

Measuring Human “Progress” in the New Millennium: The Jewish Question Revisited

*Midiendo el «progreso» humano en el Nuevo Milenio:
la Cuestión Judía revisitada*

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Abstract

This is an article in two parts. Part I offers a new way of looking at progressivism and progressive politics by defining different typologies of progressivism and by looking for these approaches in the cultural strategies of specific ethnic groups. The study offers a theory of how these progressive cultural strategies are maintained and distinguishes these strategies from apparent “progress” that may simply be a phenomenon of temporary accommodation of different ethnic groups in more complex systems. Part II examines the ideology of “progress” as part of the cultural strategy of Jews and whether this strategy, which appears stronger when Jews are minorities in the Diaspora, is consistent with Jewish culture once Jews have a territorial boundary where they are a “majority.” This article touches upon the political choices that Jewish “political progressives” and Jews, overall, have made recently in the U.S.; modifying their support for “progress” in return for political representation, with parallels to the historical situations of other minorities. While “identity based” political choice that slows the over-

Resumen

Este artículo consta de dos partes. En la primera parte se ofrece un nuevo enfoque sobre el progresismo y las políticas progresistas mediante la definición de diversas tipologías de progresismo y buscando estas aproximaciones en las estrategias culturales de grupos étnicos específicos. Este trabajo teoriza sobre la forma en que estas estrategias se mantienen y las distingue del «progreso» aparente que puede ser simplemente un fenómeno efímero de adaptación de dichos grupos étnicos en sistemas más complejos. En la segunda parte se examina la ideología del «progreso» como componente en la estrategia cultural de los judíos y si esta estrategia, que se muestra más fuerte cuando los judíos son minorías en diáspora, es coherente con la cultura judía una vez los judíos han conseguido un límite territorial en el que son ya «mayoría». Este artículo alude a las opciones políticas que los judíos «políticamente progresistas» y los judíos, en general, han tomado recientemente en los Estados Unidos de América; modificando su apoyo al «progreso» a cambio de más representación política de forma paralela a las situaciones históricas

all “progress” of civilization appears to have protected Jewish interests in the short term, historical comparisons suggest that this choice will endanger Jews if the U.S. economy and U.S. global influence collapse, in a direct historical parallel to the European Holocaust; offering an opportunity to test theories on how (and whether) “progress” occurs. In short, this study examines the choice that Jews made in the 20th century to define themselves as “European” rather than “Middle Eastern” (or “Eastern”) and how a rethinking of this choice could be fundamental to protecting Jews in Israel and to restarting a global impetus for both social and political “progress.”

de otras minorías. Aunque la opción política «basada en la identidad» que ha ralentizado el «progreso» general de la civilización parece haber protegido los intereses judíos a corto plazo, las comparaciones históricas sugieren que esta elección puede poner en peligro a los judíos si la economía estadounidense y su influencia mundial se colapsan, de manera paralela a lo que ocurrió durante el Holocausto europeo; ofreciendo una oportunidad para poner a prueba las teorías sobre cómo (y si) se produce un «progreso». En resumen, este estudio examina las elecciones tomadas por los judíos durante el siglo xx para definirse a sí mismos como «europeos» en vez de «orientales de Levante» (o «del Este») y como un replanteamiento de esta elección podría ser fundamental para la protección de los judíos en Israel reiniciando de manera global el «progreso» tanto a nivel social como político.

Key Words: Progressive, left, liberalism, social justice, political justice, rights, Jews, Blacks, Israel, Holocaust, U.S. Presidential elections, empire, ethnic conflict, modernization, globalization.

Palabras clave: Progresismo, izquierda, liberalismo, justicia social, justicia política, derechos, judíos, negros, Israel, holocausto, elecciones generales estadounidenses, imperio, conflicto étnico, modernización, globalización.

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1. Introduction

In an interview on the news network Democracy Now exploring U.S. government response to the global financial crisis officially starting in 2008, journalist Naomi Klein raised but did not answer a question about something she termed the “intellectual dishonesty” of “progressive” “liberal left” politics in the U.S. The answer to and the rephrasing of, that seemingly simple question may touch on the very heart of global politics and identities in this century and on the human future.

At the center of the discussion was why economist Larry Summers, whose name is associated with the causes of the global financial crisis, along with Robert Rubin and Alan Greenspan, have all escaped accountability or (as in the case of Summers) were

even “rehired” to preside over the “solutions.” Klein charged that the world was “paying the price of the—frankly, the intellectual dishonesty of the progressive liberal left during the Bush years,”¹ though not defining who constitutes this group or why they would have chosen dishonesty.

Has the “progressive liberal left” been “intellectually dishonest?” Who are they? What dishonesty is being referred to? Is there a particular double standard that is being applied? And what does this question about one such group in the U.S. at one historical time in history tell us about the much larger question about human “progress”?

While terms like “progressive,” “liberal,” and “left” are often in the eye of the beholder, it is possible to more precisely define different approaches to “progress” (ideas and actions) and to link them to particular cultural traditions to see whether or not they are part of the human experience that is transmitted through time. Once the traditions are identified with certain ethnic groups, it is possible to measure some of the non-conformist (“progressive”) behaviors of those identified groups over time and to look at the decisions that these groups are now making that do have implications for historical progress. These decisions can also be used as a way to examine and test some ideas about historical change, with unfolding events in our own time serving as a kind of social experiment on “progress.”

It is possible to use available data on minorities in the U.S. – African Americans, Hispanics, and particularly Jews – to confirm Klein’s observation while posing questions and seeking data that take the analysis several steps farther. The historical data of changing voting patterns of Jews in the U.S., for instance, indicates a co-optation of their historic progressive role in supporting equal application of laws and standards over the past century (some four to five generations). While Jews in the U.S. retain cultural differences and avoid full assimilation, Jewish intellectuals have recently diverged from an historic practice of supporting ideals of rule of law in democratic systems where Jews are a minority². The oft offered explanation that this double standard represents the “protection of Israel” raises a larger question of how Jewish “progressives” are defining their interests and their role and the political trade Jews are making. It also raises questions about whether a single minority culture continues to promote strategies of human “progress” once its own interests seem protected and when it has something to protect that it fears to lose.

A closer look at the data suggests that non-Jewish leaders have managed to co-opt Jewish progressives by playing on Jewish fears and short-term interests now in the post-Cold War period in much the same way as during the beginning of the Cold War. The significance of this choice for the U.S. and for the world, given the important role that Jews played in promoting “progress” between 1945 and 1980, is that it has severely

1. Klein, 2008.

2. Jewish “Communist” and “Socialist” leaders of Parties that took power in Hungary in 1919 and 1948-56 and in the Soviet Union between 1918 and 1936, and leading parties in Israel, today, could also be said to have abandoned ideals of political and legal symmetry/ equality.

weakened any political force or pressure for global progress towards ideals of legality, co-existence, symmetry and rule of law. It is possible that this change signals the “end” of history in our lifetimes, in the sense of regression towards short-term self-interest and political power rather than development of law and standards³.

As Jews in the U.S. agreed to redefine themselves as “American/Western European” and “anti-Eastern European” for security at the beginning of the Cold War, Israel’s Jews have also continued to consider themselves “Europeans” in the European colonial tradition, rather than seek to diversify the Jewish global identity in a way that more closely ingratiate Jews with their Middle Eastern, Asian, or African neighbours. The identity of Jews in the U.S. and throughout the world, today, is one that includes little identification with Middle Eastern neighbors or Asians and that continues to ally with U.S. and European imperial and resource interests.

Comparison of the Jewish situation in the world today with that of Jews in the collapsing Austro-Hungarian and German Empires in World War I suggests that the conditions prior to the Holocaust could now be re-emerging as the U.S. Empire collapses. This very choice that Jews have made to secure their interests could actually be what most endangers the Jewish future. As the U.S. Empire and Western European influence continue to fall and as oil resources in the Middle East are exhausted, Jews will soon face a new dilemma over identity as well as a potential resurgence of violence directed against Jews in the United States in ways that will test theories about Jewish culture and progress, about progress, and about ethnic accommodation and violence.

There is an emerging new opportunity for Jews in Israel and elsewhere to redefine themselves by reconnecting with Middle Eastern roots and attempting a new peace, reconciliation, and prosperity alongside Middle Eastern neighbors, the emerging powers of Asia, and the Islamic world, but Jews do not appear to be taking it⁴. That choice and its consequences also offer a living social experiment on cultural adaptation and on “progress.”

3. While there has been much debate over whether globalization represents the “end of history” in terms of movement towards Western concepts of rationality, the weakening of any political and intellectual movements to continue developing these concepts effectively means that they will stagnate. This extends Azar Gat’s, “The End of the End of History,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 2007 and links it with the many criticisms of declining democracy in the U.S. and Western Europe.

4. As this article goes to press in December 2015, an American political leader of the progressive tradition, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, has suddenly risen on the political scene calling for exactly this kind of “political revolution” and potential for reconciliation. This article offers a timely test for American Jews as well as emerging data to add to the analysis.

2. Part I: Measuring “Progress” in the New Millennium and its Ethnic Dimensions

The first part of this article begins the search for answers about human political and social progress by looking for ways to measure it and to link it to social science variables. It begins with a new way of looking at such progressivism and progressive politics that defines different typologies of progressivism and looks for these approaches in the cultural strategies of specific ethnic groups. Data on political behavior among different minority groups helps to generate some theories as to how progressive cultural strategies are maintained and how they can be distinguished from apparent “progress” that may simply be the temporary accommodation of different ethnic groups in more complex systems.

2.1. Defining “Progressive” Development of Humanity

Is civilization still progressing or are we regressing? How would we even know? Answering this question requires starting with an agreed definition on what constitutes human progress, but there does not seem to be a clear or agreed definition of what “progressive” politics is. The ideal itself seems to be a different battleground for ethnic and cultural interpretations. Nevertheless, definitions seem to fall into three categories, even though there is disagreement about their exact origins or motivating forces. Each category also offers some potential measures.

Human “progress” and “progressivism” is generally conceived in three ways that are not mutually exclusive. Each offers measures that can also be used to differentiate political platforms, ideologies, candidates, and actions over time:

2.1.1. Technological “Modernization” Progressives

Technocrats and modernists focus on industrial and technological development, with the measure of progress the understanding of and application of natural and scientific laws to achieve greater human control over the universe. This reflects the biological reality of human and primate evolutions of the brain that allow for understanding of time and the ability to develop technologies. There is some debate over whether this is entirely a linear process of development or a radial adaptive process of developing science and technology in environments and how that relates to the other two types of progress; social and political. The Western concept of science generally assumes a linear, though uneven progress⁵. Sometimes the social and political institutions that accompany these

5. Kuhn, 1970.

technologies are also assumed to be those that are the most advanced and progressive⁶. Though few civilizations have produced advanced technology without also developing philosophies that have included concepts of human progress (some form of social and political equality), there are also questions as to whether industrial advance can be achieved without some kind of competition either between ethnic groups (with the need for military dominance driving innovation) or between individuals.

Measures: Scientific and productivity advances.

2.1.2. Social Progressives

Social progressives focus on equitable results (equality of condition) following principles of symmetry and concepts of “justice” or “fairness” that follow from that principle. One of their key aims is “progressive taxation” as a way of redistributing wealth and offering economic opportunity and a safety net. This view of progress is a religious or social and economic rights concept that comes out of almost every religious tradition and embraces the ideal of charity and giving a helping hand to others. It is said to reflect the biological impulse of humans for social relations and cooperation, starting with small collectives. In larger societies, the ideal is often reflected in “interest” politics for meeting the needs of minorities and the poor through social justice.

Measures: Economic and social justice for the poor or for minorities that suffer discrimination. The key measures of political action and candidate stands are those on: “Progressive taxation” and redistribution for social welfare (health care and education, social services) and economic opportunity; military and police spending for defensive protection rather than for hegemony over resources or peoples; subsidies for farmers and rural areas.

2.1.3. “Rule of Law” and Political Progressives and Civil Libertarians

Political progressives focus on development of human systems, institutions and instruments, usually based on the concept of “rule of law” or “natural rights” in order to enforce the principles of symmetry and diversity for long-term survival interests. This is the political rights view of equity and justice that looks not only at outcomes and charitable acts but that tries to systematize the process to assure balances of interests and appropriate long-term results (including protections for future generations). It is the “meta” approach to progress that combines scientific thinking and long-term planning

6. Much of the discipline of anthropology and its premise of cultural relativism are based on challenging the linear view of evolution of all systems and the teleological progression of cultures to fit linear progressions of technology. These critiques also extend into the development and environmental policy and sustainable development and cultural rights literature. For some of the earlier classic discussions of this evolution of technology and systems, see Durkheim, 2014; Weber, 1958; Service, 1975; Toffler, 1981; Hofstadter, 1955; Galbraith, 1967; Kerr, 1983; Bell, 1071: 102-168; Degler, 1992; Wallerstein, 1979.

with concepts of social justice and continued scientific development. The biological root of the idea of political progress is the evolution of the human ability both to plan for future events and to demonstrate empathy. It is a counterweight to the idea of “might makes right” and that individual nations or individuals are “exceptional” or “above the law.” In complex societies, this idea of progress goes beyond the idea of efficiency and modern bureaucracy to incorporate an ideal of accountability, participation, fairness (equal opportunity) and rights (both individual rights and community/cultural rights) at different levels in ways that are enforceable. This systematization also assumes the use of scientific thinking to establish standards and measurements of the quality of processes.

Measures: Political participation and oversight to achieve equality (e.g., political system reform for equal access and oversight; corporate regulation; governmental regulations; electoral reforms; legal system participation and reforms; press and agenda setting equality of access); Judicial equity and equal enforcement (including use of mechanisms against high officials in government and corporate/private sector); International law and treaty obligations; Civil liberties (reduction of death penalty and torture; protection of privacy; due process and protection against collective punishment or discrimination; gender rights; protection of future generation interests and environment; etc.); Rule of law for protection of the full set of political rights (consumer rights, labor rights; Indigenous rights ad federalism); Adherence of individual nations to international legal bodies rather than avoidance through ideologies of “exceptionalism” or special rules. Another way to measure progress in this area is the advance of social science since inquiry into human systems and the creation and testing of those systems in a scientific way (combining the ideals of technical progress and of social justice) reflect the higher order development of planning systems. One set of measures that the author has generated from these concepts that reflects the post-World War II international consensus found in international is a set of “Universal Development Goals”⁷.

Before trying to link these concepts to specific ethnic groups, it is interesting to take a quick look at the three categories to consider where they might be historically rooted. Any “civilization” by definition supports the concept of technological progress. Today, the ideology of “development” or the “right to development” as promoted by international powers is generally defined by these interests as the promotion of technological advance using the science and technologies of these powerful interests.

The idea of “social justice” is rooted in most major religions and is not specific to any group. In complex systems, it is often the rallying point for any categorically disadvantaged minority. Much of the global movement today for equality between “North and South” or for promotion of the Millennium Development Goals (now the Sustainable Development Goals) through the United Nations, is one where social progressives can come from multiple groups. Though there are differences in the attention on “social

7. Lempert, 2014.

justice” in the constitutions and rhetoric of “socialist” countries of Asia and Eastern and Northern Europe, versus the Anglo-American countries, the idea of social justice seems partly related to ethnic factors (and climate, and geography that may underlie them)⁸ and partly to the kind of ethnic competition that exists within a complex system.

While the “political justice” and “rule of law” approach can be traced to many civilizations, going back to the first legal codes and to the development of international commerce, it is also particularly associated with societies and subcultures that have developed complex legal and literate traditions.

2.2. Measuring “Progressive” Politics Against Some Real Variables: Rephrasing the Question to Include Ethnicity

Who are the “Progressives”? Are they random groups that arise spontaneously with a social function of protecting interests and to keeping certain types of societies moving “forward” or are progressives a defined functional group (like healers or spiritual leaders) whose existence and effectiveness can be correlated over time to measure historical “progress”? Do “progressives” only arise when societies confront difficulties and need to re-adapt to their environments to improve survival, or do complex societies create and protect a specific role for “progressives” within systems like education, religion, leadership, and communications? Given the changes in the roles of these institutions in contemporary societies, there are real questions as to whether or not there is a “natural” social role that humans have developed to promote long-term “progress” that goes beyond simple “stability” and continuity. However, if progress is measured in human societies over the past several generations, there seems to be a correlation between “progress” and the activity of particular minority groups. For political progressives (the third category above) in many societies today, there seems to be a clear correlation with Jews, while for social progressives (the second category above), any disadvantaged minority can fit that role. By looking at behaviors of ethnic groups, it is possible to develop some basic theories to try to measure how societies progress technologically, socially, and politically, and what the future might hold.

The place to start a search for a baseline on “progressives” is to look at the characteristics of people who support progressive causes and to separate those “progressives” who arise spontaneously within a system in order to change it for their individual interests and those whose characteristics are larger and unchanging. While political analysis is often defined by labeling that can hide the underlying alliances and actions of identifiable groups, one way to get around this dilemma is to look for these harder variables (more stable affiliations) and to move political analysis closer to anthropology and sociology, using quantifiable measures of age, gender, race and (though not entirely clear cut) ethnicity. That means taking euphemistic words such as “left” or “liberal”

8. Lempert, 1993.

or “progressive” and trying to fill them in with categories such as ethnicity or age or class in order to understand what may really be going on in progressive decisions and modeling this over time.

In fact, there is some positive correlation between the different progressive agendas (technological, social, and political) and different ethnic groups. While there is a larger question as to whether ethnic groups spontaneously move to take on these roles due simply to factors of position or size, and to fulfill a certain social function in complex systems over time, it makes sense to start with a smaller question as to whether there are any identifiable cultural groups in our own time with these roles and to see how they redefine and change those roles over time.

The question that Klein asks is really a “shadow” question that can be analyzed by looking at specific ethnic groups; particularly Jews. Klein is identifying contradictions in the behavior of political progressives; the third “type” of progressive identified in the section above, whom she and the media have called “the liberal left.” The intellectual dishonesty that she detects consists of the willingness to accept a double standard for an unidentified reason. Since the mission of political progressives is to apply standards equally to all and to look for solutions that are systemic, she seeks an explanation as to the underlying causes that have led to the violation of this mission by people who previously expressed a strong support for it.

The way to turn the question about the “liberal left” into a question about Jewish political behavior is to use a simple anthropological trick. Anthropologists ask whether there is a fear or taboo of using a more descriptive word for the “liberal left” that is being hidden by a euphemism. If there is such a taboo, this underlying fear might also explain why the group might sometimes resort to breaking its own standards. To find out, we simply try out substitute words for “liberal left” or for other characteristics of individuals mentioned in the question or who are raising the question. We can also look for a parallel question to Klein’s question to confirm a starting point for this analysis and to relate it to a larger phenomenon. Here’s how.

In addition to Klein’s question about economic policy and specific individuals who have supported that policy at high levels, authors and journalists who have been defined as “progressives” of this “liberal left” (including Klein and Democracy Now) also pose a very similar question about military policy and international law. On issues such as use of the U.S. military or the support for foreign military actions in violations of international law and treaty agreements, they also raise questions about the unwillingness of the same “progressives” to enforce politically progressive standards on people such as former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who was also rehired as part of the Democratic Presidential transition, and on former Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke, who has been rehired as special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their assumption is that progressives should have been much more vocal and consistent during the “Bush years.” That question can be situated in time to date back more than

three decades to 1980 and earlier, before members of the Bush family served as U.S. President or Vice President.

To derive a social scientific question that closely fits the problem, we can substitute the phrase “political non-conformist (independent) Jews” for “liberal left” in Klein’s question and the parallel question, above. The newly formed question is now striking and direct.

Why is it that “politically non-conformist” (“independent”) Jews are “intellectually dishonest” (substituting some other goal for their long-held principles of rule of law and political progress) when it comes to blaming or holding accountable people like Summers, Rubin, Greenspan, Holbrooke (who are all Jewish), and Albright, (who was born Jewish)?

Without assuming whether Klein’s world view is right or wrong, it is easy to simply rephrase her question for at least one potential and important group of political progressives, in this way:

Why have many Jews agreed to support stagnation in or reversal of global social and political justice while politically non-conformist Jews whose previous role was to push the world towards objective standards, have been turning away from upholding those standards?

This may be the real unanswered question that was right in front of Ms. Klein’s and her interviewer’s (Amy Goodman’s) noses. Both are Jewish.

Similar substitutions can be tried using other ethnic groups to ask some similar questions about both political and social progress.

2.3. Opening a Window into the Larger Question of “Progress” by Examining the Political Behaviors of Jews and the Strategy of Political Progress in the Culture of Diaspora Jews

The identification of Jews as one important component of the “progressive left” makes it possible to measure one of the potential driving forces of “political progress” by examining how Jewish culture promotes and protects (or how it compromises or abandons) this strategy under different conditions. By examining how Jewish political behavior is changing overall and the size of “progressives” as a subset of the Jewish minority population over time, it is possible to come up with some conclusions about whether “progress” is specifically linked to cultures or whether it is only linked to the relative vulnerability of certain minority cultures at different points in time. The answer to this question has implications for overall human progress, for other minority groups, and also for Jews. The assumption here is that using Jews as an indicator of progres-

sive politics makes some logical sense and is a good fit. Moreover, although it is not a perfect fit, since the identification of “Jews” or any racial, ethnic, or minority group is also socially constructed, it is a relatively stable category over time and offers a good starting point.

