

# The Project on Allyship to Combat Antisemitism

## *American Jewish - Indigenous Allyship: Prospects and Barriers*

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These are difficult times to be thinking about Jews and allyship. Many American Jews have felt abandoned by leaders, friends, and co-workers from other minority communities in the wake of the heinous Hamas attack. Many assumed that their non-Jewish neighbors would understand that their sense of being part of the Jewish People – an interconnected global family-tribe – made October 7th cut as deep here in America for them as did the antisemitic attacks in Pittsburgh, Poway, Monsey, Colleyville, or elsewhere in the US in recent years. For most, October 7th actually cut considerably deeper on account of how many people died, the ways they died, that so many people were taken hostage, and that the attack happened in Israel – the place whose supposed *raison d'être* is Jewish security. Since so many non-Jewish Americans did not respond with instant solidarity for the victims, as they might have had the attack happened on US soil, some Jews felt worse than abandoned – they felt betrayed, as though an unspoken pact had been violated among American minorities: that when one is targeted by terror, all would sound a collective alarm and grieve together.

The silence, equivocation, and even victim-blaming and praise given to Hamas as legitimate political resistance struck many as both terrifying and sickening. The subsequent war against Hamas in Gaza, and all the accompanying destruction, violence, and suffering wrought upon Palestinians *there*; the hate and confusion sewn *here* and around the world; and the concomitant rise of explicitly anti-Jewish sentiment as well as eliminationist anti-Israel rhetoric have made matters of allyship even more dispiriting for many American Jews across the political spectrum. The Israel-Hamas war / Israeli-Palestinian conflict may very well be the most divisive, politically explosive, radically polarizing issue in a generation, and much of our society's information ecosystems have already sorted us into radically separate and morally incompatible spheres of information and perspective. These two facts on the ground – a bitterly polarizing conflict and profound algorithmic fracturing of ideas and information, especially through social media platforms – have solidified some alliances and made others much more difficult.

But the need to cultivate and re-cultivate allies for Jews in America has become urgent, not despite but precisely because these times are so fraught and bitter. The principal and most obvious reason for this need is the shared social fact that Jews are facing a rise of anti-Jewishness unprecedented in North America, and that various racialized and otherwise marginalized groups are facing enormous and chronic hate that is both materially consequential and ideologically driven. Jewish victimization comes together with and is inseparable from other forms of bigotry.

Second, other minorities need Jews as allies, as they too struggle to reshape America so that it guarantees them safety, dignity, and opportunity. Jewish voices in the broader movement for harmonious race relations, for social justice, for historical redress and the meaningful recognition of communal trauma have been significant and have been valued for the ways they bring a unique set of perspectives to inform policy change, educational initiatives, and public commemoration (an historical reality that is oft forgotten).

Most significantly, Jews are among those minorities who have been, currently are, and will continue to be targeted by an increasingly emboldened far right in so many places in the developed world – including the explicitly white nationalist, often explicitly Christian movements in the US. Jews have been and will continue to be targeted by the so-called Alt Right alongside African-, Arab-, Asian-, Latin-Americans, as well as LGBTQ+ people, Indigenous Peoples, and the vast array of non-Christians among us. Simply put, Jews and other “Others” share a common threat and a profoundly illiberal foe that must be countered together, in order to move America closer to realizing its highest potential and to protect those who are the most material victims of white supremacist violence and disenfranchisement. Cultivating allyship across different marginalized groups is simply a rational strategy of survival.

Yet unlike these other groups, Jews have been on the margins on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy, education, and ideology – the set of ideas and practices that now dominate the American conversation on racism and inter-group relations. They have not reaped the rewards of this social movement, chief among them recognition of their at-risk-of-hate standing in society at large. Unlike other Others, Jews are also often targeted not only by the far right, but also by the far, illiberal left, cast as subversive globalists, rapacious capitalists, and heartless imperialists – the embodiment of the most despised qualities of the left itself. This precarious standing is not new, and one need only look at the North America of the 1930s to witness a frenetic see-saw of antisemitic editorials casting Jews as both the great Bolshevik danger to capitalism and democracy on one hand, and the filthy capitalist pigs subjugating the proletariat on the other. The current antisemitic ideas, often fused with antizionist rhetoric, draw from a vast storehouse of old tropes and are being super-fueled by conspiratorial thinking. Jews, in short, have much to lose by failing to cultivate allies.

