Chapter: One

Introduction:

Birth of the Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC): Foothold in the GOP
The Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC) was established in September 1985 as the National Jewish Coalition. Its birth was significant in America's political history as it was the first attempt to build bridges between the Jewish community and the country's Republican Party or the Grand Old Party (GOP). The RJC served as a platform for the Jews who wanted an association with the Grand Old Party. In fact, the word National from the organization's name was replaced by Republican in 1999 to manifest in stronger terms its political leanings towards the Republicans. The RJC describes itself as the sole voice of Jewish Republicans to Republican decision makers and the Jewish community. The name National Jewish Coalition was considered unattractive for prospective members. Creation of the new organization also made the Republicans feel that they could now get the support of an ethnic group which was alienated for several decades.

That the Jews are traditionally more liberal and closer to the Democratic Party is a well-known fact. However, the formation of the RJC added a conservative dimension to their existence honing a natural attraction to the GOP. The RJC, though independent in its functioning, aimed to cash on the Jewish votes and Jewish affiliation to the party and its policies. Four years after the birth of the RJC, came into existence an organization to counter its influence, the National Jewish Democratic Council (NJDC). The NJDC claimed to align with the Democratic Party ideology.

The formation of RJC marked a paradigm shift in the US politics and raised some fundamental question, which this chapter seeks to answer. What motivated the formation of the RJC? How was it formed and why in 1985? What made the Jews turn to the Republican Party, giving up their decades-old active support to the Democratic Party? How did the neoconservative ideology championed by a few Jewish intellectuals gained in popularity with the community motivating a section of Jews to defy the Democratic Party agenda and work for the Republican ideology? Did the RJC have some supporters who were not a part of it but yet voted for the Republican Party?

Since the early 1930s, the Jews in American have consistently stood behind the Roosevelt coalition finding solace in the New Deal structure and the Democratic Party. The
community’s support has been integral to the Democratic Party prompting Milton Himmelfarb to comment that “Jews earn like Episcopalians and vote like Puerto Ricans.” (Himmelfarb 1969: 60)

However, before 1932, the American Jews supported the Republican Party and stood for its conservative policies. In the 19th century, Benjamin Disraeli in his book Lord George Bentinck, called the Jews “the trustees of tradition, and the conservators of the religious element…. All the tendencies of the Jewish race are conservative. Their bias is to religion, property, and natural aristocracy; and it should be interest of statesmen that this bias of a great race should be encouraged and their energies and creative powers enlisted in the cause of existing society.” (Edward Shapiro, 2001: 9)

Jews in the United States

Jews have been living in America for more than four centuries. During the American Revolution, their population in the country was nearly 2,000, most of them Sephardic*. They played a significant role in America’s struggle for Independence, including fighting against the British forces. The first Jewish congregation in North America, Shearith Israel, founded in New York in 1684, was Sephardic and is still active. The first Jewish congregation in the city of Philadelphia, Congregation Mikveh Israel, founded in 1740, was also a Sephardic one, and is also still active.

The year 2004 marks 350 years of Jewish life in the land of freedom. Since their arrival in America, Jews have established themselves as a major player in all walks of life showing keen interest in politics, culture, and finance. American Jews were the first ethnic or religious minority to win power and influence within the larger body politics by trumpeting their own weakness and projecting themselves as victims. (Goldberg 1997: 20) As a new land, America attracted different ethnic groups from different countries who came there in quest of a better life. The Jews migrated to America because of the persecution faced by them in several European countries. The Jews of Spain were expelled by the edict of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabelle in 1492. Five years later, the
urban Portugal Jewish community faced a similar fate when they were forced to leave the
country. There is an anecdote behind this expulsion. When Manuel I ascended the
Portuguese throne in 1494, he decided to marry Princess Isabel of Spain. Isabel put a
condition that she would marry him only if he expelled the Jews from the country. The
marriage contract was signed on November 30, 1496. With this ended the golden era of
the Portuguese Jews. Despite their limited numbers, European Jews started forming their
own groups to protect and promote their interests. A substantial number of them migrated
to the United States.

Once in the US, integration into the social mainstream ranked among the highest personal
and collective priorities of the migrant Jews, if not the top most. (Amyot and Lee
Sigelman 1996: 177) With every passing year many Jewish organizations mushroomed in
various parts of the US in a bid to place their interests effectively. During the colonial
period, Jews lived in different pockets and their role in the society differed from colony
to colony.

They struggled hard to carve a niche for themselves in the domestic political process.
This was a result of their European experience where the Jews were made to realize that
they were not welcome in the political set up. They did not want to repeat the same
mistakes. Initially their number was small, and thus American Jews refrained from
aligning with the policies of any political grouping. Besides, the time was also not ripe as
the American party system was not matured enough.

It took years of ups and downs for the American political party system to take a concrete
shape. After decades of alignments and bickering, the Democratic Party and the
Republican Party finally emerged as the two poles of a two-party democracy in the
country. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the two parties found themselves
relatively balanced in terms of voter preference. The control of the White House and the
Congress alternated between them. (Diner 2004: 156-157) However, neither of the two
parties saw Jews as a major voting block at that point in time due to their small numerical
strength. But majority of the Jews still fell in line with the conservative trend, though not expressing it prominently. According to American Jewish Historian Sarna (1999: 117):

"Having won the right to settle and trade in the seventeenth century, all indications are that Jews embraced the same traditional, conservative political tactics they practiced in Europe. They believed deeply in the values of tradition and deference, and as merchants and traders what they prized above all else was security and stability."

The community which has managed to attain the status of a strong voting block in the twentieth century was never seen as such before the Civil War. The formal contact between the Jewish community and the American government came in 1790, a year after the inauguration of George Washington as the first President of the new Republic. President Washington visited Newport, Rhode Island on August, 1790 after an invitation from Moses Seixas, the warden of Congregation Kahal Kadosh Yeshuat Israel, better known as the Hebrew Congregation. Newport had suffered greatly during the Revolutionary War. The Congregation offered all help to Washington. Touched by the Jewish support, Washington wrote which expressed the ideal relationship among the government, its individual citizens and religious groups:

May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.1 (Source: American Jewish Historical Society)

Slowly Jews started taking active interest in politics. In 1851, Samuel Hirshl successfully ran for town council in Davenport, Iowa, as a member of the newly formed Republican Party. (Diner 2004: 160) In the nineteenth century, the Jewish population increased significantly as more and more of them immigrated to the US. Among the immigrants, the number of German Jews was higher and it kept on increasing.

The German Jews supported the new Republican Party. As a young party, the Republicans promised a new hope to these immigrants. Lawrence Fuchs (1956) wrote:

1 George Washington's Letter to the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island "To Bigotry No Sanction, to Persecution No Assistance" (1790) Source: American Jewish Historical Society
The German – Jewish refugees from the stillborn European uprisings of 1830 and 1848 especially welcomed the new Republican Party, the party of free men and free soil. The very name of the new organization was attractive to these German immigrants. Most of the Rabbis of the North opposed slavery, a few speaking out in their pulpits. Some became out-and-out abolitionists.

Also, Jews supported the Whigs. This was the period when the German Jews influenced the politics of the immigrant Jews in the US. The fact that the Republican Party during the period was focused on expanding its political base helped their cause. Diner (160) analyzed.

A number of Chicago Jewish men organized monster public rallies for the fledgling Republican Party, once benefited handsomely from the patronage system and secured a very comfortable political position. He was Abraham Kohn, an immigrant from Bavaria, who had opened a clothing store in Chicago in 1843 and had become deeply woven into the fabric of local business and Republican politics that by 1860, Mayor John Wentworth named him city clerk.

When Abraham Lincoln became the 16th President of the United States, he introduced several Jewish friendly policies. For the first time, a Rabbi was called in to bless the US House of Representatives. President Lincoln cancelled the Order No. 11 by General Ulysses S. Grant\(^\text{3}\)*, which sought to expel Jews from the states of Tennessee, Kentucky and Mississippi. The move had a positive impact on the Jewish community as it provided them considerable relief. What drew the Jews to Lincoln more than anything else was his consideration for the community. (Fuchs: 41) A Jewish Chaplain – Jacob Frankel was commissioned in the United States Army during his tenure. Majority of them liked Lincoln’s approach to the Civil War. Barring a few exceptions, Jews of the South

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\(^2\) The Whig Party emerged in 1833 and lasted till 1856. It was opposed to the policies of Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party

\(^3\)* During the Civil War, smugglers were illegally selling southern cotton to the northern textile factories. Grant, commander of U.S. Army forces, believed that Jews were primarily behind this illegal cotton trade, and he decided to expel all Jews from southern territory. Based on Grant’s orders, Jews were expelled from their homes, including 20 families from the town of Paducah alone. Some Jews were denied rail transportation and had to flee northward on foot. Those who did not cooperate were thrown into prison. Jewish community leaders immediately arranged a meeting at the White House with President Lincoln, who cancelled the expulsion order. Grant, who would later become US president, never offered any explanation or apology.
preferred to be attached to the Democrats while those living in the Upper Midwest stuck to the Republican principles.