By contrast to movements for social progress that are rooted in most major religions and are not specific to Jews (even though Jews have long been associated with movements for social justice through labor and political movements in the U.S. and Europe), the category of political progress is often associated with Jews today⁹ and is one that offers itself to measurement (of quantity of effort, though the actual quality can be subject to dispute). While there is a debate as to whether this third concept of progress (of history moving towards some “ends” rather than repeating itself in cycles) is even a Jewish “invention,” there is a core Jewish philosophy of “*tikkun olam*,” of perfecting institutions through law as well as a part of Jewish identity that reinforces survival against the forces of empires through legal and moral challenges to those empires. A central distinguishing idea in the Jewish religion is one that humans control destiny, not outside forces. According to this philosophy, Jews create meaning not only through ritual activity, as in other cultures, but in this activity of mending the world or perfecting the world. For Jews living in the Diaspora for 2,000 years, the essential definitions of perfecting the world have included the protection of small minority peoples and their chosen identities through concepts of rights (including rights to a “Sabbath” day each week free from labor and to the worship of one’s ancestors and God) and codified law (Commandments) within these larger systems. For the past century in the West, Jews have been over-represented in modern legal professions and have been a driving force in promoting concepts of civil liberties, rights, and protections through law and institutional frameworks that are central to the concept of political “progressivism”¹⁰.

Jews have historically represented a significant part of political non-conformist intellectuals and activists promoting a particular view about human and civilization’s progress and how individual decisions can be part of such progress.

As a (Jewish) progressive, Klein expresses concern that (Jewish) political progressives are abandoning their agenda and her observation can be tested with hard evidence. Assuming that a certain group of political progressives can be identified (and evidence in the next section suggests that Jews do fit this category and that Klein is observing a real change), it is possible to try to explain the change. Her worry suggests a belief that (Jewish) progressives are making a deliberate (and harmful) free choice. Jews (previ-

9. Civil liberties organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, the Center for Constitutional Rights and other organizations that have challenged government and economic power in the United States have a strong association with Jews and with Jewish lawyers and activists.

10. The Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac and the idea of the “covenant” and struggle between people (with each other) and with a concept of god in the Bible is one of the first stories on this theme. The story symbolizes the struggle to establish law and to bargain with the forces of human and scientific nature for human ends. However, many of the other stories of the Old Testament of the Bible that tell the story of Moses in Egypt are also reinforcements of a story of rights and law within the context of larger state systems such as dynastic Egypt. See for example, Lerner, 2002.

ously a political progressive group) aren’t assimilating but are abandoning progressive traditions without any clear cause. Why would Jews give up an established cultural belief that society apparently defines in a positive way (as “progressive”)?

Klein has put her finger on a key issue of both overall political progress and Jewish political identity that has at its roots some key decisions of how Jews in the world are now collectively interpreting their (our) survival interests and their (our¹¹) alliances. If Jews are giving up the ideal of political progress because they are on a path to assimilation, this suggests that there is really no such thing as “political progress”; that it is only a ruse used by certain minority groups to promote their assimilation and that it will be given up once they feel relatively secure. Similarly, if Jews are giving up the ideal of political progress out of fear for survival (or a combination of relative security and some ultimate fear), can the idea of political progress ever really take root in human societies, or is it also subject to elimination through manipulation of fear? Given the position of Jews in the world today, how Jews are making this decision not only has an impact on U.S. and Middle Eastern politics, but on several concerns for the future of humanity and global survival in what many futurists describe as a post-oil, desertifying, resource depleted world, where the U.S. Empire is crumbling and where Asian and other power centers are emerging, without any particular minority group rooted in these traditions.

Does political progress require the existence of a particular group with a particular “politically progressive” tradition in order for the progress to continue, and if so, what happens when it give it up? Is political progressivism something that is “cultural” and specific to part of a once victimized minority group such as Jews that is independent of economic victimization? Can an ethnic group that initiates a progressive agenda that includes both social and political progressive features continue to support this agenda after the group is no longer disadvantaged? Or, does human “political progress” require continued victimization of a group to create the impetus for change (making it almost paradoxically impossible for real “progress” to be continued and sustainable)? If neither condition exists, is human progress really possible?

2.4. Progress or Regress?: Evidence of Recent Regressive Behavior of Minorities and “Progressives” in U.S. Elections to Generate Hypotheses about Ethnicity and “Progress”

It is relatively easy to generate data demonstrating the disappearance of support for political or social progress in the U.S. between 1980 and 2012. What is compelling about this general data is not only how strong the trend in the U.S. over the past (more than a generation) has been showing the decline of “progressivism” but also how closely it follows ethnic lines and how at least one group in the U.S. (Muslims) is becoming more progressive. Changes seem to be related to the political and economic positions

11. Including the author of this study.

of those groups; with Jews and Muslims moving in opposite directions in progressive politics. Assuming the high education and political activity of Jews, the data on Jews is particularly intriguing. Overall, the findings offer a way not only for individuals to reconsider the basis of their own political behaviors and what they have chosen to give up, but to alert different ethnic groups as to what they stand for (if anything other than self-protection).

Most political scientists examine political data to measure the changing support for different coalitions over time but do not try to measure “progress” over time or support for “progress” among particular ethnic groups. While there is no reliable measure or poll of the absolute numbers of “progressives” in the three different categories of progressives identified above, it is possible to use some shadow measures to explore some trends and begin to offer hypotheses with polling data that does ask about ethnicity.

In the United States, one place to start is with support for candidates in Presidential primaries (and particularly in the Democratic primaries) where activists more directly express their preferences than in Presidential votes. Recently, the creation of a “Progressive caucus” in the U.S. Congress also offers a way to look at one self-defined group and their characteristics. Some comparisons between the voting for Congress, in Presidential primaries and in Presidential elections also offer a window into the decisions that these “progressives” are making.

General data for elections in the United States for the past 35 years (now more than a generation and possibly long enough to confirm a trend) tends to confirm both that there is a general trend away from social and political progressivism among the very same people who were progressive before, and that Jews in particular are weaker than ever as political progressives. A longer look at data for Jewish “progressive” voting also shows this shift even more strongly in ways that tend to confirm that (Jewish) progressives have been making some kind of bargain that is counter to their previous progressive stance. Added to this, it would be interesting to measure if there is a trend away from science and technological progress globally (and a case might be made that there has) that could also be confirmed through other measures such as spending and dedication to pure science and the range of support to applied science and technology.

2.4.1. *The General Trend*

One way to look at progressive politics is to start by looking at national votes within the Democratic Party for the past 35 years. Although there can be “progressives” in any political party, and some Republicans (among them some libertarians and some professionals building standards on spending) take some “progressive” stances in line with the three types identified above, all current members of Congress’ “Progressive Caucus” are Democrats and the full range of issues that fit the definition of “progressive” has recently been associated with the Democratic Party. The way to look at the trends is to take candidate voting records and position and to hold them against the measures of

“social progressive” (second type) and “political progressive” (third type) to determine which candidates fit the definition, then to see how much initial support they received in primary elections.

While historical interpretation introduces biases and the classification categories are imperfect, I have made some very rough interpretations of candidates for the past nine elections, putting candidates and their votes into three categories: non-progressive, progressive (including those candidates who are or were members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus since 1991 or whose records were similar) and a third “unclear” category. Of course, the classifications and data itself is rough, since not all candidates stay until the end of Presidential primaries, some votes are tallied in caucuses, not all candidates appear on each ballot, and so on. Support for globalization or for particular U.S. military intervention is also hard to interpret (is it for resources and control or for promoting rights and progress?). However, the data does offer an opportunity to put some numbers on an often-stated belief that in the U.S. there has been a major shift away from Progressive politics and that today’s “Democratic Party” candidates may be even more conservative (non-progressive) than even Republican Party candidates used to be more than a generation ago.

Other ways of conducting the analysis result in similar conclusions, including comparing political platforms or stresses of particular issues in campaign speeches¹². The purpose of the brief overview is just to set an initial baseline.

This table cannot suggest whether this phenomenon – the severe downward trend in progressivism, if correctly interpreted – is part of a “cycle” or the end of “progress”, and it is only for the United States. However, it is a first measure that can be viewed in an historical context with more data for specific ethnic groups.

12. In 2009, for example, one can make a quick comparison of progress in the U.S. simply by comparing the Inaugural addresses of John F. Kennedy in 1960, when the Democrats won a majority, with that of Barak Obama in 2009. There is clear attention to agendas of social progress (concern for the poor), for political progress (international standards through law and international organizations; civil rights as something higher than national law and part of a global goal of humanity, human understanding and peace in a joint effort rather than as the single country managing that effort) as well as to scientific and technological progress (space exploration, cultural advance, research on disease) in Kennedy’s speech. One can find almost all of these themes in President Lyndon Johnson’s inaugural address and other speeches, as well. Other than mention of progress made in civil rights and a nod to continuing efforts towards “equality,” all of these other “progressive” commitments were glaringly absent in Obama’s address, in his campaign speeches, or in current speeches that focus on meeting economic needs and on national and individual strength and position.

Table 1: Downward Trends in Progressive Voting in Democratic Primaries¹³

	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
Candidates Tagged as Non-Progressive Caucus	La Rouché	Glenn, La Rouché	Gore, Gephardt	Clinton, La Rouché	Clinton, La Rouché	Gore	Kerry, Edwards, Gephardt, Lieberman, Graham	Obama, Clinton, Richardson, Biden, Dodd, Edwards	Obama
Unclear	Carter (51%), Unpledged (7%)	Mondale (38%), Hart (36%)	Dukakis (42); Hart (2%)	Tsongas (18%), Kerrey (2%)	-	Bradley (20%)	Clarke (3%)	-	-
Candidate Tagged as Progressive	Kennedy (38%), Brown (3%)	Jesse Jackson (18%); McGovern (2%)	Jesse Jackson (29%); Simon (6%)	Brown (20%), Harkin (1%); McCarthy, Agran (1%)	None	?	Kucinich (4%), Sharpton (2%), Dean (5%)	Kucinich, Gravel	No challenge
Progressive and Unclear Primary Vote	99%	94%	79%	42%	Incumbent	20%	14%	2%	0%
Progressive Primary Vote	41%	20%	35%	22%	Incumbent	?	11%	<2%	0%

2.4.2. Jewish Progressives Over Time

The more interesting trend, also downward, is that of the “independent” party voting of Jews in the U.S. for most of the past century. If “non-conformist” Jews do represent the political progressives, their voting patterns would indicate that either the culture has been changed or that they are making the kind of hypocritical choice that Klein identifies. While there is no way of knowing how many Jews are “progressive” or which categories of “progressive” they fall into, there are clear records of their Presidential electoral voting for the two “Progressive” parties that directly chose this name in 1924 and 1948 as well as for a social progressive party (the “Socialist” Party) in 1920, and whose political agendas reflected the goals of social justice and/or political progress. In more recent elections, it is possible to track Jewish support for candidates who represented progressive agendas of the Green Party that included social progressive and

13. Data from Our Campaigns website. On web at: <http://www.ourcampaigns.com/RaceDetail.html?RaceID=55208>

politically progressive agendas (including one Green Party candidate, Cynthia McKinney, who was a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus).

Table 2. Politically Non-Conformist (Independent/“Progressive”) Jewish Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections

Candidate(s)	Party Label	Year	Jewish Vote ¹	Popular Vote ²	Jews as a Percentage ³
Eugene Debs	Socialist	1920	38%	3%	62%
Robert La Follette, Sr.	Progressive	1924	22%	17%	7%
Henry Wallace	Progressive	1948	15%	2%	31%
John Anderson Barry Commoner	Independent Citizens	1980	14%	7%	10%
Ross Perot	Independent	1992	9%	19%	2%
Ralph Nader	Green	2000	1%	3%	2%
Ralph Nader	Green	2004	1%	1%	5%
Ralph Nader Cynthia McKinney	Independent Green	2008	0.5%	1%	5%
Jill Stein ⁴	Green	2012	<1%	0.3%	?

1. Jewish voting data (percentages) is from: L. Sandy Maisel and Ira Forman, Eds., *Jews in American Politics*, 2001. on the web at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/US-Israel/jewvote.html>
 2. The national voting data used for comparisons is drawn from published sources including Wikipedia articles on each election.
 3. The assumption is that Jews are 4-5% of the vote; roughly double that of other groups. The Jewish tradition is one of active civic participation (making fate rather than accepting fate) and Jewish voter turnouts are high, while the average voter turnout in Presidential elections is between 40 and 60%. Bernard Avishai, “Obama’s Jews,” *Harper’s*, October 2008, page 9. Note that my calculations are rough given the overall imprecision of the data. For more specific figures, I would have to use the Jewish population of the country in each election year and also look at the exact voter turnout in each year.
 4. Exit polls showed 69% of Jews voted for Obama and 30% for Romney with 1% unclear, even though the Green Party candidate, Jill Stein, was Jewish. There is some possibility that this data was skewed and that Jewish vote was higher but that Stein was simply excluded from the polling. Two “swing state” results were Ohio: 64 (or 69, depending on the poll):31.5: and 4.5 not explained; and Florida: 66 (or 68): 30: and 4 not explained. Even if the third party vote is suppressed in the media polls and was 4-4.5% in these states and maybe double that in non-swing states, it’s still way below past third party levels. However, it would suggest that a larger percent of the small vote for Jill Stein was from Jews. Stone, Andrea (2012). “Jewish Vote Goes 69% for Barack Obama: Exit Polls,” *Huffington Post*, posted November 7. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/07/jewish-voter-exit-polls_n_2084008.html

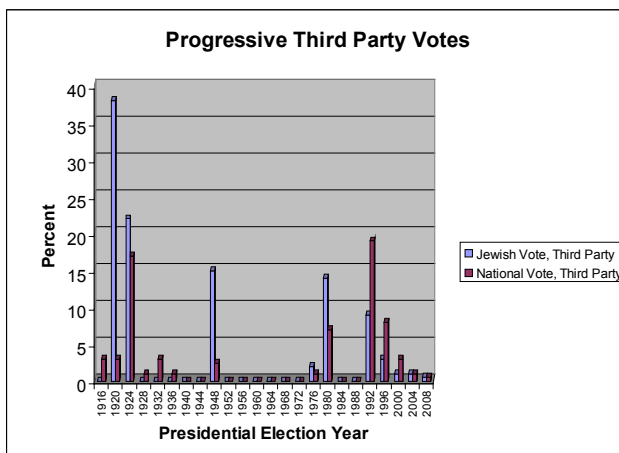
Presidential votes in general elections are harder to use to show the specific strength of progressives, but they also reveal a startling pattern. In U.S. general elections for President, in what many have called the U.S. two-party “duopoly” system, choices have often become “strategic” votes where groups make bargains with the major Party candidates. Thus, actually votes may not directly reflect the numbers of progressives given that some progressives may have extracted promises from major party candidates in return for their votes. The ability to bargain effectively could be masking changes in progressive choices. What makes the table below so interesting is that it identifies elections where progressive Jews chose to vote strongly for the Third Party candidates, rather than put faith in bargain with one of the two major Parties.

There is no way to know the actual thinking of Jewish progressives in making these votes; whether they felt their Third Party votes were important in moving the overall political debate (for political progress) and/or in protecting Jewish progressive as a recognized bloc (social progress for Jews). Following the 1920 and 1924 votes, the Democratic Party did become progressive under Roosevelt, for example. Following 1948, however, Jews were heavily targeted in the McCarthy era purges. Yet, there is still a clear pattern in the votes.

What is important to see in the table is that Jews had a tradition of voting for Third Parties and not blindly identifying with the Democratic Party (part of the recent common wisdom). They apparently did use their voting power strategically for Third Parties, not just between the two major parties. Moreover, they made up large parts of the vote for the Socialists in 1920 and for Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party (against the Cold War) in 1948. They were also significant in 1980 in support for John Anderson, an anti-war candidate. Yet, more recently, they have fallen behind other groups in their Third Party voting.

Graphing the data shows the phenomenon more clearly.

Figure 1. The “Disappearance” of Jewish Progressives



Since 1980, Jews have made a clear switch. The data might or might not indicate a general progression of Jewish voting that could suggest some kind of assimilation. But it could just as easily suggest that voting (and “assimilation”) represents a specific political choice of alliances that would confirm Klein’s observation that Jewish progressives are acting against their stated principles.

2.4.3. *The Congressional “Progressive Caucus” and Ethnicity*

Ethnicity figures for the U.S., for the U.S. Congress and for the U.S. Congressional “Progressive Caucus” offer general information about ethnic groups and “progressive” choices on a more national level, and also suggests that Jews are becoming less progressive. While Congressional voting in the U.S. is by district and its members do not clearly reflect progressive sentiment of minorities, there is a rough correlation.

While the U.S. Congressional “Progressive caucus” has only existed since 1991 and data cannot be used to show any real trends, its membership itself offers some clues on ethnic lines as well as on issue choices of what currently constitutes “progressive” politics and also of the relative role that Jews and other ethnic groups play in it.

Below is a chart for a recent Progressive Caucus for which data were available (in office for 2007 and 2008) with tabulations of Congressional membership by ethnicity. Note that all of the members of the Caucus are members of the Democratic Party.

The interesting numbers in the table are those that suggest that progressives are probably social progressives representing the interests of disadvantaged minorities since the composition of the group is higher than that of minorities who are “disadvantaged.” Blacks make up almost half of the caucus and Blacks, Hispanics, Jews, and Asians are 62% of the members. Moreover, of Blacks in Congress, some 61% are members of the Caucus compared to 13% of all members of Congress.

Table 3. Analysis of the U.S. Congressional Progressive Caucus, 110th Congress, by Ethnicity¹⁴

Ethnic Group ⁵	Number of Members in Congress (Both Houses)	Number of Democratic Party (or Independent) Members	Number of Members in Caucus	Percentage of Democratic Party (or Independent) Members in Caucus	Percentage of Total Group in Caucus	Percentage of Total Caucus
Blacks	44	44	27	61%	61%	38%
Hispanics	29	23	8	35%	28%	11%

14. The 110th Congress served in 2007 and 2008. The raw numbers were tabulated from lists and biographies in Wikipedia and on the Web.

Ethnic Group ⁵	Number of Members in Congress (Both Houses)	Number of Democratic Party (or Independent) Members	Number of Members in Caucus	Percentage of Democratic Party (or Independent) Members in Caucus	Percentage of Total Group in Caucus	Percentage of Total Caucus
Jews	44	42	7	17%	16%	10%
Asians	7	7	2	29%	29%	3%
Other	314	162	27	17%	9%	38%
Total (including non-voting members)	538	278	71	26%	13%	100%

5. These minority groups account, overall for 30+% of the national population (Blacks at 12.3%; Hispanic at 12.5%; Jews at 2-3%; Asians at 3.6%). 2000 Census data. U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Population Profile of the U.S., 2000," reported on the web at: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/pop-profile/files/2000/chap02.pdf>

The statistic for Jews is also interesting. Only 16% of Jewish members of Congress are now members of the Progressive Caucus; not much higher than the percentage for non-minority members (9%). Among Democrats, Jewish members of the caucus are in the same percentage as non-minority Democrats. It looks as if Jews who might otherwise be “progressive” had made a bargain with the mainstream Democrats.

2.4.4. The Disappearance of Progressive Agendas in Politics Among Most Minority Groups, Throughout the Political Process: Minority Progressives Making Some Kind of Compromises or Surrender of their Agenda in 2008, Apparently for Identity Politics

The recent choice of Jewish progressive voters to support the Democratic Party candidate in Presidential elections, rather than to give support to progressive Third party candidates is reflected by the behavior of several minority groups, even in primary elections, suggesting that not only are progressives NOT using bargaining power when they do vote in the general elections, but also they are generally abandoning progressive stands overall. The way to see this is to combine data from U.S. Presidential primaries with the self-definition of “progressive” by those members of Congress who were Presidential candidates in primaries. It seems that progressives are no longer voting on issues but are seeking protection by voting for candidates who are from their ethnicity or who will choose staff from members of that ethnic group, no matter what their political preferences are.

Table 4. Projected Support in Voting if the Public Supported the Progressive Caucus’s Presidential Candidates in the 2008 Democratic Primaries

Ethnic Group	Percentage of Overall Democratic Party Affiliation, Estimated by Voter Turnout and Democratic Vote in 2008 ⁶	Percentage of Democratic Party (or Independent) Members in Progressive Caucus	Percentage of Democratic Primary Votes for Caucus Members: Kucinich and other “Progressives” not in Congress (Gravel)	Percentage of Democratic Primary Votes for Non-Caucus Members: Obama, Clinton, Edwards, Biden, Dodd, Richardson
Blacks	23%	61%	0 to 9%	91 to 100%
Hispanics	6%	35%	0 to 33%	67 to 100%
Jews	2%	17%	0 to 100%	0 to 100%
Total ⁷	31%	26%	<2%	98+%

6. CNN Exit Polls, November 4, 2008, reported on the web at: <http://edition.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls/#val=USP00p1> Data is then repercentaged over 53%, the total Democratic vote.

7. Unsourced data presented in Wikipedia, “Democratic Party (U.S.) Presidential Primaries 2008, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_\(United_States\)_presidential_primaries,_2008](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)_presidential_primaries,_2008)

With the basic data on minorities and “progressive” voting, as represented by the above data for the Congressional Progressive Caucus, it is possible to take a look at national voting behavior among these groups in 2008, both in the Presidential primaries where activists are more likely to vote their interests in hoping that they can influence a nominee and policies, and in the general election. What is interesting about the 2008 elections is that there were candidates who were members of the Progressive Caucus (including Dennis Kucinich and Cynthia McKinney) running against several candidates who were clearly not members of the Caucus. Barack Obama, for instance, is among the minority of Blacks in Congress who did not identify with the Progressive Caucus.

Overall, while 26% of the country’s Democrats were members of the Congressional Progressive caucus, their candidates received less than 2% of the primary votes.

There is not enough data to know exactly how individual ethnic groups voted. Progressive candidates report that they did not have the funds to do this kind of polling¹⁵. At best, it is only possible to make mathematic estimates and for smaller groups like Jews, it is impossible to see anything. But for Blacks and partly for Hispanics, the data is clear. Progressives did not vote their political views in the primaries.

