

UJPO News



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Canada, USA, Middle East

For an extended version of this issue of UJPO News go to:
<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/newsletters>

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

UJPO STATEMENT ON HUWARA POGROM

MARCH 15, 2023

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) – a secular, progressive Jewish cultural, social and political organization whose roots date back a hundred years – wishes to express our sentiments of horror and disgust at the settler pogrom which took place in the Palestinian village of Huwara on February 26, 2023. We are hardly surprised but are nonetheless dismayed by the failure of the Israeli army to offer support and provide security to the victims while these events took place. Threats to Palestinian communities continue, such as those of Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a self-described “fascist homophobe,” who issued a call for genocide. Smotrich remains in office and was in Washington DC on March 12 after being granted a U.S. visa for his visit.

On January 29th UJPO issued a Statement of Solidarity with Palestine and the Palestinian People in which we deplored the constant expansion of illegal settlements, and further supported the rights of all Palestinians to freedom and self-determination. Our concerns about Israel's escalating repression of Palestinians arise in a context of intensifying restrictions on the bare semblance of democracy, and growing discontent among a majority of Canadian Jews. However, the Canadian government has remained silent on recent developments in Israel, and Shimon Koffler Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, has defended a policy of constructive engagement with the new Israeli government. UJPO members believe that there can be no constructive engagement with violent extremists.

We call upon the Canadian government to condemn the actions of the current Israeli government toward the Palestinian victims of Huwara. We hope all other Jewish organizations, religious and secular, that have not already done so, will dissociate themselves publicly from the repellent actions of the Netanyahu government. ♦

Solidarity Rally in Winnipeg

By Harold Shuster, March 14, 2023

I want to extend a big thank you to all members and supporters who came out to the solidarity rally for Huwara on Sunday, and to those who couldn't attend in person but were there in spirit. There were about 25 people, we got lots of supportive honks, and some good media coverage thanks to CityTV.

Next big action is happening on Thursday May 11th – so please save that date. That evening the Jewish National Fund will be holding its Gala Fundraiser at the RBC Convention Centre. The JNF's special guest will be former Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Plans are currently underway. Please let me know if you would like to help with the organizing. We have a few fun things planned.

Thanks as always for your support for Palestine and the Palestinian people in their quest for justice and peace.

PS - here is a photo from Sunday's action: ♦



NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

UJPO CANADA Annual General Meeting (Via Zoom, January 18, 2023)

By Sam Blatt

(Ed. Note: How does one write a report on an AGM? After all, the minutes are available, and provide more detail than a “report” could ever present (without effectively repeating the minutes). One of the missions of UJPO News is to present analysis, thus reflecting the view of author. Common knowledge – no reporting is “objective”, but includes the nuances that move the report in a “direction”.

As we know, UJPO is a volunteer organization, and though its current membership numbers are drastically reduced from its 1945 membership of over 2000, distributed now between Toronto and Winnipeg as viable chapters, it is no less a complex organization to run than in 1945. In fact, our membership is likely more diverse than it was in 1945, and the reduced numbers also mean reduced financial resources. So the National Board, in its mission to guide the organization, has fewer resources to call on, yet has no less a heavy load to carry. Credit to the current board for their achievements.)

A total of 41 members attended the Zoom AGM, Chaired by Elka and Abbie, with minutes by Shayle. Thank you for steering and facilitating this AGM!

The Agenda Items

What is (or should have been!) the most significant ethical question that Jews have grappled with over the last 75 years? What is the position of UJPO on that ethical, unresolved issue? I have been a member of UJPO for about 30 years, and we have (not) debated our position on Israel/Palestine to everyone’s satisfaction for the entire time. As a population we are not as divided as the Canadian Jewish community, but divided enough (somewhat) to make it difficult to articulate a position to satisfy all members, yet reflect our common anti-racist, anti-oppression position when it comes to Israel and its occupation of Palestinian territories. (Fortunately this issue has not been buried even during the current Israeli demonstrations against Israel’s extreme right-wing government.) To pave the way to create a position statement, this board held three (Zoom) educational events in 2022 – creative, open, and not avoiding the possible controversial subjects of BDS and Israel’s “Law of Return”. Therefore – **a million kudos to the 2022 National Board for presenting a position that was easily passed with only one dissension.** That statement is available on the UJPO web site, at <https://www.winchevskycentre.org/>.

(Click on the tab, and it becomes available in your “downloads” as a PDF.)

