



# UJPO News



## INSIDE

- Page One ..... 1
- National UJPO News .. 2
- Vancouver..... 4
- What's In Order ..... 4
- Know UJPO Members. 5
- Poetry & Song ..... 5
- Yiddish..... 6
- Canada..... 6
- Middle East..... 7
- International.....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 #38, Issue #1

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

## Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – controversy 75 years later

By David Abramowitz

75 years ago, all Polish Jews were forced into concentration camps including Roma, homosexuals and communists. The largest camp was in Warsaw. Almost 394,000 (and eventually about 500,000) were forced into a space which normally housed 113,000 Poles. Even without the Nazi killing machine, anticipated food and medication shortages caused disease and starvation to take a deadly toll. We have often retold the story in these pages and during seasonal programs in our centres on how the Nazi master plan was, for the first time, successfully challenged with significant Nazi casualties and a sadly sacrificial outcome.

We always referred to the culprits as Nazis. It is documented, in numerous sources, that in each country which the Nazis conquered during WW 2 there were sympathetic, compliant, participating nationals.

30 years ago I and the late Muni Taub led a group of UJPO members and others of Toronto's Jewish community to the 45th Warsaw Ghetto Uprising commemoration where we laid remembrance wreaths for UJPO Canada, *Outlook Magazine*, the Morris Winchevsky School, and *Jewish Currents Magazine*. We were the only foreign organization to be given the honour of witnessing, in the Polish parliament, the ceremony of Yad Vashem's "Righteous Among Nations" awards to several Polish citizens (or their descendants) for their sheltering/hiding Polish Jews at the risk of their own lives.

Under a new law passed in Poland on Feb. 1, 2018, individuals suggesting that Poland was complicit in the Holocaust could face fines or up to three years in jail. The U.S. State Department and Israeli officials among others believe that this law infringes upon free speech and could even be used to target the few remaining Holocaust survivors or even contemporary historians.

Historians point out that this law makes it impossible to discuss the guilt/participation of at least some Poles in Nazi crimes. Still controversial is whether a 1941 atrocity by Polish nationals in Jedwabne was conducted after pressure from the Nazis or whether the crimes were independently perpetrated by Polish anti-Semites without Nazi involvement.

And so, as we have always known, it becomes increasingly important to continue relating the story of the heroism of the defenders of the Warsaw Ghetto against impossible odds to fend off the elimination of the Jewish people. It shall inspire us to defeat all forms of anti-Semitism whenever and wherever they occur. **NEVER AGAIN! ♦ קיינמאל ניט פאָרגעסן !**



Memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

---

# NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

---

## FROM WINNIPEG

By Harriet Zaidman

On February 28, UJPO co-sponsored, along with Global College and Independent Jewish Voices and other groups, a discussion with three speakers with links to Jerusalem (one Jew – Rabbi David Mivasair, one Palestinian Christian and one Palestinian Muslim). About 100 people attended.

In March the Winnipeg Branch of UJPO held a forum examining the role of Jews in the Russian Revolution. Henry Heller, Professor of History at the University of Manitoba and the author of several books on French history and on capitalist society, presented an analysis of Jewish participants in the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia itself. Ester Reiter, a Senior Scholar in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University, outlined the work of individuals who supported the revolutionary cause in North America.



Ester Reiter. Photo by Henry Shorr



Max Wallace. Photo by Henry Shorr

UJPO and the Sholem Aleichem Community marked the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising by welcoming Max Wallace as its special guest. Wallace, author of *In The Name of Humanity – The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust*, spoke about the information he uncovered

as a researcher for Stephen Spielberg's Shoah Foundation. Wallace discovered the role of a Swiss ultra-orthodox Jewish woman, Recha Sternbuch, who organized the rescue of thousands of Jews from Germany before the war and more after the war began. He also learned that Sternbuch and her supporters were pivotal in drawing Heinrich Himmler into a ruse that there was a possibility of negotiating a separate peace with the West against the conflict with the Russians and Joseph Stalin. Her efforts, which included the participation of an avowed anti-communist and fascist, resulted in Himmler being convinced to destroy the crematoria at Auschwitz months before the war ended, saving the lives of an estimated 300,000 Jews. Wallace's presentation was warmly received; he graciously answered questions after his speech.

The North End Jewish Folk Choir sang a selection of Holocaust-related songs, which were interspersed by the lighting of candles in memory of the six million murdered.

Students from Elmwood High School stood side by side with the relatives of Holocaust victims and survivors to light the candles.

