Forum on
No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging

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No Better Home? Forum Introduction

This section was inspired by the 2021 book *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging,* edited by David S. Koffman. The book is a collection of eighteen scholarly essays that explore topics relating to home, diaspora, and belonging within the context of Canadian Jewry. Wanting to further unpack some of the themes the book raised, we asked two groups of select scholars to read and reflect on ways these topics are manifested in their own research and fields of expertise. The first group is made of six scholars who specialize in the study of other minority groups in Canada, the other group consists of five scholars of Jewish diaspora communities in other countries.

We provided contributors little direction, other than asking them to write short, informal essays relating to any of the themes raised in *No Better Home?* Naturally, each scholar took this assignment in a different direction. Some chose to engage with a specific article, others took a more general approach to the volume. The result is a series of eleven short but insightful texts that weave together scholarly insights and personal reflections in a compelling way.

Respondents followed Koffman's suggestive lead, using the rhetorically provocative question in the book's title as a point of departure rather than as an analytic question demanding a direct answer. Afterall, and as Gavin Schaffer writes, trying to answer the question of which country is a better home is "a little like Jewish children arguing about which of their mothers makes the best chicken soup." Most responses highlight the inherent complexity of discussing "home" and "belonging" given these terms' highly subjective nature. Moreover, any analysis is further complicated by the tension between individual experiences and wider community interests or, as Koffman writes in his introduction to the book, "what seems to be good for individual Jews, might be bad for the community's health."[1] Overall, both this forum and the book make clear that contemplating "home" proved to be a richer and more compelling topic to respondents than the question of which one is "better."

Essays by Scholars from Non-Jewish Canadian Minority Groups

One elemental concession of *No Better Home?* is that the Canadian Jewish experience was, and remains, a success story. Despite obvious challenges and setbacks, Jewish life and culture thrive in Canada, and Canadian Jews enjoy security, freedom to express and experiment with their religious and cultural character, and receive respect from their neighbors and their state. The responses we received from scholars of other minority groups in Canada provide us with some fascinating insights into ways other Canadian communities approach, frame, and experience similar questions of home and belonging, while relating to the Jewish case study.

Satwinder Bains, director of the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley, introduces the Canadian Punjabi diaspora perspective. Bains emphasizes the importance of understanding the Punjabi Canadian community from within the context of transnational Punjabi culture. Her response also touches on the challenges of cultural adaptability, inter-generational differences, and how strong community culture sometimes work to the detriment of individual members. Paul Gareau, associate professor and associate dean of graduate studies in the Faculty of Native Studies at the University of Alberta, addresses questions of reconciliation and relationship building between Jews and Indigenous peoples by highlighting colonial-settler history and its negative impact on both communities. He further recommends ways to make this land "a better home on Native land" for everyone through a call for reconciliation and relational ways of life.

Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, professor at the University of Alberta and director of the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies, addresses the shared and often contested histories of Ukrainian Jews and non-Jews. She suggests that the two groups' disparate transnational histories influenced the ways in which they imagined Canada as a home, especially given that neither community had a politically defined homeland for many years. In that regard, Khanenko-Friesen's response complements Jeffrey Veidlinger's article in *No Better Home?* regarding some of the intellectual undercurrents behind the celebrated Canadian version of multiculturalism.[2] Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, chair of Mennonite Studies and associate professor in History at the University of Winnipeg, reminds readers of the promise of religious freedom offered in the Mennonite Canadian context, and how for some Canada failed in that promise. Nobbs-Thiessen also provides us with some captivating comparisons to topics explored in *No Better Home?* such as the commitment to public and historical memory in both communities, as well as their relations with and attitudes towards Indigenous communities.

Roberto Perin, emeritus professor of history at York University, points to the many similarities between Italian and Jewish communal activities in their journey from "otherness" to mainstream in North America. He compares patterns of communal organizations, labor activism, and education as well as the effects of generational differences in reimagining and redefining what it means to be an Italian or a Jew within the North American context. David A. Wilson, professor in the Celtic Studies Program and the History Department at the University of Toronto, and general editor of the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, highlights the fact that although Irish immigrants faced their own struggles and discomforts upon arrival to Canada, they also actively created the standards of success and integration by which other migrant groups were judged. Wilson also touches on the fear of the "new world" as an assimilatory space and the challenges it posed for cultural continuation.

From a broader, comparative perspective, we also note that none of the communities represented in this section are members of the Anglo-Protestant majority, meaning that like the Jewish community, religion plays some role in their ongoing experiences. Moreover, each of the participating scholars was mindful of the fact that building a community home in Canada is an ongoing effort, especially in relation to twin diaspora communities in the United States and other competing immigration destinations. Many also noted that events in the homeland continue to affect and shape diaspora communities in Canada—a topic well worth further scholarly attention.

Naturally, given the scope of this section, there are many diasporic, religious, cultural, and other minority community groups that are not represented in this forum. We do hope, however, that this project could serve as a starting point to other worthwhile engagements, comparisons, and conversations.

Essays by Scholars of Jewish Communities Outside Canada

The second part of this project contains responses from five scholars who specialize in the study of Jewish communities in other countries. We chose not to solicit responses from scholars who specialize in American Jewry or in Israel studies. *No Better Home*? includes an article by Hasia Diner on American Jewry, to which many of the responses in this section refer.[3] The much broader question of Israel as a Jewish home is thoroughly discussed in many other conversations, and thus seemed out of place given our project's context and scope.

Naturally, every scholar brought forward the unique historical and cultural context of what it means to be Jewish in the country about which they wrote. In comparison to the responses from other Canadian groups, we note that the Jewish responses are much more concerned with the themes of family, physical protection, and practical necessities than ideologies of belonging. The authors also highlight the importance of physical proximity (or lack thereof) to other countries with sizable Jewish populations, and the ways in which the Jewish collective imagination regarding specific countries plays a key role in assessing questions of home, security and belonging. Most respondents also emphasize the central place that the Second World War and the Holocaust have had on Jewish communities of the global diaspora. As a result, readers can note some of the underlining differences between ways Jewish communities in Europe and those in other continents conceptualize the notion of home.

Stanisław Krajewski, professor in the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Warsaw, addresses the difficulties associated with maintaining a Jewish identity and culture in Poland in the aftermath of the Holocaust. At the same time, he emphasizes the historical continuity and the sense of Jewish rootedness in Poland as a deep bond that points to an almost inherent sense of at-homeness compared to other younger and less-rooted diasporas. Nadia Malinovich, associate professor of American Stud-

ies, Universite de Picardie, offers insights into the changing image that France has held in the Jewish imagination(s), and the difference between those images and the experiences of Jews living there. Her response emphasizes France's unique place in "the Jewish imagination the world over" given its pioneering role in granting emancipation to Jews side by side with the long, dark shadows of French antisemitism and the Holocaust. Gavin Schaffer, professor of Modern British History at the University of Birmingham, emphasizes the importance of context in how Jewish communities envision themselves. In the British case, this means the need to engage with the strong sense of imperialism and patriotism that defined the country during the time the Jewish community was formed.

Suzanne Rutland, professor emerita, Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University of Sydney, reflects on the balance of practicalities in migrants' choices of home, such as geographical distance and personal desires or goals, and how those affected the formation of the Australian Jewish community. Her response is a particularly relevant commentary on the book due to the many similarities between Canada and Australia as political entities, some of which were already explored in a 2022 roundtable that took place during the annual conference of the Association for Jewish Canadian Studies. Adriana Brodsky, professor of Latin American History at St. Mary's College of Maryland and co-president of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association, brings us back to the Americas. Brodsky provides readers important insights on Jewish communities in Latin America and raises the very promising, long overdue suggestion for a "hemispheric focus" in American Jewish studies.

We hope that this forum provides our readers with new and worthwhile perspectives for thinking about Jewish homes and about Canada as a home for Jews and for others. These texts reinforce the fact that although many diaspora communities are created in reaction to something, often negative economic or political realities, the communities are not passive as they shape their new homes. As scholars, we need to consider the many hows and whys associated with community building as well as the impact on other communities and on Indigenous people. These questions are not only ones of the past. In the face of global crises and wars, many people continue to migrate to Canada and other countries, seeing them as viable options for building new and better homes.

We wish to thank everyone who helped us bring this project to fruition: to the contributors who took time and effort to prepare their responses, to the scholars who contributed to the original book, to the employees of University of Toronto Press who sent out the physical or digital copies to all participants, and to our colleagues at *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* for their support and advice. This forum already led to a vibrant roundtable conversation among Canadian studies scholars at the 2023 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences at York University, for which we are grateful. We hope that this project will spark more scholarly engagements across the fields of both Canadian and Jewish studies.

Postscript

We are writing this short postscript on the seventh day following the horrific October 7 massacre in Israel, which led to the war between Israel and Hamas. The full scope of what will follow, in Israel and in other countries, remains to be seen.

Fuller studies of the ways in which Canadian Jewry is affected, perhaps reshaped, by these events, will come later. We are confident that many of these future studies will be published in the pages of this journal. For now, we would like to acknowledge that the current events (as big historical events tend to do) are bringing some of the broader themes highlighted in this section regarding home and diasporic identities into immediate visibility in the Jewish world. We note the Canadian Jewish community's immediate mobilization for Israel, the deep sense of unity and of shared destiny, and the anxiety that many Canadian Jews feel in relation to their personal security, even here on Canadian soil. These fears are not just a result of specific threats made against the Canadian Jewish community. They are also triggered by exposure to a kind of barbarity that many Jews worldwide believed would never be repeated after the Holocaust, and by the deeply rooted social psychology of modern Jewry, with its hallmark signs of collective trauma. The new levels of anxiety are also directly related to expectations from and responses by non–Jewish neighbors, public figures, and elected officials, including silence, support, victim blaming, and outright hostility. Canadian Jews today are much more worried about the rise of antisemitism in the country they call home.

A new layer of meaning and context surely would have been added to the texts we curated had we asked scholars to write these responses to *No Better Home?* after October 7. We recognize that the events of that day and in the immediate aftermath will inevitably change the ways most of us will read and interpret the texts we have gathered for this forum. Such is the nature of scholarship: meaning is made between the aims of the author and the response of the reader. Both are deeply shaped by context. Some of the themes that begin to unfold could be applied and compared to experiences of other communities in Canada. Others will only be relevant for comparisons to other Jewish communities across the world. The reaction of Jewish communities in Canada to the events of October 7 and the treatment of these communities by their fellow Canadians, demonstrate how multifaceted and sometimes changeable feelings of home and belonging can be.

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David S. Koffman, "Introduction: What Does It Mean to Ask the Question, "Has There Ever Been a Better Home for the Jews Than Canada?" in *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging*, ed. David S. Koffman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 14.

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Jeffrey Veidlinger, "'To Guarantee Their Own Self-Government in All Matters of Their National Life': Ukrainians, Jews, and the Origins of Canadian Multiculturalism," in *No Better Home?* 41-55.

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Hasia R. Diner, "Destination World Jewry: The United States versus the World," in *No Better Home*? 33-40.

Essays by Scholars from Non-Jewish Canadian Minority Groups

Satwinder Kaur Bains

Transnational Punjabis and the Idea of Home(s)

The Punjabi diaspora has a century plus-long history in Canada (est. 1903), and since this country has provided the impetus towards building a pluralistic society with embedded values of tolerance (acceptance), respect and understanding, Punjabis have thrived in great numbers, sitting at over a million strong in 2023. The Punjabi diaspora holds stories of migration to different countries for various reasons at various periods of recent history, successfully building home and community alike with great fervour amidst a ferocious appetite for cultural maintenance. In his edited volume *No Better Home?* Koffman urges us to explore issues of home, host, emigration and processes of settlement, persistence of cultural production, the extent of assimilation or integration and adaptation, as well as socioeconomic and political participation in the country of origin, among others.

Punjab has been a "host" (unwilling or otherwise) society long before her people began to migrate in large numbers to other lands. Waves of peoples came to settle, conquer, or seek refuge in northern India, impacting and influencing the country with their cultures and placing memories of home in architecture, politics, religion, and language. India has always absorbed different peoples into an increasingly pluralistic society, which today appears to breed an endless capacity for cultural accommodation, even with minority unrest always brewing in various parts of the country. This huge diversity of ethnicities, religions, and languages has made the Indian culture an extraordinarily syncretic one. Indians have "learned to live with difference, developing strategies, norms and institutions which allowed them to live together with a range of groups while retaining their own ethno-cultural identity. The Punjabi diasporas have inherited this very complex legacy and culture and taken it with them to the host countries including Canada."[1]

The global Indian diaspora began in the form of indentured labour in the 1830s and has continued to be replenished by voluntary family migration, professional mobility, and the information technology booms in recent times. The diaspora is drawn from more than a dozen different regions of India and extends to the most underdeveloped as well as the most advanced countries of the world. It covers half a dozen major religions, all majority and minority castes, many languages and a wide variety of occupations ranging from unskilled labourers to highly skilled professionals.[2] The comparisons amongst the diaspora nations may be warranted as they inform each other's movements, histories of settlement, challenges faced, successes carved out, and so on. But as Koffman states, comparisons are problematic other than as "structuring principles."[3] Just like the Jewish community in Canada, Punjabis have only recently become keenly interested in studying themselves, especially around the "national experience" as Canadians.[4]

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century there was a great demand for cheap and regulated labour brought about by European colonization. The demand for labour was accentuated by the ever-expanding colonial economy, the growing oppo-

sition to slavery and its eventual abolition and the inability of European countries to meet the shortfall of labour by deploying their own labour force. India was an extant reservoir of cheap, docile, and dependable labour, especially to work on colonial plantations, far from the home country. Broadly three distinct patterns of Indian emigration are identifiable in this period: (a) '"indentured" labour emigration, (b) "kangani" or "maistry" labour emigration and (c) 'passage' or 'free' emigration. Indentured labour was officially sponsored by the colonial government in full brutal effect. An individual labourer would sign a contract to work on a plantation, beginning in 1834 and ending in 1920. The kangani (derived from Tamil *kankani*, meaning foreman) or maistry (derived from Tamil *maistry*, meaning supervisor) system recruited labourers who were legally "free", as they were not bound by any contract or fixed period of service, although both things were part of their fate, locking them into countries from which there was no return. These systems, which began in the first and third quarter of the nineteenth century, were abolished in 1938.[5]

Emigration from India did not cease with the abolition of indentured and other organized systems of export of labour. There was a steady trickle of emigration of members of trading communities from Gujrat and Punjab to South Africa and East Africa. Many Punjabi labourers emigrated to East Africa to work on the railroads. These emigrants were not officially sponsored: they paid their passage for themselves and were "free" as they were not bound by any contracts, and many moved back and forth with some trepidation about a guaranteed return home.[6]

A new and significant phase of emigration began after India became independent in 1947. After partition, the emigration of professionals and semi-professionals from Punjab to industrially advanced countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada is essentially a post-independence phenomenon. There was a particularly large wave in the 1960s and 1970s and then it somewhat declined with the adaptation of more stringent immigration regulations of recipient countries. This emigration pattern often described as "brain drain" was essentially voluntary and mostly individual by nature.[7] In the twenty-first century, the Punjabi diaspora has increasingly acquired a distinct global and transnational identity. With historic settlements around the world, and successive migrations in the last two centuries to North America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, the Punjabi diaspora reflects a growing self-consciousness that has been further strengthened by the developments of new communication technologies and rapid globalization.[8]

Punjabi Diaspora in Canada

The long durée of migration history of Punjabis in Canada divides itself into three distinct eras: the early years, 1902-1918; the quiet years, 1919-1947; and the post-war era, 1948-present.