Roz Usiskin was a driving force within UJPO since long before all but the surviving UJPO elders were born. She kept the branches united, created national programs that served and educated all our centres, did not hold back on constructive criticism, yet presented a modest personality. She was a member of the national board throughout her years with UJPO. **UJPO News, as an instrument of the national board, delivered a special memorial issue dedicated to Roz, with testimonials submitted from across Canada.** Thank you to UJPO News!

Ongoing projects: Several projects of a national nature are ongoing, some initiated several years ago by previous board members, some initiated by the current board members. These projects are resource heavy, both in “person-hours” and funding, but important for a complex organization such as ours. Together they are the framework that solidifies and makes available our history, and provides us with a solid legal base within our organization. The AGM recognized the efforts that continue to develop **our national archives, spearheaded by Ruth Grossman; the Summary of Relationships – a roadmap that defines and simplifies the understanding of our relationships, initiated and continues to be developed by Charna Gord; and a revised constitution,** a draft of which must still be approved by a lawyer and reviewed by the board.

Yiddishkayt – (and Yiddish, no doubt!) – one of the significant roots of UJPO, when it didn’t have to be an agenda topic, because it just...was! Our Yiddishkayt was expressed secularly/culturally, and our members spoke Yiddish without having had to “learn it”! Our four chapters always had *leyen krayzen*, Yiddish theatre performances, and supported Yiddish language newspapers. It is an important aspect of UJPO to many members, of all ages, that has waned with the generations, but has again surfaced as prominent to many in UJPO and much of the Jewish community at large. **A new staff position in support of this aspect of our heritage is “in process”.** See Sarena's report for the update on staff positions that have been added.

Board Members: Thanks to the outgoing board members for their excellent accomplishments in 2022. All current members, nominated by their chapters, were re-elected for the coming term, with Carl Rosenberg being nominated by Toronto. **Andrew Lyons is a new board member, nominated by Toronto.** (Harriet Lyons you may recognize as the cultural editor of UJPO News.)

Other agenda items, routine but important, included: Financial report, presented by Lynn Lubitz (accountant)

and Abbie Bakan (National Board treasurer); the Montreal cemetery, with an explanation of our fiduciary and administrative responsibilities.

At the time of the AGM, the **Ben Shek social justice award** had not yet been decided. It was presented at the Toronto third seyder. **Mazl tov to Hannah Blazer**, the very deserving recipient for 2022/2023. ♦



Hanna Blazer

Report on UJPO National Board and related activities

By Carl Rosenberg (Vancouver)

At our February 8 meeting, the UJPO National Board evaluated and on the whole was pleased by the Jan. 29 UJPO AGM, especially the educational part of the program and the passing of a long-overdue statement on Israel/Palestine. Many thanks to Sarena Sairan, Abbie Bakan, ElkaGuz, Shayle Kilroy, Gin Marshall, Barb Linds, and everyone else involved in planning, organizing, chairing and facilitating the event.

The Third Seyder of UJPO/WinchevskySchool was held on Sunday, April 16. The theme was Resistance, commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the 75th of the Palestinian Nakba. The service was led jointly by Sarena Sairan and Rachel Epstein, our current and previous Executive Directors, with introductions written by Rachel and with musical accompaniment by Marilyn Lerner, David Wall, and Saskia Laufer. Many thanks to all the organizers, participants and performers.

Hannah Blazer was awarded the Ben Shek Social Justice Award for her outstanding work in many areas, including her chairing of the UJPO-Toronto Board for the past three years (including during the Covid 19 pandemic), her involvement in Limmud (a Canada-U.S.-wide Jewish educational network), this year chairing their annual conference, and her active involvement in IfNotNow-Toronto. Congratulations, Hannah!

UJPO/MWS hosted a panel at Limmud Toronto's day-long festival of Jewish learning on April 30, on "Secular Jewishness and Jewish Secularism". The four speakers from the UJPO/Winchevsky community were Paula David, Sharoni Sibony, Lia Tarachansky and David Wall. Many thanks for representing us, Paula, Sharoni, Lia and David!

Andrew Lyons, who together with his wife Harriet has been active in UJPO for over 10 years, planning various

events at the Winchevsky Centre, has joined the UJPO Board. He remarks, "We were particularly interested in finding an organization involved in Palestinian solidarity work." Welcome, Andrew!

David Wall has been hired as UJPO's new Cultural Programmer and Developer. He began his involvement in UJPO in 1997 when he sang at the Third Seyder. Welcome, David!

UJPO has agreed to a request by CJPME (Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East) to endorse their year-long campaign to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Nakba.

