

**CANADIAN JEWISH STUDIES  
ÉTUDES JUIVES CANADIENNES**

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## About the Journal

*Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal devoted to original scholarship that illuminates any and all aspects of the Canadian Jewish experience. It is published annually since 1993 and twice annually since 2019 by the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies (ACJS).

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## Volume 44 Editors' Foreword

Our spring 2026 volume arrives late thanks to a terrifically productive winter and spring for the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies. Of particular interest to the scholarly journal team at *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* is the recent (re-)launch of the literary magazine *Parchment: Contemporary Canadian Jewish Writing*, now published by the ACJS. We are delighted to welcome a sibling journal into the world, and will continue to cheer on the poets, short story authors, and creative non-fiction writers of Jewish Canada, as well as *Parchment's* editorial team and its editorial and advisory boards for their stupendous work. We are also excited to draw attention to the ACJS's digitization of the entire print run (1977–1988) of our forerunner, the *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, which is now free to read via a link on our website.

Volume 44 of *CJS / Éjc* includes four research articles, the first edition of a periodic pulse survey of Canadians' attitudes toward Jews and Israel and Jewish perspectives on our current moment, and instalments, and instalments of two of our longstanding subsections, The Archives Matter and Translation.

Leading the volume's **Articles** section is Lilach Marom's mixed-methods study based on data from a national survey as well as interviews that show how Jewish identity and antisemitism have been marginalized in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policies and practices of universities in Canada. The study reveals both a low level of awareness about Jewish identity and antisemitism in EDI policies, and a low satisfaction score by Jewish faculty and staff with institutional responses and support to Jewish concerns. Marom's article is followed by a second social science contribution: an analysis about fertility demographics and their relationship with religiosity among Canada's Jews as reflected in the three most recent federal censuses (2001, 2011, and 2021), by Western University sociologist Rachel Margolis. Margolis finds that Jews who identify as religious have significantly higher fertility rates than Jews who do not identify as Jewish by religion, as do Jews who are immigrants, rather than those born in Canada. In his article, historian Pierre Anctil uses the infamous Plamondon Libel Case and its 1913–1914 trials in Quebec City as a portal to better understand the specific intellectual sources of anti-Judaism that pervaded Catholic Quebec elites and to distinguish it from the intellectual trends that were feeding Anglophone Canada around the same time. The section's final article is Shlomo Gleibman's study of literary representations of queerness, and its relationship with both Judaism and migration, in works by David Bezmozgis, Brian Stein, and K. David Brody. Gleibman explores perennial questions about migration and identity, diversity, and multiculturalism.

We are particularly pleased to present the 2026 instalment of Robert Brym and Rhonda Lenton's "Canadian Jewish Barometer," which draws on groundbreaking

new data that show how antisemitism has evolved in Canada since early 2024, and describe how these changes have affected Canada's Jews. This edition of the "Barometer," subtitled "Pressures on Canadian Jews and their Responses," is based largely on a survey of more than three thousand Canadian residents conducted in early 2026. Among its six principal findings are that non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Jews and Israel have become significantly more negative over the past two years; that non-Jewish Canadians' negative perceptions of Jews and Israel breaks down unevenly based on various groups and population categories; and that Canadian Jews are considerably more fearful and pessimistic of their position in Canadian society than they were in 2024. Brym and Lenton also offer several recommendations for both diminishing anti-Jewish and anti-Israel attitudes among non-Jewish Canadians and diminishing polarization in the Jewish community.

The volume's **The Archives Matter** instalment offers a glimpse into the young adulthood of Gerald Tulchinsky, the pioneering historian of Canadian Jewry, via the letters he sent home to Brantford, Ontario from his yearlong adventure in Israel in 1952–1953. The section's main essay, "Letters from a Young Zionist: The Evolution of a Historian," was co-authored by Tulchinsky's daughters, Ellen Tulchinsky and Laura Tulchinsky, who narrate several key moments of their father's formative experience and curate a selection of letters, photographs, and ephemera that illustrate it poignantly. The instalment also includes a short framing essay by Heather Home, an archivist at Queen's University Archives, which houses Gerald Tulchinsky's papers. Home's essay offers readers a peak into the larger Tulchinsky collection and extols Tulchinsky's many contributions to the documentary evidence of Canadian Jewry during his career as a faculty member in Queen's Department of History.

Our **Translation** section features two newspaper articles from the turn of the millennium published in Traditional Chinese by the recently defunct Vancouver-based *Ming Pao Daily News* about Jewish-Chinese relations. The articles are translated and introduced by University of Shanghai PhD candidate Hongfei Liang, who spent the 2025–2026 academic year at York University conducting research on Canadian Jewish history for his dissertation—the first scholarly work focusing on Jewish Canada to be written in China.

As ever, we are immensely grateful to work with a devoted team of editors, authors, reviewers, translators, and readers, and thank them for sustaining the journal's mission: to advance, deepen, and diversify the scholarly study of Canadian Jewish life in both official languages. We offer hearty appreciation for our associate editors, Valentina Gaddi and Amir Lavie, our designer, Derek Broad, and our copy editor, Tetyana Pekar. We also offer a special word of gratitude to Janice Rosen, who will hand over the task of editing and curating our Archives Matter subsection to Hannah Srouf-Zackon, the archivist and museum director at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, in Montreal; and to Vardit Lightstone, who will pass on the English-lan-

guage Book Review section to Amos Bitzan, a historian of Jewish education and the community relationship coordinator at the Jewish Federation of Ottawa.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Aid to Scholarly Journals program and York University's Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies (particularly its coordinator, Julie Feinberg). We are also indebted to York's digital publishing librarian, Tomasz Mrozewski, the J. Richard Shiff Chair for the Study of Canadian Jewry, and, of course, the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies itself. We are also grateful for a generous donation to the journal and the ACJS from the Tauben family.

**David S. Koffman**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Joshua Tapper**  
Managing Editor

June 2026

## Volume 44 Avant-propos des rédacteurs

Notre volume du printemps 2026 arrive en retard en raison d'un hiver et d'un printemps incroyablement productifs pour l'Association d'études juives canadiennes. L'équipe de la revue savante *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* s'intéresse particulièrement au récent (re)lancement de la revue littéraire *Parchment : Contemporary Canadian Jewish Writing*, maintenant publiée par l'AÉJC. Nous sommes ravis d'accueillir ce journal-frère, et nous continuerons d'encourager les poètes, les auteur.es de nouvelles et les écrivain.es de non-fiction créative du Canada juif, ainsi que l'équipe éditoriale de *Parchment* et son comité éditorial et consultatif, pour leur travail remarquable. Nous sommes également ravis d'attirer l'attention sur la numérisation par l'AÉJC de l'ensemble du tirage (1977-1988) de notre prédécesseur, le *Journal de la Société historique juive canadienne*, qui est maintenant en accès libre via un lien sur notre site Web.

Le volume 44 de *Éjc / CJS* comprend quatre articles de recherche, la première édition d'un sondage périodique sur les attitudes des Canadiens à l'égard des Juifs et d'Israël et les perspectives juives sur la situation actuelle, et des et des tranches de deux de nos sous-sections de longue date, A vos archives et Traduction.

La section **Articles** du volume s'ouvre avec l'étude à méthodes mixtes de Lilach Marom basée sur les données d'une enquête nationale ainsi que sur des entrevues qui montrent comment l'identité juive et l'antisémitisme ont été marginalisés dans les politiques et pratiques d'équité, de diversité et d'inclusion des universités au Canada. L'étude révèle à la fois un faible niveau de sensibilisation à l'identité juive et à l'antisémitisme dans les politiques EDI, et un faible score de satisfaction de la part des professeur.es et du personnel juifs face aux réponses institutionnelles et leur soutien aux préoccupations juives. L'article de Marom est suivi d'une deuxième contribution en sciences sociales : sur la base des trois derniers recensements fédéraux (2001, 2011 et 2021), la sociologue Rachel Margolis (Université Western) propose une analyse de la fécondité chez les Juives canadiennes, au croisement de leur relation avec la religiosité. Margolis constate que les Juives qui s'identifient comme religieuses ont des taux de fécondité significativement plus élevés que les Juives qui ne s'identifient pas comme Juives par religion, tout comme les Juives qui sont des immigrantes, plutôt que celles nées au Canada. Dans son article, l'historien Pierre Anctil utilise l'infâme affaire de diffamation Plamondon et ses procès de 1913-1914 à Québec comme une occasion pour mieux comprendre les sources intellectuelles spécifiques de l'anti-judaïsme qui imprègnent les élites catholiques du Québec et pour le distinguer de celles qui nourrissent le Canada anglophone à la même époque. Le dernier article de la section est l'étude de Shlomo Gleibman sur les représentations littéraires de la queerness, et sa relation avec le judaïsme et la migration, dans des œuvres de David Bezmozgis, Brian Stein et K. David Brody. Gleibman explore des questions éternelles sur la migration et l'identité, la diversité et le multiculturalisme.

Nous sommes particulièrement heureux de présenter la tranche 2026 du « Baromètre juif canadien » de Robert Brym et Rhonda Lenton. S'appuyant sur de données novatrices, iels montrent comment l'antisémitisme a évolué au Canada depuis le début de 2024 et décrivent comment ces changements ont affecté les Juifs du Canada. Cette édition du « Baromètre », sous-titrée « Pressions sur les Juifs canadiens et leurs réponses », est basée en grande partie sur un sondage mené auprès de plus de trois mille résidents canadiens au début de 2026. Parmi ses six principales conclusions, mentionnons que les attitudes des Canadiens non juifs à l'égard des Juifs et d'Israël sont devenues beaucoup plus négatives au cours des deux dernières années ; que les perceptions négatives des Canadiens non juifs à l'égard des Juifs et d'Israël se décomposent de manière inégale en fonction de divers groupes et catégories de population ; et que les Juifs canadiens sont beaucoup plus craintifs et pessimistes à l'égard de leur position dans la société canadienne qu'ils ne l'étaient en 2024. Brym et Lenton offrent également plusieurs recommandations pour diminuer les attitudes anti-juives et anti-Israéliennes chez les Canadiens non juifs et diminuer la polarisation dans la communauté juive.

Le volume **A vos archives** offre un aperçu du jeune adulte Gerald Tulchinsky, l'historien pionnier de la communauté juive canadienne, par le biais des lettres qu'il a envoyées à Brantford, en Ontario, de son voyage en Israël en 1952–1953. L'essai principal de la section, « Lettres d'un jeune sioniste : l'évolution d'un historien », a été co-écrit par les filles de Tulchinsky, Ellen Tulchinsky et Laura Tulchinsky, qui racontent plusieurs moments clés de l'expérience formatrice de leur père et organisent une sélection de lettres, de photographies et d'éphémères qui illustrent de manière poignante. Le volet comprend également un court essai de cadrage de Heather Home, archiviste aux Archives de l'Université Queen's, qui abrite les papiers de Gerald Tulchinsky. L'essai de Home offre au lectorat un aperçu de la collection Tulchinsky et exalte ses nombreuses contributions documentaires et empiriques au sujet de la judéité canadienne au cours de sa carrière, en tant que membre du corps professoral du département d'histoire de l'Université Queen's.

Notre section **Traduction** présente deux articles de journaux du tournant du millénaire publiés en chinois traditionnel par le *Ming Pao Daily News*, récemment disparu, basé à Vancouver, sur les relations judéo-chinoises. Les articles sont traduits et introduits par Hongfei Liang, candidat au doctorat à l'Université de Shanghai, qui a passé l'année universitaire 2025–2026 à l'Université York à mener des recherches sur l'histoire juive canadienne pour sa thèse — le premier travail scientifique axé sur le Canada juif à être écrit en Chine.

Comme toujours, nous sommes extrêmement reconnaissants de travailler avec une équipe dévouée. De la rédaction à la révision, de la traduction à la lecture, notre équipe soutient avec dévouement la mission de la revue : faire progresser, approfondir et diversifier l'étude savante de la vie juive canadienne dans les deux langues offi-

cielles. Nous remercions chaleureusement notre rédaction adjointe, Valentina Gaddi et Amir Lavie, notre designer, Derek Broad, et notre réviseuse, Tetyana Pekar. Nous offrons également un mot de gratitude spécial à Janice Rosen, qui remettra la tâche d'édition de notre sous-section A vos archives à Hannah Srour-Zackon, archiviste et directrice du musée à la Congrégation Shaar Hashomayim, à Montréal ; et à Vardit Lightstone, qui transmettra la section Comptes rendus (anglais) à Amos Bitzan, historien de l'éducation juive et coordonnateur des relations communautaires à la Fédération juive d'Ottawa.

Enfin, nous remercions le soutien du programme Aide aux revues savantes du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines et de la Faculté des arts libéraux et des études professionnelles de l'Université York, ainsi que du Israël et du Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies (en particulier sa coordonnatrice, Julie Feinberg). Nous sommes également redevables au bibliothécaire de l'édition numérique de York, Tomasz Mrozewski, à la Chaire J. Richard Schiff pour l'étude de la communauté juive canadienne et, bien sûr, à l'Association d'études juives canadiennes elle-même. Nous sommes finalement reconnaissants à la famille Tauben pour leur don généreux à la revue et à l'AEJC.

**David S. Koffman**  
Rédacteur en chef

**Joshua Tapper**  
Rédacteur adjoint

Juin 2026

Lilach Marom

## **A Bug or a Feature? The Marginalization of Jewish Identity and Antisemitism in the EDI Landscape of Canadian Higher Education**

## Abstract

*This paper examines the construction of antisemitism and Jewish identity within equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) frameworks in Canadian higher education (HE). Using mixed-methods data from a national survey and semi-structured interviews, it explores how Jewish faculty and staff perceive the treatment of Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI policies, resources, and action plans in Canadian HE. Survey results show low awareness and comprehensiveness of EDI and institutional policies about Jewish identity and antisemitism, and low satisfaction with institutional responses and support. The interview data further elaborates on experiences of dismissal and avoidance and points to the conditional recognition of Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI. Overall, the study suggests that antisemitism is missing or marginalized in policies and that Jewish identity is only partially recognized. The study positions this marginalization as a feature of EDI and urges institutions to engage meaningfully with these frameworks to make them more inclusive.*

## Résumé

*Cet article examine la construction de l'antisémitisme et de l'identité juive dans les cadres du programme d'équité, de diversité et d'inclusion (EDI) de l'enseignement supérieur canadien. À partir de données recueillies par méthodes mixtes (enquête nationale et entrevues semi-structurées), il explore la perception du personnel enseignant et administratif juif quant au traitement de l'identité juive et de l'antisémitisme dans les politiques, les ressources et les plans d'action EDI de l'enseignement supérieur canadien. Les résultats de l'enquête révèlent une faible connaissance et une compréhension superficielle des politiques EDI et institutionnelles relatives à l'identité juive et à l'antisémitisme, ainsi qu'une faible satisfaction à l'égard des réponses et du soutien institutionnels. Les données des entrevues mettent en lumière des expériences de rejet et d'évitement et soulignent la reconnaissance conditionnelle de l'identité juive et de l'antisémitisme dans le cadre de l'EDI. En conclusion, l'étude suggère que l'antisémitisme est absent ou marginalisé dans les politiques et que l'identité juive n'est que partiellement reconnue. L'étude considère cette marginalisation comme une caractéristique de l'EDI et exhorte les institutions à s'engager de manière significative dans ces cadres afin de les rendre plus inclusifs.*

This study centres the voices of Jewish Canadian faculty members and staff as they navigate the contemporary landscape of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in Canadian higher education. Drawing on a mixed methods design that includes a national survey of approximately 218 faculty and staff and sixty-three in-depth interviews, the paper examines how Jewish identity and antisemitism are addressed within university EDI policies, offices, and institutional responses, particularly in the period following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 (hereafter October 7).

Rather than treating EDI as a moral framework, this paper interrogates it as an institutional technology of governance, asking what it enables, what it constrains, and what tensions emerge when applied to Jewish experiences in Canadian universities.<sup>1</sup>

EDI has been widely adopted as a central organizing framework through which higher education institutions in Canada articulate commitments to fairness, representation, and social justice.<sup>2</sup> In broad terms, equity seeks to address structural barriers that constrain access to educational opportunities and career advancement, challenging assumptions of a level playing field and the claim that equal treatment alone is sufficient for social mobility. It proposes that much of what universities call “merit” is the accumulation of advantages beyond individual control and, therefore, universities should address educational and structural disparities. Diversity recognizes difference as a defining feature of contemporary societies and institutions, encompassing intersecting identities, social positions, and lived experiences. Inclusion focuses on how diversity is actively taken up within institutions, emphasizing participation, belonging, and the conditions under which individuals and groups can contribute fully to academic life.<sup>3</sup> Together, these concepts signal a transition from viewing universities as a neutral site of knowledge production to understanding them as social institutions shaped by Western, Eurocentric, and colonial histories and their ongoing legacies.<sup>4</sup> A substantial body of research has documented persistent inequities in access, participation, and outcomes for students from historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized groups (HPSM), as well as enduring barriers in hiring, retention, and advancement for faculty from HPSM groups.<sup>5</sup>

Contemporary EDI frameworks can be traced to initiatives such as the Athena SWAN Charter in the United Kingdom, which initially focused on gender inequities in academic careers and institutional cultures.<sup>6</sup> Over time, the scope of EDI expanded to address multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization, taking on different terminology and emphases across national contexts.<sup>7</sup> EDI principles also underpin global policy agendas, including UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, which commits to “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education.”<sup>8</sup>

Following the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its ninety-four Calls to Action, decolonization has increasingly been articulated as a necessary extension of EDI frameworks, particularly in settler-colonial contexts such as Canada.<sup>9</sup> Decolonizing approaches foreground the enduring impacts of colonialism and the ways educational institutions have privileged Western epistemologies while marginalizing Indigenous knowledge systems.<sup>10</sup> This perspective urges institutions to confront the structural and epistemic foundations of Eurocentric dominance and to engage meaningfully with questions of Indigenous sovereignty, relationships to land, and knowledge production.<sup>11</sup> Whether decolonization should be folded into EDI or positioned as a distinct and more radical framework remains a subject of

debate.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, institutional and policy discourse has increasingly collapsed these conversations under the umbrella term EDI/D (or D/EDI).<sup>13</sup>

In Canada, EDI is legally linked to protected categories under the Employment Equity Act (1985), including women, visible minorities, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.<sup>14</sup> The federal government has positioned EDI as a priority across the public sector, with direct implications for research funding and institutional accountability mechanisms such as the Dimensions program and the Canada Research Chairs program.<sup>15</sup> In response, most Canadian universities have adopted EDI policies and embedded EDI principles within strategic plans, hiring practices, and governance structures, positioning EDI simultaneously as a moral commitment and a marker of institutional excellence.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, critical scholars have cautioned that EDI can operate as a mode of institutional governance that manages, contains, or neutralizes more radical critiques of power.<sup>17</sup> Rather than transforming underlying structures, EDI initiatives may prioritize symbolic gestures and performative forms of recognition that leave colonial, racial, and geopolitical hierarchies largely intact.<sup>18</sup> In parallel, EDI has become the target of growing political backlash, particularly from the political right, where it is framed as ideologically driven and as a threat to academic freedom and research excellence.<sup>19</sup> Beyond ideologically motivated critique, scholars are increasingly calling for change or revision in EDI, demonstrating that the current model can lead to excessive bureaucracy, increased divisions, and limited progress in addressing structural inequalities.<sup>20</sup>

Within this contested terrain, the place of Jewish identity and antisemitism in EDI frameworks remains undertheorized and empirically underexamined. Recent research examining EDI policies in Canadian universities suggests that Jewishness is often narrowly constructed as a religious affiliation rather than as an ethnic and cultural identity, and that antisemitism and Jewish identity are frequently absent from EDI policies and institutional resources.<sup>21</sup> When acknowledged, antisemitism is often addressed through generalized diversity language that obscures its specific nature and manifestations. Emerging scholarship, particularly since October 7, points to the uneasy fit of Jewish experiences within EDI frameworks that are primarily organized around race, visibility, and underrepresentation.<sup>22</sup> In the Canadian context, additional tensions arise when settler-colonial and Indigeneity frameworks intersect with debates surrounding Israel/Palestine.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, accusations of antisemitism have been mobilized by political actors, particularly in the United States, as tools to dismantle EDI initiatives altogether.<sup>24</sup>

These dynamics raise fundamental questions about whose identities and experiences are included within institutional EDI frameworks, and under what conditions.<sup>25</sup>

Centring the experiences of Jewish members of Canadian higher education institutions, this paper asks: How do Jewish faculty and staff perceive the treatment of Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI policies, resources, and action plans in Canadian higher education? How do they experience and perceive institutional EDI responses to antisemitism and Jewish concerns following October 7?

To respond to these questions, it is important to clarify how the terms Jewish identity, antisemitism, and Zionism are used in this paper. Jewish identity is understood here as a form of peoplehood—a social group formation predating modern categories of race, ethnicity, and religion, and encompassing ethnic, cultural, religious, and secular dimensions with diverse lineages and no single essentialized definition.<sup>26</sup> Antisemitism is understood as hostility toward Jews as Jews—an adaptive, dynamic phenomenon that has shifted in form across historical and societal contexts.<sup>27</sup> Zionism is understood here broadly as support for Jewish political self-determination—a position embraced by the majority of Canadian Jews.<sup>28</sup>

Drawing on EDI both as an analytic lens and a policy frame, the article highlights the limitations of the current framework, pointing to sites of omission and friction. In doing so, it aims to contribute to broader scholarly conversations about EDI in higher education and argues for institutional approaches that are more attentive to the complexity of marginalization and more capable of fostering genuinely inclusive academic environments.

## **EDI in Canadian Higher Education**

In the Canadian education context, early references to diversity and inclusion were largely articulated through the policy frameworks of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Canada was the first country to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy, promoting a national narrative that framed diversity as a cultural asset and marker of societal strength.<sup>29</sup> While this model foregrounded the recognition of cultural difference, critics have long argued that Canadian multiculturalism operates as a limited liberal framework that emphasizes the “celebration of diversity” while leaving underlying relations of power, racial hierarchies, and structural inequality largely unexamined.<sup>30</sup>

Over the past decade, Canadian higher education has experienced a notable shift from multicultural discourses toward more critical frameworks, particularly following the TRC’s Calls to Action.<sup>31</sup> The TRC explicitly positioned postsecondary institutions as key sites for addressing the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism, calling for structural changes in the curriculum, pedagogy, leadership, research practices, and relationships with Indigenous communities. This emphasis on Indigenization and decolonization has become a defining feature, at least declaratively, of the contemporary Canadian higher education landscape.<sup>32</sup>

The institutionalization of EDI in Canadian higher education has been significantly shaped by federal policy instruments tied to research funding and accountability. In 2019, the Government of Canada launched the Dimensions program, requiring postsecondary institutions to develop, implement, and publicly report on EDI action plans as a condition of participation. Although the program was initially paused following its pilot phase, it was subsequently renewed and expanded, further consolidating EDI as a governance mechanism linked to research excellence, institutional reputation, and access to federal funding.<sup>33</sup>

Parallel initiatives have reinforced this trajectory. The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences introduced a Charter on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization (EDID), calling for “a more resolute effort to achieve equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization in our disciplines, fields of inquiry, and artistic and cultural expressions.”<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program incorporated EDI into its allocation processes, explicitly acknowledging longstanding inequities in the distribution of academic prestige and research resources.<sup>35</sup> These initiatives positioned EDI as a normative expectation within Canadian higher education governance. In addition, the racial reckoning that followed the murder of George Floyd in the United States and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement triggered a growing awareness of anti-Black racism in the Canadian higher education context.<sup>36</sup> In response, many institutions signed the Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education.<sup>37</sup> The Charter frames anti-Black racism as a structural problem requiring coordinated and sustained institutional action.

At the same time, a growing body of scholarship cautions that the rapid uptake of EDI risks prioritizing discursive commitment and symbolic gestures over structural transformation.<sup>38</sup> Carol Campbell criticizes the focus on individual behaviour rather than structural change, the oversimplification of EDI to appease stakeholders, the assumption that discrimination is no longer a significant issue, and the avoidance of divisive topics.<sup>39</sup> Vicki Squires and colleagues show that across Canada’s U15 research-intensive universities, EDI has become a normalized institutional expectation driven by federal funding, public discourses, and reputational incentives.<sup>40</sup> However, their analysis also documents persistent challenges in translating EDI commitments into practice, including definitional ambiguity, uneven implementation across institutions and departments, and a tendency toward performative actions rather than systemic change. Similarly, in a study of EDI documents in Canadian colleges, Merli Tamtik and Puvi Balasubramaniam find substantial variability in the definitions and uses of EDI, leading to the conclusion that the understanding of EDI within institutions is fragmented, vague, and incomplete.<sup>41</sup> This situation can serve to reinforce and perpetuate existing power structures rather than dismantle and disrupt them.

These findings align closely with those of the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) report on EDI in postsecondary education.<sup>42</sup> While the report documents substantial growth in EDI policies, offices, and reporting mechanisms, it also highlights persistent resistance within institutions, significant gaps in data collection, unequal division of labour, and a lack of consistent evidence to assess the effectiveness of EDI initiatives or identify best practices. The CCA emphasizes that without robust data, clear accountability structures, and sustained institutional commitment, EDI risks remaining an aspirational framework rather than a driver of meaningful change.

At the same time, the scholarly pushback against EDI has gained a stronger voice, as evidenced in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research, convened to examine how EDI criteria in federal funding affect research excellence.<sup>43</sup> In the hearings, some prominent scholars argued that EDI criteria in research grants endanger academic freedom and undermine merit.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, scholarly organizations such as Heterodox Academy, which centre viewpoint diversity, and initiatives promoting civil discourse and dialogue are gaining growing support on university campuses and are increasingly positioned as alternatives to EDI.<sup>45</sup>

Overall, the literature illustrates how EDI has become deeply embedded in the governance of Canadian higher education while remaining marked by tensions between discursive uptake, structural transformation, and growing pushback. This institutional context provides an important backdrop for examining how Jews as an identity group and antisemitism as a form of marginalization are recognized, addressed, or sidelined within contemporary EDI frameworks that are already complex and contested.

## **Jewish Identity and Antisemitism in Higher Education**

Recent scholarship on Jewish identity and antisemitism in higher education is relatively limited and is concentrated primarily on students, often in the United States. Warren J. Blumenfeld and Jason R. Klein describe how Jewish undergraduates were overlooked and misunderstood by campus administrators and faculty. They argue that Jewish students, most of them of Ashkenazi descent, faced unique challenges emerging from being afforded White-skinned privilege while also carrying a collective sense of racialization and persecution.<sup>46</sup> In a more recent study on faculty, staff, and students, Barry A. Farber and Arielle Poleg argue that as universities expand their multicultural and equity programming, Jews are paradoxically less likely to be recognized as a group deserving institutional attention.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Benjamin S. Selznick and Sandra Greene conceptualize Jewish identity on campus as simultaneously privileged and vulnerable, visible and invisible, a positioning that sits uneasily within equity frameworks organized around fixed categories.<sup>48</sup> They conclude that “it is important for Jewishness as an identity space to be fully recognized and valued by colleges and universities.”<sup>49</sup>

Steven Feldman maps how Jewish identity and antisemitism were treated across five top journals in higher education over fifty years and assesses how authors frame Jewishness when it appears. He argues that scholarship marginalizes the ethno-racial dimensions of Jewishness, treats Jewishness mainly as religion, and rarely centres Jewish experiences.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, antisemitism is largely missing in anti-racism and anti-bias education and programming.<sup>51</sup> Laura Vernikoff and colleagues show that even teacher educators committed to anti-oppressive pedagogy often omit Jewish identity and antisemitism from curricula.<sup>52</sup> The authors argue that:

American Jews may also be categorized as a religious group instead of, or in addition to, a racial or ethnic group ... Teacher preparation, in particular, and higher education, in general, often ignore religion and religious discrimination when addressing cultural diversity, thus allowing biases, discrimination, and Christian normativity to continue unchecked.<sup>53</sup>

In Canada, Ayelet Kuper argues that antisemitism at the University of Toronto is treated as episodic, external, or political rather than as a structural feature of campus life. She documents multiple forms of institutional silencing, including the exclusion of Jews from data collection instruments and curricular of antisemitism. She argues that Jewish experiences are overlooked within institutional EDI logics.<sup>54</sup>

October 7 and its aftermath have led to a renewed interest in scholarship on Jewish campus experiences.<sup>55</sup> Talia Morstead and Anita DeLongis examine how stress related to antisemitism and the Israel/Palestine conflict, as well as different coping strategies, were associated with depressive symptoms in Jewish university students.<sup>56</sup> They argue that “institutional responses that downplay [antisemitism’s] existence or stifle speech about its impacts may inadvertently worsen outcomes for affected students.”<sup>57</sup> Similarly, drawing on a taxonomy of microaggressions, Yael Silverstein and Caryn Block argue that subtle, everyday forms of antisemitism on campuses often go unrecognized and unreported, yet are pervasive and harmful. Jews were often excluded from campus diversity spaces, had the legitimacy of their identity questioned, and their experiences dismissed and ignored.<sup>58</sup> The authors argue that there are “strong correlations between antisemitic experiences and race-based traumatic stress symptoms, explicitly linking Jewish microaggressions with other forms of minority stress.”<sup>59</sup> Miri Bar-Halpern and Jaclyn Wolfman describe “traumatic invalidation,” whereby Jewish expressions of fear or exclusion are minimized or dismissed. They describe an expectation on campus that Jewish students disavow Israel to gain social acceptance.<sup>60</sup> The authors conclude that university administrations and EDI offices failed to adequately acknowledge, validate, or protect Jewish individuals on campuses. Specific institutional reports from prominent universities similarly underscore failures of EDI offices to respond to and address Jewish concerns. For ex-

ample, Columbia's Task Force on Antisemitism reports that:

Many students thought that the main address for these complaints was the offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). However, DEI offices ... have generally not engaged Jewish student complaints. In our survey of the various websites, programs, and discussions offered by each of the DEI offices ... we found only one that mentioned antisemitism.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, the final report of Harvard's Presidential Task Force on Combating Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias maintains that "many Jewish respondents feel that DEI offices are not able to satisfactorily engage with Jews as a minority group. Some would like DEI offices to improve their engagement with Jewish community members. Others would like to see DEI programs wound down."<sup>62</sup>

While some scholars call for the dismantling of EDI altogether, emerging scholarship calls for an expansion and revision of EDI to include Jewish identity and antisemitism, suggesting different strategies and pedagogies.<sup>63</sup> This paper aims to contribute to this emerging literature by focusing on the Canadian higher education context.

## Methodology

The data presented here are part of a larger mixed-methods research project examining the experiences of faculty and staff in Canadian higher education in the period following October 7.<sup>64</sup> The broader project includes three interconnected components: policy analysis, a national survey, and semi-structured interviews. This article focuses specifically on survey and interview data related to EDI with particular attention to how Jewish identity and antisemitism are recognized and addressed within these institutional frameworks.

Participants were recruited through Jewish campus organizations, Jewish academic and professional networks, Canadian Jewish organizations, and Jewish studies associations. Recruitment also relied on the professional networks of the research team and snowball sampling to reach participants across institutions, roles, and regions. Eligibility criteria included being faculty or staff at a Canadian higher education institution and having knowledge of, experience with, or exposure to antisemitism on campus. While the broader survey was open to both Jewish and non-Jewish respondents, the analytic sample for this paper focuses on Jewish respondents (153 out of 218), consistent with EDI approaches that centre the voices of those directly impacted by marginalization.

The survey was designed and administered using the Qualtrics platform and hosted on a secure University of British Columbia server. The first section collected professional and institutional background information (e.g., role, discipline, institution type, and province). Subsequent sections focused on participants' awareness of and engagement with university policies and EDI offices, including perceptions of whether antisemitism and Jewish identity were explicitly addressed and how comprehensive (i.e., relevant, effective, having a positive effect, and capturing the right things) such efforts were relative to other forms of discrimination. Additional items assessed exposure to antisemitic incidents before and after October 7, reporting behaviour in response to incidents, and perceived institutional responses to reports. A dedicated section addressed Jewish identity for respondents who identified as Jewish, including dimensions of cultural, ethnic, and religious identification, as well as emotional attachment to Israel. This section also included items assessing participants' sense of physical, emotional, and professional safety, as well as feelings of inclusion on campus. The final section collected demographic information (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation). In this paper, only survey items related to EDI are presented.<sup>65</sup> For survey questions included in this paper, see Appendix A.

At the end of the survey, participants were invited to indicate interest in a follow-up semi-structured interview. Interviews are conceptualized here as Jewish counterstories, aimed at fostering more accurate and equitable discourse on antisemitism and Jewish inclusion in higher education.<sup>66</sup> Interviews included open-ended questions about Jewish identity, understandings of antisemitism, and experiences with colleagues, students, and campus leadership before and after October 7. A dedicated portion of each interview focused on participants' interactions with EDI policies, offices, resources, and institutional responses, as well as their understanding and perceptions of Jewish identity and antisemitism within their institutions. Participants selected or were assigned pseudonyms and were invited to review and edit their transcripts before analysis, to ensure their voices and confidentiality were maintained.

## Data Sources

The survey remained open for approximately five months and yielded 218 responses. After data cleaning and eligibility screening, including the removal of incomplete responses, ineligible respondents, and duplicate entries, 149 responses met the inclusion criteria. A further thirteen responses were excluded from the primary analytic sample due to failure of an attention check item, resulting in a strict analytic sample of 136 respondents. These thirteen cases were retained in a relaxed analytic sample ( $N = 149$ ) used exclusively for sensitivity analyses. Across all variables reported in this paper, descriptive patterns were substantively consistent between the strict and relaxed samples, indicating that inclusion of the additional thirteen respondents

does not materially affect the results. Results are therefore presented for the strict sample unless otherwise noted.

**Table 1**  
**Survey Participant Demographics**

| <b>Demographic</b>                      | <b>Category</b>  | <b>n</b> | <b>%</b> |
|---|--|----------|----------|
| <b>Age Group</b>                        | 25–44  | 28       | 20.6     |
|   | 45–54  | 50       | 36.8     |
|   | 55–64  | 28       | 20.6     |
|   | 65+  | 23       | 16.9     |
|   | Missing  | 7        | 5.1      |
| <b>Gender</b>                           | Woman  | 74       | 54.4     |
|   | Man  | 54       | 39.7     |
|   | Other  | 8        | 5.9      |
| <b>Province</b>                         | British Columbia   | 42       | 30.9     |
|   | Ontario  | 60       | 44.1     |
|   | Quebec   | 14       | 10.3     |
|   | Other (includes the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan) | 16       | 11.8     |
|   | Missing  | 4        | 2.9      |
| <b>Academic Discipline</b>              | Humanities/Social Sciences   | 47       | 34.6     |
|   | Health/Medicine  | 34       | 25.0     |
|   | STEM   | 14       | 10.3     |
|   | Business/Law   | 14       | 10.3     |
|   | Other  | 9        | 6.6      |
|   | Missing  | 18       | 13.2     |
| <b>Academic Rank</b>                    | Junior   | 15       | 11.0     |
|   | Mid-career   | 33       | 24.3     |
|   | Senior   | 49       | 36.0     |
|   | Other  | 20       | 14.7     |
|   | Missing  | 19       | 14.0     |
| <b>Attachment to Israel</b>             | Attached to Israel   | 126      | 92.6     |
|   | No Attachment/Neutral  | 10       | 7.4      |
| <b>Strong Cultural Jewish Identity</b>  | Very   | 120      | 88.2     |
|   | No/Neutral   | 16       | 11.8     |
| <b>Strong Religious Jewish Identity</b> | Very   | 56       | 41.2     |
|   | No/Neutral   | 79       | 58.1     |
|   | Missing  | 1        | 0.7      |
| <b>Strong Ethnic Jewish Identity</b>    | Very   | 112      | 82.4     |
|   | No/Neutral   | 24       | 17.6     |

In the strict analytic sample ( $N = 136$ ), 111 respondents (81.6 percent) identified as faculty, eighteen (13.2 percent) as staff, and seven (5.1 percent) as other (e.g., postdocs). Respondents were predominantly affiliated with research-intensive institutions: eighty-nine respondents (65.4 percent) were employed at U15 universities, twenty-nine (21.3 percent) at other research-intensive universities, and fourteen (10.3 percent) at teaching-focused institutions; institutional type was missing for four respondents (2.9 percent). Disciplinary backgrounds spanned multiple fields; forty-seven respondents (34.6 percent) were based in the humanities or social sciences, thirty-four (25 percent) in health or medicine, fourteen (10.3 percent) in STEM fields, and fourteen (10.3 percent) in business or law; nine respondents (6.6 percent) reported other disciplines, and eighteen (13.2 percent) did not report a disciplinary affiliation. See Table 1 for survey participant demographics.

Among Jewish survey respondents, eighty-one expressed an interest in being interviewed, resulting in fifty-nine interviews with faculty and staff. Participants varied across institutions, positions, fields, locations, career stages, political orientations, and Jewish self-identification. Given the volume of interview data, the paper includes the voices of twenty-five participants. The interview participants included faculty, staff, and other academic roles across multiple disciplines, provinces, career stages, and institution types, with most affiliated with research-intensive universities—a profile broadly consistent with the composition of the broader survey sample. The interview participants were selected to reflect the range of themes and experiences identified across the full interview dataset rather than to constitute a statistically representative subsample. See Table 2 for an overview of interview participants whose voices are included in this paper.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using R.<sup>67</sup> Analyses examined participants' perception of how their institutions recognize Jewish identity and antisemitism within EDI frameworks and how this compares to recognition of other marginalized identities and forms of discrimination. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent demographics, institutional characteristics (e.g., institution type), and responses to EDI-related measures, including policy awareness, perceived policy comprehensiveness, EDI office resources, workplace climate, exposure to antisemitic incidents, and reporting behaviour.

Subgroup comparisons are interpreted cautiously and as descriptive patterning rather than definitive group differences, given uneven subgroup sizes and a study design not intended for causal inference or population-level estimation. These findings should not be interpreted as statistically representative of all Jewish faculty and staff in Canadian higher education; rather, they document patterns among respon-

**Table 2**  
**Interview Participants Demographics**

|    | <b>Pseudonym</b> | <b>Position</b> | <b>Discipline</b>                | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Province</b> | <b>Professional Rank</b>  | <b>Setting</b> | <b>University Type*</b>       |
|----|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Adi              | Faculty         | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W             | MB              | Emeritus Professor        | Urban          | Research University (RU)      |
| 2  | Alicia           | Faculty         | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W             | ON              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 3  | Amira            | Staff           | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W             | BC              | N/A                       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 4  | Aviva            | Faculty         | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | W             | ON              | Assistant Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 5  | Ben              | Faculty         | Business                         | M             | ON              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 6  | David            | Faculty         | Social Sciences                  | M             | AB              | Full Professor            | Urban          | RU                            |
| 7  | Diane            | Faculty         | Education                        | W             | QC              | Senior Academic Associate | Urban          | RU                            |
| 8  | Eden             | Faculty         | Physical Sciences                | W             | QC              | Full Professor            | Urban          | RU                            |
| 9  | Elishveva        | Staff           | Library                          | W             | SK              | N/A                       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 10 | Esther           | Faculty         | Behavioural Sciences             | W             | AB              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | Teaching University (TU)      |
| 11 | Etgar            | Faculty         | Law                              | M             | ON              | Full Professor            | Urban          | RU                            |
| 12 | Ezra             | Faculty         | Social Sciences                  | M             | QC              | Teaching Faculty          | Urban          | CEGEP                         |
| 13 | Joe              | Faculty         | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M             | ON              | Assistant Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 14 | Josh             | Staff           | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M             | BC              | N/A                       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 15 | Lane             | Faculty         | Business/Engineering             | W             | ON              | Contract Professor        | Urban          | RU and College                |
| 16 | Lila             | Faculty         | Behavioural Sciences             | W             | MB              | Full Professor            | Urban          | RU                            |
| 17 | Lili             | Faculty         | Music                            | W             | QC              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 18 | Max              | Other           | Social Sciences                  | M             | ON              | Senior Fellow             | Urban          | RU                            |
| 19 | Michael          | Faculty         | Social Sciences                  | M             | BC              | Instructor                | Urban          | Comprehensive University (CU) |
| 20 | Nachman          | Staff           | Engineering                      | M             | ON              | N/A                       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 21 | Noah             | Faculty         | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M             | ON              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 22 | Paul             | Faculty         | Business                         | M             | QC              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 23 | Rita             | Faculty         | Humanities                       | W             | ON              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |
| 24 | Ruth             | Faculty         | Humanities                       | W             | ON              | Full Professor            | Urban          | RU                            |
| 25 | Yishai           | Faculty         | Medicine/Health sciences/Nursing | M             | ON              | Associate Professor       | Urban          | RU                            |

dents who met the study criteria and chose to participate. No statistically significant differences were observed across participant demographics or affiliations (e.g., gender, position, discipline), or between institutional groups (e.g., U15) in the primary analyses. For details on the survey analysis process, see Appendix B.

Interview transcripts were analyzed using NVivo. Thematic analysis guided the coding process.<sup>68</sup> Members of the research team met regularly to refine the codebook, compare interpretations, and ensure analytic rigour. Themes were generated inductively from participants' narratives (e.g., experiences on campus, responses, and behaviours) and deductively informed by the EDI framework (e.g., EDI policies, discourses, and offices). In the final analytic stage, findings related to EDI were reorganized into three main themes. The first theme maps the EDI landscape of Canadian higher education, highlighting the omission and marginalization of Jewish identity and antisemitism and the baseline institutional way Jewish identity is managed via religious accommodations. The second theme identifies areas of misfit and tension around the inclusion of Jewish identity and antisemitism in EDI frameworks. The third theme points to EDI institutional strategies to manage responses to antisemitism. The findings section starts with an overview of the survey findings, followed by the qualitative sections that enhance and complement these findings.

## Survey Findings

Survey responses indicate limited institutional inclusion of antisemitism and Jewish identity within EDI policies and resources and reveal large, systematic gaps between recognition of antisemitism and recognition of other forms of identity-based discrimination. In the sample ( $N = 136$ ), only 32.4 percent of respondents reported awareness that their institution had a policy addressing antisemitism, compared with 93.4 percent who reported awareness of policies addressing other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Indigenous, anti-Black racism). Within-respondent paired comparisons show that eighty-three respondents were aware of policies addressing other discrimination but not antisemitism, while no respondents reported the reverse pattern (McNemar  $\chi^2 = 81.0$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating a large and highly asymmetric awareness gap.

Perceptions of EDI office activity showed a similar pattern. On a five-point scale measuring awareness of EDI activities—with higher scores indicating greater perceived visibility—the median Jewish-focused EDI awareness score among respondents with paired ratings was 3.00 (IQR: 1.00–5.00), compared with 5.00 (IQR: 4.00–5.00) for EDI activities addressing other forms of discrimination. This difference was highly statistically significant in a paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test ( $z = -6.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Consistent with this result, within-person gap scores (Jewish-focused minus other-discrimination awareness) had a median of  $-0.50$  (IQR:  $-2.62$ – $0.00$ ), indicat-

ing that respondents systematically rated Jewish-focused EDI activity as less visible than EDI activity addressing other identity groups.

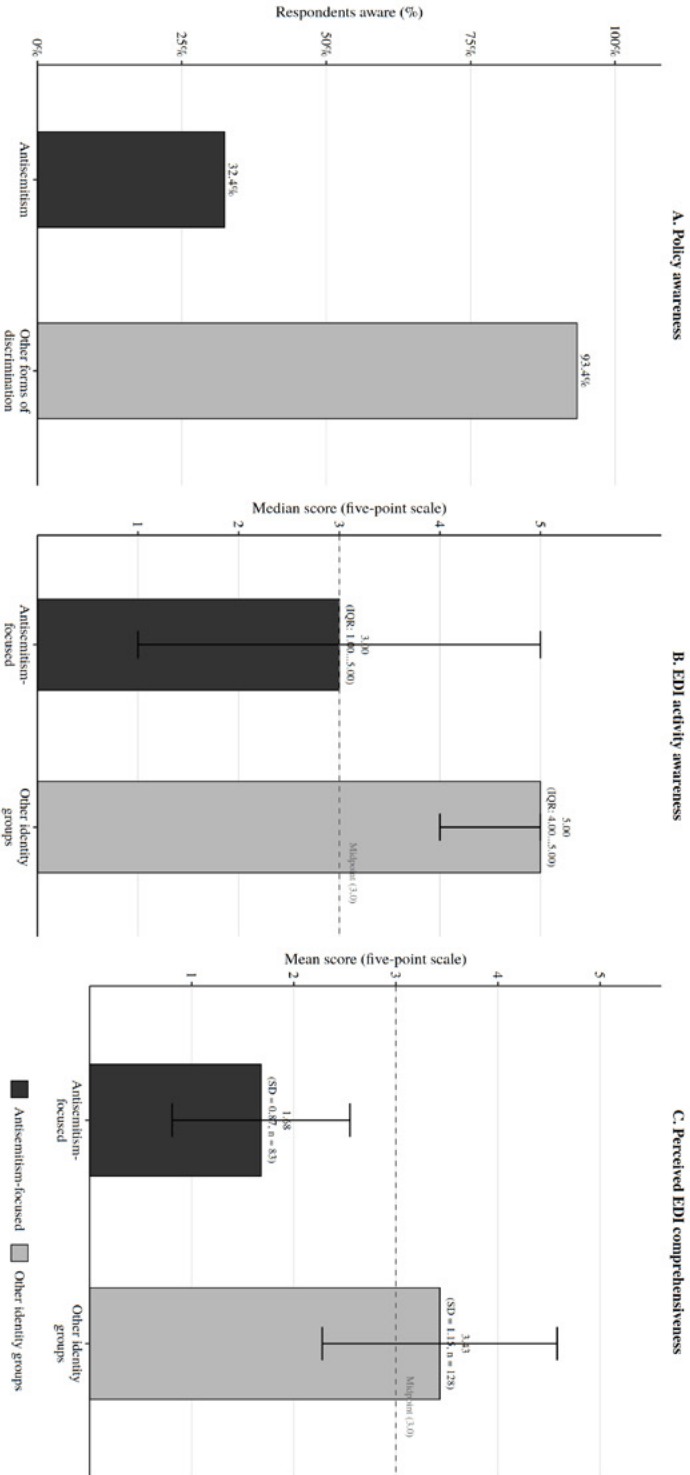
Perceived EDI activity comprehensiveness showed an even larger disparity. Jewish-focused EDI comprehensiveness averaged 1.68 ( $SD = 0.87$ ;  $n = 83$ ), while EDI comprehensiveness addressing other forms of identity-based discrimination averaged 3.43 ( $SD = 1.15$ ;  $n = 128$ ). This difference was highly statistically significant among respondents who provided paired ratings for both domains (paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test,  $p < .001$ ). A similar pattern was observed for formal institutional policies. Among respondents who rated policy comprehensiveness across domains, antisemitism policies were rated as significantly less comprehensive than policies addressing other forms of discrimination ( $p < .001$ ) and workplace misconduct ( $p < .001$ ), based on paired Wilcoxon signed-rank tests.

These within-respondent comparisons indicate that the same individuals consistently evaluate antisemitism-related policies as weaker than parallel institutional frameworks. Within-person gap scores further quantify this asymmetry. The mean EDI comprehensiveness gap (Jewish-focused minus other-discrimination EDI) was approximately -1.8 points on a five-point scale, indicating a large and systematic deficit in perceived adequacy of Jewish-focused EDI efforts relative to other identity-based domains. This gap was highly statistically significant in paired analyses, demonstrating that the observed differences are not attributable to random variation or between-person differences, but reflect a robust institutional recognition gap. These results indicate that Jewish-focused EDI efforts were perceived as substantially less visible and less adequate than EDI efforts addressing other identity-based groups (see Figure 1).

