

# UJPO News



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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 #42, Issue #4**

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

## UJPO condemns Israel's attack on Jenin

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) of Canada unequivocally condemns the brutal and disgraceful atrocities committed by the Israeli military against the Palestinian city of Jenin in the occupied West Bank. The attack was on the orders of Israel's elected, extremist government. Specifically, we abhor the killing of three children, the wounding and beating of scores of innocent citizens, the willful obstruction of ambulances and medical workers, the destruction and ransacking of homes, the theft of property, and the disruption and outright destruction of infrastructure – roads, electricity supply and water supply. Such actions constitute state terror and a form of ethnic cleansing and cannot be justified as policing action against “terrorists.” Furthermore, such conduct is incompatible with the ethical values and cultural traditions of Jewish communities in Canada and throughout the world. We call on the government of Canada to support the Secretary-General of the United Nations in condemnation of these acts of violence. ♦

## IJV: Celebrating 15 Years of Jewish Solidarity with Palestine

**Report by Daina Greene, IJV Member, Toronto**

Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) marked its 15th anniversary with a vibrant conference held in Toronto from June 16 to 17, 2023. Themed “Anti-Racist Solidarity and the Fight for Justice in Palestine”, the event featured engaging speakers, interactive workshops, and offered ample opportunities to fress and schmooze. The conference, which represented IJV's first in-person gathering since the pandemic, provided a chance to reconnect with old acquaintances and welcome new and younger members.



The atmosphere was filled with enthusiasm as approximately 100 attendees gathered at the Polish Combatants' Hall on Friday night for a delicious catered dinner. There were brisk sales at the back of the hall of solidarity T-shirts and Zatoun products, including the emblematic Palestinian olive oil. The evening set the tone for the conference, featuring a panel presentation on practical strategies for Building the Movement for Palestinian Solidarity in Canada.

Saturday morning kicked off with a virtual conversation featuring Edo Konrad and Amjad Iraqi of +972 Magazine, reporting live from Tel Aviv and Haifa. The discussion revolved around the extensive Israeli protest movement against the new Israeli government. The protests have not inspired much hope among Palestinians due to their failure to address ongoing apartheid and attacks against Palestinian communities. Toronto anti-racism activist and journalist Desmond Cole led a panel on Fighting Antisemitism alongside other forms of racism. Another panel explored the themes of censorship and self-censorship in mainstream media, emphasizing the importance of supporting each other's social justice struggles. The participation of Michele Landsberg in this panel highlighted the increasing rejection of the Zionist project by prominent Jews in Canada.

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# NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

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## NOTES FROM UJPO NATIONAL

*By Sarena Sairan, Executive Director*

UJPO National has been taking care of our constitution! We have been in the process of establishing our Continuance and updating our Bylaws in partnership with our Toronto board. We've been keeping steady progress, aiming to have our records up to date before our next AGM.

National has also been concerned with making sure our archives are fully catalogued, and our archivist Ruth Grossman will soon be creating finding aids, so our archives can be used effectively. Ruth has been working with our summer intern Sky Dobkin (who was also last year's Shule Assistant), alongside Gin Marshall our data expert. National will be making some decisions soon about the extent of our archival scope. Cultural Programmer David Wall may also use the available archived materials to animate future programming and projects.

National continues to be our political voice in response to outrageous events in Israel-Palestine this year. We are planning to develop a statement on antisemitism in the near future, grounded in the same rigorous process with which we conceived our statement of solidarity with Palestine and the Palestinian people.

Further, National and Toronto's joint Cemetery Committee has been developing plans for our mortuary benefits. We have been nurturing our efforts in Toronto and looking at potentially selling our cemetery lands in Montreal that have remained untouched for many years. ♦

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## UJPO STATEMENT

*Statement written by MWS Education Director Lia Tarachansky, approved and endorsed by our UJPO National Board of Directors:*

The United Jewish People's Order and Independent Jewish Voices (UJPO & IJV) were deeply disappointed to learn the Israeli parliament passed the so-called "Reasonableness Standard Bill". The law further consolidates political power in the hands of Israel's increasingly fascist elected officials and strips the Supreme Court of its role as a legal check of the Parliament's decisions. Historically, the Court ruled against torture of prisoners, against overt forms of discrimination and against Israel's mass refugee prisons. The Supreme Court was instrumental in appealing the government's drive to segregation and annexation of Palestinian land.

UJPO & IJV commend the tens of thousands who protested for more than 30 weeks in a row, pouring into the

streets throughout the country on Monday. Opposition to this law is seeing the largest civil disobedience in the country's history, including sit-ins, mass strikes, and army service refusal. Such resistance proves there is a strong political will that could and should be mobilized towards ending the country's undemocratic Occupation and settler colonial regime. In the words of thousands of Israeli and Palestinian protesters in recent months - עם דמוקרטיה אין - אפרטאיד ["There is no democracy with Apartheid."]

The passing of this law is the nail in the coffin of judicial oversight in Israel. It makes the case before international law that the country has no internal checks and balances and that even though it did not sign onto the Rome Statute, its leaders can now be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court. This is a positive outcome that opens the possibility of Israeli war criminals being finally brought to justice. ♦

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## FROM WINNIPEG

*By Harriet Zaidman*

UJPO Winnipeg wound up its activities this year with a barbecue, which was attended by more than 30 people. Our Board chair, Ellen Karlinsky, listed our Book Club and the lectures on Yiddish literature by Dr. Itay Zutra as continuing accomplishments of our chapter, as well as special gatherings to enjoy Yiddishkayt and a Zoom reader's theatre play reading evening. We are also excited about a documentary film that is being made by Winnipeg filmmaker, Saul Henteleff, about the women of UJPO. Saul has interviewed several people already and will continue his work over the coming year.

Ellen announced that the North End Jewish Folk Choir will again raise their voices in the coming year, now under the direction of George Bajer-Koulak. We are excited to sing together once again.

Our website, Jews for Social Justice (<https://www.ujpowinnipeg.com>) is updated regularly. We invite people to visit to keep in touch with our activities.

In her remarks, Ellen announced she was stepping away from the position of chair and thanked the other members of the Executive for their commitment and hard work. We appreciate the thoughtfulness, leadership and reliability that Ellen brought to the position. She will stay on our Executive Board, happily, to add continuity to our programming and activities.

At the barbecue, we remembered Roz Usiskin, our former chairperson, mentor and friend. Roz's death in November 2022 left a hole in our hearts. We are trying to emulate the spirit and drive she exemplified. To that end,

UJPO Winnipeg will engage in an evaluation of our goals and activities in the fall.

Roz's life was celebrated at a gathering organized by her family at their "summer place" in Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba, where Roz and her late husband, Larry, bought a cottage decades ago. More than 100 people attended, with her children, grandchildren and friends from different times in Roz's life recalling her commitment to making the world a better place, her intelligence, her critical thinking, her selflessness and the many projects and activities she engaged in.

