

*Jewish  
Political  
Studies*

**The  
Dimensions  
of American Jewish  
Liberalism**

Steven M. Cohen



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven M. Cohen is professor of sociology at Queens College of the City University of New York. His most recent books are *American Assimilation or Jewish Revival* (1988) and, with Samuel Heilman, *Cosmopolitans and Parochials: Modern Orthodox Jews in America* (1989).

## FOREWORD

Whatever the truth of the old saw about American Jews being just like other Americans only more so, it certainly does not apply in the political sphere, where a distinctive Jewish pattern is evident. Scholars such as Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab have pointed to the "political hyperactivism" of American Jews, their disproportionate involvement in the political process as expert professionals, volunteers, and, in recent years, candidates for office. Moreover, Jewish voters show a remarkable propensity for liberal politics, a propensity that cannot be predicted on the basis of their relatively high socioeconomic status. In addition, the organized Jewish community expends enormous effort and energy in advancing favored political causes, such as support for Israel and aid to Soviet Jewry.

The existing scholarly literature on the political life of American Jews has certain limitations. In the first place, a good part of the material is dated and needs to be made current. Second -- and more important -- there are not enough studies with analytic depth, exploring not only the "whats" of Jewish political behavior but also the "whys." Why, for example, do American Jews cling tenaciously to political liberalism even as the country as a whole moves in a more conservative direction? Why do Jewish organizations pursue an activist political agenda in relation to Congress and the White House? More generally, why do American Jews gravitate to politics as a sphere of activity?

To suggest answers to these and other important questions about the role that American Jews play in the political life of the nation, the American Jewish Committee has initiated the Jewish Political Studies series. The second publication in the series is Steven M. Cohen's *The Dimensions of American Jewish Liberalism*. Copies of the questionnaires on which Professor Cohen's study is based are available from the Department of Information and Research Services of the American Jewish Committee.

David Singer, *Director*  
*Information and Research Services*

## THE DIMENSIONS OF AMERICAN JEWISH LIBERALISM

### INTRODUCTION: JEWS AS LIBERALS

American Jews are political liberals. While as a group their political attitudes range over the entire ideological spectrum from left to right, the American Jewish political center is situated to the left of that of the larger society. Although not all Jews are liberals, proportionately more Jews are liberal than other Americans, and fewer are conservative.

American Jews' reputation for liberal politics derives from the actions of both Jewish political elites and the rank and file. Over the years, Jews have been prominent activists, technicians, financial contributors, and intellectuals in several left-of-center political movements, such as the civil rights movement, the feminist movement, the antiwar and antinuclear movements. And not least significant, Jews are said to contribute upwards of half the money donated to the Democratic party's presidential campaigns.

The Jewish public has earned its reputation for liberalism by voting Democratic far more often than other whites. In 1980, the defection of Jews from the Democratic candidate, Jimmy Carter, led some observers to suggest that the long-expected Jewish shift to the political right had begun. While Carter still obtained a plurality of Jewish votes, he attracted the lowest proportion of Jewish votes of any Democratic candidate in recent memory. But in numerous national, state, and local elections since then, Jewish voters have maintained their allegiance to Democratic or liberal candidates. In 1984, when the American electorate produced a "landslide" of 59 to 41 percent for Ronald Reagan over Walter Mondale, Jews generated an even more lopsided vote for Mondale, roughly 68 to 32 percent. The only other population groups to vote as heavily Democratic in 1984 were the blacks, the poor, and the unemployed. Moreover, most Jews thought it appropriate to vote Democratic even if the outcome was not entirely in their own interest. After the election, in a 1985 survey, over two-thirds (69 percent) of a national

Jewish sample agreed with the proposition, "Even if Jews were sure Mondale would lose heavily, and that voting for him would hurt their political influence, it was still right for them to have voted for Mondale." In 1988, the disproportionate Jewish vote for the Democratic presidential candidate emerged yet again, as about 46 percent of the country (and even fewer white non-Jews) voted for Dukakis compared to roughly 68 percent of the Jewish voters.

All of this is not to deny that elements of political conservatism among American Jews abound. Their most visible expressions are among the Orthodox minority, wealthy pro-Republican Jewish activists, and certain intellectuals, notably many of those who write for *Commentary* magazine. Notwithstanding these conservatives, it is still fair to say that political liberalism has been part and parcel of what being Jewish means for many American Jews. The identification of liberal political inclinations with the essence of Judaism goes back decades. In a study of a suburban Chicago community in the late 1950s, sociologist Marshall Sklare asked third-generation American Jews what it meant to be a "good Jew." Two-thirds thought it "essential," and almost all the rest "desirable," to "support all humanitarian causes" and to "promote civic betterment and improvement in the community." Helping the "underprivileged improve their lot" was rated almost as high. And almost two-thirds thought it at least "desirable" for a Jew to "be a liberal on political and economic issues" to "be a good Jew."

Over 30 years later, a nationwide survey of American Jews by the *Los Angeles Times* substantiated the view that liberalism (or a variant thereof) is central to American Jews' understanding of their Judaism. Interviewers asked, "As a Jew, which of the following qualities do you consider most important to your Jewish identity: a commitment to social equality, or religious observance, or support for Israel, or what?" Half answered "social equality." The rest were equally divided between the other options. As one might expect, denominational traditionalism was inversely associated with the liberal response. The proportions choosing "equality" amounted to only 18 percent for the Orthodox, but 44 percent for the Conservatives, 65 percent for the Reform respondents, and 63 percent for the nondenominational. Clearly, at least for non-Orthodox American Jews, liberalism is not merely a characteristic, but a major component of their understanding of what it means to be a Jew.

Interestingly, both politically liberal and politically conservative Jewish leaders and thinkers acknowledge this phenomenon. For the liberals, the identification of Judaism with liberalism is a matter of pride, signifying the nobility of Jewish political sentiments. For the conservatives, it is a cause for frustration, signifying the wrongheaded stubbornness of most American Jews, their failure to appreciate where their friends and adversaries may be found today. But for both camps, the consonance of liberal inclinations with the group identity of American Jews is an accepted reality.

For some time, conservative thinkers and political activists have argued

that Jews had good reason to shift their partisan allegiance from Democratic to Republican, and their political philosophy from liberal to conservative. They have put forward a number of reasons for such a change.

First, they point out, Jewish fondness for the left was born and nurtured in 19th-century Europe and pre-1960s America where the left was perceived (rightly or not) to favor Jewish interests, while the right seemed to oppose those interests. Today, the argument goes, the conservative camp seems as friendly as, if not more friendly than, liberals to Jews' positions on Israel, affirmative action, Soviet Jewry, and other matters of vital concern to American Jews.

Also, liberalism's economic program is oriented primarily toward the poor. When American Jews were struggling to establish themselves economically, liberal politics made sense. But now, say the conservatives, Jews have attained a position of unparalleled affluence, and ought to adopt a more conservative stance on taxes and social spending, favoring limits on both.

Finally, for more than two decades black-Jewish relations have undergone serious strains. In the 1960s, blacks expelled Jews and other whites from leadership positions in the civil rights movement. In the late 1960s, urban tensions pitted Jews and blacks against one another in several communities. In the 1970s, black and Jewish organizations were often on opposite sides over certain affirmative action procedures. And, in the 1980s, the nation's most prominent black leader, Jesse Jackson, appeared to most Jews to be anti-Semitic and to endorse positions hostile to Israel. For all these reasons, it would be logical for Jews to abandon their sympathy for the black political agenda, and perhaps even for the Democrats and the liberal camp generally, where blacks play an increasingly prominent role.

But notwithstanding the affluence of American Jews, their concern for Israel and Soviet Jewry, and their alienation from blacks, the available evidence (this study included) documents the persistence of American Jewish liberalism. Aside from the electoral evidence cited above, a series of national public opinion surveys I have conducted (largely under American Jewish Committee sponsorship) has documented the tendency for Jews to identify as Democrats and as liberals far more often than other Americans. These studies compared the stated preferences of Jewish respondents on selected questions with those produced by the major contemporaneous national surveys. In addition to party and political identification, there were pronounced differences between Jews and others on church-state questions -- where Jews overwhelmingly favor strict separation -- the Equal Rights Amendment, and other issues.

However, drawing inferences from comparisons of surveys of Jews with published national studies has its limitations. Sometimes even slight changes in the wording of questions can result in different distributions of responses, as can variations in sampling or interviewing procedures. Without completely comparable data, collected in the same way at the same time, it is impossible to compare the attitudes of American Jews with those of American non-Jews

with any degree of precision or accuracy. Nor can surveys which focus on Jews alone provide much insight into the processes whereby Jews come to hold their political attitudes. Only in direct comparison with others can we trace the relative importance of education, income, parents' politics, religiosity, and other major influences on Jews' political attitudes.

To fill this gap in our collective understanding, the AJC commissioned two parallel surveys, one of American Jews and the other of non-Jews. Both surveys were conducted at the same time, April 1988, used similar sampling procedures, and asked many of the same questions. These features enabled the analysis to address three overarching questions:

(1) Where did the Jews stand politically in 1988? Many things had happened since the last in-depth study of American Jewish political attitudes conducted in 1984, including dramatic events in the United States and around the world, changes on the American political scene, the aging of the Jewish population and the maturation of a new cohort of younger adults, and the emergence of new forms of Jewish identity. These and other forces at least raised the possibility that American Jewish political attitudes had changed.

(2) To what extent, and in what ways, do Jews' political attitudes differ from those of other Americans? Are they consistently more liberal than Americans on all issues, or is their liberalism selective and limited to certain concerns and measures? Liberalism embraces a wide collection of issues, causes and behaviors. Party affiliation, social welfare spending, "reproductive rights," civil liberties, the role of minorities, foreign affairs and defense are but the most prominent. Does the size and nature of the Jewish/non-Jewish difference vary depending on which issue we examine?

(3) Knowing where and to what extent American Jews' political views are distinctive immediately raises the next question: Why are they different from those of other Americans? How do we explain the apparent contradiction between their relatively high incomes and their liberal political inclinations? To what extent do Jewish values and group interests, as Jews understand them, influence their political ideas? These questions demand an examination of the processes by which American Jews come to adopt their political attitudes, and these processes can be illuminated by comparing Jews with others. Owing to the sharp social and political differences between blacks and whites, as well as to the special relationship between blacks and Jews, most of the analysis also distinguishes between black and white non-Jews.

### *Methodology*

In April 1988, the Washington office of Market Facts, Inc., a national survey research company, sent an eight-page mail-back questionnaire to 1,700 self-identified Jewish members of the company's Consumer Mail Panel. In all, 1,252 respondents returned usable questionnaires, many after receiving reminder postcards. At the same time, the company also sent 1,700 questionnaires to non-Jewish members of the Panel. At our request, Market

Facts oversampled blacks to assure an adequate number of black respondents for reliable analysis. Of the 1,300 questionnaires sent to whites (or, more precisely, "nonblacks"), 959 were returned; of the 400 questionnaires sent to blacks, 262 were returned.

The Consumer Mail Panel is constructed to permit the extraction of a demographically representative sample balanced on five critical characteristics as reported by the U.S. census: age, household size, income, region, and size of city or town. The high rates of return (76 percent for the Jews; 74 percent for the white non-Jews; and 66 percent for the blacks) are not altogether atypical for the Panel, which consists of over 200,000 individuals nationwide who have agreed to participate in mail-back surveys on a variety of issues. In fact, the response rates here are higher than in most surveys of the Panel members, possibly because respondents found questions on political issues more interesting and important than those on consumer behavior.

At the time they join the Panel, and about every two years thereafter, Consumer Mail Panel members fill out screening questionnaires where they provide basic demographic information about themselves and their families. Thus it was possible to reach those who identify themselves or their husbands as Jews or non-Jews (in married couples, the wife is the official Panel member). Weighting procedures were used to correct for under- or overrepresentation of various population segments. Male and female respondents were similarly weighted so as to reflect their true proportions in the population. Whenever white and black respondents were combined to form a total sample of non-Jews, the two groups were weighted so as to correct for the oversampling of blacks. As had been anticipated on the basis of previous experience, the sample contained about half as many Orthodox respondents as local Jewish population studies have reported. To compensate, the weighting procedures roughly doubled the representation of the Orthodox.

As is demonstrated in an appendix to this report, the fully weighted Jewish sample has demographic and Jewish-identity characteristics that resemble those found in a number of local Jewish community studies that use far more expensive and more reliable sampling techniques (primarily Random Digit Dialing). The characteristics for this sample also resemble those found in the April 1988 *Los Angeles Times* survey of American Jews, which used a merged sample of Jewish respondents located over several years of nationwide random telephone sampling.

While this report focuses primarily on the data collected in the 1988 study, for comparison purposes it also draws on other national studies of American Jews conducted between 1981 and 1986. Of particular usefulness is the 1984 study, which also focused on Jewish political and social attitudes.

The vast majority of questions on American political issues were asked in identical fashion of both Jews and non-Jews. Several of the questions were asked in the previous surveys of American Jews; others were taken from national public opinion surveys recently conducted by major polling organizations; and the remainder were designed specifically for this survey.