Kudos to UJPO member Lee Anne Block, who is part of an initiative to take a corner of Winnipeg St. John's Park into a Healing Forest, planted in honour of residential school survivors and missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. The intention is to provide a peaceful location where people can reflect heal and learn from the past. The site chosen is where indigenous people and settlers met over 200 years ago, where they negotiated and struggled with each other. The space will include a fire pit, a learning space, a medicine wheel garden, pathways and log park benches for visitors. More trees will be added to blend in with the existing trees in the park. The Healing Forest is hoped to be another contribution to the process of reconciliation and was developed in consultation with the community, elders and the City of Winnipeg..♦

---

## FROM TORONTO

By Rachel Epstein and Sue Goldstein



Julia Barnett addresses Third Seyder. Photo by Errol Young

**Third Seyder:** Happy spring from Toronto! We are still happily recovering from our 200+ person Seyder on April 7. The Seyder this year continued our theme of Creative Solidarity, sharing many beautiful and inspiring images of resistance and solidarity. Our special guests were Hassan Diab, his partner Rania Tfaily, and their two children, as well as two women from the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom – Zehra Mirza and Zehra Abbas. Julia Barnett, UJPO-Toronto's president, introduced Hassan, who spoke briefly about his return to Canada following over three years in a French jail.

This year's Seyder also focused on youth and the students of the Morris Winchevsky Shule did not disappoint. After their rendition of *Di Fir Kashes*, they each asked one of their "Great Questions" – questions they

have been collecting since the beginning of the school year. For example: How do I get out of doing a mitzvah? Why do people deny their privileges? What did God do on the 8th day?



Shule children ready to ask their questions. Photo by Errol Young

Included again were some non-Ashkenazi Passover traditions: the Iranian and Afghani practice of “beating” each other with scallions to mimic the lash of the slave-driver. And the children were lightly pelted with candy by parents and elders – a Turkish tradition.

More than once we heard, “Best Seyder ever!”

**Camp Naivelt:** Camp Naivelt is gearing up to open, and also to hire a camp manager for the summer. Stemming from the efforts of several Working Groups, spearheaded by Camp chair Tina Blazer, the decision has been made to hire someone to coordinate the maintenance and ongoing caretaking of camp during the months it is open. UJPO-Toronto is also embarking on a Strategic Planning process, with the assistance of the Management Advisory Services (MAS), an organization that assists, pro-bono, non-profit organizations with planning. Camp Naivelt will be the first focus of this process. Through consultation and dialogue with the Camp Naivelt community, we want to develop a short and long term vision for the Camp.

**Morris Winchevsky School:** The school year came to a close on May 6, and we are beginning to accept registrations for 2018-19. This year was a dynamic one, thanks to the new curriculum designed by Education Director, Lia Tarachansky, and the energy and commitment of students and parents. The students have created three podcasts and a newscast based on their Great Questions – check them out on our Facebook and Twitter pages. The three B’nai Mitzvah students are gearing up for their ceremony on June 23. We wish them all the very best.

**Zing! Zing! Zing!:** Our singing group led by Rachel Sheinin and Hartley Wynberg has set dates for May and June. They have tons of new material and have added a new feature: participants can bring their own song and it

will be taught to the group. Could be a Yiddish favourite, a protest song, a union song, or a folk song that you love!

**Other programming:** We continue our monthly Alternative Shabbes events, with typically 30-40 people showing up each time. On March 9, in honour of International Women’s Day, we welcomed activists Kiké Roach and Judy Rebick to reflect on the book they wrote 20 years ago called *Politically Speaking*. The book took “a new look at some of the issues that have troubled our hearts and minds over the past decade: racism, Quebec sovereignty, identity politics, the changing nature of work, the power of the media, violence against women, and the future of the women’s movement and the left.” Kiké and Judy engaged in a spirited conversation about the current state of the world and of political movements, and about feminism, anti-racism and LGBTQ+ issues.



Rachel Epstein, Kiké Roach and Judy Rebick. Photo by Errol Young

On April 13, our Alternative Shabbes event took the form of a Talk-Shop on Creative Resistance to Toronto’s Alt-right. Following our usual secular candlelighting, ceremony and dinner, journalist Evan Bolgard filled us in on the landscape of the white supremacist Alt-right in Toronto and local organizer, Jacob Zelig spoke about recent tactics Toronto groups have used to resist the Alt-right. Then we moved into small groups to explore creative options for the ongoing struggle.

On May 2 we were happy to launch, with Mosaic Press, UJPO member Joyce Wayne’s new novel: *Last Night of the World*. We are looking forward to the next Alternative Shabbes event on May 11, with PhD student Kevin Nixon talking about the nature of drag, and the race, class and gender issues it raises, and also featuring drag performer Victoria Parks. On Wednesday, May 23 our student intern Anton Guz will be leading a conversation about Ukraine According to Ukrainians.