Survey data further indicate substantial reporting of antisemitic incidents following October 7, alongside low perceived support and satisfaction with institutional responses. In the strict analytic sample ( $N = 136$ ), 57.8 percent of respondents formally reported at least one antisemitic incident since October 7, while 42.2 percent did not. Because experience with, knowledge of, or exposure to antisemitism on campus was part of the study's eligibility criteria, this finding reflects the reporting rate among respondents already connected to antisemitism-related experiences, rather than the prevalence of antisemitism among all Jewish faculty and staff. Even within this eligible sample, a substantial minority did not engage with formal reporting mechanisms.

In multivariable analyses, reporting behaviour was most consistently associated with post-October 7 exposure burden. Each additional antisemitic experience since October 7 was associated with significantly higher odds of formally reporting an incident (OR = 1.37, 95% CI: 1.11-1.78,  $p = .008$ ), adjusting for pre-October 7 exposure burden, recognition gaps, role, institution type, disciplinary background, and Israel attachment. Full model results are reported in Appendix C. These findings suggest

**Figure 1**  
**Policy and EDI Resources Awareness and Comprehensiveness**



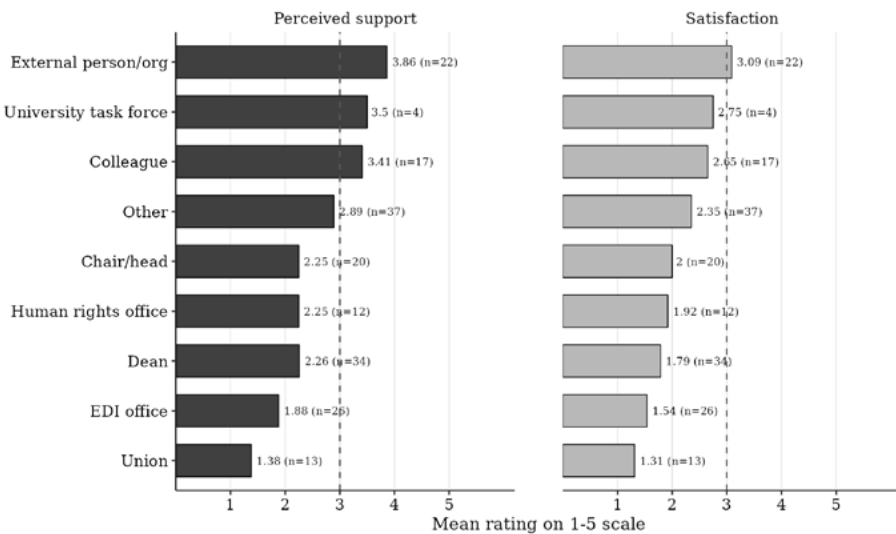
Awareness of institutional policies addressing antisemitism compared with policies addressing other forms of identity-based discrimination (strict analytic sample, N = 136). Panel A: Percentage of respondents aware of institutional policies. Panel B: median EDI activity awareness score on a five-point scale; error bars indicate interquartile range (IQR). Panel C: mean perceived EDI comprehensiveness score on a five-point scale; error bars indicate one standard deviation. Dashed lines mark the scale midpoint (3.0). Percentages exclude missing responses.

that reporting was driven primarily by the cumulative burden of post-October 7 exposure rather than by institutional recognition or EDI-related factors.

Satisfaction with how reported incidents were handled was low overall. Among respondents who reported incidents, the mean satisfaction score was 2.17 on a five-point scale, below the scale midpoint of 3, interpreted here as indicating generally low satisfaction. Satisfaction varied descriptively by reporting destination: external persons or external organizations (e.g., the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs) received the highest mean satisfaction ratings (mean = 3.09), while institutional channels were rated substantially lower, including EDI offices (mean = 1.54), deans (mean = 1.79), and unions (mean = 1.31).

Perceived support following reporting showed a similar pattern. Overall mean perceived support was approximately 2.66 on a five-point scale, falling below the midpoint, reflecting moderate-to-low perceived support. External persons or organizations (mean = 3.86) and colleagues (mean = 3.41) were rated as most supportive, while institutional channels such as EDI offices (mean = 1.88), unions (mean = 1.38), and human rights offices (mean = 2.25) were rated lower. These results are intended to characterize descriptive patterns of perceived response rather than to establish statistically significant differences between reporting channels (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2**  
**Perceived Support and Satisfaction across Reporting Destinations**



Perceived support and satisfaction across reporting destinations, illustrating the consistently lower support and satisfaction ratings associated with institutional reporting channels relative to colleagues and external organizations. Mean rating on a five-point scale. The dashed line indicates the scale midpoint (3.0). Strict analytic sample; respondents could report to multiple destinations; n indicates number of respondents per destination.

Taken together, these findings indicate that while a majority of respondents reported incidents of antisemitism after October 7, perceived institutional responses were consistently experienced as insufficient, indicating a gap between reporting engagement and perceived effectiveness of institutional response mechanisms.

### **Mapping the EDI Landscape: Missing, Marginalized, and Limitedly Accommodated**

Similar to the survey findings, interview participants repeatedly described that antisemitism was rarely named or addressed as a distinct form of oppression. Rita explained:

It's the absence. The website, for example, had a list of various underrepresented groups that the EDI office could help if you had a concern and antisemitism wasn't there ... if you felt that you'd experienced racism or ableism [etc.], it is obvious where to go and who the support staff is. There's nothing on the website that says, "if you're Jewish or you've experienced antisemitism, here's where you would go."

Eden echoed this observation: "In the university-wide EDI committee, there's never a mention of antisemitism ... it's anything but antisemitism." Esther agreed: "The institution has lots of stuff about EDI. Notably missing is anything about antisemitism."

When antisemitism was mentioned, it tended to appear as part of a generalized list rather than as a category that required distinct analysis or action. Lila described:

If there's a big, long laundry list, it might include antisemitism, but there's nothing that ... would help people understand what antisemitism is. Relative to [other forms] of anti-oppression ... that say what it is and what you're supposed to be fighting against.

Michael added:

The university created an anti-racism task force ... and a lengthy report was published.... In the report, the first-time antisemitism is mentioned, I believe, on page seventeen or eighteen, and it's only mentioned one other time. So, to me, it suggests that antisemitism is not a priority for the task force, and it's hardly recognized, if at all.

For many participants, this institutional omission became particularly visible after October 7, when EDI offices were often silent in response to concerns about antisemitism or in expressing solidarity with Jewish members of the campus community. Etgar shared:

They have done nothing for the Jewish community since October 7 through the auspices of the EDI office. They hadn't made any statements of support ... contrasted with very vocal statements that the university made when it was the Black Lives Matter movement or the Me Too movement.... [They] know how to make [statements], and there was nothing.

Relatedly, Jewish identity was described as largely absent from, or positioned at the margins of, institutional EDI policies and resources. As Josh shared: "I've never seen anything mentioned in writing about any Jewish holiday." When Jewish identity was acknowledged, it was most often framed narrowly as a matter of religion rather than as a social, cultural, or ethnic identity.<sup>69</sup> Ruth illustrated how this logic was operationalized in practice when asking whether Jewish students were included in a graduate mentorship program:

I got a reply from the inclusion advisor of the Graduate Faculty ... [that the mentorship program] was organized specifically for equity-deserving groups, namely, Black, Indigenous, and people of colour, and that if Jewish students felt they needed mentorship, they could go and see the multi-faith team.

Here, Jewish students were effectively displaced from EDI and redirected into religious services, reinforcing the idea that Jewish concerns fall outside institutional EDI mandates.

Indeed, the most common institutional response to Jewish identity was through religious accommodation. Participants emphasized, however, that even these accommodations were uneven and often required individual negotiation. Rita shared: "Every year, I feel like I have to fight to get my colleagues not to schedule a department meeting on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur." Esther connected this pattern directly to exclusion from professional participation:

Throughout my fourteen years here, we have had faculty council and faculty association meetings and retreats scheduled on High Holidays. Anytime I have mentioned it, I'm always told, "You don't have to come." I'm like, "You're taking away my ability to participate in doing my job."

Joe described how this extends into student life and campus services:

[Students are] required to have a meal plan, but there's no kosher meal plan ... The [faculty] puts significant milestone events on Jewish holidays regularly, despite us having a multi-faith calendar.... It's those subtle things that most of us ... tend to just accept.

Lili reiterated how a similar pattern underlies EDI-designated spaces: “I was in an EDI meeting, and I said, ‘we’re rescheduling the next meeting’ [because it was on Friday evening].... Some people were visibly annoyed, and I just thought, ‘This is an EDI meeting, what’s going on here?’”

These accounts point to a form of “double exclusion.” Canadian higher education is still grounded in Christian calendars and norms as the default, while EDI frameworks—intended to disrupt such defaults—often overlook Jewish identity.<sup>70</sup>

At the same time, interviews revealed variation across institutions and contexts. Some participants described being accommodated at the individual level. Paul shared: “It wasn’t uncommon to have various administrative meetings scheduled on High Holidays, and I just say, ‘I’m not going to be available,’ and they’re like, ‘oh, no problem, we’ll reschedule it.” Yet only a few participants, typically in universities with a larger Jewish population, described a clear institutional-level commitment to accommodation, as Diane noted: “I cannot imagine any university meeting of consequence being scheduled on Rosh Hashanah. There would be such an outcry, and that pre-dates October 7.”

These accounts suggest that Jewish religious accommodation, in most cases, is informal and situation-specific rather than systematic or tied to EDI accountability. Overall, the findings map an EDI landscape in which Jewish identity and antisemitism are weakly embedded in institutional policy and EDI infrastructures, narrowly framed through religion when acknowledged, and addressed primarily through individualized accommodation rather than through systematic EDI recognition and accountability.

### **Structural Misfit: Jewish Identity and Antisemitism Within EDI**

Interview data illuminate how the recognition gap identified in the survey findings is produced for Jewish identity and antisemitism within the EDI context. Participants described Jewish identity and antisemitism as misfitting within existing EDI frameworks. They frequently pointed to structural features of EDI—particularly the centrality of racialization and underrepresentation—as creating barriers to recognition. Several participants encountered this misfit through institutional classification systems, such as surveys and demographic forms, where Jewish identity was absent. Yishai explained:

If you ask Jews who they are differently, half of them disappear. That’s been known to Canadian demographers for over fifteen years. That [problem] persists in EDI policies. So, Jews are made to disappear in multiple ways. From anchoring

EDI policies and related data collection in race to the overt exclusion of religion, ancestry, or ethnicity.

Ruth shared a concrete experience: “I looked at the registration form, and it had this long list where you could identify yourself. ... It’s quite a lengthy list, and Jewish wasn’t on it.”

Eden articulated the rationale she believed underpinned these omissions:

I look at the form, and I think, “OK, what are these people who make these forms thinking? Why would they not include Jewish?” I guess they would argue that Jews are overrepresented in academia and in research, and they mean to track underrepresented groups ... and I don’t think I could argue against Jews being overrepresented in academia.

This logic—equating EDI primarily with underrepresentation—was widely recognized by participants, even when they experienced its consequences as exclusionary. Nachman noted:

If the goal of EDI is to mitigate underrepresentation ... there’s no diversity argument to be made to push more Jewish inclusion because the Jews are already overrepresented, but from a fairness and inclusion point of view, if you see things that ... antagonize the Jewish community ... you would expect there to be some kind of statement, and there isn’t.

Although Jews in Canada have historically faced exclusion and quotas in universities, participants emphasized that Jews today are not underrepresented in academia.<sup>71</sup> This tension raised questions about how recognition and inclusion might be claimed without forcing Jews into the conceptual box of representation that structures EDI.

A related source of tension concerned the limits of EDI frameworks in addressing forms of discrimination that do not map neatly onto dominant categories such as race and gender. Yishai observed: “Understanding antisemitism, engaging with antisemitism, or even contemplating forms of discrimination that aren’t based in race, sexual identity, or gender is impossible within those policies.” Since Jewishness was seen mainly as a form of religious identification, which is not centred in EDI, it was further marginalized.<sup>72</sup> As Amira explained: “[I was told] ‘Jews are not included because it’s a faith and there are no faith-based discrimination policies.’ I would say: ‘It’s not just a faith; it’s also an ethnicity and a minority.’”

Participants also described Jews as being perceived through the lens of Whiteness and privilege, further complicating EDI recognition.<sup>73</sup> Etgar asked: “If you’re listing

all kinds of identities ... why would you not list Jewish as an identity? ... Why is that one group not included? Are they conflated with Whites?” David added:

I don't know what accident of history gave me White skin, and I understand that it allows me—not that I want to pass—but it allows me to pass. In a group of White people, I don't stand out. But I don't feel like they do; my history is not theirs.

Diane agreed:

Many EDI initiatives are inherently non-inclusive, and they certainly do not include Jewish people. [The university] has identified equity groups. Jews are not among them. Jews are considered White and privileged.... It doesn't include me. It doesn't recognize that I am a minority.

October 7 has made this omission painfully visible, as Etgar described: “Jews have not been one of the groups that should be beneficiaries of EDI policies. The frameworks that were set up to support all kinds of equity-deserving groups were not there to support Jews post-October 7.”

At the same time, participants expressed ambivalence about simply inserting Jewish experiences into existing EDI categories. Several emphasized that inclusion should not come at the cost of flattening differences or appropriating spaces designed to address other forms of marginalization. Max reflected: “The idea that ... we should be the beneficiaries of EDI, I don't know. I'm not sure.” Ben elaborated:

I wouldn't want us to equate our experiences with people who are visibly diverse... My Black colleague faces racism that I don't experience.... She gets judged based on what she looks like, and we don't.... That's the challenge I have with us being part of the EDI. I don't really feel like it's my space to be in, even though I know it has to be.

Joe pointed out the reason many Jews are ambivalent about being identified by racial categorization:

The erasure is that [EDI] conceptualizes Jews as a religious group, and perhaps as a cultural group, but they don't include us as a racial [group] ... and this is partially about how Jews did not want to be racialized. We were exterminated for being racialized.

Overall, these findings show that Jewish identity and antisemitism sit uneasily within EDI frameworks structured around racialization and underrepresentation. While

participants often recognized the intent and value of EDI, they also identified its conceptual limits and expressed ambivalence about claiming inclusion on terms that do not fully reflect Jewish experiences and needs.

### **Managing Antisemitism: Dismissal and Conditional Recognition Within EDI**

In alignment with low satisfaction from leadership and EDI office responses reported in the survey, many interviewees described overt dismissal, silence, or procedural deflection when they reached out to EDI offices for support. Elisheva shared:

I haven't heard a single peep from EDI.... I just consider them a write-off, to be quite honest. We've definitely reached out, and they just say, "There's nothing we can do," but they never give an explanation as to why.

Ben reiterated, "when antisemitic issues had come up, I directed it to the Vice President of EDI. They didn't do anything. In fact, I don't think they care; I think they want to just sweep it under the rug." Others described prolonged delays that functioned as a form of avoidance. Adi explained:

I waited two weeks and emailed [the head of the EDI office] again. I still have not heard from her. Then I emailed the president with a copy to her, to say, "waiting," and all of a sudden, I heard from her, but she couldn't fit me in; it's another three weeks.

Participants also emphasized that when responses did occur, they were often superficial and performative rather than substantive. Alicia described:

I have written three emails to the EDI office, and they never responded. Then I got pissed and I cc'd everybody on that email ... I said, "We have been emailing you month after month, and you are just silent." [...] We repeatedly reached out with the concerns and examples of being discriminated against on campus, and nothing came of it. ... They showed a lack of interest and compassion.

Participants further described a set of management strategies that minimized institutional accountability and aimed to avoid controversy. One such strategy involved framing antisemitism primarily as a historical phenomenon rather than as a contemporary and evolving form of discrimination—unlike institutional approaches to other forms of marginalization, which explicitly trace historical legacies into present-day structures. Lane shared:

[In the EDI resource] ... the part about Jewish people had ... just one thousand-year-old tropes. For other... [equity-deserving groups], they list things in context: "This is what people say about Muslims and it's hurtful or not true because of this." [...] The section about Jewish people had stuff like, "all Jews are rich," with no context.

When contemporary antisemitism was addressed, it was often centred on right-wing extremism. Aviva described an EDI-led workshop following October 7: "The workshop was fine in terms of addressing the history of neo-Nazi and White supremacist antisemitism, but it completely ignored left antisemitism.... We were like, 'You're not really addressing what's currently going on ... on this campus.'"

Another prominent management strategy involved the consistent pairing of antisemitism and Islamophobia. Diane explained, "the two go hand in hand, you cannot talk about antisemitism on its own.... It's like Jews don't have a right to exist on their own with their own pain, their own concerns." Joe added:

You can never have those things separated. They always have to be together, which I think diminishes both of those experiences.... It worsens things because it puts us in a mirror of each other rather than acknowledging each group for their unique needs and experiences.

Most participants did not dispute the importance of addressing Islamophobia; rather, they interpreted this coupling as a risk-management strategy designed to avoid backlash at the cost of meaningful engagement with both phenomena.

Finally, participants described how Jewish relationships to Zionism were selectively represented within EDI discourses. While many Canadian Jews hold diverse and critical views of Israeli politics, the overwhelming majority understand Zionism as a core dimension of Jewish self-identification.<sup>74</sup> Yet EDI narratives frequently amplified anti-Zionist Jewish voices (e.g., Jewish Faculty Network) while dismissing the perspectives of the majority.<sup>75</sup> Noah explained: "The university ... head of the EDI committee ... [is] an outspoken anti-Zionist. He has a large social media presence promoting anti-Zionism.... I don't think the EDI committee has anybody who would call themselves a Zionist." Ezra agreed: "There are maybe three anti-Zionist Jewish progressives that I know of. A couple of them have been given a platform and a lot of weight by the administration." Joe added:

I don't really think [the EDI office] has a good conceptualization of antisemitism ... at least from the left, when it is couched in anti-Zionist, anti-Israel rhetoric.... I'm trying to give them the benefit of the doubt that it is ignorance rather than baked in.... If they truly cared, and it wasn't by intent, their policies could be updated.

Overall, these findings show how Jewish concerns were not only dismissed but also actively managed through conditional recognition and selective framing. Antisemitism was acknowledged only in forms that were easier to contain and less disruptive to existing EDI paradigms, at the expense of sustained engagement with Jewish experiences and concerns on campus.

## Discussion

This study examines how Jewish identity and antisemitism are constructed and addressed within EDI frameworks in Canadian higher education. The findings suggest that the marginalization of Jewish identities and experiences within EDI is not simply a matter of institutional oversight—a bug—but is closely tied to how EDI has been conceptualized and operationalized in the Canadian education context—a feature. As a dominant framework, EDI carries significant normative power and institutional authority. Consequently, the limited attention paid to Jewish identity and to antisemitism as a contemporary and structural form of discrimination has tangible consequences for Jewish faculty, staff, and students on Canadian campuses.<sup>76</sup>

While scholarship has already critiqued EDI as serving institutional performance rather than transformation, this study extends that critique by examining the governance of EDI itself.<sup>77</sup> The findings demonstrate that EDI offices, leadership, and policies actively shape and regulate what is deemed important and actionable within institutions. In doing so, they also delineate the boundaries of inclusion and recognition, often excluding experiences that do not align with dominant equity categories. As such, EDI frameworks remain ill-equipped to engage with forms of marginalization that do not map neatly onto categories of race, visibility, and underrepresentation. This is despite high levels of negative attitudes toward Jews among Canadian university students and the documented rise in antisemitic incidents in Canada.<sup>78</sup>

Because Jews are often perceived as well-integrated, socio-economically successful, and as a “model minority” within higher education, they are rarely recognized as belonging within EDI frameworks.<sup>79</sup> Yet Jewish identity occupies a liminal position: constructed as White and privileged, while simultaneously subject to racialization, stereotyping, and conspiracy-based forms of hatred.<sup>80</sup> This positioning complicates dominant EDI categories and contributes to the ongoing erasure of antisemitism as a form of racism.<sup>81</sup>

The conditional ways in which antisemitism is acknowledged within EDI further reveal a wider lack of consensus in Canadian higher education about how antisemitism should be defined and addressed. As Dov Waxman and colleagues argue, “While concern about antisemitism is growing, agreement on what actually constitutes antisemitism is shrinking.”<sup>82</sup> Addressing antisemitism within EDI frameworks requires

deeper engagement with Jews as a diverse social identity group and careful attention to their experiences and concerns.<sup>83</sup> This, in turn, requires moving beyond a narrow focus on definitional debates, such as those surrounding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance antisemitism definition (IHRA), and the newly proposed definition of anti-Palestinian racism.<sup>84</sup> These have increasingly devolved into polarized disputes that frame antisemitism and anti-Palestinian racism as mutually exclusive, producing an implicit zero-sum logic, in which one form of suffering is understood to negate another.<sup>85</sup> Moving beyond this impasse requires shifting away from managing antisemitism and Islamophobia through pairing and instead identifying intersections, shared patterns, and meaningful differences between these phenomena.<sup>86</sup> For example, religious accommodation affects both Jewish and Muslim campus members within institutions marked by Christian hegemony. Both groups are also subject to distinct stereotypes that are often intensified by geopolitical tensions.<sup>87</sup>

Relatedly, and perhaps most controversially, the findings point to a lack of willingness within EDI frameworks to engage with Jewish Zionist identities, which is presumably linked to the growing centrality of settler-colonial discourses within EDI.<sup>88</sup> While anti-Zionism is a legitimate political and ideological stance, it remains a minority position within Canadian Jewish communities.<sup>89</sup> As such, it cannot function as an inclusion criterion for EDI spaces.<sup>90</sup> Debates over whether Zionism constitutes a form of settler colonialism are an emerging and contested area of scholarship.<sup>91</sup> Yet these debates often shift from critical analysis to the embodiment of Zionist Jews as morally suspect or illegitimate, rendering individual faculty, staff, and students vulnerable to exclusion or scrutiny based on their real or perceived identities. Justice-oriented frameworks, such as EDI, must grapple seriously with the implications of stigmatizing an entire group.<sup>92</sup>

The current EDI landscape leaves those concerned with Jewish inclusion and antisemitism with limited and problematic options. One option is to claim space through discourses of victimhood, which risks equating Jewish experiences with those of racialized groups in ways that many participants found uncomfortable. Such comparisons can obscure important differences in how marginalization operates and may inadvertently pit minoritized groups against each other rather than foster solidarity. At a time when antisemitism is increasingly weaponized to undermine EDI altogether, this strategy is both ethically and practically fraught.<sup>93</sup>

Another option is to pledge allegiance to EDI by downplaying critique or disavowing aspects of Jewish identity that sit uneasily within existing frameworks. Recent research suggests that a growing number of Canadian Jews may adopt this strategy, particularly in relation to Zionist self-identification.<sup>94</sup> The cost, however, is high: relinquishing authentic self-identification in exchange for conditional recognition. At

the same time, the pain and anger many Canadian Jews have experienced since October 7 can generate a sense of victimhood that, in turn, can diminish the capacity for empathy and the ability to recognize others' pain—including that of Palestinians.<sup>95</sup> Taking Jewish experiences seriously within EDI, therefore, also entails the difficult work of critical self-examination.

There is much at stake for those who view EDI as a vital tool for addressing the enduring effects of historical exclusion and marginalization in Canadian higher education. Jewish academics should be cautious about being used as pawns in efforts to weaken these important advances. At the same time, Jews are justified in expecting respect, recognition, and protection on their own terms.<sup>96</sup> Attending seriously to Jewish inclusion and antisemitism offers an opportunity to critically examine the rigidity of EDI frameworks and to push from within to make them more genuinely inclusive.

## Concluding Thoughts

The marginalization of Jewish identity and antisemitism documented in this study should not be understood as incidental gaps or implementation failures. Rather, these omissions and distortions reflect structural features of how EDI has been conceptualized, categorized, and governed within Canadian higher education. Meaningful change requires a conceptual shift—one that revisits assumptions shaping which identities and forms of harm are centred within EDI frameworks.

One might ask, then, why revise rather than dismantle? A question many Jewish Canadians are asking today. Here it is important to pause and recall the long history of Jewish people advocating and working alongside Black, queer, and Indigenous communities to remove institutional barriers and fight for inclusion.<sup>97</sup> EDI, while not perfect, is the current iteration of these traditions. It can be changed from within, but we must not let anger sever this deep Jewish tradition of *Tikkun olam*—the pursuit of justice for all.

To meaningfully include Jewish identity and antisemitism as part of EDI's core commitments, there is a need for clearer conceptual engagement with antisemitism as a form of racism, attending to both historical legacies and contemporary manifestations.<sup>98</sup> Jewish people are often racialized through markers beyond skin colour, including physical attributes and cultural or religious signifiers. Recognizing this expands understandings of racialization as a dynamic social process, opening new opportunities to engage with diverse forms of marginalization and their intersections.<sup>99</sup> It also demands moving beyond the assumption that Jews are simply White or uniformly privileged.<sup>100</sup> Jewish communities are not homogeneous; they include people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, skin colours, sexual orientations, and so-

cio-economic positions.<sup>101</sup> Engaging with this internal diversity is important not only for Jews but also for strengthening EDI framing by moving away from rigid binaries of power, privilege, and marginalization.<sup>102</sup>

Ultimately, EDI seeks to foster an institutional culture that actively encourages and facilitates full participation. This requires opening spaces for engagement and interaction across difference and a willingness to engage in complex social issues and, at times, uncomfortable conversations. Research shows that interpersonal interactions are among the most effective ways to reduce prejudice, and universities are uniquely positioned to facilitate such encounters.<sup>103</sup> If EDI frameworks were to recognize pain and vulnerability without qualification, hierarchy, or competition, their ability to lead to meaningful institutional change would grow. This is work worth doing.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A Survey Questions Used in Analysis

#### Section 1. Position and University Affiliation

1.0 The following questions will ask about your academic position and affiliation.

For the purpose of this survey, please consider your primary place of employment in an institution of higher education in Canada.

1.2 What is the name of the academic institution where you work? We are asking this question to be able to examine diverse institutional policies with relation to the data.

- a) Name of the academic institution (please specify): [text box]
- b) Prefer not to say

1.4 What is your primary form of employment at your academic institution?

- a) Faculty
- b) Staff
- c) Other

## 1.6 What is your primary academic discipline?]

- a) Behavioural science (psychology, neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience, behavioural economics)
- b) Biological sciences/Life sciences
- c) Business
- d) Chemistry
- e) Computer sciences
- f) Education
- g) Engineering
- h) Humanities (literature, arts, languages, theater, music, etc.)
- i) Law/Criminal justice
- j) Mathematics
- k) Medicine/Health sciences and practice/Nursing/Pharmacy
- l) Physical sciences
- m) Public administration
- n) Social sciences (economics, sociology, history, archaeology, anthropology, political science)
- o) Other (please specify): [text box]

**Section 2. University Policies**

2.0 The following questions are referring to your academic institution's policies.

2.1 Based on your knowledge, does your academic institution have policies that address:

- a) Antisemitism
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
  - iii. Not sure
- a) Other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
  - iii. Not sure
- b) Workplace misconduct (e.g., bullying and harassment, sexual misconduct)
  - i. Yes
  - ii. No
  - iii. Not sure

2.2 In your opinion, are the following policies comprehensive (i.e., are they relevant, effective, having a positive effect, and capturing the right things)?

- a) Antisemitism
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- b) Other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- c) Workplace misconduct (e.g., bullying and harassment, sexual misconduct)
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree

### Section 3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office

3.0 The following questions are referring to the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office (or its equivalent) at your academic institution.

3.1 To what degree are you aware of your academic institution's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office (or its equivalent) and its activities regarding:

- a) Training, resources, and/or education on antisemitism
  - i. Very unaware
  - ii. Somewhat unaware
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat aware
  - v. Very aware
  - vi. Not applicable/do not exist
- b) Training, resources, and/or education on Jewish identity
  - i. Very unaware
  - ii. Somewhat unaware
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat aware
  - v. Very aware
  - vi. Not applicable/do not exist
- c) Training, resources, and/or education on other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
  - i. Very unaware
  - ii. Somewhat unaware
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat aware
  - v. Very aware
  - vi. Not applicable/do not exist
- d) Training, resources, and/or education on other identities (e.g., Black, Indigenous)
  - i. Very unaware
  - ii. Somewhat unaware
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat aware
  - v. Very aware
  - vi. Not applicable/do not exist

3.2 In your opinion, is your academic institution's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion office (or its equivalent) and its activities comprehensive (i.e., are they relevant, effective, having a positive effect, and capturing the right things)?

- a) Training, resources, and/or education on antisemitism
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- b) Training, resources, and/or education on Jewish identity
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- c) Training, resources, and/or education on other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism)
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree

- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat agree
- v. Strongly agree
- d) Training, resources, and/or education on other identities (e.g., Black, Indigenous)
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree

#### Section 4. Jewish Identity and Experiences on Campus

4.0 The following questions will ask about your relationship to Jewishness and/or Judaism as well as your experiences on campus.

4.1 Although the categories listed below may not represent your full identity or use the language you prefer, for the purpose of this survey, please indicate which group(s) below best describes your identity? (Select all that apply):

- a) Not Jewish
- b) Jewish by religion
- c) Jewish by culture
- d) Jewish by ethnicity
  - a. Ashkenazi
  - b. Mizrahi
  - c. Sephardic
  - d. Other (please specify): [text box]
- e) Jewish and other race or ethnicity
  - a. Asian
  - b. Black
  - c. Latinx/Hispanic
  - d. Indigenous/Aboriginal, Native in Canada/US/Australia/New Zealand, etc.
  - e. Middle Eastern, North African
  - f. Other (please specify): [text box]

4.3 If Jewish, to what degree do you feel an emotional attachment to Israel?

- a) Very unattached
- b) Somewhat unattached
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat attached
- e) Very attached

4.14 Thinking specifically of your Jewish identity or allyship to the Jewish community, please indicate whether any of the following things has happened to you at your academic institution (either in person or online) *before* October 7th, 2023:

- a) Joined a new Jewish club, activity, or network
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- b) Seen anti-Jewish graffiti, vandalism, or signs on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- c) Heard someone use a stereotype or trope about Jews (e.g., Jewish power or wealth)
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure

- d) Heard someone say Jews are silencing the voices of others
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- e) Heard comments that expressed distrust towards Jewish organizations/communities
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- f) Felt that your lived experiences were invalidated/discredited
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- g) Felt targeted/unwelcome because of the encampment/protest on your campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- h) Felt distressed while on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- i) Avoided certain parts of campus or changed your behaviour
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- j) Been excluded from a campus event
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- k) Been harassed online in an academic channel
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- l) Been verbally targeted on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- m) Been physically threatened or attacked on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure

4.15 Thinking specifically of your Jewish identity or allyship to the Jewish community, please indicate whether any of the following things has happened to you at your academic institution (either in person or online) *since* October 7th, 2023:

- a) Joined a new Jewish club, activity, or network
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- b) Seen anti-Jewish graffiti, vandalism, or signs on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- c) Heard someone use a stereotype or trope about Jews (e.g., Jewish power or wealth)
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- d) Heard someone say Jews are silencing the voices of others

- i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- e) Heard comments that expressed distrust towards Jewish organizations/communities
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- f) Felt that your lived experiences were invalidated/discredited
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- g) Felt targeted/unwelcome because of the encampment/protest on your campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- h) Felt distressed while on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- i) Avoided certain parts of campus or changed your behaviour
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- j) Been excluded from a campus event
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- k) Been harassed online in an academic channel
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- l) Been verbally targeted on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure
- m) Been physically threatened or attacked on campus
  - i. Yes, has happened
  - ii. No, has not happened
  - iii. Not sure

### Section 5. Reporting and Institutional Support

5.0 The following questions will ask you about your experiences with incident reporting.

5.1 Since October 7th, 2023, have you reported an incident or filed a complaint about antisemitism at the academic institution that you are currently working at? (Note: if you have filed multiple reports or complaints, please choose the one that affected you most).

- a) Yes
- b) No

5.4 To whom did you report the incident or complaint? (Select all that apply):

- a) EDI Office
- b) Dean
- c) Chair
- d) Colleague
- e) Union
- f) Human Rights Office

- g) External person/organization (e.g., CIJA, Hillel, NECA, police, political representative)
- h) University antisemitism task force
- i) Other (please specify): [text box]

5.5 How supported did you feel (by the above choice) regarding the report/complaint? [participants only presented with option selected in question 5.4]

- a) EDI Office
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- b) Dean
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- c) Chair
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- d) Colleague
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- e) Union
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- f) Human Rights Office
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- g) External person/organization (e.g., CIJA, Hillel, NECA, police, political representative)
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- h) University antisemitism task force
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Somewhat supported
  - v. Very supported
- i) Other [item presented to participant pulled from text box in question 5.4]
  - i. Very unsupported
  - ii. Somewhat unsupported

- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat supported
- v. Very supported

5.6 The incident/complaint was handled to my satisfaction (by the above choice): [participants only presented with option selected in question 5.4]

- a) EDI Office
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- b) Dean
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- c) Chair
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- d) Colleague
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- e) Union
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- f) Human Rights Office
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- g) External person/organization (e.g., CIJA, Hillel, NECA, police, political representative)
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- h) University antisemitism task force
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree
  - iii. Neither agree nor disagree
  - iv. Somewhat agree
  - v. Strongly agree
- i) Other [item presented to participant pulled from text box in question 5.4]
  - i. Strongly disagree
  - ii. Somewhat disagree

- iii. Neither agree nor disagree
- iv. Somewhat agree
- v. Strongly agree

## **Appendix B**

### **Survey Analysis Process**

Categorical variables were summarized using counts and proportions, and continuous or ordinal measures using means, standard deviations, medians, and interquartile ranges, with denominators reported for each measure to reflect item-level response patterns. Core analytic constructs included domain-specific policy awareness, perceived policy comprehensiveness, and EDI office activity awareness and adequacy. Policy awareness items were coded as binary indicators reflecting whether respondents reported awareness of institutional policies addressing antisemitism, other forms of discrimination, and workplace misconduct. EDI office activity and all comprehensiveness items were captured using five-point Likert-type scales, coded such that higher values indicate greater perceived comprehensiveness or visibility. Composite EDI indices were constructed separately for Jewish/antisemitism-related recognition and for other identity-based discrimination and analyzed descriptively to characterize overall distributions and missingness patterns.

To assess relative recognition across domains while minimizing confounding by stable individual characteristics, analyses emphasized within-respondent comparisons. For binary policy awareness measures, paired McNemar tests compared awareness of antisemitism-related policies with awareness of other discrimination and misconduct policies. For scaled comprehensiveness measures, paired Wilcoxon signed-rank tests compared Jewish/antisemitism-related ratings with ratings for other discrimination domains.

Within-person gap variables were constructed by subtracting other-domain scores from Jewish-domain scores, yielding continuous measures of relative EDI awareness and comprehensiveness, with negative values indicating lower perceived recognition of Jewish/antisemitism-related issues. These gap measures were summarized descriptively and served as primary outcomes in subsequent inferential analyses examining whether recognition gaps varied across institutional and positional contexts, including role, institution type, disciplinary background, and Israel attachment. Linear models with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors were used for gap outcomes. Because difference scores may be sensitive to measurement error in either component measure, these models are interpreted cautiously as indicators of relative recognition patterns rather than as precise estimates of underlying institutional differences.

## Appendix C

### Logistic Regression Model Predicting Formal Reporting Since October 7

**Table A1**

**Logistic regression model predicting formal reporting of an antisemitic incident since October 7**

| Predictor  | Odds ratio | 95% CI      | p-value |
|--|------------|-------------|---------|
| Post-October 7 antisemitic experiences                       | 1.37       | 1.11–1.78   | 0.008   |
| Pre-October 7 antisemitic experiences                        | 0.93       | 0.78–1.09   | 0.369   |
| EDI awareness gap  | 1.31       | 0.84–2.09   | 0.233   |
| EDI comprehensiveness gap                                    | 0.77       | 0.49–1.19   | 0.252   |
| Other role vs. faculty                                       | 0.64       | 0.02–13.99  | 0.788   |
| Staff vs. faculty  | 0.80       | 0.14–4.54   | 0.801   |
| Other research-intensive institution vs. U15 institution     | 1.97       | 0.39–11.31  | 0.420   |
| Teaching-focused institution vs. U15 institution             | 2.16       | 0.29–21.12  | 0.472   |
| Business/Law vs. Humanities/Social Sciences                  | 0.30       | 0.04–2.26   | 0.241   |
| Health/Medicine vs. Humanities/Social Sciences               | 1.35       | 0.32–5.71   | 0.680   |
| Other/Unclassified discipline vs. Humanities/Social Sciences | 8.54       | 0.68–267.79 | 0.139   |
| STEM vs. Humanities/Social Sciences                          | 2.35       | 0.25–42.96  | 0.487   |
| Attached to Israel vs. unattached/neutral                    | 0.66       | 0.08–5.28   | 0.689   |

**Note:** Odds ratios are from a multivariable logistic regression model predicting formal reporting of an antisemitic incident since October 7 in the strict analytic sample. The model adjusted for post-October 7 antisemitic experiences, pre-October 7 antisemitic experiences, EDI awareness gap, EDI comprehensiveness gap, role, institution type, discipline, and Israel attachment. Reference categories are faculty, U15 institution, Humanities/Social Sciences, and unattached/neutral Israel attachment. The missing discipline category was not estimable in the model and is omitted from the table. CI = confidence interval.

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Rachel Margolis

**Canadian Jewish Fertility in Comparative  
Perspective (2001–2021)**

## Abstract

*This analysis focuses on two factors leading to changes in Canada's religious composition—religious differences in fertility and immigration to Canada. I provide updated estimates for Jewish fertility in Canada and its subpopulations, including the first fertility estimates for secular Jews in Canada, those reporting Jewish ethnic origins but no religion. Secular Jews have much lower fertility than those reporting Jewish religion. I then examine how Jewish fertility compares to other religious groups in Canada. Between 2001 and 2021, Jewish fertility remained rather stable, while all other groups experienced considerable decline. Last, I examine how fertility varies within religious groups for those who are born in Canada, those who immigrate to Canada as children, and those who immigrate as adults. I find that for all religions (except those with no religion or "other religions"), the foreign-born who immigrated after age fifteen have, on average, higher fertility than native-born people of the same religion. This work provides important insights into the changing religious landscape in Canada and how Canadian Jews are remaining a stable but small subpopulation in a rapidly changing country.*

## Résumé

*Cette analyse porte sur deux facteurs expliquant l'évolution de la composition religieuse du Canada : les différences religieuses en matière de fécondité et l'immigration. Je présente des estimations récentes de la fécondité des personnes juives au Canada et de ses sous-populations, incluant les premières estimations pour les Juives laïques, c'est-à-dire celles qui se déclarent d'origine ethnique juive mais sans appartenance religieuse. La fécondité des Juives laïques est nettement inférieure à celle des personnes se déclarant de religion juive. J'examine ensuite comment la fécondité des Juives se compare à celle des autres groupes religieux au Canada. Entre 2001 et 2021, la fécondité des Juives est demeurée relativement stable, tandis que tous les autres groupes ont connu un déclin considérable. Enfin, j'analyse comment la fécondité change au sein de groupes religieux considérant les personnes nées au Canada, celles qui ont immigré au Canada durant leur enfance et celles qui ont immigré à l'âge adulte. Je constate que, pour toutes les religions (à l'exception des personnes sans religion ou appartenant à d'autres religions), les personnes nées à l'étranger et ayant immigré après l'âge de quinze ans ont, en moyenne, une fécondité plus élevée que les personnes nées au Canada et appartenant à la même religion. Cet ouvrage apporte un éclairage important sur l'évolution du paysage religieux au Canada et sur la façon dont la population juive canadienne demeure une sous-population stable mais restreinte dans un pays en pleine mutation.*

The religious composition of Canada has shifted tremendously over time. In Canada's first census of population in 1871, most Canadians were Protestant (56 percent), a large minority were Catholic (43 percent), and there were small populations of Jews (0.03 percent), Mormons (0.02 percent), "Pagans" (0.05 percent) and those with unspecified religion (0.7 percent).<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the most recent census conducted in 2021 showed that 53 percent of Canadians reported a Christian religion, 35 percent reported no religious affiliation, and smaller religious groups comprise a larger share of the total than in previous censuses: Muslims (4.9 percent), Hindus (2.3 percent), Sikhs (2.1 percent) and Jews (0.9 percent).<sup>2</sup>

Changes in religious composition can occur through three mechanisms. First, religious groups often differ in their fertility rates leading to different rates of growth. These religious differences in fertility may occur because of groups' different socioeconomic and demographic factors which in turn affect fertility. Religion can also have a direct effect on fertility behaviour through values or norms that affect the timing of marriage, use of birth control, or frequency of sexual intercourse.<sup>3</sup> A second mechanism that can lead to growth or decline in religious groups is group switching. This has been shown to be a quantitatively important factor in some religious groups and contexts, but this is less well studied in Canada, where shifts in religion or toward religious non-affiliation are not based on high-quality data.<sup>4</sup> Third, immigration can change the religious composition of society. Canada is a country with high levels of immigration, and the religious composition of Canada's immigrants is distinct from the religious composition of native-born Canadians. Recent migrants are much more likely than native-born Canadians to be Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, or Buddhist, leading to an increase in the size of these groups.<sup>5</sup>

This analysis focuses on two factors leading to changes in Canada's religious composition—religious differences in fertility and immigration to Canada. The article makes three key contributions. First, I present updated trends for Jewish fertility in Canada for the period 2001 to 2021, providing estimates for Canadian Jews and its subpopulations, including the first fertility estimates for secular Jews. This analysis of Canadian Jewish fertility uses census data that captures both the religion and ethnic origins of respondents, allowing us to examine not just those reporting Jewish religion, but the broader Jewish ethnic group in Canada. Second, I compare Canadian Jewish fertility trends to those of other religious groups in Canada. Last, I examine variation within religious groups, for those born in Canada, those who migrated to Canada as children, and those who migrated as adults, shedding light on patterns of fertility acculturation. This work provides insights into the sources of Canada's changing religious landscape.

Understanding trends in fertility among Canadian Jews is imperative for the Jewish community and its institutions. If fertility in the Jewish community is declining rap-

idly like it has in the rest of Canada (now at 1.26 births per woman), this would imply rapid population decline. If Canadian Jewish fertility is high, close to replacement level of 2.1, this implies a steady population. Anything lower than replacement level of 2.1 implies smaller cohorts of births, population aging, and slow decline without Jewish immigration adding to the population.

## Religious Differences in Fertility in Canada

Fertility in Canada has fallen from about seven births per woman for those born in the mid-nineteenth century to 1.26 births per woman today.<sup>6</sup> Catholics had substantially higher fertility than did Protestants in nineteenth-century Canada and well into the twentieth century. In Canada, this difference had disappeared by the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>7</sup>

Historically, the vast majority of Canadians fell into either the Protestant or Catholic category, leaving a small “other” category for all other religious traditions.<sup>8</sup> As Canada became more ethnically and religiously diverse, fertility research included a broader range of ethnic and religious groups. The first comparative estimate for Canadian Jewish fertility, based on 1971 census data, found that Jews had 2.02 children on average, lower than British (2.41), French (2.67), German (2.25), Italian (2.24), Native Indian (4.21), Dutch (2.83), Polish (2.05) and Ukrainian (2.19) ethnic groups.<sup>9</sup> More recent estimates put Canadian Jewish fertility *above* the national average. Alain Bélanger’s research from the 2001 census reports that Jewish fertility in Canada was 1.8 births per woman compared to the country’s average of 1.54.<sup>10</sup> There was huge variation across religious groups, with Muslims and Hindus reporting the highest fertility at 2.41 and 2.00 children per woman, respectively. Protestants and Catholics were alike, around the national average (around 1.57), and Buddhist, Orthodox Christians, and women with no religion had the lowest fertility rates (1.34, 1.35, and 1.41 children per woman, respectively).<sup>11</sup>

There has not been a comprehensive study of religious differences in fertility for the last two decades. Robert Brym reports a total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.8 for Jews in Canada from a 2021 census custom tabulation.<sup>12</sup> However, it is unknown how this figure compares with that of other religious groups and whether there was any change in Jewish fertility in the interval between Bélanger’s 2001 and Brym’s 2021 estimate.

As far as variation in fertility within Canada’s Jewish community is concerned, Charles Shahar estimates that in 2001 Montreal had the highest fertility of any large Jewish community in Canada at 2.27 births per woman, significantly higher than that in Toronto (1.93) and Vancouver (1.40).<sup>13</sup> Moreover, we know that ultra-Orthodox Jews have more children than do other subgroups of the Jewish community: 4.85 children per woman in 2001.<sup>14</sup> No subgroup analysis on the Jewish community in

Canada has been done since these studies were published. Hence the novelty of this paper. In addition, I will provide the first estimates of fertility among subgroups of Canadian Jews, including the first fertility estimates for secular Jews, that is, ethnic Jews who report no religion. While it is well known that those reporting no religion have lower fertility than those with religious affiliation, it is unknown to what extent secular Jews' fertility will be more similar to Jews reporting Jewish religion or more similar to non-Jewish secular Canadians.<sup>15</sup>

## Immigrant Fertility in Canada

Understanding immigration is key to understanding population growth and change in Canada. In fact, in the first quarter of 2025, Canada had negative natural increase—more deaths than births—and *all* of Canada's population growth was fueled by immigration.<sup>16</sup> High immigration over many years means that Canada's proportion of immigrants is highest among G7 countries, reaching 23 percent in 2021.<sup>17</sup> Because immigrants have a different religious composition than native-born Canadians, it is important to examine immigrant fertility by religion to see how Canada's religious configuration is changing.

The gap between the fertility of immigrants and native-born, and the direction of the gap, are shaped by a range of economic, sociocultural and ideational factors from both the country of origin and the country of destination. In Canada, immigrants have tended to have higher fertility than the native-born population.<sup>18</sup> The difference in fertility between immigrants and native-born Canadians was 0.35 more children per woman for the period 1996–2001, 0.09 for 2011, and 0.11 for 2021.<sup>19</sup> Thus, immigrants have higher fertility than native-born Canadians, but the gap has narrowed over time.

When examining immigrant fertility, it is important to consider age at migration. That is because immigrants who immigrate as children are likely to adopt the social norms of the country of destination and have similar fertility to native-born individuals, while those who arrive as adults tend to have fertility norms closer to those of their country of origin. Research based on 1991–2006 data finds that women who migrated before age six have similar fertility as native-born Canadians, but those who migrated after age fifteen have higher fertility than those who migrate as children and the native-born.<sup>20</sup> More recent research finds that people who migrated to Canada before age fifteen had even lower fertility than native-born Canadians. Specifically, in 2011, those who migrated to Canada as children (1.5 generation Canadians) had 1.46 children per woman compared to 1.60 for the native-born, and in 2021, they had 1.25 children per woman, compared to 1.31 for the native-born.<sup>21</sup>

The effect of immigration on Canadian Jewish fertility depends on whether Jewish immigrants have higher or lower fertility than do native-born Jewish Canadi-

ans. In recent decades, Jewish immigration has been largely from the former Soviet Union, Israel, and the United States, and secondarily from South Africa, France, and Argentina.<sup>22</sup> Jews from the former Soviet Union in particular had low fertility, certainly below the replacement level during the last several decades—one possible factor contributing to the downward pressure on Canadian Jewish fertility.<sup>23</sup> (The replacement level is the TFR needed to keep the population size stable over time without migration: approximately 2.1 children per woman.) By comparison, Jewish immigrants from Israel come from a higher fertility context, which could increase the overall fertility rate of Jewish immigrants to Canada.<sup>24</sup> It is unclear how Jewish immigration to Canada from other countries shapes fertility dynamics in Canada and no previous research has examined the fertility of foreign-born Jews.