Many Jewish immigrants were influenced by the conservative philosophy. One of them was Joseph Seligman, well known in the Republican Party circles. In 1837, Seligman immigrated to the United States and settled in New York. Originally a peddler, Seligman started from the scratch. Along with his brother he first established a clothing firm. Later he diversified his business and established the banking house J&W Seligman. His business acumen saw him grow into one of the most successful businessmen in the US. As Seligman became wealthy, he also became politically very active and made contributions to the Republican Party by marketing bonds in Europe. He won the confidence of President Grant, who offered him the post of Secretary of the Treasury. Seligman, however, rejected the offer. He did not have big political ambitions, and instead wanted to remain in the thick and thin of the financial world. Seligman submitted a plan to the government detailing ways to fund their operations. His plan was accepted and he later joined the House of Rothschild in this undertaking.

Jacob H. Schiff and Louis Marshall, both prominent Jews were die-hard supporters of the Republican Party. While Schiff was a philanthropist and financer, Marshall lived up to an even more conservative code and is known as the "natural Republican." (Sarna: 122) New York bankers Jacob Schiff and Felix Warburg; Philadelphia bibliophile and Jurist Mayer Sulzberger; Chicago Sears, Roebuck head Julius Rosenwald; and New York attorney Louis Marshall, second President of the American Jewish Committee, were staunch Republicans and equally adherents of the laissez-faire business philosophy their party stood for. Orthodox Jew and publisher of the Jewish Morgen Journal, later the

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4 *The House of Rothschild is a banking group in the United States. House of Rothschild, term used to refer to the various branches of an international banking family. Members of the family all descended from a common ancestor, the German financier Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1743-1812). Financier Haym Salomon, who supported the patriots during the American Revolution, then later made loans to James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe, was a Rothschild agent.

5 *The first Yiddish daily morning newspaper; established in New York July 2, 1901, by Jacob Saphirstein. It is now published by the Jewish Press Publishing Company. While professedly Orthodox, Zionist and conservative, it is an ardent advocate of the Americanization of the Russian immigrants who form the bulk of its readers.
Morgen Zhurnal, Jacob Sapherstein was so influenced with the Republicans that he turned his newspaper into the Yiddish voice of Republicanism.

Mordecai M. Noah was an important Jewish figure during the 19th century. He was a multifarious talent who would preach self control and social control. He also supported demand for the separate Jewish homeland which was later advocated by Theodore Herzl. His support for Jewish homeland was based on the fact that Jews were persecuted at many places.

When pogroms started in Russia towards the end of the nineteenth century, more Jews headed to the United States. They remained active to save their brethren not only in America but also in East Europe. While living in the United States, the Jews drew the attention of the country's political leadership towards the inhuman working conditions of Jews on the other side of the Atlantic and sought appropriate remedies. By the end of the nineteenth century, the thrust of American Jewish politics shifted from the defense of Judaism to the defense of the Jews. (Diner: 169)

Republican President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909) supported several Jewish concerns. Roosevelt's relations with the Jewish community began when he was president of the New York City's Board of Police Commissioners. He opened the police department to Jews. This made him a hero among the American Jews. Fuchs (1956:52) wrote:

"In 1902 he appointed Oscar Straus to succeed ex-President Harrison as American representative to the Arbitration Court at Hague. Four years later he brought Straus into his cabinet as Secretary of Commerce and Labor."

6 * Theodore Herzl, a writer and a statesman, founded national Zionism and the World Zionist Organization, which elevated the Jewish problem to an international political subject of primary importance. It was the Dreyfus case that awakened in him national Jewish feeling and brought him to the conclusion that the Jewish problem could only be solved by political means. After considering a number of possibilities, Herzl became convinced that the only solution to the Jewish problem was the mass exodus of Jews from their places of residence. Originally he wrote that it didn't matter where Jews went. He eventually realized that a national home in Palestine was the answer. He published a pamphlet, The Jewish State in 1896. He succeeded in convening the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland, August 29-31, 1897. The congress adopted the Basle Program and established the World Zionist Organization to help create the economic foundation for the proposed Jewish state.
Roosevelt was also the first president to contribute his own funds to a Jewish cause. In 1919, when he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts during his presidency to settle the Russo-Japanese War, Roosevelt contributed part of his prize to the National Jewish Welfare Board. However, the close association between the Jews and the Republicans suffered a setback during the tenure of William Howard Taft who was the 27th President of the United States from 1909 to 1913. Jews approached Taft with requests to abrogate the Russian Treaty and do away with the literacy test of immigrants. But President Taft did not consider the request for abrogation of the discriminatory Russian Trade Treaty during his tenure. This led to erosion of Jewish support to the Republican Party.

This helped the Democratic Party Presidential candidate Woodrow Wilson who managed to considerably influence the Jewish voting behavior in the 1916 election. However, the Democrats could not nurture this support base in the next presidential election of 1920.

The New Deal and the American Jews

In the post World War I period of the 1920s, the Jewish community in the United States became very prosperous. But this period of prosperity was short-lived. The Great Depression inflicted untold miseries on the American Jews. The 1929 stock market crash and the eventual global depression affected many Jewish businessmen adversely dashing their hopes and dreams. Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) of the Democratic Party came to power in 1933 amidst hopes of overcoming the economic crisis. The Jewish community in the US supported Roosevelt as he initiated the New Deal programs to alleviate

7 *Collection of political and economic policies and programs promulgated by the first two administrations of the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The New Deal policies were aimed at combating the economic miseries of the Great Depression. When Roosevelt was nominated, he said, “I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people:” The New Deal included federal action of unprecedented scope to stimulate industrial recovery, assist victims of the Depression, guarantee minimum living standards, and prevent future economic crises. In the first two years, the New Deal was concerned mainly with relief, setting up shelters and soup kitchens to feed the millions of unemployed. Another New Deal measure under Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 1933, the Public Works Administration (PWA), was designed to stimulate US industrial recovery by pumping federal funds into large-scale construction projects. In addition, the New Deal program founded the Works Projects Administration in 1939.
poverty and restore the economic health of the country. The Jews and the African Americans became the twin pillars of the Democrats because of the policies pursued by Roosevelt. (Rosen 2006)

During the course of the Great Depression and subsequently in the midst of World War II, the Jewish community in the US stood solidly behind the Democratic leadership. President Roosevelt and his Party denounced Nazism and condemned European anti-Semitism. In sharp contrast, the Republican Party opposed any intervention on behalf of the European Jews and in domestic politics appeared to have sympathy with the right wing, racist groups, such as Ku Klux Klan (KKK). This contributed significantly to the shifting of political loyalties of the American Jews from the Republican Party to the Democrats.

The American people in general and the ruling Democrats in particular extended support and sympathy to the Holocaust victims. While opening the American shores for the Jewish immigrants, the US encouraged and supported the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Middle East. President Harry S. Truman quickly recognized the new state of Israel in 1948. By this act, Truman won the hearts and minds of the Jewish Diaspora, including the Jewish community in the United States.

The Republican Party nominated Second World War hero, General Dwight D. Eisenhower to contest the 1952 Presidential elections. His opponent was Adlai Stevenson from the Democratic Party. Eisenhower won the Presidential election. However, he could manage only 36 per cent of the Jewish vote in contrast to Stevenson who got 64 per cent. But still Eisenhower’s track record on Jewish vote was far better compared to other Republican Presidential candidates in nearly two decades. It was because of recognition

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8 * The Ku Klux Klan is a secret white supremacist organization that has sprung up in different times in American history. The Klan was born on the heels of desperate war in a time when most disagreements were still settled at gun point. Great and horrific battles were fought, brother against brother. Jesse James was robbing banks and trains. 1865 was a violent time and the now defeated south would feel the wrath of the industrial north in ways yet unimagined by the people of the south. Born in a desperate hour this humble fraternity, became the central driving force during America's "Reconstruction".

