

# If Canada and Israel are at War, Who Gets My Support? Challenges of Competing Diaspora Loyalties: Marshall Sklare Award Lecture

Morton Weinfeld

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**Abstract** This paper seeks to examine the issue of competing loyalties for diaspora Jews, using Canadian Jews as a case study. The Jewish case has become marginal in the study of diasporas and transnational ties. This is particularly the case where we find real or perceived political conflict, which Jews have encountered historically as the charge of dual loyalty. The history of anti-Semitism, notably after the Enlightenment, and debates about Zionism were precursors of this current dilemma for Jews, and indeed other diasporic minorities. Interviews with Canadian Jewish leaders, and a review of the case of a prominent Canadian Jewish politician, illustrate that the tensions of status insecurity continue to be found even in a highly successful and integrated Jewish community such as that in Canada.

**Keywords** Diaspora · Transnationalism · Dual loyalty · Canada · Jews · Israel · Zionism

I want to pay tribute to a few individuals, among very many, who helped shape my intellectual development in terms of the social scientific study of modern Jewry. When I was an undergraduate student at McGill University in the late 1960s, I spent one summer working as a research assistant to Louis Rosenberg, the researcher for the Canadian Jewish Congress. In 1939 he published *Canada's Jews*, a work that was decades ahead of its time in marshaling Canadian census data to provide a truly

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Randal Schnoor and Jacqueline Wilson assisted in the research for the paper. Elements of this paper were presented at a panel discussion for Oyfn Veg (On the Road): A Symposium on Canadian Jewish Studies in Honour of Professor Gerald Tulchinsky, University of Toronto, Nov. 17, 2013. Some portions of the text are drawn from a treatment of this topic published earlier (Weinfeld 2011–12). In addition, I should note that Irwin Cotler, Canadian law professor, Jewish leader, and politician, whose career is analyzed later in this paper, is a personal friend.

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M. Weinfeld (✉)  
McGill University, Montreal, Canada  
e-mail: morton.weinfeld@mcgill.ca

comprehensive portrait of Canadian Jewry. Rosenberg was a comparativist, so his scores of tables included many comparing Jews to other Canadian ethnic and religious groups.

In the 1970s, four professors at Harvard, where I completed my doctorate, played a role. Nathan Glazer, my adviser, taught me that one could produce valuable work by careful reflection and “pondering” social problems. Seymour Martin Lipset stressed to me in word and through his work, the importance of understanding Jews by studying and understanding non-Jews. Daniel Moynihan taught me, when doing social science, and despite the seductions of complex multivariate equations, to value the forest over the trees. In his words, “seek simplicity.” From John Porter, the dean of Canadian sociology whom I met during his sabbatical at Harvard, author of *The Vertical Mosaic*, I learned what it meant to be a “liberal assimilationist” as he described himself—though I am not.

And of course there are countless others, notably from a graduate year at the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University, and the many scholars of the ASSJ. I also was fortunate to be able to audit part of a course from Marshall Sklare at Brandeis, while I was at Harvard, which makes the Sklare award even more meaningful.

### **Diasporas and Dual Loyalties in Canada and in General**

Among my interests in the study of modern Jewry has been the challenge facing Canadian Jews in the political arena, when championing Jewish communal causes in the face of opposition from other quarters, including the Canadian government (Taras and Weinfeld 2010; Troper and Weinfeld 1988). While one can analyze these cases within a framework of interest group politics, for Jews they may also harken back to historic charges of dual loyalty. When I was a little boy I used to ask my father: “Daddy, who would we support if Canada and Israel had a war?” I have forgotten his precise answer, but I know I would regularly pose the question. I do not recall why. But for some reason, over 50 years later, I find myself returning to that question, but in modified form. Luckily, Canada and Israel are not about to fight a war.

In my defense, I could note that this was my childish restatement of some of the questions posed by Napoleon in 1806 to over 100 Jewish notables in Paris, helping to define parameters for emancipation. I suggest that these questions remain pertinent for any diasporic Jewish community in the post-emancipation era:

1. In the eyes of French Jews, are Frenchmen considered brothers or strangers?
2. What conduct does Jewish law prescribe toward Frenchmen not of that religion?
3. Do the Jews born in France and treated by the law as French citizens consider France their country? Are they bound to defend it?

The notables’ answers were of course what we would call assimilationist, or accommodationist, commensurate with the times. The Jews were eager to appear as

ideal citizens, with no problems of dual loyalties. I would like to explore the controversial issue of dual or competing/conflicting loyalty, with reference to Jews in general, and the Canadian Jewish case in particular. In the following discussion when I define dual loyalties I am excluding clearly illegal acts such as treason, sabotage, espionage, terrorism, etc. Committing or supporting actions like those of Jonathan Pollard are not the focus here—though many Jews might feel conflicted about that case because they felt, and still believe, that the punishment meted out to Pollard was too harsh.

The use of the term “loyalty” can be seen as somewhat provocative. But the loyalty issue has a history and present worth (re)exploring. I am also not focusing mainly on the broad issue of hybrid Jewish identities which are more pronounced in the West. Indeed, for most areas of life and citizenship Jewish and non-Jewish values, norms, and behaviors coalesce very well (Fishman 2000). Rather the focus here is on those few—but important—occasions when Jewish host country loyalties become problematic and conflictual.

In the past decades, among sociologists, anthropologists, and demographers working in the field of modern Jewish studies, and certainly for those focusing on North America, these dual loyalty questions have taken a back seat. For many they are distasteful. For some they reek of anti-Semitism. Rather, the dominant focus of research has been the fear of assimilation. Will your grandchildren be Jewish? And what does being Jewish mean anyway, in this open and post-modern North American milieu? In the United States, periodic national surveys of Jewish identity, most recently the Pew survey (2013), have stoked the fires of this concern.

