	76	10	6	7
France	69	14	14	4

"...Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

	Applies Fully	Applies to Limited Extent	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
United States	89%	8%	1%	2%
Italy	88	7	4	1
Republic of Ireland	86	8	3	3
Northern Ireland	84	11	3	1
Sweden	84	8	5	4
Great Britain	78	14	5	3
Norway	75	20	3	2
Denmark	74	16	2	7
West Germany	73	20	4	4
France	67	16	13	4
Finland	61	27	6	6
Belgium	61	23	7	9
Netherlands	57	29	8	5
Spain	56	30	10	4

"...Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

	Applies Fully	Applies to Limited Extent	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
United States	89%	6%	2%	2%
Republic of Ireland	85	8	3	3
Norway	80	13	4	2
Northern Ireland	79	17	3	1
Great Britain	79	9	10	3
Sweden	75	11	9	5
Denmark	72	16	4	9
Finland	65	21	7	7
Spain	65	20	11	5
Netherlands	65	17	13	6
Belgium	65	16	9	10
Italy	64	14	20	2
West Germany	62	24	8	7
France	52	18	25	5

"...Thou shalt not covet they neighbor's goods."

	Applies Fully	Applies to Limited Extent	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
United States	88%	8%	2%	2%
Republic of Ireland	87	6	4	3
Northern Ireland	85	9	4	2
Norway	79	14	5	3
Great Britain	79	12	8	1
Italy	73	12	13	1
Denmark	72	15	4	9
Sweden	71	12	12	6
West Germany	70	20	4	6
Belgium	69	16	7	8
Finland	65	21	7	6
France	62	16	18	4
Spain	61	24	11	5
Netherlands	59	24	12	6

SOURCE: Surveys by the Gallup Organization and Gallup International Research Institute for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and the European Values System Study Group, 1981.

Table 2

"Do you believe in a God?"

	Yes	No
United States	98%	2%
Greece	96	2
Austria	85	10
Switzerland	84	11
Finland	83	7
West Germany	81	10
Netherlands	79	13
Great Britain	77	11
France	73	21
Norway	73	12
Sweden	60	26

"Do you believe in Heaven?"

	Yes	No	No Opinion
United States	85%	11%	4%
Greece	65	23	12
Finland	62	20	18
Norway	60	20	20
Great Britain	54	27	19
Netherlands	54	31	15
Switzerland	50	41	9
Austria	44	49	7
Sweden	43	42	15
West Germany	43	42	15
France	39	52	9

"Do you believe in life after death?"

	Yes	No	No Opinion
United States	73%	19%	8%
Greece	57	28	15
Finland	55	23	22
Norway	54	25	21
Netherlands	50	35	15
Switzerland	50	41	9
West Germany	41	45	14
Great Britain	38	35	27

SOURCE: Surveys by the Gallup Organization and Gallup International Research Institute, July 1968.

Table 3

Confidence in Institutions

(Percent saying "great deal" or "quite a lot," combined)

	1985	1984	1983	1981	1979	1977	1975	1973
Church or organized religion	66%	64%	62%	64%	65%	64%	68%	66%
Military	61	58	53	50	54	57	58	NA
U.S. Supreme Court	56	51	42	46	45	46	49	44
Banks and banking	51	51	51	46	60	NA	NA	NA
Public Schools	48	47	39	42	53	54	NA	58
Congress	39	29	28	29	34	40	40	42
Newspapers	35	34	38	35	51	NA	NA	39
Big business	31	29	28	20	32	33	34	26
Television	29	26	25	25	38	NA	NA	37
Organized labor	28	30	26	28	36	39	38	30

NA = Not asked.

SOURCE: Surveys for 1973 through 1983 and 1985 were conducted by the Gallup Organization. The 1984 survey was conducted by the Gallup Organization for Newsweek.

Table 4

"(If any religious preference) Would you say you go to church regularly, often, seldom, or never? (1952-1968) Would you say you go to (church/synagogue) every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never? (1979-1984)"

	Regularly/ Every Week/ Almost Every Week	Often/ Once or Twice a Month	Seldom/ a few Times a Year	Never
1952	38%	18%	36%	8%
1956	42	18	34	6
1960	44	18	33	5
1964	45	17	31	7
1968	38	15	36	11
1972	39	12	34	15
1976	40	15	31	14
1980	40	13	32	16
1984	39	15	31	15

SOURCE: Surveys by the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies; latest survey 1984.

Table 5

"Did you, yourself, happen to attend (church/church or synagogue) in the last seven days?"

	National	Protestant	Catholic
1958	49%	44%	74%
1961	47	43	71
1964	45	38	71
1967	43	39	66
1970	42	38	60
1973	40	37	55
1976	42	40	55
1978	41	40	52
1980	40	39	53
1981	41	40	53
1982	40	41	51
1983	40	39	52
1984	40	39	51
1985 (1 study)	39	38	51

Note: Data for 1958-1984 represent averages of several surveys.

SOURCE: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, in the years indicated.

Table 6

Frequency of Church Attendance,

1972-1985

"How often do you attend religious services?"

	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1980	1982	1983	1984	1985
Never	9%	14%	12%	15%	13%	14%	16%	11%	14%	14%	13%	15%
Less than once a year	9	8	7	7	9	8	9	8	7	8	7	7
About once or twice a year	11	13	15	12	14	13	13	16	15	13	12	15
Several times a year	14	15	13	14	16	13	12	15	14	12	14	12
About once a month	7	6	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	8	7
2-3 times a month	9	8	9	9	7	9	10	8	8	10	8	7
Nearly every week	6	8	6	7	6	6	7	6	6	5	5	4
Every week	29	21	23	23	20	22	20	22	20	23	24	25
Several times a week	6	8	8	7	9	8	8	8	8	9	9	8

SOURCE: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center, Unversity of Chicago, in the years indicated.