Roz was remembered for her steadfast work on keeping Yiddish and Yiddishkayt alive in Winnipeg. Music was a part of Roz's life; Dora Rosenbaum, Roz's decades-long friend and co-activist led the gathering in a round of *Dona, Dona*, and *Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream*, accompanied by Roz's son Michael Usiskin. Singer-songwriter Sam Baardman sang a beautiful tribute, *Into the Crowd*, accompanied on violin by Susan Israel. Sam's lyrics ([sambaardman.com](http://sambaardman.com)) captured Roz's sense of social justice and her exceptional personality.

UJPO Winnipeg Secretary Harriet Zaidman also paid tribute to Roz, citing her inexhaustible curiosity about issues, her continual expectation that our chapter should engage other organizations and individuals to advance our presence in the community. Roz spent her life working to bring a progressive voice to the Jewish community and a Jewish voice in the progressive community. We are all grateful, and we will never forget her.

Winnipeg UJPO executive member Dora Rosenbaum recently celebrated her 95th birthday with a beautiful garden party organized by her family. UJPO Winnipeg extends our greetings, our love and our admiration for our intrepid Dora, who has been a tireless member of UJPO since the 1940s. Dora has served in multiple positions on the executive, and over the last fifteen years has been the organizer and engine of the North End Jewish Folk Choir. We wish her many more years of good health, and social and political activism!

Lee Anne Block, who died suddenly in February 2022, was remembered with fondness on July 2 for her role in establishing the Kapabamayak Achaak Healing Forest in St. John's Park in Winnipeg. The circle of stones and trees is a soothing spot that invites contemplation. It honours Indigenous children lost to or affected by the residential school system, and offers a place for teaching and learning about the injustices caused by colonialism and racism, past and present.

Lee Anne was UJPO Winnipeg's programming chair. Her ideas were the catalyst for many topical forums. Her role as a former teacher and then professor in Education at

the University in Winnipeg meant she spoke authoritatively on matters related to education. She was also our contact person in a broad, ultimately-successful coalition of community members and groups that worked to stop changes proposed by the Manitoba government that would have severely damaged the educational system. Lee Anne is sorely missed. ♦

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## FROM TORONTO

*Notes from the Toronto office by Shayle Kilroy, Community & Office Manager:*

We're in full summer swing here at the UJPO/MWS Toronto Office. Our most exciting development is the new staff addition of our summer intern Sky Dobkin. Sky is spending their summer scanning and digitizing the choir's archive of (mostly Yiddish) sheet music – an important part of our organization's history and our historic Toronto Jewish Folk Choir's history.

Staff is going full steam ahead on planning for Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur programs, which will be on September 16th and September 24th this year. Our theme for this year's observances is "ancestors and descendants" and we are getting really excited to present an amazing program for our community. The observance will be presented in person and it will be live-streamed!

We've been in some exciting locations these past few weeks. We've been working in cafes, taking field trips up to Camp Naivelt during Music Week, and spending many of our work days at our office at the Winchevsky Centre at 585 Cranbrooke, always discovering new archival gems in that space. When we're not fighting with our printer, clearing dust off old Rosh Hashonah booklets or eating smoked whitefish bagels and vegetarian cabbage rolls from United Bakers, we're doing things like getting registration for the Shule open for next year, working on our membership campaign, and re-starting our Youth Group!

For bi-weekly updates on what's going on with UJPO/MWS go to [www.winchevskycentre.org/newsletters](http://www.winchevskycentre.org/newsletters) and sign up for our digest!

*Notes from UJPO Toronto by Sarena Sairan, Executive Director:*

Toronto has been a vibrant and exciting place for UJPO activity!

With our MWS Shule wrapping up another successful and dynamic year, I want to congratulate Lia Tarachansky, the teachers, the TAs, our shule assistant, all students, b'mitzvah grads and parents. Lia's brilliant curriculum continues to be revised, refined, and reinterpreted, as our teachers roll out vibrant and experiential lesson plans in a radical Jewish social-justice context. This context comes



from our broader vision and mandate developed by the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO). Our shule is supported and sponsored by UJPO, and our hope for next year is to better integrate MWS with our UJPO community and events, and UJPO into our MWS accomplishments and holiday parties. As a result, in our 2023/2024 school year, we have a new tuition fee structure that encourages UJPO membership. We have developed the opportunity for families to become members of UJPO and receive a 15% discount on tuition, which results in an almost equivalent price per family. By becoming a member, you are directly supporting the existence of UJPO, which ensures the continuation of entities such as MWS. Next year, we will continue to offer member and non-member pricing. For a complete list of member benefits, please visit [here](#).

I also want to congratulate all our adult learners who completed coursework in Secular Jewish Learning and our Adult B'Mitzvah program. Sharoni Siboni guided our adult learners through their journey to learn and self-reflect on their radical Jewishness. Our grads and UJPO hope to continue in our learning through a monthly Shabbat gathering, while we also offer more courses in the fall. Stay tuned for these opportunities!

David Wall, UJPO's Cultural Programmer & Developer, has been busy curating Jewish content programming for the fall. We will soon be announcing a film series that tackles the plight of Palestinian occupation, a remounted Youth Group, and the potential mounting of theatrical and musical events. David has also been instrumental in sourcing and applying for grant opportunities for culture and for our heritage-designated Camp Naivelt. It was a pleasure to experience our Yid Pride event last June, and represent UJPO at both Limmud and Shavuot programmed events in the broader community this spring.

Camp Naivelt is in full swing, with plenty of programming too! We've already concluded a very well attended Music Week, culminating in a concert performance, and now look forward to Indigenous Week, Creative Week, and multiple bagel brunches, each themed with speakers to lead fascinating discussions. To review the programming calendar at Camp Naivelt, please visit us [here](#). If Camp Naivelt is new to you, try to visit our gorgeous lands on the Credit River. You can even rent cabins, simply by going [here](#).

Last but not least we are busy organizing and preparing for our annual High Holidays. Save the dates! Our Rosh Hashanah observance will begin at 10:30 am on Saturday September 16th, and our Kol Nidre observance will be held on Sunday September 24th, beginning at 7:30 pm. We will



be hosting these in-person events at the Society Clubhouse, 967 College St. and get livestreamed on zoom.

### **New (and continuing) exciting UJPO partnerships! By David Wall, Cultural Programmer & Developer**

Over the past few months, UJPO has had the pleasure of both forging new partnerships and continuing relationships with some inspiring, like-minded organizations, working to spread the good word about radical Jewishness in the 21st century. Here is a brief description of three such recent connections:

- **Downtown Jewish Community Council/Kultura Collective**

In May, UJPO staff attended a workshop at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre in Toronto, presented by the Downtown Jewish Community Council. Not only was it great to strengthen our connection with this important organization – the DJCC brings together Jewish educational institutions, religious organizations and social service agencies to foster positive social change – but it enabled us to connect with Kultura Collective, an innovative, progressive Jewish, movement and music-based community-building organization from Texas.