And, finally, we want to acknowledge that Julia Barnett, UJPO-Toronto’s President for the past five years, is stepping down from that position. We will miss her leadership, her energy, and her thoughtful presence. Julia will remain active in the organization, so it is not goodbye,

and we hope that this lessening of responsibility will provide her with some much-deserved rest and relaxation.

See our website: [www.winchevskycentre.org](http://www.winchevskycentre.org) for more info on these and other programs and activities. Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/WinchevskyCtr/> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/winchevskyctr> ♦

---

## HAMILTON

By Lyn Center

UJPO members and friends held two “schmooze and nosh” events this Spring: one in March and the second in April.

For the first the theme was “Music and the Jewish Contribution”. Everyone contributed with examples in the areas of rock, folk, jazz, classical, klezmer and even Christmas music – for example, “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” by Johnny Marks.

For the second, the theme was Jewish comedians. There was a very long list of Americans, going back to the time of Groucho Marx and Wayne and Shuster, and continuing to today’s Jerry Seinfeld. We viewed and laughed at the Seinfeld episode that made fun of a baby’s *bris*. And Gloria Geller read us some great Jewish jokes.

Some popular Jewish Canadian comedians are Eugene and Daniel Levy (from Hamilton!) and Seth Rogen. And of course, the Executive Producer of Saturday Night Live, Lorne Michaels. Comedy is needed now more than ever!



Joyce Wayne interviewed by Jill Downie

Five of our group travelled to the central library in Oakville to hear Joyce Wayne speak about her new cold war novel *Last Night of the World*. She was interviewed by author Jill Downie, followed by many interesting questions from the audience. ♦

---

## VANCOUVER COMMUNITY EVENTS

By Carl Rosenberg

*Ed. Note: Though we no longer have a UJPO section in Vancouver, Carl will continue to report on events of interest to UJPO members across the country.*

The *Fraytik Tsu Nakht* secular shabbes dinner at the Peretz Centre on March 16 featured trombonist and music teacher Gordon Cherry, who spoke to us twice before on Leonard Bernstein and Leonard Cohen. Gordon, a native of Toronto, talked about the Christie Pits riot in Toronto on Aug. 16,

1933. Many people know about this event in a general sense, but Gordon fleshed it out for us. The riot took place against a background of rising fascism and anti-Semitism in Canada and the world, including widespread discrimination against Jews in Toronto. Italian and Ukrainian immigrants joined Jews in the rioting, amounting to a rebellion not only against fascism and anti-Semitism, but also against the elitism and xenophobia of “Toronto the Good.” Toronto has changed greatly since then, but the issues underlying the Christie Pits riot haven’t gone away.

One of my favourite activities at the Peretz Centre is the reading group “English-Language Exploration of Jewish Writers” led by Al Stein, who contributed his encyclopedic knowledge of Yiddish literature to *Outlook* for many years. Most recently we read Howard Fast (1914-2003), known for his historical novels (*Spartacus*, *Freedom Road*, *Citizen Tom Paine*) and his refusal to name names before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which led to a three-month prison sentence. We read two of his short stories, “The Last Supper,” and “Gentleman from Mississippi,” both powerful evocations of the American scene at the time.

On March 23, I took part in a National Day of Action to Defend the Water from Kinder Morgan – protests outside the offices of MPs across the country, including my MP, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould. I hope such protests continue until the Kinder Morgan pipeline/tanker project (aided and abetted by Rachel Notley and Justin Trudeau) is soundly defeated.

On April 6 I and other members of Independent Jewish Voices-Vancouver attended a protest against the Israeli shooting of unarmed Palestinian Gazan protesters, which killed at least 17 people and injured over 1,000 (according to the Israeli human rights group B’Tselem) during the Great March of Return near the Israeli-Gaza fence. B’Tselem itself issued a commendable statement, “Why Israeli soldiers must refuse to fire at unarmed Palestinian protesters.” I hope Israelis take up B’Tselem’s call, and that Palestinian and Israeli resistance (numerically small as the latter is) continue until the decades-long Israeli occupation finally ends. ♦

---

## WHAT’S IN ORDER

- Mazl Tov to Joyce Wayne for publication of her new novel *Last Night of the World*.
- Speedy recovery to Julia Barnett and David Abramowitz.
- Condolences to the family and friends of Fanya Temnik who passed away on April 30.

---

## GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

---

### Mark Golden

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

I have been a member of UJPO (Winnipeg) for 20 or 25 years and on the executive for most of the last 10.

*What brought you to UJPO?*

I belong to UJPO to help fulfill my desire to live as a Jew without worshipping god or Israel. I also belong to Independent Jewish Voices (which focuses on opposing Israeli policies and practices concerning Palestinians within and outside Israel) and the Sholem Aleichem Community (which has at times operated a Sunday school and sponsored the Klezmer Kids band but now mostly organizes secular celebrations of the major Jewish holidays).