## 1. POLITICAL IDENTITY

### *Liberalism, the Democratic Party, Ronald Reagan*

The survey questions on political philosophy, partisan affiliation, and approval of the Reagan presidency are particularly appropriate starting points since they are barometers of broader political inclinations. Moreover, responses to the three questions were similar, indicating that to some extent they tapped a core underlying attitude: Democrats tended to be more liberal and more disapproving of Reagan, while Republicans more often saw themselves as conservative and expressed approval of the most conservative president in recent history.

We asked respondents which of five labels ranging from "very liberal" to "very conservative" best described their "usual stand on political issues" (table 1.1). While more than twice as many non-Jewish whites identified as conservative than as liberal, Jewish liberals outnumbered Jewish conservatives 33 percent to 21 percent. At the same time, almost half the Jews and almost half the other whites chose the "middle-of-the-road" response, making centrism the most frequently selected single answer. Other evidence of the respondents' centrism is found in the small number who chose the extreme answers of "very liberal" or "very conservative."

Based on this single question, then, Jews tended to characterize themselves as to the left of center, while white gentiles tended to see themselves as right of center. Among Jews, liberals outnumbered conservatives by 12 percentage points; among non-Jewish whites, conservatives exceeded liberals by 19 percentage points. Blacks, meanwhile, were somewhat more likely than Jews to identify as liberals and just as likely to see themselves as conservatives.

Over the course of several surveys of Jews since 1981, the balance between liberals and conservatives has held remarkably steady. Though differences in sampling and weighting make it difficult to draw inferences with any degree of precision, the surveys point to no major trend in either the liberal or conservative direction over the last eight years.

Further support for the finding that Jews identify more with the left than with the right can be found in the results for party identification. As in other recently conducted national surveys, the non-Jewish whites split evenly between Republicans and Democrats. But among Jews, Democrats outnumbered Republicans by four to one. This is consistent with the surveys of American Jews taken since 1981. Over the years, Democrats have accounted for roughly 60 percent of the Jewish respondents; Republicans have comprised roughly 15 percent; and about a quarter have called themselves independents.

As one might expect, blacks are even more overwhelmingly Democratic than Jews. In recent decades, blacks have strongly identified with the

Democratic party. Moreover, the candidacy of Jesse Jackson could only have served to strengthen that historic association.

More than other presidents, Ronald Reagan has been identified in the public's mind with the conservative movement. Hence, approval or disapproval of his performance is more than a judgment of his persona, but constitutes another useful indicator of overall political inclinations. Here, the results for the three survey groups approximated their respective partisan distributions. White non-Jews were almost evenly split, with those approving "of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as president" slightly exceeding the number who disapproved. Among Jews, only a quarter approved and more than twice as many (60 percent) disapproved. Seventy-six percent of the blacks -- even more than the Jews -- expressed disapproval of the conservative president.

The three questions on political philosophy, partisanship, and approval of Reagan displayed strikingly similar patterns. Insofar as we can speak of a conservative/liberal spectrum, on all three questions the non-Jewish whites leaned toward the conservative pole; Jews leaned toward the liberal pole; and blacks were situated even more decisively on the liberal side.

#### *Presidential Election, 1988*

For several reasons, pre-election surveys of voter intentions are notoriously bad predictors of actual electoral choice. As the frequent polls during election season clearly document, voter preference is highly volatile, and this was especially true in 1988. Swings of 10 or more percentage points within a week's time, especially in the months right before the elections, were not at all uncommon. Moreover, the kind of precision demanded of electoral predictions is usually far more severe than that commonly required of public opinion questions. A five-point error in predicting electoral results is ordinarily very consequential; the same sort of error in reporting a public opinion issue (such as opposition to abolishing the death penalty) normally has little impact on the substantive conclusion (that a vast majority support continuing the death penalty).

The presidential-preference results reported for April 1988 (table 1.2), then, did not predict final voter behavior in November. Rather, they are useful in understanding some of the more fundamental values and attitudes that motivate Jews, non-Jewish whites, and blacks.

By April 1988, when our questionnaire was in the hands of the respondents, George Bush had already clinched the Republican nomination for president, while Michael Dukakis was well on his way to doing the same on the Democratic side. Jesse Jackson remained his last viable opponent, but it was the April primaries that dashed any hopes for a serious Jackson challenge. Our production schedule demanded that the questionnaire be written in final form in early March, well before many important primaries. To avoid the appearance of prejudging the final outcome of the nominating

process -- and being genuinely unsure about that outcome -- we formulated three questions on presidential preference in terms of parties, without referring to specific individuals. At the time, some political commentators were speculating that Pat Robertson and/or Jesse Jackson might be selected to run for vice president. To avoid confusion, we constructed the following question: "Assume that neither Jesse Jackson nor Pat Robertson is on the major party tickets. Which of the major parties will you probably vote for in the 1988 presidential election?"

Among non-Jewish whites, 29 percent were undecided or said they would not vote. The remainder gave a slight edge to the Republicans over the Democrats. Among Jews, though, of those with a stated preference, Democratic-leaning voters swamped their Republican counterparts by more than three to one, 58 to 16 percent. Among blacks, as one might expect, hardly any chose the Republicans and the vast majority preferred the Democrats.

For Jews, and for many other Americans as well, the candidacies of Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson were very disturbing. To many, these candidacies represented an unwarranted intrusion of religious leaders into the political realm. Some voters thought that either or both candidates espoused politically extreme and objectionable views.

Many Jews believed they had additional reasons as Jews to oppose both Jackson and Robertson. Each candidate, in his own way, seemed to be insensitive to critical American Jewish concerns, if not outright anti-Semitic. Jews recalled Jackson's reference to New York as "Hymietown" in 1984, and many found his advocacy of Palestinian national rights a grave threat to Israel's security. Robertson, for his part, advocated a moralistic, conformist vision of a "Christian America," while many Jews, in contrast, believe they have a stake in a pluralist society, one which can accommodate and tolerate culturally divergent minorities such as their own. Also, many Jews have a visceral aversion to political leaders like Jackson and Robertson who make their Christian identity a vital and public part of their political personas. To be acceptable to Jews -- and many other Americans -- a deeply religious politician should not appear to allow personal religious beliefs to dictate public policy positions. Mario Cuomo is very popular among Jews; Jimmy Carter was always suspect.

We wanted to see how voter preference would shift on the hypothetical assumption that Jackson or Robertson would run on their respective party tickets. First, we asked respondents for their preferences "if Jesse Jackson is the Democratic vice-presidential candidate." Compared to non-Jewish whites or blacks, the Jewish respondents reported the largest net shift of voters as a result of a prospective Jackson candidacy.

Among non-Jewish whites, the "Jackson factor" meant that a three-point edge for the Republicans grew to 24 points, a shift of 21 percentage points. Since black support for the Democratic ticket was enormous without Jackson running, the Democratic margin could hardly grow. Nevertheless, even with

the large initial Democratic advantage among blacks, the Jackson candidacy resulted in a net shift toward the Democrats of 11 percentage points.

For Jews, the shift away from the Democrats was far greater than for non-Jewish whites. With Jackson on the ticket, a 42-point advantage for the Democrats was reversed into a 20-point Republican lead, a net shift of over 60 points. Well over half of the Jewish Democratic supporters defected. The intensity of the defection was also notable -- most went all the way to Republican, rather than to "not sure." With Jackson running for vice president, only a quarter of the Jews claimed they would vote for the Democratic ticket, about a third were unsure, and over two-fifths said they would prefer the Republicans.

Robertson's impact on the Republican ticket was greater for non-Jewish whites than for Jews or blacks, in large part because Jewish and black support for the Republicans was so low to begin with. With Robertson as vice-presidential candidate, a slight Republican edge among the whites turned into a decided Democratic margin, representing a net shift of 12 percentage points. For blacks, the results with and without Robertson were nearly identical; in both cases, hardly any expressed support for the Republicans. Among Jews, the small Republican minority shrank considerably, and the undecided (or "won't vote") expanded commensurately. Here, most defectors (in this case, from the Republicans) moved to the "not sure" category rather than to the opposite party, the Democrats. In more ways than one, then, a hypothetical Jackson candidacy occasioned a more profound shift in Jewish electoral preference than a hypothetical Robertson candidacy.

The most noteworthy finding was the extent to which Jewish voters were repelled at the thought of Jesse Jackson being nominated by the Democrats for high office. Despite their liberal proclivities, despite their widespread attachment to the Democratic party, most of those who would have otherwise supported the Democrats changed their minds at the prospect of Jesse Jackson on the ticket. The reaction among non-Jewish whites was far more muted.

### *Jews and Jesse Jackson*

Despite the evidence, both hard and soft, of widespread Jewish aversion to Jesse Jackson, some Jews (both in this survey and in the Democratic primaries) did support the Jackson candidacy. Estimates of Jewish support for Jackson in the voting booth ranged from 7 percent in New York's primary to upwards of 20 percent in California. On this survey, as many as 24 percent of Jewish respondents said they would vote for the Democratic ticket with Jackson as the vice-presidential candidate and almost a third said they were "not sure." In other words, only a very sizable minority of the respondents were so opposed to Jackson that they said they would vote Republican; and most Jews, in fact, at least entertained voting Democratic even if that meant that Jesse Jackson would be elected vice president. Who are the Jews who might have voted for Jesse Jackson?

The answer is not to be found in the standard sociodemographic variables. Sex, age, education, and income had little association with the willingness to vote for a Democratic ticket with Jackson as the running mate. However, measures of Jewish involvement were moderately linked to Jackson-related attitudes. Orthodox and Conservative Jews rejected a Jackson Democratic ticket far more readily than did Reform and nondenominational Jews. Those who never attended synagogue services were more likely to vote for a Jackson ticket than those who attended frequently. Upon further investigation through multivariate analysis, we learned that three political measures directly influenced Jewish readiness to support a Democratic ticket including Jesse Jackson: partisanship, political orientation, and perception of Jackson as an anti-Semite.

To elaborate on the impact of partisanship, self-described "strong Democrats" were the most ready to accept Jackson, followed by Democrats who did not call themselves strongly partisan, followed in turn by non-Democrats (independents and Republicans). Strong Democrats were about three times as likely as non-Democrats to consider supporting the Democratic ticket, with other Democrats midway between the two groups.

Above and beyond Democratic partisanship, political orientation, that is, self-identification as a "liberal" -- as opposed to "middle-of-the-road" or "conservative" -- increased the likelihood of supporting Jackson. The effects of liberal identification remained even when partisanship was taken into account. In other words, whether among ordinary Democrats or among strong Democrats, liberals were far more ready to back a ticket with Jackson than were nonliberals.

Not surprisingly, the perception that Jackson was hostile to Jews affected one's readiness to support the ticket. Those not seeing Jackson as an anti-Semite were twice as likely to vote Democratic (for the hypothetical candidate) as was the majority who viewed him as anti-Semitic. While more religiously traditional Jews were more likely to see Jackson as anti-Semitic, there was no difference between traditional and nontraditional (or secular) Jews in the impact of the perception. In other words, the association between perception of Jackson as an anti-Semite and reluctance to vote for him was just as strong among Reform and nondenominational Jews as among Orthodox and Conservative Jews.

All three factors -- partisanship, political orientation, and perception of anti-Semitism -- independently contributed to the tendency to support or oppose a ticket with Jackson running for vice president. Thus the most vigorous opponents of Jackson were those who were Republicans and independents, who were conservative or middle-of-the-road, and who saw Jackson as an anti-Semite. These were disproportionately Orthodox and Conservative Jews. At the other extreme were those most prepared to vote for Jackson. These were strong Democrats who were liberals, and who did not accept the characterization of Jackson as anti-Semitic. These tended to be Reform and nondenominational Jews.

## *Perceptions of Anti-Semitism*

The perception that gentiles are anti-Semitic is a core element of modern Jewish identity, rooted in a collective memory of persecution extending back centuries, reinforced by anti-Jewish discrimination in the United States through the middle of the 20th century, and sharpened by the Holocaust, an experience within the memory of most American Jews or their parents. The perception is further strengthened by several Jewish communal agencies whose rhetoric and fund-raising efforts regularly emphasize the historic persecution of Jews and the contemporary threat to their security. And, not least, many Jews see hostility toward the State of Israel as continuous with the long history of gentile antagonism. Indeed, many Jews tend to be fairly imprecise in their usage of the term "anti-Semitism," applying it to almost any instance of conflict between Jews and non-Jews, as well as to any expression of opposition to Jewish interests by gentiles.

For these reasons and more, Jews in the United States retain images of widespread and potentially dangerous anti-Semitism. These images, in turn, influence the process whereby Jews make political decisions, either individually or collectively. That is why presidential campaigns routinely appeal to Jewish voters by trying to portray their opponents as, in effect, "soft" on anti-Semitism. Much of the political debate within Jewish organizations and in Jewish periodicals centers on the question of which candidate, party, or political camp is most hospitable or antagonistic to Jews and their communal interests.

