

The American Elections and What it Means for North American Jewry and Israel

By Geoffrey Clarfield

A few days ago I went to a lecture at a Synagogue in Montreal called, "The American Elections and What It Means for North American Jewry and Israel," by Professor David M. Shribman, a Jewish Montreal born dual citizen of Canada and the USA, distinguished professor of politics, with an impressive academic record as well as experience as a political journalist.

Galilee hillsides-photo by Geoffrey Clarfield



I was most anxious to hear what such a worldly commentator had to say about this sea change

in world politics, but it is as if he ended his lecture before answering the question implied in the title.

The Professor's presentation was short. He read out facts about Jewish voting patterns during this most recent election. The takeaway was direct. Most American Jews voted for Kamala

Harris as opposed to Donald Trump, with the exception of a growing number of American Orthodox Jews.

His commentary was short but listening carefully to the little he had to say, he implied that American Jews voted for a style of American governance that valued "the normal way of doing things," implying that the Trump team is and was disruptive.

He also suggested that American Jews voted for democratic values, were pro-immigration (open borders?) and concerned with gender issues as well. He suggested that Israel as an issue was not the number one concern of most American Jewish voters and then to my mind, abruptly ended his presentation and asked for questions.

I was hoping for something more and so, on the train back to Toronto from Montreal I composed what I would have said to the assembled guests that evening, if I had been given the opportunity to address the audience. Here it is.

To answer the question implied in the title of the lecture one must take into account five interest groups, the average American voter, the Democratic Party, The Republican Party, the State of Israel (an existentially threatened and essential ally of the USA) and the Jewish voters of the USA.

During the Obama and Biden years the Democratic Party began distancing itself from Israel, yet most American Jews still voted Democrat. The Republicans, no matter how pro-Israel they spoke, were out of power and the Israelis for their part felt like a deserted, unappreciated ally which the US government was preventing from fighting its enemies, namely Iran and its proxies.

The Biden administration (and Obama before him) gave Iran millions if not billions of frozen funds held during Donald Trump's first term in office thus providing financing for much of the latest proxy war against Israel by its neighbours.

With the re-election of Donald Trump this configuration has changed. Now the Republicans are in power, most American Jews still vote for the Democrats, but Israel is hoping that the new American government will not tie its hands in its pursuance of its enemies, despite the liberal misgivings of a majority of American Jewish voters. So how has this realignment come about and why is it unique? Let us briefly look at all the players.

Let us begin with the American people. The first point to remember is that in US elections no matter how turbulent the middle east is and how threatened the State of Israel is from its radical Islamic enemies, or a hostile Federal Administration like that of Biden, Jews are a small minority in the USA and do not decide the fate of an election in a country that has over 350 million citizens. Americans vote for issues that speak to Americans in the broadest sense and what defines America.

So what did most American citizens vote for when they recently re-elected Donald Trump and a Republican majority in both houses?

The answer is simple. They voted for American exceptionalism, a social contract for daily life as outlined in the Constitution and linked to a realization that since WWII, for better or for worse, the United States of America is the only real guarantor of Western freedom, democracy, and human rights around the world. This implies that for those voters who are aware of foreign policy Israel is an ally fighting for freedom on the borders of a radical Islamic world.

And who are today's Democrats? At the deepest level, and many good academics have explored this, for example in the writings and musings of Professor Victor Davis Hanson, the Democratic party of 2024 is now a party of wealthy, credentialed politicians, high tech authoritarian donors most of whom behave like actors and who are supported by actors who behave

like politicians.

Most of them are either consciously or unconsciously influenced by various forms of Marxist thought, which preaches that America and free markets are the enemies of human progress and must be cut down to size or eliminated altogether.

This world view is embodied in the persona of Barack Obama who many argue has been the puppet master behind both Biden and Harris. Had Harris been elected she would have become Obama III.

With Biden and Obama's former appointees in charge the American government at every level has been acting on this premise for the last four years and the results are evident. America is weak, the economy is weak, and it is neither respected by friends nor enemies.

The Republicans, a party that has been thoroughly transformed from the ground up, have once again reclaimed their legacy as common-sense constitutionalists who believe in the promise of America, its free markets, rule of law and equality of opportunity, not results.

Today's Republicans including President Trump, lean towards a constitutionally restrained libertarianism, whereas Democrats would prefer a top-down European socialist state. Republicans are against the Democrat driven policies of diversity, inclusion, and equity (and which seems to spontaneously generate BDS-boycott of Israel) which permeates the media, the Ivy Leagues, and most liberal universities.

Simply put, today the Republican Party represents the promise of America so well described by that French visitor to the USA in the 1840s, who wrote his masterful, almost anthropological description of American democracy in action, **Democracy in America**, Count Alexis de Tocqueville.

The Democrats represent the failed promise of 19th and 20th century Marxism and the emotional excitement that so appeals to youth, "revolutionary transformation."

Today the Democrats represent a firm rejection of the De Toquevillean legacy and have a set of values that are not only Marxist, but go against some of the fundamental Judeo Christian values implied in a Constitution under God, that for example, men and women are created in the image of God, parents have authority over children and gender is defined at birth.