- **The Rooted Network**

In June, two UJPO staff members joined a two-day, online workshop with the Rooted Network, a US-based, internationally linked organizing hub, dedicated to bringing radical Jewish secularist folks and groups together. The

workshop was an inspiring, informative experience, during which UJPO staff got to present a brief history and summation of Naivelt, the Shule and all the delicious stuff that our organization(s) has to offer. There will certainly be more to come with the Rooted Network moving forward.

- **Independent Jewish Voices-Canada conference**

Also in June, UJPO staff attended the annual IJV conference, celebrating their 15th year of brilliant activism and advocacy on behalf of Palestinian rights and a just peace in the Middle East. The weekend-long event featured a long list of expert speakers and panelists, including Desmond Cole, Michelle Landsberg, b.h. yael, Shree Paradkar and many others. We were proud to be a part of the proceedings, re-establishing our strong, collaborative relationship with IJV. ♦

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## HONOURABLE MENTSHN

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### TRIBUTE TO ROSE (ROZ) USISKIN

By David Abramowitz

Greetings on behalf of all United Jewish People's Order members.

Although this is a solemn occasion, given the devotion and dedication with which Roz Wolodarsky Usiskin lived her life, it is also a joyful event when we consider her accomplishments which, by far, exceed those of all those each of us knows. In fact they surely exceed those of most Canadians!



Roz's entire life was dedicated to ensuring that progressive, secular Jewishness and social justice values were being perpetrated through her numerous affiliations and connections in western Canada, the UJPO, and beyond; and there were many. How much would she have achieved without the equal dedication of her loving husband Larry? Each of their three sons is proof of a joint success and of whom their parents were justifiably proud.

The tremendous effort that was needed just to qualify for her university education, ultimately earning, among others, a Masters' Degree in sociology, was just a tiny start. She, with colleagues, researched copious materials which ultimately became the database of the subsequent "Jewish Heritage Society of Western Canada" and on whose board she later served as President.

We'll be here for hours if all of her voluminous accomplishments were individually recalled, and they deserve to be. But it's difficult to foretell what other tributes today will contain. And it's important to get to Winnipeg Lake for a nosh and shmoozing which was also very

important to Roz. UJPO produced a special (memorial) edition of UJPO News this Spring 2023 entirely dedicated to Roz's life work and accomplishments. It's available online at [ujpo.org](http://ujpo.org), and if you click on the "newsletters" section you will find it with all the tributes from members and associates as well as a multitude of factual research. If you download it to print you'll need 10 pages.

Overall, it's her ongoing dedication and unending, unrelenting labour of love which she was constantly upgrading, whether to the online educational seminars presented by Professor Itay Zutra or the remembrance of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike to which she was personally related through her father's work as a (unionized) metal worker, or the presentation she and Ester Reiter prepared for a learned Winnipeg conference. Her last official Toronto appearance was the national headquarter's 2019 special commemoration of the centennial of the Winnipeg General Strike which attracted a larger attendance than the national officers anticipated and her translation of volume two of *The Wolodarsky Papers* sold out!

It was also a chance for the Toronto audience to see two entirely different presentation styles. Roz prepared and delivered a traditional lecture, using her thoroughly researched and fact-filled script, and her co-presenter, UJPO Winnipeg's secretary Harriet Zaidman, stepping forward, gave an animated presentation supplemented with visual PowerPoint projections (both historical and contemporary) to an unsuspecting but definitely much appreciative audience. And thus, in one informative and educational evening, the audience saw that UJPO Winnipeg was in good hands and well on its way to a contemporary future.

Roz constantly sought ways to maintain and renew Winnipeg's membership. It's a lesson I hope will be inspirational to our National organization. As our world evolves, the requirement for social justice is increasingly and urgently needed, and this was one of Roz's most significant passions which she often shared with UJPO. It's one that our unipolar world faces today when her efforts and wise words are needed even more.

So we shall carry on with her spirit as our inspiration for the future. Her work wasn't finished, and it's up to us, her beneficiaries, to ensure that Roz's ideals of progressive secular Jewishness and social justice are realized. She lives on as our inspiration for her and our objectives for the future. ♦

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## REMEMBERING SYLVIA LUSTGARTEN

1926-2023

By David Abramowitz

I was greatly saddened to learn of Sylvia's June 2023 death. She was a daughter of the renowned, late Montreal Yiddish poet I. J. Singer and the vibrant Director of the Toronto UJA Federation's "Committee for Yiddish" (CFY) when we first met: I had become the UJPO representative on the committee. Her insightful, significant influence and reach continued well beyond those years in numerous productive relationships. They illustrate why she was such an important individual to so many until her death. Among the adjectives in her memorial notices were, incredible, creative, brilliant, steadfast, vibrant, energetic, joyful, witty, kind, and a truly original thinker. Remarkably they all apply!



Dr. Thiru Yogaparan, on behalf of the Canadian Geriatrics Society Medical Student Competency Working Group stated "...her thought provoking questions informed us what is important from an older adult's perspective. She shaped the final Aging Care 5M Competencies for its Canadian medical students. She was honoured at the 2022 Canadian Geriatrics Society annual scientific meeting for her contributions."

Toronto's Baycrest Hospital and Long Term Care Home's Senior Executive Team, and Client Relations and Experience Office who also worked very closely with her said she "...was very passionate and involved as a Client and Family Partner...Sylvia has made countless contributions to improving the organization...She always impressed us with her fortitude, extensive knowledge, and dedicated advocacy for the older adult, and was widely known by everyone she interacted with as impactful and brilliant every time she spoke."

It was her free-spirited nature and warm personality which created a joyful, educational atmosphere permeating the meetings of her CFY. Not only were they informative, but her projections and thoughts could never be fully realized by the volunteer members. There were too many concepts permeated and never adequate staff to fulfill them. She mentioned this in her farewell 'retirement' reception, but as can be seen with all of her post-retirement activities, she never really retired, just got involved with numerous other organizations which unanimously sang her praises in their last tributes. For a time during this period she joined the Toronto UJPO but was also interested and active in

other organizations. Her suggestions at the Toronto UJPO Board were not adequately appreciated or followed up.

Her replacement after retirement was a fellow Montrealer, Adam Fuerstenberg, who was a promising and I felt the very appropriate successor. However, in retrospect, it appears the Federation's long-term plan was to eventually eliminate the CFY and Fuerstenberg was moved to oversee and help evolve Toronto's excellent Holocaust Centre.