Each relationship within the broader network-coalition of allies has its own requirements and its own barriers to success. The Latin American – LGBTQ+ relationship has unique issues, distinct from the Black-Muslim one, or any of the many potential relationships between Jews and any other group. One relationship among this network of possible coalitions that has taken up only a small amount of attention is the Jewish-Indigenous relationship.

### **Jewish – Indigenous History**

I come to write this essay as one of the few students of the long history of Jewish – Indigenous relationships, a subject about which I have written a book and several articles and book chapters. I have been studying and writing about the nature and history of these

relationships in the US and Canada, in particular, for close to two decades now; about how they have changed over time and about what we learn about modern Jewish life by paying attention to them that we might not otherwise grasp. Jews and Indigenous People – diverse and heterogeneous groups in and among themselves and including people who identify as both Jewish and Indigenous – have had long, intertwined, and complicated relationships in the United States and Canada, as they have in Australia and New Zealand, in Southern Africa, and throughout Latin America.

It is a relationship that has been profoundly challenged by the conflict in the Middle East and the “conflict over the conflict” here in North America. I will return to the matter of how competing ideas about colonialism, Zionism, and Indigeneity complicate the possibilities and the limits of stronger Jewish-Indigenous ally bonds, but I wanted to first foreground two key points. Firstly, the mere fact that this relationship has a long history here, and second, that the future of this relationship needs to be based on what the two internally diverse communities do with it here. We can wrestle with the obstacles and contradictions right here where we are, even as we also keep the transnational context close to our hearts.

It is a relationship that began even before Jews first set foot on Turtle Island and had any face-to-face encounters with any Indigenous people. Two dimensions characterized the earliest of these relationships. One took the form of the wildly popular but spurious notion that “Indians” either descended from the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel or had some other connection to the Hebrew Bible’s narrative, thereby imagining a profound and ancient kinship between the two. The other dimension was in the thought habits and administrative patterns that medieval British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish leaders developed in order to manage their Jewish minority populations at home, and later applied to manage the Indigenous populations of the new world as they expanded their imperial reaches.

Few of the relationships that actual Jews and actual Indigenous people forged once Jews began arriving in North America were relationships of allyship. Late-eighteenth and nineteenth century encounters were most often framed around land, commerce, and resources, and were set within the broad context of frontier expansionism, or what scholars often refer to as settler colonialism. Many of these relationships were amicable and mutual. Some led to deep respect, inter-cultural understanding, friendship, and even sex and marriage. Many of these relationships bore the stamp of racism and exploitation too. Of course, the foundational context for these encounters was the state’s slow genocidal war against Indigenous people, its effort to conquer the original inhabitants of the continent. The state – its laws, military, and policy – supported and protected Jewish migrants and their ambitions to build viable Jewish communities and to foster a sense of belonging for themselves in the emerging national projects of which they were a part. Frontier Jews, wherever and whenever there was a frontier, from the founding decades of the original east coast British colonies until the late nineteenth century closing of the American frontier, were, at times, indifferent or even antagonistic to Indigenous concerns, communities, and people. The vast majority of these Jews had migrated to the Americas seeking safe haven from persecution, poverty, pogrom, conscription, and hunger. They

arrived with the hopes that America would be an end to their exile, and for the most part, they internalized their fellow American and new immigrants' attitudes toward the Native peoples already here, focused as they were on building better lives for their families and communities.

Among these frontier encounters were peaceable interactions too – many examples of Jews and Indigenous people engaged in mutually beneficial and voluntary business dealings, and of Jews identifying with and empathizing with Native Americans and standing up for their claims against settlers and the state. Some Jews expressed deep sympathy for the plight of “the Indians” and sometimes they articulated these anti-imperial critiques in particularly Jewish ways. This pattern persisted in virtually every state west of the Mississippi wherever there was a frontier and whenever Jews were a part of the state's support for immigrant expansion, treaty making or warfare in order to Manifest Destiny. Jews were a part of the juggernaut of non-Indigenous expansion. Alongside all other settler minorities (sometimes harmoniously with them, sometimes with friction), Jews acted with the support of the emerging state, its military, police, and law. This process had profoundly negative consequences on Indigenous peoples and cultures.