In recent months, UJPO has renewed contact with the Argentine branch of ICUF (Yidisher Kultur Farband--Yiddish Cultural Organization known in North America as IKUF) which at one time had branches throughout the Americas. ICUF Argentina organized a virtual event on April 19 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, consisting of three videos – the reading of a text recounting and reflecting on the uprising, candle-lighting, and choir performances of Hershel Glick's Partisan Song. The videos featured members of various affiliate or affinity organizations, including two UJPO members, Lia Tarachansky and Carl Rosenberg. A brief excerpt from the above-mentioned text was read aloud at the UJPO/MWS Third Seyder.

One of the members of ICUF Argentina, NerinaVisacovsky, has edited a book, *Cultura judeo-progresista en las Americas* (Ediciones ICUF), which features two articles about UJPO. Nerina will visit Toronto and possibly Winnipeg in late August or early September, and would love to meet members of UJPO and perhaps take part in UJPO events. Ester Reiter has been in touch with Nerina, and hopes to take her to Camp Naivelt and Klez Canada during her time in Toronto.

We have also been working on various ongoing projects, including our corporation status update, which involves a transformation of UJPO from an Insurance Company to a Non-Profit-Organization, work on the UJPO Constitution, and working with Ruth Grossman on the UJPO archive project.

Many thanks to everyone in UJPO for your participation and involvement. ♦

FROM WINNIPEG

By Ellen Karlinsky

Greetings from Winnipeg.

The winter was long, but spring has finally arrived in Winnipeg, and we're cheering.

We also cheered for the Jets during their playoff battle with the Las Vegas Golden Knights, but hockey fans have now put away their jerseys, of course looking ahead to next year.

The last of a four part series will take place on May 7 as Itay Zutra continues his exploration of Yiddish poets. It's been a fascinating and stimulating series with a lot of discussion. Everyone has their own interpretation and it has made for excellent conversations.

Itay is truly a Winnipeg treasure and since COVID, we have been able to share his offerings on Zoom with other UJPO members across Canada.

Another one of our cultural initiatives is a play reading group. It met last month to read an Arthur Miller play *Incident at Vichy* followed by a meaningful discussion. This also took place on Zoom but hopefully will be in person next time.

We have had two successful Yiddish afternoons. The most recent featured a deep dive into Jewish Humour and the singing of some songs in Yiddish led by our one and only Dora Rosenbaum. We will meet next time to explore Yiddish expressions. We have a lot of fun.

Book club is thriving. Most recently the members read *Free* by Lea Ypi.

On a more serious note many of our members gave presentations to the Human Rights Commission. These were focused on speaking against the adoption of the IHRA definition of anti-semitism. A report on this meeting written by Rubin Kantorovich can be found on Page 10.

We are so pleased that Sarena Sairan joined our Zoom board meeting to introduce herself, and to answer questions. Sarena has made a huge effort to strengthen the connections between Winnipeg and the National and Toronto groups. Sarena encouraged us to join the third Seyder and made a big effort to include Yiddish songs that our choir has sung in previous years at Warsaw ghetto memorials.

She also talked about David Wall, the new cultural programmer. We hope to connect with David about things going on in Winnipeg like the choir and the documentary film project.

There are many actions and events happening in May that UJPO will be supporting. Check our website: <https://www.ujpowinnipeg.com/>

Condolences to UJPO Winnipeg board member Joel Kettner and his family on the passing of his mother Ruth Kettner. Our thoughts are with you, Joel.

A public memorial event for the late Lee Anne Block, UJPO Winnipeg Executive Member, will take place on

Sunday, July 2 at the Healing Forest in St. John's Park in Winnipeg, at 2:00. Lee Anne helped found and develop this space for contemplation and reflection, a contribution to advance reconciliation in Canada.

Many thanks to our hard working Winnipeg Board. ♦

FROM TORONTO

By Sarena Sairan

UJPO National has been involved in several political initiatives. Most notably, UJPO was among over 100 signatories on a letter to the UN, written by the Human Rights Watch against the UN adopting the IHRA's definition of anti-semitism. We are mentioned in this article and read it here:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2023/04/13/why-a-debate-over-how-to-define-antisemitism-has-reached-the-united-nation.html>

We hosted our first in-person (and virtual) Third Seyder since 2019, on April 16, 2023. It was an evening full of community! The theme of our seyder this year was Resistance, and we reflected on the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the 75th anniversary of Nakba, and some of the heroic acts that the Jewish Partisans accomplished during the Holocaust with writings authored by Rachel Epstein. We had live music by David Wall, Marilyn Lerner and Saskia Laufer. Thank you to the Third Seyder planning committee (Shayle Kilroy, Rachel Epstein and myself), and to all those who contributed and participated.