Table 7

"How important would you say religion is in your own life--very important, fairly important, or not very important?"

	Very	Fairly	Not Very
1952	75%	20%	5%
1965	71	22	7
1978	53	33	14
1980	56	31	13
1981	55	28	16
1982	57	30	13
1983	57	30	13
1984	57	30	13
1985	56	31	13

Note: "Don't know" responses calculated out. The "don't know" response was 2% or less in each year.

SOURCE: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, in the years indicated.

Table 8

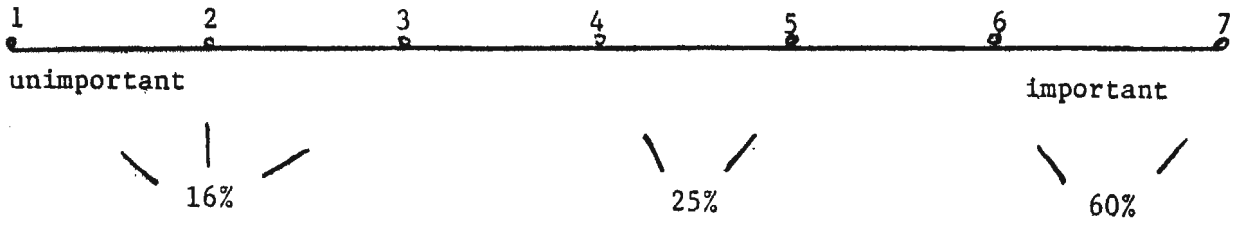
"At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?"

	Increasing	Same (vol.)	Losing	No Opinion
1957	69%	10%	14%	7%
1962	45	17	31	7
1967	23	14	57	6
1970	14	7	75	4
1974	31	8	56	5
1976	44	8	45	3
1978	37	10	48	5
1980	35	11	46	8
1981	38	10	46	6
1982	41	9	45	5
1984	42	14	39	6
1985	48	10	39	3

SOURCE: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, in the years indicated.

Table 9

"We would like to know how important each of these aspects of life is <u>for you</u>...religion and church."



SOURCE: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, February - April, 1982.

Table 10

(In a series of questions asking attributes a president must have....)

"What about a candidate who...does not believe in God? Would you personally not vote for him for president even if you really liked him and you shared his political views? Would you say definitely not, probably not or you might?"

Definitely not	56%
Probably not	15
Maybe	27
Don't know	2

"Do you agree or disagree...The real problem with Communism is that it threatens our religious and moral values."

Agree	73%
Disagree	23
Not sure/No answer	4

SOURCE: Time/Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, December 6-8, 1983.

Table 11

"About how often do you pray?"

	Combined 1984/1985
Several times a day	28%
Once a day	30
Several times a week	13
Once a week	7
Less than once a week	20
Never	1

"How close do you feel to God most of the time?"

	Combined 1984/1985
Extremely close	32%
Somewhat close	52
Not very close	10
Not close at all	5
Does not believe in God	1

SOURCE: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center University of Chicago, combined 1984 and 1985.

Table 12

"Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?"

	Combined 1984/1985
a. The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word	38%
b. The Bible is the inspired world of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word	49%
c. The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men	14%

"Here are four statements about the Bible, and I'd like you to tell me which is closest to your own view."

	Combined 1984/1985
a. The Bible is God's Word and all it says is true	46%
b. The Bible was written by men inspired by God, but it contains some human errors	48%
c. The Bible is a good book because it was written by wise men, but God had nothing to do with it	5%
d. The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is worth very little today	2

SOURCE: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, 1984 and 1985 surveys combined.

Table 13

"There are many different ways of picturing God. We'd like to know the kinds of images you are most likely to associate with God." (Here is a card with sets of contrasting images. On a scale of 1-7 where would you place your image of God between the two contrasting images?)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Mother	3%	1%	2%	26%	10%	9%	49%	Father
Master	51	10	9	19	4	2	5	Spouse
Judge	40	9	8	24	5	3	10	Lover
Friend	30	8	5	28	6	4	19	King
Creator	31	5	4	46	3	3	8	Healer
Redeemer	38	8	6	38	3	2	6	Liberator

SOURCE: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, data combined from 1984 and 1985.

Table 14

"Do you believe there is a life after death?"

	Yes	No	Undecided
NATIONAL	68%	24%	8%

"Of course no one knows exactly what life after death would be like but here are some ideas people have had." How likely do you feel each possibility is?"

(Percentage saying very likely or somewhat likely.)

	All Respondents	College-educated people, 18-29 years of age
Union with God	76%	84%
A life of peace and tranquility	74	83
Reunion with loved ones	73	82
A place of loving intellectual communion	70	80
A spiritual life, involving our mind but not our body	61	67
A paradise of pleasure and delights	52	55
A life like the one here on earth only better	47	49
A life without many things which make our present life enjoyable	38	40
A life of intense action	31	40
A pale, shadowy form of life, hardly life at all	15	12

SOURCE: General Social Surveys, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, data combined for 1983 and 1984.

Table 15

"What sort of things, if any, do you do to nourish or strengthen your faith?"

Pray alone	59%
Help others	51
Attend religious services	44
Read the Bible	39
Listen to sermons or lectures	36
Meditation	32
Take walks, commune with nature	31
Receive Holy Communion	29
Watch religious TV programs	21
Read religious books other than Bible	21
Prayer in a group	19
Seek out fellow Christians	17
Pray with others for spiritual healing	14
Read religious magazines	13
Read Bible in a group	12
Evangelize, encourage others to accept Jesus	11
Spiritual counseling	8
None of the above	6

***

Percent saying that in the past 12 months they had:

Donated money to a charitable cause	67%
Gave money to a religious organization	60
Donated time to helping poor/disadvantaged/needy	34
Donated time to religious work	28

SOURCE: The Gallup report, "Religion In America", 1984.