The process of acclimation to fertility norms may differ for different religious and ethnic groups because of variation in gender and family norms for different immigrant groups. For example, Muslim women have more traditional labour force participation patterns than do other religious and ethnic immigrant groups in Canada, suggesting that they may acclimate more slowly to fertility norms here.<sup>25</sup> This article is the first to examine variation in fertility by age at immigration for different religious groups in Canada, highlighting potential variation in the adoption of Canadian family norms.

## Data and Analysis

My analysis uses the long-form Canadian census micro-files from 2001 and 2021 and the National Household Survey 2011. The long-form Canadian census is based on a 25 percent sample in 2021 and a 20 percent sample in 2001. The National Household Survey collected comparable data in 2011, but because it was a voluntary survey rather than a mandatory census, it had a lower weighted response rate (77.2 percent) than in the prior census (93.8 percent).<sup>26</sup>

These data are ideal for reconstructing fertility rates because they are drawn from large nationally representative samples and provide detailed information on individuals' religion, ethnicity, country of birth, and age at immigration. Information on relationships within households and census families allows the linkage of children to their mothers and the calculation of fertility rates by maternal age and characteristics.

I use the “Own Infant Method” to estimate fertility rates by religion and nativity. This TFR reconstruction procedure allows me to calculate age-specific and total fertility in the period prior to a census or survey and has been widely used in estimating fertility rates by immigrant and ethnic groups.<sup>27</sup> The “Own Infant Method” links infants (ages 0–1) with mothers (ages 15–49) via the census family, defined by the census as a couple with or without children or a single parent with children. In same-sex fami-

lies with two mothers, I avoid double counting the children 0–1 in the census family by assigning infants to the younger mother. After linking infants to their mothers in the census family, I estimate age-specific fertility rates using the weighted number of matched children ages 0–1 divided by the weighted number of women ages 15–49 by single-year age group. I then use the age-specific fertility rates to calculate the total fertility rates for each census (see the relevant equations in the Appendix). Population weights are applied across all analyses.

First, I present TFRs for the Jewish population in Canada in 2001, 2011, and 2021 (Table 1). I report fertility first for Canadians who report Jewish religion. Second, I report fertility for the population of Canadian Jews that Shahar refers to as the “standard definition” of Canadian Jews, namely those who identify with Judaism plus those who report no religion but do report Jewish ethnic origins.<sup>28</sup> I divide this category into three components:

- a) Individuals who say they are Jewish by religion and ethnicity.
- b) Those who say they are Jewish by religion but do not report Jewish ethnic origins.
- c) Those who identify with no religion but report Jewish ethnic origin, either as the only ethnic origin or along with other(s).

The question on ethnic origins asks for each person in the household, “What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person’s ancestors? Ancestors may have Indigenous origins, or origins that refer to different countries, or other origins that may not refer to different countries.” Excluded from my analysis of Canadian Jews are people who report Jewish ethnic origins and a religion other than Judaism.

Second, I compare Jewish fertility with the fertility of other religious groups listed in the census question on religion. It asks for each person in the household, “What is this person’s religion?” with instructions to “Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practicing member of that group. For example, Roman Catholic, United Church, Anglican, Muslim, Baptist, Hindu, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, etc. Specify one denomination or religion only or No religion.” Religion is coded as follows: Catholic, Christians other than Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jewish, no religion, and other religions. The group of “other religions” includes a variety of groups that vary by year, but in three census years analyzed, this group comprises less than 1 percent of the Canadian population.<sup>29</sup> For the nine religions specified, I estimate the total fertility rate for the year prior to the data in 2001, 2011, and 2021 (Table 2).

The next part of the analysis puts religious differences in TFR in perspective by examining how immigrant fertility differs from native-born fertility within religious groups. For women of each religious group, I estimate the TFR for three subgroups: native-born Canadians; first-generation immigrants who are foreign-born and immigrated to Canada at age sixteen or older; and 1.5 generation immigrants who immigrated at or before age fifteen. Examining how fertility norms differ for those who are new to Canada versus those who grow up here is important for understanding likely future population change given Canada's changing immigration policy.

To put the estimates for fertility by religion in context, I present descriptive statistics on the size of different religious groups in Canada. Table 3 presents the number of people in each religious group, the percentage of the Canadian population that they comprise, the number of women in childbearing ages of that religion and the number of births in each religious group. Table 4 also illustrates the demographic context by showing the number of women in childbearing years for each religious and immigrant group, highlighting in this way the size of the population experiencing each fertility rate.

I note four caveats. First, the estimated total fertility rates refer to the year prior to the census date, not the calendar year. The census occurs in mid-May of each census year, so the estimate of infants ages 0–1 in this study counts the births between mid-May of the year prior to the census year and mid-May of the census year.

Second, the analysis does not include infants who were born in the year before the census but died before the census date. Because infant mortality rates are very low in Canada at 5.2, 4.9, and 4.3 per 1,000 births in 2001, 2011, and 2021, respectively, the estimates of TFR with the "Own Infant Method" are little affected by this omission.<sup>30</sup>

Third, the small number of infants (3 percent) that could not be matched to their mothers introduces some measurement error. Unmatched children include those living in two-father and single-father families, households with grandparents but without a parent, and foster homes. Unmatched children cannot be included in TFR calculations because we do not know the mother's age, religion, or immigration status. However, the low rate of unmatched children is not likely to bias TFR estimates.

Finally, too few Jewish respondents report their denomination to allow me to report denominational differences in the TFR.

## Results

Table 1 presents TFRs for Jewish Canadian women by census year. The TFR is a measure of fertility in a given year. It expresses the average number of children a woman

would have if she experienced the sum of age-specific fertility rates observed in that period. The TFR does not refer to particular birth cohort, but rather a population's fertility at a point in time.

**Table 1**  
**Total Fertility Rates for Canadian Jews, 2001, 2011, and 2021**

|   | 2001 | 2011 | 2021 |
|---|------|------|------|
| Canadians Reporting Jewish Religion                     | 1.81 | 1.97 | 1.80 |
| All Canadian Jews (standard Jewish definition)          | 1.78 | 1.85 | 1.59 |
| Jewish religion and Jewish ethnic origins               | 1.96 | 2.12 | 1.77 |
| Jewish religion, but Jewish ethnic origins not reported | 1.32 | 1.73 | 1.83 |
| No religion, Jewish ethnic origins                      | 1.50 | 1.30 | 0.76 |

Note: TFRs refer to the one-year period prior to the census, e.g., mid-May 2000 to mid-May 2001.

The TFR for Canadian women who report Jewish religion was 1.81 in 2001, 1.97 in 2011, and 1.80 in 2021. This is relatively high and stable fertility.

For a broader group of Canadian Jewish women, including women who identify with Judaism as well as those with Jewish ethnicity, the TFR is slightly lower: 1.78 in 2001, 1.85 in 2011, and 1.59 in 2021. The last three rows of Table 1 display data for the three subgroups of this broader group. Jewish women who identify with Judaism *and* Jewish ethnicity have relatively high TFRs: 1.96, 2.12, and 1.77 for 2001, 2011, and 2021, respectively. Those who report Jewish religion but not Jewish ethnic origins have an increasing fertility trend, from 1.32 in 2001, to 1.73 in 2011 to 1.83 in 2021. The Jewish women with the lowest TFRs are those who identify with no religion but do identify as Jews ethnically: 1.50, 1.30, and 0.76 for the respective census years. The last figure is extraordinarily low.

Table 2 compares Jewish fertility with that of other religious groups. In 2021, Jews and Muslims have the highest fertility in Canada (1.80 and 1.81, respectively). However, in 2001, Jewish fertility (1.81) was considerably lower than that of Muslims (2.34), Sikhs (1.88), and Hindus (1.85), with all other religions having quite a bit lower fertility than Jews. Between 2001 and 2021, Jewish fertility remained rather stable, while all other groups experienced considerable decline. Muslim fertility fell from 2.34 in 2001 to 1.81 in 2011, now at par with Jewish fertility. In 2021, the TFR of Sikhs and Hindus was very low, at 1.30 for Sikhs and 1.22 for Hindus. Christians (other than Catholics) have stable fertility, between 1.55 and 1.76, and Catholics have slightly lower fertility than non-Catholic Christians, between 1.39 and 1.62. The groups with the lowest fertility in Canada are those with no religion (1.22), other religions (1.07), and Buddhists (0.95).

We cannot rely only on TFRs to understand how religious differences in fertility are shaping population change in Canada. We also need to know the size of different subpopulations of women in their reproductive years because this is the population experiencing births. When a population has a large and rapidly growing number of women in reproductive ages, even if the fertility rate is around replacement level or lower, the population will still grow because a large number of women are having children. On the other hand, if the number of women at reproductive ages is shrinking, then even if the fertility rate remains stable, the number of births will decline. This is called population momentum.

**Table 2**  
**Total Fertility Rates by Religion, Canada, 2001, 2011, and 2021**

|                                | <b>2001</b> | <b>2011</b> | <b>2021</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Jewish                         | 1.81        | 1.97        | 1.80        |
| Muslim                         | 2.34        | 2.37        | 1.81        |
| Christians other than Catholic | 1.55        | 1.76        | 1.58        |
| Catholic                       | 1.45        | 1.62        | 1.39        |
| Sikh                           | 1.88        | 1.59        | 1.30        |
| Hindu                          | 1.85        | 1.45        | 1.23        |
| No religion                    | 1.32        | 1.47        | 1.22        |
| Other religions                | 1.46        | 1.71        | 1.07        |
| Buddhist                       | 1.24        | 1.26        | 0.95        |
| <b>All of Canada</b>           | <b>1.49</b> | <b>1.63</b> | <b>1.35</b> |

Notes: Results are sorted with Jews first, and then from highest to lowest fertility in 2021. TFRs refer to the one-year period prior to the census, e.g., mid-May 2000 to mid-May 2001.

Table 3 presents relevant demographic data on different religious groups in Canada sorted from the most populous in 2021 to the least populous. These data put the changing religious makeup of Canada in perspective. The first row of Table 3 shows those reporting no religion. More than one-third of Canadians reported no religion in the 2021 census, up from only 16 percent in 2001. This group is not only rapidly increasing in size; it is also more prevalent among younger people. In 2021, those with no religion represented 34.6 percent of all Canadians, but 39.2 percent of women in childbearing ages. Due to rapid population growth, and despite lower fertility, this group had more than 127,000 births in 2021, making up 38 percent of all births in 2021, more than any other group. Next are Catholics and non-Catholic Christians. The Catholic population declined over the period of analysis, from about thirteen million in 2001 to under eleven million in 2021. It also declined from 44 percent to 30 percent of the population. Non-Catholic Christians also declined from ten million in 2001 to 8.5 million in 2021. Again, because of low fertility and aging populations, the share of childbearing age women in this group has declined as have the number of births to Catholic and Christian women.

**Table 3**  
**Demographics on Religious Groups in Canada, 2011, 2011, and 2021**

|                          | Number of people  |                   |                   | % of the Canadian population |             |             | Number of women in childbearing ages (15-49) |                  |                  | % of all women ages 15-49 in Canada |             |             | Number of births |                |                | % of births |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
|                          | 2001              | 2011              | 2021              | 2001                         | 2011        | 2021        | 2001   | 2011             | 2021             | 2001                                | 2011        | 2021        | 2001             | 2011           | 2021           | 2021        |
| No religion              | 4,900,090         | 7,850,610         | 12,577,475        | 16.5%                        | 23.9%       | 34.6%       | 1,304,905                                    | 2,039,845        | 3,185,860        | 16.9%                               | 25.7%       | 39.2%       | 51,190           | 90,425         | 127,375        | 38.4%       |
| Catholic                 | 12,936,910        | 12,810,705        | 10,880,360        | 43.7%                        | 39.0%       | 30.0%       | 3,423,315                                    | 3,034,510        | 2,105,595        | 44.2%                               | 38.3%       | 25.9%       | 130,760          | 128,175        | 78,050         | 23.6%       |
| Christians, not Catholic | 9,914,920         | 9,292,040         | 8,492,970         | 33.5%                        | 28.3%       | 23.4%       | 2,494,830                                    | 2,073,605        | 1,643,670        | 32.2%                               | 26.2%       | 20.2%       | 99,465           | 94,270         | 70,880         | 21.4%       |
| Muslim                   | 575,280           | 1,053,945         | 1,775,715         | 1.9%                         | 3.2%        | 4.9%        | 158,500                                      | 291,450          | 479,495          | 2.1%                                | 3.7%        | 5.9%        | 11,500           | 21,645         | 26,265         | 7.9%        |
| Hindu                    | 297,200           | 497,965           | 828,195           | 1.0%                         | 1.5%        | 2.3%        | 85,505                                       | 139,520          | 235,000          | 1.1%                                | 1.8%        | 2.9%        | 5,080            | 6,350          | 10,485         | 3.2%        |
| Sikh                     | 278,415           | 454,960           | 771,790           | 0.9%                         | 1.4%        | 2.1%        | 75,440                                       | 120,205          | 222,905          | 1.0%                                | 1.5%        | 2.7%        | 4,795            | 6,410          | 8,995          | 2.7%        |
| Buddhist                 | 300,345           | 366,830           | 356,975           | 1.0%                         | 1.1%        | 1.0%        | 91,670                                       | 106,070          | 89,440           | 1.2%                                | 1.3%        | 1.1%        | 3,165            | 3,710          | 2,565          | 0.8%        |
| Jewish                   | 329,995           | 329,495           | 335,295           | 1.1%                         | 1.0%        | 0.9%        | 75,300                                       | 68,810           | 66,625           | 1.0%                                | 0.9%        | 0.8%        | 3,490            | 3,690          | 3,555          | 1.1%        |
| Other religions          | 105,880           | 195,770           | 309,705           | 0.4%                         | 0.6%        | 0.9%        | 34,590                                       | 56,460           | 95,355           | 0.5%                                | 0.7%        | 1.2%        | 1,445            | 2,800          | 3,190          | 1.0%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>29,639,030</b> | <b>32,852,325</b> | <b>36,328,475</b> | <b>100%</b>                  | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>7,744,050</b>                             | <b>7,930,470</b> | <b>8,123,945</b> | <b>100%</b>                         | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>310,890</b>   | <b>357,475</b> | <b>331,360</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Note: Sorted by percent of Canadian population in 2021.

Muslims have experienced rapid population growth in Canada, from 575,000 in 2001 to 1.8 million in 2021. They form a very young population, so even though they represent 4.9 percent of all Canadians, they are 5.9 percent of women of childbearing age. Because of relatively high fertility, high immigration, and a young population, the number of births to Muslim women have more than doubled from 11,500 in 2001 to 26,265 in 2021, now 7.9 percent of all births. The next two religions by size of population are Hindus and Sikhs, both of which have experienced similar population change in Canada. Both groups made up about 1 percent of Canada's population in 2001 and in 2021 increased their share to just over 2 percent. Both populations are relatively young and include many new immigrants, leading to a doubling of births to Hindu and Sikh women in Canada between 2001 and 2021.

The population of Jews by religion and Buddhists have remained stable and represent about the same proportion of the total population in 2001 and 2021. Because the Jewish population is relatively old, Jews are underrepresented in women of childbearing ages. The number of births to Jewish women has remained relatively stable: 3,490 in 2001 and 3,555 in 2021, or 1.1 percent of all births.

Since almost all of Canada's population growth is a result of immigration, it is important to examine the fertility of immigrants and compare it to people of the same religion who are born in Canada. This comparison can show us change in the weight of these subgroups and the degree to which different groups adapt to Canadian fertility norms. Here I examine differences in fertility within religious groups, examining those who are born in Canada, those who migrated to Canada as a child (< 16), and those who migrated at age sixteen or older. This analysis is especially useful in the Canadian context, as some religious groups have been migrating here in large numbers over the last couple of decades. For this part of the analysis, I will start with the Jewish population and then examine others for comparison.

Figure 1 charts the total fertility rate for native-born and immigrant Canadian Jews. Native-born Canadian Jewish fertility is stable (1.76 in 2001, 1.84 in 2011, and 1.77 in 2021). Jews who move to Canada as children have fertility rates that are not much different from the native-born, which is common among other ethnic groups. It is the foreign-born who immigrate as adults who generally experience higher fertility, a pattern visible among foreign-born Jews who moved to Canada after age sixteen. In 2001, their TFR was 2.41; in 2011, 2.87; and in 2021, 2.16. Foreign-born Jews who move to Canada as adults are the only subgroup with a TFR higher than replacement level (about 2.1).

**Figure 1**  
**Jewish Total Fertility Rate by Nativity and Age at Immigration to Canada, 2001, 2011, and 2021**

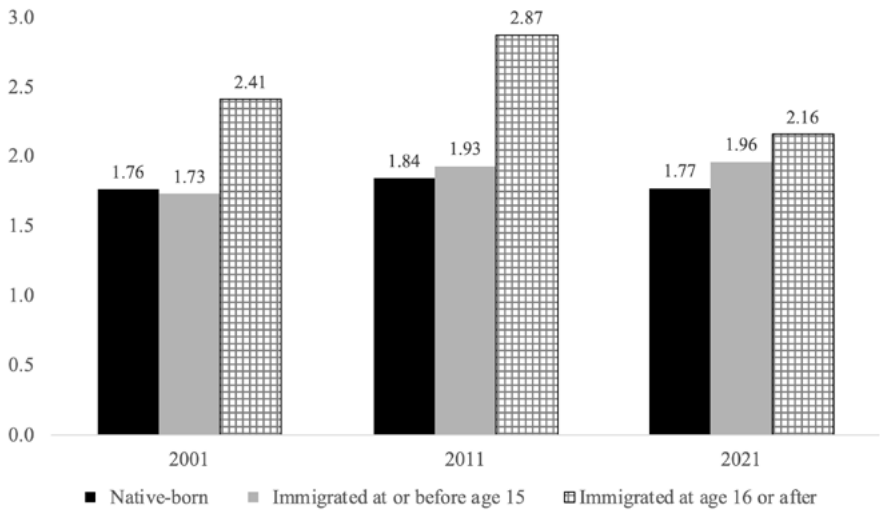


Table 4 shows a similar pattern for other religious groups. For all religions (except those with no religion or “other religions”), the foreign-born who immigrated after age fifteen have, on average, higher fertility rates than native-born people of the same religion. The largest differential between native-born and foreign-born is for Muslims, with a gap of 1.03 in 2021. Immigrants generally increase the TFR of each religious group if they move here as adults. However, the TFR of those who move to Canada as children have similar fertility rates as the native-born of their religion (Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, non-Catholic Christians and Jews. In some groups (Muslims and Catholics), those who immigrate as children have even lower fertility than do native-born people of that religion.

**Table 4**  
**Total Fertility Rates and Numbers of Women by Religion and Age at Immigration, 2001, 2011, and 2021**

|   | TFR  |      |      | Number women in childbearing ages |        |        |
|---|------|------|------|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|
|   | 2001 | 2011 | 2021 | 2001                              | 2011   | 2021   |
| <b>Jewish</b>                           |      |      |      |                                   |        |        |
| Native-born                             | 1.76 | 1.84 | 1.77 | 53,880                            | 49,810 | 50,530 |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.73 | 1.93 | 1.96 | 7,910                             | 7,110  | 6,270  |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 2.41 | 2.87 | 2.16 | 12,645                            | 10,750 | 8,295  |
| <b>Muslim</b>                           |      |      |      |                                   |        |        |
| Native-born                             | 1.88 | 2.14 | 1.45 | 17,165                            | 40,460 | 95,950 |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.72 | 1.57 | 1.46 | 26,030                            | 55,655 | 93,370 |

|   |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
|---|------|------|------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 2.66 | 2.83 | 2.48 |  | 108,115   | 183,390   | 254,445   |
| <b>Christians other than Catholic</b>   |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 1.53 | 1.74 | 1.50 |  | 2,110,045 | 1,630,190 | 1,139,825 |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.49 | 1.61 | 1.51 |  | 124,055   | 129,845   | 131,150   |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 1.92 | 1.99 | 1.99 |  | 241,845   | 280,585   | 312,170   |
| <b>Catholic</b>                         |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 1.42 | 1.63 | 1.36 |  | 2,949,680 | 2,546,590 | 1,636,925 |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.32 | 1.47 | 1.21 |  | 160,555   | 148,520   | 126,765   |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 1.82 | 1.79 | 1.72 |  | 292,105   | 295,235   | 288,415   |
| <b>Sikh</b>                             |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 1.74 | 1.43 | 1.28 |  | 16,085    | 32,400    | 56,500    |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.92 | 1.47 | 1.16 |  | 9,970     | 14,130    | 15,735    |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 2.32 | 2.03 | 1.79 |  | 48,480    | 71,340    | 100,215   |
| <b>Hindu</b>                            |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 1.06 | 1.59 | 1.13 |  | 11,415    | 24,535    | 42,095    |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.37 | 1.27 | 1.24 |  | 12,755    | 22,960    | 27,580    |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 2.35 | 1.82 | 1.65 |  | 59,140    | 87,270    | 126,070   |
| <b>No religion</b>                      |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 1.30 | 1.48 | 1.26 |  | 1,019,975 | 1,628,535 | 2,583,995 |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.13 | 1.21 | 1.01 |  | 78,855    | 122,675   | 163,685   |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 1.45 | 1.55 | 1.23 |  | 187,750   | 248,270   | 326,170   |
| <b>Other Religions</b>                  |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 1.44 | 1.83 | 1.05 |  | 25,750    | 45,900    | 77,125    |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.22 | 0.81 | 0.90 |  | 2,260     | 3,090     | 4,405     |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 1.60 | 1.06 | 1.74 |  | 6,105     | 6,710     | 11,240    |
| <b>Buddhist</b>                         |      |      |      |  |           |           |           |
| Native-born                             | 0.65 | 1.33 | 0.92 |  | 13,355    | 27,100    | 26,825    |
| Immigrated ≤ age 15                     | 1.27 | 1.32 | 0.91 |  | 16,995    | 19,050    | 15,665    |
| Foreign-born, immigrated at 16 or above | 1.43 | 1.35 | 1.26 |  | 57,335    | 55,685    | 40,165    |

Note: TFRs refer to the one-year period prior to the census, e.g., mid-May 2000 to mid-May 2001.

It is important to note that Table 4 shows that only two subgroups have above replacement fertility. One is foreign-born Jews who migrated as adults (TFR 2.16) and the other is foreign-born Muslims who migrated as adults (TFR 2.48). It might seem as if these two groups are growing at a similar rate, but the fertility rates are experienced by populations of vastly different size. In 2021, there were 8,295 foreign-born Jews and 254,445 Muslims in this subgroup. So even though these groups of foreign-born have relatively high fertility, the number of women having those children is small scale for Jews and much larger for Muslims.

## Discussion

Is Canadian Jewish fertility high or low? And what do recent fertility trends imply for Canadian Jewish institutions? Canadian Jewish fertility is below replacement level, at 1.8 compared to replacement level of 2.1 births per woman. Moreover, it is lower than the TFR of Israel which has been stable around three births per woman and was most recently 2.84 in 2023.<sup>31</sup> That said, Canadian Jewish fertility is very high compared to the overall Canadian fertility rate. In fact, Canadian Jews had on average almost half a birth more per woman than the overall Canadian population in 2021 (1.80 for Jews versus 1.35 for all of Canada in 2021). Moreover, this article finds that Canadian Jews have relatively high fertility compared to other religious groups; only Muslims have a comparable TFR. Another important fact is that the fertility rate for Canadian Jews is stable, compared with all other groups except non-Catholic Christians, which have seen fertility decline over this period. All other groups have witnessed fertility decline while Canadian Jewish fertility is stable.

What are the implications of a relatively high and stable fertility rate for the future of the Jewish community in Canada? The community of Canadian Jews is likely to grow slowly, as it has for the last several decades. Therefore, services for children and youth will have steady demand, as will the needs of young families.

To understand more about the needs of Canadian Jews, we should look at the differential fertility of the subpopulation. When we look beyond those who identify with Judaism, at those reporting Jewish ethnicity but no religion, we see that this subgroup has much lower fertility than those reporting Jewish religion. Jews expressing no religious identification have experienced rapid fertility decline to an exceedingly low level. The latter not only has the lowest fertility of any subgroup in the Jewish community; they have much lower fertility compared with the broader pool of Canadians who report no religious affiliation. In contrast, those reporting Jewish religion have much higher fertility; as they represent the Canadian Jewish majority, they keep the population's TFR relatively high. More research should be done on the subgroup of ethnic Jews reporting no religion. They may in fact be a stable subgroup. Or it could be that people report no religious affiliation as young adults,

but after they start families, they may be more likely to engage in religious practice as a way of socializing their children. Those without children may not have the same motivation for religious involvement and therefore are more likely to declare “no religion” in the census questionnaire.

Because immigration is the main driver of population growth in Canada, it is important to examine fertility adaptation of migrants from different religious groups to see how immigration shapes fertility rates here in Canada. This analysis is the first to estimate fertility within religious groups for those who are born in Canada, as well as those who are born abroad and migrated as children versus adults. Estimates for fertility by religion, alongside patterns of growth by religion together show how the religious composition of Canada is shifting through both immigration and fertility differentials.

By examining fertility in tandem with immigration history, we see that Jewish immigrants to Canada have more children than do native-born Canadians. Women who migrate to Canada at age sixteen or later have significantly more children than do native-born Canadian Jews. The gap is quite large between these groups. Moreover, those who came to Canada as children have similar fertility to native-born Canadians. This means that Jewish immigration to Canada bolsters the overall Canadian Jewish fertility rate.

This pattern is also found for all other religious groups in Canada with the exception of those with no religion. Those who migrate to Canada at ages sixteen and above have significantly higher fertility than those born in the country, or those who migrate to Canada as children.

Despite the fact that Jewish immigrants bolster the Canadian Jewish fertility rate, the number of Jewish immigrants is small relative to the comparable number for other religious groups. Thus, in 2021, 8,295 Jewish women immigrated to Canada at ages sixteen and above compared to 254,000 Muslims, 312,000 Christians, 288,000 Catholics, 100,000 Sikhs, 126,000 Hindus, and 326,000 with no religion. Such immigration increases the TFR for Jews, but the absolute level of growth is small in comparison with growth for other religions.

Why is Jewish fertility high in Canada relative to the fertility of other religious groups? Traditionally, scholars have answered this question by assessing two competing explanations. One is that religious differences in fertility are due to different economic and sociodemographic factors. Jews in Canada, for instance, are extremely highly educated and have high labour force participation, especially in professional fields.<sup>32</sup> These factors may influence Jewish fertility rates. The second explanation is that religions differ in their fertility rates due to the influence of the religious leaders

or values on ideal family size, timing of marriage, use of birth control, or coital frequency.<sup>33</sup> This remains an important question for future research to address.

A second question for the Canadian Jewish community is what will happen to Canadian Jewish fertility in the future. We may see an uptick in Canadian Jewish fertility because the community has rallied since October 7, 2023, due to the rise of antisemitism and a communal turn inward. These shifts may lead to an increase in Jews seeking out Jewish partners. Enrolments in Jewish schools and memberships in synagogues have increased. These developments may lead to a decrease in the intermarriage rate. However, these remain to be seen, and this demographer will not be making any forecasts.

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## Appendix

$$\text{Equation 1: } ASFR_{i,year} = \frac{birth_{i,year}}{female\ population_{i,year}} (15 \leq i \leq 49)$$

$$\text{Equation 2: } TFR_{year} = \sum ASFR_{i,year} (15 \leq i \leq 49)$$

1

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**29**

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Unity - Metaphysical, Scientology, Rastafarian, New Age, other religions, agnostic, Satanism, Ahmadiyya, Druze.

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Pierre Anctil

**Defining Antisemitism in Francophone Canada:  
The Plamondon Trials of 1913–1914**

## Abstract

*The study of antisemitism in twentieth-century Canada has recently attracted considerable scholarly attention, especially given the country's poor record in welcoming Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany before and during the Second World War. This article argues that scholarship in this domain has tended to oversimplify the differences that existed between Anglophone and Francophone Canada in this respect, often ignoring elements of religious doctrine that kept Catholics and Protestants relatively apart in their understanding of Jews and Judaism. To better define the frame of reference of Francophone Roman Catholics, the author examines the documentation produced during the 1913–14 Plamondon defamation trials in Quebec City. These trials offer a unique opportunity to better understand the inner workings of antisemitism within a French Canadian elitist milieu, independently of other forms of Judeophobia that predominated in English Canada.*

## Résumé

*L'étude de l'antisémitisme au vingtième siècle au Canada a beaucoup retenu l'attention dans le domaine des études juives, surtout si l'on considère que le pays a accueilli peu de réfugiés juifs qui tentaient de fuir l'Allemagne nazie avant et pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Cet article avance l'idée que les recherches sur ce sujet ont eu tendance à sursimplifier les différences qui existaient à cette époque entre le Canada de langue anglaise et celui de langue française, au point de ne pas tenir compte des aspects de la doctrine religieuse catholique et protestante qui divergeaient quant à leur attitude respective pour ce qui est des Juifs et du judaïsme. Pour mieux comprendre le point de vue des catholiques canadiens-français, l'auteur analyse la documentation produite à l'occasion des procès qui ont eu lieu à Québec en 1913–1914 concernant les propos antisémites du notaire Plamondon. Ce contexte d'affrontement légal offre une occasion unique de dévoiler le visage de l'antisémitisme dans un milieu élitiste canadien-français, indépendamment des tendances judéophobes du Canada anglophone.*

Few scholars of Canadian Jewish history who have approached the subject of Francophone antisemitism have attempted to define what, specifically, distinguished the hatred disseminated by Catholic French speakers from the type propagated by Anglophone Protestants. In *None Is Too Many*, for example, Irving Abella and Harold Troper went no further than establishing a language divide between these two types of anti-Jewish discourse, as if the forms of antisemitism emanating from these two vastly different societies were equivalent and could be compared at first glance.<sup>1</sup> Readers of *None Is Too Many* are led to believe that only nuances distinguish what Anglo-British Canadian Jew haters expressed and their equivalents in French Canada, and that otherwise their respective hostility essentially took the same shape

and form. Such oversimplifications, based on ignorance of French Canadian cultural models and religious heritage, are at the root of a significant problem in the field and have long obstructed a better grasp of the evolution of Jew hatred in this country. Using the Plamondon blood libel trial—a landmark case in the legal fight against antisemitism in Quebec City in the early 1910s—this article argues that antisemitism in Francophone Canada emerged from different sources, presuppositions, and civilizational contexts than its counterpart in English-speaking Canada and therefore cannot be understood through simplistic or superficial comparisons.

Recent publications based on a study of French-language newspapers extending over long periods have revealed a very different overall picture with regard to antisemitism in Quebec than has been presented generally in Canadian Jewish studies up to now.<sup>2</sup> This new approach has been supplemented by a serious analysis by Simon-Pierre Lacasse of opinions expressed after the Second World War on the subject by two major Montreal English-language Jewish publications, *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* and *Congress Bulletin*.<sup>3</sup> One of the most significant debates in the field is whether the forms of antisemitism that developed in Francophone and Anglophone Canada during the twentieth century can meaningfully be compared, as has been done in English-language scholarship, or whether such comparisons are inherently problematic because they overlook the distinct historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts from which these phenomena emerged.<sup>4</sup> At the very least, historians with diverse skills and research orientations should be called upon to examine the matter and present their conclusions. Nevertheless, the lingering question remains whether such debate genuinely advances our understanding of Canadian Jewish history or ultimately belongs more to the sphere of political controversy.

### **Notary Plamondon and His Allies State Their Case in Court**

Discussions about the nature and effects of French Canadian antisemitism are not new and did not begin with the publication of *None Is Too Many* in 1982. There were several occasions during the twentieth century when Jews and Francophones entered into open confrontation concerning the relative significance of Jewish hatred in Quebec Francophone Catholic circles, and whether such attitudes deserved to be denounced publicly. In 1934, Omer Héroux, editor-in-chief of *Le Devoir*, and H. M. Caiserman, the general secretary of the Canadian Jewish Congress, exchanged several salvos when it was revealed that the central organization of Canadian Jewry distributed information to the effect that this newspaper was among the main press organs promoting antisemitism in Quebec.<sup>5</sup> After a few angry exchanges where Héroux wholeheartedly denied such accusations, especially when Congress was placing *Le Devoir* and *L'Action catholique* on an equal footing with *Le Patriote*, published by Adrien Arcand, both sides moved on to more pressing issues and did not

renew their mutual complaints. Of much more significance in this respect were the Plamondon trials of 1913–1914, which saw two Quebec City Jewish residents, Benjamin Ortenberg and Louis Lazarovitz, sue notary Jacques-Édouard Plamondon over the antisemitic content of a lecture titled “Le Juif,” which he delivered on March 30, 1910, at the Cercle Charest de l’Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne. The plaintiffs also demanded a financial reparation of \$500 from the defendants and a condemnation for defamatory libel by the court.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the talk itself (*la causerie*) was published on April 16 of the same year in *La Libre Parole*, a Quebec City weekly devoted to the promotion of the social teachings of the Catholic Church.<sup>7</sup> It was also printed in a brochure format by the same periodical shortly after.<sup>8</sup> The main argument at the trial was that the ideas publicized by Plamondon were deemed to have caused social disturbances in Quebec City, to have resulted in a loss of revenue on the part of Jewish store owners, and to have directly led locals to throw stones at both a synagogue and the residence of one of the plaintiffs, Benjamin Ortenberg.<sup>9</sup> Spurred by the speech that Plamondon himself delivered at the trial, a debate ensued in the Quebec City French-language press pitting *La Libre Parole* and *L’Action sociale* against the liberal papers *La Vigie* and *Le Soleil* about what constituted antisemitism.

The trial hinged on whether a 1910 speech about Jews and Judaism, presented by Jacques-Édouard Plamondon, a notary educated at l’Université Laval in the Faculty of Law, was defamatory and caused material damage to Jews. The trial proceedings, covered by the local press with great interest, became an occasion for Plamondon and several prominent clergy members surrounding the trial to air a full-fledged and multifaceted series of accusations about “the Jews” and their deleterious impacts on Western civilization, dating back to Roman times. During the first trial, in 1913, the plaintiffs, Benjamin Ortenberg and Louis Lazarovitz, and the co-defendants, Jacques-Édouard Plamondon and René Leduc, were offered the opportunity to openly express their opinions and beliefs with regard to the debate at hand, and to call upon expert witnesses to buttress their point of view.<sup>10</sup> A defamatory libel in civil law is defined as the utterance of false statements likely to damage a person’s reputation and social standing. If Plamondon’s *causerie* was based on doubtful and untrue affirmations, then he was likely to be condemned by a court of justice for attacking the plaintiffs and causing them harm. To be freed of all accusations, Plamondon’s interpretations of Judaism had to be proven correct according to valid evidence, which is what the defendant set out to do in front of a court of justice.

It is under these circumstances that we are offered a revealing list of the sources which inspired Plamondon to adopt an antisemitic stance in his 1910 public address, vastly enriched by the detailed testimonial of three eminent Catholic priests who came to his defence in front of Judge Albert Maloin. The documentation brought before the court on this occasion provides us with one of the most detailed and comprehensive depictions of the intellectual and religious origins of French Canadian

Catholic antisemitism in the early twentieth century. In all, when questioned by the court, Plamondon and his allies alluded to thirty-two specific foundational texts and declarations, written by highly significant historical figures, published and distributed over two millennia, who in their minds amply justified that Jews be treated with great suspicion, if not outright hostility, in a Christian society.<sup>11</sup> The plaintiffs' lawyer, Samuel W. Jacobs, and his expert witness, Rabbi Herman Abramovitz, the spiritual leader of the Shaar Hashomayim congregation in Montreal, cross-examined Plamondon, further revealing a broad array of historical sources that fed Francophone Canadian hatred and suspicion of Jews.

Plamondon alone could not have created such a vast list of antisemitic authors and "proofs" on which to rest his case; the task of assembling such a body of texts fell to three priests who appeared in court on his behalf. Their purpose, as stated by Leduc's lawyer, Joseph-Édouard Bédard, was to show that the sources mentioned by Plamondon in his initial public statement were reliable and revealing of the profound truth of Christian doctrine regarding Judaism. According to Bédard, the clergymen on whom Plamondon's defence rested—l'abbé Joseph-Emery Grandbois, l'abbé Jean-Thomas Nadeau, and l'abbé Joseph-Arthur D'Amours, all eminent members of the Catholic clergy—had "indiscutable autorité [indisputable authority]." The texts and their interpretations of them, argued Bédard, were both "vrais et dans l'intérêt public [true and in the public interest]."<sup>12</sup> The priests had extensive doctrinal and theological training. Each had studied ecclesiastical history, was fluent in Latin and Ancient Greek, and had mastered the intricacies of logical reasoning. Grandbois had obtained a doctorate in theology at l'Université Laval, then a canonical Catholic institution administered directly by the diocese of Quebec. He had also studied the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac languages at the École biblique de Jérusalem under Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange, whom he mentioned in his own testimonial. Both Nadeau and D'Amours, besides being scholars in their own right, were often called upon to write in Catholic Quebecois media to propagate the teachings of the Church, such as in *L'Action sociale*, the precursor in 1907 of *L'Action catholique*, and had experience in communicating the main tenets of their faith to a broad public. They represented, in short, the most significant voices of the Catholic conservative elite of Quebec society at the time. They carried the moral authority of the Church itself in court.

In an age when all major intellectuals and political leaders of Quebec Francophone society were educated under the guidance of Catholic institutions of higher learning, the three abbés were formidable foes, determined to use every argument at their disposal to establish the threatening nature and moral inferiority of Jews and Judaism in a society based entirely on Christian values. The arsenal of arguments and citations that they brought forward at the Plamondon trial was of immense proportions, compared to what the notary himself could have mustered on his own volition,

and laid bare the theological positions of the Catholic Church in Quebec regarding Judaism before the great reorientation of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>13</sup>

Their testimonial was transcribed by a court clerk in shorthand French on a few pages, and later found its way into the Canadian Jewish Congress archives when Samuel W. Jacobs offered to the institution his documentation regarding the Plamondon trials.<sup>14</sup> Almost all the references offered by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours, and the texts that they cited, were written in French originally or translated into that language when they dated back to the Roman Empire or to periods of history that predated the French cultural sphere. They also were almost invariably authored by Catholic figures of authority, or individuals that the Vatican considered deeply associated with the propagation of the faith. For that reason, it is doubtful that many of the thirty-two authors or works cited by the three abbés in their critique of Judaism were widely known at the turn of the century to persons of the Protestant tradition, or readily available in Canada in the English language.

In this respect, the Plamondon trials demonstrate that the negative perception of Judaism that some French Canadians entertained doctrinally at the turn of the twentieth century came from a different stream of antisemitism than the one that was dominant in Anglophone Canada. It did not find much common ground, except in a very general sense, with the ideas developed in this regard in the Reform movement initiated by Luther in Germany or Henry the Eighth in Great Britain, when speaking specifically of the Anglican faith dominant in the British Empire. Historically, Catholics would not under any circumstance, for fundamental reasons of doctrine, refer to the "heretic teachings" of Protestantism. The violent antisemitic pamphlet authored by Luther in 1543, entitled *Von den Jüden un iren Lugen* (*On the Jews and their Lies*), was not included in the list compiled by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours, and was never cited by the three Catholic priests present at the trial.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, German romantic precursors of radical nationalism like Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried von Herder were not referred to at the Plamondon trials, nor were the many disciples of Charles Darwin whose theory of evolution was condemned at the time by the Catholic Church. The Vatican frowned upon most "modern" forms of thinking at the turn of the century. Its aggiornamento came only after World War II; few "modern" modes of thinking about the Jews contributed to Quebec antisemites' logic at the time of the Plamondon trials. They did not even draw from the then-popular pseudo-scientific current of thought that justified hatred of Jews based on racialist classifications, drawn from the work of Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau and his *Essai sur l'égalité des races humaines* published in Paris in 1855, and many others. Even the term "antisemitism" itself, as coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879 in his infamous pamphlet entitled: *Der Sieg des Judentums über das Germanium* (*The Victory of Judaism over Germandom*), was irrelevant to the Quebec Catholic elite of the time. This should come as no surprise as the civilizational focus of the three abbés, and all

their colleagues, was centred entirely on Italian ideas, with Latin as the vehicle of all knowledge, whether recent or ancient and pre-Christian. In this vast Catholic cornucopia of accumulated knowledge and interpretation of the world, the Roman Empire and its contributions to the evolution of European history, *not* the later British or German versions informed by Protestantism, formed the nodal point of human advancement.

### **A Vast Cornucopia of Jew-Hatred Going Back to Roman Times**

Plamondon and the three abbés made their official declarations to the court separately during the initial inquiry and were cross-examined individually by the legal representative of the plaintiffs. The written summary of their respective attitudes about Jews and Judaism, and the method of compilation adopted by the clerk at the time of the 1913 trial, allowed for many repetitions to appear that are in themselves significant to the historian. Once regrouped, these statements produce a much clearer picture of what exactly inspired the three Catholic priests to maintain their antisemitic stance in front of the judges to avoid a condemnation for libel against Plamondon. The strategy of the three clerics was quite simple. They argued that all the authors that the notary alluded to, and their works, presented the truth in terms of Catholic religious doctrine, and that their reasons for opposing Jews in one form or another, including the conclusions that Plamondon himself arrived at in his initial public conference, were all reasonable, truthful, and valid. There was no basis to condemn the notary, they argued; the documents he used simply promoted church teachings. All were sound and acceptable, irrespective of whether certain utterances may have caused harm to several Jews living in Quebec City or to their reputations as good citizens.

A clear picture of the particular articulation of Francophone Catholic antisemitism at the turn of the century emerges from the extant archival sources from the trial. The three abbés' hostility to Judaism was deeply rooted historically and quite systematically presented. It relied on an accumulation of anti-Judaic interpretations resting mostly on religious arguments and covered a wide range of periods and events leading up to the time of the 1913 trial itself. The testimonial was encyclopedic; most of the textual basis for their beliefs came from European sources.

Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours appeared to think in unison and shared the same general dispositions regarding Judaism. At one point in their testimony, they cited classic Roman sources in Latin. As Catholic scholars, they were familiar with Roman imperial law, from which the canonical rules and hierarchical structure of the Church derived. These sources included Cicero, who in 59 BCE, had participated as a lawyer in a public trial in Rome to defend the conduct of an imperial administra-

tor, Lucius Flaccus. Flaccus had forbidden Jews from his province in Asia Minor to send funds to their coreligionists living in Jerusalem. The exhortations of Cicero, known as “Oratio pro L. Flacco,” present a striking parallel with the Plamondon trials of 1913–14, in that they painted a highly negative picture of Jews, going as far as declaring Judaism to be a “barbarous superstition.” By blackening the image of Judaism, Cicero’s harangue managed to absolve Flaccus of the accusations of extortion presented against him. This approach to Judaism paved the way two thousand years later, in the minds of the three abbés, to what should be the conclusion of the ongoing trial in Quebec City. This foundational declaration by Cicero was strengthened further when Tacitus (ca. 58–120), one of the greatest historians of the Roman Empire, was referred to by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours as a guide to understand the true nature of Judaism. In his *Historiae*, which covers the period from 69 to 96 of the Common Era, Tacitus repeats the accusations levelled against Jews by Cicero and incorporates them in a highly significant chronicle of the Empire then at the height of its power. For the three abbés, these negative perceptions and descriptions, dating back nearly two millennia and written before the Catholic Church even existed, carried the weight of a literary tradition highly regarded in Catholicism, and served as solid proof that Jews were indeed a marginal group yielding an influence far greater than their number warrants.

Later in the trial, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours turned to the origins of the entire edifice of Catholic theology regarding Judaism, which forms the second stage in their argumentation. They quoted from early Church fathers and celebrated preachers who helped Christianity across vast areas under Roman authority, namely, Saint Jerome (ca. 342–420) and Saint John Chrysostom (ca. 347–407), both of whom developed extremely negative perceptions of Jews, portraying Jews who maintained an attachment to some of the Jewish rituals while declaring themselves to be Christians as active opponents of the Church. Chrysostom, who became archbishop of Constantinople, published a series of homilies in the late fourth century brutally condemning the religious tradition of Jews, known in the Roman tradition under the title *Adversus Judaeos* (Against the Jews), which described Judaism as “demoniac and despicable.” These harangues, which resounded in Christian theology for a very long period, remained the standard view of Jews in many Catholic seminaries and institutions of higher learning; they were presented as evidence at the trial.

Saint Jerome, who produced the first translation of the Bible in Latin, known as the Vulgate, and exerted a tremendous influence throughout the centuries in theological and Christian intellectual circles, likewise judged Judaism to be a threat to the Church and deplored in no uncertain terms the “resistance of Jews” to conversion. Saint Jerome in fact was one of the first Church fathers to give credence to the theory of supersessionism, which maintained that the First Alliance had been voided to the benefit of Christianity. By referring to these saintly figures of the Catholic Church in

court, the three abbés raised religious objections to an acceptance of Jews in Quebec society that were formidable in the circumstances, even in a civil court of law, and that were part of the dogma presented at l'Université Laval to seminarians and lay persons, at least until the Vatican Council of the Sixties. The attitude of Saint Jerome and Saint John Chrysostom to Jews and Judaism is the doctrinal base for a Catholic response at the turn of the last century to a Jewish presence in Quebec society, not Luther or the disciples of Charles Darwin. This scathing attack on Judaism was further deepened by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours when they cited in court the Gospel of Matthew, a standard negative Christian depiction of the teachers of Jewish law and of the Pharisees at the time of Christ, who were described as "broods of vipers," "blind guides," and "whitewashed tombs" (in Christian tradition, the Pharisees are depicted as comprehending Jewish law but dismissive of its teachings altogether). Such biting criticism of Judaism taken from parts of the Christian holy scriptures and disseminated universally without the use of a proper context or interpretation, to which one must add the chasing of the merchants from the Temple by Christ himself, strongly encouraged the Catholic faithful in all historical circumstances to adopt a theologically negative view of Jews and Judaism.<sup>16</sup>

Having covered sacred ground that was indisputable to Christians at the time, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours then turned to another series of references, which form the third stage of their antisemitic demonstration. In a broad sweep of the modern age pertaining to the issue at hand, the three priests turned to thirteen authors who in their minds formed the cultural and intellectual background justifying in general terms the marginalization of Jews in a Christian society.<sup>17</sup> This vast panorama constitutes the "Summa Theologica" of all the fundamental "truths," religious and secular, that the three abbés had absorbed in their religious training at l'Université Laval and during further studies in Catholic institutions of higher learning in Europe. Save a few exceptions, in most of these references Jews and Judaism appear only as a passing subject of interest within a much wider edifice conceived to situate Christianity and particularly Catholicism as the central locus of European civilization. Nonetheless, these mentions each constitute, in their own way, a subtle reaffirmation of the inferior moral standing and "threatening" nature of Judaism in a world dominated by the Church, whose teachings and religious beliefs must be viewed as immutable and unchallengeable. In an age of revolutionary movements and violent contestation of the social order, the modern authors cited by the three abbés also present a very conservative view of the political order deemed necessary to preserve the fundamental values of Christianity. Mostly, in a French context, they point in the direction of a restoration of the institutions of the *Ancien régime*, which predated the colossal changes brought about by the transformative events of the French Revolution of 1789. Once more, in this section, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours place the French intellectual tradition at the centre of their argument, while rejecting at the same time the contributions made in this respect by "les philosophes du siècle des Lumières."