The first handful of South Asians arrived in British Columbia in 1903. Within four years they were followed by over 5,000 others attracted to Canada by comparatively high wages and available work. Most immigrants were Punjabi Sikh, and their service in the British Raj and armies and protecting the northwest frontier province over millennia had provided them with the tools to travel, build strong community solidarity and the work ethic to strengthen their economic, social, and political developments.[9] As more immigrants began to arrive in the early 1900s, the colonial government and public opinion towards Punjabis began to harden, eventually leading to the subsequent ban on immigration. The ban hit the local community hard as it exempted no one and it was felt extensively by the small community. The egregious ban included the wives and children of those who were already in Canada. It was not until the ban was modified in 1919, allowing entry to wives and children, that their economic security increased.[10] It would take four decades for the fight for equality to be fully realized for these immigrants, fought for in all parts of British Columbia where they resided.[11]

The year 1947 marked the beginning of a new era of belonging for Punjabis in Canada. The ban was fully removed in that year, and this led to slow resumption of immigration, with a small over the next two decades. Punjabi settlement and ensuing community development has led to an increase in national, cultural, class, linguistic, and religious awareness, and more fulsome Canadian connections for these new Canadians.[12] This heightened Canadian consciousness has come at a cost, as Koffman suggests, and it behooves us to not just examine the "vertical plane" of Punjabi history but also "the horizontal landscape of global comparisons."[13] While it took forty years of challenging the system to gain the right to vote, Koffman notes, "if social integration, equality and religious freedom are the right measures of a good home, then Canada seems to offer a pretty good one."[14] However, like Koffman's examples of Jewish power in the hallways of political and media centers, Punjabis in recent times also had to take seriously their civic duty to become involved in the three levels of government across Canada to affect real change. This defining involvement has carved out new conversations about political contributions on the ideas of home and family–both in country of origin and in Canada. For example, the often silent and brushed aside role of caste hierarchies in Punjabi Canadian political achievement, where almost all elected members of Parliament are from so called "upper castes," accentuates the need for an internal debate that has not yet gained much attention or traction.

Crucial to this important evolution of Punjabis as a diasporic community in Canada has been their ability to adapt in an alien setting, while still maintaining those things they hold as important (like caste), but without creating opportunities for critical discourse. Punjabis have set up institutions that are characteristic of social organizations of their ancestral land, without the critical lens of understanding ongoing oppression and coercion. The most important of these has been family; the rites of

establishing family structures and the network of relationships resulting from it has been one of its core strengths, one that has faced much stress in recent times. An aspect of a social organization such as that of family, which has analytical significance in the study of diaspora, is the generational difference and ensuing strife. The first generation of Punjabis as a diasporic community is evidently different from the second and the subsequent ones. Canada now has entire generations of diasporic Punjabis born and brought up in this country.[15] Regardless, families or significant others may identify themselves as originating from and belonging to an imagined homeland.[16] However, the past continues to inform the present and while the Punjabi community in Canada has always looked backwards to Punjab for many reasons, encroachment of Canadian values and experiences has affected some change:

> Interracial marriage has not become that common among Punjabi communities, compared to other immigrant groups. The ethnic and religious population patterns of Punjabis indicate how immigration policies affect the formation of Diasporic communities.... When immigration rules softened, limited family immigration through the sponsorship program was allowed, and the Punjabi population slowly developed its composition as it is today.[17]

The experiences of adult immigrants and that of their offspring are significantly different. The second generation is spared the hardships endured by their immigrant parents, but they are expected to achieve greater success than their parents and to fully integrate into society. At the same time, there is great stress within Punjabi families to ensure maintenance of ancestral country's values, ethos, culture, languages, caste, and religion.[18] This second generation is a demographic group that includes both children born in their parents' new home and those who immigrated with their parents when they were children (often referred to as the 1.5 generation). Members of the second generation see themselves and are seen by others as a cultural bridge between their parents' way of living and a new way of living. They are agents of sociocultural change, and a prime locus for understanding the complexities of a multi-racial society.[19] While second-generation youth identify with the ethno-cultural group of their parents' country of origin, they also have a strong sense of belonging to the host society.[20] The parents' home left behind still plays a major role in the imaginary-passed down the generations with what I call a great deal of "nostesia" (a mix of nostalgia and amnesia).

Punjabis are known for jealously preserving their cultural identity as they continue to cling tightly to their norms and endogamy, marital and family solidarity, kin orientation, religion, caste differences, and mother tongue, which is not easily understood by host communities.[21] Overseas Punjabis adhere to their traditional culture so ostensibly that at times it appears that they are more Indian in their cultural orientations and practices than resident Indians are in India, creating tensions in Canada. Culture is an abstract symbolic system, which is composed of values, meanings, and

beliefs and the rich cultural heritage, common language, and a strong sense of being Punjabi (called *Punjabiyat)* has bound Punjabis together. The transnational networks among Punjabis have become stronger with the development of media, internet, and television. The local twenty–four–hour linguistically rich radio, print weekly newspapers, monthly and quarterly magazines, and more, play an important role of informing Indians abroad about their homeland.[22]

Conclusion

The Punjabi diaspora is not the mere physical movement of people. Punjabis have carried with them socio–cultural strengths as well as cultural baggage that, among other things, consists of predefined social identity, a set of religious beliefs and prac–tices, a framework of norms and values governing family and kinship organizations, food habits, caste differences, and language. Punjabis are not completely cut off from their original homeland of India; they retain a mental and physical contact with their homeland, often characterized as "the myth of return."

To return to the question of "no better home?" as proposed by Koffman, it would seem that the one–hundred–and–twenty–year history of Punjabis in Canada, as part of a global Punjabi diaspora, is a testament to their resilience of building a better home in Canada, albeit through much struggle and many successes. They present a powerful example of a mostly successful integration into the new homeland of Canada, secured with their adherence to traditional values, culture, religion and lan–guage that have been sustained at some cost of personal, political, and public opinion. In more recent times Punjabis have insisted on no "single story" for a diverse and culturally astute community built on chain migration, but host and home have not always come together with the same understanding of this dichotomy.

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Paul L. Gareau

A Better Home on Native Land: Reflections on the Question of Home and Being Good Relations

On February 9, 2023, celebrated Canadian R&B artist Jully Black stepped into the limelight at the NBA All-Star Game in Salt Lake City, Utah, to sing the Canadian national anthem. In front of a global audience, Black changed one word: from "home *and* native land" to "home *on* native land."[1] In response to this alteration, Black received a torrent of racist, anti-Black hate speech, and personal threats on social media.[2] On April 3, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) honoured Black with a Blanketing Ceremony, led by AFN knowledge keeper and chief RoseAnne Archibald, to acknowledge Black's conviction and bravery for standing with Indigenous peoples and for Indigenous rights. Chief Archibald stated, "She shifted consciousness in that moment on a huge international stage, simply for singing the truth."[3] Moved by this honour, Black said, "I didn't realize that my action would garner such a response."[4]

Black was inspired to act when she learned of the uncovering—not discovering—of 215 unmarked graves of Indigenous children at the former Kamloops Industrial School in May 2021. This event was a catalyst that brought national and international attention to the stark and disturbing realities of Indian residential and day schools that operated across Canada between the 1870s and 1990s. An estimated 150,000 Indigenous children were forced to attend, and an estimated 6,000 children died.[5] For decades, Indigenous peoples have been advocating for recognition, reparation, and reconciliation for these atrocities from a settler state that had obstinately denied any responsibility or wrongdoing. Black stated that she can no longer sing the conventional Canadian anthem, knowing this history of institutional racism and genocide.[6] And before an AFN audience, Black said, "On behalf of the Black community, I say we are one. We're better together."[7]

Black's actions address issues of structural racism and settler colonialism that continue to shape Canadian society and identity. These issues impact the lives of Indigenous nations/peoples, where Indigenous histories and experiences are diminished and decentred, ignored, silenced, and erased. This represents a settler exceptionalism based on ideals of *terra nullius* (empty lands) and the doctrine of discovery, and the propagation of Western European civilization. Together, it describes the colonial project in Canada that speaks of nationhood conviction and justification, stability, and strength, i.e., *home and native land*. But what is lacking from this nationalist narrative is an acknowledgement and, like Archibald said, a consciousness of the multifaceted and continuous relations Indigenous nations/peoples have with and on the Land in different storied places. These storied, relational places aggregate into situated Indigenous homelands and traditional territories that overlap and are intersectional—places where different collective nations/peoples, who are human and other-than-human, interact, interrelate, and negotiate shared space/place through kinship and reciprocity, diplomacy, and non-interference. The Land holds these complex co-constitutive, multi-nation relations, which therefore cannot be possessed or abstracted, nor forgotten. Black's words and actions speak of reconciliation for the dispossession of Indigenous relations caused by settler colonialism, and rec-

ognition of the sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous nations/peoples as a matter of Indigenous rights, i.e., *home on native land*.

This complex idea of home on native land and Canada brings us to the main themes of the book *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging*. Edited by David S. Koffman, this book brings together Jewish and Jewish studies scholars on the question: "Has there ever been a better home for Jews than Canada?"[8] The different chapters weave through themes of settlement, diaspora, genocide, multiculturalism, diversity, racialization, assimilation, marginalization, political advocacy, enfranchisement, citizenship, patriotism, nationalism, transnationalism, belonging, nostalgia, community(ies), and place and location. Crucially, it is a book that centres Jewish voices, experiences, cultures, histories, thought, and socio-political positions as part of the Canadian experience. It serves as a reflection on and affirmation of the presence and relevancy of Jewish people and communities in Canada, and their impact on Canadian society. The value in this book is how it engages questions of Jewish Canadian experiences that do not conform squarely to the nationalist narratives of Canada, and undeterredly negotiates claims of Canadian identity as Jewish people and communities.

As an Indigenous studies scholar and Métis citizen born and raised in the Batoche homeland in Saskatchewan, the history and expressions of Jewish life in Canada raised in this book are insightful, engaging, and relevant. As a former student in Jewish studies at Concordia University in Montreal, I appreciate the affirmation of Jewish identity that is diverse, situated, complex, and intersectional, which also resists the racializing discourse of Canadian identity. I see a resemblance of self-awareness and self-determination in the Métis Nation. As Métis, or *li gens libre* (the free people) or the *otipemisiwak* (the people who own themselves), we have struggled for Indigenous rights and self-determination against the impositions of settler colonialism and the dispossession of our relational homelands, knowledges, and governance. We challenge racializing discourse in Canada that marginalizes us as "the forgotten people" or as an "Indian problem" that needs to be enfranchised or eliminated. Unfortunately, we also get swept up by normalizing discourse around race and identity (i.e., internalized racism, aspirational whiteness, and lateral violence), heteronormativity, gender, and sexual violence, and engagement in non-consensual economic exploitation. However, through these contradictions and force relations, we hold to our core principles of relationality that define us as Indigenous. Broadly speaking, the Métis engage in an ethic of *wahkotowin* (kinship or relatedness) and *making kin*, or as Sisseton Dakota scholar Kim TallBear explains, "making people into familiars in order to relate."[9] As all Indigenous nations/peoples do in their own way, Métis are invested in making kin and good relations within our nation, and with other nations/peoples, who are human and other-than-human, in storied places, homelands, and territories that we share.[10] This is what makes us a Métis Nation.

