Survey of Literature

Sternberg begins his study by attempting to answer the basic premise of this book: why are Jews so predominantly liberals? He talks about the background of the American Jewish experience and how the various political parties have influenced Jews as a whole, and how this influence has led to the staunchly liberal ideology that most Jews hold today. Abortion, education, affirmative action, and gun rights are among the topics that Sternberg discusses. With each issue, he explains some of the background followed by a synopsis explaining why Jews feel the way they do about each social issue.

Then, he shows how the conservative stand is really more in line with Orthodox Judaism and why American Jews should rethink their position on these important issues. The book wraps up with Sternberg summarizing that conservative thinking is the most compatible with the Torah and with the Jewish experience. Some of the areas that Sternberg touches on do have validity, like the topic of abortion and how it conflicts with the teachings of Judaism. But he seems a little off base when talks about other areas, like the threat from the religious right. The other topics that are presented in the book (healthcare, guns, education, etc.) include a mixture of good and questionable reasoning. He does make some convincing arguments relating to the overall power of government and why Jews should be very careful about expanding government, given the experiences of the past.

Murray Friedman, (2005) *The Neoconservative Revolution: Jewish Intellectuals and the Shaping of Public Policy*

This is a well-researched, timely book delving into the history of “neoconservatives” and their impact on U.S. policy and culture. Murray Friedman argues that Jewish intellectuals played an important role in the emergence of neoconservatism, which has in turn impacted American conservatism as a whole. The neoconservatives, a small group with big ideas, have drawn considerable attention in recent years as the alleged architects of George W. Bush’s foreign policies, especially the war in Iraq. Friedman traces the origins of the neoconservatives to left-wing Jewish intellectuals disillusioned with the domestic policies of the Great Society, the transformation of civil rights into Black Power and
affirmative action, the countercultural attack on mainstream values, and George McGovern's critique of the Cold War.

He also introduces the second generation of the neoconservative thinkers. He says the second generation of neoconservatives plunged directly into partisan politics as opinion-makers and appointees in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and both presidents Bush, primarily in defense and foreign policy positions. Prominent examples include: William Kristol (Irving's son), John Podhoretz (Norman's son), Elliot Abrams (Norman Podhoretz's and Midge Dector's son-in-law), Michael Ledeen, Robert Kagan, Kenneth Adelman, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith, and I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby. Friedman's book is an easy and interesting read, generally sympathetic to his subjects.

It relates fascinating stories about the early days of Jewish conservatives (many like Frank Meyer, Marvin Liebman, and Frank Chodorov who were not neoconservatives. Friedman emphasizes neo-conservatism's growing support for religion as social glue, its militant defense of Israel and its patriotic appreciation of the opportunities America offers Jews. He also argues that Jewish neo-cons helped the larger conservative movement exchange a racist, anti-Semitic aura for intellectual sophistication and social-science chops. Friedman's conservative sympathies and biographical approach mean that he takes neo-con enthusiasms like supply-side economics and the Contra war in Nicaragua largely at face value without subjecting them to serious critical appraisal. The book is a useful introduction to its history.


This first rate collection of commissioned essays that range across a wide spectrum of opinion addresses a vitally important and timely question: How should religious adherents, and specifically engaged Jews, draw upon their faith traditions as they participate in American public discourse? This volume presents a strikingly diverse range of views on church-state issues. It also contains much original survey information and
other fresh empirical findings. Whatever one’s perspective on religions’ social and civic roles, this balanced, lively, and timely volume will enrich and challenge it.


To be sure, *Jewish Power* contains some of the ingredients which might go into such a work. For one thing, it ranges widely over its subject, with chapters on the origins of Jewish “defense” organizations, the activities of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), relations with Israel, the role of American Jews in the collapse of the USSR, and so on. And apart from providing a trove of anecdotes on all these matters, Goldberg also has a thesis and a point of view. But these, unsupported by facts and conditioned by an instinctive left-wing bias, prove to be the book’s undoing.

The interests of American Jewry would be served, Goldberg believes, only if Jewish organizations redoubled their efforts to advance “a traditional American Jewish message of compassion,” and did so in conjunction with the New Deal coalition of blacks, trade unionists, intellectuals, and Protestant church groups.

To judge by what has happened in American politics in recent years—the New Deal coalition has drifted sharply to the Left and faded in strength while the center has shifted to the Right—Goldberg’s is a formula not for Jewish power but for political irrelevancy. With all the other currents causing Jewish influence in the United States to dwindle, this is one formula the community could do without. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.


