

# UJPO News



## INSIDE

**Middle East.....1**  
**National UJPO News ...2**  
**Honourable Mentshn..5**  
**What's In Order .....5**  
**Poetry & Song/Yiddish 6**  
**Culture.....7**  
**A Little Nosh .....8**  
**USA.....8**  
**Canada .....10**

The United Jewish People's Order is a national, nonpartisan, socialist-oriented, secular organization, serving Canada's progressive Jews in individual organizations since 1926 and collectively as the UJPO since 1945.

### Volume #41, Issue #4

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

## MIDDLE EAST

### Missing Uri Avnery, a Warrior for Peace. If Only We Had Listened to You More

*By Zehava Gal-On, Ha'aretz, September 22, 2021*

Three years ago, we lost Uri Avnery, an indefatigable fighter for peace and against the perpetual state of war in which we are mired for our own comfort.

As an Israeli, Yom Kippur is always linked in my mind to the 1973 Yom Kippur War – a monument to hubris that we built with 2,222 slain soldiers, thousands of wounded and still others who bear the emotional scars to this day. All of them were sacrificed to the Molech of retaining the Sinai Peninsula, and I remember how Avnery, in his criticism of that war, contributed to shaping my worldview. And I remember how badly this warrior is missed.

He was born in Germany with the name Helmut Ostermann, and at age 10, he fled with his family to what was then called Palestine. He changed his name several times before settling on Uri.

He joined the Irgun, a pre-state underground, but left in 1941 to protest the organization's common practice of massacring Palestinians. Avnery began developing ideas close to those of the Canaanite movement, viewing the Middle East as a "Semitic expanse" that he considered in need of liberation from imperialist control.

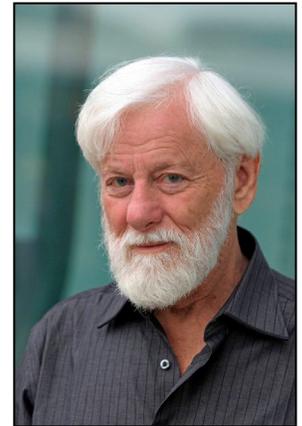
The 1948 War of Independence was the formative event that shaped his character. He fought in the ranks of Samson's Foxes, then the Givati Brigade's commando unit, and was seriously wounded toward the end of the war. Immediately afterward, he wrote a best-seller, "In the Fields of Philistia," which described the war.

Shortly afterward, he was shocked to hear boys saying they regretted not having being able to take part in the war. Avnery responded by writing a companion book, "The Other Side of the Coin," which described the horrors of war. This is where he first clashed with Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's dark regime, which prevented a second edition of the book from being published on the pretext of a shortage of paper.

In 1950, Avnery used his compensation payments to set up *Ha'olam Hazeh*, apparently the most biting newspaper ever published in Israel. It attacked Ben-Gurion's government repeatedly, stressing its corruption and its use of the Shin Bet security service an agency which at that time it was forbidden even to mention) to suppress Palestinian Israelis and free-thinkers.

He exposed scandal after scandal at a time when newspapers were seen as part of the establishment. And he assailed the government's treatment of immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa.

The paper's offices were bombed several times by "unknown parties," and Avnery himself was also attacked by "unknown parties" – paratroopers who were granted a special leave from the army for this purpose by Ariel Sharon, then a paratrooper commander. I was 17 at the time, and



*Continued on page 10*

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# NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

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## The Former National Board's Last Report

By David Abramowitz

I would like to say farewell on behalf of the previous National Board (NB). This Board differed from earlier ones in that we represented a variety of left political positions and experiences.

### The Executive:

I was recruited by UJPO in the late '60's to restart our long missing theatre group. My youth encouraged the aging executive to get me to run for elections. My qualifications were not quite appropriate for an organization our size but I tried. The world has become more complex from politics to nature's changes to present and future climates.

Our secretary, Lyn Center, was elected to the position of Co-President. But constantly inaccurate recording of NB minutes caused her to request a return to her former secretarial position which we granted. Our meeting minutes were never a concern thereafter. Her additional duty of UJPO News layout (often abridged for the print version) made her the constantly busiest worker on the former NB.

Our Vice-President, Henry Lowi, brought a different political position to the Board. At CSJO Conventions Henry presented the film "Bundism"; the union movement supported by the Workmen's Circle and to which our forbearer's belonged. His legal background also helped us to comprehend the legal issues which often arose.

A major very busy participant on the former executive was Barbara Blaser, our Treasurer. She made a very strong contribution to both the organization and executive. Her previous experience of managing properties and investing millions on behalf of her employers helped her transition our books to a modern, easy-to-maintain and accurate system.

### Members At Large:

A former president of UJPO Toronto, Sol Hermolin continues to make significant contributions to Toronto's Jewish and Yiddish life/activities. Formerly secular, Sol's relationship change evolved into a religious perspective and added a formerly absent aspect to our deliberations and affected the results of some of our discussions and statements.