Black progressives apparently voted for a Black non-progressive candidate in large numbers (Obama) because he was Black. Hispanics may have voted in larger numbers

15. E-mail from Vin Gopal, Deputy National Campaign Manager for Kucinich’s 2008 Presidential campaign, January 4, 2009.

for the non-progressive Hispanic candidate, Richardson. It looks as if progressives bargained away their interests on the basis of some other definition of their interest or a co-optation of those interests in the primaries. The data here on Jewish progressives is too small, but the same questions about their choice can start to be raised, partly on the basis of where Jewish money went if not Jewish votes¹⁶.

The same phenomenon is also visible in the election, itself, where Congresswoman McKinney, a Black Progressive Caucus member, was pitted against non-member Obama.

Apparently, progressive members of different minority groups were not voting on issues but were making a strategic decision to ally with non-progressives. The progressive vote almost entirely disappeared.

One can raise questions about why the “progressive” vote for Congress is so different than that in the Presidential election process and whether there is a belief that Congress, itself, and its progressives, can pressure a President. There is also a question of whether the Congressional data is really a valid representation of “progressives.” The question that Klein is raising suggests that Congressional progressives, very much like national progressive voters, may have also made deals once they were in office, to support (or to look the other way at) activities of their non-progressive colleagues and of Presidential staff, and their appointments to high positions. This data does not offer clues as to why progressives seem to have chosen to make deals, and what interests they think they are protecting by making deals that suggest an inconsistency in their beliefs. This question that can be taken up using a different approach, in the second part of this article.

Before trying to understand why “progressives” have agreed to suppress or abandon or trade their agenda, it is important to ask whether there are any progressive minority voter groups who apparently chose not to make such a deal and to ask what might be different about them. In fact, there is one. The only minority that did not make this bargain with non-progressives, was American Muslims.

16. One report describes Jews as 20% of Democratic Party donors, though they are only 5-10% of its voters. Avishai, 2008. Jewish money went first to Hillary Clinton, then to Obama. Though I have not analyzed political or ethnic dimensions of money, it is important to recall California Governor Jerry Brown’s comments in 1992 that the real primary was the “money primary” and not the competition for votes.

Table 5. Projected Support in Voting if the Public Supported the Caucus’s Candidates in the 2008 National Elections for President

Ethnic Group	Percentage of 2008 Voters ⁸	Percentage of Progressive Caucus of National Representatives	Percentage of National Votes for Caucus Members ⁹ : McKinney	Percentage of National Votes for Other “Progressives”: Nader/Gonzalez	Percentage of National Votes for Non-Caucus Members: Obama
Blacks	13%	61%	1.0% (Combined)		95%
Hispanics	9%	28%	< 2.0% (Combined)		67%
Jews	2%	16%	0.5% (Combined)		78%
Total	100%	13%	0.2%	0.5%	52%

8. CNN Exit Polls, November 4, 2008. Note that the Jewish vote is only reported at 2% when sources generally find Jews voting at about 4-5% of the electorate. Given that there was a 62% turnout, Jews could have been overrepresented by 50+ if they all voted, pushing their share to 4+%. CNN reported an “Other” category of religions of 6% that may include some of the Jewish voters if they did, indeed, vote in large numbers in the election.

9. CNN Exit Polls, November 4, 2008, *supra*.

2.4.5. American Muslims: Minority Progressives Not Making the Bargain

Of all minority groups in the U.S., the one that appears to be more progressive while other groups are less progressive, is Muslims. The question is why, and the answer suggests that they are also acting on the basis of identity politics in protecting their interests. What seems to make them different is that they are one of the groups that the Democratic Party does not seem to welcome into its coalition.

There is very little data on the Muslim and Arab-American vote, given their small size, although their vote may actually be as large as that for Jews¹⁷. But there are surveys of their voting behavior in 2000 and 2004 when they suddenly moved from a standard U.S. voting pattern including support for Republicans, to the left. There is a good explanation for why. This was a group who, while not “disadvantaged” economically in the U.S., was suddenly a victim of discrimination and civil liberties violations as a result of U.S. policy regarding the Muslim world. Many had a direct interest in supporting the civil liberties agenda of political progressives as a way to protect themselves.

Using some available data, it is possible to see that they voted strongly for Ralph Nader, a political progressive candidate in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Presidential elec-

17. It is difficult to know what percentage they are of voters but they are estimated at 2 to 12 million in the census. Wikipedia offers sources that they vary from 0.7% to 4% of the population.

tions who is not Muslim but is Arab-American and who spoke out as a defender of Arab-American and Muslim civil liberties. Assuming that Muslim Americans are 3% of the electorate, their votes for Nader would have accounted for about 0.6 of the national vote which was 20% of the Nader vote in 2000 but almost all of it in 2004 and 2008. This table also explains why Nader did so well in states like Michigan. It wasn't just blue collar voters and auto workers supporting him. It was the Arab and Muslim minority there.

Table 6. Muslim-American Vote in Recent Presidential Elections¹⁸

Year	Republican	Democrat	Nader
2000	8%	72%	19%
2004 (Polls)	2%	54%	26%
<i>/Repercentaged</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>32%</i>

This is not to say that there are no Muslims or Arab Americans welcomed in the Democratic Party, but simply an analysis of specific voting behaviors¹⁹.

18. Fleischer, 2004. Note that these figures are slightly lower in polls of “Arab-Americans” but show the same trend. The Zogby International poll found that in 2000, 44% voted for Bush, 38% for Gore and 13% for Nader. In the 2004 election, the numbers were 28% Republican, 63% Democrat and 8% for Nader; a decrease rather than the increase indicated in the table. The pre-election polls in 2008 were indicating 6% for Nader. Arab-American voters were estimated at 2 million, slightly less than 2% of the electorate. By these figures, they could have contributed to about one quarter of the Nader vote in 2008. Mineeia - Lobe, 2008.

19. U.S. Senator and diplomatic envoy, George Mitchell, is part Lebanese Christian ancestry, similar to Ralph Nader. Mitchell, however, does not speak Arabic and has not spoken out for political protections for all Arab Americans including Muslims, as Ralph Nader has.

3. Part II: Progressivism and the Current “Jewish Question”

A standard explanation of U.S. (and global) political behavior in recent times that suggests the weakening of progressive movements, even in the face of growing economic inequalities, attributes the change to both the increasing power and sophistication of control mechanisms (including media and propaganda) by elite actors. Yet, that explanation seems to fail, not only because it denies the underlying assumption that people make rational choices that reflect their interests but because it does not recognize a competing trend of increasing knowledge and cynicism among citizens as well as easier access to alternative sources of information and communications. An analysis based on rational choice suggests that progressives were making a rational choice to suppress their agenda and to deaden movements for progress. The rest of this study, focusing on Jews but applying to other groups, argues that the choice is really one being made out of fear and perceived self interest. The article also seeks to project these choices to logical conclusions that are startling (and horrifying) for the future of Jews, of humanity, and for concepts of “progress.”

What the U.S. Presidential election results in 2008, analyzed above, suggest is the fact that minority voters, who are most likely to be progressive, were making choices based on identity politics rather than on political agendas. (Given the incumbency of Barack Obama, 2008 is used as a clearer base year for analysis.) There is evidence that politicians can co-opt progressive segments by their own ethnicity or by the filling of positions of people with that ethnicity, regardless of whether or not they share that agenda; symbolic tokenism as convincing people they are represented or that they, too, can win the lottery. The larger question is, why minorities would want to agree to this given that majority populations apparently feel free to support candidates who represent their interests even though they are from minority groups. Moreover, why is it that progressives, who are arguably more educated and ideological than others, agree to this choice? While the 2008 electoral results raise some questions about Black progressives and their allegiances, the rest of this article focuses on Jewish progressives and their choices over the past several decades in the U.S. and outside of the U.S. Others can deal with the implications of this for Black progressives in the U.S. since a study of Jews should have similar implications for Blacks and other minorities.

Even if elites have been using money and media to drive progressives out of politics, this would still not fully explain why progressives, themselves, have long been convinced by the messages. One would still have to examine the messages and arguments that have been used to convince progressives to make concessions to support different agendas in order to understand their beliefs.

Underlying this question are assumptions about how history and progress work and how groups and cultures make decisions and changes that are too complicated to fully address in this article. Social scientists, themselves, are split into whether they think choices are rational and based on perception of self-interest or irrational and manipulat-

ed by advertising, fears, shallow appeals, or even on how “self-interest” is defined and understood in the brain. For arguments sake, the rest of the article assumes that Jewish progressives are thoughtful actors in their voting and other political behaviors and that even their motivations based on fear are part of some underlying rational or logic of self interest. Another important assumption for measuring behavior and attitudes towards progress is the fact that rational choices are being made in an environment where the very context in which choices are made is relatively constant over time and that people are aware of that context²⁰.

It is important to also accept a frame of analysis for measuring history and to assume that history is a process that individuals affect by aggregate choices on their interests and how they define those interests, and that this is a conscious choice by individuals, added up into a collective choice. That is different from looking at human choices as driven by a collective consciousness of larger forces that drive decisions beyond individual conscious choice. Those who look at history from a macro-view in long sweeps of time for the rise and fall of civilizations, including this author in other work²¹, could see the same data and the story it tells as just part of a larger process and might assume the insignificance of human action and decisions²². Even though it may be difficult to link individual behaviors to collective social changes and to work on these two levels at the same time, this article assumes that there is some consistency between these levels.

Progressives themselves assume that ideas count and that philosophies and human choice move history. At the very least, the rest of this piece tests progressives’ own assumptions when applied to their choices to see whether their own choices solely reflect rational survival interests or whether progressives also perceive choices between longer term and short term interests of humanity and of their own group definition (i.e., Jewish progressives as wedded to a strategy of promoting political progress) and act in that way²³.

The rest of the article examines these issues by looking at the context in which Jews make political choices and what these choices reflect. The overall question is

20. Minorities may find themselves as the frogs in a boiling pot, unable to really assess changes around them or to recognize that the concept of who they are and what is “progressive” or what is the nature of the world around them is changing. Anyone reading this article might also have to put themselves in an “objective” framework to hold several things constant, and that may not be possible. See, for example, Foucault, 1985. For an historians’ classic view of the complexities, see Meyerhoff, 1959.

21. That piece looks at current history moving towards corporate global feudalism that will stop any kind of movements towards progressive politics in a return to a new feudal age, albeit with the current level of technology. That article starts with different assumptions of history and a different level of analysis.

22. See, for example, Tainter, 1988 or Spengler, 1926-1928.

23. Some of the classic historians of the 20th century raised this question in looking at development in the U.S. and Europe. Charles Beard’s work analyzes the U.S. constitution, a politically progressive document, in terms of economic interests and raises questions about whether it is really what it says and whether it really represents progress at all. Beard, 1934: 219-229. Arnold Toynbee’s view of rise and fall of civilizations was not that it was an organic process but that it could also be defined by choices made by innovative groups. If Jewish progressives are one of those groups, their ability to hold to a consistent agenda and promote a belief is a test of whether this idea of human choice is really a relevant historical phenomenon. Toynbee, 1956.

whether Jews are visibly (consciously or subconsciously) sacrificing progressive politics for identity politics or some other short-term tradeoff, and whether this trade can be measured and explained. The piece then examines the long-term implications for Jews, themselves of this choice and whether Jews, themselves are conscious of the real implications of the short-term tradeoff they have made, given that similar tradeoffs in recent memory have been associated with genocide against the Jews when empires Jews have allied with have failed and when progressive resistance was weak. There is also a striking parallel to this choice – this “Jewish Question” – that Jews have made in the Middle East. An understanding of that choice helps to challenge much of the common wisdom and myth about Israel’s position in the world today. Finally, the changing power relations in the world today offers an opportunity to test Jewish choices, Jewish progressive politics, and the future of progressive politics overall in human history.

3.1. The “Jewish Question” and Its Theoretical Implications: Are Jews Assimilating and Agreeing to An End to Progress or Are they Just Making a Temporary Bargain?:

Since there is enough evidence to suggest that Jews as a political group are not assimilating in the U.S. in ways that would make them indistinguishable from the mainstream, why is it that they appear to be turning away from progressive politics? Are Jews assimilating in some other way that is causing them to turn away from progressive politics to simply protect themselves, indicating that Jews²⁴ neither really were nor will they continue to be a culture that is politically progressive? If they are not assimilating, are Jews in the U.S. simply making some short-term (possibly misguided) decisions for protection that are conflicting with other values? This question of assimilation and/or making some kind of alliance for self (group) protection is the essence of the “Jewish Question”²⁵ (a survival strategy in relation to the powers that be). It is also a key to understanding whether a cultural strategy for political progress is independent of the conditions of a small ethnic group or whether it is simply a mechanism for self-protection that is discarded once conditions of that group improve. Given that the Jewish re-establishment of a nation state and the rise of Jews in the U.S. and other countries to a position of economic and professional status have occurred in less than the past century, there is not enough data yet to offer a clear answer. However, there could be enough data in the next few decades to provide one given that it is at least clear that Jews have sacrificed progressive politics in the short term. Putting these decisions directly in social context, to understand the logic of the choices (the Jewish answers to the “Jewish Ques-

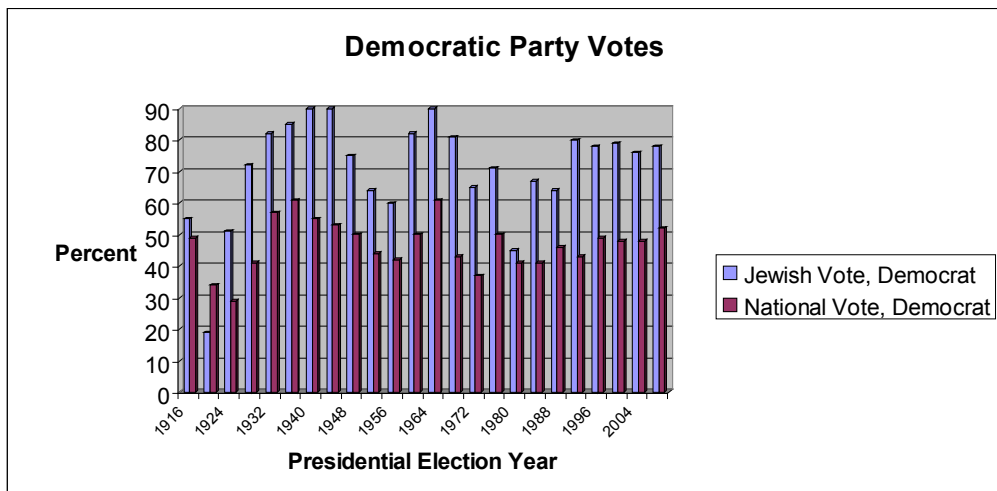
24. In referring to the “culture” of American Jews, it may be better to define the group as “Ashkenazic” (Eastern European émigré) Jews, which describes almost all of the American Jewish population.

25. Marx, 1975: 211.

tion”) and the potential consequences, points the way to measure continuing changes and what they mean.

The evidence that Jews are retaining some cultural difference in the U.S., other than just a religious preference now that they have given up “traditional” or identifying dress, grooming, and language, is in their distinct set of political preferences that reflects a cultural choice rather than simply economics. While many Jews are as wealthy as most American conservative elites, they still do not vote with conservatives. While data above described Jewish voting patterns in the U.S. over much of the past century for Third Party (progressive) candidates in Presidential elections and suggested a trend towards assimilation, Jewish voters have not assimilated. The rest of the same data set, highlighting the Jewish vote for the Democratic Party and comparing it to national voting in the U.S., shows that Jewish voting has also been consistent over time. The Jewish vote for the Democratic Party is higher than that of the general population or they historically break off from the Democratic Party to vote for Progressive candidates who challenge the Party (up until the past 25 years). This pattern has held remarkably constant although there was a small shift in the 2012 election (not shown on the chart) with 69% for the Democratic candidate.

Figure 2. Consistency of Jewish Political Identification with the Democratic Party and Lack of Overall Political Assimilation



While there is a question as to whether the whole “political spectrum” in the U.S. and elsewhere shifts as all minorities assimilate into urban culture and/or assume similar economic position and status as other groups, there is still continued immigration to the U.S. and Western European countries. This is part of an arguably continuing process of cheap labor exploitation or brain drain where Jews continue to form coalitions with new minority entrants and groups who are more easily identifiable as minorities.

Those who survey the specific views of Jews, beyond their electoral choices, also find that Jews remain more progressive on both issues of social justice and political justice/ civil liberties, than the population overall and the Democratic Party. For instance, 70% of Jews rejected the Iraq war as early as 2005²⁶, although they continued to support candidates who voted for it or funded it.

3.1.1. Defining the “Jewish Question”

The “Jewish Question” – the question that Jews as a minority group have always had to ask – is how they would define themselves in relation to the majority group and to its enemies. Anthropologists generally write about identity as not only a set of distinguishing traits of a group but also as a way of setting boundaries and distinguishing a relationship to others (to “the other”). While the standard question about Jews is whether they are “assimilating,” the real human choice is not between becoming one thing or another but about positioning oneself and one’s group between different groups; particularly between those who are defined as “allies” or “friends” and those who become “enemies” or “others.” In the U.S., the question about “assimilating” is not about becoming some inexact and undefined part of the U.S. elite, Christian, culture, but about how a group defines itself in relation to all of the other minorities inside the country (blacks, Native peoples, Latin Americans, Asians, and Middle Easterners) and to those outside the country.

In every country that Jews have lived, they have had to define the traits of the majority culture that they would adopt as their own and others that they would keep, and to think about how this positioned themselves as a group for survival of the group given the potential for future internal strife in the country and future invasions and wars outside of the country. Identity is partly self-defined and groups decide to stress certain traits or symbols not only to reinforce their own systems but to remind themselves of where they differ from other groups and whom their allies should be. For Jews in a Europe that was often divided between Christians and Muslims (the Moors and the Turks) or between West and East (the Slavs or migrating peoples from Asia and the Caucasus), between landed and nomadic peoples, Jews defined themselves in relation to these lines of conflict between the majority peoples, seeking to secure their status by picking winners and losers. Divisions between neighboring countries in conflict were also problematic and required Jews to choose. At times of invasions or repelling of invasions and the rise and fall of empires (invasion and overthrow of the Turks, for example), Jewish survival was dependent on how they were perceived by both sides of the conflict.

Indeed, much of the basis of Jewish identity as “politically progressive” can also be described as part of how Jews defined themselves as a minority people with a small area of resources, seeking to survive in a world of empires; the Babylonians, the Egyptians,

26. Avishai, 2008.

the Romans, the Greeks, up to the Russian and U.S. Empires of our day. The creation of an identity as politically progressive was based on the ideal of a small group able to maintain its sense of differences and to survive the rise and fall of empires around them, in league with other small groups seeking to do the same.

Karl Marx's answer to the question of Jewish identities that he posed in his own writings, was to try to create a new kind of assimilation through homogenization and destruction of all identities. It was an assimilation that was socially progressive but that largely avoided political and legal systematization. It didn't work particularly well to protect Jewish ideals or Jews, themselves. Among those who were purged in the 1930s in a backlash to the failures of this system as it was applied in the Soviet Union were the many Jews in the Communist Party and in the State apparatus who tried to override traditional Russian culture and create a new identity²⁷. Many of the Jews who survived are now in the U.S. and Israel where they have had to ask the "Jewish Question" again to define what their new identity would be and how they would establish new alliances.

Apparently, Jewish progressives in the U.S. have made a trade, agreeing to support U.S. elites and to avoid criticism or standards. That bargain has required accepting the definition of the U.S.'s enemies and sharing the spoils without asking too many questions. It would only be logical that the amount by which progressives have agreed to silence would be in some direct relationship to their benefit (and embarrassment) and/or in direct relationship to their feelings of insecurity (making the value of the benefit seem to be greater). Logically, then, it would seem that if Jewish political progressives have been silent it is because they perceive themselves as increasingly insecure.

3.2. The Trade That Progressive Jews Have Made: Explaining the "Intellectual Dishonesty":

The first part of this paper presented a chart of Jewish "progressive" voting in U.S. progressive elections, showing very strong Third Party progressive votes in 1920 and 1924, then in 1948, then in 1980. While the overall progression looks like a "trend," these three peaks could be explained as something else. It could be that Jewish progressives were acting independently at those three times because they were not yet forced to make a "choice" to support a set of political elites. Between 1928 and 1944, the Jews in the U.S. were faced with a choice of being independent or joining with elites during a time of economic crisis and the European Holocaust. Between 1952 and 1976, they were forced to make alliances during the Cold War. After the Cold War, since 1984, there has been a new choice. One way of understanding the suppression of Jewish political progressives is to look at the "Jewish Question," the fears and choices that Jews faced in the U.S. for self protection during the Cold War, the current "War on Terrorism" (against countries that are largely Muslim) and the deep fears and concerns that might

27. Lempert, 1998.

motivate these choices and that go beyond the standard explanation that it is merely to “protect Israel”. After examining the real historical choices, it is possible to retell the history of Jewish politics and progressive choices through the prism of identity politics and self-protection.

There seems to be a common wisdom in U.S. political analysis based on the fact that Jews have largely defined their activism in relation to Israel and protections for Israel as a homeland. But from an economic and military standpoint, Israel has been much stronger, safer and more secure in the past 30 years than in its first 30 years, and that assessment would largely be true even without the military support that it receives from the U.S.²⁸ If that is so, the real insecurity that Jews in the U.S. perceive, and that has driven them to support elites in the U.S., more likely comes from fears they have in the U.S.

This perspective reverses the view of the role of Israel in the political activity of Jews in the U.S. The politics and activism of Jews in the U.S. is not driven out of concerns for protection of Israel, given that Israel is now largely in a position to protect itself. The choice that U.S. Jews have made is one of supporting U.S. military interests in relation to their sense of their own security, and rationalizing this as the protection of Israel and of all Jews.