The CFY was given no budget subsequently. With great opposition to this situation, Toronto UJPO's Saul Hermolin, then and currently, the head of "The Yiddish Vinkl" (TYV – "The Yiddish corner", a cabaret-style group fostering its love of Yiddish monthly through both educational and entertaining guests) urged its membership and CFY supporters to write to the Federation denouncing the defunding and requesting it be continued. I'm sure the Federation was not only surprised by the response about "a dead Holocaust language", but as a negative reputation was undesirable, the CFY budget was reinstated with an increase of 40%! This was doubtlessly due to the volume and zeal in response to Hermolin's appeal, but also an unspoken gratitude to Sylvia Lustgarten for the phenomenal work she had done fostering a love of Yiddish for future generations of Toronto's Jewish communities and organizations. She was indeed remarkable and we miss her already!♦

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## WHAT'S IN ORDER

### Mazl Tov to:

Shayle Kilroy, for graduating with a Master of Arts from University of Toronto's Yiddish field in Germanic Languages and Literatures with Collaborative Specialization in Jewish Studies. Shayle's thesis was titled "Little Yiddishland Shtetl": Community Formation and Heritage Language Learning at the Yiddish Book Center's Steiner Summer Program. Way to go Shayle! We are super impressed and proud of you!

New parents Sadie Epstein-Fine and Zachary Templeman on the birth of their baby, Zevi Grace Templefine, born April 15, 2023. And of course, Mazl Tov to our previous executive director Rachel Epstein on becoming a bubbe!

Our Social Media and Marketing Specialist Erfan Talebi, after 5 years in the making, has received his Permanent Resident status! Erfan, from Iran, brings great talent and contribution to our organization, and we are so happy for him, his sister and his mother. We're so glad you're here, Erfan!



*From Erfan:*

“Growing up, I witnessed firsthand the injustice and hardships people faced due to an extremist religious and fundamentalist government that silenced any form of criticism. They imposed strict practices of Islam on us, stifling our individuality. Feeling like outsiders, my friends and I often discussed the idea of leaving to avoid our government’s oppressive military service and US sanctions. When the time came, I, like many of my friends, found a way out with the support of my family and settled in Canada.

Here, I’ve encountered a vastly different life. While there is more freedom, societal class distinctions and capitalist pressures persist. It’s not the idealized Canada portrayed in Western propaganda we heard about in Iran – a country synonymous with freedom and equality. Nonetheless, I’m grateful to no longer fear for my life and have opportunities to pursue success.”

### **Heartfelt condolences to:**

We extend our sincerest condolences to Jonathan Brown Gilbert. Jonathan is an active and vibrant UJPO member who has sat on our Toronto/MWS Board, and last year was hired as our Grades 4 - 6 Shule teacher. We extend our condolences to Jonathan on the recent loss of his sister, Alyssa Gilbert.

### **In loving memory of Alyssa Gilbert February 6, 1984 - July 15, 2023**

Early on Saturday morning, Alyssa passed away after a fight against cancer.

Alyssa loved her family fiercely, protected her community, and did it all with style and lots of sparkles. She was a beloved daughter, mother, sister, auntie, niece, partner, and friend. After she was diagnosed with cancer, she fought hard to spend as much time as she could with her loved ones, especially her 17-year-old son, Devin.

Alyssa lived a life full of love and joy, but it was not always an easy life. One of her most amazing qualities was her capacity for forgiveness – she always gave people second chances, even when others wouldn’t. We’ll remember her as brave, generous, and compassionate. We hope to honour her by carrying these qualities within us, and by continuing to struggle against the systems that failed her as a survivor of gender-based violence, including the criminal injustice system.

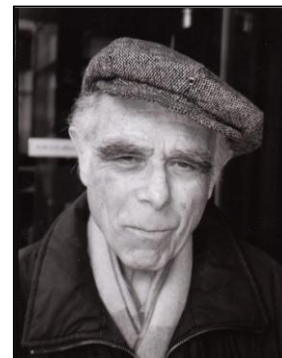
We invite people to donate to the Red Door Family Shelter, which provides emergency shelter and support in Toronto for women and children affected by domestic abuse, families experiencing a housing crisis, and refugee claimants with nowhere else to turn.

We will also be planting fruit trees to honour Alyssa’s memory on land in Grey County that Devin and other family members visit each year.

### **Norman Epstein**

The entire community at the United Jewish People’s Order are sending our deep condolences to our former Executive Director Rachel, regarding the loss of her father, Norman Epstein.

Norman Epstein, father to Rachel Epstein, grandfather to Sadie Epstein-Fine, great-grandfather to Zevi Templefine – and with many more family ties, passed away on July 29th, 2023. He was 99.



### **Amy Gottlieb**

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of a former UJPO member and long-term community member Amy Gottlieb on July 27th, 2023.

Amy will be remembered as a warm, supportive and dedicated friend and community builder, blessed with a glowing smile, brilliant, analytic mind and wicked sense of humour.



On behalf of the UJPO/Winchevsky community, we extend our love and support to Maureen, Sami, and Amy’s entire extended family.

### **Get well to:**

Shelley Cope. Wishing Shelley a speedy recovery. ♦

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## **GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS**

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### **Lisa Ross**

*Interviewed by Sarena Sairan*

#### **Since when have you been a member of UJPO (Toronto)?**

I have been a member of UJPO off and on since I was a baby. I believe about 25-30 years I became a member as a grown-up.

#### **What brought you to UJPO?**

My parents’ car!

**In which boards and/or committees are you active?**

Currently I am the chair of Camp Committee (CC) of Camp Naivelt.



**What are some of the projects or activities your committee or board has been or is involved in?**

Oy, where do I start? CC is involved with many of the big and small functions, tasks, crises, etc. of Camp Naivelt. This work is not limited to the summer months. We meet monthly all through the year and CC is made up of sub-committees that take on a lot of the work (eg. programming, maintenance, housing etc).

**What is your life outside UJPO, (that you are willing to share..)?**

After four decades working in health care (midwife, abortion counsellor, sexual health clinician/counsellor) I am now retired. So with my big chunk of free time I spend a lot of it parenting my 18 year old – who is about to leave home to go to university (so I am trying to mentally prepare myself for that). I visit my mom weekly and help take care of many aspects of her life. I have a fairly active social life. I do yoga everyday at home and dabble a bit in creative projects (sculpting, clowning, photo-taking, writing) but so far I haven’t been as focussed and/or disciplined as I would like. Come September, my hope/goal is to spend a lot more time on my creative projects and return to being more politically active.

**Are you able to bring your non-UJPO activities and skills into a close relationship with your UJPO activities?**

My first response was to make a joke about bringing my sexual health skills to the community – “keeping Naivelt healthy, one hill at a time” but I thought that would be a bit inappropriate.

**Are other members of your family involved in or members of UJPO?**

Most of my family members who belonged to UJPO are no longer alive,...so I believe I am now the only member.

**How do you see yourself contributing to the health of the organization?**

I believe (or at least hope) that being chair of CC contributes positively to the health of the organization. Camp Naivelt is a significant part of the organization. And I am happy that recently, with the new UJPO team in

Toronto, the various arms of the organization (eg. the board, ECAL, CC) have been working together (which is not always an easy task) to build a stronger community.

Also, in a less formal way, I think that my family’s long history with Naivelt/UJPO inspires me to keep wanting to contribute to the health and strength of the organization. Perhaps, even in sharing stories and photos of the old days out at Naivelt helps keep us grounded and connected to these incredible roots. I kind of feel that in doing so I am honouring my bubies and zeydies, and parents, and the others that created and/or contributed to making Naivelt/UJPO the amazing place/organization that it is.