In 1960 when our former Youth Division separated from UJPO a few members remained, including Solly Blaser. He was involved in cultural work, for examples, the 1951 theatrical extravaganza, *No Time to Cry*. His membership dates from the time his family was active in

the early years. He has served on and contributed to several NBs.

With a mother very active in numerous UJPO activities and a father who taught Yiddish in the Morris Winchevsky School, Gord Meslin and his brother Marty were also quite active. Not automatically totally accepting of our positions and statements, his contribution to our deliberations helped improve and broaden our end result.

We often filled vacancies by co-opting members to the NB as an alternative to the time consuming and then costly election process. Sam Blatt's contributions to Toronto's activities and his positive suggestions made him a prime candidate. His additions to *UJPO News* (What's in Order, Member interviews, etc.) added missing elements. Together with Ronnee Jaeger, his partner, Sam led three solidarity tours to Israel – which definitely helped put UJPO on the map of anti-Occupation activism (and one solidarity tour to Venezuela). He was an editor of *UJPO News* the entire time he was on the board, and still is.

Winnipeg, our other section, has been well represented by Roz Usiskin for decades. Its modest membership has delivered considerable programming and substance to its local and our national organization. The Winnipeg chapter is a strong supporter of progressive Jewish values and its impact on educational, historical and international projects is exemplary.

At our last executive meeting we decided not to run and to welcome a new, younger, progressive leadership to guide us in these complex and troubling times. I am proud of your support and our representation over my years of service. ♦

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## FROM WINNIPEG

By Harriet Zaidman

**UJPO Winnipeg** began its program for 2021-22 with a live lecture on Sunday, October 17 by Dr. Henry Heller, Professor of Modern History at the University of Manitoba. Dr. Heller spoke on the topic: The Decline of the American Empire, with special emphasis on Afghanistan, Cuba and Canada.

Dr. Heller, with his impressive grasp of the realities of geopolitical realities and relations, talked about the ways American influence has unravelled in different parts of the world, how the debacle of twenty years of occupation in Afghanistan was revealed in the immediate crumbling of the corrupt American-imposed regime and its replacement by the Taliban. He spoke about how France, Germany and Turkey have moved away from American control, as well as how the Chinese have extended their influence in different countries.

The lecture was attended by nearly 50 people, with Covid-19 protocols applied. Audience members expressed delight at attending an event for the first time in 18 months. A lively question and answer period ensued, with thanks to Dr. Heller for his thorough analysis.

The forum was held at the Ukrainian Labour Temple in Winnipeg. The Temple, built in 1919 on the cusp of the Winnipeg General Strike, has recently been beautifully renovated and made wheelchair accessible.

**UJPO member Samantha Harrison** represented the chapter in Winnipeg at a national conference “Breaking the Shackles of Racism” on September 30 and October 1. Presented by the Islamic Social Service Agency, the proceedings focused on human rights, justice, policing and media. Held on the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation as well as the first day of Islamic History Month, it fittingly brought to light the intersectionality and interconnectedness of xenophobia, racism, sexism and colonization.

Presenters tackled important and meaningful topics. Some of the standout presenters included Diane Redsky (executive director of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata), Niigaan Sinclair (Associate Professor at the University of Winnipeg and award-winning writer, editor and activist), Azeezah Kanji (legal academic and writer and director of programming at Noor Cultural Centre) and Edward Ahmed Mitchell (deputy director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and elder Wally Chartrand, a residential school survivor.

Samantha said she took away a new understanding from the conference about truth and reconciliation and how she can approach it as allies, as well as a clear understanding that the fight against racism, sexism, colonialism, xenophobia and antisemitism are inherently connected. The only way to break the shackles of racism is to support each other and join together. As Niigaan Sinclair said, “Reconciliation is motion through commitment driven by love.”

**UJPO Winnipeg’s Book Club** met before the recent federal election to discuss the issues that arose during the campaign. On October 24 they took a break from reading to review some movies, then went back to the books, reading former Winnipegger Miriam Toews’s new novel, *Fight Night*.

**The North End Jewish Folk Choir** is still on hiatus and will not meet until Covid protocols ease. ♦

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## FROM TORONTO

*By Rachel Epstein, October 2021*

**High Holidays:** The High Holidays came early this year and we marked them with two wonderful and well-attended online events, featuring much poetry and music. On Rosh Hashonah we lit candles for Climate Justice, Land Back, Health Care & Global Solidarity and Abolition and we echoed back to our community some of the ways and places people seek hope and resilience.

On Yom Kippur we lit candles in grief and solidarity with Indigenous communities, to mourn the victims of the struggle in Palestine-Israel, and to remember the Salman family who were murdered in an Islamophobic attack in June 2021 in London Ontario. We reminded ourselves that despite the fear, grief and rage that characterize current times, there is hope for a better world. In the words of Arundhati Roy: “We’re still moving through that portal. We haven’t transitioned. We still don’t know what the fallout of this havoc will be...The pandemic has also been like an X-ray showing up the horrific, systemic, institutionalized fault-lines of our egregiously unjust world. I do believe that there is still hope, because the suffering that Covid-19 has brought with it, physical as well as psychic, will make human beings reassess their lives and values, their wants, their desires. I can’t say the same about governments or Big Tech or banks. But if human societies, thus far brainwashed and driven by consumerism, suddenly stop in their tracks and think, it could drive real change.”