In an earlier article, more than a decade ago, on the Cold War²⁹, I drew direct attention to one form of intellectual dishonesty of Jewish intellectuals that began in the 1950s and carried through to the 1980s; the willingness to fictionalize much of 20th century Russian history in order to serve the interests of American elites in the Cold War and to boost their own careers by doing so. Now that the Cold War is over and U.S. elites have defined a new “enemy” and a new “war” (or set of wars) to further their interests, there appears to be another set of deceptions to which many Jews in the U.S. have joined to further their careers. Moreover, the rewards are now greater, earning Jews not only middle class success but also positions high in the political establishment. Nevertheless, it seems that Jews (and other minorities) feel no more secure today in the post-Cold War U.S. than they were during the Cold War, or at least feel that they now have more to protect and are equally vulnerable. The pressures that led Jews to violate their professional integrity in order to boost their position during the Cold War seems to be the same calculus that now drives the politics of progressive Jews, in general.

28. U.S. military aid to Israel is current \$3 billion per year, which is only about 1.5% of the total GDP of some \$200 billion. Sharp, 2008: Israel’s per capita GDP of \$25,000+ ranks it with European countries and among the top fifth of countries in the world. Although Israel relies heavily on the U.S. for its trade – 20% of imports and 40% of exports – this isn’t a subsidy and is roughly equal to Israel’s trade with Asian partners that continues to grow.

29. Lempert, 1998: 457.

3.2.1. The Jewish Question and Progressive Politics During the Cold War

In the 1990s, in work as a young scholar of Russia and the Soviet Union, I noticed how many parallels there were in the history of the Russian and U.S. Empires, including the purges of Jews in both countries at the start of the Cold War, the use of ethnic quotas, and the labeling of those with family histories on the two sides of the Iron Curtain as somehow suspected of being disloyal. In Russia, the quotas worked against those who were called “Cosmopolitan” while in the U.S., the label used in blacklisting was “Un-American” or “Pink” (not pure White, Anglo Saxon, Protestant establishment). Yet, few scholars dared to conduct real social science of comparative “Empires.” Until only a few years ago, the very word “empire” was, itself, taboo in descriptions of the U.S.

During the Cold War, American Jews boosted their careers by turning their anger against Russian and Eastern European peasant cultures that uprooted their families, against the labels like “Marxist” that U.S. elites used for countries outside of the U.S. Empire whose resources and markets were not open to it. Jews were able to show their “loyalty” to American elites, and distanced themselves from Jews like Karl Marx and other Jews or part Jews like Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, by bashing the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe while remaining mostly silent about the U.S. Empire and inequalities. They also accepted the fabrication that there was no real cultural continuity between the Tsarist Russian Empire, which traded with the West and accepted foreign investment, and “Soviet” Russian Empire, or between the “Soviet” Russian Empire and the post-Soviet Russian Empire under most of the same leaders or their relatives, who once again agreed to trade and investment with the West.

As the first U.S. anthropologist in urban Russia, some 25 years ago, I also began to draw the parallels between the economic policies that caused the collapse of the Soviet Russian Empire with those in the contemporary U.S., focusing on a number of choices under Leonid Brezhnev in the 1970s, and the economic policies of de-regulation, reliance on military spending, decline in national investment, widening gaps between elites and masses, which were almost in direct parallel to those of the Reagan Administration that the two leading U.S. political parties have continued since then³⁰.

What I began to note then was that many of the same U.S. Jews who were agreeing to falsify Russian history and social science and to avoid comparisons that would have directly challenged injustices and policy failures in the U.S., were also soon to become involved in the “transition economy” schemes that helped loot the former Soviet Union of its capital and intellectuals at the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. Harvard Jewish economists such as Jeff Sachs and Larry Summers, World Bank President James Wolfensohn, and others were able to join the Jewish intellectuals writing about the Cold

30. Lempert, 1996. In President Obama’s first term, these policies continued under the Democratic Administration, with only occasional hints of some investments in research and development, but little change in military spending, distributional equalities, or citizen oversight of government and powerful non-governmental institutions. This has continued in his second term as of this writing.

War by offering the structural adjustment “solutions” of “shock therapy” to those countries in ways that offered them the same psychological catharsis with career promotion. They could release Jewish anger against the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe while advancing their own careers. By doing so, they avoided any mention of the fact that the solutions that were needed to actually rebuild economies in the collapsing Russian Empire were the same kinds of investments, regulations, and policies in the U.S. Empire. At the time, I referred to it as “Building Democracy with Mirrors,” deflecting attention away from the reality on both sides of the divide³¹.

During the Cold War, many Jews were able to make their careers by making these deals, and many of them appear to believe after a time that the compromises they had made were their own real beliefs. Those who had emigrated from war torn Europe and had learned to shed identities and seek friends were probably acting out of a sense of self-protection (Henry Kissinger and Madelyn Albright among them) while others who were second and third generation immigrants were filling their psychological need for security and belonging in their newly adopted countries. The longer they played the game, the harder it was to see that it was a game and the deeper they all sank into a sense of unreality and detachment from their sense of professionalism or their own sense of self and values.

3.2.2. The “Jewish Question” and Progressive Politics, After the Cold War: Context and Nature of the Trade

What has happened since the end of the Cold War is that the choice (and the source of benefits) has changed. While it was easy before for Jews to turn their anger against Russia and Eastern European countries with the Holocaust fresh in their memories and with the centuries of positive co-existence of peoples silenced in the graves of their ancestors, the calculus of how to rise professionally in the U.S. now required that Jews turn their anger against different enemies; those who held the resources that U.S. elites craved.

Several Jews including Henry Kissinger, the architect of President Nixon’s foreign policy in the late 1960s, with close ties to the Rockefellers, found that they could rise to prominence and position in the U.S. by championing the new goals of the U.S. Empire; advances on oil in countries that are largely Arab and Muslim or, like Richard Holbrooke, on the resources of Asian countries. The founders and early adherents of the “neo-conservative” movement included Jews such as Richard Perle, who supported the U.S. Cold War and then the brain drain of Jewish intellectuals from Eastern bloc countries, and who quickly moved to support for U.S. domination of the Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. It even began to run in families. Irving and William Kristol, Donald and Robert Kagan, and other Jews began to push U.S. militarism in a way that

31. Lempert, 1996.

promoted U.S. elite interests and their own. At the same time, they made the claim that doing so was in the interests of Jews as a whole because it enmeshed Israel in this new web of U.S. imperial interests. While promoting these interests in government, they also found that it was quite lucrative outside of government, at the head of law firms or consulting companies on investment risk. Former Assistant Secretary of State, later managing director of Lehman Brothers, Richard Holbrooke, typifies how support for U.S. militarism could also be part of careers that would then open up the revolving door to great wealth in work for investment banks that profited from the pillaging of economies that fell to U.S. power and to the application of similar economic rules in the U.S.

In short, now that the Cold War is over, Jews demonstrate their “loyalty” to the U.S. oil companies and consumption. They do so by supporting and promoting invasions of Arab countries that have oil, and by agreeing to the militarization of Israel as a country with a racist policy against Muslim Arabs, regardless of whether or not it makes sense in the history of Jewish-Arab relations or in the future of the Middle East.

While it is clear how a few Jews have been able to make their careers by picking the winning horse in competition among Empires and by writing the history or rationalization for those acts, the question is why Jewish progressives (and most U.S. Jews today) have also agreed to participate in these deceptions given that Jews have increasing security in the U.S. in general. Although it could be that Jews have changed and are no longer as educated or critical as they may have been at other times in the past (something that seems unlikely given that Jews have risen precisely because they are educated professionals), that argument starts with an assumption that there is no real benefit – even short term – for Jews for going along with what appears to be a contradiction. It makes more sense to start by looking for some explicit benefit or interest, even if it is based on fear, to rationally explain this behavior today, now that the Cold War is over. What are ordinary Jews getting, what are they giving up, and why do they feel that they need to make this bargain?

The trade that politically progressive Jews and other minorities have made in the U.S. is a simple one. It appears to be the same trade that has enabled some Western economic systems to maintain legitimacy despite the perpetuation of structural injustices of poverty and hierarchy. A few positions are opened at the top of the system – in economic and political power -- in a kind of “lottery” where no one is excluded simply on the basis of ethnicity. At the same time, there is one specific difference that seems to have muted the political progressives; the openness of political positions and not just economic ones, well beyond simple “token” representation.

The two sides of the bargain are as follows.

On the one hand, Jews agree to support the overall international agenda of U.S. hegemony and the creation of enemies to fit elite desires for resources and markets. In the past, that enemy was defined by the Cold War; now it is largely defined by oil and divisions between the Christian and Muslim worlds that reflect those resource divisions. On the other, minorities also agree to support the financial de-regulation that has pro-

moted economic gains from (in many ways, looting, of) weak countries. They agree not to push for standards or enforcement of laws or building of new systems.

What they get in return is a respite from internal hegemony and targeting within the U.S. that characterized the country before its rise to the status of a global power. They get the positions in major institutions – government, universities, the media – that were previously closed to them and that were used directly against them. At the same time, a number of them are able to take the system’s riches as its equal; not simply as its professional servants on a second tier (lawyers, engineers, civil servants, doctors) as before. In fact, it may be that all of them are partly sharing in the riches and are entwined in them because their very positions of status as lawyers, engineers, civil servants, and even doctors, is fueled by the resources and spending of the system, and they are investing their gains back into that system. This, itself, is the standard process of assimilation. Groups that rise in the system increasingly feel the need to defend that system and give up their identity in the process.

There is nothing new about this overall approach to incorporating minorities who call for social and political justice. The bargain in the U.S. is an example of the same system in which minorities were able to rise in Germany prior to the Nazis, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire prior to its collapse, and slowly in the Russian Empire before its collapse. However, there is one significant difference. In all of those cases, minorities were able to attain economic power but never had major positions of political leadership. Now, the bargain is including visible political positions that reflect the economic status. At the same time, that power is almost entirely symbolic, creating the illusion of change and protection but without any real progressive agenda behind it (and often the very opposite) that would protect the system, itself, the ideal of “rights” and protections, and the cultural protections.

Nevertheless, this still does not answer the key question: If Jews are richer and more secure, why are they not even more forceful in promoting their progressive ideals that were central to their identity? What would they really lose or fear that they could lose? To answer the question requires looking deeper at Jewish motivations and at the idea of whether a culture that is really “progressive” can continue. Before getting there, it is important to see how deep this transformation has gone and to see what roots it (its visible structure, described more fully in the rest of this subsection), and then at its deeper structure and the causes of these changes, including deep-seated fears (in the next subsection).

The cause and effect of this change in Jewish political behaviors since the end of the Cold War is not entirely clear on its surface and probably has occurred through both “push” (demand for positions and representation in the system) and “pull” (recognition by elites that minorities could be co-opted to join the system through representation and would not effectively change anything) but is not essential to seeing the phenomenon. The impact and depth of this change can be seen not only in the numbers of Jews who have risen into the political establishment – an effect that is beyond tokenism and looks

more like the “mining” of the political system by elites, with minority representatives – but also the transformation of Jewish political “progress” into actual regressive policy.

3.3. Beyond Tokenism: Elite Mining of the Political System with Ethnicity in Ways that Co-Opt Progressives on the Basis of their Ethnic Affiliations

In the U.S. and elsewhere, “tokenism” has long been an approach taken by majority groups to promote their interests and to appear to be listening to disadvantaged or under-represented groups in ways that stall or thwart pressures for actual systemic change. Sometimes progressives have achieved important positions only to find themselves isolated as minorities in organizations or in government where they are represented but still have no real power. In recent years, however, the naming of minorities to high positions has increased whereas “establishment” opposition to their selection has decreased, particularly as prominent members of minority groups have offered to serve in roles protecting the establishment. The discourse among minority group members has long been that the representation of these groups is a sign of “protection” or even of “advancement” of the interests of these groups into a mainstream agenda. Yet, in recent years, the sheer numbers of minorities who have offered their services in support of non-progressive agendas has apparently created such cognitive dissonance that many political progressives themselves now describe this advance as evidence of their progressive agenda being fulfilled. The means has somehow now become the ends.

The way that the system is increasingly working is that Jews and other minorities are in the very positions that are viewed or presented as those where the progressive interests of the disadvantaged group can best be protected if they are ultimately threatened, even although the systems, themselves, and the people in those positions may actually be supporting policies that are regressive; in reverse of political and social progress.

The answer to Klein’s question about why progressives are silent about President Clinton’s economic team that has been reconstituted in personnel and spirit in President Obama’s administration, and why progressives were also “dishonest” in refraining from criticism of Clinton’s policies and even his personal behavior, is an example of this substitution of means for ends. If you insert the “J” word and ask why “Jewish” political progressives might have muted their voices against regressive or illegal actions by Jews and their colleagues, the question itself becomes rhetorical after adding a few simple statistics. Nearly half of Clinton’s second cabinet was Jewish. Both of his Supreme Court appointees were Jewish. The Presidents of the World Bank and the Federal Reserve during his tenure were Jewish. Jews were the architects of his globalization policy as well as his international military policy. None of these policies were “progressive” but many were even described in terms of Jewish values and protection in ways that sought to mute Jewish criticisms, including Clinton’s violation of international treaties to bomb the Serbians. When Jews rushed to Clinton’s defense on charges of perjury,

many were willing to overlook that he was perjuring himself over sexual relations with a Jewish woman in his office³².

When George W. Bush’s administration pushed forward with the national security state to erode civil liberties, the Head of Homeland Security was Michael Chertoff, a Jew from a family of rabbis and Talmudic scholars who seemingly offered the assurance to Jews that they would at least be temporarily protected. Senator Diane (Goldman) Feinstein’s rise on the Senate Intelligence Committee similarly muted concerns that the Democratic Party was not sensitive to torture and violations of international law; at least temporarily not against Jews, and that their spouses and family could also financially benefit from military contracts. The recent list has also included the appointment of Judge Laurence Silberman, to co-chair, and Yale’s first Jewish President Rick Levin as a member of, the Robb-Silberman Commission – the Iraq Intelligence Commission to investigate the U.S. invasion of Iraq and weapons of mass destruction. Appointments and individual positions like these have served as mines or “booby traps” to defuse progressive calls for structural advance because they are seemingly vetted by high ranking Jews who are assumed to offer protections of the interests of those minorities.

During the 2008 Presidential campaign while Jews originally rallied around New York’s Senator Hillary Clinton, Obama’s selection of Jews on his team was also made clear in signals through the national media as a notice to progressives that their interests would be protected even if Obama’s real stands on progressive issues were unclear (or regressive). Depending on how one defines it, some 30-40% of Obama’s inner circle around the time of his election consisted of Jews³³. Although Obama did not name Jews to his initial cabinet, his campaign manager and chief consultant, and his Chief of Staff were both Jews, as was Vice President Biden’s Chief of Staff³⁴.

A few weeks before the 2008 Presidential election, a number of prominent political progressive intellectuals who are Jewish – Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Ira Chernus, Norman Solomon among them – recommended to other progressives that they support Democratic Party rather than any of the progressive candidates; arguing that the Democratic Party candidates might at least be willing to “listen” and might be convinced to

32. The key cabinet members in Clinton’s second cabinet, out of 12 total cabinet members, include Albright (born Jewish but not practicing), Rubin and Summers at Treasury, William Cohen (half Jewish) at Defense, Mickey Cantor at the Commerce Department (replacing Ron Brown, of African American descent), and Dan Glickman at Agriculture. Though both of his Supreme Court picks were Jews, the percentage among other federal and appeals court judges appears closer to the actual percentage of Jews among prominent lawyers.

33. Of 30 people identified by the *New Republic* in November 2008 as the most important advisors or allies in the Obama Presidency, including advisors, fundraisers, and political figures, it is possible to identify at least 9 of 25 of them as Jews and two others as of Jewish ancestry. The Jews are David Axelrod, Rahm Emmanuel, Larry Summers, Penny Pritzker, as well as Austan Gulsbee, Joel Benenson, Andy Stern, Julius Genachowski, and Jason Furmin. James Steinberg is possibly of Jewish ancestry (not confirmed). (Four others are not identifiable by ancestry: Peter Rouse, Greg Craig, Phil Griffin and David Plouffe.) Two others: John Kerry and Nicolas Sarkozy (the French leader, who is included as an influential ally) are part Jewish. Note that there could be a selection bias in the story since the author is likely Jewish and might overly weight Jews as influential. Scheiber, 2008: 14. If you search the web, you can also find various blogs describing Obama as the “first Jewish President.”

34. David Axelrod, Rahm Emmanuel and Ron Klain.

follow some progressive ideas. Their discourse largely followed the terms of identity politics, noting candidate and advisors' racial and ethnic background as part of the belief in that openness³⁵.

This change is not limited to high political positions and is reflected elsewhere in society. It began in the University system roughly two decades ago, with affirmative action policies to promote the rise of minorities and women. Yet, what is striking about these changes is how they have had little if any impact at all on making the university structures or the teaching methods more politically progressive. The faces of professors has changed and textbooks may have been replaced but the system remains as undemocratic in terms of student and community responsiveness and accountability as it was before, if not more regressive³⁶. Rather than transforming disciplines internally to turn economics, law and other key disciplines into subjects that are responsive to communities and minorities, the disciplines themselves have been fractured and new interest group disciplines have developed to appeal to various constituent groups such as racial and sexual minorities and women. There is also some anecdotal evidence that university positions in some disciplines that were once held by politically progressive Jewish men have now been filled with social progressives who are visibly members of racial minority groups or who are women. There is also some evidence –despite being little studied – that this new identity politics has been part of a transformation of the social sciences into representational journalism, eliminating the goal of an objective social science, promoting human progress on understanding of human behavior and solving human problems³⁷.

3.4. How Progressives Have Even Reversed Progressivism in Making this Bargain

What potentially makes the “intellectual dishonesty” of Jewish political progressives even more disturbing to those who believe in the goal of human progress is the fact that the decision to support a short-term calculus based on ethnic or identity politics threatens to undermine the credibility of even the idea of political progressivism, if it has not already done so. That makes progressives' short-term trade one that discredits the very individuals who previously identified as political progressives, and requires others who are not tainted by such contradictions but who have no direct link to the tradition, to take their place.

Among the key achievements of political progressives in the 20th century was the movement to create and codify international legal principles in ways that sought to transcend politics. The ideals of creating genocide and humanitarian laws and protections

35. These articles and debates appeared on many different internet sites such as “Common Dreams.”

36. Lempert et al., 1996.

37. Duncan, 2013: 61-87.

as well as empirical and objective measurements of fair processes largely advanced on previous concepts of “contract” and natural rights. The momentum of the Great Depression and two World Wars gave an impetus and legitimacy to this attempt to move civilization forward through systems for political progress.

There was a belief in the 20th century that civilization was advancing through law and education. One of the principles at the heart of this view was the idea established by the Nuremberg tribunals that imperialism and genocide could be stopped by establishing individual liability up and down the chain of command to citizens at all levels. In many national legislatures, including the U.S., a sign of advance was not only the amount of education of members but their familiarity with these laws and legal principles.

What gave progressives momentum and leverage was the ability to argue that any kind of support for violations of these legal principles was a sign of voiding of those principles and regression for human civilization. The idea of individual responsibility for collective action meant that legislators and citizens would not only be politically responsible and subject to removal but would also be legally accountable and responsible.

In a country where a political leader might act to violate international laws by killing innocent civilians or disrupting their cultures to steal their resources or to avenge a family vendetta or for reasons of religious or racial hatred; or were to act in a self-interested or reckless way to jeopardize human rights; or would seek to justify torture; or were to use political power to engage in criminal enterprises favoring cronies and disrupting international systems using public funds, any legislator or citizen knowingly supporting those activities would be guilty of aiding and abetting these crimes under principles of law. Those not using their power to seek removal of those officials could also be legally accountable.

The personal belief or “side” that one supported was no longer a relevant defense to such actions. It might “explain” the actions but it would not excuse liability for them. The only excuse could be one of self-protection for an immediate and recognizable threat, not just a vague feeling of unease or some other sensitivity. The line was very clearly drawn. It had to be clearly drawn in order to push individuals and societies further forward and to prevent them from slipping backward.

Overall, the disintegration of rule of law in the West is partly the unwillingness of progressive (and other) Jews to hold themselves to the same standards that an independent system of law would require to hold others accountable. The intellectual dishonesty is that Jews cannot enforce or advocate for adherence to rules when members of their “tribe” have broken the same rules for protecting “their” financial and military interests. This hypocrisy is destructive both of the Jewish role and of rule of law principles in general. The undermining of credibility with contradictory actions also weakens the very system of enforcement. That marks an end to human progress.

3.4.1. *Deeper Reasons Why Jews Have Made the Trade and Agreed to Follow the Few Co-Opted Elites*

Given the ramifications of this bargain for Jewish progressives, for human progress, and for Jewish culture and identity, the question is either what has made this trade seem to be of such apparent importance or what has made continuation of a Jewish politically progressive struggle seem to be pointless at this time in the history of the U.S. and of the world? After considering different hypotheses, the one that seems to better explain a re-emergence of conscious (and probably more sub-conscious) fear among Jews who stand out, is the fact that there is an important need for Jews in the U.S. (and Western Europe) to demonstrate that they are “not Middle Eastern,” “not Arab”, and “not Muslim” in order to protect themselves from facing the increasing and real discrimination that members of these groups now face in the West due to the new struggles over resources in the Arab and Muslim world.

On its face, there were no visible threats to Jews in the U.S. or in the world at the end of the Cold War that were not seen as due to expanded U.S. militarism or to Jewish-Palestinian relations. The quotas that kept Jews out of top universities had already ended in the 1970s³⁸ and the discrimination that led many Jews to undergo cosmetic surgery in order to blend in to American society (informally referred to as “de-Yiddification”) declined after that time. Jews in the U.S. who are under 35 probably do not have direct experience with anti-Semitism in the U.S. Most had already learned the lesson of shaving their beards and long hair so as not to look like Jews who had been turned into enemies (Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and others) and to find other ways to dissociate Jews who could have been seen as historic enemies of the U.S. or Western countries from any link to contemporary Jews.