Our 1988 survey (table 1.3) repeated two questions on perceptions of anti-Semitism that were asked in similar AJC-sponsored surveys of American Jews in 1983, 1984 and 1986. In 1983-86, roughly half the samples evinced anxiety about American anti-Semitism. That is, about half those surveyed disagreed with the proposition "Anti-Semitism in America is currently not a serious problem for American Jews." About the same number disagreed with the idea that "Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews." But in 1988, the level of anxiety as expressed by the proportions disagreeing with these statements jumped markedly. Almost two-thirds (65 percent) thought that some influential positions were closed to Jews; over three-quarters (76 percent) said that American anti-Semitism was currently a serious problem.

We cannot know for sure why these anxieties spurted upward, but two possibilities come to mind. The Palestinian *intifada* erupted in December 1987, and the bad publicity it generated for Israel continued throughout the winter and early spring of 1988. Many Jews interpreted criticism of Israel and negative portrayals of Israelis by the news media as evidence of anti-Semitism. The events certainly made them nervous about U.S. support for Israel.

The second possible reason for increased Jewish perception of anti-Semitism may be the moderately successful candidacies of Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson. Somewhat more than half the sample regarded Jackson as

anti-Semitic, and somewhat less than half thought the same of Robertson. That these two men achieved such prominence in American politics in the months before the survey may have contributed to increased American Jewish anxieties.

The collective consciousness that makes Jews sensitive to anti-Semitism also instructs them where they can expect to find anti-Semites. The left has generally been perceived as more friendly to Jews than the right, and those with strong national, ethnic, or religious sentiments have been seen as more anti-Semitic than others. This is because Jews have a memory -- historically accurate or not -- that nationalist passion and religious fervor have been the springboard to anti-Semitic persecution in Europe and elsewhere. The questionnaire asked respondents to evaluate the extent of anti-Semitism among various groups in the American population. The 1988 respondents provided a pattern of answers consistent with those offered to a similar question asked in 1984.

They rated political groups associated with the right as far more anti-Semitic than those associated with the left. Thus, many more perceived larger numbers of anti-Semites among conservatives than among liberals, and among Republicans than among Democrats. But respondents perceived even larger numbers of anti-Semites among members of all religious and ethnic groups listed than among conservatives and Republicans. Respondents saw two of these groups as particularly anti-Semitic: blacks and fundamentalist Protestants. The several sources of tension between blacks and Jews on the local and national levels have undoubtedly contributed to the impression among Jews that blacks are antagonistic to them. Fundamentalist Protestants have advanced a public agenda that, in essence, seeks to incorporate Christian moral principles into public policy. To Jews, this stance connotes a conformist rather than a pluralist America, a "Christian America" that by its very nature would imperil Jews' social position.

Jewish anxieties over American anti-Semitism and their perception of anti-Semitism among certain groups apparently influence their political inclinations. As in 1984, respondents in the 1988 survey demonstrated a connection between perceived anti-Semitism and partisanship. Liberals and Democrats perceived relatively more anti-Semitism on the right than on the left; conservatives and Republicans perceived relatively more anti-Semitism on the left than on the right. The causal order here is impossible to determine. One may choose to see anti-Semites among one's political antagonists; or one's political allegiance may be determined in part by where one perceives anti-Semitism. In any event, the connection between perceived anti-Semitism and political views is undeniable.

*Presidential Preference, April 1988*

To assess the personal popularity of several candidates (and one noncandidate, Mario Cuomo), we presented respondents with a list of

individuals, and asked them to note their first, second, and third choices for president (table 1.4). The proportion favoring a candidate either as a first or second choice indicates the extent of support that candidate enjoyed.

It is no surprise that blacks overwhelmingly preferred Jesse Jackson as a first or second choice, with Dukakis a very distant second. Among non-Jewish whites, Bush was most preferred, outscoring Dukakis 45 to 38 percent. Among Jews, Dukakis gained the widest support, 60 percent giving him their first- or second-place "votes," followed by Mario Cuomo's 51 percent, with Bush a very distant third at 24 percent. (Interestingly, the gap between Jews and gentiles in support for Dukakis in this survey, 22 percentage points,  $60 - 38 = 22$ , is identical to that estimated by the November exit polls,  $68 - 46 = 22$ .)

For non-Jewish whites and for Jews, the Bush-Dukakis match-up yielded results which strikingly paralleled those for party preference in the presidential election. On both questions, among non-Jewish whites, Republicans had a noticeable edge over Democrats. But among Jews, Democratic preference heavily outweighed Republican preference. In terms of both party identification and presidential choice, Jews seemed highly attached to the Democratic party.

#### *Impressions of Liberal Lobbies*

We asked respondents for their impressions of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Planned Parenthood, four widely known liberal organizations (table 1.5). In each case, blacks reported the most favorable images, and non-Jewish whites the least favorable, with Jews situated somewhere in between. Of those with an impression one way or the other (in some cases, most respondents were either "not sure" or checked "mixed feelings"), we may examine the balance of positive and negative impressions for each organization. For the ACLU, non-Jewish whites reported twice as many negative as positive images; in contrast, Jews were decisively positive, and blacks almost uniformly positive. For NOW, the non-Jewish whites were about evenly split, Jews heavily favorable, and blacks even more favorable. For the NAACP, the whites were split, Jews again heavily favorable, and almost all blacks reported positive impressions. Finally, for Planned Parenthood, all groups reported more favorable than unfavorable images, but the ordering from least to most favorable is by now familiar: non-Jewish whites, Jews, blacks. Generally, approval of these groups rose with education and declined with religiosity. In other words, highly educated secularists liked liberal groups, and poorly educated churchgoers (or synagogue-goers) disliked them.

It would be erroneous to interpret the responses to these questions as reflecting the varying commitments of whites, Jews, and blacks to the particular agendas of each of these organizations. This is because positive or

negative images of one group go hand in hand with similar feelings about the other three. These correlations, in turn, are far higher than those between the image of a particular agency (such as Planned Parenthood) and support for its key positions (such as legalized abortion). These responses, then, indicate a generalized affinity for, or rejection of, what may be called the liberal lobby. To be sure, some people certainly do distinguish between feminism, civil liberties, civil rights and other liberal movements. But to a great extent, people respond to all these movements in like fashion. That is why direct-mail fund-raisers for one agency find it profitable to purchase the membership lists of another group or magazine within the liberal (or, for that matter, the conservative) camp.

With this perspective, we may infer that blacks have the strongest affinity for the liberal lobby, Jews are next, and non-Jewish whites are the least favorably disposed to the major liberal agencies.

## 2. POSITIONS ON THE ISSUES

### *Affirmative Action*

The debate over how affirmative action plans should operate and to whom they should apply has been a major cause of black-Jewish tensions. For both sides, this issue has deep symbolic importance, extending beyond specific jobs or places in universities. For blacks, the plans have come to represent the society's commitment to rectifying years of discrimination. Support for affirmative action is seen by many blacks, women, and liberals as the acid test of the resolve to end racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. For many Jews, however, affirmative action has a very different meaning. To them, it connotes quotas, the instrumentality by which Jews were kept out of jobs and universities in the United States not long ago, and in many European countries throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The perception of shared victimization and of decades of cooperation in the not-too-distant past has heightened the disappointment blacks and Jews feel about each other's public positions on affirmative action. To blacks, organized Jewry's efforts to restrict what some Jews regard as the excesses of affirmative action betray a historic moral commitment to equality and represent an abandonment of the good fight for a fair share of white America's affluence. To Jews, organized blacks' support for expanded versions of affirmative action is an attack on the nondiscriminatory principles of meritocracy they believe both blacks and Jews struggled for in the 1960s.

Public opinion research on affirmative action has demonstrated huge variations in responses, depending on how the question is framed. While the public largely supports affirmative action in general terms, it responds far less favorably to questions which ask about giving explicit preference to a specific

group. On our questionnaire, we chose a very specific item (table 2.1): "Do you favor or oppose giving preference in hiring to each of the following groups?" We followed with a list which included the handicapped, women, blacks, Hispanics, Jews, and Asians. In practice, all those on this list but the Jews are the object of affirmative action programs of one sort or another.

The responses of non-Jewish whites and Jews were strikingly similar: majorities supported giving preference in hiring to the handicapped. A notable minority, more than a third, favored giving preference to women. But only about a quarter responded favorably to giving preference to blacks, Hispanics, Jews, or Asians. It is noteworthy that Jews were hardly more likely to seek preference for themselves than for other minorities.

Black respondents, meanwhile, endorsed preference in hiring for all the groups listed, not just blacks. A majority even favored giving preference to Asians and to Jews; almost two-thirds supported preferential hiring of Hispanics; and three-quarters endorsed the policy for women, blacks, and the handicapped. Here too we find an impulse toward consistency. Blacks seemed to be saying that if affirmative action is right for blacks, it is right for others as well, Jews included.

While Jews opposed preferential hiring (and, by inference, other forms of affirmative action as well) for ethnic minorities as frequently as non-Jewish whites, they expressed greater sympathy for other aspects of the black political agenda. One such indication is their positive assessment of the NAACP, as noted earlier. Others are found in responses to questions on social spending and pressuring South Africa, which are reported below. We shall see that, affirmative action (where Jewish and other white attitudes are similar) and Jesse Jackson (where Jews are especially anxious) excepted, Jews tend to have a more positive reaction to items of black concern than do other whites.

### *Social-Welfare Programs*

Historically, Americans have been ambivalent about "welfare," which in loose terms signifies programs that provide public assistance for the poor, but is often identified specifically with federally funded Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Many whites believe (mistakenly) that most welfare recipients are black. The ambivalence about welfare derives in part from a perceived conflict between what ought to be done to help the poor, on the one hand, and the effectiveness of current programs, on the other.

Consistent with this ambivalence, we found an interesting assortment of attitudes with respect to "government programs such as welfare" (table 2.2). Roughly half of Jewish and non-Jewish whites, and almost two-thirds of blacks, claimed to "support the goals and philosophy" of welfare programs. At the same time, the vast majority (around three-quarters of Jews, non-Jewish whites, and blacks) saw these programs as having "had many bad effects on the very people they're supposed to help." But very few were prepared to cut back these programs. Less than a third of the Jews, a few more non-

Jewish whites, and only a fifth of the blacks said they "support efforts to reduce or eliminate" welfare.

The same three questions were asked of a national sample of Jews in 1984. Interestingly, Jews' images of welfare seemed to have worsened over the four years, but paradoxically, their opposition to cutting back such programs increased. The percentage saying they support the goals and philosophy of welfare declined from 75 to 54, while the proportion perceiving welfare's bad effects grew from 64 to 77. Yet the number saying they wanted to reduce or eliminate welfare actually declined from 43 to 32 percent. Perhaps this last finding reflects a growing perception that welfare spending had already been reduced in the 1980s.

These questions, then, did not uncover any sharp differences between Jews, non-Jewish whites, and blacks about welfare. At least on the rhetorical level, all Americans seem to be after the same goals: welfare programs that help the truly needy but that avoid perpetuating lifelong or intergenerational dependency; and, they believe, no one has quite figured out how to operate such programs.

### *Taxing and Spending*

The conservative fiscal revolution wrought by the Reagan presidency featured three policies: cut taxes, limit (or reduce) social spending, and increase defense spending. Liberals, in contrast, generally favored contrary policies. They would have preferred to avoid what they regarded as excessive tax cuts -- especially for businesses and the wealthy -- to maintain domestic spending, and to reduce expenditures for arms and military personnel.

To ascertain respondents' views on these matters, we introduced our questions with the observation that "the federal budget deficit is running at the rate of 200 billion dollars a year" (table 2.3). We then presented the three policies that sharply distinguish conservatives from liberals among political elites. While most respondents reacted favorably to the proposal to "cut defense spending," more black respondents approved than did non-Jewish whites (65 percent versus 51 percent); but support for defense cutbacks was highest among Jews (69 percent).

A question on cuts in domestic spending opened a wide gap between non-Jewish whites, on the one hand, and Jews and blacks, on the other. Among non-Jewish whites, a two-to-one majority approved of cuts in domestic spending. Among Jews and blacks, pluralities, larger among blacks than Jews, disapproved of such cuts.

Among non-Jewish whites, opposition to domestic spending was, naturally enough, higher among the wealthier respondents than among those with lower incomes. While Jews displayed a similar relationship between income and attitudes toward domestic spending, at all levels of income, fewer Jews than comparable non-Jewish whites approved cutting domestic spending.

On average, Jews probably earn more than any other ethnic group in

America. And since higher taxes place a greater burden on the well-to-do than on those with few dollars to spare, Jews are particularly affected by tax hikes. Nevertheless, more Jews than other whites or blacks endorsed raising taxes as a way of cutting the budget deficit. To be sure, majorities of Jews, non-Jewish whites and blacks disapproved of tax increases. But the margin of disapproval was smallest among Jews.

### *Church and State*

Opposition to any weakening of the boundaries between church and state has been a staple of Jewish organizational life for decades. Jews reason that, as a religious minority in a largely Christian country, Jews have much to fear from the introduction of religious symbols and ceremonies into state-run institutions. Christians, be they white or black, cannot be expected to share the same sense of vulnerability.

