

UJPO News



INSIDE

In the Name of Humanity..1
National UJPO News .. 2
Honourable Mentshn. 3
What's In Order 4
Know UJPO Members. 4
Poetry & Song 5
Yiddish 6
Canada..... 6
USA..... 8
Middle East..... 9
International..... 9

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.

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Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

SS chief may have been duped into ending Final Solution

By Barbara Silverstein, *Canadian Jewish News*, October 5, 2017

On Nov. 25, 1944, the crematoria and gas chambers at Auschwitz were mysteriously blown up. By this time, Germany was losing the war and this demolition was viewed by many as sabotage or an attempt by the Nazis to eradicate evidence of their genocidal atrocities.

However, new research has uncovered a very different explanation. In *In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust*, historian Max Wallace says Heinrich Himmler, the SS chief and architect of the Final Solution, ordered the destruction of the mass murder machinery to spare thousands of Jews.

It was a gesture of goodwill to initiate secret peace negotiations with the Allies, Wallace says. In fact, Himmler had defied Hitler's order to dynamite all the camps and annihilate the remaining Jewish inmates.

Wallace presents an extensively researched thesis to explain Himmler's motives. He says the SS chief realized the Third Reich was doomed and thought he might be able to strike a deal with the United States and Britain to form a western coalition against the Soviet Union.

According to Wallace, Himmler had been convinced – or possibly duped – into thinking that there would be a greater chance of establishing such a pact if the mass slaughter of Jews ended.

Months before Germany's surrender in May of 1945, a cast of players on both sides of the war collaborated in a bold plan to abort the Final Solution. Through their efforts, thousands of Jewish lives were saved.

Wallace suggests that number may have been as high as 300,000, but he also acknowledges that, in the final months of the war, thousands of Jews still perished on forced death marches or from disease and starvation.

A key player in the covert operation with Himmler was Recha Sternbuch, an Orthodox woman based in Switzerland. Before the war, she had secretly helped thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria escape from the Nazis.

Working on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis (UOR), Sternbuch and her husband, Isaac, also played an important part in the rescue of 500 eastern European Orthodox rabbis who were given safe passage to Shanghai.

As representatives of UOR, the Sternbuchs consulted with diplomats and politicians and raised money and/ or funneled it for the negotiations with Himmler and other Nazi officials.

They also enlisted an unlikely ally, Jean-Marie Musy, a Nazi sympathizer and the former president of the Swiss confederation. The Sternbuchs asked him to lobby Himmler for the release of all the Jewish people imprisoned by Germany. Musy happened to be an acquaintance of Himmler, but the retired politician was horrified by Nazi genocide. *Continued on page 10*



Max Wallace at UJPO-Toronto Alternative Shabbes presenting his book *In the Name of Humanity*. Photo: Rachel Epstein

NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

FROM TORONTO

By Julia Barnett and Rachel Epstein

It has been a busy time for UJPO-Toronto, including our Annual General Meeting on Sunday, November 5, 2017. Here are some highlights:

Rosh Hashonah/Yom Kippur: We welcomed the New Year with our traditional Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur ceremonies. This year we experimented by holding the Rosh Hashonah service in the evening. While well-attended, many attendees expressed the loss of somewhere to go during the days of Rosh Hashonah, so next year we will revert to a daytime event.

Given the difficult nature of the times, it is sometimes difficult to know where to turn for inspiration and hope. This year, instead of a statement from the organization, we turned to the poets for thought and guidance. At Rosh Hashonah, Sue Goldstein read Aurora Levins Morales' poem *V'ahavta*, and at Yom Kippur, Emmanuel Ortiz's *A Moment of Silence*.

Camp Naivelt: After a robust and exciting season, Camp Naivelt members are turning their attention to organizing the work of running the camp in a sustainable way. It seems no longer possible to rely solely, or primarily, on an ever-changing group of part-time, seasonal volunteers. In response, four working groups have been formed who will carry out their work from now until camp opens next spring/summer. The groups are responsible for: hiring a camp manager; managing public buildings and spaces, starting with the renovation of the Ritz; reviewing governance documents and policies; environmental considerations.

Morris Winchevsky School: Lots of exciting new developments at the Morris Winchevsky Shule. The school's enrollment is now at 37 students, up 37% from last year. After attending a series of workshops on Experiential Education, Education Director, Lia Tarachansky, has revised the entire curriculum, incorporating an experiential approach and ensuring that each year builds on the last. We have recently welcomed two new teachers: Alex Barnes for the Grades 4 – 6 class and Sterling Stutz for the B'nai Mitzvah class. The shule celebrated Sukkes on October 1. As is the tradition, the event was held outdoors, around a campfire at Dufferin Grove Park. Lev Jaegar and Shlomit Segal assembled the Sukkah, and those who attended participated in a fun family game of "Jewperdy", through which they learned about the harvest festival and its rich symbolism of unity and harmony.