Table 16

Confidence in Church or Organized Religion

	Great Deal	Quite a Lot	Some	None/ Very Little	No Opinion
National	42	24	21	12	1
Men	36	27	22	14	1
Women	48	21	20	11	*
18-29 years	39	26	24	12	*
30-49 years	38	25	23	14	1
50 & older	50	21	18	10	1
College graduates	36	25	22	17	1
College incomplete	39	21	27	11	1
High school graduates	41	26	20	12	1
Not H.S. graduates	51	21	18	10	1
East	32	24	28	14	1
Midwest	45	26	20	9	1
South	51	24	14	10	1
West	38	21	24	16	*
Whites	42	23	22	12	1
Non-whites	45	27	18	9	1

*Less than one percent.

SOURCE: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 17-20, 1985.

Table 17

"How often do you attend religious services?"

	Never	1-2 times a year or less	Several times a year	1-3 times a month	Every/ Nearly Week	Several times a week
NATIONAL	14%	21%	13%	15%	29%	9%
By Age:						
18-24 years	12	28	14	21	20	5
25-39 years	15	23	14	16	24	7
40-54 years	14	21	14	15	28	8
55-64 years	12	15	9	14	38	12
65 & older	12	14	13	12	37	11
By Education:						
Less than H.S.	17	21	12	14	27	10
H.S. Grad	12	22	13	15	29	9
Some College	14	20	15	14	30	8
College Grad/ Post	13	19	13	20	29	7
By Age & Ed:						
Persons 34 years and younger						
Less than H.S.	21	32	14	14	13	6
H.S. Grad	14	27	16	16	20	7
College Grad	11	23	14	20	25	6
35-59 years						
Less than H.S.	18	18	13	16	24	11
H.S. Grad	11	22	11	16	30	10
College Grad	15	17	14	14	32	7
60 years & older						
Less than H.S.	13	17	11	13	36	10
H.S. Grad	10	14	12	12	43	10
College Grad	13	12	11	14	38	13

SOURCE: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, data combined from 1984 and 1985.

Table 18

"About how often do you pray?"

	Several times a Day	Once a Day	Several Times a Week	Once a Week	Less Than Once a Week	Never
NATIONAL	28%	30%	13%	7%	20%	1%
By Age:						
18-24 years	12	29	18	9	31	1
25-39 years	19	29	16	9	25	1
40-54 years	28	28	14	7	22	2
55-64 years	39	36	10	5	11	1
65 & older	46	32	6	5	10	1
By Education:						
Less than H.S.	35	31	9	6	18	1
H.S. Grad	28	32	13	7	19	1
Some College	24	29	16	8	22	1
College Grad/ Post	20	28	16	8	25	3
By Age & Ed:						
Persons 34 years and younger						
Less than H.S.	15	23	17	8	37	2
H.S. Grad	15	31	17	11	25	1
College Grad	17	29	17	10	26	1
35-59 years						
Less than H.S.	35	30	9	7	17	2
H.S. Grad	31	33	12	5	19	1
College Grad	22	27	17	7	24	3
60 years & older						
Less than H.S.	46	35	4	5	10	*
H.S. Grad	47	31	10	6	6	1
College Grad	37	32	13	4	13	2

* = less than .5%.

SOURCE: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, data combined from 1984 and 1985.

Table 19

"Do you believe there is a life after death?"

	Yes	No
NATIONAL	76%	25%
By Age:		
18-24 years	76	24
25-39 years	79	21
40-54 years	74	26
55-64	76	24
65 & over	74	26
By Education:		
Less than H.S.	71	29
H.S. Grad	79	21
Some College	79	21
College Grad/Post	76	24
By Age & Ed:		
Persons 34 years and younger		
Less than H.S.	72	28
H.S. Grad	77	23
College Grad	84	16
35-59 years		
Less than H.S.	68	32
H.S. Grad	82	18
College Grad	72	28
60 years & older		
Less than H.S.	74	26
H.S. Grad	79	21
College Grad	66	34

SOURCE: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, combined 1983 and 1984.

Table 20

"How close do you feel to God most of the time? Would you say extremely close, somewhat close, not very close, or not close at all?"

	Extremely Close	Somewhat Close	Not Very Close	Not Close At All	Does Not Believe
NATIONAL	32%	52%	10%	5%	1%
By Age:					
18-24 years	20	60	13	6	1
25-39 years	24	58	12	5	1
40-54 years	31	50	12	7	1
55-64 years	45	45	6	3	1
65 & over	47	44	6	2	1
By Education:					
Less than H.S.	42	45	8	5	1
H.S. Grad	31	56	10	4	1
Some College	30	53	11	4	1
College Grad/ Post	21	57	13	8	2
By Age & Ed:					
Persons 34 years and younger					
Less than H.S.	22	56	14	8	1
H.S. Grad	21	63	11	4	1
College Grad	23	59	12	4	1
35-59 years					
Less than H.S.	41	46	8	5	*
H.S. Grad	33	52	9	5	1
College Grad	26	51	14	8	2
60 years & older					
Less than H.S.	52	39	5	3	1
H.S. Grad	44	48	7	1	0
College Grad	34	53	8	4	1

* = Less than .5%.

SOURCE: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, data combined from 1984 and 1985.

Table 21

"Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?...The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word; the Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word; the Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, hisotry and moral perceptions recorded by men."