Not surprisingly, then, Jews held views that varied sharply with those of non-Jewish whites and blacks on such issues as prayer in schools and the public display of religious symbols (table 2.4). The vast majority of non-Jews, white or black, favored "a constitutional amendment to permit prayer in the public schools," and the vast majority of Jews opposed it. Apparently, American Jews feared that the introduction of prayer in the public schools would make their children feel uncomfortable in an environment that is supposed to be religiously neutral. Many of today's Jewish adults reported feeling anxious and hurt when, as school children, they were compelled to participate in, or listen to, the singing of Christmas carols in their schools.

A large majority of non-Jewish whites and a smaller majority of blacks said it is "OK for a city government to put up a manger scene on government property at Christmas." A Jewish majority opposed the idea, but over a third approved. The responses for all three groups to the erection of a Hanukkah menorah on public property were consistent with their responses to the manger scene. We thus have the curious phenomenon of far more gentiles than Jews expressing a readiness to accept the public display of a menorah.

We also asked about allowing student religious groups to hold "voluntary meetings in [public] school classrooms, when classes are not in session." While a slim majority of Jews supported the idea, three-quarters of non-Jewish whites and 71 percent of blacks favored the proposal.

In two other related areas, however, Jewish responses were fairly similar to those of others. Only about a quarter of all respondents -- 19 percent among the Jews and 29 percent among the blacks -- favored "government aid for parents of school children to help pay for tuition at private or parochial schools." The three groups were also united in their opposition to "unusual religious cults." Over two-thirds of each group favored laws to prohibit cults from trying "to convert teenagers."

It appears, then, that Jewish organizational opposition to the lowering of church-state barriers finds ready support in the Jewish public. The only

significant dissent comes from Orthodox Jews who favor some sort of government assistance to reduce the costs of sending children to parochial schools.

### *Abortion*

Since the landmark 1973 United States Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, American women have been able to obtain legal abortions without impediment. The decision triggered intense debate between "pro-life" groups that urge restrictions on access to abortions, and "pro-choice" groups that oppose the imposition of any such restrictions.

Quite a few public opinion surveys have demonstrated that only a small number of Americans oppose legal abortions in all instances. But the vast majority who favor legalized abortion is itself split into two roughly equal groups: one would permit abortions only in cases of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's life, while the other wants abortion available for any purpose, even, for example, to limit family size.

To capture this repeatedly documented distinction in public opinion, we asked whether abortion should be "legal as it is now, legal only in some cases, or not permitted at all" (table 2.5). Consistent with previous surveys, only 11 percent of non-Jewish whites wanted to ban abortions outright, while the rest were evenly split between those who favored legal abortion "only in some cases" (44 percent) and those who answered "legal as it is now" (45 percent). Blacks were somewhat more restrictive, with a slightly smaller number preferring unfettered legalization and a commensurately larger number favoring legal abortion only in some cases.

In striking contrast, far more Jews supported legalized abortion without restrictions. Hardly any (1 percent) wanted a total ban on abortions; just a few (12 percent) supported legalization with restrictions; and an overwhelming majority (87 percent) -- just about twice as many as among non-Jews -- said abortion should be "legal as it is now."

One can identify two possible sources for Jews' extremely liberal attitudes on legalized abortion. Seeing themselves as a vulnerable minority, Jews may want to maximize individual freedoms and keep to a minimum government intrusion in what they regard as the private sphere of individual morality. Or perhaps Jews are simply less troubled by abortion. In other words, Jews may not only be more civil libertarian in public policy, but also more "libertine" in private morality.

In part to test this hypothesis, we constructed a question that would personalize the abortion decision: "Suppose your unmarried teenage daughter told you she was pregnant and intended to have an abortion. Would you support her decision to have an abortion?" Among black and white non-Jews, over a third said they would support their daughters' decision, slightly more said they would oppose it, and the remainder were not sure. Among Jews, though, three-quarters, more than twice as many as among the gentiles, would

support the decision to have an abortion, and only a very small number (6 percent) took the opposite view.

Interestingly, for each of the three groups surveyed, the proportion favoring legal abortions without restrictions was slightly greater than the proportion who would support their daughters' decision to have an abortion. In other words, support for full legalization embraces those who would accept abortion in their own families, as well as a much smaller number who object to abortion for themselves, but are willing to extend to others a free choice in the matter.

### *Homosexuality and Gay Rights*

Two survey questions explored attitudes toward homosexuals (table 2.6). One asked about their rights, and the other sought a personal reaction. In both cases, Jews proved most sympathetic to homosexuals, non-Jewish whites were least supportive, and black attitudes fell in between.

We asked respondents to react to the statement "Whatever my personal views of homosexuality, I think that homosexuals should have the same rights as other people." A majority of non-Jewish whites endorsed this view, as did over two-thirds of the blacks, and more than five Jews out of six. We then offered another statement: "Whatever my views of the rights of homosexuals, I am troubled by the rise in their visibility." If we take those who disagreed or who were not sure to mean respondents were "untroubled" by a rise in the visibility of homosexuality, we find the same ordering of groups: a little more than a third of the non-Jewish whites were untroubled, as were a slim majority of the blacks and almost two-thirds of the Jews. For each of the three groups, the proportion supporting the rights of homosexuals was about 20 percentage points greater than the proportion that was relatively untroubled by their visibility.

Again, Jews appear to be more committed to a civil liberties stance -- for gay rights -- than others. Perhaps they are more tolerant of deviation since they are themselves "deviant" from the American norm. But it also appears that, as a matter of personal lifestyle choice, Jews more readily accept homosexuality, abortion, and, as we shall now see, pornography.

### *Pornography*

We asked respondents, first, whether they would want to ban all forms of pornography, and, then, whether they would support "laws which regulate where and how pornography may be exhibited," a less demanding formulation (table 2.7). With respect to an outright ban, a majority of non-Jewish whites and half the blacks were in favor, a third were opposed, and the rest were unsure. Among Jews, the results were reversed. A majority opposed the ban, a third favored it, and the rest were unsure. Clearly, more non-Jews want to ban pornography outright than do Jews. The more ambiguous question on

regulating pornography obtained wider support. Almost two-thirds of Jews and blacks, and three-quarters of the non-Jewish whites, favored such regulations. Among both Jews and non-Jews, support for banning or regulating pornography was greatest among the least educated, the more religious, and women. Thus, part of the reason Jews are more tolerant of pornography is that they are, indeed, more highly educated and more secular.

One other question on pornography highlighted the distinctive attitudes of Jews. We reminded respondents of the then-recent Supreme Court decision upholding the right of *Hustler* magazine "to print a parody of Rev. Jerry Falwell suggesting he had sexual relations with his elderly mother." Less than a quarter of white or black non-Jews said they agreed with this decision, but almost half of the Jews agreed.

### *Capital Punishment*

We asked respondents whether they favored abolishing capital punishment (table 2.8). Almost three-quarters of Jews and of white gentiles opposed such an idea. Moreover, support for capital punishment was stable across all major demographic groups, with the minor exception of the most highly educated Jews, where support for the death penalty was slightly weaker than elsewhere.

Blacks also opposed banning the death penalty, but by a far smaller margin. While a little less than half opposed the ban, over a quarter -- more than twice as many as among Jews and non-Jewish whites -- favored abolishing the death penalty. Presumably, blacks are more likely to feel that the criminal justice system is biased against them, and that current applications of the death penalty discriminate against poor black criminals.

The extent of Jewish support for the death penalty merits some explanation. If, as we have seen, Jews are more liberal than other whites, and are more likely to take civil libertarian stands, why did they support the death penalty as much as other whites? One possibility is that Jews may be more troubled by crime and disorder than others, since most of them live in or near large cities, and even many who live in the suburbs were raised in urban neighborhoods or may still have parents in those neighborhoods. Another clue may lie in the fact that, according to previous surveys, Jews connect social disorder and violence with anti-Semitism. A certain historically informed Jewish consciousness suggests that the breakdown of public order is a harbinger of pogroms. Thus Jews may feel more keenly the need to "crack down" on murderers by maintaining the death penalty.

### *Symbolic Issues: Bork, the Contras, and Colonel North*

At any given time, certain personalities, issues, ideas, groups or themes acquire a symbolic importance in the political confrontation between conservatives and liberals. While the specifics may have little lasting importance, observing how respondents react to them can give some understanding of the

symbolic world which they inhabit. We have already seen how the reactions of non-Jewish whites, Jews, and blacks to one important symbol -- President Reagan -- can be arrayed on a continuum, with non-Jewish whites at one end, blacks at the other, and the Jews in the middle. We will find much the same ordering with respect to other important symbols (table 2.9).

We asked about Robert Bork, the Supreme Court nominee who was rejected by the Senate. Liberal and civil rights organizations mounted a vigorous campaign against Bork, claiming that he was insensitive to the rights of individuals, particularly women and minorities. We asked respondents whether they thought Bork "got a raw deal." A 38-percent minority of white non-Jews agreed that he did, but only a quarter of the Jews concurred, as did just 9 percent of the blacks. Support for Bork -- endorsing the idea that he got a "raw deal" -- grew with income, but only among non-Jewish respondents.

Another important symbolic issue that has sharply divided conservatives from liberals has been the question of how much and what sort of aid the United States ought to provide the contra rebels fighting against the Marxist Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Liberals have portrayed the rebels as brutal thugs under the leadership of sleazy followers of Somoza, the ousted dictator. Conservatives have seen them as freedom fighters struggling to release Nicaragua from the grip of a Communist dictatorship allied with the Soviet Union. We asked respondents whether they agreed that "President Reagan was right when he said that the contra rebels are 'freedom fighters.'"

Over 40 percent of both Jews and non-Jews said they were unsure, possibly indicating that the question probed an unfamiliar issue. Nevertheless, we found a familiar ordering: non-Jewish whites, Jews, and blacks. A third of the non-Jewish whites saw the contras as freedom fighters, as did just over a fifth of the Jews, and one black in eight.

The image of the contras has been closely linked to that of Lt. Col. Oliver North, the former National Security Council official who vigorously promoted financial and other assistance to the contras and who was the center of media attention during Senate hearings into the Iran-contra affair. Among conservatives, North has emerged as a patriotic hero; to liberals, he is a headstrong official who acted deceitfully, illegally, and corruptly.

We asked respondents for their impression of North. Among non-Jewish whites, those with a favorable impression outnumbered those with an unfavorable image by almost two to one. Among blacks, the image was decidedly negative, and among Jews, even more negative. Jews with an unfavorable impression (almost half the sample) were more than twice as numerous as those with a favorable view of North.

### *Opinions of the News Media*

Conservative commentators have claimed that the news media, particularly the major network newscasters, give a decidedly liberal tilt to their work. They have accused journalists of being overly critical of American foreign

policy and domestic problems, of showing insufficient patriotism, of constituting a "blame-America-first crowd," and, not least, of arrogance. (Indeed, surveys have demonstrated that journalists' political orientations are decidedly more liberal than those of the American public.) In addition, Jews have very specific reasons to distrust the media. Particularly since the Lebanon war, many prominent Jews have charged journalists with bias against Israel and in favor of the Palestinians. As our survey was taken during the Palestinian uprising, Jewish sensitivity on these matters must have been very keen indeed.

To gauge attitudes toward the media, we asked respondents whether they agreed, "There's been too much bad-mouthing of America by journalists and politicians" (table 2.10). More than half of Jews and white non-Jews, but only 38 percent of blacks, agreed. Further evidence of racially disparate reactions to the press can be derived from responses to a question on impressions of the news media. Whites, Jewish and gentile, had almost the same distribution of responses, with the favorable replies slightly exceeding the unfavorable ones. Among blacks, though, the favorable responses outnumbered the unfavorable by five to one.

In recent times, many prominent journalists have considered it their professional responsibility to question accepted truths and challenge respected authority. Clearly blacks feel that such critical probing helps them and their interests. Many whites, Christians and Jews, find this approach disturbing and unsettling.

#### *Attitudes Toward the Soviet Union*

For several reasons, Jews might be expected to be more "dovish" with respect to U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union than other Americans. As we have seen, Jews are much more willing to cut defense spending, an attitude that may logically reflect dovishness regarding the Soviet threat and how to handle it. Also, as we have seen, Jews identify far more than others as liberals and as Democrats, and liberal Democrats are perceived as advocating a "soft-line" approach to the Soviet Union.

At the same time, however, there are reasons to expect Jews to take a strongly anti-Soviet position. They have an affinity with the so-called cold-war liberals, that wing of the Democratic party which historically was liberal on domestic issues and took a tough anti-Communist stand in international affairs. John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Henry Jackson, and Daniel Moynihan -- each in his own way, each in his own time -- have been prominently associated with this camp, and enormously popular among Jews. In our 1984 National Survey of American Jews, the hypothetical presidential candidate described as a domestic liberal and a foreign-affairs hawk garnered more first- and second-place votes than the three alternatives. In addition, Jews have special reasons to mistrust, if not detest, the Soviet Union, which has not only been seen as a diplomatic and military ally of the

Arab confrontation states and the PLO, but has also been criticized for persecuting its several million Jewish citizens, many of whom have been trying to emigrate over the last two decades.