### **Morris Winchevsky School (MWS):**

The MWS opened in-person on September 19 with a Sukkot party in Dufferin Grove Park. In addition to our usual sukkah-building, games, activities and hot chocolate, we heard from some activists about the work they’ve been doing to support the homeless encampments, including the one in Dufferin Grove.

All our teachers are back, we have a full complement of TAs and a wonderful student body, who, along with their families, make up the vibrant MWS community. We are in the process of recruiting some new people to serve on the Shule Advisory Committee.

<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/morris-winchevsky-school>

**Adult Secular B’Mitzvah (ASBM):** The ASBM begins on Tuesday, October 26. So far we have 10 participants who promise to be an interesting and lively cohort, facilitated once again by Sharoni Siboni. The ASBM meets bi-weekly for 14 sessions, followed by an optional ceremony for participants.

<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/adult-b-nai-mitzvah>

**Camp Naivelt:** Following a wonderfully successful season, Camp Naivelt is closed for the season, but we are preparing for the annual Bungalow Holders' Meeting on Saturday, October 30.

**Israel-Palestine Discussions:** The third and final discussion, entitled *Diaspora Jews and Israel*, took place on Sunday, Oct. 17 with speakers Jason Kunin and Alejandro Paz. The organizing committee is developing a survey to go out to UJPO members to assist in planning next steps.

**Programming:** We are delighted to introduce Sophie Bourett-Klein who is working with us as a program assistant, funded by Canada Summer Jobs. Here's a bit about Sophie:

Sophie Bourett-Klein is a Master of Education candidate at OISE (U of T) in the department of Social Justice Education. Her research looks at the intersections of anti-racism and anti-colonialism education, particularly investigating how learning the Yiddish language is part and parcel of a larger Jewish anti-Zionist community-oriented pedagogy. She is eager to learn from leftist Jewish community organizing and working in solidarity with other anti-colonial struggles. Her passion and advocacy for social justice stem from her dedication to creating and youth in their journey as young learners navigating difficult spaces. She is a founding member of X-Impact, a Toronto based non-profit organization that works alongside youth to ensure youth voices and actions are the centre of education and wellness. She is passionate about youth empowerment and challenging herself as a learner so she can bring an ethics of care to everything she is part of. In her spare time, you can find her on Yiddish Duolingo, gardening and perfecting the best latte!

Sophie has been developing some exciting new programming, including a new Winchevsky Youth Group, some intergenerational Shabbat events and the new Winchevsky Art Expo:

On October 22 we held an **Alt Shabbes** event called: Cooking Together for a Future. It was a night of schmoozing and connecting to land, culture, and food justice through an interactive, intergenerational cooking night. The event included a live interactive cooking lesson with Jewish Chef, Sari Papular, and a special presentation by tattooist Joey Ramona, who spoke about food insecurity in Toronto and ideas for action, building on the mutual aid groups that have sprung up in the shadow of the current pandemic.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/176780561280116>

**The Winchevsky Youth Group** had its inaugural event following the Sukkot party in Dufferin Grove Park. The next planned event is an outdoor screening of the Rocky

Horror Picture Show on Halloween weekend.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/285865983397112/?ref=newsfeed>

The group aims to provide an ongoing connection to secular Jewishness, community building, and skill-sharing for Jewish youth aged 13 to 18. It is a group for fun, interesting, and engaging drop-in activities for teens to meet friends, explore Jewish identity and participate in Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World).

<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/mwsyouthgroup>

**Winchevsky Art Expo:** We are pleased to announce the launch of the virtual Winchevsky Art Expo to showcase our community members' artistic talents and expressions. We are a uniquely talented intergenerational community that includes artists, writers, designers, photographers, and filmmakers, to name a few.

We encourage all community members to submit their work from a range of disciplines to showcase on Winchevsky's Art Expo launching in December 2021. We are asking members to submit a piece of work that will be virtually displayed along with a bio for each artist. We hope to create a platform for discovering and sharing the talent and creativity that lies within Winchevsky. For more info: <https://www.winchevskycentre.org/art-expo>  
Note: Submissions only open to UJPO members and MWS families.

Saskia Laufer continues to be upping our social media game and in particular, enlivens our Instagram account.

**Please follow us on:**

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/winchevsky](http://www.instagram.com/winchevsky)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WinchevskyCtr](http://www.facebook.com/WinchevskyCtr)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WinchevskyCtr>

And visit our website: [www.winchevskycentre.org](http://www.winchevskycentre.org)

**Upcoming Dates:**

UJPO-Toronto/Morris Winchevsky School AGM: Sunday, November 21, 3 pm

MWS Chanukah Party: Sunday, November 28, 1 pm, 918 Bathurst St.

