



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 #39, Issue #2

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

**UNITED JEWISH PEOPLE'S ORDER - CANADA
 and
 THE SOCIALIST PROJECT**

invite you to a unique event about

**THE 1919 WINNIPEG STRIKE
 THE STORY OF JEWISH INVOLVEMENT**

7:00 P.M., Thursday, September 19, 2019

at

**The Winchevsky Centre,
 585 Cranbrooke Ave., Toronto
 416-789-5502 – www.ujpo.org**

Speakers

Roz Usiskin

Past Pres. UJPO Winnipeg & JHSWC*
 UJPO National Board Officer

Harriet Zaidman

UJPO Winnipeg member
 Author, *City on Strike*

MODERATOR – Leo Panitch

Both speakers have family connections to the strikers.

Roz Usiskin's father, Joseph Wolodarsky, was a strike participant whose archival documentation states "...someday, [a] historian may look into my archives as a record of our history." ... **Harriet Zaidman's** family members were Winnipeg workers affected greatly by the strike. They are depicted in her novel *City on Strike*. Copies will be available at the event. She is an author and former teacher-librarian who writes for CM: Review of Materials and for The Winnipeg Free Press.



*Jewish Heritage Society of Western Canada

NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

FROM WINNIPEG

By Harriet Zaidman

UJPO member Harriet Zaidman launched her novel, *City on Strike*, in Winnipeg in April. The middle grade novel traces the life of two children, the son and daughter of Jewish immigrants, during the events of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. The General Strike was the largest labour disruption in Canadian history. The struggle for higher wages and better working conditions was crushed by the Canadian state in concert with a cabal of Winnipeg businessmen, lawyers and other elite. The result was continued poverty for Canadian and North American workers, but also the growth of a strong social movement to organize workers and legislate protections such as socialized medicine, pensions, unemployment insurance, minimum wages, worker safety and more. After the book launch, Harriet made presentations at more than 40 schools and organizations, with more planned in the fall, including Thin Air – The Winnipeg International Writers Festival.

UJPO co-sponsored an evening on the topic of the Strike with the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada. The evening was well-attended by members of the Jewish community as well as organizers of the commemorative events that took place throughout the city. Roz Usiskin spoke about Jewish participation in the strike, with a special mention of her interview with Moishe (Moses) Almazov, a student and radical writer who was arrested in a police sweep of labour and ethnic leaders. Harriet Zaidman spoke about her personal journey to writing *City on Strike*. UJPO members participated in many activities organized in Winnipeg to commemorate the strike. Roz and Harriet will be speaking about the General Strike at the Winchevsky Centre on Thursday, September 19. All are welcome.

The North End Jewish Folk Choir wrapped up another successful season of tunefulness. We performed several times during the year at nursing homes, assisted living residences and for the Sholem Aleichem Community celebrations. We concluded our year with a program of songs at UJPO/SAC annual Warsaw Ghetto Memorial evening, where University of Toronto Yiddish studies professor Dr. Anna Shternshis talked about her discovery of songs written during the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. The subsequent recording called “Yiddish Glory” was nominated for a Grammy Award this year. The choir met one last time to eat and converse at a convivial social evening. The choir will begin singing again later in the fall.

Our annual windup barbecue was held at the home of UJPO Executive Board member Roberta Hechter and her



Cartoon by John Williams

husband Bob Gowenlock. There was a good turnout on the beautiful evening, and discussion took place about plans for future programs.

We are sad to report the death of Winnipeg Executive Board member Sherman Kreiner on July 1. Sherman was also an active leader in the Sholem Aleichem Community in Winnipeg, a baritone in the North End Jewish Folk Choir and volunteered in many other organizations. He worked for the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Program, bringing positive changes to the inner city. Together with his wife Cindy Coker, Sherman worked to make the world a better place. Cindy, their two children and two grandchildren and all the UJPO community will miss his intelligent, kind, curious and witty personality. ♦

FROM TORONTO

By Rachel Epstein

It's been a hot summer in Toronto, and, while many of our programs go on hiatus through the summer, Camp Naivelt, our summer community outside the city, has been abuzz with activity.

Camp Naivelt:

Highlights of Camp Naivelt's summer include the ever popular Music Camp (July 8–13), the new Creative Camp (August 3–10), the annual Peace Tea, held on Hiroshima Day, this year featuring Dr. Samantha Green speaking about the climate crisis, and a series of well-attended and engaging Bagel Brunches on Sunday mornings.

This year's Music Camp participants included instrumentalists and vocalists fortunate to be working with Martin van de Ven and Ameena Bajer-Koulack, who so generously share their talents, their love of Klezmer music

and their commitment to pull an eclectic range of talents together to make music! The group included a delightful mix of ages, stages and skills and the sounds drifting through the hills culminated in a fabulous Saturday night concert.

The first Creative Camp demonstrated that Naivelters are bursting with creativity, humour and talent. Activities took place across camp and all ages participated. Volunteers shared their skills and interests in writing, modern dancing, rock painting, sketching, life drawing, graphic novels, acrylic techniques, toothbrush rug hooking, colouring books, beeswax wraps, still-life, film making, fruit carving, music, personalized poetry, paper making, puppetry and a Friday evening performance by the outstanding youth of the Drama Arts Workshop. The week culminated in a community creation of a Stone Soup with many contributions from across Naivelt enhancing the flavour of the stone. The three varieties of soup were equally excellent and accompanied by fresh roasted corn and Rico Rodriguez regaling the crowd with an original version of the Stone Soup Story.

Peace Tea speaker Samantha Green of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) reminded those in attendance that, “Climate is the biggest threat of the 21st century and we all need to be aware of the personal way this affects us as urban Canadians. With this understanding and knowledge, we individuals can make the right decisions about how to take action on behalf of ourselves and all life on this planet.”

Samantha is a family physician at St. Michael’s Hospital, and is no stranger to activist and advocacy work. She worked with three other doctors in 2017 to found Toronto’s Doctors for Safe Cycling. She also works weekly in a clinic providing primary medical care to people who are homeless, experiencing addiction, or involved in the criminal justice system, teaches a graduate course called “The Social, Political, and Scientific Aspects of Primary Care,” and is past chair of Health Providers Against Poverty.

Bagel Brunches this summer included: Anna Shternshis on Recovering Lost Yiddish Songs; Dan Laxer on the Metis Fur Trade; Sadie Epstein-Fine on her co-edited book, “Rants & Reflections on Growing up with LGBTQ+ parents”, Craig Heron on the Winnipeg General Strike; and Rachel David and Rebecca Leonard on Social Circus.

It’s been a fabulous summer, and it is not yet over. Summer at Camp Naivelt stretches until the annual Thanksgiving potluck in October.

Morris Winchevsky School:

Education Director Lia Tarachansky has been focusing this summer on increasing the MWS’s presence on social

media. To help out, please go to our Facebook and Instagram pages and LIKE and SHARE our posts.