## Jews as Proponents of the French Revolution and Modernity

Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881) and Bernard Lazare (1865–1903) figured prominently in the priests' arguments, as they provided a critique of Judaism from a "Jewish point of view." If Jews themselves envisioned their religious tradition as passé and irrelevant in the Christian civilization of Europe, the arguments of Disraeli and Lazare should be even more convincing to those who profess to rationally demonstrate the futility and even harmfulness of the persistence of Judaism in modern times. In his early works of fiction, Disraeli, a convert to Anglicanism, presented Christianity as a superior civilizational development emerging out of the Biblical tradition. From his perspective, Jews served as a bridge to a more accomplished spiritual and moral world, while being denied at the same time entrance into societies that appeared after the beginning of the Christian era. Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours cited Disraeli's 1844 *Coningsby*, a novel that painted a positive view of British political conservatism and described the career of a young man by the same name elected to Parliament. This work of fiction also included the character of Sidonia, a Jewish personality modelled on Lionel de Rothschild; the three abbés considered Sidonia an archetype of the influential Jew operating undetected in society and bent on reaching political and social aims contrary to public interest. Lazare was the object of an even more convoluted form of reasoning on the part of Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours. An author who professed to be entirely agnostic in his beliefs and who was embroiled in the early stages of the Dreyfus affair, Lazare claimed in *L'antisémitisme, son histoire et ses causes*, that Jews were in part at the source of the hostility that they encountered in France during the Third Republic, essentially because they persisted in their communitarian notion of Judaism and did not embrace the universal nature of the French Revolution of 1789. An anarchist and a political polemicist, Lazare, although of Jewish origins, also condemned the highly visible participation of some Jews in the capitalist exploitation of workers and thought that antisemitism was simply based on an erroneous form of reasoning on the part of Jew haters. In a strange twist of logic, the three priests nonetheless recruited his writings in their anti-Jewish crusade because of the negative judgment he passed on Orthodox Judaism, even though he clearly sought an assimilationist solution to the hostility that Jews suffered on the part of Christian traditionalist opinion in France.

Even more surprising on the part of the three priests testifying at the Plamondon trials was their reference to Voltaire (1694–1778). A central figure of the French Enlightenment, Voltaire was one of the high-profile *philosophes* who paved the way for modernity in France and in Europe in general. A friend of the *encyclopédistes* Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert, a proponent of a rational approach to social ills, and a staunch critic of the absolutist political foundations of the *Ancien régime*, Voltaire held all forms of religiosity in contempt, regardless of historical period or type of

civilization. He considered references to God, any god, to be a form of obscurantism and fanaticism unworthy of an educated person and systematically denounced all organized religions as being a major obstacle on the path to human progress and accomplishment. Such views did little to endear Voltaire's *philosophie* to the Catholic Church in France, and his works were routinely banned from Catholic *bibliothèques* and educational establishments. In fact, most Catholic intellectuals were seriously discouraged in the 1910s and beyond from reading Voltaire or making references to his thinking. While Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours must certainly have known this, they were nonetheless aware that a great proponent of the Enlightenment could also, by virtue of this overall disdain of religion, be portrayed as an enemy of traditional Judaism. Voltaire did not make a profession of attacking Judaism, but he described Jews in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, published in 1764, as "La nation [...] la plus détestable qui ait jamais souillé la terre [the most detestable nation that defiled the earth]," not to mention other such instances of hostility throughout his career. The three abbés selectively chose what served their purpose from a wide body of classic works and ignored the historical context under which various antisemitic quotes and denunciations were produced, including Voltaire's equally harsh critique of Catholicism.

One last example of the antisemitic thinkers the abbés cited to buttress their case was Charles-Louis-Victor, Prince de Broglie (1757–1794), who figured prominently in their list of authors. Although Broglie favoured the French Revolution in general, in a pamphlet published in 1789, entitled *Opinion sur l'admission des Juifs à l'état civil*, he also declared himself to be against the Assemblée constituante's political emancipation of Jews. In 1791, Broglie even proposed a law that would have excluded Jews from any civic responsibility and prohibited their entrance into certain types of commercial activities.<sup>18</sup> This understanding of the contribution of Jews to Revolutionary France was eventually superseded by the emancipation Act of November 13, 1791, the first of its type in the entire world, which was based on the principle of the universality of mankind.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, the three abbés shared Broglie's regret over the 1791 decision to grant Jews full citizenship on the same footing as other French citizens, provided that they abandon their traditional structure of internal governance and their *communautarisme* (communitarianism). Indeed, all the sources that Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours cited in their testimonial to the court were both antisemitic and anti-revolutionary in the French sense of the word, in that they not only deplored the granting of equal rights to Jews in France in 1791 but altogether rejected the democratic principles on which the Republic was founded and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* promulgated in 1789. As eminent members of the Catholic clerical elite of Quebec, the three abbés wholeheartedly embraced the traditional interpretation of the *Ancien régime* and supported the political forces that attempted to restore such an order in late-nineteenth-century France. In that context, antisemites saw Jews as a major factor contributing to the economic dissolution of traditional Christian society and as strong adherents of the Republican ideal.<sup>20</sup>

The context under which the emancipation of French Jews took place, in the midst of a vast revolutionary upheaval, followed immediately by the Napoleonic thrust in favour of liberalism and the final disappearance of the *Ancien régime*, gave the three abbés in Quebec City many reasons to validate the antisemitic statements made by Broglie in 1789, the most important of which was that the 1791 emancipation Act contradicted the anti-Judaic teachings of the Church in place since Saint Jerome. The French Revolution was a historical development that the traditional Catholic elite could not reconcile itself with doctrinally and that the popes ceaselessly fought against, until the Second Vatican Council. A further complication emerged with the proclamation in 1870 of the Third Republic in France, which was to become a full-fledged parliamentary regime and under which Jews generally enjoyed further advancement in their legal status as French citizens.<sup>21</sup> The Third Republic rapidly became a battleground for those who opposed the democratic ideal of the French Revolution of 1789 and the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, and sought either to restore royalty in France or at least to reestablish the medieval privileges granted to a hereditary nobility. One of the most salient developments in this respect was the Dreyfus affair, which saw an officer of the French army, of Jewish origins, accused in 1894 of espionage in favour of Germany.<sup>22</sup> The trumped-up charges against Captain Alfred Dreyfus revived the long-standing accusations of Jewish disloyalty to the French State and the ideals of Christianity, which had been circulating for centuries in the higher circles of Catholic France. They also pitted the new Republican elites against the political forces of *la restauration monarchique* and the conservative inclinations of the Church.

### **The Centrality of the Dreyfus Affair in Plamondon's Thinking**

After having evoked a very wide historical panorama of Jewish hatred, spreading over two millennia and mostly centred around Roman civilization, the preaching of early Christian figures, and the antisemitic contributions of a series of French Revolution-era thinkers who approached Judaism in a negative way, the three priests entered a fourth stage in their attempt to prove that Plamondon's interpretation was based on valid doctrine. Up to that point, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours referred mostly to authors who occasionally discussed the issue of tolerating the presence of Jews in societies that claimed to be based on Christian moral principles and reflected the ethical teachings of the Church. These general considerations of a broad nature were transformed in late-nineteenth-century Europe by a group of publicists who developed a different and, in a sense, a more "specialized" view of Judaism.<sup>23</sup> In many countries, including Germany, Great Britain, and France, authors appeared who were obsessed with the central place that Jews seemed to have taken in Western society, and the power that they were accused of concentrating in their hands. These were contemporary political activists and antisemitic social

theorists to whom the three abbés turned to complete their defence of Plamondon and his interpretation of Jewish influence in Quebec City. In this phase of their demonstration, the Catholic priests relied almost exclusively on essays published in France by authors belonging to ultraconservative, Church-oriented milieus, rather than on activists involved in “nationalist” movements, who relied mostly on “scientific” and racial arguments to bolster their hatred of Jews. Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours remained deeply attached to the anti-Judaic stream of thinking present in early Christianity, and opposed Jews more as adherents of the Jewish religious tradition than as simply individuals of Jewish origins. Their wrath, in other words, was concentrated on the persistence of Judaism in the contemporary world; it did not include a racial definition of Jews.

The tragic events surrounding the Dreyfus affair in France, and the climate of muted antisemitism that it fuelled in traditional Catholic circles, must be considered more directly central to the hostility toward Jews that manifested itself in French Canada among intellectual circles at the turn of the twentieth century. After years of bitter political debate and several highly publicized trials involving the upper echelons of the French army, including the very daring editorial published by Emile Zola in 1898 in *L’Aurore* under the title “J’accuse...!”, reason and justice finally prevailed. Dreyfus was rehabilitated officially in 1906 and reintroduced into the ranks of the French army. This was only four years before the anti-Jewish speech given by Plamondon in Quebec City. Certainly, opposition to a Jewish presence in Quebec was foremost of an anti-Judaic nature, in that the basic fault of Jews was their refusal to convert to the true faith and their persistence in maintaining a religious tradition that had been superseded by Christianity. Added to these traditional accusations was the more contemporary notion that Jews did not pay allegiance to the king or the country in which they found themselves, but first to a secret master plan of Jewish dominance about to engulf the world. These conspiratorial and antisemitic tropes were nearly universal in Europe at the time of the Dreyfus affair, though they manifested in different forms and with local variants. French Canadian Jew haters were inspired not by antisemites in Great Britain, Germany, or Russia but by those in the unique cultural and linguistic context provided by the French Third Republic.

Of the nine authors and publicists cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D’Amours in the fourth section of their list of “proofs,” seven were devoted anti-Dreyfusards active during the Third Republic—thinkers who belonged to ultraconservative political milieus in France closely associated with the Catholic Church.<sup>24</sup> Looking carefully at the testimonial of the three Quebec City priests, one gets the definite impression that they were well connected with the main publicists of conservative French antisemitism, that they regularly read the press produced by these activists, notably Édouard Drumont’s *La Libre Parole*, launched in 1892, and had absorbed their logic and reasoning. It is no coincidence that when this French Canadian faction felt the need to

propagate their political ideas in 1905 through the creation of a weekly newspaper, they adopted the name of Drumont's own mouthpiece, *La Libre Parole*, soon replaced in 1915 by *L'Action catholique*. Despite all these ideological similarities, French Canadian leaders seemed to have felt a need to adapt the message of the French antisemites to the situation prevailing in French Canada, a society that did not present the same political complexity as France under the Third Republic, one in which most Jews were recently arrived immigrants from the Russian Empire. Drumont's bestselling essay, *La France juive*, for example, published initially in 1886, could not achieve wide circulation in Quebec because it described a situation that was typical of a highly industrialized and urbanized society, which Francophone Canada was not at the time.

Further proof of the unique nature of French Canadian antisemitism in Canada can be found in a literary event that took place in France in 1894–1895, just as the Dreyfus affair was gaining broad attention politically. Intent on obtaining publicity for his cause and for *La Libre Parole*, Drumont launched a concours destined to reward the best essay in view of answering a predetermined question: “Quels sont les moyens pratiques d'arriver à l'anéantissement de la puissance juive en France, le danger juif étant considéré au point de vue de la race et non au point de vue religieux [What are the means to annihilate the might of the Jews in France, the danger of Jews being considered from a racial point of view and not from a religious one].” (This orientation deliberately contradicted the famous concours *littéraire* launched in 1787 by the Académie royale de Metz, on the eve of the Revolution, which posed the question: “Est-il des moyens de rendre les Juifs plus heureux et plus utiles en France? [Are there means of making Jews happier and more useful in France?]” The contest was famously won by l'abbé Grégoire, a defender of Jewish rights in the Assemblée constituante.) Of course, only antisemites and publicists convinced of the veracity of Drumont's ideas submitted texts to the concours sponsored by *La Libre Parole*. Approximately 150 participants entered the competition to determine the best way to curb the supposed dominance of Jews over France after the emancipation of 1791. The essayists presented arguments, in other words, advocating for the permanent reversal of the civil and political rights afforded to Jews during the Revolution, a century earlier. Grandbois, Nadeau and D'Amours cited two of the winners of *La Libre Parole's* concours (l'abbé Marie-Léon Vial, author in 1897 of *Le roi juif comment le détrôner*, and Marie-Joseph Frank, author in 1898 of *Solution de la question juive*), signalling that the three abbés had read them and approved of their ideas. The three Quebec City priests cited one abbé Charles no less than thirteen times at the Plamondon trials. “Abbé Charles” was none other than Marie-Joseph Frank, whose book *Solution de la question juive*, reissued in 1909 under a different name, was highly influential among ultraconservative antisemites.<sup>25</sup> The abbés' next most cited sources were l'abbé Marie-Léon Vial, another winner of the concours, Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, Édouard Drumont, and abbé Maximilien de Lamarque.<sup>26</sup> The three Quebecois priests saw these contemporary authors as the most credible literary au-

thorities to buttress the defence of Plamondon. The antisemitic tropes used in the Plamondon defamation trials drew heavily from the ideological orbits of the French Third Republic and the Dreyfus affair, and not those familiar within a British or German political environment.

This fact might also help explain why the Talmud figured so pre-eminently in the speech presented by Plamondon at the meeting arranged in March 1910 by the Association catholique de la jeunesse canadienne. Plamondon's line of attack had concentrated on the commercial practices of Jewish merchants and the supposed detestation of Christianity by all adherents of Judaism. In the Quebec City context, because Plamondon and the abbés selectively quoted damning passages from the Jews' own religious texts, the Talmud carried more weight as evidence of Jewish perfidy than racial or ideological forms of reasoning present in other antisemitic European contexts.

### **The Talmud Stands Accused of Turning Jewish Minds Against Christianity**

During most of the Christian era, the Talmud, written during and after the institutionalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire, was considered by the Church as a minor Jewish treatise and was not regularly consulted by Catholic scholars who concentrated their attention on the Hebrew Bible. The first French-language translation of the Babylonian Talmud appeared only in 1831 in Leipzig, the work of abbé Luigi Chiarini (1789–1832), who completed only one tractate, a small fraction of the entire text.<sup>27</sup> The three abbés mentioned Chiarini's "translation" as though it were faithful. It was, in fact, a highly biased document that focused on criticizing the "errors" and "deviances" of Judaism and served more as a work of anti-Judaic propaganda than a sincere attempt at understanding the mode of reasoning of the Talmudists and their place in the Jewish tradition. Chiarini's work followed in the footsteps of the Protestant scholar Johann Andras Eisenmenger (1654–1704), who published a concerted attack on the Talmud entitled *Entdecktes Judenthum* [*Judaism Unmasked*] in Germany in 1700—perhaps the first one of its kind in Christianity and the foundation for all subsequent assaults on the Talmudic tradition. In this volume, Eisenmenger compiled a series of quotations taken from the sacred work and many other Jewish sources, transcribed out of context, with the intention of proving the anti-Christian nature of modern Judaism. These citations, reinterpreted by Eisenmenger and often altered to make them appear more scandalous, might have remained obscure had not a German priest and theologian, abbé August Rohling (1839–1931), introduced the distorted reading of his anti-Judaic predecessor to Catholic circles with the publication in 1871 of *Der Talmud Jude*. Rohling's German reissue thus crossed the Rubicon into Roman Catholic circles and was translated into French in 1888, with further distortions by abbé Maximilien de Lamarque under the title *Le Juif talmudiste*. This final rendition of the anti-Talmud tract reached French Canada at the turn of the century.<sup>28</sup>

Both Rohling and Lamarque occupied a central place in the argumentation presented by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours at the trial of Plamondon, and the very negative perception of the Talmud that they defended can be seen in the list of contemporary authors who were called upon to justify Plamondon's disdain of this Jewish document, notably Antoine-François Saubin's *Le Talmud et la synagogue moderne*, published in France in 1899, and abbé Marie-Léon Vial's *Le Juif sectaire et la tolérance talmudique*, also printed the same year. By that time, the accusations against the Talmud, all without foundation, had become a standard instrument in the denigration of Judaism in France, notably in Édouard Drumont's *La France juive* and in the newspapers that he controlled. It figured prominently as well in the doctrinal teachings of the Quebec Catholic Church, as is evidenced in Mgr. Louis-Adolphe Paquet's "Summa Theologica" published in Quebec City in 1908 under the title *Droit public de l'Église: principes généraux*. Paquet (1859–1942), a professor of theology at l'Université Laval and a widely recognized authority in French Canada on matters of Catholic influence in secular society, besides being a proponent of Francophone *nationalisme messianique* (messianic nationalism), had himself internalized a highly negative perception of the Talmud as is evidenced in his *Droit public de l'Église*: "Le Talmud," he wrote, "ce commentaire fangeux et cette dépravation pharisaïque de la Bible plus chère aux Juifs que la Bible elle-même [This repugnant commentary, this pharisaic depravation to which the Jews are more endeared than the Bible itself."<sup>29</sup> Cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours as a source of doctrinal authority, Paquet's work contains classic anti-Judaic statements that described contemporary Judaism as corrupt, plagued by deviations from the original Biblical Revelation and unworthy of respect on the part of Christians.

### The Court Rules in Favour of the Plaintiffs

The plaintiffs' lawyer and his expert witness knew very well that the vast array of antisemitic sources that Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours presented to the court were without any historical validity and based on false evidence, particularly the facts concerning the Talmud and the attitude of Jews to Christians in commercial life. Called by Samuel W. Jacobs to criticize the three abbés in court, Rabbi Herman Abramovitz rhetorically asked if they had read the Talmud in its original version and if they had studied the type of Hebrew and Aramaic in which the treatises were written. They had not. This was a central element in the argument in favour of Ortenberg and Lazarovitz. How could the defendants present sacred Jewish sources as valid proof of Jewish hostility to Christianity when the authors they cited all conspired to present a very negative and biased interpretation of them? During his speech of March 1910, Plamondon had referred mainly to the anti-Talmudic tirades printed by Lamarque in *Le Juif talmudiste*, and to Édouard Drumont's two main pamphlets, *La France juive* and *Le testament d'un antisémite*. Most of the other sources that he alluded to, especially those in German and English, were taken directly from La-

marque's translation of August Rohling's *Der Talmud Jude*. Following Abramovitz's testimony, the validity of Plamondon's affirmations was in doubt, and his intentions appeared clearly defamatory.

Ultimately, Judge Maloin rendered a decision that conformed to British law and the then-current jurisprudence in October 1913. His decision claimed that freedom of speech could not be curtailed and that to be found guilty of libel, a publicist accused must name specific persons and attack their personal reputation pointedly, something that Plamondon had not done in March 1910. Describing an entire community in negative terms, or a collective group of some kind, was a matter of opinion, he argued, and judgment about such matters was best left in a liberal democracy in the hands of citizens themselves. After the suit was dismissed by the court, Samuel W. Jacobs and his colleagues appealed, and sent the case to a higher tribunal, the Court of King's Bench. The decision to appeal suggests that many Jewish community leaders remained concerned about the spread of antisemitism in Quebec City and felt it necessary to publicly oppose the dissemination of anti-Jewish hatred in Canada. They reasoned that public utterances against Jews had to be curtailed and that activists who repeated well-known anti-Jewish tropes should be condemned by a court of justice.

The appeal judgment, made public in December 1914, reversed the 1913 decision and, despite the sophistry Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours displayed in attempting to prove what is intrinsically false, the judge of the Court of King's Bench found Plamondon guilty, and sentenced him to a small fine for defaming the civic loyalty and reputation of the Jewish population living in Canada.

For decades, the decision would be considered a prime example of a court of justice silencing hostile pronouncements made *en bloc* against a Jewish community.<sup>30</sup> The Plamondon trial was the first instance in Canadian history of antisemitic pronouncements being condemned by a court of law, and for this reason it brought a ray of hope to the Jewish leadership who felt that the final judgment proved the value of the country's justice system in redressing wrongs committed by enemies of the Jews. It is important to note though that the decision of the court was not based ultimately on a religious interpretation but referred only to the damage done to the small Jewish community of Quebec City which the notary had not attacked specifically, but which had suffered nonetheless from allegations brought against Jews at various periods of history.<sup>31</sup> The appeal judges based their decision essentially on the same legal principles that had guided Judge Maloin but took into consideration matters of local Jewish demography. Given the small population likely to be affected by Plamondon's scathing attacks, his speech was deemed indeed equivalent to a personal defamatory statement for all Jews living in Quebec City. Their summary judgment read:

Let it be clearly understood: the respondent is not condemned because he attacked the Jewish race or religion, nor for having repeated the accusations that historians and pamphleteers have levelled against Jews in general, nor because he denounced with reason Sunday labour; but he is condemned for attributing to all and each of the 75 Jewish families of Quebec the wish to commit the abominable crimes of which their race is accused, when they have obtained sufficient strength to commit these offences. In that, there is personal defamation.<sup>32</sup>

Although the anti-Judaic statements presented in the context of the Plamondon trials were hardly defensible under any circumstances and originated mainly from the very elitist clerical segment of Quebec society, they nonetheless stoked the fears of the Jewish leadership everywhere in Canada, who concluded from the proceedings that repeated accusations of a hostile nature against small Jewish merchants living in the provincial capital might lead to violence and even to pogroms.<sup>33</sup> In 1910, when Plamondon spoke on the Talmud in St. Roch parish, there were roughly only four hundred Jews living in Quebec City, most of them recent Russian immigrants regrouped in a section of Lower Town near the port. The accusations uttered by Plamondon were also circulated at a time when Menachem Mendel Beilis, the superintendent of a brick factory in Kiev, Ukraine, was accused of ritual murder by the Russian authorities and tried in 1913. The highly elaborate antisemitic fabrications published by Drumont and his disciples in France at the turn of the century, and the complex unravelling of the Dreyfus affair during the Third Republic remained nonetheless largely out of reach of the common folk in Francophone Canada, whose knowledge of the French political environment was very limited. The treatment meted out to the Jewish artillery officer by the French *état-major*, and the reactions of the anti-Dreyfusard faction remained in Quebec an issue confined to a small group of Catholic conservative intellectuals far removed from the realities of the French Canadian working classes.

Writing about the period during which the Plamondon trial was taking place, the Yiddish-language journalist Israel Medres stated in his 1947 Yiddish-language memoirs, entitled *Montreal fun Nekhten*:

However, another type of anti-Semitism persisted. This was not the anti-Semitism of the street bullies, but an intellectual or academic anti-Semitism. This was the anti-Semitism of a small group of conservative ultranationalist French Canadian intellectuals.

The immigrant Jews in Montreal knew little about this type of anti-Semitism for they had not experienced it. Similarly, the vast majority of the French Canadian population was unaware of this sort of anti-Semitism. Newly arrived Jews found the French Canadians in the cities and towns of the Province of Quebec to be most hospitable.<sup>34</sup>

Is this to say that there was no antisemitism among simple folks in Quebec society? Certainly not. Or that the anti-Jewish agitation in France did not find its way at times into the pages of the Francophone press of Canada? Not at all. Essentially, it was the general disposition of the French-speaking Catholic clergy, sustained by the anti-Judaic traditional teachings of the Church and its theological foundation that produced the generally negative attitude found in many Quebecois milieus to Jews and Judaism. In that sense, the regular preaching by priests on religious occasions, especially during Passion Week, the perceptions entertained by the clerical elites on doctrinal grounds, and the almost total absence of concrete contact in Montreal between Jews and elitist adherents of Catholicism, produced a climate that was not conducive to an overall favourable or even neutral understanding of Judaism in French Canada.

The elaborate argumentation provided by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours during the Plamondon trials represents the most explicit form of anti-Judaic doctrine available at the time to Catholics in Quebec, presented by priests active at the highest intellectual echelon in the diocese of Quebec. Most educated French Canadians, such as Plamondon himself, could not come to terms with all the nuances and theological justifications offered by the three abbés but, through several layers of cultural influence and religious teachings, absorbed the general orientations of Church anti-Judaism.

### **Comparing Two Traditions of Hostility to Jews**

Despite the outcome of the Plamondon trials, the Catholic clergy in Quebec City continued to make regular defamatory statements throughout the interwar period. The most vociferous among them were likely abbé Édouard-V. Lavergne (1879–1948) and abbé Antonio Huot (1877–1929).<sup>35</sup> French Canadian religious anti-Judaism was in marked contrast to Protestant (and especially Anglican) anti-Jewish hate based largely on racial and imperial arguments in the broader Anglo-Canadian context. In this respect, British-born Goldwin Smith (1823–1910) can be used as a point of comparison between Francophone Catholic antisemitism in Quebec and more Anglo-Protestant varieties of the same phenomenon during the Plamondon Trial. Although Smith has not been studied thoroughly in this respect after he settled in Toronto in the 1870s, it is clear from his abundant writings that his anti-Jewish views were based mostly on Jews' supposed racial and social characteristics. Smith critiqued what he saw as the negative "innate" cultural behaviour of Jewish people and a "tribal" mentality that he thought Jews exhibited against any broader Canadian civil instinct. These traits, he argued, made Jews the enemies of civilization and unfit for the pursuit of higher ideals. Jews, he thought, were an inferior race obsessed with the creation of material wealth through base methods and were entirely responsible for the hostile reactions that they encountered among Gentiles. Smith suggested that

Jews be completely assimilated into the fabric of Protestant society and that Judaism be eradicated from Canada altogether, through long-term, nonviolent social mechanisms.<sup>36</sup> While some Catholics may have shared some of Smith's racialist judgments, they tended to focus their condemnation of Jews on their rejection of the teachings of Christianity.

In the last analysis, antisemitism found distinct articulation in French and English Canada. Comparing these two currents of thought without the proper qualifications can lead to serious distortions that only serve to obfuscate our understanding of how antisemitism worked (and works). The Plamondon trials, represent the most revealing case study to document the shape that Francophone antisemitism took in Canada before World War I.

This theological antisemitism, I would argue, remained the dominant form of antisemitism in Quebec until the Quiet Revolution. It was, however, augmented by the arrival of a new instrument that helped fan the flames of Jewish hatred across the world after the military armistice of 1918, namely, a pamphlet entitled *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. While the Protocols were written and published in the Russian Empire a few years prior to the Great War, French-language versions of the antisemitic tract began to circulate by 1920 in France. In 1922 abbé Ernest Jouin (1844–1932) published the tirade in *La Revue internationale des sociétés secrètes*, dedicated to exposing anti-Catholic conspiracies. In 1924, Urbain Gohier (1862–1951) published a book entitled *Les Protocoles des sages d'Israël*. Many of the sources cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours in 1913 refer to the conspiratorial aims of Jews and their supposed desire to dominate the world, including essays written by Paul Copin Albancelli (1851–1939), entitled *Le drame maçonnique: la conjuration juive contre le monde chrétien*, and by Mgr. Henri Delassus (1836–1921), entitled *La conjuration antichrétienne: le temple maçonnique voulant s'élever sur les ruines de l'Église catholique*, both published in France in 1910. While some of these tracts lacked the pointed and phantasmatic accusations proffered by the Russian version of the *Protocols*, they nonetheless augmented the more theological strands of anti-Judaism and played a significant role in spreading anti-Jewish sentiment.

Because the *Protocols* came from a dubious source in terms of Catholic theology and remained foremost a political pamphlet, the Vatican authorities remained suspicious of its authenticity and did not encourage its dissemination among the faithful.<sup>37</sup> More likely than not, this forged document, had it existed in 1910 in a French-language version, would probably not have been cited by Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours as a credible source.<sup>38</sup> Other writers thought differently, and the *Protocols* were widely alluded to in antisemitic newspapers circulated by "secular" antisemites active in both English and French Canada, notably by Adrien Arcand throughout the thirties. In fact, weeklies like *Le Miroir*, *Le Patriote*, and *Le Fasciste canadien* used the arguments

and statements offered in the *Protocols* extensively and adapted them to Canadian circumstances. These papers helped initiate a type of antisemitic campaign quite different from what Plamondon and the Quebec City *La Libre Parole* had envisioned in the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>39</sup> Arcand's antisemitism marked a turning point of sorts. Attacks on the Talmud and the Catholic Church's doctrinal objections to Judaism took a back seat to a more political form of antisemitic onslaught, based essentially on an economic and nationalist line of reasoning. Arcand was not attuned to the specific theological arguments raised by traditional Catholicism against Judaism, nor did he mention them in his antisemitic propaganda, mostly directed at a popular and working-class audience.

In Arcand's mind, Jews exploited Francophones on a commercial basis and ultimately sought to dominate the world, not only to bring about a triumph of Judaism over Christianity, but mostly to impose the revolutionary ideals of Soviet Russia and universal socialism. Yet despite their best efforts, the conspiratorial strain of antisemitism espoused by Arcand and his Parti national social chrétien could not displace the dominant theological forms of Quebec anti-Judaism based on Church teachings. Religious (il-)logic continued to dominate French Canadian antisemitism from the 1930s until institutionalized Catholicism began to wane in French Canada in the 1960s. Curiously, Grandbois, Nadeau, and D'Amours' antisemitic interpretations of 1913 persisted despite the rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, which the Vatican opposed on canonical grounds. The entire line of reasoning of anti-Judaic Catholicism was finally dealt a fatal blow by Pope Paul VI with the publication in 1965 of the *Nostra Aetate* declaration, never to reappear in Quebec except in very limited ultraconservative circles. Seen from this perspective, Arcand-style anti-Jewish animus was relatively marginal in Catholic Quebec, despite being extraordinarily vocal. It was rarely supported by the local Catholic authorities, and it found no place in either the upper echelons of Francophone society or in the institutions of higher learning that served to sustain the development of a French-speaking elite in Canada. The revolting vulgarity and insane antisemitic suppositions propagated by the Arcand press, and its opportunistic use of Nazi regalia, condemned it to marginality in most of the French Canadian journalistic and political milieus, until it was finally decapitated in 1940 by the federal government in the context of Canada's declaration of war against Nazi Germany. Uprooting anti-Judaism from Quebec Francophone society, of the type that Plamondon had publicized, turned out to be in the end a much more difficult and long-term process than Samuel W. Jacobs had envisaged in the second decade of the twentieth century.

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1

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933–1948* (Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).

2

Pierre Anctil, *À chacun ses Juifs: 60 éditoriaux pour comprendre la position du Devoir à l’égard des Juifs, 1910–1947* (Septentrion, 2014). Translated into English by Tonu Onu under the title *A Reluctant Welcome for Jewish People: Voices in Le Devoir's Editorials, 1910–1947* (University of Ottawa Press, 2019). This study revealed that only 2 percent of *Le Devoir's* editorials between 1910 and 1947 discussed the influence of Jews in Quebec society. See also Pierre Anctil, *Antijudaïsme et influence nazie au Québec; le cas du journal L’Action catholique (1931–1939)* (Les Presses de l’Université de Montreal, 2021).

3

Simon-Pierre Lacasse, *Les Juifs de la Révolution tranquille : Regards d’une minorité religieuse sur le Québec de 1945 à 1976* (Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2022).

4

Pierre Anctil, “Deux poids, deux mesures: les responsabilités respectives du Canada de langue anglaise et de langue française dans la crise des réfugiés allemands,” in a special issue of *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes*, entitled “*None Is Too Many and Beyond / Au-delà de None Is Too Many*,” 24 (2016): 16–37.

5

See Omer Héroux, “Le ‘boycott’ des annonces et les Juifs,” *Le Devoir*, February 3, 1934, 1, reproduced in Pierre Anctil, *À chacun ses Juifs*, 381–84.

6

In 1913, racist or supremacist utterances were not considered criminal under Canadian law.

7

Christian Samson, “La peur de l’autre dans la presse de Québec: les représentations de l’immigration internationale dans *La Libre Parole* (1905–1912),” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 19, no. 1 (2010): 187–96.

8

An electronic version of Plamondon’s pamphlet is available at <https://archive.org/details/lejuifconfrenc00plam>, accessed on August 8, 2025.

9

Plamondon himself is not a central historical figure of Quebec Francophone antisemitism. His only public intervention in this respect was the conference he gave in Quebec City on March 30, 1910.

10

René Leduc was the printer of the incriminating pamphlet *Le Juif*, published in 1910.

11

Found in a document entitled “Défense, témoignage de Plamondon,” Fonds P0093, Samuel-William Jacobs, Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, Montreal. This document contained 32 documents presented as proof of the doctrinal validity of Plamondon’s speech.

12  
Ibid.

13

Philippe Chenux, *La fin de l’antijudaïsme chrétien: l’Église catholique et les Juifs de la Révolution française* (Cerf, 2023).

**14**

The full archives of the trial are available at Archives nationales du Québec in Quebec City (Fonds des archives judiciaires de la Cour supérieure, district judiciaire de Québec, TP11,S1,SS2,SSS1, art. 563).

**15**

The degree of violence reached in Luther's antisemitic pamphlet of 1543 is not found in Catholic theology, which remains more conceptual and abstract in its condemnation of Judaism.

**16**

Gospel of Matthew, 3:7, 23:7, 21:12.

**17**

Besides those discussed in the article, the authors are Nicolas Delamare, abbé Lucius Ferraris, abbé René-François Rohrbacher, David Drach, Jules Michelet, abbé Henri-Dominique Didon, abbé Marie-Joseph Lagrange, Auguste Fabius, and Moïse Schwab.

**18**

Brogie was guillotined in 1794 for opposing radical factions within the French revolutionary movement.

**19**

David Feuerwerker, *L'émancipation des Juifs en France, de l'Ancien régime à la fin du Second Empire* (Albin Michel, 1976).

**20**

Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism from Ancient Times to the Present Day* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

**21**

Pierre Birnbaum, *Les Fous de la République: histoire politique des juifs d'État, de Gambetta à Vichy* (Fayard, 1992); *La France aux Français: Histoire des haines nationalistes* (Seuil, 1993).

**22**

Alain Pagès, *L'affaire Dreyfus: vérités et légendes* (Perrin, 2019); Piers Paul Read, *The Dreyfus Affair: The Scandal That Tore France in Two* (Bloomsbury, 2012).

**23**

Pierre-André Taguieff, *Criminaliser les Juifs: le mythe du meurtre rituel et ses avatars (antijudaïsme, antisémitisme, antisionisme)* (Hermann, 2020); *Les Protocoles des Sages de Sion, des origines à nos jours* (Hermann, 2024).

**24**

The three exceptions are Father August Rohling, a German Catholic priest; Mgr. Louis-Adolphe Paquet, the only Canadian author cited by the three abbés in 1913; and Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, who died in 1876, before the beginning of the Dreyfus affair. The other six authors cited in this section are Édouard Drumont, abbé Marie-Léon Vial, Marie-Joseph Frank, abbé Antoine-François Saubin, Paul Copin Albancelli, and Mgr Henri Delassus.

**25**

Since it was not customary for priests to use only their first name in public transactions, it is highly likely that "l'abbé Charles" was a fraudulent designation.

**26**

L'abbé Charles (or Marie-Joseph Frank), l'abbé Marie-Léon Vial, l'abbé Antoine-François Saubin, and l'abbé Maximilien de Lamarque are minor figures in the history of Catholicism whose biographies are not well known.

**27**

Chiarini translated only tractate "Berakhot," which is dedicated to the rules of prayers in Judaism.

**28**

A much-enlarged translation and interpretation of abbé Rohling's *Der Talmud Jude*, prepared by A. Pontigny, appeared in France in 1889 under the title *Le Juif selon le Talmud*. The three abbés, however, cite only the work of abbé Maximilien de Lamarque in their demonstration, probably because he was a representative of the Church.

**29**

Mgr. Louis-Adolphe Paquet, *Droit public de l'Église: principes généraux* (L'Action sociale, 1908).

**30**

Joshua D. MacFadyen, “Nip the Noxious Growth in the Bud’: Ortenberg v. Plamondon and the Tools of Canadian Anti-Hate Activism,” *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 12 (2004): 7–96.

**31**

The court estimated that in 1911 there were sixty-five Jewish merchants and professionals in Quebec City, a number it considered small enough to expose them individually to the hostility of the general public following Plamondon’s statements. This argument was never invoked again in Canadian legal history on antisemitic defamatory libel.

**32**

The judgment is reproduced in Pierre Anctil and Richard Menkis, ed., *‘In a Land of Hope’: Documents on the Canadian Jewish Experience, 1627–1923* (Champlain Society, 2023), 239–40.

**33**

Israel Medres, *Montreal of Yesterday: Jewish Life in Montreal 1900–1920* [*Montreal fun Nekhten*], trans. Vivian Felsen (Véhicule Press, 2000), 121.

**34**

For a description of the Plamondon trials from a Jewish point of view, see Medres, *Montreal of Yesterday*, 121–34.

**35**

Abbé Edouard-V. Lavergne, *Sur les remparts* (L’Action sociale, 1924); abbé Antonio Huot, *La question juive chez nous* (L’Action sociale, 1926). The limitations imposed by the Canadian legal system on the attempts by Jewish organizations to suppress the dissemination of antisemitism were also quite visible in 1932 when Judge Gonzalve Desaulniers refused, albeit reluctantly, to condemn Adrien Arcand for the content of his weekly publications.

**36**

Notably, Smith also saw Francophones living in Canada as a tribal minority and likewise advocated their complete assimilation into Anglo-British society.

**37**

Maurice Olender, “Pierre Charles (s. j.) face aux Protocoles des Sages de Sion,” in *La chasse aux évidences: sur quelques formes de racisme entre mythe et réalité* (Éditions Galaade, 2015), 210–45.

**38**

The Protocols appeared in an English version at approximately the same time that a French translation began to circulate, notably in the United States, where Henry Ford publicized their content in the *Dearborn Independent* in the early 1920s.

**39**

Jean-François Nadeau, *The Canadian Führer: The Life of Adrien Arcand* (Lorimer, 2011); Hugues Théorêt, *Les chemises bleues: Adrien Arcand, journaliste antisémite canadien-français* (Septentrion, 2012); Pierre Berthiaume, *La clé du mystère d’Adrien Arcand ou l’hystérie antisémite: dénonciation de l’antisémitisme d’un libelle québécois et déconstruction de sa rhétorique démagogique* (Presses de l’Université Laval, 2024).

Shlomo Gleibman

## **Writing Canadian Judaism through Queer Migration**

## Abstract

*This essay places the literary representations of Canadian queer Jews from the former Soviet Union, such as in David Bezmozgis's short story "Minyan," in a larger context of Canadian queer Jewish writing that addresses the themes of immigration or migration, such as Brian Stein's short story "The Good Son" and K. David Brody's novel Mourning and Celebration. This article thus discusses three works where immigration/migration reflects a recouping of traditional symbols of Jewish life in the contexts of Canadian Judaism, Jewish community, and gay male sexuality. The article pursues answers to the following questions: How does the experience of immigration to Canada or migration within Canada influence one's sense of cultural loss and strategies of reclamation? How are these representations of queer Jewish life shaped by and contribute to the diversity and multiculturalism of Canadian society?*

## Résumé

*Cet essai situe les représentations littéraires des personnes juives queer canadiennes originaires de l'ex-Union soviétique – comme dans la nouvelle « Minyan » de David Bezmozgis – dans un contexte plus large d'écriture juive queer canadienne abordant les thèmes de l'immigration ou de la migration – à l'instar de la nouvelle « The Good Son » de Brian Stein et du roman « Mourning and Celebration » de K. David Brody. Cet article analyse ainsi trois œuvres où l'immigration/migration reflète une réappropriation des symboles traditionnels de la vie juive dans les contextes du judaïsme canadien, de la communauté juive et de l'homosexualité masculine. L'article cherche à répondre aux questions suivantes : Comment l'expérience de l'immigration au Canada ou de la migration à l'intérieur du Canada influence-t-elle un sentiment de perte culturelle et des stratégies de réappropriation ? Comment ces représentations de la vie juive queer sont-elles façonnées par la diversité et le multiculturalisme de la société canadienne et y contribuent-elles ?*

## Immigrant Fiction as Queer Midrash

This essay looks at three instances of contemporary queer Jewish fiction produced in Canada. These works explore the intersections of Jewish history, Jewish tradition, and same-sex sexuality from different perspectives and subject positions, yet in the same context of cultural reclamation associated with (im)migration. Brian Stein's and K. David Brody's works provide a larger cultural and literary context for my discussion of the literature of Canadian Jews from the former Soviet Union that David Bezmozgis's work exemplifies.

The three works of fiction examined in this article share a common literary strategy: They represent queer immigrant experience by performing what we might call a queer midrash, a creative reinterpretation of Jewish textual, ritual, and liturgical tradition that reclaims these traditions for queer Jewish life in specific contexts. Stein's "The Good Son" (2000), Brody's *Mourning and Celebration* (2009), and Bezmozgis's "Minyan" (2005) differ in form, cultural context, and literary ambition. Read together, however, they exemplify an emerging subgenre of queer immigrant fiction that contributes to Jewish Canadian literature by representing intersections of religious, cultural, and sexual experiences through displacement and migration to Canada and within Canada.

This argument builds on Daniel Boyarin's foundational work, which demonstrates that the ideal Jewish male, the *yeshiva bochur* (student at a yeshiva), constitutes a countercultural masculinity at odds with the hegemonic virility of Western modernity.<sup>1</sup> Boyarin shows that traditional Jewish intellectual and spiritual life harbored an alternative model of manhood, a gentle scholar, that Western culture, which valued virile, physically dominant masculinity, perceived as effeminate, and that, he argues, constitutes a resource for queer self-understanding. Boyarin also shows that this normative appropriation of femininity for men in rabbinic culture participated, and originated, in the male domination of women, particularly in the exclusion of women from Jewish intellectual life and in misogynistic views of female sexuality.<sup>2</sup> This article addresses a related connection between the feminized Jewish man as described by Boyarin and Jewish society's traditional heteronormativity or modern homophobia.<sup>3</sup> The prohibition of male-male anal penetration in biblical and rabbinic law was rooted in the anxiety and shame associated with the perceived feminization of men, stemming from misogynistic cultural meanings attached to gender roles in the ancient Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup> In this context, the prioritization of the feminized and (homo)eroticized Jewish man, which Boyarin discovers in Talmudic and Ashkenazic cultures (and which other scholars find in the Hebrew Bible) at once resists and reinforces the dominant heteromale norms.<sup>5</sup>

The works of fiction discussed in this article represent this tension between the potential queerness and the actual homophobia of Jewish society. In each text, the figure of the Jewish intellectual (Brody's Yankl, Stein's Noah, and Bezmozgis's Herschel) embodies Boyarin's alternative model of Jewish manhood. These narratives participate in a broader anti-homophobic cultural project by resisting modern homophobic discourses in Jewish culture. Their queer protagonists transform Jewish texts, prayers, and rituals into resources for a queer life in changing geographical and cultural contexts, often through mourning and reclaiming losses (relational, emotional, cultural, linguistic) that accompany queer and (im)migrant experiences.

Additionally, these works redefine Jewish family. As affect theorist Sara Ahmed points out, in the absence of a heteronormative family, queers become “affect aliens,” alienated from the positive affects associated with the cultural idea of family as the source of happiness.<sup>6</sup> This bears additional significance in the contexts of the Canadian and American Jewish communities, in which marriage has become a signifier of heteronormativity and a structure central to the formation of North American Jewish identity since the late nineteenth century through most of the twentieth century. Jewishness and Judaism can be seen as gendered and relational categories, with the ideology of “familism” as the defining characteristic of North American and Israeli Jewishness.<sup>7</sup> In the works under discussion, the tension between the queer protagonists and their families of birth, along with their constructions of alternative families of their own, serves as a major factor that forces their migration and determines its trajectories.

### **“Foreskin with a Yarmulke”: Moving between Cultures in Brian Stein’s “The Good Son”**

The short story “The Good Son,” by Toronto-based author Brian Stein, was published in a 2000 collection of gay Jewish erotica, *Kosher Meat*, edited by Lawrence Schimel.<sup>8</sup> It follows a gay couple, Jewish doctor Noah and his Catholic partner Patrick, a librarian. Noah grew up in a kosher home in Toronto and moved to Montreal after coming out and being rejected by family, his homophobic father especially. In Montreal, Noah meets Patrick, who had left his native St. John’s, Newfoundland, after being rejected by his Irish Catholic family. Montreal thus serves as a neutral, cosmopolitan and gay-friendly middle ground standing in opposition to both Toronto and St. John’s, two very different yet shared versions of estranged home. The story revolves around Patrick’s sex with his Jewish partner, and Patrick’s conversations with his partner’s Jewish mother, Mrs. Wolfson. The intersection of two cultures and two generations is therefore the very fulcrum of this story. Stein’s narrative adopts recognizable cultural tropes: the conflicted gay Jewish man, the gentle non-Jewish partner, the Jewish mother mourning her unborn grandchildren, the conflict between a gay person and a religious community. Stein’s story uses these clichés as the available cultural scripts for gay Jewish life in contemporary Canada. The story exposes their internal tensions and contradictions, their limits and possibilities. Moreover, Stein uses these conventional scripts as the medium for a queer midrash, for a transformation of Jewish tradition through a queer lens.

Noah’s and Patrick’s movement is not just their migration from Toronto or St. John’s to Montreal. It is also an escape from their homophobic families and religious communities. Their shared experience of loss, the break with their families and religious traditions, brings them together. It is the loss of home that makes them a “perfect pair”:

“Look, I no longer consider it her fault. I don’t think it’s anyone’s fault. But you know, Jewish tradition condemns what we do. It’s right there in the Torah.”

“And you think us being lovers has my church’s blessing?” I said.

“We’re the perfect pair, aren’t we? Except that it’s easier to cross yourself than make a Star of David every time we sin.”<sup>9</sup>

Patrick knows that Noah is “conflicted about being Jewish and being gay, a combination as damning as my being born a Catholic and living as an openly gay man.”<sup>10</sup> The perceived conflict between gayness and religion, synagogue and church alike, adds to the alienation from family. Noah recalls: “My father didn’t believe me that I was gay. As if I was making it up, for fuck’s sake. And my mother asked my shrink if it was her fault.”<sup>11</sup>

Love for Patrick further distances Noah from Judaism: “He hadn’t been a practicing Jew since leaving Toronto, probably even before that, with the exception of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when, for some inexplicable reason I questioned only once, he still fasted.... Oddly enough, the Star of David on the chain around his neck disappeared soon after we had sex the first time.”<sup>12</sup> Sex with a non-Jewish man inexplicably makes the Star of David disappear. This move of escape has a double meaning for Noah. It is an act of liberation from the homophobic and xenophobic attitudes of his Jewish community, from its heteronormative and ethnocentric restrictions. It is also a loss of his Jewish identity, a loss that is never complete or final. Noah keeps a mezuzah on his doorpost while insisting that it is a holdover from the previous owners (“He’s never gotten around to removing it”).<sup>13</sup> Noah’s loss of Jewishness is a conscious choice, a choice of his lover over his family: “Listen to me, Patrick, you are not an embarrassment to me. There is no reason for me to hide you from my family. I love you and I’m proud of you. If they can’t deal with my Catholic partner, that’s not your problem, or mine.”<sup>14</sup>

After the death of his father, Noah introduces Patrick to his family. Patrick is reluctant to meet them, especially Noah’s mother: “She hasn’t exactly welcomed us with open arms for chicken soup on Friday night. What makes you think she’s going to warm to me when I show up for her husband’s funeral?”<sup>15</sup> Patrick’s concern is that he is both Noah’s same-sex partner and a non-Jewish partner. An interfaith gay couple faces double rejection.

“Are you telling me your mother’s so hip that she won’t insist we sleep in separate rooms?”

“In the Jewish faith, mourners are expected to abstain from sex.”

“Then wait till your family finds out I’m not even circumcised.”

“I admit there are plenty of strange practices surrounding death in the Jewish religion, as you’ll discover,” he said. “But dropping your drawers to show your

pedigree isn't one of them. We'll cover your foreskin with a yarmulke and no one will be any the wiser."<sup>16</sup>

Kinship and religion intersect in the story's thematic preoccupations with foreignness and familiarity, alienation and home. Patrick is a stranger in Noah's Jewish family, with its "strange practices." The Jewish practices of mourning, which include sexual abstinence, reinforce the motif of alienation, as a reminder of the perceived conflict between Noah's and Patrick's love and Jewish tradition that allegedly condemns sex between males. Patrick's foreskin is another reminder of this tension, this time from an interfaith perspective. Noah's joke reveals an underlying anxiety: is it possible to cover it up with a yarmulke, to bridge the divide between two conflicting religious cultures?