In the early- and mid-twentieth century, a cadre of Jewish civil servants, social scientists, educators, and rabbis emerged whose pro-Indian advocacy work can be understood as what we now call allyship. Jewish liberals, progressives, and socialists landed jobs at the highest echelons of the Roosevelt New Deal Administration in the Department of the Interior, and worked toward and achieved a remarkably pro-Indian slate of federal policies to advance what they saw as in the best interest of American Indians, the Indian New Deal. Two of their many accomplishments were the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, which turned a century of federal policy aimed at assimilating Native Americans on its head and instead tried to foster Indian self-governance; and the establishment of the Indian Claims Commission, the federal government's legal body at which tribes sued – and frequently won settlements – against the federal government itself for broken treaties and other damages. Many of the lawyers representing tribes were Jewish. Few people know that there is a history of Indigenous-Jewish alliance, akin to — though quite different from — the Black-Jewish alliance of the pre- and peri-Civil Rights partnership era.

Jewish-Indigenous relations expanded into several areas throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Legal, economic, and educational advocacy work continued throughout these decades, but to these spheres of work were added sometimes-tense discussions comparing genocide, sometimes-fruitful business collaborations in the energy and gambling sectors, sometimes-unconventional explorations in spirituality and environmental consciousness, and a growing body of exchanges in the realms of arts and culture (novelists, visual artists, poets and playwrights exploring characters and themes from the other).

Clearly, there were limits to Jewish allyship in the past, tarnished, at times, by misunderstandings, biases, and parochialism. But these relationships of the past also have within them some usable history and some basis for modeling allyship, even as this history presents some troubling aspects with which we still have to reckon. There is, in

short, a long history of precedent relationships between the two peoples in America, some harmonious and some discordant, from which the present can draw and learn.

Over the past decade or so, there have been efforts to build stronger ties, mostly among younger Jewish progressives, including the Jews of Turtle Island Community of Practice, and Jews on Ohlone Land in Northern California. Ad hoc, event-based Jewish solidarity efforts also sprang up around the Idle No More movement of 2012, and the Standing Rock Sioux and Dakota Access Pipeline protest movement of 2016. The Jewish Farmers' Network, which has centered its solidarity commitments to Jews of Color, Sephardi, and Mizrahi farmers, and Indigenous peoples, aims to support and amplify a land-based vision of Jewish ethics globally. Some Jewish museums and historical societies have begun to contend with their own implication in the extraction and accumulation of heritage objects from Indigenous communities.

The last decade or so has also seen a groundswell of genealogical and life-writing projects that connect Jewish family histories with the Indigenous histories with which their ancestors intersected. There have been a growing number of graduate students working on various aspects of Jewish-Indigenous relations in history, social science, education, and social work fields as well. And we are witness to a sizable expansion of literary and artistic engagements by Jewish creatives around Jewish-Indigenous intersections: plays, films, TV shows, photography projects, music compositions, novels, graphic novels, and non-fiction writing, including those of Rebecca Clarren, Emily Bowen Cohen, Aaron Kreuter, Winona LaDuke, Isa Milman, Jennifer and Tamara Podemski, Steve Rivo, and Kali Spitzer.

What's more, organized Jewish community institutions, including synagogues, JCCs, film festivals, day- and supplementary schools, archives, foundations, and social action committees, have been exploring local connections to Indigenous themes and leaders, considered, or adopted Land Acknowledgments, and are actively considering their roles in Indigenous reconciliation.

### **Four Bases of Allyship**

The bases of these ties have tended to center around one of four themes: parallel histories of persecution; the virtues of anti-assimilation or cultural resiliency; expressions of religious ecology; and the quest for political sovereignty. Each ground for allyship has its own opportunities and risks.

Many Jewish-led initiatives initially conceive of their allyship efforts based on a sense of shared or parallel suffering when they have sought either to forge ties with local Indigenous leaders and groups or have created programs for their own constituents. Both groups, they argue, have long endured the slings and arrows of Western civilization's hate, of being "othered" by the mainstream. Both have been targeted for genocidal extermination. This basis for inter-relating has the advantage of grounding connections in deeply felt empathy. The risks associated with basing a relationship on the shared experience of persecution, on the other hand, are that it can be shallow link, one that sometimes leads to feelings of competition for suffering recognition. In the effort to see oneself in the other, one might fail

to see other at all. Subtle rivalry for empathy can undermine the connection rather than fostering it.