Facebook: Morris Winchevsky School
Instagram: Winchevsky Centre and School

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

Adult B’nai Mitzvah:

We are excited to have launched a new Adult B’nai Mitzvah program for those 18 and up who are seeking a student-centred Jewish learning experience. The program will run bi-weekly from Fall to Spring, and will include an optional research project and group ceremony, involving students in the program and their friends and families.

We are anticipating that the program will appeal to those who missed the opportunity to have a bar/bat/b’nai mitzvah, those who were unable to have a bat/bar/b’nai mitzvah because of gender or were misgendered at their bat/bar/b’nai mitzvah, those who had a bar/bat/b’nai mitzvah but are seeking a different experience, and/or those who have Jewish family members and want to learn more.

We are delighted to welcome program facilitator Sharoni Sibony, who is an experienced and enthusiastic educator across multiple disciplines. After completing her BA and MA at the University of Toronto, she pursued a PhD in English Literature at Indiana University, where she taught courses in writing, rhetoric, and literature. A decade later, she took ceramics courses at Sheridan College and now teaches adult pottery classes at Woodlawn Pottery Studio. In between school chapters, she worked and volunteered for nearly a decade in Jewish educational programming and event management at the Jewish Community Centres of Toronto, Ashkenaz Festival, Limmud Toronto, and the Ontario Jewish Archives: Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre, and she brings a strong community-building orientation to her teaching. She has been a lecturer, tour guide, and book club facilitator in various venues across the Toronto Jewish community. She is excited to share her passions for Jewish life, history, arts, and culture with the inaugural cohort of the MWS Adult B’nai Mitzvah program.

For more information and to register:

<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/adult-b-nai-mitzvah> or contact us at: info@mwstoronto.org

Other Programs and Upcoming Events:

Our ongoing, informal Yiddish group, Red Yiddish, took a break for the summer but will resume in the Fall. Our popular drop-in monthly singing group, Zing! Zing! Zing! is on temporary hiatus as one of the facilitators has left town for the year.

On Thursday, Sept. 19 we welcome Roz Usiskin and Harriet Zaidman who will be speaking at the Winchevsky Centre on Jewish involvement in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. Both speakers have family connections to the strikers. Roz Usiskin's father, Joseph Wolodarsky, was a strike participant whose archival documentation states "...someday, [a] historian may look into my archives as a record of our history." Harriet Zaidman's family members were Winnipeg workers affected greatly by the strike. They are depicted in her novel *City on Strike* (\$15 at the event).

We look forward to celebrating Rosh Hashonah on the morning of Monday, September 30 and eve of Yom Kippur on Tuesday, October 8.

On Sunday, October 20, we will hold our annual community Sukkes/Sukkot celebration in Dufferin Grove Park. If you are in Toronto, join us to decorate the sukkah, sing and listen to stories around the fire and more! Bring a picnic lunch and a blanket. We provide hot cocoa and cider.

On Friday, November 8, in honour of Holocaust Education Week, we welcome journalist Ellin Bessner, author of *Double Threat: Canadian Jews, the Military, and World War II*, who will speak about Jews – outlawed because of their union organizing and affiliations with the Communist Party and the broader Left – who fought against Hitler as Canadians and helped to rescue the survivors of the Jews of Europe.

Also in the works: a pre-election event to dialogue about possibilities for resistance and a Death Café, to provide an opportunity for open discussion about death and dying.

An eclectic and exciting year to come! Given the ever-more alarming political and social climate we find ourselves in, we remain grateful for this community that provides a place for respite, dialogue and a platform from which to resist. ♦

Lane-way naming honours Feygl and Emil Gartner, and Toronto Jewish Folk Choir

By Ester Reiter

On Sunday June 23, some former members of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir gathered to sing at a ceremony naming a lane-way to honour Feygl and Emil Gartner who had lived on Palmerston Avenue just south of Harbord Street. Frumie Diamond, who had sung in the choir, gathered the required number of signatures and contacted the Palmerston Area Residents Association (PARA) to propose that a lane-way be named for the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir.

Frumie and Linda Litwack, a longtime choir singer and activist, contacted some former choir members to sing a few songs at the event. A number of us were more than



Representatives of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir performed at the Laneway festivities (Barbara Silverstein, CJN photo)

happy to participate in this small reunion of our beloved choir including Maxine Hermolin, our former Executive Director, and Sherri Bergman who drove in from Prince Edward County. A few members from Zing Zing Zing, UJPO's monthly singalong group, joined us.

It was a beautiful day and a good opportunity to remember the Gartners and the history of the choir which was for so many years the pride and heart of our organization.

The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir began in 1925 as the the *Frayhayt Gezangs Fareyn* [the Freedom Singing League.] For our working-class choir members, many of whom could not read music, the choir was the equivalent of a university. They worked all day in factories and would come to rehearsal each Wednesday memorizing the music.

Choir members became part of a strong community, most of whom lived in the area. One did not just go to rehearsals – there were dances, concerts, dinners, lectures, romances – the works. As Ben Shek who with his wife Jean devoted their formidable energies to helping the choir in later years recalled, "people walked everywhere – we were neighbours as well as comrades."

The choir became one of Toronto's foremost choirs during the 1940's and 1950's under the leadership of its inspirational conductor, Emil Gartner. Emil came to Toronto in 1938, fleeing Nazi Austria. It is here that Emil Gartner met Feygl Freeman, an accomplished pianist and choir's accompanist. Their home on 388 Palmerston Avenue became a vibrant hub for choir-related activities.

Inspired by Gartner, the choir's challenging repertoire included Yiddish folk songs and cantatas, international songs (pioneering world music), classical works and newly commissioned choral works from Canadian composers.

They often performed with the Toronto Symphony at Massey Hall. Guest artists included singers from New York's Metropolitan Opera, such as Jan Peerce and Regina Resnick. Paul Robeson, the wonderful Black artist and a hero to the left Jewish community in Canada and the US, performed regularly with the choir and became a personal

friend of the Gartners. Membership in the choir came to include people of many different backgrounds.

Feygl Freeman Gartner, a fine musician in her own right, organized the UJPO Folk Singers and the UJPO Youth Singers. In 1952 they, along with members of the New Dance Theatre, toured the country for 5 weeks, performing in union halls in small cities like Sudbury and in community halls in remote prairie farm towns.

Tragically, Emil passed away in 1960 but Feygl and their daughter Esther continued to live in the apartment. Esther later became a cellist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

At the lane naming we sang three songs well known in our community. The first, *Zog Nit Keynmol* (Never Say), Hirsh Glik's commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, became our anthem. It is sung to remember what happened, not to mourn but to reaffirm that in the most terrible of times, never say *az du geyst dem letsn veg*, that you are on the last path, we must never lose hope. The next *Dona, Dona*, is so well known in translation that some of our audience may not have recognized it as originally a Yiddish song. Calves are bound and slaughtered but whoever has wings can fly and is no one's slave. The audience was invited to sing the chorus with us.