To see how these conflicting motivations shape Jewish attitudes toward the Soviet Union, we asked respondents to characterize the Soviets' primary objective in world affairs (table 2.11). The four choices were: (1) simply seeking to protect itself, (2) competing with the U.S., (3) seeking global domination short of war, and (4) seeking global domination even at the risk of war. Most respondents among all three of the subsamples picked the two intermediate responses. The only way Jews differed from the others was that they were far less likely to choose the most extreme responses at the hawkish and dovish ends of the spectrum.

Another indication of attitudes toward the Soviet Union can be gleaned from impressions of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Liberals have tended to hail him as a force for liberalization and democratization, while conservatives remain skeptical of his intentions and/or ability to bring about true reform. For all three groups of respondents, the percentages of those with favorable images and those with unfavorable images were about the same. In this respect, too, Jews seemed no more hawkish and no more dovish than other Americans.

One of the points in the debate about U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union is whether, and to what extent, improved relations ought to depend on curtailment of Soviet human-rights abuses, a prominent example of which is the restriction on Jewish emigration. We found that most Americans would not want Soviet human-rights abuses to impede "progress toward U.S.-Soviet arms agreements," but the margin of support for this position was smaller among Jews than among other whites. Pluralities among non-Jewish whites and blacks also endorsed the proposition that "Soviet human-rights abuses should not be a barrier to expanding U.S.-Soviet trade." However, here more Jews disagree than agree. Clearly, concern about Soviet human-rights abuses influences Jewish thinking more than it does that of non-Jews.

What may be even more interesting is that, of the three groups, Jews make the sharpest distinction between arms agreements and U.S.-Soviet trade. While they are the most determined to link improved trade with human-rights progress, Jews are as open as non-Jewish whites and blacks to keeping disarmament talks unfettered by American disappointment over lack of Soviet progress on human rights.

Taken together, the responses to the four questions on the Soviet Union suggest that Jews are distributed on the hawk-dove spectrum much like other Americans. It is quite likely that Soviet treatment of its Jewish citizens has prompted some Jews to take a tougher line than they would if Soviet human-rights abuses were not a relevant factor.

## *South Africa*

There has been much impassioned debate over how hard and in what ways the U.S. ought to press the government of South Africa to end apartheid. Many blacks and white liberals have been especially outspoken in urging a sharp reduction in commercial and diplomatic cooperation with Pretoria, or extending U.S. support for the African National Congress. Conservatives and others, meanwhile, have argued that the U.S. can most effectively curtail human rights abuses in South Africa through a policy of "constructive engagement," enabling the U.S. to retain some leverage; in addition, they argue that American strategic, military, and commercial considerations necessitate ongoing relationships with South Africa.

In the 1988 survey, non-Jewish white respondents were equivocal about toughening U.S. policy toward South Africa (table 2.12). Asked whether "the U.S. should put more pressure on the South African government to end . . . apartheid," almost a quarter wanted to keep the pressure "about the same as now," less than a third wanted to step up the pressure, and 16 percent (presumably the most "conservative") actually wanted to reduce pressure. In contrast, over three-quarters of the blacks wanted to increase pressure, and hardly any (2 percent) called for less pressure. The answers of Jewish respondents were situated about halfway between those of non-Jewish whites and blacks. A slim majority wanted to increase pressure, only 11 percent wanted to reduce pressure, and the rest -- a sizable minority -- were either unsure or favored the same pressure as now.

On another question, blacks were far more critical than whites of the U.S. for being "too friendly with the South African government." A two-to-one majority of blacks agreed with this charge; in contrast, among Jewish and non-Jewish whites, of those with an opinion, about as many agreed as disagreed.

Far fewer respondents could express an opinion about whether "Israel has been too friendly with" the white-supremacist regime. Of those who had an opinion either way, neither blacks nor gentile whites were, on balance, any more critical of Israel than they were of the United States. Despite their attachment to Israel, a fifth of the Jews (as contrasted with somewhat fewer non-Jewish whites and somewhat more blacks) agreed that "Israel has been too friendly" with South Africa.

### 3. WHY ARE JEWS LIBERAL?

#### *Differential Liberalism*

We have seen that the gap in political attitudes between Jews and non-Jews varied by the issue or area under consideration: in no area were

Jews' attitudes significantly more conservative than those of other whites; in some areas, the distribution of Jews' attitudes resembled those of non-Jewish whites; in others, the differences between Jews and non-Jews were clear but modest; and in still other areas, the differences were quite substantial. Compared to non-Jewish whites, then, depending on the issues, Jews were either no different, a little more liberal, or much more liberal.

The attitudes of Jews and other whites were very similar on: (1) affirmative action, where both groups were largely unsympathetic to the preferential hiring of minorities; (2) capital punishment, which both widely supported; and (3) U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. The areas where Jews were somewhat more liberal than white non-Jews were: (1) fiscal policies, where more Jews favored cutting defense spending, maintaining domestic spending, and raising taxes; and (2) miscellaneous symbolic issues -- Bork's nomination, North's image, aid to the contras. The Jews' comparative liberalism was most pronounced in: (1) their political identification (as liberals rather than conservatives, as Democrats rather than Republicans, and with the "liberal lobby"); (2) strict separation of church and state; and (3) such social issues as abortion, homosexuals' rights, and pornography.

Only in a few areas were blacks more liberal than Jews; in others, Jews were far more liberal than blacks. More blacks than Jews identified with the Democratic party and other liberal institutions. Blacks also supported preferential hiring more than Jews; fewer blacks supported capital punishment (although a plurality did); and blacks took an even tougher line than Jews on pressuring South Africa. For their part, Jews were much more committed than blacks to maintaining a strict separation between church and state. Many Jews may well be "liberal" on this because they perceive themselves as a vulnerable non-Christian minority that would suffer increased discrimination were the official public sphere to permit the expression of Christian symbolic activity. But even in other areas, where Jews' supposed self-interest is less clear than on church-state relations, Jews reported positions and attitudes more liberal than those of blacks. The positions of Jews on taxing and spending were slightly more liberal, and on the social issues -- abortion, homosexuality, pornography -- Jewish attitudes were markedly more liberal, than those of blacks.

Clearly, straightforward interest-based arguments cannot totally explain Jewish liberalism in spheres other than church-state relations. We need, instead, to develop more complicated interest-based arguments and to look to other possible explanations to understand why, in so many areas, Jews are more liberal than other whites, and sometimes more liberal than blacks.

Previous research has identified several key factors that influence political attitudes: parents' political orientation, region of the country, education, income, and religiosity. We shall see that in many cases these factors affect the politics of Jews and other Americans in a similar fashion, but at other times a particular factor may affect Jews one way and non-Jews another way. To understand why the politics of American Jews are so distinctive, we need

to focus upon how the key factors are distributed among American Jews and how these characteristics affect Jews in special ways.

### *Parents' Politics*

Some observers of Jewish liberalism have claimed that today's Jews inherit their leftist tendencies from their parents and grandparents. Early-20th-century Jews were prominent in the labor movement and in socialist and communist organizations. Relative to their population size, Jews were overrepresented on the ideological left. Since parents do exert some influence on the political attitudes of their children, it would be logical to assume that, to the extent that Jews were disproportionately leftist in the recent past, Jews should be disproportionately liberal today.

To test this hypothesis, we asked respondents to characterize the political views of their fathers and mothers "when you were growing up" (table 3.1). Here we ought to note that recall questions are notoriously unreliable. As they age, people remember different parts of their lives with varying degrees of accuracy. Moreover, respondents engage in selective or distorted recall, often reconstructing the past to harmonize with the present. We proceed to examine the results, then, with all due caution.

As one might have predicted, Jews, more than other whites, reported that their parents were liberal. Twice as many Jews as non-Jewish whites said their fathers and mothers were liberal, and notably fewer Jews than other whites characterized their parents as conservative. We combined the reports of the two parents' political views into a single index which, in effect, computed an average of both reports. Where a respondent was unsure about one parent, the index relied on the report for the other parent; where respondents were unsure about both parents, the parents were classified as "middle-of-the-road."

We then cross-tabulated five dimensions of the respondents' liberalism -- political identification, fiscal policy, church-state issues, social issues, and anti-Soviet feelings -- with reported parental political philosophy. We found that:

(1) Parents' reported political views had the biggest impact on the index of political identification (tables 3.2a,b). This result is to be expected for methodological reasons if no other: the question on one's own political identity was phrased to resemble that on parents' identity. We were correlating the parents question with an index containing its nearest "relative" in terms of content and wording.

(2) For Jews, parents' politics also had a sizable impact on attitudes toward spending and taxation. That is, those with more liberal parents more often favored cuts in defense, hikes in taxes, and maintaining domestic spending. Among non-Jews, the impact was less marked.

(3) Children of liberals were more likely to favor strict separation of church and state. However, the effect was stronger for Jews than for non-Jews.

(4) For Jews, but not for other white Americans, parents' liberalism was associated with liberalism on the social issues.

(5) For neither Jews nor non-Jews did parental liberalism affect attitudes toward the Soviet Union.

Political socialization thus explains some -- but only some -- of the reason for Jews' left-leaning tendencies. To an extent, Jews may be more liberal today because their parents were more liberal years ago. However, the evidence for this is far from airtight, based as it is on selective recall.

### *Regional Concentration*

Aside from their parents' politics, another reason Jews may be more liberal than other whites is that so few of them live in the South, a region noted for its political and social conservatism (tables 3.3a,b). In this survey, the political attitudes of white non-Jews in the South -- what the U.S. Census Bureau calls the East South Central and the West South Central regions -- were indeed more conservative than those of whites elsewhere. And relatively few Jews live in the South. The population of the eight states in these regions (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma) comprises 17 percent of the survey's white non-Jews, but less than 5 percent of the sample's Jewish respondents.

White non-Jewish Southerners are more fiscally conservative, more socially conservative, more opposed to church-state separation, and more anti-Soviet than other white gentiles. But these political differences with the rest of the country's white non-Jews are small. Moreover, the differences are almost entirely attributable to religious service attendance (to a large extent) and to education (to a lesser extent). In other words, Southerners are more conservative because they are more religious and because they are relatively poorly educated.

Interestingly, the small number of Jews in this part of the South reported political attitudes that were hardly different from those of Jews elsewhere, showing that the regional distribution of American Jews, in itself, is not a major factor in explaining their liberal tilt.

### *Education*

Most observers associate education with liberal attitudes (tables 3.4a,b). One reason is that higher education is a relativizing experience, bringing the student into contact with ideas different from his own, and calling into question previously accepted truths. Moreover, studies of American academics have demonstrated that professors as a group -- especially those in the humanities and social sciences -- hold fairly liberal political and social views. Presumably, these views influence those of their students.

But one could also make an opposite case, one which would argue for education's conservative impact. Not all professors and not all schools are

equally liberal; today especially, some impart conservative political, social, economic, or religious ideas. More important, education is also a channel of social mobility, often leading to occupations in business or the more conservative professions -- like medicine and engineering -- and to relative affluence. Education, then, can make one more invested in the prevailing social order, that is, more conservative.

For both Jews and non-Jews in our sample, education's relationships with the five dimensions of political attitudes were rather similar. For both groups, it had little impact on anti-Soviet attitudes. Its relationship with political identification was inconsistent among Jews, and curvilinear among non-Jews. That is, the least educated non-Jews were the most liberal-Democratic. Conservative Republicanism grew with education through the B.A., but then declined with further increases in education on the graduate level.

For the three other political dimensions, the impact of education was more consistent, with liberalism increasing almost uniformly with education. The more educated were fiscally more liberal, more committed to separating church and state, and significantly more committed to liberal positions on the social issues of abortion, gay rights, and permitting pornography. Moreover, in these three spheres the impact of education held up under controls for other variables such as religiosity. Generally, the impact of education was slightly greater for Jews than for non-Jews; with rising education, liberalism grew more rapidly for Jews than for others.

On most dimensions of political liberalism, education exercised a liberalizing influence, even controlling for age. Education generally meant more for Jews' liberalism than it did for non-Jews. Moreover, Jewish educational attainment was far above that of non-Jews. In this sample, about half the white non-Jews had been to college compared to three-quarters of the Jews; proportionately, over twice as many Jews had graduated from college as non-Jews; over twice as many Jews had graduate degrees as non-Jews. And there is another important difference between Jews and others: not only do they go to college and graduate school more than others, but they also disproportionately attend the more selective institutions where the liberalizing influence is presumably greater than elsewhere.

Education is clearly part of the reason Jews are more liberal than non-Jews. Not only are Jews more educated, but their education is also more closely associated with liberalism.

### *Income*

Jews are among the wealthiest groups in America. Surveys of American Jews in the last few years have reported median household incomes approaching \$40,000, while median American household incomes in the same or parallel studies were below \$25,000. This difference is all the more impressive when we recall that, owing to the larger number of elderly and fewer children in Jewish homes, Jewish households are generally smaller than

non-Jewish households. Per capita Jewish income, then, may actually be almost double that of non-Jews. In this study, more than twice as many Jews as non-Jewish whites reported household incomes in excess of \$50,000. At the other end of the spectrum, almost twice as many white non-Jews as Jews reported incomes of less than \$20,000.