UJPO-Canada Annual General Meeting:

Sunday, December 12

1:30 - 2:30 – 3-minute panel on Yiddish & Yiddishkeit

2:30 - 5:30 – AGM ♦

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## FROM HAMILTON

*By Paul Weinberg*

The Hamilton UJPO and friends met on July 25 in the afternoon in a member's backyard to discuss *Jerusalem 1913, The Origins of the Arab Israeli Conflict* by Amy Dockser Marcus.

Some of us liked the book; others like myself found it a little underwhelming. One part of the book profiles author and journalist Theodore Herzl making his one and only trip to Palestine under the Ottoman Turks. Missing from the book is that a top Palestinian official pleaded with Herzl to give up the project of a Jewish state in a country already inhabited. This is recounted by his descendant, Rashid Khalidi in a much worthier book, *the Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917-2017*. ♦

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## FROM VANCOUVER

### In Memoriam: Marty Roth (Toronto, 1934 – Vancouver, 2021)

By Carl Rosenberg

Perhaps this formal, although heartfelt, title doesn't do justice to the Marty Roth whom we all loved.

Marty's life partner Martha wrote on Tuesday, Oct. 19: "Marty Roth died yesterday in exactly the way he wanted, guided by a Vancouver team of MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) folks. His children, Jennifer and David, were at his bedside with me. There will be celebrations of his life in the coming weeks, in Vancouver, Minneapolis, and maybe Chicago." Martha wrote a few days later, "Fuertes abrazos para todos, or something. I can't believe it either, but no doubt reality will seep in. Thanks to you all, Martha."

I knew Marty initially through *Outlook Magazine*, to which Marty and Martha made enormous contributions as frequent writers – often collaborators – of feature articles and book and film reviews. Marty brought to *Outlook* his immense knowledge and erudition from his career as an English Professor and his lifelong activism.

I also knew Marty in Independent Jewish Voices-Canada (IJV), a Jewish Canadian organization which opposes Israeli occupation policies and advocates for justice and peace for everyone in Israel-Palestine. He was heavily involved with its Vancouver chapter and more recently the national steering committee. He was an indefatigable, on-the-ground activist, handing out leaflets at demonstrations in which IJV took part, and playing a major role in organizing these activities. In our discussions, he offered well-thought-out ideas and principled arguments in defence of his positions, forthright and often feisty, always leavened with a sense of humour, never compromising his support for justice.

I knew Marty in a more casual way through the Thursday lunch group in which he was an old-timer. We met at a Chinese restaurant, and since Covid hit, via Zoom. The free-wheeling discussions ranged from family affairs to politics to books, films and TV shows. Marty could be

counted on to start discussions on all these subjects, assessing the latest shows on Netflix.

One of our members, Balash Akbari, was with Marty's family at his bedside when he died. Another, Ken Klonsky, wrote that, "Marty was the heart and soul of the group. I didn't always agree with him but he knew what he loved and he loved what he knew. And always with a twinkle in his eyes."

Another member, Neil Naiman, wrote, "I find it difficult to comprehend that Marty is no longer here with us. What a force of nature! Let's keep his spirit alive and keep on fighting for what is right and just in the world and also continue watching good movies and eating good food though we didn't always agree on those food choices."

To Martha, Jennifer and David: Marty will always be remembered in the communities to which he gave so much, and which he would undoubtedly love to see continued. Everything he contributed will continue to enrich us as a way of honouring his memory. A fervent toast to Marty from all of us – *l'chaim, prost, salud, skoal!* ♦

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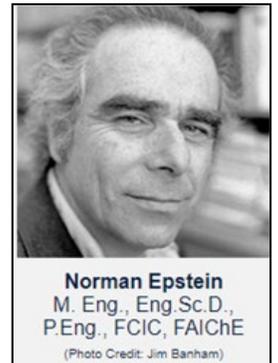
## HONOURABLE MENTSHN

### Professor Norman Epstein

*Submitted by Rachel Epstein, in honour of her father*

Dear Norman,

I am writing to inform you that the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering at UBC has unanimously selected you, Professor Norman Epstein, to be inducted into our CHBE Hall of Fame.



Congratulations on this well-deserved, and arguably overdue, honor. Through this award, now the highest bestowed by the department, we recognize your outstanding contributions to the department, its student body, and the profession of chemical and biological engineering, including your important research contributions in the areas of heat exchanger fouling, liquid and three-phase fluidization, particulate processes, and spouted beds. In each of these areas, but arguably most especially spouted bed technology, you have contributed seminal articles that served to greatly advance engineering science. Through this honor, we also recognize your exemplary service to our profession, including as editor of the *Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering* and as President of the Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering.

