

**In the Era of “Great Society”: Jews and
the Welfare State, 1963 –1969.**

*Dissertation submitted to
Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

TRITHESH NANDAN

**American Studies Division
Centre for American and West European Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi –110067
India
2001**




CENTRE FOR AMERICAN & WEST EUROPEAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

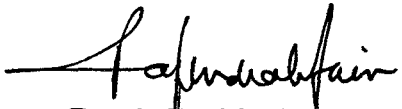
July 9, 2001

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, “**In the Era of “Great Society” : Jews and the Welfare State, 1963 – 1969**” submitted by **TRITHESH NANDAN** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this university is to the best of our knowledge, his own work, has not been previously submitted.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before examiners for evaluation.


Prof. R. P. Kaushik
(Supervisor)


Prof. R. K. Jain
(Chairperson)

dedication

In memory of
my uncle
Prabhash Chandra Jha

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(Trithesh Nandan)

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Preface

*To be a Jew in the twentieth century
Is to be offered a gift. If you refuse,
Wishing to be invisible, you choose
Death of the spirit, the stone insanity.
Accepting, take full life, full agonies.....
Daring to live for the impossible*

Muriel Rukeyser

The Jews of America are a wonderful community. They had not arrived in this country at the same time, but whenever they came brought with them culture of different nations and periods. America provided and served heaven to all these different groups. For Jews, America experience became really different - different in kind not just in degree – from any other society in which Jews have lived. Since the beginnings of Jewish Emancipation in the eighteenth century, Jews have welcomed an open society and, indeed, fought for them. And in this country, the Jewish community flourished and joined the mainstream. “America was safety valve and Heaven, place for renewal and source of support.”

By the time they reached the Atlantic, many immigrants had been reduced to a state of helpless passivity unable to make out what was happening to them or why. But slowly they started picking up during first half of the twentieth century. The boom in business where Jews provided sharpest acumen put them into centrestage. Though the Great Depression halted their progress, and the persecution in the Second World War by Hitler provided them sense of insecurity, still they recovered from all these tribulations to become one of the successful immigrant groups of the United States.

Many years of urban life in the European countries with stress on education helped Jews to catch upper echelon of the American society. The freedom in America to worship, speak, assemble and petition their government and their protection under equal law bound them a national community, even though their political interests were diverse.

In this work, I endeavour to present the Great Society of President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Jewish community in the United States supported this liberal concept. This work is divided into six different chapters.

The burden of Chapter One consists in explicating the nature and meaning of a Jew and then relating the definition of it. This chapter also goes through the genesis of Jews and their attachment to the philanthropic tradition.

Chapter Two deals with the historical experience of Jews and their enlightenment period due to which they became modern. This religion is heavily

involved in the historical experience of the Jewish people and coming to America was one of the finest experiences they must have felt.

Chapter Three goes through the concept of Welfare State. This concept stands on equality, freedom, democracy, solidarity, security and economic efficiency. Jewish quick to realise the democratic life in America through the President Roosevelt's policy, Liberalism came into wide usage in the United States during the 1930s. And Roosevelt through his New Deal pushed forward government's intervention to alleviate conditions of people after the Great Depression.

Chapter Four takes measure of another liberal concept propounded by President Lyndon B. Johnson in his Great Society. Jews penchant for liberal polices such as civil liberties, action against poverty and upliftment of all communities coincided with the policy adopted by this president. In fact, here was a president who could come to care about anything and everything he surveyed as he looked about.

Chapter Five goes through the concept of Jewish Liberalism. In all ages Jews were supremely conscious of need to aid and succor one another. It is substantively connected to its religious culture.

Last Chapter deals with conclusion, which provides a look on this topic, which is based on preceding chapters.

At the end of this work, there is a detailed bibliography, which has been used in this work.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Bible says the Jews descend from a Mesopotamian nomad named Abraham, who came with his flocks and his tents in the shadowy dawn of history to Canaan the place now called Israel. Jacob, who was the grandson of Isaac and son of Abraham, migrated to Egypt with his large household to escape famine. The prosperity came to Jacob's family in Egypt. Egypt at that period was a great civilization where arts and sciences flourished; architecture and sculpture were at its zenith. In this nation, the prolific family descended from Jacob retained its separate identity. Here they nurtured a dream, which the Bible says, a vision of a great invisible Spirit, who had promised them an eventful life in the land of Israel and a historic destiny as teachers of mankind. So the land of Israel is the Promised Land for all Jewish people. So Jews descended from the small nation, which came out of the Sinai desert into Canaan three thousand years ago, with a tradition of liberation from Egypt, under a lawgiver and deliverer called Moses. The land have been born as refuge a for oppressed Jewry, its founding law hold that any Jew could become a citizen at once by declaring he wanted to.¹ The miracle of the exodus from Egypt is an event, which Jews have never ceased to remember. "God Himself, personally and not through the agency of an angel, redeemed, His people from bondage".

The Jews are defined in various ways. There are different perceptions where Jews are called as a race or a nation, or a religion, or a people, or a sect, or a state of mind in non-Jews. Three factors always come in consideration when Jews are defined. Firstly, they began as a family. Secondly, Faith determines Jewish existence. Thirdly, the concept of nation came into existence before they had a land. For thousand years they lived as a wanderer protecting their faith from the onslaught from other religion. The Holy Land

¹ Herman Wouk, *This is my God: The Jewish Way of Life* (Boston, 1987), p. 16.

was their historic fulfilment. They come to know as “the chosen people.” In modern times their success story have been envied by all. Their prominence in different societies and countries where one can find them dwelling in the finest city neighbourhoods and suburbs, or playing in the luxury hotels and the upper- crust clubs are well known. Their achievements in different fields are also well known. Their tradition teaches, and Western religion does too, that they are the remnant of an old great House, with a historic purpose that is God.² Judaism, the religion of the Bible, is the classical paradigm of a God-made religion. A “Chosen people” has a right to exist and so think of itself only if there is a God in the world who is more than a First cause or the order of the cosmos.³ In every age Jewish religious expression is rich in mystical fervour. For many years, Jews have survived in the worst pogroms, persecution, and discrimination. The traditional view elaborates that the survival system is the law of God; the law is to be obeyed because it is the will of god.

“The Torah was given only as a means of purifying men” - so runs a famous rabbinic dictum.⁴ The Torah set forth the symbols as well as the civil and criminal law of Judaism. Conquest and exile suspended the codes in agriculture, damages, crime, and property. The religious code survived, and survives to this day also. The Torah is commandment, but it is much more than that. It is the whole of the sacred traditions, especially as expressed in all the writings of the faith, from the Bible to the present. Jewish religious law - *halakhah*- is concerned with conduct. It defines how a Jew must act in all aspects of his daily life. But there is another body of teaching in Judaism,

² *ibid.*, p. 21.

³ Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), *Judaism* (New York, 1961), p. 13.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 71.

distinct from *halakhah* and with an extensive literature of its own, which is also, on the face of it, concerned with conduct. The teaching comes under the general heading of *musar*-ethics. Judaism has always maintained that *musar* and *halakhah* are not, in fact, in competition; they are totally compatible. In the first place, *musar* is concerned with broad principles of conduct *halakhah* with precise and detailed directions.

The Jews have seen Hellenistic anarchy, when Palestine was under the Greek rule to the time of Hitler's persecution. Yet, they survived for such a long period and kept their faith intact. The Jews have long tradition of assimilating in a country they live. In the Greek rule, "they spoke Greek; they wore Greek clothing, ate like the Greeks, built Greek stadia and ran races naked in them, called Greek philosophy and science the only truth, and in the end worshipped like Greeks."⁵ Despite, they remained loyal to Judaism. They always made home in the state they lived. When the Jewish commonwealth fell two thousand years ago and its civil legislation ceased to be a reality, the Talmud sages laid down the rule for Jews in all the ages of exile: *dino d' malkuto dino*, "the law of the land is our law."⁶ Therefore, the traditional Jew, beyond his civic sense, is obliged by his religion to be a law abider; a Frenchman, if born in France; and Israeli, if in Israel; an American, if in America.⁷ It is this spirit that they have carried long through traditions intermingled with the society, and have produced new political, financial and intellectual leaders as well. In America, the variety of political opinion and involvement in philanthropic, social and secular activities is just as bewildering. So Judaism refers to an enormous body of practices, embracing one's entire life, more than it refers to a body of

⁵ Wouk, p. 25.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁷ *ibid.*

doctrine. The symbol and rites of the faith are stamped on every important part of life: on food on clothing, on shelter, on time, on speech. Mostly Jews lived tensed between two cultures, the faith and the environment they stayed. The spirit and sense of Judaism are so woven through the entire Talmud. The law has sharpened the Jewish sense of duty and served it as an iron wall of defence against temptations, aberrations, and enticements of centuries.

By tradition Judaism has six hundred and thirteen commands.⁸ Law codes are extracted from the Talmud. Sabbath law comprises one of the largest tracts of the Talmud. The Jewish Sabbath is a ceremony that makes steep demands to achieve a decisive objective. The pious Jew on the Sabbath does not travel, or cook, or use motor or electric appliances, or spend money, or smoke, or write. The Sabbath is first of all a dramatic gesture of the community, the immemorial collective gesture of stopping work and celebrating. The Sabbath also marks the founding of the Jewish nation in the Exodus from Egypt. The Jews three festivals that mark the turns of the calendar: *Pesakh* in the spring, *Shavuot* in the summer, *Sukot* in the fall. *Pesakh* is the feast of the Exodus, *Shavuot*, falling on the anniversary of the Sinai revelation, is the Day of the law giving, *Sukot* betokens forty years of wandering in the desert, the Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement where the Jew neither eat nor drinks anything at all, observing the strictest of fasts, and also spends all the waking hours in prayer. American Jew has won recognition of the day from civil authorities. In cities with a large Jewish concentration, Yom Kippur is virtually a legal holiday. Everywhere schools and employees accept as a matter of

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 35.

course the absence of Jewish pupils and workers. To a certain extent Yom Kippur has carried along with it in popular esteem the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hoshana. These two observances constitute a major religious event.

The Jewish diet discipline cuts sharply across general manners and ideas. In the kosher rules the preparation of food does result in a high degree of hygienic fitness. Kosher itself means pure. The obligations of dress are simple and fall mainly on men. The symbols of dress are tied to times of prayer. A custom of dress for at least two thousand years has been covering the head, especially during study and prayer.

The Jewish people were exiled from the Holy Land into Babylonian captivity in Biblical days. From there onwards Jew became the wandering Jew. But in those years of exile, Jews maintained the law and the common culture that meant survival in broken groups. The Judaism after 1800 AD saw a remarkable change in itself. A change that was bestowed with the dawn of modern scientific achievements. It enforced a new life to the Judaism. Moreover, the attachment to the scientific achievements in Europe allowed for the freeing Jews from old bondage. The ghetto life in Europe ended with the new ideas of Renaissance, the liberalism of the eighteenth century, and the loosening society of the industrial age. Germany, the stronghold of the old school, the place of one of the stablest Jewish communities, became a centre of apostasy. Educated Jews dropped their religion, their learning, and their very names.

The Jewish philanthropic tradition traces its origin to biblical times. It clearly shows that Jewish liberal values have been continuing for centuries. Earlier it was in the form of charity. In Judaism, caring for one's fellow man is spelled out in specific, legally binding obligations, which each man must heed. The need to help others, were present in Jews for all ages. This was especially emphasized for them by the innumerable persecutions they have suffered since the beginning of the Exile in the year 70 and it has not ceased in America too. During World War I, Jewish philanthropic efforts were consolidated through the establishment of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. After World War II, the united Jewish Appeal was initially established to help Holocaust survivors. These efforts show they have carried ancient tradition to aid and succour one another.

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild beasts may eat. You shall do likewise in the year of your Vineyard, and with your olive orchard.⁹

If one of your brethren that dwells within the gates of your city of land which the Lord your God gives you, should come to poverty, you shall not harden your heart nor close your hand, but you shall open your hand to him and you shall lend him that which you perceive he has need of. Beware that there be not a base thought in your heart, saying, "The seventh year, the year of release, draws near" and you turn away your eye from your poor brother, giving him nothing, lest he cry against you to the Lord, and it be a sin in you. But you shall give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, that the Lord your God may bless you at all times, and in all things to which you put your hand. For the poor shall never ease out of the land; therefore I command you to open your hand to your poor and needy brother that lives in the land.¹⁰

⁹ Hertzberg, p. 104.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 104-105.

There are, in fact, eight ways in the giving of charity, which is codified in the *Mishneh Torah*, in the section entitled “ The laws of giving to the poor”. It is summarised as follows:

1. The highest degree, exceeded by none, is giving a gift or a loan or taking one as a partner or finding him employment by which he can be self-supporting...

2. Giving charity to the poor without knowing to whom one gives, the recipient not knowing the donor’s identity, for this is a good deed of intrinsic value, done for its own sake. An example of this is the Half of Secret Donations, which was maintained in the Temple. The righteous would donate in secret and the poor would be supported from it in secret. Approximating this is giving to a charity fund. One should not give it to a charity fund unless he knows the collector is trustworthy and wise and conducts himself properly, like Rabbi Hananiah ben Tradyon.

3. Giving to one whose identity one known, although the recipient does not know the donor’s identity. An example of this would be the action of those great sages who would walk about in secret and cast coins at the doors of the poor. It is fitting to imitate such a custom and it is a high degree indeed, if the charity collectors (through whom one can give impersonally) do not conduct themselves properly.

4. Giving without knowing to whom one gives, although the recipient knows the donor’s identity. An example of this would be the action of those great sages who would wrap up coins in bundle and throw it over their shoulder. The poor would then come to take it without suffering any embarrassment.

5. Given before being asked.

6. Giving only after being asked.

7. Giving inadequately though graciously.

8. Giving grudgingly.¹¹

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 106-107.

The big wave of immigrants in the early 1900s brought the old learning to America with them. There was nothing else to bring. The children had to go to public school, and they went. Religious studies were pushed to the afternoon and the night. The spirit of Capitalism that permeated economics, politics, and the arts made the metaphor of the marketplace applicable to ideas, both religious and secular. Capitalism in its American formulation has encouraged both physical and social mobility to a degree unknown in other parts of the world. The idea of becoming an American by choice fits in very well with urban American values today. Freedom in choosing occupations, neighbourhoods, clothing, foods are highly valued especially in those places where most American Jew reside. In America, informal and flexible patterns of communal organisation developed early on Judaism was not an established religion. American Jews followed the Protestant pattern of organizing on congregational lines. In the nineteenth century, American Jewry was split between the Reform and the more traditional Conservative-Orthodox groupings. The massive East European migration at the end of that century was itself divided by a variety of ideologies, including socialist, nationalist, Yiddishist, Hebraist, orthodox and atheist.

In American Jewry, priorities in observance have changed in tune with time. Previously minor rituals and ceremonies have been given much wider observance. The *Bar Mitzvah* marks a crucial rite between childhood and adolescence for American Jewish youth. The synagogue, home observances of festivals, Jewish Community Centres and the like help demarcate a Jewish symbolic arena in both time and space. Generally, however, American Jews increasingly share the tastes of other Americans. Anglo-conformity marked American cultural policies but it was not imposed by the federal

government but through the zeal of English - speaking Americans at every level of society. Compulsory education and universal conscription during the two world wars speeded this process. From 1840 to 1950, there was intense competition by Jews in forming congregations, philanthropic groups and communal organizations.

American Jews were slow to enter politics. Earlier their allegiance remained largely with the Republicans. Jews like Edward Einstein and Israel Fisher, being sent to Congress by Republican majorities in New York. Oscar Straus and Simone Wolfe, both prominent Jews were awarded second-rank diplomatic posts abroad. While some of them like Henry Morgenthau Sr. and the millionaire Straus brothers identified themselves with the Democrats. But on a national scale and for some earlier decades of the twentieth century, the majority of American Jewish voters preferred the Republicans. In every presidential election between 1900 and 1928, with the possible exceptions of 1900 and 1916, more Jews voted for Republicans than Democrats. In the early years of the twentieth century, the Republicans still kept a strong hold on Jewish voters, at least during presidential election. Theodore Roosevelt won the hearts of Jewish people with his progressive appeal. In New York City, the Republicans were usually more generous than the Democrats in nominating Jewish candidates for local office. But it was more German Jews who were attracted to the Republican Party. For the east European Jews, the Democrats attracted them because of its policy for socialism.

Relations between the immigrant Jews and the various agencies of city government were repeatedly aggravated by disputes over such "courtesy" issues as Sunday blue laws, Sabbath observance by Jewish workers, the demands of teachers that

they be paid when they stayed home on Jewish holidays, Christmas observance in the public schools, and in later years the bitterly contested issue of “released time” in the public schools for religious instruction.¹² Some of these issues touched sore spots in the feelings of both Jews and gentiles; others raised difficult problems regarding the relation between church and state, since the

general principle of separation could not provide guidance for particular ambiguities.¹³ There were also antagonisms between Jews and Christians between celebrations of Christmas ceremonies in the schools. There were also boycott from schools as a protest against “sectarian ceremonies.”

The Irish-Jewish friction also emerged in 1930 in New York and Boston. Both these places have considerable number of Jewish and Irish catholic groups. In both cities, the depression had reversed or frustrated Irish advance into the middle class, and, in New York, the political hierarchy shifted as Jews and Italians made inroads into traditional areas of Irish power in political positions and the civil service. In Boston, Jewish migration during the 1920s into Irish neighbourhoods fuelled resentments. Added to these factors, certain explosive issues related to communism, the Spanish Civil War, and World War I sharply pitted the group against each other. The Irish were engulfed by the sense of displacement along with the perception that Jews, their main ethnic competitors, were more successful. The Irish faced an economic collapse during the Depression. The Spanish Civil was a bolt from the blue to the Irish community. To the Irish, the war was

¹² Irving Howe, *Word of Our Fathers* (New York, 1976), p. 379.

¹³ *ibid.*

part of an attack on Catholicism, and they rose to define the faith. To the Jews the war was part of struggle between fascism and democracy. Each supported opposite sides in the war. Also, the Irish youth groups attacked the Jews on their synagogues and shops. Efforts were made to work against perceived Jewish dominance in unions, employment, political and society in general. With these conflicts in New York and Boston it carried a prolonged and violent clash on a number of issues and flash points. Later on, the World War II changed the scenario. The economy stabilized and jobs became plentiful. On the local level, group of Irish and Jewish citizens organized tolerance committees and interfaith rallies led by the local clergy to denounce inter-group conflict.

The period of World War I through World War II was a troublesome one for all minorities Americans. Jews were viewed by many Americans as an alien force threatening America. By the 1930s, William Pelley's nativist Silver Shirts were warning Americans that there was a Jewish plot to take over America and rule it from Jerusalem. Economic hardship was taking its toll. People needed a scapegoat for their Depression miseries. The Jews were blamed for all of society's ills including the Depression of the 1930s. These images helped inspired Henry Ford's anti-Semitic ravings in the 1920s as well as those of Father Coughlin and his supporters and also Pelley's rural and navite based sliver shirts of the 1930s.

The Quota Act of 1921 limited the annual number of entrants to the United States of each admissible nationality to 3 percent of the foreign born of that nationality as recorded in the U.S census of 1910. In 1924, the year that the 1921 Quota Act expired, Congress passed the National Quota Act, which was even more restrictive than the

previous Quota Act. This new Act set national quotas at 2 percent of the number of the respective nationalities in the 1890 population. The Quota Act of 1924 also provided that beginning on 1 July 1927, the quota limit would be 150,000, allocated on the basis of the estimated national origins distribution of the Continental United States in 1920. That portion of the 1924 Act was postponed twice, but it finally became effective on 1 July 1929. The Act barred from entry all aliens who were ineligible for citizenship. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Congress passed other pieces of restrictionist legislation that limited groups on the basis of political activities and ideologies and medical histories. Much of the anti-immigrant sentiment expressed in the decade before the United States entered what became World War II grew out of strong isolationist beliefs and the specific belief that the United States had made a mistake when it joined the allied forces during World War I. These times were tough for American Jews as well as immigrant Jews coming to America after facing persecution in the European countries. By the time they reached the Atlantic, many immigrants had been reduced to a state of helpless passivity, unable to make what was happening to them or why.

No matter how cramped their lives might be, the immigrant Jews struggled against the assumption that they were locked into settled cultural moulds.¹⁴ But here started a tendency to learn and survive in these conditions. It is always true that acclimatising in an alien atmosphere is always difficult. But how one quickly adjusts into the condition, matters, most. But Jews were bread apart, not better, not worse, just different. The immigrants had first of all to work out some relationship with the

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 225.

surrounding American culture. Learning the new language turned out to be difficult, partly because they had little experience in the methods of modern learning. The difficulties experienced by immigrants in learning English were not merely technical, like mastering the “th” and “N” sounds or coping with the chaos of English spelling; they were basically cultural.¹⁵ Nevertheless, thousands of immigrants took themselves off to the night classes that the Board of Education ran three and four times a week in the public schools.¹⁶ As life shortly became easier, the dream of liberation from the gentile yoke was to be realized through an immersion in the alien culture but never a total immersion always, one that could be limited and controlled. By about 1905, most immigrant Jewish families were trying to keep their children in school until at least the age of fourteen; but all of them worked in the afternoons, evenings, and weekends.

The dispersion of the immigrant Jews began the very day they started themselves into a community. It meant, simply, moving away. The values controlling Jewish immigrant life by the twenties and thirties of the twentieth centuries were mostly secular, radical, and universalist. Patterns of ethnic separation continued even for first generation born Americans striving for middle-class respectability in secondary and tertiary areas of settlement. The street I lived on in the Bronx was almost entirely Jewish, but there were Irish and Italian streets nearby. Irish, Italian and Jewish children who attended the same public school during the day shared virtually nothing of their ethnic backgrounds, did not visit in each other's homes, or otherwise socialize each other. Everyone took their separateness for granted, keeping ethnic pride largely to themselves.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

But Jews provided the sharpest refutation of those who argued that American identity was based on one kind of religion or culture. In the U.S., Jews would build hospitals, orphanages, cemeteries, schools, fraternal societies and communal institutions just as they had in Poland, Russia, and other European countries. But now there was a difference. For the first time in the history of their Diaspora, they experienced not mere toleration as a group but the protection of equal rights as individuals. Often they felt the sting of anti-Semitism and many drifted or wrenched themselves away from the older Orthodox practices and from the Yiddish language, partly because of the pressures they felt to be culturally like most Americans.

There are also a number of definitions to be a Jew. It is also defined at different times, in different places and with different political agendas because of its diasporic conditions. The Jewish traditional law *halacha* states that a person is Jewish if he or she was born to a Jewish mother or has followed a prescribed set of procedures to convert to Judaism. A second way to define Jewishness is based not on birth or conversion but on conviction. According to this definition, people are Jewish if they consider themselves Jewish. This includes those whose mothers were Jewish and who see themselves as Jewish, those whose fathers were Jewish and who see themselves as Jewish and those who have been converted. One definition is based on an ancestral tabulation and if there is one Jewish parent then he is "half Jewish", a person who has one Jewish grandparent is "one-fourth-Jewish", and so on. Another definition is based on membership of synagogues or Jewish Clubs. American Jews, if they believe in anything, believe in the instrumental efficacy of religion. The Jewish religion is based on a pattern of life over a period of two thousand years in which a daily round of prayers and observances

punctuated by the more intense observances of the Sabbath and the festivals, reminded all Jews that they were a holy people. Judaism emphasizes acts, rituals, habits, a way of life.¹⁷

Cultures are slow to die; when they do they bequeath large deposits of custom and value to their successors; and sometimes they survive long after their more self-conscious members suppose them to have vanished.¹⁸ Americans have always believed that their society is different. It has no social classes. Anyone, through hard work, can be upwardly mobile. The upward mobility of Jews confirms this. Most Jewish immigrants came to America because they perceived it as the land of opportunity, but many also came to escape religious persecution. Transported suddenly into unfamiliar suburbs, the second and third - generation Jews - some of them children and grandchildren of those immigrants who had left behind in poverty began to look for new ways to live.¹⁹ Part of the reason for moving to the suburbs had been a wish to get away from the people who lived in them - yet one of the consequences was to force upon the new suburbanites major problems in self-definition.²⁰ The Jewish life underwent drastic changes during this shift from city to suburb. In suburbs, Jewish institutions also became modern. A place of many purposes, it combined house of worship, community centre, Sunday school social hall and hangout for the young. For Jewish children the suburbs, opened the possibility of an uncharted existence, and while a minority of suburbanites welcomed this as conformation

¹⁷ Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago, 1972), p. 135.

¹⁸ Howe, p. 618.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 613.

²⁰ *ibid.*

of having become “fully human”, the majority saw it as threat of deracination and wanted their children at least to “feel Jewish”.²¹

The Holocaust in Germany during the 1930s was a major shock to the life of American Jews. Their living conditions were divided due to this. At home: improvements in social and economic conditions, a growing sense of ease, comfort, security and in Germany the greatest horror in the history of mankind, the destruction of six million Jews for reasons no mind could fathom, no intuition penetrate. Memories of the Holocaust pressed deep into the consciousness of Jews, all, or almost all, making them feel that whatever being a Jew meant, it required of them that they try to remain Jews. This was in part a matter of fear; somewhat more, a matter of need; but most of all, a matter of honour.

When Israel was established, there was much talk about what this would mean for American Jewry. The reactions of most American Jews, whether immigrant or native born, was to show their solidarity with Israel less as a fulfillment of the Zionist or any other idea than a vibrant historical reality, the place where survivors of the Holocaust and other Jews in flight could make a life for themselves.²² Most Israelis realize intuitively, as do the majority of their fellow Jews throughout the world that on the survival of Israel depends, in a very real sense the entire future of the Jewish people as a whole. For non-religion Jews, Israel because the chief alternative to assimilation if a major consequences of the emergence of Israel upon American Jews was to strengthen their own sense of

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 616.