	Actual Word of God	Inspired Word of God	Ancient Book of Fables
1978 National	39%	49%	12%
1981 National	41	47	12
1983 National	40	47	12
1984 National	39	48	12
By Age:			
18-24 years	33	52	15
25-29 years	37	49	14
30-34 years	29	54	17
35-44 years	36	53	12
45-59 years	42	45	13
60 and over	51	42	7
By Education:			
Less than H.S. Grad	66	29	5
H.S. Grad	41	48	11
Some College/Grad	23	60	18

SOURCE: Surveys by the Princeton Religion Research Center and the Gallup Organization for the Religious Coalition, April 14-17, April 28-May 1, 1978; and the Gallup organization, December 11-14, 1981, May 13-16, 1983, and September 28-October 1, 1984.

Table 22

"Would you say that you have been born again, or have had a born again experience--that is, a religious experience which has been a turning point in your life?"

	Registered Voters	
	Yes	No
National	37%	63%
By Age:		
18-24 yrs. old	32	68
25-29 yrs. old	37	63
30-34 yrs. old	28	72
35-39 yrs. old	41	59
40-49 yrs. old	34	66
50-64 yrs. old	45	55
65 yrs. and over	36	64
By Education:		
Less than H.S. Grad	54	46
H. S. Grad	39	61
Some College/Grad	29	71

Note: Sample = 1,013 registered voters.

SOURCE: Survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, July 23-25, 1985.

Table 23

"...how would you describe your feelings about...the way moral standards have been changing in America."

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't Know
NATIONAL	22%	74%	4%
By Age:			
18-24 years	36	57	7
25-29 years	34	63	3
30-34 years	27	70	3
35-44 years	17	80	3
45-59 years	18	79	2
60 and over	10	85	5
By Education:			
Less than H.S. Grad	17	77	6
H.S. Grad	21	75	4
Some College/Grad	27	70	2

Note: Satisfied = Extremely Satisfied and Fairly Satisfied; Dissatisfied = Somewhat dissatisfied and Very dissatisfied.

SOURCE: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 13-16, 1983.

Table 24

"...how would you describe your feelings about...the religious or spiritual climate in America?"

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't Know
NATIONAL	40%	51%	9%
By Age:			
18-24 years	49	43	8
25-29 years	49	46	5
30-34 years	37	56	7
35-44 years	35	62	3
45-59 years	41	50	9
60 and over	34	52	14
By Education:			
Less than H.S. Grad	38	49	14
H.S. Grad	42	51	7
Some College/Grad	40	54	6

Note: Satisfied = Extremely Satisfied and Fairly Satisfied; Dissatisfied = Somewhat Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied.

SOURCE: Survey by the Gallup Organization, May 13-16, 1983.

Table 25

Connecticut Mutual Surveys of the Beliefs and Values of Elites, Compared to the General Public

"Do you consider yourself a religious person?"

	Yes	No
General Public	74%	26%
Leaders	66	34
Religion	100	0
Business	80	20
Military	67	33
Voluntary Associations	64	36
News Media	64	36
Education	63	37
Government	57	43
Law and Justice	53	47
Science	50	50

"How frequently do you attend religious services?"

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
General Public	44%	38%	18%
Leaders	43	36	21
Religion	96	4	0
Military	48	38	14
Business	47	42	11
Voluntary Associations	38	42	20
Education	36	41	23
Law and Justice	34	42	24
News Media	33	40	27
Science	31	36	33
Government	28	47	25

"How frequently do you engage in prayer?"

	Frequently	Occasionaly	Never
General Public	57%	32%	11%
Leaders	48	32	20
Religion	95	4	1
Business	67	25	8
Voluntary Associations	46	32	22
Military	44	40	16
News Media	44	32	24
Education	40	33	27
Government	38	41	21
Law and Justice	33	41	26
Science	27	40	33

"How frequently do you feel that God loves you?"

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
General Public	73%	21%	6%
Leaders	54	23	23
Religion	96	2	2
Business	70	18	12
News Media	53	29	18
Voluntary Associations	53	20	27
Military	50	33	17
Government	48	26	26
Law and Justice	44	27	29
Education	40	28	32
Science	31	31	38

"Was there a specific time in your adult life when you made a personal commitment to Christ that changed your life?"

	Yes	No
General Public	47%	53%
Leaders	33	67
Religion	74	26
Business	37	63
Voluntary Associations	35	65
News Media	29	71
Military	25	75
Government	22	78
Law and Justice	21	79
Education	20	80
Science	18	82

SOURCE: Survey by Research and Forecasts for Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance, September 1 - November 15, 1980.

Table 26

Public Opinion on School Prayer

"What are views on the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools? Do you think it should be required in all public schools, not allowed in any public schools, or that it should be up to each state or local community to decide?"

Required	32%
Not Allowed	9%
Communities Decide	60%

SOURCE: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1974.

"Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit organized prayers in public schools?"

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
May 1982	68%	27%	5%
August 1982	65	29	6

SOURCE: Surveys by NBC News/Associated Press, latest that of August 9-10, 1982.

"Would you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit organized prayers to be said in the public schools?

Favor	66%
Oppose	29
No Opinion	5

SOURCE: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, September 13-18, 1982.

"(Suppose that on Election Day, November 2 (1982), you could vote on key issues as well as candidates. please tell me how you would vote on each of these propositions.)...I favor a constitutional amendment to permit prayer in the public schools; I oppose a constitutional amendment to permit prayers in the public schools."

Favor	73%
Oppose	27

SOURCE: Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 17-20, 1982.

"The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may require the reading of the Lord's Prayer or Bible verses in public schools. What are your views on this--do you approve or disapprove of the court ruling?"

	Approve	Disapprove
1974	32%	68%
1975	36	64
1977	34	66
1982	39	61
1983	41	59
1985	44	56

SOURCE: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, latest that of 1985.