*Charles Haynes, Chair, Dept. of Chemical & Biological Engineering, UBC ♦*

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## WHAT'S IN ORDER

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### Get well to:

Barb Linds

### Heartfelt Condolences to:

Ellen Karlinsky, on the passing of her mother, Minnie Karlinsky

Alex Barnes, former shule teacher, on the passing of his partner, Julie-Rae King

Lynn Lubitz, on the passing of her brother, Ross ♦

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## POETRY & SONG/YIDDISH

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### New Furrows in the Black Earth

*Poem by Rachel (Rokhl) Korn, translated from Yiddish by Seymour Levitan.*

*Submitted by Harriet Lyons*

**New furrows in the black earth  
yield to the autumn sun  
like women birthing for the first time:  
bearing the pain and smiling, they've already decided to  
give birth again.**

**Crows gather for the party,  
taking measured dancing steps.  
Their clever black eyes search for unearthed worms,  
heads shaking  
like old aunts chewing cake and showing blue gums:  
"It's not so bad. The pain will go like the dew,  
and the joy will come soon, very soon,  
even before the pointy-tail swallows  
cut the first wool in the spring sky."**



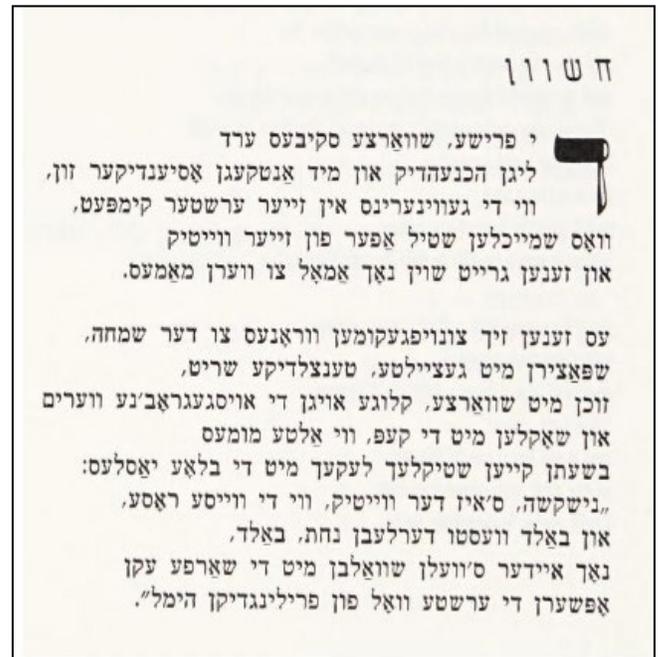
Rachel (Rokhl) Korn was born in 1898 in Galicia, where her parents managed a wealthy estate, in an area that is now part of Ukraine. She was an important member of the circle of Yiddish writers in Montreal from 1948 till her death in 1982. In between she fled two world wars and the Holocaust, living in Vienna during the first World War and the Soviet Union during the

Second, returning to Poland between the wars and for a time after WWII. Her earliest poetry was written in Polish, just after the war, but from the 1920s on she wrote in

Yiddish (which she had to be taught by her husband) as a protest against antisemitism.

In the 1920s and 30s she published poems about farming, nature, and women's lives and bodies, none of them major themes in Yiddish poetry at that time. The poem selected here combines these themes, through a skillfully economical use of metaphor. The plowed earth is a young woman, opened for impregnation and birth, to some degree at least willingly, though she needs the old aunts to reinforce her resolve to attend a "party" where the fertile earth's body is picked at by crows. We are assured that joy will come, though even the spring swallows "cut". Swallows' tails, after all, look like scissors.

When the Nazis invaded her home area, Korn happened to be in Lvov, visiting her daughter who was studying there. She and her daughter escaped to the Soviet Union, where they spent the war years, though her husband



and the rest of her family perished. While in the Soviet Union, she became disillusioned with the treatment of Russian Jews, and refused to take part in public Yiddish culture. She did receive a degree of protection however, being evacuated to Uzbekistan along with some other Jewish writers when Hitler invaded, and eventually returning to Moscow, before her brief return to Poland and emigration to Canada. Her poems during the war and post war period were largely concerned with wandering and homelessness, and she said that poetry itself had had to become her home, as she had lost her real one.

"New Furrows in the Black Earth" was translated and published in 1986 in a bilingual collection of her poetry, *Paper Roses*, edited by the translator, Seymour Levitan.

Photocopies in Yiddish and English of poems from this collection, including this one, may be found at this website: <https://archive.org/details/paperroses0000korn>

You must register to enter, but there is no charge. For those lucky enough to understand Yiddish, there is a recording of an interview with Korn, during which she reads from her work:

<https://archive.org/details/RachelKornReadsFromHerWorkAndIsInterviewedByAbrahamTabachnickPartI>

More of Korn's poems in English translation may be found on the All Poetry website, a resource for people who want to read others' poetry, as well as share their own. This site also requires registration, also free.

<https://allpoetry.com/Rachel-Korn>

There are numerous sites with biographical information about Korn, one of which features a photograph of Korn with two other important Montreal women Yiddish poets, supplied to its online source by UJPO member Sylvia Lustgarten.

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/korn-rokhl-haring> ♦

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## CULTURE

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### **Raja Shehadeh, author of "Going Home - A Walk through Fifty Years of Occupation" (2019) and "Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape" (2007)**

*Review by Paul Weinberg, independent journalist and author*

Melancholy pervades the writings of lawyer and author Raja Shehadeh. As the founder of Al Haq, a Palestinian human rights organization based in Ramallah, he spent his life representing clients charged or arrested by Israeli police, as well as defending Palestinian farmers fighting the seizure of their land which is then converted into new illegal Jewish settlement communities. He is on the losing side of a sophisticated Israel government operation. More than 700,000 Israeli Jews now live on the occupied West Bank or in east Jerusalem. Some reside in new developments plumped down on hilltops looming over Arab villages in the valleys below.

