

# JEWISH HISTORY, LIFE, AND CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA

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**El exilio incómodo: México y los refugiados judíos, 1933–1945.** By Daniela Gleizer. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2011. Pp. 321. \$28.00 paper. ISBN: 9786074622843.

**Kosher Feijoada and Other Paradoxes of Jewish Life in São Paulo.** By Misha Klein. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012. Pp. ix + 256. \$74.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780813039879.

**Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880–1955.** By Sandra McGee Deutsch. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. Pp. viii + 377. \$23.95 paper. ISBN: 9780822346494.

**Trauma, Memory and Identity in Five Jewish Novels from the Southern Cone.** By Debora Cordeiro Rosa. Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2012. Pp. vii + 189. \$60.00 cloth. ISBN: 978073917297.

Latin American ethnic studies have traditionally focused on indigenous groups and people of African origins. Scholars have paid less attention to immigrant groups and their descendants, especially to non-Catholic and/or non-European immigrants such as Jewish Latin Americans, Arab Latin Americans, or Asian Latin Americans. Much of the literature about each of these groups has been produced by members of their own organized communities. In recent years, however, Jewish Latin Americans are attracting a growing interest on the part of historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and literary and cultural scholars. In the past decade Jewish Latin American studies have become a subfield of research characterized by vitality and innovation. This subfield can certainly contribute to a better understanding of the ethnic experiences of other groups of immigrants and their Latin America-born children.

Recent methodological and theoretical discussions have encouraged new studies of Jewish Latin American experiences.<sup>1</sup> The current bibliography on Jewish experiences in this continent is less focused on political aspects than on cultural and social facets. Scholars nowadays are less concerned with Jews as victims of

1. See, for example, Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein, eds., *Rethinking Jewish Latin Americans* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); Haim Avni et al., eds., *Pertenencia y alteridad: Judíos en/de América Latina: Cuarenta años de cambio* (Madrid: Iberoamericana / Frankfurt: Vervuert, 2011); Adriana Brodsky and Raanan Rein, eds., *The New Jewish Argentina: Facets of Jewish Experiences in the Southern Cone* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

anti-Semitism, xenophobia, or racism and more interested in their place and role as an integral part of society at large; research is now founded less on communal and institutional sources and more on testimonies produced by unaffiliated ethnics, focusing on history from below and on oral testimonies rather than “official stories.” Many authors currently favor comparative perspectives across ethnic divides within the nation as well as from a transnational viewpoint linking the diaspora to its real or imagined homeland.

In the discussion of Jewish Latin Americans we thus hear today voices which were hardly heard before: those of unaffiliated Jews, women, workers, Sephardim, left-wing anti-Zionists, children, or LGBTQ individuals. All are incorporated into the larger story of hybrid identities in Latin America. Put together, these voices often challenge accepted ideas about Jewish Latin Americans. Furthermore, scholarly attention has traditionally been devoted to the larger Jewish communities of Argentina, Brazil, or Mexico, marginalizing the experiences of Jews in smaller communities. However, recent studies of Jews in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, or Chile have demonstrated that the size of a group should not be a criterion for determining the extent of research consideration it should receive.<sup>2</sup> Smaller communities and subcommunities can teach us just as much about the ebb and flow of ethnic relations as can the larger ones. The volumes under discussion here add to this productive exchange, ranging across a variety of cases in the early to mid-twentieth century and covering political, social, and cultural themes.

#### THE UNDESIRABLES

Daniela Gleizer’s *El exilio incómodo* demonstrates that systematic archival research and the reformulation of old questions may yield important contributions to the well-trodden field of Jewish immigration to Latin America. This is possibly the best book on the subject since the publication of Jeffrey Lesser’s *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question*.<sup>3</sup> It builds on earlier works by Haim Avni and Judit Bokser on Mexico’s immigration policies during the refugee crisis caused by German National Socialism, but presents a broader and more nuanced picture.<sup>4</sup>

The book challenges the well-established image of Mexico as a country of asylum and a safe haven for persecuted people in the stormy 1930s and 1940s.