Based in this relational ethic, I have always understood myself as a non-Jewish, Michif/Métis man making kin with and learning from my Jewish relatives. Therefore, I was delighted to see a relational engagement reflected in Koffman's chapter, entitled "The Unsettling of Canadian Jewish History: Toward a Tangled History of Jewish-Indigenous Encounters," which focuses on instances and intersections of Jewish and Indigenous encounters throughout Canadian history.[11] The operational factor in Koffman's work is the question of *encounters*, which speaks of the tension that Jewish settlers in Canada face between engaging an ethic of Indigenous relationality in making kin and assenting to the normalizing pressures of the colonial project. This tension between good relations and settler colonialism is discussed in four sections: (1) historical exposition of Jewish-Indigenous encounters that hint at but fall short of exploring kinship relations; (2) the ideals of Jewishness and Indigeneity intersecting as "imagined relations" through arts and literature, culture and identity; (3) activism from Jewish legal and academic professionals in recognizing Indigenous rights and struggles against colonial dispossession and assimilation; and (4) advocacy and solidarity from Jewish institutions in Canada that critique Canadian policies of Indigenous elimination as well as multiculturalism for totalizing and silencing Indigenous voices and experiences.[12]

Though Jewish people and communities have taken action to challenge Canada's structural issues of anti-Indigenous racism, Koffman holds no illusions about the complexity of these encounters. Koffman mentions instances of Jewish complicity in the colonial project, such as participation in the trans-Atlantic Fur Trade, salvage anthropology, and the global market of Indigenous material culture; self-Indigenization and "settler moves to innocence" as a means to justify Jewish settlement on Indigenous traditional territories; and participation of Jewish families in the 60s Scoop that saw the forced removal and adoption of thousands of Indigenous children into non-Indigenous homes.[13] Notably, Koffman also points to examples where Indigenous leaders deployed antisemitic rhetoric, like in Métis leader Louis Riel's nineteenth-century writings about the Jewish racialized moral character, and the former AFN chief David Ahenakew's antisemitic diatribe in 2002.[14] These are unfortunate examples of how both Jewish and Indigenous peoples deployed racism in ways that hurt the other. But, more importantly, it makes clear the role that white supremacy plays, historically and currently, in shaping Canada as a settler society, and which negatively impact Jewish and Indigenous peoples alike.

This represents a key element to Koffman's work in highlighting that Canada's history is unambiguously a story of settler colonialism.[15] The promise of being and becoming Canadian was and remains conditioned by the colonial project, which is defined by Indigenous dispossession and white possessiveness. Indigenous nations/peoples and Indigenous studies scholars have always advocated this critical perspective.[16] In response to the possessive ethos of the American Dream, Kim TallBear explains, "While the foundation of Indigenous elimination is one of white supremacy, it

is not only white people in power who work to eliminate or erase Indigenous peoples. Dreaming, even in inclusive and multicultural tones, of developing an ideal settler state implicitly supports the elimination of Indigenous peoples from this place."[17] The ugly truth is that the promise or dream of Canada as a settler state is built on stolen Land, Indigenous territories, and relations. The solution resides in the question that is seldom articulated in settler societies: *how do you make a better home on native land?* Koffman arrives at the solution by stating that making Canada a "better home" for Jewish people and communities necessitates self–reflexive "calls for grappling with a more nuanced 'settler–side' history."[18]

Like Jully Black's affirmation of Black solidarity, Koffman is heeding the call from Indigenous nations/peoples for reconciliation that asks all settler people and communities in Canada to resist colonial discourses of white possessiveness and settler exceptionalism (i.e., home and native land), and to recognize Indigenous sovereignty and relational lifeways in situated, intersectional, and shared places (i.e., home on native land). The idea of Indigenous sovereignty is not one of ownership or possession over the Land, but recognizing that Indigenous nations/peoples have deep, multifaceted, and complex relations in storied places and traditional territories. Therefore, to engage in and maintain good relations means to work towards an ethic of non–interference, non–possessiveness, and self–determination that affirms consensual and co–constitutive relations between settler communities and Indigenous nations/peoples. To build a better home on native land is to move beyond encounters towards becoming kin.

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1
The term "native" is used throughout this article to challenge settler colonial discourse in the Canadian national anthem as well as affirm Indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous autonyms are preferred to represent specific nations/peoples, and the term "Indigenous" is used to recognize First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

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"Canadian R&B Singer."

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Jennifer Adese and Chris Andersen, eds., *A People and a Nation: New Directions in Contemporary Métis Studies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021).

11
David S. Koffman, "The Unsettling of Canadian Jewish History: Toward a Tangled History of Jewish-Indigenous Encounters," in *No Better Home?*.

12
Ibid., 94.

13
Ibid.; see also Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1-40, https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.n38.04.

14
Koffman, "The Unsettling of Canadian Jewish History," 91, 102.

15
Ibid., 103.

16
See Brendan Hokowhitu et al., eds., *Routledge Handbook of Critical Indigenous Studies* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2021).

17
TallBear, "Caretaking Relations," 24.

18
Koffman, "The Unsettling of Canadian Jewish History," 104.

Natalia Khanenko–Friesen

No Better Home? A Ukrainian Canadian Response

As a cultural anthropologist and scholar of diaspora studies with long-term professional interest in Ukrainian Canadian culture, I was delighted to be invited to comment on the value of *No Better Home?* The book thoughtfully and authoritatively untangles factual and interpretive layers of complexity, tensions, junctures, disjunctures, and multivocality of the Jewish Canadian experience. In doing so, the book allows one to develop a much better understanding of Canada as a home for Jewish communities and an appreciation of Jewish Canadian experiences. I am sure other readers will appreciate this impressive dissection of history that retraces the evolution of the Jewish presence in Canada from the early 1700s to recent times.

The book's key messages are also important intellectual contributions to a number of scholarly fields including global Jewish history, Canadian history, immigration and transnational studies, diaspora studies, language studies, and more. Its essays shed much light on life and choices Jewish Canadians made and continue making to maintain themselves as viable communities. Importantly, these essays overall illuminate the essence of Canada and Canadian culture, making this publication a valuable read for anyone interested in how Canada is lived and experienced from within.

Readers expecting to hear that Jewish Canadians have long been a united community will be surprised to learn how multivocal, linguistically, culturally, and religiously diverse various subgroups of Jewish Canadians have been. First, ancient and modern dispersals, regulated- and state-sanctioned discrimination across various hosting lands, and the removal from the ancient homelands being so far in the past have dictated for the Jewish communities around the world different strategies of self-maintenance. This long and meandering global history led to the formation of distinct versions of Jewishness. When Jewish immigrants encountered Canada, with its own evolution and formation of the Canadian society as a nation, a unique path towards a new home began to shape.

Second, unlike most ethnic communities that might have enjoyed a clear and strong connection to an easily identifiable ethnic homeland, Jewish diasporic communities did not have a designated homeland of their own until the mid-twentieth century. As such, for millennia Jewish identity had to sustain itself on the basis of so many important pillars other than a shared ethnic language, shared ethnic homeland, and shared religious tradition. Third, this complex evolution of Jewishness demands novel approaches to explaining the foundations of Canadian Jewish identity, and many insightful perspectives are advanced in this publication in this respect. Thus, a Montrealer, Lois Dubin, inspired by the idea of a "tripartite identity" of early twentieth-century Habsburg Jewish people—they are politically Habsburg; culturally and linguistically German; and ethnically Jewish—considers herself politically Canadian (and federalist), linguistically English, and ethnically Jewish. Potentially not all Jewish Canadians follow this breakdown describing their Jewish and Canadian positionalities. But the notion of tripartite identity can serve many as a useful tool to explain

the layers of one identity. Fourth, to fully understand and appreciate Canadian Jew-ishness one also needs to examine the Canadian part of the hyphen. David Wein-feld takes this on, singling out one important aspect of Canadian culture that in his opinion explains the robust Jewish life in Canada. Comparing Canada to the United States, Weinfeld calls Canadian culture thin which, paradoxically, allowed the Jewish culture to grow "thick" and become vibrant, diverse, and self-sustained across many generations in Canada.

Apart from appreciating the intellectual rigour of the volume, reading this fascinat-ing collection also offered me a stimulating experience of stepping into an unfamiliar cultural diasporic space of Jewishness in Canada with its contested historical mem-oryscape and continuous identity renegotiations. Intriguingly, though, delving into the book's subject matter was also akin to intellectual homecoming, so familiar the book's intentions are to a Ukrainian Canadian scholar who has been observing the evolution of Ukrainian identity in Canada for some time.

Professional and personal lifepaths of my own equipped me with the lenses through which I engaged with the book. A young Kyivite, I arrived in Canada in the early 1990s to pursue my academic studies, and eventually settled on, and fell in love with, the Canadian prairies, though my academic life in North America had also unfolded in meaningful ways at some point in Toronto and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Like many authors of the book, I found myself on numerous occasions explaining my own Ukrainianness to myself and others, both inside and outside of the Ukrainian community. I have been examining and commenting on the complexities of Can-ada's Ukrainian experience, comparing it to other Ukrainian diasporic settings, the homeland, Canada's mainstream and other ethnic communities and their practices and representations.

My childhood and youth in Soviet Ukraine did not intersect much with Jewish cul-ture, though I cherished my friendships with my Jewish friends and was immersed in the popular culture of the day enough to understand the unique place Jewishness occupied in the local lore. Vernacular references to Jewishness on one end loud-ly signalled otherness and yet, simultaneously, pointed to something of one's own, something deeply familiar, intimate, and personal. In times of my youth, in my mi-lieu back in Ukraine, Jewish culture and traditions were not well known or under-stood, but nonetheless, Jewish spaces, sounds, and tastes felt like an integral part of Ukrainian cultural domain. Various Jewish communities and Ukrainians lived side by side on the territory of contemporary Ukraine over the course of a thousand years, both as minorities and subjects of medieval states, then large empires of Habsburg Austro-Hungary and Tsarist Russia and later a totalitarian state of the Soviet Union. Jewish families were next-door neighbours to Ukrainians in their Orthodox or Greek-Catholic or later Soviet or post-Soviet communities. Yet, given their dif-ferent statuses and positions in homeland societies, as well as differing memories

of past conflicts that have not been fully reconciled, effectively, in Canada the two groups have never truly re-engaged with each other on the communal level. Many members of these two communities continued holding on to their differing understandings of their complex shared history in Europe, despite scholars in both fields, Ukrainian studies and Jewish studies, periodically engaging in the dialogue about the virtues and misfortunes of Jewish-Ukrainian encounters over the course of history.

While Jewish arrivals to Canada date back to the 1700s, Ukrainians began actively arriving in Canada after 1891. In Canada, neither group gravitated to the other, and did not reconnect in ways, say, the Mennonites and Ukrainians did, or Poles and Ukrainians did. Their collective energies and foci were redirected towards their own groups' immediate goals and tasks of community building and language and culture maintenance, again in various ways and with various purposes. Equally the two groups also faced and dealt with the pressures of political, ideological, and religious factionalism within their own ranks. In both cases, though, these goals were pursued in the context of continued mainstream Canada's prejudice, racism, and discrimination that both groups have experienced throughout their Canadian history. Several decades after their settlement in Canada, by the time the policy of multiculturalism was adopted in 1971, Ukrainians had successfully transitioned from being seen as non-white stalwart garlic-smelling cultural Eastern European others into acceptable citizens of Canada and among its celebrated "nation builders." On the other hand, and at the same time, institutional racism (i.e. blocking Jewish immigration to Canada), antisemitism, and vernacular manifestations of cultural intolerance towards the Jewish people linger in Canada, the latter having been so poignantly illustrated by Jack Kugelmass in his contribution to this volume.

Reading the book, I could not avoid comparing Jewish and Ukrainian understandings of Canada as home. The very question whether Canada is a good, or better, home for the immigrant people, I believe, was hardly on the radar of the Ukrainian Canadians who univocally would have given a positive answer to this question if it would have been asked of them. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that Ukrainian dispersal has roots in more recent, modern times and in broad strokes, was more or less unidirectional, from home villages to a place of new settlement, with Ukrainians taking root in countries and regions they had come to. The Jewish people on the other hand have been displaced from their original and interim homelands multiple times throughout millennia. Therefore, asking the question that begs comparison—of not just a good home but a better home—makes more historic sense in Jewish diasporic settings.

That Ukrainians have not seriously considered the question whether "Canada is better home" probably also has something to do with the fact that the first and until now most populous Ukrainian immigration wave to Canada (1891-1914) of farmland-focused immigrants immediately received access to much desired Canadian

soil. Most of the 170,000 Ukrainians predominantly from the Habsburg Empire arrived in Western Canada to take homesteads, and thus they partook in active colonization of Canada's western frontier. The emerging Ukrainian community embraced the national discourse of the day of empty prairies and pristine lands that needed to be broken, to eventually build on such discursive pillars a powerful narrative of their own ethnic origin as pioneer settlers, developers of western Canadian agriculture, and thus builders of the Canadian nation. Canada offered so many opportunities to Ukrainian families that, despite initial prejudice and persecution, to many local family history writers, Canada was an even better homeland than earlier versions run by imperial or totalitarian rulers. This pride sustained the Ukrainian Canadians throughout many decades and very much informed their leaders' actions in the 1960s, when Paul Yuzyk called Canadian politicians to support the adoption of the official policy of multiculturalism. History, though, offers some lessons and a perspective on what Ukrainians in Canada may see as Ukrainian invention. Jeffrey Veidlinger's article contextualizes this Ukrainian drive towards a more just Canada in Jewish–Ukrainian political cooperation in the past, in the turbulent and shifting times of the early twentieth century and in the Jewish social advocacy at the time. Veidlinger reminds us that it was Jewish political participation and activism that introduced the idea of "national autonomy" in the Ukrainian nation building project of early twentieth–century Ukraine. Back then, "Jews were conscious of securing rights as a minority group within the largely binational (Russian and Ukrainian) state," thus providing the newly created Ukrainian government of 1917 with the novel multicultural and civil template for the future Ukrainian state.[1]

Perhaps the heightened focus on Canada as a home is also dictated by key developments in historic homelands of both communities, at least in the twentieth century. Until 1948, in the case of the Jewish community, and until 1991, in the case of the Ukrainian community, both ethnic groups had been building their communal lives in Canada without their own homelands as political agents and subjects on the global stage. In the case of Ukrainians in Canada, most of whom in the twentieth century either rejected or doubted the legitimacy of Soviet rule in what was then Soviet Ukraine, Canada was true home, with Ukraine remaining solidly in the landscape of longing and imagination. This long–term absence from a political map, and longterm inaccessibility to one's homeland, certainly channelled personal and communal agencies as well as political and intellectual energy towards realignment with ethnic peers elsewhere in the world. Both Jewish Canadians and Ukrainian Canadians sought out and looked up to their ethnic and culture peers in the United States, though as I learned from this volume, there have been differences in vectors of fascination and orientation and in how the two Canadian minorities connected with their US–based peers.