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

I now chair UJPO-Winnipeg executive meetings and occasionally act as doorperson and/or MC at our events. Other members do most of the real work.

*What is your life outside UJPO?*

I recently retired after many years teaching Classics at the University of Winnipeg. I still read (a lot) and write (a little). The curious might have a look at *Greek Sport and Social Status* (University of Texas Press, 2008) or *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens* (Johns Hopkins University Press, second edition, 2015).

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

I read (a lot) and write (a little) whatever else I'm doing.

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

My brother Peter, a Victoria lawyer, shares my political views and is engaged in similar activities.

*Have there been any changes in UJPO since you joined, that you would like to mention?*

Some of us are growing older.

*Are there changes you would like to see over the coming years?*

I'd like some of us – not necessarily the same ones – to grow younger.

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

I just finished *Mr. Jones*, a novel by my University of Winnipeg colleague, Margaret Sweatman. Set (mostly) in Ottawa in the '50s, it will bring back many memories to anyone who recalls the Cold War, Diefenbaker and Kennedy, Herbert Norman .... Not a good story, but an interesting one, well told. I am now looking forward to Daniel Thau-Eleff's latest play, *Deserter*, which opens here next month. ♦

---

## POETRY & SONG

---

### Chad Gadya sung by Chava Alberstein

*Submitted by Sam Blatt*

*Chava Alberstein sings this version of Chad Gadya in Hebrew, presented here in translation. When it was first broadcast, it created quite a furor in Israel, being seen as an anti-occupation message – which it clearly is. In any other country it might have been considered a general anti-war song. It is still popular, and broadcast during Passover.*

Why are you singing “Chad Gadya”?  
Spring has not come yet, Passover isn't here  
what has changed for you ? what has changed ?

I myself have changed this year  
And on all nights, on all nights  
I have asked only four questions

Tonight I have another question:  
How long will the cycle of horror last?  
Hunter and hunted, beater and beaten  
When will this madness stop?

And what has changed for you. What has changed?  
I myself have changed this year  
I used to be a sheep and a calm kid  
Today I am a leopard and a predator wolf  
I've been a dove and I've been a deer  
Today I don't know who I am

Our father bought for two *zuzim*  
one kid, one kid

Our father bought a kid for two *zuzim*  
And we're starting again from the beginning... ♦

<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/chad-gadya-lyrics.html#ixzz5C5zdAmSz>

## Khad Gadya

Words by Y. Lukovski, music by M. Gelbart

Ed. Note: Listen to the very sweet rendition of this version, at the website noted at the end of the song.



אַ מעשה־לע גאַר שײן:  
דער טאַטע האָט אַ ציגעלע  
געקויפֿט פֿאַר צוויי גילדיין.



אַ ציגעלע אַ וויסינקע,  
אַ שייניקע ווי גאַלד,  
און צוויי גילדיין מזומנע  
האָט ער פֿאַר איר באַצאַלט.  
חד-גדיא, חד-גדיא.

איז דאָך אין הויף אַ קאַץ געווען,  
אַ מזיק ווי באַוויסט.  
האָט קעצעלען זיך פֿאַרצוקן גאַר  
דאָס ציגעלע פֿאַרגלוסט.

דערזען האָט עס אַ הינטעלע.  
פֿאַרדריסט עס אים גאַנץ שטאַרק,  
ער וואַרפֿט זיך אויף דער בייזער קאַץ  
און בייסט איר אַין קאַרק.  
חד-גדיא, חד-גדיא.



קומט שטעקעלע אין כּעס אַרײַן  
און טראַכט גאַר ניט קיין סך,  
און שפּאַלט דאָס קעפל הינטעלען:  
דו, הונט! ס'איז ניט דיין זאַך.

צעפֿלאַקערט האָט זיך פֿייערל,  
פֿאַר כּעס צונטער רויט:  
דו, שטעקעלע! דו, פֿלעקעלע!  
איך מאַך דיר באַלד אַ טויט.  
חד-גדיא, חד-גדיא.



קומט צו פֿליסן וואַסערל,  
און לעשט דאָס פֿייער אויס,  
קומט צו גיין דאָס עקסעלע  
און טרינקט דאָס וואַסער אויס.



נאַר האָבן מיר אַ שוחטל,  
מיט אַ חלפֿל וואַס גלאַנצט,  
מאַכט ער צום אַקס כּיך כּיך, כּיך,  
און ס'איז אויס באַלד אונדזער טאַנץ!  
חד-גדיא, חד-גדיא!

<https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/heyarbet-homework/peysekhh->

## CANADA

### Has Ontario's anti-Semitism subcommittee accomplished anything?

By Ron Csillag, CJNI, March 14, 2018

A year ago, Ontario's Liberal government unveiled its three-year anti-racism strategy. A Better Way Forward included initiatives "to combat systemic racism and create equitable outcomes for indigenous and racialized communities."