2. Leo Spitzer, *Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Allen Wells, *Tropical Zion: General Trujillo, FDR, and the Jews of Sosúa* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Eva Goldschmidt Wyman, *Escaping Hitler: A Jewish Haven in Chile* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013); Enrique Martínez-Ruiz, *Haciendo comunidad, haciendo ciudad: Los judíos y el espacio urbano de Bogotá, 1920–1970* (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana, in press).

3. Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994). The English edition of Gleizer’s book has a somewhat similar title: *Unwelcome Exiles: Mexico and the Jewish Refugees from Nazism, 1933–1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

4. See, for example, Haim Avni, “Cárdenas, México y los refugiados, 1938–1940,” *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* 3, no. 1 (1992): 5–22; Judit Bokser Liwerant, “Alteridad en la historia y en la memoria: México y los refugiados judíos,” in *Encuentro y alteridad: Vida y cultura judía en América Latina*, ed. Judit Bokser Liwerant y Alicia Gojman de Backal (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 342–361.

This image has to do with Lázaro Cárdenas's presidency and the open arms with which the country welcomed some 20,000 Spanish Republican exiles fleeing the Civil War and the ensuing Franco dictatorship. Such an image has been shared by academic circles, government officials, the institutional memory of the Jewish community, and popular sentiment.

Gleizer looks at the less generous moments of Mexico under Presidents Cárdenas (1934–1940) and Miguel Ávila Camacho (1940–1946). This is therefore a cross ethnic comparative study that includes the Spanish Republican experience, on the one hand, and the often hostile attitudes toward Chinese immigrants and Jewish refugees, on the other.<sup>5</sup> Mexico's relations with China and international agreements eventually prevented the adoption of a ban on Chinese immigration at the federal level. In the Jewish case, however, there was no country to play such a protective role. The symbolic moment of the hostile Mexican attitude toward Jewish immigration occurred in September 1940, when the Portuguese cargo ship *Quanza*, carrying Jewish refugees on board, arrived at the port of Veracruz. Jewish refugees without documents were not allowed to disembark, in a similar manner to the mid-1939 refusal by Cuba and the United States to allow entrance to the Jewish passengers on the German ocean liner *St. Louis*.

To the same extent that she moves away from the romantic image of *cardenismo*, Gleizer avoids the nostalgic Jewish-Mexican historiography that focused on the arrival of the first generation of immigrants in the 1920s and documented the founding of community institutions, while failing to research the relations between Jews, non-Jews, and various government agencies. As Gleizer relates, a confidential letter issued by the Mexican Ministry of Interior in April 1934 banned the immigration of several groups, including Jews, into Mexico. A few years later this ban was replaced by another order that, in practice, maintained the same policy. Jews were regarded as undesirable even before a demand for asylum was raised by a large number of Jewish individuals and associations. Gleizer claims that the refuge offered to Spanish exiles was the exception, not the rule. After all, Mexico had not been a country of immigration—and therefore there are very few historical studies of the country's immigration policies—and mostly adopted a restrictive policy toward "outsiders."<sup>6</sup> The Jewish experience was in many ways the opposite of that of the Spanish Republicans: during the years of the Third Reich and the Holocaust, Jews faced a closed-door policy.

Based on research in Mexican and American archives, on papers of the Mexican Jewish community, and on an extensive bibliography, Gleizer analyzes three interrelated arenas: the state apparatus (including the presidency, the National Congress, and the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs), interest groups (in-

5. See an earlier discussion of anti-Semitism and anti-Chinese attitudes in Alicia Gojman Backal, *Camisas, escudos y desfiles militares: Los dorados y el antisemitismo en México, 1934–1940* (Mexico City: Escuela Nacional de Estudios Profesionales Acatlán (UNAM) and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000).

6. Recent important works on Mexico's immigration policies include Pablo Yankelevich, ed., *Nación y extranjería* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2009); Pablo Yankelevich, ed., *México, país refugio: La experiencia de los exilios en el siglo XX* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia; Plaza y Valdés, 2002); Katya Somohano y Pablo Yankelevich, eds., *El refugio en México: Entre la historia y los desafíos contemporáneos* (Mexico City: Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados and Secretaría de Gobernación, 2011).

cluding political parties, economic associations, the media), and the organized Jewish community and its efforts to secure entry for Jewish refugees. Gleizer thus includes in her discussion actors and groups previously less studied. Internal and public discussions, conflicts, and tensions provoked by the need to respond to Jewish pleas for asylum serve as a lens for looking at Mexican politics, policies, and ideologies, especially regarding foreigners and immigrants, desired or undesired.