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for his heroics in World War II when he rescued myriad Jews from the concentration camps in Poland and Germany.

In the 1960s, every eye was set on the Presidential contest. Richard Nixon, the Republican Party candidate was pitted against Democrat John F. Kennedy in the race for the White House. Kennedy won the election with a slim margin against Nixon. Surprisingly, the American Jews voted more than 80 percent for Kennedy-Johnson ticket. After Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued with the liberal policies. He supported ideas to help minorities and poverty stricken people. The Great Society provided the Jews and other minorities space in different spheres. Johnson presidency came under fire because of the Civil Rights movement. Many cities came under civil strife. On the external front, the country got deeply mired in the Vietnam War. Many liberals who supported the Democratic Party detested Johnson administration policies. They also objected to America’s questioning of Israel’s involvement in the 1967 war with the Arabs. In the backdrop of all these events, a new right-wing movement began to emerge. It soon came to be known as neo-conservative movement.

**Neoconservative Revolution: The Changing path of the Liberals**

The neoconservative movement picked momentum in the 1960s, almost three decades after it started taking roots. From 1930 to 1960, people associated with this nascent movement were busy concretizing their ideas. They were trying to form a common opinion and a platform which could be shared by all those who wanted to depart from their liberal ideas. During this period, the ideas were discussed vigorously and vociferously, be it at a coffee shop, university lounge or even during the evening walks. As is the case with any new movement or ideology, the movement took some time to take shape.

Intellectuals studying in Ivy League schools, such as Irving Howe, Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset and Melvin Lasky, kept track of the events in
America as well as in Communist East European countries. They spent hours in ideological debates that were often more spirited and stimulating than the classroom lectures. (Friedman 2005: 28) While New York served as the political base for the movement, Chicago became the base for free market economists. Chicago was also home to Milton Freidman, the conservative economist associated with the free market "Austrian school" of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, and to Leo Strauss, the noted conservative philosopher. (Friedman)

Four New York intellectuals – Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell and Irving Hove, were instrumental in laying the foundation of the modern Jewish conservative movement. They broke ranks with their older generation in ideological understanding. They attended City College of New York (CCNY) in the mid – to late 1930s and early 1940s. The New York intellectuals were able to become more comfortable with America because America was becoming more comfortable with them. The expansion of higher education that accompanied the postwar boom provided them with university jobs. (Gerson 1996: 35) Now it was time for them to consolidate their position in the academic field. They started writing their views in the upcoming journals and magazines. Mark Gerson elaborated.

"The hard anti-Communism that liberals articulated in Commentary, the New Leader, and Partisan Review generally centered around two larger ideological foci. First and foremost was that Communism is a system of absolute evil. Second was the demonstration that liberalism is not only distinct from Communism, but diametrically opposed to it in both theory and practice."

The growth of the conservative movement was earlier checked by liberalism in the 1930s to the 1940s, when its ideology was pushed to the fringes. However, during the 50s things started to change. The Republicans were elected to power both in the White House and the Congress. This was the time when conservative movement could bounce back to the centre stage. Instead, ultra conservatism took the podium. Senator Joe McCarthy- a known ultra conservative made a brief but strong appearance. But he subsequently faded in his own political gamble. His anti-Communism stance became the talk of the town. His tone was so hard-hitting; that it became too hot to handle even for the conservatives. The
liberals also opposed McCarthyism. (Steinfels 1979: 30) Everyone agreed the need to stop the spread of communism. But they did not subscribe to the ways preached by McCarthy.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the threat from the right was largely countered by a renewal of the pre-war alliance between the Jews and the established Protestants. (Ginsberg 1993: 123) Senator Joseph McCarthy charged the members of the Protestant elite with betraying the country by engaging in, or at least condoning, communist activities. (Ginsberg) This was the time when Jews feared to be branded as communists, as most of them were in socialist or liberal camps. Their association with radicalism and America’s communist party stoked the fear of them being labeled as sympathizers of communist movement. After Eisenhower’s victory in the 1952 presidential election, the WASP establishment closed ranks against McCarthy and its other right-wing opponents. (Ginsberg) McCarthy, during his hey days, never opened a direct battle against the Jewish community. Jews feared a barrage of anti-Semitism, which would negate their achievements in the United States. So, Jews and members of the WASP establishment allied with each other in the period preceding the World War II against their common antagonists. (Ginsberg) These forces sought to undermine liberals by arguing that they were unable to deal effectively with the menace of communism even in their own camp. Since the Jews were prominently associated with the liberal groups and, in the public mind, were easily linked to communism, exposing and attacking Jewish Communists in government and in media represented a very useful way of connecting liberalism and communism. (Ginsberg)

In the meantime a serious body of conservative thought began to emerge, influenced by the likes of more cosmopolitan F. A. Hayek, Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and Michael Oakeshott. The chief characteristics of the Old Right prior to the World War II included a fanatical opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, resistance to international alliances (along with a bias in favor of protectionist trade policies), and tolerance (occasionally even active support) of racial and religious discrimination against blacks,
Jews and the minorities. (Ginsberg 80) Some American Jews added color to the movement, while others joined it. Edward Shapiro (2001: 207) pointed out.

Jewish conservatives, not surprisingly, are also more pluralist regarding American identity, culture, and immigration than traditional conservatives. Jewish conservatives are cultural pluralists. They were born into an immigrant culture and religion that was hardly mainstream American. For them the essence of America is not the particularist history, institutions, vices, and virtues emphasized by Fleming but the universal political principles found in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Gettysburg Address.

It was in response to this threat, seen by many Jews as a severe danger to the community, that Jewish organizations made a determined effort to disassociate Jews from left-wing groups and reduce the plausibility of efforts by conservative forces to tie Jews to the Red menace. (Shapiro 2001) By 1950s, the Jewish community had acquired enough maturity, to place themselves in the political situation effectively. This is why despite their overwhelming presence in the Democratic Party; they maintained small but active position in the Republican Party. There were Jews in the McCarthyism cabal. This group included Roy Cohn, McCarthy’s chief advisor; newspaper columnist and radio broadcaster Walter Winchell, who had a huge national following; and “China lobby” zealot Alfred Kohlberg, whose extreme views found little appeal. (Friedman: 73) This shows that Jews were not monolithic in their outlook. By the late fifties, the threat of McCarthyism subsided; but by then it was time for another presidential showdown.

The re-energized conservatives in the 1950s got support from the Republican Party and the administration. Included in this conservative band of politics were small number of Jews like – Frank Chodorov, Morrie Ryskind, and William Schlamm. Though few in numbers, they were very influential, favored free market principles, thus guiding the Republican Party in a new direction in the years to come.

William F. Buckley, a staunch conservative and a leading light in the conservative circle came up with National Review, a magazine with a conservative bent, publishing views and opinions. From 1955 to 1960, the editors of National Review launched a steady attack
on the dominant liberal ethos, focusing on intellectual currents and party platforms. (Friedman) Buckley is widely credited as the driving force behind the intellectual coalition that drew conservatism from the fringes of American life to the powerhouse.

The old conservatives, however, did not support President Eisenhower’s centrist approach. They opposed enforcement of integration in Little Rock in 1957, and subsequently the marches, freedom rides, and civil rights legislation of the 1960s. (Friedman) Some Jews in liberal camps, who were disillusioned, opted for conservative ideology. Marvin Liebman who belonged to the conservative aspect of Jewish involvement, often focused on the anti-communism rhetoric: (Friedman: 94)

“As an account executive for a public relations firm (he had set up his own firm), Liebman sat about organizing the Committee of One Million, which sought to combat Chinese communism. Utilizing techniques he had learned in his Communist Party days, he was among the first to discover the importance of mailing lists, now a prime organizational and financial tool of the conservative movement.”