Zing! Zing! Zing! Our new singing group, organized by Max Wallace and led by Rachel Sheinin and Hartley Wynberg, continues to meet monthly, offering those who love to sing an opportunity to come together with others to learn new songs in an assortment of languages. Each month sees approximately 30 people coming out to zing!



Zinging October 19 at Winchevsky.

Photo: Rachel Epstein

Other programming: We are collecting names and gauging interest in working groups related to our social justice priorities: Indigenous Rights, the Environment, Racial and Economic Justice, LGBTQ+ issues and Israel/Palestine. We continue with our monthly Alternative Shabbes events, the most recent being an evening of intergenerational dialogue on Jewish activism. Jointly sponsored by IfNotNow – Toronto and UJPO-Toronto, the event aimed to build community across generations through a discussion of Jewish activism, past, present and future. Attended by close to 40 people, the room was abuzz with talk, laughter and connection. We are currently thinking about a follow-up event.

The Alternative Shabbes on November 10, 2017 was a book launch for our own Max Wallace's bestselling book, *In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust*. We are also offering a workshop series, in collaboration with Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), called "Beyond Polarized Kvetching: How to Effectively Communicate on Israel/Palestine." In January, also in collaboration with IJV, we will be offering a reading/workshop series on the History of Zionism: Then and Now, facilitated by Sheryl and Sydney Nestel. On November 30 we are sponsoring a talk by Jonathan Kuttab, a Palestinian lawyer who is currently a visiting scholar at Osgoode Hall Law School. Our Executive Director, Rachel Epstein, has been attending a four-part educational series put on by the Danforth Jewish Circle, in partnership with *Ve'ahavta*, called *Walking Together: Jewish Communities Learning about Indigenous Issues*. She and other UJPO members attended an information meeting about Grassy Narrows on Monday, November 6. We continue to develop new connections with younger Jewish activists who are interested in partnering with us on student placements and

other initiatives that will bring more youth into the UJPO community. ♦

Winnipeg summer activities

By Mark Golden

UJPO-Winnipeg joined members of a number of other groups to organize a Celebration of Diversity at the Manitoba Legislature. The gathering, attended by about 500 people, responded to the appalling rally and attacks at Charlottesville, Virginia and to the neo-Nazis' threats to hold similar events here and elsewhere. Speakers, including Rabbi Alan Green, represented eight religions.

Schmoozefest, our annual welcome for members returning for the fall season, featured presentations by Corey Balsam, the new national coordinator for Independent Jewish Voices Canada, and Robert Massoud, founder of the Zatoun project, dedicated to the production and distribution of Palestinian olive oil. Both were in town to attend the conference of UNJPPI (United for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel).

The North End Jewish Folk Choir performed on the opening nights of both the UNJPPI conference and the reunion for students and staff of the local Jewish schools.

Our secretary, Harriet Zaidman, will launch *Benny's Dream Horse*, her third illustrated children's book, at McNally Robinson booksellers on Sunday, November 26. ♦

FROM VANCOUVER

By Carl Rosenberg

The Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture is the home of many programs and activities which will be of interest to readers of *UJPO News*. The *Fraytik Tsu Nakht*, the Peretz Centre's monthly secular shabbes gathering, recently featured longtime CBC producer Neil Ritchie, who earlier gave a presentation on the life and work of Leonard Bernstein. This time he discussed the work of a major Canadian artist – poet, singer/songwriter and novelist Leonard Cohen, with vivid audiovisual clips of his performances. I hope Neil comes to speak to us again, perhaps – who knows? – about other Leonards.

In this column I've already reported on the Peretz Centre's superb reading and discussion group devoted to the work of I.L. Peretz. Led by Al Stein, the group has gathered to read the book *I.L. Peretz and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture*, by Yiddish scholar Ruth R. Wisse, and from Peretz's own stories in English translation. The discussion has been both lighthearted and highly stimulating, reflecting the various perspectives which the participants bring to it.

Having read through Prof. Wisse's book and many of

Peretz's stories, the group has expanded to readings from other Jewish writers, both Yiddish writers in English translation and English-language writers, and is now called English-language Exploration of Jewish Writers. Its expanded range has embraced stories by American writer Grace Paley and Canadian Yiddish writer Chava Rosenfarb, and the group plans to go on to works in various genres – stories, essays, poetry, reportage – by authors ranging from Sholem Aleichem to the Polish writer Bruno Schulz to the contemporary American writer Deborah Eisenberg.