**Last and not least – recent book and/or movie and/or play you recommend!**

*Detectorists*

A very low-key sweet English series about some folks in a small town in Essex whose hobby is metal detecting. Sounds like a snoozer but it is quite lovely. ♦

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## POETRY & SONG

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### Chairs

**By A.E. Stallings 2005**

*From Harriet Lyons*

A.E. (Alicia) Stallings is an important contemporary American poet and Classicist, resident in Athens, Greece for the last quarter century. She has just been elected to a four-year term as the Oxford University Professor of Poetry, a major honour to add to her many other awards, including a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Poets’ Prize, and the Willis Barnstone Translation Prize. She is particularly noted for her skill in using rhyme, meter, and traditional poetic forms such as the sonnet, the sestina, and the villanelle. Her books include *Archaic Smile* (1999), *Hapax* (2006) *Olives* (2012), *Like* (2018) and *This Afterlife* (2022), as well as verse translations of the Classical authors Lucretius and Hesiod. She publishes regularly in the *Times Literary Supplement*, where her articles are particularly noteworthy for linking poetic works, ancient and modern, to contemporary social issues. She is an exceptional teacher of both the writing and appreciation of poetry, as Harriet and Andrew Lyons can attest, having been privileged to take a two-week class with her in Athens in 2015.

In recent years, Alicia has been active in offering both advocacy and practical support to refugees in Greece, including running a poetry workshop for refugee women. Her husband, journalist John Psaropoulos, has also written extensively on the refugee crisis. The poem “Chairs” was



published in Poetry magazine in 2005, some years before the influx of refugees to Greece, and before the sinking of boats and the suffering faced by those forced to live in refugee camps, and as urban squatters, became international news. The poem might perhaps best be read as a comment on the conditions that lead to refugee crises, economic crises, and all the other emergencies humans (the “people” in the poem) create for themselves.

Using the 33333 4 stanzaic form of a villanelle, with a repeated refrain, “Chairs” employs the extended metaphor of a party game that offers pleasurable noise and movement, until anxiety, born of the competitiveness the game embodies (and teaches), brings that enjoyment, and perhaps all enjoyment, to an end.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are always fewer places than people –  
Those are the rules, although you’ve found  
It makes it hard to enjoy the music.

At parties, it’s the old classic –  
Dance of no partners, round and round.  
It makes it hard to enjoy the music

When the tune builds and starts to topple –  
The lurch you’re left in when the sound  
Stops, and suddenly the people

Scramble for what remains. The basic  
Principle is not profound.  
It makes it hard to enjoy the music –

The carnival feeling, green and awful,  
Turning like the revolving ground.  
Fewer and fewer places. And people

Pushing and crowding. It makes you sick  
And tired. You only want to sit down –  
But all of the places are taken by people.  
The music stutters. There is no music.

To read a lot more by and about A.E. Stallings, click on the Poetry Foundation website <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/ae-stallings> .♦

## A LITTLE NOSH

### Summer Berry Shortcake

By Harriet Zaidman

A lovely summer cake, flavoured with orange and lemon zest. Top it with luscious whipping cream and the berries of your choice and combination – strawberries, raspberries, blueberries are favourites, but why not add mangoes, peaches, nectarines or kiwi to the mix?

Note that the recipe produces two cakes. You have the option of making a layer cake or freezing one cake for future use. Prepare it several hours ahead, if possible, so the whipping cream can soften the cake and the tastes can blend. Taken almost exactly from Ina Garten’s Barefoot Contessa, this is a cake you’ll make over and over.



This, and over 250 great recipes, can be found on my food blog, North End Nosh ([northendnosh.weebly.com](http://northendnosh.weebly.com)).

#### Ingredients for Two Cakes

3/4 cup unsalted butter at room temperature  
2 cups sugar  
4 eggs  
3/4 cup sour cream  
1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest  
1/2 teaspoon grated orange zest  
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/4 cup cornstarch  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda

#### Ingredients for the Filling for Each Cake:

1 cup whipping cream, chilled  
3 tablespoons sugar  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 pint berries of your choice. If using fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced. Options: other fruits: mangoes, peaches, nectarines, kiwi  
lemon and/or orange zest (optional)

#### Method

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour two 8-inch cake pans.

Cream the butter and sugar with a fork or in the bowl of an electric mixer at high speed.

On medium speed, add the eggs, one at a time, then the sour cream, zests, and vanilla, scraping down the bowl as needed. Mix well.

Sift together the flour, cornstarch, salt, and baking soda. On low speed, slowly add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and combine just until smooth.

Pour the batter evenly into the pans, smooth the tops with a spatula, and bake in the centre of the oven for 40 to 45 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean. Let the cakes

cool in the pans for 30 minutes, then remove to wire racks and let cool to room temperature. At this point one cake may be wrapped and frozen. Optionally, use both cakes for a tall layer cake.

To make the filling for one cake, whip the cream by hand or in a mixer until firm; add the sugar, vanilla and zests (if using). If desired, toss the berries with zest and sugar.

Using a serrated knife, slice off the rounded top of the cake. Slice the cake in half. Place the bottom slice of the cake on a serving platter,

Spread the bottom part with half of the whipped cream, and scatter with the berries of choice. Cover with the top half of the cake and spread with the remaining cream. Decorate with berries (and zest, if using). ♦

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## CANADA

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### Is the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs losing influence?

*By Paul Weinberg, May 31, 2023*

Has the recent civil unrest in Israel changed the perspective of Canadian politicians on the conflict with the Palestinians?

Maybe the news from Israel and Palestine has become too toxic for even the most cautious of Canadian federal politicians.

EU representatives for instance recently refused to meet with the openly racist and Jewish supremacist Israeli national security minister, Itamar Ben Gvir. (Will Canada do the same if that same situation comes up?)

Another Israeli minister, Amichai Chikli, who has advocated for the elimination of the Palestinian identity, visited a private Christian college near Toronto at the invitation of controversial evangelical minister, Charles McVety without first informing the Canadian government.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development stated in May it will hold hearings to study “the actions Canada should take to foster peace, protect civilians, combat terrorism and uphold respect for human rights and international law in the region.”

This came about following some skillful negotiations on the wording by NDP MP Foreign Affairs Critic Heather McPherson who had introduced the original motion and managed to cobble enough Liberals to get on board and have it passed six-to-three with the Conservatives completely opposed.

The key thing, yet to be determined, is who will be invited to appear before the Foreign Affairs Committee.

In the committee’s own words, witnesses are expected to appear from “Canadian civil society, international humanitarian organizations, as well as Israeli and Palestinian human rights and peace-building organizations.” Following that, the committee will report its findings to Parliament.

Hailing the decision, the Montreal-based Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East is urging that in addition to hearing from human experts with knowledge and expertise on the ground in Israel and Palestine the study should also “prioritize Palestinian voices as the group which is oppressed and marginalized.”