During the initial days, many budding conservatives concealed their identity as their endeavor was not to be branded in a particular group. Liebman took painstaking effort so that many young conservatives could join the movement. In 1960, he came up with the Sharon Statement

“The Sharon Statement fused together traditionalism, libertarianism, and anticomunism. It emphasized that freedom was “indivisible” and could not “long exist without economic freedom.” The statement declared that government had only three functions: “preservation of internal order, the provision of national defense, and the administration of justice.” (Friedman: 125)

The liberal camp was energized with the victory of President John F. Kennedy in 1960. The liberals once again consolidated their position in the government. For the conservatives this was a period of transition. The victory of liberals belittled the conservatives’ achievement and briefly stopped their progress. In the 1964 presidential

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9 * On September 11, 1960, young activists and intellectuals gathered at William F. Buckley’s Sharon, Connecticut home advanced one of the most succinct statements articulating conservative principles. The Sharon Statement launched Young Americans for Freedom and the modern conservative youth movement. The document put forth a number of bold but true statements that would guide conservatives for decades. It declared that political freedom cannot long exist without economic freedom.
election 90 per cent of Jews supported Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ). His Great Society\textsuperscript{10} policy was a hit among the Jews. But Johnson’s Affirmative action and the administration’s involvement in the Vietnam War angered the Jewish intelligentsia. Many liberals voiced their opinion. When the Democratic Party backed affirmative action programs and acknowledged group-based social inequality, many one-time liberal Jews bolted, accusing that cultural nationalism diverted liberalism away from its consensus oriented and rights-based values. (Dollinger 2000: 224)

In the process they formed a new understanding, which was called the neoconservatives or neocons. Many disgruntled liberals drifted toward this new bloc known as “new (neo) conservatives.” They favored a strong U.S. foreign policy.

The “universal” concern of the American society of that time emerged from the opposition to the Vietnam War. Over a period of time it formulated its agenda upon the principles of political liberalism aligned with Jewish values and ideas of social justice. American Jewish Historian Marc Dollinger (2000: 224) explains that perhaps it was time to posit a new definition of Jewish exceptionalism, one that was informed by a more complete set of historical case studies.

**Turbulent 1960s**

The 1960s can be defined as the turbulent phase for the Jewish community. The relations between the Jews and the Blacks soured in the late 1960s due to anti-Semitic sentiments among some Blacks. It is well known that Jews had been vocal supporters of the early civil rights movement. The Jews traveled to Selma and Birmingham in early 1960s to take part in demonstrations led by Martin Luther King Jr. Influential, Rabbi Abraham

\textsuperscript{10} The Great Society was the phrase that President Lyndon B. Johnson gave to his domestic programs. Johnson spelled out his vision of the Great Society in a commencement speech at the University of Michigan on May 22, 1964. He called on the nation to move not only toward “the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society,” one that would “end poverty and racial injustice.” The term came from the English socialist Graham Wallas, who wrote a book of that name in 1914; the term was also used by the English socialist Harold Laski in his 1931 book *introduction to Politics*. Johnson created the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964 in order to coordinate social programs in poor neighborhoods.
Heschel, a staunch anti-Vietnam war liberal, was a close friend of Martin Luther King. Heschel walked arm and arm with King through the streets of Selma, Alabama, visibly, morally and physically, linking American Jewry to the Black American struggle. Joel and Arthur Spingarn helped form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NACCP).* Jack Greenberg succeeded Thurgood Marshall as head of the NACCP legal Defense fund. Jewish organizations such as American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, and the Anti-Defamation League were in the forefront of the struggle for racial equality and justice in America. In the years that followed, the civil rights movement came to be eclipsed by the black-power movement, increasingly violent and also increasingly anti-Semitic. (Lefkowitz Commentary 1993: 38)

At the same time, the American Left in general was being taken over by radical elements hostile to Jewish interests and, in the aftermath of Israel’s victory in the Six-Day war, to Israel. (Lefkowitz) Dissemination of these observations was sufficiently widespread to convince people that change had occurred.

The idea that Jews were increasingly on the fringes became evident to them as the civil rights struggle transformed into a racial movement, bringing with it greater anti-Semitism and a racial spoils system benignly described by its advocates as an affirmative action. (Friedman: 148) So, the decade of the 1960s was a different period of struggle for the Jewish groups. The success of American Jews’ in achieving middle-class status made them hesitant towards employing confrontational tactics and aroused their suspicion of outspoken black leaders. And to some extent, blacks and Jews began to diverge in their goals. If the desire for liberal civil rights legislation promoted a “grand alliance,” the struggle to define true equality and determine methods of enforcement spurred its unraveling.” (Greenberg 2006: 62)

* Organized by a group of black and white intellectuals, the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) came at a time when racial inequality was accepted in American society. The NAACP was founded in New York City in 1909. It was formed by W.E.B. Du Bois, other members from the failed Niagara Movement, and several liberal whites. Du Bois served as Director of Publications and Research and was the editor of the NAACP’s magazine, *The Crisis*, until 1934. The NAACP made getting out the word about the inequality of African Americans its primary focus. It engaged in lobbying activities, spoke out about important issues affecting blacks, and publicized issues through the press.
Neocons believed that the violence of the 1960s could lead them to a new backlash especially the repeated numbers of anti-Jewish movement. There was war outside America – the Vietnam War, and on the home front - the racial riots, civil rights movement, and student rebellions, engulfed the Jewish psyche. During 1960s, black militants would appear with false promise of placing their rights on the policy of hatred. This made the society insecure like never before. These postures symbolized attack on liberalism or liberal set up which had gained foothold with many federal programs – the New Deal, the Fair Deal\textsuperscript{12} and the Great Society in the last thirty years. This was quite a disappointment for the Jewish community. The American Jews appeared on the front seat of the liberal set up, often supported the race relations, especially for the Blacks, working for their upliftment; now saw the soaring relations with the black communities with disdain. There was much of destruction inflicted on Jewish owned businesses. (Greenberg)

The 1967 Israel-Arab war took another toll of American Jewish community. It marked the reappearance of black anti-Semitism, with many chanting pro-Arab, anti-Israel and pro-Hitler slogans. The Nation of Islam, an American Black movement, was founded in 1913 by Noble Drew Ali. He was succeeded by W.D. Ford in 1934. Ford, like his predecessor, disappeared under strange circumstances and was followed by Robert Poole. Robert Poole took the name Elijah Muhammad and under him began the rapid rise and influence of the Nation of Islam over the general American Black community. The Nation of Islam quickly adopted anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic views in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1960s, Elijah Muhammad’s leadership was challenged by Malcolm Little, better known as Malcolm X. However, he was murdered by a member of the Black

\textsuperscript{12} The Fair Deal was the slogan that President Harry Truman applied to the 21-point program that he presented to Congress on September 5, 1945, to convert the economy from wartime to peacetime status. The message to Congress emphasized passage of the Full Employment Act to provide jobs for U.S. servicemen and servicewomen returning from World War II. In 1949, after winning reelection, Truman presented a State of the Union address that again referred to a Fair Deal program. He called for protecting the civil rights of black Americans by establishing a fair employment commission. He also proposed federal aid to education, more funding for public housing, national health insurance, an expansion of Social Security benefits, an increase in the minimum wage, new land reclamation and public power programs, and a program of technical assistance to underdeveloped nations.
Muslims in 1965. The Black Muslims, aligned with many rising, highly visible Black power groups such as the Black Panthers (Huey Newton), the Freedom and Peace Party (Eldridge Cleaver). The Black Caucus (H. Rap Brown) had energetically promoted Black pride awareness and for some, anti-Semitism. The Jewish liberals took note of the new trends coming out of the society. As a consequence, many drifted to the Right fold while others, still undecided, embraced rightist in the coming years. The Vietnam War was the final blow to the liberal consensus. (Greenberg) It was during this decade that the neoconservatives opposed the liberal programs initiated by the government.

Through the Journals

In the 1960s, conservatism started transforming, a fact, little noted by the liberals and the establishment media. Historian George Nash traces this growth to an intellectual community that was formulating alternatives to liberal orthodoxies and the development of a number of instruments serving to unite that community with grassroots rebels. (Friedman: 91-92) Michael Harrington has been credited with having coined the term “neoconservatives” to describe a group of his old socialist allies who had turned away from the true faith. (Friedman: 127) The burgeoning television media in the 1960s was also responsible for the growth of the neocons, who took the centre stage through numerous chat shows. They used the new medium to vociferously put across their thoughts against government’s policies, which made them stars. The journals would be flushed with the neocon thinking. The academia also felt the heat of undergoing changes, as many Jewish academics, who for the few years championed the cause of liberalism, got alienated from the policies of the government. With caution they moved to the right with the modified liberal agenda, to be known as torch bearers of the neocon ideology.