²² *ibid.*, p. 628.

worth there was another, somewhat paradoxical one: it enable them to postpone that inner reconsideration of “Jewishness” which the American condition required.²³ Almost all Jews agreed that Israel had to be helped, nurtured and kept alive. Israel has given a sense of dignity and worth to Jews everywhere. Not only has Israel served to bolster the moral of Jewish communities everywhere, but it has also become the strongest bond uniting their members. Helping Israel also became a major communal activity among American Jews, undertaken with the usual range of styles from reflectiveness to business.

The freedom of American to worship, speak, assemble and petition their government and their protection under equal law bound them a national community even though their political interests were diverse. In lobbying for remedies, they learned the art of working with others. They formed coalitions, made compromises and extended their connections and knowledge beyond the small circle of relatives and friends with whom they ordinarily dealt. Given political freedom, American saw the possibility of changing their lives for the better by altering some public condition. In the journey of political freedom, Jews utilised the condition in better way and became successful ethnic group. Their achievement in the society serves as an example to other ethnic groups how to assimilate. And living in America made Jews a “golden age” to their existence and survival.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 629.

Chapter 2

AMERICAN JUDAISM:

ANCIENT FAITH,

MODERN PEOPLE

Coming to America

The year 1492, in fact, Christopher Columbus discovered America. There is no question, however, that the crew of Columbus first voyage did include Jews.¹ The ship's doctor was a Jew, Maestre Bernal.² The early participation of Jews in the dangerous voyage of exploration should surprise no one, for in the year 1492, the populous and wealthy Jewish community of Spain was expelled from Spain by edict of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. The Jews of Portugal were expelled in 1497. The settlement in the New Land i.e., America is the seed from which a new Golden Age of Jewry has developed in the United States. The first batch of Jews settled in the New Land was found in the colonies of Spain and Portugal. They first arrived in the Dutch colony New Amsterdam later to be called as New York. By 1658, there was a Jewish community in New Port, Rhode Island.

The first migrated Jews were mainly Sephardim i.e., of Spanish descent. To establish as residents, the Jews had to struggle for the right to share guard duty with settlers. They had no permission to establish a public house of worship, as the records of these kinds are not present till 1728. They probably worshiped in private homes from the very beginning of their life in New Amsterdam. By 1763, the Jews built a beautiful Synagogue, a masterpiece of colonial architecture. Before the end of the eighteenth century they were added to the settlements in New York and Newport communities, large enough to found synagogues in Charleston, Savannah, Philadelphia and Richmond. By

¹ Joseph L. Blau, *Judaism in America: From Curiosity to Third Faith* (Chicago, 1976), p. 21.

² *ibid.*

that time there were between two and three thousands Jews in the United States, and in Charleston the largest community in the United States numbered about five hundreds souls.

The British started its colonial set-up by capturing New Amsterdam from the Dutch. They renamed it New York and confirmed the rights and privilege to the citizens the same as by the Dutch authorities. During the years of British rule, the small Jewish group in New York City formally organized under the name of Shearith Israel (Remnant of Israel).³ The small Jewish group also built the cemetery. One of the major responsibilities of Shearith Israel at that time was to carry on the education of the Jewish children of the city. They taught Spanish, English composition, Arithmetic as well as religious subjects. Even to improve the education in girls, the Shearith Isreal congregational school was co-educational by 1790. In the seventeenth century, the European Jews could be described as a people of merchants and traders and scholars. The international trade was just picking up which provided important fillip to the economy. The Sephardic Jews of colonial America produced a commercial elite group by doing many things including manufacture of spermaceti candles and merchandizing. Their engagement in ocean commerce gave them the greatest wealth, which touched Africa and the West Indies. The synagogues in the British North American colonies were located in major seaports. The Jews also enjoyed more freedom; legally when in 1740 an act of parliament permitted the naturalization of Jews in British colony. In order to Americanize themselves, the Jews started English exclusively.

³ *ibid.*, p.24.

“Ashkenazim” joined the Sephardim, the term used for Jews from Germany and their descendants in other countries. The religious ritual differed in some small details. But in America both the two groups mingled with less self-consciousness. Presumably the Ashkenazic-like the Sephardic-immigrants of those years were the more cosmopolitan members of their group in Old World and were less attached to local peculiarities than those whom they had left behind in Europe. The Jewish population was not large enough in colonial days, in any of the cities to support two synagogues, two cemeteries, two rituals baths, two slaughterers, two teachers and two readers.

The Jews also participated in the American Revolution. Many of them supported the Revolutionary cause and also participated actively in military affairs. They were engaged in furnish supply for the army. By this way, they already started considering themselves as an American. When the war had ended, Jews began to enter the service of the new government in a variety of roles.⁴ Due to high literacy among Jews they were able to serve in government service. In 1783, when the American Revolution was barely finished, the enlightened Jewish idol of the Berlin salons, Moses Mendelsohn, wrote a short treatise advocating religious freedom and the separation of church and state.⁵ It was beneficial to the Jews because of religious freedom expressed after the American Revolution, as they were able to enter into any career without being threatened by governmental action despite open practice of Judaism. They started communicating in English, as the German was preferred in the synagogue for sometime. Until 1836, the Jewish immigration into America was of individuals and isolated families, but it

⁴ *ibid.*, p.27.

⁵ *ibid.*

increased later on with the mass migration coming to America. It was due to the development of the urban centres away from the Atlantic coast had begun to develop by the time these immigrants arrived. In Germany, the Jews had suffered under heaps of taxes and restrictions and these things inhibited their progress and personal happiness.

The Ashkenazic Jews not only came from Germany but also from England, Holland and some parts of Poland. They founded congregation B'nai Jeshurun as the Ashkenazic house of worship. After 1828, the number of the Polish Jews increased dramatically. They also formed a congregation that followed the Polish variety of general Ashkenazic picture. Shaarey Zedek was the name given to this new synagogue. The Dutch Jews increased after 1847. They formed their own type of synagogue called as B'nai Israel. But all maintained the age-old messianic hope of a time in returning to the Holy Land. They were one in faith, one in law, one in hope and yet they felt more at ease spiritually when worshipping with those whose customs of dress, of food, of dialect were their own.

Politically, the situation of the Jews differed from colony to colony. Keeping pace of development the congregations in time became Americanized. The establishment of synagogues catered the expression of the Jewish community. The rabbi was the part of the community. In the colonies, the Jews had of more or less the same position as other dissenting sects in that they were largely ignored by the governing authorities and free to determine their own character. Thus synagogue represented the Jewish community. As contrasted the Jewish communities in Europe, the Jewish communities in America had no

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taxing power and could not call on the state authority to enforce the decisions.⁶ Their practice of the religion was based on “dignified orthodoxy”. The small community with strong business sense, the idea of “dignified orthodoxy” was an appropriate and viable pattern.

In the 1870s and 1880s, however, the resurgence of persecutions and pogroms, first in Rumania and then in Russia led to vast Jewish emigration from those countries, many of the emigrants ending in the United States.⁷ In Russia and Rumania, poverty and governmental anti-Semitism led many thousands Jews every year to migrate to America. From Austria, poverty had the same effect in the immigration of the Jews from this country. In fact, so enormous were the number of these “hurdled masses yearning to be free” that in some years between 1881 and 1914 Jewish immigrants in the United States exceeded in number the total Jewish population in the country at the time of civil war.⁸ The mass migration continued up to 1920, the year in which restrictive laws of immigration came into force. The migrated people came to stay here, as they had come with wives and children. So before the First World War the stream of immigration from Eastern Europe had risen to one hundred thousand a year.

The new immigrants brought with them their own traditions. The newcomers were in many respects completely different from those Jews who were living there. They had created a Jewish culture totally unaffected by others in the East European countries. They also brought their own semi-sacred language, Yiddish. For them, Yiddish language

⁶ Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* (Chicago, 1972), p. 19.

⁷ Blau, p. 20.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 45.

not only was a tone of conversation but also a tenuous connection to the lands of origin. This was Jewishness and also served as a temporary barrier to the dangers of Americanization. The use of Yiddish in daily communication, publication of newspaper and magazines in Yiddish, the development of a Yiddish theater, the carrying on of instruction in religious schools and preaching in synagogues in Yiddish—all of these contributed to insulating the group immigrants from the currents of American life for a longer period than had been true of any previous group of Jewish migrants to the United States.⁹ The traditional Judaism was far stronger in a Eastern Europe in the late in 19th century. East European Jewish life was remarkable, even in Jewish history, for the single-mindedness with which it persuaded the study of the Jewish law and banned every other form of education as heretical.

The East Europeans Jews tended to concentrate in the urban localities because of the availability of the jobs especially in the clothing trades. They became part of the working class. The East European Jews were attached to religion in deep sense. In 1880, there were 270 synagogues in this countries by 1890 there were 533 by 1906, 1769 and in 1916, 1901.¹⁰ The proliferation of the new synagogues was due to sudden coming of the East-European Jews in the New Land. The religion encapsulated form of their life so much that they were dictated by the religious observations. There were stark differences in the pattern of life between German and East European Jews. This can be emanated from the societal standards of life. At one side the Jews of Germany lived on an ethnically homogeneous society, and on the other side the Jews of East Europe were not

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁰ Glazer, p. 62.

as homogeneous as Germany Jews. To the established, middle-class Americanized German Jews of the 1880s, the East European immigrants were a frightening apparition. Poverty was prevalent in Jews of East Europe. There was, in fact, orthodoxy in approach by these immigrant Jews. The American Jews now living for centuries were also confused of the situations prevalent in the Jewish emigrants from East European countries. In 1902, the East European orthodox rabbis organized their rabbinical group, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis. The majority of the congregations and rabbis of the East European of the immigrants joined neither group, and there was no institution to serves as a center for the religious life of the East European Jews.¹¹

The Jewish immigration increased between 1900 and 1914. The immigration was higher than before. Though, it was nearly stopped during the period of the First World War. With the end of the First World War, immigration of Jews to America increased in leaps and bounds. It was due to a bolshevized Russia and the ravaged, economically depressed, and the emergence of anti- Semitism new states of Eastern Europe. But, in the meantime, much had changed in America.¹² The agitation against immigration, which had generally been conducted by the less educated part of the population (including many recent immigrations) against the insistence of a more enlightened upper class, now became more and more powerful.¹³ The Johnson Act, imposing quotas on immigration, became law in 1924, bringing mass immigration into end.¹⁴ The immigrants who came here were either impoverished traders or artisans or factory workers. They became

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 78.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 79.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

employed workers in urban pocket. But, the Jewish working class had a broader horizon than the working class of other groups. The United States, too, had changed, so that what the Jews had been adopting to was not a static environment but a dynamic social order.

Actually, the Jewish immigrants in 1870 came from different sections of the various countries of Eastern Europe. The traditions were also brought by them tended to be very ancient. There were dialectal differences from place to place, but Jews could understand and presumably communicate with each other, by using different dialects of the same language. There were differences in the mode of customary dress and detail of religious ritual even within the group of immigrants of a single country. The earliest Jews in America followed the Sephardic *minhag*; even when the majority of members of the earliest synagogues were Ashkenazim (after about 1730), the Sephardic pattern was maintained.¹⁵ The local variations of ritual also came into vogue when the immigrants from different pockets of East European countries landed in America. Forms of separate synagogues also came into existence. These small synagogues provided a kind of identification that the new comers could fill immediately, a buffer against the new world in which, as “greenhorns”, they felt so lost.¹⁶

Before 1880, when the immigrants arrived individually or in small family groups, the process of adjustment was fairly rapid.¹⁷ But later, when the Jewish inhabitants of a Russian or Polish Town immigrated as a body, settled together in some quarter in a large American city, maintained their own small school for their children’s education and their

¹⁵ Blau, p. 97.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 104.

own small synagogue, and in all ways served as a social brake on one another, adjustment came more slowly.¹⁸ The local community way of living was more of a Jewish kind than of national unity. The synagogue was the most characteristic and distinctive from Jewish organization. The synagogue to the Jews served the purpose of study (*torah*), worship (*abodah*), and philanthropy (*gemilut hasadim*). The synagogue activity became increasingly important on the Sabbath and the holidays. All these activities organized in the synagogue building called “sanctuary”. The commandment of study attracted a number of synagogue activity. The Sunday school served the purpose of the education of the Jewish children. Rebecca Gratz and Isaac Lesser started the earliest Jewish Sunday schools in Philadelphia in direct and deliberate imitation of Protestant Sunday schools. In the twentieth century, each of the major denominations has developed a cadre of educational professionals who create both curricular and co-curricular materials, which are then made available to the synagogues for use in their schools.

Synagogue evolved the idea of the community centre in the aspect of American Judaism. From the community centre the idea of self-fulfillment evolved, as the Jews were strangers, aliens, and object of curiosity even in the United States. In the nineteenth century American synagogues, elimination of the “oriental” elements in public worship was urged in part because non-Jews were fairly frequent attendants.¹⁹ The Jews being a minuscule in population and closer neighbourliness served a better basis for mutual understanding. The familiarity with the Old Testament also created a pool of shared allusions and common terms of sacred reference and also building bridges between Jews

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 122.

and non-Jews.

In 1917, it was estimated that there were about 34,00,000 Jews in the country and that they formed about 3.3 percent of the American population.²⁰ In 1927, it was estimated that about eight hundred thousand had been added by immigration and natural increase and that the Jews formed perhaps 3.6 percent of the population.²¹ Then after, the upward mobility of the Jews led the Jewish proportion of the American population more so fixed. The Jews of America by 1927 were probably 80 percent of East European origin. In fact, there was a change of the connotation of Jew in the American mind. In 1880, it meant, mostly a German middle class individual. By 1920, the German element played little part in the identification of the Jews. This change in the meaning of the “Jew” in the American language led to a certain resistance to and denial of Jewish traits on the part of the German Jews. But it also led to more conformances with historical Judaism by many German Jews.

The Great Revival

George Santayana once observed that “American life is a powerful solvent” and so it was for the millions of immigrants who have been reshaped in America’s image for over three centuries.²² Once having left the “old home” America substituted its own culture, which was plastic enough to allow for the retention of some of the sentimental facets of the old.²³ American Jews who had been one of the earliest ethnic group set up

²⁰ Glazer, p. 82.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 83.

²² Joseph B. Gittler (ed.), *Jewish Life in the United States: Perspectives from the Social Sciences* (New York, c 1987), p. 271.

²³ *ibid.*

their feet in this country became Americanized. This was to assert them in the process of assimilation in “melting pot”, milieu confronted by two independent historical streams; the historian of America Jewry faces unique problems of perspective. In the process of self-assertion, emergence of protagonist is more likely to occur. To survive in this process of acculturation, the Jews of America projected themselves as a modern man. Despite being fact, the Jews belonged to one of the old Semitic religion. They trace their origin as the oldest of three sons of Noah. The name Semite comes from Shem in the Greek and Latin version of the Bible, Shem is Sem. Shem is considered as the eldest son of Noah. The Bible tells us that everyone on earth was drowned except for Noah and his family and that all mankind are descended from his three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth.²⁴ While Shem and his son are of biblical antiquity, the Semite is of much more recent origin, dating from eighteenth-century Europe.²⁵

The history of Judaism is a glorious history of creative synthesis. The overcoming from shocks and a crisis to Jewish history is replete with examples. For any religion is a complex of beliefs asserting one possible interpretation of the ultimate nature of the world, and of the place of human beings in the world together with patterns of practice expressing and reflecting at least approximately, that view of the world. A major religion is one that has persisted through time, that has attracted adherents in relatively large numbers, and that has spread far and wide over the face of the earth. Though the religion remains same but meanings they bear, the interpretations put upon them, the understandings conveyed are subject to change. The changes of cultural scene, led to the

²⁴ Bernard Lewis, *Semites & Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York, c 1986), p. 42.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 43.

formation of varieties of Judaism. The different varieties while linking to the old religion brought some modification to sustain to their environment of the moment. Many religions did not have the vitality to adjust as the world changed and have disappeared as living faiths. Judaism has not disappeared; it has repeatedly proved its adaptability and flexibility and thus its right to rank with other major religion.

There is no precise definition of Judaism. There are a number of traditions that differ considerably from each other in Judaism. But in commonality, “Judaism” is a name of the class constituted by those various traditions. The number of traditions, which formed in Judaism, are all due to the impact of modern science and contemporary secular trends. Judaism, then, is a name for the many expressions of the spiritual life of those men and women in any place and at any time who regard themselves as Jews. According to a Jewish law, a person of a Jewish mother is regarded as Jewish.²⁶ Conversely, however, an individual born of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother is not Jewish—such a person is a gentile.²⁷ The Babylon Talmud gives the broadest definition of the Jew “He who renounces idol worship may be called Jew” (Megillah 13a). The Jewish life represents a sense of plurality by imparting multifaceted spiritual life as the standard of Judaism.

In the late eighteenth century, the political and economic barriers between the Jews and the peoples among whom they lived have tended to be eliminated. They became accustomed to the cultural aspect of the society they had lived. They got political freedom to air their ideas. It became in the process of assimilation from previous country

²⁶ Don Cohn-Sherbok, *Modern Judaism* (New York, 1986), p. 221.

²⁷ *ibid.*

to the new one. More or less, the Jews have been emancipated; have become “citizens” rather than “residents aliens”.²⁸ Career-wise the prospects of Jews enhanced. The better education to the children of the Jews always helped. They started getting into the public careers, which were rather closed previously. They got into advanced professional training courses. These courses were more open and chances of upward mobility were certainly there. At the same time, the discoveries in the science subject made life easier. It became more convenient and added Jews to the modern world. The modern engineering subjects gave the world a boost in technological aspect and evolvement of humans in the great science age. The opportunity was lying there. Jews have come to great prominence in the sciences, and even in engineering, which fifty years ago, was regarded as a field not open to Jews. The individual achievement by the Jews placed them in the upper strata of societal ladder. In fact, men are judged, by and large, by their individual achievements. The new relatively open society places the burden of proof on the individual. To put it briefly: as part of the enlargement and refinement of American civil liberties, the movement of constitutional law and public policy in the United States has taken a certain direction in order to accommodate the sensibility of emancipated Jews.²⁹

The Jewish tradition reinvented itself in the modern world, which was reinforced by the discovery in modern physical and social sciences. The Jewish tradition also modified in contemporary concepts of intellectual methods and western nations of aesthetics and morality. In the 18th century, the few thousands Jews who settled in colonial American quickly adopted to the unprecedented opportunities for social

²⁸ Blau, p. 4.

²⁹ Robert M. Seltzer, “New Looks at American Jewish History” *Commentary*, (New York), vol. 96, no. 2, August, 1993, p. 49.

intercourse with non-Jews and the broad political rights available to them. In every previous period of Jewish crises, there were leaders of genius to guide the perplexed. Dean Frederick J.E Woodbridge of Columbia University is reported to have used the image of the hollow tube open at both ends to describe the nature of man.³⁰ American society seems to have inculcated the posture of this thought, as it is open both as to beginnings and as to conclusions.

American religious expressions are enveloped in “Protestantism” and “Pluralism”. Here “Protestantism” should not be confused in Christianity terms. It has wider definition, which allows religious movement in multiplicity of conclusions. “Pluralism” manifests of the view that all-starting points are equally valid. In any case “Pluralism” seems to be the basis for inter-faith or multi-faith activity, which is so much more of a commonplace in American than anywhere else in the world that it might well be called the most characteristically American of all American religious practices.³¹ American cultural life concerns for practical consequences, which can be somehow called as an approach towards “pragmatism”. Benjamin Franklin manifested the same trait in the context of secular benevolence, and many other leaders in philanthropic activity have followed in Franklin’s secular path.³² The individual also lays a vital role in creating society a new. Every individual has the right to select, out of the wide range of possible ways of cooperating with his fellows, whichever way or ways he goes. In fact, Jefferson also viewed that each generation reconstitutes society and owes to the past no obligation to transmit its heritage.

³⁰ Blau, p. 8.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*, p. 9.

There have been Jewish adjustments to the American environment. The American religious life is based on the principle of freedom of religion. No governmental agency may impose any sort of religious association on the public, nor may it coerce the individual into affiliation with any religious association. In fact, principle of freedom from religion is present in the cultural ethos of the society. Furthermore, the Jews who came to the United States did not all arrive at the same time and what they brought with them in the way of cultural baggage differed according to the time of their arrival. They also came from different lands. In each of these countries of origin, there was developed at least one, and sometimes more than one, novel synthesis of traditional Jewish belief and practice with the culture of the country that was their host. Even those Jews who came to America from countries that abutted on each other brought with them customs that had developed differently in their various host environments.

Though Jews have always chosen to live in close proximity to their fellow Jews in American cities, there has never been any official designation of a Jewish quarter, even in early New Amsterdam. The Jews have always tried to live a good life. Judaism has characteristically inclined to moralism rather than to ecclesiasticism, certainly since the destruction of the Second Temple, and possibly since the age of the Prophets. There has not been much emphasis given to the clerical class on Judaism, otherwise, it would have been a seduction to ecclesiasticisms. The Jewish life has been beset with ideas of pluralism. It has always tended to learn the lesson of living with other religions. The Hellenistic Age and the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry, when pluralistic multiplicity has been a major feature of Jewish religious life.

The American culture has contributed the concept of voluntaryism to Jewish life. Voluntaryism, or the idea that a man's religious affiliations are his own concern and not the business of the community.³³ The Voluntaryism was a novel concept on the American scene in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These periods when the Jews from Eastern Europe arrived in America. The concept of voluntarism was new to them. Essentially, what voluntaryism has meant to the individual Jew is that his civil status, whether as a citizen or as a wage earner has been independent of Jewish ties.³⁴ He has political rights because he is a man, not because he is a Jew.³⁵ Officially, at least, his economic position is his by virtue of his common humanity and his unique abilities, rather than of his particular Jewishness.³⁶ In short, voluntaryism has proved to be the capstone of Jewish emancipation, for it has emancipated the Jews of America from any necessary connection with Jewry.³⁷ If a Jew in America supports Judaism, he does so because it is his will to do so; if he does not support Judaism his will is again his law.³⁸ The imbibement of voluntaryism made American Jews completely independent of synagogue control and also shaped American Jewish group in the reflection of American cultural and religious patterns. So the Jews in America have enthusiastically taken up the American way of life and consistently nourished this concept.

Through the centuries, the Jewish community was united by a common religious tradition. With the immigration to America, the migrant took the complex of traditions with them, as well as some of them moulded in the existing order of their new home.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *ibid.*

Most of the internal law of this community had been until the end of the eighteenth century in large measure the law worked out by the rabbis of Palestine and Babylonia between the second and sixth centuries of the Christian era, the law summed up in that enormous compilation, the Talmud, and interpreted by succeeding generations of rabbis.³⁹ This law governed in every detail, such as what prayers should be said and when and in what manner, but also other aspects of life – what can be eaten and how, what kind of clothing may be worn, and in what way one is to prevent ritual impurity.⁴⁰ Also, insofar as governments did not interfere, the Talmudic law or Rabbinic law decided questions of marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance.⁴¹ By the end of the eighteenth century, under the impact of modern science and contemporary secular trends, the monolithic system of Jewish belief and practice had undergone a process of dissolution. Many of the Talmudic law had become of no use. Regarding the concept of God a number of Jewish thinkers have found it increasingly difficult to accept the fundamental tenets of the Jewish faith: some wish to modify various elements of Jewish theism; imposing limits to God's omnipotence or omniscience; others have sought a more radical solution, wishing to substitute the concept of a supernatural deity in naturalistic terms. The Talmudic law has its presumed divine origin. Forms of rigidity encapsulate the Talmudic law. Even more complicating was the fact that Talmudic principles of long standing asserted that the customs of the Jews, a sacred people, also had legal authority and that customs which merely served to differentiate the Jews from other peoples could

³⁹ Glazer, p. 25.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *ibid.*

have legal authority for that reason alone.⁴² The Rabbi used to interpret the Talmudic law to Jewish people.

The reform in the internal structure of Judaism had its taste in European countries itself. The French Revolution had emancipated the Jews in France and the rest of the Napoleonic Empire – Holland, Italy and West Germany. The Jews of the central Europe had somehow become “emancipated” as a result of the French conquests by the year 1815. The French Revolution can be said as the foundation – laying stone for the Jews to have a “modern men” status. They remain as Jews and received secular and traditional educations and experimented their lives in the contemporary world. Germany was also not left behind in these stirrings of Reforms happening to the Jews around the Europe. Their ancient law and ambiguous status embarrassed many Jews. The religious service was one of the impediments in gaining full the status of full members of the German nation. “Reform Judaism” began as a movement of Jews of high social status who wished to dignify Jewish religious services and make them decorous.⁴³ They did not like the idea that the traditional Jewish service was (among the Ashkenazim) a rather cacophonous Hebrew out powering by the congregation, dressed in hats and prayer shawls, and led by a cantor (prayer - leader) using a decidedly un-Western and un-Germanic mode of singing, or rather chanting.⁴⁴

Discontented with the traditional services, laymen, and some rabbis, began to experiment with new services in the second decade of the nineteenth century in various

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

places in Germany.⁴⁵ The modern schools were set up, modeled on protestant schools. By these early reforms the traditional Jewish education learning only the Bible and the Talmud came into question. All these changes were violently attacked by orthodox Rabbis. But inadequate numbers hampered the call by orthodox Rabbis. The Reform was largely opportunistic desire to adapt the western norms. These were early phases of modern Jewish thought. The tendency developed among the German Reformers to emphasize the progressive nature of Jewish law, the fact that it had, indeed, developed and changed continually in response to different conditions. And since a number of prophets had indeed emphasized social Justice and ethical behaviour and had attacked priestly rites, they seemed well suited to serve as vanguards of Reform Judaism.