This is where the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the premier lobbying organization for Israel in Canada, becomes very nervous.

After losing the battle to stop the hearings in its tracks, CIJA is seeking a restriction on certain kinds of witnesses for the hearings.

Presumably, CIJA will be sending its CEO Shimon Fogel to speak on its behalf. (CIJA did not respond to my emailed inquiries for comments.)

One can infer that the organization prefers not to have witnesses offering blunt talk about how Israel privileges its Jewish residents at the expense of Palestinians or that Israel is a by-product of settler colonialism and today functions as an apartheid state under international law.

One CIJA spokeswoman on Twitter speaks about how the hearings “will normalize extremist groups and views that the government has previously neglected.”

She adds that it “puts the Jewish community in Canada at risk by fuelling tensions with other groups.”

But such inflammatory talk is rejected by JSpaceCanada, which calls itself “Jewish progressive Zionist, pro-Israel, pro-peace and pro-democracy.” It supports the hearings and is on record opposed to the current status quo occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

The Liberals under Justin Trudeau are very pro-Israel. They are on record in support of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism which conflates criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

Plus, the UN representative Bob Rae, for instance, boycotted the May 15 UN commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Nakba to mark the expulsion of approximately 750,000 Palestinians from their homes into exile by Zionist militias during the founding of Israel as a Jewish majority state.

Canada, like many of its western allies in the US and EU countries, is tied to Israel for geo-political reasons. Our country also has a free trade agreement with Israel.

One interpretation is that the appearance of hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews within Israel opposing the gutting of an independent Israel Supreme Court by the new far-right government, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, has given the Canadian government permission to embark upon a closer scrutiny of Canada's relationship with this new administration in Tel Aviv.

Canada, for instance, provides millions in humanitarian assistance to Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

Also, the CIJA, which has never taken a critical standing on anything coming out of Israel, appears out of step with the current mood within the Canadian Jewish community according to recent polling – and that may be understood by the federal government.

JSpaceCanada and the New Israel Fund of Canada jointly discovered in a 2023 survey of Canadian Jews that about 59 per cent of them believe that the Israeli government is heading in the wrong direction in a host of areas in like the Supreme Court, the promotion of gender separation and anti-LGBTQ measures, the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements on the West Bank and its annexation. (Technically, this new government has already de facto annexed the West Bank, according to Israel international legal specialist, Michael Sfard.)

In face of campus pro-Palestinian rights activism, the CIJA was formed in 2004 under a slightly different name, the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, to provide a more muscular approach to advocacy and lobbying for Israel than its disbanded but also Zionist and more democratic predecessor, the 100-year-old Canadian Jewish Congress.

CIJA acts more like a corporate public affairs firm and is frequently called “secretive”.

Its CEO Shimon Fogel has been described as among the top 100 lobbyists in Ottawa by *The Hill Times*. He has played a major role in the adoption by both the federal government and various provinces of the IHRA definition.

On its web site the CIJA is officially described as the “advocacy agent” of the local Jewish federations across Canada, providing services including education for local Jewish communities.

There are about 400,000 Jews in Canada, according to most reports. Yet, by CIJA's own admission it only represents more than “150,000 Jewish Canadians affiliated with the federations”.

That number 150,000 includes anyone who has anything to do with a Jewish institution.

“So, if you go swimming at a JCC (Jewish Community Centre), you are included. Does that constitute consent to representation? I doubt it. The recent JSpace/New Israel Fund survey reports that over 30 per cent of Canadian Jews think the institutional Jewish community is too supportive of Israel,” said Sheryl Nestel, a retired University of Toronto sociologist and a member of Independent Jewish Voices.

Earlier in 2004, CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel referred to the occupied West Bank as “disputed”, a description not recognized by any international legal body. It also contradicts CIJA policy of a two-state solution.

The other aspect of the CIJA are the people on its board who are less circumspect than Shimon Fogel.

One is the Israel based David Weinberg (no relation) who has been cited by Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East for taking extremist positions including calling for the seizure of the Muslim administrated Temple Mount Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Weinberg is a senior fellow of the far-right Kohelet Policy Forum, whose policies have influenced the agenda of the current Israel government.

Another CIJA board member and its director of research is Becca Wertman-Traub. She was formerly the managing editor and Canada Liaison for a Jerusalem-based research institute NGO Monitor that regularly “monitors and harasses” Israeli and Palestinian human rights activists and organizations, reported Yossi Melman, a columnist for the Israeli daily, *Haaretz*.

The question is where do CIJA and Wertman Traub stand on the worrisome anti-NGO bill in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, that targets foreign financial support including Canadian taxpayers. (In May, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu tabled the bill for re-examination following an international uproar with regards to the proposed legislation.)

The CIJA also called for the second extradition of Carleton University professor Hassan Diab, now back in Canada, to France following a sham trial in absentia in Paris that ignored a previous judicial ruling in that country that there was no evidence linking him to a 1980 bombing of a synagogue. Not all Jews in Canada agree with this stance including Bernie Farber, the founder of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network and a former chief executive officer for the Canadian Jewish Congress. Farber told the *Globe and Mail* in April that he regrets his original support for the first 2014 extradition of Diab to France, has apologized to the professor's family and now calls the 2023 French



prosecution of Diab “a shanda” (Yiddish for a disgrace of scandalous proportions).

Today, the CIJA stays “above the fray” (the words of one observer) in promoting a pro-Israel tone inside the Canadian political class and the local Jewish community much like a sedative, in encouraging silence and acquiescence. Meanwhile other more combative pro-Israel organizations like B’nai B’rith or Honest Reporting, target via social media what they perceive as anti-Israel utterances by either politicians or the media.

But, the kickstarting of the parliamentary hearings represents a sign that CIJA is starting to lose its edge.

Dimitri Lascaris, a pro-Palestinian rights activist and lawyer, follows CIJA closely. He says in an interview that CIJA is in danger of becoming “obsolete” in face of a shift within the Canadian Jewish community.

“(CIJA must) adapt, to the new reality, which is that people are waking up all around the world, to what the state of Israel has become,” said Lascaris. “There must be people within (CIJA) that are aware of this. I am sure that is causing some internal fractures, but I don’t think we have seen much of that in the public sphere, yet.”