Noah and Partrick transgress Jewish mourning customs and make love, in a liberating and life-affirming move, which stands in contrast with the theme of mourning: "There is nothing life-affirming about a funeral."<sup>17</sup> The funeral of Noah's father represents the dead tradition of his family, a tradition that puts unnecessary limits on living a life of fulfilment and authenticity. Sex with Patrick helps Noah "to rid the presence of death from his old bedroom."<sup>18</sup> Noah and Partrick's lovemaking, their kisses and tears, allow each of them to feel free and human, to feel alive. Their lovemaking also redeems the loss associated with rejection: Noah's skin tastes like home, and Patrick's weight prompts Noah's "secure, protective feeling."<sup>19</sup> Both partners find a new home in each other.

The main obstacle to Noah's family accepting his relationship, however, is not forbidden sexual practices. Nor is it the exogamic character of this relationship. Rather, it is the impossibility of children: "[O]f all the things society could frown on regarding two men in a committed relationship, never having children was the most pressing shortfall."<sup>20</sup> Noah's mother mourns a double loss, her husband and her unborn grandchildren. A central dialogue between Patrick and Mrs. Wolfson reveals her fear of the existential loss of family continuity.

"Look, *boychick*, my son tells me he's very happy with you. You're not a bad looking man, and you strike me as intelligent. I wish I could say the same about Harvey and Lev. They're good providers for my daughters and my grandchildren, but neither one of them looks like he walked off the dust jacket of a Danielle Steele novel. But I get *nachas* from them. I can't ask for more."

"You'd like to say that Noah gives you *nachas*."

"I would. I don't think it's an unreasonable request or assumption to expect pleasure and pride from a child."

"Neither do I. What would it take to get this feeling from Noah?"

"A grandchild to carry on the Wolfson name."

It all came down to legacy, then. It was so simple, so traditional, except that Noah and I couldn't accommodate her wish. Her grandchildren were the keys to her immortality, and Noah had denied her that. At least in her mind.<sup>21</sup>

Stein's story captures the collision between two opposing stereotypes: the gay man as good looking and intelligent, and the Jewish man as a provider who continues family lineage through heterosexual procreation. "The Good Son" represents this opposition, one that operates on the basis of contemporary Jewish Canadian society's principal values and assumptions and consequently pits Judaism against homosexuality. Mrs. Wolfson defines Jewish *nachas* (pride) in terms of procreation and pleasure to be had from children and grandchildren. Patrick sums it up: "I think the hardest thing for her to accept is the failure for you to deliver an heir to carry on the Wolfson name."<sup>22</sup> Noah is aware that his supposed inability to produce grandchildren for his mother is the greatest challenge in their relationship. Moreover, Noah shares this sense of loss: "[T]hat was always my concern, too. I hated the idea that the line ended with me."<sup>23</sup> The significance of lineage is not merely a fantasy of personal immortality, as Patrick believes. The Jewish anxiety about reproduction is also associated with the memory of the Holocaust, "the terrible feelings of loss that come with being a survivor," as Mrs. Wolfson tells Patrick.<sup>24</sup> For Mrs. Wolfson, emphasizing collective survival in the wake of the Holocaust is a common response to its memory, an imperative of Jewish continuity that she views first and foremost as a demographic issue. To Mrs. Wolfson, her son's gay Christian partner, is "as painful a reminder as, well, the tattoos on your relatives' arms."<sup>25</sup>

Eventually, however, Patrick connects with Noah's mother better than her son. It turns out that Patrick is "the good son," the one who rectifies Mrs. Wolfson's disappointment with Noah. Patrick, the gay Christian, brings his Jewish partner Noah back to Judaism. In this way, he redeems the loss of Noah for the Jewish people. Ironically, gay sex with a Christian, the very thing that had alienated Noah from the Jewish community, helps him reconnect with his family and with Judaism. Patrick encourages Noah to say Kaddish for his father:

"Noah, have you given any thought to all that Jewish ritual stuff expected of a son when a parent dies?"

"You mean am I going to say Kaddish for the man who denied my very existence? I don't know."<sup>26</sup>

Patrick's persistence forces Noah's return to Jewish tradition.

"Get up. It's after seven. Noah. Come on. Get up."

"What's the matter?"

"Aren't you going to services this morning? Don't you have to say *kiddush*?"

“Oh Christ. I’m up, I’m up.” ...

“I think you said I had to go to the synagogue for *kiddush*. That’s the prayer over wine. I have to say *Kaddish*. That’s the mourner’s prayer. A slight difference.”

“Hey, what do I know? I’m a goy from The Rock.”<sup>27</sup>

Patrick’s confusion of *kiddush* and *Kaddish* points to the redemptive power of his apparent ignorance of Jewish customs: he replaces the negative meanings of loss, death, and mourning, associated with the *Kaddish*, a prayer recited in memory of the deceased, with a positive context of life and celebration implied in the *kiddush*, a blessing over wine recited on the Sabbath and festivals to mark the time of joy. This comic confusion thus creates a symbolic resonance: Patrick, the gay Christian outsider, inadvertently performs what Stein’s story at large is doing, recasting Judaism in the direction of queer life-affirmation. The outsider’s ignorance of Jewish custom becomes, through Stein’s narrative, a kind of queer midrash: a creative misreading that opens up new possibilities within the tradition, transforming mourning into celebration. Patrick’s efforts to help Noah reconnect to Judaism and his family reveal a struggle for acceptance:

“In a way I was providing approbation, telling him that I thought it was a good thing he was doing, attending services, standing up before his congregation with the leather straps of his *tefillin* binding him closer to his Judaism. When you said *Kaddish* in front of the rest of the congregation you showed what a good son you were.”<sup>28</sup>

Even so, one must not lose sight of the significance of showing “what a good son” one can be despite being gay. It remains an apologetic attempt to please a homophobic community in hope of being tolerated.

This assimilationist move, however, parallels an opposite one: Patrick’s goal of turning Noah’s mother into an ally by sharing in her son’s gay experience and life more generally: “You’ll never have her on your side if you hide it all from her.”<sup>29</sup> Patrick’s efforts at reconciliation represent the hope for another existential transformation—from Noah’s father’s denial of his son’s very existence to Noah’s mother’s eventual participation in Montreal’s Pride celebration.<sup>30</sup> These two trajectories, Noah’s reconnection to Judaism and his mother’s possible acceptance of his sexuality, are interdependent in Stein’s story. With Patrick’s help, the mother and the son begin their journey towards each other with a promise of meeting somewhere halfway.

## **“In My Grandfather’s Shtetl”: Leaving the Old World in K. David Brody’s *Mourning and Celebration***

The historical novel, *Mourning and Celebration*, by K. David Brody, a Montreal-based writer, meditates on the author’s immigration to Canada from the United Kingdom, and on his experience of being Orthodox Jewish and gay. The novel is organized as a dialogue between the author-narrator and his fictional gay ancestor Yankl, a Hasidic yeshiva student in a nineteenth-century Polish shtetl. The motif of loss in *Mourning and Celebration* includes the lost voices of queer Jews throughout history, as the author’s dedication points out: “To the thousands of voiceless souls whose anguish could rise only to heaven.” Hence, the book is intended to reclaim Jewish gay history and collective memory through imagination. The novel does so by projecting contemporary sexual categories and homophobic attitudes on an earlier era. It frames queer experience of the past using modern Western discourses, such as the category of homosexuality based on desires and personality types and its associations with moral panic or ideological conflict, rather than traditional Jewish categories related to same-sex sexual or erotic experience that showed concern with specific sexual practices understood in gendered terms. Therefore, although framed as historical fiction, the novel is presentist; the author conceptualizes his relation to the past through the lens of his own cultural context. In broader terms, it demonstrates common perceptions of the past in today’s Canadian queer Jewish community.

The central theme of Brody’s novel is moving away from “mourning” the queer desire, a loss of queer affective and sexual opportunities associated with the closeted existence in a homophobic society, toward “celebration” of openly gay Jewish life. Brody conceptualizes this movement as both temporal and spatial. It is “the social progress that has been made during my own lifetime” from the constraints of the repressive past toward the freedom of the present.<sup>31</sup> It is also a movement from the closeted life in Europe (nineteenth-century Poland or twentieth-century England), to the personal gay Judaism of the narrator in Canada of the new millennium.

The immigrant experience in Brody’s novel includes his grandparents’ immigration from Rypin, Poland, to London, England, early in the twentieth century, and his own immigration from the United Kingdom to 1960s Montreal: “Casting aside the memories, I realize that I managed to change my life. In 1968, by exchanging my place of birth for Montreal through emigration to Canada, I achieved liberation.”<sup>32</sup> The image of linear temporality is embedded in the very structure of the novel, in the parallel narratives of the author’s autobiography and that of his fictional protagonist Yankl’s storyline. The author’s narratives focus on his relocation from England to Canada, from the repressive family and childhood experiences of homophobia and antisemitism to the adult life of an openly gay Orthodox Jewish man. The fictional storyline depicts a movement from the shtetl to the big cities, from the constraints of Yankl’s

family and community to the freedom of his chosen identity. The conflation of these two narratives thus establishes the starting point in nineteenth-century Europe, and Yankl's extremely oppressive home; it ends in twenty-first-century Canada, presented as a place of messianic freedom. The setting of the novel in traditional Jewish society is meant to indicate the relative failure of the protagonist's efforts at personal liberation: in contrast to the author's current-day experience, Yankl's journey consists of moving from one oppressive community to another.

Yankl, a yeshiva student, falls in love with his study partner, Velvel. Their relationship oscillates between the intimacy of shared Talmud study in the yeshiva and making "passionate love" in the forest.<sup>33</sup> The imagery of a Jewish home symbolically sanctifies Yankl and Velvel's sexual relations. In an episode that takes place immediately after the two boys have sex, Velvel shares with Yankl his mother's Sabbath cookies, as "if they were an intrinsic part of their relationship."<sup>34</sup> The traditional blessing over food, recited by the lovers, functions as a blessing over sex between men. Building on the rabbinic metaphor of food for both Torah and sex, the blessing moves gay sex into the realm of Judaism.<sup>35</sup> By bringing the cookies from his mother's home to the forest, where the boys make love, Velvel replaces the domesticity of the kosher home of Jewish tradition with the wild, open, free, and potentially dangerous gay sexual space.

The ideal same-sex relationship in *Mourning and Celebration* resembles a traditional Jewish family. Yankl and Velvel have sexual relations every Friday afternoon, when the students in the yeshiva are dismissed earlier and the town's entire Jewish community is busy with preparations for the Sabbath.<sup>36</sup> This arrangement of sex and time is symbolic: it alludes to the Jewish custom of linking marital relations to the Sabbath eve.<sup>37</sup> The two lovers also symbolically appropriate the so-called laws of family purity:

They embraced, and remained holding each other. "How can I wait till next Friday?" said Velvel.

"Married couples wait two weeks after the woman's menstruation. We can wait one. Waiting will make it even better next Friday."<sup>38</sup>

The laws of ritual purity contained in Leviticus prohibit sexual relations during menstruation.<sup>39</sup> Jewish legal tradition requires that husband and wife abstain from sexual relations for a period of approximately two weeks monthly. Although the menstruation laws are not applicable to sexual relations between males, Brody metaphorically applies them to Yankl and Velvel's relationship. In this manner, he appropriates major symbols of traditional Jewish marriage and femininity and subverts their historical gender-based meanings.

The love relationship between Yankl and Velvel is interrupted by their neighbors who report the teenage boys to the rabbi of the town, Rabbi Levy. The rabbi separates the lovers, sending Velvel to another yeshiva in Vilna, and attempts to force Yankl into a heterosexual marriage. The antagonism between Yankl and the Jewish community of his shtetl, personified by the figure of Rabbi Levy, leads to Yankl's escape and excommunication. When confronting Rabbi Levy, Yankl's mother communicates it as a loss for the Jewish community: "We lost him. You lost him.... And now you want to remove him from the Jewish world?"<sup>40</sup>

Rabbi Levy's response appeals to the Torah, yet interprets Yankl's departure in modern moralistic terms: "But, Leah, he has sinned, the rabbi said, more sympathetically. His sin is called an abomination."<sup>41</sup> The rabbi interprets the biblical term *to'evah*, commonly translated into English as "abomination," as moral judgement:

"Two young men, from good families pursuing immorality ... what an example to set for the innocent young!"

Mrs. Bradawka came out of her shock. "He's always been such a good boy. Immoral? I cannot imagine my Yankl being immoral."

The rabbi bristled. "It is an abomination. The Torah states that it is an abomination!"<sup>42</sup>

The rabbi's language ("immorality," "an evil temptation, an abomination," a response to Yankl's non-normative desire rather than his transgressive behaviour) draws on modern Western psychological categories that had not yet emerged in traditional Jewish society in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe.<sup>43</sup> The rabbi speaks as if "the homosexual" as a distinct type of person already exists, whereas premodern Jewish law focused on specific sexual acts, not on sexual identities or orientations.<sup>44</sup> There are no known historical records of excommunication for same-sex activities in Jewish communities. These activities were traditionally treated just as other transgressions of Jewish law rather than an ideological or political threat that would require an extreme measure such as excommunication.<sup>45</sup> The trope of "abomination" associated with "immorality" suggests appropriation of modern homophobic discourses and the moral panic of the twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> Whereas the biblical prohibition and its traditional interpretation in Jewish law exclusively refer to specific sexual practices, Rabbi Levy understands it in modern psychological terms of sexual feelings. The rabbi decides to excommunicate Yankl because of Yankl's non-normative desire, "an evil temptation, an abomination."<sup>47</sup> Brody's rabbi, in other words, speaks the language of twentieth-century homophobia rather than the language of the nineteenth-century shtetl. This anachronism, however, is itself meaningful: it registers the contemporary Jewish author's own negotiation with homophobia, and the difficulty of imagining a pre-modern Jewish relationship to same-sex sexuality that does not already speak in the idiom of the present. The novel is, in this sense, less

a historical fiction than a meditation on the contemporary moment, using the past as a mirror. Rather than describing the shtetl's sexual categories, it reveals the author's own experience of rejection by a Jewish community that speaks the language of modern moral panic.

Following the rabbi's instructions, Yankl's parents pronounce their gay son dead and perform traditional mourning rituals—*keriyah* (tearing one's clothing), Kaddish, and shiva—which are symbolic acts of rejection. Yankl, too, performs a traditional ritual of Jewish mourning, but to him this ritual denotes a different kind of loss: it expresses his grief due to separation from his lover, Velvel.<sup>48</sup>

Yankl expresses his longing for his lost lover in a series of literary reworkings of traditional Jewish liturgy. Whereas traditional Jewish liturgical poetry uses love metaphors to describe spiritual experience, yearning for a union with the divine, Yankl uses these religious songs, which refer to the relationship between Israel and God, to express his feelings for Velvel. For instance, "Yedid Nefesh" ("Kindred Spirit," or literally "Beloved of the Soul"), a mystical poem of longing for union with the divine included in the traditional Jewish prayer book, in Yankl's mouth becomes a song about separation from his human male lover.<sup>49</sup> Significantly, when love is no longer a metaphor, a prayer becomes a queer space. The poets whose works shaped the Jewish prayer book imagined a same-sex love affair between Jewish male worshippers and a male God, a metaphor that runs in Jewish tradition from the Hebrew Bible through rabbinic Midrash and medieval Kabbalah.<sup>50</sup> The queer potential is already present in the traditional text of the prayer, a site where same-sex erotic longing, desire, and spiritual striving are intertwined. Yankl adopts this traditional homoeroticism, but instead of the metaphorical erotic relationship with God he speaks of his actual relationship with a physical male lover, thus turning the traditional homoerotic subtext of Jewish prayer into an explicitly queer ritual and creating a queer midrash on a traditional text.

Yankl's excommunication corresponds to his choice of a new life. Yankl leaves the yeshiva and his hometown and cuts all ties with his family and community. Pursuing an "even more radical break with his past identity," he changes his name to Jonathan, identifying with the biblical Jonathan who loved David.<sup>51</sup> Brody's queering of Jewish tradition in *Mourning and Celebration* serves to separate the protagonists from mainstream Jewish community, to chart their departure away from family and society, and to create a radically new form of Jewish religious experience rooted in Orthodox practices and values. In other words, Brody's interventions imagine the creation of a new kind of Jewish identity.

Yankl, now Jonathan, spends the rest of his life cherishing his love for Velvel and traveling across Poland and Lithuania. He is forced to leave each of his new towns to

escape yet another forced heterosexual marriage. Brody presents his protagonist's separation from the Jewish community with the symbolism of the Havdalah, the Jewish ritual of separation between the sacred and the profane, the Sabbath and the weekdays.<sup>52</sup> Just as the Havdalah ceremony takes place every week, at the end of the Sabbath, Yankl's separation from Jewish community recurs in every new place that he visits, as he moves from town to town.

During his travels, Yankl enters into a platonic romantic relationship with his new study partner, Herschel, who is heterosexual and married to a woman. After Herschel dies in an accident, Yankl has a brief love affair with a gay German army officer, Hermann. Despite Yankl's separation from the Jewish community, the Jewish religious context is definitive in his intimate relationships with men. The erotic power of shared spirituality is so crucial that it can turn friendship between a gay man and a straight man into a romantic relationship, a love affair. Yankl/Jonathan defines his friendship with his straight study partner Herschel as "almost a love affair without any physical element."<sup>53</sup> To him, the relationship with Herschel is "the best thing ... since Velvel."<sup>54</sup> In contrast, Yankl defines his sexual relationship with Hermann, a Prussian officer, as merely friendship: "He unashamedly admitted to himself that what he had felt for Velvel was love; what he felt for Hermann was friendship."<sup>55</sup> Apparently, it was not love because it lacked the element of shared Torah study and shared Jewish religiosity. These two components are indicative of the queer Jewish world that Brody creates in his novel. This world can only take shape through migration, through a constant change, loss, reclamation, and transformation of identities.

### **"Not Tradition but History": Queering "Russian" – Canadian Judaism in David Bezmozgis's "Minyan"**

The short story "Minyan" by David Bezmozgis was first published in the magazine *Prairie Fire* in 2002 and later included in the author's collection *Natasha and Other Stories* (2005). Bezmozgis, a Toronto-based writer who immigrated to Canada from Riga in 1980 at the age of six, depicts a small community of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union that meets in a one-room Orthodox synagogue in a B'nai Brith building for seniors in Toronto. The main characters, Herschel and Itzik, share an apartment, but they are more than roommates, or so everyone thinks (this ambiguity is essential to the story). Intersections between Jewish, immigrant, and queer experiences, particularly in the immigrant communities from the former Soviet Union, are underrepresented in literature and scholarship. Bezmozgis's story "Minyan" is an important step towards filling this gap in contemporary fiction. "Minyan" shows that the issues of belonging for former Soviet Jews in Canada can be complicated by queer difference—as intra-Jewish difference and intra-Soviet Jewish difference, in particular.

“Minyan” depicts a small Orthodox synagogue that, just as many others, struggles to get ten Jewish men for a minyan, the traditional quorum for communal prayer and services. Zalman, the synagogue’s *gabbai*, a person in charge of the services, can use his connections with the building manager to make sure that minyan participants get apartments in the building when they become available (typically when a tenant dies). This interdependency of the minyan and the social housing waiting list constitutes the context in which the storyline develops. This plot line disrupts stereotypical images of Jewish life common in the other texts. It creates a literary situation in which Jewish religious practice and the most material concerns of immigrant life such as housing, aging, survival, are inextricably bound together. The minyan is not simply a spiritual community but an economy of survival, in which religious attendance functions as currency for a scarce and literal resource. This convergence of the sacred and the pragmatic gives Bezmozgis’s story its distinctive moral texture and provides the context in which homophobia operates. As we shall see, the question of whether Herschel is allowed to stay in Itzik’s apartment after Itzik’s death is not only about the recognition of queer relationships but also a practical question about an old immigrant person’s housing security. Bezmozgis situates queer Jewish identity not in abstraction but within the specific conditions of post-Soviet immigrant life in Toronto.

The story is narrated from the perspective of the youngest member of a Jewish immigrant family, Mark. Mark’s grandfather “had no hobbies aside from the synagogue,” and so the young man accompanies his grandfather to the synagogue in a nostalgic turn to his roots.<sup>56</sup> In Mark’s view, the synagogue is a pastime for old Jews. Mark tells us: “Most of the old Jews came because they were drawn by the nostalgia for ancient cadences, I came because I was drawn by the nostalgia for old Jews. In each case, the motivation was not tradition but history.”<sup>57</sup>

In the synagogue, Mark meets two elderly men: Herschel, a Holocaust survivor from a Lithuanian shtetl, and Itzik, a cab driver from Odessa. Mark soon finds out that Herschel and Itzik live together as a couple. Herschel and Itzik represent the intersections of English, Russian, and Yiddish languages and cultures: “Herschel spoke to me in English. Itzik, when he spoke, spoke to me in Russian. They spoke Yiddish to each other.”<sup>58</sup> This essential linguistic and cultural mix defines the identity of Soviet-born Canadian Jews, who are variously integrated into Canadian society. Herschel and Itzik represent specific types of identity and experience. Yiddish is the old Jews’ mother tongue, which Mark associates with a disappeared Jewish life. He can neither comprehend nor access it without the mediation of Russian or English cultures. However, for Mark, Itzik’s Russian is also the language of the past; it is of little relevance for Mark, whose adult life takes shape in Canada. Herschel’s communication in English thus represents a conscious embrace of the Canadian present as a place where Jewish history and traditions will live on.

“Minyan” illustrates post-Soviet Jewry’s complicated relationship with Jewish religion. The story depicts the estrangement of older generations of Soviet-born Jews from their traditions—a function of life in an atheistic state that repressed Jewish religious practice. “I couldn’t believe that, in a building whose entire population consisted of old Jews, they couldn’t find ten men, but my grandfather insisted that it was true,” says Mark.<sup>59</sup> Some of those old Jews, however, rediscovered Judaism on Canadian soil. This is true for Itzik who left the Soviet Union in 1979.<sup>60</sup> Itzik “came to Canada already an old man and had become successful [...]. In his last years he rediscovered his Jewish roots. For two years he never missed a Saturday service.”<sup>61</sup> In a similar vein, Itzik discovers or rediscovers his queerness through his relationship with Herschel.

Herschel, however, stands in contrast to these trends. Herschel was born in a shtetl. He survived Auschwitz and moved to Canada in 1950. His Jewishness and gayness are essential parts of his life. He is a Jewish scholar without a title: “There was no rabbi and so the responsibilities for the service were divided between Zalman, my grandfather, and Herschel.”<sup>62</sup> Mark’s grandfather calls Herschel “a very intellectual man ... a professor.”<sup>63</sup> In essence, Herschel is a queer Jewish intellectual who helps preserve traditional practices for the sake of his Jewish community. This community does not recognize him yet cannot survive without him.

Although Herschel is a Holocaust survivor, he is not a fighter. He is a traditional Jewish dreamer, a soft *yeshiva bochur* in love with books: “He was an intellectual, a man of ideas. Not a practical man.”<sup>64</sup> Herschel is not successful in the conventional sense. His gift lies in his ability to see “a possibility of joy” in the world with “neither mission nor meaning,” and to understand the humanity of every person.<sup>65</sup> “He could understand all of them. That was his problem, he said, he could understand everybody.”<sup>66</sup> Herschel is the only neighbour who invites Mark’s lonely and isolated grandfather “to come over for tea, to read some Yiddish poetry, to play cards, to go for a walk in the park.”<sup>67</sup> Paradoxically, kindness can be a problem—the reader witnesses this as the story develops.

Herschel’s capacity for care and love manifests in his relationship with Itzik. Sadly, this relationship alienates him from the rest of his post-Soviet Jewish community: “The following Saturday I noticed how, when Itzik coughed, Herschel placed a hand on his shoulder. I also noticed an undercurrent of disapproval emanating from the back of the room.”<sup>68</sup> The signals of rejection are everywhere: men hesitate to shake Herschel’s hand after his Torah reading; he and Itzik are the last to receive a cup of wine at the Kiddush; others in the synagogue barely acknowledge Herschel when he is speaking.<sup>69</sup> The subtle expressions of affection between the two men elicit homophobic reactions from their community. Bezmogis registers homophobia through gesture, spacing, and omission rather than through explicit statement. The

men “hesitate” rather than refuse; Herschel and Itzik are considered “last” rather than excluded. The community’s rejection is enacted through the choreography of synagogue ritual (the handshake after Torah reading or the distribution of wine at Kiddush) which makes the homophobia all the more telling: the very practices that are supposed to enact Jewish solidarity are the ones through which Herschel is marginalized. Community and exclusion are two sides of the same ritual coin.

Both Itzik and Herschel are widowers. Herschel moved in with Itzik after his wife’s passing:

So Herschel moved into Itzik’s apartment. Maybe Itzik did it as a mitzvah, because everyone knew he didn’t need the money. But then again, a man loses a wife, another man loses a wife—this is an unimaginable loneliness. Who knows who is helping who? ... And by then they had been living together for two years. They move in here and people talk. Two men in a one-bedroom apartment.<sup>70</sup>

The two men face homophobic attitudes in their minyan (“people talk”). The nature of Herschel and Itzik’s relationship is never defined in the story, however. It might be sexual or platonic, but because it escapes categorization, it is queer and normative at once. This ambiguity is a literary strategy operating through the story’s complicated narratorial voice: we hear the voices of various older immigrant community members, sometimes named and sometimes unknown, integrated into the main narrator’s voice of Mark, a young, secular, Canadian-born observer. This double outsider-insider’s perspective creates a multivocality of the text. It also highlights the ambiguity in representation of a queer relationship. Mark is admitted to the minyan’s world by virtue of his Jewish identity, but he does not fully comprehend what he observes. His reticence about naming or defining Herschel and Itzik’s relationship mirrors his own partial understanding. He reports what he sees—the single bed, the hand on the shoulder, Herschel’s shaking hands at the Torah—without drawing explicit conclusions, leaving the reader to perform the close reading that the narrator withholds. This indirection enacts, at the level of narrative form, the same ambiguity that the community enacts in its response to the two men.

Since both men had wives, neither Herschel nor Itzik are openly gay. Yet they do not hide their relationship. They are not ashamed of it. They share an apartment, and they share a bed (there is only one bed in the apartment, as Mark notices when he helps Herschel fix a lightbulb). They express their love and affection for each other openly. The story offers parallels between this relationship and a heterosexual marriage, such as in this instance: “A man loses a wife, another man loses a wife.”<sup>71</sup> Herschel’s and Itzik’s relationship with one another has for them the same value and meaning as the relationships each of them had with their wives.

The main events of the story revolve around Itzik's illness and death. These events reveal the degree of closeness between Herschel and Itzik. This closeness manifests itself through Jewish rituals and customs, such as the public Torah reading in the synagogue: "When it was Herschel's turn to approach the Torah he asked Zalman to say a prayer for Itzik. He pledged eighteen dollars to the synagogue and stood solemnly, his hands shaking, as Zalman asked God to deliver Itzik from his illness and provide him with a full recovery."<sup>72</sup> As traditionally required, Herschel requests a prayer for Itzik's recovery through the person leading the services at the time Herschel is called to read from the Torah. As Zalman prays, Herschel's body language reveals his love for Itzik in the most profound way: "What could he say that could compare with the eulogy of his wretched back?"<sup>73</sup>

Bezmozgis's depiction of Hanukkah celebrations shows the estrangement of most of the community members from Judaism: "Most of the others sat in their coats, their lips gleaming with oil and specked with sugar, waiting for the opportunity to leave."<sup>74</sup> A celebration of a Jewish holiday reveals the participants' indifference to Jewish rituals or Jewish tradition as such. Their Jewishness is reduced to the desire for the free donuts brought by Zalman's wife. For Herschel, however, the Hanukkah donut acquires new meaning:

Herschel asked if he could have a second donut to take upstairs to Itzik. Not that Itzik could eat it. It was hard to imagine, Herschel said, such a man. A real Odesa character, right out of the pages of Babel. He had even grown up on Babel's street. As a young boy Itzik had carried watermelons for Babel's uncle. What hadn't he done in his life? At thirteen he was working two shifts in a munitions factory. At seventeen he was at the front. He fought the Germans, he survived the Communists, he had an appetite for the world—and not, he didn't even have the strength to eat a donut.<sup>75</sup>

Herschel's request for a second donut is irrational by the logic of consumption but entirely legible by the logic of love: what matters is the offering, the act of carrying a symbol of communal Jewish celebration to a dying man who can no longer participate in community. The Hanukkah donut is a holiday food, and Herschel's act transforms the communal holiday ritual into a private, intimate gesture—a domestic version of the minyan itself. This is Bezmozgis's queer midrash: Jewish tradition is relocated, carried upstairs to a one-bedroom apartment where two men have built their own version of Jewish life. It also serves as a reminder of Itzik's past strength and passion for life, his "appetite for the world"—qualities that Herschel, who spent his own life in the world of ideas, appreciates in his partner.

Herschel openly expresses his love at Itzik's funeral. He is confident and proud about his relationship, even though he doesn't define or categorize it:

Facing the room, Herschel composed himself and spoke clearly. Itzik was my last and dearest friend. Hitler killed my family and I never had children. When my wife died I thought I would be alone until God decides it was finally time to take me also. That Itzik was my dear friend these last years was the blessing of my old age. Without him I don't know what would have become of me. He was a wonderful man. He was an honest man. He was a strong man. He said not one word he didn't mean. I will miss him like I would miss my right arm.<sup>76</sup>

Herschel's words—"I will miss him like I would miss my right arm"—allude to the classical expression of Jewish mourning for Jerusalem, borrowed from the Psalms and carried over to Jewish liturgy and ritual: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither" (Psalms 137:5). This line has become an archetypal expression of Jewish mourning for the lost homeland, referring to the very first Jewish experience of displacement in the Babylonian exile. By invoking it for a lost partner rather than a city or country, Herschel retrieves the tradition's unfulfilled possibilities and redirects them toward queer love—the kind of personal intimacy that helped two Jewish men survive the displacement of immigrant life. Herschel's speech at Itzik's funeral also echoes David's lament for Jonathan in the Hebrew Bible: "I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan, you were most dear to me, your love was wonderful to me more than the love of women" (2 Samuel 1:26). Many works of modern critical biblical scholarship read this piece of biblical poetry, along with the narratives of David and Jonathan, as an example of same-sex love in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>77</sup> The relationship between Herschel and Itzik thus represents a queer midrash framed with traditional Jewish imagery and presented as one of Jewish tradition's most ancient forms.

Itzik's death sparks a fight for his apartment: "Everyone knew someone on the waiting list."<sup>78</sup> People wonder whether Herschel will be allowed to stay there? The fight for Itzik's apartment goes hand in hand with the homophobia Jews of Bezmogis's story brought with them from the Soviet Union: "Just because this one shared a bed with another man he should be rewarded with an apartment? In Russia he would have been given ten years!"<sup>79</sup> The homophobic arguments against Herschel's right to stay in the apartment draw on the validity of a heterosexual marriage and the proscription of homosexual partnerships: "They had nothing against Herschel, but what right did he have to the apartment? Was he Itzik's wife? Is this the kind of world we were living in?"<sup>80</sup> Jewish tradition in this story functions as a means of securing an apartment by participating in the synagogue's minyan. It is a way of getting into Zalman's good graces:

On Saturday morning more than twenty men appeared for the service. Almost as many women settled in behind the partition. Despite the air of sinister motivations, the room was transformed and Zalman walked through the aisles with a sense of purpose. He threw himself into the service with exceptional vigor. He sang out page numbers in Russian and Yiddish. He called the new attendees up

to the Torah. Everyone made an effort at making an effort. Zalman. The new attendees. Voices battled each other for distinction. Herschel sat as usual beside my grandfather. He sang loud, his voice mingling with those of the others. The synagogue swelled with beautiful and conflicting prayer. God in His heaven was left to sort it out.”<sup>81</sup>

Yet the prayer includes all the voices, loving and selfish, genuine and false, those of the victim and those of the perpetrators. The moral distinctions are left to “God in His heaven,” to determine, whereas for Zalman the continuity of Jewish tradition takes priority.

The ending of the story gives voice to Zalman, the man who oversees the minyan. In this story, Zalman’s perspective on Herschel and Itzik’s relationship represents the position of Jewish tradition, and perhaps that of the whole of Jewish history. This position is ambivalent; it is at once condemnatory and compassionate. Zalman affirms Herschel and Itzik’s love through non-action: “For the week Herschel sat shivah Zalman refused to make any decisions.”<sup>82</sup> Herschel sits shivah for Itzik, performing a mourning ritual that is traditionally reserved for close family members of the deceased, such as a spouse. By respecting Herschel’s shiva for Itzik, Zalman tacitly acknowledges the validity of their relationship. He assigns it the status of a Jewish marriage. Confiding in Mark, Zalman says:

“I have my own opinions, but I am in charge of the synagogue. Do you think I liked the business with Itzik and Herschel? You shouldn’t speak ill of the dead, but Itzik was a difficult man. And there are people who say they know very well why Herschel has no children. But for two years they came. I never said a word. Because my job is to have ten Jewish men.... And they say, With so many good Jews who need apartments, why should Herschel be allowed to stay? This is not my concern.... They should know I don’t put a Jew who comes to synagogue in the street. Homosexuals, murderers, liars, and thieves—I take them all. Without them we would never have a minyan.”<sup>83</sup>

On the one hand, Zalman disapproves of gay relationships. He places “homosexuals” in the same category with “murderers, liars, and thieves.” On the other hand, Zalman recognizes that Herschel is essential for the very existence of the minyan, which can stand for Judaism at large. There is this too: Zalman is willing to err on the side of compassion, leaving the final determination to God.

Zalman’s compassionate homophobia is close to the positions taken in many Orthodox Jewish communities. Additionally, the association of homosexuals with criminals stems from the long-established criminalization of homosexuality in the Soviet Union. In my own conversations with Soviet-born Jews, especially those from older generations, I have often witnessed a trope linking same-sex relations with criminal activities or imprisonment.

Herschel has no children, which proves to Zalman that he is homosexual. In “Minyan,” the irony lies in the fact that it is childless Herschel who enables the continuity of Jewish tradition. It is Herschel who makes the minyan possible. Furthermore, Herschel, a gay man, is part of the “old Jewish life” that Mark was longing for and made a point of searching out.<sup>84</sup>

Bezmozgis’s “Minyan” was turned into a film in 2021. The director, Eric Steel, relocates the story to New York’s Brighton Beach. In the film version, the young protagonist, renamed David, turns out to be gay himself. The film thus offers two storylines. One follows David’s platonic friendship with Herschel and Itzik, where he witnesses the love relationship between two older, closeted gay men. The other storyline depicts David’s own sexual explorations and love affairs in the gay community. David has relationships with younger men who are openly gay—particularly with Bruno, a bartender in a gay bar. Significantly, whereas David’s sexual encounters with other young gay men help him explore and navigate his sexuality, the love between two older and closeted gay men, Herschel and Itzik, teaches him the values of care and commitment. Both storylines, however, are concerned with their gay characters’ struggles with homophobia and the macho masculinity ingrained in post-Soviet Jewish communities. The young man’s efforts to negotiate his Jewish and gay identities—in conflict with his own father’s homophobia, for instance—manifest in reading habits that move between the Torah and the gay literary canon, including the works of James Baldwin.

## Conclusion

The works of fiction discussed in this essay represent different cultural trajectories associated with queer immigrant and migrant experience within the diverse Canadian Jewish community. Noah in Brian Stein’s short story is a native Canadian. The immigrant roots of his Jewish family have been lost and forgotten; they are never mentioned. Nevertheless, Noah’s migration within Canada, from Toronto to Montreal, acquires a significance that parallels K. David Brody’s motives and experience of moving to Montreal from the United Kingdom, as well as his protagonist Yankl’s migration across Poland. Additionally, whereas Brody’s novel portrays an imagined Eastern Europe of the Jewish past, even if it more resembles modern Western society rather than the historical shtetl, David Bezmozgis’s short story represents the Jews who left Eastern Europe (Lithuania, Ukraine, or Romania) to settle in Canada. The focus of Bezmozgis’s “Minyan” are the first-generation Jewish immigrants who build lives in Toronto, grounded in their Soviet or post-Soviet cultural baggage/heritage. As with Herschel and Itzik’s reliance on Yiddish or Russian, the Jewish past is immediate and alive. Of note, too, is that although the residents of the B’nai Brith building and the attendees of its small synagogue may differ from the mainstream Canadian Jewish community, they are no less representative of the Canadian Jewish community than the Wolfsons in “The Good Son.” Remarkably, all the works

discussed in this essay present queer Jewish experience to the reader indirectly, not through eyes of the Jewish gay man but from the perspective of a third figure. This universal narrator's perspective represents this experience as part of the mainstream culture and in connection to other types of experience, whether it is a non-Jewish gay partner in Brian's story, a presumably heterosexual observer in Bezmozgis's story, or a distant descendant in Brody's novel. In each case, the queer experience tests the limits and the possibilities for acceptance by disrupting cultural assumptions, reinventing lives, and by relating to Jewish history and tradition in unique ways, including a queer midrashic reinterpretation of traditional Jewish texts, ritual, and liturgy.

Stein's short story "The Good Son" meditates on sexuality and multiculturalism in a distinctly Canadian context, depicting migration within Canada, between cities, provinces, cultures, and religions. Noah's relationship with his family and with Judaism is rendered through Patrick's non-Jewish perspective. The Jewish community depicted in Stein's fictional work is invested in reproduction and therefore heterosexuality. Queer relationships are seen as precluding Jewish continuity. The queer loss is redeemed through Noah's reconnection to Judaism because of his relationship with Patrick, his non-Jewish gay partner.

In K. David Brody's historical novel *Mourning and Celebration*, the relationship between the mainstream Jewish community of the nineteenth-century Polish town of Rypin, a projection of the author's personal experience of growing up in an Orthodox Jewish home in Britain, and the homosexual protagonist, Yankl (later Jonathan), an imagined gay ancestor of the author, is one of mutual rejection. Yankl's family, neighbours, friends, teachers, and rabbis cannot grant him acceptance. In Brody's novel, Jewish men with same-sex desires are doomed to suicide or to loveless, unhappy marriages. Yankl represents a different response to the heteronormativity and homophobia of this traditional Jewish society—active and conscious resistance that includes separation from mainstream Jewish community and creation of an alternative, gay Jewish culture through the queering of Jewish religious texts, rituals, and symbols. Yankl/Jonathan constructs a personal gay Judaism by queering biblical and rabbinic texts, as well as traditional Jewish liturgy and ritual, just like queer Jews in today's Canada. In this way, by reformulating his same-sex attractions as inherent in Jewish intellectual and religious life (albeit outside of his Jewish community), he counters the rejection that he experiences in mainstream traditionalist Jewish society.

In contrast to the works of fiction discussed above, the short story "Minyan" by David Bezmozgis mentions neither sexual activities nor desires, nor identities. Instead, it focuses on what Jonathan Boyarin calls "immigrant intimacy."<sup>85</sup> Like the other works discussed in this article, Bezmozgis's text explores complex intersections of same-sex relationships, queer love, Jewish tradition, and Canadian Jewish community through the immigrant/migrant experience. One of the story's underlying themes is the interrogation of notions of loss and return to the self and to the past through

an interplay of identities and lived experience. Bezmozgis's "Minyan" complicates the relationship between Jewish tradition and Jewish history by meditating on the intersections of religion, immigration, sexuality, and aging, as well as on English, Russian, and Yiddish cultural trajectories. Herschel and Itzik's relationship produces new meanings surrounding Jewish tradition, rituals, and community; these meanings are queer and normative at once.

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### 1

Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (University of California Press, 1997). Boyarin's work has helped to shape the growing field of Jewish queer studies, which includes, among others, works such as *Queer Jews*, edited by David Shneer and Caryn Aviv (Routledge, 2002); *Queer Theory and the Jewish Question*, ed. Daniel Boyarin et al. (Columbia University Press, 2003); and Noam Sienna, *A Rainbow Thread: An Anthology of Queer Jewish Texts from the First Century to 1969* (Print-O-Craft, 2019).

### 2

Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 151–85.

### 3

As Foucault shows in his *History of Sexuality*, homophobia is a modern phenomenon related to the emergence of the category of sexuality at the turn of the twentieth century. Seidman effectively demonstrates that homophobia was generally absent in male homosociality of traditional Ashkenazic culture depicted in the works of Jewish writers and that, instead, Jewish masculinity was calibrated with "varieties of heteronormativity and shifting modes

of patriarchy." Naomi Seidman, *The Marriage Plot: Or, How Jews Fell in Love with Love, and with Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2016), 16 and 312n22.

### 4

Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective* (Fortress Press, 2004); Saul Olyan, "'And with a Male You Shall Not Lie the Lying down of a Woman': On the Meaning and Significance of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (1994) 179–206.

### 5

Theodore Jennings, *Jacob's Wound: Homoerotic Narrative in the Literature of Ancient Israel* (A&C Black, 2005); Stephen Moore, *God's Beauty Parlor: And Other Queer Spaces in and around the Bible* (Stanford University Press, 2001); Lori Lefkowitz, *In Scripture: The First Stories of Jewish Sexual Identities* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010); Howard I. Schwartz (formerly Howard Eilberg-Schwartz), *God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism* (Beacon Press, 1995).

**6**

Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Duke University Press, 2010), 30, 37, 50.

**7**

Charles Liebman and Steven M. Cohen, *Two Worlds of Judaism: The Israeli and American Experiences* (Yale University Press, 1990); Riv-Ellen Prell, "American Jewish Culture through a Gender-Tinted Lens," in *Judaism Since Gender*, ed. Miriam Peskowitz and Laura Levitt (Routledge, 1997), 79–80.

**8**

Brian Stein, "The Good Son," in *Kosher Meat*, ed. Lawrence Schimel (Sherman Asher Publishing, 2000), 95–115.

**9**

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**10**

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**12**

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**13**

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**14**

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**15**

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**16**

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**18**

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**19**

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**20**

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**22**

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**23**

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**24**

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**25**

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**26**

Ibid., 98.

**27**

Ibid., 112.

**28**

Ibid., 114.

**29**

Ibid., 113.

**30**

Ibid.

**31**

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Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 62b and Yoma 18b.

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**Canadian Jewish Barometer /  
Baromètre juif canadien 2026**

Robert Brym and Rhonda Lenton

**Canadian Jewish Barometer 2026:  
Pressures on Canadian Jews and their Responses<sup>I</sup>**

## Abstract

*This report is based mainly on a survey of 3,062 adult Canadian residents, including oversamples of Quebecers, Muslims, and Jews. The survey was in the field from January 15 to February 11, 2026. It focuses on how the attitudes of non-Jews toward Jews and Israel have changed since early 2024 and how that change has affected Canada's Jews. Its main findings are as follows: (1) Non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Jews and especially toward Israel have become significantly more negative since 2024, (2) The percentage of individuals with negative perceptions of Jews and Israel varies in explicable ways across different groups and population categories, (3) In 2026 as in 2024, the correlation between attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel is moderate, so attitudes toward Israel are still important to understanding the spread of antisemitism, (4) Canadian Jews are most inclined to believe that attitudes toward Jews and Israel have grown more negative because of media coverage criticizing Israel's actions during the war in Gaza and the way Israel actually prosecuted the war, (5) Canadian Jews are considerably more fearful of their position in Canadian society than they were in 2024 and believe that the situation will grow worse in the near future, (6) A rift has grown between Jews who believe the government of Israel should not be criticized insofar as it lacks viable strategic alternatives and Jews who believe the government of Israel should be criticized for adopting strategies that prevent compromise with the Palestinians and violate traditional liberal-democratic principles on which the Jewish state was founded. Based on these findings, the report recommends strategies for mitigating negative sentiment toward Jews and Israel and reducing polarization in the Jewish community.*

## Résumé

*Ce rapport repose principalement sur un sondage mené auprès de 3 062 résidents adultes canadiens, incluant un suréchantillonnage de personnes québécoises, musulmanes et juives. Le sondage s'est déroulé du 15 janvier au 11 février 2026. Il porte sur l'évolution de l'antisémitisme depuis début 2024 et sur ses répercussions sur la population juive canadienne. Ses principaux constats sont les suivants : 1) l'attitude des Canadiens non juifs envers les Juifs, et plus particulièrement envers Israël, est devenue nettement plus négative depuis 2024 ; 2) le pourcentage de personnes ayant une perception négative des Juifs et d'Israël varie de façon explicable selon les différents groupes et catégories de population ; 3) en 2026 comme en 2024, la corrélation entre l'attitude envers les Juifs et l'attitude envers Israël est modérée, de sorte que les attitudes envers Israël sont toujours importantes pour comprendre la propagation de l'antisémitisme. 4) les Juifs canadiens sont majoritairement enclins à croire que la dégradation de l'opinion publique à l'égard des Juifs et d'Israël est due à la couverture médiatique critiquant les actions d'Israël durant la guerre à Gaza et la*

*manière dont ce conflit a été mené ; 5) les Juifs canadiens sont beaucoup plus inquiets pour leur place dans la société canadienne qu'en 2024 et pensent que la situation va s'aggraver prochainement ; 6) Un fossé s'est creusé entre les Juifs qui estiment que le gouvernement israélien ne devrait pas être critiqué tant qu'il ne dispose pas d'alternatives stratégiques viables et ceux qui pensent qu'il devrait l'être pour avoir adopté des stratégies empêchant tout compromis avec les Palestiniens et violant les principes libéraux et démocratiques traditionnels sur lesquels l'État juif a été fondé. À partir de ces constats, le rapport recommande des stratégies visant à atténuer les sentiments négatifs envers les Juifs et Israël et à réduire la polarisation au sein de la communauté juive.*

## The End of Canadian Jewry's Golden Age

The golden age of Canadian Jewry stretched from the early 1960s to the early 2020s. During that period, Jewish Canadians experienced substantial upward mobility and increasing integration into the social, economic, and political mainstream. These developments occurred in the broader context of Canada's official adoption of multiculturalism in 1971 and expanding opportunities in higher education, business, and professional employment. Today, however, most Canadian Jews feel less secure than they did during the golden age because antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes are more widespread and often accompanied by antagonistic behaviour toward Jews.

According to B'nai Brith's annual audit of antisemitic incidents, the number of antisemitic acts started to rise quickly in the early 2000s, coincident with the second intifada and the founding of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement.<sup>2</sup> Yet, until 2023, many scholars paid insufficient attention to the significance of this trend. In 2012 the late Irving Abella wrote that "anti-Semitism is no longer ... a major concern for Canadian Jews."<sup>3</sup> In 2018, Morton Weinfeld agreed that "Jewish life in Canada is a success story."<sup>4</sup> In 2021, historian David S. Koffman suggested that Canada is perhaps better for the Jews than any other diaspora country, past or present.<sup>5</sup>

One reason for this blind spot is that we lacked adequate attitudinal data. The first nationwide survey assessing the level and distribution of attitudes toward Jews and Israel, the relationship between the two sets of attitudes, and Jewish Canadians' responses to their new reality was conducted four months after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023.<sup>6</sup> By that time many members of the Canadian Jewish public had begun to think that the golden age was ending.

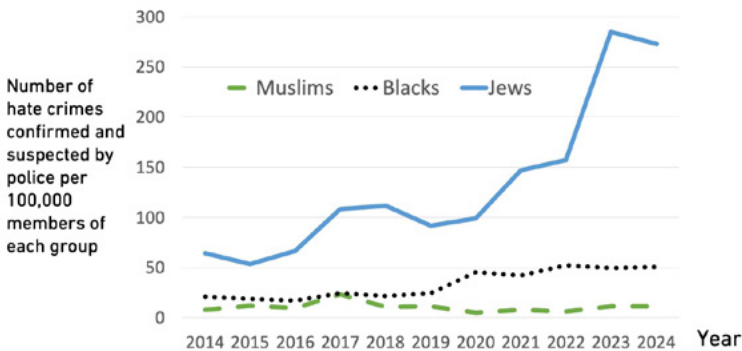
In the wake of the attack and the ensuing Israel-Hamas war, spontaneous and organized hostility toward Jews in their neighbourhoods, places of worship, schools, businesses, and workplaces spread. Activists marched into Jewish neighbourhoods, harassing Jews. Anti-Zionist encampments sprang up on twenty-five universi-

ty campuses. Activists expressed hostility toward the existence of Israel and toward Jewish students, faculty members, and administrative staff who disagreed with their ideas, rhetoric, and tactics.<sup>7</sup> Public schools became sites of organized hostility against Jews, with guns fired at several school buildings.<sup>8</sup> Arsonists set fires to synagogues. Physical assaults of Jews became more common.