The first batch of the German Jewish immigrants to American consisted of impoverished and less educated people. Later on better-educated folks began to come over to America. Initially, the rabbis who came here had already played some role in the fight over reform. They were educated in German universities so they tried to put influence by their education. But somehow reform movement started in America. The first reform movement to start on American soil was in Charleston, South Carolina in 1824, centered in demand that the ritual of the synagogue shall be purged of the accretions of the centuries and restored to its classical simplicity and brevity so that Jewish services might achieve intelligibility, dignity, and decorum of Protestant worship. The movement did not stop but continued on. Later in the 1840s and 1850s, small groups of German Jews in the United States banded together in "Reform Vereine" ("Reform societies"), which could in time became "temples," as the Reformers preferred to call

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

their synagogues.⁴⁶ In a face burst of fine rhetoric they said: “We wish not to *overthrow*, but to *rebuild*; We wish not to *destroy*, but to *reform* and *revise* the *evils* complained of: we wish not to *abandon* the institution of Moses, but to *understand and observe them*; in fine we wish to Worship God, not as slaves of *bigotry and priest craft*, but as the enlightened descendants of that chosen race.”⁴⁷

The reform movement showed that literary and religious creativity had been perennially alive in Judaism, so that this ancient religion had continued through the ages to produce new ideas and new patterns of expression appropriate to the time and place of their development. Interestingly enough, the struggle for Reform was far more successful in America than in Germany, primarily because of the absence of any thing like a community structure for Jewish life in this country. Isaac Harby, a noted journalist and playwright, formed the Reformed society of Israelites. He demanded a number of moderate changes in the synagogue ritual such as, “an abridgement of the long service, repetition of some of the important Hebrew prayers in English, removal of references to the resurrection of the dead, and a regular discourse in English on the scriptural reading prescribed for the week.”⁴⁸ But when Isaac Harry demand was entertained by Sephardic Congregation, Beth Elohim of Charleston, South Carolina, seceded from the congregation and was compelled to form a Reformed Society of Israelites. The membership increased in leaps and bounds in short span of time. Its prayer service was not only abbreviated and conducted to a considerable extent in English, but also included instrumental music and worship with bared heads on the part of the male members of the

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁸ Bernard Martin, *A History of Judaism: Europe and the New World* (New York, 1974), p. 289.

congregations. Pozanski was the first Jewish Clergyman with marked Reformed tendencies in America. **Isaac Mayer Wise** (1819-1900) a leading figure of the Reform movement can be called as **“the master builder of America Reform Judaism.”**

Isaac Mayer Wise reform movement called for a complete autonomy for each congregation. He was for a national federation consisting of all local congregations. He emphasized that all congregation must also collaborate in the establishment and maintenance of a seminary for the training of indigenous rabbis, so that the American congregations would no longer be dependent on European-born and European-educated spiritual leaders who were not always attuned to their new environment. But later on Wise's methods were criticised in a conference of orthodox and Reform, where he compromised his own position for the sake of unity. Actually, he did not favor a reform of Judaism so extreme that it would sever its connections with historic Jewish faith and practice.⁴⁹ Wise's indefatigable efforts bore fruits when a national federation of congregations came into existence in the year 1873.

The development of Jewish communities with no over - all headships, centrally or locally, with many synagogues and many uncoordinated institutions dealing with the different aspects of Jewish life, made the task of the Reformers easier. Also the year 1875, Isaac Mayer Wise opened the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. This was to establish Jewish education in America. And also existed in the Reform process a kind of more radical group under the aegis of David Einhorn. He refused to preach in English. The Pittsburgh platform was interaction between the Reform and the Conservative

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 295.

Judaism. They largely compromised their differences and adopted a statement of principles for the theological programme of the American Reform rabbinate. With admirable terseness and directness, it summed up the final position arrived at by the Reform movement. Reform was now equipped with and organisation of congregations, a seminary, and a platform.

Between the year 1880-1900, Jews made significant growth of prosperity and one of the factor to it was the Reform movement in their faith. This Reform Judaism was to bring Jews in the realm of non-Jewish world. All the changes in ritual introduced by reform brought Judaism closer to America middle class Protestantism; but, again, this was not the only reason for the introduction of these changes.⁵⁰ The effect of these changes was to make the social atmosphere of the synagogue that of a Protestant Church of the upper and upper-middle classes.⁵¹ The changes were brought in the ritual practices by the synagogue and outside of it too. Reform Jewish religious education consisted only of Sunday school. These Reform was to keep in touch with their increase in social status and the age – old practices of Judaism were consequently denounced as superstition, and any prayer that could not be believed literally was branded a lie no self-respecting man should be asked to repeat. The historical basis of Jewish unity is the law and authority in the Jewish religion resides not in individuals but in the law as interpreted by the whole body of men whose education permits them to understand and interpret it.⁵² In the nineteenth century and for the first time in Jewish history, qualified interpreters of the

⁵⁰ Glazer, p. 46.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 56.

law rejected the traditional principles of interpretation and asserted that they could take upon themselves the right and the responsibility to create a new law.⁵³

The course of the Reform movement in the twentieth century reveals discontinuities with its nineteenth century history. The new immigrants introduced a different type of Jewish piety, less rationally formulated, far more emotional in its expressions than the more radically rational and “enlightened” piety of the founding fathers of Reform. Many of the Reform’s experiment disappeared. Even Sunday morning services were discontinued in many Reform congregations. Now Hebrew studies were paid enough attention in the Reform congregations. There was also emphasis given to study Jewish law [*halakha*]. By 1937, American Reform movements were no longer dominated by a majority of rationalistically and intellectualistically focused leaders of Jewish origin.⁵⁴ The Columbus platform, endorsed by the movement in 1937 embraced Zionist ideals, promoted the use of Hebrew and revived Jewish practices that had previously been set aside.

Conservative Judaism emerged from the ranks of the Reform movement as a reaction against its radical tendencies. In the United States a number of like-minded adherents of the positive-historical approach to Judaism established the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, which was later, headed by the Cambridge scholar Solomon Schechter. He made a vitally important contribution to the conservative movement by his formulation of the doctrine of “Catholic Israel” (*Klal Yisrael*), a

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Blau, p. 59.

doctrine that is easily transformed into the dominance of the laity.⁵⁵ He emphasized the importance of traditional rituals, customs and observances, as well as belief, while simultaneously stressing the need for a historical perspective. The Conservative Movement endorsed a general policy regarding the tradition. Conservatism also emphasized that East European immigrants should adjust to the social, economic and cultural conditions of America while preserving their Jewish identity. For this reason, Conservative Jews were anxious to conserve the essential customs, beliefs, traditions and rituals of the faith. The conservative movement has from its inception been dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state.

Reconstructionist Judaism came on the scene under the influence of Mordecai Kaplan. Unlike the Reform and conservative movements, Reconstructionist Judaism developed out of the thinking of an individual Jewish scholar. This type of Judaism has acted as a leaven within both Reform and conservative. Based on the concept of Judaism as a civilization, Reconstructionism hallows the sancta of Jewish life: language, history culture, folkways, social organization, and dedication to Israel.⁵⁶ Though smaller in size among the various Judaic denominations, it has had a profound impact on American Jewish life. This denomination showed an attempt to restore the ancient Judaic faith deliberately and self-consciously. As far as the conditions of modern life permit, traditional practices are to be maintained in their traditional form; the interpretations, or “rationales”, adduced to explain and justify traditional practices are to be reconstructed in the light of current conditions and the current state of knowledge.⁵⁷ In the Judaism of this

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵⁶ Cohn – Sherbok, p. 130.

⁵⁷ Blau, p. 64.

form the traditional narrative (*hagguda*) has been tied to the scriptural story of the Exodus. The Reconstructionist *hagguda* associates the same joyous ceremonial festivity with more recent events in Jewish history by viewing the holocaust years of the Nazi drive for a “final solution” of the Jewish problem as equivalent to the enslavement of the children of Israel in ancient Egypt, and the ultimate defeat of the Nazis and the establishment of the state of Israel as the modern analogue of the Exodus and the arrival in the promised land.⁵⁸

The main aim of Kaplan was to inject objective and adequate rationale of Judaism through this form. So in the tradition of Judaism, he presented a traditional Judaism with a reinterpretation of God as a power in the Universe, other than ourselves, making for the realization of human ideals.⁵⁹ By his use of the word “God” he means a natural power, part of the natural order of the Universe.⁶⁰ Kaplan described Judaism into the form of a cultural unit and a “civilization.” His means was based on the “advance civilization of the Jewish people” where religious element can be separated from the rest of Jewish life, where individual matter must have some say in this faith. The cultural aspect of the Jewish sense be fostered which could become stronger than their religious life. In line with the sociological views of the French–Jewish master, Emile Durkheim, Reconstructionism interprets the Jewish religion as the expression of the group-consciousness of the Jewish people.⁶¹ Vital religion cannot be detached from the cultural matrix to whose ideals it gives expression.⁶² Group life fosters the development of

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² *ibid.*

creative individuality because there is an organic relation between the group as nourished and the individual as nurtured. To maintain vitality in the life of the Jewish group, its expressions must be translated into language that conveys both intellectual and emotional meaning to modern Jew.

The Earlier orthodox had largely disappeared by the way assimilation into the dominant Christian Community by marriage or conversion. But the new Orthodox reappeared in the twentieth century. All this was possible due to immigrants Jews of the 1800–1914. They largely came from East Europe. They had preserved strong traditional outlook. Though they were not a significant group on the American scene. Charles S. Liebman defines them, “Orthodox Jews as all Jews who are affiliated with nominally Orthodox synagogues”, this definition touches upon synagogue life, which is the most meaningful expression of American Orthodoxy.⁶³ The individual participation lies in the synagogue. Those who live by the code of Jewish practice (*halakha*), it actually defines true form of orthodoxy. The Hasidic Jews represents the most visible segment of Orthodox Judaism. They retained the East European habits of dress and personal manner. American Orthodoxy is a congeries of fragmentary sectarian groups, each one of which is itself composed of independent synagogues.⁶⁴ The Orthodox synagogues consisted of elementary “day school”, a Yiddish speaking elementary “day school”, a Hasidic “day school” two high schools for boys and one for girls, Hasidic higher schools, and a school for advanced Talmudic study with the “national constituency”.⁶⁵ Orthodox Rabbis endorsed *yeshiva* only legitimate higher leaning in

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 67.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 68.

America. Along side *Yeshiva University* other *yeshivot* and day schools were created throughout the country. So the Orthodox Judaism rested on a common law of shared belief and practice biblical and rabbinic teaching about the nature of god and his activity constituted the foundation of the faith.⁶⁶ So this has also presented to Jews one of the life options in America.

The enlightenment brought profound changes in Jewish life. This transformed Jewish also to inculcate thoughts and culture of non-Jewish segments. They strolled through many thorny paths. They lived for centuries without having a homeland. They faced enough anti-Semitism for many years. They came to America under the leadership of Columbus. From this onwards a new Golden Age of Jewry has developed in the United States. They formed different variations based on tradition and innovation. When the immigrants Jews came to America, they brought different themes they had adopted in Europe. German Jews were liberal, while as secularized east European were largely socialist. They made their religion with science, psychotherapy and liberal politics. The Jewish know that they adopted in daily rituals were developed over a period of two thousand years. This consisted of daily rounds of prayers and observances punctuated by the more intense observances of the Sabbath and the festivals reminded all Jews that they were a holy people. Judaism emphasizes acts, rituals, habits a way of life. They want that the society they live should be modern. In this way, so that, there is not an iota of hatred to any one. So the liberalism, progress, and reform, they inculcated and made part of their life.

⁶⁶ Cohn – Sherbok, p. 45.

In the United States of America, where people of all faiths have tended toward moralistic interpretations of their own traditions, Jews have followed the pattern of their own varieties of ways.⁶⁷ The secularized form guides Jewish behaviour. This is the Jewish concern for social justice. The American Jews are votaries of civil liberties and in favour of policies, which improve the position of working milieu. They support free publication and liberal publications. The Jews of America express religious attitudes indirectly in their concern for social problems. They have had to rescue hundreds of thousands of Jews from Germany and Austria, help the Jewish community of Palestine, try to save the millions of Eastern Europe and a new state of Israel, help the endangered Jews of modern countries. While in the process of becoming modern, they have not stopped of being a Jew. They gave stress on education and that too on modern education. Nevertheless, the traditional education continued even in the microscopic form. Their gospel of modernity lays in Philanthropy, Zionism Jewish organisational life, attachment to Yiddish, and interest in Hasidism, a love of Hebrew former religious affiliation and Jewish food. The cycles of the terms "Orthodox", Conservative, "Reconstructionist" and "Reform" have been in the part and parcel of the American Jewish life. They happen not to be slaved by any binding of synagogues, but to practice the modern feature made them so successful in every strata of American life.

The Jews ploughed the religious feelings and spiritual needs through social welfare activities, ethical causes, cultural creativity and stimulation. The pluralistic culture of the United States served as dignified host to the Jewish tradition. The hospitality provided by the United States gave an opportunity for the Jewish religion not

⁶⁷ Blau, p. 70.

to become extinct. In the absence of dogma and authority Jews became Americans for over three centuries. The American Jews presented themselves as a skilled interpreter in the complex history of human life. They never straitjacketed themselves in the religious orthodoxy. They kept wandering as the entire probable against this religion in the European countries, but a solid start on the American soil made American Judaism very ancient faith, a modern outlook.

Chapter 3

Citizens of a Welfare State: Jews and American Liberalism

“Tryst With Destiny”

The welfare state has been unearthed at least as far back as eighteenth century Prussia, where the leaders of that nation employing police power to enforce rules. Also in the sixteenth and seventeenth century when the formation of nation states were in progress in western Europe, the concept of good life became buzz word among the policy makers. The first sources of welfare assistance were family, friends and the community and assistance of these natures was called mutual aid. It was mutual because people were dependent on one another. In later age, the church became active to carry assistance programme. And nature of assistance was informal. There were no formal eligibility requirements, no application forms to complete and no background investigations. Later on, due to complexities in societal pattern led to welfare assistance based on laws.

The first laws designed to curb poverty were passed in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹ In the eighteenth century the Industrial Revolution made a shift from and agrarian-based economy to an economy based on the industry. Cities became the centre of development in the industrial economy. The centralised government that emerged in economic transition played a stronger role in many aspects of society including social welfare concept. Society became virtually an adjunct of the market. The social and economic changes occasioned by the growth of heavy industry made the moral exhortations more vibrant to form liberal assistance. In fact, there are

¹ Diana M. DiNitto and Thomas R. Dye, *Social Welfare: Politics & Public Policy* (New Jersey, 1983), p. 21.

values attached to the concept of welfare state. These are equality, freedom, democracy, solidarity, security and economic efficiency.

Democratizing economic life is one of the mainstay formulations of welfare state. There is, in fact, greater public influence over investment decisions by a variety of means: increased public investment, state investment banks, investment of public pension funds based on publicly determined criteria, public ownership, placement of representatives on corporate board of directors. This system also attempts to remove community development from the hands of real estate, speculators and business interests. Welfare state also takes measure of some basic needs, which are applicable to every strata of the society. Actually, the forms of such patterns are education, healthcare, legal aid and recreational facilities. These services financed from general revenues are provided free or at nominal rates and as rights of citizens. The basic necessities of life can also be fulfilled by social insurance to citizens. Schemes to protect citizens against loss of income through old age, illness, disablement and unemployment are a central feature of welfare state organization.² Welfare state aims at a “vertical” redistribution of resources through progressive taxation of incomes and wealth. To fit into realm of democracy, citizens have full opportunities to participate in local governments and the administration of social welfare.

Policy making is frequently portrayed as a rational process, in which policy makers identify social problems, explore all of the benefits and costs of each alternative solution, compare benefits and costs of each alternative solution and select the best ratio

² Norman Furniss and Timothy Tilton, *The Case for the Welfare State: From Social Security to Social Equality* (Bloomington, 1977), p. 44.

of benefits to costs.³ Towards fulfilling welfare policy, government does nearly everything from taxation, national defence and energy conservation to health housing and public assistance. To satisfy the need of every section of society, government involves in a policy making process which consists of Identifying Policy Problems, Formulating Policy Alternatives, Legitimizing Public Policy, Implementing Public Policy and finally Evaluating Policy. In social welfare policy wide area is to be covered. Alfred Kahn has made this observation "Social services appear everywhere in the modern world. They continue to exist and even expand as productivity increases and average standards of living are raised. Indeed they are seen as part of the improved standards."⁴ Kahn emphasizes the idea that welfare policy has to do with the principles on which specific welfare programmes and service delivery systems are based over time. Effective and appropriate social welfare policy is not just an impulsive response to a problem, but a reasonably well thought out long-range plan. Certainly, social welfare and social work have deep roots in religion and humanitarianism. Present day welfare programmes are institutionalization of the philanthropic impulse and love of mankind.

Colonists who settled in the New World adopted English welfare traditions. In fact, contemporary welfare institutions are a response to the conditions and risks of industrial labour in a market economy, but industrial nations have responded in different ways as a result of their particular historical traditions and circumstances. Industrialization also happened at the same time when in nascent stage, the United States was about to realize a truly democratic social structure. The year 1815 is significant

³ DiNitto, p. 22.

⁴ Charles S. Prigmore and Charles R. Artherton, *Social Welfare Policy: Analysis and Formulation* (Massachusetts, 1986), p. 8.

because it markets the resumption of peaceful relations with Europe and that is consequently benchmark not only in American economic development but also in the history of immigration.⁵ The African slave trade was legally ended in 1808. American colonists adopted many aspects of the Elizabethan welfare system. The desire to make society more democratic inspired many reforms in the years 1815-1845. The elaboration of free public schools and the heroic advances of the evangelical churches in these years testified to a feeling that more discipline was needed, that the individual and society that were called to improve themselves had indeed much to improve.⁶ Though in the formative years of social-welfare institutions, the plight of Indians blocks did not enter into anyone's thinking.

As a young nation, social equality and liberalism received little systematic criticism or even explicit formulation. Thomas Jefferson set forth about the nature and function of government. It also postulated a positive notion about social welfare; government exists to protect and enhance the rights of its citizens. In that context "social security" implied not a great social – insurance programme but simply the safety of life and property from those who threaten it. The heirs of the original colonies were the states that also enacted all legislation touching social welfare – poor relief health, education, labour, crime, and the family. The federal government was like a league formed by the states to manage certain common interests in diplomatic affairs, the public lands, and interstate commerce.

⁵ James Leiby, *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States* (New York, 1978), p. 7.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 9.

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⁶ *ibid.*, p. 9.

In the United States each state government could legislate as it chose and policies could vary greatly among the states. Slowly the remarkable expansion of the economy led to “economic liberalism”, a doctrine also elaborated first by Adam Smith in *An Inquiry into the Nature and causes of the wealth of Nations* (1776), where government minimal intervention in terms of the economy was sought. He looked for whatever could increase production. Smith’s idea brought out the division of labor and also men worked harder and produced more. Adam Smith’s idea coincided with time. The rise of the factory system greatly increased the division of labour and more and more products were sold at market rather than consumer directly. It set a time frame for social welfare in which the more we produce, the better we live. It followed that government should seek to increase production. Smith argued that the best way to do this was to let the individuals decide for themselves how they wanted to work or invest or trade – better not just for them, but also for everyone in the long run. Society was thought to be a collection of individual. Social action was largely a voluntary do-it-yourself arrangement among individuals with a common interest. Thus the energies and initiatives of the nineteenth century built America. This set of examples provided this country a land of opportunity and freedom for the ordinary man.

In the years 1815-1845 gave concrete expression to many nations underlying welfare institutions in the period.⁷ They elaborated the tradition that social relations were best ordered in the form of a face-to-face community much like a rural village; that the group was properly united by a common moral authority—usually the Bible and supplementary divine revelations, rightly interpreted – which laid down how people ought

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 38.

to at and respond to others; that within this framework people were more or less equal children of God, stewards of His bounty, sharing in it among the vicissitudes of life.⁸ In the United States a state acted on the poor relief programme. In 1817, businessmen, physicians and clergymen, who could see the problems, set up New York, a society for the prevention of pauperism. Some more organizations of these natures mushroomed in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Massachusetts and the City of Philadelphia. These organizations functions were based on a systematic critical view and to develop their plans in a rational way. This led a foundation stone of science of social welfare and a profession of social work.

Established in the mood of sympathy and hope, the welfare programmes often embodied clear insights into ways of helping or dealing with people. The combination of philanthropy and prudence extended with particular force to education.⁹ They represented a creative overlap of the religious and philanthropic impulse with the exciting innovations in formal education taken as a whole. In fact, the awareness for social change was eminent. The educational emphasis was given for the handicapped. The medical science also grew. Due to this attention on medical science, it also led to major discovery in curing dreaded disease. There was also a breakthrough in the treatment of mental illness. So America represented basis of social justice in the form of citizens supposed to have equal rights, substantially equally dignity of person and equality of opportunity. The antecedents of modern social welfare institutions came less from a secular ideal of social justice than from religious humanitarianism.¹⁰ Helping the unfortunate was not only a token

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 69.

of divine mercy but also it might be done so that life was better for everybody in the long run.

The industrial revolution, which took place, metamorphosed the society from a rural and agrarian society to urban ways of life. In the process of industrial revolution rapid changes also took place in industrial life. Now mechanic and engineer became important who can put together the technical process going. Operator tended the machines and the wholesaler and retailer marketed the product. The labour force, skilled and unskilled was paid in wages for the time they worked. This led to formation of a class of employees. The alteration of society in industrial edifice forced a social welfare system based on the labour force. It was also important to them as they were exposed now to more competition with less regulation. They became increasingly dependent on money wages, which were related to a state of trade. The increased production offered more opportunities. There was a division of labour force on provisions of technology and market specialization. So in the expanding cities residential neighbourhoods were quickly segregated in different classes and ethnic group.

During this phase of industrial revolution, American society was entangled by the changing patterns of immigration. These masses were particularly unprepared and vulnerable in such a prevailing and innovative situation. They were culturally separated from the natives not only by their language and foreign backgrounds but also by their religion and social values. Initially, they joined the unskilled jobs such as construction, transportation and manufacturing. There was division on the basis of occupation and also in geographic patterns. The big seaports were the immigrant slums concentrated, spread and multiplied further with new arrival. In this context, it made difficult to arrive at and

implemented social welfare policies at long-range levels. The early institutional responses to urban poverty came from people who had religious interests and motives.¹¹ The philanthropy to the native or immigrant was religious in its inspiration and goals. In fact, many could see that religious fellowship was a source of strength and mutual aid.

In 1880, the Salvation Army came to America. It found its special work among vagrants and derelicts of a sort very numerous in industrial cities. There were also many mutual – benefit societies like those federated into the German Central Verein (1855) and the Irish Catholic Benefit Union (1869). Also, the need for both orphanages and child – placing agencies increased in number and size after the Civil War. For a long time many state and municipal authorities had helped or stimulated private philanthropy by means of grants and concessions—forgiving taxes on real estate for example.¹² This arrangement was supposed to encourage citizens to undertake voluntarily work that was in the public interest, and to do so at reduced cost to the taxpayer.¹³ Later the idea of scientific philanthropy was caught up in the larger argument over government and political economy. The first state board of charities was created in Massachusetts in 1863. The board members divided themselves into four sections to focus their work: education, public health, social economy, and jurisprudence. In this way the charity organizers addressed themselves to different problems and showed different aspect of the philanthropic and scientific spirit.

Many charity organizations grew up in the wake of the depression and social

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 75.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 84.

¹³ *ibid.*

order of the 1870s. There were formations of Associate Charities of Boston (1879), National Conference of Charities (1881), a society in New York City (1892). They refined the concept of charity and also looked beyond to the immediate act to its long-run consequences. Charitable promoters continued to seek and win support for their causes without attention to duplication and coordination. Charity workers themselves were taking a much more professional stance. In this background there were a general political enthusiasm for reform and social justice.

In the nineteenth century there were two lines of thought about social welfare; the doctrine of charity, associated with traditional religion, and that of secular liberalism, associated particularly with political economy and ethical individualism.¹⁴ The political economy and philanthropic charity came into a closer relationship in the subject of poverty. Economists too became interested on the subject of poverty. **Robert Hunter** published his book *Poverty*, where he specified that the government should established and enforce minimum standards to:

*Make all tenements and factories safe
regulate hours of work, especially for women and children
regulate and supervise dangerous trades
eradicate "unnecessary disease" (such as tuberculosis)
prohibit child labor
provide educational and recreational institutions
Compensate labor for involuntary idleness due
to sickness, old age, or unemployment
restrict immigration.¹⁵*

This was an early statement of some of the social goals of the progressive period, what might be called the first version of the welfare state in America.¹⁶ Other writers

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

refined the ideas. The workers were sought as human beings and receive a wage that gives them a degree of self-respect and spiritual cultural foundation. The Progressive Party and Socialist adopted standards of living and labour into there party platforms and garnered one third of the vote in the election of 1912. From this year onward a bold new notion of “social welfare” that addressed itself to impersonal causes of poverty and injustice came into focus. There was a significant change in the welfare of children, which became more central in social work and social reform after 1890. Florence Kelley became a commanding authority on the actual conditions of labour industry. She also devoted considerable time and energy on the issues related to women and children. Her attention to child and female labour gave specificity to the rising demands for minimum wage and maximum hour laws. By the 1910-1913, many states passed or improved laws about factory safety, workmen’s compensation, minimum wage, maximum hours and industrial-welfare commission to administer labour laws. There were also legislation for child welfare, widows’ pensions, housing regulation and laws on health and sanitation. Also there was effort to improve the quality of social work in the 1920s. It was a much larger movement towards specialization and rationalization. There was an effort to ameliorate the conditions serving to the interest of employees and investors.

At the same time, thoughts of providing economic security and ideas about social insurance and public assistance hit the government. “Insurance” was a promising device to people who thought about social welfare because it seemed to be an alternative-an advantageous alternative- to charity.¹⁷ Insurance was based on charity or sympathy but on mutual self-interest. The modern typology of insurance stated to protect merchants

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 191.

against the risk of loss of cargo at sea. Life Insurance emerged later on the scene. The insured got protection at once in amounts he could afford. The insurance business grew rapidly in the nineteenth century along with the great expansion of trade. It enabled the middle class to recognize and confront economic insecurities in a rational way. Also grew in this mega commercial activity a kind of help called as mutual aid. It offered social life, recreation of a sort, and a small degree of protection against some risks of loss of income. The government was helping the insurance business and regulating especially for the working class. This concept was the foundation of “social insurance”.¹⁸ The government made insurance compulsory for certain risks and classes. It became a sort of fixed cost on production that employees could not dodge. This further helped in greater planning. Protection against the loss to workers from industrial accidents was the first mode of social insurance in the United States.¹⁹ Workmen’s Compensation covered the risk from industrial accidents and illness. Health insurance was intended to meet health problem unrelated to job.