The real threat that Jews may face today is being identified with the new “enemy” that has been defined by all the leading powers in the world since at least the late 1970s and then intensified in 2001, not only in the U.S. and Western Europe but also in Russia (in its attacks on Chechnya) and in some Asian and African countries. In the past, Jews were literally cutting off their noses (“fixing” them) to spite their Middle Eastern faces and to blend in. Now, that separation is more of a political one. Jews do not want to be mistaken for Muslims or Arabs in the West. It is this fear of new discrimination and of the arbitrariness of Western military and police power that has apparently triggered a heightened anxiety and urgency among Jewish progressives of their need to conform, in much the same way as Jews were terrified into disavowing their Russian and Eastern European origins during the Cold War.

A personal experience highlighted this for me in an African country in April of 2002 where I was working for the United Nations. I walked past a U.S. Information Services library on a Saturday and asked the guard to tell me the opening hours. Within a few

38. According to Karp & Oren, these hidden quotas formally existed at Yale until 1974. Karp - Oren, 1986.

seconds, I was held at gunpoint, thrown into the back of a police van and taken to a local police station where I was interrogated for almost an hour. The reason I was held, despite presenting my passport and even a business card identifying me as a previous U.S. Fulbright Professor was because I “didn’t look like most other Americans” who were “taller,” heavier, and whiter. I looked as if I might be part Middle Eastern or Caucasus descent as Jews (and many eastern “Caucasians”) are. That put me on the list of physical types to be treated with suspicion around any U.S. office, even a library. This was not the only time that I have been confused with Arabs or Muslims around the world and it was an awakening to the prejudices and suspicions that these groups feel and some of the harassment that they face now in the world³⁹.

The reasons that are usually given to explain why Jewish and other political progressives have been wise to abandon progressive politics in political campaigns are based on a number of assumptions that sound plausible as “rational” explanations but they do not seem to have the same explanatory power of one based on fear, particularly given the kinds of behaviors that seem “intellectually dishonest” or contradictory. The almost extreme distancing of some Jewish political progressives from others who seemingly hold their agenda, the unwillingness to bring them into coalitions (Ralph Nader, in particular, whom they had previously lionized in the 1960s) and the unwillingness to apply standards against members of minority groups, suggests that identity politics and fears of discrimination are the strongest motivations.

3.5. Testing and Discarding Alternative Explanations, Including “Voodoo Politics” for Why Jews Have Abandoned Progressive Politics

Among the different explanations that progressives in the U.S. offer for why they have increasingly supported the least worst of non-progressive major party candidates, even in political primaries, and why they have backed off of pressures for action on specific issues that otherwise define their agenda once their candidates are elected to office, are that: the least worst candidates will be receptive to undefined “pressures” or good nature to support progressive agendas, that the worst candidates will be so intractable that progressive agendas will be set back further, that politics is so corrupted and political figures so powerless that voting and political activities only represents a choice on one or two dimensions of civil liberties and protections (such as abortion rights for women), or that non-progressive candidates who are minorities or who choose them will break a glass ceiling that will pave the way for a progressive agenda in an undefined future. Each of these issues makes sense on its face but largely reverses arguments that political progressives used in the past about how their integrity and steadfastness

39. In Southeast Asia, people who see me as a “Western” man with a beard and Jewish features often said that their first identification of me was a reminder of Osama Bin Laden; the stereotypical image of someone with Middle Eastern features and a beard as distinguished from the clean shaven Western European face and physique.

were essential and successful in forcing their agendas to be included first, before any compromises or actions on faith. Moreover, it offers no explanatory reasoning of why the past strategy needed to be abandoned and how something else would actually work.

The idea offered by Jewish progressives that support for “lesser of the two evils” positions would effectively create the pressures and impetus for progress through an apparent willingness to bargain, appears to be the modern corollary of the Reagan era mantra of “trickle down economics.” That approach was deemed “voodoo economics” and can equally well be labeled as “voodoo politics.” In fact, the evidence of such a strategy over the past generation seems to be that compromise by progressives is taken for weakness and that it reverses rather than promotes progress. The idea of speaking softly is also out of step with the Jewish progressive tradition of speaking truth to power and seeking to win the higher moral ground as a way to convince others and motivate action on an ideal of human progress.

It is difficult to prove that either the Jewish vote for political progressives or other steadfast progressive movements have actually been the triggers for reform, but it seems even harder to prove the opposite. The data on Jewish voting above demonstrated that Jews responded to the cyclical rhythms of U.S. politics and political scientists have long sought to link political shifts (and progress) to these rhythms⁴⁰. In fact, it is difficult to claim that Jewish progressive votes for progressive candidates were either the trigger or part of the pressure for political “realignments” or overall governmental policy shifts⁴¹. In 1948, for instance, the Jewish vote for Henry Wallace may have been part of trying to stop the shift towards the Cold War and purges. Did Jews help moderate the shift or did they create an opportunity to be scapegoated? Time series data, itself, does not offer a conclusive answer. If critical elections or policy shifts are actually the result of lags in political and economic planning that fail to catch up with population demands (and unemployment or underemployment of youth), one might not even expect to find greater activism among Jewish progressives in these specific elections unless Jews were both part of the unemployed and had an agenda with specific solutions⁴². The argument is inconclusive.

A similar justification is that the “lesser of the evils” offers a way for minorities to break through the final barriers of glass ceilings and to create a more level playing field. But this argument also seems to be illogical since it substitutes identity characteristics for political views and ultimately splits or co-opts and dilutes progressive movements. The experience with “tokens” suggests that it does not itself lead to progress. More likely, this argument is a rationalization for certain groups assimilating and trying to save face when they do so.

40. Elazar, 1978.

41. Burnham, 1955: 3-18.

42. Lempert, 1987.

The more interesting argument that also seems contradictory is that political candidates have little real power and that progressives should support them to influence one or two significant rights. In recent elections in the U.S., the argument has been that politicians are largely irrelevant, that an “establishment” holds power and progressives or disadvantaged groups cannot influence it. The best that they can do is to win a few concessions on a limited number of progressive issues like social welfare and abortion/women’s rights. The argument that seems to be used to justify this choice has largely been that candidates will choose “Supreme Court” justices who will have long term impact on social issues. What makes this argument confounding is that usually the same people who make it also make contradictory arguments that the choice of the lesser evils is also important for other major decisions and that the power of politicians is so great that even shades of difference have major implications. Moreover, the choices of Supreme Court members in the U.S. have largely been made with identity characteristics in mind; with recent choices including two Jews (by the Democratic Party), two women (one from each major party) and a Black (from the Republicans). If anything, the focus on Supreme Court nominations tends to reinforce the idea that the appeal is really towards identity and “protections” to a group (women or minorities) more than towards ideals of progress.

These explanations also do not elucidate several other phenomena in U.S. politics in recent years. Why, for example, have both Jews and Blacks been so antagonistic in recent years to the progressive candidates to the extent that they have not sought any real accommodation of them and have preferred to seek to scapegoat rather than build bridges? There seems to have been much less antagonism to progressives for support of other progressive candidates, including John Anderson, even though the Democratic Party was also adversely affected in 1980. What would explain outbursts by Congress’ Black Caucus against Ralph Nader who was effectively advocating their views and seeking to push the Democratic Party to incorporate rather than to discard them?

With none of the alternative explanations serving to describe behavior of progressives and Jews, the way to see how well the identity politics explanation fits is to substitute for it in the retelling of recent political history and to see how well it actually fits that history. Moreover, the history can be projected into the future, allowing for further confirmation and testing of other related hypotheses or for refining it, if the current rise of the Jewish political candidate, Senator Bernie Sanders, at the time of writing of this article, demonstrates any kind of shift.

3.5.1. Retelling Recent U.S. Political History of Jews and Jewish Progressives from the Perspective of Identity Politics

The simple explanation of human choices may be the best explanation, and that seems to be the case for describing Jewish political behavior in the past several generations. Members of a minority group who fear being victims of attacks and who have

little real power against the attacker, or believe that they are weak, would appear to be making a rational choice (at least in the short run) to try to find a way to ally with the attacking group and to distance themselves from other potential victims. For Jews in the 1950s and through the Cold War, the safest place to be once it became clear that the elites would attack those affiliated with rights movements in Russia and Eastern Europe was to distance oneself from them and from one's heritage in those countries and to seek protectors in positions of power. In the 1970s and intensifying in the past decade, when the new enemy became Muslims and Middle Easterners who opposed U.S. exploitation of their resources, the safest place to be was to distance oneself from one's heritage in those countries and to assure that one had protectors in positions of power. In contemporary U.S. and European politics, the fear and need for distancing applies equally well to Jews, given their Middle Eastern origins, and to those of African descent, given the influence of the Muslim world there. The way to test it is to examine the political history again while introducing this variable and to see how well it does.

An earlier assumption in this article is that the strong Jewish vote for Henry Wallace's Progressive Party in 1948 represented an outpouring of Jewish political progressive traditions in an effort to move civil rights in the U.S. and international law forward after World War II and to head off movements towards a Cold War. But an alternate – or complementary – explanation is that this vote was also one based on identity politics and self-protection. It is possible that many Jews were voting against the Cold War in an effort to rebuild ties with their relatives (or at least their heritage) in Eastern Europe. Although Israel was also granted independence in 1948, many Jews were still living in Russia, Ukraine, Hungary and other countries of the Eastern bloc. It is possible that there was a hope that the U.S. alliance with the Soviet Union against the Nazis and the joint effort of Jews in the Soviet Union against the Nazis could have led to improvements for Jews in those countries. Many Jews in Hungary and Yugoslavia were prominent in government positions immediately after World War II, although they did not draw attention to their Jewish heritage. In fact, discrimination against Jews on both sides of the Iron Curtain began to intensify from 1948 onwards, as the Cold War intensified and Jews were suspected to have alliances with each other that crossed over the lines⁴³.

43. While the internal killings in the Soviet Russian Empire in the 1930s were disproportionately focused on non-Russian minorities including Jews, in what I have described in my works on Russia as a "Russian nationalist backlash" and a demographic crisis rather than a "Stalinist" or "Communist" action, the specific targeting of Jews did not really begin until the Cold War. There are no estimates of how many Jews were killed in the Soviet Russian Empire under Stalin of the 5 million or so who may have been in the country in the 1920s, since that would also require estimates of the Jewish peasant population in Ukraine who died in the 1930s famine (the "war against the peasants") as well as lists of Party members. Records are confusing since the Nazis liquidated 2 million Jews in Ukraine, the Balkans, and Belorus and Leningrad was under siege, with these earlier deaths being hard to distinguish. The totals could run into the hundreds of thousands but are unlikely to be more than 20%; a multiple of the 7% (2 million in purges and 8 million in famines of a 1926 population of nearly 150 million) of the overall population of the Soviet Union that may have died in the 1930s.. See Lempert, 1998.

The McCarthy era purges in the U.S. worked on guilt by association, not on evidence of any wrongdoing, and this also reinforced the idea that protection was not a matter of legality but one of networks. Minority groups learned the lesson in the 1950s, including many Jews whose careers suffered by blacklisting and the determination that they were “Un-American.” Most Jews did not follow McCarthy’s aide, Roy Cohn, who became a staunch anti-Communist, and many of them disputed Jewish Judge Irving Kaufman’s imposition of the death penalty in the famous espionage trial against Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in 1951, but they also separated themselves from those who were under attack and were selectively silent.

While many Jews were split in the late 1960s and 1970s over support for Richard Nixon given that Henry Kissinger had helped engineer a policy that would maintain support for Israel and for emigration of Soviet and Eastern European Jews, there was still a strong Jewish progressive movement. Moreover, the ideal of having a half-Jewish President named Goldwater (Goldwasser) in 1964 had almost no appeal at the time for Jews given that the opposing candidate, incumbent President Lyndon Johnson, had signed two major Civil Rights bills and was spearheading the campaign for social justice in the “War on Poverty.” In the Kennedy Administration, that Johnson had assumed after Kennedy’s death, two of the ten original cabinet members were Jews and one of two Supreme Court appointees were Jewish⁴⁴.

By the 1970s, Jewish political progressives had become emboldened and major party candidates in the U.S. were incorporating ideas for political progress as well as social progress in their agendas. What led to the changes since the 1980s and fears among minorities in the U.S.? The rise of Islamic fundamentalist liberation movements promoting control of local resources and social justice for peoples in the regions of the Middle East to Central Asia and the rapid condemnation and scapegoating of these movements as terrorism by U.S. and Western European elites seem to have created this fear. 1979 was the year of the Iranian revolution – the “Islamic Revolution” – and the capture of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by an indigenous Muslim populist movement against Western colonialism.

The transition in 1980 from Jimmy Carter’s Presidency was one that could have created fear among Jews and other minorities who did not demonstrate support for the ruling elites. In Carter’s cabinet there were always at least three Jews (out of a total of 12, later 13 members). In Ronald Reagan’s there was only one, a converted Jew, and of five Supreme Court appointees there was only one minority (Jewish) and his nomination was withdrawn⁴⁵. The newly emerging enemy that the U.S. and the West were identifying as the Soviet Union was collapsing was the Islamic world.

44. Arthur Goldberg, the Labor Secretary, was appointed to the Supreme Court. Abe Ribicoff was Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

45. In the Reagan Cabinet, Casper Weinberger, who was an Episcopalian of Jewish descent, was Defense secretary. Douglas Ginsburg was the Supreme Court appointee. The Carter Cabinet was expanded when the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was split. Jewish appointees during the Carter years included Harold Brown (Defense), W.

The emergence of anti-colonial movements in the Middle East raised new fears for Jews (and Blacks), unlike the anti-colonial movements in much of Asia. Jews and Blacks could voice their support for anti-colonialism in countries of Asia where the U.S. had no real thirst for resources, but the rise of the oil producing and exporting countries and the power that they could exert on oil prices and supplies made support for their autonomy or for social justice movements appear “anti-American”.

There were reasons why Jews felt the need to distance themselves as far as possible from the Islamic Revolution. The way historians write that history now suggests that these nationalist and populist revolutions were a threat to Israel and to Jews, even though one of the first things that the new Iranian government sought to do was to assure Jews in the country of religious freedom and security. In fact, the cause and effect are likely to be reversed. It is because the very history of Jews in the region, the very basis of Jewish progressive ideals, and even the independence of Israel from colonial powers all echoed the actions that the Islamic Revolution had taken in the very region where Jewish history was born⁴⁶. It was an uprising by the ancient Persians (forerunners of modern Iran) in 537 B.C.E. whose struggle actually liberated the Jews from imperial domination.

The very stories on which a politically progressive Jewish identity is founded in the Middle East are those that dangerously echo the Islamic Revolution and that could also make the loyalty of Jews living in contemporary Western empires, suspect, again. The history of Jewish survival is one of terrorist tactics in the struggle against empire and solidarity, achieved through religious fundamentalist appeals. The three major holiday festivals, commemorating key events in Jewish history and political ideals are Passover, Hannukah and Purim. The first two depict a fundamental struggle against empire and a military to achieve independence, while the third describes strategy in the palace of an empire where Jews were a minority. The story of Moses and the Passover, told in the Old Testament as the “Exodus” from Pharaonic Egypt, before 1,200 B.C.E., is that of a Jewish rebellion under Moses, accompanied by the “killing of the first born” Egyptian sons in each household, with the sparing of Jewish households whose doorways were pre-marked in lamb’s blood. That of Hannukah is a fundamentalist revolt against the Selucid Greek monarchy of Syria in 165 B.C.E. Purim tells the story of how Jews living in Babylonia under a Persian King, Xerxes the Great, were spared from destruction in the late 4th century B.C.E. when a Jewish consort, “Ester,” and her uncle gained position in the king’s court and turned him against Jews’ enemies.

The clear contrast to these Jewish stories is that of Jesus, whom Christians have taken as their symbol of how minorities in an empire are supposed to behave, with direct

Michael Blumenthal (Treasury), James Schlesinger (Energy), Neil Goldschmidt (Transportation), and Philip Klutznick (Commerce).

46. Abraham, the father of the Jews, is said to have been born in Ur, a Mesopotamian City that is now in Iraq. Though Jews left Iraq, they were brought back to Babylonia some 2,600 years ago until they were freed by the Persians under Cyrus the Great.

implication for Jews. The historical figure of Jesus is a Jewish pacifist whose strategies of non-violent resistance against the Roman Empire marked the destruction of Israel and the 2,000 year Diaspora of the Jews. While the Passover rituals reinforce elements of law and fairness, as well as the recognition of the suffering of one’s enemies, Jewish traditions do not honor the strategies of those Jews who failed in standing up to empires.

The reinforcement of the traditions that Jews herald in opposing empire is the struggle for retaking the land of Israel from the British and freeing it from colonial rule as an independent “Jewish” state. Not only was Israeli independence won through terrorist acts against the British and not only did the terrorists assume leadership positions in the new government (Menachim Begin and Yitzhak Shamir among them), but these acts also became a symbol for how to successfully wage an independence struggle against European powers. More than 50 years later, Vietnamese tell stories about how they modeled many of their terrorist actions against the French on Israeli tactics and how they saw Israeli independence as a model of achieving colonial liberation⁴⁷.

As the Cold War ended, the Islamic Revolution continued to be demonized in America and resources that had previously been under the influence of the Soviet Russian Empire now were seen as up for grabs. Both major political parties in the U.S. shifted to an agenda of U.S. control over the Middle East. The agenda was promoted by prominent Jews demonstrating their support for the U.S. Empire through their militarism against Islamic countries as well as their interests in stripping the declining Soviet Russian Empire and Eastern Europe of whatever resources, intellectuals, and other assets could be taken. The ideals of “progress” in the U.S. almost entirely disappeared, to be replaced with agendas of globalization and control by the remaining super power.

I have made the case above, and in my earlier article more than a decade ago on why the prominent Jews in the Clinton Administration had underlying psychological reasons for selling out a progressive agenda and for supporting the stripping of the economies of the Eastern bloc, the deregulation and destruction of rule of law in the U.S. that led the U.S. economy to ruin, and the illegal use of U.S. power against Serbia. Because of the insecurity of Jews in the U.S. at the time, Jewish progressives agreed to these destructive policies and agreed to silence in order to protect their own. Jews in the establishment did not want to confront each other to deal directly with these fears or inconsistencies or to consider the consequences. That situation has continued.

What can be added to that story is the similar hypocrisy among progressives (and almost all lawyers) in confronting President Clinton over not only violations of international law and domestic law then and now, but his perjured testimony that became the subject of his impeachment. The best way to protect rule of law is to prosecute the guilty and go on with leaders who have cleaner records. While it is arguable whether or not Vice President Al Gore’s policies were different from those of President Clinton, he was not directly tied to criminal violations. Yet, most “progressives” opposed Clinton’s

47. Personal communications to author during field work in Southeast Asia between 1998 and 2006.

removal for impeachment or any subsequent prosecutions. The Clinton finances and actions were given a seal of approval as Hillary Clinton was approved for Secretary of State and now, again, at the time of this article, as she runs again for President. Although it is not polite to say or admit it, Jews have also tended to excuse Bill Clinton for his perjury over extra-marital affairs, and it is likely because one of his consorts, Monica Lewinsky, was a Jewish woman. I have noted above, how one of the most well-known stories that Jews recall each year on the Purim holiday is how a Jewish consort of the Persian King, Xerxes the Great, was the means to protecting Jewish interests in the Babylonian Empire. The story of “Queen Ester” is one that resonates in the tale of Monica Lewinsky, because a President’s passion for a Jewish woman suggests that he will also be a protector of other Jews (more recently, the Clintons’ daughter, Chelsea, married a Jewish man).

The combination of the events of the “stolen” Presidential election of 2000 and of the “terrorist attacks” of September 11, 2001, has now achieved mythical status in U.S. political history. The myth that is told by the elites of the Democratic Party, that apparently won the election but lost in the courts (or decided for reasons that have not been made fully clear to give up its legal challenges) and the media, is that the two Presidential candidates would have been radically different. In fact, Al Gore’s Vice Presidential nominee, Joe Lieberman, the first Jewish candidate for Vice President of a major Party, was a strong advocate for the wars and curtailing of civil liberties of the Bush Administration. Democrats in the Congress overwhelmingly supported every Bush administration request for funds, for new legal authority, for approval of Cabinet appointments, and for the economic policies that widened deficits and led to (or subsidized) the financial crisis and questionable public spending choices. Arguments that Gore would have withstood these pressures do not stand up, given his unwillingness to engage in a lengthy process challenging the election results. The only real differences attributed to Gore was his interest in the environment, but this was not manifest in any pledges by Gore or by his party to disengage the U.S. military from activities in the Middle East or Central Asia to gain control over non-renewable resources for continued burning of fossil fuels. Nor was the idea of “pre-emptive” warfare or violation of international law something new to the Bush Administration. By bombing Serbia, the Clinton Administration promoted a policy for unilateral action in pre-emptive war that Clinton’s Vice President, Gore, did not disavow. Most statements about the Clinton Administration on their approach to “terrorism” continue to be a battle over who was tougher over Muslim political movements.

If the story of 2000 and 2001 is retold from the perspective of Jews’ deepest fears and why Jewish political progressives would give up their agenda, for protection, it is this. What was really lost in the 2000 election was the chance for the “first Jewish Vice President” (Joe Lieberman) as a symbol that U.S. military power would protect Jews. What was “lost” in that election was not a policy agenda, but the incorporation of more Jews in prominent places, managing that power.

With both of the major political parties in the U.S. committed to what they call the “global war on terror” and on anyone who can be linked to “supporting” terror, with the U.S. considering itself above and not bound by international law and free to strike any country or jail or spy on any political group at will, any “non-Christian” group and any group that supports independence movements could then and can today easily become a potential target. There is no reason to think that Jews would be immune. Given Jewish holidays and Jewish and Israeli history as a Middle Eastern origin people supporting anti-colonial struggles and “terrorist” tactics, and given that Muslims share some of this history in the Koran, Jews are also a potential target of the unchecked super power looking to the “source” of terrorist and liberation struggles. The picture of Osama bin Laden planning a religious fundamentalist movement in desert caves is quite easy to link to pictures of Moses in Jewish stories of Passover and to the legend of the “Prophet Elijah” and the religious slaughter of Baal priests who challenged the Jewish faith. There are similar echoes in the Hannukah stories and the guerilla warfare of the Maccabee religious faithful.