Another basis for engagement foregrounds the flip side of this impulse: an emphasis on resistance to cultural assimilation, on cultural resiliency. These efforts tend to locate the ground of allyship in the parallel mission of inspiring pride, particularly among the youth, and view learning about the other communities' efforts to bolster pride as an opportunity to more clearly see the dynamics and importance of this work among their own. At an event I once attended with rabbis from various denominations about Indigenous reconciliation in Canada, all agreed it is good for Jews to learn about Indigenous Peoples precisely because learning from and about others fosters a stronger sense of one's own Jewish identity. This sort of engagement foregrounds an interest in the other for the sake of emboldening the self. These engagements can be meaningful when and if such meetings reinforce both learning about the other and seeing oneself in the other in roughly similar proportions.

A third, related ground of engagement involves religious and communal perspectives on ecological conservation. This basis for allyship has all of the benefits of self-enrichment, learning about and from the other, and emphasizing perhaps the single broadest commonality all humans share: the call to environmental action in order to protect and preserve our terrestrial home.

The last basis for forging alliance ties is around the idea of sovereignty. It is the thorniest of bases; it's both an opportunity for and a barrier to allyship. Increasingly over the past decade or so, American Jews with strong commitments to Zionism have begun using the language of Indigeneity with respect to the Jewish relationship to the land of Israel. American Zionist leaders, scholars, activists, and organizations have also expended effort trying to recruit Indigenous leaders, organizations, and influencers to endorse Jewish claims to Indigeneity, hoping that Indigenous leaders will announce and perform this form of kinship and solidarity. For many American Jews, this position is intuitive and powerful; many see Zionism as the end of the exilic condition for world Jewry – the return to Jewish self-governance and national self-determination. They see Israel as the full realization of an Indigenous people achieving what many Indigenous People wish to achieve: sovereignty on their ancestral land, using the revitalized language of the people's ancient past. Some Indigenous leaders have endorsed this position and have constituted allyship relationships with Jews and Israelis on these grounds.

But this basis for Jewish-Indigenous relations has proven to be a non-starter or a barrier for other Indigenous people, leaders, and organizations. There are Indigenous leaders who have refused or refuted this invitation. Many have endorsed the competing claim that Palestinians are the (only) Indigenous people to that land, and instead see Israel an imperial, colonial force to be de-colonized. There are some Indigenous leaders who recognize two competing and equally legitimate claims to Indigeneity on the land. And there are others who resent the ways that the language of Indigeneity has been weaponized in the “conflict over the conflict” and would prefer Diaspora Jews and Israelis,

Muslims, Arabs, and Palestinians cease their appropriation of Indigenous struggles, vocabulary, and politics to advance their own goals.

### **What's To Be Gained?**

There are gains to be made in a more fully elaborated and mutual relationship of allyship between Jews and Indigenous Peoples. Both communities – each internally diverse and both relatively small populations in the US – could benefit from more vocal allies in the face of racist attacks, and the common causes of civic decency, cultural pluralism, religious libertarianism, and bulwark against America's homogenizing forces.

There are several things Jews stand to gain in allying with Indigenous People: one more group of allies in the effort to stand up against antisemitism; an opportunity for the sort of inter-group dialogue and mutual refracted reflection that ends up instilling Jewish pride; a model of unapologetic commitment to particularism; and finally, being on the right side of America's efforts to come to terms with the difficult aspects of its history, and in this way, being model citizens.

What's to be gained for Indigenous People to ally with Jews? I cannot and should not make any claims to speak for or on behalf of any Indigenous peoples. I'm not Indigenous, and my relationships with Indigenous leaders, community organizations and ordinary Indigenous peoples are relatively thin. But I do have some thoughts about what might be gained based on my sense of what Indigenous leaders have long been saying they want from any other settler community allies.

I honestly don't know if Indigenous People care if Jews articulate their allyship in a particularly Jewish way, but I suspect the reconciliation process will go better for all Indigenous People if "settlers" are disaggregated and if each religious or ethnic minority in America forges ties with specific Indigenous Peoples or nations. Reconciliation might be advanced past the State-Indigenous relations stratum, if Italian Americans and African Americans, Muslim Americans, Mormons, Catholics, Asian Americans and Jewish Americans can see their own histories and fates as intertwined in some way with Indigenous histories and fates; begin to connect their local communities as connected to an Indigenous history of the land on which they're living; and see their own histories as connecting and implicating them. In this respect, Jewish allyship might serve as a model for other religious and ethnic groups' efforts to forge alliances that use relationship-specific language, rather than subsuming the specific attachments different sorts of Americans have with their own histories, cultures, and religions under the broader rubric of "settler" - a term with which few people, save the most committed of activists, identify.