In 2025, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in the United States conducted a survey of more than one hundred countries to discover the percentage of people with an “elevated level of negative attitudes toward Jews” residing in each country.<sup>9</sup> It turns out that 8 percent of Canadian adults—2.6 million people—reach that standard. Since there are about 321,000 Jewish adults in Canada, this means there are arguably eight adult antisemites for every adult Jew in the country.

The annual number of police-recorded hate crimes per hundred thousand members of a group is a reliable indicator of the impact of hate crime on a group. In 2024, there was one anti-Jewish hate crime for every 366 Jews in Canada (Figure 1).<sup>10</sup> To place this number in perspective, there was one anti-Black hate crime for every 1,961 Blacks and one anti-Muslim hate crime for every 9,091 Muslims in that year. Because the impact of hate crime is more severe for Jews than for any other ethnic, racial, or religious group in Canada, Jews are the only group in the country that now requires surveillance cameras, protective fencing, bollards, and security guards at its places of worship, schools, and other community institutions.

**Figure 1**  
Police-reported hate crimes per 100,000 members of the three groups experiencing most hate crimes, Canada, 2014–2024



## What and How the Barometer Measures

### What are this study’s research questions?

Four sets of questions drive our inquiry. First, how can we characterize non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Jews and Israel; how, if at all, have these attitudes

changed over the past two years; and how are these attitudes distributed across different religious, ethnic, racial, age, and political–ideological groups? Second, what specific attitudes and actions do Canadian Jews consider antisemitic; how often do they experience such attitudes and actions; and how worried are they about their future in this country? Third, what is the relationship between attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel; how has this relationship changed since 2024; and why do many non-Jews view this relationship differently than many Jews do? Fourth, what policies might reduce unfavourable sentiment toward Jews and Israel?

Our answers to these questions are far from definitive. However, we base them mainly on data from a large web panel survey of Canadian adults that was appropriately weighted to match key population characteristics. We also refer to the results of other recent surveys that touch on the subjects of this report and a broader research literature to establish context for some of our findings and arguments. Accordingly, we believe we are able to provide useful and reliable insights regarding the pressures facing Canadian Jews, their current state of mind, their near-term prospects, and ways they might deal with these pressures.

### **Sampling, weighting, and analysis**

Our survey sampled four categories of Canadians. The general population sample consists of 3,062 adults who reside in Canada. In nineteen of twenty random samples of this size, the maximum margin of error would be  $\pm 1.8$  percent.<sup>11</sup> The sample of 3,062 individuals includes three oversamples. The Quebec oversample is composed of 1,208 adults who reside in Quebec. In nineteen of twenty random samples of this size, the maximum margin of error would be  $\pm 2.8$  percent. The Muslim oversample consists of 514 adults who identify as Muslim. In nineteen of twenty random samples of this size, the maximum margin of error would be  $\pm 4.3$  percent.<sup>12</sup> The Jewish oversample is composed of 626 adults who identify as Jewish by religion or identify with no religion but identify as Jews by ethnicity. In nineteen of twenty random samples of this size, the maximum margin of error would be  $\pm 3.9$  percent.

To maximize representativeness, we weighted the general population sample and the oversamples by age, gender, educational attainment, and annual household income using data from the most recent Canadian census. We also weighted the general population subsample and the Jewish oversample by province of residence, and the Jewish oversample by identification as Jewish according to (1) religion or (2) ethnicity and no religious identification. Finally, we weighted the Jewish oversample by religious denomination, with data on this variable taken from the *2018 Survey of Jews in Canada*, the only available source on this subject.<sup>13</sup> When the oversamples are folded into the general population sample for purposes of analysis, they are reweighted to correspond to their representation in the general population. For more information on the representativeness of the general population sample and the oversamples, see Appendix A.

We wrote this report for an educated non-specialist audience. It should therefore be regarded as preliminary, with multivariate analyses to appear later in professional social science journals. Here we rely on descriptive statistics to tell our story.<sup>14</sup>

## Canadian Attitudes toward Jews

### How did attitudes toward Jews change between 2024 and 2026?

The “Barometer 2026” survey measures non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Jews in the same way as “Jews and Israel 2024: A Survey of Canadian Attitudes and Jewish Perceptions.”<sup>15</sup> In the earlier survey, non-Jews were presented with a set of eight statements about Jews. Some statements were positively worded. For example: “Jewish people should be admired for their resilience in the face of adversity.” Others were negatively worded. For instance: “Jewish people don’t care what happens to anyone but their own kind.” We asked respondents to indicate whether they “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree” with each statement. We repeated this procedure for the 2026 survey. Table 1 lists responses to the statements for both years. (See Appendix B for 2026 Quebec-only results.)

Sentiment toward Jews varies substantially. At the negative extreme, 24 percent of non-Jewish Canadians “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree” that “Jewish people don’t care what happens to anyone but their own kind.” At the positive extreme, 68 percent of non-Jewish Canadians “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree” that “Jewish people should be admired for their resilience in the face of adversity.” For responses to negatively worded statements, the average increased by 5 percentage points between 2024 and 2026. For responses to positively worded statements, the average fell by 10 percentage points between the two survey years. These changes are statistically significant at standard levels, indicating that negative attitudes toward Jews increased over the past two years.

To illustrate change between surveys years, we constructed a composite scale by reverse-coding positive items, averaging responses, and rounding to the closest integer. The resulting scale is cohesive, meaning that each statement is highly correlated with the other statements.<sup>16</sup> The scale ranges from one to six, with six indicating the most negative attitudes towards Jews and one indicating the most positive attitudes. Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents at each point in the scale for 2024 and 2026.<sup>17</sup>

The large decline in the percentage of respondents with the most positive attitudes toward Jews is striking. The percentage scoring one fell 8 percentage points between 2024 and 2026 while the percentage scoring two fell 15 percentage points. Meanwhile, the percentage scoring three rose 15 percentage points and the percent-

age scoring four rose 8 percentage points. These changes are statistically significant. (The percentage scoring five and six did not change significantly between 2024 and 2026.) Note also that the share of “don’t know” responses increased significantly between 2024 and 2026, as Table 1 shows.

**Table 1**

**“The following statements reflect notions that some people have regarding Jewish people. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements,” non-Jewish Canadian adults, 2026 (2024 in parentheses), in percent**

|  | “Slightly agree,”<br>“agree” or<br>“strongly agree” | “Slightly disagree,”<br>“disagree” or<br>“strongly disagree” | Don’t<br>know/ no<br>answer | Total     |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Jewish people have too much power in our country today.  | 21 (13)   | 50 (54)  | 29 (23)                     | 100 (100) |
| Jewish people don’t care what happens to anyone but their own kind.  | 24 (16)   | 56 (68)  | 20 (17)                     | 100 (100) |
| Jewish people talk too much about the Holocaust.   | 16 (13)   | 53 (68)  | 31 (19)                     | 100 (100) |
| Jewish people are largely to blame for the negative consequences of globalization.   | 11 (4)  | 55 (76)  | 33 (20)                     | 100 (100) |
| It is appropriate for opponents of Israel’s policies to boycott Jewish-owned businesses in Canada.   | 20 (16)   | 51 (67)  | 29 (17)                     | 100 (100) |
| Jewish people should be admired for their resilience in the face of adversity.   | 68 (73)   | 12 (9)   | 20 (18)                     | 100 (100) |
| Jewish people should be included in the policies that Canadian universities are implementing to increase equity, diversity, and inclusivity in all aspects of university life. | 53 (58)   | 20 (18)  | 28 (24)                     | 100 (100) |
| Jewish people should be admired for their achievements despite discrimination against them.  | 67 (74)   | 13 (8)   | 19 (18)                     | 100 (100) |
| Average  | 57 (67)***  |  |                             |           |
| Average  | 17 (12)***  |  |                             |           |

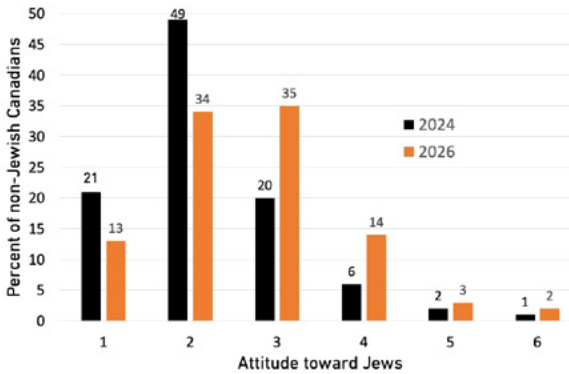
Note: Shaded cells indicate positive response to negatively worded statements and negative responses to positively worded statements. Unshaded cells indicate positive responses to positively worded statements and negative responses to negatively worded statements. Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

The picture that emerges from these data is one of substantial change in Canadian public opinion over a period of twenty-four months. Twenty of those months coincide with the 2023–2025 Israel– Hamas war. This circumstance leads us to hypothesize that the shift in public opinion is associated with mainstream Jewish organizations and many non-Jewish Canadians moving in opposite directions in their attitudes

toward the war. Mainstream Jewish organizations tended to express solidarity with Israel and eschew criticism of its actions in Gaza. Many non-Jewish Canadians disagreed with the way Israel prosecuted the war. As we note in the next section, 54 percent of non-Jewish Canadians considered the war “an example of genocide.” Media coverage often reinforced their opinion. As one observer notes, “the more that Canadian and American Jews suggest that their identities are nourished or challenged by the State of Israel, the more that non-Jewish Canadians might, unjustly, blame Jews for Israel’s misdeeds.”<sup>18</sup> In this case, non-Jews fail to distinguish between Jewish attitudes toward the existence of the Jewish state (over which there is virtual unanimity) and Jewish support for particular Israeli state policies (over which there is considerable division of opinion).

**Figure 2**  
Non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Jews, 2024 and 2026



Note: Scores of one to three are on the positive side of the scale. Scores of four to six are on the negative side.

## How do attitudes toward Jews vary across social and demographic variables?

### Group membership

Non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Jews vary across a host of social and demographic factors. To illustrate this point, we first examine how attitudes vary by membership in six non-Jewish groups: racialized Canadians, left-leaning Canadians, university students, Francophone Quebecers, Muslim Canadians, and all other Canadians. Because individuals self-identify in various ways, they may appear in more than one group.

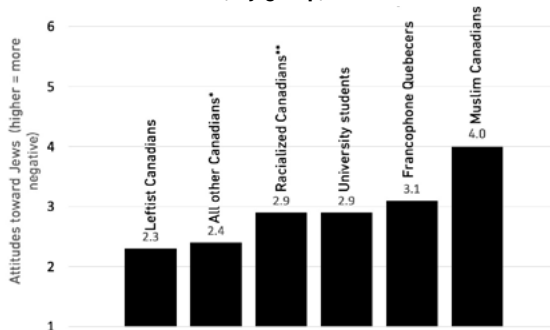
Racialized Canadians include individuals who specified their main ethnic identity as Indigenous Canadian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Latin American, Arab or other Middle Eastern other than Israeli, and other Asian. To measure ideological position, we presented respondents with the following question: “People sometimes place political opinions on a left-right spectrum. How would you characterize your political opinions on this spectrum? Please use a scale from 1, meaning ‘extremely left,’ to 7,

meaning ‘extremely right,’ with the mid-point, 4, meaning ‘in the political centre.’” We categorized respondents selecting 1, 2, or 3 as left leaning.

Figure 3 shows the average attitude toward Jews for individuals in all six groups. It is important to recognize that variation underlies every average. That is, all groups are heterogeneous. They include some individuals who score low and some who score high on our scale. Averages only reflect a group tendency.

That said, a score over 3.5 indicates that more than one-half the group has negative attitudes toward Jews. The average varies from 2.3 for left-leaning individuals to 4.0 for self-identified Muslims. A between-group difference of at least 0.2 on the six-point scale of attitudes toward Jews indicates a statistically significant difference at conventional thresholds, so there is no statistically significant difference between racialized Canadians and university students or between left-leaning individuals and all other Canadians.

**Figure 3**  
**Non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Jews, by group, 2026**



\*Excludes Muslims, leftists, Francophone Quebecers, racialized Canadians, and university students.

\*\* Includes individuals whose first ethnic identity is Indigenous Canadian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Latin American, Arab or other Middle Eastern other than Israeli, and other Asian.

Muslims, Francophone Quebecers, university students, and racialized Canadians score significantly higher than the “all other Canadians” group. Left-wing Canadians score lowest on the scale, although the difference between them and the “all other Canadians” group is not significant.

We discuss left-wing Canadians and Muslims later. Here we cite research literature that points to factors responsible for the relatively high negative sentiment toward Jews on the part of Francophone Quebecers, racialized Canadians, and university students.

### ***Francophone Quebecers***

For nearly three-quarters of a century, anxiety about demographic decline, linguistic and cultural assimilation, and underrepresentation in white-collar private sector employment have fuelled nationalism among Francophone Quebecers.

Surveys show that negative sentiment toward immigrants and minorities is no stronger in Quebec than in the rest of the country—as long as newcomers and members of minority groups embrace the French language and integrate well into Quebec's secular culture.<sup>19</sup> Quebec's language and *laïcité* policies, the latter of which strictly separate state from religion, are designed to help overcome resistance to this embrace. These policies ban the display of religious symbols in state institutions, compel immigrant children to study in French schools, demand that French dominates commercial signs and packaging, and so on.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, negative attitudes toward religious groups that tend to resist secularism and cultural assimilation—especially Muslims, but also Sikhs and Jews—are common among Francophone Quebecers, although by no means universal.

### ***Racialized minorities***

Irrespective of whether one measures economic inequality by differences in poverty rates, occupational attainment, or earnings, the research literature reveals intergenerational convergence with White Canadians for some racialized groups and persistent intergenerational inequality for others. For example, by the third generation, the poverty rate difference recedes substantially for Indian, Chinese, and Japanese immigrants but persists for Black, Latin American, Arab, and West Asian immigrants despite considerable advances in their educational attainment.<sup>21</sup> Persistent economic deprivation is also evident among Indigenous Canadians. Such inequalities, due principally to labour force discrimination, are often associated with widespread resentment against economically privileged groups. Resentment is especially strong among members of the second and later generations of underprivileged racialized groups because they have been educated in a school system that emphasizes equality of cultures as a societal norm.<sup>22</sup> Historically, Jews have been a target of such resentment because of their notable economic success. They remain so today.<sup>23</sup>

### ***University students***

In recent decades, anti-racism movements originating in the US have strongly influenced Canadian universities, which have adopted equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) policies.<sup>24</sup> Among other things, these policies involve (1) increasing the diversity of students attending university; (2) rewriting curricula so they increasingly reflect the intellectual contributions of underprivileged minorities; and (3) modifying hiring criteria so new jobs increase the representation of these groups. EDI policies and anti-racist sentiment are more deeply entrenched in some fields than in others, with education, sociology, and the humanities leading the charge.<sup>25</sup> In general, however, it seems that EDI policies may encourage students to develop a two-class image of the ideal society in which a subordinate class obtains privileges now enjoyed by a dominant class, resulting not just in equality of opportunity but equality of outcome. Whatever the merits and weaknesses of this vision, it fosters antagonism between students labelled underprivileged and those labelled privileged. Again, Jews are often

negatively evaluated because they are commonly seen as privileged—not just in the larger society but in the university, where they constitute a disproportionately large number of students and faculty members in some disciplines, such as medicine.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Positive versus negative attitude groups***

We now divide respondents into those who express positive and negative attitudes toward Jews, showing how the two groups differ along multiple social and demographic dimensions. The percentage differences between groups indicate the extent to which the dimensions differentiate the two groups. The greater the number of asterisks at the end of each line, the less likely the finding is to have occurred by chance. Lines in Table 2 lacking an asterisk indicate no statistically significant difference between the groups.

People with negative attitudes toward Jews are most significantly likely to identify as Muslims, attend religious services at least several times a year, place themselves on the right of the ideological spectrum, reside in Quebec, identify as men, be part of the 18–34 age cohort, and to have answered the questionnaire in French. Members of the group with positive attitudes toward Jews are most significantly likely to be on the left of the political spectrum, to believe that there is “some” or “a lot” of antisemitism today, and to be part of the 65–plus age cohort.

**Table 2**  
**Canadians with positive and negative attitudes toward Jews by various social characteristics, 2026, in percent**

|   | Positive group | Negative group    |
|---|----------------|-------------------|
| Percent Muslim  | 1              | 12***             |
| Percent who attend religious services apart from weddings, funerals, etc., at least several times a year. | 26             | 42***             |
| Percent Quebec resident   | 18             | 35***             |
| Percent completed questionnaire in French   | 16             | 33***             |
| Percent on the left of the ideological spectrum   | 35             | 16***             |
| Percent on the right of the ideological spectrum  | 31             | 50***             |
| Percent “some” or “a lot” of antisemitism today   | 78             | 60***             |
| Percent male  | 48             | 68***             |
| Modal age cohort (% in parentheses)   | 65+ yrs. (29)  | 18-34 yrs.** (37) |
| Percent union member  | 19             | 28**              |
| Percent who would vote Liberal  | 46             | 35**              |
| Percent who would vote Bloc Québécois   | 4              | 10**              |
| Percent Christian   | 52             | 46                |
| Percent who would vote Conservative   | 26             | 26                |
| Percent who would vote NDP  | 7              | 5                 |

\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$

Less significantly, members of the positive group are more likely to vote Liberal, while members of the negative group are more likely to be union members and vote Bloc Québécois. The groups do not differ significantly in terms of the percentage of self-identified Christians in the group, the percentage who vote Conservative, or the percentage who vote for the left-leaning New Democratic Party.

### ***Age and ideology***

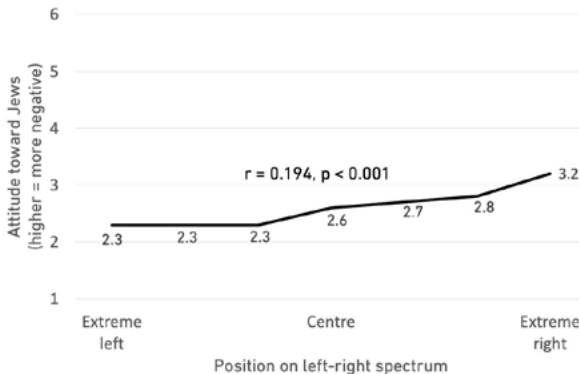
Quantitative social science research has paid considerable attention to the effect of age and ideology on attitudes toward Jews. For that reason, we illustrate these effects in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Research conducted in the US supports the “horseshoe theory” of antisemitism. The theory holds that the most antisemitic US residents occupy the hard left and the hard right of the political spectrum, while the least antisemitic US residents occupy the political centre.<sup>27</sup> As a result, when graphed, the relationship between position on the ideological spectrum and attitudes toward Jews forms a U-shape.

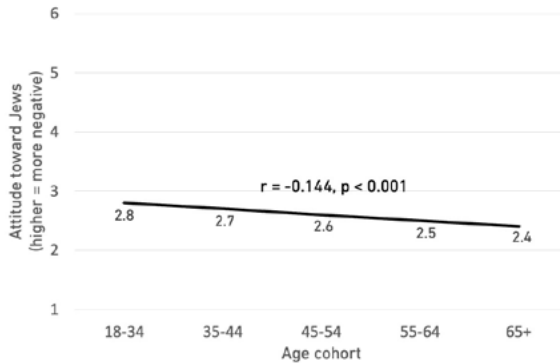
“Barometer 2026” data do not support the horseshoe theory. Figure 4 plots respondents’ self-identified position on the left-right spectrum against attitudes toward Jews on our six-point scale. For clarity, we display trends in the data rather than an “x” for each respondent.<sup>28</sup>

Attitudes become more negative as one moves from left to right on the ideological spectrum, rising from 2.3 on the six-point scale for those on the hard left to 3.2 for those on the hard right. The correlation between ideological position and attitudes toward Jews is weak but statistically significant. Note that these results are based on the self-perception of non-Jewish Canadians. As we show later, most Canadian Jews do not perceive left-leaning Canadians as having relatively positive attitudes toward Jews.

**Figure 4**  
Non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Jews, by position on the left-right spectrum, 2026



**Figure 5**  
**Non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Jews, by age cohort, 2026**



Unlike the association between ideological position and attitudes toward Jews, the association between age and attitudes towards Jews in Canada is similar to that in the US and other countries. Figure 5 again displays the trend in the data rather than an “x” for each respondent. In Canada, attitudes toward Jews become more positive as one moves from younger to older age cohorts, falling from 2.8 on our 6–point scale for eighteen– to thirty–four–year–olds to 2.4 for respondents sixty–five years of age and older. Again, the association is weak but statistically significant. Over time, relevant conditions may change in a way that makes this association disappear, but if relevant conditions do not change, then as young Canadians age, and older Canadians pass away, the future may be less hospitable toward Canadian Jews.

### **How is antisemitism reflected in Canada’s education system?**

To varying degrees, the expression of negative attitudes toward Jews is evident in all Canadian institutions. We conclude this section by focusing on the education system because it touches the lives of nearly all Canadians and has recently been the subject of more antisemitism research than have other institutions in Canadian society. We first summarize findings from a recent survey on antisemitism in K–12 (kindergarten to grade 12) schools and then review recent research on the university scene.

#### ***Antisemitism in K–12 schools***

Ontario is home to about 55 percent of Canada’s approximately sixty–four thousand school–age Jewish children. A 2025 survey of parents of Jewish schoolchildren in that province found widespread antisemitism in K–12 schools.<sup>29</sup>

Recognizing that a single incident perceived as antisemitic may exhibit a variety of characteristics—blanket condemnation of Jews because of their alleged negative attributes, Holocaust denial, denial of the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, and so on—the survey asked parents, “In your opinion, what was it about the incident that made it antisemitic? Please select as many of the following options as apply.”

Respondents were presented with a list of six options that were then divided into: expressions of negative attitudes toward Jews *per se* and expressions of negative attitudes toward Israel.

More than 40 percent of incidents involved the expression of negative attitudes toward Jews—statements like “Hitler should have finished the job.” The remaining 60 percent expressed negative attitudes related to Israel—statements like “you’re a Zionist baby-killer.” Significantly, many incidents combined negative statements about Jews *and* Israel, making it clear that the supposed line between anti-Jewish and anti-Israel sentiment is often blurred if not absent in the minds of many schoolchildren.

Nearly one in six incidents were initiated or approved by a teacher or involved a school-sanctioned activity. Moreover, about 60 percent of reported incidents were not investigated by school authorities, classified as not antisemitic, or resulted in a recommendation that the victim attend school virtually or be removed from the school permanently.

### ***Antisemitism in universities***

Since October 7, 2023, pro-Palestinian/anti-Zionist university students have staged countless demonstrations, media appearances, class and convocation disruptions, and appeals to various university constituencies. However, the series of university events that seem to have most attracted the public’s attention took place in the spring and summer of 2024, when pro-Palestinian students set up temporary residence on the grounds of twenty-five university campuses across the country.

A tiny percentage of university students populated the encampments. In many cases they numbered only a dozen or two. The largest encampment, at the University of Toronto, included no more than two hundred students, 0.2 percent of the student body. Even these numbers exaggerate because some encampment participants were not university students. Some encampments, especially McGill University’s, received funding and other assistance from outside sources.<sup>30</sup>

A survey of more than fifteen hundred Canadians in May 2024 found that 16 percent of the country’s adults supported the encampments, 40 percent opposed them, and 44 percent lacked an opinion one way or the other. The strongest supporters were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four, lived in urban areas, located themselves on the left of the political spectrum, tended to be non-White, were least likely to say they were “proud to be a Canadian,” and were most likely to have negative attitudes towards Jews.<sup>31</sup>

A forthcoming report on a 2026 survey of Canadian university students report deepens our understanding of anti-Zionist protesters in the country’s universities. It

substantiates the existence of a wide rift between non-Jewish university students and Canadian Jews in perceptions of what constitutes antisemitism (on the latter, see Table 8, below).<sup>32</sup>

## Canadian Attitudes toward Israel

### How did attitudes toward Israel change between 2024 and 2026?

Two main findings regarding non-Jewish Canadian attitudes toward Israel emerge from the “Barometer 2026” survey. First, as was the case in the “Jews and Israel 2024” survey, non-Jewish Canadians are much more negative in their attitudes toward Israel than in their attitudes toward Jews. Second, strong and moderate supporters of Israel are fewer in percentage terms than in 2024, while the percentages of weak supporters, detractors, and individuals who are uncertain of their attitudes toward Israel are substantially larger. Table 3 and Figure 6 lead us to these conclusions.

Table 3 lists responses to ten statements that tap attitudes toward Israel and form a cohesive attitudinal scale.<sup>33</sup> Five of the statements are positively worded. For instance: “Israel is the only democratic country in the Middle East.” Five are negatively worded. For example: “Israel is an apartheid state.” These statements appear in both the “Jews and Israel 2024” survey and the “Barometer 2026” survey. For each statement, we asked respondents to indicate whether they “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “slightly agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree.” (See Appendix B for Quebec-only results.)

Responses vary widely in the degree to which they express anti-Israel sentiment. However, on average for the five negatively worded statements, a 2 percentage point drop took place between 2024 and 2026. This result is within the margin of error and therefore not statistically significant. On the other hand, on average for the five positively worded statements, we observe a 14 percentage point decline over the two survey years. This is a substantively and statistically significant change.

Figure 6 shows how this change is reflected in the six-point scale of attitudes toward Israel that we created following the same procedures applied earlier in constructing the scale of attitudes toward Jews. It displays the percentage of respondents at each point on the scale for 2024 and 2026. Like the scale of attitudes toward Jews, scores less than 3.5 are on the positive side of the scale, scores greater than 3.5 are on the negative side. A group score over 3.5 indicates that more than one-half the group has negative attitudes toward Jews.

Figure 6 displays a combined 16 percentage point decline in the two most positive positions on the scale (one and two) between 2024 and 2026. Over the same period, it registers an increase of 7 percentage points in the weakest positive position (three),

a combined 12 percentage point increase in the weak negative and moderately negative positions (four and five), and no change in the extreme negative position (six). Clearly, over the two years under examination, the non-Jewish Canadian public has grown substantially more critical of Israel.

**Table 3**

**“The following statements reflect notions that some people have regarding Israel. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements,” non-Jewish Canadian adults, 2026 (2024 in parentheses), in percent**

|   | “Slightly agree,”<br>“agree” or<br>“strongly agree” | “Slightly disagree,”<br>“disagree” or<br>“strongly disagree” | Don’t<br>know/ no<br>answer | Total     |
|---|---|--|-----------------------------|-----------|
| The war Israel is conducting in Gaza is an example of genocide.   | 54 (49)   | 15 (37)  | 30 (14)                     | 100 (100) |
| Israel is an apartheid state.   | 27 (34)   | 17 (33)  | 56 (32)                     | 100 (100) |
| The Israelis are more responsible than the Palestinians are for the past three years of violence in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza | 35 (32)   | 22 (37)  | 43 (31)                     | 100 (100) |
| Zionism is a form of racism.  | 35 (38)   | 14 (28)  | 51 (35)                     | 100 (100) |
| I support the Palestinian-led BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) movement.  | 24 (21)   | 28 (44)  | 48 (35)                     | 100 (100) |
| Israel is the only democratic country in the Middle East.   | 25 (38)   | 24 (30)  | 51 (32)                     | 100 (100) |
| There is no justification for Palestinian suicide bombers targeting Israeli civilians.  | 65 (77)   | 8 (11)   | 27 (11)                     | 100 (100) |
| In general, Israeli leaders are sincere in their pursuit of peace with the Palestinians.  | 19 (26)   | 46 (54)  | 35 (20)                     | 100 (100) |
| The Jewish people are entitled to a state of their own in Israel.   | 51 (63)   | 12 (16)  | 37 (20)                     | 100 (100) |
| The Canadian government should not impose sanctions on Israel.  | 30 (43)   | 30 (36)  | 41 (21)                     | 100 (100) |
| Average   | 29 (43)***  |  |                             |           |
| Average   | 30 (32)   |  |                             |           |

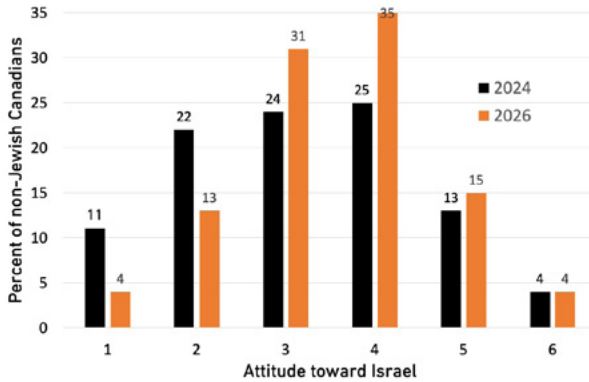
Note: Shaded cells indicate positive response to negatively worded statements and negative responses to positively worded statements. Unshaded cells indicate positive responses to positively worded statements and negative responses to negatively worded statements. Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

The foregoing data concern respondents who expressed opinions on Israel. Returning to Table 3, we note that the percentage of sampled individuals who answered “don’t know” or did not respond to a statement, already high in 2024, increased markedly in 2026. On average across the ten statements about Israel, about 23 per-

cent of respondents in 2024 and 40 percent in 2026 replied “don’t know,” while another 2 percent in both years did not respond at all. Sociologists usually interpret “don’t know” responses literally, and we see no reason to interpret them differently in the present case. While some non-Jewish Canadians developed increasingly negative attitudes toward Israel between 2024 and 2026, others apparently grew more uncertain about their attitudes.

**Figure 6**  
**Non-Jewish Canadians’ attitudes toward Israel, 2024 and 2026**



Note: Scores of one to three are on the positive side of the scale. Scores of four, five, and six are on the negative side.

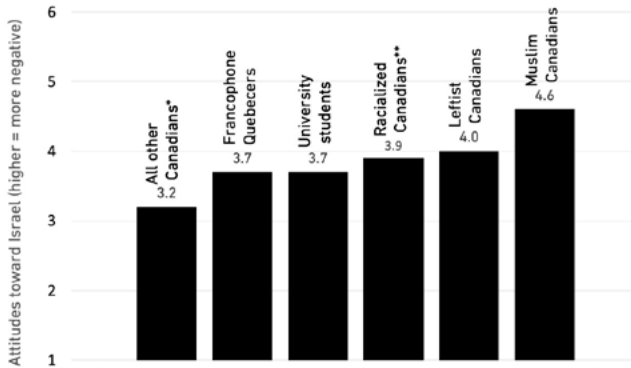
Finally, while 82 percent of individuals hold positive attitudes toward Jews in 2026 (Figure 2), just 48 percent hold positive attitudes toward Israel (see Figure 6). When we asked directly, “What is your overall opinion of the State of Israel?” 27 percent of respondents selected “very favourable” or “mostly favourable,” 40 percent selected “mostly unfavourable” or “very unfavourable,” and 33 percent selected “don’t know” or didn’t answer the question. And when we asked, “In the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians, which side do you sympathize with more, Israelis or Palestinians?” nearly 24 percent of non-Jewish Canadians said they sympathize more with Palestinians and almost 12 percent said they sympathize more with Israel. Notably, however, more than 64 percent of respondents were about equally divided between the “both equally,” “neither one,” and “don’t know/no answer” response options.

### **How do attitudes toward Israel vary across social and demographic variables?**

#### ***Group membership***

Like attitudes toward Jews, attitudes toward Israel vary widely across different non-Jewish groups. Figure 7 displays average scores on our six-point scale of attitudes toward Israel for racialized Canadians, left-leaning Canadians, university students, Francophone Quebecers, Muslim Canadians, and all other Canadians. Since people identify with multiple groups, some individuals appear in more than one group.

**Figure 7**  
**Non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Israel, by group, 2026**



\*Excludes Muslims, leftists, Francophone Quebecers, racialized Canadians, and university students.

\*\* Includes individuals whose first ethnic identity is Indigenous Canadian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Latin American, Arab or other Middle Eastern other than Israeli, and other Asian.

All groups score significantly higher, that is, significantly more negative, than they do on the scale of attitudes toward Jews. The average attitude toward Israel varies from 4.6 for self-identified Muslims to 3.2 for all Canadians not found in any of the other groups. A between-group difference of at least 0.2 on the six-point scale indicates a statistically significant difference. A score over 3.5 indicates that more than one-half the group has negative attitudes toward Israel. Thus, most individuals in all groups apart from “all other Canadians” have negative attitudes toward Israel.

With one exception, the order of groups in terms of their attitudes toward Israel is the same as the order of groups in terms of their attitudes toward Jews. The exception: non-Jews who place themselves on the left of the political spectrum. Among the six groups under consideration, non-Jewish left-leaning individuals have the least negative attitudes toward Jews and the second most negative attitudes toward Israel. We reflect on this finding, which some readers may regard as anomalous, later in this report.

### ***Positive and negative attitude groups***

Dividing respondents into those who express positive or negative attitudes toward Israel, we now demonstrate that the two groups differ on a range of characteristics (Table 4). In Table 4, the greater the number of asterisks at the end of each line, the greater the statistical significance of the difference between the positive and negative group. Lines lacking an asterisk indicate no statistical difference between groups.

**Table 4**  
**Canadians with positive and negative attitudes toward Israel by various social characteristics, 2026, in percent**

|   | Positive group | Negative group    |
|---|----------------|-------------------|
| Percent Christian   | 62             | 40***             |
| Percent Muslim  | 1              | 8***              |
| Percent who would vote Conservative   | 38             | 15***             |
| Percent who would vote NDP  | 4              | 10***             |
| Percent on the left of the ideological spectrum   | 12             | 45***             |
| Percent on the right of the ideological spectrum  | 46             | 21***             |
| Percent male  | 62             | 52**              |
| Percent who would vote Liberal  | 39             | 48**              |
| Modal age cohort (% in parentheses)   | 65+ yrs. (34)  | 18-34 yrs. (35)** |
| Percent Quebec resident   | 19             | 26*               |
| Percent completed questionnaire in French   | 18             | 25*               |
| Percent who attend religious services apart from weddings, funerals, etc., at least several times a year. | 33             | 27                |
| Percent union member  | 19             | 23                |
| Percent who would vote Bloc Québécois   | 5              | 8                 |
| Percent "some" or "a lot" of antisemitism today   | 76             | 72                |

\* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* =  $p < 0.001$ .

The groups are most significantly different in terms of religious composition, political party preference, and self-identified position on the ideological spectrum. Members of the positive group are more likely to identify as Christians, vote Conservative, and place themselves on the right of the ideological spectrum. Members of the negative groups are more likely to identify as Muslims, vote NDP, and place themselves on the left of the political spectrum.

Less significantly, members of the positive group are most likely to identify as male and to be in the sixty-five-plus age cohort. Members of the negative group are most likely to be in the eighteen- to thirty-four age cohort.

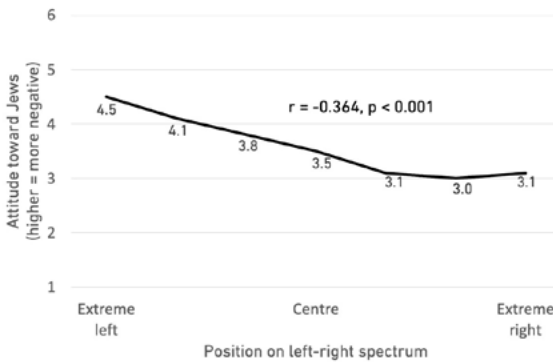
Still less significantly, members of the negative group are more likely to be Quebec residents and to have completed the questionnaire in French. The two groups do not differ significantly in terms of the likelihood of their attending religious services frequently, belonging to a union, voting for the Bloc Québécois, or perceiving "some" or "a lot" of antisemitism today.

### ***Age and ideology***

Earlier we saw that non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Jews become significantly more negative as one moves from the left to the right of the ideological spec-

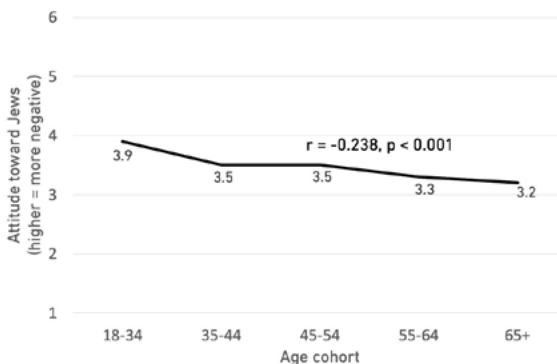
trum. We now add that the opposite is true with respect to attitudes toward Israel. Attitudes toward Israel become significantly more *positive* as one moves from left to right, and the correlation between the two variables is moderate and significant (Figure 8). Put differently, non-Jewish Canadians on the ideological left have more positive attitudes toward Jews and more negative attitudes toward Israel than do those on the ideological right. We explore this apparent paradox below. For the moment, we note merely that Figure 4 and Figure 8 suggest that attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel are distinct in the minds of most non-Jewish Canadians, although not, as we shall see, in the minds of most Canadian Jews.

**Figure 8**  
**Non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Israel, by position on the left-right spectrum, 2026**



No such complexities are involved when we inspect the relationship between age cohort and non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Israel (Figure 9). Younger Canadians have more negative attitudes toward Israel and Jews than do older Canadians. The correlation between these two variables is weak but significant. Changing geopolitics and other factors may alter this relationship over time, but all else the same, there are no grounds for optimism in this finding.

**Figure 9**  
**Non-Jewish Canadians' attitudes toward Israel, by age cohort, 2026**



## The Relationship between Attitudes towards Jews and Israel

A recurring question in public and scholarly debates concerns the relationship between attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel. While some commentators treat these attitudes as equivalent, others emphasize their distinctiveness. Survey data provide a means of assessing the empirical relationship between the two.

In the “Jews and Israel 2024” survey, the correlation between attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel was 0.339, at the low end of moderate. The correlation between these variables in the “Barometer 2026” survey is 0.366. The results for the two surveys are both statistically significant, suggesting that attitudes toward Israel remain important to understanding the spread of antisemitism. At the same time, the fact that the correlation is moderate in both years suggests that many Canadians continue to distinguish between their attitudes toward Jews and their attitudes toward Israel. The data do not support the claim that the two attitudes are interchangeable.

However, the strength of the relationship between attitudes toward Jews and toward Israel varies across social groups. Table 5 compares correlations for selected groups of non-Jewish Canadians polled in the “Barometer 2026” survey. The correlations range from strong for Muslims to moderate for Francophone Quebecers to low for left-leaning and “all other Canadians,” the latter category excluding Francophone Quebecers, left-leaning individuals, Muslims, racialized Canadians, and university students. We hypothesize that the stronger the correlation, the less likely individuals are to distinguish Jews from Zionists.

**Table 5**  
**Correlations (r) between attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel, non-Jewish Canadians, selected groups, 2026**

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Muslim Canadians                 | 0.503*** |
| Francophone Quebecers            | 0.352*** |
| All other Canadians <sup>†</sup> | 0.297*** |
| Left-leaning Canadians           | 0.285*** |

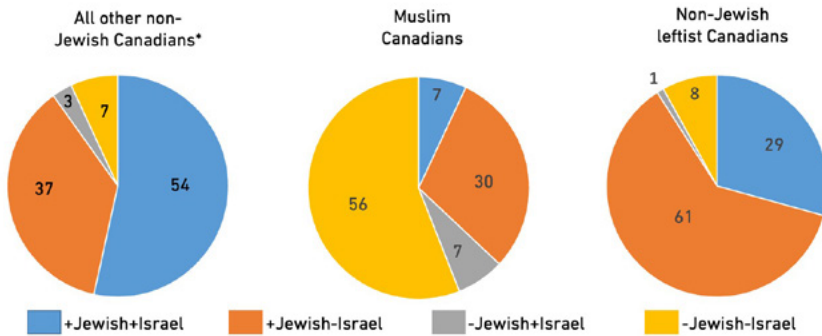
<sup>†</sup> Excludes Francophone Quebecers, left-leaning individuals, Muslims, racialized Canadians, and university students.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The correlations indicate the degree to which the two sets of attitudes are associated but they do not tell us how the attitudes are distributed. What percentage of individuals in each group have positive attitudes toward both Jews and Israel, negative attitudes toward both Jews and Israel, positive attitudes toward Jews and negative attitudes toward Israel, and negative attitudes toward Jews and positive attitudes toward Israel?

Figure 10 answers this question for three groups in 2026: Muslim Canadians, non-Jewish Canadians who place themselves on the left of the ideological spectrum, and “all other Canadians,” as defined earlier. Among respondents identifying as Muslim, 56 percent express negative attitudes toward both Jews and Israel. Among respondents who identify as left-leaning, the most common pattern, including 61 percent of cases, is positive attitudes toward Jews combined with negative attitudes toward Israel. Among the residual “all other Canadians” group, the largest share (54 percent) expresses positive attitudes toward both Jews and Israel.

**Figure 10**  
Attitudes of non-Jewish Canadians toward Jews and Israel, Canada, 2026, by selected group, in percent



\*Excludes Muslims, leftists, Francophone Quebecers, racialized Canadians, and university students.

How can one explain the fact that more than one-half of Muslim Canadians have negative attitudes toward both Jews and Israel? Some analysts suggest that Islam is responsible for this pattern. If that were the case, one might expect Muslims who are more religious to have more unfavourable sentiment toward Jews and Israel than do Muslims who are less religious or non-religious. To test this argument, we examined correlations between religiosity (measured by frequency of attending religious services, ranging from “never” to “daily”) and our scales of attitudes toward Jews and Israel. We found that both correlations are close to zero. In Canada, religious Muslims are no more likely than are irreligious Muslims to have negative attitudes toward Jews or Israel. This finding casts doubt on the religiosity hypothesis.

In Muslim-majority countries, about three-quarters of residents have highly negative attitudes toward Jews.<sup>34</sup> Could immigration status in Canada influence attitudes toward Jews and Israel? By this logic, Muslims whose parents were born in Canada may have the least negative attitudes toward Jews because they are relatively assimilated into Canadian culture, while Muslims who are temporary residents may have the most negative attitudes because they are closest to the socializing influence of their country of origin. Again, however, analysis reveals a correlation close to zero when we examine the relationship between immigration status, on the one hand, and our scales of attitudes toward Jews and Israel, on the other.

Another possibility is that attitudes toward Israel play a role in shaping attitudes toward Jews. After all, many Muslim Canadians seem to believe (correctly) that most Jews support Israel. Muslim Canadians also tend to be strongly anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian. Thus, when asked, “In the dispute between Israelis and Palestinians, which side do you sympathize with more, Israelis or Palestinians?” 64 percent of Muslims selected “Palestinians,” 1 percent selected “Israelis,” with the remaining 35 percent selecting “both equally,” “neither,” “don’t know,” or not answering the question.

While our interpretation is plausible it is not certain. There exists a small empirical literature that seeks to unravel the causal complexities of the relationship between attitudes toward Jews and attitudes toward Israel. Some analysts argue that negative attitudes toward Israel cause negative attitudes toward Jews. Others hold that negative attitudes toward Jews cause negative attitudes toward Israel. Still others maintain that the causal relationship is reciprocal. Findings are not definitive, and addressing this issue would in any case take us well beyond the scope of this report.<sup>35</sup>

One of the more notable patterns in the data pertains to respondents who identify as left-leaning. They tend to exhibit relatively positive attitudes toward Jews alongside comparatively negative attitudes toward Israel. An entire literature claims that many left-leaning individuals are antisemitic insofar as they reject the idea that there should be a Jewish state.<sup>36</sup> But how can left-leaning individuals be antisemitic if, as we have seen, they have more positive attitudes toward Jews than do the other groups that we have analyzed?

One way to unscramble this paradox is to recognize that, as the “Barometer 2026” survey finds, 86 percent of Canada’s Jews think that supporting Israel is an essential or important part of what it means to be a Jew. From this point of view, Jews enjoy national rights—a position, incidentally, endorsed by 85 percent of United Nations member states insofar as they recognize the State of Israel diplomatically.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, many left-leaning individuals think of Jews as a religious or ethnic group lacking national rights. The result: Many left-leaning Canadians have positive attitudes toward their preferred image of Jews, not toward the great majority of Jews as they actually are. Many Jews thus consider left-leaning individuals antisemitic despite the demonstrable fondness of the latter for what we might call the imaginary Jew.

## **Jewish Perceptions and Responses**

We now turn our attention to the ways Jewish Canadians experience antisemitism; the effect of Holocaust education on attitudes toward Jews in Quebec and the rest of Canada; and the effect of antisemitism and anti-Israelism on Jewish communal solidarity.

### How do Canada's Jews Experience Antisemitism?

We asked Jewish respondents to “indicate whether each of the following things has happened to you in the past twelve months.” A list of eighteen possible experiences followed. Table 6 arrays the responses, with those experienced most frequently at the top and those experienced least frequently at the bottom. Results for items preceded by an asterisk pertain to individuals with at least one child under the age of eighteen living at home.

**Table 6**

**“Please indicate whether each of the following things has happened to you in the past twelve months,” in percent**

|  | Yes | No | Don't know/<br>no answer | Total |
|--|-----|----|--------------------------|-------|
| I have seen anti-Jewish graffiti or vandalism in my local community.   | 69  | 29 | 2                        | 100   |
| * I started worrying about the safety of my children in school because of rising antisemitism.   | 69  | 26 | 5                        | 100   |
| I have heard someone say that Jews care too much about money or words to that effect.  | 65  | 33 | 3                        | 100   |
| I have heard someone say that the Holocaust did not happen or that its severity has been exaggerated.  | 60  | 37 | 4                        | 100   |
| I have had someone who is not Jewish express support for me because I am Jewish or because of my Jewish background.  | 59  | 37 | 4                        | 100   |
| * I started worrying about sending my child(ren) to university because of rising antisemitism.   | 58  | 32 | 10                       | 100   |
| * I have moved my child(ren) to a Jewish day school, thought seriously about moving them to a Jewish day school, or would like to move them to a Jewish day school if one were available in my city and I could afford it. | 43  | 54 | 3                        | 100   |
| I started worrying that a Holocaust could eventually happen in Canada because of rising antisemitism.  | 39  | 55 | 7                        | 100   |
| * I started worrying about whether my child(ren) could get a job because of rising antisemitism.   | 38  | 56 | 5                        | 100   |
| I have heard someone say that Canadian Jews care more about Israel than about Canada.  | 37  | 55 | 8                        | 100   |
| I was made to feel unwelcome because I am Jewish or because of my Jewish background.   | 36  | 52 | 2                        | 100   |
| I stopped wearing visible signs that I am a Jew in public ( <i>kippa/yarmulke</i> , Star of David necklace, etc.).   | 34  | 56 | 11                       | 100   |
| I developed more negative feelings about Muslims because of rising antisemitism.   | 30  | 64 | 6                        | 100   |
| I have thought seriously about moving to another country or I have made plans to move to another country because of antisemitism in Canada.  | 26  | 69 | 5                        | 100   |
| I have been harassed online because I am Jewish or because of my Jewish background.  | 25  | 71 | 3                        | 100   |
| I changed which federal political party I support because of antisemitism in Canada.   | 23  | 70 | 8                        | 100   |
| I was called offensive names because I am Jewish or because of my Jewish background.   | 22  | 76 | 2                        | 100   |
| I was physically threatened or attacked because I am Jewish or because of my Jewish background.  | 8   | 89 | 3                        | 100   |

\* For individuals with at least one child under the age of eighteen living at home.