Anti-racism, the 60-page plan stated, "actively confronts the unequal power dynamic between groups and the structures that sustain it."

Four subcommittees were set up last March under the province's Anti-Racism Directorate, which was established in February 2016 by Premier Kathleen Wynne and Michael Coteau, the minister responsible for anti-racism. The subcommittees are tasked with studying racism directed at blacks, indigenous people, Muslims and Jews respectively.

The directorate's goal is "to eliminate systemic racism in government policies, decisions and programs," and to boost public education and awareness of racism.

On June 1, Ontario passed its sweeping Anti-Racism Act. Among other things, the law mandates a review of anti-racism strategies at least every five years.

The subcommittee examining anti-Semitism has been toiling in relative obscurity ever since. Its unpaid members, who were chosen on the basis of their expertise in the area, were confirmed last spring. The first meeting was held in October, with two more in December and February. A fourth meeting has not yet been scheduled.

The committee is co-chaired by Bernie Farber, formerly of Canadian Jewish Congress and the Mosaic Institute, and Andrea Freedman, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa and the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation.

Its members are: Karen Mock, chair of the progressive Zionist group JSpace Canada; Len Rudner, formerly of the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA); Zach Potashner of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre; Pamela Divinsky, director of the Mosaic Institute; Madi Murariu from CIJA; Tom Henheffer, a journalist and media consultant; Hersh Perlis, director of the Legal Innovation Zone at Ryerson University and a former adviser at Queen's Park; Nikki Holland, director of public affairs for the Carpenters'

District Council of Ontario; Brianna Ames, a volunteer with the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee; and Amanda Hohmann, who at first represented B'nai Brith Canada, but now represents La'ad Canada, a new group focused on the next generation of Jewish Canadians. (B'nai Brith says it's in the process of naming a new envoy to the committee.)

In an email to The CJN, the anti-racism directorate explained that all four subcommittees are tasked with providing “population-specific and community perspectives on supporting and implementing ... anti-racism initiatives” and providing input on “ongoing public awareness and education initiatives related to systemic racism.”

Asked what it has achieved, Farber said that even establishing an anti-racism directorate is an accomplishment, because it recognizes that within issues around racism, anti-Semitism “is seen individually and separately as a very impactful issue of discrimination that has to be dealt with on its own basis. That recognition has never been there before, officially.”

And “there’s a lot more to be done. We are just scratching the surface,” he added.

One hope is for the committee to reach out to FAST (Fighting Anti-Semitism Together), an activist group that opposes anti-Semitism, and Facing History and Ourselves, an educational organization that aims to engage students in issues of racism and genocide, Farber said.

Freedman told The CJN that the committee has narrowed its focus to education initiatives.

“One of our main areas is education and raising public awareness on anti-Semitism to ensure there’s a multi-faceted approach to the issue that involves all levels of government,” she said.

As for a definition of anti-Semitism, Freedman said that she and Farber will recommend that the committee adopt the one used by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which has also been adopted by the government of Canada. It says that anti-Semitism “is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”



## Paint the town red!

May Day cartoon by Mike Constable

© Michael L. Miller 05/2017 www.mll.com

The only times the anti-Semitism subcommittee has been in the news was when two groups, Independent Jewish Voices Canada (IJV) and the United Jewish People’s Order (UJPO), complained that they were deliberately excluded because they are openly critical of Israel and support Palestinian rights.

The organizations launched a petition on [change.org](http://change.org), saying the directorate would “increase its credibility and effectiveness” by including “a greater range of Jewish voices, including those who are critical of Israel.” To date, it has nearly 900 signatures.

On Feb. 20, Teresa Armstrong, an NDP MPP from London, tabled the petition in the legislature.

Criticism of Israel’s government or policies “is not inherently anti-Semitic,” she said, quoting the petition, and confusing criticism of Israel’s government or policies with anti-Semitism “can have the adverse effect of silencing critical voices.”

Farber said that the two groups were not deliberately excluded, but that they focused on including “those Jewish organizations which deal specifically with anti-Semitism.” The focus of UJPO and IJV is not anti-Semitism, he said. ♦

<http://www.cjnnews.com/news/canada/has-ontarios-anti-semitism-subcommittee-accomplished-anything>

---

## MIDDLE EAST

---

### B’Tselem: Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

By Sam Blatt

*This is the third in the series on Israeli (both Jewish and Palestinian) NGOs.*

B’Tselem defines its mission as, simply, to end Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, basing its premise that that ending the occupation regime is the only way to forge a future in which human rights, democracy, liberty and equality are ensured to all persons living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

The organization was given the name B’Tselem, by former Member of Knesset Yossi Sarid. It is taken from Genesis 1:27: “And God created humans in his image. In the image of God did He create him.” It literally means “in the image of” in Hebrew and is also used as a synonym for human dignity. The name expresses the Jewish and

universal moral edict to respect and protect the human rights of all people.