I find this program one of the most rewarding I've taken part in, and hope it continues for a long time to come. ♦

FROM HAMILTON

By Paul Weinberg and Lyn Center

Close to 60 people attended Max Wallace's lecture about the content of his new book at Hamilton's premier independent book store, Bryan Prince Bookseller, which along with Hamilton UJPO, co-sponsored the event on the evening of Nov. 16. It was preceded by a dinner at a nearby restaurant and followed by a cozy gathering at the home of an interested friend.

Max gave a powerful summary of his book, *In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust*, (see Barbara Silverstein's article on page 1).

The story of rescue efforts by Orthodox Jews during World War has largely been ignored or neglected by the generally secular and mainstream Holocaust historians, Max told the gathering. He described it as a serious oversight that led him, a secular guy to boot, to uncover valuable archival documentation during his 15 years of research to pursue this subject.

US journalist and anti-war critic Gareth Porter has coined the term, "investigative history," to describe what he does. The prolific author Max Wallace has accomplished something similar with *In the Name of Humanity*.

We are very grateful to Max for coming to our city to present his impressive and unique research on the history of the Holocaust. ♦

HONOURABLE MENTSHN

[One of] Four [Winnipeg] individuals who deserve recognition

By Bernie Bellan, *Jewish Post and News*

Local children's writer and librarian [and Winnipeg UJPO Executive Board's secretary]



Harriet Zaidman. Photo: Jewish Post and News

Harriet Zaidman launched her third children's novel at McNally Robinson's on Sunday, November 26 at 2:00 pm. *Benny's Dream Horse* is based on a story by Harriet's late father, Ben Zaidman.

According to information provided, "Benny has a dream to turn a delivery horse into a galloping steed so he can be a cowboy. When his impatience gets the better of him, his plan takes a dangerous turn. With love and understanding from his family and especially his kind neighbour, Benny learns how to make his dream come true in a different way."

Harriet Zaidman tells a timeless story about childhood yearnings. Tom Andrich's watercolour paintings evoke a time when hopes and dreams counted as riches. Harriet Zaidman lives in Winnipeg. As a teacher-librarian for 25 years, she introduced children to the world of literature. Picture books inspired her to write her first two titles, *Daisy's Biggest Success* and *Sherman and the Sheep Shape Contest*. Harriet is a freelance writer and reviews books for *The Winnipeg Free Press* and *CM: Canadian Review of Materials*. ♦

<http://www.jewishpostandnews.ca/local/2438-four-individuals-who-deserve-recognition>

Ed. note: Harriet, formerly on the Winnipeg UJPO Executive, took a sabbatical to fulfill a teaching undertaking and returned this fall. She wrote the food column in the late Outlook Magazine and participated in and recorded several UJPO Annual National Board Meetings. Welcome back Harriet, we missed you.

WHAT'S IN ORDER

- Best wishes to Barbara Blaser on her retirement from her role as UJPO Treasurer
- Mazl tov to Joyce Wayne on her recent marriage to Sandy von Kaldenberg
- UJPO-Toronto welcomes new members Ilana Gutman and Lois Fine
- Condolences to Marnie Wohl Bennett and Jeremiah Bennett on the passing of their sister-in-law

GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

Sarah Latha

Since when have you been an UJPO member?

I joined UJPO a few years ago, having spent a special few summers as a teen with my family actively involved in the Camp Naivelt and UJPO community of the mid '90s. I was

drawn back to the organization out of a longing for the rich political and cultural environment that is UJPO and Camp Naivelt, and a desire to share this with my children.

In which boards and/or committees are you active?

I have just ended a two year term as an MWS/UJPO Director, and I continue to sit on the membership committee.

What is your life outside UJPO?

Life is very full. Parent, activist, social policy analyst, elder caregiver, novice plumber... and that's just to start. With three children at home (two of whom are high school bound next year!), I remain active in the Social Justice Committee of the alternative school I helped to found, The Grove Community School, as well as numerous other community initiatives. These days I preoccupy myself a great deal with concerns around the everyday struggle of working people and the fact that working conditions are growing more and more precarious all the time. I think the current College Faculty strike is highlighting core issues at the heart of the working class struggle: low wages, job security, and widespread exploitation built into the very Terms of Employment.

How do you see yourself contributing to the organization?