The last, the *Yugnt* hymn (Youth hymn) was composed by Shmerke Kaczerginsky in the Vilna Ghetto. Even in the ghetto, there were music and theatre – people needed culture to hold onto their humanity. The song tells us that youth is not just a matter of age – it is a matter of conviction. In a new and better world, we will all be young.

For those people who lived on these streets and who sang with Emil and Feygl, active participation in cultural life was not only personally rewarding but also inseparable from their activism to create a better world. How inspiring to name a lane after this choir and keep its memory alive. We very much appreciated the Lane-way naming project of the Palmerston Area Residents' Association. ♦

FROM HAMILTON

By Paul Weinberg

On Aug. 25 at the home of Paul Weinberg and Cathy McPherson the Hamilton UJPO group will be discussing a new book from BTL Books, "The Montreal Shtetl: Making Home after the Holocaust". In their oral history, the authors Zelda Abrahamson and John Lynch interviewed members of the first wave of Holocaust survivors who were allowed into Canada after the Second World War. Up to until 1947 there were severe restrictions on Jewish refugees. They were strictly focused on the labour requirements of the Canadian economy, especially in the clothing and needle trades where many Jews in Canada worked. Also, the

majority ended up in Montreal. What is interesting are the challenges faced by these refugees that have parallels to what we see today in Canada. The difference is that there was a postwar economic boom that ultimately lifted many of them out of poverty and which does not appear to be on the horizon today. ♦

FROM VANCOUVER

By Carl Rosenberg

The history and cultures of Jewish communities in Latin America have become better known in the last two decades or so thanks to the pioneering work of various writers, scholars and artists, including many Jewish Latin Americans. I recently took part in two events at the Peretz Centre highlighting this history.

At our reading and discussion group on Jewish writers, I presented stories (in translation) by several Argentine Jewish writers which gave a vivid picture of aspects of Latin American Jewish life, from the disintegration of traditional Jewish culture and religion to anti-Semitism and political violence.

I also took part in a larger event – a week-long program (Aug. 2-9), "Festival Judío: A Celebration of Latin American Jewish Culture," with films, lectures, two concerts and dance nights, an art show, a book sale, and a children's story workshop, with presenters and performers from various countries. A revival of two similar programs at the Peretz Centre during the early aughts, it was held to make known the experiences and history of Jewish Latin Americans and to celebrate their contributions in various fields (art, literature, dance, music).

The art exhibit featured the work of Mexican-born Vancouver artist Miriam Aroeste and Argentine-born artist, writer and psychologist Liliana Kleiner. The first music and dance night featured a tango lesson given by Ms. Kleiner, and a concert of tango music performed by a five-member ensemble led by Buenos Aires-based composer and bandoneon virtuoso Amijai Shalev. The other night featured a lesson in Brazilian samba given by Claudia Bulaievsky, and a samba and klezmer concert performed by an ensemble led by Brazilian guitarist and composer Mauro Perelman. Both concerts also featured local artists well known to the Vancouver Jewish community – Fabiana Katz in the first one, Saul Berson and Stephen Aberle in the second.

The films included *The Jewish Gauchos*, based on a classic work by Argentine-Jewish writer Alberto Gerchunoff, and *An Unknown Country*, a documentary about European Jews fleeing the Holocaust who found refuge in Ecuador. (The latter was accompanied by a question-and-answer period with director Eva Zelig.) The

afternoon lectures included a reading and presentation, “Absent But Not Forgotten,” by Helen Waldstein Wilkes and Dafne Blanco-Sarlay on history, memory, and identity.

The book sale was divided in two: one half featured books for young readers in English and Spanish by Latin American authors, organized by Argentine-Canadian writer Silvana Goldemberg (who also did the children’s workshop). The other half (which I organized) featured works by Latin American Jewish writers in English translation.

The program was put together by Peretz General Manager David Skulski, publicist Helena Kaufman, graphic designer Claudia Bulaievsky, and volunteers Silvana Goldemberg, Yom Shamash, Haydée Levid, Miguel and Ethel Macon, and yours truly.

Many diverse attendees enjoyed the week-long program. I hope this will be followed by many similar ones which draw further attention to the world of Latin American Jewry. ♦

BEN SHEK SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

UJPO-Canada annually presents an award in memory of the late, beloved Ben Shek (a progressive activist and life-long member) to a current member who fulfills the following criteria:

- Is a UJPO member
- Upholds the values of our organization
- Is active in promoting social justice in Canada
- Has made an extensive contribution to our organization

All UJPO members across the country are invited to send the name(s) of members believed to merit this award specifying the reasons why they merit it. The National Board officers will choose the successful candidate from those nominated and the award will be presented at a UJPO-Canada event to be held this fall. The deadline for receipt of nominees is October 31. Please send nominations to the UJPO National Board at ujpo@ujpo.ca or 585 Cranbrooke Ave., Toronto, ON M6A 2X9.

WHAT’S IN ORDER

Mazl tov to:

Toronto:

- Barbara and Sol Blaser on the birth of their first great-grandchild on June 12, 2019. Nela Ruth Stansfield. Kiersten and Jon are the proud parents.
- Joey Hotz (Hill 1, Cabin 4) on being the valedictorian at Northern Secondary School in Toronto.

- Paul Kellogg and Abbie Bakan on the birth of their first grandchild, Gabriel Rutherford Stephens. Rachel Kellogg and Michael Stephens are the proud parents.
- Naomi Binder Wall on the birth of her granddaughter, Socorro Leona de Oliveira, affectionately known as “Coco”. She was born on April 22 to proud parents, Eliza and Donald.
- Sam Blatt on his 80th birthday on Sept. 25.

Winnipeg:

- Mark Golden on his 71st birthday, and who was recently elected as the Honorary President of the Classical Association of Canada (for 2018-2021).
- Roz Usiskin on the birth of her (8th) great-grandchild.

Welcome new members:

- Nellie Groeneberg, Olga and Leonid Minkin, Rochelle Fine, Hilary Barlow, Monica Harhay, Sarah Kitz and Ali Barkok.

Heartfelt condolences to:

- Roslyn Oslender on the passing of her mother, Tillie Oslender.
- The family of Paula Eidlitz on her passing.

Speedy recovery to:

- Kathy Sims, Morag York, Max Wallace, Ester Reiter. ♦

GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

Hannah Blazer

Interviewed by Sam Blatt

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

Since birth! I was born into the organization and grew up attending the shule, going to holiday celebrations, and spending summers at Camp Naivelt. UJPO had a huge role in shaping me as a person – my social justice values, my Jewish culture, and my commitment to *tikkun olam* (“repairing the world”).

What brought you to UJPO?

I’m the 4th generation of my family to be in UJPO (or its predecessor, the Labour League), so I didn’t really have a choice! Joking aside, though, I did drift away a bit after my



B'nai Mitzvah, during my teenage years. I chose to become active again as an adult because UJPO provides what I want in a community, and this has become even more true over the years as I've matured and grown into my politics and my Jewishness.

In which boards and/or committees are you active?