Pensions were, likely social insurance a device to provide (“maintain”) income in the absence of wages.²⁰ It was to be applied to employer and care should be taken to them. Mother’s pensions became an American innovation. The old-age pension laws came in some of the states. States like Pennsylvania, Montana and Nevada passed these laws in 1923. In 1924 Wisconsin passed it, Kentucky in 1926, Maryland and Colorado passed old-age pension laws in 1927. Due to active initiative taken by people on social welfare issues, many of the problems could be solved. Also opportunities increased due

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 202.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 212.

to flourishing of large-scale organizations. A team of talents mushroomed when business and government's social initiative opened paths of opportunities. Organized labour was well paid in the due course of time. There were also complexities as social legislation was state legislation and it was different in states concerned. There was also much promise in these ideas, but in the event they were somewhat discredited by the confusion, suffering and despair of the Depression years that began in 1929.²¹

In November 1929, stock market crash started. There was also decline in business after this dark happenings on the stock marked. Due to the stock market crash, there was the abrupt fall of the prices of stocks traded on the New York Exchange an average of 40 per cent. It was very depressing to investors as they lost fortunes due to this crisis. The Depression further deepened leading to the question of survivability. The collapse of production, the mounting unemployment, the inability of farmers to sell their produce at anything approaching cost, the apparently ceaseless fall of industrial prices—all attested to the termination of businessism as a viable organizational principle.²² Even the world economy failed in the Depression juggernaut. Heavy industries appeared stagnated. The shipbuilding industry was further decimated, as were industries such as cotton spinning that were forced to compete with new synthetic fibres. In fact, whole industrial areas appeared destined for permanent attrition. The United States seemed to be in more crises, as more than half of the decline in industrial production took here only. There were also fissures in the structure of the economy, such as the collapse of the banking system that did enormous damage. The heavy burden of debt weighed heavily on the

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 190.

²² Furnis, p. 157.

economy. The rural income fell and the farmer income became more and more desperate.

In October 1930, the great Depression entered its second winter. The general property tax fell sharply during the Depression and many owners were tax delinquent. To come out from this crisis, authorities distinguished their policy objectives: recovery, relief and reform. For many economists this Depression was just a phase of business cycle. This phase was a contraction phase for them. The government intervention to come out from this crisis was led by president himself. President Hoover encouraged public works that is, federal, state, and local construction of buildings, highways, or other facilities. He also called in industrialists and asked them to keep their prices and wages steady. He arranged for the government to make credit available to farmers so that they would not have to sell their crops at panic prices. He favoured a tariff that would protect workers from low-wage competition abroad. He also appointed the president's Emergency Committee for Employment. Its objective was to be a clearinghouse for local efforts to provide jobs and relief. Later on, president Hoover replaced it with the president's Organization for Unemployment Relief, which helped arrange a great nationwide fund-raising drive for local community chest and urged that state governments help municipalities that were foundering.

But these crises still became worse as Hoover had not been prepared to comprehend the depth of the emerging crisis or to take very drastic action. Many also knew the amount of this major crisis. It was also not communicated well enough among public, which led public perceptions about this crisis based on rumours. The relevant empirical observations—the number of unemployed, the resources of various communities—were simply not available. After 1930, Congress also become very hostile

and it compounded president's difficulties. But by 1932, the states and the federal government had begun to help communities pay for outdoor relief.

Vision of the Abundant Life

Franklin Delano Roosevelt came to office at a desperate time, in the fourth year of a worldwide depression that raised the gravest doubts about the future of western civilization.²³ By the time Roosevelt was sworn in, national income had been cut in half and more than fifteen million Americans were unemployed. Every state had closed its bank or severely restricted their operations; the New Stock Exchange had shut down on the very morning of inauguration. When the Depression first struck the nation President Roosevelt had made a Herculean and successful effort to humanize what was regarded as democratic capitalism. Only a few weeks after Roosevelt took office, the spirit of country markedly changed. It all started with the bright springtime of the first hundred days. As for recovery, FDR went beyond Hoover's efforts for voluntary price maintenance to an effort to compel "fair competition". Representatives of employers, labour, and consumers drew up the codes of fair competition. Roosevelt also went beyond Hoover's programme for public works to stimulate the economy.

So Roosevelt was more willing to spend. He had a favourable Congress too. Meanwhile, in May 1933, Congress authorized almost \$550 million for relief and set up a Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) to get it to the states and people who needed it.²⁴ The FERA tended to favour a new or separate State Emergency Relief

²³ William E. Leuchtenburg, *The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and His Legacy* (New York, 1995), p. 6.

²⁴ Leiby, p. 224.

Administration (SERA) parallel to the state and local welfare departments. The SERA offices had set high standards and paid cash relief. The SERAs had strong central direction from Washington, a sense of mission (emergency help to the unemployed), and the existing poor relief agencies, particularly at the local level, were as various as the communities that sponsored them, to which they were responsible.²⁵ In the Roosevelt's initial stage work relief had more positive aspects. To the reliever it meant that his grant was not charity but a sort of compensation. Due to the president's innovative approach to swim over crisis, the community participation was strengthened and they got the value of work. There was also a notion of a public job for the unemployed. The unemployment relief was set in such a fashion that it should not mean more income but a real job.

The advent of the New Deal altered the character of the state in America. Roosevelt rested his legislative programme on the assumption that government should seek social justice of all Americans and entertaining them with equal benefits. Roosevelt brought the welfare state to America in his spectacular first hundred days in his office. In the First Hundred days of 1933, Roosevelt initiated an enormous expansion of the federal government, with proliferating alphabet agencies lodged under the executive wing.²⁶ During the First Hundred Days, Roosevelt sought to restore national confidence by evoking the mood of wartime: the imperative of national unity above any claim of partisan or private interest because the very existence of the country was in danger.²⁷ The New Deal hoped to arouse the same sense of devotion to the nation and the same commitment to sacrifice that had been displayed in the war. Roosevelt started with

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 226.

²⁶ Leuchtenburg, p. 29.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 50.

special session of Congress to enact Enemy Act of 1917, to proclaim a national bank holiday. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) became the most ambitious New Deal experiment in regional planning. The TVA Act of 1933, stipulated that in case of war or national emergency, any or all of the property entrusted to the Authority should be available to the government for manufacturing explosives or for other war purposes.²⁸ The New Deal's programme of farm price supports owed something to the wartime Food Administration. The National Recovery Administration [NRA] was the keystone of the early New Deal. The National Industrial Recovery bill proposed together a series of schemes for government business co-ordination. The war agencies had established the basic principles of the New Deal labor program: that workers had the right to unionize, that they must not be discharged for union activity and that national boards could restrain employees from denying such rights.²⁹

In the First Hundreds Days, Roosevelt took full advantage of the situation as the country was at psychological war with the Economic Depression. Of all the New Deal agencies, the most successful programmes were designed for young people; the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC] and the National Youth Administration [NYA]. The CCC was set up in March to employ men aged 18 to 25 whose families were on relief. Through CCC two things were aimed. First, the conservation of America's natural resources and second the conservation of its younger generation. The Department of Interior or Agriculture helped plan the projects and supervised them. The NYA was a special programme for school-aged youth. It also had a programme for young people in the area

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 57.

of ordinary work relief.

In January 1935, Roosevelt proposed a bold new programme. The plan was to replace the “emergency programme” with a “permanent programme”. The plan was to have a social insurance to prevent or minimize calamities in the future. The permanent program, in short, was to be the Works Progress Administration [WPA] plus the public assistance and social- Security Act of 1935.³⁰ The main features of the Social Security Act of 1935 were: (1) unemployment compensation- states were financially encouraged to set up programs meeting federal Standards (by 1938 all had done so); (2) aid for dependent children, as well as state grants for maternal health services; (3) old age assistance consisting of two parts- aid to states for pensions and compulsory old age insurance for qualifying groups paid for a tax levied on employers and employees.³¹ The basic idea of the WPA was that the problem of the depression which was unemployment. Unemployment was a national problem and was appropriately met by a federal programme; work relief than by direct relief better met it. In Old Age Assistance [OAA] and Aid to the Blind [AB], the federal government matched the state dollar for the first \$15 per month. Roosevelt’s idea towards social insurance was to protect individual workers against risk of loss of income. The policy was to have the worker a dignity of providing an insurance claim. The idea was also that insurance would gradually replace assistance, to everybody’s advantage.

Historically, social insurance had been state legislation. Unemployment insurance, however, was authorized in the form of separate state programmes. The states

³⁰ Leiby, p. 227.

³¹ Furniss, p. 158.

were induced to act by a federal tax on payrolls, which the federal government would return to the states if they enacted approved legislation. The permanent programme of 1935 reorganized the haphazard arrangements for relief that had developed over thirty years and particular during the Depression. It used the power and resources of the federal government to put more system and substance into them and added a large component of social insurance. There was a strong political support in 1935 for work relief and for helping the old folks. Social insurance was the norm; public assistance - the heir of poor relief or public charity - was a supplement for cases that would fall outside the norm; services for maternal and child welfare, rehabilitation, employment and so forth – were ancillary to the main job of income maintenance.³² The Act of 1935 provided only two kinds of insurance against loss of income in old age and retirement and – a very limited programme – against unemployment.

The New Deal focused on housing also. In 1934, the Federal Housing Administration [FHA] began its programme of insuring loans for the construction and renovation of private homes. It also established standards for construction. During that period the proportion of homeowners rose from 44 percent to 63 percent.³³ Actually, the Wagner-Steagall Act in 1937, created the U.S. Housing Authority, it assured housing a permanent place in American life. More than one hundred thousand public housing units were built under the 1937 law. The New Deal profoundly altered industrial relations and also organization of the workers. The situations of labourers were grim at that time and especially after the economic slowdown. Employers hired and fired and imposed

³² Leiby, p. 227.

³³ Leuchtenburg, p. 249.

punishments at will. Also, only tiny populations of the workers were unionized. But the situation changed stupendously in the Roosevelt years. Under the umbrella of section 7(a) off the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 and of the far-reaching National Labor Relations Act [Wagner Act] of 1935, union organizers won millions of recruits in such open shop strongholds as steel, automobiles and textiles.³⁴ This Act also promised that the government would guarantee a fair procedure for determining bargaining rights and for the disposition of unfair practices. During the New Deal years, employees won wage rises, reduction in hours, greater job security, freedom from the tyranny of company guards and protection against arbitrary punishment. The Walsh-Healy Act of 1936 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 established the principle of a federally imposed minimal level of working conditions.³⁵ The New Deal also made substantial changes on education. School buildings erected as part of the programme dot the map from the small town of White-Field in northern New Hampshire to Honolulu, Hawaii and from far northern villages in Alaska to the tropical Canal Zone.

There was construction renaissance due to the New Deal programme. Many of subway, skyscrapers were product of the construction ventures of the New Deal. Its agencies carried out projects to generate hydroelectric power and develop water resources on a colossal scale. The New Deal built and rebuilt enough miles of roadway to pave the continent from coast to coast more than two hundred times. The business of agriculture was revolutionized in the New Deal years. There was mounting desperation for American farmers during the Depression years. Many of the lives were lost in a period of collapsing

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 250.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 253.

prices. The Farm Credit Administration of 1933 came to the aid of the beleaguered farmer, and within eighteen months, it had refinanced one-fifth of all farm mortgages.³⁶ The Rural Electrification Administration brought the American countryside out of darkness. The Agriculture Adjustment Act [AAA] granted large-scale subsidies to grower and lent them billions of dollars. The New Deal programme constituted the greatest innovative epoch in the history of American agriculture. The Farm Security Administration also reached out to the tenant farmer. Health benefits were also considered for the more than a million migrant farm workers. The Resettlement Administration represented the greatest innovation in agriculture policy since the passage of the Homestead Act.

Women also received due recognition in the New Deal programme. Roosevelt named eleven women to high positions, no woman had held before. The opportunities given to women in thirties changed their status. Aid to mothers with dependent children under the Social Security Act made women as beneficiaries. The African-Americans received important gains under the New Deal Programme. Blacks moved into federal housing projects; government funds went to schools and hospitals in black neighborhoods. Roosevelt also appointed a number of blacks to high posts in the government. The Civil Rights section was established in the Department of Justice. The New Deal transformed the nature of American politics by drastically altering the agenda and bringing every section of the people in the mainstream. The Roosevelt years changed the conception of the role of government not just in Washington but also in the states and cities. Also FDR's policies did encourage the emergence of "Little New Deals" time to

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 269.

time so that good work started should not be stopped in the middle. From 1932 to 1940, state and local spending for public welfare increased tenfold. The New Deal marked a new era in American urban history. The enlarged role for government at all levels created a sense of excitement about its potentialities. The nature of the Supreme Court changed due to the “Constitutional Revolution” of 1937.

The New Deal gave far greater amplitude to the national state, expanded the authority of the presidency, recruited university-trained administrators, won control of the money supply, established central banking, imposed regulation on Wall Street, monitored the airwaves, rescued debt-ridden farmers and homeowners, built model communities, transformed home building, made federal house a permanent feature, fostered unionization of the factories, drastically reduced child labor ended the tyranny of company towns, wiped out sweatshops, established minimal working standards, enabled thousands of tenants to buy their own farms, built camps for migrants, introduced the Welfare State with old-age business, unemployment insurance, and aid for development children and the handicapped, provided jobs for millions of unemployed, set up a special program for the jobless young and for students, covered the American landscape with new edifices, subsidized painters and novelists, composers and ballet dancers introduced America’s first state theater, created documentary films gave birth to the impressive Tennessee Valley Authority generated electric power, send the CCC boys into the forests, initiated Soil Conservation Service, transformed the economy of agriculture, lighted up rural America, gave women greater recognition, made a start toward breaking the pattern of racial discrimination, put together a liberal party coalition and changed the agenda of American politics.³⁷

After the New Deal America, for better or worse was henceforward a welfare state so FDR had also given the liberals, inspiration, excitement, identity, and unity; he had preserved the spirit of the New Deal long after the New Deal’s demise.³⁸ FDR had made the New Deal the very definition of American liberalism. But the postwar world presented a different situation. The death of Franklin Roosevelt created new problems.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 279.

³⁸ Alonzo I. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York, NY., 1973), p. 54.

Though the situation was different from the Depression years, yet it was a challenging situation. The major domestic economic problem was inflation, not depression; the liberal need was not to provide for the unemployed but to protect the purchasing power to relatively affluent workers and middle-class Americans, and to provide them with such basic amenities of prosperity as decent housing. Also the Democratic Party was inextricably tied to the Roosevelt tradition. Thus after FDR's death, Truman's essential political tasks were to provide leadership in the struggle against the Republican conservatism and to establish a compelling liberal identity.

“Every segment of our population and every individual has a right to expect from our Government a Fair Deal”, with this declaration in the 1949 State of the Union address, Harry S. Truman gave his program an identity of its own.³⁹ The political expression of the vital center, the Fair Deal included virtually the entire list of liberal goals, an impressive list of anti inflation measures, a fairer and more progressive tax structure, repeat of the Taft – Harley Act, a 75- percent minimum wage, a farm program based on the concepts of abundant production and parity income, resource development and public power, expansion of social security, national medical insurance, federal aid to education, extensive housing programs, and civil right.⁴⁰ Though the Fair Deal a child of the New Deal and from this programme president Truman reflected his policy preferences and approach to politics.

Truman recommended repeal of the federal tax on transportation of goods, passage of some corporate benefits, an extension of the time limit for repayment of

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 293.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

Reconstruction Finance corporation loans to business, and encouragement of American investment abroad through technical assistance programmes and extension of reciprocal trade. He called for increases in unemployment compensation, veteran benefits, and social security. He advocated a higher minimum wage and an improved programme of farm income supports. He also asserted that the government must play a key role in fostering economic expansion. The balance budget should go ahead for the well being of American people as he hoped to control inflation.

Truman's domestic accomplishments represented an important chapter in the history of American liberalism. He successfully defended and institutionalized the New Deal but in his own way. Truman's attempt to put over a legislative programme rested on an effort to transform a mandate of continuation and consolidation into a mandate for change. Truman also advanced and, indeed, added to the New Deal heritage with his management of the economy. Even during all the fumbling and mistakes of the postwar reconversion period, for doubted that his acceptance of the New Deal assumption that government was responsible for the economy. The Employment Act of 1946 not only codified the principle but also established important machinery for putting it into practice. He was also concerned on the problem of civil rights.

So two personalities John Locke and Adam Smith ideas shaped the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries liberalism. In response to the rapid and massive growth of industry and corporate power, liberalism began to find new definitions during the later nineteenth century. Workers, farmers, reform – minded clergymen, and social scientists all began to formulate in one way or another idea of a powerful activist state affirmatively promoting the welfare of its citizens. The industrialization had created peculiar problems of modern

society - insecurity of income and social disorganization. It had at the same time created great resources of wealth and organizational skill that might solve the existing problems.

American Reality and Jewish Tradition

For American Jews, integration into the social mainstream has always ranked among the highest personal and collective priorities, if not the highest. For centuries, Jews' sense of group identity was reinforced by exclusion from the social mainstream, but in America the lessening of overt anti-Semitism and the lowering of traditional barriers to Jewish assimilation removed some potent external sources of Jewish identity. From their earliest arrival in this country, Jews exercised their rights of free association by establishing a broad range of agencies to meet separate needs as a religious cultural, and ethnic group. In America, Jews from different nationalities arrived for search of a new life. Powerful centrifugal forces propelled Jews of different national backgrounds, social classes, and ideological outlooks to establish their own charitable institutions, each spinning in its own orbit. The Jewish agencies in local communities started to band together to overcome the liability by creating coordinated fund-raising campaigns. As time went on, these federations of Jewish philanthropies became the central bodies in each Jewish community, their purpose expanding to include not only raising money but allocating the income and planning, for common needs.

The Jewish philanthropic tradition reaches back to biblical times when Israeli Jews practiced *tzedakah*, or charity as one of their primary duties in life.⁴¹ This type of charity was in the form of harvest crops for the poor. The poor could take crops from

⁴¹ Jim Kamp, *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America* (Detroit, c 1995), p: 825

certain parts of a farm. There were also self – governing communities among Jews during the middle ages. It was called as *kehillah* and would ensure that the community's poor would have the basic necessities of life. The spirit of the *kehillah* survived up to the twentieth century in the form of *landsmanshaft* separates societies existing within congregations in cities such as New York. The *landsmanshaft* comprised townspeople, from congregations who pooled resources to provide such benefits as insurance, cemetery rights, free loans and sick pay. The philanthropic organizations mushroomed quickly due to the liberal attitude of Jews. Jewish philanthropy increased tremendously during the twentieth century. Scientific philanthropy – a method of providing aid through modern methods and without assistance from religious institutions – gained favour at the turn of the century in response to the problem of helping settle the large waves of Russian immigrant Jews.

Since reaching on American soil, Jewish characteristics and values have been especially congruent with the larger culture. It could imbibe many of the American welfare and liberal attitudes since the country began as a new society, formed by settlers in a wilderness. This society actually was unhampered by values derived from feudalism. Perceiving America as the purest market society implies that it is a meritocracy, open society, opens to talent, open to the most efficient, the most competent. Equality formed the basis of American policy makers. There was also equality of respect. As the self – conscious centre of the liberal ethos, this country has been open to new members. American Jews were encouraged to play a full role in society and polity already by President George Washington. Thomas Jefferson rejoiced over the presence of Jews in the country because they would insure religious diversity, which in his judgement, was

the best protector of liberty. The pluralistic and liberal character of American society can be seen since its existence. The Sunday Mail's Law, passed in 1880 on the basis that "the Constitution regards the conscience of the Jew as sacred as that of the Christian," and concluded that the government was obligated to affirm to all its "institutions on Sunday as well as every day of the week."⁴²

In 1860, the House of Representatives were opened with a prayer by a rabbi, thus acknowledging "the equal status of Judaism, with Christianity, as an American faith."⁴³ Concern for the welfare of Jews in other parts of the world has been characteristic of Western Jewry since Roman times and American Jews have obviously continued that practice. The American governments protested the anti-Semitism subsequently. So America has been from the outset accepting of religious, political and ethnic diversity so long as members of the different groups accepted the American political creed. Accordingly, immigrants, including the Jews, have not had to struggle to gain full citizenship rights. The question of Jewish emancipation never arose. By 1740, Parliament granted Jewish aliens the right to citizenship without having to take a Christian oath.

The Jewish experience in the United States exhibits unique features in the panorama of Jewish historical experience and at least some of these are closely connected with specific characteristics of American liberalism. As a whole, America has provided a miraculous home for the Jews, which they have made the most of the opportunity. They worked hard for the political system and for putting responsive people at the control of

⁴² Seymour Martin Lipset, "A Unique People in an Exceptional Country," *Social Sciences and Modern Society*, (New Jersey), vol. 28, no.1, Nov/ Dec-1990, p. 6.

⁴³ *ibid.*

that system, at making certain that the equalitarian idea, in fact, carried out and perpetuated. Judaism, in fact, stresses man's obligation to perform good on earth. As Lawrence H. Fuchs has pointed out in *The Political Behavior of American Jews*, Judaism emphasizes that this world is man's to make what he will of, made for him, "that he is much more creator of history than its creature."⁴⁴

Since the first Jews arrived in Colonial America, Jews have enjoyed a high degree of political freedom and have taken an active role in politics and government. After America gained its independence, the *Mikveh Israel Congregation* urged the Constitutional Convention to make a provision guaranteeing the freedom of religious expression, which became a reality with the passage of the First Amendment in 1789. Over the years, Jews have developed a rich political tradition of fighting for social justice as liberals. The reflection of this nature can be reflected for centuries, Rabbi Hanina, deputy high priest in the first century after the birth of Lord Jesus, who warned; " Pray for the welfare of the government since but for the one thereof men world swallow each other alive."⁴⁵ The Jewish charities became prominent in Boston [1895] and Cincinnati [1896]. They raised more funds with less experience, less bother and more dignity. The device of charity spread to the other cities too.

The United States emerged as a more cosmopolitan society during the New Deal years. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP) no longer monopolized the New Deal years. The Jews were elevated to the top rung of politics and government during the FDR government. Felix Frankfurter was appointed as Supreme Court justice. Samuel

⁴⁴ Stephan D. Isaacs, *Jews and American Politics* (New York, N.Y., 1974), p. 22.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 7.

Rosenman was chief speechwriter to FDR. There was also a more sympathetic and human consideration to the immigrants and especially to Jews by the president. Many scholars came across the Atlantic from Germany and Austria in height of anti-Semitism and fertilized nearly all of the American academic disciplines. There had been a significant number of Jews in the Roosevelt camp from its beginning and in unusual leadership positions as well. David Niles, for example, was a “strategically placed” Jew in the White House. The President was close to Senator Herbert H. Lehman and to former New York Supreme Court Justice Samuel Rosenman, both prominent and highly respected Jew.

The Jews were actually brought up in the period of FDR and all that kind of situation was eternally grateful that they were in the United States and no place other than that. Roosevelt, to many American Jews, was the next thing to Moses. He ended the Depression, which had exacerbated the anti-Semitism of the late twenties. And his conception of government the New Deal and its social welfare underpinning-reflected the Jews own conception of community. When in 1944, President Roosevelt’s New Deal policies caused the president to lose popularity, 90 percent of Jews still continued to support him. In fact, critics called the New Deal as the “Jew Deal”. When the Jews were supporting Roosevelt and the New Deal, actually they were supporting many social interests such as labour unions, the minimum wages etc. These were of great assistance to many, many Jews. The New Deal came to millions of Americans who were helpless in face of the great concentration of economic Depression as a panacea. The labour union had been liberating forces.

The 1930s were a watershed in the evolution of the national state. The New Deal created an almost entirely new pattern of social welfare. Roosevelt's commitment to the welfare policies was unparalleled. This can also be echoed by the statement he expressed to Perkins in January 1935 on his commitment on social security: "I see no reason why every child, from the day he is born, shouldn't be a member of the social security system. Cradle to the grave - from the cradle to the grave they ought to be in a social insurance system."⁴⁶ His measures made him a reputation as "the great economic emancipator". Truman moved a step further and successfully defended and institutionalized the New Deal. He demonstrated great skill in mobilizing the latent majority, which was ready to support the New Deal. He also advanced and indeed added to the New Deal heritage with his management of the economy. The Employment Act of 1946 not only codified the principle but also established important machinery for putting it into practice. Even the Fair Deal policies were based on the whole a progressive social welfare tradition. Truman was also sympathetic to the cause of Jews and the state of Israel. When Israel declared itself a nation on May 14, 1948, President Harry Truman decided to officially recognize Israel, despite a longstanding warning from the U.S. State Department that such recognition could anger oil-producing Arab countries.

For a large proportion of the Jewish community, the progression of economic and occupational mobility which gave rise to an expanded scope of collective Jewish ventures and the growth are all based on the welfare policies adopted by the different presidents of the

⁴⁶ Leuchtenburg, p. 19.

United States in the first half of the twentieth century. The Jews assimilated in this society and always worked hard on the welfare policies of the governments. In fact, the New Deal gave the Jew them security in American society which they utilised the conditions properly to prosper.

Chapter 4

A better friend of the Jews: Lyndon Johnson, Great Society and the Jewish Community in the U.S.

The Unravelling of the New Liberalism

The decade of the 1960s is regarded as the dawn of the new liberalism in America. In the late 1950s liberalism was a philosophy with a heroic past. This decade was left behind as the legacy of the New Deal memory as a political label to the liberals. The term “liberalism” evoked 20 years of Democratic leadership during which the nation had survived its worst economic depression and then gone on to triumph in the most devastating war in history.¹ It stood for policies and laws that came out of Roosevelt’s New Deal and Truman’s Fair Deal, and that most American believed in, such as providing pensions to the elderly and relief to the unemployed.² These measures provided a strong federal government and to secure the greatest possible good for the largest number of Americans.

