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# Transnational *Yekkishkeit* from a Canadian Perspective

*Patrick Farges*

For a long time, Canada was one of the lesser known destinations of Jewish emigration from Nazi-occupied Europe. Indeed, unlike its southern neighbour, Canada in the 1930s offered limited opportunities for immigration. Approximately 6,000 German-speaking refugees (Jews and non-Jews) were allowed in. This figure includes about 1,000 ‘enemy aliens’ (most of whom were refugees) who had been interned in the United Kingdom in 1940 and then transferred to the Dominion of Canada. Several recent publications have put the “Land der begrenzten Unmöglichkeiten”, the “land of limited impossibilities” (as one of my interviewees once put it), on the map of exile studies. In this paper, I shall focus on the German-speaking Jews (*Yekkes*) who found refuge in Canada, in order to show how they positioned themselves within the Jewish community in Canada and whether they created and transmitted a form of collective *yekkish* memory; how they perceived and positioned themselves within a transnational space linking Montreal and Toronto to London, New York and Jerusalem. My purpose is to emphasise immigrants’ local lives in transnational cultures, to help map the migrant experience, and to use a transnational lens from a Canadian perspective.

Transnational migration studies have raised new questions regarding the use of the comparative method. Migration and exile histories relying on linear studies of migration generally follow migrants’ trajectories from “there” to “here”, thus implicitly introducing a comparison. Another model I would like to explore is the – seldom used – “divergent model of comparison” within migration studies, which encourages the tracing of transnational paths and networks from one country of origin to a variety of destinations.<sup>1</sup> The (mainly Jewish) refugees from German-speaking countries or regions who fled the rise of Nazism found refuge in a number of societies: this is one example of a divergent migration and of a specific Diaspora, in which ‘Germanness’, ‘Jewishness’, and ‘German-Jewishness’ had to be constantly renegotiated.

1 Nancy L. Green, “The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies”, in Jan and Leo Lucassen (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 69–71.

In the course of the nineteenth century, Jews had intellectually shaped German culture and formed an integral part of the emerging middle class (*Verbürgerlichungsprozess*),<sup>2</sup> despite a deeply rooted antisemitism in German (and Austrian) society. In German (and Austrian) urban and industrial centres, the proportion of 'assimilated', and sometimes converted, Jews was high, to the extent that Judaism was in some cases only marginally part of families' social practice and identity. At the same time, the German language, (high) culture, and education were means of integration into the bourgeoisie, and hence important identity markers. In 1933, half a million Jews were living in Germany.<sup>3</sup> Though the 'German-Jewish symbiosis' was revealed as an illusion after the brutal rupture of 1933, the cultural heritage of German Jewry was not eradicated by Nazism and the Holocaust. German-speaking Jewish refugees fled to a number of countries where they grew new roots. Those include the United Kingdom, the Dominions, the British colonies, as well as Palestine under British Mandate. According to German historian Wolfgang Benz, approximately 250,000 Jews left Germany between 1933 and 1939.<sup>4</sup> In addition, over 100,000 Austrian Jews became refugees after Austria's annexation in 1938.

In some host societies – most prominently in Mandatory Palestine/Israel – the German-speaking Jews became known as *Yekkes*, a term that connotes cultural difference and formal stiffness. According to the dominant etymology, the word comes from the Yiddish term for 'jacket'. The pun allegedly plays on the *Yekkes'* clothing – inadequate to the climate of Palestine – as a trace of their social past. In an article published in 1943 in the *Menorah Journal*, Hannah Arendt – herself a German Jew in exile – used the term to demonstrate the German-Jewish refugees' distinct "ethnicity" abroad.<sup>5</sup> Like the term 'Ostjuden', which 'assimilated' Jews in Germany used to designate Jews who had emigrated from Eastern Europe, *Yekke* was originally a derogatory term meant to ridicule German-speaking Western Jews and to mock their deeply habitualised formal manners. The *Yekke* was not the *Pariah* (Arendt), i.e. the Jew rejected by non-Jews – the *Yekke* was a Jew who was being ostracised by *other*

2 Shulamit Volkov, "Die Verbürgerlichung der Juden in Deutschland. Eigenart und Paradigma", in Jürgen Kocka (ed.), *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*, vol. 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 105–133.

3 Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945. Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988).

4 Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Das Exil der kleinen Leute. Alltagserfahrungen deutscher Juden in der Emigration* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1991), 9.

5 Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees", in *Menorah Journal* (January 1943), 69–77. Reprinted in Ron H. Feldman (ed.), *The Jew as Pariah* (New York: Grove, 1978), 55–66.

Jews. Over time though, the term's connotation gradually changed and eventually became a positive marker of 'ethnic' cultural difference.

The *Yekkes'* distinctive sense of identity was largely situational. In particular, it depended on their relations with other groups in the multicultural societies they migrated to. Understanding the interactions and frictions at the margins of ethno-cultural group definitions unveils the mechanisms that lead to such imagined group formations in the first place, and helps one to comprehend multicultural dynamics. Moreover, challenging the dichotomy between "ethnic retention" and "acculturation",<sup>6</sup> one can say that the intensity and selective use of *Yekkishkeit* – as a specific form of "symbolic ethnicity" expressed in language use, everyday practices, values, and personal narratives<sup>7</sup> – relates to the fact that the *Yekkes* strategically saw these elements of identification as something worth holding onto.<sup>8</sup> Hence *Yekkishkeit* can be seen as one of many available identity options in Canada.

This article focuses on those German-speaking Jews who found refuge in Canada. How did they position themselves within the socio-cultural complexity of the Jewish community in Canada? Did they create and transmit a form of collective *yekkish* memory? What was their location within the transnational "three-way" space<sup>9</sup> linking Montreal, Vancouver or Toronto to London, New York, Jerusalem and even (more recently) Berlin? My purpose is thus to emphasise "immigrants' local lives in transnational cultures,"<sup>10</sup> to help map migrant experience, and to use a transnational lens from a Canadian perspective. After all, as Joachim Schlör pointed out recently: "Finding a job, mastering the new language, adjusting to the climate, creating little *Heimaten* amidst foreign circumstances, thinking about Germany and the loss of friends and family" as well as other practical experiences were shared by all refugees from National Socialism around the world.<sup>11</sup>

6 Herbert Gans, "Toward a Reconciliation of 'Assimilation' and 'Pluralism': The Interplay of Acculturation and Ethnic Retention", *International Migration Review*, 31.4 (1997), 875–92.