I'm on the board of UJPO-Toronto, as well as the Youth Committee and an ad hoc committee that is focused on inaugurating the new Adult B'nai Mitzvah program.

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

As the name would suggest, we're working on setting up a B'nai Mitzvah program for adults, which will be launching this September. I'm so happy we're getting this program off the ground because it will be a great opportunity for folks who didn't have a bar/bat mitzvah when they were younger, were wrongly gendered for their ceremony, or just had an experience that didn't resonate with them. In general, the Board has been focusing lately on expanding the organization's Indigenous solidarity work and learning, providing Yiddish programming, and working towards making the Winchevsky Centre more accessible.

What is your life outside UJPO?

I'm studying history and political science at university, working at a pet store, and organizing with IfNotNow Toronto (a group of young Jews who aim to end the North American Jewish community's support for the Israeli Occupation). I'm also trying to improve my mediocre French, so let me know if you'd like to practice conversation skills together sometime!

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

Pretty much all of them! Not to name-drop (although I'm going to!), but two of my aunts, Lee Schechter and her daughter Maxine Hermolin, were previous Executive Directors of UJPO, and my bubby, Pearl Blazer, worked in the office for many years. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to bring my passion for history to a job in the UJPO archives, under the skillful direction of Ruth Grossman. It was an amazing experience and I feel so lucky that I got to spend so many hours poring over the documents and photos that tell the history of the organization; it was especially poignant for me as that history is so intimately wound up with the history of my own family. How wonderful to be able to see photos of my bubby and zaidy in their youth, acting in the UJPO theatre group and exhibiting work at an UJPO art show!

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

I've seen our membership become more diverse, and I think this is in part due to our efforts at forming more connections with other groups and organizations who have similar values and interests to UJPO – a trend which I'd like to see continue. I'm also very heartened and excited by the recent influx of new young members – some of whom have joined the Board! – who don't necessarily have a family history with the organization. I love that we now have a balance on the Board and across our various committees of institutional knowledge and wisdom, interest in preserving meaningful traditions and history, and fresh perspectives and ideas. I'm really excited about the present and future of our community.

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

“Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life” by James Daschuk is an absolutely essential – and devastating – read for settlers in Canada to begin to understand the relationship between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples on this land. It's only a starting point, of course, but provides the vital background knowledge needed to go further. For something more light-hearted, I enjoyed the recent movie “Rocketman”, a biopic about Elton John! ♦

HONOURABLE MENTSHN

Remembering Sherman Lewis Kreiner

March 1953 - July 2019

By David Abramowitz

Born in Philadelphia, PA, USA, Sherman met and married Cindy Coker when they studied at Philadelphia's Swarthmore College. After receiving a law degree from the



University of Pennsylvania, Sherman worked tirelessly for democracy and social justice through PACE, the Crocus Investment Fund, the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC), Winnipeg's Sholem Aleichem Community, UJPO Winnipeg and numerous volunteer organizations.

It was through their involvement with the Sholem Aleichem Community that Cindy and Sherman became very active in UJPO Winnipeg. Together, they worked to make their shared vision for a better world a reality each and every day. Winnipeg UJPO's executive received a morale boost when Sherman and Cindy became active members on it.

He was an intelligent, thoughtful, kind, productive, curious, witty and courageous human being who thought carefully about the work and life he created and lived with Cindy and their children, Corey and Meta. While the diagnosis of leukemia was devastating, Sherman received an extra year through a loving stem cell donation from his sister Debbie Stevens (nee Kreiner).

The UJPO National Board and all our members send our sincere condolences to Cindy, Corey, Meta, Sherman's parents and the entire extended family. Our world is a better place because of his vast contributions to social justice and numerous progressive causes and he was an inspiration to all. We shall honour his name and memory.

Donations can be made to a social justice organization of your choice. ♦

POETRY & SONG

Culture

By Aharon Shabtai

Edited by Harriet Lyons

From J'Accuse (2003), translated by Peter Cole, New Directions Press (posted by Aharon Shabtai in MRonline)
<https://mronline.org/2008/02/10/culture>

The mark of Cain won't sprout
from a soldier who shoots
at the head of a child
on a knoll by the fence
around a refugee camp –
for beneath his helmet,
conceptually speaking,
his head is made of cardboard.
On the other hand,
the officer has read *The Rebel*;
his head is enlightened,
and so he does not believe
in the mark of Cain.
He's spent time in museums,
and when he aims
his rifle at a boy
as an ambassador of Culture,
he updates and recycles
Goya's etchings
and *Guernica*.

Aharon Shabtai was born in 1939 in Tel Aviv, grew up on a kibbutz, and served in the Israeli military. He has had a distinguished career as a poet and a Classical scholar, being particularly noted for translating Greek drama into Hebrew. He has also been an ardent campaigner for social justice, whose actions, like this poem, are a rejection of the idea

that art and scholarship should operate on a plane too lofty for political engagement. This is, perhaps, particularly noteworthy, given that the study of Latin and Greek texts has traditionally been viewed as the most "ivory tower" of disciplines. Shabtai boycotted several prestigious literary events in Israel and abroad because of his belief that "even poets were not allowed in the past, and not in the present, to ignore persecutions and discriminations on a racial or national basis" (quoted in MRonline). In the poem "Culture" he argues that learning and aesthetic sensibility are worthless without moral courage and compassion for the sufferings of others. A head full of culture can still be made "of cardboard". The poem, on several levels, employs erudition to argue against erudition's sufficiency. The title of the collection in which "Culture" appeared, *J'Accuse*, ironically invokes Emile Zola's attack on those who falsely accused Alfred Dreyfus, in the service of a critique of those contemporary Israelis who often seem to have learned the wrong lessons from the Dreyfus affair and similar manifestations of anti-Semitism. Literary, Biblical and artistic works mentioned in the poem depict torture, murder, and genocide, and, in the case of *The Rebel*, Camus's call for resistance. The soldier, who knows the cultural canon and is proud of his modernist sensibility, like many apologists for Israeli policy, employs that sensibility to distance himself from the victims of that policy, whose sufferings can be excused or ignored on the grounds of Israel's self-appointed status as a bastion of civilization in a benighted Middle East. ♦

YIDDISH

Writing Yiddish Words in English

By David Abramowitz

The correct spelling of Yiddish words into English phonetics is the responsibility of YIVO. YIVO, established in 1925 in Wilno, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania) as the Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut (Yiddish Scientific Institute), preserves, studies, and teaches the cultural history of Jewish life throughout Eastern Europe, Germany, and Russia as well as orthography, lexicography, and other studies related to Yiddish. (The word *yidisher* means both "Yiddish" and "Jewish".) Its English name became the "Institute for Jewish Research" after its 1948 move to New York City. It is the de facto recognized international language regulator of the Yiddish language.