There has been a remarkable parallel change in the way Jews now retell their own history and in the way they act in politics. Both seem to have roots in the fear of U.S. and Western military power against anyone now labeled as in support of “terrorism.” Every year on the Passover holiday, Jews retell the story of the liberation struggle led by Jewish slaves in Egypt against the Egyptians. During the 1960s and 1970s, Jewish progressive households told the story of the “Passover” of Jewish houses and the death of the first born in the Egyptian households as one of a planned action by Jewish activists to conduct night raids against the Egyptians while the Egyptians slept. The story was that such killing was only the last resort after every other option had been exhausted, but that it was an action justified in the cause of religious and minority freedoms when nothing else worked. It was told with the spilling of wine as both a symbol of blood and of shared sorrow. In short, this was a story about how and when terrorist action was to be justified in the cause of a liberation struggle. Now, more than 30 years later, mention of that earlier story is met with almost a fanatical response that the killings were not done by Jews, that there was no terrorism, that this was only an “act of God” and that no other interpretation or story was possible. The idea of the spilling of wine as shared sorrow over difficult and complex human actions has also disappeared. The idea of the Passover service as a place for questioning and discussion has also largely been replaced with a single telling⁴⁸.

Similarly, oral stories about the founding of Israel – heralding the terrorist activities of the Irgun and the Stern gang – now seem cleansed of any parallels to actions by other religious or nationalist groups elsewhere on the globe; destroying any sense of commonality and compassion for struggles against empire.

48. This is my experience in some 40 years of attending Passover seders with family and with members of the Jewish community working in social services fields in the university and overseas.

Although the more typical telling of this story is that Jews fear that the U.S. might “abandon” Israel to militant Islam, the reality is that politically progressive Jews have no reason to be opposed to the struggles of Islamic peoples for their own identity and autonomy or for greater equity. Nor should they have any reason to oppose Osama bin Laden’s statements calling for more democracy in Saudi Arabia or other Arab military powers or for autonomy for areas of Afghanistan from Russian or American or other military interests. Jews may be in opposition to religious tyranny, but should not be opposed to some of the other goals.

All small countries in the world today fear of abuse of military power and political intervention from larger countries, including the U.S., particularly given the lack of enforcement of international laws against the major powers. No country wants to be put on a list of terror states and to face pre-emptive war or economic embargoes or other interference. Israel is no exception. But, fortunately, for Israel, it has little in the way of attractive resources to major imperial powers like the U.S. Its only exploitable resource that is of interest to non-Jews, other than its ability to carry out U.S. military interests and conduct arms sales, is its list of Christian cultural heritage sites⁴⁹ and there is no reason to think that any Israeli governing party would make them unavailable.

The real fear of Jews and particularly of political progressives in the U.S. is how police and national security state powers will be used in the U.S. against Jews, given the real and visible fear about how military and police powers are used in the U.S. against Muslims, Blacks and other minorities. There is little fear of this power being used against Israel⁵⁰. While many Jews were already supporting U.S. elites in demonizing Islamic political movements, the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, the city where there are more Jews in the world than Jerusalem and where many of the dead were Jews⁵¹, helped to cement the alliance between Jews and U.S. Christians against Muslim political aspirations.

From this perspective, the voting behavior in recent elections becomes clearer as does the real motivation of voters. The idea that there were significant differences on issues between the major parties, that the choice between the two of them was significant and that progressives needed to join the Democratic Party against Republican candidate John McCain in 2008 for these reasons is easy to expose as fraudulent. Senator, now Vice President Joe Biden, actively sought to put the 2008 Republican Presidential candidate, on the 2004 Democratic Party ticket with Senator Kerry, and said in early 2005 that he would be equally happy to run *with* McCain on the same Party ticket as

49. Samuel Clemens/ Mark Twain documents visiting them with U.S. tourists back in the 19th century. See Twain, 1869.

50. One well known Jewish author who has recently expressed such sensitivities in book and interviews is Naomi Wolf, who traces her hyper-sensitivity to this issue and her confrontation of it to her father’s loss of family members in the Holocaust. Wolf, 2007.

51. Some 20 to 25% of Jews in the U.S. live in New York city and its suburbs. Sources posted on Wikipedia suggest that Jewish deaths were consistent their actual percentage in the New York population (9%) or higher (up to 15% of the deaths). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#cite_ref-163

he would against him⁵². The 2000 Democratic Vice Presidential candidate, Joe Lieberman, endorsed McCain. Yet, Lieberman was also the very Senator whom Barack Obama supported in his Senate race and to whom he turned for mentoring⁵³. If all of these candidates were in bed with each other and perpetrating a charade about differences on issues, what was the real sensitivity that heightened passions? Why such apparent hatred or hysteria towards the progressive candidates rather than attempts either to support them or reach out to them?

The resentment of Ralph Nader in the 2000 Presidential vote can be described in ethnic terms. Muslims voted in high numbers for Nader to protect their civil liberties but Jews and Blacks sought to distance themselves as far as possible from a Lebanese American. The hatred against Nader was not that he “caused” any of the regressive policies that both parties supported in their administrations and in Congress. It is much more likely that Nader is perceived to have mobilized Muslim voters and Jewish and other progressives against the “First Jewish Vice President, Joe Lieberman,” then against the “First Partially Jewish Democratic Party President, John Kerry,” and finally against the “First Partially African Male President, Barack Obama.”

In many ways, the Jewish (and Black) bashing of Ralph Nader, who actually represented the core values that most American Jews held in the 1940s through the 1960s, was a racist bashing against an “Arab” who supported the Palestinians, and a clannish defensiveness in order to assure that a member of the Jewish tribe was in charge of the expanding military, police, and financial reward apparatus. The targeting of fear and attack has been switched to Muslims and others of Middle Eastern descent in hopes of drawing attention away from Jews.

The conundrum facing progressives is that this new order puts them in a position where they are perceived as “traitors” to their own ethnic group if they oppose the Democratic Party and its choice of Establishment Blacks, Jews and women. This is the simple answer to Klein’s question of why economists such as Summers, Rubin and Greenspan are not now held to account by progressives. It is the same answer to why former Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger, Elliot Abrams, Madelyn Albright, and Richard Holbrooke are not held to standards of international justice. There is a similar answer for Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, and currently for Barack Obama. Once minorities rise in the system, progressive minorities are caught in the double bind where criticizing those of their own group is seen as a support for “racism” and a threat to their own security. To protect their own perceived interests, they turn silent. For Jews, that very silence is corrosive of cultural beliefs and a direct threat to identity. For Jews whose political identity – the sense of

52. The Kerry and McCain campaigns discussed the idea with each other. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVQEaUZDjiU>, The Biden comments on the 2008 ticket and his confirmation that he urged McCain to run with Kerry in 2004 were on the Daily Show with Jon Stewart, August 2, 2005. <http://www.thedailyshow.com/video/index.jhtml?videoId=125441&title=Joe-Biden-Pt,-2>

53. Stephanie Reitz, 2006.

what distinguishes Jews from others in the modern world – is based on the ability to tell truth to power, to stand up to authority and to take direct responsibility and action against a government or power that causes harm or death to other minorities, the silence in the face of oppression or death to others (Iraqi, Pakistani, Afghan, or Palestinian citizens and children whose only “crime” is their ethnic identity but not their actions) makes Jews who uphold their progressive traditions the very people they condemn⁵⁴.

The silence of most Jews about policies of Israel or about the excesses of Wall Street and their unwillingness to place the blame on those visible Jews who promoted these policies along with the elites behind them, is part of the current identity politics. The goal is to suppress certain racist attacks not only from government and from angry mobs of ordinary citizens.

Although there are a number of Jews in the media who could dissect these issues⁵⁵, there is little discussion of what it means to be Jewish and progressive, what the fears are, and what it would mean to maintain identity and be consistent. The fact that the Klein interview does not reach this level of analysis suggests that it is either taboo throughout the culture or is so deep in the subconscious that it is hard to express.

Jewish progressive candidates for President, such as Green Party candidate Dr. Jill Stein in 2012 and now Bernie Sanders, have also sought to avoid mention of their ethnicity and Jewish values. Senator Sanders’ early campaign commercials in 2015 described himself as the son of “Polish immigrants”, not Jewish, and he often mentioned his agreement on issues with the Pope.

54. If “Nazis” are those German citizens who remained silent when their governments began to round up Jews and who were afraid to speak out and to help Jews or stop the killing, when the risks to them were minimal, what makes Jews any different today when the risks are also minimal but they agree to fund the deaths and remain silent supporters of those political figures who enable or cause those deaths?

55. Major media interviewers in the U.S. who are Jewish – Larry King, Wolf Blitzer, Mike Wallace, Ted Koppel, and major outlets with Jewish ownership, including the New York Times -- have shied away from this kind of introspection and long-term perspective on Jewish interests or the nature of progress.

3.6. How the “Jewish Question” Becomes a Survival Question as the U.S. Empire Collapses and as Oil Runs Out: The Consequences of the Choice Jewish Progressives are Making: An Ongoing Test of the Theories

While the “short term” strategy that Jews and Jewish progressives seem to have chosen in the U.S. – one of ethnic representation and distancing from targeted groups, along with a silencing of the progressive agenda and support of elite interests in return for protection – may be perceived as necessary or prudent, there are strong reasons to think that it could also be a dangerous choice. The lessons of 20th century history suggest that Jewish support for elites easily turns into a deadly strategy when empires fall and economies collapse. There are now ample warning signs in the U.S. and in Western Europe to suggest that silence and support for systems that now seem to be collapsing not only will not open the door for progress, but it will lead to Jews becoming the likeliest targets and victims when failures occur. Political representation in high positions does not offer protection when the system fails, as French Jews under the moderate left Jewish Prime Minister Leon Blum learned in 1942, to public chants of “Mieux Hitler que Blum” (“Better Hitler than Blum”).

In earlier works, I have sought to model the economics and demographics of political violence and the implications for different minority groups. While there is still no specific model when violence occurs against different groups, there are some key variables to look for such as litmus tests and comparisons.

In the table, below, I have sought to reconstruct some of the economic, social strata, and demographic conditions that existed for Jews in two failed empires in Europe in the 20th century where anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) laws and violence developed partly independently; Germany and Austro-Hungary. Alongside the factors for those two countries, I have placed the contemporary U.S. Although I do not include the Russian empire here, in other work I have compared conditions of anti-Semitism that arose in the Soviet Russian Empire and in the U.S. post-World War II. I describe the impact of economic hardship in Soviet Russia in the 1930s as a different phenomenon from the collapse of an empire and note that, when the Soviet Russian Empire collapsed in 1990, Jews largely migrated and escaped mass violence. Russia is also a different case because its social system and distribution of wealth did not match the European model.

What the chart demonstrates is that Jews have achieved roughly the same position now in the United States that they had in Europe before the Holocaust. They are also visible in much the same way in the financial sector and in alliance with elites. Jews in the U.S. have entered the same fields as they did in pre-Holocaust Europe – law, medicine, banking, journalism and publishing, entertainment. The only thing that is different is that they have achieved greater representation in formal political institutions in the U.S. than in pre-Holocaust Europe, as described earlier in the article, although it could be argued that in Eastern Europe they expressed political influence in different

ways (through overrepresentation in the publishing industry and media, including half of Budapest’s journalists).

Table 7. Comparative Economic and Political Position of Jews

Category of Comparison	Germany, 1920	Hungary, 1920	Contemporary U.S.
Jews as a Percentage of Population	1%	5%	2-3%
Percent of Wealth Held by Jews (estimated)	4% ¹⁰	20-25% ¹¹	5-29% ¹²
Percent of Banking-Commercial Leadership (urban centers) that is Jewish ¹³	13-25% ¹⁴	50% ¹⁵	50% ¹⁶
Percent of Legal Positions (urban centers) Held by Jews ¹⁷	27% ¹⁸	50% ¹⁹	20-32.5% ²⁰
Positions in Legislature Held by Jews	2.2% ²¹	1% ²²	10% ²³

10. This is the percentage of income tax that Jews paid in Germany during the Weimar era and can be used as a rough approximation of wealth. From Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question,"* Princeton University Press, 1984, page 15. Another source notes that Jewish "average income" was 3.2 times that of the national population in 1931. Donald I. Niewyck, *The Jews in Weimar Germany,* Transaction Publishers, 2001, page 16, on the web at: <http://books.google.com/books?id=wtU0PDLU2s0C&pg=PA32&lpg=PA32&dq>

11. From the main exhibit at the Holocaust Memorial Museum, 49 Pava utca, Budapest, Hungary, on display in the fall of 2008..

12. No specific figures are available for wealth ownership of Jews. Some breakdowns of U.S. census data make distinctions by "race" but in the U.S., Jews are not defined as a racial group. I have derived this data range through calculations based on existing data for wealth ownership in the U.S.

a) To calculate the lower limit: The percentage of Jewish households with income greater than \$50,000 is double that of non-Jews. Additionally, the percentage of Jewish households with income less than \$20,000 is half that of non-Jews. Steven Silbiger, *The Phenomenon of the Jews: Seven Keys to the Enduring Wealth of a People* 2000. Similar data shows that 35% of Jews earn more than \$100,000 compared to 19% of all American households. Avishai, *supra*, page 10. This would suggest that Jewish wealth is at least double their percent of the population and suggests a lower bound of 5%.

b) To calculate the upper limit: Start with the assumption that there are Jews concentrated in the upper 1% of all wealth holders and that they make up half of this wealthy elite. That would be 0.5% of the population and one fifth of all Jews potentially in that category, with the rest of the country's Jews (2.0% of the population) elsewhere. If that 2% were concentrated among the rest of the top 5% of wealth holders, Jews at MOST, could hold half of that. In 1998 and continuing to 2004 the top 5% owned 59% of wealth; top 1% owned 38%. This works out to an upper limit of 29%. From: *The Economic Policy Institute: The State of Working America*, 2008/2009, <http://www.stateofworkingamerica.org/tabfig.html>

13. Note the distinction here between owners and managers. This is a generalized aggregate statistic of industrialists, stock markets, and banks (those with major capital control) in an attempt to draw a meaningful comparison.

14. Jews controlled 18-23% of Germany's banks and held roughly 15% of the positions in the major banks – 43% of the jobs in Jewish banks and 5.8% in the rest) and 6.23% of positions in banking and the stock market nationally, but 80% in Berlin. They held 13% of the directorships of joint stock corporations and 25% of the management positions. Jews ran 25% of the country's retail and wholesale trade.

Gordon, *supra*, pages 11-12.

15. Various sources on Budapest, where wealth and industry were concentrated, note that Jews (and second generation Jewish families that had converted their religion) accounted for half of the industrialists, ran the stock market, and were major players in the banking industry, owning several major firms. Kinga Frojimovics,; Geza Komoroczy, Viktoria Puszati and Andrea Strbik, *Jewish Budapest: Monuments, Rites, History*, Central European University Press: Budapest Another reference, describes Jews as holding 53% of all “commercial executive” positions nationally and 64% of those in Budapest. Peter Tibor Nagy, “The Numerous, 1994.Clausius in Inter-War Hungary: Pioneering European Antisemitism,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 1, June 2005, available on the web at the World Hungarian Jewish Observer site: <http://www.whjo.org/numerus.htm>
16. Joseph Aaron, “Feel the Power,” commenting on The New Establishment, the 100 most powerful, most influential people in American society, Vanity Fair, October 2007: <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/joe/aaron101007.php3> at least 51 are Jews, up from 30 in the 1970s
17. The legal profession is not entirely the same in all countries so this is only a rough comparison. However, in all countries it is a profession requiring university education. In all three countries (unlike the Soviet Union), lawyers played an important role in management of wealth and investment. Note that statistics for Jews in the medical profession generally also track those for lawyers. Jews play a disproportionate role in both the body of the country and in individual body health.
18. The statistic is from 1904 but would be consistent into the 1930s since the percentage of Jewish students studying law was 25% between 1918 and 1933. From Gordon, *supra.*, page 13. However, Niewyk suggests that lawyers were only “more than 16%” of the total in 1933, in his book, *supra*, page 15. (Note that the figure he offers for doctors is 11%.)
19. Various sources on Budapest note that lawyers were half of the profession, where the country’s lawyers were concentrated. Frojimovics, Komoroczy, et. al., *supra*. Another reference, that may be national, puts this figure at 45%. Nagy, *supra*. In a more recent work, Yuri Slezkine, puts the number at 51% (with 60% of doctors in the country of Jewish origin). *The Jewish Century*, Princeton University Press, 2005.
20. The 20% figure is a national statistic from the 1960s when the number of lawyers nationally was 350,000. 10 *Ency. Judaica Lawyers* 1490, 1505 (Macmillan Co. 1971). The 32.5% figure is for Chicago in the early 1980s and represents the rough sample (that may not be fully representative) used by Heinz and Laumann in their survey of Chicago lawyers. John P. Heinz and Edward O. Laumann, *Chicago Lawyer: The Social Structure of the Bar* (Chicago: American Bar Foundation, 1982). The National Association for Law Placement suggests that the percentage of Jewish lawyers has dropped overall, but part of this may be due to the fact that the legal profession is changing and growing. The national figure should now be falling by about half due to changes in the profession (to roughly 10% nationwide) but the percentage of Jews in leadership positions across the profession should be the same. Note that the number of lawyers in the country has tripled since the 1960s (recently reported by the American Bar Association as 1, 143, 358 in 2007), even though the population has only increased by 55% in that span of time. American Bar Association, *National Lawyer Population by State*, 2007, on the web at: http://www.abanet.org/marketresearch/2007_Natl_Lawyer_FINALonpage.pdf
21. Percentage of delegates to the Reichstag from 1867 to 1916. From Gordon, *supra*, page 18.
22. In the 1926 National Assembly, there were 3 Jewish deputies among the 245 total seats. Raphael Patai, *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology*, Wayne State Press, Detroit, 1966, page 435.
23. The 221th Congress, elected in November 2008, had 13 Jewish Senators and 32 Members of the House of Representatives; 13% of the Senate and 8% of the House. This is up from 30 House Members.

The data from the table can be displayed in ratios to account for the slightly different percentages of Jews in the three different societies. Note how consistent the ratios of disproportionality are across the three countries, in three of the four categories (all except for political representation).

Table 8. Comparative Economic and Political Position of Jews: Disproportionality Comparisons

Category of Comparison	Index of Disproportionality for Germany and Hungary	Index of Disproportionality for Contemporary U.S.
Percent of Wealth Held by Jews (estimated)	4 to 5	2 to 10
Percent of Banking-Commercial Leadership (urban centers) that is Jewish	10 to 25	20
Percent of Legal Positions (urban centers) Held by Jews	10 to 25	10 to 12
Positions in Legislature Held by Jews	0.2 to 2	4

The tables suggest that the Jews have roughly the same visibility and opportunity to be targeted in the U.S. today as they did in both Nazi Germany and fascist Hungary. There are some differences in the fact that there is no large rural population in the U.S. today that would perceive itself as cut off from urban culture and decisions made in the cities by Jews and other minorities who were essentially the majority populations in Eastern European cities in the early 20th century, though there are large numbers of people who see themselves as outside major power centers of Washington, New York, and other major cities where there are large numbers of Jews. In Germany and Hungary, Jews were concentrated in cities and were mostly traders and professionals, and it is hard to say that Jews are any less visible in the U.S. today than they were in places such as Berlin or Budapest where they had also largely assimilated⁵⁶. There may not be a large rural population in the U.S., but the division of U.S. politics into “Red” (formerly rural, mostly Southern, often “Bible belt” and non-Jewish) states and “Blue” states with high concentrations of Jews in major cities, is equally visible.

In order to project the likelihood of a Holocaust occurring in the United States, it would be necessary to predict the economic dislocations and type of competition for jobs, capital and basic commodities that are likely to occur and to compare these with the types of insecurities and competitions that occurred in Germany and Hungary after World War I. Certainly other empires fell in recent memory (including the British Empire) without an internal genocide in its center. Genocide models are incomplete due to cushioning effects and outside support. As this article is written and the U.S. enters a period of economic decline, there are simply too many competing models and predic-

56. 55% of Germany’s Jews were urban compared to 25% of all Germans, and almost one third lived in Berlin. Gordon, *supra*. Half of Jews worked in commerce and only 1-2% in agriculture in Germany compared to 29% of Germans. This didn’t mean that rural Jews weren’t visible targets as they were for the Ukrainian hetman nationalists, but that they were identifiable in 20th century discrimination, much as they could be in the U.S. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Second edition, Volume 7, Germany.

tions as to whether the U.S. Empire will suffer a sharp collapse or a slow decline, or whether other shocks will contribute to a long depression⁵⁷.

Nevertheless, if it can be assumed that the economic conditions that existed before the genocides in Europe are to reappear in the U.S., there is good reason to suspect that Jews will be targeted in much the same way as they were in 20th century Europe. When jobs and resources become scarce and there is competition for them, the violence will likely be channeled and targeted to particular culture groups. Those who are likely to be the victims are those groups who are seen to have unequal shares, who are in the social positions to have taken and protected wealth, whose actions can be linked in some way with the crisis and suffering that has occurred, and who represent a population that is small enough and identifiable enough to be targeted in a way that directs attention and responsibility away from both the majority and from the elites who belong to the majority ethnicity. All of those conditions are being created now in the U.S. and Jews have created these conditions. The “handwriting” is not visible “on the wall” but it is visible in many anonymous comments on the Internet.

While Jews are only a small minority that is not responsible for the failures of elite or majority rule in the U.S. and that has shifted views in order to accommodate the elites, that is not how the story is likely to be told in conditions of economic collapse. Elites will look for a small and more visible group onto whom they can shift the blame. By their political visibility now in the U.S. government and in major institutions, Jews are now even more likely to be targeted.