Measuring the successes in making a host land a home has been oftentimes done by Canadian Jews in comparison to how their Jewish peers and cousins fared in the US. Lois Dubin states that "for the Montreal Jew, thinking about Canada as a home meant simultaneous awareness of the local Jewish community, the Protestant English-speaking sector of Montreal, the Catholic majority of Montreal and Quebec, as well as the entire country of Canada–and all of them embedded in the larger North American continent, which means of course the United States."[2] A similar cross-border curiosity and cross-referencing is present in the psyche of the Ukrainian Canadians and Ukrainian Americans. Though writing from the prairies–the space imagined by the Ukrainian Canadians as a birthplace of Canada's own Ukrainian history and culture—and commuting between the US Eastern Seaboard and Canada's west made me fully aware of American Ukrainians' appreciation of Ukrainian-Canadian successes in self-mobilization, community building, and transnational diasporic engagements. In pre-war times, and now, with Russian troops ravaging Ukraine, diasporic mobilization of both is profound and comparable.

Weinfeld, in his postscript, "Thin Canadian Culture, Thick Jewish Life," contemplates how Canada's Jewish communities benefited from the thinness of Canadian culture. Weinfeld embraces this juxtaposition of thick/thin in reference to a 2015 exchange between Justin Trudeau and a journalist interviewing him but rephrases it in a more conceptual way. Canadian culture, being thin enough, allowed Jewish people to think about themselves as Jewish first, and Canadians second. "Where Jewish culture feels thick, durable, and substantive, Canadian culture feels shallow, flimsy, and unformed. Yet, that is Canadian culture's greatest strength. By having a thin culture, Canada allows other cultures to feel at home."[3]

This powerful assertion wraps up the discussions in this volume. Reflecting on the key question that the volume addresses, whether Canada is a "better home" for the Jewish people, the contributors' collective message implies that Jewish people were able to achieve a sense of belonging in this country. But together, contributions to the volume left me with the feeling that the phrase "sense of belonging" should not be automatically signal belonging to Canada. In so many circumstances discussed by the authors, the sense of belonging was oftentimes most projected onto the group itself. For Jews in many instances, the plains of Canadian culture have been too thin to serve as a foundation for their Canadianness.

As a Ukrainian Canadian scholar, also representing institutional and professional networks of this field, the book offered me many intriguing details about Jewish life in Canada, making me want to go further on my journey through the thick diasporic space of Canadian Jewishness. I have been intrigued by the parallels and differences in how Jewish and Ukrainian Canadians pursued their belonging to Canada in their respective ethnic solitudes. It is not difficult to imagine that if Jewish-Ukrainian dialogue in Canada has an opportunity to grow, then perhaps not only parallels but

meaningful intersections and points of contact between the two groups can be discovered and appreciated not just within but across the rich terrains of both Canada settler cultures.

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1
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Louis C. Dubin, "Montreal and Canada through a Wider Lens: Confessions of a Canadian-American European Jewish Historian," *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging,* 218.

3
David Weinfeld, "Postscript. Thin Canadian Culture, Thick Jewish Life," *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging,* 297.

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and the Unfinished Business of Canadian Mennonite Belonging

Ben Nobbs–Thiessen

Latin American Migration, Settler Colonialism, and the Unfinished Business of Canadian Mennonite Belonging

For those Low-German speaking Mennonites who sought to live apart from the world and historically resisted conscription, national schooling, and political participation, David S. Koffman's "audacious" question was frequent and fraught across centuries of diasporic mobility.[1] In the 1870s, facing compulsory military service in the Russian Empire, Mennonite delegations traveled to the United States and the Dominion of Canada with that question on their lips. Their investigations on both sides of the 49th parallel did not produce a consensus. For the majority, opportunities in the Mennonite Commonwealth they had established over the preceding century in imperial Russia outweighed concerns about encroaching Russification.[2] Life there, particularly with the option of alternative service, offered a better home and would until the chaos of the Russian Revolution and Civil War prompted a new round of emigration in the 1920s.

Of those that elected to emigrate in the 1870s, a majority (10,000) opted for the United States. Canada's appeal for roughly 7,000 of the 1870s Mennonites is notable given the near universal tendency of other migrants (including Jewish migrants of the era) to overwhelmingly favor the US. Despite a challenging climate and scarce infrastructure, the Dominion's promises of block settlements, educational freedoms, and pacifist exemptions offered a better home for some Mennonites. In the US those options appeared tenuous. Letters to Russia as well as letters published in the newspaper *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* in the late 1800s, read by Mennonites on both sides of the border, are testament to the continued resonance of this question. Paens to Canada's promise were also issued in formal encounters between government officials and Mennonites. Elder Gerhard Wiebe recalled an 1877 visit by Lord Dufferin to the Mennonite reserves of southern Manitoba, when the governor general "concluded his speech by assuring us that it would go well with us if we remained the people we profess to be ... namely, peaceful agricultural people."[3]

Still, the question of Canada as a better home must invite a highly qualified response within the Mennonite diaspora. For whom? Four decades after Dufferin's visit, those same Mennonite communities would send delegates across the hemisphere as some now prepared to abandon Canada. Imposed English-language education confirmed the worst fears of those who, to quote Hasia Diner, were, "never utterly convinced that the robust opportunity structure they enjoyed would really persist."[4] Unsuccessful in their petitions to circumvent provincial school laws, the "audacious" departure of 7,000 Mennonites for Latin America in the 1920s remains the largest group emigration in modern Canadian history.

Even with this outmigration, the Mennonite population continued to expand quickly. New waves of Mennonite migration from the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1940s bolstered the majority of those 1870s descendants that had remained in Canada. These varied migrant waves carried distinct relationships to their Russian past and Canadian future. But each would continue in their particularistic but growing embrace

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of national belonging. From construction empires and philanthropic endeavors to political participation, literary prominence, and academic engagement, Canadian Mennonites were increasingly present in arenas far beyond the inland agricultural enclaves of the 1870s.

As they prepared to celebrate their centennial in Canada in the 1970s, Mennonite belonging was evident in robust historical societies at the provincial and national level. Sometimes, this new generation of community and university-based historians framed their contribution as a Canadian alternative to US-centric Mennonite historical writing which, as with the "narratives constructed about American Jewish history have managed to ignore Canada."[5] Commemorative initiatives also included the establishment of museums, the unveiling of placards in the halls of government and even, in 1978, the creation of the very position I currently hold–a chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg as a joint product of a Mennonite donor family and the Canadian Multiculturalism Secretariat. Tentative diasporic engagements with official multiculturalism, which Jeffrey Veidlinger teases out in his contribution to *No Better Home?*, continued for Mennonites over the following decades and culminated in 2019 with a declaration of the second week of September as "Mennonite Heritage Week."

The motion, brought forward by Mennonite MP Ed Fast, could be read as one, among many, indicators of what Morton Weinfeld refers to in *No Better Home?* as "full political participation." Yet an alternative to this national narrative is readily available if one only looks south. A century since the 1920s emigration, roughly 250,000 Mennonites across Latin America are a rapidly growing affront to the claim that Canada offers a better home. As Koffman suggests, inclusion of other branches of the diaspora, particularly those with orthodox or traditionalist orientations, offer a much "murkier" response to the question of belonging.[6] In the Mennonite case, the perspective from the south might have indeed read the very successes detailed in the previous paragraph as a form of capitulation while espousing a Mennonite version of the "brilliant and oft-repeated observation that what seems to be good for individual Jews might be bad for the community's health."[7]

Historian Royden Loewen has referred to this as the "competing cosmologies" of Mennonites in Canada and Latin America.[8] A further caveat is also necessary. These opposing camps were incredibly porous. Mennonites on both sides of the north-south divide engaged in a constant "calculus" of departure and return in regard to what constituted a better home. This is evident in tens of thousands of "returnees" to Canada from Mexico and elsewhere; new departures from Canada to Latin America (even a notable but small current in the context of recent pandemic mandates); and individuals and families who moved south or north not once, but often multiple times and for a multitude of reasons.[9]

The ongoing history of Mennonite migration to Latin America is only one element that unsettles the question of Canadian belonging. It is furthermore a common one in Mennonite historiography that has often been guided by the twin themes of negotiation with state authorities and divisions brought on by questions of accommodation. More immediate and troubling is Koffman's acknowledgement that diasporic dispersal is always intertwined with displacement and that "seeing the particulars of Canadian minority histories through the lens of Indigenous settler relations poses some serious challenges to these groups' historical narratives."[10] In much historical writing, including until recently in Mennonite Studies, such challenges have often gone unaddressed because of a trend to view immigration history as a separate subfield from Indigenous history (in terms of themes, methods, sources). In the process, as Yolande Cohen writes, a "settler's aspect has been replaced by a migrant one."[11] In the face of this erasure, to the question, "no better home?" we must counter not simply "for whom" but also "at whose expense?"

Koffman's subsequent exploration of the points of encounter (direct, structural, metaphorical) between Jewish migrants and Indigenous peoples offers both divergences and intersections with Mennonite roles in settler colonialism. He rightly highlights the need to "disaggregate the immigrant/settler/guest populations and their respective encounters with Turtle Island's first peoples."[12] In Canada, Mennonite settlement was unthinkable outside of the context of Indigenous dispossession. Indeed, the 1870s migrants discussed above were the first major block settlement on Treaty 1 territory in the newly created province of Manitoba. This should lead us to exactly the sort of critical re-interpretation of Lord Dufferin's 1877 celebratory speech offered by historian Shelisa Klassen who reminds us, in a nuanced analysis of media coverage of the era, of the Mennonite role in constructing a benign settler myth from a history of violent dispossession in Manitoba.[13] Jewish migrants, though interacting with Indigenous peoples earlier than Mennonites in their roles as merchants along "capitalism's cutting edge"—also joined the post-1872 wave of settler agriculture on the prairies.[14] In that respect, each group could be characterized in the words of scholar Reina Neufeldt, as "obedient subjects, good to their word as conscripts who, by and large, enfolded within the settler colonial order from which they materially benefitted."[15] Despite this, a telling absence is evident in Mennonite primary sources of the era, as in the Jewish memoirs of Isa Milman referenced by Koffman. Each were largely characterized by "silence" in which Indigenous histories were "hardly mentioned" or reduced to a footnote.[16]

In the ensuing years, as structures of Canadian settler colonialism deepened, Mennonites would take on new roles in relationship to Indigenous peoples. Given their isolationist tendencies, Canadian Mennonites were slower to embrace missionary work than their counterparts in the US. There, General Conference missionaries were already active on Arapaho and Cheyenne reservations in the 1880s. Their work extended to translation and, in the case of H.R. Voth, an 1870s Russian Mennonite

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migrant to Kansas who corresponded with Franz Boas, this included a role as a trad-er/collector/photographer. His controversial work linked Arapaho and Hopi missions to museums (notably the Field Museum in Chicago).[17]

In Canada, by contrast, belated missionary work was a product of mid-twentieth century notions of witness, outreach, and a growing evangelicalism. The Bergthal church of Manitoba (representing Mennonites who decided against emigration to Latin America in the 1920s) began a Mennonite Pioneer Mission in the late 1940s (later Native Ministries under the umbrella of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada). Operating primarily in northern Manitoba Anishinaabe and Cree communities it was followed by other Mennonite missions across the country. In the 1950s, young Mennonite volunteers with the Mennonite Central Committee (an inter-church relief agency) were encountering Indigenous patients in summer service work at Clearwater Lake–a racially-segregated tuberculosis sanatorium in The Pas, Manitoba linked to the residential school system.[18] By the early 1960s, Mennonites operated residential schools of their own in northwestern Ontario as well as an Indigenous boarding school in Saskatchewan.

As these examples indicate, Mennonite outreach was often steeped in paternalism and at times aligned with the state's assimilationist policies of cultural genocide. This perspective began to shift in the following decades. Like some Jewish advocates, certain Mennonites followed an anthropologically informed path to activism that moved from ethnocentrism to "cultural pluralism and anti-racism ."[19] They also openly critiqued state policy. While the Jewish Labour Committee and the Canadian Jewish Congress became active in anti-discrimination work with Indigenous communities in the sixties, MCC formed a Native Concerns Committee (later Indigenous Neighbours) in the mid-1970s with Menno Wiebe, who also taught anthropology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, as its first director. As part of an ecumenical "Project North" group, its members challenged northern development and hydroelectric initiatives as forms of environmental racism against Indigenous communities. By the 1980s, some MCC volunteers were also supporting land claims with groups such as the Lubicon Cree.[20]

Though the preceding examples might read as a uniformly progressive trajectory in Indigenous-Mennonite encounters, the reality, as Koffman also suggests for Jewish-Indigenous engagement, was far more complex. Increasing solidarity on the part of some Mennonites was sometimes dampened by concerns about the perceived limits of pacifist engagement. Culturally informed, collaborative engagement existed alongside Mennonite-run residential schools. Most troubling (and least explored), in the very moment when Mennonites turned to Indigenous advocacy in the late 1960s, Mennonites across Canada, like Jewish Canadians, were also encouraged to take part in the Sixties Scoop by church leaders.[21] They did so in significant numbers through adoption and fostering of Indigenous children. Indeed, the two messages were in-

tertwined in Mennonite discourse. In addition to the violence of family separation, some Indigenous children in Mennonite homes and communities encountered experiences of marginalization and racism very similar to those of Nakuset Shapiro.[22] All of these initiatives from mid-century onwards produced a plethora of primary sources that demand further attention from scholars.