I also note at the outset that there is an extensive literature on Israel diaspora-relations (also see below). Part of this body of work relates to the distancing debate: How attached are diaspora Jews to Israel? And what are the consequences or causes of distancing, if any, to diasporic Jewish identity (Sasson 2014)? Another issue of academic and public debate relates to public criticism of or dissent from Israeli policy by engaged diaspora Jews, from the political right or left. Indeed a recent issue of the journal *Israel Studies* featured a symposium on “Loyalty and Criticism in relations between World Jewry and Israel” (Saxe and Boxer 2012; Sheffer 2012). These are both important and fascinating topics. But for both these issues, the conversation is focused on Israel, on loyalty to Israel, and on Jewish identities. I would like to suggest a rebalancing of this conversation on Jewish loyalties and engagements.

Think of the notion of a Jewish-Canadian, or a Jewish-American, or if you prefer, Canadian Jew, American Jew, etc.: “Jews in the US are deeply enmeshed in the larger society; it is impossible to understand them without understanding their social context” (Burstein 2010, p. 217). For the past three decades, analytical energy has focused mainly on the Jewish side of the hyphen. I would like to suggest it is time to restore more of a balance, to add more focus on the Canadian or American (or British or Mexican, etc.) side of the hyphen. In what ways are Jews today being Canadian or American? What does it mean? And where does Israel fit in? Is there a zero-sum relation at work, or can both be maximized? If not, how does one manage the trade-off?

The issue of dual or competing loyalty is relevant to this broad topic. It may be time to revisit the traditional positive and optimistic Jewish responses to those

Napoleonic questions. This makes sense in the prevailing reality and discourse of transnationalism, globalization, and even dual citizenships. Indeed the issue is exacerbated by the prevailing equal rights paradigm which dominates law and discourse on minorities. And all this applies even in the near idyllic Canadian case. The assumption made here is that, for identified North American Jews, the integration of ties to Israel, or links to community and tradition, with the host society may require a process of negotiation which is not always straightforward—even though Jews have seemingly “made it” in North America.

Fraternity is even more of a challenge than liberty or equality. Recall the iconic joke: *An old Jew is on his deathbed. He asks his wife to summon a priest so he can convert. She cries: Morris, your whole life you have been a devout Jew! Why convert now? He replies: Better one of them should die than one of us!* Even as we laugh, there is an undertone of an ‘us-them’ dichotomy that requires exploration and might make us uneasy. Historians, more than others, have been perhaps attuned to this issue. This is not surprising, since it is past generations of Jews that have dealt with the issues of marginality, dual loyalties, and suspicion.

My own interest in this area was nurtured by involvements over the years as a scholar and government policy advisor dealing with non-Jewish groups in Canada, and with the evolution of Canadian multicultural policy. As an example, I co-authored a paper in 1996 entitled “Canadian Jews and Canadian Multiculturalism” (Troper and Weinfeld 1996).

Analyzing the general issue of (Jewish) dual loyalties remains topical and salient, even though some would see it as inherently racist or discriminatory (Baron 2009). In the United States, since 1964, about 30 % of Americans believe Jews are more loyal to Israel (Anti-Defamation League 2013). The Pew survey reports that 30 % of Jews are *very* attached to Israel (39 % of Jews are *somewhat* attached); 43 % say caring about Israel is *essential* to being a Jew (and 44 % *important*); 43 % have visited Israel; and 31 % felt the United States is *not supportive enough* to Israel (Pew 2013, ch. 5). People can debate whether these numbers indicate a glass half-full or half-empty. The popular Jewish press has seen recent articles discussing this special relationship. For example, Hillel Halkin argued “Why American Jews Shouldn’t be Afraid to put Israel First” (2013). In Europe, and indeed Latin America, these issues have a different resonance, as the status of the Jews as iconic outsider has been more pronounced, for many reasons, than in North America (Bokser Liwerant 2008; Gitelman et al. 2003).

In Canada, there is less communal and general debate than in the United States on Jewish loyalty issues. But commitment to Israel has emerged as a decisive political factor among Jewish voters, fueling a shift to support for the Conservative Party in federal politics—more pronounced than any Jewish shift to Republicans. The Canadian Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, formerly Justice Minister, represents Mount Royal, a Montreal riding [electoral district] with a large Jewish population. But he has said that for the first time in the federal election in 2011 he feels he did NOT get a majority of the Jewish vote, but rather owed his victory to the strong support among visible minority and immigrant voters in his riding. The reason: Jewish voters in his riding concerned with the welfare of Israel preferred to support the strongly pro-Israel government of Stephen Harper (Arnold 2011, May 12). And the

perceived political shift of Canadian Jews rightward, linked to the Conservative government's strong pro-Israel positions, is an increasingly frequent feature of news commentary and academic writing (Merkley 2011; Offman 2013, November 30).

In general the evidence suggests that Canadian immigrants and minorities can combine interest in a homeland's welfare or policies with local political integration or participation (Black 2011; Black and Leithner 1988; Bloemraad 2006; Wong 2007/08). This research less frequently looks at the political participation of minorities in terms of the content of advocacy positions. Moreover during the occasional periods of serious geo-political tension or conflict between Canada and that homeland, any transnational connection can become particularly problematic. Such conflicts are of course not new to Canada, and not unique to Jews. During World War I, "enemy aliens," notably Ukrainians and Germans suffered abuse, prejudice, discrimination, and internment in Canada. This was the lot of Canadians of Japanese, German, and Italian ancestry during World War II (Adachi 1991; Hillmer et al. 1988; Iacovetta et al. 2000; Kordan 2002). And of course the shadow of these events has hung over the response, in Canada and other western nations, to the events of 9/11, trying to strike a balance between avoiding Islamophobia while monitoring militant Islamist groups (Arat-Koc 2006; Yousif 2008).

Even the legal status of holding dual citizenship, a phenomenon which is growing in Canada, has become suspect. Many Canadians opposed using Canadian funds and resources to repatriate absentee dual Canadian and Lebanese citizens caught during the 2006 clash between Israel and Hezbollah (Nyers 2010). More generally, even respected political leaders have faced some suspicion or skepticism for holding dual citizenship. Stephane Dion, former leader of the Liberal Party, Michaëlle Jean, former Governor General of Canada, and Thomas Mulcair, leader of the New Democratic Party, each have held French citizenship. These dual citizenships provoked significant press commentary, much of it critical (Jedwab 2007/2008). In any event, some of the skepticism concerning dual citizenship, with an undertone of doubt about possible conflicting loyalties, is captured by the recent comment of Prime Minister Harper, referring to the Mulcair case: "In my case, I am very clear: I'm a Canadian and only a Canadian" (Davis 2012, January 18). Former Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff routinely found his loyalty to Canada challenged because of his nearly 30-year period of work and residence in Britain and the United States. In other words, even mainstream leaders of Canadian political parties have had to deal with possibly suspect loyalties...so why not Canadian Jews?