I have always had my feet – and my heart – in multiple worlds. Growing up biracial and Muslim in Toronto in the '80s, I looked around and saw no one like me. Radicalized at a young age both by my connection to the anti-Apartheid struggle, and by living under Mike Harris' regime in Ontario, I slowly learned that being on the margins was far from a place of lacking: inhabiting the periphery was a fruitful launch point to work in social movements and build bridges across difference. It is from this place that my contributions to UJPO attempt to translate both a youthful urge for renewal and change with an old order respect for tradition and the grassroots legacy of our organization. On the membership committee for example I am a philosophical stalwart who reviews each application for evidence that the applicant really gets our grassroots, socialist roots and finds these relevant for today.

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

I am very proud of the work that UJPO is doing as a secular Jewish voice for peace and justice, particularly around the



Sarah at the Toronto Women's March. Photo from Facebook

POETRY & SONG

Springhill Mine Disaster - October 1958

Though the song commemorating the Springhill mine disaster refers to the mine collapse that occurred in 1958, the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia, actually memorializes three mining disasters: 1891, 1956, and October 23, 1958. (See song source, below.)

At 8:06 pm, on October 23, an enormous shock wave “severely impacted the four levels of the mine.” The strength of the shock alerted residents in Springhill, and miners from the town immediately gathered to begin the rescue effort. (The wave was strong enough to register on seismic scales in Ottawa, Quebec, Halifax and Dartmouth.) By 4:00 am on October 24, seventy-five survivors had been brought to the surface.

The enormity of the quake attracted media to the mine site, and the disaster became famous as the first major international event to appear in live television broadcasts (on the CBC).

On Saturday, October 25 the General Manager of Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation, owners of the mine, stated that there was no hope for any more trapped miners to be rescued; the rescuers nevertheless continued with their efforts, and on the morning of Wednesday, October 29, contact was established with a group of 12 survivors, who were brought to the surface early on Thursday morning. On Saturday, November 1, another group of seven survivors was found and rescued. Thus, of the 174 miners in No. 2 colliery at the time of the shock wave, 75 died and 99 were rescued. Those who were not immediately killed by the crushing rubble were killed by the gases.

On November 7 (a week after the last survivors were rescued), bluegrass musician Bill Clifton recorded “Springhill Disaster” a song he adapted from a poem written by a mine survivor, Maurice Ruddick. During the nine days the miners were trapped, Ruddick cheered his comrades with his singing. The mother of one of the miners later declared “If it wasn’t for Maurice, they’d all have been dead.” He was chosen as Canada’s “Citizen of the Year”.

Above content assembled and paraphrased from various Internet sources by Sam Blatt.

In the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia
Down in the dark of the Cumberland Mine
There’s blood on the coal and the miners lie
In roads that never saw sun nor sky.

Palestinian liberation struggle. At the same time, I think we have an opportunity to build our capacity – as both individual UJPO members and as an organization – to engage in Courageous Conversations, both about Israel but also about other difficult topics. I am thrilled that this is happening through the ‘Beyond Kvetching’ workshop series around Israel/Palestine, and would love it if this skill building approach could be expanded. There are also critical indigenous struggles happening right now that urgently need our allyship.

Finally, I would say that I am eager to see growth and renewal of the Jewish cultural aspect of our organization. It may seem strange for me to say this as a non-Jew, but the cultural richness that is UJPO’s legacy is what really feels like home to me. Other members are actively working to revitalize our Jewish cultural dynamism, and I dearly hope this can be embraced as a strategic direction for our organization.

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

I have just finished reading the script of the beautiful “My Name is Asher Lev” – a play by Aaron Posner adapted from the novel by Chaim Potok. This heartrending story portrays the tensions that Asher, a gifted artist, experiences between his Hasidic upbringing and his creative calling. It is both a classic Jewish tale of choosing between art and faith, and a universal parable about the often heavy price of staying true to your beliefs. While the story explores what it means to be an artist, ultimately for me these are the same questions that underlie what it means to be human. Produced by Studio 180 Theatre, the play is currently running until November 26 at the Greenwin Theatre at the Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts on Yonge Street.

Anything else?