"Do you favor or oppose allowing voluntary prayer in schools?"

	Registered Voters
Favor allowing voluntary prayer	79%
Oppose	15
Don't Know	5

Note: Sample size = 1,025 registered voters.

SOURCE: Survey by Penn & Schoen Associates for the Garth Analysis, June 24-28, 1983.

"Do you approve or disapprove of a constitutional amendment to permit voluntary prayers in public schools, or haven't you heard enough about that yet to say?"

Approve	74%
Disapprove	20%
Haven't heard enough to say	3%
Not sure	3%

SOURCE: Survey by the Los Angeles Times, June 26-30, 1983.

"(Do you favor or oppose each of the following)...Allowing prayer in schools."

	Registered Voters	
	9/83	9/84
Favor	67%	68%
Oppose	22	23
Don't Know	11	10

Note: Sample size = 1,016 registered voters in 1983.
Sample size = 1,023 registered voters in 1984.

SOURCE: Survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, latest that of September 11-13, 1984.

"Do you favor or oppose...A constitutional amendemtn permitting prayer in the classroom."

	Registered Voters
Favor	69%
Oppose	26
Not sure	5

Note: Sample size = 1,013 registered voters in 1985.

SOURCE: Survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, July 23-25, 1985.

"Do you favor or oppose...a constitutional amendment to allow daily prayers to be recited in school classrooms?"

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
February 1982 National	69%	28%	3%
April 1984 likely voters	67	29	4

Note: Sample size for February 1982 = 1,253 adults, for April 1984 = 1,270 likely voters.

SOURCE: Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of April 4-8, 1984.

"Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of prayers in public schools?"

	Registered Voters
Approve	77%
Disapprove	19
Not Sure	4

SOURCE: Survey by the Los Angeles Times, April 28-May 3, 1984.

Table 27

"Did your Clergyman Encourage You to Vote for Either Reagan or Mondale?"

(percentages answering yes)

	All Voters		Reagan Voters		Mondale Voters	
	Yes for Reagan	Yes for Mondale	Yes for R	Yes for M	Yes for R	Yes for M
Nationally	4%	4%	6%	1%	2%	8%
In the: East	3	4	4	1	2	8
South	4	5	5	1	2	12
Mid-West	5	3	6	1	2	7
West	5	3	7	1	1	6
In: West Virginia	5	5	7	2	3	9
North Carolina	5	7	8	2	1	15
Alabama	6	11	9	2	1	29
Texas	5	7	6	1	2	18
Mississippi	7	10	10	1	2	24
In: New Hampshire	3	1	3	1	2	3
Vermont	4	4	5	2	2	5
Massachusetts	4	3	5	1	2	5
In: Pennsylvania	5	4	5	1	6	8
New Jersey	5	4	6	2	3	8
New York	5	5	8	2	1	8
In: Michigan	5	5	5	2	3	11
Iowa	5	3	7	2	3	4
Illinois	5	4	7	1	2	9
Ohio	5	5	7	2	1	9
Minnesota	4	3	4	2	3	5
In: Oregon	4	5	7	3	1	8
California	4	4	6	1	1	8

SOURCE: Election Day polls taken by CBS News, November 6, 1984.

Table 28

Religious Make-up (Religion-raised) and Vote of the 1984 Presidential Electorate

	Reagan	Mondale
Mormons (2 percent of electorate)	85	15
Presbyterians (7 percent)	68	32
Lutherans (7 percent)	66	34
Methodists (13 percent)	65	35
ALL PROTESTANTS (62 percent)	61	39
Episcopalians (3 percent)	60	40
ROMAN CATHOLICS (28 percent)	59	41
ALL VOTERS	59	41
Baptists (22 percent)	51	49
ATHEISTS (1 percent)	34	66
JEWS (3 percent)	32	68
* * *		
Have had "a born-again experience--a turning point...when you committed yourself to Jesus Christ" (39 Percent)	63	37
Have not had a born-again experience (61 percent)	57	43

SOURCE: Election Day survey, Los Angeles Times, November 6, 1984.

Table 29

"Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if..."

Those responding in the affirmative

	Threat to Mother's Health	Pregnancy Caused By Rape	Threat of Defect in Baby	Can't Afford More Children	Single/ Does Not Want To Marry	Married/ Does Not Want More Children	Wants Abortion for any Reason
ALL RESPONDENTS	89%	81%	79%	45%	43%	42%	38%
By Age & Education:							
Persons 34 years and younger							
Less than H.S.	86	77	74	35	32	32	28
H.S. Grad	91	83	83	45	39	39	36
College Grad	93	86	84	56	54	53	51
35-59 years							
Less than H.S.	86	69	71	34	33	30	25
H.S. Grad	88	77	82	41	38	38	33
College Grad	94	85	83	57	57	57	51
60 years & older							
Less than H.S.	83	75	68	33	27	24	22
H.S. Grad	86	84	79	40	40	40	35
College Grad	91	88	87	48	50	43	40
By Political Ideology:							
Liberal	94	88	84	58	55	56	52
Moderate	91	82	82	45	40	40	37
Conservative	87	77	75	39	38	36	32
By Race:							
White	90	82	81	46	44	43	39
Black	84	73	67	38	33	34	30
By Religion:							
Protestant	90	81	79	43	40	39	36
Catholic	86	76	75	38	36	36	31
Jewish	100	96	95	86	86	81	71
None	96	93	91	74	71	71	67
By Frequency of Church Attend.:							
Never	95	91	90	65	64	61	56
1-2 times a year or less	96	90	89	57	54	53	51
Several times a year	95	90	89	56	51	51	44
1-3 times a month	93	85	87	47	44	45	38
Every/Nearly wk	84	71	69	30	29	27	24
Several times a week	64	51	44	11	11	10	11

SOURCE: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, data combined from 1984 and 1985.