A dominant contemporary frame for the study of these cases of charges of dual loyalty has been one of victimization and injustice. Less attention has focused on the challenges faced and decisions taken by these minorities themselves and their Canadian communal leaders. Thus, an examination of the situation of Japanese, German, and Italian Canadian communities before, during, and most interestingly *after* World War II has revealed findings that are more nuanced than the binary of national security versus unfair victimization (Massa and Weinfeld 2010).

Following the war, these groups adopted two postures to achieve full reintegration into the Canadian social fabric. At first the communities emphasized rather deferentially the imperatives of re-establishing their acceptance as patriotic Canadians. As one Italian Canadian leader put it, "We needed to prove we were

good Canadians.” This posture reflects the prevailing social and political inequalities and can be called an *accommodationist paradigm*. In contrast, the subsequent attempt to seek compensation and apologies for these wartime injustices relied on a legalistic and even militant posture grounded in notions of equal rights (Massa and Weinfeld 2010). This second approach, which can be called an *equal rights paradigm*, is sustained by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, passed only in 1982, and the general embrace of equal citizenship for all. The equal rights paradigm now dominates the discourse of all minorities.

A legacy of the Holocaust has been a determination for greater opposition to anti-Semitism in all its forms, crystallized in the well-known motto of “Never Again.” This is the Jewish expression of the militant equal rights paradigm mentioned above. Thus Jewish organizations in the West—and Canada—were allegedly insufficiently militant in pressuring their governments for rescue and resettlement of Jewish refugees before, during, and after World War II (Abella and Troper 1982). For Canadian Jews, it has been argued that this period of new self-confidence as equal citizens began in the 1960s. It was reflected in vigorous communal opposition to Canadian neo-Nazi movements, the emergence of an aggressive movement for freedom for Soviet Jews, and in strong and public support for Israel before and after the 1967 war (Troper 2010).

## Diaspora Studies and the Jews

In setting the context for the discussion of the Canadian Jewish case, this paper relates to two literatures. The first is the extensive writing on diasporas, transnationalism, and globalization, which can also relate to dual loyalty issues. In an earlier time, the Jewish case was indeed prominent in these areas. The entry on “diaspora” in the 1937 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* written by historian Simon Dubnow, confirms the iconic importance of the Jewish case in earlier discussions of diasporas. His article was about five pages in length and devoted about half a page to a discussion of the Armenian and Greek diaspora cases; the *entire* rest of the article focused on the Jewish case. The Jewish case was then recognized as archetypical (Dubnow 1937; Safran 2005).

Things began to change in the 1990s. In one overview the Jewish case was recognized as historically relevant but with less contemporary salience: “...scholars of diaspora recognize that the Jewish tradition is at the heart of any definition of the concept. Yet if it is necessary to take full account of this tradition, it is also necessary to transcend it” (Cohen 1997, p. 21). And indeed, the origin of the Jewish conception of diaspora is the harmful experience of exile. This may be seen as somewhat limiting given the range of contemporary diasporic experiences, even for the Jews who have found in North America far more congenial diasporic options (Vertovec 2009, pp. 129–135). In any case, the centrality of the Jewish case has continued to erode, despite the work of some scholars (Sasson 2014; Shain 2007; Sheffer 2003). This disengagement has been more pronounced in European work (see as examples Gamlen 2006, 2008; Khagram and Levitt 2008).

This degree of “academic apartheid” seems not to exist, or at least not to the same extent, in Canada. The first major edited volume on the subject, *Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada*, contains 13 chapters, and one of them does indeed deal with the Jewish case (Wong and Satzewich 2006). Moreover, a conference sponsored by Canadian Ethnic Studies and the Association for Canadian Studies in the fall of 2011, on the 40th anniversary of Canadian multiculturalism, featured 79 presentations, and three of those dealt with a Jewish topic. On the other hand, two recent annual national Canadian Metropolis conferences dealing with issues of immigrant integration, in 2011 and 2012, present a different picture. Out of hundreds of presentations, none focused directly on the Jewish case, in Canada or elsewhere (see [www.metropolis.net](http://www.metropolis.net)).

So the academic disciplines have changed. How to explain this drifting of the Jewish case to the periphery and beyond, notably in Europe but even in Canada? Note that this marginalization can be found for all the older and established white, migrant groups. One explanation is simply that the European Jewish minority is much smaller now than in the pre-1945 period. And Jewish migration to Canada, while still significant, is far less than for other non-white groups. Yet another explanation is that the roster of current issues of concern to researchers in these areas, such as asylum seekers, Islamophobia, remittances, racism, discrimination, and socio-economic inequalities, are no longer seen as issues relating to Jews. Most of the communities of recent study involve a large post-war, post-colonial, and non-European migration from a homeland to a variety of immigrant-receiving countries. By contrast, most diasporic Jewish communities are now perceived as majority non-immigrant, and white or European. (*Mizrachi* Jews are often ignored.) And finally, it is possible that this perceived trait, along with the evident economic success of Jews, and the negative political assessments of Israel with regard to Palestine in much of European and Canadian academe, make the Jewish case ideologically less welcome. These are just conjectures.

There is another scholarly literature which has addressed the issue of Jewish diasporas. It can be divided into three subsets. One focuses on the structure and working of the Jewish diaspora (e.g., Ben-Rafael and Sternberg 2009, ch. 11–20). This focus can also be found in this journal and in Jewish think-tank reports. As just one example, the Israel-based Jewish People Policy Institute, associated with the Jewish Agency for Israel, has produced a variety of papers and studies on precisely these areas, most of them data-driven and social-scientific (see [www.jpipi.org.il](http://www.jpipi.org.il)). Other examples include the “distancing debate” (Beinart 2010) and the 2010 special issue of *Contemporary Jewry* devoted to it, and the evaluation studies of Birthright (Saxe et al. 2009).