Quite a few magazines would come during the course of time to advance the neocon thinking. One of them was the Public Interest, published by none other than the “doyen of the neoconservative movement” - Irving Kristol. He motivated neocon leaning authors to write for the magazine. It soon became a rallying point for those who were fed up with the era of big government and socialist economy. The magazine was born during the political ferment of the Great Society, and while striving to maintain an aura of
objectivity suitable for an organ of social science; its major role was to challenge the new conventional wisdom on crime, housing, race relations, welfare, health, education, the environment, and other public policy issues. (Shapiro: 202) Kristol also infused corporate donors with a missionary zeal in pumping money to bring out magazine based on the conservative ideas. The Public Interest journal attracted budding talents in the sixties. The journal carried writing of the who’s who of the neocon revolution. Nathan Glazer, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Seymour Martin Lipset, James Q. Wilson would regularly criticize Johnson administration’s “Great Society” program through their articles.

According to Irving Kristol, “I myself have accepted the term [neoconservative], perhaps because, having been named Irving, I am relatively indifferent to baptismal caprice. But I may be the only living and self-confessed neoconservative, at large or in captivity.” (Gerson: 8) The neocons can be termed as soft conservatives. In fact, neocons take best of the left and the right interests. “Neoconservatism is a unique and interesting school of thought because it is primarily a philosophical movement that has political relevance. The neoconservatives come to politics through moral ideas, not the other way around. That helps to explain why neoconservatism can change without sacrificing intellectual integrity, and elucidates the concerns of critics of neoconservative political positions.” (Gerson)

Kristol would describe the body of ideas that came to be known as neoconservatism as “a new synthesis”. (Friedman: 120) While increasingly doubtful of governmental solutions to problems, neocons were not hostile to the government itself, particularly programs like the Social Security. (Friedman: 121) Kristol himself gave small glimpse about the neoconservatives in his writings: “Neoconservatism is the first variant of American conservatism in the past century that is in the ‘American grain.’ It is hopeful, not lugubrious; forward-looking, not nostalgic; and its general tone is cheerful, not grim or dyspeptic.” (Kristol 2003)

Another magazine Commentary became a platform for the neocon writers. Norman Podhoretz, magazine’s editor, for more than three decades, broke ranks with the liberals
in the 1960s due to left radicals who were disrupting campuses, shouting down speakers, staging sit-ins, and chanting anti-Semitism slogans. In his book *My Negro Problem – and Ours*, Podhoretz mentions his childhood experience living in the lower-class neighborhoods of New York and his transformation from liberal to neoconservative outlook. Many Black leaders like Malcolm X supported Arabs in the 1967 War of Attrition between Arabs and Israel. All these factors led to the formation of a coalition which could be easily identified with the conservative trends. But Podhoretz’s entry into the neocon fold was primarily due to the struggle between his roots and his aspirations. Joshua Muravchik, an author who follows the growth of neoconservative movement, has called Podhoretz’s growth an effort to raise the club of neocons from a scattered to family club as the conductor of the neocon orchestra.

Both magazines put things in different perspectives and in different ways. *The Public Interest* raised the domestic issues, while the *Commentary* concentrated on topics related to foreign policy, especially the issue of Israel and its security. The neocons advocated more friendly relations with Israel. Apart from the issue of Israel, *Commentary* took the vanguard in encouraging the forces of disintegration within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe – a far cry from the Nixon/Kissinger policy of détente. (Kristol: 124) In the *Commentary*, Podhoretz made increasing efforts to make the magazine reflect on Jewish matters. Also, it opposed the quota system for the Blacks, which was opposed by the majority of Jews as administration’s discriminatory effort.

Podhoretz, like Kristol, helped reinforce neo-conservatism in the late 1960s. The family of Podhoretz is also complete in conservative terms. His wife, Midge Deeter, not only wedded to Norman Podhoretz, but also to his philosophy. Deeter was at the heart of one of the most remarkable political transformations of the post-war era. Norman Podhoretz and Irving Kristol were joined by many to the rank and files of the Republicans. The credit goes to the Republican Party machinery, which assessed the situation and accommodated them in the Party.
In the 1960 presidential elections, Republican candidate Richard Nixon lost to the Democrat John F. Kennedy. But what hurt the conservatives more was the loss of Barry Goldwater in 1964. Goldwater, the Republican nominee, was defeated by the Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson. The tall Johnson had a telling effect in the election, garnering 61 percent of the popular vote, unprecedented in the history of Presidential elections, a record still maintained, sweeping the emerging Conservative bastion. While 90 per cent of the Jews voted for Johnson ticket, a small number of them were also found in the Barry Goldwater camp. Prominent among them were, “Liebman, Milton Friedman, Frank Mayer, Charles Lichtenstein, Harry v. Jaffa, a Straussian scholar at Claremont Man’s College in California, and helped to write the famous speech of the 1964 campaign, and Ayn Rand, the famous novelist who was an ardent and public supporter.” (Friedman: 98)

Analyzing Goldwater’s defeat Friedman (99) wrote that despite the loss there were some positive gains for the conservatives:

“In retrospect, one can see that Goldwater’s race in 1964 helped to transform conservatism from a small, largely intellectual phenomenon into a significant grassroots movement. Near the end of that campaign, a retired movie actor delivered a televised speech for Goldwater that was more impressive than by any given candidate. Two years later the former actor, Ronald Reagan, was elected governor of California.”

The victories that the liberal forces had achieved, especially during the years of the Great Society, had alienated a number of political groups, including business leaders, Southern whites, and large segments of the middle class. (Friedman: 99) It was probably Podhoretz conversion towards Republicans, around 1969 or 1970, to what Steinfels has termed a ‘scorched-earth campaign against the New Left and Counterculture,’ which gave wide publicity and a center of direction to a movement which had been gathering strength for a decade. (Steinfels 1982: 124) This shift to the right was essentially a movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and should be distinguished from another, earlier similar trend: the ‘God Had Failed’ phenomenon of 1930s Communists who, in the 1950s, became liberals. (Steinfels) For Milton Himmelfarb, among the most perceptive and incisive neo-conservatives, the Jewish outlook was essentially conservative, as he suggested:
"The notion that Jews are by centuries-long tradition a people of liberal inclinations, is a parochial error, the consequence of ignorance of Jewish history. Before the Enlightenment, Jewish attitudes toward politics were essentially static, detached and conservative." (Friedman: 125)

In the 1960s, John F. Kennedy, America's first Catholic President, downplayed his own Catholicism. Pope John Paul XXIII moderated the church's stand, encouraged dialogue with communism, and denounced nuclear power. Jewish neocons did not like this, but still they came forward as a primary group in support of militant anticommunism. (Friedman: 147) So the liberals were attacked through writings, slogans, and debates on the television by the ever-present conservatives and the neoconservatives. Again it was Commentary and the neocon writers that pushed for a hawkish foreign policy, when Richard Nixon came to power in 1968. Through consistent efforts by the neocons, President Nixon billed Israel as a strategic asset of America's war against communism in the Middle East. It was during Nixon's time that the US replaced France as a major weapons supplier to Israel since its formation in 1948. The decade of 1970s was a little different as people started noticing the neoconservatives more than they did in the 1960s.

Conflicting Interests: Neoconservatives vs. Conservatives

But the entry of the neocons in the Republican Party was not smooth. The traditional conservatives, especially the followers of Edmund Burke looked at them suspiciously. They considered themselves as genuine conservatives. The Burke brand of classical conservatives valued religion, social hierarchy and status, which neocons detested. The neoconservatives maintained a silence on religion. For them, religion and politics were two different entities. Basically, the neoconservative ideology was like an old wine in a new bottle. They put liberal political belief in a conservative bottle with hawkish foreign policy as an extra appendage. According to Columnist Samuel Francis, the neoconservatives do not challenge liberalism "but simply make it more efficient by "moderation, gradualism, empiricism, pragmatism, and centrism. Besides they are unsympathetic to the critique posed by the traditionalists to the contemporary liberal state." (Shapiro: 205) The neocons spoke the language of social science... Conservatives
had long insisted that government programs weakened the natural bonds of society, without ever being able to prove it... The neocons showed that social problems were much harder to understand than they appeared – and that social engineering of the Great Society sort was plagued by perverse consequences. (Frum 1995: 35) The neocons were muckrakers of the Right, discrediting government just as the original muckrakers had discredited the robber barons. (Michlethwait and Wooldridge 2004: 73)

Up until the 1970s, Jewish Republicans were visible only in isolated pockets: liberal political activists such as the late Senator Jacob Javits of New York, or conservative economic theorists such as Milton Friedman and Arthur Burns. (Goldberg: 44) There was no place for counter culture movement. Since 1932 Democrats occupied the White House for a longer duration. From 1932 to 1952 and 1961 to 1969, four Democratic presidents occupied the White House. Henry Jackson, better known as “Scoop” Jackson, was Senator from Washington and well known for the interventionist American policy. In 1973, Jackson formed the Coalition for a Democratic Majority in which Norman Podhoretz and others became very active. This policy appealed many Democrats who later became Republicans and neocons. Bill Bennett, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Eliot Abrams all had a Democratic Party affiliation. Abrams left because of Carter’s weak foreign policy as he considered Democrats perpetual doves.