One of Gleizer's arguments is that Mexico's acceptance of Spanish Republican exiles exhausted the country's ability to receive other refugees. Following the accommodation of Spaniards fleeing the civil war, it was difficult for the government to agree to more refugees, which would have raised loud criticism from certain sectors of the population. The fact that Mexican laws of immigration did not include refugees as a category was certainly an obstacle to the entry of Jews fleeing the Third Reich. Mexican authorities had no prior experience in dealing with a case of collective asylum. It was only in the early forties that the term "racial refugees" was coined, acknowledging the status of the Jews as a persecuted people and at the same time distinguishing them from political refugees, who were viewed more favorably by Mexican public opinion. The ideology of *mestizaje*—supposedly assuring that Mexico was immune to the virus of racism—as well as xenophobia and anti-Semitic stereotypes also made it difficult to open the gates to asylum-seeking Jews. While the Mexican Left fought to open the doors, right-wingers and sympathizers of Nazi Germany vehemently opposed such a step.

Gleizer also documents an interesting initiative, promoted by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, to settle 1,500 Jewish families in an agricultural colony. It was supported by the governor of the State of Tabasco and won the approval of President Cárdenas. But the plan provoked hostile reactions in public opinion and Cárdenas withdrew his support. Gleizer exposes not just the huge gaps between the government discourse of openness and the selective admission of immigrants but also the gap between laws and decrees, on the one hand, and social realities, on the other. After all, in spite of the decrees aimed at preventing the entry of Jews, the number of Jews living in Mexico increased: according to various estimates, their number in 1920 was just 2,000, while in 1940 it was around 18,000.

#### INTRODUCING THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

One of the areas that has been under-researched in Latin American ethnic studies in general and in Jewish Latin American studies in particular is gender. In the case of Argentina, studies of Jewish women have too often focused on prostitutes, novelists, or entertainers. Jewish women have largely been omitted from social and political histories of the Southern Cone. In her remarkable book *Crossing Borders, Changing a Nation*, Sandra McGee Deutsch sets out to recover their voices and tell several of the untold stories of the hitherto silent half of the Jewish population in that region.

Deutsch analyzes a wide variety of sites, in the Argentine countryside as well as in the cities, where Jewish women interacted with both Jews of different origins and non-Jews. The eight chapters in this volume deal with the fundamental roles

played by Jewish women in all aspects of rural and urban societies and in both domestic and public spheres. Women transmitted linguistic, culinary, musical, and other kinds of heritage to their children and thus created a kind of ethnic enclave in their homes. At the same time, the gradual adoption of local customs, local cuisine, and local ingredients in traditional dishes and celebrations transformed these homes into Argentine ones. In the streets, schools, and workplaces, Jewish women contributed to the formation of *argentinidad*.

Argentine Jewish prostitution is probably the one aspect of Jewish women's lives that has attracted much attention from scholars, writers, and filmmakers. Deutsch does not ignore the disproportionate number of Jewish prostitutes in Buenos Aires until the early 1930s, alongside French, Polish, and native-born prostitutes. But here (chapter 4) as in other chapters, she is much more interested in exploring the ways in which Jewish women crossed many borders and how they negotiated the boundaries between private and professional lives and between the respectable and the disreputable. The author presents a more diversified experience than traditionally portrayed, including women who had worked as prostitutes before emigrating, women who chose a lucrative profession which gave them more economic freedom and independence, or women who acted as pimps and brothel keepers.