The second subset is a strain of social scientific analysis which relates to diaspora Jewish political behavior and to links with Israel, including political analyses of the Jewish vote, Jews and ethnic politics, and the so-called Israel or Jewish lobby (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007; Tivnan 1987). Sasson suggests that overall the connections between American Jews and Israel remain strong, but there is a shift taking place from a political “mobilization” to a more personal “engagement” approach (2014). This shift may possibly suggest a reduction in possible future tensions of a dual loyalty type. There have also been Canadian studies. Some of

these relate to Canadian Middle East policy, including the functioning of the Canada Israel Committee (Barry 2010; Goldberg 1990; Sasley and Jacoby 2007; Taras and Goldberg 1989; Taras and Weinfeld 2010). One detailed study compared the Jewish and Ukrainian polities and their efforts on the issue of alleged Nazi war criminals in Canada (Troper and Weinfeld 1988). While all these strands of Jewish scholarship are social scientific, they interface infrequently with the current research and writing in the fields of diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization.

The third subset, which is not social scientific, has been developed mainly by philosophers, historians, professors, intellectuals, rabbis of all persuasions, diasporic Jewish and Israeli communal leaders and elected political leaders. This is the literature which has evolved as part of the early debates on Zionism, in the late 19th and 20th century (Hertzberg 1969). It has been reshaped in the post-war period as the impact of Israel on diasporic Jewish identity, and indeed on the actual and desirable nature of the linkage between diaspora Jewry and Israel, including conceptions about post-Zionism. This literature is largely prescriptive, rather than neutral or analytical, and flows out of debates about the Jewish encounter with modernity, with liberal democracy, and with modern anti-Semitism, historically interconnected and understood as “the Jewish Question.”

The Jewish Question is a precursor, perhaps **the** precursor, of the multicultural dilemma: How can liberal democratic societies encourage equal citizenship while allowing social space for the perpetuation of minority identities and communities? In the post-1948 period this dilemma and its related dual loyalty possibility was crystallized in a famous exchange of letters, beginning in 1950, between Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and Jacob Blaustein, head of the American Jewish Committee (AJC). The AJC was concerned that the establishment of Israel might raise concerns about dual loyalty, and thus hamper the struggle for American Jews for full acceptance in their new homeland. Blaustein was concerned to clarify the exact nature of the link between diaspora Jewry and the new state of Israel. He was a non-Zionist, though supportive of the state of Israel, and wanted to clarify to Ben Gurion that American Jews’ first loyalties were and would remain with the United States. Israel would not be interfering in the life of American Jewry, and vice versa (Liebman 1974)...The Napoleonic questions again...

This early debate on Zionism was eventually superseded by one focusing on Israel-diaspora relations, which was also more ideological and prescriptive (Beilin 2000; Hazony et al. 2006). Most recently, this debate has addressed the concept of Jewish “peoplehood.” This focus is reflected in such institutes as the JPPI and in scholarly volumes such as *Jewish Peoplehood: Change and Challenge* (Revivi and Koplewitz 2008). Indeed, organizations like the World Jewish Congress, or the International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians, operationalize the peoplehood concept. The premise underlying these debates is generally that Jewish peoplehood (in the transnational sense) exists, and that there are, can be, and should be ties among all Jewish communities, and between Israel and the diaspora. So much for the Ben Gurion-Blaustein agreement.

The worldwide Jewish polity today operates on the premise that Jews have an interdependence of fate, and thus a transnational responsibility for each other: *kol yisrael arevim zeh la-zeh*, or “all Israel are bound up one with another.” Thus



Jewish NGOs are concerned not only with the welfare of Israel, but also with Jewish communities in distress everywhere, from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia to France or Argentina. And the NGOs will now press all those concerns, as effectively as possible, even in the face of governmental resistance. This interventionist approach challenges the premise of the Napoleonic replies, or the Ben Gurion-Blaustein correspondence, and indeed some of the conventional understandings of citizenship. The suspect issue of dual loyalty, and the more benign notion of solidarity and mutual responsibility, may be two sides of the same coin.

### The Challenge of Dual Loyalties for Jews

The very first example of “recorded” anti-Semitism, it can be argued, is the chilling command by Pharaoh in Exodus 1:10, *hava nit’chacma lo*, “Come let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and if war break out they join our enemies and fight against us.” So this foundational myth of anti-Semitism is based on a geo-political, fifth column-like fear of suspect loyalty, and not on any assumption of Jewish racial inferiority, or religious error. This theme is repeated throughout the rabbinic literature, when Jews like all minorities lived in places where they had few or no rights. Thus the “accommodationist” Talmudic dictum of *dina de’malchuta dina* states succinctly that “the laws of the kingdom in which you live are the laws” (Nedarim 3:3). Jews were strongly advised to obey the laws of the state, and not challenge them. Or as one finds in Jeremiah 29:7, “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” In this same spirit, one finds today in most North American and other synagogues formal prayers for the welfare of the host country. (It is ironic that this prayer is recited alongside a prayer for the welfare of the state of Israel.)

For Jews and other religious minorities, this approach began to change in the 18<sup>th</sup> century following Emancipation. Today, in liberal democracies minorities participate fully while being allowed, or encouraged, to retain their particularistic identities. Synthesizing these two objectives poses a challenge to all diverse liberal-democratic societies, whether or not they are officially “multicultural.” This synthesis proves difficult enough when the issues at hand are cultural differences or economic inequalities. Political differences are far more challenging. Liberal (Canadian) theorists argue that in fact competing rights of individuals, groups, and the liberal state can be accommodated (Kymlicka 1998; Taylor and Guttman 1994). Perhaps. But this accommodation is certainly most difficult when conditions of geo-political conflict arise, with a real or perceived national security dimension. In general, minorities as equal citizens have the right to dissent from, challenge, and attempt to change government policy. Yet this exercise of rights may also alienate majority Canadians who support those policies. Minority groups must engage in trade-offs when negotiating an optimum response to such delicate oppositions. And this applies to Jews.