As of the writing of this piece, as the U.S. economy and U.S. Empire begin to fail, two groups have already been imprinted on public consciousness linked with two key causes of economic loss (and loss of life to U.S. citizens): 1) Muslim fundamentalists causing deaths and triggering huge military spending in the “War on Terrorism,” for reasons that are increasingly linked to Jews and 2) failure and abuses of global financial institutions, including Wall Street and Jewish run firms, triggering the global “Financial Crisis.” Jews are placed prominently in the causal chain of threats and expense to most Americans. Regardless of the actual causes of these economic difficulties, these two concerns (along with several others such as climate change and oil price rises) are seen or presented by the media as the most costly and the most easily targeted to a specific

57. Among the different predictions that appear to the author to be most empirically grounded in theories of comparative empires and of materialist realities of complex economic systems are: Kunstler, 2004; Johnson, 2007 and Bacevich, 2008, among others. Now in Obama’s second term, the choices that were envisioned by President Obama and the earlier Democratic Congress did not suggest any real long term solutions of the underlying problems that caused the financial crisis and that many analysts believe are likely to lead to other crises. Spending packages to “stimulate” the economy that were based on tax cuts rather than real scientific and intellectual (non-military) productive investment and legal infrastructure beyond energy “efficiency,” the huge military expenses, lack of economic transfers to the poor, and the postponement of resolution of future crisis that will attract resources (continuing climatic and resource wars) do not suggest that there will be a future balance of population, consumption and resources, or more equitable or negotiated ways of resolving conflicts that would avoid violent competition. Increases in the U.S. debt also suggest the potential for the same kind of hyperinflation that occurred in Germany in the early 20th century.

group. It is easy to see why Jews are likely to be targeted by examining both of these areas.

1) *The “War on Terrorism”* – When U.S. citizens look for trails of where trillions of dollars have been spent with little perceived benefit in a time of economic hardship, the “War on Terrorism” looms as one of the largest in terms of spending and also includes preventable deaths. Economist Joseph Stiglitz estimated the cost merely of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq between 2002 and 2008, at \$4 trillion⁵⁸. By 2009, the U.S. was spending nearly \$1 trillion per year -- more than 6% of its Gross Domestic Product and about half of all discretionary government expenditure – on military costs with little translatable economic benefit for citizens and hundreds of annual deaths and casualties. The \$3,000 per person per year is much more than the average annual food budget for Americans and a hungry person could easily draw the parallel⁵⁹.

Although the U.S. has long supported military spending for international invasions in order to secure resources and markets, these recent wars appear to have been undertaken to secure a diminishing global resource while deterring investments in renewable resources. As this spending and the international backlash that it has caused the U.S. are evaluated in the future, the spending and the oil policy underlying it (and contribution to additional costs of climate change) are likely to be seen as irrational and motivated by benefits to a small group rather than to the overall national interest. Even though the largest beneficiaries in terms of short term gains are oil companies, military contractors, automobile and other petroleum based industries, they will seek to avoid blame.

A more convenient story is one that is already written; that wars in the Middle East and in Central Asia were to stop “Muslim extremism” and “terror” and to defend “Israeli interests.” The people who are already making this link are Muslims who see the policy being supported by Israel, as a satellite of the U.S. not only acting as its agent but pursuing similar policies in gaining access to water resources and territory in the areas around Israel. American elites do not have to draw attention to Jews as a scapegoat because groups that have been harmed are already doing this for them.

The names in the U.S. who will be easy to blame for these policies include a few elite families like “Bush” but there is a long list of the people behind them who have promoted this military spending: the neo-conservatives who are largely Jews, U.S. State Department officials from Kissinger to Elliot Abrams; U.S. Senators like Joe Lieberman; and military officials like Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle. The message that the U.S. is a target of Islamic terrorism because of its support for Israeli violations of international law in the Palestinian territories is already one that is widespread. When U.S. citizens look to the causes of “terrorism”, their attention is directed first to Mus-

58. Herszenhorn, 2008.

59. The average food spending per person in the U.S. in urban areas in 2004 was \$2,207. If non-urban areas were included, the average would be even lower. U.S. Department of Agriculture data, reported in “US food spending report uncovers trends and tastes,” March 16, 2007, on the web at: <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Financial-Industry/US-food-spending-report-uncovers-trends-and-tastes>

lims, but it is linked immediately to Jews who seem to also be part of the cause of why Muslims have turned to terrorist tactics.

In short, even as the crisis worsens, the U.S. and Israel have remained committed to continued spending to perpetuate militaristic approaches to control over resources, despite the cost. Without clear economic benefits and increasing costs, the funds for these expenditures will disappear and the people who caused the problem will likely find themselves as targets. The peoples of the Middle East are going to remember what the U.S. has done and the U.S. will have fewer resources to protect itself. In a declining U.S., hungry and angry people are already asserting that it was Jews who played a major role in these policies of war spending and death that the country will be paying off for generations.

In Hungary after World War I, there were attempts to blame Jews for not being strong enough supporters of the war effort and a cause for losses. This was an echo of Eastern European attacks against Jews in driving out the Turks and anyone who seemed close to them. If the U.S. Empire collapses, Jews will not be blamed for “defeat” but for politicizing the use of military force and for bankrupting the economy through military spending for their perceived interests.

2) *The “Financial Crisis”* – The standard attack on Jews in Germany and Hungary after World War I was that Jews ran the banking system and the legal system and not only should have foreseen economic decline but profited from it and the harms it caused. That argument is now part of the common wisdom in describing the causes of the financial crisis that began in 2008⁶⁰. While blame could easily be directed in the past to “corporate interests” and to “Wall Street” and “Big Business,” which conjures up images of aristocratic families and White, Protestant names and firms, that picture seem to have changed. As with the U.S. State Department and military where many of the appointed heads of both major parties have Jewish names, that is now equally true of the Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve, and other financial positions such as the Commerce Department. That is also why Klein partly bites her tongue when it comes to the “J” word (“Jewish”) when she asks why progressives do not want to squarely put blame for the failings on people such as Larry Summers and Robert Rubin and Alan Greenspan.

Most of the people who benefited from the excesses of Wall Street and the ideology of globalism, were not Jews; nor were the majority of those who supported the billion dollar bailouts starting in 2008 to try to solve (or temporarily cover up) the underlying problem. Today, however, “Wall Street” has a very different connotation because of the

60. My own work began to document predictions of collapse in parallels to the Soviet Union in 1992, with similar pieces written during the early 1980s including critiques of the ideology that I found at Stanford in the law and business schools in the 1980s that I published in several places. There is long and clear documentation that political and financial elites knew that deregulation and destruction of the country’s legal oversight and educational and civic infrastructure would lead to economic collapse. Media and film long documented the “Greed is Good” view that became the gospel in the Reagan years. Progress and the future became irrelevant as did the idea of the “public interest.”

names now associated with it. When the financial crisis broke, the Bush Administration official who seemed caught unawares, Henry Paulson, was immediately associated with his investment bank where he personally accumulated a fortune. It was “Goldman Sachs,” the same firm of Robert Rubin and the firm that was described as the largest contributor to the Obama Presidential campaign. Immediately after this scandal, the largest private investment firm scandal that was reported was that of Bernard Madoff, a Jewish financier on Wall Street who became the magnet for Jewish investors seeking to beat the system. In the public mind, Wall Street, in New York, is now increasingly seen as the symbol of Jewish activity in the city where Jews have the highest population. It is the Berlin or Budapest of U.S. finance and empire.

In global finance, the image of Jewish responsibility is also easily reinforced. Presiding over the globalization and structural adjustment strategies of the World Bank were also Jews like Wolfenson, then Wolfowitz, and Stiglitz who exposed how that system was actually creating indebtedness rather than sustainability of most of the borrowing countries⁶¹. Obama’s current Secretary of Commerce and one of the major financial supporters of his campaigns, from Chicago, is Penny Pritzger, a representative of one of the wealthiest Jewish families in the country.

When Americans and others around the globe search for those to blame for the market fundamentalism that has also been tied to personal corruption and fortunes of the very government officials who promoted them, they see a merry-go-round of the same names going back and forth between the firms that they were to de-regulate or from which they draw financial favors, into and out of government. The major names described as the “brilliant minds” and “brains” behind these schemes, like Summers and those above, and Jeff Sachs and others, are Jews.

What makes these signs particularly ominous for Jews is that even while the collapse is occurring, Jewish progressives and others who are perfectly aware of the causes or who were part of the problem, have been behind a new U.S. Presidential administration and a Congress with most of the same names, with the same financial interests (like Goldman Sachs, along with other major Jewish donors) and endorsements of policies that only treat the symptoms but that continue the problem. What that means is that the very people who are going to be seen presiding over this collapse, if it does reach significant proportions, are the same people who supported its creation. That includes a significant number of Jewish faces and also some Blacks, like Obama.

The very fear that underlies the impulse of progressive Jews to have distanced themselves from Muslims and to have joined the elites is itself the recognition that Jews in the U.S. will not be safe if the system collapses. What Jews who whistle in the graveyard will pretend is that the circumstances in the U.S. are much more different from those in Germany and Hungary in the 20th century and that this will make it difficult to target Jews. They will suggest that there are other minorities who are vulnerable given

61. Stiglitz, 2002.

that the U.S. is a cosmopolitan society and that this includes Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans and other identifiable minorities in the pentagon of colors and prejudices within the U.S. (white, off white/ Middle Eastern, yellow, brown, black, and red). They will claim that there is more intermarriage in the U.S. among Jews and other races than there was in Eastern Europe and in Germany. They will also rest their hope on a belief that there is no clear agrarian majority that would target Jews. Almost certainly, Muslims would continue to be a target as would Blacks and Asians in much the way that they have always been in the U.S. and in the way that the Roma/Gypsy were also targeted in the Holocaust.

In fact, there are several factors that make the Jews particularly vulnerable in the U.S. and in Western Europe, as well, that are different from other minorities and that reflect the commonality of conditions with those in pre-Holocaust Europe. One is that they are already more likely to be scapegoats for the reasons described above. While Blacks could be blamed for the failures of an Obama administration, Blacks have only recently had the history of State Department and military positions that Jews have now held for more than a generation. Moreover, they do not have visibility in the financial sector or any historic association with New York and Wall Street. Second, Blacks and Hispanics are much too large a population and they are also not perceived to have concentrated wealth and position and influence in the same way that Jews have. Third, Jews remain geographically identifiable and professionally identifiable in the U.S. They are concentrated in certain cities and areas where their economic holdings represent something that can create jealousy and anger. As in pre-Holocaust Europe, they are in cities and they are on the coasts in what Americans call the “blue states” of the U.S. The southern and mid-western States are not agrarian, but they do represent a more agrarian culture as well as a strong Christian culture. It is one that Jews, themselves, recognize as anti-Semitic.

It is the “fault line” or dividing line between “Christians” and “non-Christians” (Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Confucians) – European Americans and those they missionized and assimilated, versus Middle Easterners and Asians on the other side – that is still a likely logic of discrimination and separation. It is ironic that Muslims and Jews are the easy targets and also potential allies against discrimination, while they are now among the furthest apart.

What also makes Jews particularly vulnerable in the U.S. is that they lack the same kind of international protectors that other countries have. Israel is known to have nuclear weapons, but where would it use them to retaliate against genocide in the U.S. if the country were still around to respond? New York? It is in the major urban centers where Jews are concentrated. By contrast, Asians and Latin Americans have a deterrent by their size and power. When the U.S. first experimented with concentration camps for the Japanese population in World War II, the Japanese were already at war with the U.S.

The only compelling argument is that Jews would be difficult to round up (or forced to give up their jobs, then to emigrate and leave their property behind) and to concen-

trate given not only intermarriage but the fact that this creates a much larger group of people with kinship ties who also have to be dealt with in some way. In fact, the administrative difficulty of dealing with groups like this slowed the concentration of German Jews as well as Hungarian Jews in Budapest under German occupation. But the numbers were not very different. By the 1930's, some 15 to 44% of children born to Jews were in mixed marriages in Germany, similar to the 50% rate of intermarriage that is estimated for Jews in the U.S. today⁶². There were violent demonstrations in Nazi Germany in 1942 against the Gestapo by the German wives of Jews and that slowed the genocide there; while creating the illusion of German democracy and responsiveness to pressure and demonstrations that did occur at that time.

3.7. The “Jewish Question” in Parallel, for Israel and the Middle East: Why Israel Went “European” and What it Means Now:

In a parallel to the choice by Jews in the U.S., the Jewish government of Israel and Jews supporting it has also agreed to a similar bargain of sacrificing some positive political rights, progressive agenda for short-term perceived tribal interests in ways that both echo and reinforce the reversal of progress in the West. Both Jews in the U.S. and Israel have agreed to support U.S. elites in their strategies for gaining control of foreign resources overseas and backing away from political progress and ideals that can be described as central to Jewish traditions. Given similar potential dire consequences for Jews, it would also be in Israel's interests to assure that there is another alternative before it might be too late. How that choice is seen and how Jews start to make it will also offer clues as to whether Jews retain any commitment to human progress in their culture or whether they are now like any group, protecting economic and security interests through mostly short-term calculations rather than long-term thinking.

In the U.S., Jews making this choice are a minority. The fear of repression could be the motivating factor in their choice. By contrast, Jews in Israel have won their independence from a European power and include a large population of Jews who specifically fled discrimination (and death) in Europe. Given that the Jews who left Europe for Israel also had the same ideals of political and social progress and justice and had no particular reason to give these up to promote European interests, what motivated their choice and what does this choice mean for the possibility of progressive politics and social justice in the world, as a whole? Why have Jews in Israel apparently abandoned their politically and socially progressive agendas that were part of the original vision of Jewish settlers? Why are they also making a choice to support Western resource politics alliances?

In many ways, the implications of changes in the world are similar for Jews in Israel as in the West. As in the U.S. for the past three decades (and many countries in Western

62. From 1901 to 1905, 15% of Jews intermarried, rising to 36% by 1926-32 and 44% in 1933. Gordon, *supra*, p. 17.

Europe), on a measurement scale of political progress and social justice, there has been a regression in Israel rather than progression. Those who have reversed this progress argue that it is a reality of protection and survival but do not deny that it is an abandonment of the agenda of progress. In the sense of Jewish traditions coming out of the ideals of law and the Ten Commandments, one could easily suggest that the commandment of love for family (honoring one’s parents and traditions) has taken precedence over other commandments such as killing (particularly civilians), coveting of property (water and lands), theft (of lands), and (though less clear) false witness. The movement has been towards tribalism and away from equity.

If the resource policies of the U.S. and Western Europe in the Middle East are an economic dead end, having caused harm not only to the Middle East but also creating costs for the U.S. and Western Europe that are leading to their decline, what are the implications and choices for Jews in Israel as the conditions worsen?

The way to understand the situation and to try to predict and then measure these choices into the future follows in parallel with the analysis above. One can pose the “Jewish Question” to analyze the choices that Jews have made and how it relates to maintaining the part of the culture that has supported political progress. To do that, requires tossing aside the current approach to looking at Jews in the Middle East that defines “enemies” rather than relationships and choices; clarifying that the choice for Jews in Israel is whether they would ally themselves with European – Western powers or re-establish a Middle Eastern identity; and then looking at that decision in different historical periods as well as consequences for the future. Overall, it appears that Jews returning to the Middle East have been forced into a reliance on Europe in the same way that most newly independent countries have also been forced into relations with former colonial powers and that the reality of this choice required hiding their Middle Eastern identity. But as Israeli Jews gain strength and as Western powers fall, the current logical choice that is consistent with progressive values is actually to recreate an identity that is Middle Eastern and that roots itself on the ideals of political and social progress that can be traced to early civilizations in the Middle East. Whether Jewish Israelis choose to do this before they add to a list of enemies will also help answer the question of whether Jews have assimilated into the systems of Western powers and given up the ideals of progress, or whether they retain them.

3.7.1. Restating the Middle Eastern Question for Jews in Terms of the “Jewish Question” Not in Terms of a Conflict with a Specific “Enemy”

Discourse about Israel and the Middle East is usually framed in terms of solving “the conflict” between “Jews and Palestinians” or “Jews and Muslims” or between “Israel and the Arab world,” but this dichotomy is false for two reasons. It hides the reality that relationships are about choices of allies and the needs that force those choices as much as they are about conflicts with enemies who interfere with fulfillment of needs.

For one, there is an unexamined assumption that the parties to the conflict are limited to Jews (or Israel) and different parties in the Middle East, rather than between East and West (during the Cold War) or between North and South, with the region a place for using smaller countries to carry out these larger conflicts and where local parties may have been forced to take sides. Second, there is an implication that conflicts are to be “solved.”

More recently, the discourse has been framed in terms of a conflict between the Judeo-Christian world and the Muslim world. In the U.S. and in Israel, the current framing of the question asks, “What should the response of Israel and its Jewish population be to securing itself” in a world that presumably is filled with “Muslim extremism” and “terrorism” and a culture of violence and hatred for the State of Israel and for Jews?

The questions that are posed are already loaded with assumptions about the source of conflict and anger and how different parties see and target each other. They also force the presentation of history in terms of “the conflict” and of “the other” (“Jews” and “Arabs.”)

In fact, the “Jewish Question” is not that different from the question that all peoples ask in defining themselves, and self definition is not necessarily based on reinforcing historic conflicts. There is no fundamental historic “Jewish-Christian” conflict given that there is a combined “Judeo-Christian” tradition, in the same way that there is no such thing as a fundamental historic “Jewish-Muslim” conflict, given the joint history of Semitic or Middle Eastern peoples with shared traditions. There are, instead, differences in identity of groups relative to each other and to others. These identities are redefined at different times to meet particular needs and survival interests.

The “Jewish Question” (just like the “Palestinian Question” and the “Arab Question” and “The U.S. Middle Eastern Question”) is not about how to resolve a dispute with a particular enemy. It is about the choice of alliance and associations in order to maintain the autonomy and strength of the group in relation to a set of other groups among whom they must choose allies and opponents in seeking out interests. The set of choices in context is what defines one’s identity as a group and what establishes whether one is closest to or farther from the “others.” This is the question that Jews had to answer in the history of Eastern Europe when at times they were close to Muslims and far from Christians and at other times were closer to Christians or different Christian sects. The basis of the choice depends on who was in power and how Jews had to establish themselves to protect themselves in the same place. This is the question that Jews had to answer in Babylonia, in Egypt, in the Roman Empire, in the Greek Empire, in the Ottoman Empire, in Tsarist Russia and then in revolutionary and Soviet Russia and elsewhere.

Why is it, then, that Israeli Jews have chosen to align with Western Europe and the U.S.? Given that it was Christian Europe that in recent memory nearly completed the extermination of Jews, that it was similar, earlier European empires such as Spain that led to the expulsion, diaspora and near destruction of the Jews, and that it was the

British who sought to continue colonial rule over Israel, what made this alignment a rational long-term choice, beyond simply an accommodation to short-term realities of power? How is it that the current “enemy” of the Jews is a set of peoples who have no previous history of seeking to annihilate Jews and no weapons technology of their own (beyond European weapons) to do real harm to Jews? Given the potential commonality of interests of Jews with other Middle Eastern peoples in aspirations for identity in the modern world, in an anti-colonial struggle, and in desire for development, why would Jews not make every effort to promote political progress with their neighbors rather than act in the interests of Western powers?

The more important sub-questions are really these. How flexible is the Israeli Jewish identity as something European rather than in solidarity with Middle Eastern roots? Do Jews have to choose one or the other or is there a middle path? Is the current choice just a short-term one or a long-term irreversible one? Have past acts or commitments poisoned the ability to change or shift the identity?

A way to consider this overall question is to take a brief look at Jewish relations in the Middle East historically and then at the pressures in the last century in Jewish relations overall that led to this choice. Posing the question in this way helps to suggest that changing power relations in the world will also help change the identity question for Jews in a way that could reaffirm the commitment to progress.

3.7.2. *Long History of Jewish Relations with Middle East: Why Don't the Jews “Go East”?*

At the heart of questions about why Jews have chosen to identify with Europe rather than with other Middle Eastern peoples is an assumption that Jews avoid an “Eastern” and harmonized Middle East because it is impossible for Jews and Arabs now to fit together, culturally. That is really a chicken and egg question. Is it impossible for them to now fit together culturally because they are really in conflict or because Western European and U.S. power have placed Jews in a situation where they are forced into conflict which makes it impossible for them to now fit together culturally? History helps suggest that the answer is more likely to be current pressures rather than history.

Despite there being differences in how Jews of “Middle Eastern” versus “European” cultural influence are classified and whether this kind of identification itself is just an artificial creation forced on Israeli Jews by international politics, the claim of Israeli Jews to a Middle Eastern cultural origin seems just as strong as that to a European origin. There is no logic in the backgrounds or birthplaces of Israeli Jews that would push them to lean more to the “West” or to the “Middle East.” While the “European” Jews are politically dominant and claim to be a small majority (recent figures claim that the “Ashkenazi” are 52%), the “Mizrahim” Middle Eastern Jews claim to be as much as 60% of the Jewish population. This is even after large recent migrations of Jews from the former Soviet Union which is considered to be “European” despite the Soviet Union’s mix of Asian and Turkic influences.

This choice of Israeli Jews to be “Western” is not necessarily rooted in Israeli or Zionist history, either. The first sound film made by Jews in Palestine in 1935, “Land of Promise”⁶³, depicts Israel as an “Oriental” (Eastern) country with Middle Eastern roots. The idea of Israeli settlers, as depicted in the film, was that they were consciously choosing to avoid the European materialism and Statist military and imperial conflicts, even though much of the current writing of Israel’s history and of Zionism suggests the exact opposite. Footage shows Tel Aviv after 25 years of development in a Mediterranean-Middle Eastern architectural style with camels serving the milling and other industries. Although the film disparages the life of the local Palestinian Arab population as having fallen into a “primitive” way of life after Jews left the region, there is no suggestion that Middle Eastern cultures and traditions are primitive but only that the development of civilization that had occurred in the region had been reversed.