The best chapters in the book (chapters 6 and 7) are the ones devoted to the political participation of Jewish women in a variety of organizations and political parties in an era when women lacked the vote. During the first half of the twentieth century, more than a few Jewish women participated in socialist, anarchist, communist, or union activities or worked toward the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine. In all these frameworks they struggled against male discrimination: at home, in the workplace, or in the political arena. Deutsch has already demonstrated her talents as a political historian able to present a nuanced picture, incorporating ideological and gender elements, in her classic *Las derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile*.<sup>7</sup>

Of special interest is her short discussion of Jewish women and the Spanish Civil War. As Deutsch emphasizes, "The Spanish Civil War made militants out of many young Ashkenazi women . . . [and] introduced them to leftist politics" (182). Indeed, Jewish women aided the Republic through the Comisión Israelita de Ayuda al Pueblo Español or other associations in the framework of the Federación de Organismos de Ayuda a la República Española. This was true both for the Federal Capital and its surroundings as well as for the provinces. Thus Jewish girls in Quilmes, Once, and Villa Crespo, or in Villa Domínguez and Moisesville, raised funds and organized benefit gatherings of various sorts to help the Spanish people. The socialist Rosa Scheiner believed that Argentina was heading toward a Spanish-like confrontation. Like many others, she feared that a rebel victory would strengthen the *nacionalistas* in Argentina. Communist Fanny Edelman shared a political commitment with her husband, one that led them both to participate in the Spanish Civil War.

7. Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890–1939* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Another Jewish-Argentine woman who became identified with the Republican cause was Berta Singerman. She had begun her career in the Yiddish theater and acquired national and international fame for her recitations. Deutsch recounts how Singerman, at the peak of her career, performed before 70,000 people in Córdoba. In her autobiography, *Mis dos vidas*, Singerman gives testimony to her love of Spanish poetry and her sympathy for the Republican project of social justice and freedom.<sup>8</sup> Berta performed, with her sister Paulina, in pro-Republic events and refused to visit Spain once the nationalist regime was consolidated there.

During World War II, Jewish women took leading roles in the Junta de la Victoria, which campaigned vigorously against increased authoritarianism at home and fascism and Nazism abroad. By supporting the Allied cause, they also fought for a democratic and pluralistic society in Argentina. As explained by the Yiddish schoolteacher Berta B. de Drucaroff, “by defending the Jewish people, we also defend the integrity of our beautiful fatherland” (172).

As students and teachers, working the land alongside fathers and husbands, or in the liberal professions, in the sciences, or in political activities, through human rights groups or Zionist organizations, Jewish Argentine women fought against exclusion within the Jewish community and without, and demanded to be an integral part of Argentine society. Deutsch correctly points out that “even as Jewish women aided their communities and the nascent state of Israel, they highlighted their Argentine identities and expanded the sense of who belonged to the nation” (235).

The book gives attention to both working- and middle-class women, Ashkenazi and Sephardic alike, thus highlighting the diversity within the Jewish community. Too many studies have tended to overemphasize the supposed separation between Jews of Ashkenazic and Sephardic origins, as if there was hardly any contact between them in their daily lives. By contrast, Deutsch points out several contact zones between members of the two groups, such as their participation in Zionist and philanthropic associations.

Unlike many studies on Jewish experiences in Argentina, anti-Semitism is not a main axis of discussion here. Deutsch challenges the trope that anti-Semitism, prejudice, and persecution were dominant in the lives of Jewish immigrants. As she points out already in the introduction, except at certain moments Jewish women in Argentina “experienced relatively little anti-Semitism until the 1930s, although their status and race were ambiguous” (10). By focusing on women’s actual experiences rather than on state policies or public discourse, she is able to tell a different story. Based on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, written documents and oral histories, this book is highly recommended to anyone interested in Latin American ethnic studies or the history of women in this region.

#### FOOD, LITERATURE AND IDENTITY

Daniel Burman’s film *El abrazo partido* (2004) takes place in a shopping center in Once, the supposedly Jewish neighborhood of Buenos Aires. In her lingerie store,

8. Berta Singerman, *Mis dos vidas* (Buenos Aires: Tres Tiempos, 1981).

Silvia always has a *lekach* (honey cake) on the counter. This traditional Ashkenazic sweet is one of the expressions of her Jewish identity. Visitors to the store, Jews and non-Jews alike, pick at the ever-present sweet.