From the early 1950s, there was failure of liberal democrats not fairing well at the polls. They lost two presidential elections of 1952 and 1956 to the Republicans. Eager for a change in ideology, liberals tried to embrace new ideas, causes and constituencies that would restore their political clout. John Kenneth Galbraith, an economist, argued that America’s recent prosperity had not made its citizens truly secure. He pointed that in this economic and military success after the World War II, the common welfare was being neglected. Schools were crowded, parks were dirty and sparse, urban transportation inefficient and municipal workers underpaid. The Eisenhower’s America gave a grim situation in case of the welfare activities. The leaders of the Eisenhower’s time were

¹ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York, 2000), p.48.

² *ibid.*

primarily interested in economic progress as seen by the business community, and they were dubious about “welfare state” measures that might be a drag on business.

This period also gave rise to the Cold War and the disillusion over Stalinist socialism. To show the prowess in the Cold War, there were high expenditures on defence. The condition was such that the defence establishments came on the top of agenda cutting welfare measures. While the political mood shifted away from the concerns of the New Deal and the Fair Deal, the prosperity that came after 1940 affected the argument about social security in two ways. First, it became less urgent, a lower priority among public issues due to emphasis on greater defence establishments. Second, inflation undermined the structure of contributions and benefits. The Social Security Act was expanded and strengthened in 1950 but the social – insurance benefits remained low.

The new currents in American liberalism began to emerge in the 1950s represented less a well-defined set of political doctrines, and more a kind of political sensibility reflecting a new social environment. Many of the first generation to enjoy college education was becoming self-appointed spokesman for the public interest in good government, civility, and social responsibility. Long years of prosperity allowed Americans to dream that, for the first time in history, the problem of scarcity—which bred poverty, joblessness, and desperation—might soon be solved. The first Republican President since FDR, Eisenhower accepted a limited welfare state as the new status quo. During his tenure, real wages had increased by one-fifth, the system of inter-state highways was rapidly expanded, and new schools and houses seemed to sprout up in

every middle-class community.³ Young Americans at the start of the 1950s were more educated than their parents and more apt to have careers requiring professional accreditation. These were people who had the spare time, the financial wherewithal, the credentials, and the self-confidence to challenge conventional wisdom and take on established authorities. They also embraced new causes, or old causes that had gone out of fashion, like environmentalism and women's right. They combined a passion for social change and social justice.

The population was also increasing. During the 1930s, the birthrate had been low and immigration negligible; only 9 million people were added to the U.S. population in that decade. In the 1940s, population grew by 21 million people. These increases were mostly because of higher birthrates, which reversed a long historic trend. Economic boom and population growths were circumstances for great social and geographic mobility. Most immediately affected were families in the business and professional class. Meanwhile, the migration of rural people to the metropolis, and particularly out of the south, also continued. They came, like other migrants, seeking opportunity and security, and in fact their situation was better than what they left behind. Nevertheless, they appeared disproportionately among the dependent, sick, mentally disordered, and delinquent. Their organizational resources were few at first. Their constructive ideas about their problems were mutual aid. They, too, were interested in education and health, but their first concern was access to the service, rather than its content or delivery.

By the end of the 1950s, Democratic Party was making something of a comeback.

³ *ibid.*, p. 8.

In the 1958 Congressional election, Democrats gained their biggest margins since the beginning of World War II. The Republicans lost in the populous states of Ohio and California. Republicans were still the party of Main Street and Wall Street—of American business, large and small, and of voters who cherished the rights of private property and were leery of “big government”.⁴ The ethnic groups and blue-collar workers favoured the Democrats. The legacy of old battles over restricting immigration and instituting prohibition also played a part. Into the vacuum of power and ideas within the Democratic Party stepped a new generation of liberal activists. Liberals in the Democratic Party who worked through advocacy groups like Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), Campus Organizations like the National Student Association (NSA), and reform-oriented groups like the Village Independent Democrats in New York City got busy drafting plans for higher minimum wages, government health insurance for the elderly, and other extensions of the New Deal. The Post-War absorption with leisure generated a vital search for new ways to spend all that free time and disposable income. In the past, Americans had fought major battles over who would control the workplace and how to distribute the fruits of their labour. Mass movements of small farmers and wage earners had pressured the powerful to recognize unions, subsidize crop prices, and establish Social Security and a minimum wage.

The post war America became immensely prosperous and powerful. Roosevelt’s New Deal gave America a sense of authority, which could smell liberal intervention in the government for the upliftment of the society. They also saw in the Cold War a continuation of the liberal internationalism of the Second World War, a war of ideas as

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 18.

well as power blocs that Roosevelt had defined as a struggle for the “Four Freedoms”—freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.⁵ The last two suggested the need for a strong, interventionist government, along the lines of Roosevelt’s own New Deal, to redistribute resources or stimulate economic growth to do away with “want” and to protect the rights of political and racial minorities to do away with “fear”. Also the reform Democrats gained significant influence in the mid to late 1950s in Democratic parties in such key electoral states as New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and California. They enjoyed the patronage of Eleanor Roosevelt, the leading liberal icon of the Democratic Party, and gained useful political experience and contacts in Adlai Stevenson’s presidential campaigns of 1952 and 1956.

In the prosperity and high employment of the 1950s, Buell’s concept of the “multi-problem family” flourished.⁶ The highlight of this concept was more services, better services, better community organization of services, and planning for intervention. In 1956, Congress amended the Social Security Act to clarify its purposes. Public assistance was meant to develop services. Public assistance caseworkers should help the aged to achieve self-care, families with children to maintain and strengthen family life, the blind and disabled to attain self-care or self-support. They were to see that their clients got medical care, vocational rehabilitation, help with employment, or referral to other service agencies without any difficulty.

Congress authorized larger federal expenditures to encourage state public-assistance officials to expand their efforts. Provision for the mentally ill and retarded

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶ James Leiby, *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States* (New York, 1978), p.284.

benefited in those years from the general progress of medical care and from the involvement of the federal government. With regard to Welfare Policy, the important question was more rational financing of the costs of care, which were a risk to economic security and limited access to treatment. By 1960, the death rate dropped by almost half and infant mortality by three quarters. In 1955, New York passed its Community Mental Health Services Act, which offered a state grant-in-aid to local mental-hygiene clinics, California, Minnesota, and New Jersey soon followed suit.

In 1960, the conservative Eisenhower gave way to John F. Kennedy, who promised a more active federal policy. He became identified, for most Americans, with a new birth of liberalism was a thoroughly practical politician of the old school who tended to view idealists and moralists as sentimental fools. In his campaign for nomination, Kennedy benefited from the support of prominent liberal activists such as Schlesinger and Galbraith. Kennedy won the presidential nomination at the Democratic Convention on the first ballot. In the fall campaign, Kennedy shored up his reputation with liberals by hitting hard at the Eisenhower record on domestic policy. His opponent, Richard Nixon, bore the burden of defending the record of the administration in which he had served eight years as Vice-President and, unfortunately for his cause, had to do so in the midst of an economic recession. Kennedy declared that the “war against poverty and degradation is not yet over,” citing statistics showing millions of Americans living in substandard homes, and millions of elderly people living on inadequate assistance. Kennedy’s promise that he would “get the nation moving again”.⁷ It reflected to continue the policy adopted by Roosevelt’s New Deal programme. Kennedy ran for office committed to a

⁷ Isserman, p. 60.

liberal wish list of bold initiatives; if elected, and true to these promises, he would raise the minimum wage, improve the conditions of farm workers, secure passage of national health insurance for the elderly, and launch a 10-year campaign to eliminate urban slums.

The Democratic Party Platform also pledged vigorous enforcement of many liberal activities and one of them was on the issue of civil rights legislation. The Kennedy campaign heavily publicized black rights in their communities. To President Kennedy and the activists in Congress, the main domestic problem was the prevailing condition of economy. The prosperity of the 1950s had been marred by a series of “recessions”, each of which left a larger residue of unemployed; some regions of the country were in a chronic depression, and economic growth, as measured by the gross national product, was rather sluggish. Under Kennedy Congress passed (1) the Manpower Development and Training Act (1962), essentially an elaboration of vocational education to help the unemployed; (2) the Area Development Act (1961 and 1962) which offered advantageous loans to depressed areas to help public officials and private entrepreneurs get new enterprises going; (3) the Accelerated Public Works Act (1962), which provided grants-in-aid for public works in depressed areas, administered as part of area redevelopment; and (4) the Appalachian Regional Commission (1963), an alliance of eleven states funded by the federal government for technical assistance and coordination of development with special loans and grants to suit the very severe problems of that area.⁸

Kennedy in his inaugural address appealed the country with an idealistic slogan

⁸ Leiby, p. 302.

“bear any burden, pay any price”. He also supported to the equal rights for women. Kennedy also favoured health insurance through social security. The general scheme was that wage and salary earners would pay a little extra in social security taxes and after they retired the programme would pay substantial benefits for hospital and convalescent care. Another part of the law offered substantial payment for doctors’ bills, especially for surgery. This was voluntary, and recipients paid for it out of their grants. Called Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI), it was like a public Blue Shield Programme. Finally, the measure provided a much expanded programme of medical Assistance (Medicaid) to all public-assistance recipients and possibly to others who were not on public assistance but were medically indigent. This was a grant-in-aid programme in which states shared the costs, and the states had a considerable option in what they would cover and for whom. As for direct services, President Kennedy put the federal government behind new activities in mental health and Juvenile delinquency. The Mental Retardation Facilities and Mental Health Centres Construction Act of 1963 offered funds to public or voluntary groups that would build “community mental health centers”, and it was plan that these were much more than out patient clinics: the idea of a comprehensive service, including consultation, mental-health education, and community planning, stood beside the idea of continuity of care (diagnostic work, inpatient and outpatient services, and partial hospitalization).⁹ President Kennedy also created by executive order the President’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. So the Kennedy Administration and its advisers gave a national stimulus and a new turn to the idea of community care for the mentally disordered and delinquent.

⁹ *ibid.*

Kennedy wanted to be a great president. He was also mindful of the narrow margin of his victory in 1960. He also faced formidable legislative constraints. The Democrats had lost 22 seats in the House and 2 in the Senate in 1960, despite their success in taking back the White House. Congress was even more firmly under the control of a coalition of southern Democrats and Conservative Republicans in Kennedy's first two years in office than it had been in the last two years of Eisenhower's Administration. Many of the bills dealing with domestic matters were defeated which were sent to Congress in 1961 by the President. Of all the domestic issues Kennedy had to deal with civil rights were the most problematic issues. He responded positively to the successive civil rights crisis of 1961-1962 primarily in terms of crisis management, rather than opportunity to provide political leadership.

“Not a fluke of History, but a President”

Lyndon Johnson, trained to the use of power, his whole life geared to his driving ambition, had come now to the Presidency itself on November 22, 1963, but under circumstances that could not conceivably have been more ominous.¹⁰ After four days of Kennedy's assassination the country virtually shut down, as millions of Americans watched the events of that long weekend unfold on their television screens. Now, when the nation mourned its dead President, the burden of binding the wound, of creating a sympathetic response between the new President and the millions of American citizens who loved the old, of reassuring Kennedy's Administration that he was worthy of its

¹⁰ Robert Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (London, 1967), p.335.

support, of showing a resolute face to the world, of moving a nation wrapped in sorrow out of its tears—the whole burden fell on this one man.¹¹

Americans were also unsure how the country could carry on without Kennedy. But here comes Lyndon Baines Johnson, the first Southern President since the Civil War and added, humbly, “let us continue”, in his first presidential address to a joint session of the Congress of the United States. The thirty-sixth President, Lyndon B. Johnson needed the confidence of the American people at this point of time. He also had to move swiftly to reassure the country as a whole, and the Democratic party in particular and the best way to start could be utilizing Kennedy’s Programme through Congress. In fact, Kennedy left Johnson a plan in domestic affairs that was only partially completed, and this plan, energized by a national longing to atone for Kennedy’s assassination, gave Johnson his matchless opportunity.

Johnson started his political career as a secretary to the Congressman Richard Kleberg in 1931. In 1935, he was appointed as Texas state director of the National Youth Administration (NYA), a New Deal agency that provided work grants to needy college students and public employment to other young people in need of jobs. Resigning his NYA job, Johnson, at twenty-eight, was one of seven candidates who entered a special election on April 10, 1937 to fill the seat from the 10th Congressional District left vacant by the death of Representative James P. Buchanan.¹² He ran a campaign designed to link himself in voters’ mind with President Roosevelt and the New Deal: “Franklin D. and

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*, p.7.

Lyndon B.” read his campaign signs.¹³ From this special election, and the beginning of his unique relationship with Roosevelt, flowed a cornucopia of political goodies. The electric power and water needed for his dry, resource-starved district came from the New Deal. Through Roosevelt’s help, Johnson landed a seat on the House Naval Affairs Committee. In 1937, he formed political alliances in Washington that were to last a decade. Exuberantly self-confident in dealing with the mightiest of the New Deal, the freshman Congressman betrayed his nervous energy by his inability to sit still and his insistence on doing something, going some place, seeing someone. Roosevelt was Johnson’s ideal.

Johnson continued his climb to power with election to the U.S. Senate in 1948; having secured the Democratic nomination (tantamount to election in Texas in those years) by a scant and suspect majority of 87 votes, he also acquired the painful nickname of “landslide Lyndon”.¹⁴ In 1949, a Johnson accommodation emerged that considered the realities. He made new arrangements with the right and shored up his bases in Texas and the Senate, but at no time did he go far enough to box himself in as a hopelessly regional politician.

In 1953, his Democratic colleagues elected him as Senate minority leader. At 44, LBJ was the youngest floor leader of either party. The entire Democratic power structure was in a state of upheaval and Johnson was quick to perceive his opportunity. The Senate organization inherited by Lyndon Johnson was comfortably old fashioned, dusty with years of tradition and ceremony. In days to come, Johnson had quietly scrutinized every

¹³ Isserman, p.105.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

cranny of the Senate establishment. Perched near the pinnacle of party leadership, Johnson had a plan fixed in his mind of what he wanted to do. Johnson wanted to streamline the Senate's power structure, breaking the power of Russell's conservative coalition and making it part of the regular leadership. He supported some of the liberal cause such as on housing, minimum wages, Social Security, farm legislation, rural electrification, reciprocal trade and occasionally, foreign aid. But on the budget, oil and gas, public power and, above all, civil rights, Johnson had to cash in with his own people in the Senate and his Texas constituency. As a Senate leader, he favoured to give chance to qualified younger members on committees.

On the Senate floor, Johnson was rarely seen sitting quietly in his seat, watching the other actors in the often-tiresome legislative debates. Johnson seldom left the Senate until long after the last adjournment bell had sounded. He also used to arrive next morning before most other Senators had had their breakfast. Always being available was a tremendous asset. It enabled him to develop quickly the most informed Intelligence System in the Senate history.

In January 1955, he became Majority Leader of the new and narrowly Democratic Senate. At 46, he was the youngest Majority Leader in the Chamber's history. He repeated the list of the Senate's 1955 accomplishments: extension of the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act, federal aid for highway construction, upper Colorado River Bill, increase of minimum wage to one dollar an hour, increase of foreign aid misappropriations over the President's request. Johnson also owed much of his electoral success, in fact, to the strong support of another large Texas minority. They invariably supported Johnson. In the year 1956, Johnson proposed a thirteen-point "Programme with

a Heart". This was year's possible legislative issues: Social Security changes, tax reduction, medical research and hospital construction, school construction, highway construction, farm price supports, housing, water resource projects, aid to depressed areas, elimination of the poll tax by constitutional amendment, immigration law changes and a bill to return to the oil and gas industry the power to set natural gas prices as high as it liked. Another leading liberal Hubert Humphrey praised Johnson's thirteen points.

Lyndon Johnson's masterful burial of the court bills in August 1958 warmed the hearts of his New Deal friends who remembered the Leeland Old affair of 1950 but still had kept faith in him through the years.¹⁵ Few of Johnson's legislative masterworks contained partisan attacks against Eisenhower. He also rescued Eisenhower on some legislative function. Johnson's performance in the 1958 court fight saved Eisenhower the task of vetoing a batch of rightist legislation that would have passed with considerable Republican support.¹⁶ The Battle of the Budget smugly fit Johnson's unwritten rule never hesitate to attack Eisenhower at the right time and on the right issue. Johnson also believed in budget cutting for the sake of budget cutting. With the Middle East Resolution out of the way, Johnson stepped up his budget-cutting sallies—encouraged by a nationwide splurge of letters to Congress pleading for a slash in the budget. Swept up in the excitement of the Battle of the Budget, Johnson flailed away at programmes he had supported throughout his Congressional career. The budget cutting by Johnson was to show the country that the Democratic Congress, not the Republican President, was the true safeguard of fiscal responsibility.

¹⁵ Evans, p.168.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

The election of November 5, 1958, ended more than a decade of even balance in the national legislature and gave the Democrats a big margins: 283 to 152 in the House; 65 to 35 in the Senate. Each election of the 1950s sent a few more liberals. And the moment was right for the Democrats to usher in a Big Government policy. All these were a recruit for the Johnson Network. In the first weeks of 1959, the Senate followed Johnson's headlong legislative timetable at the pace of the Hundred Days and followed his strategy of enacting bills without concern for Eisenhower's economy strictures. At Johnson's prodding, the Senate Commerce and Banking Committees got off to their earliest start in a generation, working on bills providing federal funds for airport construction and comprehensive housing. By the end of January, both bills had reached the Senate floor and both carried enough money to assure a veto from the new Eisenhower. In the 86th Congress, Johnson's attempt to compromise the housing and airport bills infuriated the liberals but failed to satisfy Eisenhower. The housing bill was vetoed twice. Johnson passed a third housing bill tailored to the President's specification. The airport construction programme was also trimmed in the House and won the President's approval.

From the Democratic point of view, nothing had been accomplished in 1959. In 1960, Johnson confronted liberal demands for an indigestible package of legislation: federal aid to education, medical care for the aged, another housing bill, another civil rights bill, and increase in the minimum wage plus an expansion in its coverage. On January 20, 1959, Lyndon Johnson introduced his first civil rights bill. It featured the racial conciliation service he had considered in 1957 but was discarded. A much broader civil rights bill sponsored by President Eisenhower became the framework the debate

with presidential nominee Kennedy and running mate Johnson in charge of the legislative programme had a set programme of four bills: medical care for the aged, federal aid to education, minimum wage improvement, a new housing bill. The commitments were strong and they were now backed by the Democratic platform.

In 1961, with Kennedy in power, he expanded and gave two statutory positions to his Vice-president, Lyndon B. Johnson. He was named Chairman of the Space Council— which was supposed to shape overall space policy and mediate disputes between military and civilian leaders. The other post Johnson was assigned was of Chairman of the new President's Committee on Equal Employment, designed to prevent racial discrimination in employment by businesses having contracts with the federal governments. His conflict with staff in committee on Equal Employment was from beginning. Johnson also moved to consolidate control of the staff in May 1962. He was also criticized by the nature of his work. Robert Kennedy, who as Attorney General maintained general supervision over all civil rights matter, felt Johnson's tendency was to reduce the problem of equal employment to statistics.¹⁷ He ordered peremptory orders to Johnson to get moving in the employment field and Johnson resented this direction, further straining their relation.¹⁸ Johnson made eleven separate tours outside the United States during his two years and ten months in Vice-presidency's office.

The year 1963 was, on the whole, uneventful, for it proved to a relatively mild year in terms of disasters, scandals, economic upheavals, politics, and controversy in general. Things did not seem to be changing rapidly in fundamental respects, as they had,

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p.318.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

for example during the two World Wars or during the transition from the 1920s to 1930s. This year President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Lyndon Baines Johnson became president after Kennedy's assassination. From the very outset the new president was firm in voice and manner. With Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Johnson beside him and with Judge Sarah Hughes reading the oath, he spoke in clear and decisive tones. He would later tell an audience: "I swore to myself that I would carry on. I would continue for my partner who had gone down ahead of me."¹⁹ So the new president intention was to come on strong policies. Johnson knew what he wanted in his assistants. He should be expert in his field, a strong leader, a man of candour and honesty, possessed of untiring devotion to his country and he should be able to work long hours. He should be loyal to his president and what the president stands for. Aides were supposed to produce ideas for their leader. Most of the Kennedy – appointed cabinet members simply stayed on. While Kennedy's New Frontiers – men stayed on as symbols of continuity, the duties of some of them soon fell to Johnson's men.

Johnson's capacity for work in these first few days after he became President was superhuman. Addressing from the rostrum of the House, President Johnson addressed, "Let us continue". His intention was clearly evident that he wanted to carry Kennedy's directions. The new President, with that link between the dead and the quick, rang with conviction and captured precisely the mood of the country. By this speech he had undisputably gained the confidence not only of the nation but also of the liberals who had always distrusted him. In early days of his Presidency, Johnson also frequently invited Senators to come to the Oval Office to get their advice. In the early weeks of the Johnson

¹⁹ Vaughn Davis Bornet, *The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson* (Kansas, 1983), p.8.

presidency and, in fact, right up to the election of 1964, relations between the President and individual members of the Congress were closer than at any time in memory. After all, Capitol Hill and Johnson's political home substantial progress on the tax and civil rights bills was impossible until 1964. The new President's first goal then was to whip through all the appropriation bills during December as a sign of renewed presidential-congressional cooperation. In reaching for this goal, Johnson ran head-on into a limited yet hotly disputed question that offered him a quick opportunity to show the country that the man who had tamed the Senate had not lost the key to power on the Capitol Hill, despite three years of isolation as Vice-president.

In that first weekend after the assassination, Lyndon Johnson had to rush through much the same thought process on tax policy that because of its revolutionary nature, John F. Kennedy had deliberated over for two full years.²⁰ The key to the tax reduction bill was the budget. The administrative budget recommended to President Kennedy shortly before his death was \$ 102.2 billion. The revenue estimates were \$ 93.1 billion. These figures indicated a deficit of \$ 9 billion. To ask the Congress to reduce taxes in the face of a budget imbalance amounting to \$ 9 billion was the nearest thing to asking it to pass a joint resolution endorsing sin. To free the economy of high tax rates, tax reduction was essential. The Senate passed the bill by a consensus vote of 77 to 21 after a week's debate. Another three weeks were needed to reconcile the Senate and House versions. When the President signed the bill on February 26, 1964, he further wooed the conservatives by appealing for consensus. In the closing moments of the long struggle on this bill of such historic significance, Johnson's intent was to mollify the defeated

²⁰ Evans, p.368.

prophets of orthodox economic policies. Bill after bill was passed, including bills written off as dead in 1963. The bill to provide federal aid for mass transit facilities was revived and passed. Many of Kennedy's proposal for additional federal help to college students were passed.

In 1963, Johnson's three conditions came together in historic harmony. Firstly, it was the lack of specific training the denial of civil rights to black Americans the neglect of the educational needs for young, the inadequacy of health care, and the invisible barriers around ghettos. These problems had been there for generations but little had been done to ameliorate the problems and they were growing to overwhelming and unmanageable size. Secondly, the willingness to act legislation came only after the problems reach crisis proportion. The pattern of social reform in America has been like a vast pendulum, swinging over the years from creative activity to almost total inaction and then back to action again.²¹ Thirdly, after the end of both World Wars the nation wanted to return to normalcy and rest for a while. The "New Deal" and the "Fair Deal" tried to meet new demands for urgent change. Again, in the 1950s, the nation obtained the breathing space it clamoured for and the problems festered unchecked. Russia's advancement in space technology exposed to examine America's weaknesses in education system. The Kennedy's assassination was further blow to the nation. This act of violence shocked the nation deeply and created the impetus to send the country surging forward.

²¹ Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (Delhi, 1972), p.70

The problem of poverty in the 1960s was not the same as that of the hard times in the 1930s. During the depression there had been concerned mainly with educated and trained people who were temporarily dislocated by the sickness of the economy. This poverty of the 1960s was different. Different in the sense as jobs were plentiful, but the unemployed were incapable of filling them. There was also stubborn entrenchment and the total entrapment of its victims from one generation to the next. A man was poor if he did not have enough money to live on, but that was only part of it. If he was poor, the consequences were that he had little education that he received inadequate medical care and substandard nutrition that he lived in crowded and unsanitary conditions. He had not real chance to train for a decent job. In fact, he was destined to die poor. His generations would carry the same repetitive pauper cycle. Seldom there was escape from this revolving cycle. To defeat poverty meant breaking this cruel pattern. Johnson's war on poverty targeted the hard-core poor. Johnson said: "The people I want to help are the ones who've never held real jobs and aren't equipped to handle them most never had enough money and don't know how to spend it. They were born to parents who gave up hoping long ago. They have no motivation to reach for something better because the sum total of their lives is losing."²² As Johnson believed, the growing economy might cover his war on poverty. If wages and profits increased, most Americans would prosper, job opportunity would expand sufficiently to make room for affirmative action for blacks without threatening whites, and higher federal revenues would finance Great Society programs without additional taxes.²³

²² Joseph A. Califano, Jr., *The Triumph and Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson* (New York, 1974), p.75.