Shehadeh is a frequent contributor to the *New Yorker* magazine and the author of many non-fiction memoirs. These include two inter-related titles – the award-winning *Palestinian Walks* and the more recent *Going Home*. Both are part of a fine literary tradition of writers using extensive walks to ponder and reflect on a particular locale. In the case of Shehadeh, he wrestles with the radical changes wrought on the rural landscape by the Israeli presence and in Ramallah by a self-absorbed Palestinian elite. (The Gaza

Strip, the other Palestinian territory, remains off-limits to West Bank Palestinians like Shehadeh, who says it is easier for him to travel to China.)

In *Palestinian Walks*, Shehadeh avoids the main roads and their humiliating Israeli military check points by travelling along nature trails and small dirt roads to explore the rolling rural landscape outside Ramallah and much of the West Bank. Among the native plants is the plentiful common thistle, the *natsh* which the author describes as a tenacious plant bearing strong roots. During the winter, the plant develops thick narrow leaves that conserve water. In the summer the leaves dry up and fall off, leaving humps of wiry mesh which farmers cut up and use to clean the coarse surfaces of stones and pebbles. A Christian by birth, Shehadeh speculates that the Crown of Thorns reputedly worn by Jesus Christ may have derived from the *natsh*.

The author also writes that every wadi, spring, hillock and escarpment, is graced with a special name that at times can be traced to ancient times. He finds an abandoned *qasr* (castle in Arabic) which is a stone structure constructed by local Palestinian farmers to store produce and serve as a stayover to rest and sleep (generally on the open roof.)

Shehadeh is more likely to encounter Jewish settlers or Israeli soldiers on his wandering journeys (sometimes alone, with his wife Penny or a friend) and gingerly manages to avoid any serious confrontation. Few of his fellow Palestinians take part in these unplanned hikes which are locally called *sarha* or *sarhat* (the plural version in the Arabic language) to describe walking where the spirit takes a person minus serious time constraints. The book was written before the ubiquity of cell phones.

*Going Home* is a more up-to-date recounting of walking through Ramallah on a single day on the 50th anniversary of Israeli occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. He continues to reflect on the frustration in his legal work and the local politics. His city is the unofficial capital for the semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority, a moving part in the Israel military apparatus in the West Bank. Its sole purpose appears to be the policing of a defeated people.

Shehadeh is frank both in this book and *Palestinian Walks* about how Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Liberation Organization failed to accept legal advice during the Oslo Accord negotiations with Israel in the 1990s. Having lived in Tunisia during their exile, the Palestinian leadership had no understanding or appreciation about how the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territory (a war crime under international law) would impede their anticipated Palestinian state in the territories seized by Israel in the Six Day War.

One of the best parts of *Going Home* is at the beginning where, as a man in his later 60s, Shehadeh stares straight into the bathroom mirror and discovers how more and more he resembles his now deceased father, also a lawyer and early advocate for an independent Palestinian state in a two-state solution alongside Israel.

Ramallah is less a provincial town and more of a thriving and culturally enriching city. Since the PA has taken charge, there is no sense of a continuing struggle by local Palestinians. Nothing happens to mark, the 50th anniversary of the occupation which of course would be an admission of failure. The city is a bit of a self-contained bubble more focused on making money and earning a living.

After *Going Home* was published, it was not in the PA capital but in occupied east Jerusalem that a new movement of Palestinian youth emerged last spring to question both the occupation and specifically, the threatened evictions of Arab residents from neighbourhoods like Sheikh Jarrah by Jewish settlers. This has expanded into a Palestinian-wide movement across Israel and the occupied territories, thereby uniting a fragmented nation in the process. But there is still a long way to go for the achievement of substantial change in this ongoing conflict with Israeli intransigence.

Shehadeh writes lyrically and eloquently in both books. But I would say that *Palestinian Walks* is close to perfect and deserves being called a classic in Palestinian writing. *Going Home* has some strong chapters but at times meanders into different directions like some of Shehadeh's walks in the country. This book emphasizes his negative state of mind which is out of step with the mood of a younger Palestinians today.

I see the younger generation saying, that is enough Raja. Use your obvious writing and analytical talents to write something new, fresh and less despairing. ♦

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## A Little Nosh

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### Rice and Apple Stuffed Acorn Squash

By Harriet Zaidman

Check out more recipes at [northendnosh.weebly.com](http://northendnosh.weebly.com)

It's fall, which means it's time to try new ways to cook the many varieties of squash. Fill the centre of a delicious acorn squash with a blend of carbs, fruit and herbs for a good-looking side. This healthy recipe comes from Heart & Stroke. It's been adapted to reduce the serving size, and other options have been added. This goes well with any grilled or roasted meat.

