

**Gerald Caplan**

## **What every office needs to succeed in Harper's Canada**

**If the Prime Minister is serious about counting Jews in federal agencies, it's time to form a urinal patrol**

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Special to The Globe and Mail

Published on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2010 11:33AM EST Last updated on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2010 12:00PM EST

The Harper government's torrid love affair with the self-proclaimed leaders of Canadian Jewry is about to reach a new plateau. Rumors circulating throughout Ottawa indicate that a pointed observation made by one of the government's star appointees has prompted a new initiative to augment Harper's existing strategies to woo Jewish votes.

**As reported in several columns in this space, first is Harper's unconditional embrace of the present extreme right-wing Israeli government. Second is the Harper government's insistence that anyone who dares criticize the Israeli government is guilty of anti-Semitism (it's not yet clear if this applies to the Israeli government's many Israeli critics). Third is Stephen Harper's direct attack on Canadian organizations that dare say a sympathetic word about Palestinians.**

Now, I'm told, the Harper government will be adding a bold new element. It will speak to the shameful truth that a surprisingly large number of Canadian organizations have been functioning without enough Jews on staff. Some actually seem to have none at all. That is about to change.

The first penalty for those who fail to meet this new test of True Canadianism Strong and Free has, in fact, already been handed out. It began in Montreal with an international human rights group known as Rights and Democracy. It emerges, to the shock of most Canadians and the outrage of much of the Third World, that Rights and Democracy failed to have a single person of the Jewish persuasion on its staff.

**Rights and Democracy had begun to vex the Prime Minister because it thought Palestinians should have the same rights as all other people.** Mr. Harper appointed three new board members who were committed to end this heretical nonsense. One of those appointees, Jacques Gauthier, became interim president of the board. Mr. Gauthier's credentials include a doctoral thesis arguing that Jerusalem belongs to the Jews by international law. This may not speak well

for the level of PhDs but made him kosher to the Conservatives.

In a confidential evaluation of the organization's late executive director, Mr. Gauthier pointedly noted the perhaps telltale absence of Jews on staff, apparently a serious dereliction of duty.

**“How many Jews must your average mosque or Hindu temple or church employ to meet the government's new Jewish criteria?”**

How Mr. Gauthier learned that no Jew was employed by R & D is not yet clear. Suspiciously enough, R & D does not ask the religion of its employees. Often in the past Jewishness has been established by what's discreetly called the urinal test, although this technique doesn't really apply to women while also failing to distinguish telltale characteristics among Muslims, Jews and certain African ethnic groups. **Mr. Gauthier brought a private investigator into the R & D office last year, although he was introduced as "a business associate" and his function wasn't explained. Bitter R & D staff, believe the stranger was expected to lead the urinal patrol in order to determine Jewishness. Isn't that what a private eye is for?**

Businesses, NGOs and other institutions that are now frantically beating the bushes for unemployed Jews have a major challenge ahead of them. The first problem is that the Jewish employment rate is notoriously high. Many complain that you can never find a Jew when you need one. Then there's the vexing question of whether one is enough, a question that has befuddled Canadians for many decades.

**It is understood that the Harper government is about to set up a special Number of Jews Bureau, to be known as the NUJ. It will report to Jason Kenney, the minister responsible for smearing anyone who disagrees with his cheerleading support of the Israeli government. The new bureau will be tasked with devising a formula to determine the necessary number of Jews each group needs on staff to meet the new criteria, and will house the inspectors who will be going from organization to organization across the land counting the number of Jewish employees. It is anticipated that synagogues will be exempt from inspection.**

Among the trickier issue the NUJ must quickly deal with is whether the Jewish quota applies to the government. Believe it or not, it seems that no one knows for certain how many Jews sit in the government caucus or the cabinet, and there are too few urinals to do a test.

**Mr. Kenney is not only responsible for the electoral seduction of Canada's credulous Jews. He is also Mr. Harper's main weapon in the wooing of Hindus, Sikhs, Persians, Koreans, Eastern Orthodox Christians, carefully selected Muslims, and countless other minorities. Here is where the new system faces certain tricky issues. How many Jews must your average mosque or Hindu temple or church employ to meet the government's new Jewish criteria?**

**And what will Punjabis, Armenians, Buddhists, Chinese and certain carefully selected Muslims think if they must hire Jews but other organizations need not hire, say, Punjabis, Armenians, Buddhists, Chinese and certain carefully selected Muslims? After all, they might**

reasonably ask, how many Punjabis etc. etc. etc. does the B'nai Brith, for example, employ? Mr. Harper's entire ethnic strategy might be jeopardized if this sensitive issue is not handled delicately.

The obvious answer, of course, is perfectly consonant with one of Canada's great conceits – our multicultural character. Yet in truth, outside public transportation and some malls, our many communities remain substantially segregated. Here is the means to make mythology reality. Every Canadian organization would have to have at least a certain number of employees from each of our ethnic/racial/religious/cultural groups. It's a magical solution for Canada's serious unemployment problem, since a good number of the unemployed happen to be members of these groups.

One downside of this solution is that Jewish organizations are expected to complain bitterly that the government has begun listening to other interests. Mr. Harper and Mr. Kenney are expected to discuss this conundrum later this week.

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