It planned to standardize phonetic rules, but disputes arose over the spelling of words of Hebrew and Aramaic origin phonetically as had been adopted in the USSR which, it was believed, would associate it with pro-Communist, anti-religious, and anti-Zionist sympathies. A 1931 conference approved phonetic spelling, but it wasn't

adopted by the institute. Its orthographic rules in 1936 were implemented in its classrooms, including retaining the traditional treatment of the Hebrew and Aramaic component of Yiddish. This exemplifies how the commitment of the YIVO leaders to address contemporary issues could lead to political disputes, despite trying to avoid partisan stances that might have compromised their academic integrity.

The most used Yiddish-English dictionary is the 1968 “Modern English-Yiddish Yiddish-English Dictionary” by Uriel Weinreich, using YIVO transliteration. But, 48 years later, in 2016, the U.S. League for Yiddish published the “Comprehensive English-Yiddish Dictionary”, edited by Gitl Schaechter-Viswanath, Paul Glasser and Dr. Chava Lapin, associate editor (Indiana University Press) which is more than twice the size of the Weinreich publication and really develops words that didn’t exist in 1968. Email is “blitspost”; flip-flops are “fingershikh”, etc.

Today, after decades of linguistic assimilation, a growing number of Ashkenazi Jews are reclaiming Yiddish as a heritage language. They are learning Yiddish (UJPO-Toronto recently started a Yiddish circle and is seeking a Yiddish teacher!) and its ZING! ZING! ZING! evenings draw many non-members as well to enjoy singing Yiddish and social justice songs. Toronto’s bi-annual Ashkenaz Festival includes numerous cultural events with Yiddish concerts, films and theatre.

And to ensure the proper phonetic pronunciation, YIVO transliteration will be used here as consistently as possible. ♦

How Sweden Became the Epicenter of Yiddish Children’s Media

Kids’ books, cartoons, and music videos keep the mameloshn alive in an unexpected place

By Marjorie Ingall, July 9, 2019, Tablet

In 1999, Yiddish was declared an official national minority language in Sweden, alongside Finnish, Romani, Meänkieli, and the Sami languages. There’s federal funding in Sweden for media produced in all its national minority languages – so Sweden, of all places, is now a major source of new Yiddish children’s books, TV cartoons, web media, and music videos.

How did Yiddish get this exalted status in Sweden? Especially when there are only 15,000 to 20,000 Jews in the country, less than 0.2% of the population?

To become an official minority language in Sweden, a language has to have been spoken in Sweden for hundreds of years. Yiddish fits the bill: The first official Jewish community was established near Goteborg in the 1770s; in

1782, the country passed legislation allowing Jews to live there without having to convert to Christianity. In 1832, Jews were permitted to become citizens. Jews turned out to be good for the economy, so the Swedish government encouraged the community’s growth, and its population skyrocketed between 1850 and 1920, as Jews fled pogroms and conscription in Russia and Poland. But from 1933 to 1939, Sweden limited Jewish immigration, fearing an influx of Jewish refugees.

The prohibitions were lifted in 1942, when it became clear to the Swedes that the Nazis were determined to exterminate the Jewish people. Over 8,000 Danish Jews – almost the entire population – were smuggled into Sweden in the dead of night in tiny fishing boats. (The details of this secret rescue mission figure in Lois Lowry’s classic, brilliant 1989 children’s book *Number the Stars*.) And Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg singlehandedly saved thousands of Hungarian Jews.

After WWII, Sweden continued to welcome Jewish displaced persons and refugees. Then it welcomed Jewish intellectuals fleeing Eastern European Communist witch hunts and persecution. Then it welcomed Soviet Jews. Today, Sweden has the largest Jewish population in Scandinavia; 70% of its Jews live in Stockholm, where there are several synagogues, a Chabad House, a Jewish day school, a Jewish library, a Jewish magazine, and a weekly Jewish radio show.

So yes, Yiddish has a long history in the country. But that’s not all. Another rule says that an official national minority language must be deemed to have benefit for the minority community (Yiddish is undeniably a marker of Jewish identity and history) and still another rule says that the language must be spoken – currently or in the past – by a significant number of people in the world (Yiddish once had 12 million speakers worldwide) and have a connection to Sweden.

Because there’s a government mandate in place, publishers, broadcasters, videographers, and animators now create media in the country’s minority languages. One such creator is Niklas Olniansky, who runs a Yiddish children’s publishing house. This is actually his third Yiddish-language venture; he and his wife, Ida, used to edit a popcult-y Yiddish magazine and founded a Yiddish heavy metal band called Dibbukim.

“It was totally by accident that I started learning Yiddish,” he told me. “I lived in a student apartment in central Lund, and I’d graduated and had a job but I wanted to keep that apartment. So I needed to take a class. Yiddish was then a new subject at the university, and the class was in the evening because it was mainly old people, and the first thing the teacher said was, ‘Yiddish is not an academic

language,' which meant he wasn't picky when it came to grading. It sounded perfect! I enrolled the very same day!" He joked that studying Yiddish helped him cope with growing older. "I still get the young people's discount in Yiddish," he said.

Olniansky converted to Judaism after marrying Ida. He's the one who pushed the couple, who now have a young son and two daughters, into the lucrative world of Yiddish publishing. ("Her life was much easier when she was married to a goy," he said.) "Ida grew up hearing her grandfather sing her Yiddish bedtime songs," he told me. "But she has the sad story that many Ashkenazi Jews have, that they had a vibrant community here where Yiddish was heard in the streets and the town squares, but somewhere down the line, it kind of fell away. There was no actively speaking community anymore."

Now that's changing.

Olniansky Tekst has published numerous Yiddish books for little kids, including three alphabet books starring characters named Alef and Beys, drawn by Niklas' sister. The company just brought out its first classic, as well as its first book in translation: *Der Hobit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, translated by Barry Goldstein.

Tablet wrote about Goldstein's translation in 2013, back when it was a self-published labor of love. "I had one of my grandkids scribble pictures of the dragon and Bilbo, and that was the cover," Goldstein told me in a more recent interview. "I was flattered when Niki called – he proposed a hardbound, with Yiddish letters, not transliteration, with new cover art, very beautifully done." Goldstein has also translated *The Lord of the Rings* and Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers* into Yiddish and is pondering future projects. "There's already a Yiddish translation of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, but I think *The House at Pooh Corner* hasn't been done," he said. "And I'd love to do *The Wind in the Willows*." Olnianskys: Take note.

Before the Holocaust, tons of Western children's classics were translated into Yiddish. Jews love to read, so it's unsurprising that Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* were Yiddish bestsellers. Now that there's a Yiddish renaissance among hipster and queer-identified Jews, there are once again wider markets for secular Yiddish children's books.

Sam Zerín, a musicologist at Brown University, speaks exclusively Yiddish with his 3-year-old son. (A specialist in early 20th-century Jewish music, he's also interested in contemporary Yiddish pop and the music of Disney; he has thoughts about "Let It Go," which has naturally been translated into Yiddish.) Married to a Conservative rabbi, calling himself "halakhically observant but egalitarian," he

was dismayed to discover that contemporary Yiddish children's books from Haredi publishers often depicted gender roles that didn't square with his own values or family life. "In these books, boys are the ones who have adventures and girls stay home," he told me. "Women do all the childcare, which contradicts my own lived experience. And non-Jews are often depicted as greedy, stupid, or immoral, a foil for the good Jewish characters. When I read books like that aloud to my son, I tend to change 'der goy' to 'der gvir,' which means the rich man."