Keynesian economics dominated the first three decades after the Second World War. The economic idea sought government intervention to achieve full employment and stable price. In the 1970s, the Keynesian policy and massive government spending were replaced by free market policy. Milton Friedman’s ideas on the market and state slowly gathered force in the same way as Keynes’ ideas had dominated political talk after the 1940s. The less tax burden on common people meant an end to the social spending. While Keynesian ran on big government ideas, Friedman advocated small government

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13 * In the 1960s, young people questioned America’s materialism and cultural and political norms. Seeking a better world, some used music, politics, and alternative lifestyles to create what came to be known as the counterculture. Americans in that era faced many controversial issues—from civil rights, the Vietnam War, nuclear arms, and the environment to drug use, sexual freedom, and nonconformity. The counterculture lifestyle integrated many of the ideals and indulgences of the time: peace, love, harmony, music, mysticism, and religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition. The movement, greeted with enormous publicity and popular interest, contributed to changes in American culture.
and less intervention. Moreover, the 1970s saw the beginning of erosion of the economic position of a large number of middle-class voters who till then were willing to tolerate social welfare spending and high levels of taxation. (Ginsberg: 184) The crack in the liberal ideology became evident as the Republicans gave an alternative to the Keynesian economics prevalent during Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

The Jews at this time made a beeline for the Republicans. Nixon was good at courting Jews. Nixon’s decision to appoint the Holocaust survivor Henry Kissinger as the National Security Advisor was appreciated by the Jews. Kissinger became the eyes and ears of President Nixon in the foreign policy matters. Soon, he was nominated as the Secretary of State, making him the only person in American politics till date to occupy both posts, and also first Jew to be in the high slot of the foreign policy set-up. But Kissinger was not a champion of the neo-conservative movement. His ping-pong diplomacy led to détente with China. Kissinger also shaped favorable American’s policy in the Middle East. Nixon termed US-Israel relations as an important strategic asset. The Republicans’ need for the Jewish vote was quite clear, because Nixon in 1968 had just scraped through the presidential election against the Liberal Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale.

Neocons met Neocon

The lopsided voting behavior of American Jews favorable to the Democrats changed again in the 1980 Presidential election. The Republican Presidential candidate and a “conservative champion” Ronald Reagan garnered 39 per cent of the Jewish vote while his opponent the President and Democratic Party nominee Jimmy Carter managed to get only 45 per cent of the American Jewry support. This was considerably less than what previous Democrat presidents had achieved. Two things can be analyzed from the 1980 elections: first, conservative philosophy started in the 1960s and expanded in the 1970s and is now reaping dividends. Second, the 1980 election verdict indicated that American Jews could switch their support from Democrats to the opposite camp. It also negated commentators and political scientists’ common view of Jews as absolute liberals.
This changed voting pattern among the Jewish community in the USA was a result of the unfolding of events during the Carter administration from 1977 to 1981. Carter's approach toward the Middle East crisis had angered American Jewish community. And this was reflected in their voting behavior. There were also other factors responsible for this course of action toward the Republicans. During the late 1970s, the Republicans launched a major offensive against the Democrats. Jews played an important role in such effort.

The 1980s was a perfect playground for neocons. For the next four years in the Republican Party as well as administration, the Jewish neocons gained foothold. Irving Kristol, considered the father of the neocon movement played a crucial role in the Regan administration. Gerson writes that Reagan was joined by a host of other intellectuals: Jews and non-Jews like Gertrude Himmelfarb, Midge Decter, Norman Podhoreetz, George Weigel, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Michael Novak, Richard John Neuhaus, James Q. Wilson, Joshua Muravchik, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell, Ruth Wisse, Arnold Beichman, Walter Lacquer, Milton Himmelfarb, Elliot Abrams, Peter Berger, William Bennett, Thomas Sowell, Ben Wattenberg, Sidney Hook, Brigette Berger, Aaron Wildavsky, George Gilder, Samuel Lipman, Saul Bellow, Roger Kimball, Joseph Epstein, Hilton Kramer, Seymour Martin Lipset, Paul Johnson, Murray Friedman, Leon Kass, James Nuechterlein, Carl Gershman, Penn Kemble, and Martin Peretz. (Gerson: 4)

They captured the spot as do footballers on the field. In the Reagan administration, some of these strategists mentioned above played in forward position, some occupied midfield and served as a link between defensive and forward positions. Some had the courage to breach their own role to become forwards. Those who were off the playing field eventually turned to coaching, physical training and support staff. They knew their jobs and in what capacity they had been taken, and embarked on their own missions with zeal. In fact, starting as an orphan child of liberalism and communism in 1940s, the Reagan administration was a perfect place to show off their talent. The 1970s was the decade when neocons started building themselves brick by brick. In the 1980s, the neocons
consolidated their position; it was a kind of political renaissance which established them in the political, cultural, media, economics and academic world.

Capturing the mood of Jewish community and other Americans, the Reagan administration came up with strong foreign policy commitments, some of which America had lost in 1970s, especially in Indochina. The self styled neocons, who were sitting on the fringes, found an able character at the White House as Reagan himself believed in neoconservative ideas. Reagan, a liberal in his youth and a registered Democrat, was a true neocon who could actively perceive threat as a part of his way of understanding politics during Republican governorship of California and his presidential bid in 1976 against Gerald Ford. Once Reagan stepped into the White House, his strategists started working on policies to deal with Communist Soviet Union with an iron hand.

Reagan right from his election campaign focused on aggressive American stand outside the western hemisphere, what former president Harry Truman had done in the late 1950s. He formulated a policy that would check advancing Soviet ideologies at different places around the world. When Dick Allen, his security adviser, asked him what his basic strategy was to deal with the Soviet Union, Reagan replied with a smile, “How about, ‘we win, they lose.’” Abraham Sofaer (2005, personal interview) who had worked in the State Department during Reagan administration said, had Truman been alive today; he would have been a Republican. Reagan tried to restore the pride of Americans. The Commentary magazine became favorite piece of the White House.

President Reagan made full use of this opportunity and appointed number of Jewish advisers to be part of his team. Most of them were in mid-level positions where broad policies are translated into action. Forging a working alliance with the Jewish community was not an easy task for a neoconservative Republicans, but Reagan made it work. It was a symbiotic relationship. The neoconservatives, for all their intellectual brilliance, remained a tiny band of generals with no troops. (Goldberg: 215) They advocated such policies which could later prove responsible for the break up of the USSR.
For various reasons the growth of the neocon pedigree in the American political process since the 1960s can be considered phenomenal. For Jewish neoconservatives, with Reagan it was like home. These were Jews who defied the normal traditions of Jewish political activism and rose from the debris of the liberal achievements in the 1960s and its stand on racial minorities and foreign policies. What some authors say, they challenged the Jewish exceptionalist thinking and voted on what they thought to be correct.

The Formation of the RJC

For neocons, an entry into the Republican Party was a challenging task. Apart from Jewish neocons, there were other Jewish groups who disliked liberal ideology but favored Republican ideology for different reasons. In spite of change in the voting pattern in the 1980 presidential election, it took another five years for Republican Jews to announce the formation of an organization, which would be sympathetic towards the Grand Old Party. But the formation of the Republican Jewish Coalition did not happen in one day. It took effort and greater ideological understanding over decades.

In 1985, Max Fisher launched the National Jewish Coalition (NJC); an organization that was to speak for the Republican Jews, both in the GOP and the Jewish community. Many Jews considered Fisher as the ‘dean of Jewish life.’ He was considered as one of the rare and loyal Jews in the Republican circle since President Eisenhower. An oil magnate, Fischer was a rare Jewish Republican breed. Despite Roosevelt’s charm and charisma in 1930s and 1940s, he remained very active among the Republicans. Fisher was one of the wealthiest persons in America, a popular figure among Jewish leadership and a former United Jewish Appeal14* (UJA) chairman. Born in 1908 to a grocer in small-town Ohio, he moved to Detroit after college and made a fortune on the spot oil market. Fisher’s generosity also made him a key GOP player. (Goldberg: 169) As a presidential aide, he guided America’s Middle East’s policy during Israel-Egypt War in 1956. For the

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14* In 1939 the United Palestine Appeal joined with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the National Refugee Service to form the United Jewish Appeal (UJA). The UJA operates through hundreds of federations and welfare funds in the United States. In 1999 the UJA, the United Israel Appeal (UIA), and the Council of Jewish Federations merged to form the United Jewish Communities (UJC).
majority Jews, the Republican Jews were minority, indeed, they were, even if they were in Eisenhower and later with other Republican presidents. They worked very hard to convince their majority brethren to unshackle the liberal clothes.