²³ *ibid.*

The war on poverty was to help those who had no chance of getting their fair share of economic growth. In Johnson's view a successful programme would have to provide not only special services but also most important the opportunities for people to lift themselves out of the treadmill of poverty. For poor people capable of helping themselves the goal was to offer the kind of assistance most Americans receive from their parents. For the old or disabled, the objective was to make life more bearable. In this programme, there was emphasis on efforts to help children and youth, who offered the best hope of breaking the poverty cycle. The war on poverty encompassed a vast range of programs: those to offer a hand up (aid to education, child health and nutrition, adult nutrition, and job training) and those to assist people who might never be able to help themselves (Medicare for the elderly and disabled, cash payments through Social Security, veterans disability and supplemental security income, and nursing home care through Medicaid).²⁴

The Office of Economic Opportunity [OEO] bill reached the floor of the House in August 1964, and was approved by 226 – 185. This programme went to offer poor children preschool education and follow through to preserve their gains in the initial school years. It also spawned Community Action Program [CAP], which established organizations in cities, towns and neighbourhoods across America to organize the poor to help themselves. OEO also set up VISTA [Volunteers in Service to America], which sent young college students and graduates into poor urban and rural areas to teach people how to read, write, take care of basic hygiene, and muster some self-respect.²⁵ LBJ pointed

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.76

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.78

out: “one thousand dollars invested in salvaging an unemployable youth today can return forty thousand dollars in his lifetime.”²⁶ The excitement for this programme was contagious. Hundreds of people – high school and college students, returning Peace Corpsmen, housewives, and even congressional wives – volunteered to work thousands of hours in every kind of capacity. They went at it with a fervor and created a ferment unknown since the days of the New Deal, when lights had burned through the night as men worked to restructure society.²⁷

Soon other ideas began to take their place beside community action in the emerging legislative proposal: programs to give a special educational head start to children from deprived backgrounds; plan to train school dropouts for productive jobs; a blueprint to draw on the volunteer spirit of American Youth; new ways to help small businessmen in the slums get started and to help impoverished farmers keep going; programs to enable students from low-income families to work while they pursued an education.²⁸

In fact, there was no magic formula because poverty itself is a complex problem composed of many interlocking facets. No single poverty programme could reverse centuries of discrimination and deprivation. That reversal would come only with the long, hard work of dozens of campaigns fought on hundreds of battlegrounds. Aid to school was designed to prevent poverty from crippling young minds. Increased social security payments benefited the elderly poor. New housing programmes provided decent homes

²⁶ Johnson, p.75

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.77.

²⁸ *ibid.*

and neighbourhoods for many poor families. All these programmes were an important part of broad strategy to fight poverty, and they all needed public funds. The Economic Opportunity Act opened the door and made these funds available, followed by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Medicare, the Rent Supplements Act, and further extensions to the War on Poverty. To Johnson, environmental legislation was a profession of faith in the power and beauty of nature.²⁹ The environmental legislation included the Clean Air and Air Quality Act, the Water Quality and Clean Water Restoration Act, the Solid Waste Disposal Act, and the Motor Vehicle Air Pollution Control Act. The President asked Congress to enact a highway – beautification bill that would give the federal government power to require states to ban billboards and exposed junkyards along highways. States failing to do so would lose all federal highway funds.

Meanwhile, poverty programme response was large. On November 15, 1967, the poverty bill passed the House almost entirely intact. Not one of the spin off proposals was accepted. Johnson pushed the war on poverty as another tribute to John F. Kennedy. Johnson's legislative agenda for the spring of 1964 resembled a Christmas gift list. There was the Civil Rights Act for blacks. There was a tax cut for the better off. And there was a war on poverty for the poor. Johnson's vision of America was the creation of a great and durable political majority who shared a common vision.

Johnson's quest for the Great Society dominated the second session of the 89th Congress as it had the first. Then for hours on end, he pressured, persuaded, and pleaded with the Democratic Leadership at weekly breakfasts, and with committee chairman and

²⁹ Califano, Jr., p.81.

reclacitrant members in scores of phone calls and face-to-face meetings, to get laws back to him for signature.³⁰ A number of laws were pushed through Congress such as laws for child nutrition, truth-in- packaging, bail reform, mine safety, urban mass transit, national parks and seashores, clean rivers, international education, auto, tire, highway safety etc. In November 1964, Johnson swept past Barry Goldwater with 61 percent of the popular vote, better than Franklin Roosevelt had managed in his great re-election victory in 1936. In the first six months of the year, the administration submitted 87 bills. The President put his signature on Medicare and Medicaid. Medicare turned out to be a very popular program, far from being regarded by the public as an unwarranted intrusion of the government into a previously sacrosanct economic activity, it was seen as the natural extension of the already popular provisions for social security pensions; soon after its passage, over four out of five Americans proclaimed backers of the measure.³¹ Along with Johnson's Great Society legislative initiatives, the federal judiciary and new social movements outside of government also played important roles in the decade's resurgent liberalism. The mid 1960s were the third time in the twentieth century that reformers in the White House and Congress joined together in seeking fundamental changes in American Society.

The laws of the 1960s built on earlier foundations – on ideas, work, and legislation that went back for decades. But many were virtually new in concept, some so new as to have virtually no constituency. Some were passed with little lobbying or public attention. Some resulted only after battles in which the President himself was the force

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.122.

³¹ Isserman, p.116.

that made all the difference. Some of the titles that read impressively never attracted funding that was adequate to implement their language. This presidency made its mark in education. During 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed almost exactly in the form in which the administration wanted it. The Higher Education Act of 1965 provided federal scholarships for undergraduate students, which were based, not on promise or ability, but on need. Johnson's dream was far more ambitious than anything contemplated before the Federal Government's efforts in cities had previously focused on housing. By the mid 1960s, however, urban problems extended far beyond the dilapidated buildings housing seven million families. Schools were inadequate, as were health care, transportation and recreational facilities. With a new department to lead the effort, Johnson was ready to tackle them all, rebuild entire slum neighbourhoods in American cities and in the process provide jobs for the unemployed in the ghetto. Instead of urban renewal programmes that moved poor people out of their neighbourhoods and homes, he envisioned a programme that would allow staying here, in remodeled with jobs, police protection, recreation, and community health centres.

The famous War on Poverty was superimposed on the long-standing social security, welfare and veterans – payments programs of government in America.³² With the new medicare payments programmes for hospitals and physicians and pharmacists came a vast new area of services and costs. The 1965 task force was supposed to develop new programmes for the projected Department of Housing and Urban Development. In his 1966 Economic Report to the Congress President Johnson described six “main tasks”

³² Borner, p.233.

of federal economic policy as he saw them.³³ These were: full employment without inflation; opening the doors of opportunity by developing human resources; helping to solve social and economic problems that are beyond the capability of state and local governments and private action; international economic action; maintaining healthy economic competition; and finally, enlisting the voluntary co-operation of business, labour, and other groups.³⁴

On November 3, 1966, the President signed the bill in the East Room. In his statement, he referred to it as the “Model Cities” Act. Johnson also instituted an unprecedented requirement for presidential approval of every borrowing by any federal agency. Organised labour profited during Johnson’s presidency. The AFL-CIO even called the 89th Congress “the most outstanding in national history!”³⁵ The Department of Labor was able to get Congress to increase and extend minimum wage legislation. The minimum wage went from \$ 1.25 in 1966 to \$1.60 in 1968, during an inflationary period; and ten million more workers were covered. The Food and Agriculture Act of 1965, with its production controls, governmental payments to producers and price supports of the kind that had been long been popular in Democratic party was passed. But there was still unemployment among rural farm workers, which continued to be a problem. The Congress also passed the Omnibus Crime Control, Safe Streets Act and the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act.

Johnson’s legislative revolution was taking the federal government into the

³³ *ibid.*, p.242.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.243.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p.245

modern world on the side of the little person. During November 1966, Johnson pressed forward on one of his most controversial initiatives, despite sharp criticism from powerful allies. Johnson felt strongly that as a component of his war on poverty birth control information and devices should be made available to poor people who wished to have them. He believed that promotion of family planning was a positive duty of government. In 1966, the administration began to educate the poor about birth control, and Johnson got Congress to increase funds for family planning. He also asked Congress for tough laws to control guns and organized crime, more money to fight drugs, and a unified federal corrections system. He urged states and cities to try innovative approaches such as treating alcoholism as a disease rather than punishing it as a crime in the absence of other crimes or disorderly conduct.

Lyndon Johnson was absolutely convinced that the result of the 1964 election had given him an unlimited mandate to do with a Great Society, the War on Poverty, civil rights for minorities, and expanding educational opportunities. Previous Presidents had relied on departments, agencies, and staff in the White House and personnel in the Bureau of the Budget to frame bills. Thus, whatever innovation there was had to come from the appointed or civil service bureaucracy. But Johnson was determined not to let so called intellectuals dominate his effort, and he sensed that the future inevitable lacks that he was seeking outside advice from experts could only be helpful to his reputation.

Determined to put the entire power and prestige of the presidency behind the major education bill, Johnson and his staff consulted all the power centres in the Congress. The true significance of the education bill, in Johnson's judgement, was that "it established a foundation on which the country could work toward educational

achievement, with equal quality and opportunity for the future.”³⁶ He wanted to remove the enemies of mankind such as ignorance, illiteracy, ill health, and disease through the Great Society. In fact, Johnson was determined to make a difference in the lives of American through his liberal policies.

Searching for a Friend in the White House

Franklin D. Roosevelt’s basic domestic policy thrust appealed strongly to Jews. From then onwards, American Jews became supporters of the Democratic Party. President Truman gave the same touch to the American Jews. He was also first to recognise the state of Israel. But after two terms of Eisenhower’s, at best, indifference, to the Jewish state American Jewish leaders were in need of a friend in the White House.³⁷ Before the 1960s election, Jews were searching someone who fits into the role of liberal policies. In 1958, they found John F. Kennedy as one of them. The Jewish leaders were largely Democrats and liberals, and here was a man who looked like he shared their beliefs, at home and abroad.³⁸ Eminent Jews in Massachusetts, including the Zionist Dewey Stone had helped Kennedy beat Henry Cabot Lodge for a Senate seat in 1952.³⁹ Kennedy showed sharp inclination for the Jewish problems. From the moment he considered making a bid for the Presidency, Kennedy was eager to win over the Jewish vote. For decades, politicians at every level have courted American Jews with extraordinary care. With their population concentrated in such key battlegrounds states as

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.123.

³⁷ Tivnan Edward, *The Lobby: Jewish Political Power and American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1987), p.52.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*

Florida, California, Illinois, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and with a proud history of turning out to vote in large numbers, they are said to be capable of tipping the outcome of closely fought races. In New York State, Jews compose an estimated 14 percent of the population but cast between 16 and 20 percent of the votes. Because of their political energy, their close association with the Democratic party, and because of other group's apathy, they cast at least one of every four votes in state-wide Democratic primaries and nearly half the votes in Democratic primaries in New York City, where one of every five residents is Jewish.

The Jewish community's attachment to the Democratic Party can be traced back to the New Deal. In the days, when there was still a substantial Jewish lower class, and when middle class Jews were regularly kept out of private schools, country clubs, and even many residential neighbourhoods, American Jews had no doubt that they were underdogs, and they embraced the party perceived as the champion of the underdog and of ethnic minorities. After the World War II, American Jews became more integrated into American life both economically and socially. By the 50s and 60s – Jews were showing every sign of having become wedded to the liberal agenda in everything from race relations to economic policy, and it would have taken a major dereliction on the part of a candidate or officeholder to dislodge their allegiance to the Democratic Party. After his nomination at the 1960 Democratic Convention, Kennedy agreed to meet with a large group of Jewish leaders in New York at the Hotel Pierre Apartment of Abraham Feinberg, a Kennedy supporter and wealthy banker. Though the meeting was not a fundraiser, the group pledged \$ 500,000 to Kennedy's campaign coffers. For good measure, Kennedy turned some of his fabled charisma on the Jews. It did not hurt

Kennedy's quest for Jewish support that he was the target of some nasty anti-Catholic bigotry among Protestant Leaders. In the famous close finish in November 1960, 80 percent of American Jews voted for Kennedy. They had made clear what earned Jewish allegiance at the ballot box: progressive causes at home and support for Israel abroad. The results of the 1960 presidential election only confirmed to other politicians how stupid it was to ignore the political power of the Jews. Traditionally, Jews have lived in large urban areas where their votes can sometimes swing the election to one presidential candidate or another. This was the case in the Kennedy – Nixon battles.

The Jewish Community generously pumps money to political campaigns. Feinberg raised money for Harry Truman and was a major backer of John F. Kennedy.⁴⁰ Feinberg remained as adviser after Kennedy was elected. Mike Feldman, another Jew was named as assistant for domestic relations by Kennedy, a job that was the White House's link to the American Jewish community. Kennedy was also appreciative of the Jewish vote in his wafer-thin presidential victory. At the end of his first meeting with Ben-Gurion at the Waldorf Astoria in New York in the spring of 1961, President Kennedy turned to the Israeli leader and said, "I know I was elected because of the votes of American Jews. I owe them my election. Tell me, is there something that I can do for the Jewish people?"⁴¹ Kennedy Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson always supported the state of Israel and for Jewish cause. Johnson proved a good friend of Israel in Congress. As John F. Dulles was threatening Israel with sanctions, LBJ was on the phone to Abba Eban expressing his indignation over the Republican Administration's tactics of

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.55.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.56.

threatening to punish the Israelis when it had not threatened the Russians for their brutal invasion of Hungary. "They're not going to get a goddam thing [from Congress] until they [treat you fairly]," Johnson told Eban.⁴² Johnson was then Senate Majority Leader.

Shortly after John F. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, President Lyndon Johnson told an Israeli diplomat "You have lost a great friend. But you have found a better one."⁴³ LBJ made good on his promise. He was not only a better friend; Johnson became the best friend the Jewish state ever had in the White house.⁴⁴ For Johnson, politics was a personal affair; it was about friends and connections. And some of the Johnson's friends were Jews. His appointee to the United Nations was Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg, a Jew Abe Feinberg was a close associate of Johnson.

The Jews of America are, in the main, a product of the psychic ravages of the Western World's deeply entrenched pattern of Jew hating. They are the progeny of thousands of years of man's brutality to man culminating in the events of the 1940s. But while much of America perceives Jewish fright as emanating from Hitler's death camps, most of the Jews of America are the progeny of a different era of Jew-baiting and discrimination, that of Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. Two millions soul do not wrench themselves from their homes and journey nearly penniless, across a great ocean to a foreign land without a compelling motivation. Most of the Jews of Russia were in straits that one today finds inconceivable, barred from most avenues of earning even a crumb of bread, their sons hauled off to slavery under the guise of military conscription

⁴² *ibid.*, p.50

⁴³ *ibid.*, p.59

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

their lives in constant jeopardy, if not from starvation, then from the vicious beatings and attacks from their non-Jewish neighbours and from the Czar's agents. As a whole, America has provided a miraculous home for the Jews and they have made the most of the opportunity and want to keep America the way they hoped it would be when they and their ancestors arrived. They worked hard for the political system and for putting responsive people at the controls of that system, at making certain that the egalitarian idea, in fact, carried out and perpetuated.

Jews, on the other hand, were compelled towards politics by issues, principally by those issues relating to human rights and civil liberties, these "rights of man" that were denied to them for so many centuries. America as a nation and its success had depended upon its immigrants, and the Jews were the most successful immigrants of all. In 1965, the annual income of almost half of all Jewish families was between \$ 7,500 and \$ 15,000; only 25 percent of all American families had been as successful.⁴⁵ The percentage of Jews in white-collar jobs was three times the national average, and Jews were succeeding impressively in the nation's best colleges, universities, and professional schools.⁴⁶ From their earliest days in America, Jews have exhibited many skills and talents, but most of those who immigrated to America tended to follow historic patterns. As American business evolved, so did American politics, and the importance of a historic Jewish talent came to play a larger and larger role in both.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Califano, Jr., p.204.

American Jews were big financial supporters of the President and big supporters of his Great Society.⁴⁷ At the same time, on the other track, they were liberal for things like civil liberties and so forth because it was in their self-interest, and so the self-interest merged with liberalism. Following a tradition as old as the nation, Americans made sense of rapid social and moral change in religious terms. Some expressed their faith by participating in the same movements for human rights and against war that attracted secular activists; a greater number confined their hopes and energies to matters of the spirit.

The presidency of Lyndon Johnson was one that brought changes to the United States. These changes were major: in meaningful laws passed; good that was done; spending and inflation that would long be continued; regulations that would be inflicted and vain promises that would be recalled as coming from the pulpit of the White House. This presidency made a difference. Difference in terms as the nation was transformed in civil rights; in the financing and administration of every level of education; to an extent in forms of action taken against poverty; in payments for medical care for aging citizens, the disabled, and the poor; and in a new conservation effort that would soon mushroom. The very fervour of presidential concern helped to recruit many citizens to worthwhile causes, some of who had been standing to one side with too intellectualized a view of family and individual distress. In office, President Johnson was a man with power; in the sense that he could make things happen and that what he desired did make the wheels move. Vested with the authority of a presidential office that he greatly strengthened, at least temporarily, he resolutely used that authority as many of his predecessors had not.

⁴⁷ Califano, Jr., p. 204

By so doing, he gained the prestige that is accorded to the man of decision and action. This President, concluding three decades in public office, took seriously the constitutionally prescribed tasks of the presidency. Here was a president who could come to care about anything and everything he surveyed as he looked about.

Johnson introduced academic community in the government. This brought new brains into the governing establishment. Johnson did not appreciate any set of mind that might stress ideologically based, single-minded devotion to one policy, posture, or issue at the price of the pragmatic. He liked the accommodating American system and was impatient with those who could view temporary stays in government as a time for striking blows for fundamental change in the system. The addition of federal dollars at every level of the American educational system, followed by regulations, was revolutionary and brought changes in scale, quality, and control of prices. Johnson was the greatest president for the poor. He worked very hard and displayed great concern. He contemplated achievement in regard to the space effort, conservation, civil rights, education and medical care.

Chapter 5

Jewish Liberalism: Cause of Jewish Power and Prosperity?

The Genesis of the Liberal Concept

American Jews, in their overwhelming majority, are rooted in a liberal tradition. Jews are more liberal than their fellow Americans and their liberalism derives from loyalty to Jewish values or, more specifically, to the Jewish religious tradition. Their political liberalism expresses traditional Jewish values. Liberalism, however, is not an expression of the biblical tradition but an alternative to it. Hebrew prophecy was rediscovered in the 19th Century by Christian Bible scholars and Reform rabbis who, for their own doctrinal purposes, moderated Jewish “legalism” with prophetic “justice”.¹ Liberated from the constraints of tribe cult, and sacred law, the prophets were hailed as the founders of a universal religion of moral idealism and ethical monotheism [who bore a remarkable resemblance to liberal Protestantism and Reform Judaism].² The integration of Jews into American life has been in the burgeoning of Jewish institutions and in their public visibility and acceptance; and in the participation of Jews in the general institutional, especially political and intellectual, aspects of American society. The common denominator of these phenomena has been the public display and acceptance of the Jewish experience and activities, defined not only in religious terms, but also in broader ethnic national terms.

American Reform rabbis of the late 19th century had a different agenda. They rejected Mosaic Law, which enabled them to frame a Judaic concept to the free soil of America. For a large proportion of the Jewish community, the progression of economic

¹ Jerold S. Aureboch, “Liberalism & the Hebrew Prophets”, *Commentary*, (New York), vol.84, August, 1987, p.58

² *ibid.*

and occupational mobility gave rise to an expanded scope of collective Jewish ventures and the growth of Jewish education on both the local and national levels. The Reform movement acknowledged modern enlightenment and progress. It also laid emphasis on Judaism to blend with freedom and embrace the universal truths of prophecy. Liberalism is still good for the Jews, according to the conventional wisdom because liberal values express fidelity to prophetic ideals.³

It is reasonable to expect one prerequisite for advancement in modern society to be a pronounced spirit of achievement, or achievement orientation. The rabbis of the talmudic verse reiterated and strengthened biblical teachings. There are prophetic demands for justice within the conventional faith. There are admonitions, which conveyed some of its most ancient sanctions against oppression of the poor, mistreatment of the disadvantaged and perversion of justice. The Torah is full of these teachings and spread in the different chapters of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. There is also commitment of social justice in Judaism. It is focused as, "Judaism without keen involvement in the struggle for human decency is a contradiction a denial of the deepest elements of the Jewish spirit."⁴

Priorities in observance have changed from time to time based on the requirements of the societal needs. Previously minor rituals and ceremonies have been given much bigger observance. *Hanukkah* has become sign of Jewishness, which was once a minor holiday. The *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony marks a crucial rite between childhood

³ *ibid.*, p.59.

⁴ Charles S. Libman & Steven M. Cohen, "Jewish liberalism Revisited," *Commentary*, vol.102 no.5, November, 1996, p.52.

and adolescence for American Jewish youth. The synagogue, home observances of festivals, Jewish community centres and the like help demarcate a Jewish symbolic arena in both time and space. Among the components of Judaism which may help encourage liberalism is the importance of *Zedakeh* (literally, righteousness), which holds that the poor are entitled to support from the wealthy as a matter of rights. Charity has been an important phenomenon in the Jewish tradition. It is called as *tzedakah*. In this form, poor were free to take crops from certain parts of a farm. During the Middle Ages, Jewish self-governing communities called *Kehillahs* would ensure that the community's poor would have the basic necessities of life.⁵ The modern form of *Kehillahs* is *landsmanshift* and provides benefits as insurance, cemetery rights, free loans and sick pay. The Judaic liberal tradition also includes 'Torah' or education and the respect for learning. Actually, learning helps intellectual independence and a rational approach to dealing with everyday affairs. In 'non-asceticism', Jews are enjoined to accept life's pleasures and to act in this World rather than wait for the world-to-come. Judaism is oriented more around commandments [*mitzvoth*], which emphasizes obligations not only to fellow Jews but to society at large. The *mitzvoth* is the 613 holy obligations found in the Torah and Talmud. Consisting of 248 positive commandments (Thou shall's) and 365 negative commandments (Thou shall not's), these commandments fall into three categories: *Edot*, or "testimonies", are rules that help Jews bear witness to their faith [e.g., rules on what garments to wear]; *Mishpatim* (Judgements) are rules of behaviour found in most

⁵ Jim Kamp, *Gale Encyclopaedia of Multicultural America* (Detroit, 1995), p.825.

religions (e.g., the rule against stealing); and *Hukim* (Statutes) are divine rules that humans cannot fully understand (e.g. dietary rules).⁶

The Jewish commitment to Justice is substantively connected to its religious culture. This is also related to the experience of exile before as well as after emancipation. The meaning of Justice was conformity to accepted standards of divine law. As law originated from a just God there could be no conflict between law and justice. The Exodus story of the Holy book has taken note of the poor and oppressed. So Jewish communal life has often been marked by intense competition for having the honour of giving large sums of money for synagogues, burial societies and the poor. The rabbinic tradition maintains that obedience to religious law in and itself is a paramount virtue, the prophetic tradition holds that justice is God's supreme command and that the law should be used to seek it.⁷ Kristol argued that it is the prophetic tradition, which is especially influential on contemporary non-orthodox Judaism and plays an important part in encouraging liberalism.⁸ Several of the religious holidays emphasize the liberation of the Jewish people from bondage and enslavement, which continued for centuries.

The historical circumstance also elaborates contemporary Jewish liberalism by focusing on aspects of modern Jewish history. Jewish life in Christian Europe first burgeoned creatively in the western parts of the continent, especially in the communities of the Rhineland and of Italy. It was not until after the first crusades that there began a steady migration of Jews eastward into Poland, a migration which continued until the

⁶ *ibid.*, p.820.

⁷ Jerome S. Legge, "Explaining Jewish Liberalism in the United States: An Exploration of Socio-economic, Religious and Communal Living Variables," *Social Security Quarterly*, (Austin, Tx), vol.76, no.1, March 1995, p.128.

⁸ *ibid.*

seventeenth century, where a reversal of the tide's direction was inaugurated. As a result of a century of bloody persecution culminating in total expulsion from their homeland in 1492 many of the exiled Jews of Spain established themselves in settlements all along the Mediterranean littoral, obtaining an especially cordial welcome in the domains of the Ottoman empires. After living in miserable conditions for many centuries in which their fortunes touched nadir that was not again approximated until the Holocaust of a generation ago, the Jews of western and central Europe began in the eighteenth century to witness the emergence of a new social and political order in the larger world that was ultimately to break down their ghettoized existence and precipitate them into the mainstream of European life. At the same time that these Jews were first being exposed to the winds of modernity that have ever since continued to buffet traditional Judaism. But their isolated and oppressed brethren in eastern Europe were swept by the powerful movement of Hasidism which attempted, for a time with great success, to introduce new vitality and spontaneity into the rigidified tradition.

Jews first came to the Italian peninsula, where they have lived uninterruptedly until the present time, as early as the second century B.C.E., if not before. The enlightened and liberal emperor Frederick II [1194-1250] was a special patron of the Jews, aiding them both materially and culturally.⁹ Frederick himself commissioned a number of Jews to translate Arabic philosophical and scientific works into Hebrew and Latin.¹⁰ The Renaissance era of Italy seem to have had relatively slight effects on the creativity of the Jews of Italy. They welcomed the liberal and tolerant spirit that the

⁹ Bernard Martin, *A History of Judaism: Europe and the New World*. (New York, 1974), p.90.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Renaissance fostered. Many Jews also took advantage of this new situation to study medicine and the sciences at the Italian universities. The fifteenth century ended with a massive tragedy - the expulsions of Jews from Spain and Portugal and destruction of some of the most cultured and creative Jewish communities in history. The next two centuries were to be largely a period not of achievement and progress but of stagnation and regress. After Renaissance as in the second half of the sixteenth century, the reactionary spirit of the Counter Reformation, with its persecutions and imposition of the ghetto throughout Italy, placed a damper on further creativity. Elsewhere, in Europe Jews had either been driven out of the countries where their ancestors had lived for generations or else, as in the German States, were allowed only a precarious existence, largely cut off from the cultural influences of the larger world through ghettoization, reduced to the most degrading forms of earning a livelihood, and constantly threatened with expulsion or – worse – violence and slaughter at the hands of an incited mob.

With the discovery of America and the westward movement of European imperialism, the Mediterranean cities had begun to yield their place as the centers of World trade to the seaports of the North Atlantic.¹¹ The small colonies sprouted up in this new discovered land within a short span descendants of the Jewish exiles from Portugal and Spain who had been scattered all over the Mediterranean world followed them. They were followed in turn by Ashkenazic Jews from central and eastern Europe. The seventeenth century, despite certain peaks of achievement, was truly melancholic period for them. In their longing for redemption from present woes, thousands of Jews had rushed headlong into a frantic messianic movement that bitterly disappointed their hopes.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p.154.