Conclusion

How to respond to these two countercurrents within the discourse of Canadian Mennonite belonging? A celebratory narrative of "heroic immigrant ascent" meshed easily with currents of official multiculturalism in the 1970s.[23] But it could not account for the quarter of a million individuals whose legacy was directly tied to a rejection of Canadian national education through Latin American migration. It was equally silent on the question of Indigenous "disempowerment" that accompanied immigrant empowerment. In the short term, we should insist, as with the title of this compelling edited collection, on maintaining the question mark that follows the title "no better home?" Mennonite Studies, as with Jewish Studies, must continue to hold such national narratives in tension with settler colonial and transnational perspectives on diaspora. As Melanie Kampen has suggested, Canadian Mennonites, in their approaches to Indigenous reconciliation and advocacy in the TRC-era, must also avoid championing a forgetful "peacemaker myth" and reflect on the way in which these aims sit "uneasily"—to borrow from Koffman with historically unequal relationships with Indigenous communities.[24] Notably, it is a question that Latin American Mennonites–who may have rejected Canadian belonging through participation in new rounds of settler colonialism in Paraguay, Bolivia, Mexico and elsewhere–must also address.

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Roberto Perin

Jews and Italians in the Land of Milk and Honey?

While similarities abound in the trajectories of Jews and Italians in Canada, fundamental differences are also in evidence. Before the Second World War, these two groups constituted the most demographically significant ones in Canada's largest cities outside the British and the French. However, in the wake of large-scale post-war migration from the peninsula and a correspondingly weak flow of Jews arriving from abroad, Italians displaced the latter in the top spot, holding that position in Montreal, but ceding it to South Asian Indians in Toronto by the end of the millennium. Still, the mass movement of the two groups began roughly at the same time, in the early years of the twentieth century. Before that, embryonic communities dating back to the Conquest in the case of the Jews and the War of 1812 for Italians were well integrated, the first among English speakers and the second among French speakers. In the 1850s Moses Judah Hays became Montreal's chief of police and Abraham de Sola, professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature, at McGill University. At the same time James Forneri held the chair of Modern Languages at the University of Toronto, while Paul Bruchési was appointed second archbishop of Montreal at the end of the century.

Mass migration greatly expanded and diversified these communities. The new arrivals used their hometown identities to expedite their integration in the new land. Jews founded *landsmanshaftn* and synagogues whose very names testified to their deep-seated local identity. As for Italians, *campanilismo*, a word derived from the belltower of the local parish church (*campanile*), is perhaps too often used to describe the narrow limits of their sense of loyalty. Be that as it may, boarding houses and mutual aid societies were often based on local identities. The first Italian parishes in both Montreal and Toronto bore names referring to cults predominantly associated with southern Italy where most immigrants originated. As well, Italian religiosity was very much focused on the patron saint of the town of origin which the parish clergy ignored at their peril. Local identities produced fractiousness within these immigrant communities, compounded by perceptions of superiority entrenched in segments of both groups. One could say that the further south one went in Eastern Europe and Italy, the less esteemed were the inhabitants: at the top were Lithuanian Jews and northern Italians, while the bottom was occupied by Romanian Jews and Sicilians. Factors relating to class and time of arrival, however, were also at play.

These centrifugal forces were, however, held in check. Immigrant elites had an interest, both personal and ideological, in containing them. As well, international events such as the Kishinev pogroms, the Messina earthquake, the First World War, the Third International, the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, as well as Zionist, Bundist, and anarcho-syndicalist ideologies appealed to a broader sense of identity. Activities and institutions specifically directed at the entire immigrant group, namely newspapers, health and welfare assistance, trade unions, theatre, sports, and other pastimes, all reinforced these centripetal tendencies. In this regard, one cannot but be in awe of the achievements of the highly literate and cultured Jews who transformed Montreal

into the Vilna on the St. Lawrence to borrow from the title of Kalman Weiser's evocative article. Only a third as numerous in Canada's major urban centres and with less formal education, Italians had to wait until after the Second World War to achieve a somewhat similar flourishing.

In the world of work, Jews and Italians occupied specific job niches, the former in the *schmatte* trade and the latter in construction. A smaller number ran small family businesses doubtless escaping the exploitative conditions imposed on their compatriots by Jewish, Italian, and Canadian employers, but subjected nonetheless to the tyranny of economic survival, especially during the Depression. In the larger industries, affiliates of US trade or industrial unions engaged in strikes and other action to improve workers' lives. This was not an option in small clothing and construction companies where the prevailing intense competition exerted a depressive effect on wages and working conditions. Ottawa's enactment in 1944 of an order-in-council protecting workers' right to organize and employers' obligation to recognize their unions paved the way to the spectacular labour conflicts in Toronto's construction industry in the early 1960s. Italians were in the forefront of the battle to unionize and create a safer working environment in the wake of the Hogg's Hollow disaster that killed five of their compatriots. These events show that a culturally driven analysis of labour activism, privileging some immigrant groups over others is deficient, for it is the material conditions constraining workers' actions that are ultimately more important.

In order to secure a better future for their children, many Jewish immigrants pinned their hopes on education. Their offspring's' marked proclivity for the liberal professions, especially law, medicine, and dentistry, impelled universities, such as McGill, and hospitals to devise various techniques to restrict their numbers. For those who could afford it, obtaining a degree from a US institution became a way of circumventing such obstacles. By contrast, Italians seemed to follow another strategy linked to what historians such as Bettina Bradbury called the family economy whereby every member of the unit contributed however modestly to the economic wellbeing of the whole, often at the expense of further study. As a result, the second generation's achievements were less spectacular than those of Jews. In the postwar era, however, Italians responded eagerly to the state's heavy investment in schooling, obtaining university degrees in large numbers especially but not only in the vastly expanding education sector. They contributed to and benefitted from the growth of the Catholic school system, finding ready jobs especially in Quebec where the British element was in rapid decline.

Is there then no better home than Canada for Jews and Italians, to paraphrase David Koffman? As many of the contributors to his volume and for the same reasons, I am rather hesitant to say so, irrationally fearing that such hubris will unleash the fury of the gods. Immigration incontestably averted the horrors of the Shoah, certainly

produced economic and psychic security for most Jews and Italians, as well improving the lives of their children. And this despite the xenophobia and the antisemitism that was a banal fact of life in Canada before the age of multiculturalism and still haphazardly dogs Jews to this very day. Both groups produced in the second generation luminaries in the magistracy, medicine, education, the arts and sciences, and even honest and competent political leaders. Jews led the fight for civil liberties in this country, while Italians championed the cause of workplace health and safety. All this was achieved in the context of the Keynesian state, what the French term "Les Trente Glorieuses."

Today, we live in a different world, which makes me skeptical of David Weinfeld's optimism about the United States. I for one do not feel the same sense of commonality with US Italians that he displays toward US Jews. Already in 1986, filmmaker Denys Arcand foretold the decline of the American empire. Despite its economically and ecologically unsustainable lifestyle, most Canadians have hitched their wagon to this falling star. Ever the followers, politicians have aligned the country's policies even more closely to those of the imperial centre. In this context, how much longer can Canada claim to be a promised land? Will we live to regret the choices made by our forebears?

Much more compelling is Pierre Anctil's exasperated cry for Anglophone and Francophone specialists of Canadian Jewry to read each other's work. Vitiating Italian Canadian studies as well, this dialogue of the deaf characterizes all aspects of the humanities and social sciences relating to Canada. It is one aspect of the broader issue of the relations between the two major linguistic groups, which is older than Canada itself, and constitutes a key element, along with the country's relations to the United States, of the Canadian question. Although a breach appeared in the wall separating the two cultures in the postwar era, it closed again within a few short years. While this estrangement can perhaps be excused at the popular level, it is completely incomprehensible in academia. And yet, not only do scholars not read the works of their counterparts in the other linguistic community, they do not know them as individuals and have little hope of interacting with them within the associations of their discipline which are organized largely along linguistic lines. Today the reality of "the two solitudes" is still very much with us. Whatever the constitutional form Canada will assume in future, however, the two language groups cannot afford to ignore each other if they wish to survive as distinct entities within the North American continent.

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David A. Wilson

"No Better Home?" Reflections on the Place of Canada within the Irish Diaspora

If, in the nineteenth century, you decided to join your fellow countrymen and women who left Ireland in search of a better life, which country would have been your best bet? A key word in that question is "decided": although many Irish migrants described themselves as exiles, and although those who left during the Great Famine of 1846-51 have often been depicted as refugees, the vast majority left Ireland of their own volition.[1] They weighed up their options in relation to their means, often drawing on information provided by those who had left before them, and made their choices. Despite the many differences among them—differences in the localities from which they came, the time of their departure, their religious beliefs, their social class, their gender—their objectives were broadly the same. They wanted religious freedom, economic security, freedom from discrimination, and more opportunities for their children. For many, these goals were associated with the same goal of Mordecai Richler's Duddy Kravitz: the acquisition of land. And for most, these objectives could be best achieved in the two English-speaking empires that dominated the world: the British and the American.

Much depended on where you came from, when you left, where you arrived, and whether you were Catholic or Protestant. There were so many variations in the Irish migrant experience that generalizations obscure more than they reveal. During the peak period of emigration in the mid-nineteenth century there were intense debates among the Irish about the location of the "better home." Some, such as Toronto's Catholic Archbishop John Joseph Lynch, argued that the Irish were better off staying at home; the threat to faith, family, and morality was much greater in the various New Worlds than it was at home.[2] In Ireland itself, there were many who agreed—eagerly blaming British misrule for Irish emigration, even as they benefitted from the consolidation of holdings, the shift from tillage to pasture, the declining number of agricultural labourers and the reduction of social tensions that emigration made possible. Yet more and more Irish people voted with their feet; between 1851 and 1921, more than four and a half million people left Ireland for North America and Australasia.[3]

The vast majority—around 80 percent—went to the United States, where the employment opportunities were greatest: labour was moving towards capital. For radical nationalists, the United States had the added attraction of providing a model for an imagined Irish future—an independent democratic republic forged by revolution against Perfidious Albion. To say that the reality fell short of expectations would be a vast understatement; the degree of social alienation and political disillusionment among Irish republicans in the Empire of Liberty is nothing short of remarkable. "If I really thought that an Irish Republic would result in the degeneracy of the people to the extent that they have been generated here," wrote the Irish revolutionary Michael Doheny from New York, "I would prefer that Ireland remain as she is."[4]

Some nineteenth-century immigrants in the United States, including people who had been evicted during the Famine, succeeded in owning land that had been opened up in the west—made possible by the displacement and destruction of Indigenous peoples. Most, though, worked in the industrial sectors of the economy, and those who were trapped in the urban slums of the east coast cities experienced extreme poverty. Irish Catholics also bore the brunt of Protestant American nativism, sometimes with Irish Protestant immigrants joining the attack. Yet the extent of "No Irish Need Apply" discrimination can be exaggerated; the demand for labour overrode anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic feeling.[5] Irish Catholics, it should be noted, could dish out discrimination themselves, particularly when they were in competition with African Americans for jobs.

When it came to religious freedom, the Catholic Church expanded at an impressive rate during the nineteenth century, although Catholics did not have publicly funded separate schools. Irish Protestants—the "invisible Irish" in the United States—fitted much better into the religious mainstream, and increasingly identified themselves as "Scotch-Irish" to distinguish themselves from their Catholic compatriots. Because Irish Protestant immigration had predominated during the eighteenth century, the multiplier effect over the generations meant that there were actually more people of Irish Protestant ethnicity than Irish Catholic ethnicity in the United States. It might be concluded that for Irish Protestants, there was indeed "no better home" to live than the United States. However, when upward social mobility is factored in, the picture changes; Americans of Irish Catholic ethnicity are now generally better off than the descendants of Irish Protestant immigrants.

Among those radical Irish nationalists who became disillusioned with life in the United States was a former revolutionary and future father of Canadian Confederation, Thomas D'Arcy McGee. Appalled by the condition of immigrants in urban slums, he tried during the mid 1850s to establish an Irish Catholic colony in the American west, bringing people out of the ghettoes and into farming communities where they could practice their faith and insulate themselves from the influences of Protestantism. Having failed to accomplish this goal, he turned his sights northwards and concluded that if Irish people had to emigrate, their first choice should be Canada.

A minority of Irish emigrants had already made that decision. Most arrived before the Famine, and around 60 percent were Protestants. Not surprisingly, the Orange Order flourished in this British and Protestant environment; at its peak, about a third of Canada's Protestants were members of the Order.[6] There was no shortage of anti-Irish Catholic prejudice, particularly at the local level; Ottawa was gerrymandered to prevent Irish Catholics from controlling the municipal government, and Toronto's Orangemen had city politics sewn up for a century.[7] As Harold Troper has shown, the Orange mould was only broken in 1954, when Nathan Phillips came up

the middle and was elected as mayor.[8] At the supra-local level, though, Orangemen and French Canadians had to work together in the Conservative Party, and the alliance necessitated a degree of accommodation and compromise. John A. Macdonald was an Orangeman, but he worked closely with Catholic bishops and priests to bring out the Conservative vote and initiated significant improvements to separate school legislation in Canada.

The existence of publicly funded separate schools for Catholics in Canada—a product of the French fact—marked the country out from the United States and was a major reason why D'Arcy McGee moved northwards. Canada had other advantages for Irish Catholics. With the achievement of responsible government during the 1840s, it had a degree of legislative independence within the British Empire that Irish nationalists could only dream about at home. Just as the Protestantism and Britishness of Canada appealed to Irish Orangemen, the absence of a state religion and the existence of largely independent legislatures fitted well with the dominant Irish constitutional nationalist tradition. In much the same way that Irish republicans viewed the United States as a model, at least in theory, Irish constitutional nationalists viewed Canada as the embodiment of their aims. If Canadians had responsible government and religious freedom, why not Ireland?