Fischer also remained in touch with the Republicans during the 1960s and when President Richard Nixon came to power in 1969, he was once again active in the White House. During the Yom Kippur war between Israel and the Arabs in 1973, Fischer dictated President Nixon's support for Israel. In fact, as a White House regular, he devoutly filled the Jewish-adviser role once played by Democratic donors like Abe Feinberg and Arthur Krim. (Goldberg: 169-170) During the Reagan and subsequent Republican administrations, Fischer was often invited at Republican Party functions.

The Jews became active members in terms of the growth within the Republican Party. Since 1968, a small group of wealthy Jewish Republicans also began financing Republican coffers. The role of Fisher in encouraging Jews to vote and help to Republicans financially is no less significant. A fund-raiser of legendary prowess, Fisher regularly headed the major - donor organizing effort in Republican presidential campaigns. He was the founding chair of the Republican National Committee's Team 100, made up of the donors of $100,000 and more.” (Goldberg: 277)

The Jewish Orthodox Influence in the Republican Party

The orthodox Jewish community known as the black hats\textsuperscript{15} became one of the pillars supporting the GOP. In the formation of the RJC, along with the neocons the orthodox Jewish community also played a major role. The American Jewish community is not a monolithic organization. Basically, it is divided into many groups, some large and some small, others even microscopic. All these groups play an important role in the Jewish community, culturally and politically. There were, however, at least three communities

\textsuperscript{15} Yeshivish (colloquially, [sometimes pejorative, sometimes affectionate] “black hat” or “black”) suggests an Orthodox Jewish outlook in which the focus of life is Torah study. Many Orthodox men wear kippas or skullcaps, the only outward sign of their devotion. The ultra-Orthodox are much more obvious. They wear the black, suits long jackets, hats, and earlocks in every season.
which played very active in the Republican Party or aligned with their policies: the growing orthodox community, the Russian Jewish community and third, the younger generations Jews who are different from their earlier generations.

Since America’s independence in 1776, there evolved a society which was based on respect for each and every group. The Preamble of the US Constitution reads:

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” (www.constitution.org/constit_.htm)

To highlight their problems, and also suggest remedies, the groups have been presenting their own agenda, be it majority Christians or any other ethnic group. This is how the political process has evolved in the American democratic set up. For years they have kept tradition, which is still followed. There are groups, sub-groups and other microscopic sub-groups deeply attached to their own ideological affiliations while remained American as well. The Jews who migrated to the United States from different countries in search of better life and opportunities, proved their mettle by presenting uniquely their case. The Jewish community in America has several denominational structures - Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist. Though different in its outlook, all these groups function for the betterment for the Jewish value among the community.

16 * Orthodox Judaism believes that both the Written and Oral Torah are of divine origin, containing the exact words of God without any human influence. The term “Orthodox” Judaism only emerged as a result of the growth of new branches of Judaism. While all orthodox movements are similar in their beliefs and observance, they differ in the details that are emphasized and in their attitudes toward modern culture and the State of Israel. Modern Orthodox tends to be a bit more liberal and more Zionistic. Ultra-Orthodox tend to be the least open to change and the most critical of modern society.

17 * Conservative Judaism maintains that the truths found in Jewish scriptures and other Jewish writings come from G-d, but were transmitted by humans and contain a human component. Conservative Judaism generally accepts the binding nature of halakakh, but believes that the Law should change and adapt, absorbing aspects of the predominant culture while remaining true to Judaism’s values. The idea of flexibility is deeply rooted in Conservative Judaism.

18 * American Reform Judaism, the largest Jewish movement in North America, was founded by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise over 125 years ago. The practices of Progressive Judaism are anchored in Jewish thought and tradition. They seek to extend the range of observance by granting full equality to all Jews, irrespective of gender and sexual orientation - while challenging laws that are contrary to Judaism’s fundamental principles. One of the guiding principles of Reform Judaism is the autonomy of the individual.
There has been marked decline in the moral standards of the American society. Many elders are aghast by the way young Americans are behaving. Many are copying the famous Hollywood culture, fast food, crimes, sex at very early life. In the last decades of the last century a growing number of Americans came to realize that what most worried them – the decline in morality and standards- was caused by the failure of secularism. (Huntington 2004) The other ethnic groups are also facing problems of cultural degradation. They are torn from inside, so seeking religious overtures is quite obvious. Now religion is slowing acquiring a key factor again in American public life. So people in America are trying to get relief in a new found religiosity.

The Jewish society is also not left apart. With numbers declining, there is erosion of social values in the community. The percentage of conservative and reform Jews are more than the Orthodox. For the last two decades, there is growth in the number of Orthodox Jews. They maintain religiosity in a traditional way. The Orthodox Jewish group feels a religious America is better for their growth. They have also tied up with the various Right wing Christian denominations to further their cause. Among the Jewish community in America, the Orthodox Jews gives maximum involvement in the Republican Party. They are heavily involved in carrying message of the Republican ideologies to the Jewish people. In fact, voting patterns also reflect the same. The neoconservative Jews have been heavily involved in shaping policies, but it is the Orthodox Jews who comes in large number to support through ballot to the Republicans.

The United States has openly stayed away from a faith based preference. Nevertheless ‘God Bless America’, ‘In God we Trust’ printed in dollars and executives taking oath in the name of God continues. There are also faith-based schools of many religious dimensions, which maintain its own faith based curriculum apart from general one. This clearly shows America remained secular but religious groups have the preference to observe their faith independently without any government restrictions. As late as 1955,

19 * Reconstructionist Judaism is a progressive, contemporary approach to Jewish life that integrates a deep respect for traditional Judaism with the insights and ideas of contemporary social, intellectual and spiritual life. Reconstructionism is a "bottom-up" approach to Judaism. It begins with the experiences of the Jewish people. It speaks less of revelation and more of discovery.
Sociologist Marshall Sklare dismissed the Orthodox experience in the United States "as a case study of institutional decay." (Freedman 2000: 217) Recently among the American Jewish community, the percentage of orthodox community is considered just above ten percent. Their numbers are growing due to acquiring new religious habits by many American Jews. This proves Sklare's thesis wrong but we must note that he had formulated it six decades ago during the 1950s which was based on the circumstances of those days.

Where once Orthodoxy had been written off as a movement of immigrants and poor Jews, it is now regarded as a movement with staying power and appeal to Jews from across the religious spectrum. Wertheimer quotes Jewish Sociologist Charles Liebman, "This is the first generation in over 200 years – that is, since its formulation as the effort by traditional Judaism to confront modernity – in which Orthodoxy is not in decline." (Wertheimer 1993: 114) It means that for the last two decades, the orthodox have defied the popular beliefs and emerging as a vibrant group.

Religious orthodoxy seeks betterment of man through moderate improvements in daily life and within existing institutions. It tended to be stoic and taught that evil could ultimately yield to good, but it accepted as a given the inherent unfairness in life. (Friedman: 117) Curiously the orthodoxy survived because of its religious educational schools, which the liberal Jews were dead against. In fact, full time Jewish education in America is largely Orthodox education: 500 of the 625 Jewish day schools in the United States are Orthodox. (Abrams 1997: 169) The Day schools, a kind of religious school has been disseminating traditions and values, which mean a lot for the shrinking Jewish population in America, otherwise beset with the problems of intermarriage.

Interrmarriage exploded on the American Jewish scene since the mid-1960s, rapidly rising in incidence to the point where more than half the Jews who married between 1985 and 1990 wedded a partner non-Jew. (Wertheimer: 59) The trend to make Jews realize about the importance of religious schools intensified after late eighties. Now orthodox educators often staff the day schools and Hebrew schools of Conservative and Reform
movements, which cannot produce enough skilled teachers of their own. (Friedman: 217-218) Hebrew teachers had been recruited from Israel to serve the purpose of teaching the language in the schools. The Hebrew teachers work with students to develop lesson frameworks and teaching methods based on their interests and learning styles. They also tell information about Israeli culture, the people, and the country. (Smoli, personal interview, 2006)

The American society has much more consideration for religiosity in the present set-up. Apart from Christianity, religious fervor of other communities in Americans has also increased. In this context one finds the growth of Jewish Orthodoxy is not mere a chance but a real consideration of society.