7 Dani Kranz, "Being a Yekke is a really big deal for my mum! On the intergenerational transmission of Germanness amongst German Jews in Israel", *Austausch*, 2.1 (2013), 43–66.

8 Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2.1 (1979), 1–20.

9 Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris (eds.), *Three-Way Street: Jews, Germans, and the Transnational* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).

10 Alexander Freund (ed.), *Beyond the Nation? Immigrants' Local Lives in Transnational Cultures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

11 Joachim Schlör, "Irgendwo auf der Welt': The Emigration of Jews from Nazi Germany as a Transnational Experience", in Jay Howard Geller and Leslie Morris, op. cit., 220–238.

## 1 Canada, “das Land der begrenzten Unmöglichkeiten”?

For a long time, Canada was one of the lesser known destinations of Jewish forced migration from Nazi-occupied Europe. Unlike its southern neighbour, Canada in the 1930s offered limited opportunities for immigration.<sup>12</sup> Irving Abella's and Harold Troper's groundbreaking study of Canadian immigration policy in the years of National Socialism, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933–1948* (first published in 1983),<sup>13</sup> once and for all shattered the illusion of a peaceful Canada being a welcoming haven of refuge and an open society. On the contrary: Canada was one of the least welcoming nations for Jewish refugees in that period.<sup>14</sup> The great Canadian myth of the country being a safe haven from barbarous regimes has been further undermined by new historical findings. It is now established that Canada could have done more to help the refugees and that Canada's supposed “racelessness” and peacefulness in fact harboured a high degree of ethno-racial violence.<sup>15</sup> In the last fifteen years, several publications finally put the “Land der begrenzten Unmöglichkeiten” (as one of my interviewees once described Canada, in contrast to the USA as the “Land der unbegrenzten Möglichkeiten”, the “land of unlimited possibilities”) on the map of exile studies.<sup>16</sup>

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- 12 Between 1933 and 1945, approximately 90,000 Jews who had fled Nazi Germany arrived in the United States. See Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry 1933–1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Anne C. Schenderlein, “‘Germany on their Minds?’ German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships to Germany 1938–1988”, PhD Dissertation (University of California, 2014).
- 13 Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933–1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1983).
- 14 L. Ruth Klein (ed.), *Nazi Germany, Canadian Responses: Confronting Antisemitism in the Shadow of War* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012).
- 15 Catherine Bates, Graham Huggan, Milena Marinkova and Jeffrey Orr (eds.), “Visions of Canada,” special issue of *Canadian Studies in Europe*, 6 (Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2007).
- 16 Annette Puckhaber, *Ein Privileg für wenige. Die deutschsprachige Migration nach Kanada im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2002); Patrick Farges, *Le Trait d'union ou l'intégration sans l'oubli. Itinéraires d'exilés germanophones au Canada après 1933* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2008); Eugen Banauch, *Fluid Exile. Jewish Exile Writers in Canada 1940–2006* (Heidelberg: Winter-Verlag, 2009); Pascal Maeder, *Forging a New Heimat. Expellees in Post-War West Germany and Canada* (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2011); Andrea Strutz, “Sie kamen als ‘enemy aliens’. Kanadas verschlossene Grenzen für jüdische Flüchtlinge”, in Gerald Lamprecht, Ursula Mindler and Heidrun Zettelbauer (eds.), *Zonen der Begrenzung. Aspekte kultureller und räumlicher Grenzen in der Moderne* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012), 47–60; Patrick Farges, *Bindestrich-Identitäten? Sudetendeutsche Sozialdemokraten und deutsche Juden als Exilanten in*

As a consequence of Nazism, between 4,900 and 6,000 German-speaking refugees came to Canada, most of whom were Jewish.<sup>17</sup> Some found entry into Canada because they had relatives who vouched for them, others were able to demonstrate proficiency in a profession favoured by immigration officials, still others settled as farmers – never, however, did Canada in the 1930s have a consistent policy in response to the European refugee crisis in the 1930s.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Canada also took in civilian internees from Great Britain in 1940, the ‘Camp Boys’. This group consisted in part of Germans and Austrians residing on British soil. In view of Germany’s growing military successes in the spring of 1940, the fear of a “Fifth Column” led Winston Churchill to register and categorise all “enemy aliens”, and to intern many of them.<sup>19</sup> Among the interned, there were numerous Jewish refugees. About 2,000 male internees were then sent overseas to Canadian internment camps (others were sent to Australia) where they spent several months, in some cases alongside German prisoners of war, some of whom were declared Nazis.<sup>20</sup> After finally being released, they became Canada’s “accidental immigrants”.<sup>21</sup> About half of them returned to the United Kingdom, while the others settled permanently in North America.

In the last twenty years, Canadian immigration historiography has largely focused on immigration policies.<sup>22</sup> Scholars have studied measurable integration issues and government policies – less so migrants’ lives, transnational net-

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*Kanada. Studien zu Akkulturationsprozessen nach 1933* (Bremen: edition lumière, 2015); Christine Whitehouse, “You’ll Get Used to It! The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940–43”, PhD Dissertation (Carleton University Ottawa, 2016).

17 Waltraud Strickhausen, “Kanada”, in Claus-Dieter Krohn, Patrik von zur Mühlen, Gerhard Paul and Lutz Winkler (eds.), *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration 1933–1945* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1998), 284–96; Farges, op. cit. (2008), 32–5.

18 Abella and Troper, op. cit.

19 Tony Kushner and David Cesarani (eds.), *The Internment of Aliens in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); Anne C. Schenderlein, “German Jewish ‘Enemy Aliens’ in the United States during the Second World War,” *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 60 (2017), 101–16.