Equally important were the economic prospects facing Irish immigrants to Canada. The United States remained the magnet for Irish immigrants. Of the 100,000 Famine migrants who landed in Canada in 1847, around 90 percent moved straight through to the American heartland. But the immigrant cohort who settled in Canada between 1815 and the mid 1850s, after which most of the good land in Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes had been taken up, did reasonably well. If we take the standard indices of acculturation—residence, occupation, and occupational success—the Irish were close to overall Canadian norms; indeed, there were so many of them that they helped to define those norms. A large-sample analysis of the 1871 census—the first census in Canada to match ethnicity with religion—indicates that three-quarters of the Irish as an ethnic group lived in the countryside, and that their single largest occupation was farming. In Canada, 53.8 percent of the overall population made their living as farmers; among those of Irish Protestant ethnicity, the figure was 58.3 percent, and for Irish Catholics it was 44.3 percent. If Irish Catholics were under-represented as farmers, they were over-represented as semi-skilled workers and labourers. Nevertheless, American-style images of the Catholic Irish as an impoverished urban people are misleading when transferred to Canada—as D'Arcy McGee well understood. Not only did most Irish Catholics live in rural areas; in common with Irish Protestants, they also matched the general population in occupations held by merchants, manufacturers, white collar workers and artisans.[9]

The argument can be taken further. As the largest English–speaking ethnic group in Canada from the 1830s to the late 1880s, the Irish helped to establish the larger society to which later immigrant groups would have to adapt. The political culture of English–speaking Canada, its policing system, its religious character, and its educational structure—even its school textbooks—were deeply influenced by Irish immigration and Irish models. In this sense, the experiences of the Irish in Canada were qualitatively different from those of the immigrant groups who came after them.

It must also be recognized that the Irish were as capable as other white ethnic groups in Canada of racial prejudice and of attempting to keep non–white groups such as the Sikhs, Chinese, and Japanese out of the country. This kind of prejudice could and did include attitudes to Jews, such as the antisemitism of the Orangeman Leslie Saunders in his mayoralty campaign against Nathan Phillips, or the 1935 praise of Hitler's "warfare on the Jews" by an Irish Catholic doctor from Montreal, Emmet Mullally.[10]

Broadly similar observations can be made about Irish experiences in New Zealand and Australia: settlement patterns and occupational profiles matched those of the populations as a whole, and the Irish can be viewed as a "charter group" whose early arrival helped to shape the contours of the society to which they belonged.[11] Ultimately, however, the question of which destination constituted the "better home" remains impossible to answer. There were so many variations in individual experiences, expectations, tastes, values, and opportunities, and so many differences among the micro–cultures of the New Worlds, that one person's better home could be another's nightmare. An Irish Catholic from County Louth who moved to, say, Toronto in the early twentieth century might find it an insufferably boring place where they chained up the gumball machines and swings on a Saturday night to ensure that the Sabbath remained a day of rest.[12] Meanwhile, an Irish Protestant from County Antrim might find the city a safe and stable place to find work, make friends and raise a family. But to the extent that quantitative data can shed light on qualitative experiences, the general picture suggests that Irish migrants to Canada had a reasonably good chance of finding a better life. Perhaps the verdict is a quintessentially Canadian one: Not bad, eh?

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On this question, see Richard Jensen, "'No Irish Need Apply': A Myth of Urban Victimization," *Journal of Social History* 36 (2002): 405-29.

6
See Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

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On gerrymandering in Ottawa and political discrimination against Irish Canadian Catholics in general, see John Lawrence Power O'Hanly, *The Political Standing of Irish Catholics in Canada: A Critical Analysis of its Causes, with Suggestions for its Amelioration* (Ottawa, n.p., 1872); on the Orange Order in Toronto, see William J. Smyth, *Toronto, the Belfast of Canada: The Orange Order and the Shaping of Municipal Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

8
Harold Troper, "Nathan Phillips: The Election of Toronto's First Jewish Mayor," in ed., David S. Koffman, *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 147-60.

9
Gordon A. Darroch and Michael D. Ornstein, "Ethnicity and Occupational Structure in Canada in 1871: The Vertical Mosaic in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Historical Review* 61, no. 3 (1980), 305-33; Donald Harman Akenson, *Being Had: Historians, Evidence, and the Irish in North America* (Port Credit, Ontario: P.D. Meany, 1985), 41-2.

10
Troper, "Nathan Phillips," 154-7; Emmet Mullally to Charles Murphy, 26 September 1933, Charles Murphy Papers, Library and Archives Canada, MG27-III-B8, 9347-50.

11
Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Port Credit, Ontario: P.D. Meany, 1993), 59-122.

12
A good example can be found in Patrick Rankin, Document No. W.S. 163, Bureau of Military History, Ireland.

Essays by Scholars of Jewish Communities Outside Canada

Stanisław Krajewski

Canada as Terra Incognita

For me, Canada is terra incognita. I did pay brief visits to Montreal and Toronto, but before reading the present book my basic picture was that Canada was an addendum to the United States, huge in area, small in population. Ditto its Jewish community. And while I knew that some good friends living in New York were born in Canada— Barbara Kirshenblatt–Gimblett, for example, with whom I had the privilege to work on the core exhibition in POLIN, the Museum of Polish Jewish History in Warsaw, or David Roskies, scholar of Yiddish and, even more important, a member of the original Havurat Shalom–their Canadian origins did not seem significant. Has the book changed my perception? Well, yes and no.

To begin with "yes." I realize now that the Canadian Jewish community is sizeable. In the near future it may become larger than that in France—especially because of the francophone Sephardic Jews. And it is diverse, characterized the evolution of its attitudes from biculturalism to multiculturalism, which was not a smooth process as related in several of the book's chapters. Yet the most significant and characteristic aspect of Canadian Jewry is seen in the role of Yiddish. (That is why, perhaps, the Canadian roots of Kirshenblatt–Gimblett, Roskies, and Jack Kugelmass, who authored one of the chapters in this book, are not to be ignored.) In Montreal and Toronto, for decades it was the mother tongue of most Jews. This is no longer the case, but the story remains impressive, especially when I compare it to the fate of Yiddish in post–war Poland. Still retained among some survivors, it was not transferred to next generations. Even the son of a noted Yiddish teacher and translator has not learned the language. We were all raised culturally Polish. Nowadays we sometimes invoke Yiddish but never speak it, to use the apt phrase from Margolis's chapter. Many decades ago, Warsaw's state Yiddish theater introduced earphones with translation. The natural public was disappearing. After 1989, when we gained freedom and all cultural paths became open, there has been a notable academic revival of Yiddish. It is not, however, part of Jewish life; the devoted experts are often non–Jewish.

Does the Canadian fate of Yiddish show that in Canada it was better for Jews than in Poland and everywhere else (with the possible exception of Australia)? Perhaps, but anyway non–Hasidic Yiddish seems to have disappeared as a mother tongue. Is then the label "better" still applicable? And, after all, is Yiddish central to being Jewish? To be frank, for all its sentimental value, it isn't for many Jews, even with European roots, including myself (even though my mother spoke as much Yiddish as Polish in her pre–war childhood).

I belong to the baby boom generation of "Polish Polish Jews," to use the phrase from the title of one of my books. That is to say, the Jews who were born in post–war Poland and have lived there up to the present century. We started from a state of complete assimilation, sometimes even without awareness of roots. When in 1963, still in elementary school, I wrote an essay about the Warsaw ghetto uprising, on its twentieth anniversary, I did not feel it was about me or my crowd. It was also signifi-

cant that many among our parents were approving of and involved in the communist project. This meant a very different kind of participation in the power elite than in the case of Nathan Phillips, related in Troper's chapter. And their careers ended dramatically with the 1968 communist-orchestrated antisemitic campaign. As a result, most of the assimilated Jews who had never thought about emigration left Poland. Those of us who remained had to choose: some denied their Jewish connections; others, including myself, affirmed them. We have undergone a long process I call "de-assimilation," that is gaining a Jewish identity, connection with other Jews and our history, including the Shoah, some competence, involvement, religious or more often not, and all that without diminishing our participation in Polish public life. De-assimilated Jews have mostly partial or remote roots. Some of them have formally converted to Judaism to take part in religious life, alongside converts who have no knowledge of Jewish ancestry. Now they form the bulk of our community. All this is interesting, but in the context of the present remarks it is significant because it exhibits the opposite pole to the Canadian one, or the heavily, obviously, organically Jewish community, with relatively low intermarriage rate and smooth participation, individual and group, in national life. To further pinpoint the difference, let us invoke commemorations of the Shoah. I presume that in Canada they are done by survivors and their descendants, and others are invited as guests. I guess that all that tragic history feels abstract in Canada because it happened somewhere "there," far away from your lives. In Poland, those places are around us. In Falenica, just outside of Warsaw, where there was the ghetto from which my grandmother and aunt were taken to the Treblinka death camp, I participate sometimes in commemorations: I can represent the victims, I can address the gathering, and chant *El male rachamim* (in Israeli Hebrew, sorry). The events are organized principally by Christian and other non-Jewish people from the town; I am a guest.

Having read the book, I am able to see some features of Canadian Jews. On the other hand, my original perception has remained in place: I can still perceive no uniqueness, Canadianism that would be specific and strong enough to form a picture of Canadian Jews as more than another branch of the American Jewry. After all, while I highly appreciate the fact of the relatively elevated Jewish literacy in Canada, I see as even more relevant the fact that all Canadian rabbis come from seminaries in the United States. Thus, sincerely, I cannot see in what sense, as claimed in Weinfeld's postscript, Jews have forged a distinctive Canadian Jewish culture.

Perhaps the work on the museum of Canadian Jewish history, as advocated in Menkis's chapter, could help substantiate the claim better. This is certainly a worthy project. All the special aspects, like the relations with the Indigenous peoples or the range of attitudes to biculturalism, could be presented. The presence of Francophone Canada in the background is very interesting, for instance the story of the choosing of the term "'Sephardic" as the designation of French-speaking Jews. When a recently arrived Moroccan Jew, not very religious, as narrated in the autobiographical chap-

ter by Yolande Cohen, decides to attend the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue – the oldest in the country — to make connection to an older wave of Jewish immigration, the story becomes one of a search for belonging. Yet it only underscores the fundamental feature of the contemplated museum: it will be most of all an account of immigration, a relatively recent one at that.

I cannot help but compare this imagined focus of the Canadian museum to POLIN. Again, the contrast is conspicuous. Jews arrived in Poland many centuries ago, and the perception is that we have been in Poland for generations immemorial. Yiddish developed in Poland and its vicinity. The river Vistula, flowing through both Cracow and Warsaw, spoke Yiddish, wrote Sholem Asch and S. L. Shneiderman. We belong here, we are connected in a most fundamental way, despite antisemitic rejection and the ripping dynamic of modern nationalisms, both Polish ethnic, linked to Catholicism, and Zionist. The story of acculturation and assimilation is also part of our legacy. In the nineteenth century, Poland was partitioned between three empires, which resulted in a sort of linguistic biculturalism: German and Russian were the dominant languages. It is remarkable, as mentioned in Weiser's chapter, that Polish acculturation was chosen by some Jews despite the rulers. And all that has led to present–day de–assimilation, the search for roots and conversions, initiated by people of my generation.

There exists one more topic that has emerged as a link between us in Poland and you in Canada only recently; I mean the presence of large numbers of Ukrainians. They had been quite numerous in Poland even before the Russian invasion of February 2022, functioning similarly to Mexicans in the US. Since the aggression, millions have fled and only some have come back. In Poland, there are now probably well over two million Ukrainians, the number and the ratio comparable to that in Canada. There are important differences: in Canada, Ukrainians were part of the multifaceted influx of immigrants. In contrast to that, Poles have shown laudable openness to these refugees, but very little to other ones, especially peoples of colour. Apparently, a major reason for assistance results from an identification with the victims and the feeling that Poles can be the target of another Russian campaign. The great pro-Ukrainian mobilization is remarkable because it happened despite dark pages of history: Ukrainian massacres of Poles, especially in 1943, remain an important point of reference in the national psyche. Yet, for the time being, only a minority keeps referring to those horrors. It is worth mentioning that the most virulent anti–Ukrainian expression is voiced by those Poles who are also engaged in antisemitic hate speech.

Polish Jews, as individuals and as a community, fully participate in the efforts to help refugees. And again, this is despite the recollection of the extreme brutality of pogroms performed by Ukrainians. Presence of Ukrainians is clearly felt in our synagogues. Their arrival may signify a new chapter in the general history of Poland. And an even deeper process seems to occur. The feeling exists in Poland, Europe, and

North America that Ukraine defends not only itself but also Western democratic and liberal values. The presence of these values in pre–2022 or pre–2014 (when the Russian aggression began) Ukraine was limited but they were much better rooted than in the closely related Russian nation. The reasons for the difference have to do with history. Veidlinger's chapter refers to the legacy of the short–lived Ukrainian National Republic, more than 100 years ago. They proclaimed cultural autonomy for all–Great Russians, Jews, Poles, and others. The picture was more complicated, but I do appreciate the fact, reported in the chapter, that Senator Yuzyk recalled that very legacy while fighting for Canadian multiculturalism. Hopefully, Ukraine will prevail and with the help of the West, primarily NATO, it will rebuild an inclusive and democratic society. And maybe this new reality of including large Ukrainian minorities will bring a special connection between Poland and Canada?

To conclude, is Canada the best place for Jews, or at least for the Jewish diaspora? Perhaps. If a Russian invasion or another disaster forced me to flee, and Israel would not be a viable option, I would certainly think very seriously about Canada as a great place of refuge. On the other hand, "the best" means the best for me as I am now. Among all my connections to people and social institutions the Polish ones, including prominently their Jewish component, are by far the strongest. And you know as well as I do that in Canada, while pondering Jewish history and beliefs, you need to look back to Poland. In Poland, I have no particular need to refer to Canada.