**Time:** 40 minutes. **Serves** 3-4

### Ingredients

1 acorn squash  
1/4 cup rice - brown, wild, white or any mixture you prefer  
1 acorn squash, halved and cored  
olive or vegetable oil  
1 small shallot, cut finely, or equivalent in onion or leek (shallot is more delicate)  
1 clove garlic, minced finely  
1 inch piece unpeeled zucchini or 1/2 stalk celery, chopped finely  
1/2 firm apple, unpeeled, chopped finely  
1 tablespoon fresh thyme or 2 teaspoons dried

### Method

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

Cook the rice according to directions or this suggested method: Cover the rice with 3/8-1/2 cups boiling water. Let sit covered for 1 hour, until the kernels are tender. Drain any water, fluff with a fork. Cover and set aside.

Cut the squash in half. If it's hard to cut, put the squash in the microwave on high for 1 - 1/2 minutes, then cut.

Scoop out and discard the seeds from the centre of each half. Brush the inside of each squash half with oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Place the squash, flat side down on a metal pan, or on a pan covered in parchment paper. Bake 30 minutes or until squash is tender when pierced with a fork.

Five minutes before squash finishes cooking, prepare the stuffing. In a skillet, heat oil and reduce the heat to medium. Sauté the shallots for 2-3 minutes. Then, lowering the heat to medium-low, add the garlic and zucchini (or celery) in the remaining oil for 2 minutes.

Add the apple; cook 2 minutes to warm through. Remove from heat.

Add the rice and thyme. Mix well.

Remove the squash from the oven and stuff with the rice/apple blend. Serve. ♦

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## USA

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### U.S.-backed Afghan government surrenders to the Taliban

By Answer Coalition, posted by Answer Coalition, August 15, 2021. The following was originally published by *Liberation News*.

The unopposed entrance of Taliban forces into Kabul marks the bitter conclusion of a 20-year long military adventure by U.S. imperialism that senselessly inflicted death and suffering on an enormous scale. The fact that the

U.S.-backed Afghan government surrendered without a fight is the clearest indication that it was nothing more than an extension of U.S. imperialist power. The stark reality showed itself: either the U.S. imperialist occupation that began 20 years ago would be sustained literally forever, or this government would collapse upon the exit of U.S. military forces. The Taliban coming to power in the mid-1990s was the consequence of the CIA war against the socialist government of Afghanistan that had come to power in 1978 during the Saur Revolution. The U.S. was perfectly willing to do business with the Taliban prior to September 11 in spite of their odious policies including their prohibition on the education of girls. The hope and promise of the earlier socialist period was crushed by U.S. intervention and the later collapse of the Soviet Union. Since then, the people of Afghanistan have lived under one reactionary government after another.

The complete and almost instantaneous military and political collapse of the Afghan government has led to a situation where the Taliban is presiding over the panicked evacuation of its opponents from inside the capital city. Since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, hundreds of thousands of Afghans died, millions were forced to flee their homes, tens of thousands of working class enlisted soldiers from the United States were killed or injured – and in the end the political situation in the country is returning to a situation where the Taliban dominates the country.

The U.S./NATO invasion of Afghanistan began October 7, 2001 in retaliation for the September 11 terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The Bush administration refused the Taliban government's offer to hand over Osama bin Laden for trial in a Muslim country if the United States would present evidence showing that al-Qaeda was responsible for the attack. Instead, Bush declared "no negotiations with terrorists" and launched the invasion. The Bush administration used the September 11 attack as a pretext to launch a sweeping assault against Iraq and other Middle Eastern governments. The invasion of Afghanistan was simply conceived of as a box-checking endeavour by the neo-conservative government to wage a new round of aggression under the banner of the "war on terror". This imperialist wave of aggression toppled the government in Iraq and Libya and hoped to topple the governments in Syria and Iran as well. It has been a disaster for the people of the Middle East and South Asia.

The pace of the Taliban's advance was stunning. In just nine days, the group took over every major city in the country and then marched into Kabul without firing a shot. This was possible because the Afghan government's forces in most cases put up virtually no resistance. Where fighting

did occur, it frequently was carried out by elite special forces or local militias. When the moment of truth arrived and it became clear that the U.S. military really was leaving the country, the Afghan National Army did not fight.

After the 2001 invasion, the United States spent hundreds of billions of dollars creating and supporting the Afghan government's military. But this military served a government that had no political legitimacy. Its source of authority was the U.S.-led foreign occupation of the country, corruption was rampant and it failed to develop an appreciable base of support among the country's people. It was clear that the government would not be able to hold out for long against the Taliban, so rather than fight and die to prolong the inevitable the security forces mostly chose to step aside.

The Biden administration chose not to carry out a military escalation, like a dramatic escalation of the air war, that could have halted the Taliban advance. The prevailing view appears to have been that the war was unwinnable and it would be best to abandon the government they installed, get the withdrawal over with now and focus on bigger issues for U.S. empire. But certainly the Biden administration was hoping to carry out an orderly withdrawal on its own terms. It is now suffering the humiliation of having to directly hand over control of the country to the Taliban, a major blow to the image of U.S. military might around the world. This could have long lasting implications for Biden's military and foreign policy going forward.