In the eighteenth century, the Jews of central and western Europe were witnessing social changes and the emergence of new ideological currents that were soon to result in the breakdown of their long separation from non-Jewish society, and to catapult them into the mainstream of the life of the modern world. Several factors converged to bring about the entrance of Jews into western society and inserted liberal formulations. The mercantilist attitude of Jews, with their long experience in the intricacies of finance and commerce, came increasingly to be regarded as an economic resource of which constructive use had to be made. The commercial talents of Jews shaped the nation's prosperity. In Germany also, a number of Jews rose out of the ghetto to attain the privileged status. The rapid progress of science and its application in this era helped Jews to climb the upward mobility. The stress on scientific knowledge was accompanied by a corresponding decline in the authority and credibility of the traditional ecclesiastical structures and dogmas which had for centuries dominated the mentality of the European populace, and which, along with other factors, had conspired to reduce the Jew of the Middle Ages to the status of a Pariah, outside the boundaries of Christian society.¹² As the scientific and rationalist spirit of the Enlightenment gained ascendancy, the Church and its dogmas came under increasingly trenchant criticism.

The liberals came to the forefront that also contributed significantly to the eventual emancipation of the Jews. Here leading European thinkers came into picture who had preached about the natural equality of all men. Locke himself, in his "letter concerning Toleration", published in 1689, had maintained that "neither Pagan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his

¹² *ibid.*, p.190.

religion".¹³ Liberal spirits such as Charles Lorius Montesquien arose to question the morality as well as the rationality of continuing the persecutions and ghetto restrictions so long inflicted upon the Jews.¹⁴ Political emancipation, however, was not obtained by the European Jew overnight. Complete political equality was not finally achieved by the Jews of such countries as Germany and Italy until the 1870s, and most of the Jews of eastern Europe had to wait until the twentieth century for any significant degree of civic emancipation. The First European nation to grant its Jews citizenship rights was France. It started the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Judaism and the Jewish people. In revolutionary France they had achieved the status of free and equal citizens. In the two decades that followed the political emancipation of the French Jews the armies of France, sweeping across Europe, brought with them temporary civic equality in greater or lesser degree to the Jews of almost every state and territory they occupied the Netherlands, Belgium, the Italian cities of Venice, Rome, and Leghorn, and a number of the German states.

Though the Jews ultimately triumphed in the second half of the nineteenth century in most of western and central Europe, which only came after long agitation and intensive struggle. In the vanguard of the liberal movement were such noted Jews or born-Jews as Heinrich Heine, Ludwig Borne and Gabriel Reisser.¹⁵ *Haskalah* also emerged in the mid of the eighteenth century to the general movement of enlightenment and secularisation fostered by the rationalist spirit that dominated the social and intellectual life of the eighteenth century. Its essential aim was to enlighten Jews to familiarize them with the

¹³ *ibid.*, p.191.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.208.

world of European civilization, to rationalize and modernize Jewish life. Reform Judaism that developed in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century fulfilled the religious needs of considerable number of Jews who were no longer at home in the World of traditional Jewish piety. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the whole of the Jewish past – its outstanding personalities, institutions, and ideas, as well as its vast literature – had undergone careful and exhaustive investigation at the hands of a small army of Jewish scholars utilizing the modern techniques of critical historical, philosophical, and literary investigation.¹⁶ In addition, these men brought to light hundreds of important Jewish religious, legal, moral, philosophical, and poetic works some published in the first decades after the invention of printing, but many in manuscript and gathering dust in libraries throughout Europe and the Near East which had hitherto been ignored their very existence often unknown to the generality of Jewish students.¹⁷ The new interpretations of Judaism that emerged in the nineteenth century all had gained acceptance in Germany, the land where the challenges to the traditional Jewish faith and practice of the pre-modern era posed by the civic and political emancipation of the Jews appeared sharply. It was these religious movements that gave German Jewry much of the ferment and élan that characterized it in the century before its tragic end. From Germany they were transplanted to Jewish communities all over the world. The modified life in American scene suitable to its conditions determined the character and quality of American-Jewish religious life.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.264.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

Cohn argues that the predominant liberalism of American Jews is related to the emancipation of Jews in modern Europe.¹⁸ From France to other European countries it was a long struggle to mix in the society. The Jewish immigrants to America preserved their liberal outlook. Jews have been attracted to liberalism because historically it has helped encourage an open, tolerant, and less prejudiced society under which Jewish educational and economic success has thrived.

In the wider setting, American history is to a great extent that of the absorption of immigrants and that of their subsequent contribution towards an emergent national culture.¹⁹ Also American society comprised a variety of cultural backgrounds. The first Amendment to the Constitution and Jeffersonian principle of the wall of separation between Church and State were subsequently to form the basis of certain fundamental policies in American education. With the development of a national public, non-denominational system, Jewish full time schools declined in scope and influence in this secular outlook. The Jewish communities showed their liberal attitudes, as they had enrolled their children in the public school system. By this they showed plurality of attitudes towards assimilation and acculturation. American Jewry is no monolithic entity in terms of communal organization and structure. The Reform Sunday School, with its origin in the last century, represents a characteristically American version of Jewish education.²⁰ At the national level, the most important achievement of the American Association for Jewish Education since 1945 has been the encouragement of a more

¹⁸ Geoffrey Brahm Levey, "The Liberalism of American Jews – Has it Been Explained?", *British Journal of Political Science*, (Cambridge), vol.26, 1996. p.372.

¹⁹ Bernard Steinberg, "Jewish Education in the United States: A Study in Religio-Ethnic Response," *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, (London), vol.XXI, no.1, June, 1979, p.5.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p.15.

methodical and scientific approach towards Jewish education largely by fostering the principle of local communal responsibility. There had been charitable undertones in the financial basis of Jewish education.

A parallel development has been the growing involvement of Congress since the 1950s in providing direct aid to non-public educational institutions. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 set out a five-year programme of grants to private as well as public schools for the acquisition of library resources, textbooks, and other printed material. One important and interesting experiment in American Jewish education has been the summer camp. The camp atmosphere - with its special emphasis on recreational activities, its characteristics of a total institution, and its stress on human fellowship - has been very successful in promoting Jewish education. Continuing focus on education there has been expansion of Jewish day schools. A variant of the policy of separating Jewish and secular studies is to be found in the third type of day school, which has been called the 'integrated yeshiva'. Here an attempt is made to synthesize the Jewish and secular curricula and there is no division into respective morning and afternoon sessions. Hebrew is often used as the language of instruction or secular subjects, as part of the aim to integrate American and Hebraic cultures, or to achieve a blending of Judaic Americanism. For years Jews have placed strong emphasis on the importance of education. In the nineteenth century, the ability to read gave German Jewish immigrants a competitive edge over other immigrants in America. Later, American-born Jews pursued education as a means of entering such professions as law and medicine. The proportion of Jews in academic has been significantly higher with Jews comprising ten percent of the teaching faculty at American universities. As with education, the emergence of the

successful Jewish woman into contemporary secular society has also encouraged liberalism to some extent. The high educational orientation among Jews has a strong influence on liberalism independent of the effects of other variables.

For American Jews, integration into the social mainstream has always ranked among the highest personal and collective priorities, if not the very highest.²¹ For centuries, Jews' sense of group identity was reinforced by exclusion from the social mainstream but in the post-World War II America the lessening of overt anti-Semitism and the lowering of traditional barriers to Jewish assimilation removed some potent external sources of identity. Even so, other source of Jewish identification remained. The characteristics Jewish kinship groups and organizations provide daily confirmation of their Jewishness. Their interests also serve many liberal welfare programmes such as aid to dependent families, national health care, programmes for children in crisis and other such matters. On the secular side, the network of local philanthropic bodies, which fund most Jewish agencies – the “federation world” – invokes Jewish continuity but offers neither an explanation of why such continuity is important nor a definition of the content of Jewishness.²²

Jews are firmly committed to permissive social codes, sexual codes in particular. Jews enjoy the dubious distinction of having produced some of the most outspoken exponents of the sexual revolution, ranging from publishers of pornography and producers of sexually explicit record albums and movies to gurus of the self-help

²¹ Robert P. Amyot and Lee Sigelman, “Jews without Judaism? Assimilation and Jewish Identity in the United States,” *Social Science Quarterly*, (Austin, Tx), vol.77, no.1, March, 1996, p.177.

²² Jack Wertheimer, “Family Values & the Jews,” *Commentary*, vol. 97, January 1994, p.30.

movements that promote “doing your own thing” and sexual fulfilment.²³ Why Jews favour social codes? American Jews are more resistant to legislation or enforcement on such areas as they fear from the consequences of government intervention. Actually, they favour freedom from government coercion in issues of conscience. One issue that has received attention in the Jewish community is the support for homosexuals. Most sectors of organized Jewry have passed resolutions opposing civil discriminations against gays and lesbian.

Since the early decades of the twentieth century, Jewish fertility rates have been consistently below those of white non-Jews. The overall marriage rate of Jews has fallen. Jewish men women stay single for longer than their non-Jewish counterparts, with predictable effects on the number of children they are likely to have. Moreover, rates of divorce are greater for Jews who identify themselves as secular and higher. In their drive to succeed, American Jews have historically given scant priority to the task of shaping their children as responsible and active members of the Jewish community.

Jews are much more likely to identify politically themselves as liberals than are other Americans. Jewish micro-political interests are defined as being four-fold; the survival of the Jewish group; full and free participation in their society; the freedom to express and practice their Jewishness [however, this is individually defined]; and the economic interests of Jews, given by their concentration in a particular socio-economic division.²⁴ The Jewish liberalism and Democratic Party affiliation could be traced to Jewish support from the New Deal and Roosevelt Administration’s opposition to the Nazi

²³ *ibid.*, p.31.

²⁴ Levey, p.380.

regime in the 1930s. By supporting the Democrats since the 1930s because in the face of social discrimination they found protection and opportunity as members of a political coalition organized by the Democrats around a liberal social economic agenda. Roosevelt appointed Jews to his administration in record numbers and pursued expansive domestic policies that provided Jews and other minorities with professional opportunities otherwise generally closed to them in the private corporate sector. In 1936, Ward 24 in Chicago was probably the most Jewish Ward in the nation where Roosevelt received 96 per cent of the vote from here. Elsewhere Jews were also Democratic. In 1944, Jewish affiliation to the Democratic Party increased further. In 1952, the Jewish group held fast to its Democratic moorings while the nation, for many reasons, swung to Eisenhower.

Jews have been strong supporters of the “New Deal” and the “Fair Deal”. In 1932 and 1936 such views made economic sense to the Jews themselves, like other Americans of immigrant stock, they felt the cruel blows to the depression and were no doubt grateful to Roosevelt for his efforts to lessen the effect of those blows. However, even though the Jews began to climb the economic class ladder in the late 1930s and 1940s, they persisted in their adherence to “New Deal” and “Fair Deal” ideas. Why there is positive attitude towards political liberalism among Jews? Firstly, it is the basic insecurity of the group so they cling to the Democrats for the supports of their liberal ideology and for their groups. The second primary source of Jewish liberalism probably less obvious and less understood than group insecurity, is in the ethno-religious values of the Jewish group.²⁵ In probably no other American sub-culture is so high a value placed upon learning and

²⁵ Lawrence H. Fuchs, “American Jews and the Presidential Vote,” *The American Political Science Review* (Wisconsin), vol.49, 1955, p.399.

intellectuality, or upon the helping of the poor by the rich and the weak by the strong, or upon living a good life upon earth in full use of one's body.²⁶

For virtually all other groups there is a correlation between economic status and party vote: the greater the income of the group, the higher the conservative, Republican Vote. Only the Jews stood out as a major exception. They were both the highest status white group and the most Democratic. Elections in the 1960s, however, indicated that although their economic status consistently improved, Jews voted significantly more Democratic than they had in the 1950s; they seemed to be moving back to the Roosevelt era.

With respect to African-Americans, Jews are moderately more liberal when compared with their non-Jewish counterparts. Jews had played more prominent role than other whites in the fight for civil rights. Jews were involved in the formation of the NAACP. Joel E. Spingarn, an assimilated Jewish professor of English at Columbia, became the NAACP's chairman in 1914 and served this organisation until his death in 1939. His younger brother Arthur Spingarn headed the NAACP's legal fights. Louis Marshall, head of the American Jewish Committee, argued on behalf of the NAACP in the Supreme Court, attacking restrictive housing covenants that discriminated against blacks and Jews. Jews also donated thousand of dollars in the NAACP coffers. Jewish philanthropists, especially Julius Rosenwald, became the generous supporters of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, appearing at fund-raisers for Washington in New

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.400.

York and building a network of Jewish donors.²⁷ Rosenwald set up the Rosenwald Fund to dispense money to build black elementary schools in the South.²⁸ Between 1912 and 1915, 300 schools were built; by 1932, the Rosenwald Fund had established 5,357 schools in the South, serving 663,615 students.²⁹ It was almost struggle for equality and fair treatment, which could give blacks greater opportunity. It was to sympathize for their cause. And the true sympathy emerged by the Jewish own experience with discrimination and by the Horror of the Holocaust. The teachings of the Old Testament – the exodus from Egypt, the exhortations of the prophets – predisposed Jews to activate for the liberal causes.

Martin Luther King's top white adviser was Stanley Levison, a Jewish lawyer. Jews made up more than half the white lawyers who went south to defend civil rights protesters. They made up half to the quarters of the contributors to civil rights organizations, even to the more radical organizations, like the SNCC. They were prominent among journalists who wrote about civil rights, and in polls and elections, they consistently backed civil rights and candidates who endorsed civil rights. Jews felt at home in a nation that spoke of equality. The civil rights movement offered a point where Jewish self-interest and Jewish morality intersected. Jews know that on their merits-they could make it with everyone else. A society opposed to discrimination was one where Jews could thrive. Tolerance would allow them to grow and prosper.

²⁷ Jonathan Kaufman, *Broken Alliance: The Turbulent Times Between Blacks and Jews in America* (New York, 1988), p.31.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

Jews benefited enormously from the terrain shaped by the civil rights movement. They were first to use anti-discrimination laws to gain access to restricted apartment buildings in large cities. The presence of Jews at the centre of the civil rights movement contributed enormously to the success of the movement. In fact, it was a genuine love and co-operation in the civil rights movement from the Jews. They believed that society should not make distinctions based on race or religion. The Jewish liberal attitude meant harnessing the energies of the country, striking down barriers so that country could call on all its resources and triumph. Jews in Germany did very well economically before the Holocaust. Wealth was no protection, Jews had learned, if politics changed and the tide turned against the Jews. Where Jews survived, they often did so at the whim of the political ruler, relying on the king or emperor to protect their special status in the face of hostility by local people or the Church. Rapid political change often meant new perils so their interest in welfare economics and civil rights laws are the best guarantees of political stability, and thus their security. Their cultural identity addresses their interest in civil liberty protections, and their religious identity addresses the strong Jewish interest in separating church and state.

A Jewish Success Story

When Jews crossed the Atlantic, they found a more hospitable environment. In this New World, Judaism was accepted as simply one more religious denomination and they participated in the life of the larger community to degree that would have been inconceivable in Europe. Acceptance was made easier by the fact that until the middle of the nineteenth century there were not enough Jews to create a visible Jewish presence. By

the time the republic was established, therefore, American Jews were a highly accumulated middle-class group, largely indistinguishable from other Americans. The immigrants of the nineteenth and twentieth century dispersed throughout the country. This young country was also expanding geographically as well as economically. They started as peddlers, which required little capital and no particular skill, and also it filled a vital economic need. By 1860, there were no fewer than 160 identifiable Jewish communities in the United States and a Jewish traveller could find a synagogue almost everywhere he went in places such as Albany, Utica, and Buffalo, New York; Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit; Wheeling, West Virginia; Mobile, Alabama, and Galveston, Texas; and far west as San Francisco.³⁰ During the Civil War time, the Jews served the army in various capacities.

After the Civil War the golden age of entrepreneurship started in the United States. Due to the rapid economic growth, fortunes were amassed on a scale undreamed of before. The Jews caught this wave of entrepreneurship and propelled themselves on the scale of success. One-time peddlers became millionaires, among them investment bankers such as Joseph Seligman, Mayer Lehman, Marcus Goldman, and Solomon Loeb; retailers such as Benjamin Bloomingdale and Lazarus Straus; clothing manufacturers such as Levi Strauss and Philip Heidelback; real estate brokers and developers such as Henry Morgenthau, Sr.; and the mining magnate Meyer Guggenheim.³¹

In 1870, when migration of Eastern European Jews were just beginning, there had

³⁰ Charles E. Silberman, *A Certain People: American Jews and their Lives Today* (New York, 1985), p.44.

³¹ *ibid.*, p.45.

been only about 170,000 Jews in the United States, a mere 0.4 percent of the population. In the next ten years some 70,000 Eastern European Jews arrived. By 1900, more than 20 percent of the immigrants coming to the United States were Jews. Severe economic dislocation had already forced Russian and Polish Jews out of their traditional occupations, turning them into an impoverished proletariat, when the assassination of the liberal Czar Alexander in 1881 touched off a wave of bloody pogroms. In the half century following the Czar's assassination half the Jewish population of Eastern Europe moved to the United States - some to and a half million people in all. By 1900, the American Jewish population had passed the one million mark; by the mid - 1920s, when new immigration exclusion legislation went into effect, there were more than four million Jews in the United States - 3.5 percent of the total population. Too poor even to become peddlers - the Jews who arrived in 1900, for example, had only \$9 with them, on average, compared to \$15 for immigrants as a whole they took the jobs that were available, most often in the clothing factories and other light industries that were springing up to produce items that before urbanization had been manufactured at home.³²The Eastern European Jews settled in the areas such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, and Detroit etc. Many Jews who earned success also avoided any hint of Jewishness and also assumed Anglo-Saxon names. Thus Bernard Schwartz became Tony Curtis, Issur Danielovich became Kirk Douglas, Julius Garfinkle became John Garfield, Lazzlo Lowenstein became Peter Lorre, Jill Oppenheim became Jill St. John, Belty Joan Derske became Lauren Becall, Muni Weisenfreund became Paul Muni, Teiodosia Goodman turned into Theda Bara, and Samile Diane Friessen was

³² *ibid.*, p.49.

reborn as Dyan Cannon.³³ Curiously enough, the moguls who built the movie industry – people such as Harry Cohn, Samuel Goldwyn, Luis B. Mayer, Adolph Zukor, Carl Laemmle, A.J. Balaban, and the Warner Brothers – retained their names.³⁴ Between the late 1940s and early 1950s, when name changing was at peak, in 50,000 petitions filed to change names; 80 percent of them were Jews. Moreover, comedians such as Jack Benny (ne Benjamin Kubelsky), Eddie Cantor (Israel Iskowitz), George Burns (Nathan Birnbaum), and Ed Wynn (Isaiah Leopold) created public personae with no Jewish indeed, no ethnic-identity whatsoever.³⁵

For the most part, upwardly mobile Jews have shown a preference for professions and business in which one can be one's own boss. Jews who went into business, moreover, were drawn to fields in which their performances would be judged by an impersonal market place rather than bureaucratic superiors. They also turned to laws as one of the professions. Initially, Jewish lawyers were confined to the least prestigious kinds of legal work, such as bill collecting, criminal law, petty negligence suits, bankruptcy cases, small real estate closings, and the like. Jewish lawyers fulfilled skills, which were in demand in the post-war America. After this period, the labour and tax law came into leaps and bounds. When corporations discovered that they needed lawyers who could negotiate with trade unions and guide them through the thickets of the Internal Revenue Code and other government regulations, they came handy in these emerging law practice and they became the most sought by the corporations of America. Medicine careers among Jews was an ideal choice because it appeared to offer the autonomy and

³³ *ibid.*, p.60.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*

freedom from dependence on Gentiles. At the turn of century, most Jewish immigrants were simply too poor to afford a medical education for their children. As the educational opportunities broadened and upward mobility in occupation took place, the Jewish students started applying to American Medical Schools. It did not take long for these immigrants to begin climbing the occupational ladder.

The Jewish immigrants had a different set of aptitudes as well, aptitudes that made it easier for them to make their way in American Society. Most of the Jewish immigrants were well versed with urban life. They had long discarded agricultural occupation in the European countries. The new urban life in America did not come as a surprise to them. They had also occupational skill to survive in urban conditions. They were tailors, dressmakers, shoemakers, carpenters, and so on. All the more so because Jews had long practice in utilizing whatever opportunities happened to be at hand. Urbanization and industrialization required a vast expansion of retail and wholesale trade-occupations with which Jews had had long experience and an even larger growth in the housing stock.³⁶ That growth and the frequency with which city dwellers, especially Jews, moved from one neighbourhood to another, created opportunities for Jewish carpenters, painters, electricians, plumbers, plasterers, masons and tinsmiths, and for real estate developers as well.³⁷

They concentrated in rapidly growing cities, and found it was an obvious way of making money on what was close at hand. Most important of all, perhaps, real estate development was an easy field to enter; since developers operate largely on borrowed

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.133.

³⁷ *ibid.*

funds, they needed very little capital of their own. The growth of Jewish-owned businesses, whether in real estate, trade, or manufacturing, was a source of upward mobility for others besides the proprietors themselves; it created employment opportunities for Jewish lawyers, accountants, and architects as well as for book-keepers, secretaries, retail sales clerks, textile and garment salesmen, real estate brokers, insurance agents, rent and bill collectors, and building superintendents, not to mention painters, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and other craftsmen.³⁸

Jews always aimed for future and their penchant for saving tells the things. They also invested a lot on their offsprings' career. They wanted their offspring to get better themselves by becoming doctors or lawyers or professionals of some sort, and they saw higher education as an answer by which their children could climb above them. They sent their children to the best schools. In fact, Jewish college students showed considerably more self-confidence than Gentile students. In Jewish culture, as the anthropologist Natalie F. Joffe has pointed out, giving almost flows downward - from parents to children rich to poor, learned to ignorant, old to young and the obligations that result are complimentary rather than reciprocal.³⁹ The moving towards top is most evident in Jews. They also tended to choose the branches of science that are on the cutting edge of intellectual discovery. They also gained entry in the fields of Microbiology, Biophysics, Biochemistry, and the like. The motion picture industry was largely a Jewish invention, and it remains a predominantly Jewish industry.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.137.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.137.

Clearly the transformation of American society has been good for American Jews, who have flourished never before. Until the late eighteenth century, pessimism about the future was primarily a response to the hostility that Judaism so often evoked an understandable fear that conquest, persecution, poverty, inquisitions, and pogroms would take their toll and those who survived the ordeal of the moment would find it too difficult to continue as Jews. In the United States apostasy never was a significant phenomenon; Jews had tickets of admission to American society without having to be baptized.⁴⁰ Jewish success does not fit the image of a long distance runner. In fact, it was very much quicker. In *World of Our Fathers* Irving Howe put it more poetically: “The fathers would work, grub, and scramble as petty agents of primitive accumulation. The sons would acquire education, that new world magic the Jews were so adapt at invoking though formulas they had brought from the old world.”⁴¹ In fact, Jews in America came from widely differing backgrounds and found a host civilization undergoing successive and equally varied experiences.

Formation of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) and Welfare Funds in 1932 had stimulated the growth of federations by 1939 there were approximately 135 in existence, compared to 50 in 1932 and made the federation heads a force to be reckoned with in the national scene; the CJF’s General Assembly became a kind of annual summit meeting of communal leaders.⁴² The United Jewish Appeal (UJA) came into existence in early 1939 for Refugee and Overseas needs. It became a powerful force in Jewish communal life.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.142.

⁴¹ Irving Hove, *World of Our Fathers* (New York, 1976), p.253.

⁴² Silberman, p.187.

It is reasonable to expect one prerequisite for advancement in modern society to be a pronounced spirit of achievement, or achievement orientation. There are sociological dimensions to the Jewish success story and liberalism of its nature. One of them is marginality theory proposed by Veblen in 1934, which concluded that it was this marginality that accounted for this creativity. The Jews had left traditional community, which enabled them to make such outstanding contributions in the scientific and intellectual fields. But still with their solid achievements in almost all fields, they are not fully integrated in a new home. Actually, marginality is a general condition touching minority group members where because of such membership, there attends a sense of estrangement from the dominant culture.⁴³ Veblen argues that it is that uneasy position between different cultures, which has given Jews a sceptical and original point of view, which in turn has led them to extraordinary success. Most Jews do not want to relinquish their Jewish identity entirely, even if what they retained was nominal attachment. Of course, it is not only the Jews but also the various other immigrant group in the United States who have been conceived as marginal [The principal consequence of Jewish marginality, the great Anglo-Jewish political philosopher and historian Sir Isaiah Berlin suggests, is not alienation but an intense desire for acceptance, which has led Jews to study their neighbours with almost obsessive care.]⁴⁴ Since they are uncertain of their welcome – the “strangers” in Berlin’s myth suspect that the host tribe may be as likely to expel as to accept them they feel obliged to learn everything they can about how their hosts think and act.⁴⁵ In the process the (Jewish) strangers become:

⁴³ Levey, p.338.

⁴⁴ Silberman, p.147.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.148.

primary authorities on the natives; they codify their language and customs, they compose the tribe's dictionaries and encyclopedias, they interpret the native society to the outside world..... Hence the fantastic over-development of their faculties for detecting trends, and discriminating the shades and hues of changing individual and social situations, often before they have been noticed anywhere else. Hence, too, their celebrated critical acumen, their astonishingly sharp eye for the analysis of that past, the present, and sometimes the future also in short, their well known genius for observation and classification, and explanation – above all or reportage in its sharpest and finest forms.⁴⁶

The real achievement of the Jews in America has been the generations of energetic and gifted young people they have supplied to the arts, to politics, to the labour movement. Many of these young people were able in the twenties and thirties and forties to find challenging and satisfying environments that were formally or de facto suitable to Jews. Even while considering themselves free from all Jewish ties, they worked among Jews in the theatre, in political activity, in the unions. A highly promising development of the 1950s and 1960s was the establishment of a considerable number of chairs of Jewish studies at major American universities. In 1925, Harvard University added Nathan Littauer Chair in Jewish literature and Philosophy. Columbia University added Miller Foundation for Jewish History, Literature and Institutions. Students greatly benefited from this programmes and it provided an opportunity to study Judaica and Hebraica at a high academic level and made Jewish studies a recognized discipline within the university. Meanwhile, Jewish novelists also flourished and played a commanding role in American literature. Some of them dealt with Jewish themes and stimulated interest in Judaism and the Jewish people in the larger American World. Some of the Jewish novelists who attained commanding heights were Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Edward Wallant, J.D. Salinger, and Norman Mailer, poets such as Delmore Schwartz,

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

Allen Ginsberg, Howard Nemerov, John Hollander, and Karl Shapiro and critics such as Lionel Trilling, Philip Rahv, Irving Howe, Leslie Fiedler, and Alfred Kazin.