*This article originally appeared in rabble.ca ♦*

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## USA

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### Israeli President Herzog’s ‘honest’ speech to the US Congress

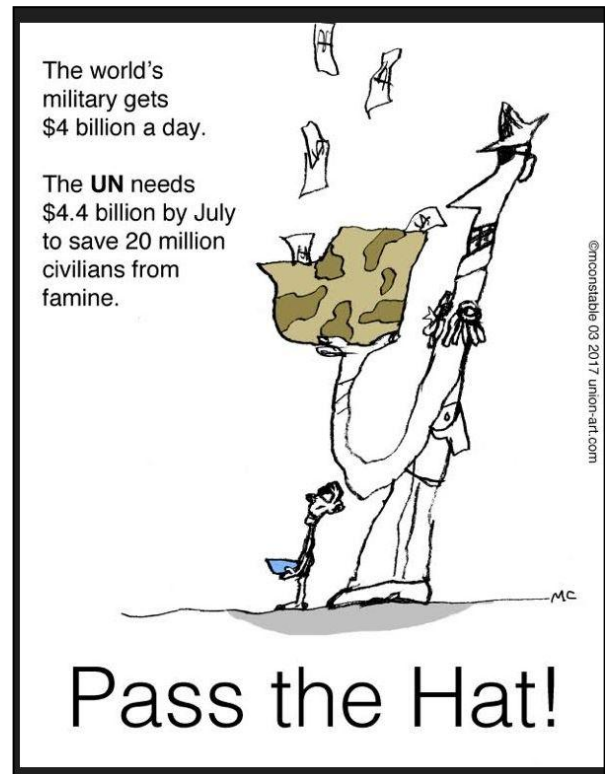
***Speech by Israeli President Isaac Herzog during a meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in Washington, DC, on October 25, 2022.***

*Submitted by Sam Blatt*

I am honoured to speak to you today at the 75th anniversary of my country’s independence. It is an honour that neither I nor my country deserves.

Throughout our history, your steadfast and generous support has made Israel what it is today. President Woodrow Wilson supported the 1917 Balfour Declaration at the behest of the British Empire, committing to our future Jewish state – a commitment made by those who did not own the land to those who did not live on the land, against the will of those who did live on it.

And it was President Harry Truman who first supported the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan to carve that land into a Jewish and Palestinian state, and the first to recognise Israel only 11 minutes after its establishment in 1948. Since then, we have been telling each other how our nations were founded by persecuted migrant communities



*Cartoon by Mike Constable*

on the basis of European Enlightenment; how they created strong, vibrant modern states, civilising the savage, and how we have dominated global and Middle East affairs.

We tell each other a tale of how they founded two righteous, God-fearing models to emulate, like “shining beacon of hope” and “light unto the nations”; of sharing common liberal, democratic principles, and of our persistent pursuit of peace.

But if we are honest with ourselves, we should admit that we have also copied the worst of imperial Europe. We share a dark past of settler colonialism, war, ethnic cleansing of Indigenous inhabitants and a persistent history of racism and discrimination including slavery in the Americas, and apartheid in Palestine.

Our success was made possible through the blood and tears of countless victims. We’ve treated our nemeses as warmongers, our critics as enemies, and our enemies as modern-day Hitlers, but no other states have waged as many wars, or embarked on as many military interventions in the past eight decades as we have.

These similarities between our two nations continue to cast a long shadow over our bonds and behaviour.

Since our birth, Israel has had no better ally than the United States. Period. Even though, we have not always been gracious or reciprocated – while generally following in your footsteps, befriending your friends and denouncing your foes.

Whenever the world ganged up on our “Jewish state”, America came to the rescue. When Soviet bloc nations joined Muslim and other developing nations to condemn us for our bellicosity, it was the US that defended us and placated our foes with vigour and zeal. And when Europe joined the international outrage, the US was the only major power ready and able to stand by Israel and block international censures by vetoing consequential UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israel.

Indeed, with the exception of that one “mistake” under Jimmy Carter, when Washington voted against Israeli settlement expansion, the US has routinely vetoed efforts to condemn Israel at the United Nations Security Council, blocking more than 40 such resolutions.

And this week, when a US Congresswoman – one of your own – called Israel racist, you, dear members of Congress, quickly shut her down by proclaiming in a resolution that Israel is not racist. Though I might have put it differently, she was essentially right, you are wrong.

Thanks to you, we have become more confident and assertive. With your military and economic aid that reached some \$200bn, we have built a formidable military machine, that allowed us to double down on the repression of the Palestinians, and humiliation of the stubborn Arabs, who refuse to accept our pretence that our culture is superior to theirs, and that our settlement of their land is ours by right of a brief sojourn here a few thousand years ago.

When my late beloved father Chaim spoke to you as president of Israel in 1987, he boasted of our peace accords with Sadat of Egypt. And I am inclined to walk in his shoes and do the same; to boast of our Abraham accords with several Arab autocrats.

But unlike him, I can no longer keep silent as our military and civilian occupation mutates into an apartheid system in the Middle East. I do not say that lightly; I say it with a heavy heart. I do not say it out of pity for the millions of Palestinians, most of whom stubbornly linger under occupation and in refugee camps, I say it out of pity for my people and what’s become of us as decades-long occupiers and dispossessors. Our chutzpah is self-defeating. Our hasbara is wearing thin.

I never was a particularly brave or charismatic parliamentarian and head of the opposition. But that stops now, knowing I will never again have a better platform to address your people and mine. We may have become rich and powerful but we’ve never been so divided, so fanatical, so morally bankrupt.

Friends speak truth to each other. Good friends speak the bitter truth. It befalls upon you, once again, to save us from ourselves. To free us and the Palestinians from an

entrenching system of apartheid that is bound to lock us in hatred and violence for decades to come. There is little I can do, as a ceremonial president, other than to speak out.

So, I urge you to condemn racism and apartheid today, as you condemned apartheid in South Africa, albeit belatedly in the past. And I urge you to push us to come to terms with the Palestinians, who soon will become the majority between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Do not believe a word Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says about the Palestinians; he has made a career out of trafficking in fear.

Like my two predecessors, I also believe we have a peace partner in President Mahmoud Abbas; perhaps the last peace partner. We must stop undermining him, as we will never be as lucky with a strong yet accommodating leader.

My father boasted of our liberal democracy and respect for human rights, albeit for Jews only, considering that in our Jewish state, the right to the land, the right to settle (return), and the right to self-determination is for the Jewish collective.

But even this communitarianism has eroded with time, culminating in a government of hyper-nationalists and religious fanatics that is demonstrably bent on destroying our Jewish democracy and squashing our liberal values.

Hundreds of thousands of my fellow Jewish countrymen and women have taken to the streets every week to protest against new illiberal legislation that is bound to chip away at our institutions and freedoms, and destroy any hope of future peace and democracy in the Jewish state.

This destruction will happen if you, members of this august symbol of constitutional democracy, continue to outbid yourselves in appeasing us as we stumble towards religious autocracy. Your intentions to invite our lying, cheating prime minister to speak here for a record fourth time will only make things worse.

President Biden is right to be concerned and to warn our government of going down this road. So should you. It is a dangerous road that is bound to destroy the fabric of our society.

I urge you to be brave and principled, for a change. It is liberating, as I have discovered. ♦

*Contributed by Marwan Bishara, Senior political analyst at Al Jazeera. Published on July 19, 2023*

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/7/19/israel-president-herzogs-honest-speech-to-the-us-congress-2>

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# MIDDLE EAST

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## Why settler pogroms are now sweeping the West Bank

***Frustrated at the military's pushback to their pogroms, settlers will continue upholding Jewish supremacy by any means necessary.***

*By Menachem Klein, June 26, 2023*

Sometimes there is an event so extreme that it tears the veil of willful ignorance from the eyes of Jewish-Israeli society. The pogrom in Huwara last February, in which hundreds of settlers torched the Palestinian town in the occupied West Bank, was such an event. Last week's pogroms in Turmus Ayya, Urif, and Umm Safa raised the curtain even higher, forcing many Israelis to stare straight at a reality that has long been present and can undoubtedly get worse.