B'Tselem was founded in 1989 and until recently devoted most of its efforts to documenting human rights violations that come under Israel's purview as occupying power. This included publishing statistics, testimonies, video footage and reports concerning human rights violations and their implications, in order to promote better living conditions for the occupied population – with the understanding that the occupation was to be a passing matter.

Yet after almost half a century of occupation, it is clear that this reality cannot be viewed as temporary. Therefore, in addition to documenting and publicizing human rights violations, it is also exposing the injustice, violence and dispossession that lie at the very core of the occupation, with the goal of expediting its end.

B'Tselem field workers have been seen in the past few years filming in Hebron and the surrounding hills. One of its most innovative strategies has been to distribute cameras to Palestinians, so that they can film violations by both army and settlers against farmers, shepherds, and other Palestinian civilians (often in Hebron). For this video project it was awarded the British One World Media Award (2009) and the Israeli Documentary Filmmakers Forum Award (2012), among others.

Other awards it has received include the Carter-Menil Award for Human Rights, together with Al-Haq (1989), the Danish PL Foundation Human Rights Award, together with Al-Haq (2011), and the Stockholm Human Rights Award (2014).

Along with several other human Rights NGOs (read: anti-Occupation) B'Tselem is often criticized by the Israeli government and targeted by legislation to curtail its activities or funding.

B'Tselem is an independent, non-partisan organization. It is funded by donations alone, from foundations in Europe and North America, and from private individuals in Israel and abroad. ♦



*Area residents traditionally lived in caves, using them as a shared family space, for living, cooking, and sheltering*

*livestock. Today, the authorities prohibit the communities from building permanent homes and developing in accordance with community needs and they continue to live in cramped conditions in the ancient caves.*

---

## Uri Avnery's column

### A Song Is Born

07/04/18

A FRIEND from overseas sent me the recording of a song. An Arab song, with a soft Arab melody, sung by an Arab girls' choir, accompanied by a flute.

It goes like this:

*Ahed / You are the promise and the glory / Standing as high as an olive tree / From the cradle to the present / Your honor will not be violated / Palestine has been planted in us / As a dock for every ship / We are the land and you are the water /*

*You are covered with blond hair / You are as pure as Jerusalem / You taught our generation how the forgotten people should revolt / They thought the Palestinians are afraid of them because they are wearing armor and holding a weapon? / Palestine has been planted in us / As a dock for every ship / Our nation must be united and resist for the freedom of Palestine and the prisoners /*

*Your blue eyes are a lighthouse / For a country that has every religion / You united the people far away and close / You ignited the spark in all our hearts / Your head is raised up high encouraging us / You ignited the light in our darkness /*

*Despite the softness of your hands / Your hands have shaken the world / Your hands returned the slap to the occupier / And returned esteem to the nation / Palestine has been planted in us / As a dock for every ship / We are the land and you are the water.*

IF I were an adherent of the occupation, this song would frighten me very much. Because the force of songs is much stronger than the force of weapons. A gun wears out, but a song lasts forever.

In the early days of the Israeli army, there was a slogan hanging in our mess: "An army that is singing is an army of victory!"

The present Palestinian generation has decided to lower its head and wait until the storm has passed. The coming Palestinian generation may act in a completely different way.

On the eve of my 15th birthday, I joined an underground (or "terrorist") group that fought against the British colonial regime. Almost eighty years later I remember just about every song of that time, word for



word. Songs like “We are unknown soldiers without uniforms...” and many more. Afterwards I wrote an anthem for my company.

I am not a poet. Far from it. But I have written some songs in my time, including “Samson’s Foxes”, an anthem for my commando unit in the Israeli army. So I know the force of a song. Especially a song about the heroism of a 16 year old girl.

THE MOMENT I saw the scene of Ahed al-Tamimi boxing the face of an Israeli army captain, I knew that something important had happened.

The British politician Lord Acton famously wrote: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” I would add: “Occupying another people tends to make you stupid, and a long occupation makes you utterly stupid.”

In my youth, when I was already a member of the anti-British underground, I was working in the office of a British lawyer, many of whose clients were officials of the British administration. I often asked myself: “How can it be that such intelligent people can behave so stupidly?” They were nice people, who treated even a lowly clerk like me politely. But they had no alternative: the occupation compels the occupier to behave stupidly.

It works like this: in order to uphold an occupation regime for any length of time, the occupier must believe in the superiority of his race and in the inferiority of his subjects, who are seen as primitive creatures. Otherwise, what gives him the right to subject another people? That is exactly what has happened to us now.