Table 30

Public Opinion on Abortion

"Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution which would give Congress the authority to prohibit abortions?"

Favor	19%
Oppose	75
Not Sure	6

SOURCE: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, January 18-19, 1982.

"Do you personally believe that abortion is wrong? (If yes, ask) Do you think abortion should be illegal?"

Abortion is not wrong	44%
Abortion is wrong but should not be illegal	22
Abortion is wrong and should be illegal	27
Not sure	7

SOURCE: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, January 27-28, 1982.

"Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'The decision to have an abortion should be left to the woman and her physician.'"

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
January 1982	77%	20%	3%
August 1982	77	20	3

SOURCE: Surveys by NBC News/Associated Press, latest that of August 9-10, 1982.

"There is a proposal for a Constitutional Amendment which would give individual states the right to outlaw abortions state-wide. Do you favor or oppose such an amendment?"

	Registered Adults
Favor	47%
Oppose	46
No Opinion	7

Note: Registered adults = 70% of sample.

SOURCE: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, September 13-18, 1982.

"(Suppose that on Election Day, November 2 (1982), you could vote on key issues as well as candidates. Please tell me how you would vote on each of these propositions.) I favor a ban on federal financing of abortions, I oppose a ban on federal financing of abortions."

Favor	44%
Oppose	56%

SOURCE: Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 17-20, 1982.

"Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal under only certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances?"

	1983	1985
Legal (all)	23%	21%
Legal (certain)	58	55
Illegal (all)	16	21
No Opinion	3	3

SOURCE: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, June 24-27, 1983, and by Gallup for Newsweek, January 3-4, 1985.

"Do you favor or oppose a law eliminating all federal funds for abortions for poor women?"

	Registered Voters
Favor	35%
Oppose	58
Don't Know	6

Note: Sample size = 1,010 registered voters.

SOURCE: Survey by Penn & Schoen Associates for the Garth Analysis, August 26-30, 1983.

"Do you favor or oppose a consitutional amendment to prohibit almost all abortions?

	Registered Voters
Favor	36%
Oppose	57
Don't Know	7

Note: Sample size = 1,010 registered voters.

SOURCE: Survey by Penn & Schoen Associates for the Garth Analysis, August 26-30, 1983.

Should abortion be permitted under all circumstances, under some circumstances or under no circumstances?"

	Registered Voters
Under all circumstances	21%
Under some circumstances	67
Under no circumstances	10
Don't know	2

Note: Sample size = 1,010 registered voters.

SOURCE: Survey by Penn & Schoen Associates for the Garth Analysis, August 30, 1983.

"Do you favor or oppose...a constitutional amendment to ban (legalized) abortion?"

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
February 1982 National	33%	61%	6%
July 1982 National	31	62	7
April 1984 likely voters	34	59	7
January 1985 National	38	58	4

Note: Sample sizes for Feb., 1982 = 1,253 adults; for July, 1982 = 1,250 adults; for April, 1984 = 1,270 likely voters; for January 1985 = 1,254 adults.

SOURCE: Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of January 24-27, 1985.

"Mark an "X" if you approve of any of the following programs and leave it blank if you don't....A constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion."

	Voters As They Left Booths
Approve	23%
Disapprove	77%

Note: Sample size = 7,310 voters as they left booths.

SOURCE: Survey by the Los Angeles Times, November 6, 1984.

"Should abortion be legal? (Yes, as it is now; legal only in extreme circumstances; no.)"

	Voters As They Left Booths
Yes, as it is now	42%
Only in extreme circumstances	29%
No	25%
No Opinion	4%

Note: Sample size = 8,671 voters as they left booths. The Survey was not conducted in Washington, Hawaii, or Alaska.

SOURCE: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, November 6, 1984.

Jewish politics

AMERICAN JEWS AS VOTERS
The 1986 Elections

by David Singer

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If there is truth in the old saw that American Jews are just like all other Americans, only more so, it certainly does not hold when it comes to voting behavior. This, indeed, is an area in which one finds a clear and consistent pattern of Jewish exceptionalism -- exceptionalism in the direction of a firm Jewish commitment to liberal politics. The 1986 Congressional and gubernatorial elections provided American Jews with yet another opportunity to demonstrate that fact.

The discussion that follows focuses on Jewish voting behavior, but it is important to bear in mind that Jews influence the political process in other ways as well. There is, in the first place, what Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab refer to as Jewish "political hyperactivism" -- the disproportionate involvement of Jews in the political arena as expert professionals, volunteers and, in recent years, candidates for office. (As of January 1, 1987, there will be 8 Jewish Senators and 29 Jewish House members in the Congress.) Then there is the role played by representatives of Jewish organizations who approach government officials about a broad range of matters of concern to the Jewish community. Last but hardly least -- indeed, this is an area of growing importance -- there is the impact of Jewish political giving, i.e., campaign contributions, whether in the form of individual donations or money distributed by Jewish PACs (political action committees). While precise figures are not available, it is clear that Jews give very substantial sums to both Democratic and Republican candidates, especially favoring the former.

"The Jewish Vote"

While there is a great deal of easy talk in political circles about "the Jewish vote," it is important to recognize that Jewish voters are, in fact, a diverse lot. Differences of gender, social class, and religiosity find a reflection in how different groups of Jews behave at the polls. Thus, Jewish women tend to be more liberal than Jewish men; unprosperous Jews more Democratic than prosperous Jews; and Orthodox Jews more conservative than Reform Jews.