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Nadia Malinovich

No Better Home than France?

In her contribution to *No Better Home?* Hasia Diner aptly notes that "the trope of gratitude" has been used as a survival strategy for Jews living across time, countries, and continents, well into the modern era:

> Never utterly convinced that the robust opportunity structure that they enjoyed would really persist, the Jews of France, England, Australia, Canada and the United States used moments in time, anniversaries, national holidays, and meetings with state officials, among others, to proclaim their gratitude and to thank the governments and the people for having provided them with the best possible home.[1]

France is notably on this list, in contrast to twelfth-century Spain and early twentieth-century Germany, which Diner rather evokes as examples of "the trope of gratitude" morphing into memory of a golden age when these places became sites of Jewish expulsion and persecution. And yet, in contrast to England, Australia, Canada, and the United States, France has been a site of Jewish persecution in living memory: during the Second World War, as elsewhere in Nazi-occupied Europe, the country's Jewish population was subject to racial laws and deportation. Why does Diner nonetheless (and rightly in my view) include France on this second list? The answer, I would argue, lies in the singular conundrum that France has posited to the question of "no better home?" stemming from the particularities of the French Jewish experience from 1789 up until today.

No Better Home than France? (1789-1940)

As the first European country to have politically emancipated its Jewish population, France occupied a special place in the Jewish imagination the world over, representing hope for Jews and all humanity built on the principles of equality and religious and political freedom. The evolution of "Franco-Judaism," an ideology synthesizing traditional Jewish religious concepts with French republican and nationalist ideals, became dominant in Jewish public discourse. Early nineteenth-century scholars such as Salomon Munk and Joseph Salvador drew parallels between the political life of ancient Israel and modern Republican ideology, thus expressing their commitment to the ideal of republican France during the years of the Restoration and the Second Empire. We also find this synthesis of French and Republican values in the language of the founders of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, an association created in 1860 to advocate for Jewish civil rights and share the blessings of (French) civilization the world over. This kind of public discourse was largely aspirational and—in keeping with Diner's observations—intended to demonstrate French Jews' loyalty, and by extension, ensure their security. And yet, there were discernable differences in the possibilities for Jewish social advancement and acceptance that set France apart, particularly after the founding of the Third Republic in 1870. Structural barriers to the liberal professions and governmental positions were largely absent, and

social intercourse between Jews and non–Jews became increasingly normative, particularly as compared to the situation in Germany.

In contemporary renditions of the rise of modern antisemitism, the Dreyfus Affair
looms large as the moment when a vicious underbelly of antisemitism brought the
limits of Jewish belonging to France starkly to the fore. Importantly, however, while
the Affair did indeed shake the French Jewish community to its core, for most Jews,
its ultimate resolution in favor of the Dreyfusards confirmed their faith in the republic and attachment to France. Reactions to the Affair around the Jewish world are
also indicative of the relatively exalted place that the country continued to occupy in
the Jewish international imaginary. Indeed, somewhat ironically, the fact that the entire incident revolved around a Jewish army officer—a status notably unattainable in
either Tsarist Russia or in Germany–served as evidence of the overall favored status
of French Jews. It is also noteworthy that French Jews did not experience the same
kind of social exclusion and prejudice in the realms of employment and education
as their American counterparts in the aftermath of the First World War. The 1920s
were rather a time in which the dominant ethos among French Jews was optimistic.
Antisemitism appeared to be subsiding, and Jewish participation in the war helped
to popularize the notion that Jews were no less French for proudly affirming their
unique spiritual and cultural heritage.

The End of the French Dream?

It goes without saying that the murder of 25 percent of France's Jewish population in
Nazi death camps, the pillaging of property, family separation, and other unimaginable hardships for those who survived the war marked a turning point in the history of the Jews in modern France. Importantly, however, a re–evaluation of France's
status as a "Jewish home" in light of the events of the Second World War and the
Holocaust did not happen overnight. The 1950s and 1960s were transitional decades.
French Jews struggled to come to terms on a spiritual, moral, and intellectual level
with what had taken place in Europe and in France during the war, while meeting
the challenges of community rebuilding and renewal. It was during these years that
Jews from the Middle East and North Africa began to arrive in large numbers. Over
the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Jews of French
colonial North Africa increasingly came to identify with French culture, and—especially among the more educated—to see France as their spiritual home. For these
new arrivals, who had not suffered persecution to the same degree as their European
counterparts during the war years, an idealized image of France as a Jewish home
remained largely intact.

Beginning in the 1970s, a reckoning with Vichy's complicity in Jewish persecution and the souring of relations between France and Israel, together with broader
changes in the post–1968 social and cultural landscape led to the emergence of a

more assertive and identarian French Jewish posture. The turn of the twenty-first century marked another turning point, as a wave of anti-Jewish violence and rhetoric gripped the country following the Second Intifada. Over the past two decades, discussion of Jewish life in France has largely centered on the question of antisemitism, a spike in departures for Israel and elsewhere (including, notably, Montreal) and the possibilities for a French Jewish future. This kind of widely circulating media-fed discourse can obscure the reality on the ground. Jews occupy a wide stratum of positions in contemporary French culture, politics, and economic life, and Jewish cultural and religious expression of all kinds are a feature of contemporary French society. Furthermore, France has retained its status as the country with the largest Jewish population in Europe and third largest Jewish population in the world. As has been the case for more than two centuries, France thus continues to function as a Jewish home, and one that most French Jews still choose to make their own.

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1
Hasia Diner, "Destination World Jewry: The United States Versus the World," in *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging*, ed. David S. Koffman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 35.

Gavin Schaffer

On Homes and Hearts:
A British Jewish Perspective

Initially, the question set by this important volume struck me as strange, a little like Jewish children arguing about which of their mothers makes the best chicken soup. As the title of Morton Weinfeld's contribution makes clear, in the context of the horrors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the history under discussion here is a matter of comparative privilege. Has Canada offered the best home to Jews? Well, certainly a better one than Nazi Germany, Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, and once we get lost in the details there are perhaps only relatively minor differences between Canadian, British, Australian (etc.) experiences especially given that, as Weinfeld explains, "one person's rich Jewish life is another's ghetto,"

Nonetheless, the introduction argues that the tendency to ignore such histories has been "myopic," not least because understanding a country's treatment of Jews is likely to tell us something about attitudes towards other minorities, too. But above and beyond what these histories can tell us about states and minorities more broadly, there is also much to learn in terms of Jewish history itself. Diner's argument, that US scholars have not been terribly interested in Canada, dismissing it (and other countries such as Britain) as "corridor communities," is revealing. It reminds us that Jewish studies, so dominated by the strength of the United States, has allowed substantial holes to remain within the tapestry of our understanding of modern Jewish lives. While commendable steps have been taken in recent years to refocus scholarly attention on Mizrahi Jews, this book points out that much remains unknown about the (largely) Ashkenazi migrations too.

Such histories, when they have been given space to breathe, have grown within generally safe, but still insecure, Jewish communities, which have been keen to emphasise contribution and loyalty to their respective states. Richard Menkis's analysis of Canadian-Jewish exhibitions, with their focus on Jews who had "made it" and corresponding disinclination to wade into radical and criminal Jewish histories, really chimes with the British experience, too. "A brittle self-consciousness," in his words, indeed indicates communities that don't feel (at least fully) at home, a reality which has skewed the way Jews have historicized themselves over generations. On these terms, Jews have tended, as the introduction here makes clear, to write histories that emphasise "loyalty to the nation" in a way which has obscured a great deal both about the realities of Jewish experience and identification.

In this context, there is an obvious and urgent case to put Canadian Jewish histories under the spotlight, to tease out stories that earlier histories have missed or avoided, and to fill in the gaps left by an international Jewish Studies community that has tended to dig elsewhere. Reading this volume, my mind, perhaps unsurprisingly, drifted back to British Jewish histories, to how they compare and to the different ways in which we, as scholarly communities, may have approached them. Was it time, I wondered, to put down on paper that my mum's chicken soup was the best, that Britain had offered a home to Jews comparable (or even better) than Canada?

After all, some of the essays here seemed determined to do just that, notably Randal Schnoor's discussion of the state of Jewish education in these two countries.

But to a historian of Jewish Britain such questions don't come naturally. While some scholars (such as Bill Rubinstein) have emphasised the comparatively comfortable experience of British Jews, most of us, at least since the 1980s, have steered a different course.[1] Avoiding the pitfalls of the celebratory narratives described here by Menkis, historians such as Tony Kushner and Todd Endelman have very much gone for a "warts and all" approach, focusing extensively on state and public discrimination and prejudice, in which stories of happy Jews in a welcoming new home have receded.[2] On these terms, if I am being honest, I really can't imagine an equivalent volume on the British Jewish experience, or at least, such an endeavour would be undertaken amid a significantly different tone.

If this is the case, it seems important to ask why. Have British Jews been less happy, had a less good home, which has made our historians tell stories of woe more than tales of successful integration? At least part of the answer to this question may lie in David Weinfeld's observation concerning Canada's "thin culture". That Jews in Canada can "feel at home," he argues, amid a culture which has allowed them to construct themselves as "Jewish first, Canadian second" is a reality which stands in contrast to the desire and expectation that Jews in Britain should define themselves as British first and foremost. Jewish immigration to Britain took place across periods of fervent imperialism and patriotism, and immigrant Jews were cajoled, not least by pre-existing Jewish communities, to become British as quickly and fully as possible. Has this made British Jews less happy? Has it left less space for them to be Jews? Certainly, following the sociology scholarship highlighted by Morton Weinfeld, that "cultures and identities" and integration clash in a "zero-sum operation," one might be inclined to see things this way. Yet it merits observation that the ideologies of both Reform and Modern Orthodox Judaism in modern Europe developed amid the claim that this is absolutely not the case, that there was no conflict, and even a synergy, between being a good Jew and a good citizen. These theological claims, however, were made in the context of considerable external pressure and expectation to toe the line, in an atmosphere where Jews understood only too well the high cost of being seen as outsiders.

If Canada's "thin culture" removed some of this expectation it may in so doing have created a space for freer Jewish lives, but in the final reckoning I remain unconvinced. In the end, for Jews in comparatively safe countries such as Canada, the US and Britain, home was (and is) where the heart is. In all these cases, Jews have generally embraced the possibilities afforded by their nations, while to varying extents maintaining cultures and traditions, all amid a very clear memory of how much worse things could be. As for the directions of Jewish affiliation (to the US, Israel, to their "old countries") perhaps there is also a story of geography here, one which

might reveal a little more about the nodes of Jewish culture in a global sense, and one which might explain the different pull towards other Jewish cultures of British and Canadian Jews. As Canadian Jews were drawn by the light of the US, British Jews were pulled more towards Israel, and even back towards their old states in Eastern Europe. British Jews were also that much closer to the Holocaust, perhaps a trivial point, but perhaps not. On these terms, the Jewish cultures that have emerged in different places have been shaped by space, as well as by policy and ideology. Being a Jew in Britain has a different geography to being a Jew in the US and Canada, and that seems to matter.

 In the end, *No Better Home?* raises important and interesting challenges about international Jewish experiences and champions an unexplored and vibrant Jewish history. In an academic climate where the paths less travelled have not perhaps received the attention they deserve, this volume offers a valuable corrective. For generations, Jews have carried home with them as they have travelled, as Daniel Boyarin, among many others, has pointed out.[3] By highlighting the Canadian Jewish experience, the authors here help us to make sense of a less known part of this journey.

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1
See William and Hilary Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840-1939* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), William Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies Could Not Have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London: Routledge, 1997) and William Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English Speaking World: Great Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996).

2
One should consider here not only the extensive work of Kushner and Endelman, but also that of David Cesarani, David Feldman, Geoffrey Alderman, Louise London, and Lloyd Gartner.

3
See Daniel Boyarin, *A Travelling Homeland: The Babylonian Talmud as Diaspora* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

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Suzanne D. Rutland / An Australian Response to *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging*

Suzanne D. Rutland

An Australian Response to *No Better Home? Jews, Canada, and the Sense of Belonging*

In her chapter, "Destination World Jewry: The United States vs the World," Hasia Diner queries the central theme of this book in terms of Canada offering a "no better home" for Jews, noting that this is both a question and a statement. She asks how historians can evaluate what was the best place for migration. She argues that given the strong pull of the United States for Jewish migrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which attracted around 80–90 percent of all Jewish immigrants to what was known as the "Goldene Medina" (Yiddish for Golden Land)" in the New World, surely it was the best place for Jewish migration.[1] Certainly, for distant Australia at the "edge of the Diaspora,"[2] its importance for European migration before the Shoah pales into insignificance compared with the United States, and even in terms of East European Jewish migration to the other English–speaking countries: Canada, Britain, and South Africa.

Yet, the complexity of the question posed by the book's title resonated with me, given my own family's migration history before and after the Shoah. My Polish–born parents migrated from Antwerp with my older brother to Australia's shores, known as the "lucky country," arriving in January 1939. After the war, they sponsored all the surviving family members on my father's side to Australia——there were virtually no survivors left in Europe on my mother's side of the family. My father's family, based in Krakow, were luckier——two of my uncles, Chaim and Jacob Perlman, were saved by Oskar Schindler, and a third uncle, Monek, also survived even though he missed his name when it was called for Brunnlitz and ended up in the Mauthausen concentration camp. A few other members of the Perlman family also survived and arrived in Sydney, Australia, after the war, sponsored by my parents. However, my uncles were strictly Orthodox Bobover Hasidim and Sydney's religious life was too diluted for them. They moved on: my granduncle, Chaim Perlman, moved to New York to marry the sister of the Bobover rebbe——both had lost their families during the war and had met after the war but were separated by their migration choices. My other two uncles, Jacob and Monek, moved to Canada and settled in Toronto. This family story highlights migration challenges, and the different choices people make——in my family's case Australia, United States, and Canada.