But the main problem is not in the byproduct of occupation – Jewish settler terrorism – but in Israel's routine activity in the territories. Indeed, the decision by the heads of the Israeli security establishment to label the pogroms as “terrorism” indicates that the veil has only been partially lifted; they simply don't want Jewish terrorism to interfere with or embarrass the authority of the army, Shin Bet, and police.

Settlement is itself a violent act, whether it is done in concert with Israeli law or with the law following retroactively. It is violent because the settlers impose their presence on the natives and rob them of land, water, free movement, and basic human rights. It is an organized system of violence on behalf of the state.

The symbiosis between the army and the settlers is not limited to violence; it also exists in the understanding of their mission. The settlers explicitly define their mission as the Judaization of the area, and they do this effectively and consistently. The army's mission is not to provide security for all residents in the territories – as international law requires of the occupying power – but rather to protect the settlers from the reactions of the native Palestinians, who are not allowed to defend themselves, neither with the help of the Palestinian security forces, nor by establishing their own national guard. The factor that determines whether a West Bank resident's life and property will be protected is whether or not they are Jewish.

Expanding settlements as a response to the murder of Israelis – as senior government ministers pledged to do last week – is also not a harmless civil action. It is violence without immediate bloodshed, yet which will inevitably engender Palestinian resistance, followed by bloody army repression.

The Palestinians are tolerated only if they assimilate into the landscape, becoming inanimate objects that forgo their collective identity. But as long as they maintain that identity, they are by definition an enemy. The army and the Shin Bet will continue to control them with biometric and electromagnetic data that tracks their location, actions, and thoughts as expressed in phone calls and on social media. The Palestinians' complete dependence on Israel for permits makes it easy for Israeli authorities to gather information about their family and medical conditions, sexual tendencies, personal weaknesses, and social structures, and to weaponize that information to force them into collaboration.

Jewish supremacy is clear as day, and the Palestinian people are bleeding physically and politically. However, as settlements expand and the army operates, the friction increases, and so too does the Palestinian motivation to react. Today, Palestinian violence has little expectation of liberating the West Bank; the power disparity between the parties is all too evident. Rather, it is intended to exact a price, any price, from the colonizers.

### **Dangerous frustration**

This pushback frustrates the settlers. How is it possible that all their power and supremacy has still not erased Palestinian identity and resistance? That frustration is what drives pogroms like those we saw last week, which then pushes the army and government to use even more force to expand the settlement project. Just a few days ago, Col. (Res.) Moshe Hagar, head of the pre-military academy in the settlement of Beit Yatir, called for the destruction of a Palestinian city or village in order to teach the Palestinians a lesson. Meanwhile, Bezalel Smotrich, who serves both as finance minister and minister in charge of the civilian affairs in the West Bank, called any comparison between what he termed “Arab terror” and the “civilian counter-operations” both “wrong and dangerous.”

Their frustration today is greater than it was in the past. In the 1980s and '90s, the settlers in the occupied territories transformed from a civil movement supported by the establishment into the establishment itself. They found their way into the executive levels of the government's civil and security branches that control the Palestinian population and their land. Today, under the current far-right government, they have reached the height of their powers. They do not think for a moment about acknowledging the limitations of their power, because the vector of their political ambitions is linear and unequivocal. They must not retreat.

The idea of containing the conflict in order not to lose control – as the army, Shin Bet, and police are hoping to do – is unacceptable to those whose frustration is on par with



their political and theological extremism. The settlers are pushing the security establishment to act in accordance with Hagar’s vision. Unlike in “Operation Defensive Shield” – when the Israeli army physically and politically destroyed the Palestinian Authority in 2002 through devastating urban invasions – today there is no leadership left to decimate. The PA under President Mahmoud Abbas has already done this in the service of Israel. The Israeli right’s call to launch “Defensive Shield II” is instead a call to action that places Palestinian civilians as the central target, rather than as mere acceptable collateral.

The end of the conflict and the two-state solution are no longer relevant to the Israeli public and the international community. Lacking a solution – or more accurately, the will to pursue one – foreign governments, including Arab states, have allowed Israel to create a single regime in the entire area between the river and the sea without having to officially declare annexation.

The fact that two different groups live under two sets of laws under a single sovereign means that Israel is implementing practices of apartheid, racial supremacy, and military rule not as a matter of foreign policy, but rather as its *domestic* policy.

This is why, for example, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir is seeking to establish his own private militia, to have the power to put Israeli citizens in administrative detention, and to deepen the Shin Bet’s penetration into the lives of Palestinian citizens of Israel. And, in the wake of the events of May 2021, the Israeli army has now drawn up plans to act against Palestinian citizens in the event of a conflict.

Israel’s leaders are realizing that they need to further bend the law to their will, otherwise the identity of the entire area between the river and the sea will never be exclusively Jewish. And unfortunately, the Jewish Zionist left has neither the vision nor the courage to prevent this trend. ♦

*A version of this article was originally published in Hebrew in Local Call. Read it here: +972 Magazine – <https://www.972mag.com/settler-violence-frustration-army/?sourceid=1001761&emci=3cce4a3a-2215-ee11-a9bb-00224832eb73&emdi=2e8a47f7-cc15-ee11-a9bb-00224832eb73&ceid=138738>*

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*Continued from page 1*

The rest of the day was dedicated to practical workshops facilitated by IJV members, covering various topics such as connecting Palestine solidarity work with Indigenous solidarity, combating Canadian colonialism, campus organizing, and engaging with mainstream Jewish communities. The day concluded with a compelling talk by Sarah Jama, the newly elected Hamilton MPP and a staunch supporter of Palestine. Despite allegations of antisemitism planted by certain mainstream Jewish organizations during her campaign, Jama emerged triumphant.

Congratulations are due to the organizers for hosting a well-structured, invigorating, and focused conference. The gathering generated numerous innovative ideas and reinforced participants’ dedication to justice for Palestinians.

Members and supporters of IJV gathered for a party on Saturday evening, with delightful entertainment by the UJPO Pop-up Klezmer band and Arab women’s drum and vocal ensemble Tabiba. The IJV Annual General Meeting, exclusively for members, took place on Sunday, June 18. Around 50 members attended in person, with an additional 100 joining online from across Canada. These attendance figures serve as a testament to the widespread support IJV enjoys throughout the country.

For further insight, read the post-conference interview with Corey Balsam, IJV National Coordinator by Alex Cosh of *The Maple* online newsletter. The interview can be found at <https://www.readthemaple.com/interview-15-years-of-jewish-solidarity-with-palestine>. ♦

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## 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.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are the authors’ and not necessarily those of UJPO.

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