THE MOMENT I saw the face-boxing scene on TV, I knew that something momentous had happened. The Palestinian people now have a national heroine. The Palestinian youth now has a model to emulate.

The Israeli public has got used to the occupation. They believe that this is a normal situation, that the occupation can go on forever. But the occupation is not a natural situation, and some day it will come to an end.

Ten thousand British ruled hundreds of millions of Indians, until a skinny man called Gandhi went to produce salt on the seashore, contrary to the law. The Indian youth arose, and British rule fell away like a leaf from a tree in autumn.

The same stupidity took hold of all the occupation enforcers who dealt with Ahed al-Tamimi. Army officers. Prosecutors, military judges.

If we were wise occupiers – an oxymoron – we would have sent Ahed home long ago. Expelled her by force from

the prison. But we are still keeping her locked up. Her and her mother.

True, some days ago the army realized its own stupidity. With the help of Ahed’s devoted (Jewish) advocate, Gabi Lasky, a “compromise” was worked out. Several charges were dropped and Ahed was sentenced to “only” eight months in prison.

She will be released in three more months. But that is too late: the picture of Ahed is already engraved in the mind of every Palestinian boy or girl. Ahed, the girl covered with blond hair, her blue eyes shining like a lighthouse. Ahed the saint. Ahed the savior.

The Palestinian Jeanne d’ Arc, the national symbol.

THE STORY of Ahed al-Tamimi happened in the West Bank. But it resounded in the Gaza Strip, too.

For most Israelis, the Gaza Strip is something else. It is not occupied territory. It does not concern us.

But the situation of the Gaza Strip is even worse than straight occupation. The strip is completely surrounded. North and east is Israel, west is the sea, where the Israeli navy shoots at everything except for fishing boats close to the shore. The south belongs to Egypt, which behaves even worse than the Israelis and in close cooperation with them.

The situation in the Gaza Strip is as close to hell as one can get. Food at subsistence level, electricity for two to four hours a day, the water is polluted. Work is extremely scarce. Only the most severely ill are let out.

Why? It has to do with the demon that plagues the Israeli government: the demographic devil.

In historical Palestine, the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan river, there now live about 13 million people, roughly half Jewish and half Arab, with a slight edge in favor of the Arabs. Numbers are uncertain, but roughly there are 3 million Arabs in the West Bank, 2 million in the Gaza Strip and 1.5 million Arab citizens in Israel. The Arab birthrate is higher than the Jewish average.

These numbers disturb the sleep of many Israeli officials, especially politicians. They look for means to change the balance. They once had the illusion that if the situation in Gaza got unbearable, people from Gaza would emigrate. But it did not happen. Palestinians have become very tenacious.

Then a new fashion came up: just ignore the bastards. Just imagine that the Gaza Strip has sunk into the sea, as one Israeli politician once prayed. No Strip. Two million Palestinian less.

But the Strip is there. True, Gaza is ruled by the Islamic Hamas party, while the West Bank is ruled by Abu Mazen’s PLO, and the enmity between the two is vicious.

---

## INTERNATIONAL

---

### A brief history of Stephen Hawking's complicated relationship with Israel

By Judy Maltz, March 15, 2018

Stephen Hawking was critical of Israel and supported BDS, but also visited Israel a number of times and based his revolutionary theory on the works of an Israeli scientist

Stephen Hawking, the world-renowned physicist who died on Wednesday, had a difficult relationship with Israel.

In 2013, his decision to boycott a conference in Jerusalem honoring Shimon Peres, the late Israeli president, made international headlines, sparking outrage in Israel and much of the Jewish world.

The conference, which was meant to mark the 90th birthday of the Israeli leader, was attended by world leaders and celebrities, among them former U.S. President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Hawking's decision to back out was first reported in *The Guardian*.

Hawking initially notified the organizers that he would attend, but under pressure from the international Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement, he reneged. At first, his associates said that Hawking would not be attending because of his failing health. Only later did it emerge that his decision had been prompted by pressure from the boycott movement.

In a letter to the conference organizers, Hawking wrote: "I have received a number of letters from Palestinian academics. They are unanimous that I should respect the boycott. In view of this, I must withdraw from the conference."

Responding to his decision, the conference organizers issued an angry statement saying: "The academic boycott is in our view outrageous and improper, certainly for someone for whom the spirit of liberty lies at the basis of his human and academic mission. Israel is a democracy in which all individuals are free to express their opinions, whatever they may be. The imposition of a boycott is incompatible with open, democratic dialogue."

Although many musicians and artists have declined to visit Israel as a way of showing solidarity with the Palestinians, Hawking was the first scientist of his stature to embrace the boycott movement.