My own parents chose to remain in Sydney and were eternally grateful to their new home. Indeed, from its foundation, Australia offered the same freedom and tolerance as Diner describes in her chapter for Canada and the United States, and possibly even more so. For example, Sir Benjamin Benjamin was elected as Melbourne's first lord mayor, serving from 1887–1889, while Sydney's first Jewish lord mayor, Ernest S. Marks, was elected in 1933.[3] This compares with Toronto, which, as described by Harold Troper in his chapter, only elected its first Jewish lord mayor in 1954, after a century of Protestant domination.[4] In addition, Sir John Monash was appointed as Australia's commander–in–chief of the Australian army in 1918, despite the fact that he was a triple outsider——Jewish with Prussian–born parents who was a civilian soldier. His engineering brilliance enabled him to maximize tank warfare in the bat-

tles in France in 1918, ensuring and Allied victory.[5] Again, in 1930, Sir Isaac Isaacs, was appointed as the first Australian-born governor general, representing the British crown.[6] In contrast to the United States, Jews were permitted to join the Sydney stock exchange from the nineteenth century. However, the "tyranny of distance" meant that if, as Diner describes it, Canada "barely figured" for European Jews and that "it loomed in only the most shadowy way in the Jewish imaginary role in Europe," Australia virtually did not figure at all.[7] As a result, while 120,000 East European Jews migrated to Canada from Tsarist Russia between 1900 and 1931, only around 2,000 migrated to Australia.

The picture was to change after the introduction of the quota system in the United States in 1924, when the gates to European Jewish migration were suddenly slammed shut and Emma Lazarus's words "send me your tired, your poor" no longer applied in the same way. Hitler's ascension to power in 1933 created an immediate refugee crisis and suddenly distant Australia, with its wide-open spaces and small population, seemed a desirable migration place. Diner does not address this phase of Jewish refugee and survivor migration directly or the issues highlighted by Irving Abella and Harold Troper in their book, *None is Too Many*, which are also not addressed directly in the volume under discussion.[8] Numerically, around 140,000 Jewish survivors migrated to the United States after the war, adding to a Jewish population of over four million; around 35–40,000 Jewish survivors migrated to Canada, adding to a Jewish population of approximately 170,000; but around 25,000 Jewish survivors migrated to Australia after the war, adding to the 9,000 pre-war refugees and internees, and resulting in an almost trebling of the Australian Jewish population from 23,553 in 1933 to 59,343 in 1961. In this way, Australia absorbed more Jewish survivors on a pro rata population basis of any country outside Israel. Australian Jewry was transformed as a result of this migration, with every aspect of Jewish life and culture being affected.[9]

Despite permitting a quota of sponsored Jewish survivors to enter Australia in the post-war era, government policy was that no funds were to be expended on Jews. Sponsors, who included family members, employers, and the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, had to guarantee that the migrant(s) they were applying for did not become a charge on the state for five years. As well, they had to have their accommodation guaranteed on arrival in Australia. Providing passage to Australia, hostel accommodation, English classes, employment advice, placed a significant financial burden on the local community, which in 1933 had only numbered 23,000.

Already in 1939, two leaders of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society travelled to New York to request financial assistance from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and its offshoot, Refrecom (Refugee Economic Committee), led by Charles Liberman. Their pleas were heard, and they were able to establish two interest free loan societies—Mutual Farms to assist refugees from Nazism settle on the land—not— a successful venture for central European Jews who had no farming

experience and no idea of how to cope with Australian climactic conditions—and Mutual Enterprises to assist refugees setting up in business, a much more successful project. After the Shoah, this assistance from the JDC and Refrecom, as well as HIAS (Hebrew Immigration Aid Society), was crucial in assisting survivors settle in Australia. Emery Komlos, one of the American emissaries who visited Australia to investigate the situation, described these organizations as "three rich uncles."[10] This extensive American aid played a significant role in ensuring the successful integration of the survivors into the Jewish and general communities in Australia. This situation contrasted with the United States, where cases for survivors were closed after one year.[11] While Diner's contribution is certainly correct in its analysis of the immigration trends to the New World until after the First World War, this aspect of America's role following the closing of its gates is not discussed in her chapter.

Parallels between Australia and Canada can be seen in terms of the Holocaust survivors' story of travel, arrival, and memory. In chapter 7, Mia Spiro writes about the challenges of travelling to Canada by ship and then the train travel after arrival to their final destination and notes that most survivor memoirs do not refer to their experiences on arrival and write very little about their life in their new home. Their focus is on their Holocaust experiences.[12] The same applies to Australian Holocaust memoirs where the one exception is child survivor Diane Armstrong's book *The Voyage of Their Life*, about her trip on the SS Derna to Australia in 1948. She describes how, for the young people on the ship, the voyage was a fun experience after the suffering of the Holocaust, while for their parents it was a time of worry about their future life in Australia.[13] Most survivors constantly stress in their memoirs how grateful they are to Australia for giving them a new life—many felt as though they were born again—as highlighted in the book, *The Gift of Life*, prepared for the first major Australian and international survivor gathering held in Sydney in 1985.[14]

Another interesting parallel relates to Ruth Panofsky's chapter, which analyzes Bernice Eisenstein's *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*, the first Canadian second-generation account published in 2006.[15] Interestingly, two important books by Australian second-generation writers were published earlier, but they also mirror Eisenstein's account of how their "harrowing wartime memories possess Ben and Regina Eisenstein (her parents)."[16] Second-generation Melbourne writer Mark Baker's novel, *The Fiftieth Gate*, highlights his parents' struggles as he seeks to find out their full story—conveyed to him as a child through his father's nightmares, while Sydney based Ruth Waynryb's *The Silence* explores the way she grew up with the past totally cordoned off.[17] Panofsky describes "The Group," the senior Eisenstein's close circle of survivor friends, which provides them with support. Similarly, Baker's father was part of the group known as the "Buchenwald Boys," who were orphans liberated from Buchenwald in April 1945 and who migrated as a group to Melbourne sponsored by the Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society, who also found solace through their "shared past."[18]

As this discussion has demonstrated, Australia's distance was both a disincentive and an advantage, particularly for Jewish survivor migration after the Shoah. For those who wanted to get as far away from Europe as possible, it was an advantage; for those who wanted to be in a place where there was a stronger Jewish religious life, it was a disadvantage. However, for Jews escaping European persecution—whether it was from Tsarist Russia, the Nazi inferno before, during and after the Holocaust, or from the Soviet gulag, and to whichever English–speaking country in the New World of–fering them sanctuary, whether it was Australia, the United States, or Canada—there was "no better place."

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Ruth Panofsky, "The 'Nu World' of Toronto in Bernice Eisenstein's *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors*," in *No Better Home?*, 135-146.

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Ibid.,140.

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Mark Raphael Baker, *The Fiftieth Gate: A Journey Through Memory* (Melbourne: HarperCollins Australia, 1997); Ruth Waynryb, *The Silence: How Tragedy Shapes Talk* (St Leonard's, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2001).

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Adriana M. Brodsky

The Promised Lands of the Americas

As a scholar of Jewish Latin America and a Jewish Argentine who now lives in the United States, I have to confess that the assertion, however tentative, that Canada "may now very well be the safest, most socially welcoming, economically secure, and possibly most religiously tolerant home for the Jews than any other diaspora country, past or present," put me in a defensive reading mode.[1] Particularly troublesome to me was the argument that Canada should also be considered "the better home" when compared to other countries in the past. As I read through the introduction and other chapters in the book, I kept thinking that many of the qualities listed for Canada as a better Jewish home could also be applied to Latin American countries. For example, weren't there much better homes elsewhere in the continent for Jews after Canada (and the United States) passed restrictive immigration laws in the early decades of the twentieth century? Argentina, the better home my great-grandparents chose when moving out of Morocco and Bessarabia in the early years of the twentieth century, ended up providing them with the ability to find jobs, ascend into the middle class, send their children to university to become professionals and high-ranking government officials, and keep their families embedded in Jewish social and cultural circles. They *chose* it, not as a "second" option to a potentially better home elsewhere; and some who may have migrated to it as an "alternate" option, chose to stay. What does identifying "the better home" tell those Jews, like my grandparents, who sought and found a great home in the countries in which they settled? That they "chose" wrongly? Many years later, the home my grandparents found lost some of its appeal for me, and I sought to find "better options" in a much more globalized world. Latin America, a region plagued by economic and political hardships, realities that countries in North America were able to avoid completely or weather differently, made its (Jewish) populations seek alternatives elsewhere. Yet the reasons that guided *my* move had little to do with my life as a Jew, which had motivated some of my grandparents' search a century before; in fact, one of the hardest adaptations to life in my new country has been the inability of feeling truly at home among US Jews.[2] And, I ask, isn't Argentina still *my* home, even when I am now a citizen of another country? The project to identify *the* best home for Jews across time and space, appears to be, ultimately, a task that leaves us with unsatisfactory responses, (and all sorts of alternative possibilities) and wondering what, if anything, the question helps us understand.

Yet, I certainly appreciated the chance the book provides to challenge the narrative about US exceptionalism when it came to Jews. One of the premises of the book, in fact perhaps the most important one, is to state that *because* Canada is and was (perhaps) a "better home" for Jews, it should figure more prominently in Jewish Studies scholarship. The lack of attention to the Jewish Canadian experience makes no sense, the editor suggests, given the past and present comforts that the country provide(d) its (Jewish) citizens. I have long believed in and argued elsewhere (with colleagues Raanan Rein and Laura Leibman) that the existing narratives about the history of

Jews in the Americas focus almost exclusively on the United States to the detriment of the field.[3] But in order to challenge the US-centered narrative it is not necessary to make a claim about other countries being better homes for Jews. Hasia Diner makes this exact point in her chapter in the collection (but she ends her thoughts by reiterating that the Jews that went to Canada did not do better than those who went to the United States, circling back to the exceptionalism trope).[4] But by taking this route, claiming that (likely) there was no better home for Jews than Canada, this collection may end up delegitimizing (or worse, declaring irrelevant?) the scholarship that focuses on smaller and lesser studied Jewish communities, or on communities in "lesser homes."

Expanding our attention to the Americas as a whole and encouraging comparative work on Jewish communities across the continent, alternatively, presents advantages that go beyond identifying better or lesser homes. It would uncover that the United States was not where Jewish American history started (OK, perhaps this part of the story is already well known; but this "Latin American connection" gets explained away only as the steppingstone for the creation of the US Jewish community). A hemispheric focus would bring attention to other homes where truly innovative practices were tried, adopted, and (sometimes) circulated to other points in the continent and beyond. Think of Darhe Jesarim, for example, an African Jewish communal organization in Suriname in the mid-eighteenth century, which challenged the power of the (white) Portuguese Jewish congregation by requesting that they be allowed to pray independently, and demanded their members deserved full religious rights, even if they were Jews of color.[5] Comparative work will help us identify what it was about the Americas that provided, as it were, so many good homes for Jews, and for the many differences in the types of communities Jews built across time. In the Jewish agricultural colonies founded by the Jewish Colonization Association at the end of the nineteenth century, for example, Sephardi Jews from the Mediterranean became Argentine government workers who taught Spanish (and Argentine history) to Russian Jews escaping pogroms and learning how to be farmers in the Argentine pampas.[6] What did other experiences in nation-building look like in other countries, then, and what do they, all together, tell us about opportunities and agency in the continent? But the comparative angle should not just focus on how different (or similar) these communities were to the United States, but rather allow for the emergence of a truly continental picture that can inform our understanding of Jewish life on this side of the Atlantic in all its complexity, and contradictions. We also know that from the very beginning of Jewish life in the Americas, Jews were in contact with, and felt part of, the Jewish diaspora in the Americas. While Jews deeply connected to the homes in which they settled, they also, importantly, foster the connections (personal, institutional, and even communal) with other Jews in the continent. And not just Jews saw this hemispheric connection. A stand to sell kosher *choripan* (sausage sandwich, perhaps *the* most traditional of Argentine snacks) opened in Boca Juniors

soccer club stadium in 2018, after the non-Jewish president of the team learned of this possibility while watching a Miami Heat basketball game.[7] This new kosher option came to join the (then sole) existing kosher McDonald's stand outside of Israel.[8] The circulation of (Jewish) ideas, practices, and people within the continent all contribute to cement the idea of a hemispheric reality of *America* being an excellent home for its Jewish population.

This hemispheric picture is dependent upon the ability of scholars to access the (Jewish) archives and oral histories repositories that can make this fruitful exploration even possible (besides, of course, linguistic competencies). In Latin America, these (Jewish) institutions tend to be underfunded and unfavourably positioned to compete for international (Jewish) grants, perhaps because they are deemed to be peripheral to the "centers" of Jewish life, and not "better homes" for Jews. As well, universities (seldom) host Jewish Studies programs or centers, and research and teaching of Jewish Studies usually takes place as part of larger disciplinary or thematic units (like immigration or ethnic studies, for example). While there are important benefits for the field of Jewish Studies to not exist in isolation (Jews have always been studied in conversation with other groups), funding may also be difficult to obtain. It is these economic, political, and structural realities that need to be overcome to make this fuller picture emerge. Lack of resources for the study of Jewish communities in Latin America, then, should not be seen as a "failure" of the communities, or as an indication that they are "lesser homes" for Jews.

In short, we do not need to decide which of the countries in the Americas was the best home for Jews to challenge the narrative of US exceptionalism. Rather, we should seek to put the historiographies of these now national narratives in conversation with each other, so explicit or implicit comparisons can illuminate the Jewish experience from a hemispheric angle.

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