All other things being equal, it is true that Jews are likely to favor a Jewish candidate; but that equality rarely obtains. Thus, in

the 1982 gubernatorial election in New York, Jews strongly supported the Italian liberal Democrat Mario Cuomo over the (then) Jewish conservative Republican Lewis Lehrman. Nor are Jews a parochial lot when it comes to campaign issues. While they care deeply -- very deeply -- about the welfare of the State of Israel, they are also concerned about a candidate's stance on a broad range of matters. The Israel factor comes into play as a clearly dominant element only in those instances -- rare in American politics -- when a particular candidate is seen as actively hostile to the interest of the Jewish state. A case in point is Charles Percy of Illinois, who was spurned by Jewish voters in his reelection bid to the Senate in 1984 largely for this reason.

Jewish Political Liberalism

Are we to understand, then, that "the Jewish vote" is a chimera, a myth, with no referent at all in the real world? Hardly so. What that shorthand phrase properly denotes is the reality that Milton Himmelfarb, the American Jewish Committee's former director of Information and Research Services, and a contributing editor of Commentary, has underscored: "It is a consistent pattern over the years. Jewish voters, on average, behave in certain distinctive ways. They are more Democratic and more liberal than others with similar education and income." It was Himmelfarb, years back, who expressed the same point in an aphorism that has, by now, become famous: "Jews earn like Episcopalians, and vote like Puerto Ricans."

A variety of hypotheses -- some of them mutually exclusive -- have been put forward by students of politics to account for the pronounced political liberalism of American Jews. Our concern here, however, is not with the why of liberal Jewish politics, but rather with its extent and degree. Consider, then, what Professor Steven M. Cohen of the City University of New York has to say in his 1984 National Survey of American Jews, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.

From the introduction:

> Jews...continue to confound the logic of those who have anticipated a rightward shift in their politics. Recent exit polls and public-opinion surveys still report disproportionate Jewish support for liberal candidates and issues....Putting matters in perspective, the national political center has moved right over the last fifteen years, and Jews have moved accordingly, but the center of the Jewish political spectrum remains left of the national center.

From the body of the text:

> We asked respondents to describe their political orientation ("liberal," "conservative," etc.). As

> in other studies, we found that Jews thought of themselves as liberal (or radical or socialist) much more often than other Americans (36% in this study versus 24% in a recent nationwide survey) and as conservative (or very conservative) considerably less often (25% here versus 35% across the country). Thus while Americans generally are split between conservatives and moderates (or middle-of-the-roaders) with a small liberal minority, Jews see themselves as divided between moderates and liberals with conservatives comprising the smallest group.

From the conclusion:

> This study has demonstrated that relative to the national political center, Jews remain disproportionately liberal. Where comparisons with national survey data were possible, we found that Jews adopt what may be regarded as liberal positions more often, and conservative views less often, than other Americans. In instances where no strict comparisons were available, we still were able to discern a clear liberal tilt in virtually every issue area....

Political Party Preference

As a corollary of their political liberalism, American Jews tend to identify strongly with the Democratic party. In every presidential election since 1924, Jews voted Democratic by an average of some 25 percent more than the electorate as a whole. In the Reagan-Mondale race in 1984, between 67 and 70 percent of Jews cast their vote for Democrat Walter Mondale. As if this were not enough, California State University Professor Alan M. Fisher has shown that Jews exhibit even greater loyalty to the Democratic party in Congressional elections.

Over the past decade "neo-conservatism" has emerged as a significant political orientation among a small but highly articulate group of American Jewish intellectuals. That, plus the fact that Ronald Reagan secured an unprecedented 40-percent support among Jewish voters in the 1980 presidential election, led many observers to speculate that American Jews might be on the verge of "defecting" en masse to the Republican party. In the 1984 presidential contest, however -- and this was already foreshadowed in the 1982 election results -- Jews reverted to form: Reagan's support among Jews declined to 30-33 percent. At present, a 30-percent figure would appear to be the likely level of support for a Republican presidential candidate in the Jewish community.

Jewish Voting Power

Since Jews constitute less than 3 percent of the total American

population, and make up 1 percent or less of the voting population in most states, it may be wondered why politicians -- at least on the national level -- go out of their way to court Jewish voters. Part of the answer has to do with the fact that the ratio of Jews to voters is almost twice as high as the ratio of Jews to the population -- nearly 5 percent nationwide. As an article in The Economist in 1980 observed: "A campaign rule is to multiply the Jewish voting age population by three to get their true weight in a primary election and by two for a general election."

Another part of the answer is that Jews are concentrated in the large industrial states -- about a third of all American Jews live in New York and close to half in New York plus California -- which are crucial to any victory in the electoral college. And given the winner-take-all outcome in electoral contests, Jews -- who constitute 5 percent or more of voters in New York, New Jersey, Florida, Pennsylvania, California, and Illinois -- are not likely to suffer neglect at the hands of political candidates.

II

The 1986 Elections

How did Jews vote in the recently concluded 1986 Congressional and gubernatorial elections? Did they conform to the well-established pattern of political liberalism or depart from it in some significant way? Based on an analysis of how Jews voted in the Senatorial races in New York, California, Florida, Maryland and Pennsylvania, as well as the gubernatorial contests in New York and California -- races seen as providing significant clues to the current political orientation of American Jews -- one would have to conclude that the traditional pattern is still very much there, although with some interesting variations. Jews continue to provide very strong support for liberal and Democratic candidates, but also appear willing, under certain circumstances, to vote for moderate, and even conservative, Republicans.