20 Patrick Farges, “Masculinity and confinement: German-speaking refugees in Canadian internment camps (1940–1943)”, *Culture, Society & Masculinities*, 4.1 (2012), 33–47. This episode was part of a more general practice of wartime internment in Canada and abroad. See Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin and Angelo Principe (eds.), *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

21 Paula Jean Draper, “The Accidental Immigrants: Canada and the Interned Refugees”, PhD Dissertation (University of Toronto, 1983).

22 Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006); Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540–2006* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2007); Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Christopher G. Anderson, *Canadian*

works and transcultural baggage in “societies in the process of being created” (Dirk Hoerder).<sup>23</sup> Memories of families and home countries are an integral part of migrant experience. For refugees however, such memories included experiences of extreme violence, family stories of complicity and victimisation, as well as biographies of fellow victims, friends and bystanders. These complex national, family and individual narratives shaped an entire generation and were transmitted on to children. The official policy of multiculturalism in the 1970s set an institutional framework in which ethnic cultures could be granted recognition. Multiculturalism enabled, so it seems, the promotion of the acculturation paradigm over the assimilation paradigm thought to be prevalent in other societies, most prominently the United States. Canadian multiculturalism, however, also led to the paradox that only those cultures could be recognised and gain visibility that fitted the institutionalised and socially accepted norms of multiculturalism.<sup>24</sup> Thus, there was little allowance for interstitial identities. The German-speaking Jewish refugees largely fell in between the cracks of the Canadian mosaic, in between German-Canadian historiography and Jewish-Canadian historiography.<sup>25</sup> My research was conducted in part as an oral history. Besides interviews, my sources include personal papers, testimonies, letters, memoirs, and other autobiographical accounts found in archival or private collections. Consequently, this paper will also offer a qualitative study of everyday ‘transculturalisation’ and identity creation, based on the interpretation of personal narrative data.

## 2 “We were Germans, We were Jews, We were Germans” (Eric Koch)

Far from being shielded from ostracism after they escaped Nazi Europe, the German-speaking Jews were confronted with various forms of rejection and hostility in Canada. Canadian society in the 1930s was generally not welcoming to those who did not approximate to the dominant model, i.e. who were not of ‘native stock’. In English-speaking Canada, the main concern of “nativists” who

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*Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control, 1867–1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

23 Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies. Immigrants' Lives in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), ix.

24 Richard J. F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

25 Patrick Farges, “Une identité à trait d'union? Les ‘Germano-Canadiens’ et la nation-mosaïque multiculturelle”, *Ranam. Recherches anglaises et nord-américaines*, 42 (2009), 9–24.

opposed immigration was that the “British” character of Canada would be seriously threatened by an im-migration of “undesirable” immigrants who seemed to defy assimilation – including “Orientals”, “Negroes”, and Jews.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, various gatekeepers in the administration projected onto the (German) Jewish refugees their anxieties concerning intrusion. The refugees were stigmatised both as Germans (and thus considered ‘enemies’) and as Jews. When, after being released from months of internment, Gerd Waldstein was refused several jobs in 1944, he assumed that it was because his name sounded German, Jewish, or both German *and* Jewish. In any case, he decided to change it to Gerry Waldston, and quickly found a job in the advertising field in Montreal.<sup>27</sup> In his memoirs, Eric Exton (born Erich Eckstein) recalls that his first Canadian boss overtly suggested a name change in 1943: “‘We’re at war with Germany, so a German and Jewish sounding name just won’t do,’ he said. ‘How about something more Canadian, like, say, Elliott?’”<sup>28</sup>

When entering Canada, the Jewish refugees were burdened with the weight of their cultural and experiential baggage, which included racial stigmatisation, estrangement, and (sometimes multiple) displacement. In order to avoid stigmatisation, their preferred strategy was to blend in as much as possible. If one could not possibly hide a German accent, one could at least pass as a non-Jew. Antisemitism was a widely accepted, normal, everyday aspect of life in the late 1930s and 1940s.<sup>29</sup> When endorsed by immigration officials or civil servants, it would lead to a form of institutionalised antisemitism based on simple prejudice, as well as elaborately constructed economic and social theories designed to justify anti-immigration measures. This explains in part why refugees adopted English-sounding names, married non-Jews, and converted. Certain universities, notably McGill University and University of Toronto, had quotas on the number of Jews to be admitted.<sup>30</sup> Alfred Bader, who studied at Queen’s University in Kingston (Ontario) in the 1940s, after being released from an internment camp, also recalls that rampant antisemitism at schools and universities – still largely denominational institutions at the time – was strong:

26 Franca Iacovetta, *The Writing of English Canadian Immigrant History* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1997).

27 Gerry Waldston, Personal Interview (Toronto, 13 May 2004).

28 Eric Exton, *Zaidie Exton’s Odyssey*, vol. 1 (Toronto: privately published, 1986), iii.

29 Alan Davies (ed.), *Antisemitism in Canada. History and Interpretation* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992).

30 McGill University’s strict quota was officially adopted in 1920 and ended in the late 1960s. See Gerald Tulchinsky, *Canada’s Jews: A People’s Journey* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 132–33.

a protracted discussion went on at the university's Board of Trustees meetings regarding the increasing number of Jewish students. Before the war, two or three per cent of the students were Jews, by 1944 this had risen to ten per cent. They came mainly from Montreal where McGill enforced a *numerous clausus*. Jews had to have higher marks than Christians to be admitted.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, the reaction of Canadian Jews to the refugees varied from indifference to a reserved distance, as the refugee problem threatened to fuel antisemitic sentiments in Canada.<sup>32</sup> Hence the German-Jewish identity could not be referred to within the Canadian Jewish community unproblematically. With reference to his experience with Canadian Jews, Eric Koch said in an interview in 2003: "German Jew. Do you know what irritates me most? Before the Nazis, we used to be Germans. There existed something like that. We were Germans, we were Jews, we were Germans. It's unimaginable today."<sup>33</sup>