Growing up in the South African diaspora, I had a pretty intimate knowledge of what The Struggle had been like; I had family members who were tortured and jailed for their activism alongside Nelson Mandela. I also knew there had been South African whites who were active in the movement, and I came to realize that the majority of them were Jewish. These were people who often enjoyed the same privileges as the dominant white minority, and yet perhaps found something in their Jewish identity that called them to defy Apartheid’s injustice. This allyship and solidarity among people has been a constant source of inspiration for me throughout my life. It’s no wonder I have found threads of connection with so many UJPO members who I now consider among my dearest friends and chosen family. ♦

In the town of Springhill, you don't sleep easy
Often the earth will tremble and roll
When the earth is restless, miners die
Bone and blood is the price of coal.
In the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia
Late in the year of fifty-eight
The day still comes and the sun still shines
(But it's) Dark as the grave in the Cumberland mine.

Down at the coal face, miners working
Rattle of the belt and the cutter's blade
Rumble of the rock and the walls closed round
(The) Living and the dead men two miles down.

Twelve men lay two miles from the pit shaft
Twelve men lay in the dark and sang
Long hot days in the miners tomb
(It was) Three feet high and a hundred long.

Three days past and the lamps gave out
And Caleb Rushton got up and said
We've no more water, or light, or bread
(So we'll) Live on song and hope instead.

Listen for the shouts of the blackfaced miners
Listen thru the rubble for a rescue team
Three hundred feet of coal and slag
Hope imprisoned in a three foot seam.

Twelve days passed and some were rescued
Leaving the dead to lie alone
Thru all their days they dug their grave
Two miles of earth for a marking stone. ♦

YIDDISH

Yiddish tattooing: embodied text

By Diana Clarke, July 6, 2017, *On the Bowery*.

Ed. Note: With this issue we begin a column of this most interesting topic – tattoos in Yiddish or on Yiddish subjects! We welcome your comments and stories!

There's a lot of cultural baggage around tattoos in Jewish contexts, or with Jewish connotations. For some Jews, the idea of tattooing evokes identification numbers tattooed on prisoners during the Holocaust, and others still hold by the widespread notion that someone with tattoos can't be buried in a Jewish cemetery, an idea over which Jewish movements have debated and issued responses in recent years. In any case, taboo can't be the end of the story. Lives and texts – and bodies, art, trauma, all of which, of course, are connected – are always more complicated than that. The truth of complication, and a curiosity about it, drew me as a writer, a symbolist, and a Yiddishist with tattoos, to the lived intersection of Yiddish and tattooing: each in its own

way a subculture (only one necessarily subcutaneous), each weighted with history and meaning. What about Yiddish gets under our skin, both literally and metaphorically? What draws us to embody language, or to make explicit how language embodies us? I found other folks with Yiddish tattoos through friends and friends-of-friends and asked each person to write a bit about their Yiddish tattoo(s) in their own words:

Diana Clarke's tattoo and explanation:

This was my first tattoo, and I got it in 2014 in Salt Lake City, Utah. I don't remember the name of the artist who inked it, but I designed the style of the lettering myself, and I actually quite love how it blurred as it healed. I'd been thinking for a long time about the *golem* of Prague, who of course has *emes* or "truth" written on its clay forehead, and becomes lifeless when the *alef* is removed, transforming the word into *mes*, or death. I liked the idea of truth and death as opposites, the idea that words have power to give or take life from clay. And there's a little Yiddish joke in it, just for me: rather than get the word tattooed on my forehead, where the *golem* has it, I included a little star inside the *alef*, since the Yiddish word for forehead, *shtern*, also means star. ♦



<https://ingeveb.org/blog/yiddish-tattooing-embodied-text>

CANADA

'Free trade' has come to mean powerful interests get whatever they want

By Yves Engler, August 8, 2017

"Free trade" has become a euphemism for "whatever power wants," no matter how tangentially tied to transferring goods across international borders.

In an extreme example, Ottawa recently said its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Israel trumps Canada's Food and Drugs Act since accurately labelling two wines might undermine a half-century long, illegal, military occupation.

Of little connection to international trade, the North American Free Trade Agreement – and subsequent FTAs – has granted foreign corporations the ability to bypass domestic courts and sue governments in secret tribunals for pursuing policies that interfere with their profit making. Over 75 cases have been brought before the Investor State Dispute Settlement section of NAFTA, which has resulted in tens of millions of dollars paid to companies impacted by

Ottawa banning the export of toxic PCB wastes or the import of suspected neurotoxin gasoline additive MMT.

Strengthening this dynamic, Canada's "free trade" deal with the European Union (CETA) empowers companies to sue municipalities if they expand public services. For instance, a municipality unhappy with private water delivery could face a suit if they tried to remunicipalize (or de-privatize) this service.