So Zerín was delighted to discover less problematic Yiddish children's media from Sweden. His son loves the Swedish show *Allti Kartong*, which he watches online in its Yiddish incarnation, *Alter Karton*. *Alter Karton* is about the adventures of two robots, Alter Karton and Roytinker, low-budget Swedish educational ripoffs of C3P0 and R2D2. Zerín wrote about the show for his blog, *Tate-loshn* ("father language," a play on *mameloshn*, which is Yiddish for mother language, meaning Yiddish). He noted with amusement that another Swedish children's video depicts a little girl named Amanda longing for wintertime and Christmas cookies. Niklas Olniansky told me, "Some of the videos are very Swedish – the Swedish countryside, with pigs and people celebrating Christmas and eating ham. It is very goyish, but it's still in Yiddish."

Sweden isn't the only place Yiddish kidlit (colloquially known as Yidkidlit) comes from. After the Jewish communities of Germany and Eastern Europe were destroyed, Buenos Aires, Jerusalem, London, Montreal, Melbourne, Mexico City, and of course New York took up the slack. Tablet contributor Zackary Sholem Berger, a resident of Baltimore, has translated *The Cat in the Hat*, *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, and *Curious George* into Yiddish. As Isaac Bashevis Singer himself once said, "The Yiddish language has been dying for a thousand years and I'm sure it will go on dying for at least a thousand more."

One must offer a caveat that Sweden is not entirely hunky-dory for the Jews. Kosher butchery was banned in the 1930s and remains illegal today; anti-Semitism has risen sharply in the country in recent years, particularly in Malmö. A 2013 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that nearly 60% of Swedish Jews are now afraid to openly identify as Jewish.

Yiddish, on the other hand, is thriving. Miriam Udel, professor of Yiddish at Emory University, told me, "I first learned about the Yidkidlit coming out of Sweden a few years back, when a dude from Swedish national radio got in touch with me about finding great Yidkidlit to read on the air, and to check the Yiddish in their first new children's story in what was to be a series. I was kind of flabbergasted

that Yiddish was an official language in such an unexpected place, but ‘Abi a prezhenitse’ – ‘As long as it’s an omelet ...’” Your Tablet correspondent, a Yiddish imbecile, did not get this reference, so Udel explained: “A character in a Sholem Aleichem story tries to order an omelet and they’re out of all the things that constitute an omelet, but ‘Hey, as long as it’s an omelet.’ My feeling was, ‘They might not have a lot of yidn, but as long as Yiddish is getting some honor and respect somewhere, I’ll take it!’” ♦

(Correction: An earlier version of this story incorrectly stated that only a medical doctor, not a mohel, can perform a circumcision in Sweden.)

<https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-life-and-religion/287503/sweden-yiddish-childrens-media>

Yiddish Theatre Giant Dora Wasserman Memorialized in Montreal

By Janice Arnold, Staff Reporter, CJNI, July 4, 2019

The boulder is a fitting memorial to the determination of Dora Wasserman, but it should not be interpreted as a monument to the Yiddish theatre she founded, say those who share her vision today.

The Boisé Dora Wasserman, which was created to celebrate the centenary of her birth, is at the corner of Côte-Ste-Catherine Road and Westbury Avenue in Mackenzie King Park, across the street from the Segal Centre for Performing Arts in Montreal.

The Segal has been the home of the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre (DWYT) for most of its 60-year history, and those who run it hope the relationship will continue for many years to come.

“This installation will remove any doubt any of you may have of the promise of continuity,” said Wasserman’s daughter, Bryna, at the dedication ceremony on June 30.

A plaque affixed to the boulder provides a brief biography of Wasserman, who died in 2003, in French, English and Yiddish. The installation was sponsored by Montreal’s Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce borough, as was another more modest one, which was erected deep in the park’s woods in 2017.

Immediate past DWYT co-presidents Aron Gonshor and Edit Kuper approached borough Mayor Sue Montgomery about moving that plaque (in French and Yiddish only) to a more appropriate and visible location, and she was immediately on board, said Gonshor.

The plaque attests that the DWYT was the first, and is still the only, permanent Yiddish theatre company in Canada.



Bryna Wasserman, left, attends the dedication of Boisé Dora Wasserman with Côte-des-Neiges-Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Mayor Sue Montgomery, in Mackenzie King Park in Montreal on June 30. (Janice Arnold/The CJN)

Born in Ukraine in 1919, Wasserman was a graduate of the Moscow State Jewish Theatre and began her career in the Soviet Union. She immigrated to Montreal in 1950, where she founded what became the DWYT in 1958, initially as a children’s theatre based at the Jewish Peretz School and later an amateur adult troupe.

She was its director for 45 years, staging over 70 productions, from classics to original plays and musicals, to adaptations from other languages. The inscription emphasizes that Wasserman was devoted to “building bridges between the Québécois and Jewish cultures.”

Most famously, she had Michel Tremblay’s iconic play *Les Belles-Soeurs* adapted for the DWYT.

Among her many citations was a lifetime achievement award from the Académie Québécoise du Théâtre.

Bryna Wasserman, who took over the helm of the DWYT after a stroke prevented her mother from maintaining her active role, has been the executive director of the Folksbiene Yiddish theatre in New York since 2011.

Returning to Montreal for this tribute to her mother was moving for her. “Dora and her husband Shura and their two young daughters came here with just the shirts on the backs. But they had a dream that they could leave Europe behind and possibly bring the Yiddish language and culture here,” she said.

In time, Wasserman reached out to the broader community, “believing that art can do what many things cannot,” she added.

The dedication served as a reunion for some of the countless DWYT performers that Wasserman took under her wing. They reminisced about what an uncompromising taskmaster she was: she knew what she wanted and demanded the best from each of them. They appreciate it now more than ever.

“She would lock the doors until 2 or 3 in the morning until we got it right,” recalled Gisèle Rucker, who was in the first of many productions in 1986.

Pinchas Blitt, who made his debut in 1971, while studying law, said what he learned from Wasserman about acting helped in the courtroom.

Another early member, Phil Goldig, was a trained cantor who never believed he could act. Wasserman felt differently.

“She had an uncanny ability of seeing somebody for the first time and knowing what kind of talent they had. She was right almost every time,” he said.

DWYT president Ben Gonshor, Aron’s son, said the current leadership is “committed to carrying on her legacy through Yiddish theatre, but not exclusively, and to building bridges.”

Segal board member Barbara Seal-Shiveck said that “the incomparable” Dora Wasserman’s influence is still felt. “Dora Wasserman led the fight to preserve Yiddish culture in Montreal and built tolerance and understanding between communities, something we need more than ever. Today, people of all backgrounds appreciate Yiddish culture.”