Jews have for a long time wrestled with the canard of dual loyalty, as one of several dimensions of anti-Semitism. In Canada this concern dates back at least to

the debate about the acceptance of the Jewish Ezekiel Hart into the parliament of Lower Canada (now Quebec) following his election by the voters of Three Rivers in 1807. Newspapers of the day printed letters opposing his entry into the Assembly, and the fear of disloyalty was clearly an issue: “By what right can a Jew who is only worried about himself and his sect expect to look after the interest of the whole nation? And what reason is there to expect that such a man would work in the interests of the common good?” (Tulchinsky 1992, p. 25).

With the rise of the Zionist movement, there was concern among Jewish elites in the liberal-democratic West that the movement would give renewed impetus to the suspicions of dual loyalty, and thus fuel anti-Semitism and set back full integration. This was certainly the case for Reform Jews. Thus, in the United States, Louis Brandeis sought to negate this danger by asserting that Zionism was not aimed at comfortable American Jews and that Zionism and Americanism were in fact symbiotically related and mutually reinforcing (Brandeis 1942). Reconciling the two was no problem. In Canada, where Reform Judaism was far weaker, the Zionist movement enjoyed greater support, and the fears of dual loyalty were relatively muted. In general, since Canadian identity—still linked to Britain and France—was weaker than the post-revolutionary American identity, tensions between Jewish/Zionist identities and a weaker Canadian identity were fewer (Tulchinsky 1992, pp. xxii–xxiii; 1998, pp. 145–146). As early as World War I, 300 Jewish Canadians volunteered for the Jewish Legion, to fight alongside British soldiers to liberate Palestine from Ottoman rule. In 1947–48 a disproportionate number of Canadian Jews went to fight for an independent Jewish state (Bercuson 1984). And after the creation of the state, the percentage of Canadian Jews who made *aliyah* was higher than the United States, though comparable to or less than Britain and South Africa (Central Bureau of Statistics 2011). In short, the Canadian Jewish link to Israel is strong. More recently, at least two-thirds of Canadian Jews have visited Israel, whereas only 42 % of American Jews have done so (Pew Research Center 2013; Weinfeld 2001, p. 361).

This popular connection has had its organizational dimension. The Canada Israel Committee (CIC) was formed in 1970 by the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), B’nai Brith, and the Canadian Zionist Federation. It was hoped the CIC would advance the case for Israel in a more professional manner, following the trauma of the 1967 war. In 2011 the Centre for Israel and Jewish Advocacy was created by Canadian Jewish communal leaders (and not without a good deal of controversy), as a replacement of the CIC and the venerable Canadian Jewish Congress to further professionalize and centralize advocacy on behalf of Israel in Canada. This activism has created a context where Canadian Jewish ties to Israel have on occasion caused concern about dual loyalty conflicts.

In 1988, the then Minister of External Affairs Joe Clark caused a stir among Canadian Jewish supporters of Israel when he criticized alleged human rights violations by Israel during the first intifada, at a gathering of the CIC. This prompted a hostile reaction from his audience. And that in turn prompted press criticism, most strongly from the *Toronto Star*, which editorialized about Clark’s comments: “It was also a necessary reminder to members of the Jewish community of Canada that they are citizens of Canada, not Israel” (Weinfeld 2001, p. 259). Subsequently

allegations or suspicions of dual loyalty were leveled against high-profile Canadian Jews. Norman Spector, former chief of staff to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, was appointed to be the first Jewish ambassador from Canada to Israel in 1992. (In fact he was the first Jewish diplomat of any sort sent to Israel.) Veteran foreign affairs analyst Peyton Lyon claimed that among the professional foreign affairs community there was resentment of “the lobbying that has distorted what they believe best for Canada, the United States, and even Israel” (Lyon 1988). A more pointed episode concerned a case where Mossad agents used Canadian passports from Canadian Jews in a botched assassination attempt. The Canadian government angrily recalled the ambassador to Israel, David Berger, who happened also to be Jewish (Weinfeld 2001, pp. 259–61).

These cases raise the issue of how Canadian Jewish communal and/or political leaders actually negotiate possibly conflicting sentiments or obligations.

### **The Case of Irwin Cotler**

The career of former Canadian Justice Minister Irwin Cotler illustrates this issue and is worth considering in some detail. Cotler, a McGill law professor for many years, is a very well-known Jewish communal leader and served as President of the Canadian Jewish Congress from 1980–83. While there have been other Jewish federal Cabinet Ministers, none has combined a senior Cabinet position with the degree of personal and communal Jewish activism as has Cotler.

Cotler was born in 1940, and was a law professor at McGill University until 1999, when he was first elected to the House of Commons in the largely Jewish Montreal riding of Mount Royal, formerly held by Pierre Trudeau. As a law professor he had been deeply involved in various human rights campaigns, notably that of Natan Sharansky, other Soviet Jewish refuseniks, and Nelson Mandela. In Parliament, he served as Justice Minister and Attorney General in the Liberal government of Paul Martin, from 2003 to 2006. Since then he has served as an opposition MP, focusing on human rights issues.

His ties to the Jewish world are strong. A native Montrealer, he attended Jewish schools and a Hebrew-speaking summer camp near Montreal, is a member of an Orthodox synagogue, and is married to Ariela Cotler, an Israeli who used to work in the office of Prime Minister Begin. He owns an apartment in Israel and has a daughter who lives there. He has been a strong public presence in Canadian Jewish life for over 45 years, regularly quoted in the *Canadian Jewish News*. He has been on a first-name basis with many of Israel’s (and Canada’s) major political figures.