"Canadian Jewry," the American historian Jonathan Sarna argues, "never experienced a 'great German period' in the sense in which this term is used in the United States. For this reason, the community is both more homogeneous and more heavily East European than in the United States."<sup>34</sup> American urban centres like Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and especially New York, had been characterised by on-going friction between German-Jewish "Uptowners" (old immigrants) and Eastern European Jewish "Downtowners".<sup>35</sup> Though there were a few exceptions in Canada, like the German-Jewish Shaar Hashamaym (Gateway to Heaven) Synagogue in Montreal's Westmount, or the Jewish community in Hamilton (Ontario), the small wave of post-1933 refugees largely bore the weight of the 'German' tradition. This was the case of Emil L. Fackenheim (born in Halle), for instance, who came to Canada as a refugee 'Camp Boy', and later served as the Rabbi of the Anshe Sholom Congregation in Hamilton. He became one of the most distinguished Canadian scholars of Reform Judaism, a religious practice that was consolidated in Germany in the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Another example is Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut (born in

31 Alfred Bader, *Adventures of a Chemist Collector* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995), 41.

32 Farges, op. cit. (2008), 290–300.

33 Eric Koch, Personal Interview (Toronto, 22 April 2003).

34 Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Value of Canadian Jewish History to the American Jewish Historian and Vice Versa", *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, 5.1 (1981), 20.

35 In the U.S.A., the American Jewish Committee, whose members were Jews of German extraction and their descendants, highlighted how integrated and assimilated the German Jews were. See Schenderlein, op. cit. (2017) 103–5.

36 Emil L. Fackenheim, *An Epitaph for German Judaism: From Halle to Jerusalem* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

Münster): in 1935, his first destination when he came to North America as a refugee had been the American Reform Seminary of Cincinnati, where he encountered modern Judaism, the continuation in the United States of German Jewish Reform practices. After twenty-five years in the United States, Plaut moved to the Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto in 1961 and became another leader of Reform Judaism in Canada.<sup>37</sup>

German-speaking Jews by and large did not fit into a Canadian Jewish community that largely embodied an Eastern European Jewish culture they had looked down upon in their former *Heimat*.<sup>38</sup> Rabbi Erwin Schild recalls that he first had to learn Yiddish in order to address his congregation at the Adath Israel Synagogue in Toronto.<sup>39</sup> By doing so, he earned the respect of the congregation's members. Most refugees, however, were not ready to take this step, and consequently they remained strangers in the local community: well-educated, worldly and sophisticated, they were seen as 'assimilated' Jews who spoke German, sometimes even along with French. They clashed with a working-class milieu dominated by Polish and Galician Jews. In the sharp and ironic tone so characteristic of his writings, Mordecai Richler, born in Montreal's Mile End, gives his personal rendition of the arrival of the German-Jewish refugees, as embodied by an archetypal *Yekke*, "Mr. Bamberger":

The war in Europe brought about considerable changes within the Jewish community in Montreal. To begin with, there was the coming of the refugees. These men [...] were to make a profound impact on us. I think we had conjured up a picture of the refugees as penurious hassidim with packs on their backs. We were eager to be helpful, our gestures were large, but in return we expected more than a little gratitude. As it turned out the refugees, mostly German and Austrian Jews, were far more sophisticated and better educated than we were. They had not, like our immigrant grandparents, come from shtetls in Galicia or Russia. Neither did they despise Europe. On the contrary, they found our culture thin, the city provincial, and the Jews narrow. This bewildered and stung us. But what cut deepest, I suppose, was that the refugees spoke English better

37 W. Gunther Plaut, *Unfinished Business – An Autobiography* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1981).

38 For a general history of the Canadian Jewish community that includes evidence of the demographic and cultural predominance of Eastern European Jews since the early decades of the twentieth century, see Tulchinsky, *Canada's Jews*.

39 Erwin Schild, Personal Interview (Toronto, 10 May 2004).

than many of us did and, among themselves, had the effrontery to talk in the abhorred German language.<sup>40</sup>

Here, Richler gives his literary rendition of the mixed feelings the Canadian Jews harboured towards German-speaking Jews – oscillating between exclusion, envy and reluctant respect. W. Gunther Plaut recalls that the refugees were perceived as “arrogant know-it-alls who were not properly grateful for the marvellous opportunity afforded them in the New World”.<sup>41</sup> Helmut Kallmann confesses: “I guess everyone went through a little bit of ‘zuhause war alles besser’ [everything was better at home] attitude, perhaps as a self-defence, even when you came from Nazi Germany!”<sup>42</sup> Erwin Schild also remembers the difficult relations with Jews of Eastern European origin:

We certainly had fun, Jewish religious fun. Modern Westernized Jews rubbed shoulders – and sensitivities – with ‘Ostjuden’, mutually suspicious and quaint; the *Yekkes* with their stiffly formal, punctilious style of Jewish observance clashed with the informality of the *Yeshivah* spirit.<sup>43</sup>

In Canada, the numbers and dispersed locations of German-speaking Jews – up to 6,000 within a Canadian Jewish community of approximately 100,000 people living mainly in Montreal and Toronto<sup>44</sup> – made it impossible to recreate locally “Little Jewish Germanies”, like the German-Jewish neighbourhood in Washington Heights in New York City, which became known as “Frankfurt on the Hudson”.<sup>45</sup> Nor was it ever possible to envision close relations with the German-Canadian community, either, as the dominant impression among German-speaking Jews was that in the 1930s and even later, most

40 Mordecai Richler, *The Street* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, [1969] 2002), 58–59.

41 Plaut, op. cit., 58.

42 Helmut Kallmann, Letter to Eric Koch [22 January 1979], Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG30-C192/R2408-0-5-E, Eric Koch Collection, vol. 1.

43 Erwin Schild, “A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust. A Review Essay of Deemed Suspect. A Wartime Blunder, by Erich Koch”, *Canadian Jewish Historical Society Journal*, 5.1 (1981), 36.

44 See Irving M. Abella, *A Coat of Many Colours: Two Centuries of Jewish Life in Canada* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1990).

45 Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson. The German Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933–1983, Its Structure and Culture* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989). See also Atina Grossmann, “German Jews as Provincial Cosmopolitans: Reflections from the Upper West Side”, *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 53.1 (2008), 157–68.