Income has typically been viewed as a conservatizing influence. Liberals and Democrats, their opponents often charge, want to tax and tax and spend and spend. By advocating taxing the rich and spending money on social services for the poor, liberals are thought to espouse a redistributionist social ethic, one that is consistent with the interests of the poor and contrary to those of the rich.

Higher-income white non-Jews in our survey did identify less frequently with liberals and Democrats, and more frequently with conservatives and Republicans. Among Jews, though, income exerted no such effect (tables 3.5a,b). In terms of party identification or self-perception as a liberal or conservative, the impact of income was ambiguous or inconsistent. Relative financial security did not lead Jews to register as Republicans or to abandon liberalism as it did among white non-Jews.

Among both Jews and non-Jews, income had no noticeable effect upon fiscal attitudes, separation of church and state, or anti-Sovietism. In these areas the rich(er) were no more conservative than poor(er) Americans.

In one area, income's impact was actually in the liberal direction. Among both Jews and white non-Jews, wealthier individuals were more tolerant on the social issues (abortion, homosexuality, pornography). Part of the reason is that many of the higher-income individuals became that way by education. But even after education was factored out of the equation, income independently exerted a liberalizing influence on social attitudes. Among Jews, the major break-point in social-issues attitudes occurred between those earning under \$20,000 and their wealthier counterparts. Poorer Jews (who may also be older, less educated, and more religious) are also the ones with more conservative approaches to the social issues. Here, the relatively small number of poor Jews as compared with poor non-Jews provides part of the explanation for Jewish liberalism; so few Jews oppose abortion, gay rights, and pornography since relatively few of them are among the poorer households in the country.

The most striking aspect of these findings is to undercut the oft-noted observation that "Jews earn like Episcopalians, but vote like Hispanics." The implication buried in the observation is that higher-income individuals are more conservative and Jews are failing to respond to their middle- and upper-middle-class interests. In fact, the impact of income among the population at large is not as conservative as many think. Higher-income individuals do tend to vote Republican in presidential elections; but presidential vote is only one measure of political outlook.

## *Religion*

American Christians see themselves as a religious people. Over 90 percent of white non-Jews in the sample said they believed in God. Almost half claimed that religion was "very important" in their lives and only a fifth felt that religion was "not very important" to them. Almost a quarter claimed to have personally had the experience of being "born again," a rather demanding characterization of religious commitment.

The data on religious-service attendance seemed to indicate that for most Christian Americans, religion is akin to an all-or-nothing experience; they either participate heavily or (almost) not at all. Accordingly, most respondents clustered at either the high or low end of the attendance spectrum. A little over a third of white American Christians claimed to go to church at least every week; and, at the same time, over 40 percent said they went to church four times a year or less. Only a quarter (or less) attend an intermediate amount -- more than a few times a year, but less than weekly.

The results also demonstrated how religiosity influences political attitudes (tables 3.6a,b). Half the non-Jewish white respondents believed their political views were shaped by their religious values, and half said they were not. Other results substantiated the impact of religiosity on political attitudes: for most dimensions of political attitudes, church attendance had as much as or greater impact than education or income. In predicting political attitudes of white Christians, knowing how often one goes to church is more important statistically than knowing how much one went to school or how much money one makes.

More frequent church attendance was associated with higher levels of identification with conservatism and the Republican party, and with a very modest increase in fiscal conservatism. It was also the only background variable that had a statistically significant impact on anti-Sovietism; the more religiously involved held more negative images of the Soviets. As might be expected, more churchgoers than the unchurched supported religious symbols in schools and public places.

The most powerful impact of religious service attendance was upon orientations to the social issues. Those who went to church four times a year or less scored high on the social-issues index -- that is, they endorsed tolerance or permissiveness -- four times as often as those attending services weekly. No other variable even came close to church attendance in impact on social-issue attitudes.

Of course, church attendance is but a proxy for the larger concept of religiosity. Thus similar relationships with political attitudes can be found for other indicators such as, among Protestants, the distinction between those who claimed to be born again and the majority who did not. Of the born-again, just 9 percent scored high on social issue liberalism, as compared with 36 percent among the non-born-again.

The inevitable conclusion is that religiosity, however measured, promotes

conservatism among white Christian Americans. This remains true even when we control for the fact that the married more than the unmarried, and women more than men, attend churches regularly (being married and being a woman are also associated with social-issue conservatism). Churchgoers are socially conservative not only because they happen to be married and female, but primarily because of the worldview and community that churchgoing promotes and reflects.

Among Jews, religious-service attendance was also associated with more conservative attitudes, but the impact was both far weaker and limited to fewer attitudes than among white Christians. For Jews, religious-service attendance bore little relationship to political identification, had no relationship with fiscal attitudes, and had little connection with support for religious symbols in the public sphere, rejected by almost all Jews from religious to secular. However, to be sure, more traditional Jews did support tuition aid for parochial school parents more frequently.

Among Jews, the impact of religious-service attendance was limited to two areas: anti-Soviet attitudes (where, for Jews, it was the only variable of consequence); and to more conservative stances on the social issues. Of those going to synagogue infrequently (four times a year or less), less than a third scored high on the index of anti-Soviet feelings; of the weekly service attenders, about half scored high. Of the infrequent worshippers, almost two-thirds scored high on the index of social-issue liberalism; of the regular service-attenders, only a bit over a third scored high.

Obviously, some of the reasons that churchgoing Americans adopt anti-Soviet and socially conservative attitudes also operate on religious Jews as well. But factors peculiar to Jews may also be at work. As noted earlier, Jews who are vitally concerned about freedom for Soviet Jews and Israel's security are likely to take an especially dim view of Soviet policy in these areas. It is no accident that those who appear frequently in synagogues for worship are also among those most involved in both the protest movement for Soviet Jewry and in pro-Israel activities.

The interesting question here is not why religious Jews are in some areas more conservative than secular Jews, but why they are not even more conservative. Why are the political differences between religious and secular Jews less pronounced than those between religious and secular white Christians?

One reason is that the Jewish religion is less important to American Jews than Christianity is to American Christians (table 3.7). While almost half the non-Jews said that religion was "very important" in their own lives, only a quarter of the Jews made a similar claim. Proportionately three times as many white Christians go to church weekly as Jews who attend synagogue weekly. Most Jews attend synagogue four times a year or less.

This is not to say that "being Jewish" is unimportant to Jews. When asked, not about their religion, but about the importance of "being Jewish . . . in your own life," almost half say it is "very important," which is almost twice

as many as those who have as much to say about "religion." Moreover, the disparity in responses between the importance of being Jewish and Judaism grows with modernism. Among Orthodox Jews, the percentage who found religion important (68 percent) was almost as large as that finding being Jewish important (80 percent). But among Conservative Jews, the "religion is important" responses were only a little more than half as frequent as the "being Jewish is important" responses (38 percent versus 65 percent). And among Reform Jews just a few (18 percent) saw religion as very important, but more than twice as many (45 percent) saw being Jewish as very important.

We can interpret these results very broadly and loosely to suggest that, for many, Jewishness takes precedence over Judaism, and that less traditional Jews are more likely to define their Jewish identity in ethnic rather than religious terms. While a good number of non-Orthodox Jews may be secular, many are still deeply attached to their Jewish identity and experience a sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

Being Jewish embraces not only -- and not always -- commitment to a Jewish faith, but involvement with the Jewish group. The dimensions of peoplehood and religion often reinforce one another, but many Jews sustain a commitment to peoplehood without an equally high commitment to religious faith. While only 26 percent of Jews said that religion was very important to them, over 40 percent said they felt "very close" to other Jews, and almost all the rest claimed they felt "fairly close" to other Jews. Less than one in ten said they were not very close to other Jews. The results on friendship patterns were similar. We asked, "Of your three closest friends, how many are Jewish?" Almost half -- about the same proportion who claimed to feel "very close" to other Jews -- said that all three of their three closest friends were Jewish. Over two-thirds -- a number that is fairly constant over several surveys -- claimed that most of their closest friends were Jewish. Just 12 percent -- a figure slightly higher than the number who said they were distant from other Jews -- said that none of their closest friends were Jewish.

In short, one reason that service attendance -- an indicator of religiosity -- has a more limited impact on Jews' political attitudes is that religion per se is not all that important to many Jews, occupying a smaller segment of Jewish identity than it does of Christian identity.

Another reason for the weak effect of Jewish religiosity may be that many Jews believe their religion teaches them to be liberal rather than conservative. We asked them quite explicitly whether they agree that "Jewish values, as I understand them, lead me to be politically liberal." A plurality (44 percent) agreed. Obviously, nonliberals -- even if they thought Jewish values are liberal -- logically must disagree with this statement, as must many liberals who believe they come to their liberalism by ways unrelated to Jewish values. Thus this 44 percent represents a minimum of those who see Jewish values as basically liberal, a figure only slightly less than the 50 percent in a recent *Los Angeles Times* survey who saw pursuit of social equality as the major

principle of being Jewish. Agreement with this statement was fairly level across all the denominations; the Orthodox agreed as much as other Jews that Jewish values led them to be liberal. The widespread Jewish assumption that their religion teaches liberalism may also explain why Jewish respondents claimed that their religious values shaped their political views more than white Christians did.

Conservatives have argued that, however one may interpret Jewish values, Jewish interests today -- a secure Israel, freedom for Soviet Jews, and a free and meritocratic American society -- demand that Jews side with conservatives. To test Jews' receptivity to this interest-based argument, we asked for reaction to the statement "Jewish interests, as I understand them, lead me to be politically conservative." Those with a definite opinion rejected this proposition four to one. The level of agreement was almost the same across denominations. The more traditional were only somewhat more likely to see Jewish interests as conservatizing than were the less traditional groups.

Responses to the questions on Jewish values and Jewish interests pointed in the same direction, suggesting that Jews tend to understand their group identity as demanding adherence to liberal rather than conservative ideals. Hence, although the more religious are sometimes more conservative than the more secular, the contribution of religiosity to Jews' political conservatism is far less pronounced than it is among white Christians.

Even though Jewish religion exerts a weak conservatizing impact on political values, the least traditional are not necessarily the most liberal. Those Jews who are so untraditional that they virtually leave the Jewish group begin to take on the more conservative coloration of comparable Americans.

The analysis divided respondents into four denominational groups, ranging from most to least traditional in religious terms, coinciding with a range of most to least conservative in political terms: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and nondenominational. The nondenominational were the least affiliated with organized Jewish life. Within that highly secular category, most had some attachment to Jewish life, but some lacked even the most rudimentary involvement in the formal or informal Jewish community, failing to report attendance at a seder (just about the most widely practiced Jewish holiday ritual) and having mostly non-Jewish close friends. For purposes of analysis, these were defined as "marginal" nondenominational Jews, as distinguished from the "slightly affiliated" nondenominational Jews.

If declining traditionalism also means increasing liberalism, then the Jewish marginals should have been more liberal than the slightly affiliated nondenominational. But in fact, on several measures, marginal Jews were more conservative and less liberal than the slightly affiliated nondenominational Jews. For instance, on the index of political identification, almost twice as many of the marginals leaned to conservative Republicanism as did the slightly affiliated nondenominational respondents (14 percent versus 8 percent). Almost twice as many were fiscally conservative (19 percent versus 10 percent). About twice as many took a conservative stance on abortion, gay

rights, and pornography (9 percent versus 5 percent). In other words, as we moved left on the religious-secular spectrum (that is, in the secular direction), liberalism did increase. But liberalism peaked among the slightly affiliated nondenominational Jews, and then declined among the marginal Jews.

This suggests that liberalism is highest where maximal secularism is combined with some Jewish group involvement. The slightly lower levels of liberalism among the marginals suggest that full passage out of the Jewish group leads one to begin adopting the less liberal views of the non-Jewish majority.

### *Toward an Explanation of Jewish Liberalism*

Jews are more liberal than non-Jews. To be sure, on some issues Jews are centrists; on many others they are only slightly to the left of the American mainstream. But in no area are Jews significantly more conservative than non-Jewish whites, and, in many areas, Jews are substantially more liberal than gentiles. While there are Jewish conservatives and liberal gentiles, on many issues the Jewish center is well to the left of the white gentile center. Why?

One explanation, as we have seen, focuses on education. Education tends to bring about more liberal thinking, even when we factor out the higher income that usually comes as a result of higher education. Part of the reason Jews are so liberal is that so many of them have been to college and, disproportionately, to the more selective colleges with the more liberal faculties. But education's impact on Jews is even more liberalizing than its impact on non-Jews; on many measures, education has a small effect on non-Jews' attitudes, while substantially advancing liberalism among Jews.

We found that another reason for Jews' liberalism is that fewer of them are religious, and more of them secular. For white Christians, church attendance or other expressions of religious involvement and conviction are associated with greater conservatism, especially with respect to attitudes toward the Soviets and even more so with respect to the social issues. For Jews, religiosity's impact on political attitudes, while in the same conservative direction, is smaller. The fact is that, for the most part, religious Christianity among whites in the United States argues for a conservative moral, political, and social philosophy. Official Judaism's stand on these issues is more ambiguous. Thus Jews are more liberal not only because fewer are religious, but because their Jewish religion does not stand for conservatism in the sense that Christianity does for white Christians.