Cotler has argued that serious clashes between commitments as a Jew and Canadian were an impossibility. When campaigning for the CJC presidency, and well before he entered federal politics, he said “the agendas, Jewish and Canadian, not only interlock more than ever before, but impact upon each other in ways that hitherto have not been experienced...There is no distinction between being a good Jew and being a good Canadian” (Lazarus and Burkham 1980, April 2). When beginning his term as CJC President in 1980, he claimed he would emphasize human rights in general over any narrower set of Jewish interests, since human

rights represented, in his view, the quintessential Canadian and Jewish philosophy (Lazarus 1980, May 14). Later, Cotler would cite the example of Judge Brandeis, arguing that one could be both “a good Zionist and a good American.” He felt his commitments to Israel, and to civil rights courses, were intertwined: “We all have multiple identities.” He was moved by the American civil rights struggles in 1965–66, when he spent a year at Yale, and the following year in Israel, during the 1967 war. When he was sworn into the Canadian Cabinet in 2006, he cited, in Hebrew, the Biblical injunction, *tzedek tzedek tirdof* (justice, justice, you shall pursue) (Cotler 2007).

Throughout his political career Cotler has had to confront allegations of dual loyalty. He expressed concern about the chilling impact of the charge of dual loyalty on free speech (Chottiner 2007, January 19). When he was appointed Justice Minister in 2003, John Asfour, past president of the Canadian Arab Federation argued: “Mr. Cotler and some of the Jewish lobby have supported Israel blindly. If Cotler is going to be fair to all Canadians, he should cut all his connections with the Israeli government and leave the Canadian-Israeli relationship with Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister” (*Sudbury Star* 2003, December 13). Bloggers were even harsher: “Israel’s pariah status among the family of nations is entirely justified. Cotler’s odious, fallacious sophistries to the contrary show that he speaks for a foreign government, and must therefore be expelled from Cabinet” (Felton 2004, January 22).

A review of several policy issues impacting Jews or the Middle East shows that on many of these, the positions of Mr. Cotler, before and during his time in Parliament, were at odds, at times, with those of the Canadian government. These differences required negotiation between commitments as a strongly identified Jew and supporter of Israel, and as a senior Canadian politician. In general, the requirements of Cabinet solidarity from 2003 to 2006 minimized his public disagreements with government policy, compared to periods when he was simply an MP or prior to his election to Parliament in 1999.

1. Cotler investigated the Arab boycott (primary and secondary) of Canadian companies dealing with Israel. He tried, unsuccessfully, to get legislation passed to counter the boycott but the Canadian Liberal government, worried about economic ties with Saudi Arabia, refused (Stanislawski 1981).
2. Cotler was very active in the campaign for Soviet Jewry, and notably served as a legal counsel for Natan Sharansky. In principle, the Canadian government was sympathetic. However, as CJC president Cotler advocated using trade sanctions to force the Soviet Union to comply with the Helsinki Accords. Specifically he hoped that a five-year grain deal with the Soviet Union would be linked to compliance with the Accords. These arguments were disregarded by the Liberal government (Kashmeri 1982).
3. Cotler served as counsel for the CJC during the Deschenes Commission Inquiry into alleged Nazi war criminals in Canada, 1985–86. The inquiry was set up under the Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, though the earlier “inaction” including admission of these alleged war criminals into Canada, took place under various Liberal governments. Cotler criticized the earlier governments for their inaction and the Conservative governments for

- failing to act on the full range of Judge Deschenes' recommendations (Yanofsky 1989, February 2).
4. Cotler was a strong supporter of Canadian hate speech legislation in the criminal code, upheld by the Supreme Court in the Keegstra decision in 1990 (Vienneau 1990, December 14). But in the early 2000s, many in the Canadian Jewish community felt that these laws needed to be toughened, with harsher sentences. Cotler, then a member of the Liberal Cabinet as Minister of Justice, disagreed with these Jewish fellow citizens: "Combating hate crimes is a 'top priority' for the government, but new laws are not necessary" (Canwest News Service 2004).
  5. In the 1990s, the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) began to accept as refugees a growing number of Israeli applicants, mainly from the former Soviet Union (Barsky 1996). The Israeli government argued those claims were "bogus." (Most of the accepted claims came from Quebec.) The Canadian Immigration Minister condemned Israeli intervention in the Canadian system: "I don't think it is appropriate for another government to tell our government...who is a refugee or not" (Cox 1994). Cotler defended the Israeli government position in the matter, saying that Israel could protect its citizens from discrimination, but he also defended the actions of the IRB (Sarick 1995).
  6. Canada's position on Middle East issues, while generally supportive of Israel has had its clear moments of disagreement and tension with the organized Jewish community and Mr. Cotler. During the 1982 Lebanon War, after Sabra and Shatilla, CJC President Cotler argued: "If Canadian Jews support Israel too strongly we may become isolated on foreign policy issues. If Canadian Jews express public dissent over Israel's position...it will be amplified into an anti-Israel position" (Arnold 1982, September 23). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Cotler would periodically criticize a string of Canadian UN votes on Israeli matters, which were not clearly supportive of Israel (Bayefsky 2000). Even after his election as an MP, in 2000 Cotler criticized his party's position to support UN resolution 1322, which condemned Israel as "one-sided" and at "variance with Canadian principles." Cotler's critical position posed problems for the Liberal government at the time (Baxter 2000). Indeed, there was some speculation that his strong support for Israel may have cost him a position in the Liberal Cabinet of 2002 (Dolinger 2002). A major flare-up occurred during the election campaign of 2006, after Cotler was appointed as a Cabinet Minister, and involved the new Liberal Party leader Michael Ignatieff. The Conservative leader Stephen Harper began to make inroads among Jews with his outspoken support for Israel. This became more pronounced when, during the Israel-Hezbollah conflict, Ignatieff called the Israeli bombing of Qana a "war crime." While Cotler defended the pro-Israel "fundamental views" of his leader, his wife Ariela was furious and announced she was leaving her husband's Liberal Party (Arnold 2006, October 19).
  7. At the infamous 2001 Durban conference on anti-racism, Cotler, a Canadian MP, was in attendance. He walked out on the final day of the conference. Some commentators felt that the Canadian government should have left earlier, as did the United States and Israel (MacKinnon 2001, September 4).

This brief review suggests that there have at times been tensions, reflected in the career of Irwin Cotler, between perceived Jewish interests and those of the Canadian government. In his successful career, Cotler had to negotiate various considerations, often choosing to defend Jewish interests against governmental positions. In the cases above, he found himself at odds mainly with the Canadian government, at times with elements of the Canadian Jewish community, and at times with both. His positions were obviously constrained by obligations as an MP and as a Cabinet Minister; negotiation was required.