German-Canadians were largely antisemitic.<sup>46</sup> With the exception of the German Society of Montreal (twice chaired by refugees from Germany in the post-war period), there was hardly any common ground for a German-Jewish dialogue in Canada.<sup>47</sup> Cultural transmission of the German-Jewish heritage in Canada was thus relegated to private practices among family and friends. Or it took place within transnational German-Jewish networks of affiliations that reached far beyond Canada's borders. In a recent study on the life in Canada of German-Jewish conductor Heinz Unger, Hernan Tesler-Mabé concludes that:

Canada's Central European Jews continued to express – as they had in Europe – their Jewish identity by way of an allegiance to cultural expressions consistent with their emancipatory experience that brought them closer to German Jews beyond Canada's borders than to their co-religionists within the nation's borders.<sup>48</sup>

The *Yekkes* in Canada were thus separated from the cultural environment in which they had been socialised. They lived their post-migration life in a form of double Diaspora (exiled from their European 'Heimat' and estranged from the Canadian Jews). They were the heirs of an impossible cultural heritage for which there was little understanding after Auschwitz. For a long time, the stories of those who had escaped the Nazi regime before the 'Final Solution' could not be told, as they were incommensurable with the horrors of the Holocaust. And while German-Jewish culture was not completely annihilated in the Holocaust, the German-speaking Jews were largely silenced after the war. In the postwar period, a dominant narrative emerged within a Canadian Jewish community. The Canadian historian Abella summarises:

46 While Jonathan Wagner demonstrates that pro-Nazi activities had a limited influence on the German community in the 1930s, Manuel Meune on the contrary shows that within the German-Canadian community, there existed a small but vigorous minority voicing extremist ideas, especially among immigrants from the 1950s. See Jonathan F. Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea. National Socialism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981); Manuel Meune, *Les Allemands du Québec. Parcours et discours d'une communauté méconnue* (Montreal: Éditions du Méridien, 2003), 135–53.

47 Karin Gürtler, *Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft zu Montreal, 1835–1985* (Montreal: Société Allemande de Montréal, 1985); Meune, *Les Allemands du Québec*, 166–67.

48 Hernan Tesler-Mabé, "Performing Jewish?: Heinz Unger, Gustav Mahler, and the Musical Strains of German-Jewish Identity in Canada and the United States", in Barry L. Stiefel and Hernan Tesler-Mabé (eds.), *Neither in Dark Speeches Nor in Similitudes. Reflections and Refractions Between Canadian and American Jews* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 167–68.

The world had become too dangerous a place for Jews to allow themselves the luxury of internal dissent and divisiveness. [...] Jewish energies were now totally devoted to protecting the State of Israel, to welcoming the influx of Holocaust survivors and to breaking down the barriers in Canadian society. One Yiddish pundit labelled postwar Jewry the *shashtill* generation, literally the silent generation, afraid to rock the boat for fear of sinking with it.<sup>49</sup>

Postwar Canada opened its doors to approximately 35,000 Holocaust survivors.<sup>50</sup> Though the Holocaust had a “delayed impact” on Jews in Canada, it became a structuring memory for the Jewish community in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Franklin Bialystock, “by 1985, most Canadian Jews felt that the destruction of European Jewry was their loss as well. [...] [The Holocaust] had now become an important marker of ethnic awareness.”<sup>51</sup> Within the ‘silent generation’, the *Yekke* voice could not but become even quieter.

Little by little, the prevailing memory within the Jewish community in Canada reinforced the rupture between Jewish(-Canadian) and German (-Canadian) postwar memories, and later between Jewish-Canadian and German-Canadian historiographies, which contradicted the *Yekkes*’ deepest feelings of self-identification. Though they did not identify with German-Canadians (or Austrian-Canadians), some did keep an emotional and cultural link to Germany (or Austria). The impossible dialogue with ‘Germans’ was a recurrent theme within the Jewish community. Another prominent characteristic was the symbolic boycott of all things ‘German’. These aspects even became narrative features of a collective Jewish-Canadian memory. This, however, put the *Yekkes* in an untenable position as regards identity and memory. Similarly, it was for a long time inconceivable that Jews would want to return to Germany or Austria, as the son of a *Yekke* confessed: “You know, when people say to me: ‘How could your father go back after what they did to the Jews,’ you know, after that, it’s inconceivable, it’s crazy. I don’t feel that way. I understand fully that my father at some level believes he is German and still feels connected.”<sup>52</sup> Rabbi Erwin Schild repeatedly reflected on this very issue: “Why did it take so long [...] to tell the story? [...] How could you speak of suffering when you had escaped from the Nazi continent, when you knew only too well what your

49 Abella, op. cit., 226.

50 Adara Goldberg, *Holocaust Survivors in Canada. Exclusion, Inclusion, Transformation, 1947–1955* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015).

51 Franklin Bialystock, *Delayed Impact. The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 6, 13.

52 Daniel Iggers, Personal Interview (Toronto, 24 April 2003).

brothers and sisters were experiencing? And how could you help feeling guilty when your contemporaries were undergoing the agonies of a horrible war [...] while you were enjoying the security and the abundance of Canada?" The German-Jewish refugees who survived through their migration were Holocaust survivors of a different kind. Erwin Schild writes: "Our internment was a minor event, dwarfed by the Holocaust."<sup>53</sup> What is expressed here is a feeling of an illegitimate right to testify. Schild's text is entitled 'A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust': here, his dense and traumatic experience as a refugee is equated with a mere footnote in history, an infra-paginal co-text in the history of Jews in the twentieth century.

### 3 Transnational Dynamics: New Geographies of *Yekkishkeit*?

After attending the funeral of a *Yekke* in Montreal in the late 1990s, scholar Chaim Vogt-Moykopf wrote a nostalgic article in the New York City-based German-Jewish newspaper *Aufbau* about "the last *Yekkes*".<sup>54</sup> The article underlined that *Yekke* culture in Canada had died away with the passing of its bearers. The question is: was there a 'second generation' of *Yekkes*? Some twenty years after Vogt-Moykopf's article, I would argue that some sense of a distinct *Yekkish* symbolic ethnicity has indeed been transmitted on a small scale and almost secretly to children and grandchildren in private and family circles. Wendy Oberlander, the daughter of Peter Oberländer (born 1923 in Vienna), for instance, always knew that *something* had been transmitted on to her, but she needed time to figure out what. In 1996, she devoted a documentary, entitled *Nothing to be written here*, to her father's arrival and internment in Canada. Wendy Oberlander called the film – which mixes personal narratives and historical documents – the "unravelling of (her) inheritance".<sup>55</sup> Almost twenty years later, she wrote about her efforts to make sense of the scarce traces that her father had passed on to her:

How to find words in the silence? How to make something from nothing? Luckily, the time was right. During the late 1980s and '90s, other children of immigrants [in Canada] started to 'narrate their parents' past.' [...] We started with questions, asked from the privilege of here, not there,

53 Schild, "A Canadian Footnote to the Holocaust", 40, 42.

54 Chaim Vogt-Moykopf, "Die letzten Jeckes – deutsche Juden in Kanada", *Aufbau. Deutsch-jüdische Zeitung*, 9 (1999), 11.