Ginsberg examines the cycle of Jewish success and anti-Semitic attack throughout the history of the Diaspora, with a concentrated focus on the “special case” of America. For Ginsberg, the essential issue is not anti-Jewish feeling, but the conditions under which such sentiment is likely to be used in the political arena. *The Fatal Embrace* identifies the political dynamics that, historically, have set the stage for the persecution of Jews.
Wherever Jews have settled, Ginsberg writes, their literacy, commercial skills and alienation from Gentile societies have made them useful to kings, princes, sultans, prime ministers, commissars and presidents. Fatal Embrace substantiates much of what so-called anti-Semites have been saying for decades. Jewish influence in the contemporary American mass media and academia is equally pronounced. Jews abound in the top echelons of the major television networks and film studios. Fatal Embrace substantiates the Historical Revisionist theory that the three groups which pushed hardest for war with Nazi Germany were the Roosevelt administration, members of the WASP establishment and the Jewish community.


Jews in American Politics, edited by L. Sandy Maisel and Ira N. Forman, documents 200 years of Jewish participation in American political life. Chapters by noted Jewish scholars and journalists consider Jews' relationships to, for instance, the major political parties, the media, foreign policy and the conservative movement. Jewish political pioneers are highlighted as well from Florence Prag Kahn, who from 1925 to 1937 was the first Jewish woman to serve in the House of Representatives, to Senator Joseph Lieberman, in whose vice presidential campaign “Jewishness wasn’t a big deal, which itself was a very big deal.” With numerous biographical sketches of Jews in government as well as broader discussions of activism, identity and advocacy, this book is an excellent source of both fact and analysis. Both analytical and anecdotal, the essays in Jews in American Politics offer deep insight into serious questions about the dilemmas that Jews in public service face, as well as humorous sidelights and authoritative reference materials never before collected in one source. The story of the rich tradition of Jewish participation in American political life provides an indispensable resource for any serious follower of American politics, especially in election year 2004.

Mark Gerson (1996), The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to the Culture Wars Maryland: Madison Books
Contrary to widespread belief, neoconservatives generally support the welfare state as providing an essential safety net, though neocons such as Irving Kristol and Michael Novak want to restructure welfare programs in order to limit bureaucracy, maximize personal autonomy and discourage a cycle of dependency. This viewpoint emerges from Gerson's survey of neoconservative thought, based on his interviews with Kristol, Novak, Norman Podhoretz, James Q. Wilson, William Buckley Jr., Midge Decter, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Richard John Neuhaus, Joshua Muravchik and other leading neo- and old-line conservatives. Despite a wide diversity of opinions, there is much common ground; neoconservatives oppose affirmative action; they regard capitalism as essential to economic and moral prosperity and view communist systems as evil; pro-choice neoconservatives think abortion is wrong and should be stringently regulated and discouraged, while many Catholic neocons go further, opposing legalized abortion, which they regard as murder. Even readers who disagree with neoconservative philosophy will find much to ponder in Gerson's thoughtful intellectual history.


Watershed events - including the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, September 11, 2001, and the Iraq war - have created major challenges for American Jewry, leading to a change in its perceptions and environment. These developments are explored in an introductory essay and in interviews with 17 prominent American Jews: Norman Podhoretz, Alan Dershowitz, Gary Rosenblatt, David Harris, Malcolm Hoenlein, Stuart Eizenstat, Abraham Foxman, Marvin Hier, Daniel Pipes, Shoshana Cardin, Rela Mintz Geffen, David Ellenson, Ismar Schorsch, Norman Lamm, Richard Joel, Carole Solomon, and Mark Charendoff.

Their views provide a time-capsule as well as put order into a dynamic development by identifying key issues to watch as American Jewry and its environment evolve over the coming years. A major element of American Jewry's changing mind-set relates to Israel. The great majority of those who identify most with the Jewish community have become
more supportive due to the events of recent years. This in turn has intensified the search for ways to strengthen Jewish identification and that with Israel.

Other elements of change concern attitudes toward Evangelical Christians and Muslims as well as increased anxiety about anti-Zionism on campuses and anti-Semitism.

The new, mainly political, challenges emerging from the recent mega-events are superimposed on the structural problems of American Jewry. These include a high rate of intermarriage, low fertility, assimilation, reduced voluntarism, the high cost of Jewish living, and a declining percentage of Jewish philanthropy for Jewish causes.