Democrats vs. Republicans

The exit-poll data presented in Table 1 point up the basic contours of Jewish voting behavior in the 1986 elections. (All the figures cited below are from ABC News, unless otherwise indicated.) In all but one of the races -- that for Senator in Pennsylvania -- Jews voted by large majorities for the Democratic candidate. Alan Cranston in California, Barbara Mikulski in Maryland, and Mario Cuomo in New York each received more than 80 percent Jewish support. The lowest figure for any

Table 1

Jewish Vote and Total Vote in the 1986 Elections

(in percent)

State and Race	Source of Data: Jewish Vote ABC	Jewish Vote CBS	Jewish Vote NBC	Total Vote New York Times
California	(4%)	(6%)	(6%)	
Cranston (D)	85	78	78	51
Zschau (R)	15	18	22	49
Bradley (D)	63	63	55	38
Deukmejian (R)	37	32	45	62
Florida	(7%)	(7%)	(8%)	
Graham (D)	76	81	82	55
Hawkins (R)	24	19	18	45
Maryland	(5%)	(Insuf.	No	
Mikulski (D)	87	Jewish	poll	61
Chavez (R)	13	N)		39
New York	(11%)	(14%)	(15%)	
Green (D)	64	58	64	41
D'Amato (R)	34	40	34	58
Cuomo (D)	84	74	80	65
O'Rourke (R)	15	24	20	32
Pennsylvania	(4%)	(Insuf.	(Insuf.	
Edgar (D)	45	Jewish	Jewish	43
Specter (R)	55	N)	N)	57

Note. Figures in parentheses indicate the Jewish percent of the exit-poll sample, by network and by state.

Democratic candidate among Jewish voters was 45 percent for Bob Edgar of Pennsylvania.

All political commentators agree that the Democratic party made impressive gains among the general electorate, including control of the Senate, in the 1986 elections. Still, in two of the races where solid majorities of Jews favored the Democrat -- the gubernatorial contest in California and the senatorial race in New York -- substantial majorities of the general public voted for the Republican. Moreover, where both Jewish and general majorities supported the Democratic candidate, the Jewish majorities were much greater: 85 vs. 51 percent for Cranston; 76 vs. 55 percent for Bob Graham of Florida; 87 vs. 61 percent for Mikulski; and 84 vs. 65 percent for Cuomo.

In Pennsylvania, a majority of Jews -- 55 percent -- voted for Republican Arlen Specter. In New York, Republican Alfonse D'Amato increased his support among Jews to 34 percent in 1986, up from a minuscule 8 percent in 1980.

Nationwide, in contests for the House of Representatives, a New York Times/CBS News poll showed that Jews voted 70 percent Democrat and 30 percent Republican, in contrast to the general electorate which went 52 percent Democrat and 48 percent Republican. (The figures for Jews are identical to those that the same polling organization reported for the group in 1984.) A Wall Street Journal/NBC News exit poll came up with a somewhat smaller Republican percentage among Jews: 25 percent, as against 71 percent Democrat, with the remainder going to third-party candidates.

An ABC News exit poll that probed political self-identification of voters reported the following figures for Jews: Democrat -- 59 percent; Republican -- 17 percent; independent -- 22 percent.

Liberals vs. Conservatives

On the liberal-conservative continuum, Jewish voters, in most instances, showed a strong preference for liberal candidates. In Maryland, liberal Barbara Mikulski overwhelmed conservative Linda Chavez (87 vs. 13 percent); in California, liberal Alan Cranston trounced conservative Ed Zschau (85 vs. 15 percent); and in Florida, moderate Bob Graham scored easily over conservative Paula Hawkins (76 vs. 24 percent). New York governor Mario Cuomo, a leading light of contemporary American liberalism, received the support of 84 percent of Jewish voters, improving on his 63-percent showing in 1982.

The California gubernatorial race pitted Black Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, a liberal, against incumbent George Deukmejian, a conservative. Bradley had long enjoyed wide support among Jewish voters, but had been criticized in some Jewish circles for his handling of a September 1985 incident involving Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan. While the 63-percent Jewish majority for Bradley in 1986 was far smaller

than the 81 percent it had been in 1982, the proportion of Jews to general voters who went for Bradley actually increased.

In two Senatorial races in which moderate and conservative Republicans ran against avowedly liberal Democrats, there was a break from the general pattern of rock-solid Jewish liberal voting. In Pennsylvania, Arlen Specter, a moderate Republican -- who is Jewish -- gained 55 percent Jewish support, while his liberal opponent, Bob Edgar, received 45 percent. In New York, conservative Alfonse D'Amato made an impressive showing against liberal Mark Green. While Green was supported by 64 percent of Jewish voters, D'Amato was the beneficiary of a significant crossover vote, gaining 34 percent Jewish support. As indicated earlier, D'Amato was supported by only 8 percent of Jewish voters in 1980.

Observers agree that both Specter and D'Amato, as incumbents, were able to establish strong voting records on matters of concern to the Jewish community, particularly the welfare of the State of Israel and Soviet Jewry, and that this greatly aided them among Jewish voters in their 1986 races.

Jewish Subgroup Patterns

A precinct analysis of Jewish voting carried out by the New York City Jewish Community Relations Council shows that conservative Alfonse D'Amato did best in areas with high concentrations of Orthodox Jews.

A precinct analysis of Jewish voting conducted by the Los Angeles chapter of the American Jewish Committee indicates that liberal Democrats Alan Cranston and Tom Bradley garnered their greatest support in the working- and middle-class Fairfax area, and did less well in affluent Beverly Hills.

These patterns are fully consistent with Jewish voting behavior in the past.

Conclusion

An analysis of Jewish voting behavior in the 1986 Congressional and gubernatorial elections makes it clear that American Jews remain strongly oriented to liberal politics and the Democratic party. At the same time, American Jews appear willing, at least in some instances, to vote in substantial numbers for moderate and conservative Republicans if they are seen as supportive of basic Jewish concerns. Overall, Republicans appear to enjoy a 30-percent level of support in the Jewish community at present. Jewish voters, then, represent an important constituency for both the Democratic and the Republican parties.

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