55 Wendy Oberlander, "Nothing to Be Written Here", Video, 47 minutes, 1996.

looking tentatively at the geographies of [...] displacement: what could they tell us that our parents could not?<sup>56</sup>

In 2012, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC) organised an exhibition entitled “‘Enemy Aliens’. The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada 1940–43,” the first of its kind in Canada.<sup>57</sup> It included a permanent online collaborative platform, thus expanding the memorial scope of this historical episode. Patterns of silence and avoidance when discussing family knowledge of the Holocaust are an important aspect of ‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’.<sup>58</sup> So is the fact that an interest in ‘Germanness’ resurfaces in subsequent generations. The self-narratives and interviews that I collected suggest that several generations of German-Jewish Canadians continue to struggle with family memories and narratives of emigration and of the Holocaust. Nowadays, the German embassy in Ottawa receives applications for the re-naturalisation of former German citizens who lost their citizenship under the Nazi regime, and of their children who feel some connection to Europe. Unlike other Jewish families who were affected by the Holocaust and have difficulties retracing the family’s documents, *Yekkes* and their descendants often have the possibility of obtaining dual citizenship, and of holding a German passport, which materialises a form of transnational identity.

Displacement, both geographical and cultural, is the common feature of migrant trajectories. If only implicitly, the comparative dimension is at the core of the migrant experience. Comparisons are made between ‘here’ and ‘there’, and between ‘here’ and other possible destinations one could have chosen in the case of a ‘divergent migration model’ – destinations where family members, friends or former neighbours may have migrated to. Transnationalism as a research agenda that profoundly reconfigured migration studies thus offers tools enabling one to grasp the socio-cultural dynamics that take place in

56 Wendy Oberlander, “Once it was written: The story after Nothing to be written here”, *Zachor. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre* (Spring 2013), 7–8.

57 The exhibition was accompanied by a voluminous teacher’s guide: “*Enemy Aliens*”: *The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940–1943* (Vancouver: Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 2012), <<http://www.enemyaliens.ca/pdf/guide-eng.pdf>> (accessed 23 March 2018).

58 Harald Welzer, Sabine Moller and Karoline Tschuggnall, “*Opa war kein Nazi*”. *Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002); Alexander Freund, “Dealing with the Past Abroad: German Immigrants’ Vergangenheitsbewältigung and their Relations with Jews in North America since 1945”, *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 31 (2002), 51–63; Roger Frie, *Not in my Family. German Memory and Responsibility After the Holocaust* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

diasporic communities. Instead of focusing on rupture and trauma, transnational studies focus on 'longue durée' continuities, and on the transversal ties that migrant families forge between host societies. Transnationalism thus helps us to rethink societies in the process of being created. Scholars have shown in particular how migrants maintain and establish social ties within fluid transnational spaces that are constantly being reworked through their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society: those spaces are created through migration by migrants.<sup>59</sup> I would argue for a broad approach of transnationalism, which includes formal as well as informal social, cultural and intergenerational family practices, thus simultaneously connecting various levels of social experience and "ways of belonging".<sup>60</sup> The sites of identity negotiation are multi-layered and include not just the home and host societies, but also other places around the world that link migrants to people they feel connected to. Thus transnationalism should help us think about "the relationships created, maintained, forgotten, or re-established between friends, relatives and acquaintances scattered around the world".<sup>61</sup> This definition of transnationalism is especially relevant in societies like Canada, in which multiculturalism and diversity offer multiple identity options.

The forced out-migration of German-speaking Jews after 1933 led to a new form of diaspora by which "the accoutrements of German-Jewish life [were carried] to all corners of the globe" (Atina Grossmann).<sup>62</sup> Israeli historian Tom Segev, himself the son of *Yekke* parents, calls it a "*Yekkish* diaspora".<sup>63</sup> The remnants of German-speaking Jewry were indeed scattered across different parts of the world, and Canada is just one of many places. Other important locations on the map of post-1945 German Jewry include New York, London, Sidney, Buenos Aires and, more recently, as the grandchildren of *Yekkes* "return" to Germany, Berlin.<sup>64</sup> In 2010, the Moses Mendelssohn Centre in Potsdam (in cooperation with the Deutsche Welle) started the German Jewish Cultural Heritage project. The goal was to research the history of German-Jewish

59 Peggy Levitt and B. Nadya Jaworsky, "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33 (2007), 129–56.

60 Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick-Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society", *International Migration Review*, 38.3 (2004), 1002–39.

61 Schlör, op. cit., 222.

62 Atina Grossmann, "Versions of Home: German Jewish Refugee Papers Out of the Closet and Into the Archives", *New German Critique*, 90 (2003), 97.

63 Tom Segev, "Ach, gäbe es doch noch einmal Karpfen wie an der Rehwiese!", in Gisela Dachs (ed.), *Die Jekkes. Jüdischer Almanach des Leo Baeck Instituts* (Frankfurt a. M.: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005), 30.

