

Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict over Israel

By Dov Waxman

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Trouble in the Tribe explores the increasingly contentious place of Israel in the American Jewish community. In a fundamental shift, growing numbers of American Jews have become less willing to unquestioningly support Israel and more willing to publicly criticize its government. More than ever before, American Jews are arguing about Israeli policies, and many, especially younger ones, are becoming uncomfortable with Israel's treatment of Palestinians. Dov Waxman argues that Israel is fast becoming a source of disunity for American Jewry, and that a new era of American Jewish conflict over Israel is replacing the old era of solidarity.

Drawing on a wealth of in-depth interviews with American Jewish leaders and activists, Waxman shows why Israel has become such a divisive issue among American Jews. He delves into the American Jewish debate about Israel, examining the impact that the conflict over Israel is having on Jewish communities, national Jewish organizations, and on the pro-Israel lobby. Waxman sets this conflict in the context of broader cultural, political, institutional, and demographic changes happening in the American Jewish community. He offers a nuanced and balanced account of how this conflict over Israel has developed and what it means for the future of American Jewish politics.

Israel used to bring American Jews together. Now it is driving them apart. *Trouble in the Tribe* explains why.

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Editorial Review

Review
"A meticulous, precise, well-organized survey that takes into account the many different views and will certainly facilitate the heated conversation."**--*Kirkus* (Starred Review)**

"A valuable road map to an ongoing and very important conflict."**--Murray Polner, *History News Network***

"As a primer on the American Jewish machloket (argument) over Israel, *Trouble in the Tribe* is extremely useful. Its data is copious . . . its charts are handy; its perspective mostly balanced. . . . It is an excellent guide for the perplexed."**--Jay Michaelson, *Moment Magazine***

"As Waxman convincingly demonstrates in this valuable and important book, the very thing that once united the American Jewish community--Israel--now is the thing that divides us most of all."**--Moti Rieber, *Kansas City Jewish Chronicle***

"Brave and unsettling."**--Jonathan Kirsch, *Jewish Journal***

"[A] detailed and meticulously balanced account. . . . Both Waxman's complex picture of American Jewry and the plea for--critical engagement--emerging from it deserve our serious consideration."**--William Kolbrener, *Times Higher Education***

"An accessible, readable introduction to the topic."**--*Choice***

"Gently insightful, richly documented, clearly presented, and illuminatingly broad."**--Ari Y. Kelman, *Middle East Journal***

"Waxman deserves plaudits for tackling an important and very timely subject that has heretofore been ignored by the scholarly literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He analyzes a complicated and contentious topic with rare objectivity, ample research and calm reasoning. *Trouble in the Tribe* is an indispensable volume for anyone seeking to understand why American Jews quarrel over Israel and why such fraternal infighting will further complicate the quest for a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."**--Michael Rubner, *Middle East Policy***

From the Back Cover

"Dov Waxman could hardly have picked a more contentious topic for investigation than the troubled relationship between (and among) American Jews and Israel. But with *Trouble in the Tribe*, he brings to bear a rare combination of calm, reasoned analysis with scrupulous scholarly research. American Jewish arguments about Israel will certainly continue, but if Waxman's contribution to it gets the attention it deserves, they should be based far more on complex reality than simplistic fantasy. And we will all be better for it."**--Eric Alterman, columnist for the *Nation***

"Good books, Orwell once wrote, set your scattered thoughts in order--in a way, tell you what you already know. Dov Waxman's *Trouble in the Tribe* lays it out: the attitudes, the clashes, the numbers, the future. For a generation, American Jewish solidarity regarding Israel was indistinguishable from the élan of community

life. Waxman shows how, and why, this can change, even how Israel has become polarizing for congregational life. A grim, real, necessary book."**--Bernard Avishai, Dartmouth College and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

"This is an extremely important book that will have profound consequences. When puzzled friends ask me why the American Jewish community is now so divided over Israel, this is the book I will recommend."**--Kenneth D. Wald, coauthor of *Religion and Politics in the United States***

"*Trouble in the Tribe* is an outstanding book. Waxman's judgments are fair, judicious, and balanced."**--Theodore Sasson, author of *The New American Zionism***

About the Author
Dov Waxman is professor of political science, international affairs, and Israel studies at Northeastern University. He is the author of *The Pursuit of Peace and the Crisis of Israeli Identity* and the coauthor of *Israel's Palestinians: The Conflict Within*. He lives in Boston.

Users Review

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