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Physical threats or attacks were least frequently experienced during the twelve months preceding the survey, yet almost one in ten Canadian Jews say they had been physically threatened or attacked. The rates for the remaining seventeen incidents range from 22 percent to 69 percent.

Leading the list was “seeing anti-Jewish graffiti or vandalism in my local community” and, for individuals with at least one child under the age of eighteen living at home, starting to worry about “the safety of my children in school because of rising antisemitism.” Sixty-nine percent of respondents say they had these experiences. Hearing slurs about Jews caring “too much about money” or about how “the Holocaust did not happen or that its severity has been exaggerated” follow at 65 percent and 60 percent, respectively.

Such experiences are partly balanced by the 59 percent of respondents who claim that “someone who is not Jewish express[ed] support for me because I am Jewish or because of my Jewish background.” Nonetheless, 58 percent of Jewish Canadians with at least one child under the age of eighteen living at home say they “started worrying about sending my child(ren) to university because of rising antisemitism.” Forty-three percent say they “moved my child(ren) to a Jewish day school, thought seriously about moving them to a Jewish day school, or would like to move them to a Jewish day school if one were available in my city and I could afford it.”

These percentages are high by any reasonable standard, but some of the lower percentages are noteworthy too. Thus, 39 percent of Canadian Jews “started worrying that a Holocaust could eventually happen in Canada because of rising antisemitism.” Thirty-eight percent of those with at least one child under the age of eighteen living at home “started worrying about whether my child(ren) could get a job because of rising antisemitism.” Twenty-six percent “thought seriously about moving to another country or ... have made plans to move to another country because of antisemitism in Canada.” The last figure is higher than the comparable percentage of Jews who are thinking about emigrating from Israel or have made plans to do so.<sup>38</sup> There is of course a big difference between “thinking about” and “making plans,” on the one hand, and taking action, on the other. Just 251 people born in Canada immigrated to Israel in 2024, the most recent figure available as of this writing. In the same year, thousands of Israelis moved to Canada.<sup>39</sup>

Distress is growing among Canadian Jews. In the “Jews and Israel 2024” survey, 50 percent of Jews expected antisemitism to grow worse over the next few years. In 2026, the comparable figure is 58 percent. Two years ago, 63 percent of Jewish respondents said they feel less safe in Canada than they did five years earlier. That figure rose to 88 percent in 2026.

### **How do Jews in the education system respond to antisemitism?**

Earlier we reviewed results of a 2025 survey on antisemitism in Ontario's K-12 schools. We now summarize what that survey revealed about how Jewish school-children and their parents responded to antisemitic incidents.

About one in six parents who participated in the survey decided to move their child to another school or were considering doing so—usually to a Jewish private school. The number of parents contemplating such a move would have undoubtedly been larger if more of Ontario's Jews had access to Jewish schools in their communities and could afford to send their children to them.<sup>40</sup>

Nearly two-thirds of parents who participated in the survey reported antisemitic incidents to school authorities. The remainder did not report incidents either because their children asked them not to (for fear of the report becoming public, in which case they could become the target of more harassment and bullying); or because, based on past experience, they didn't believe the school would do anything meaningful about the incident.

The most frequent reactions of school-age victims of antisemitism include anger (31 percent of cases), worry about losing friends or being socially isolated from non-Jewish friends (27 percent), and fear of being bullied or returning to school (27 percent).

Psychologists studying the impact of campus antisemitism on Jewish university students report increased stress levels, depressive symptoms, and "avoidance coping," that is, turning away from the source of stress rather than confronting it.<sup>41</sup> Avoidance coping is by no means universal—many Jewish students fight campus antisemitism—but when avoidance coping takes root it is a maladaptive response, allowing depression to persist and even deepen.

Avoidance coping and openly opposing antisemitism are also evident among many Jewish faculty members, who report they have been spat on, threatened, and subjected to vandalism and a barrage of microaggressions since October 7, 2023.<sup>42</sup> Some Jewish faculty members have tried to hide their Jewish identity, others to accentuate it as an act of pride and resistance. They report being disqualified from committees dealing with anti-racism and antisemitism training because of their alleged bias; lacking options for identifying themselves as a Jew in university data-gathering exercises on employee surveys and equity initiatives; and in general being made to feel isolated, invisible, and frightened. One Jewish faculty member, a convert, commented that, before converting, she never saw antisemitism, but "as soon as I became a Jew, this happened to me.... I couldn't believe it."<sup>43</sup>

### What is responsible for antisemitism according to Canadian Jews?

We presented Jewish respondents with a series of factors that may be responsible for the current rise in antisemitism and asked them to rank each factor from one (“contributes most to antisemitism”) to six (“contributes least to antisemitism”). Table 7 presents the results of this exercise. In brief, Jewish Canadians are most likely to say that the chief contributors to the rise of antisemitism in Canada include biased coverage in social and mass media and the recent actions of the Israeli military in Gaza. Around three in ten Canadian Jews rank each of these factors first in importance.

**Table 7**

**“In your opinion, which of the following factors contributes most to the rise of antisemitism in Canada? Rank the factors from one (contributes most to rising antisemitism) to five (contributes least to rising antisemitism). Select all factors you agree with.”**

|   | Percent ranking factor first | Percent not ranking factor first | Total |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Biased coverage in social media   | 30                           | 70                               | 100   |
| Biased coverage in the mass media                                       | 28                           | 72                               | 100   |
| The recent actions of the Israeli military in Gaza                      | 28                           | 72                               | 100   |
| Support for anti-Israel activities by the governments of Qatar and Iran | 13                           | 87                               | 100   |
| The Israeli government’s ineffective public relations campaign          | 7                            | 93                               | 100   |
| Israel’s treatment of Palestinians in general                           | 5                            | 95                               | 100   |

### How effective is Holocaust education as a response to antisemitism?

Eighty-one years after the end of World War II, the Holocaust remains a leading preoccupation of Jews everywhere. Among diaspora countries, Holocaust remembrance is especially salient in Canada because a disproportionately large number of survivors settled here—proportionately about twice as many survivors as in the US. They told their stories to their children, many of whom now advocate for Holocaust remembrance, not just as an exercise in homage but as a cautionary tale. The effort to have Holocaust education adopted in the school system is one of the most widespread responses of Canadian Jews to antisemitism.

“Barometer 2026” results illustrate the importance of the Holocaust for Canadian Jews. We asked Jewish respondents, “What does being Jewish mean to you?” and provided eleven response options that participants could classify as “essential,” “important but not essential,” or “unimportant” (Table 8). The options include “remembering the Holocaust,” “caring about Israel,” “celebrating Jewish holidays with family,” and so on. Eighty-three percent of respondents selected “remembering the Holocaust” as an essential part of being Jewish—a much higher percentage than for any other option. We also asked which of a dozen statements respondents would “definitely,” “probably,” “probably not” or “definitely not” consider antisemitic. Eighty-one percent of respondents said the statement, “the Holocaust is a myth or

... has been exaggerated” is definitely antisemitic, again a much higher percentage than any other statement.

**Table 8**  
**How Canadian Jews define being Jewish and what they regard as antisemitic**

| What does being Jewish mean to you? Please indicate whether each of the following is an essential, important but not essential, or unimportant part of what Jewish means to you. |                     | Would you consider people antisemitic if they say... (Response options: yes, definitely; yes, probably; no, probably not; no, definitely not; don't know/no answer) |                           |
|--|---------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Options  | Percent "essential" | Options   | Percent "yes, definitely" |
| Remembering the Holocaust  | 83                  | ...the Holocaust is a myth or that it has been exaggerated  | 81                        |
| Leading an ethical and moral life  | 74                  | ...Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood for their own purposes   | 69                        |
| Celebrating Jewish holidays with family  | 59                  | ...Jews have too much power in Canada's economy   | 68                        |
| Working for justice and equality in society  | 55                  | ... Jews have too much power in Canada's politics   | 68                        |
| Being intellectually curious   | 53                  | ...Jews have too much power in Canada's media   | 67                        |
| Being part of a Jewish community   | 48                  | ...there is no need for a separate Jewish state   | 52                        |
| Caring about Israel  | 46                  | ...Israel is "an apartheid state"   | 45                        |
| Having a good sense of humour  | 39                  | ...Israel is "committing genocide" in its treatment of Palestinians   | 45                        |
| Participating in or attending Jewish cultural activities, such as concerts and events  | 19                  | ...they support the boycott of Israeli goods/products   | 40                        |
| Observing Jewish law (halakha)   | 17                  | ...they support Canada's ban on future arms sales to Israel   | 30                        |
| Attending synagogue  | 14                  | ...they support Canada's recognition of a Palestinian state   | 20                        |
|  |                     | ...things that are critical of certain Israeli policies   | 11                        |

To memorialize the Holocaust and educate people about it, Canada's Jews have established or helped to establish Holocaust museums in Montreal and Toronto; a Holocaust Education Centre in Vancouver; Holocaust-related exhibits in the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg; and Holocaust memorials or monuments in Toronto, Ottawa, and Edmonton. Many Canadian cities hold commemorative events or temporary exhibits for International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27 each year.

Furthermore, the Jewish community has successfully promoted compulsory Holocaust education as part of public school curricula in most provinces and territories.

As of this writing, all provinces and territories apart from Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Nunavut had instituted compulsory Holocaust education in their schools, with Quebec accounting for 83 percent of the population of non-compliant jurisdictions.<sup>44</sup>

In Quebec, non-compulsory Holocaust education seems to be concentrated in two English-language school boards, the English Montreal School Board and the Lester B. Pearson School Board, the latter serving the western part of greater Montreal. However, even in Montreal's English-language schools, there has been resistance to Holocaust education. Meanwhile, the percentage of Quebec's public school students attending French schools has risen since the beginning of the century, reaching more than 91 percent in 2023–2024. French schools offer little Holocaust education.<sup>45</sup>

To find out more about Holocaust education among non-Jews, we asked respondents, "Thinking about the years you were in school, roughly how many total hours were devoted to learning about the Holocaust?" Response options included "0 hours," "about 1 hour," "about 2–5 hours," "about 6–10 hours," and "more than 10 hours."

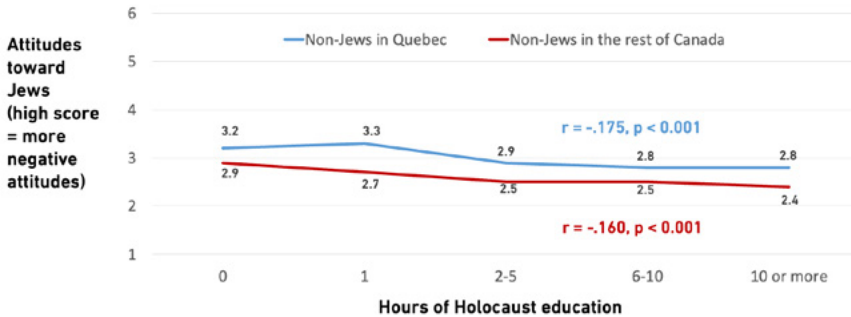
Figure 11 shows how hours of Holocaust education are associated with attitudes toward Jews. For non-Jews in Quebec (in blue) and non-Jews in the rest of Canada (in red), it plots hours of Holocaust education against the scale of attitudes toward Jews developed earlier.<sup>46</sup>

The trend line for non-Jews in Quebec is higher than the trend line for non-Jews in the rest of Canada, a result of attitudes toward Jews being more negative in Quebec than in the rest of the country. However, both lines descend as one moves from left to right, indicating that respondents with more hours of Holocaust education tend to have more positive attitudes toward Jews, while respondents with fewer hours of Holocaust education tend to have more negative attitudes toward Jews.<sup>47</sup> More hours of Holocaust education apparently creates more empathy toward Jews and hence more positive attitudes toward them. Overall, however, though statistically significant, the effect of hours of Holocaust education on attitudes toward Jews is weak, as indicated by the correlation coefficients in Figure 11 and the relatively flat trend lines.

We also asked, "To the best of your knowledge, how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?" Forty-nine percent of non-Jewish Quebecers said that between six thousand and sixty-six thousand Jews died in the Holocaust or replied "don't know" or "no answer." In the rest of Canada, the comparable figure was significantly lower at 37 percent. The more accurate knowledge of Canadians residing outside Quebec may be a function of the fact that they spend an average of two-to-five hours learning about the Holocaust in their school years, compared to an average of about one hour for Quebecers.

**Figure 11**

**“Thinking about the years you were in school, roughly how many total hours were devoted to learning about the Holocaust?” by scale of attitudes toward Jews, non-Jews in Quebec, and non-Jews in the rest of Canada**



Finally, we inquired, “In light of recent world events, do you think it is more or less urgent to teach about the Holocaust in schools?” Respondents could select one of three responses: “It is more urgent,” “It is neither more nor less urgent,” or “It is less urgent.” Twenty-nine percent of Quebecers compared to 43 percent of Canadians residing outside Quebec said it was more urgent to teach about the Holocaust in light of recent world events, which again may be attributable to more time spent learning about the Holocaust outside Quebec.

Holocaust education in Quebec is unusual in this country insofar as it is not compulsory. What is more, the curriculum related to the Holocaust is unstandardized and therefore likely subject to idiosyncrasies that make it more effective in some schools than in others. For instance, staff in some schools resist the introduction of Holocaust education on the presumed grounds that its ulterior purpose is to justify the existence of a Jewish state in Israel.<sup>48</sup> We believe that making Holocaust education compulsory in Quebec and standardizing the curriculum at a high level of effectiveness would increase empathy for Jewish concerns and thus lower the level of negative attitudes toward Jews in the province.

Even with that reform, however, we have no reason to believe that the effect of compulsory and standardized Holocaust education on attitudes toward Jews will be any stronger than it is in the rest of Canada. As we argue in the concluding section of this report, other reforms are also needed to moderate negative attitudes toward Jews in Quebec and the rest of the country.

### **How unified is the community?**

We often hear that wars and other forms of conflict cause people to “rally round the flag” or “circle the wagons.” We see evidence of this tendency in reports that Canadian synagogue membership, Jewish day school enrolment, Sunday school enrolment, and other forms of Jewish association have been on the rise since the most murder-

ous attack on Jews since World War II took place on October 7, 2023.<sup>49</sup> According to the “Barometer 2026” survey, 54 percent of Jewish Canadians “agree somewhat” or “strongly agree” that their “emotional attachment to Israel is stronger now than it was before the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel and the war in Gaza.”

Simultaneously, however, conflict can cause divisions within a group. This phenomenon has also become evident in Canada’s Jewish community over the past few years as the most right-wing party in Israel’s history took power and started invoking legislation that is foreign to traditional liberal-democratic norms; Jewish settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank and vigilantism against Palestinian citizens of Israel greatly intensified; and a war causing scores of thousands of civilian Palestinian deaths dragged on.<sup>50</sup> The “Barometer 2026” survey found that 16 percent of Jewish Canadians “agree somewhat” or “strongly agree” that their “emotional attachment to Israel is weaker now than it was before the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel and the war in Gaza.”

Let us consider in more detail three manifestations of division among Canadian Jews related to Israel.

### ***Emotional attachment to Israel***

The 2018 *Survey of Jews in Canada* found that 79 percent of Canadian Jews were “very” or “somewhat” emotionally attached to Israel. The figure fell to 70 percent in the “Jews and Israel 2024” survey, conducted four months after the start of the 2023–2025 Israel–Hamas War. That is where the figure remains today according to the “Barometer 2026” survey. Almost 29 percent of Canadian Jews now say they are “not very” or “not at all” emotionally attached to Israel, with nearly 2 percent saying they “don’t know” or not answering the question.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Reluctance to call oneself a Zionist***

In 2026, notwithstanding the decline in Canadian Jews’ emotional attachment to Israel, 92 percent of Canadian Jews continue to believe that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state, statistically no different from the 94 percent who gave the same answer in the “Jews and Israel 2024” survey. Believing that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state meets the minimalist definition of Zionism found in English dictionaries and general encyclopaedias. Still, Canadian Jews are deeply divided over whether to call themselves Zionists because the meaning of the term has become confused with policies of a current Israeli government that many Canadian Jews dislike. A January 2025 survey asked, “Do you call yourself a Zionist?” Forty-nine percent of Canadian Jews were reluctant to label themselves in that way.<sup>52</sup> About one year later, the “Barometer 2026” survey repeated the question. Nearly the same percentage of Jewish respondents (48 percent) now decline to consider themselves Zionists.<sup>53</sup> Among the latter, 24 percent respond with a flat “no,” 13 percent say “I’m

ambivalent,” 5 percent say “I consider myself an anti-Zionist,” and 6 percent say “don’t know” or do not answer the question. A follow-up question asked those who demurred, “Why do you not consider yourself a Zionist? Rank all reasons that apply to you, where 1 is most important to you, 2 is next, and so on.” The response option receiving the highest percentage of first choices (44 percent): “I do not consider myself a Zionist because I disagree with some important and enduring policies of the Israeli government.”

### ***The West Bank and Gaza***

The eventual disposition of the West Bank and Gaza, captured by Israel in its 1967 war with five surrounding Arab armies, is a contentious issue in international and Israeli politics, and therefore in the politics of Jewish diaspora communities worldwide. The “Barometer 2026” survey asked Canadian Jews a series of questions about the occupied territories, revealing another aspect of the fissure in the community. We discovered that significantly more Canadian Jews (34 percent) think the construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank “harms Israel security” than think it “increases Israel’s security” (25 percent). As far as Gaza is concerned, a minority (20 percent) believe that “Israel should take full control of Gaza and build Jewish settlements there” while 61 percent disagree “somewhat” or “strongly.” Thirty-five percent of Jewish Canadians “agree somewhat” or “strongly agree” that “the way Israel has conducted the war in Gaza clashes with my Jewish values.”

In sum, the largest part of Canadian Jewry is growing more solidary while a smaller but still substantial segment is growing apart over issues related to Israel. Roughly five of ten Canadian Jews are in the former group, three of ten in the latter group. These opposing tendencies raise in the sharpest possible way strategic questions about how Canada’s Jewish community might best respond to its fracturing, a subject of the concluding section.

## **Strategic Implications**

There is ultimately much truth in the words, “in every generation, they rise up to destroy us.” Our response determines whether our enemies will succeed.

—Yankev Leshchinsky (1937)<sup>54</sup>

The fight against antisemitism...is a well-meaning but mostly wasted effort.

—Bret Stephens (2026)<sup>55</sup>

### **Is the fight against antisemitism worth the effort?**

Bret Stephens is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who has been editor of *The Jerusalem Post* and a columnist for *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. In February 2026 he gave the annual “State of World Jewry” address at the 92nd Street

Y in Manhattan. He asserted that the struggle against antisemitism is fruitless. Why? Because, “for as long as there have been Jews, there have been Jew haters, and for as long as there will be Jews, there will be Jew haters.” From Stephens’s viewpoint, lobbying politicians, offering reasoned and evidence-based arguments against antisemitic claims, engaging in dialogue with non-Jews to promote mutual understanding, educating non-Jews about the Holocaust, and other methods of fighting antisemitism have little or no effect. This we can supposedly see from the “fact” that antisemitism is a constant in world history. “What Jews need now isn’t allyship or sympathy,” Stephens concludes. Instead, Jews need to invest in strengthening Jewish institutions and identity.

We have no quarrel with investing to strengthen Jewish institutions and identity—far from it. However, we regard Stephens’s argument as a non sequitur based on a mistaken historical premise. It is a non sequitur because the mere presence of antisemites in the world has no logical bearing on the question of whether fighting antisemitism can decrease the number and impact of Jew haters. Moreover, it is mistaken to think that antisemitism is a constant when the historical record loudly declares it a variable. Jews were respected and influential in the early period of Muslim rule in Spain and Portugal—and tormented and expelled during the region’s subsequent Christian *reconquista*. They enjoyed economic security and considerable political independence in feudal Poland—and ferocious persecution in Poland in the 1930s and 1940s.

Yankev Leshchinsky, whom we also quote, was the foremost social scientist writing mainly in Yiddish before World War II. His recipe for fighting antisemitism: reject declarations that the struggle against antisemitism is a mostly wasted effort; investigate the conditions accounting for variation in the treatment of Jews; and take actions that help to prevent inhospitable periods and promote golden ages.<sup>56</sup> Given research methods developed since Leshchinsky’s time, we can now add that people interested in countering antisemitism also need to measure the effects of their efforts in order to refine their strategies.

Unfortunately, we know little about these effects because few researchers have measured them. For instance, many Jews think Holocaust education is beneficial in the fight against antisemitism. That is what we found (conditionally), but the plain fact is that research on the effect of Holocaust education is scant. A comprehensive 2026 literature review found only six such assessments worldwide. Just one was peer-reviewed, and it is twenty years old.<sup>57</sup>

The paucity of program evaluation research means that, for the time being, we must base discussions of strategy on common sense and whatever relevant evidence is available. Accordingly, our plan in this section is to list the most strategy-relevant findings of the “Barometer 2026” survey and make recommendations consonant with

those findings. If any of our recommendations spark a wider conversation and are eventually adopted, research on their effects needs to be conducted.

First, however, we emphasize that we intend our recommendations to supplement existing efforts to counter antisemitism, not replace them. We have established that attitudes toward Jews and Israel are variables. In Canada in 2026, more than eight of ten non-Jewish adults have positive attitudes toward Jews and fewer than two of ten have negative attitudes. Just under one-half of non-Jewish adults have positive attitudes toward Israel and just over one-half have negative attitudes.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, variation is evident within the positive and negative categories. Surely, an effective strategy to combat antisemitism must keep this variation in mind; what might prove useful in dealing with people who hold extremely anti-Jewish and anti-Israel attitudes might easily prove counterproductive in dealing with those who hold weakly positive or weakly negative attitudes.

Mainstream Jewish organizations do some good work, but they tend to focus on Canadians with hostile attitudes toward Jews and Israel. For example, the Centre for Jewish and Israel Affairs (CIJA) recently organized a webinar in which legal experts demonstrated the gap between Canada's anti-hate legislation and the frequent failure of police forces to implement it effectively.<sup>59</sup> CIJA is now engaged in an educational campaign with police forces around the country to help close this gap. Overall, members of the Jewish community appreciate such actions, which focus on the most extreme Jew and Israel haters. The "Barometer 2026" survey found that seven of ten Canadian Jews think the work of CIJA "strongly" or "somewhat" supports Jewish interests (Table 9).

**Table 9**

**"In your opinion, do each of the following institutions strongly support Jewish interests, somewhat support Jewish interests, neither support nor undermine Jewish interests, somewhat undermine Jewish interests, or strongly undermine Jewish interests?" in percent**

|   | Strongly or somewhat support | Neither support nor undermine | Strongly or somewhat undermine | Don't know/ no answer | Total |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Jewish Federations in various cities                  | 77                           | 3                             | 5                              | 15                    | 100   |
| Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)           | 70                           | 4                             | 6                              | 21                    | 100   |
| New Israel Fund of Canada (NIFC)                      | 36                           | 6                             | 7                              | 51                    | 100   |
| JSpace Canada   | 27                           | 7                             | 7                              | 59                    | 100   |
| Universities  | 9                            | 13                            | 65                             | 22                    | 100   |
| Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)/ Radio Canada | 8                            | 22                            | 49                             | 22                    | 100   |
| Unions  | 7                            | 19                            | 44                             | 31                    | 100   |

Note: Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

On the other hand, mainstream Jewish organizations such as CIJA and the Jewish Federations do relatively little to engage in dialogue with Canadians who hold weakly negative attitudes toward Jews and Israel. Such people are an order of magnitude more numerous than those who are most negatively predisposed toward Jews and Israel. Canadian Jews would certainly be worse off without the efforts of mainstream community organizations. However, we also need new strategies for combatting anti-Semitism among non-extremists. One type of strategy cannot work for all.

### **What remedial strategies do this study's findings suggest?**

We believe that five of our findings are especially strategy-relevant and suggest practical remedies. We base some of the recommendations that follow on our belief that polarization allows negative attitudes to flourish. It follows that devising mechanisms to limit polarization can minimize conflict.

### ***Establish a new Canadian Jewish governing body***

Earlier we provided data showing that “the largest part of Canadian Jewry is growing more solidary while a smaller but still substantial segment is growing apart over issues related to Israel.” We judge that one way of dealing with the growing divide in the Jewish community is to revive the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) or something like it.

The CJC was established in 1919. It supported but did not focus on Jewish settlement in Palestine. Its practical efforts were directed at promoting Jewish interests in the diaspora, such as resettling Jews from Ukraine, where pogromists killed about one hundred thousand Jews in 1918–1919, and creating Jewish institutions in Canada, such as schools and an organization for immigrant aid. The CJC faltered within a few years due to lack of leadership and funding but was revived in 1933. It encompassed nearly all Jewish organizations in the country, a sort of parliament of Canadian Jewry that operated on broadly democratic principles.<sup>60</sup>

In 2004, some influential community members, dissatisfied with the work of the CJC, established CIJA, which undertook advocacy on behalf of Canada's Jewish community and in support of Israeli government policy. In early 2010 CIJA initiated discussion and debate about restructuring the governance of Canadian Jewry. A year later, it took the reins. A more Conservative and ardently pro-Israel agenda replaced that of the CJC, now unfunded and soon defunct.<sup>61</sup>

Canada's Jewish community, always fractious, has grown more so in recent years, as we have shown.<sup>62</sup> If current trends persist, a considerable part of the Jewish community may experience growing alienation from the Jewish mainstream. A chasm may open between Jews who refuse to criticize Israel's government irrespective of its policies and those who believe they must criticize Israel's government for enacting

policies that prevent compromise with the Palestinians and violate the liberal–democratic principles on which Zionists founded the Jewish state. In the extreme case, more Jews will be lost to the organized Jewish community.<sup>63</sup>

To avoid such an outcome, we think it is necessary to raise a big tent once again, re-constituting something like the CJC as a democratic organization that incorporates all—or nearly all—Jewish organizations in the country.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Increase dialogue with non-Jews***

Our data show that the social gap between Jews and non-Jews is growing, especially the gap between Jews and certain political, religious, and racial minorities. In this light, we disagree strongly with Bret Stephens’s assertion that we do not need to engage in dialogue.

David S. Koffman observes that Canada’s Black, Indigenous, Arab, Muslim, and other communities have been growing in relative size, solidarity, and influence for decades. At the same time, the Jewish community’s horizontal ties to Indigenous and visible-minority organizations, labour unions, churches, mosques, and gurdwaras have weakened while their vertical ties to parliamentarians, police chiefs, university presidents, and members of other elite groups have strengthened. “And so,” Koffman argues, “we arrive at today’s condition: Canadian Jews are politically enfranchised but socially estranged; powerful in official circles, but uncertain of our neighbors.”<sup>65</sup>

Koffman neglects to mention that, notwithstanding the shifting focus of mainstream Jewish organizations toward vertical influence, Jewish efforts to engage in dialogue have been spontaneously emerging from below. Some examples:

- Created by York University students in 2019, Professor Randal Schnoor reestablished Bridging the Gap in 2023. It has brought dozens of mainly Toronto-area Jewish and Muslim university students together to respectfully listen to their different viewpoints on the Israel–Palestine conflict, better understand each other, discover points of commonality, and talk about how they can work together to create a more civil atmosphere on university campuses.<sup>66</sup>
- On a broader scale, Digital Public Square (<https://digitalpublicsquare.org/>) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating inclusive digital spaces. Its CEO is Shlomit Broder, an Israeli–Canadian. Beginning at the University of Toronto’s Munk Centre in 2013, Digital Public Square has forged online collaborations and created online research tools, quizzes, and games aimed in part at bringing communities in conflict together to facilitate mutual understanding. Millions of people around the world have engaged with Digital Public Square projects, some focused on the Israel–Palestine conflict and involving Canadian participants.<sup>67</sup>

- Canadian Friends of Peace Now (established 1982), the New Israel Fund of Canada (established 1986), and JSpace Canada (established 2010) are progressive Zionist organizations with thousands of members and contributors who variously support justice, equality, and human rights in Israel and a two-state solution to the Israel–Palestine conflict. These organizations have grown substantially in recent years.<sup>68</sup> Among other activities, they have sponsored conferences, webinars, and public lectures promoting dialogue between Jews and Muslims.<sup>69</sup>

We could describe other such efforts, ranging from joint Jewish–Muslim podcasts to a new professional/entrepreneurial workspace for Jews and allies, but our point should be clear by now.<sup>70</sup> While mainstream Jewish organizations perform an important function operating mainly vertically to influence elites, they have neglected operating horizontally to moderate opposition and gain support. We believe that to prevent communal divisions from turning into unbridgeable solitudes, mainstream organizations need to learn from grassroots Jewish organizations and invest substantially more in forging horizontal ties. True, Canadian Jews believe progressive Zionist organizations are of less benefit to the Jewish community than are mainstream Jewish organizations. However, that may be because progressive Zionist organizations are much less well funded, in most cases newer, and therefore only about one-third as well known as the big mainstream organizations (see the “don’t know/no answer” column in Table 9).<sup>71</sup>

### ***Broaden Holocaust education***

Jews view Holocaust education as a tool to counter hate, but its effects in this regard are weak, as demonstrated earlier.<sup>72</sup> In our opinion, the frequently repeated claim that the Holocaust should be considered unique and in separation from every other mass killing in the history of humanity, limits the efficacy of Holocaust education intellectually and pedagogically.<sup>73</sup>

Every mass killing is unique in some ways, but comparative studies of mass killings usefully identify their common features and the factors that account for their level of destructiveness.<sup>74</sup> More to the point for present purposes, we surmise that, as a pedagogical tool for countering hate, the comparative analysis of mass killings is likely to have a wider and deeper emotional impact than does the study of the Holocaust alone. That is because mass killings have been experienced not just by Jews, but also by Armenians, Bosniaks, Cambodians, Chinese, Congolese, Ethiopians, Guatemalans, Indigenous Canadians, Indonesians, Palestinians, Rohingya, Rwandans, Sri Lankans, Sudanese, Syrians, Ukrainians, Yazidis, and others. All these groups are represented in Canadian schools. We hypothesize that members of these groups are more likely to empathize with the mass killing of Jews and the consequent need for a Jewish state if they can see their own history partly mirrored in the Jewish experience. And Jews will more deeply empathize with the

mass killings of others if they can see the Jewish experience partly mirrored in the history of these groups.

A substantial body of psychology and neuroscience research is consistent with our argument. The research demonstrates that empathy—understanding and sharing the feelings of others—moderates antagonism.<sup>75</sup> It follows that seeing oneself in others and others in oneself should therefore be the goal of teaching about mass killings. The paradox of empathy is that one must give it in order to receive it. That is why it is as important for Jews to learn about the Nakba and its consequences as it is for Muslims in general and Palestinians in particular to learn about the Holocaust and its consequences. Although the scale and severity of these tragedies were vastly different, they are both defining features of the national identity of the respective groups. They remain so today.

### ***Align labour law with human rights jurisprudence***

Many members of the Canadian left regard Jews as a religious or ethnic group that lacks national rights. The overwhelming majority of Canadian Jews disagree. As noted earlier, 86 percent of Canada's Jews think that supporting Israel is an essential or important part of what it means to be a Jew. Left-leaning Canadians, some trade unionists among them, thus tend fully to support only the small number of Canadian Jews who reject Jewish national rights.

When it comes to deciding what constitutes discrimination, human rights jurisprudence is on the side of racial, ethnic, religious, and other minorities. Lawyers Shalom Schachter and Maya Zor thus cite case law demonstrating that “a foundational principle in Canadian human rights jurisprudence is that members of minority groups are uniquely situated to identify and articulate the forms of discrimination that affect them.... Crucially, intent is not an element of the analysis ... [D]iscrimination may arise even in the absence of malicious or deliberate conduct.”<sup>76</sup> It follows that denying the national rights of Jews is a form of discrimination even if unintended. As the Ontario human rights code states, every person belonging to a “vocational association” has a right to equal treatment without discrimination based on ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, or creed, among other criteria.<sup>77</sup>

Human rights tribunals outside of unions could effectively deal with discrimination based on the denial of national rights if they acted promptly to hear discrimination complaints. However, they typically take years to schedule a hearing, let alone reach a decision. Such delays amount to justice denied. Meanwhile, Canadian labour law has been interpreted narrowly to limit the ability of individuals to seek redress within the union framework. Schachter and Zor call for certain Human Rights Code updates such as a regulation that would sharply reduce delays in hearing cases. They also urge specific labour law amendments that would render union leadership more

accountable for discriminatory actions toward members, such as establishing labour board forums operating under the terms of the Human Rights Code. We believe their recommendations, if implemented, would go a long way toward limiting the expression of antisemitism in unions.

### ***Address antisemitism in schools and universities***

A document recently published by Canada's largest school board states that "schools should be safe and welcoming places where all students and staff feel respected, included, and valued in their learning and work environments."<sup>78</sup> The web site of the country's largest university endorses "the idea that every member of our community should thrive in an environment of belonging. A welcoming and global community that supports equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for all is an essential part of our university."<sup>79</sup> These ideas are reflected in statements made by boards of education and universities throughout Canada. Yet, as we have seen, Jewish students, staff, and faculty in Canada's schools and universities routinely report being excluded and maligned.

While well-intended, and raising important issues including the prevalence of anti-Indigenous, anti-Muslim, and anti-Black racism, EDI policies frame Jews as a privileged White (or "White-adjacent") group. This circumstance invalidates the historical and current experience of antisemitism, causing some Jews to contest their invalidation, others to fall silent, disguise their Jewishness, or leave their program or institution for a more hospitable environment.

If schools and universities are to fulfill their stated role as welcoming and inclusive institutions, EDI policies must include Jews. Specifically, Jews must be afforded the same rights as other groups to determine how they are categorized and whether and how discrimination affects them. This means that Jews must be recognized not as a religious group but as a group that combines religious, ethnic, and national components of identity, the mix of components varying from one Jew to the next. Discrimination based on any of these components of identity must be dealt with as human rights legislation says they should—as actions requiring a remedial or punitive response.

We are on firm ground making this recommendation. The "Barometer 2026" survey found that 2.7 times more Canadian adults support the inclusion of Jews in EDI policies than oppose it (Table 1). They would likely be pleased to learn that some universities have started to broaden their EDI policies. For example, the University of Alberta encompasses "alienated and excluded people of all disciplines and within all social locations" in their revised EDI framework.<sup>80</sup>

Our second recommendation concerning universities emerges from the tension between protecting freedom of expression and maintaining a safe, non-discriminatory environment. These responsibilities are fundamental to the life of the university. In

practice, however, universities have struggled to differentiate between legitimate political expression and antisemitic rhetoric. They have been unable to create an environment where it is possible to challenge students, staff, and faculty and not feel intimidated about expressing their opinions. Students have reported classroom experiences where instructors have incorporated their own political beliefs in lectures irrespective of their relevance to course content. Jewish and non-Jewish students have been pressed to endorse particular views about Israel and the Israel–Palestine conflict that should be open to scholarly debate. Clear policy on protecting freedom of expression and maintaining a safe, non-discriminatory environment, combined with consistent enforcement, including transparent investigations regarding complaints, are essential for building trust on the part of all community members. We do not intend this suggestion to deter robust analysis of controversial topics. However, the university response must go beyond strongly worded statements and striking task forces to investigate the issue.

Our third recommendation pertains to the autonomy of university student associations. Prior to the 1960s, universities closely governed most student councils. In the 1960s and 1970s, student movements transformed student councils into associations run by students and funded by student fees. Courts and policy frameworks subsequently affirmed student associations as independent entities with their own governance and finances.

Student associations offer students a variety of services and supports. They provide a vehicle through which students are supposed to be able to work together to bridge divides and address twenty-first century problems for which they will ultimately be responsible. Challenges arise when many students no longer believe their associations represent them and/or when there is a conflict between the university and the associations. For instance, McGill University threatened to cut ties with the Students' Society of McGill University in 2025 over a student referendum to divest from Israel-related investments, requiring mediation for a renegotiated agreement.<sup>81</sup> A year later, the university gave the Law Students' Association similar notice for proposing amendments to its constitution, the impact of which it views as antisemitic and counter to the Law Society's guiding principles, McGill's Charter of Students' Rights and Policies, and its Policy on Harassment and Discrimination.<sup>82</sup> In Ontario, complaints from students regarding the use of student fees led to the passage of Bill 33, which shifts control over such fees from student associations (and universities) to the provincial government.<sup>83</sup> Bill 33 also provides government oversight of school board finances, performance, and other "matters of public interest." The University of Alberta's new framework eliminates EDI principles from hiring decisions.<sup>84</sup>

Government intervention in the operation of schools and universities, and university severance from student associations, should not be go-to solutions. Maintaining good relations with student associations, supporting educational workshops for stu-

dent leaders to create forums for mutual understanding and problem-solving, and providing clear regulations concerning student associations are all necessary features of the education system. But so is decisive action when incidents of antisemitism or other forms of discrimination occur.

In thinking about the educational role that universities must play in producing the next generation of leaders responsible for addressing complex global problems, we also need to increase opportunities for students to think critically and engage in respectful discourse. Such initiatives are especially important at a time when degree programs in the humanities and the arts are under duress due to declining enrolment. Success here will mean expanding opportunities through general education or elective courses, extracurricular activities such as organized debates, experiential education such as cooperative internships working for government and in grassroots organizations, undertaking relevant capstone projects, and other activities that help to prepare students for respectful participation in a multicultural society. An example of such initiatives is the Supporting Open and Respectful Dialogue Program at York University, which offers support for initiatives such as Bridging the Gap, discussed earlier.

In sum, strategies for mitigating antisemitism and anti-Zionism, including those we have suggested, need to be debated, tried, and tested. We take comfort and inspiration from the adage that, though “it is not your duty to finish the work, neither are you at liberty to neglect it.”<sup>85</sup>

## **Appendix A: Sampling**

Web panel surveys like the one on which we base this report are popular for two reasons. First, they are much less expensive than randomized phone surveys or address-based surveys. Second, response rates for randomized surveys have fallen to single digits.<sup>86</sup> Such low response rates raise questions about whether probability samples are idiosyncratic in suspected or unknown ways that may affect responses. This concern is especially salient in the current atmosphere; one may reasonably expect many Jews to be reluctant to acknowledge their religious or ethnic identity let alone provide details about their social characteristics and attitudes.

Researchers have also raised questions about the usefulness of non-probability samples such as those drawn from web panels. No one doubts that non-probability samples can help generate hypotheses for more rigorous testing. Many social scientists regard covariation among variables in non-probability samples as more resistant to sample bias than are estimates of population parameters. However, statistical purists insist that non-probability samples do not even permit statistical inference concerning relationships among variables because they are accompanied by unknown biases and thus depart from assumptions underlying probability sampling.

It is important to note in this connection that the representativeness of samples drawn from the Léger Opinion Panel and weighted by known population characteristics has been externally validated by comparing pre-election polls with election-day voting results. According to Kyle McGee, Léger's Vice-President, Statistics and Analytics, the agency's web panel surveys generally yield results close to those derived from their probability samples. Léger's final 2021 federal election web panel survey was within tenths of a percentage point of actual election results.<sup>87</sup> Weighting web panel samples by key population parameters helps to achieve this result.

Since we need a criterion that allows us to distinguish meaningful from chance findings, we base our generalizations about the population and subpopulations on statistical inference from our samples. While orthodox statisticians rightly regard this practice as problematic, we regard it as at least notional given the external validation tests performed by Léger and the increased representativeness of our sample achieved by weighting.

Below we present the weighted frequency distributions of all weight variables for the general population sample and the three oversamples.

**Table 10**  
**General population: weighted frequency distribution for weight variables, in percent**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>Age</b>  |     |
| 18-34   | 24  |
| 35-44   | 18  |
| 45-54   | 16  |
| 55-64   | 17  |
| 65+   | 26  |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Gender</b>   |     |
| Male  | 48  |
| Female  | 51  |
| Transgender/non-binary                                      | 1   |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Educational attainment</b>                               |     |
| < High school diploma                                       | 3   |
| High school diploma   | 15  |
| Registered apprenticeship, trade certificate or diploma     | 6   |
| College, CEGEP, other non-university certificate or diploma | 21  |
| University certificate or diploma                           | 7   |
| Bachelor's degree   | 29  |
| Post-graduate or professional degree                        | 20  |
| Total   | 100 |

| <b>Annual household income</b> |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| < \$40,000                     | 17  |
| \$40,000-\$69,999              | 23  |
| \$70,000-\$99,999              | 22  |
| \$100,000-\$149,000            | 20  |
| \$150,000+                     | 17  |
| Total                          | 100 |
| <b>Region of residence</b>     |     |
| Atlantic                       | 4   |
| Quebec                         | 40  |
| Ontario                        | 37  |
| Manitoba/Saskatchewan          | 4   |
| Alberta                        | 7   |
| British Columbia               | 8   |
| Northern territories           | <1  |
| Total                          | 100 |

**Table 10 (cont'd)**  
**Quebecers: weighted frequency distribution for weight variables, in percent**

| <b>Age</b>  |      |
|---|------|
| 18-34   | 24   |
| 35-44   | 16   |
| 45-54   | 15   |
| 55-64   | 18   |
| 65+   | 28   |
| Total   | 100  |
| <b>Gender</b>   |      |
| Male  | 48   |
| Female  | 51   |
| Transgender/non-binary                                      | <1.0 |
| Total   | 100  |
| <b>Educational attainment</b>                               |      |
| < High school diploma                                       | 4    |
| High school diploma   | 14   |
| Registered apprenticeship, trade certificate or diploma     | 9    |
| College, CEGEP, other non-university certificate or diploma | 25   |
| University certificate or diploma                           | 8    |
| Bachelor's degree   | 25   |
| Post-graduate or professional degree                        | 16   |
| Total   | 100  |

| <b>Annual household income</b> |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| < \$40,000                     | 16  |
| \$40,000-\$69,999              | 23  |
| \$70,000-\$99,999              | 23  |
| \$100,000-\$149,000            | 19  |
| \$150,000+                     | 18  |
| Total                          | 100 |

**Table 10 (cont'd)****Jews: weighted frequency distribution for weight variables, in percent**

| <b>Age</b>  |     |
|---|-----|
| 18-34   | 24  |
| 35-44   | 16  |
| 45-54   | 14  |
| 55-64   | 15  |
| 65+   | 30  |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Gender</b>   |     |
| Male  | 48  |
| Female  | 51  |
| Transgender/non-binary                                      | <1  |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Educational attainment</b>                               |     |
| < High school diploma                                       | 1   |
| High school diploma   | 7   |
| Registered apprenticeship, trade certificate or diploma     | 1   |
| College, CEGEP, other non-university certificate or diploma | 12  |
| University certificate or diploma                           | 4   |
| Bachelor's degree   | 37  |
| Post-graduate or professional degree                        | 38  |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Annual household income</b>                              |     |
| < \$40,000  | 14  |
| \$40,000-\$69,999   | 16  |
| \$70,000-\$99,999   | 15  |
| \$100,000-\$149,000   | 19  |
| \$150,000+  | 36  |
| Total   | 100 |

| <b>Religiosity</b>                                     |     |
|--|-----|
| Identifies as Jewish by religion                       | 84  |
| Identifies with no religion but Jewish by ethnicity    | 16  |
| Total  | 100 |
| <b>Denomination</b>                                    |     |
| Ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, Modern Orthodox              | 16  |
| Conservative   | 27  |
| Reform   | 17  |
| Reconstructionist/ Renewal/Humanitarian/Humanist/Other | 14  |
| Just Jewish  | 26  |
| Total  | 100 |

**Table 10 (cont'd)****Muslims: weighted frequency distribution for weight variables, in percent**

| <b>Age</b>  |     |
|---|-----|
| 18-34   | 39  |
| 35-44   | 24  |
| 45-54   | 18  |
| 55-64   | 11  |
| 65+   | 9   |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Gender</b>   |     |
| Male  | 49  |
| Female  | 51  |
| Transgender/non-binary                                      | 0   |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Educational attainment</b>                               |     |
| < High school diploma                                       | 5   |
| High school diploma   | 27  |
| Registered apprenticeship, trade certificate or diploma     | 2   |
| College, CEGEP, other non-university certificate or diploma | 33  |
| University certificate or diploma                           | 4   |
| Bachelor's degree   | 18  |
| Post-graduate or professional degree                        | 11  |
| Total   | 100 |
| <b>Annual household income</b>                              |     |
| < \$40,000  | 61  |
| \$40,000-\$69,999   | 23  |
| \$70,000-\$99,999   | 9   |
| \$100,000-\$149,000   | 5   |
| \$150,000+  | 2   |
| Total   | 100 |

## Appendix B: Supplementary Quebec Tables

**Table 11**

**“The following statements reflect notions that some people have regarding Jewish people. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements,” non-Jewish Quebecers, 2026, in percent**

|  | “Slightly agree,”<br>“agree” or<br>“strongly agree” | “Slightly disagree,”<br>“disagree” or<br>“strongly disagree” | Don’t know/<br>no answer | Total |
|--|---|--|--------------------------|-------|
| Jewish people have too much power in our country today.  | 30  | 42   | 28                       | 100   |
| Jewish people don’t care what happens to anyone but their own kind.  | 35  | 43   | 22                       | 100   |
| Jewish people talk too much about the Holocaust.   | 20  | 43   | 37                       | 100   |
| Jewish people are largely to blame for the negative consequences of globalization.   | 15  | 48   | 38                       | 100   |
| It is appropriate for opponents of Israel’s policies to boycott Jewish-owned businesses in Canada.   | 22  | 45   | 32                       | 100   |
| Jewish people should be admired for their resilience in the face of adversity.   | 52  | 24   | 24                       | 100   |
| Jewish people should be included in the policies that Canadian universities are implementing to increase equity, diversity, and inclusivity in all aspects of university life. | 39  | 30   | 31                       | 100   |
| Jewish people should be admired for their achievements despite discrimination against them.  | 51  | 25   | 24                       | 100   |
| Average  | 45  |  |                          |       |
| Average  | 25  |  |                          |       |

Note: Shaded cells indicate positive response to negatively worded statements and negative responses to positively worded statements. Unshaded cells indicate positive responses to positively worded statements and negative responses to negatively worded statements. Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

**Table 12**

**“The following statements reflect notions that some people have regarding Israel. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements,” non-Jewish Quebecers 2026, in percent**

|  | “Slightly agree,”<br>“agree” or<br>“strongly agree” | “Slightly disagree,”<br>“disagree” or<br>“strongly disagree” | Don't<br>know/ no<br>answer | Total |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------|-------|
| The war Israel is conducting in Gaza is an example of genocide.  | 62  | 11   | 27                          | 100   |
| Israel is an apartheid state.  | 34  | 14   | 52                          | 100   |
| The Israelis are more responsible than the Palestinians are for the past three years of violence in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. | 42  | 18   | 39                          | 100   |
| Zionism is a form of racism.   | 41  | 10   | 48                          | 100   |
| I support the Palestinian-led BDS (boycott, divestment, and sanctions) movement.   | 26  | 30   | 44                          | 100   |
| Israel is the only democratic country in the Middle East.  | 20  | 32   | 48                          | 100   |
| There is no justification for Palestinian suicide bombers targeting Israeli civilians.   | 65  | 11   | 24                          | 100   |
| In general, Israeli leaders are sincere in their pursuit of peace with the Palestinians.   | 14  | 52   | 34                          | 100   |
| The Jewish people are entitled to a state of their own in Israel.  | 52  | 16   | 32                          | 100   |
| The Canadian government should not impose sanctions on Israel.   | 22  | 41   | 36                          | 100   |
| Average  | 26  |  |                             |       |
| Average  | 36  |  |                             |       |

Note: Shaded cells indicate positive response to negatively worded statements and negative responses to positively worded statements. Unshaded cells indicate positive responses to positively worded statements and negative responses to negatively worded statements. Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

**Robert Brym**, FRSC, is emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Toronto. He has published more than two hundred scholarly works and received multiple awards for his publications and teaching, including the Northrop Frye Award (University of Toronto), the *British Journal of Sociology* Prize (London School of Economics and Political Science), the Outstanding Contribution Award of the Canadian Sociological Association, and the Louis Rosenberg Canadian Jewish Studies Distinguished Service Award. Brym's main research projects have focused on the politics of intellectuals, Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union and its successor states, the second intifada, and Jews in Canada. For downloads of Brym's published work, visit <https://utorontoacademia.edu/RobertBrym>.