64 See Dani Kranz, "Forget Israel – The Future is in Berlin! Local Jews, Russian Immigrants, and Israeli Jews In Berlin and across Germany", *Shofar*, 34.4 (2016), 5–28.

refugees in over ten countries of destination.<sup>65</sup> German-Jewish families maintained transnational ties between Jerusalem and Toronto, between Tel Aviv and New York, visiting family members and friends, writing letters, sending packages, and, above all, *knowing about* what was going on in their relatives' lives abroad. Heinz Warschauer (1913–1997, born in Berlin), for instance, who served between 1945 and 1976 as the religious school principal at the Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, kept a vivid correspondence with his childhood sweetheart, 'Hilde', who lived in a kibbutz in Israel: in their letters, they exchanged news about friends, family, and acquaintances, about memories of Berlin and political issues, about what it meant to be Jewish after the Holocaust and about life in the diaspora after the creation of the State of Israel.<sup>66</sup> Joachim 'Jim' Lambek (1922–2014, born in Leipzig), who left Germany on a Kindertransport and became a professor of mathematics at McGill University, eventually married Hannah Weiss, who had been born in Brno (Czechoslovakia) to a Jewish German-speaking family that had emigrated to Venezuela.<sup>67</sup> Julius Pfeiffer (1902–1997, born in Essen) and his wife Flora Weyl-Pfeiffer, who lived in Montreal, had family members scattered in London, New York, Strasbourg, South America, and Israel.<sup>68</sup> In a way, the *Yekkish* postwar diaspora offers a paradigmatic Jewish experience of dispersion, and it seems particularly fitting for a transnational approach.

And yet this transnational diasporic *Yekkish* space was not free of internal contradictions: German Jews and Austrian Jews of the first generation did not mingle;<sup>69</sup> nor did convinced Zionists and non-Zionists; bourgeois German Jews looked down on those Jews from Germany with an *ostjüdisch* background; Orthodox German-Jewish families in Montreal did not socialise with non-religious German Jews; those who migrated in the 1930s were distinct from Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Canada after 1945. By no

65 See <<http://germanjewishculturalheritage.com/home>> (accessed 18 December, 2018). See also Elke-Vera Kotowski (ed.), *Das Kulturerbe deutschsprachiger Juden* (Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).

66 Correspondence with Hilde, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), MG31-D129/R4561, Heinz Warschauer, vol. 1.

67 Jim Lambek, Personal Interview (Montreal, 25 August 2003). On the Lambeks, see also the autobiography of Mario Bunge, *Between Two Worlds: Memoirs of a Philosopher-Scientist* (Zurich: Springer Biographies, 2016), 179–82.

68 "Horst", typescript of personal and family story by Robert Isaac Pfeiffer, undated, Pfeiffer Family Papers, Montreal, Quebec.

69 Strutz, "Flucht und Vertreibung nach Kanada: ein Forschungsdesiderat der österreichischen Exilgeschichte", in Evelyn Adunka, Primavera Driessen Gruber, Simon Usaty (eds.), *Exilforschung Österreich: Leistungen, Defizite & Perspektiven* (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2018), 114–30.

means a homogenous group, German-speaking Jews were extremely diverse economically and socially, and they identified with being Jewish in different ways, constantly negotiating socio-cultural dynamics of “assimilation/dissimilation” (Shulamit Volkov).<sup>70</sup> In addition, the refugees’ very migration differed greatly according to financial condition, age, gender and profession, and they settled in different places in societies with diverse potentials. The *Yekkes* as a transnational group came from different social backgrounds, they voiced different political opinions and they practised different levels of religiosity. And yet *Yekke* families did (and do) have *something* in common that transcends borders and sometimes generations, like for instance possessing large libraries, or maintaining certain cultural habits: all his life, Julius Pfeiffer from Montreal subscribed to the newsletter of the Berlin Association of Lawyers, and he was for a long time the head of the local German Jewish Heritage Association.<sup>71</sup> He also regularly attended the cultural events organised by the Goethe Institute in Montreal, founded in 1962.<sup>72</sup> Another common feature among *Yekke* families was reading the New York-based *Aufbau*, the most important German-Jewish publication in the United States, which had a readership that spread over North and South America, Europe, Israel, and indeed most places where German-speaking Jews had found refuge.<sup>73</sup> As Atina Grossmann writes, “the history of German Jews continued outside of Germany, in the exile communities, Washington Heights, Upper West Side, Golders Green and Hampstead, Tel Aviv, Moshav Germanid and Rehavia, certain neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires, Melbourne and elsewhere. In some ways they were all the same, the same china, the same doilies, the same accents.”<sup>74</sup>

As early as 1955, German Jewish émigrés, including Martin Buber, Ernst Simon, Hannah Arendt and Robert Weltsch, who were determined to preserve the cultural legacy of German Judaism, founded the Leo Baeck Institute in

70 Shulamit Volkov, “Die Dynamik der Dissimilation”, in Shulamit Volkov, *Jüdisches Leben und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1990), 166–80. See also Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

71 On the role of the German Jewish Heritage Association among other Jewish ‘landmannschaften’, see Myra Giberovitch, *Recovering from Genocidal Trauma* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 50–66.

72 Vogt-Moykopf, op. cit.

73 See Daniel Azuélos, “L’identité blessée: étude sur le problème de l’identité chez les judéo-allemands exilés aux États-Unis entre 1933 et 1949 à travers la revue *Aufbau* (New York)”, PhD Dissertation (Université Paris IV Sorbonne, 1993); Benjamin Lapp, “The Newspaper *Aufbau*, Its Evolving Politics, and the Problem of a German-Jewish Identity 1939–1955”, *Leo Baeck Year Book*, 58.1 (2001), 161–74.