The idea that there was a conflict between Jewish values of material progress or even of development of law and ancient traditions in the region that gave birth to them may be a myth that is only reinforced by contemporary power relations in the world. Originally, Jews were a nomadic people like the Bedouins, the other non-Palestinian peoples whom are also relegated to second or third class citizenship in Israel, today, as in many other countries in the region. For most of the history, however, Jews were part of Middle Eastern civilizations where there was scientific advance as well as development of concepts of political and social progress. Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, and the civilizations of Asia with which they (and Jews) traded were the most advanced of their time. It was only later that Greek and Roman civilizations followed these and where Jews were in conflict, and then only in recent times where Europe emerged again as a global leader.

After the fall of Greece and Rome, it seems that Jewish relations with the Arab world were closer and more productive than those with a Europe that remained backward, feudal and torn by conflict for centuries. In the early 7th century, when Mohammed began to organize the Muslim religion, he did slaughter groups of Jewish non-followers in Mecca, but this is one of the rare cases of Muslim genocide against Jewish groups in the history of the relations. At that time, the wrath of Muslims was largely against Persia, Byzantium, and the Sasanians in Iran and Central Asia, and not against Jews. In this early period of the Muslim Empire, the Khazar Empire in north Turkey, the Caucuses and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, today) became a Jewish state for three hundred years; the first successful and only long-lived Jewish state until Israel in the past 2,000 years⁶⁴. It is unclear whether or not Khazaria was really an enemy of the Arab states, despite there being frequent wars. Current writing of the history suggests that the leaders of Khazaria converted to Judaism in 740 in order to appear neutral between Christian (Slavic) countries, that later overran the empire, and Muslim Arabs with whom they had fought

63. Leman, 2006.

64. Brook, 1999.

in wars in the early 8th century. For Khazaria, it appears that the answer to the Jewish question was that Judaism was acceptable to Muslims as well as to Christians. In 711, Jews were allies of the Muslim Moors in their attacks against Spain.

Although historians who write on Jewish-Arab relations note that Jews faced discrimination in the Muslim world and faced pressures to convert to Islam, as did Christian peoples under Muslim rule, Jewish communities were always allowed to maintain their autonomy. A strong Jewish merchant class developed, particularly in cities like Cairo and in regions like Tunisia and Spain⁶⁵. There were Jewish schools throughout the Arab world and Jewish wealth and status grew.

The 10th through 12th centuries -- the “Islamic High Middle Ages” -- are considered the “Golden Age” or “Hellenic Renaissance” period of Islam in which trade, philosophy, and some of the sciences developed. In the area that was once Israel, Safed and Tiberius became centers of the Jewish religion and philosophy.

It was only when these empires began to disintegrate that Jews began to suffer, but it seems that the larger part of the violence was from Christians, not from Muslims, including the Spanish Inquisition and expulsions at the end of the 15th Century. Safed and Tiberius were overrun in 1573 when the Ottoman Empire began to disintegrate and this marked the beginning of three centuries of decline of the area of Palestine for both the Jews and Muslims there until the emergence of continued but weak Ottoman rule. Although there were anti-Jewish riots in Morocco in the 19th century, there were also anti-Christian riots. In the invasion of Damascus in 1860, 5,000 Christians were killed but not Jews. Some scholars actually see anti-Jewish sentiment in the Arab world as driven by Christians who saw Jews as competition, rather than arising from Arabs.

Given this history, why would choose not choose to align with Middle Eastern peoples in modern times? And why would Jews seek to bury or to rewrite this history in ways that suggest historical conflict?

3.7.3. Recent “Jewish Questions” Regarding the Jewish Fate in the Return to the Middle East: Why Jews were Forced into Alliances with Europe and the West and What the Consequences will be if Jews do Not Change this Given Changing International Power Relations

Most of the current histories of Israel (from Jews in the West, in Israel, and from Arabs) describe it as a plan by European Jews to establish a European-type Jewish island in the Middle East. While that may describe the current result and link it to the views of some of the European “Zionist” settlers who are considered symbolic leaders of the Jews who currently hold power, it does not fully tell the story of why the Middle Eastern Jews and even the majority of European Jews who came to Israel, as a reaction against discrimination and genocide in Europe, would have wanted to create an image

65. Stillman, 1979.

of the very thing they were fleeing. There is a chicken-egg problem with history. In fact, Jews may have been responding to political pressures from the U.S. and European powers that forced a different choice than Jews would actually have made in the absence of these pressures.

The story that Jewish settlers in Palestine have always needed “arms” from the West in order to live again in the Middle East where populations were presumed to be “hostile” to them, or that their return to the Middle East was part of an ideology of Zionism that was either consciously or subconsciously racist, immediately demonizes the Arab world and paints Jews as aggressors in ways that promotes conflicts that may actually have been created by larger powers. This kind of history telling conveniently avoids questions about the source of the different interests then and now. The real question about how Jews defined themselves when they came to live in Palestine is whether there was any kind of accommodation possible between various interests – Jews seeking return, Palestinians living on the land, Turks and then British making imperial claims to the area, and then all of the different foreign powers jockeying for access to Middle Eastern oil resources – and why they couldn’t reach it.

Examining the choices that Israeli Jews and Arabs in Israel had at different times suggests that Jews have agreed to a political accommodation of the larger empires in a way that has destroyed Jewish progressive ideals. It is the depletion of oil resources from the region and the weakening of Western powers that could provide the opportunity for a return to progressive politics and accommodation in the region.

The Israeli Jewish Question Before the 1930s: “British or Turks?”: The question that Jewish settlers in Israeli largely faced before the 1930s was not whether they would see themselves as Middle Eastern or European and how they would interact with the Palestinians (and Bedouins) as much as it was one between the British and the Turks. That also muddled the question of Israeli identity away from one of “European” or “Western” versus “Eastern” or “Middle Eastern.” In fact, that decision was one largely forced by the Turks and by the local feudal lords in Palestine.

The standard “creation myth” of the modern State of Israel is that it was a direct fruition of Zionist ideology of the late 1800s, imagined by the Hungarian Jew, Theodore Herzl, following other nationalist and state building movements in Europe at the time and rejecting the idea of integration with other peoples⁶⁶. Herzl is quoted as intending in Israel to “form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism”⁶⁷. Others similarly describe visions of Israel as a “new Switzerland” with white houses and red tile roofs and pine trees, to trump its Middle Eastern culture⁶⁸. Despite this image, there were also competing visions of Jews returning to

66. Herzl’s utopian vision is set out in Herzl, 1902. In the story, Jews bring European technology to Israel and find jobs for a “backward” Arab population out of a sense of magnanimity.

67. Herzl, 1980 [1896]: 425.

68. Lipset, 1974.

agriculture, building socialist “kibbutzim” in working the soil, in a vision that certainly was not the one that city dwellers like Herzl could really have built.

Generally these depictions of Jewish settlers as choosing a “European” vision rely on cultural background of the Jewish settlers (“colonizers”) and also on psychology; suggesting the choice Jews would have made given fears of what they would need to protect themselves against European powers given the discrimination that Jews had faced in Europe for centuries. As a Hungarian Jew, Herzl would have understood the history of the Magyars as a nomadic people coming from the east who established their identity and authority in Europe in much the same way that some Slavic groups like the Serbs did when they also broke away from Turkic rule. They established their “church” and sought recognition by the European nation states around them as another State, using the church and their language as a way of securing themselves. The psychological explanation is that Jews were excluded on the base of their “otherness” (in Europe it was their “oriental” heritage) and felt that the best way to compete with their enemies, who were much stronger, was to emulate them. The shaving of their beards, adoption of Western clothes, and modeling themselves on a European pattern is little different from that of elites in the liberated former colonial nations throughout the globe. The phenomenon of becoming one’s aggressor (a pattern found in children who are victims of child abuse) is a well established psychological response to a sense of disempowerment and to learned behaviors. In many ways, the history of the U.S., founded by religious minorities fleeing persecution and debtors or ex-convicts, and that of other former British colonies can be seen in a similar way. Many of the settlers of the Americas spoke of their colonies as a “new Zion” and preached co-existence with the native peoples and the creation of a new culture but ultimately followed the European cultural imperial pattern, despite some cultural borrowing and mixing with native peoples

The motivation of fear of Europe is a strong explanation of the pressures on the decision of Jewish settlers from Europe, but it is not in itself enough to explain why Middle Eastern Jews would have agreed or why European Jews in Palestine weren’t able to transcend their history in Europe and to embrace their Middle Eastern roots. These European Jewish settlers were a minority even amongst the Jews in Palestine. For their model of a European leaning Jewish state to win, they either had to be part of a more powerful military alliance and/or they had to convince others to support them, which also implies that they relied either on force or by appeal to an argument of military alliances and force. Some scholars on Israeli Jewish culture describe the country as an Apartheid system in which the European Jews established themselves in a leadership role and created a second class of Middle Eastern (and Spanish/ Sephardic) Jews, the Mizrahim, above the Arab population. They explain this as a political reality of power but do not explain why the Middle Eastern Jews should have been so much less powerful than the European Jewish immigrants⁶⁹.

69. Khazzoom, 2003: 481-510.

In terms of *realpolitik*, it is easier to understand how the Jews were pushed to take sides against the Turks and into an alliance with the British, despite earlier history. The European Jews headed to Palestine in the 19th century were heading to an area of the Ottoman Empire still ruled as a feudal hierarchy. It was historically antagonistic to Europe and, more importantly, to the Russian Empire, to the north. While Jews were also antagonistic to the Russian Tsarist Empire (and Jewish revolutionaries were sent to Siberia and jailed or killed in the Russian Tsarist Empire) and could have been natural allies against Russia, they were still quite powerful in Budapest and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War I, the situation reversed and a Jewish led Communist government in Hungary in 1919, quickly fell, but the new Soviet government in Russia had Jews in leadership positions. There was no natural alliance of Jews with the Turks. Jewish revolutionaries who sought to overthrow State monarchies in Russia and Eastern Europe were a threat to the Turks and to their leaders in Palestine. Wealthy Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire promoted that empire's goals of taking more of the Muslim territories in the Balkans (Bosnia) and encroaching on Turkish influence. In 1915-1918, the Turkish genocide against its Armenian (Christian) population – the first European “modern” genocide in the 20th century – would have certainly convinced Jews that minorities in the Ottoman Empire were subject to the horror of genocide. This was something they probably could not imagine happening in Europe on such a scale, despite massacres against Jews and others in the villages between Ukraine and Poland as the Soviet Empire fought for the land.

In order to win a commitment to land in Palestine, Jews made the choice to ally against Turkey and with Britain in World War I, as well as to weigh the chances of improvements under the new government in Russia. The question is why Jews continued to hold to this alliance as a colonial people under the post-World War I British rule in Palestine. By the mid-1930s there was no longer any reason for Jews and progressives to have any trust in the Soviet Russian Empire, in Hungary or any of the other collapsing empires of Europe. Emma Goldman was already questioning the results of the Russian revolution by 1923, followed by Trotsky who was exiled in 1928-29 and wrote about the revolution and Jews being betrayed⁷⁰

The Israeli Jewish Question after the 1930s and to the Present: “Allying with Arabs Against the European Colonial Powers AND/or Their Local Leaders or Allying with the European Colonial Powers?”: How Economic, not Military Realities, of Post-Colonialism, Forced the Decision of the Jews: It seems almost contradictory and hypocritical that given the struggle of Israeli Jews against British colonial rule, alongside similar struggles by Arabs in other Middle Eastern countries, and given the fact that many Jews were coming to Israel to escape oppression in Europe, that Israeli Jews would have strengthened alliances with Western colonial powers and also slowly abandoned their own Middle Eastern identity and progressive agenda. The answer as to why they did is

70. Goldman, 1923; Trotsky, 1991.

likely the same answer as to why many other countries that fought against colonial rule have made the same deals with their former colonial masters in the global economy. Weak emerging countries often have little choice but to immediately make deals with the larger powers that they opposed in attempts to secure their own futures. The same fear that drives decisions by Jews within empires also drives decisions by minority powers in the global order. The fall of the Ottoman Empire, then the British Empire, and the events of World War II led to the rise of the U.S. Empire with the U.S. gaining influence over areas that were under the British sphere in the Middle East. This essentially forced Israeli Jews to enter an alliance with the U.S. in order to deal with problems that were not of their creation..

In 1948, when they achieved liberation from Great Britain, Jews were still a small minority in the new State of Israel⁷¹. Why would a minority seeking independence have created a conflict with the Arabs in Palestine who also opposed the British? Indeed, the British forces killed some 5,000 Arabs in suppressing colonial rebellions in 1936-39 and had also violently opposed a rebellion in 1916. The Arabs would have appeared to have been a natural ally. In terms of military alliance, however, Israeli Jews actually saw their chances for autonomy as greater with the British than in an alliance with Palestinian Arabs, given the weak history of successful nationalist Arab revolts against their own authoritarian rulers who would have held power after colonial independence. If Jews were to take sides with Palestinian Arabs, that also meant either siding with the dynastic Al-Husanyi clan that had controlled Jerusalem and the Judea area for generations, or working in a simultaneous movement against them. The Al-Husanyi clan helped to polarize the conflict to ensure that Jews would not arouse Palestinian Arab masses with socialist ideals, even if they were rooted in the religions and history of the region. The heads of other Arab regions and States were quick to join with the Palestinian leaders in hope of stopping revolts in their own countries.

The economic reason that Israeli Jews could not appeal to most of the Arab country leaders and their populations in a spirit of Middle Eastern cultural fraternity after 1948 is a simple one that is characteristic of most post-colonial States that quickly fall into a position of subservience under neo-colonialism. As all “developing” and newly independent peoples following colonial rule, Israeli Jews found themselves with a large population and few resources. This is the typical situation of Third World countries. The impact of colonial rule is to deplete resources and to do nothing to stabilize populations with those resources. Often it is to do the opposite, claiming that population growth and rapid consumption of resources is part of the “culture” that foreigners must “respect” even though it drives down wages and makes the peoples weak and vulnerably. The “charity” of the colonial powers is almost always in health care that continues to ratchet up populations even further, concentrating huge poor populations. The only immediate

71. In 1948, census figures generally place the Jewish population of Israel at 600,000 Jews and 900,000 non-Jews, or 40% Jewish. Today, Jews are 80% of Israelis.

alternative is for the colonial countries to beg for the technology and aid. It is to sell whatever they have and to seek foreign technology as a temporary respite as part of the “natural” desire for “development” rather than cultural protection or stability and sustainability within their own resources⁷². While Israel had not really been stripped of resources, the huge influx of Jewish settlers and refugees into a desert meant that their only real hope for survival was for foreign technology, foreign aid, and markets to sell their labor.

Israeli Jews needed imported technology, donations and trade. The only real source was from the West. While China, India, Mesopotamia, Turkey, and Eastern countries had provided the trade routes and technology in the past (and are re-emerging today) they weren't able to do so in the 1940s. Damascus, Cairo, Baghdad, and other cities of the Middle East were not going to be the places for technology or trade to meet these development needs at that time. Nor was the Soviet Russian Empire able to provide it after the devastation of the World War. While there were large populations of Jews in the Soviet Russian Empire and Eastern countries that nearly matched the population of American and Western European Jews, they did not have the accumulated wealth.

Those countries that supported the victors of World War II after the war were assisted in rebuilding. It made sense for Israeli Jews to join the victors and there were ways to save face in doing so. The U.S. did not have the history of genocide against Jews and the English and French had been relatively accommodating. That did not mean that there was nothing to fear. It may have actually meant the opposite. Given the tremendous fear of European genocide and the demonstration of U.S. military power on civilian populations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the “best” choice was to ally with the strongest power. The U.S. and Western Europe did not get any specific economic or resource benefit from Israel but they did get a client state. Although the Trans-Arabian Pipeline was planned in 1947 to go from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon, through Israel, it did not come into Israeli hands until 1967 given that its route changed to go through the Golan Heights. In addition to technology, trade and arms, Israel also received help from France to build a nuclear power plant to make nuclear weapons; the protection they wanted not necessarily against attack from Arab countries but also against attack from Europe.

The result of this choice was not only a cultural one of Jews dressing in European clothes in the Middle East and shaving their beards as a symbol of trade with their Western patrons; the same choice that leaders and peoples of dependent States throughout the rest of the world have also agreed to follow. Israeli Jews had to agree to serve the military interests of U.S. and Western European countries in gaining access to resources. This made them an immediate target for the Soviet Russian Empire and the Arab countries who feared outside influence. In the 1950s, Arab governments boycotted

72. For a short depiction of how this works in another country that is about the size of Israel, Cambodia, see Lempert, 2007.

Israel, the Soviet Russian Empire supplied weapons to parties opposing the U.S. in the region, and began to discriminate against its Jewish populations.

Within Israel, this alliance meant the strengthening of the European Jews against the Middle Eastern Jews because it was the Western Jews who had the greater access to wealth and power through relatives and through their advantage in trade and diplomacy with the Western powers.

Part of the agreement, similar to the one made by Jews in the U.S., was that Israeli Jews would also suppress their progressive movements for rights of Arabs in other client States of the U.S. and Western powers, and would join in the opposition to Islamic nationalist struggles. While there is a natural affinity between these movements and the goals of minority protection and autonomy for Jews in the international system, Israeli Jews find themselves placed in a role of policing and opposing such movements and of being targeted by them. Even if Israeli Jews were to be at the forefront of a movement for establishing a progressive identity of Middle Easterners and a development again of scientific advance and trade that once made the region the center of civilization, it would have to find enough allies to stand up to the major powers and other military leaders whom they support against the populations of the region. That has not been true for most of the period since 1948, but situations have been changing.

3.8. Concluding Remarks: The Transformation of Jewish Identity: Going Back to the Future and to a Progressive Middle Eastern Identity: The Test of Whether Human “Progress” is an Illusion (An Artifact of Minority Relations) or a Real Possibility in Human Development

The answer to the question that began this article seems to be that political progress is really a reaction to the alignments of international and domestic power and that even minorities that establish long traditions of promoting political progress and social justice can change their identities and erode this cultural preference in order to meet their short-term interests and respond to their fears.

It also seems that the erosion of movements for political progress in the past three decades seem to be linked to the emergence of the global political reality of a dominant global superpower.

Several questions arise for social scientists, for political progressives, and also for Jews who are caught in conflicting political identifications as global political realities change. If the U.S., as global superpower, continues to lose its position and as new non-European powers arise, that should weaken pressures on progressives in the U.S. to distort their agendas. It should offer an opportunity to see whether the culture of progressive politics has disappeared and whether the process of assimilation passes a point of no return that changes progressive cultures even while they retain other symbols of their identity, or whether the ideals of progress have merely been suppressed out of fear.

As countries in the East (China, Japan, Korea) develop new technologies and rival Europe, will they and other small countries adopt the ideals of political progress as a means of sharing power and of advancing humanity or is there no natural opportunity for these ideas to arise in those cultures? Will intermediaries, like Jews, re-emerge as the traders who pushed the ideals of law, science, and rights within these groups as a counter to movements to merely carve up the spoils of the earth through agreements by great powers?

As oil resources finally disappear in the Middle East and Central Asia and as a “Western” Israel no longer serves as a beach-head for Western military interests in controlling those resources, will Israel’s Jews naturally shift towards a Middle Eastern identity that seeks to rebuild trade relations with its neighbours in the region and more trade routes and cultural ties back towards the Far East? Will Israeli’s Jews reaffirm the cultural traditions of sovereignty of peoples, pluralism, and rights traditions and begin to work again towards recreating the concepts of progress that originally characterized the region? Or will Jewish culture as a “State” continue to reflect the model of State power, self interest, and opposition to progressive political and social justice ideals that are those of minority peoples?⁷³

For Jews in the U.S. and in Israel, there is a question of whether these groups will be able to recognize some of the long-term interests and the changing short-term trends and how actions that seemed to offer “protection” in the short term could be exactly the choice that creates their vulnerability to genocide in the U.S. and to future attack in the Middle East. If the collapse of the U.S. as the major super-power is sudden and results in significant hardship in the U.S., data suggests that Jews face severe risk of being forced out of the country and/or exterminated. As the U.S. Empire contracts, as oil resources are exhausted in the Middle East (over a time frame of some 20 to 40 years), and as climate change wreaks havoc on a vulnerable region that is already largely desert, Israel will begin to lose its trade relations, its financing from American Jews, and its ability to protect itself against huge and impoverished populations in the Middle East. It will be targeted as an island of remaining wealth and a symbol of colonial exploitation and may be unable to protect itself.

This dark vision should be enough to convince Jews to reconsider their current alliances and to begin to think in terms of a more global and more Middle Eastern identity. But even if it does, will that identity simply be one of power and protection or will it also include a vision of political and social progress? Will it reinspire a vision of the Middle East as a mix of peoples whose cultures all have value simply because of their difference, and as a place that defines its values as progress in law, philosophy, and

73. In Yuri Slezkine’s underlying formulation of this social question regarding Jews and other landless peoples, those peoples who are service oriented and landless are those who take up the banner of political progress as part of their culture while those who are landed become conservative. With Jewish populations split between Israelis with a state and minorities elsewhere, there is some chance to test this hypothesis. For now, the answer is that Jews in both places are acting with U.S. and Western elites for reasons of fearing their power rather than out of any cultural difference.

technology as it was in Babylonian, Egyptian, and the high point of the Muslim Middle Ages? Will Jews act to spark new self-concepts in the newly emerging powers of Asia that have also lost links with their earlier traditions of progress or will they continue to abandon them and read different meaning into history?

Watching how events follow these predictions will help tell us whether we are a species that progresses or one that is locked into laws of social behavior that merely changes the actors in a series of processes. Reaction to observations in contributions like these will also offer an insight into how those choices are made and how deeply ideas about progress and future interests are part of human decision-making, if at all.

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