Many opposed to his decision took to social media at the time to vent their anger, some accusing him of outright anti-Semitism and others going so far as to ridicule his physical condition. Much ado was made at the time of the

But that happened in almost all liberation movements in history. In our case, the underground split between the Haganah ("Defense"), which belonged to the official Zionist leadership, and the Irgun ("Organization", short for National Military Organization). Then the Irgun split, and the even more extreme LEHI ("Fighters for the Freedom of Israel", called the "Stern Gang" by the British) was born. They all hated each other.

But among the people, there is no difference at all. They are all Palestinians. Ahed is the heroine of all of them. Perhaps her model played a role in what happened last week.

For some time, the Gaza Strip was quiet. Some kind of *modus vivendi* had even come into being between the Hamas government and the Israeli one. The Israelis congratulated themselves on their cleverness. And then it happened.

Suddenly, as if from nowhere, the population of Gaza stood up. Hamas organized them to assemble on Friday near the border fence, unarmed. A prolonged campaign of passive resistance was to start.

When I was asked what would happen, I said that the Israeli army would shoot to kill. Simple: Israelis don't know how to deal with passive resistance. They shoot in order to turn it into violent resistance. With that they know how to deal. With more violence.

AND THAT is exactly what happened last Friday, the first day of the campaign: snipers were posted along the line, with orders to shoot the "ringleaders" – anyone who stood out. 18 unarmed demonstrators were killed, almost a thousand were shot and wounded.

If anyone thought that the democratic world would stand up and condemn Israel, they were sadly wrong. Reactions were feeble, at most. What was revealed was the incredible hold the Israeli government and its Zionist organization has over the world's political establishments and communication outlets. With few exceptions the atrocious news was not published at all, or as minor items.

But this cannot go on for long. The Gaza protests will continue, especially on Fridays (the Muslim holy day), until May 15, the Naqba ("Catastrophe") Day, which commemorates the mass flight/expulsion of half the Palestinian people from their homes. Palestinian flags will fill screens around the globe.

Ahed will still be in prison. ♦

<http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1523017627/>

fact that the computer-based system through which he communicates to the world runs on a chip designed by Israel's Intel team.

Writing in *Time Magazine* then, David Wolpe, the prominent Los Angeles rabbi, voiced his indignation. "As Hawking must know," he wrote, "he is boycotting precisely those most likely to agree with his political stance, the left-wing academic community in Israel. It's hard to believe he endorses a theory that if he can make some academic conferences a tad less prestigious, peace will bloom."

It was not the first time that Hawking had taken sides with the Palestinians against Israel. In 2009, in an interview with *Al Jazeera*, he condemned the recent Israeli military operation in Gaza, saying it was "'plain out of proportion... The situation is like that of South Africa before 1990 and cannot continue."

As recently as last year, Hawking urged his millions of followers on Facebook to donate money to help finance a series of lectures in physics for Palestinian graduate students in the West Bank.

Hawking visited Israel four times, most recently in 2006, when as a guest of the British embassy in Tel Aviv, he delivered public lectures at Israeli and Palestinian universities.

Arguably the most famous scientist in the world, Hawking enjoyed a special relationship with a now-deceased Israeli physicist, Jakob Bekenstein, who died in 2015. Bekenstein, who was a professor at both Ben-Gurion University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem before moving back to the United States, is considered to be the man who taught Hawking a thing or two about black holes. Hawking was initially one of Bekenstein's detractors, but he eventually embraced the Israeli scientist's groundbreaking ideas, which served as the basis for his own revolutionary theory that black holes give off radiation. ♦

<https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-stephen-hawking-s-complicated-relationship-with-israel-1.5906160>

---

## 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.

585 Cranbrooke Ave,  
Toronto, ON, M6A 2X9  
**Phone: 416-789-5502**  
**Fax: 416-789-5981**

Email: [ujpo@ujpo.org](mailto:ujpo@ujpo.org)

Website: [www.ujpo.org](http://www.ujpo.org)

This newsletter is available online at  
<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/newsletters>

### Affiliations:

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO);  
Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA);  
International Institute for Secular Humanistic  
Judaism (IISHJ)

Edited By UJPO National Board Members

Volunteer produced

**Fair Use/Dealing Notice:** This issue contains some copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in our efforts to advance understanding of journalism, politics, human rights, democracy, social justice and other issues of concern to the public. We believe this constitutes a fair dealing and fair use of any such copyrighted material as provided for in Part III Section 29 of the Canadian Copyright Law and Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Law. In accordance with the sections titled Acts Undertaken Without Motive of Gain (Canada) and Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107 (U.S.), the material in this publication is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this issue for purposes of your own that go beyond fair dealing and fair use, you must obtain prior permission from the copyright owner.