Anthropological and historical studies have already discussed food and foodways as key constructive elements of Jewish and other individual and collective identities. After all, we are what we eat. Until recently, however, relatively little attention has been paid to the culinary practices of migrant communities and their descendants, that is, the foodways of national or ethnic others, in Latin American Jewish Studies. In this respect Misha Klein's volume *Kosher Feijoada*—which touches, among very many other topics, on the ways Jewish Brazilians have incorporated and adapted elements of Brazilian food—is a welcome addition to the historiography, although it falls short of earlier works of history like Hasia Diner's *Hungering for America*, which focuses on the trans-Atlantic experiences of the first generation of migrants to the United States, or Marcie Cohen Ferris's *Matzoh Ball Gumbo*, which explores the development of a Southern Jewish cuisine in cities like Atlanta, New Orleans, or Memphis.<sup>9</sup> Ferris points both to people who conceived of Jewish food as coterminous with kosher food and others using know-how inherited from their immigrant ancestors while incorporating non-kosher elements like pork barbeque and oysters. These books are not mentioned in Klein's bibliography.

Klein does not completely break out of the traditional literature that assumes Jewishness to be the primary identity component for Jews living in Latin America. Struggling to differentiate between the diasporic and the transnational condition of Jewish communities (chapter 1), she tends to look at Jewish experiences as unique and exceptional, although many of the anecdotes included in her volume point in other directions. In part it might have to do with the fact that her study focuses on affiliated Jews and pays too little attention to the 50 percent or more of Jews not affiliated with community institutions.

Klein's primary research site was São Paulo's Associação Brasileira a Hebraica, a very large (about 25,000 members) social and athletic club established in the mid-twentieth century. Due to its size and the extent of its facilities, the club refers to itself as "the biggest Jewish institution in the world." In the institution's promotional material one can read the following: "The Hebraica should be thought of as a real city, or a world, a planet. And if we extend these reflections on the city, the Hebraica could even be imagined as a utopian city, a special space for discovery and humanism" (quoted on p. 31). This is indeed a fascinating institution with a wide variety of activities, but looking at other ethnic clubs in the metropolis of São Paulo, such as the Esporte Clube Sírio or the Clube Atlético Monte Líbano, might have offered a meaningful interpretation of its unique and not-so-unique character traits. Claiming that the "theme of contradictions permeates anthropological studies of Brazil" (191), the book emphasizes contradictions, paradoxes, tensions, conflicts, and differences insofar as Jewish experiences in Brazil are con-

9. Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Marcie Cohen Ferris, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

sidered. With no comparative perspective, the reader might think that there is nothing similar between Jewish experiences and Arab or Japanese experiences in contemporary Brazil.

Klein is fascinated by the kosher *feijoada* offered by the Bolinha restaurant in São Paulo. Described by folklorist Luís da Câmara Cascudo as “the most national and popular dish in Brazil, preferred by all classes throughout the year” (87), *feijoada* is usually made with pork and therefore would not be eaten by observant Jews. However, many of Klein’s informants either eat the common dish with pork or versions of it with beef or chicken instead.

Klein discusses Jewish-Brazilian experiences as if they were exceptional and full of “paradoxes.” Had she adopted a comparative perspective and looked at other ethnic minorities, she would have realized that the tendency to adopt local techniques and flavors while simultaneously bringing culinary or gustatory memories to bear on the realities of Latin America are common characteristics of many groups. Furthermore, Klein should have made it clearer to her readers that in the Old World, too, what Jews ate was dynamic and changing, a fact that complicates the idea of a static Jewish cuisine in Eastern Europe or elsewhere. Jews, like other ethnic minorities, invest much effort in cultural maintenance. Children need to understand their heritage and cultivate their Jewish identity, and therefore keep certain food proscriptions. The kosher *feijoada* allows observant Jewish-Brazilians to define who is outside their community and to associate themselves with dominant foodways, thus expressing their identification with the dominant culture.