CETA, TPP, WTO and other self-described "free trade" agreements also extend patent and copyright protections (monopolies), which stifle competition, a pillar of free trade ideology. CETA's increased patent protections are expected to drive up already high Canadian pharmaceutical drug costs by between \$850 million and \$1.65 billion a year. Negotiations to "modernize NAFTA" could end up granting big pharma perks that would effectively block Canada's ability to set up universal pharmacare. Similarly, the yet to be signed TPP strengthens patents and would increase the length of copyright in Canada from 50 to 70 years after the death of an author.

It is little exaggeration to say politicians have come to employ the term "free trade" to mean "whatever powerful corporations want." But, the Trudeau Liberals recently broadened the term's definition even further. In a move to make "free trade" mean "whatever powerful interests want," they announced that Canada's FTA with Israel supersedes this country's Food and Drugs Act.

After David Kattenburg repeatedly complained about inaccurate labels on two wines sold in Ontario, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) notified the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) that it "would not be acceptable and would be considered misleading" to declare Israel as the country of origin for wines produced in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Quoting from official Canadian policy, CFIA noted that "the government of Canada does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over the territories occupied in 1967."

In response to pressure from the Israeli embassy, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and B'nai Brith, CFIA quickly reversed its decision. "We did not fully consider the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement," a terse CFIA statement explained. "These wines adhere to the Agreement and therefore we can confirm that the products in question can be sold as currently labelled."

In other words, the government is publicly proclaiming that the FTA trumps Canada's consumer protections. But, this is little more than a pretext to avoid a conflict with B'nai Brith, CIJA and Israeli officials, according to Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Trade and Investment Research Project director Scott Sinclair. "This trade-related rationale does not stand up to scrutiny,"



Sinclair writes. "The Canadian government, the CFIA and the LCBO are well within their legal and trade treaty rights to insist that products from the occupied territories be clearly labelled as such. There is nothing in the CIFTA [Canada-Israel FTA] that prevents this. The decision to reverse the CFIA's ruling was political. The whole trade argument is a red herring, simply an excuse to provide cover for the CFIA to backtrack under pressure."

In another commentary on the government "backtracking under pressure," Peter Larson points out that CIFTA grants Israel an important concession that seeks to sidestep Canada's commitments under international law. The agreement says, "unless otherwise specified, 'territory' means with respect to Israel the territory where its customs laws are applied," but omits "in accordance with international law," which is in many of Canada's other free trade agreements. This omission seeks to allow goods produced on land occupied in contravention of the 4th Geneva Convention and Statute of Rome to benefit from CIFTA.

David Kattenburg and his lawyer Dmitri Lascaris will be challenging CFIA's decision in court. On Monday they filed an appeal of the wine labelling and released a statement to the media.

The Council of Canadians and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives have recently added their voices to those criticizing CFIA's decision. The NDP's trade critic has yet to comment.

Kattenburg and Lascaris' court challenge offers NDP leadership candidates Niki Ashton, Charlie Angus, Guy Caron and Jagmeet Singh a good opportunity to express their opposition to defining "free trade" as "whatever power wants." ♦

<https://yvesengler.com/2017/08/08/free-trade-has-come-to-mean-powerful-interests-get-whatever-they-want/>

A tax plan for a new Gilded Age

By the Editorial Board, New York Times, Nov. 2, 2017

With their new bill that would slash taxes on the wealthy and blow up the federal budget deficit, House Republicans and President Trump are making it absolutely clear whom they are working for — the top one percent — and whom they consider dispensable. Well, that's pretty much everybody else.

The bill, which House leaders unveiled on Thursday after weeks of back-room negotiations that only Republicans were privy to, contained multibillion-dollar gifts for corporations, Wall Street titans and rich families. While there are a few peanuts thrown at lower-income and middle-class families, many people of modest means who take advantage of deductions and credits for things like housing, state and local taxes, medical expenses and education costs could end up paying more in taxes.

At the same time, the bill would add \$1.51 trillion to the federal debt over the next decade. In coming years, Republicans will surely point to that inflated debt to argue that it is imperative that Congress slash spending on infrastructure, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Where to begin? The primary goal of this bill is to slash taxes on corporate profits to 20 percent, from 35 percent. Mr. Trump's minions in the White House and Congress are mouthing the same old stale arguments: that businesses will take the money saved on taxes and hire more people and hand it over to employees in raises and bonuses. If only. Credible economists believe the benefits of the cuts would accrue nearly exclusively to shareholders and executives. In fact, about \$70 billion a year, or 35 percent of the benefits, would flow to foreign investors who own shares in American companies, according to Steven Rosenthal at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center.