It is not surprising that the issues described above, often life and death issues, could be seen as conflictual and problematic. What of more trivial issues?

### **The Canadian Jewish Version of the “Tebbit Test”**

In 1990, British MP and former Conservative Cabinet Minister Norman Tebbit made headlines by speaking about what he called the “cricket test” as a measure of the integration of immigrants to Britain. Speaking in an *LA Times* interview on April 20, 1990, he said: “A large proportion of Britain’s Asian population fails to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It’s an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from, or where you are?”

The cricket (or Tebbit) test was attacked in much public debate as being racist in inspiration and consequence. But gradually, over the years, it became more an object of ridicule and seeming irrelevance (Fletcher 2012). A British “State of the Nation” poll carried out in 2011 by IPSOS Mori for a new think-tank, British Future, found 60 % of people agreed with the statement: “People from abroad who settle in Britain should be able to choose to support the sporting teams of the countries they came from, even against British teams, without people saying this shows they aren’t willing to fit in here.” Only 15 % agreed that “People from abroad who settle in Britain should support our sporting teams, even when they are competing against the countries they come from, to show they want to fit in here” (Jolley and Katwala 2012).

With this context I decided to use a version of the innocuous Tebbit test simply as an ice-breaker when beginning interviews with Canadian Jewish leaders. (This was part of a larger project focused on issues of Jewish identity and loyalty, in Canada and Britain.) These individuals included elected politicians, leaders of Jewish communal organizations, rabbis, intellectuals, and journalists, with varying political perspectives. They were chosen as a purposive sample through reputational criteria, not to be representative of Jews with some public or communal profile, but to illustrate a range of profiles and postures. The idea was to pose a trivial, engaging, and likely fun question in the opening of the interviews, one that the respondents would enjoy answering and talking about. This question would ease the discussion into the more serious issues of exploring and reconciling any possible competing and conflicting loyalties: “Suppose that Israel and Canada are competing in a gold medal Olympic soccer game. Who would you root for and why?” It was assumed that this question would set a positive tone with interviewees.

That assumption was wrong. The question elicited a high degree of consternation and discomfort from most of the respondents. Most in fact felt this question posed a serious challenge to their presumed loyalty, and many engaged in fence-sitting and obfuscation in attempting to come up with a “satisfactory” answer. And this discomfort, also evident in facial expressions and body language, emerged despite the fact that they all knew the interviews were confidential and that they could explicitly go off the record for any question.

Of 17 respondents, ten refused to choose or to declare a clear preference in this hypothetical match. Five supported Israel and only two supported Canada. One respondent “solved” the dilemma by declaring support for Israel if the match was soccer and support for Canada if the match was in hockey! This respondent, an academic, was then asked to speculate about a preferred outcome for a volleyball game, but still no luck: “It’s a tough choice, like choosing amongst members of your family, who do I love more, my father or my mother, I love them each differently and in different ways, it’s the same between Israel and Canada...but in most instances I would be rooting for Canada and in some I might be rooting for Israel.”

Of the majority who would not or could not choose, many somehow hoped it would be a tie—which of course is an impossibility in any final game. As one academic put it, “I would be thrilled that they’re playing against each other and probably I would hope it was going to be a tie.” Another academic responded: “I couldn’t give a shit about soccer,” but then also refused to choose when the hypothetical question was changed to a debating tournament. In the words of yet another academic, “I really don’t know, I have a deep emotional attachment to both, it is not a tough question, but tough to explain the answer.”

A Jewish communal leader explained: “I would be thrilled they both got to that point, and I would be thrilled with either one...the winning is the fact that they are playing each other at that level in sports. That Israel made it to that level, that Canada made it to that level, and whichever team won, two great teams, two great countries having that opportunity to interact, so it would be one over the other...That was hard. That’s how I would relate to it.” Another communal leader succinctly argued in a similar vein: “I would root for both, a no-lose situation.” A communal leader who wound up refusing to choose nonetheless offered another Solomonic approach to splitting a vote, based not on the sport but on geography: “It’s a tough question, I don’t know. Especially since I don’t follow soccer. No it’s a tough call. If the game is in Canada, I’d probably be rooting for Canada. If the game is in Israel, I would be rooting for Israel...I really can’t tell you off the top of my head. It’s a tough one, yeah.” And yet another respondent, a successful politician, refused to be pinned down, claiming: “I would just enjoy the game, as a Canadian I would be disposed to support Canada, but on a psychological level, I would support Israel.”

While some of these answers, despite their brevity, illustrate contortions of logic and discomfort, two respondents were so conflicted they went into enormous detail to rationalize their non-choice. One intellectual who refused to choose launched into a socio-political, indeed post-colonial, critique of soccer and indeed all sports, particularly at the elite level. This is not unusual in the sociology of sport, which

commonly includes post-modern and highly critical perspectives, often within a cultural studies framework (Carrington and Macdonald 2001; Crawford 2004; Hylton 2009). As this respondent explained,

I feel there is a kind of scary background to the nationalism that emerges around soccer, and in particular I think there is a fascinating kind of anti-colonialism that happens...so Canada to me as well as Israel in different ways represent a colonial project. So if I were seeing this soccer match, I would be thinking of it in that framework...you know, this idea of the nation state as a collection of communities... this is sort of how Canada talks about itself. That would be on my mind. And sort of—would I be rooting for Canada? I don't know, I would be interested. And for Israel, a country whom I have a lot of ideological issues with, a lot of spiritual and religious connection to, and community-based connection to...I'd be disturbed. I think no matter what soccer match I was watching I would have this colonial discourse going on in my head...so that's how I would define it, I would be watching it in a kind of disturbed state...couldn't answer the question on who I would be rooting for. That would be too binary for me. I don't have a yes or no answer.