Blitt captured Wasserman’s indomitable spirit, recalling that her weak grasp of French never prevented her from reaching out and forming relationships with some of the luminaries of Quebec theatre. She let little stand in her way. “Time, space or budget could be no impediment, nor would she be bound or fettered by such mundane matters as copyright,” said Blitt.

Thus, she saw no reason to get permission to stage the works of the likes of Isaac Bashevis Singer. “When he found out, he was livid, indignant. He called her a thief – I witnessed it myself,” Blitt said.

But, as usual, her charm and powers of persuasion “completely disarmed this giant of Yiddish literature and he surrendered his literary works to her direction, giving her carte blanche, with no interference on his part.”

Wasserman, he added, was not satisfied putting on the same old sentimental favourites; she sought out challenging works of social and political consequence.

She was daring and sometimes brash in the artistic risks she took, he said, “she weathered every difficulty.” ♦

<https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/yiddish-theatre-giant-dora-wasserman-memorialized-in-montreal>

CANADA

Indigenous Reading Series

Introduction

Non-Indigenous Canadians can’t be trustworthy partners in reconciliation, until we become informed about the histories, governance forms, cultures and ways of being that are Indigenous to the places we call home – and the impact of colonial mindsets, structures and bodies on the original inhabitants, whose land gives us life.

UJPO’s commitment to share its members’ culture and history is helpful for this project – without self-knowledge, those of us with immigrant identities (including those who arrived generations ago) can hardly engage in honest relationships with Indigenous people. Many Canadians are simply unaware that our own histories matter.

Yet, UJPO shares with Canadians in general, including the Left, a lack of awareness when it comes to Indigenous people and issues. In our lists of causes, concerns and actions, Indigenous rights and peoples tend to be an afterthought. The Left tends to argue about equity, privilege, power and class from within the colonial mindset. Even radicals largely ignore Indigenous title and fail to see the Indigenous sovereignty, stewardship, world-views, relationship and governance that was overlaid by the European grid.

It takes much more than one book or course or talk, and exposure to many points of view, to dispel the myths that fill the vacuum of our ignorance. Hundreds of books have been written on Indigenous people and issues – significant works by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers and scholars. The UJPO Toronto Indigenous Issues Working Group urges our members to read them, and began this series with a book review. We will continue to review books and to share our researches with fellow UJPO members through articles and events. More to come!

The Wet’suwet’en, Indigenous self-governance, and the health of the land

By Deb O’Rourke

Folks eager to protect the life on this planet, should support Indigenous democracies. The Wet’suwet’en of central BC are an example. The nation’s long-standing structures for making community-based decisions are permanent, representative and accountable to past and future generations as well as to the present. In their tradition, each part of their territory is under the stewardship of a clan, or “house”. Each house has a chief. When a major decision needs to be made, the clans gather to hold a feast in which the will of the people is determined.

“We are truly democratic,” explained Dini (Chief) ze’ Na’Moks, in an Oct. 1, 2018 press release. “It is our people that steer our decisions as hereditary chiefs. They speak the words and we push it forward...”

For those who lament Canada's past mistakes, BC is interesting. Canada signed few treaties there. Colonial devastation was no less than First Nations experienced elsewhere, but its failure to negotiate treaties makes BC almost entirely unceded territory. Unceded territory is an opportunity to do things differently: to stop the theft of lands and resources, to share and plan together for their future, to carry on the Nation-to-Nation relationships that Justin Trudeau gives lip service to.

Because Indigenous democratic structures aim to perpetuate the health of the community and the land they depend on, their decisions often conflict with the ephemeral elected governments of this young nation called Canada. It's not only a clash of interests. It's a clash of world-views and visions, traditions and priorities – such as industrial jobs and profits for a few now, versus diverse life and clean water into the future.

A lot of powerful short-term interests aim to pull \$billions through Wet'suwet'en territory: multi-national energy extractors and exporters, job-desperate locals and local, provincial and federal governments. TransCanada Pipelines' Coastal Gas Link (CGL) pipeline is proposed to carry gas fracked in land-locked northeastern BC, for 670k to the coastal city of Kitimat, where it will be super-cooled in a proposed \$40-billion Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) facility (owned by five major offshore investors), then transported by tanker to Asian markets.

The planned pipeline would cross the territory of the house of Unis'to'ten. Since 2010, the Wet'suwet'en have operated a homestead and healing center as a "permanent, non-violent occupation of Unist'ot'en territory, established to protect our homelands from illegal industrial encroachments and to preserve a space for our community to heal from the violence of colonization."

Under the Free, Prior and Informed Consent Protocol at Unist'ot'en, visitors must identify themselves, state their purpose and ask permission to enter the "lands of the traditional chiefs and matriarchs". Permission isn't granted to pipeline companies like CGL. A June 14, 2019 court submission asserts: "CGL faces unanimous opposition to their pipeline proposal from the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs representing all 13 Wet'suwet'en house groups, as decided in the feast hall."

CGL claims to have consulted thoroughly in their "First Nations stakeholder engagement process". Media rep Jacquelynn Benson listed "120 in-person meetings, and roughly 1000 emails and phone calls" with traditional chiefs and spokespeople. One gets an idea of how exhausting it must be to resist a pipeline company's smiling emissaries, when one learns from the hereditary chiefs that their answer from the first year was "No".

"Free, prior and informed consent" as affirmed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) includes the right to say no. But in Canada, saying "no" to resource companies means that you will hear the request repeated until, as Unist'ot'en Chief Smogelgem (Warner Naziel) recalled: "The provinces and the federal government have decided that they don't want to deal with us, that they would rather go to people who are willing to say yes to them."

CGL found such people on band councils on small reserves within the vast unceded territory of the Wet'suwet'en. Reserves are just that – small parcels where Indigenous inhabitants, shattered by disease and ecological catastrophe, were herded with the promise that there would be help to survive the changes and learn to hold their own in a changing political and economic landscape. But the Indian Act made reserves into places of internment until 1960.

After 1960, Indigenous people no longer needed passes to leave the reserves. They were able to hire lawyers, begin releasing their children from residential schools, and rebuild cultures that had been attacked by the colonizer. Authority over them that was originally in the hands of the Indian agent with RCMP enforcement, was invested in elected band councils.

Under the Indian Act, band councils are the official government of a First Nation. Their citizens usually agree with that. But they struggle within the colonizing structures and mindset of the bureaucracy created to destroy their people. Some Indigenous nations, such as the Haudenosaunee in Eastern Turtle Island, always continued their governance underground. Others, realizing that the elected council system encourages the short-sighted culture of the colonizers, are now reviving their traditional democracies.

The Wet'suwet'en argue that their history, territory and traditional authorities were recognized in the 1997 Delgamuukw case. Their governance is based on each house caretaking and living from its specific territory, which has never been ceded. Freda Huson pointed out: "The pipeline won't go through these reserves" that agreed to it. The CGL pipeline goes through the territory of several houses that did not give consent. A crucial access point, a bridge, is in the territory of Unis'to'ten, which appointed her and her partner Naziel as its spokespeople.