The bill would also lavish benefits on real estate partnerships, hedge funds and other pass-through businesses, which send their profits directly to their owners without taxes being withheld. Republicans want those business owners to pay taxes of just 25 percent on that income, rather than ordinary rates, which go up to 39.6 percent. Republicans argue that this will benefit small businesses. In fact, a large majority of small-business owners already have personal tax rates below 25 percent. This provision would aid a small group of developers, investors and other tycoons who work in professions or industries where it is relatively easy to set up pass-through businesses. Like, yes, Mr. Trump and his family, who make their money from one such industry: real estate. Let's not

forget that Mr. Trump has not released his tax returns, something every other major-party presidential nominee has done for nearly 40 years.

Republican lawmakers argue that they will put in protections to prevent people from turning their salaries into pass-through income. But their promises ring hollow when they are not even bothering to close the carried-interest loophole used by private-equity and hedge-fund managers to treat some of their income as capital gains, which are taxed at a lower rate than wages. Mr. Trump railed against that tax provision during the 2016 campaign.

On personal income taxes, Republicans say they are simplifying and cutting taxes for most people. But that is not really true. They propose reducing the number of tax brackets to four, from seven, while raising the lowest bracket to 12 percent, from 10 percent. They want to double the standard deduction but eliminate personal exemptions. One new benefit that could help many families would be a \$300 tax credit for tax filers and their dependents who are over 17, like an aged parent. Strangely, it would end after five years. By contrast, the bill's cuts to corporate and other business taxes would be permanent.

The changes that could affect middle-class families the hardest include the elimination of the deduction for state and local income taxes. And the property-tax deductible would be capped at \$10,000. Many people in high-tax states, like California, New Jersey and New York, would be especially hard hit. Those families would also be squeezed by the proposal to cap the mortgage-interest deduction for home purchases starting Thursday, the day the bill was introduced, at \$500,000. Reducing this deduction is worthy of consideration, but it ought to be part of a comprehensive reform of housing subsidies that won't put home buyers in high-cost areas at a disadvantage.

One particularly hardhearted change would eliminate the deduction for medical expenses, which is primarily used by people with serious and chronic illnesses. Gone, too, would be important tax credits and deductions for college tuition and interest on student loans.

Unsurprisingly, the tax bill contains a couple of provisions that are designed to benefit the Trumps and others like them. It would get rid of the alternative minimum tax, which is paid primarily by upper-income families with lots of deductions. This tax accounted for a vast majority of the income tax Mr. Trump paid in 2005, according to a leaked copy of his return. The Trumps would also benefit from the bill's proposed estate tax changes. That tax currently applies to inherited wealth above \$5.5 million. Republicans would exempt wealth up to \$11 million starting next year and eliminate the tax after six years. That would benefit the heirs of just 0.2 percent of

people who die every year, but cost the government \$269 billion over a decade.

It will take experts weeks to fully analyze the House tax bill, but what we already know is frightening enough. No Republican who cares about fairness, economic sense and the financial health of the government can support with a clear conscience this shameless wealth transfer. ♦

https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/02/opinion/trump-republican-tax-plan.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-left-region®ion=opinion-c-col-left-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-left-region&_r=0

MIDDLE EAST

Gisha advocates for Palestinians

UJPO News readers know that our publication has certain regular columns, including one on Israel/Middle East. The news from the Middle East is often not very uplifting. It is important for readers to be aware, however, that in both Israel and Palestine many anti-occupation/social justice NGOs exist, some having been founded many years ago, some more recently. They fight racism, the occupation, inequality, police violence...With this issue we commence a series, looking at both the well known NGOs, and the lesser known ones.

Gisha is a Zionist Israeli not-for-profit organization, founded in 2005, whose goal is to protect the freedom of movement of Palestinians, especially Gaza residents. Gisha promotes rights guaranteed by international and Israeli law.

Since the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel's military has developed a complex system of rules and sanctions to control the movement of the 4.5 million Palestinians who live there.

The restrictions violate the fundamental right of Palestinians to freedom of movement. As a result, additional basic rights are violated, including the right to life, the right to access medical care, the right to education, the right to livelihood, the right to family unity and the right to freedom of religion.

Gisha, whose name means both "access" and "approach," uses legal assistance and public advocacy to protect the rights of Palestinian residents. Because freedom of movement is a precondition for exercising other basic rights, Gisha's work has a multiplier effect in helping residents of the occupied territories access education, jobs, family members and medical care.

As part of its legal work, Gisha represents individuals and organizations in Israeli administrative proceedings and courts. Gisha's legal activity is based on Israeli law, international human rights and humanitarian law.