**Rhonda Lenton** served as president and vice-chancellor of York University from 2017 to 2025, during which she embodied York's vision of providing students from diverse sociodemographic backgrounds with access to high-quality education at a research-intensive institution dedicated to the public good. She guided the university's leadership in twenty-first century learning, research and innovation, sustainability, global health, and social justice. By advancing her vision across Canada's higher education sector, she elevated York's profile nationally and globally. Lenton was named one of the top 100 most powerful women in Canada by the Women's Executive Network in 2015. In 2016 she received the Angela Hildyard Recognition Award for innovative leadership and outstanding contributions to her institution and to higher education in general. Her areas of research and publication include gender studies, research methods and statistical analysis, Jews in Canada, and higher education.

#### 1

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#### 2

Robert Brym, "Antisemitic and Anti-Israel Actions and Attitudes in Canada and Internationally: A Research Agenda," *Patterns of Prejudice* 53, no. 4 (2019), 407–420.

#### 3

Irving Abella, "Anti-Semitism in Canada," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2012 edition, <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anti-semitism>. Abella's assessment was deleted in the 2023 revision of this entry.

#### 4

Morton Weinfeld, with Randal F. Schnoor and Michelle Shamas, *Like Everyone Else but Different: The Paradoxical Success of Canadian Jews*, 2nd ed. (McGill-Queen's University Press 2019), 337.

5

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 (University of Toronto Press, 2021), 3.

6

Robert Brym, "Jews and Israel 2024: A Survey of Canadian Attitudes and Jewish Perceptions," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 37 (2024), 6–89.

7

Robert Brym and Jack Jedwab, "Who are the Supporters and Opponents of the Pro-Palestinian Encampments?" *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 39 (2024), 101–108.

8

Robert Brym, "A Survey on Antisemitism in Ontario's K-12 Schools," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 41 (2025), 4–63.

9

Anti-Defamation League, "The ADL Global 100: Index of Antisemitism," 2025, <https://www.adl.org/adl-global-100-index-antisemitism>.

10

Group size for intercensal years has been linearly interpolated for 2014–2020 and linearly extrapolated for 2022–2024. Government of Canada, "Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, selected regions and Canada (selected police services)" (2025), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510006601>; Statistics Canada, "Visible Minority (15), Generation Status (4), Age Groups (10) and Sex (3) for the Population in Private Households of Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2011 National Household Survey" (2019), [https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=0&](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=0&PID=105395&PRID=0&P-TPYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&TEMPORAL=2013&THEME=95&VID=0)

[PID=105399&PRID=0&PTYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=0&SUB=0&Temporal=2013&THEME=95&VID=0](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810035301); Statistics Canada, "Religion by gender and age: Canada, provinces and territories" (2023), <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810035301>.

11

The margin of error decreases as findings rise above or fall below 50 percent.

12

We wanted to oversample Palestinians separately but the fact that fewer than forty-six thousand Palestinians were counted in the 2021 census, compared to nearly 1.8 million Muslims, made this unfeasible.

13

Robert Brym, Keith Neuman, and Rhonda Lenton, *2018 Survey of Jews in Canada* (Enviroinformatics Institute, 2019), 80, <https://www.enviroinformatics.org/projects/project-details/survey-of-jews-in-canada>.

14

For readers unfamiliar with the statistics we use, we note that correlation coefficients vary from -1.0 to 1.0. The closer a correlation coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the degree to which the value of one variable increases with the value of the other variable. The closer a correlation coefficient is to -1.0, the greater the degree to which the value of one variable *decreases* with the value of the other. Generally, in the social sciences, a positive or negative correlation less than 0.300 is considered weak, a positive or negative correlation greater than 0.299 but less than 0.500 is considered moderate, and a positive or negative correlation of 0.500 or greater is considered strong. In Appendix A we justify using statistical significance tests to assess whether a relationship or difference is meaningful or due to chance. Simplifying, we can say that the notation " $p < 0.05$ " means there is a 95 percent chance a finding is not due to chance, while " $p < 0.01$ " increases the likelihood to 99 percent and " $p < 0.001$ " raises it further to 99.9 percent.

15

Brym, "Jews and Israel."

16

Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.873$ . We handled missing data by computing means for respondents who answered at least six of the eight items. This procedure ensured that we captured 67 percent of respondents for analysis.

**17**

For both the 2024 and 2026 data we calculated scores by determining the percentage of respondents for each point as follows: 1 = 1 < 1.5; 2 = 1.5 < 2.5; 3 = 2.5 < 3.5; 4 = 3.5 < 4.5; 5 = 4.5 < 5.5; 6 = 5.5+. In Brym's "Jews and Israel 2024," scores were calculated by dividing the scale into 6 equal parts, yielding different scores for 2024 than those reported here. The method used here is more faithful to the underlying data but has the shortcoming of truncating the range of one and six scores. However, both methods yield similar substantive results.

**18**

Mira Sucharov, "The Challenges and Demands of Allyship through the Public Intellectual Platform," in *The Boomerang Effect of Decolonization: Post-Orientalism and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Maurice Jr. Labelle (McGill-Queen's University Press 2023), 168.

**19**

Luc Turgeon, Antoine Bilodeau, Stephen E. White, and Ailsa Henderson, "A Tale of Two Liberalisms? Attitudes Toward Minorities in Quebec and the Rest of Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 52, no. 2 (2019), 247–269; Jean-François Lisée, "And What if Quebecers are Less Racist Than Other Canadians?" *Policy Options Politique*, February 23, 2023, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2023/02/quebec-racism>.

**20**

Québec, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, "Loi sur la laïcité de l'État," December 11, 2025, <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/L-0.3>.

**21**

Keith Banting and Debra Thomson, "The Puzzling Persistence of Racial Inequality in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 54, no. 4 (2021), 870–891; Abdolmohammad Kazemipur, "Islamophobia in Canada between Populism and Political Correctness," in *Racism, Islamophobia, Antisemitism and the Future of Canadian Society*, ed. Robert Brym (Rock's Mills Press, 2020), 7–27; Christoph Schimmele, Feng Hou, and Max Stick, "Poverty Among Racialized Groups Across Generations," Government of Canada, August 23, 2023, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/36-28-0001/2023008/article/00002-eng.htm>.

**22**

John W. Berry, Feng Hou, and Michel Beiser, "Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation," *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 59, no. 1 (2010), 1–30; Carla T. Hilario and Nazilla Khanlou "Just as Canadian as Anyone Else'? Experiences of Second-Generation Immigrant Youth," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 19, no. 4 (2017), 870–879; Jeffrey G. Reitz and Rupa Banerjee, "Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion, and Policy Issues in Canada," in *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, eds. Keith Banting, Thomas J. Courchene, and F. Leslie Seidle (Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2007), 489–545.

**23**

Naomi Lightman, "Immigrant and Non-immigrant Income," in *The Ever-Dying People? Canada's Jews in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Robert Brym and Randal F. Schnoor (University of Toronto Press, 2023), 100–113.

**24**

In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report highlighted anti-Indigenous racism and the importance of decolonization as a theme in EDI. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, 2012, [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).

**25**

A unique survey of more than 3,300 Canadian academics, conducted in 2000, divided respondents by discipline, measured their left-right ideological positions, and calculated average scores for disciplines. It arrayed disciplines from left to right as follows: education, sociology, humanities, business, social sciences other than sociology, natural sciences and math, and medical sciences. See Robert Brym and M. Reza Nakhaie, "Professional, Critical, Policy, and Public Academics in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 34, no. 3 (2009), 655–669, <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/CJS/article/view/6305/5563>.

**26**

Ayelet Kuper, "Reflections on Addressing Antisemitism in a Canadian Faculty of Medicine," *Canadian Medical Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (2023), 158–170.

**27**

Eitan Hersh and Laura Royden, "Antisemitic Attitudes across the Ideological Spectrum," *Political Research Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2023), 697–711; Jeffrey E. Cohen, "Ideology and Attitudes toward Jews in U.S. Public Opinion: A Reconsideration," *Religions* 15, no. 1 (2024).

**28**

Throughout this report, trend lines are based on LOESS (Locally Estimated Scatterplot Smoothing) regression. Markers for individual respondents have been removed for clarity.

**29**

Brym, "A Survey on Antisemitism." Figures on the number of Jewish school-age children come from a custom tabulation of the 2021 Census of Canada.

**30**

Ari David Blaff, "Meet the Student Group—with Alleged Links to Hamas—Driving the Anti-Israel Encampments," *National Post*, June 15, 2024, 4, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/national-students-for-justice-in-palestine>.

**31**

Brym and Jedwab, "Public Opinion and Canadian Jewry"; Robert Brym, "Public Opinion and Canadian Jewry, 2024 (Part 2): Jews and Israel 2024 Survey: Ten Further Insights," *Canadian Jewish Studies / Études juives canadiennes* 39 (2025), 108–117.

**32**

Jack Jedwab and Paul Holley, *Campus Antisemitism and Student Experiences (CASE): A Report on the State of Antisemitism at Canadian postsecondary institutions* (forthcoming 2026).

**33**

Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.880$ . We handled missing data by computing means for respondents who answered at least five of the eight items. This procedure ensured that we captured 63 percent of respondents for analysis. There was a negligible difference in results when we computed means for respondents who answered at least seven of the ten items, but doing so captured an unacceptably small percentage of respondents.

**34**

Anti-Defamation League, "The ADL Global 100."

**35**

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Full disclosure: Robert Brym is on the advisory board of the New Israel Fund of Canada.

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## **The Archives Matter / A vos archives**

Heather Home

**Collecting Gerald Tulchinsky:  
One Fonds, Multiple Perspectives**

Queen's University Archives acquires the papers of academics on an ongoing basis as it is part of our mandate to reflect on the pedagogical history of this institution. We do not collect *all* faculty members however; we acquire an academic's records when it is clear that the records comply with archival principles (it must, above all, be good, reliable evidence) and the academic's influence in the field extends beyond the limestone walls of our institution. Such is the case with the late Queen's University historian Gerald (Jerry) Tulchinsky.

The Tulchinsky fonds is a broad-ranging and voluminous collection of records.<sup>1</sup> The scope and content of many faculty fonds is focused on an academic career with records such as course syllabi, academic papers, research materials, manuscripts of monographs, and departmental and administrative roles that have been occupied or undertaken throughout a career. The Tulchinsky fonds indeed includes all this but also much more. It not only provides evidence of an intellectual community and field of study but also offers glimpses of personal and formative moments in his life. The following essay by Ellen Tulchinsky and Laura Tulchinsky, Jerry's daughters, centers on the personal letters from a young Jerry to his parents during an exceptional year in his life, long before he became a pioneering scholar of Canadian Jewish history. The letters give us an intimate and revealing portrait not always available in faculty papers. The archives are always partial; as Pierre Nora has stated, "Archive as much as you like: something will always be left out."<sup>2</sup> We are thankful that these letters were not left out as they help add detail to the portrait we can unveil of Jerry Tulchinsky.

As Ellen and Laura propose in the article, it is likely that this year in Israel focused Jerry's later academic pursuits, shifting from labour and business history to the study of Canadian Jewry, a field Jerry saw as distinctly different from the field of American Jewry (as is evidenced in his Queen's Annual Archives Lecture of 2010).<sup>3</sup> I think this conclusion drawn by Jerry's daughters serves as a good reminder that nothing happens in isolation, that people are complex with a myriad of influences and experiences converging to create an individual life, set of beliefs, and outlook. Sometimes the records are silent about these influences, but a fulsome fonds allows for reflection on the broad span and scope of impacts and interests that combine in any life and helps to give us a better understanding of the complexities of an individual existence.

Jerry's youth does not figure prominently in his fonds. As an archivist I ask myself, "Why were these letters kept and deposited?" The keeping of the letters shows an attachment and connection that the donor had to this material. These letters meant something to Jerry. They must have for Jerry (or his family) to have physically kept them, perhaps moving them from house to house, for over fifty years before depositing them.<sup>4</sup> Jerry's attachment to the letters places value on those records that is divined not only through their content, but by their continued physical existence and deposit. While the records of a fonds can be mined for their contents as evidence

of things past, the records that exist in a fonds, and the shape of that fonds, can also be read to seek greater understanding of the individual.

A portrait of Jerry is obviously evident in his records, but in a repository such as Queen's University Archives, which maintains a total archives ethos, we also catch glimpses of Jerry in other records: within the university's records you will find him in departmental meetings; within the records of another professor, with whom Tulchinsky exchanged a series of published debates in the local newspaper, you will find the personal correspondence exchanged between the two; and within the records of the local synagogue, you find his work and worship within his faith community.

Queen's University Archives was also fortunate to have benefited from Jerry's influence behind the scenes: he acted as an ambassador for our institution. His research interests brought a number of additional fonds into our repository, expanding our holdings on Canadian Jewish life. Through Jerry's work examining the intersections of labour practices and Canadian Jewry, we acquired the Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association of Ontario fonds and the Freedman Company Limited (Montreal) fonds.<sup>5</sup> Jerry's biography of Joe Salsberg established a relationship with the Ezrin family that led to their decision to deposit the Salsberg fonds at Queen's University Archives.<sup>6</sup> Jerry's continuous championing of archives, and the value of keeping records, helped expand the possibilities for future scholarly research within our repository.

Perhaps most significantly, Jerry helped to build connections between Queen's and the local Jewish community. Jerry was instrumental in ensuring that the records of the Beth Israel Congregation came to Queen's University Archives.<sup>7</sup> Those records would later transform our Reading Room into a hub of activity during the one hundredth anniversary celebrations of the synagogue in 2010, cementing a relationship that continues to bring records through the door to this day.

**Heather Home** has been the Public Services and Private Records Archivist at Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario since 2001. She splits her time between outreach activities with a variety of disciplines and audiences and working with private donors and community groups regarding their records.

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Ellen Tulchinsky and Laura Tulchinsky

**Letters from a Young Zionist:  
The Evolution of a Historian**

For as long as we can remember, our dad, Jerry, took every opportunity to reminisce about the year he spent in Israel as a nineteen-year-old in 1952–1953. He lit up when he reflected on his experiences. His stories, memories, and emotions from that time were woven into our lives as we grew up, playing a large role in connecting us and our brother Steve, ז"ל, to Israel from a very young age.

Our dad, born in 1933, grew up in the small, close-knit Jewish community of Brantford, Ontario. His parents were both deeply committed Zionists. His father had immigrated to Canada from Tiraspol, Russia via Romania, in the early 1920s, having originally intended to go to Palestine. His mother devoted many years of her life to volunteer work with Hadassah WIZO. Their love of Israel shaped the household in which he grew up. It was passed down to their four children, particularly to our dad and his younger brother, Ted.

Long before gap years between high school and university became common practice, our dad delayed university studies, and decided to attend the Machon Le'Madrichei Chutz L'Aretz (Machon), a year-long leadership institute in Jerusalem for young Jews from around the world. This decision grew naturally out of years of involvement in Canadian Young Judaea (YJ), a Zionist youth movement, as a camper, camp counselor, and then a *madrich* (leader). He was heavily involved in Brantford's YJ chapter and attended meetups across Ontario, too.

Over the course of that year, he and his fellow *machonniks*, including friends from YJ in Canada, lived and studied together. They traveled widely throughout Israel from north to south, and spent time living, working, and studying on kibbutzim, including Tel Yitzhak and HaSolelim. It is no exaggeration to say that the experience profoundly changed our dad's life, also shaping his academic future in the years that followed.

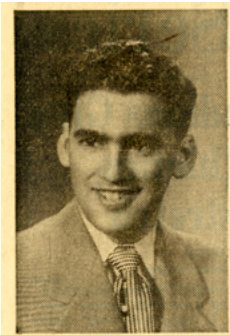
Our dad cherished being in Israel, a country barely four years old, where he interacted with Zionist peers from around the world, met extended family for the first time, studied Jewish history, and learned modern Hebrew. He may not yet have been a historian, but he was already instinctively a chronicler and a record keeper. He began keeping a diary from the moment he set sail from New York, later switching to letters when the Machon began, and explicitly asked his family to preserve them. "I would appreciate your keeping all my letters," he wrote in October 1952, "as I would appreciate reading them again when I come back. They will be valuable to me in future years."

We feel fortunate that our dad had the foresight not only to write so many poignant and insightful letters during his year abroad, but also to ask his mother to save them. They are his first personal archive. He also took beautiful black-and-white snapshots, which we have sprinkled throughout this essay. Together, the letters, snapshots, and a later interview we conducted with him form a treasure trove of primary

sources, offering a vivid window into his year in Israel and his path to becoming a historian. After retiring from the Department of History at Queen's University, he donated his papers, including all his Israel material, to Queen's University Archives, preserving them and making them accessible to future researchers.<sup>1</sup>

The year 2027 will mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of our dad's participation in the Machon. In this post-October 7 world, where questions about Zionism, Jewish identity, and Israel's place in the world are especially urgent, we felt it was the right time to revisit these letters. His keen observations and the questions he raised are more relevant than ever. While this essay can capture only a small flavour of everything he expressed in his letters home, we believe it is important to share them.<sup>2</sup>

Our dad's decision to go to Israel in 1952 meant missing several important milestones and giving up a significant opportunity: his high school graduation at Brantford Collegiate, the honour of serving as class valedictorian, and a full scholarship to Queen's University. But he knew that going on the Machon was the right decision before he left and that postsecondary studies could wait. "I know that I'm glad I came," he wrote in his first letter home on September 18, 1952, "even though it meant giving up a lot. It was no mistake on my part."



**JERRY TULCHINSKY . . .**  
off to Israel.

### **Jerry Tulchinsky Sails for Israel**

Jerry Tulchinsky, winner of a Young Judea scholarship, left today for New York, where he will board a boat for Israel. He will spend a year there studying at the Jewish Agency Institute in Jerusalem and making a walking tour of the country.

Jerry is president of the Ontario Young Judea and is one of the 11 boys and girls from Canada selected for the trip. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Tulchinsky, 176 St. George Street.

In addition to this honor, Jerry was also the winner of the Andrew Malcolm History Scholarship at Queen's University, which he was unable to accept.

The honor of being the year's valedictorian at commencement exercises at the Brantford Collegiate Institute, had also to be declined since Jerry will be in Israel at the time.

It was an exciting journey. The local newspaper, the *Brantford Expositor* even featured a short article about our dad's adventure, along with a photo, as did the *Judaeen*, the newspaper from Canadian Young Judaea. He traveled from Canada to the US to meet the ship, the SS Nassau, setting sail from New York. The ship passed Gibraltar, Tangier, Algeria, Sicily, and Crete before finally docking at Haifa. The voyage took two weeks. "It was a wonderful trip," he wrote in September 1952, "with terrific food such as I have never eaten." When the Port of Haifa finally came into sight and he spotted Israeli naval vessels flying the Star of David, he observed with pride: "It made me feel pretty good to see a Jewish ship, with Jewish sailors and a Jewish flag flying over them."

*Brantford Expositor*, Saturday, August 30, 1952.

Source: Queen's University Archives, 5023.1, Box 6, File 25



Front page of Canadian Young Judean newspaper, *The Judaean*, November 1952. Source: Queen's University Archives, 5023.1, Box 6, File 21



Jerry, in plaid, with other machonniks aboard the SS Nassau



Jerry on the SS Nassau



Jerry, on the far right, with other machonniks aboard the SS Nassau



Arriving at the Port of Haifa



Jerry's first telegram home after arrival in Israel, September 17, 1952

While our dad was clearly excited to get to Israel after so much anticipation and such a long journey, the realities of life in the new country quickly came into focus upon his arrival. In an interview we recorded with him in 2016, he recounted: “We went with stars in our eyes, but pretty quickly got to see reality...” He went on to describe tough living conditions and difficult times at the end of the British Mandate, through the War of Independence, and into the early 1950s. There was a shortage of food, tremendous loss of life, and destruction of buildings and property. Veteran Israelis had been through tough times.

Soon after arriving in the country, our dad connected with some family for the first time, relatives who had fled Europe before the Holocaust. He visited often with an uncle and his wife and young daughter in Tel Aviv. Another relative, a cousin on his father’s side, was sick with rheumatism, living in an immigrant camp, and struggling financially. Our dad made a note of who needed food parcels, and relayed that information back to his mother, who then shipped care packages from Canada. She sent clothing, too, for a cousin’s young son.

Despite this difficult, eye-opening introduction to Israel and to some family struggles, our dad’s earliest impressions of the country were favourable, as he wrote in September 1952: “Though I’ve been here only a week I think Israel’s a wonderful country. When I ride by huge stretches of bleached sand and then suddenly see an orange grove surrounded with tall evergreens spring out of sand and see fields of vegetables I can appreciate the effort and money and hard labour that went into those fields.”

Once he arrived in Jerusalem, he happily settled into the Machon’s home base, noting in September 1952: “Our place in Jerusalem is beautiful. The machon building and one of the dormitory buildings are in one spot and the place where about half the kids, myself included, is in another place about five minutes away from the machon. This is the so-called Arab Mansion. It is very nice. We have lots of room and comfortable beds of straw mattresses. There are two other guys in my room which has two balconies.” The building even had a music and reading room downstairs from the dorm, with magazines, newspapers, a radio, record player, and many classical records.



Jerusalem Hills

As far as his new urban surroundings were concerned, our dad was captivated by the beauty of Jerusalem, “a city that I think everyone must inevitably love or at least be fascinated by,” he wrote in late September 1952. “There is something ‘in the air’ here.... No one can really capture it and write it down on paper.” He enjoyed the outskirts of the city, too. In late October 1952, he observed, “the hills around Jerusalem are really fascinating. Though they aren’t beautiful from the standpoint of many trees, I think they’ve more beauty to them than anything else I’ve seen. Somebody said that the hills seem to skip around Jerusalem and that’s one way of describing them.”

The Tower of David,  
Jerusalem



Jerry (far left), on *tiyul* with other *machonniks*

The Machon was designed to train a generation of diaspora youth leaders through immersive Hebrew study, lectures, and travel, and from everything our dad describes, the institute lived up to its promise. The coursework was intensive, starting out in September with eighteen hours of Hebrew instruction per week. The hard work paid off. By November 1952 he noted: “I find that the language is fairly easy though I must continually review to keep it at my fingertips. It has depth, preciseness and beauty and if spoken well it is a beautiful language to hear.”

Apart from studying Hebrew, the *machonniks*, hailing from Europe, North and South America, and South Africa, attended lectures on Jewish history and thought, studied the geography of Israel, and embarked on many *tiyulim* (field trips) that were meant to introduce them to the young state. It’s amazing how much of the country they covered in one year. They visited Kibbutz Yavne, just east of Ashdod, for Sukkot, hiked nine miles around Jerusalem past abandoned Arab villages toward Mount Herzl, and walked through the ruins of Ramat Rachel, the southern kibbutz that, he noted, had been destroyed and rebuilt four times since 1925.

Our dad excitedly described one of the upcoming *tiyulim* to his parents in early November 1952: “So as you see it’s a pretty extensive tour but by no means to be confused with a tour in the usual sense of the word. We travel on foot



Jerry on *tiyul*

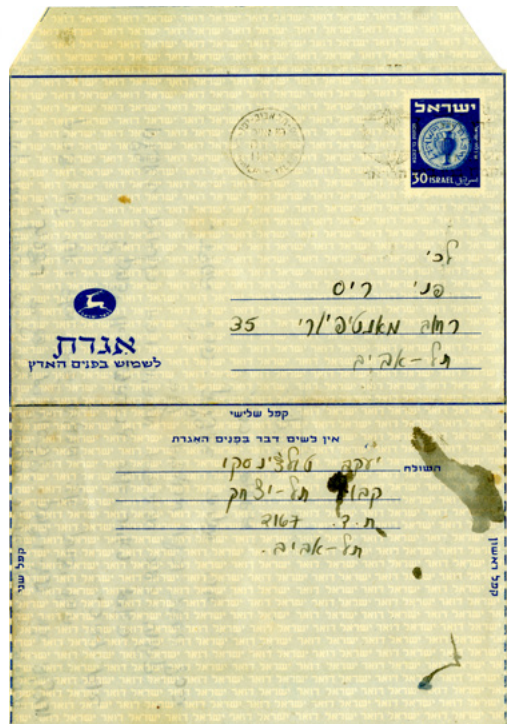


Kibbutz Yad Mordechai

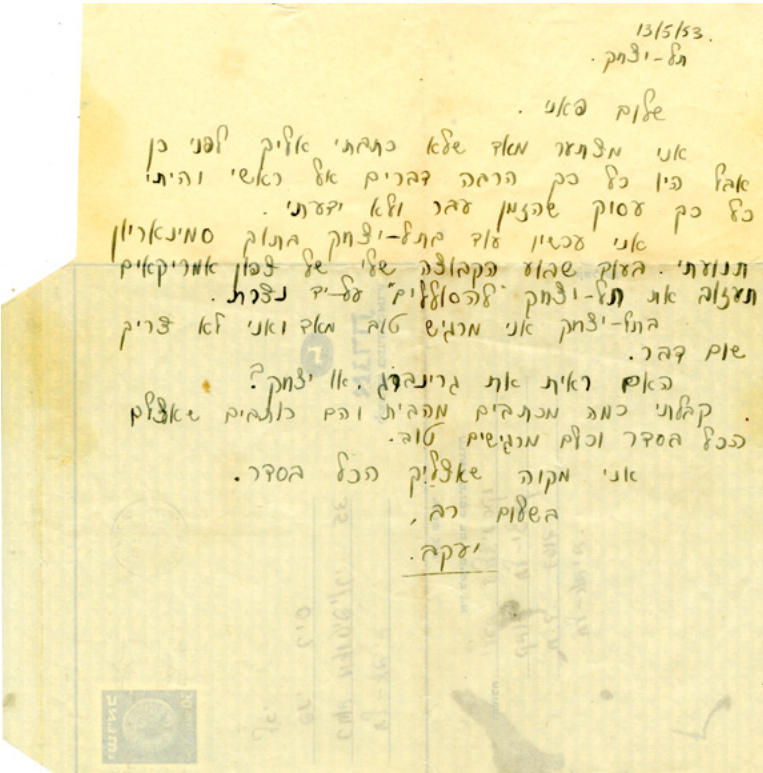
Kibbutz Yad Mordechai, named for Mordechai Anielewicz, the leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, its old water tower still riddled with shell holes.

Over the course of that year at the Machon, our dad changed and grew in fundamental ways, reflected in the personal, linguistic, and intellectual aspects of his letters. By late November 1952, he moved into a room with South American and Dutch students, writing home that they would have to converse in Hebrew, “the only common medium.” His Hebrew progressed steadily and he continued to gain confidence and take pride in his growing language skills. At a certain point in the year, he began putting his return address in Hebrew on the blue aerogrammes and referred to himself by his Hebrew name, Yaakov. He even penned letters to his father in “somewhat stilted Hebrew.”

and in trucks and will sleep in settlements. It should really be terrific and I am looking forward to it very much.” The four-day *tiyul* through the northern Negev, took them first from Ein Karem, “a picturesque little village set on the side of one of the terraced hills,” through the Judae-an hills, south to Be’er Sheva, and on to kibbutzim near the Egyptian border. Kibbutz Negba, where defenders had lived underground for weeks rather than surrender during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and



One of Jerry's first letters in Hebrew



Letter from Jerry, May 13, 1953, in Hebrew

The *machonniks* spent quite a lot of time outside of their Jerusalem headquarters, including on kibbutzim where our dad worked all kinds of jobs. In the *refet* (cowshed) on Tel Yitzhak, where he helped to deliver a baby calf, he joked in April 1953: “After a few minutes he was standing up and breathing. Pretty soon I’ll get my midwife’s papers.” He also worked in the fields gathering greens for the cows and had shifts serving meals in the dining hall.



Jerry at work on Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak



Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak



Jerry, at top right, on Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak

While the hands-on agricultural work on the kibbutz gave him a physical connection to the land, the Machon's library, concert nights, and political debates broadened his intellectual horizons. Our dad recounted reading *Ahad Ha'am* on Spiritual Zionism, attending lectures on the contemporary Israeli economy, and even getting a tour at the Jerusalem Post office.

In November 1952, he joined the national mourning after President Chaim Weizmann's death, noting: "The whole machon went to Rehovoth to pass in front of the coffin and, believe me, it was very impressive. Thousands of people from all over

the country were there." They observed and took part in significant historical moments in the young State of Israel. His feelings about these experiences come through vividly in his letters, opening a window into a world often described from a distance.



Funeral of Israel's first president, Chaim Weizmann

In late November 1952, he wrote a passage that now feels prophetic, given that he later became a historian of Canadian Jewry: "History has always been a fascinating subject for me but the Jewish History we are now studying

has no comparison, in what I have so far studied, in interest and power. I know that I never once in my life was ashamed that I was a Jew and now that I have read a little and heard these terrific lectures on Jewish History here at the machon, I am more than ever proud of my Jewishness.”

In late spring 1953, our dad was preparing his return to Canada for later that summer. Originally, he planned to take a ship across the Atlantic but noted in a June 1953 letter that “this business of my coming home on the Queen Mary now is off. We cannot get passage because of the Coronation [Queen Elizabeth II] backlog in England.”

By July 1953, our dad was wrapping up his time on the Machon with visits to family and a final *tiyul* to the Western Galil. He had also arranged an alternate route for his journey



Jerry in Israel, exact location unknown

home and set up a trip with friends through Europe on the way back to Canada, with stops including Rome, Florence, Paris, and Brussels. On the eve of his departure, August 8, 1953, he reflected: “Well it’s pretty hard to put into words what I feel right now.... Up to the last minute I am seeing and learning new things here. Each time I move somewhere something else comes up that I didn’t know before.”

Our dad returned from Israel in September 1953 a changed person. Years later, after earning a PhD in history from the University of Toronto, and spending several years teaching Canadian economic history, he changed course and shifted to teaching and writing about Jewish history. Ultimately, he became one of the country’s leading scholars of Canadian Jewry, publishing books and articles on Jewish life in Canada. In hindsight, that year at the Machon in Israel was the catalyst that set him on his academic path. He articulated it himself in December 1952: “I have a growing desire to learn more and more, not only about the Jewish people, but about everything else that I can about many other subjects. I have a thirst for knowledge and now I am sure that I want to attend university if it will teach me more about what I want to learn. I think this year in Israel, I can feel it even now, is giving me a deeper, solider view on life and on Jewish life and Zionism.”

Aug. 8 / 53.  
Eve of departure.

Dear Mom,

I received your last letter yesterday and it was good to hear from you again. This is my last day in Acre for some time because tomorrow morning at ten six of us are going to Italy.

Well it's pretty hard to put into words what I feel right now. You sensed a lot of it from my previous letters home. So there isn't much more to say now. I'll be able to tell you a lot when I go back to Canada.

Up to the last minute I am seeing and learning new things here. Each time I move somewhere something else comes up that I didn't know before.

People here are caught between the depressing feeling of an austerity-ridden country with half of the people new immigrants and hopes for a brighter future in Israel. When and how it will come no one ventures to say. Some people say that the solution is in raising agricultural production or in building up industry or a bigger bond drive etc.

Any one of them could be right, I don't know, but I know one thing: there must be people here to do the building of the country and those people must be

Jerry's last letter home from Israel, August 8, 1953

Our dad's letters are also a testament to the archival instinct he began to feel in Israel at the age of nineteen and carried throughout his life. We have recounted how he started a diary and then switched to letters, which he asked his family to keep for him. He also sent packets of *The Jerusalem Post* home to Brantford so his brother, Ted, could read the daily news from Israel. That impulse to preserve the record would define his life's work.

In a conversation we had with him about the Machon in 2017, the last year of his life, our dad took a pencil and paper and drew a simple map of the Jerusalem that still lived in his mind all those years later. He called it "My Jerusalem 1952-3, Jerry T." It included Jaffa Road, the King David Hotel, Ben Yehudah Street, the Montefiore Windmill, and the Machon building, all drawn from memory and love. Laura keeps a copy in her office on the wall right by her computer. She calls it "A Map of My Father's Heart."

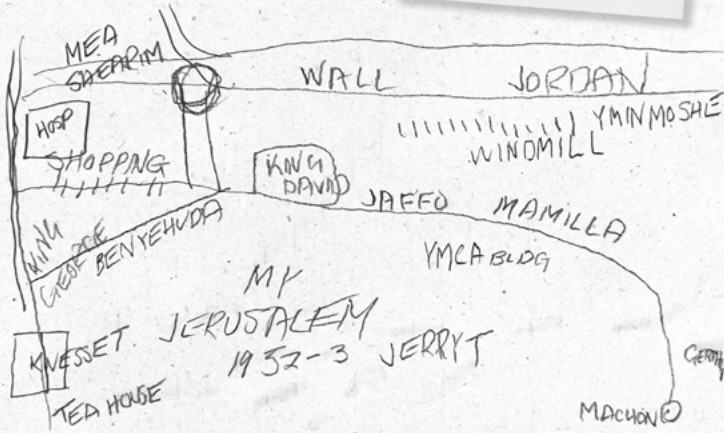
**Ellen Tulchinsky** earned a BA in history from the University of Toronto and an MLIS from The University of Western Ontario. She is a research librarian based in Toronto, Ontario.

**Laura Tulchinsky** earned a BA in political science from Carleton University and a postgraduate certificate in Journalism from Langara College in Vancouver. She is a communications professional based in Kingston, Ontario.

**Jerry's hand drawn map, titled "My Jerusalem," 2017**



Jaffa Road, Jerusalem



King David Hotel, Jerusalem



YMCA building, Jerusalem

**1**

We are grateful to David S. Koffman and Joshua Tapper at *Canadian Jewish Studies* / *Études juives canadiennes* for bringing our dad's letters to light. And thank you to Heather Home, at the Queen's University Archives in Kingston, Ontario, for her thoughtful overview of our dad's collection housed there.

**2**

All letters referenced in this essay can be found in Queen's University Archives, 5023.1, Box 6, File 2. File title: Correspondence, dates: 1952–1953. All photos published in this essay were taken in 1952–1953; along with the hand-drawn map, "My Jerusalem," they are held in the Tulchinsky family's private collection.

## **Translation / Traduction**

Hongfei Liang

**History as a Bridge:  
Chinese-Jewish Community Dialogue in Canada**

## Translator's Introduction

This instalment of the "Translation" subsection features translations of two special reports published in the *Ming Pao Daily News* (Western Canada Edition) in January and February 2000. Launched in Vancouver, British Columbia in October 1993 under the Hong Kong-based Ming Pao Group, this centrist Traditional Chinese-language daily maintained a longstanding editorial commitment to objective, impartial coverage of local political and economic events, catering to a core readership of Chinese immigrants across the Greater Vancouver area. It ceased publication and news operations in January 2026 after thirty-two years in circulation; it was the last full-service Chinese-language daily newspaper in Canada at the time of its closure.

The articles translated here record efforts by Chinese and Jewish leaders in Vancouver to foster grassroots dialogue between the two communities at the turn of the millennium—a period in Canadian history after the heyday of official multiculturalism had petered out. By this time, multiculturalism had become mainstream and bureaucratized. As critics emerged from both the right (arguing that it undermined national unity) and the left (arguing that it masked structural inequality), specific ethnic minority communities sought in-depth connection with one another. It is in this context that the Canadian Chinese community turned to the history of the Jewish people in China as a narrative link in their efforts to promote mutual understanding and build consensus on ethnic harmony between the two immigrant communities of Jewish and Chinese descent.

The first article focuses on a Chinese New Year book exhibition devoted to Jewish-Chinese relations. The second examines an exhibition on the life and deeds of the Chinese diplomat and writer Ho Feng-Shan, who rescued thousands of Austrian Jewish refugees during the Second World War. Together, these two articles connect some key threads of Jewish history in China: the history of the Jewish community that settled in Kaifeng more than one thousand years earlier and deeply integrated into Chinese society; the stories of Russian Jewish migrants who settled in Harbin, Shanghai, Tianjin, and other Chinese cities during the First World War and the Russian Revolution; and most prominently, the righteous acts of Ho Feng-Shan, China's consul-general in Vienna during the Second World War, who issued more than four thousand "Visas for Life" to Jewish refugees, enabling tens of thousands to escape Nazi persecution by fleeing to Shanghai.<sup>1</sup> In emphasizing themes of anti-racism and shared historical and cultural experiences of migration and resettlement, these articles illuminate a meaningful and little-known history of friendly interactions between Chinese and Jewish communities in Canada.

Translating these texts was not straightforward. As a PhD candidate from mainland China studying in Canada, I have navigated the idiosyncrasies of Canadian English,

American English and British English; translating Canadian Chinese newspapers has likewise been a new linguistic experience for me. Many people assume that there are insurmountable reading barriers between Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese. In reality, for any native speaker who has received basic Chinese language education, converting the most commonly used Chinese characters from simplified to traditional forms, and vice versa, poses little difficulty. The real challenges lie in the differences in writing conventions, as well as the divergent translations of specific terms.

First, there are discrepancies in the Chinese translation of proper nouns. For example, Righteous Among the Nations is translated as “国际义人” (International Righteous People) in mainland China, while in the news reports translated here, it is rendered as “國族正義” (Nations Righteousness). The Traditional Chinese translation “國族正義” emphasizes the multiethnic nature of this behaviour, which denotes “Righteous Gentiles.” In contrast, the Simplified Chinese translation “国际义人” centers on the framing of “cross-border acts of righteousness.”

Furthermore, the Chinese language frequently uses abbreviations, some of which are spontaneously formed and conventionalized expressions rooted in local their local contexts. For instance, “列市” (列治文) in the Vancouver context refers to the City of Richmond; to avoid ambiguity, the City of Richmond Hill, north of Toronto, is written as a different homophone “烈市” (烈治文山) in local Chinese media. Direct translation can lead to information loss and errors, so the translator must find the accurate original English term corresponding to these specific terms. This process in fact forms a translation cycle of “English → Traditional Chinese → Simplified Chinese → English.”

These two articles document grassroots bridge-building practices of the Canadian Chinese community, which used the history of Jews in China as a narrative link to promote mutual understanding and build consensus on ethnic harmony between Chinese and Jewish immigrant communities in Vancouver. They invite readers to reflect on the meaning of cross-cultural dialogue, as well as the power of language to connect people across time and space while preserve living history. These two reports demonstrate that Canadian Jewish life was—at least in one particular time and place—tangibly embedded within Canada’s Chinese-language sphere. They also hint at a much deeper yet-to-be-written history of Chinese-Jewish relations in Canada.

**Hongfei Liang** is a PhD candidate in world history at the College of Liberal Arts, Shanghai University, and an International Visiting Research Trainee at York University. His academic research centers on Jewish studies, with a specific focus on issues of Canadian Jewish identity.

## 1. 猶太社區中心新春書展 介紹猶太人與華裔關係

**Friday January 28, 2000**

【本報專訊】為了響應華裔的農曆新年，大溫哥華猶太社區中心的公眾圖書館現正舉行一個展覽會，展出一些華裔和猶太裔人士之間互相有關聯的書籍，使中心的會員和公眾有機會了解華裔人士和華裔的歷史。

有關的展覽設於溫哥華西四十一街九百五十號該中心地下介乎停車場與大堂之間的通道。該中心指出，這個展覽會展出的書籍種類繁多，當中包括一套由Ja"acov Liberman編寫名為《My China》一書，講述一些居住在中國哈爾濱、上海和天津等城市的俄籍猶太人，他們在第一次世界大戰和俄國大革命期間因為要逃避迫害而逃離歐洲和俄國，到達中國的城市居住。在這些城市，他們有自己的醫院、學校、報紙和文化活動。有關的書籍是以回憶的方式表達。

另一套由Xu Xin和Beverly Friend Strange編寫的《Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng》指出，在一千年前已有猶太人在中國居住。這個為數達到幾千人的猶太社區居住在開封，並且從事耕種、商業、手工藝，在政府管理和軍事上都有成就。展出的書籍還有Gish Jen的《Mona in the Promised Land》、Sonia Levitan的《The Golem and the Dragon Girl》和George W. Butler的《East Meets West》等。

### I. Jewish Community Centre New Spring Book Exhibition: Exploring Jewish-Chinese Relations

**Friday, January 28, 2000**

[Special Report from Ming Pao Western Edition] In response to the Chinese Calendar New Year of the Chinese community, the public library of the Greater Vancouver Jewish Community Centre is currently holding an exhibition, displaying a number of books related to the mutual connections between people of Chinese descent and people of Jewish descent. The exhibition provides an opportunity for members of the centre and the general public to learn about people of Chinese descent and the history of the Chinese community.

The exhibition is located in the corridor between the parking lot and the lobby on the underground floor of the JCC at 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver. The centre notes that the books on display at this exhibition are of a great variety. They include a set of works titled *My China*, written by Ya'acov Liberman, which recounts the stories of Russian Jews who fled Europe and Russia to escape persecution during

the First World War and the Russian Revolution, and arrived to live in the cities in China such as Harbin, Shanghai, and Tianjin. In these cities, Jews had their own hospitals, schools, newspapers, and cultural activities. The book is presented in the form of memoirs.

Another book, entitled *Legends of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng*, compiled by Xu Xin and Beverly Friend Strange, points out that Jews had already lived in China a thousand years prior. This Jewish community had a population of several thousand people residing in Kaifeng. Jews there engaged in farming, commerce and handicrafts, and achieved accomplishments in both government administration and military affairs. Other books on display include *Mona in the Promised Land* by Gish Jen, *The Golem and the Dragon Girl* by Sonia Levitan, *East Meets West* by George W. Butler, among others.

## 1. 何鳳山拯救猶太難民 生平事蹟展文化中心

**Tuesday, February 22, 2000**

【本報專訊】國會議員、聯邦亞太事務國務部長陳卓愉，日前在中華文化中心文物館主辦「逃命簽證——何鳳山博士拯救猶太難民生平事蹟」展覽揭幕茶會上，頌揚何鳳山的正義和英勇行為，被譽為「中國的辛德勒」。辛德勒(電影《辛德勒的名單》中主角，亦曾於二次大戰中，在德國統治的地區，拯救了不少猶太難民)。他指出最近出席在印尼的經貿會議上亦表達了加拿大政府對人權的立場，讚揚由文化中心與猶太族裔合作促成的「逃命簽證」展覽，對種族和諧具有特別的意義。同時出席展覽的溫哥華猶太浩劫教育中心(Vancouver Holo-caust Education Centre)主席韋斯曼(Robbie Waiseman)是二次大戰的生還者，他的家人則遭到納粹殺害，他表示若他們獲何鳳山簽證逃難奧國，也許可以逃過災劫。

何鳳山為中國於一九三八至四二年駐奧地利維也納的總領使。因奧國於二次世界大戰時被德國吞并，何被遣派處理外交事務。他的人道精神和洞悉世界政情的智慧，使他不顧國民政府的反對，給猶太難民簽發了超過一萬八千簽證，讓二萬五千多人前往上海暫時寄居，得以避免災難。何氏於一九七三年退休，並移居美國三藩市。九零年出版了他的著作《外交生涯四十年》，九七年九月廿八日病逝於三藩市。上月廿八日以色列政府正式通過頒予何氏最高榮譽「國族正義」勳章，表揚這位拯救猶太難民的偉人。該項榮耀為以色列自一九五三年立國以來第一次頒贈給中國籍人士。

日前，以色列社會及世界猶太會社部主任賀恩(Udi Cohen)及總理社會政策顧問伊撒高娃(Anna Isakova)亦拜訪了中華文化中心文物館，並特別參觀了「逃命簽證——何鳳山博士生平事蹟」圖片展覽。賀氏和伊氏此行特別為研究猶太移民在加拿大落籍和適應的情況，並順道了解加拿大在

推行多元文化的成功例子。他們對何鳳山博士於二次世界大戰時，曾經簽發上萬簽證給猶太難民前往上海，逃離納粹迫害致以敬意。

「逃命簽證」展期至二月二十七日。地址：哥倫比亞街五五五號，電話：六八七·零二八二。

### **I. Ho Feng-Shan Saves Jewish Refugees: Exhibition of His Life and Deeds at the Cultural Centre**

**Tuesday, February 22, 2000**

[Special Report from Ming Pao Western Edition] Raymond Chan, a member of the Canadian House of Commons and the secretary of state for the Asia-Pacific Region of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, was at the opening tea reception of the exhibition “Visas for Life—The Life and Deeds of Dr. Ho Feng-Shan Who Saved Jewish Refugees,” hosted by the Heritage Museum of the Chinese Cultural Centre a few days ago. Chan praised Ho Feng-Shan for his just and heroic acts and hailed him as “China’s Schindler.” Schindler, (the protagonist in the film *Schindler’s List*, also saved many Jewish refugees in the areas under German rule during the Second World War). Chan commented on the Canadian government’s stance on human rights at the economic and trade conference he had recently attended in Indonesia and noted that the “Visas for Life” exhibition, co-hosted by the Cultural Centre and the Jewish community, has a special significance for racial harmony. Also attending the exhibition was Robbie Waisman, chairman of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, a survivor of the Second World War whose family was killed by the Nazis. Waisman said that if his family had obtained visas from Ho Feng-Shan to flee Austria, they might have escaped the disaster.



Seventy-five-year-old Ho Feng-Shan and his daughter, Ho Manli, photographed in 1976. Reprinted in article.

Ho Feng-Shan was the Chinese consul-general in Vienna, Austria, from 1938 to 1942.<sup>2</sup> As Austria was annexed by Germany during the Second World War, Ho was assigned to handle diplomatic affairs. With his humanitarian spirit and the wisdom of insight into world political situations, he issued more than eighteen thousand visas to Jewish refugees against the opposition of the National Government of the Republic of China, allowing more than twenty-five thousand people to take temporary refuge in Shanghai and thus escape the disaster. Ho retired in 1973 and moved to San Francisco. He published his book, *My Forty Years as a Diplomat*, in 1990 and passed away in San Francisco on September 28, 1997. On the 28th of last month, the Israeli government officially approved the conferment of its highest honour, the “Righteous Among the Nations” medal on Ho in recognition of this great man who saved Jewish refugees. This honour marked the first time that Israel has awarded this medal to a Chinese national since its founding in 1953.



Israeli official Udi Cohen (first from right) and Anna Isakova (second from left) visit the “Visas for Life” exhibition.

A few days ago, Udi Cohen, director of the Israeli Ministry of Social Affairs and World Jewish Communities, and Anna Isakova, social policy advisor to the prime minister, also visited the Heritage Museum of the Chinese Cultural Centre and specially viewed the photo exhibition “Visas for Life—The Life and Deeds of Dr. Ho Feng-Shan.” The purpose of Cohen and Isakova’s visit this time was to study the situation of Jewish immigrants settling and adapting in Canada, and to take the opportunity to understand Canada’s successful examples of implementing multiculturalism. They paid tribute to Dr. Ho Feng-Shan for issuing tens of thousands of visas to Jewish refugees to go to Shanghai and escape Nazi persecution during the Second World War.

The exhibition “Visas for Life” runs until February 27. Address: 555 Columbia St.  
Tel: 687-0282.

**1**

The exact number of visas issued by Ho Feng-Shan is unknown, but it is certain that the figure exceeds four thousand.

**2**

These dates are incorrect. Ho Feng-Shan served as the consul-general of China in Vienna, Austria, from 1938–1940.

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