Another respondent, a member of the media, agonized over the question at even greater length. Some highlights included:

I'd probably be rooting for Canada as a Canadian and be delighted if Canada won and I would be delighted if Israel won too...I would absolutely root for Canada and I would absolutely probably root for Israel...I would be somewhat conflicted because I would be happy either way...it's like Keats' 'negative capability'...the art of poetry is the ability to simultaneously hold two contradictory ideas in your mind without diminishing the value of the other...In dual citizenship or religious loyalty you have to have a certain kind of negative capability...So as a Jew I am loyal to being Jewish and the notion of Israel as the apotheosis of thousands of years of searching, is meaningful to me...But Israel's not my home...and if it was I would simply move there...I don't, I have never really had that strong urge to make *aliyah*. So clearly my identity is here, my primary identity is Canadian. My home is Canada, my sense of place is Canada, and my sense of meaning is derived from Canada, but it profoundly intermingles with Israel.

This may well be the first time that Keats' concept of negative capability has been used in a discussion of soccer preferences.

Of those five who clearly were rooting for Israel, one Jewish communal leader claimed s/he would in public reply with a diplomatic answer and hope for a tie, but off the record admitted that s/he would support Israel. The argument was that it was more difficult for a Jew to say in public that s/he would root for Israel, so best to keep the Israel support private. Another respondent, a rabbi and educator, also supported Israel, but claimed that if the game were in a public space in Canada, s/he would bring two flags: "I would feel the need to affirm the Canadian piece as well. I don't know that I would be comfortable in a public role identifying myself as a



Jewish Canadian through my dress, such as wearing a *kippah*, in a Canadian stadium, rooting against Canada.”

A Jewish communal professional argued that support for Israel was strategic, it was more important for Israel to win. Another would support Israel because it is an underdog in world public opinion. And an academic stated: “Israel. If Canada won, I’d also be happy, but I imagine I would root for Israel.” The respondent elaborated: “I have both Canadian identity and Israeli identity, even though I am not an Israeli citizen...it’s possible that my identification with Jewish values is stronger than any other form of identification...It’s also possible that Israel is more of the underdog. In sports one tends to go with the underdog...so I think that would influence my decision.”

The two respondents who would root for Canada were the most direct, perhaps feeling their choice required little elaboration. These were the respondents who would pass the infamous Tebbit test with flying colors. One Jewish communal official would root clearly for Canada, but “would want a hard fought 2-1 game and not a 10-0 blowout.” The other respondent, a media personality who insisted the entire interview be off the record, was the more forceful in support of Canada: “It’s easy for me because first and foremost I am a Canadian citizen, and I’m always cheering for Canada when it comes to a sporting event. And I would have no hesitation and trepidation. I’d probably be one of the few people who, when the Maccabi team came over here to play the Raptors, I would have been cheering for the Raptors.”

## Conclusion

In sum, only two of the 17 respondents were clear that they would support Canada. This suggests a strong degree of identification with Israel among the other respondents, which is likely among many other Canadian Jews. Most respondents did not like the question and had difficulty arriving at a comfortable response. They were clearly enmeshed in versions of dual, divided, and ambiguous loyalties (Sheffer 2003, ch. 9). These competing identifications were pronounced when dealing with sports events which, in the grand scheme of things, are relatively trivial. One can imagine that if real conflicts of interest were to arise, whether dealing with Israel or some basic issue regarding the welfare of the Canadian Jewish community, these feelings of ambivalence would be even more acute. This was illustrated in the discussion of the career of Irwin Cotler.

The Jewish community is, by and large, one in which there are NOT serious homeland conflicts with Canada. In fact, the Stephen Harper government is likely the most pro-Israel government in Canadian history and throughout the world. Poll data indicate that a majority of Canadians support current Middle East policy, and only 23 % find it “too pro-Israel” (Martin 2012, January 31). Even the previous Liberal government was supportive of Israel. There are, and were, no serious geo-political conflicts. Moreover, Canada is a liberal democratic society, where minority rights enjoy constitutional protection, and where the ideas of multiculturalism are also entrenched in the Constitution, and indeed in government programs and departments.

Life for Canadian Jews is, for comparative purposes, close to idyllic. Canadian Jews have become successful poster children for multiculturalism, seemingly able to maximize full participation in Canadian life with a meaningful retention of a cultural heritage (Adelman and Simpson 1996; Brown 2006; Weinfeld 2001).

Despite these facts, there seems to be a reservoir of marginality, of insecurity, which lies dormant in many Canadian Jews. There have been questions raised about the loyalties of Jewish Canadians in the public sphere. Tensions in the Middle East routinely pose challenges to Canadian Jews, seeking to maximize Canadian government support for Israel, as they see it. These tensions have also begun to sway voting patterns of Canadian Jews, at least according to some reports. Indeed, one exit poll has confirmed a marked shift to the right, finding that 52 % of Canadian Jews voted for the Conservatives, and only 24 % for the Liberals, and 16 % for the NDP (Simpson 2011, September 28). This shift overturns a long, documented post-war affinity of Canadian Jews for the center/left, and the Liberals (Laponce 2010). Jewish Canadians with a profile in either the general or Jewish communities wrestle with conflicting loyalties even at the minimally consequential level of sports. As these interviews have shown, underneath the surface appearance of Jews as having “made it” in Canadian life, there persist ongoing internal doubts and negotiations of status in these responses.

In short: It is worth exploring again the issues of dual loyalty, indeed the old Napoleonic questions, especially within the context of transnationalism and globalization. Moreover, it may be time to focus analytical energies on the non-Jewish side of the hyphen of mixed identity and even mixed loyalties in Western societies. Finding equilibrium between identity and loyalty as a citizen of Canada—or any other Western liberal democracy—and that as a committed Jew and supporter of Israel, remains an ongoing challenge. Nothing should be assumed. Trade-offs, compromises, and negotiation are required but are becoming more challenging with the prevalence of the equal rights paradigm. When potential conflicts arise, it remains hard for Jews (and most diasporic minorities) to dance at two weddings at the same time.

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**Morton Weinfeld** is a Professor of Sociology at McGill University, where he holds the Chair in Canadian Ethnic Studies. Among his relevant publications dealing with contemporary Jewish life is the monograph *Like Everyone Else but Different: The Paradoxical Success of Canadian Jews*.