In this system, the band council has no authority over the traditional territories. That's why CGL's claim to have "100%" backing from elected councils on the reserves is disingenuous, especially when their media rep proudly listed "120 in-person meetings, and roughly 1000 emails and phone calls" with traditional chiefs and spokespeople. But one gets a sense of how exhausting it must be to resist

a pipeline company's smiling emissaries, who will not take "No" for an answer.

"It's not consulting when the parties say no and then you just ignore them and go and find another party to negotiate with," argues Huson. Last winter, when TransCanada submitted a request to the BC Supreme Court for an injunction against the defenders of Unist'ot'en, it targeted Huson and Naziel for "physically impeding or delaying access" across the Morice River Bridge and along the forest road.

CGL media rep Jacquelynne Benson explained that the bridge is "the only physical infrastructure in the area that actually will give us access to where we need to build our pipeline, which is a kilometer south of the Unist'ot'en Camp." Huson countered: "That's the only water you can still drink out of. Our salmon spawn up there. That's the reason we say no to the projects – because there's too much at risk."

On Dec 14, 2018, Supreme Court Justice Marguerite Church awarded CGL an interim injunction against the Wet'suwet'en. The neighbouring Gitdumt'en clan set up a checkpoint to stop CGL and the RCMP before they reached Unist'ot'en. On Jan. 7, armed officers overwhelmed the barricade at Gitdumt'en, arresting 14. Conditions were frigid, and the RCMP heightened tensions by blocking cellular communications. It was a night of worry and fear. As news came of police breaching Gitdumt'en and approaching Unist'ot'en, Freda Huson made a filmed statement:

"This is not reconciliation. You're treating my chiefs and us as criminals, and we're not criminals. This is our land – 22 thousand square kilometers and we have maybe 10 per cent left. The rest has been taken over by the municipality of Smithers, the municipality of Kalqua, Burns Lake and Houston... So we have no land on which to live traditionally. This last ten per cent this company wants to take for their pipelines. That is why our chiefs are saying 'No' to these projects... For all you investors, you do not have consent. For the government, you are doing war against your own people. You are sending special forces against peaceful people."

To prevent further state violence, the Unistoten gates were sadly opened to CGL. This submission to the RCMP show of force is not to be confused with consent: participants called it "an invasion by legal means." Watched by the Wet'suwet'en, CGL employees continue to cross the bridge to plan pipeline construction and build a man-camp to house the employees. Unist'ot'en has called for red dresses to be hung along the route, to call attention to the fact that such camps are associated with increased violence and disappearances of Indigenous women.

The legal struggle continues, as does work in a healing centre that is no longer quiet, but hopefully will be again. In arguments presented to the BC Supreme Court June 14, 2019, the Wet'suwet'en argued: "Wet'suwet'en law pre-exists Canadian law by thousands of years, and has been disregarded and ignored for approaching hundreds of years... The court has a responsibility to consider Wet'suwet'en law and attempt to reconcile Indigenous law with common law in this case."

When an Indigenous community takes a stand, Canadians should remember that every inch of our so-called nation is the territory of an Indigenous nation whose wealth was taken over by colonists who used the desperate bodies and cheap labour of economic migrants and refugees, to occupy territory. Reconciliation will be life-changing, nation-changing, or it won't happen at all.

Despite claims that pipeline development is in the "national interest," it cannot be said that Canadians as a whole benefit from industries that devastate the land, ignore outstanding human rights, squander water, threaten biodiversity in our coasts and watersheds, undermine the search for energy alternatives, and receive substantive tax breaks and government support.

If human rights, equity and health of the land were prioritized, we who live in this part of Turtle Island called Canada could see interesting, hopeful times. Eve Saint, who recently reconnected with her ancestral home at the healing lodge in Unist'ot'en territory, urged: "Now is the time to get behind Indigenous resistance, because industry falls on our doorstep, falls on our shoulders, makes us sick and poisons us. You want to do something about climate change, get behind Indigenous resistance."

The Wet'suwet'en have a strong web presence, with many excellent posted videos to learn from.

<https://unistoten.camp>

This link tells how we can help:

<https://unistoten.camp/support-us/>

This link shows the Jan 7 raid on the Gitdumt'en checkpoint. Prepare to cry.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdB6W8YMy6M> ♦

MIDDLE EAST

The Nakba Isn't Going Away

Haaretz Editorial, July 7, 2019

The establishment of Israel involved the destruction of the Palestinian society that existed here until 1948. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became refugees, their villages destroyed and their land confiscated, with Jews settling on it instead.

These events, called the Nakba (Catastrophe) ever since, and fueling the fire of the conflict, are a great taboo in the Israeli consciousness. They are not taught in schools, only a few historians study them, and mention of them in the media immediately sparks efforts to silence them along the lines of “the Arabs rejected the partition plan and brought destruction on themselves.” The description of war crimes committed by Israeli soldiers in 1948 – expulsion, looting, murder and rape – are shunted aside, and publishing information on them is seen as undermining the justness of the national project.

But the state does not suffice with the callousness common in Israeli society toward the events of 1948. Rather, it strives to hide evidence of the Nakba. Hagar Shezaf’s investigative report in *Haaretz* over the weekend has uncovered actions by the Defense Ministry’s security department, known by its acronym Malmab, that have gone on for about a decade now, to conceal documents and testimony about war crimes in 1948 in public and private archives, even in cases where the information has already been published.

Malmab, whose authority to censor the past is dubious and controversial, ignores the opposition of historians and archive directors who support exposing the events of the past as they happened. The goal of concealing them is to blur the evidence and strengthen the mendacious Israeli narrative that “the Arabs fled of their own free will, encouraged by their leaders.”

This is the Malmab that hid a detailed document describing the abandonment of the Palestinian cities and villages up to June 1948 and showed that most of the Palestinians left because of Jewish military actions. And that was even before the major expulsions from Ramle, Lod, the central Galilee and the northern Negev in the months after the war. The fact that the document had already been published didn’t deter the Defense Ministry’s falsifiers of history, who foolishly believe that absent documentation, the Nakba will be forgotten. Malmab is working in the spirit of the fascist slogan on the Israeli right that “the Nakba is rubbish.”

Israel at age 71 is strong enough to address the moral failings of its past. The Nakba won’t go away. It’s still there in the landscape, in the rows of pear cactus of the abandoned villages, in the many arched houses of Jaffa and Haifa, and in the memory of the Palestinian community in Israel, and in the territories and across the border.

Instead of censoring and concealing things, the history of Israel’s establishment and the Palestinian society that was uprooted should be studied and taught. Commemoration signs should be put up at the sites of destroyed villages, and the moral dilemmas that have accompanied Israel since 1948 should be faced. Such recognition won’t resolve the conflict, but it will place dialogue between Jews and Palestinians in Israel on a foundation of truth instead of lies, shame and concealment. ♦

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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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