74 Grossmann, op. cit. (2003), 121.

Jerusalem. Most participants at the founding conference were *Yekke* personalities who, in the interwar period, had been members of the Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, the Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland or the Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden. The Institute was named after Rabbi Leo Baeck (1873–1956), who represented the tradition of Liberal Judaism and had been the last leader of Germany's Jewish community under Nazism. Leo Baeck, who settled in London after the war and chaired the World Union for Progressive Judaism, was appointed as the Institute's first President. In 1955, the LBI established centres in Jerusalem, London and New York. In the late 1990s, the LBI-New York opened an office in Berlin, which became an administrative branch in 2013. The LBI-London has been publishing the *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (published by Oxford University Press), a renowned journal in the field of the history of German-speaking Jews, since 1956. The Institutes have been engaged in preserving a transnational memory of German Jewry by collecting material, conducting research, and presenting historical narratives.<sup>75</sup>

For the *Yekke* diaspora, the question of a *centre* became particularly crucial after World War II, when the Zionist response to the Holocaust was to impose Israel as the unique reference point for Jews. In response, this reinstated *Yekkish* claims on *alternative* centres like London, New York, and more recently, Berlin or Vienna. Building on the historical “distinctive path” of German Zionism (Hagit Lavsky),<sup>76</sup> many voices critical of Zionist injunctions came from *Yekkes* scattered around the world. In spite of the difficulties linked to embodying Germanness, reaffirming one's *Yekkishkeit* – and hence one's emotional ties to Germany, German culture and the German language – and resisting the host societies' cultural injunctions can be seen as strategies of resisting centripetal injunctions about what it means to be Jewish after the Holocaust. In the contemporary context of a critical re-evaluation of Jewish injunctions in the post-war period, as new Jewish ethnicities are being discussed, *Yekkishkeit* may very well be one of them. What some members of the second and third generation put to the fore is a deep personal and familial identification with the legacy of German Judaism and the urge to preserve that legacy. In the film *Still (Stille)*, set in Berlin, Wendy Oberlander, whose mother emigrated from Germany in 1939 and whose father emigrated from Austria in 1940, takes us back to the world of assimilated German-speaking Jews, showing the dissonances that ex-

75 Christhard Hoffmann (ed.), *Preserving the Legacy of German Jewry. A History of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1955–2005* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

76 Hagit Lavsky, *Before Catastrophe. The Distinctive Path of German Zionism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996).

ist between history and personal memory.<sup>77</sup> Those involved in keeping the *Yekke* identity alive want to underline a humanistic – yet ambivalent – dimension of German-Jewish history, in which the Jews were an integral part of German culture and society, while at the same time being apart.

In recent years, a new phenomenon has affected third generation *Yekkes*. Nowadays, being of *Yekke* descent holds specific cultural or even social connotations in regard to one's position on the contemporary Jewish map. This certainly holds true for Israel, where the *Yekkes* are part of the country's Ashkenazi elite,<sup>78</sup> and, to some extent, the United States. More research is certainly needed for Canada. New forms of transnational circulation are thus made possible within a fluid *Yekkish* space. Germany in general, and Berlin in particular, have become destinations for young Jews who want to experience, temporarily or permanently, the country of their ancestors. Nowadays, Berlin is becoming a new centre of Jewish life and culture, especially since the influx of Russian Jews in the 1990s, a phenomenon that also characterised Canada.<sup>79</sup> New "German Jews" build new Jewish networks and communities. Decades after the Holocaust, it looks as if transnational Jewish life and culture indeed have a future in Germany. In 2012, an English-language online newspaper was founded to document the diversity of German-Jewish life: the *Jewish Voice from Germany*. Its readers are scattered around the world: in Berlin, New York City, Chicago, Toronto, London, Haifa, and Tel Aviv.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4 Conclusion

This paper has highlighted one example of a divergent migration research agenda. It has offered a Canadian focus on one of various destinations of forced migrants who shared the same cultural background. The *Yekkes* in Canada maintained emotional ties with German culture and some of them with the actual countries, Germany and Austria. They also became part of the countries that received them, and some have developed a sense of belonging to a

77 Wendy Oberlander (dir.), *Still (Stille)*. Documentary, English, 25 minutes (Vancouver, 2001). See also Arlene Stein, *Reluctant Witnesses. Survivors, Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 154–55.

78 See Dani Kranz, "Changing Definitions of Germanness across Three Generations of *Yekkes* in Palestine/Israel", *German Studies Review*, 39.1 (2016), 99–120.

79 Michael Meng, "(Trans)National Spaces: Jewish Sites in Contemporary Germany," in Geller and Morris, op. cit., 321–40; Larissa Remennick, "Russian Jews in the Global City of Toronto: A Pilot Study of Identity and Social Integration", *Espace populations sociétés*, 3.1 (2006), 61–81.

80 <<http://jewish-voice-from-germany.de/cms>> (accessed 23 March 2018).

transnational German-Jewish diaspora. In each setting, *Yekkes* carved out a unique form of ethnic belonging that translates into specific memory cultures. By and large, there is a gap between the *Yekkes'* overall economic integration into their host societies and their personal sense of belonging: theirs seems to be “a very successful story of integration without complete assimilation”.<sup>81</sup> Whereas success stories abound – of *Yekkes* in academia, the arts, in libraries and museums – personal narratives voice a feeling of being apart. From a macro perspective, the period between 1945 and 1974, in which the first generation of *Yekkes* was professionally active, is one of tremendous economic boom in the Western world: it is a period in which success stories abound *in general*. A sharper lens, however, shows that the *Yekkes* as first generation immigrants did not easily fit into the dominant socio-cultural categories of Canada. They certainly represented a strange voice within the Jewish community and often transmitted a specific and distinctive memory to their children and grandchildren. Nowadays, more than seventy years after the Holocaust almost destroyed German Jewry, people who identify with their (grand)parents' *Yekkishkeit* have the option of participating in a transnational German-Jewish life and of feeling connected to an polycentric diasporic space. We certainly need more research on intergenerational memory cultures, on the actual networks of this new form of ‘German Jewishness’, and on the emotional consequences of these transnational connections. In 1955, Martin Buber stated that German Jewry was one of the strangest phenomena in Jewish history.<sup>82</sup> His view certainly holds true today. My own research has shown that the *Yekkes* are not just a strange phenomenon, but an important case study for the understanding of questions relating to Diasporas. We need to continue moving past our understanding of ‘hyphenated identities’ towards a more complex study of the transnational nature of German-Jewish transmissions. Both German and Jewish Studies need to turn their attention to the encounters of Germans and Jews not as a “one way street” but rather as triangular constellations of transnational ties.<sup>83</sup>

81 Schlör, op. cit., 221.

82 Quoted in Avraham Barkai, “Deutsch-jüdische Forschungsinseln. Die Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem, London und New York”, in Gisela Dachs, op. cit., 13.

83 See Leslie Morris, “German Studies and Jewish Studies: Symbiosis of Two Fields”, *German Studies Review*, 39.3 (2016), 601–10.

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