Debora Cordeiro Rosa’s *Trauma, Memory and Identity in Five Jewish Novels from the Southern Cone* tackles some of the same questions through a different cultural lens, that of fiction writing. The vast majority of Jewish Latin American studies are devoted to Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, countries that are home to the biggest Jewish communities on the continent. Indeed, there are approximately 500,000 Jews in Latin America today, with the greatest concentration by far in Argentina, with Brazil and Mexico as distant seconds, and far behind a third tier with Venezuela, Chile, and Uruguay.<sup>10</sup>

Of the four books reviewed here, only Cordeiro Rosa’s volume looks at the smaller communities of Uruguay, Chile, and Paraguay. Cordeiro Rosa discusses the constant negotiations for Jewish ethnicity and identity through the literary works of three female authors—Teresa Porzecanski (Uruguay), Sonia Guralnik (Chile), and Susana Gertopán (Paraguay)—and two male authors, Francisco Dzialovsky (Brazil) and Marcelo Birmajer (Argentina), cowriter with Daniel Burman of the above-mentioned film *El abrazo partido*. All five bring the voices of their parents and grandparents, “stories of arrivals and departures, of losing and finding oneself, of integration and assimilation, of conflict and pain, of memory and survival, and of what it means to be Jewish in Latin America” (2). By analyzing the relevant national context together with the plots and characters of the novels, Cor-

10. David William Foster, “The Jewish Presence in Latin America,” October 25, 2012, Oxford Bibliographies, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com>.



deiro Rosa is able to show how individual and collective identities are constantly in flux depending on changing circumstances.

The book, which could have benefitted from better copyediting, is structured along a timeline that depicts different moments in the history of several generations of Jews in the region. Chapter 1 analyzes Porzecanski's novel *Perfumes de Cartago*, which narrates the experiences of a Jewish-Syrian family in Uruguay of the 1920s; chapter 5 focuses on Birmajer's *No tan distinto*, devoted to contemporary third-generation Argentine Jews. Among the issues dealt with in the novels and highlighted by Cordeiro Rosa is the importance of language among immigrants. Chapter 3 looks at Gertopán's novel *Barrio Palestina*, which in turn addresses the use of Yiddish, often heard in this Asuncion neighborhood as a tool to create a community and to tie together immigrants from Eastern Europe, thus marking it as a Latin American language.

At least one of the novels, Birmajer's *No tan distinto*, turns to the ties between Jewish Latin Americans and their imagined homeland, the State of Israel. Saul, the main character in the novel, is a well-integrated Jew. Israel is a meaningful place for him, but he is first and foremost an Argentine. When he enters a bookstore in Tel Aviv, he looks for books in Spanish; when he eats baklava in Tel Aviv, he remembers how "le gustaban más las baklavas de la confitería turca en Tucumán y Paso, en Buenos Aires" (he preferred the baklavas from the Turkish pastry shop in Tucumán and Paso Street, in Buenos Aires). And on the flight back to his homeland, Argentina, he feels nostalgia: "Vivir en Barrio Norte, trabajar en el Once e ir al country los fines de semana: si hay un paraíso, no puede ser muy distinto" (Living in the North neighborhood, working in the Once, going to the country club on weekends: if there is heaven, it can't be too different) (161–162).

In conclusion, from early on, Jews have challenged narrow definitions of nationality and have sought to enlarge the social space by introducing dimensions often ignored or resisted by the established order. They have done so in a wide variety of ways, whether by introducing Yiddish and the rich cultural heritage it represents into the mix of Latin American languages, by insisting on the right to believe or disbelieve commonly held ideas, or by coexisting simultaneously in multiple "homelands."

To make a single characterizing statement about contemporary Jewish Latin Americans would be wrong. Inter-marriage rates are high, but so is the growth of ultrareligious worship. Discourses of anti-Semitism remain critical to identity formation even though acts of violence are very rare, with the exception of the terrorist attacks against Jewish institutions in Argentina. Zionist movements are strong among affiliated Jews throughout Latin America, although immigration rates to Israel are low. Furthermore, the location of Jewish Latin America has expanded since the 1960s to both Israel and North America, creating a diaspora of the Diaspora.

Taken together, the books reviewed here break new ground and expand the territorial boundaries of the subfield of Jewish Latin American studies. They formulate new questions and reexamine old ones, offer comparative perspectives, give voice to hitherto silent actors, and look at a richer variety of sources.