Insofar as Jews' liberalism extends beyond what one would expect on the basis of their education and secularity, they have good self-interested reasons for their stance. Previous studies have documented several prevalent attitudes that underlie Jewish political thinking. Jews see themselves as a long-persecuted and victimized minority, and the potential for anti-Semitic persecution in the United States, in their minds, is still very real. Jews feel like outsiders, a religious and cultural minority in a heavily Christian country.

They believe that bad economic times, social unrest, poverty, and similar problems could easily lead to trouble for them. The political center, they think, is safer for Jews than the extremes, whether on the right or the left. Also, as a vulnerable minority with a particular religious and ethnic culture, Jews are committed to a pluralist, tolerant society and feel threatened by calls for greater conformity.

Thus insofar as Jews are more liberal than we would expect on the basis of their social characteristics, they are liberal in ways that reflect their perceived self-interest as outsiders. As this survey demonstrated, Jews are extraordinarily liberal in three broad areas: church-state separation, the social issues, and identification with the groups and symbols of liberal America.

Their commitment to keeping religious symbols out of the public sphere is readily understandable: in America, public religion means Christianity. Jews have a special interest in keeping the American public sphere free of Christian symbols and prayer since such religious expressions make Jews feel uncomfortable, alienated, not quite at home.

Jews' tolerance of abortion, homosexuality, and pornography partly derives from their higher education and secularism, but it may also stem from a greater interest in tolerance for all sorts of nonconformist behavior. In the 1985 study of American Jews, 86 percent agreed that: "Whatever I may feel personally about nonconforming groups -- like black activists, feminists, homosexuals, and radicals -- I think Jews are much better off in an American society which can be truly open to and tolerant of groups such as these." Jews seem to identify those who strongly advocate conservative positions on social issues with those who advocate a more conformist America in other respects, if not an explicitly more Christian society. Hence efforts to restrict abortions, homosexuals' rights, and even the distribution of pornography may worry Jews who remain anxious about their own position in society. They may well see the opponents of social deviants today as the adversaries of complete equality for non-Christians (Jews) tomorrow.

But even when the self-interest argument is added to their social characteristics, we do not have a total explanation for Jewish liberalism on the social issues. For some reason, one that lies beyond the scope of these data, Jews are personally more tolerant of abortion, homosexuality, pornography and, we may presume, other forms of nonnormative behavior. Jews really are less judgmental, or if one prefers, more "permissive" than other Americans of equally high levels of educational attainment and secularity. If we ever arrive at a satisfactory explanation for why Jews are so nonjudgmental about these behaviors, we will also understand why they are so liberal about the public policies that relate to them.

The Jewish tendency to identify with the liberal rather than the conservative camp, to describe themselves as Democrats rather than as Republicans, and to have more positive images of the four liberal agencies listed in the questionnaire than did other white Americans, can largely be explained by perceived self-interest. Since over three-quarters of the Jews in

our survey rejected the idea that "Anti-Semitism in America is currently not a serious problem for American Jews" -- more than in any recent survey -- and nearly two-thirds disagreed with the proposition that "Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews," it is clear that Jews still feel vulnerable. Most look to the liberal camp to protect them from the anti-Semites, who are perceived as being on the right more than on the left. Of course, to some extent, liberal political commitments color Jews' perceptions of where their enemies are to be found, just as, to some extent, perceptions of anti-Semitism on the right influence political commitments. Whatever the case, part of the reason Jews identify with the liberal camp arises out of, or is at least associated with, their search for security from the threat of anti-Semitism. In their own minds, Jews identify with liberalism partly because they think liberals favor Jews and Jewish interests.

To sum up, Jews are more liberal than other Americans because they had more liberal parents; more of them went to college and more obtained graduate degrees; and fewer are religious. Higher income does not make Jews much more conservative, but neither does it exert such an influence on most Americans.

A sense of marginality in America also helps make Jews more liberal. Feeling insecure as members of a religious minority, they have a special stake in keeping prayers out of the public schools and religious symbols off public property. Moreover, feeling threatened by anti-Semitism and tending to identify their antagonists as clustering more on the right than on the left, many Jews feel impelled to support liberals and Democrats.

Jewish liberalism, then, arises out of social factors that happen to characterize many American Jews. Other Americans with the same education, with the same religiosity (or lack thereof), and with parents of the same political stripe would be almost as liberal as comparable Jews. But Jewish liberalism has a peculiarly Jewish dimension. It is the sense of being a minority, of not quite belonging, that lies at the heart of American Jewish identity.

#### APPENDIX: COMPARISON WITH OTHER SAMPLES OF AMERICAN JEWS

To examine the representativeness of the national sample of Jews from the 1988 survey, the following tables present distributions of key variables from other sources. The first column in all tables reports distributions from this survey (NSAJ88 = National Survey of American Jews). AJYB refers to the *American Jewish Year Book*. The AJYB collects estimates of local Jewish populations from Jewish federations and provides estimates of Jewish population distributions across the ten regions defined by the U.S. Census. NFO refers to National Family Opinion, Inc., a market research firm that has

amassed a list of Jewish households in a fashion similar to that used by Market Facts, Inc. 7-CITY refers to an amalgam of Jewish community studies conducted 1981-86 in seven major metropolitan areas (Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami, Chicago and Cleveland.) The data set was weighted to take into account variations in population size. LA TIMES refers to the national telephone survey of 1,108 Jewish households conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* in April 1988. The households were identified over several months of Random Digit Dial telephone surveys which queried over 50,000 households nationwide. TELENATION refers to an amalgam of Jewish households located through several months of national Random Digit Dialing by Market Facts, Inc.

The NSAJ88 sample's geographic distribution is very similar to that reported by the other sources.

Its Jewish identity characteristics also largely resemble those reported by the other sources. Insofar as the NSAJ88 sample differs from the 7-CITY data set, it seems to include somewhat more uninvolved (or what some may call "assimilated") Jews. The NSAJ88 sample contains more respondents who failed to report most of the rituals listed, but the 7-CITY data set includes more respondents without any Jewish schooling as well as those who never attend synagogue services. We should note that owing to the location of the seven cities (it excludes smaller cities and communities west of the Mississippi), the 7-CITY sample figures to be more observant than the true national average. If so, then the NSAJ88 sample's somewhat larger number of less involved Jews may be closer to the true national proportion than to that found in the 7-CITY sample.

The distributions of NSAJ88 sociodemographic characteristics resemble those reported by the three other sources. In most instances, the figures for the NSAJ88 fall within the ranges provided by the other data sets. Two exceptions are the high proportion earning over \$50,000 and the low proportion of elderly individuals age 75 and over.

NSAJ88 = National Survey of American Jews, 1988

AJYB = *American Jewish Year Book*, 1988

NFO = National Family Opinion, Inc.

7-CITY = Jewish Community Studies, 1981-86

LA TIMES = *Los Angeles Times* Survey of American Jews, April 1988

TELENATION = Market Facts, Inc.

Region	NSAJ88	AJYB	NFO
New England	9	7	8
Middle Atlantic	42	45	41
East North Central	9	9	8
West North Central	1	2	2
South Atlantic	17	16	20
East South Central	1	1	1
West South Central	4	2	4
Mountain	3	3	3
Pacific	15	15	14

<i>Denomination</i>	NSAJ88	7-CITY	LA TIMES
Orthodox	10	10	11
Conservative	31	37	35
Reform	25	31	26
Other	33	22	28
<i>Been to Israel</i>			
No	64	63	
Once	24	24	
Twice or more	12	13	
<i>Jewish education</i>			
Day school	6	10	
Hebrew school	51	47	
Sunday school	21	15	
Tutor	5	6	
None	14	23	
<i>Synagogue attendance</i>			
Never	18	26	
1-4 times a year	39	29	
5 or more times a year	43	45	
<i>Observance</i>			
Attended Passover seder	79	90	
Lit Hanukkah candles	81	79	
Fasted on Yom Kippur	59	68	
Have separate dishes	20	26	
Had Christmas tree	16	14	
Most close friends Jewish	71	89	

	NSAJ88	7-CITY	NFO	TELENATION
<b>Married individuals</b>	72	71	71	74
<i>Education</i>				
Graduate degree	29	28	37	24
B.A.	22	25	22	29
Some college	27	19	22	20
H.S. or less	23	28	19	28
<i>Income</i>				
Under 20,000	19	29	24	17
20,000-30,000	13	20	17	20
30,000-40,000	14	16	17	14
40,000-50,000	16	61	31	2
50,000 or more	39	30	29	37
<i>Age</i>				
Under 25	1	6	1	12
25-34	18	20	19	20
35-44	24	18	26	22
45-54	17	17	13	11
55-64	19	19	16	13
65-74	17	14	18	13
75 or older	4	7	8	7

**Table 1.1**  
**Political Identity (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>Jews 1984</b>	<b>Jews 1986</b>
Which of these best describes your usual stand on political issues?					
Very liberal	4	2	8	1*	1*
Liberal	29	15	36	35	31
Middle of the road	46	48	33	38	38
Conservative	20	32	18	24	26
Very conservative	1	4	5	1	4
You usually think of yourself as:					
Republican	14	37	5	12	18
Independent	25	26	11	31	19
Democrat	61	37	84	57	63
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as president?					
Approve	24	42	9		
Disapprove	60	38	76		
Not sure	16	19	15		

\*The 1984 and 1986 questionnaires used "radical or socialist" instead of "very liberal."

**Table 1.2**  
**Presidential Election, 1988 (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
Assume that neither Jesse Jackson nor Pat Robertson is on the major party tickets. Which of the major parties will you probably vote for in the 1988 election?			
Republican	16	37	4
Democratic	58	34	82
Not sure	25	28	12
Won't vote	1	1	3
If Jesse Jackson is the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, which of the major parties will you probably vote for in the 1988 presidential election?			
Republican	44	49	3
Democratic	24	25	92
Not sure	30	23	5
Won't vote	2	3	0
If Pat Robertson is the Republican vice-presidential candidate, which of the major parties will you probably vote for in the 1988 presidential election?			
Republican	10	27	3
Democratic	59	36	79
Not sure	27	33	14
Won't vote	5	3	4

**Table 1.3**  
**Jewish Perceptions of Anti-Semitism (in percents)**

		Agree	Disagree	Not sure
Anti-Semitism is currently not a serious problem for American Jews.	1988	14	76	10
	1986	26	54	20
	1984	40	47	13
	1983	35	45	20
Virtually all positions of influence in America are open to Jews.	1988	25	65	10
	1986	37	50	13
	1984	31	58	11
	1983	26	55	19

  

	Most	Many	Some	Few	Not sure
In your opinion, what proportion of each of the following groups in the U.S. is anti-Semitic?					
Big business	6	29	42	14	9
Union leaders	6	22	42	18	12
Hispanics	8	22	38	13	18
Blacks	14	32	34	10	11
Democrats	1	6	46	31	16
Republicans	3	17	48	16	15
Liberals	1	8	41	34	17
Conservatives	4	19	46	15	17
Catholics	9	29	41	11	10
Mainstream Protestants	7	27	43	11	13
Fundamentalist Protestants	16	34	28	7	15

  

	Yes	No	Not sure
Is Jesse Jackson anti-Semitic?	59	10	31
Is Pat Robertson anti-Semitic?	41	13	46

**Table 1.4**  
**Presidential Preferences, April, 1988,**  
**First and Second Choices Combined (in percents)**

	Jews	Other whites	Blacks
Which of the following politicians, some of whom are active candidates and some of whom are not, would be your first and second choices for president in 1988?			
George Bush	24	45	14
Mario Cuomo	51	15	18
Robert Dole	16	28	5
Michael Dukakis	60	38	39
Albert Gore	13	14	6
Jesse Jackson	5	10	87
Pat Robertson	0	7	6

**Table 1.5**  
**Impressions of the "Liberal Lobby" (in percents)**

	Jews	Other whites	Blacks	Jews 1984
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)				
Favorable	33	14	45	42
Mixed, not sure	46	57	50	46
Unfavorable	21	29	4	13
National Organization for Women (NOW)				
Favorable	51	28	58	41
Mixed, not sure	35	49	35	48
Unfavorable	14	24	7	11
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)				
Favorable	49	28	92	54
Mixed, not sure	37	47	7	34
Unfavorable	15	25	2	12
Planned Parenthood				
Favorable	78	63	82	
Mixed, not sure	16	23	13	
Unfavorable	5	15	5	

**Table 2.1**  
**Views on Affirmative Action**

	Percent in favor		
	Jews	Other whites	Blacks
Do you favor or oppose giving preference in hiring to each of the following groups?			
Handicapped	57	61	79
Women	36	40	74
Blacks	27	30	75
Hispanics	25	25	65
Jews	28	25	56
Asians	23	22	51

**Table 2.2**  
**Views on Social Welfare Programs**

	Percent agreeing			
	Jews	Other whites	Blacks	Jews 1984
In general I support the goals and philosophy of such government programs as welfare.	54	49	64	75
Government programs such as welfare have had many bad effects on the very people they're supposed to help.	77	74	72	64
I support efforts to reduce or eliminate government programs such as welfare.	32	35	20	43