Since its 2005 establishment Gisha has helped thousands of Palestinians overcome travel restrictions to access education, jobs and professional opportunities and to reunite with family members. In addition to providing individual legal assistance, Gisha is a leading voice on access policy toward Gaza and has contributed to ending sweeping restrictions on the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza through advocacy in Israel and abroad. ♦

See the website gisha.org and an interesting follow up website – <http://gisha.org/en-blog/2017/10/26/10-things-that-can-be-done-to-improve-economic-activity-in-gaza/>

INTERNATIONAL

Who are the Rohingya?

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/14/myanmar-military-exonerates-itself-in-report-on-atrocities-against-rohingya>

Ed. Note: The following is an excerpt from an article in The Guardian. The complete article can be read at the above Internet site. We feel that the current forced emigration of the Rohingya warrants attention by UJPO members, and hence we are including this brief description in this issue.



Rohingya Muslim refugees who entered Bangladesh by makeshift boats, 11/11/2017. Credit: DIBYANGSHU SARKAR/AFP

The Rohingya are Muslims who live in majority-Buddhist Myanmar. They are often described as “the world’s most persecuted minority”.

Nearly all of Myanmar’s 1.1 million Rohingya live in the western coastal state of Rakhine. The government does not recognise them as citizens, effectively rendering them stateless.

In 2012, deadly clashes with Buddhists in Rakhine caused 140,000 Rohingya to flee their homes. Many have since paid people smugglers to take them on dangerous sea voyages to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, where they are often exploited.

Extremist nationalist movements insist the group are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, although the Rohingya say they are native to Rakhine state.

Rights groups accuse Myanmar authorities of ethnic cleansing, systematically forcing Rohingya from the

country through violence and persecution, a charge the government has denied. ♦

Let's help make the rich pay!

Ed note: The disclosure of the Paradise Papers proves the richest contribute no value to society but suck the wealth from those who create it. AVAAZ (a global web movement to bring people-powered politics to decision-making everywhere) is circulating a petition requesting that the G20 shut these practices down. If you wish to add your name to the following go to:

https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/paradise_papers_loc/?ccHDFib

“Dear President Mauricio Macri and leaders of the G20,

The level of global inequality is appalling – eight people own as much wealth as half the planet.

And the gap is growing, thanks in part to the shadowy world of tax havens which lets trillions be syphoned offshore from our economies. Right now, the rich get richer, and the rest of us pay.

Eight years ago the G20 agreed it would shut down these practices. It's time to deliver. We call on you to act immediately to end tax havens and ensure that those that run and exploit them are held to account.

Nobody should be able to evade their duty to pay tax for the public good. It is your responsibility to make that so. As citizens from around the world, we demand action.

Sincerely,...” ♦

To sign go to:

https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/paradise_papers_loc/?ccHDFib

In the Name of Humanity continued from page 1:

Musy and his son Benoit made several perilous trips to Germany. The elder Musy succeeded in liberating 1,200 Jews from Theresienstadt, while the younger Musy brought a total of about 3,000 Jews out of Bergen-Belsen and Ravensbrueck.

On the German side, Felix Kersten, Himmler's Finnish osteopath, convinced the SS chief to save thousands of Jews. This plan was supported by Walter Schellenberg, the SS security chief.

In the Name of Humanity is a multi-layered history that provides context to the events leading up to Himmler's decision to terminate the industrial slaughter of Jews.

Wallace examines the various factions within American Jewry. Essentially, the established community was at odds with Orthodox groups vis-a- vis government intervention in saving European Jewry.

The establishment did not openly criticize U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and other politicians for their inaction on behalf of Jewish refugees and, later, Holocaust victims.

Meanwhile, American Orthodox Jews did not heed government directives. They raised money for the Sternbuchs and others who secretly negotiated with the enemy and illegally exchanged ransom money for Jewish lives, despite such payments being illegal. But Wallace explains that the Orthodox community was guided by *pikuach nefesh*, the *halachic* principle that saving a life supersedes other religious and legal considerations.

Wallace also discusses the conflicts and rivalries within the German leadership. As late as 1945, Hitler loyalists continued to support him, while others like Schellenberg and even Himmler, in the end, recognized the need to replace the Fuehrer.

Wallace spent 15 years researching and writing *In the Name of Humanity*. He worked from archival material – transcripts, diaries, letters, etc. This book is an impressive piece of scholarship and a very compelling chapter of Holocaust history. ♦

Ed. Note: Listen to Max's interview on CBC's "The Current", https://podcast-a.akamaihd.net/mp3/podcasts/current_20171110_38060.mp3.

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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