### **Opportunities and Barriers to Jewish-Indigenous Allyship**

Being an ally to Indigenous Peoples should generally follow the best practices of allyship among and between other American minorities: to recognize and sympathize with the sufferings and aspirations of the other group; to stand up and counter expressions of racism and dismissiveness; and to advocate for practical and policy ends that serve the needs of the other.

But there are some specific courses of action that American Jews could and should consider if they want to take Jewish-Indigenous allyship seriously. Firstly, they would advocate for policy redress at all levels of government, as well as social services- and community-level redress that advances local Indigenous peoples' and communities' needs, from housing to healthcare, economic opportunity to clean water access.

They could and should also consider working against the patterns that create extraordinarily high rates of incarceration (and other forms of violence from the state), cultural neglect, and racism of the everyday variety and the ones deeply baked into western and American mentalities. They could and should consider supporting Indigenous-led efforts at self-governance, treaty rights, and even land-back and "rematriation" pursuits (like those of the Jews on Ohlone Land). They could and should also support efforts to defend religious freedom for tribes whose sacred sites are occupied or under threat of occupation from mining and/or military interests. As my colleague Maxwell Greenberg wisely put it to me, shared investment in protecting religious freedoms also opens the door for greater Jewish American education on what exactly constitutes Religion(s) and might help link Jewish environmental efforts to refocus Jewish religious thinking on the primacy of human responsibility towards land and water protection, and the wider networks of kinship across human, non-human animal and other ecological networks.

Indigenous leaders have certainly called for material support and political support from allies and have articulated appreciation when allies have unapologetically recognized their historical and ongoing suffering. Indigenous allyship primers routinely recommend that allies approach them not empty-handed, but with clear introductions about where they're coming from, including acknowledging their privilege and their understanding that colonization is an ongoing process so as to foster trust that their putative allies will remain their allies over time. Some of the current best practices that help build allies among Indigenous communities include (1) actively teaching about the history of colonialism here in North America and its historical and ongoing deleterious impacts on Indigenous peoples; (2) actively teaching about the unique and specific cultures of specific Nations, their wisdom, perspectives, and resilience; (3) paying attention to the places that local non-Indigenous history and Indigenous history have and continue to intersect; (4) cultivating an awareness about the land itself from an Indigenous perspective; (5) building long-term personal relationships (not just transactional relationships); (6) recognizing Indigenous grievances with state and society; (7) supporting redress philanthropically; (8) supporting redress through policy advocacy; and (9) being open to rethinking what being "American" means.

As a community, American Jews could probably use a deeper education about Native American history and experience, and an honest understanding of their experience of the American project. Jews would also do well to pay closer attention to very local histories of their own communities because local history matters, particularly for Native peoples who are connected to particular ancestral lands and territories. It matters because different tribes and US states have vastly different histories, in addition to extraordinarily diverse



languages and cultures. It also matters because allyship between these groups ought to be grounded upon the actual lands on which people live.

It also matters that Jews see their own family histories as tied to the local lands on which they're currently living or to which they have been connected by family history; that they not see themselves as somehow exempt from the actual land or from the history that led to them living their lives in these very places.

One particularly challenging element of this work lays in the last point of the list above: being open to rethinking what being "American" means. Indigenous People are not like any other minority group – be they defined by race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, or gender, equity seeking or otherwise. Many Indigenous thinkers articulate that, for them, being "American" is not being a "fellow American." While most non-Indigenous minority groups tend to articulate their work as a matter of striving to be wholly themselves and have their group identities be ultimately recognized as laudable citizen-patriots, many Native Americans simply don't see themselves as "Americans" at all, despite having American citizenship and being bound by federal and state laws. Being an American, for many Indigenous people, means being an interloper, a colonizer, a usurper – the exact opposite of being Indigenous. For many Indigenous People, being Indigenous means being part of nation that is not the American nation.