The daily Jewish values are making more appearances on the forefront. Taking kosher food, going to Synagogue and not working on Sabbath are few values which are now practiced often in the Jewish households of the United States. Journalist Michael Shapiro revisited his childhood neighborhood of Flatbush in Brooklyn in 1985 to find it transformed from a mélange of Italian Catholics and diverse Jews into an Orthodox metropolis replete with wig shop, religious scribe, delicatessens, van service to the Catskills, a dry cleaner closed on Saturday but open on Sunday, and a fast food restaurant called Kosher Country, “that has prayer for ritual washing posted above the washstand.” (Freedman: 223) By the late nineties, one could eat kosher Tuscan cuisine on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, visit a Kosher Passover tour to the French Riviera, and sweat off the pounds in a Long Island aerobics class that separated the sexes and required attire.

Today there is no single dominant figure in the American Jewish community. According to Ismar Schorsh Jews are becoming more orthodox, which was greatly nourished by the creation of the State of Israel and viewed sociologically, Israel has infused of energy to both religious and secular Jews. (Ellenson 2005: 235) The younger generations Jews are visiting to Israel more than before. Since the creation of the State of Israel, it has given the American Jews a reason to smile. The demands for the day schools are also
increasing. About 200,000 pupils are studying in Jewish day schools in America, most of which belong to orthodox community. This has become a major suppliant to the religious movement. The mode of education, which children learn and inculcate in the religious schools are spread in their homes. The children demand Kosher food, influence their parents to observe Shabbath and prayers, this way bringing religious atmosphere in their homes.

The Day schools are beset with the problems too. They are facing financial crunch, while the cost of education is increasing, which many Jewish parents are not able to afford. Without getting the state aid, at time when Jewish philanthropy is waning, it is very difficult for such schools to survive. So the demand for the state aid to the religious education is on the rise, making orthodox Jews different from the liberals who are against state aid to schools. The Republican Party of America is a big supporter of religious aid. This makes orthodox switch to Republican ideology and a reflection is also seen in their voting patterns - mostly voting for the Republican Party. The growing orthodox communities in the New York metropolitan area and elsewhere are distinctively Republican, and are contributing to the reshaping of political outcomes in some local and state elections. (Gerstenfeld 2005: 27-28) While they found themselves at home in the Republican Party and have become one of the pillars of the Republican Party.

**Russian Orthodox Jews in the USA**

Among such orthodox elements, the Russian orthodox communities form a major chunk of people who support the Republican ideologies and the party policies over several years in tandem. For many years struggle with the communist policies in Russia may have helped them to identify with free market. The plight of the Russian Jews was evident after the death of Joseph Stalin. American people and Jews could understand the plight of Russian Jews. Many Jews living in Russia were forced to a slow death. The anti-Semitic policies made their lives horrible. They were forced out of the national periphery. By the 1970s, few Jews remained active on the national scene in the former Soviets. While the United States were fighting the Cold War in the sixties, the American Jews also made
President Eisenhower help rescue the Jews living in erstwhile Soviet Union. During the
Nixon and Ford administration, the American Jews appealed for their Russian brethren in
front of the presidency. Several Russian Jews escaped to the United States. It is said that
during last 30 years there have been at least 700,000 Jewish immigrations to America.

When Ronald Reagan became American President in 1980s, it became clear he would
contain the Soviet threat in his own way. He called communist government the evil
empire. This reignited hope for the Russian Jews. President Reagan and the Republican
Party still remained in their sub-consciousness mind. Russian Jews rate evangelical
Christians as the least anti-Semitic of various ethnic and religious groups, something no
one else in the Jewish community did.

In Boston they have formed the organization called “Boston for Israel”. This small non-
profit organization of Jews from Greater Boston Area aims to help the victims of terrorist
attacks in Israel. It also helps them recover from the trauma and also help in raising
awareness about the local Jewish community of the events in Israel by organizing public
events such as concert fundraising. The Russian Jews in California have launched a
powerful political lobbying organization which influence over the legislature. Known as
RABOTA (the Russian word for “work”), an acronym for Russian American Business
Owners Trade Association, is also the first organization of its kind in California.

It can be said that Russian origin Jews are making every effort to inculcate common
Jewish traditions. The Russian Jews are Jews by self definition and Jewishness is only
due to blood. It is because for the years of living in former Soviet Union their legacy
means culture, religion, history and traditions were lost in the Communist rule.

Majority of Soviet Jews came from large cities in the Ukraine and Russia: Kiev, Moscow,
Odessa and Leningrad and chose to live in America despite desperate call from Israeli
government to settle in Israel. Since 1990 Russian Jews have migrated to Israel in large
numbers apart from settling in the Atlantic shores and in Germany. Russian Jews in the
US are considered to be well-educated immigrants; they like their Russian counterparts
being far from cosmopolitan. These Jews tend to live in their own communities, particularly in and around Los Angeles, Washington DC, and especially New York City and few are scattered in other cities of America as well.

During 1980s Jewish settlers in Los Angeles began with Boyle Heights. They are also located in the Downtown Los Angeles area, Fairfax Avenue and West Hollywood. Now they tend to settle in the San Fernando Valley and the Santa Monica Mountains. The state of New York has the largest Russian Jewish community in the US. It is also the most organized community. They have formed the Council of Jewish Émigré Community Organizations or COJECO with the help from thirty-four Russian Jewish organizations. There are approximately ten thousand Russian Jews living in Washington DC.

They generally tend not to mix well with other groups and can be considered close to bible-belt mentality. They still speak Russian. The Russian Jews are also considered as socially conservative and on a number of issues they identify themselves with the Republican Party. On economic issues they support Republican ideologies. Years of living in Russian and some other East European countries under state controlled economy has made them acknowledge that free market capitalism is better than walled economy and will serve the purpose.

Moshe Sternberg has been living in America since 1965, after he migrated from Romania. He is a Republican and said that, during his living in Romania, “I have seen communist life, the closed economy, and felt that the Republican Party has done a lot for the rescue of the Jews from the communist regimes. So it is necessary to repay that debt by voting to them.” (Sternberg, telephonic interview, 2005)

After the 9/11 attack, the younger generations Jews are increasingly moving away from the voting patterns of their parents and are creating their own niche. Vague memories of the Holocaust, Jewish immigration to the United States, with no connection to the New Deal and the Great Society ideologies have helped them embrace a new kind of
conservatism which tends to support more for the Republican Party. In any society the young generations are considered as future elements. Steinberg (2001: 67) wrote:

"There are hopeful signs that the young American Jews of today are questioning more and more the political leanings of their elders. In the age of computers, the Internet, and the wide dispersal and availability of information, it appears that many of the old myths are slowly disintegrating as more light is cast on the lack of results of the liberal programs. Also it appears that many young Jews do not have the emotional attachment to the old liberal dogma that prevents many of their elders from rationally thinking through just what it is that is so great about liberalism."

From 2001 to 2003, Jews who were still switching sides from the Democrats to the Republican fold. Maybe they are "mugged with the reality" in their own way as the neocons were in the 1960s. A convergence of factors has led to steadily strengthening support for the president Bush among the Jewish electorate: the Palestinian *intifada* against Israel, the 9-11 terrorist attack, increasing anti-Semitism worldwide and a growing concern that the left-most wing of the Democratic Party has become more sympathetic to the Palestinians than to the Israelis. The Republican Party is not looking just for short-term changes. And many Jews of different denominations were voting and supporting Republican ideologies. Be it Orthodox, Russian immigrants, Neoconservatives, Conservatives, Younger Jews all serve through RJC, thus they were emerging into a new group called the Jewish Republicans.

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20 *Intifada* is an Arabic word which literally means "shaking off", though it is usually translated into English as "rebellion" or "uprising". According to a 2007 article in the Washington Post, the word "crystallized in its current Arabic meaning during the first Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s and early 1990s". It is often used as a term for popular resistance to oppression. The first *intifada* lasted from 1987 to 1993. The second Intifada, also known as the Intifada Al-Aqsa, erupted on the 28th of September 2000, as a result of the controversial visit of Ariel Sharon, then leader of the opposition party Likud, to the al-Aqsa/Temple Mount complex in Jerusalem.