American Jews mostly vote for the Democratic Party and did so once again in this election. Related to this is the fact that most American Jews, some of whom I met and worked with in Manhattan for a full three years and got to know quite well, are increasingly inclined to distance themselves from the rights of the State of Israel to exist.

And so they are not much bothered on how the Biden administration and its supporters in the mainstream media have continued to blame the victim, that is Israel, in its latest and ongoing war of survival after October 7th by threatening to cut off arms shipments and coming close to accusing Israel of the genocide which its Islamic neighbors so dearly desire for the Jewish state.

American Jewish voters for the Democrats also do not demand push back from the centre of the Democratic Party (if it still exists) against the tsunami of anti-Semitic anti-Zionism that permeates the growing power of the left wing of the Democratic party. This includes Jewish renegades like Bernie Sanders and radical Islamic partners in perfidy such as Ilhan Omar and other members of what President Trump has aptly named "the squad," highlighting their attraction to authoritarian practices, regimes, and their glorification of radical Islam in America and around the world.

Shockingly, there has not been the slightest trace of criticism coming from Obama and then Biden and the Democrats of the fact that all Arab states and most Islamic states are tyrannies of various sorts, some of them being Jihad exporting Sharia based Islamic states, who treat women, racial and religious minorities as unequal before the law.

Although it will not be perfect, the Trump administration will be much more supportive of this latest war of independence of the Jewish state for Republicans know, both Jewish and non-Jewish at a deep level, that both the USA and Israeli are exceptional democracies. They will also deter foreign conflicts by an increased and strong US military presence at home and abroad.

So what is new about this picture? What is new is that we will soon have an American government and a Republican Party that is more pro-Israel than the majority of American Jews. This is unprecedented in the annals of Jewish and American history.

How did this happen? It is worth pausing for a moment to describe just how. Oceans of ink have been spilled over this topic but let me suggest some of the most recent, proximate factors. And so here are some of the reasons that a majority of what are statistically called American Jews voted for Kamala. It is an interesting tale.

After WWII, after the victory over Nazism, after the Holocaust and after the rise of the State of Israel, American Jews and their communal institutions were one of the wealthiest and most well-endowed of Jewish communities since the Romans destroyed the Temple.

Given the wide, almost unconscious but mild religious and social prejudice that still faced the Jewish communities of the USA and Canada, after the war Jews did two things. They encouraged their children to respect authority, listen to their teachers and professors, study hard and blend into the

wider society (be a Jew at home and an American in public).

They hoped that strong Synagogues and extracurricular Jewish education and summer camps would create a new American Jew, one at home with the dominant culture, a firm friend of Israel and at least Jewish by religious identity.

This paradigm failed dismally. During a historically unusual period, for about three decades after the war, the wider society of America became less discriminatory. Religious attendance and belief in Christianity was in decline as was the same for Jews and Judaism. There were no social barriers between Jews and non-Jews at US colleges and so the inter-marriage rate skyrocketed.

It has been estimated that among the non-Orthodox more than 75% of American Jews since WWII have married non-Jews. And they do not raise their children in the Jewish faith. Today's American Jews, unlike Canadian Jews, have rarely felt like they are a minority. Most do not know or speak Hebrew, have not read the Bible, are unaware of Jewish history and rarely visit Israel.

Since the rise of the Marxist oriented Frankfurt school in US universities, the children of American Jews who have so obediently listened to their professors have been influenced by this latest Marxist permutation that has morphed into an anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist ideology.

Some renegade American Jews like Noam Chomsky, Bernie Sanders or the academic Judith Butler, depict Israel as a colonial state occupying the indigenous land of Palestine, which is assumed to be unquestionably Arab and Muslim coupled with an erasure of its Biblical Jewish history.

These assimilated American Jews are colossally uninformed that an Arab Muslim Palestinian state has been in existence in Mandated Palestine for over a century-the fake Kingdom of Jordan.

So what does this realignment of these five groups mean for North American Jewry and Israel?

Liberal Jewish Democratic party voters will remain lukewarm about Israel. They will assimilate even further into the dominant society, and they will give rise to a generation of hip, privileged left leaning college graduates who are knee jerk, indoctrinated anti-Zionists who at the same time may also feel comfortable boasting that “their grandmother or grandfather” was or is Jewish.

On the Republican side a growing number of modern Orthodox American Jews represented by the likes of young conservative media stars like Ben Shapiro, will lead a growing demographic rise of traditionalists who along with their Conservative non Jewish American allies, will vote Republican, for they are the sole party that recognizes the parallel nature of American and Israeli democratic exceptionalism. Together with supporters of the Republican party they will begin the long task of undoing the Woke culture that has come to dominate government, media, colleges and universities. Many of the Jews in the USA, a demographic majority, will be on the wrong side of this fight.

I believe that the speaker at this lecture that I attended is aware of this recent and dramatic reconfiguration of American voters, Democrats, Republicans, the U.S. Federal government, and the State of Israel in its fight for survival.

Why he chose not to share it with us during his presentation is beyond my ken, as the writing is on the wall for those who care to read it.

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