Indigenous goals are often not simply to have a fair shot at the American dream, or to help expand America's liberalism's promise of a more perfect union. Their claims and needs are often more fundamentally challenging. From an Indigenous allyship perspective, Americans have to be able to see themselves as an imposing people, not a heroic one by virtue of being patriotic. Citizens have rights and privileges conferred by a state that, for some, is illegitimate in the first place – a structure of law and institutions that is secure but ultimately fictional, self-serving, and in place to continue to justify centuries of land theft, ongoing colonization, and genocide. American Jews, in order to secure the possibility of having Indigenous People stand as their allies, might have to get comfortable seeing themselves as "guests" here in America. It might, in other words, be a pre-condition for at least some allyship bonds.

In this respect, Jews might be required to see themselves less as Jews and more so as Americans. For Jews who wish to build strong relationships with Indigenous People, they might have to tolerate being described as "colonists" or "settlers" without that being the end point of a discussion, without concluding that anyone who uses this language is, *ipso facto*, an antisemite and therefore cannot be engaged in a meaningful discussion. (Jews also have to consider the language of colonization here in North America, independent from the fraught debate about whether Zionism and Israel are to be thought of as colonialism, anti-colonialism, or postcolonialism). Jews who wish to cultivate allyship with Indigenous Peoples might have to meet Native Americans *where they're at*, and to be able to tolerate the perspective that their mere existence here – along with the mere existence here of every other non-Indigenous group – was not invited. Allyship might require Jews to see their own community's pasts, ongoing presence, and indeed future as part and parcel

of the centuries-long process of displacement – and ongoing process that has produced material suffering, loss, and injustice for Indigenous people.

This shift in perspective may be one of the greatest barriers to stronger allyship between American Jews and Indigenous peoples, but it is not the only one. Additional ones include the facts that Jews and Indigenous people tend not to share the same geographies, the same economic interests, or the same cultural and political spaces in the US, though there are many important exceptions to this rule. I also believe that in many Native American communities, misinformation and disinformation about Jews is prevalent. Indigenous People, after all, are subject to the same algorithmic biases that are misshaping so much of our public discourse. On a more pragmatic level, connections are currently few in number, and there's no broad tent administrative or philanthropic infrastructure for supporting this work among the American Jewish community – though there has been a steady if not roaring stream of solidarity efforts and statements produced by dozens of local and even national Jewish organizations. Another barrier to stronger relationships is the fact that there are currently few-to-no national or peak Indigenous organizations in the US that have devoted energies to cultivating relationships with Jewish organizations or making statements of solidarity about antisemitism – not the Association on American Indian Affairs, Americans for Indian Opportunity, the Native American Rights Fund, Partnership with Native Americans, the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Indigenous Solidarity Network, the Raven Trust, or the Massachusetts Center for Native American Awareness.

But perhaps the highest barrier to more enduring solidarity between the two communities is the deeply polarized and polarizing conversation about Israel-Palestine, and the heated and threatening debate about whether Israel's very essence should be thought of as a “colonial” project, a “anti-Imperial” project, or an “Indigenous, reclaimed” project that sometimes accompanies it.

Wherever Jews and Indigenous people find agreement with each other that “Zionism is colonization and there's a better way to live as a people outside their historic homeland”, there's the possibility for one kind of allyship. And, conversely, wherever Jews and Indigenous people find agreement with each other that “Jews are an Indigenous people rightfully living on their ancestral territory and have modeled an Indigenous return-to-sovereignty movement,” there's also a possibility for a different kind of allyship. These two versions of allyship are being pursued, cultivated, and publicized by different Jewish thinkers and organizations toward very different political ends.

Yet the two communities need not align on these questions – important and abstract though they are. Allyship here in North America can persist even in the face of disagreement about how Zionism and Israel are to be understood. These highly divisive and polarizing debates are, for the time being, intractable in the sense that there are claimants to be found on all sides – the world has not come to a consensus on the matter. Nor, in my view, does it need to be resolved. Jews and Indigenous People can and should cultivate allyship here in North America for more pragmatic reasons that bring the benefits of solidarity to the communities who live here. In my view, it's sufficient to say either that

modern history has made Jews into both the colonized and the colonizers, or that two peoples – Jews and Palestinians - can be indigenous to the same land. Debates and definitions about Israel deflect from our need to pay at least some attention to the Jewish-Indigenous relationship here in the Americas.

These barriers can all be overcome. Moving forward, perhaps the most sensible paths include following the lead of those specific organizations already doing this work; making deliberate and genuine moves toward the other to try to build real relationships slowly; and centering people and the voices of those people who identify themselves as both Jewish and Indigenous – who are a part of both communities, who have ancestry in both communities.

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