### **Background to the 2001 invasion**

The role of the United States in Afghanistan has always been insidious. The Taliban itself came out of the counter-revolutionary insurgency organized and bankrolled by the CIA in the 1970s and 1980s that sought to overthrow the country's socialist government. This socialist government - the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan - was committed to the empowerment of workers and farmers, full equality for women in all areas of society, the provision of free social services like education and healthcare, and other progressive goals. The U.S. government backed far right religious armed groups to wage a deadly insurgency against the government and their Soviet allies.

One faction of those fighters - the Taliban - won out in the aftermath of the fall of the socialist Afghan government and established themselves as the country's rulers and enforced an oppressive political system based on reactionary theocratic principles. Any claims by U.S. officials to be concerned about the fate of women's rights or democracy or religious freedom in Afghanistan is the worst kind of hypocrisy.

The U.S. politicians and generals responsible for organizing this senseless two decade long war should be brought to justice. They are ultimately responsible for the enormous loss of life that ripped apart Afghan society. The rationale for the war was nonsense - there were no Afghans on board the planes that struck the Twin Towers on September 11, and the Taliban was willing to negotiate the handover of Osama bin Laden. The U.S. military and political establishment could have ended the bloodshed at any time and the outcome would have been the same. Instead they claimed that year after year it was essential that the occupation be prolonged. They should be held accountable for the crime of initiating a war of aggression. ♦

[https://www.answercoalition.org/u\\_s\\_backed\\_afghan\\_government\\_surrenders\\_to\\_the\\_taliban](https://www.answercoalition.org/u_s_backed_afghan_government_surrenders_to_the_taliban)

*Continued from page 1*

every Wednesday, I would walk for half an hour to a kiosk in Petah Tikva to buy this newspaper, which offered a different viewpoint – clear and courageous.

The paper’s offices were bombed several times by “unknown parties,” and Avnery himself was also attacked by “unknown parties” – paratroopers who were granted a special leave from the army for this purpose by Ariel Sharon, then a paratrooper commander. I was 17 at the time, and every Wednesday, I would walk for half an hour to a kiosk in Petah Tikva to buy this newspaper, which offered a different viewpoint – clear and courageous.

Avnery’s lodestar, as an editor and later as a member of Knesset, was ending Israel’s war against the Palestinians, Palestinian Israelis or anyone else. At the end of the Six-Day War in 1967, he immediately called for the establishment of a Palestinian state, which he believed would join a federation with Israel within a generation.

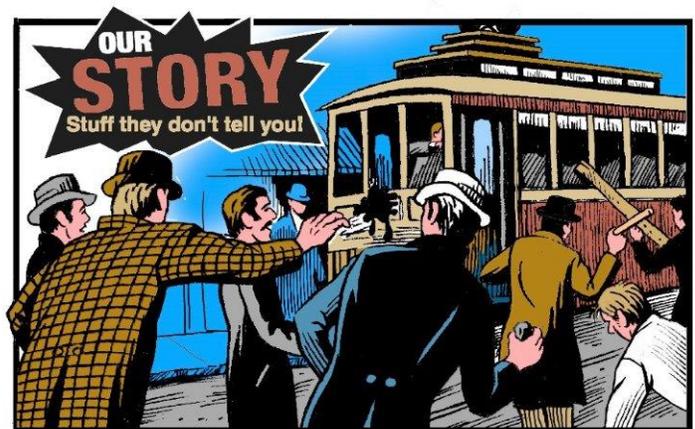
In 1970, he harshly attacked then-Prime Minister Golda Meir’s refusal to negotiate with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat – a refusal that led to the Yom Kippur War. In 1982, he interviewed PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Beirut, then besieged by Israeli troops.

Avnery was an indefatigable warrior for peace who wanted to ensure that others wouldn’t suffer what he and his generation had suffered. It’s hard to imagine how he would have responded to the Israel of 2021, with its submissive journalists who eat from the government’s hands and its incessant, eternal war that nobody ever even thinks about.

Peace be with your ashes, Uri Avnery, one of the bravest of all Israelis. If only we had listened to you more. ♦

<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-missing-uri-avnery-a-warrior-for-peace-if-only-we-had-listened-to-you-more-1.10233125>

## Canada



### “Playful” citizens back union

A carnival atmosphere spread among citizens like wildfire in Toronto when streetcar workers struck the hated arrogant Toronto Street Railway in 1886. They threw mud and bricks at the scabs, blocked tracks and turned the cars around. Mounted cops clubbed people at random but the rioting spread around the city. Workers did get a union in 1902.

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*Cartoon by John Williams*

## UNITED JEWISH PEOPLE’S ORDER

The United Jewish People’s Order develops and perpetuates a progressive secular approach to social and cultural matters, our Jewish heritage, the Yiddish language and holiday and festival celebrations; we sponsor secular Jewish education, musical and cultural groups, concerts, lectures, public forums, and take part in social action and related community activities.

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