

## Editor's Introduction

Samuel Heilman

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Since at least the age of enlightenment and certainly since the dawn of what has been called “Jewish emancipation,” and the rise of civil society, Diaspora Jewry has had to confront questions of loyalty. Those questions essentially asked whether one could be a full-fledged citizen of the nation in which one lived and also be a fully committed Jew, or indeed be even a less than fully committed Jew. These questions were of course tinged with some elements of anti-Semitism, particularly in the overwhelmingly Christian Europe since civil society never questioned the civil loyalty of Christians, even those who remained fully committed to their religion. The French citizen could be a devout Catholic without putting his Frenchness into question, The German of Bavaria could be a faithful Lutheran without impugning his Bavarianess, and so on. But as far as the Jews were concerned, the attitude—famously advanced in the case of French Jewry—was: “The Jews should be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals ...” And that was the positive view. A more prevalent attitude was that Jews had to cease to be Jews as a price of citizenship, a position taken most famously by Voltaire.

The questions of Jewish loyalty were of course exacerbated in the 20th century in the poisoned atmosphere that led up to and included the Holocaust. In the perspective of the ‘final solution,’ even having a Jewish forbear or relative was enough to invalidate the loyalty and citizenship of Europe’s Jews.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1947–48, these questions grew more urgent. Certainly for Jews in Arab countries who had been citizens for generations, the question of loyalty was decided by the state institutions and the Arab street. Whether they were Zionists or not, Jews’ loyalty was judged suspect

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S. Heilman (✉)

Department of Sociology, Queens College CUNY, Queens, Flushing, NY, USA  
e-mail: heilman@qc.edu; Samuel.Heilman@qc.cuny.edu

and large-scale expulsions or expropriations led to the demise or decimation of venerable Jewish communities in the Middle East and North Africa.

Only in the Americas, and primarily the Northern Hemisphere, in countries made up of immigrants, albeit mostly Christian ones, did the Jews seem to find a home where their loyalties as citizens were not questioned by the state and the street. In some measure this was likely a product of the fact that in these places—the United States and Canada—Jews assimilated as quickly as they could, and often more successfully than they had anywhere else in a long time. Moreover, in these immigrant societies, symbolic ethnicity—the term so felicitously coined by Herbert Gans—which allowed for the Irish-Americans (or Canadians) to retain powerful symbolic attachments to Ireland, the Italians to do the same with Italy, Caribs to the Caribbean, the Quebecois Francophones with France and so on, also allowed Jews to retain symbolic loyalties to a Jewish state (that most Jews did not even ever visit). With the rise of the unmeltable ethnics in the last quarter of the 20th century and the move toward multi-culturalism, attachments to Jewry and Judaism became less problematic than they might have been elsewhere and at other times. Additionally, the separation of religion and state allowed those who were attached to their Jewish religion not to be suspect institutionally: one could be a person in the street and a Jew in the synagogue, or even as the Orthodox discovered, a Jew in public and everywhere else without impugning one's civil status. Or did it?

That last question is the starting point for Morton Weinfeld's Sklare Memorial Award lecture, which as always we publish in the pages of *CJ*. Under the provocative title, "If Canada and Israel are at War, Who Gets My Support?: Challenges of Competing Diaspora Loyalties," the question of loyalty is raised. To be sure, given the fact that perhaps no government is at present more supportive of Israel than Canada's, this sort of hypothetical seems to border on the irrational, the questions that the paper raises about political participation, loyalty, minority status, and social integration contribute to the long debate about what Diaspora Jews may or may not do without impugning their loyalty. The fact that Canada, this stalwart ally of the Jewish state in which even a government minister was a staunch Zionist with a second home in Jerusalem, is the focus of this analysis makes the paper doubly fascinating.

Judit Bokser Liwerant extends this analysis by considering the impact of globalization and transnationalism on these questions. Her Latin American perspective adds importantly to the Northern Hemisphericism of so much of the discussion. Her reference to the issues of national integration in Latin America and the special role of the Catholic Church adds significantly to the discussion. The emigration of large numbers of Latin American Jews suggests that the issue of loyalties has not been resolved in that region.

In his paper, Paul Burstein reminds us that the question of loyalties is of course not just a Jewish question. It impacts on all minorities. And he recalls the way German, Japanese, and Italian Americans' loyalties were called into question during the Second World War. In a sense this point raises questions that remind us these issues are very much in the news today: the loyalties of the ethnic Russian and Russophones in today's Ukraine, of Scots in the United Kingdom, of Basques and Catalans in contemporary Spain, and perhaps even Quebecois in Canada. It is well

worth putting the Jewish question of dual loyalties in the context of these other examples. The hostilities that many immigrants who retain powerful attachments to their ethnic and national origins, or that Muslims in Christian Europe have experienced, certainly inform our understanding of the Jewish question. Do these other cases cause concern for Jews, should they? Or do they make Jews feel their situation is not unique?

For Barry Kosmin, committed Jew and British expatriate living in Connecticut, the question also raises matters of Jewish solidarity. He implies that solidarity may be an important element of stimulating loyalty questions. In an atmosphere of multiculturalism, solidarity is at least as important as the concern of loyalty.

Our issue also offers a paper that was not part of the Sklare session. This work by Shlomo Guzman-Carmeli and Nissan Rubin explores a kabbalistic yeshiva and how sacred texts are there used for healing. This phenomenon that has turned kabbalah into a kind of Jewish yoga and turned texts into something beyond the rational and rabbis who are kabbalists into mystic healers provides a fascinating insight into a phenomenon that has never been treated in the pages of our journal. For me as an editor this offers yet another chance to expand the boundaries of what legitimately is part of the sphere of *Contemporary Jewry*.

Coming up soon is our first issue on Jews and Jewish music, another case of the efforts to broaden the horizons of both our readers and our interests. As my term as editor in chief draws to a close, I remain committed to seeing our journal grow both in the quality of what we publish, but also in what we subsume in the boundaries of contemporary Jewry.