In the years after the war, American Jewry was primarily occupied with providing relief and rehabilitation of Jews in Europe, aiding the establishment and development of the state of Israel, and building its own communal institutions and synagogues. Since the late 1930s, American Jews have contributed billions of dollars in aid to help Israel deal with its immigration burdens and tenuous relations with Arab neighbours. While the periods of military strife in 1948, 1967 and 1973 brought forth the greatest contributions from the American Jewish Community, financial support for various philanthropic projects has been steady over the years.

The outcome of Jewish liberalism has been rooted in its deep historical as well as changing circumstances in a country like United States. The responses from the society like America truly shaped the milieu in which Jews wanted to live. And to make the wildest dream come true, Jews harvested each and every opportunities of the America society to carve a niche for other ethnic groups. The success level achieved was head and shoulders above any other ethnic groups in America. Education aspect is positively related to Jewish liberalism. There was almost total education system among Jews. It was also emphasized on to women folks. The community living, concern for all of them made their advancement possible after coming to the new land. Their concerns for other ethnic groups especially blacks were also on the forefront of liberal values. The respect of Jews for learning has also helped to make them fierce defenders of intellectual independence in

connection with civil liberties issues.⁴⁷ Their voting patterns have always been on a liberal stand. While high socio-economic status remains one of the best predictors of Republican Party support and conservative attitudes in the United States but Jews are exception to this principle. Despite high achievements, better educated, and higher status jobs than the average American, still they remain the most liberal white ethnic group in the United States. Though in recent years the conservative groups in Jews are increasing.

Jewish liberalism is both multi-dimensional and multi-determined. The core differences between Jews and non-Jews are on the issues of Church-state separation, political identification, social spending, as well as abortion and other social issues. IN these commitments are also enclosed the commitments to welfare, civil rights, civil liberties and on foreign policy issues. These are all linked to high socio-economic growth of Jews in America. And to enter the Gentile world Jews had to cross a wide abyss, leaving their intensely intimate and expressive traditional community learning Gentile matters was no easy matter. More precisely, they saw modernity as the norm to which Judaism would have to be adapted. Jews developed a sense of tolerance in America and participated in the life of the larger community. They are also haunted by the spectre of some of the flavours of anti-Semitism among traditional conservative sectors of the society. By 1968, the cooperation between blacks and Jews had faded. The politics of civility shifted to a politics of confrontation. The rise of black militancy has posed a major challenge to the characteristic liberalism of the U.S. Jews. By means of revival tendency in Jews which have demonstrated their confidence to themselves and in their ability to remain true to their traditions, even in the modern world. In the 21st century

⁴⁷ Fuchs, p.401.

when like a rocket that takes off and has its trajectory altered just a bit at the very beginning and the changes becomes very visible, Jews will have to maintain the same principle as they used to maintain earlier to survive in the American heterogeneous society. But America for its part has also demonstrated that Judaism can flourish in an open and pluralist society.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Of all the religious traditions and groups that emerged into relative numerical prominence for the first time at the turn of the century, Judaism has had one of the longest histories. Their epic included escape from bondage in Egypt before reaching the Promised Land. They were conquered many times and the temple was destroyed. Due to this conquest, they scattered to many parts of the world. Sometimes they prospered; frequently they were harried; and always the dispersion continued. In 1654, fleeing from Portuguese harassment in Brazil twenty-three Jews arrived in New Amsterdam as initial representatives of what was to become one of America's major faiths and in time the largest and the most successful Jewish community in the world. Life in America introduced many significant changes in Jewish attitude. The Jews were considered as tightly knit community. An individual Jew had no independent civic status. But within the ghetto there was considerable amount of self-government, with the Jewish leadership being responsible for maintaining order, levying taxes to satisfy the demands of the civil government, and imposing additional assessments to meet their own communal demands. In America, these self-contained Jewish enclaves disappeared. The synagogue became the primary institution of Jewish life, with membership matter of individual choice. Instead of one synagogue, there could be several within a given area. And the synagogue was controlled by its own congregation rather than by the whole Jewish community.

In the United States the legal restrictions, which fostered this isolated life, were absent. Jews could become full citizens. But in American conditions many Jewish ancient laws came to regard as anachronistic. Specific sources of embarrassment were some of the ancient folk customs associated with synagogue worship, and the general lack of decorum and dignity of the religious services. An initial attempt to simplify synagogue

worship and to make it more comprehensible and appealing was made at Charleston in 1824. This proved to be an abortive attempt but a similar effort in 1836 was more successful. In fact, from the beginning of Jewish modernity, Jews have had three choices: to be Jews, to be Christians, to be secularists. They preferred to remain secularist. Actually, the choice for Jews had not really been whether to be a Jew or a Christian or a secularist, it has been whether to be a Jew or a Christian. Other things being equal, secularism has been for Jew, a propaedeutic to Christianity.

Unlike Europe, America has had no modern past - no Middle Ages, no feudalism, no union of Throne and Altar. Unlike such multinational states as the Hapsburg Empire, ethnically diverse America is a unitary nation; but unlike most unitary nations, it has been religiously pluralist from its earliest days, when the pluralism was Protestant. The fact that American colonies were English colonies also explains in large measure the multiplicity of religious bodies which was so prominent a feature of the English colonial scene in contrast to the religious uniformity which prevailed in the French and Spanish domains, for a deliberate policy of religious toleration was adopted by the English colonial authorities. So in America the civic equality of the Jews was never as issue and never had to be legislated, at least nationally. A corollary of the triumph of the American Revolution, so obvious it did not have to be put into words was that Jews were citizens like other (white) man. And the growth of Jewish history in the land of America has been productive in multiple senses. Generally, the period starting about 1790 is one in which the political barriers between the Jews and the peoples among whom they lived have tended to be eliminated. The Jews have been emancipated; have become citizens rather than resident aliens. Public careers that were previously closed to Jewish talents had

opened up-not everywhere at the same speed, but almost everywhere to some extent. The last two hundred years might be described as the time in which the Jews have come out of the ghetto and entered into the modern world. They have done so by invitations and acclimatize it quickly. In the world into which they have come, men are judged, by and large, on their individual achievements and not on such factors as ethnic origin or religion, which the modern world in theory considers irrelevant most of time.

The Jews survived in America because there were few or no survivals of earlier forms of cultural and social patterning that had to overcome. There was no hierarchy. Feudal patterns remained silent and aloof in this new land. The openness of the situation in the New World allowed a far more rapid adaptation to modern conditions. The American populations came from many different backgrounds and brought along many different types of cultural baggage. Each new wave of arrivals brought with it enough differences to prevent the growth of a common pattern. There had been also waves of Jewish immigration to America from time to time. The organisation of Judaism is to a considerable extent accidental. The basic pattern was based on Protestant congregationalism. The Jewish American slipped into this way of organizing themselves.

Earlier in the historical text, it was mentioned that the U.S. was created by God as an asylum in which liberty, opportunity, and reward for achievement would prosper. The foundation to become an American rests on this principle. In fact, America provided exact platform to absorb people from different religious and national backgrounds. Immigrants and their children claimed the U.S. for their own and became attached to it through the exercise of civil rights. Americans in change of life and in pursuit of better living formed lobby, coalitions made compromises and extended their connections and

knowledge beyond themselves. In this capacity, they learned the art of working and living among themselves. The political freedom earned in breaking down barriers and rendering Americans more loyal to the national community. The discovery of Americans - voluntary pluralism-in which individuals were free to express their ancestral affections and sensibilities, to choose to be ethnic, however and whenever they wished or not at all by moving across group boundaries easily, was sanctioned and protected by unifying civic culture based on the American founding myth, its institutions, heroes, rules, and rhetoric. Continuing to create American values and in order to become a true citizen, words like: the pledge of Allegiance, "God Bless America," my country "Tis of Thee", "The star spangled manner" came into a ritual chanting. Capitalism and territorial expansion were the driving forces behind a wide-open immigration policy.

The first president to speak of diversity as a core American value was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who talked of it frequently during the presidential campaign of 1940 as the United States moved closer to participation in the war. He was one of the America's greatest presidents and who talked about America in terms of a diverse nation consisted of several ethnic groups and nationalities. He made it a point in his policy to serve all and secure a better life for them, as these were the lifeblood of America. Roosevelt always valued ethnic diversity as a distinctive feature of American nationality. It was Roosevelt who took prime concern for the dilapidated conditions of Jewish life in the European nations. Also liberalism came in vogue in the United States in the 1930s to refer to the programmes and policies developed by the Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Central to the New Deal liberalism was a greater reliance on the state as a primary instrument for national integration and national development. Also, the state was to be

relied upon to assure that basic standards of living were met for the entire population, as, for example, through the provisions of a minimum wage, unemployment insurance, social security and welfare programmes.

At the heart of the new departures in liberal domestic policy in the late 1930s were the increasing acceptance and the significant development of the ideas of John Maynard Keynes. Involving much more than just the growing and pre-Keynesian recognition of the importance of government spending during hard times, Keynesian analysis came to shape social reform as well as economic policy. Keynesian economics constituted an analytical framework that fit the lessons of Roosevelt's first two terms: unbalanced budgets and some recovery; restrictive fiscal policy and sharp recession; renewed spending and a resurgent economy. It also provided a structure of ideas that proved fundamental to the further development of liberal policy. The economist Alvin H. Hansen was the pivotal figure in the reorientation of liberal economic analysis. University economists, executive branch officials and bureaucrats, liberal intellectuals and journalists were especially important to the growing influence of Keynesian analysis and prescriptions. For all its new importance, however, compensatory fiscal policy did not in the late 1930s eclipse social welfare on the liberal agenda. With unemployment and privations, still obvious major problems, especially after the 1937-1938 recession, public assistance remained high among the priorities of the Roosevelt administrations, Keynesians included, and dominated the efforts of social reformers.

The National Resources Planning Board [NRPB] soon became central to the evolving liberal programme. It put a long-term relief policy atop its agenda. By early autumn 1939, then, the NRPB had identified as its chief priorities relief and full

employment, the focuses respectively of Security, Work, and of Post-War Plan and Programme; had begun to develop the new economic bill of rights; and had at FDR's direction become the administration's chief post-war planning and coordination agency. The Relief Committee's recommendations not only ensured minimum security but also added to raise the standard of living for the whole American people. By early 1942, the period of NRPB policy innovations had largely ended. Subsequent wartime liberal proposals generally were restatements, refinements, or extensions of the ideas and visions evident before Pearl Harbor in the NRPB's internal studies and published reports. Emphasizing full-employment opportunity as well as security, it envisioned a post war mixed economy where public policy both stimulated and cooperated with the private sector to sustain prosperity and stability.

On March 10, 1944 - President Roosevelt suddenly submitted Security, Work and Relief Policies and Post-War Plan and programme to Congress. This liberal domestic political agenda was a culmination of the New Deal and NRPB policy development since the late 1930s. It recommended a comprehensive array of long-term government social insurance, work relief, general relief and social services to combat chronic unemployment and economic insecurity. Despite their scope and significance, the reports provoked only a limited reaction. Criticism outweighed praise, but inattention exceeded both. Also the economic bill of rights, the grand plans for mixed public-private corporations and for a greatly enlarged government role in such areas as industrial, housing, energy, urban and regional development-indeed, the very liberal Keynesian basis of full-employment prescriptions-all drew the use of congressional anti-planning, antistatist, antispending conservatives.

But still Congressional and administration liberals used the NRPB reports in developing social security, public assistance and demobilization measures; by late 1944 they had initiated full-employment legislation as well. Roosevelt throughout much of 1944 gave liberals' additional cause for concern about postwar domestic policy and the approaching presidential election. Full employment seemed a clear national consensus and leading political priority after 1944. The eventual Employment Act of 1946 called for "maximum" rather than "full" employment. Despite many frustrations, the New Deal remained basic to the liberal agenda for a quarter century. With the signal exception of civil rights, the new programme set out a framework and agenda for liberal reform that extended beyond Roosevelt's presidency to the Fair Deal, the New Frontier and the Great Society.

The Jewish immigrants were a community triply uprooted: from their old homes, from their religious traditions, and from their customary work and culture. But in Roosevelt's New Deal: they saw their chance in America and they took it. And in the sixties of the twentieth century the Jews had got a president to care for all Americans. President Johnson campaigned on a unity theme, expressing the need for a "broad national consensus" and promising policies that would enable the United States to become a "Great Society." Johnson turned to the development of his own programme encouraged by his impressive popular mandate in 1964. As the Eighty-ninth Congress began its work, he urged the large Democratic majority in the House to modify its procedures so as to strengthen party discipline vis-à-vis seniority, thereby hoping to avoid having his Great Society bottlenecked by archaic congressional procedures and practices. A programme of health insurance for the elderly-Medicare was enacted and inaugurated

in 1966. A land mark Elementary and Secondary Education Act directed mass infusions of federal funds into special school for low-income neighbourhoods, the development of high quality curriculum materials, educational researches, aid to rural schools, and other aids to local school systems.

President Johnson's formidable presence seemed to infuse all the decisions of government, and he exacted compliance from Congress unprecedented since the beginning of the New Deal. His concept of achievement was derived from the New Deal and Roosevelt's agendas - which dominated the formative years of his public life- and from those influences and conflicts of his childhood that had brought him to equate achievement with fulfilling the needs and expectations of others, a purpose whose nobility was not impaired by his belief that such accomplishments also strengthened the authority of the man who had achieved them. Johnson's ideal-and hence the guide to his ambitions-was an America in which every person shared in the progress and the responsibilities of the country. He actually wanted a fair share for everyone. Johnson wanted to go beyond FDR's dream. He was not only a great believer but also a great persuader. In words and deeds, Johnson made known his intention how to concentrate on legislation. And more importantly, he committed most of his waking hours to shape the policies of the Great Society. Multiple actions at multiple levels were intended to serve as a continual compulsion to action; they were designed to infuse the entire governmental process with Johnson's goal of legislative success.

American Jews continued its impeccable voting records for the Democratic Party. They were largely convinced with the welfare policies inaugurated by the President Johnson as for them it was an extension to the New Deal programme. By that time their

prosperity had reached its peak. Still they supported the welfare idea. For them it was an extended support for the improvement of all ethnic groups, so that anti-Semitic feelings do not touch them due to poverty.

Though Jewish attachment to the welfare and liberal policies is well known. But Jews generally opposed the affirmative policies, which is considered to be one of the liberal policies. The meritocracy benefited Jews because they had the economic and educational prerequisites to compete effectively for scarce place at all levels of higher education. And, American Jews have shown a remarkable and disproportionate degree of educational achievement. However, other minorities who had to cope with the disabilities of economic disadvantage gained little from the elimination of overt discrimination. The cumulative disadvantages of the past, including inferior schooling, left them unprepared to compete on the same basis with members of more privileged groups. It was against this background that colleges and universities, under pressure from the federal government, launched affirmative action programmes to increase the representation of racial minorities.

President Johnson wished to build the Great Society in which every American had its say. His domestic programmes are generally acknowledged to have been crucial for the civil rights movement. Johnson is also known to have been a strategic pragmatist, as wheeler-dealer. In September 1965, Johnson signed Executive Order 11246. The inception of affirmative action starts from this Executive Order. The goal of affirmative action was the recruitment and retention of a diverse and well-qualified workforce or student body. The root cause of the post-1965 was the realisation that even with full civil rights, blacks remained a terribly disadvantaged and frustrated people in an affluent

society. By the late 1960s, preferential affirmative action had become the basic to the liberal view of race relations and was becoming entrenched in government, industry and the universities. The first use of the term “affirmative action” was probably used in the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. The Wagner Act, as it is popularly called, prohibited private employers from discriminating against person because of membership in Labour Unions.

The Jewish organisations were in the forefront of the campaign against the “new quotas”. For them it was a beginning of new discrimination as they had construed it. For Jews, affirmative action smacked of the *numerus clausus*-the restrictive quotas that excluded Jews from universities in Eastern Europe-not to mention the unofficial quotas they had to contend with in this country as well. As a small minority, numerically over-represented in institutions of higher learning, Jews were particularly threatened by any suggestion that groups should be represented in rough proportion to their numbers in the general proportion. Obviously, granting preferential treatment to racial minorities’ means that some whites will lose positions they would otherwise have had. Jews, of course, have special reason to feel threatened by affirmative action. Not only do they have a particularly large stake in higher education and the professions, but also they realize that other avenues of opportunity are still limited by anti-Semitism.

The increasing radicalisation of American Blacks in the sixties of the twentieth century had profound impact on the Jews. The liberal stance of the Jews was challenged by its chief beneficiaries, the blacks, among whom a certain degree of annoyance with Jews and even of anti-Semitism spread. When the civil-rights revolution broke out in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the front-line troops in the Montgomery bus boycott and then

in the lunch-counter sit-ins were all blacks, but among the whites who soon rallied to the black causes, a large share- a disproportionate shares-were Jews. By the summer of 1964, Jews had emerged at the forefront of the civil rights movement and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Not everyone was prepared to march down South or send money to the NAACP. But Jews, by and large, showed more sympathy with the growing black protest than any other white group. Jewish organizations lobbied relentlessly for civil rights and in election after election, Jews voted overwhelmingly for liberal over conservative candidates. Jews also contributed one-half to three-quarters of the financial support received by civil groups in that era.

Earlier also, Jewish philanthropists, especially Julius Rosenwald, became generous supporters of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. Rosenwald set up the Rosenwald Fund to dispense money to build black elementary schools in the South. Jews recognized in the black struggle for rights elements that could benefit them and conditions with which they could sympathize. Jews by the 1930s had found a political home and a political programme to overturn those injustices: Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal of the Democratic Party. Further in the 1960s, the Great Society concept fulfilled Jewish liberal aspirations. Jews had turned to black causes out of sympathy fueled by the radical politics of Eastern European immigrants, by their own experience with discrimination and by the horror of the Holocaust.

It was on the plantations in the South that blacks first met Jews. In the nineteenth century the relations between both ethnic groups was warm. It continued up to the 1960s. After the World War I, the great migrations of blacks to the North began, filling cities like Chicago, Detroit and New York. By 1960, three-fourths of blacks lived in cities and

half lived outside the old slave states. It was here, in the cities of the North, Midwest and West, that many blacks met for the first time the Jews they had heard so much about them in church. There were roots of co-operation in black attitudes towards Jews-the shared feelings of being an oppressed people, the history of Jewish philanthropy, the decency and liberalism shown by individual Jews towards blacks at a time when most whites shunned them. There were also roots of division-the persistence of an elder brother mentality, resentment at Jewish overbearingness, bitterness at ghetto businesses, a belief that Jews failed to live up to their own moral standards. The Jews who first came to America in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were heirs to a conservative political tradition that tended to embrace the status quo and sought not to rock the boat. The tumult of Europe had rarely been good for the Jews. They had been chased from Jerusalem in A.D. 70, when the Romans destroyed the Second Temple; enslaving whatever Jewish inhabitants they could catch. From that time on, Jews had lived on the margins of society, pushed into ghettos and restricted to crafts or professions that Christians would not touch.

Jews have flourished in America as nowhere else in the Diaspora because it is the most meritocratic society in which they have ever had the good fortune to dwell. The principle of equal treatment has liberated Jews from both the injury and the insult of disabilities that were imposed on them for centuries. In that sense equal treatment constitutes an interest of theirs. It was under the banner of this idea that Jews flocked to the civil-rights movement and the same ideal constituted the only real basis of the black-Jewish alliance that once existed.

The Civil War and Reconstruction kindled hopes among blacks that America was truly committed to an equal society. As the struggle for civil rights achieved its cardinal victories with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, many of its black activists began to turn away from their original goal, taking up instead the cause of black power. The meaning of black power was never clearly defined. Its driving motive seemed to be venting of rage over racial humiliation, a rage that the earlier civil-rights movement had insisted on subordinating to the strategy of non-violence and sublimating in the rhetoric of Christian love. Jews were unhappy with the rising militancy and anti-white sentiment emanating from the more militant-parts of the civil rights movement. The rising black militancy was demanding power, real power. To many Jews, these demands for aggressive black power threatened them. Tensions were roiling in ghettos, in civil rights organisations in black and Jewish neighbourhoods. All this led to a sense of insecurity among Jews.

In 1967, at the conference for a New Politics organized by leaders of the New Left soon after Israel's victory in the six-day war, the black caucus insisted on pushing through a resolution condemning "imperialist Zionists". There was even a competing anti-Jewish religious myth, popular among free-Negro churches in the northern cities before the Civil War. These developments had severe consequences for American Jews. The Jews started asking themselves, whether their prosperity had been bought at the price of the surrender of distinctive spiritual, cultural, liberal and welfare values. The deterioration had caused much anguish among Jews. There was also disagreement on the issue of affirmative actions, which Jews had opposed. The Jews always felt that black anti-Semitism utterances could increase hatred of Jews everywhere. The urban disorders

of the mid- 1960s dramatically underscored the demand for economic opportunity, spawned a cadre of angry and impatient urban leaders, and prompted a combination of urban development initiatives and race-specific policies to extend opportunities. In foreign policy, black and Jewish interests clashed over South Africa and Israel. As some considered this confrontation a class interpretation as Jews before the 1960s became more well to do and many blacks became mired in poverty, black self-assertion, also being copied by other groups in the United States for Jews legitimated self-assertion. Some Jews had always been troubled by the problem of dual loyalty.

After the destruction of affluent Jewish community in Europe, America contained the world's largest Jewish community with a complex feeling of responsibility. After the Holocaust, survival has remained an important part of Jewish life. This they again realised in the mid – sixties. The decade of the 1960s is known for the unexpected youth rebellion. There had been growth of political and cultural radicalism among the youth. The rise of special youth music, hairstyles, speech and clothing led to emergence of “counterculture” in America. Interest in Jewish religion and in Jewish issues among young seemed to have touched a nadir in the early 1960s. There was also a deep dissatisfaction among the religiously inclined. There was concern of declining Jewish population in the sixties. Three things emerged on question for the survivability of Jews. Firstly, falling birth rate and intermarriage. Out-of-wedlock births among American Jews are among the lowest in the nation, and married Jewish women are adept at birth control. Due to the prosperity, there has been phenomenon of late marriage in Jewish community. All these factors led to low birth rate. There is, in fact, greater rate of inter-marriage. Intermarriage was particularly high in the third generation and among the better educated.

A small religio-ethnic minority, the Jews have depended upon families to transmit a strong sense of identity across the generations and thus to withstand the allure of majority religions or cultures. The high rates of intermarriage continued to be regarded as symptomatic of an alarming process of communal self-dissolution. The American ethos not only sanctions intermarriages across religious and ethnic lines but also subtly encourages them long before large numbers of Jews regularly crossed social boundaries to seek spouses outside the confines of the community, they had erased the lines separating Judaism itself from other cultural perspectives. Were not the Jews of the United States, though low birth rate and intermarriage, assuring their eventual disappearance?

Secondly, there is a continuing loss of religious practicing Jews, who thus disappear into the general American population. Thirdly, Jews are mobile community, and fear of acculturation is always there. Survival also depends on passing on to very young children a religion worldview with its underlying unexpressed designs for thought and action. Mobility is not a new facet of Jewish life and at different periods in Jewish history, it may have served to strengthen the Jewish community and indeed to insure its very survival. But more often migration might have a deleterious effect on the community and the migrant. Especially, when there is continuous movement, the individual's ties to Judaism and the Jewish community may be weakened; this, in turn, may affect the strength of the formal community structure as an increasing proportion of individual fail to develop strong loyalties to local institutions.

Jews have already become widely dispersed throughout the United States; this trend is likely to continue in the future. As a result of higher education and changing

occupations, lower levels of self-employment, weakening family ties and reduced discrimination, Jews have begun to migrate in increasing numbers away from the major centres of Jewish population. Such greater dispersal means that factors other than religion will provide an increasingly important basis for selecting areas and neighbourhoods of residence. Jews remain unique, despite some evidence of narrowing of differentials, in having a high concentration of highly educated, numerous white collar, and high-income individuals.

There are increasing number of Jews who are becoming conservatives. Traditional values, of work, community and religious involvement, are shared not only by Protestants who are traditionally Republican, but also by growing numbers of conservative Jews. The stronger military orientation of the Republican Party is another attraction for Jews concerned about the security of Israel. The younger Jewish lot are shaping themselves into brand of conservative politics. The growing dissatisfaction with governmental influence in business, Democratic tax-and-spend politics, and the decline of traditional values, held dear to Jewry (i.e., family and education), may be making for at least a partial switch of political allegiance.

The Jewish commitment to welfare politics was based on at least two factors: the traditional liberal where development of everyone was sought. Though this tradition is fading away. Secondly, Jewish survival is based upon and best served by an open, secular society promoting liberal values and tolerating a diversity of religious groups. The liberalism of the last two centuries liberated Jews from the ghetto and enlisted them as civic equals in western society. Equality in the American sense has not only meant equality of opportunity, but just as importantly, it has implied equality of respect. In

course of time, Judaism has become religion of survival. Judaism is meant to repair the world not solely to save Jews. Repairing the world means helping the poor, the deprived, and in the process create a welfare state. It also means attention to the non-Jewish poor and the deprived, as there are certainly immeasurably more non-Jews in America than there are Jews. To fulfill this condition, there is certainly need of another era of Big Government much on the style of President Johnson where there should not be a Vietnam and few conservatives in the Congress.

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