**Table 2.3**  
**Views on Taxing and Spending (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
At present, the federal budget deficit is running at the rate of about \$200 billion per year. Please indicate whether you approve or disapprove of each of the following ways to reduce the deficit.			
Cut defense spending			
Approve	69	51	65
Disapprove	20	33	17
Cut domestic spending			
Approve	39	56	31
Disapprove	43	25	44
Raise taxes			
Approve	25	20	18
Disapprove	54	62	65

**Table 2.4**  
**Views on Church and State**

	<b>Percent agreeing</b>		
	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
Government aid for parents of school children to help pay for tuition at private or parochial schools?	19	24	29
A constitutional amendment to permit prayer in the public schools?	18	71	74
It's OK for a city government to put up a manger scene on government property at Christmas.	36	89	70
It's OK for a city government to put up a menorah on government property during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah.	37	81	60
Public schools should allow student religious groups to hold voluntary meetings in school classrooms, when classes are not in session.	51	75	71
It should be against the law for unusual religious cults to try to convert teenagers.	69	71	74

**Table 2.5**  
**Views on Abortion (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
What do you think about abortion? Should it be . . .			
Legal as it is now	87	45	41
Legal only in some cases	12	44	48
Not permitted at all	1	11	11
Suppose your unmarried teenage daughter told you she was pregnant and intended to have an abortion. Would you support her decision to have an abortion?			
Yes	75	35	35
No	6	37	37
Not sure	19	28	28

**Table 2.6**  
**Views on Homosexuality and Gay Rights**

	<b>Percent agreeing</b>			<b>Jews 1984</b>
	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>	
Whatever my personal views of homosexuality, I think that homosexuals should have the same rights as other people.	85	57	70	87
Whatever my views of the rights of homosexuals, I am troubled by the rise in their visibility.	35	62	48	43

**Table 2.7**  
**Views on Pornography (in percents)**

	Jews	Other whites	Blacks
Do you favor or oppose laws which would ban all forms of pornography?			
Favor	33	55	50
Oppose	53	30	32
Not sure	14	15	18
Do you favor or oppose laws which regulate where and how pornography may be exhibited?			
Favor	64	74	63
Oppose	23	17	23
Not sure	13	9	14
The Supreme Court recently ruled that <i>Hustler</i> magazine had a constitutional right to print a parody of Rev. Jerry Falwell suggesting he had sexual relations with his elderly mother. Do you agree with this decision?			
Agree	46	23	23
Disagree	36	59	48
Not sure	19	18	29

**Table 2.8**  
**Views on Capital Punishment (in percents)**

	Jews	Other whites	Blacks
Do you favor or oppose abolishing the death penalty?			
Favor	13	11	29
Oppose	74	73	44
Not sure	13	17	28

**Table 2.9**  
**Views on Symbolic Issues (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
Robert Bork, whose nomination to the Supreme Court was rejected last year by the U.S. Senate, got a raw deal. (Agree)	25	38	9
President Reagan was right when he said that the "contra" rebels in Nicaragua are "freedom fighters." (Agree)	22	33	12
Lt. Col. Oliver North			
Favorable	21	40	24
Mixed, not sure	31	37	42
Unfavorable	48	23	34

**Table 2.10**  
**Views on the News Media (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
There's been too much bad-mouthing of America by journalists and politicians. (Agree)	52	56	38
The news media			
Favorable	33	32	44
Mixed, not sure	45	42	49
Unfavorable	22	26	9

**Table 2.11**  
**Views on the Soviet Union (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
<b>In your opinion, which of the following best describes Russia's primary objective in world affairs?</b>			
Seeks only to protect itself against attack	3	5	13
Seeks to compete with the U.S. for influence	39	33	36
Seeks global domination, but not a major war	47	42	33
Seeks global domination and will risk a major war	12	20	18
<b>Mikhail Gorbachev</b>			
Favorable	26	24	16
Mixed, not sure	48	54	67
Unfavorable	27	22	17
<b>Soviet human rights abuses should not obstruct progress toward U.S.-Soviet arms agreements.</b>			
Agree	52	52	45
Disagree	29	17	17
<b>Soviet human rights abuses should not be a barrier to expanding U.S.-Soviet trade.</b>			
Agree	35	40	40
Disagree	45	27	21

**Table 2.12**  
**Views on South Africa (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
Do you think the U.S. should put more pressure on the South African government to end its apartheid racial system, less pressure, or about the same amount of pressure as now?			
More pressure	51	29	76
Less pressure	11	16	2
About the same as now	22	23	11
The U.S. has been too friendly with the South African government. (Agree)	32	26	49
Israel has been too friendly with the South African government. (Agree)	20	19	27

**Table 3.1**  
**Parents' Politics (in percents)**

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Other whites</b>	<b>Blacks</b>
When you were growing up, which of these best described your father's usual stand on political issues?			
Very liberal or liberal	23	13	26
Middle of the road	27	21	19
Conservative or very conservative	31	39	19
Not sure, or does not apply	20	28	36
When you were growing up, which of these best described your mother's usual stand on political issues?			
Very liberal or liberal	26	11	34
Middle of the road	29	24	17
Conservative or very conservative	20	33	23
Not sure, or does not apply	25	32	27

**Table 3.2a**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Parents' Liberalism: Jews (in percents)**

Degree of parents' liberalism	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
Low	14	36	50
Medium	6	32	62
High	7	23	70
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
Low	11	49	40
Medium	15	41	44
High	7	30	63
	Social-issues liberalism		
Low	7	35	58
Medium	8	40	53
High	5	26	70
	Support for church-state separation		
Low	11	6	82
Medium	10	6	84
High	5	2	93
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
Low	30	33	37
Medium	32	30	38
High	30	33	37

**Table 3.2b**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Parents' Liberalism: White Non-Jews (in percents)**

Degree of parents' liberalism	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
Low	34	35	31
Medium	16	41	43
High	15	28	57
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
Low	24	48	29
Medium	26	47	26
High	15	43	42
	Social-issues liberalism		
Low	33	38	30
Medium	31	41	28
High	31	39	30
	Support for church-state separation		
Low	56	14	30
Medium	52	15	34
High	47	12	41
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
Low	35	32	32
Medium	34	39	27
High	41	29	31

**Table 3.3a**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Region: Jews (in percents)**

Region	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
South	16	42	42
Non-South	8	30	62
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
South	23	44	34
Non-South	11	40	49
	Social-issues liberalism		
South	7	25	69
Non-South	7	35	59
	Support for church-state separation		
South	10	3	87
Non-South	9	5	86
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
South	38	31	31
Non-South	30	32	38

**Table 3.3b**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Region: White Non-Jews (in percents)**

Region	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
South	19	40	41
Non-South	24	36	40
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
South	30	45	25
Non-South	22	47	31
	Social-issues liberalism		
South	37	37	26
Non-South	30	40	30
	Support for church-state separation		
South	55	15	30
Non-South	52	14	34
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
South	28	36	37
Non-South	37	34	29

**Table 3.4a**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Education: Jews (in percents)**

Education	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
High school	5	32	63
Some college	10	33	58
College	10	29	61
Grad school	9	29	62
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
High school	14	48	38
Some college	12	42	47
College	12	35	53
Grad school	9	36	55
	Social-issues liberalism		
High school	13	47	40
Some college	7	40	54
College	2	28	70
Grad school	5	23	72
	Support for church-state separation		
High school	15	9	77
Some college	11	7	83
College	6	5	89
Grad school	5	1	94
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
High school	27	33	40
Some college	32	30	39
College	32	36	32
Grad school	32	31	38

**Table 3.4b**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Education: White Non-Jews (in percents)**

Education	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
High school	19	38	43
Some college	21	38	41
College	37	34	30
Grad school	35	29	36
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
High school	28	44	27
Some college	22	51	27
College	16	41	44
Grad school	13	49	38
	Social-issues liberalism		
High school	37	39	24
Some college	28	42	30
College	29	33	37
Grad school	20	38	42
	Support for church-state separation		
High school	57	14	30
Some college	52	13	35
College	50	15	36
Grad school	45	15	41
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
High school	30	39	31
Some college	42	30	28
College	35	40	25
Grad school	41	25	34

**Table 3.5a**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Income: Jews (in percents)**

Income	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
Under \$20,000	5	33	62
\$20-29,999	11	27	62
\$30-39,999	8	29	63
\$40-49,999	6	32	62
\$50,000 +	11	30	58
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
Under \$20,000	10	42	48
\$20-29,999	16	39	45
\$30-39,999	10	39	51
\$40-49,999	9	43	49
\$50,000 +	12	39	49
	Social-issues liberalism		
Under \$20,000	17	48	36
\$20-29,999	3	32	65
\$30-39,999	8	30	63
\$40-49,999	7	33	60
\$50,000 +	2	30	67
	Support for church-state separation		
Under \$20,000	15	12	73
\$20-29,999	6	4	90
\$30-39,999	9	6	85
\$40-49,999	5	4	92
\$50,000 +	9	2	89
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
Under \$20,000	25	38	37
\$20-29,999	35	27	39
\$30-39,999	30	34	36
\$40-49,999	35	26	39
\$50,000 +	31	33	37

**Table 3.5b**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Income: White Non-Jews (in percents)**

Income	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
Under \$20,000	17	35	48
\$20-29,999	23	40	38
\$30-39,999	25	41	35
\$40-49,999	24	33	43
\$50,000 +	40	33	27
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
Under \$20,000	21	48	31
\$20-29,999	24	46	30
\$30-39,999	27	47	26
\$40-49,999	23	45	32
\$50,000 +	24	45	31
	Social-issues liberalism		
Under \$20,000	36	39	25
\$20-29,999	38	36	26
\$30-39,999	28	39	33
\$40-49,999	24	43	33
\$50,000 +	22	40	38
	Support for church-state separation		
Under \$20,000	51	16	33
\$20-29,999	56	15	29
\$30-39,999	59	10	32
\$40-49,999	51	11	37
\$50,000 +	50	14	36
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
Under \$20,000	34	38	29
\$20-29,999	36	31	34
\$30-39,999	36	37	26
\$40-49,999	38	31	32
\$50,000 +	36	34	31

**Table 3.6a**  
**Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,**  
**by Church/Synagogue Attendance: Jews (in percents)**

Church/synagogue attendance	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
Never	12	23	65
1-4 times yearly	9	33	58
5-10 times yearly	9	27	64
2-3 times monthly	7	29	64
Weekly	5	42	53
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
Never	13	41	46
1-4 times yearly	11	42	47
5-10 times yearly	12	38	50
2-3 times monthly	8	37	55
Weekly	13	40	47
	Social-issues liberalism		
Never	6	29	66
1-4 times yearly	6	30	64
5-10 times yearly	4	34	62
2-3 times monthly	6	39	55
Weekly	13	50	37
	Support for church-state separation		
Never	8	6	86
1-4 times yearly	9	6	85
5-10 times yearly	8	4	88
2-3 times monthly	7	1	93
Weekly	14	9	77
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
Never	33	37	30
1-4 times yearly	34	34	33
5-10 times yearly	30	30	40
2-3 times monthly	29	25	46
Weekly	21	29	49

**Table 3.6b****Degree of Respondents' Liberalism on Each of Five Dimensions,  
by Church/Synagogue Attendance: White Non-Jews (in percents)**

Church/synagogue attendance	Degree of respondents' liberalism		
	Low	Medium	High
	Liberal political orientation		
Never	22	40	39
1-4 times yearly	17	40	44
5-10 times yearly	20	36	44
2-3 times monthly	23	35	42
Weekly	30	34	37
	Support for liberal tax and spending policies		
Never	21	43	36
1-4 times yearly	21	51	28
5-10 times yearly	18	52	30
2-3 times monthly	25	45	31
Weekly	26	46	28
	Social-issues liberalism		
Never	16	36	49
1-4 times yearly	17	39	44
5-10 times yearly	23	44	33
2-3 times monthly	30	44	26
Weekly	50	37	13
	Support for church-state separation		
Never	36	15	49
1-4 times yearly	43	16	41
5-10 times yearly	48	15	37
2-3 times monthly	58	10	31
Weekly	65	14	22
	"Dovish" approach to the USSR		
Never	44	32	25
1-4 times yearly	32	42	26
5-10 times yearly	41	32	27
2-3 times monthly	42	31	28
Weekly	29	34	37

**Table 3.7**  
**Views of Jewish Respondents about Their Jewishness (in percents)**

	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Fairly important</b>	<b>Not very important</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
How important would you say religion is in your own life?	26	44	30	1
How important would you say being Jewish is in your own life?	48	37	14	1

  

	<b>Very close</b>	<b>Fairly close</b>	<b>Not very close</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
How close do you feel to other Jews?	42	47	9	2

  

	<b>None</b>	<b>One</b>	<b>Two</b>	<b>Three</b>
Of your three closest friends, how many are Jewish?	12	17	26	45

  

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>
Jewish values, as I understand them, teach me to be politically liberal.	44	31	25
Jewish interests, as I understand them, lead me to be politically conservative.	13	58	29

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