On April 30, 2023, UJPO/MWS will be hosting an educational session at the Limmud Toronto Festival, called Secular Jewishness and Jewish Secularism. Moderated by our Adult Educator Sharoni Sibony, a panel consisting of David Wall (Cultural Programmer & Developer), Lia Tarachansky (Education Director) and Paula David (UJPO/MWS Board of Director) will be discussing our various expressions of Jewishness at UJPO through education, culture, leadership and at Naivelt. For more on Limmud, go here: <https://limmudtoronto2023.sched.com/>

The Morris Winchevsky Shule is coming closer to the end of this academic year, with lots of learning and highlights. We will soon be hosting ceremonies for our B'Mitzvah class from Shule, and for our adult learner B'Mitzvah class. Keep reading our bi-weekly Digest for more details. The Shule will also be taking a visit to Camp Naivelt in June. We held a successful Purim Party and had all our kids participate in a pre-recorded video of them singing Dir Fir Kashes at our livestreamed, in-person Third Seyder.

We are looking forward to another season at Camp Naivelt! If you're looking to rent a cabin this summer, we still have room! Simply visit this page:

<https://www.winchevskycentre.org/cottage-rental>

If you haven't yet already, please welcome David Wall as our new Cultural Programmer & Developer. We are absolutely delighted to have David on our team! In the short time David's been with us in this capacity, he's already applied for grants, is developing an annual calendar for cultural programming, developing cultural engagement on the National level, and kick-starting a new Youth Group based in activism!



David Wall

Here's a short bio: David Wall is a Toronto-based composer, singer and community worker. He has written scores for a long list of film, television and experimental projects, working with collaborators such as Bruce Mau Design, Naomi Klein and Alan Zweig. His career as a singer has included fronting bands

with funny names, like The Bourbon Tabernacle Choir, The Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band and Art of Time Ensemble. He has studied Cantorial and traditional Yiddish music privately and Yiddish and Hebrew language at the University of Toronto and has collaborated extensively on experimental Jewish music projects with pianist Marilyn Lerner. Over the years, he has worked as Director of Community Outreach and Education at JAZZ.FM91 (Canada's only jazz/charity radio station) and designed and taught art and music education programs for unhoused community members as well as children and youth in underserved neighborhoods across the Greater Toronto Area. He has been a proud member of the UJPO/Winchevsky community for decades, singing at holidays and other annual events since 1997. ♦

Ben Shek Social Justice Award Nomination:

By Paula David, February 2023

It is my pleasure to nominate Hannah Blazer for the Ben Shek Award. I understand that this Award pays tribute to the energy, passion and commitment that Ben contributed to our Organization for most of his life. Since its inception, many longstanding and esteemed members from across Canada have been honoured for their decades of service to UJPO's mission and values. Hannah's contribution across our entire community is comparable to these Honourees. Within UJPO her committed leadership and participation in the past few years has been growing exponentially. She was

an active and involved member since the day she was born. Her parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and countless cousins have been part of UJPO, the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, the Shule, Camp Naivelt, the Labour Movement and the quest for Social Justice. Hannah carries this rich heritage in her DNA. Many of these same relatives have, over the generations taken on leadership roles within our Organization and given countless hours of their time, talents and energy through the decades.

Usually, we wait until an honouree has had significant time in their role(s) as an active adult member, resulting in our senior members deservedly being recognized for their many years of volunteerism. My nomination comes as an exception to this traditional model and at a time when our almost 100-year-old Organization needs an infusion of young people. Currently a mutual discovery process is unfolding while these two groups find each other and share their passion for social change and justice. Hannah quietly and steadily has been contributing to this process and has been actively networking with like-minded young adults across Toronto and beyond. She represents the next generation of leadership and has embraced the challenges of change at a time when change has become critical.

UJPO, with its rich and progressive history is now witnessing how the driving needs for justice have evolved. Hannah is unique in that she is a direct descendant of our founders as well as a part of the rapidly growing new generation of young adults re-defining the meaning of secular culture, Yiddishkeit and progressive politics for the future. She is committed and has proven herself as having both the courage and confidence to join our UJPO-Toronto Board as the youngest member in years. After only two years she stepped forward to serve as Board Chair. It has been a pleasure watching her listen, learn and grow. Now beginning her third year as Chair, she has steered the Toronto Board of Directors and its various Committees through the most challenging few years UJPO has experienced in decades. These issues were as diverse as they were difficult. They included trying to remain relevant throughout a global lockdown, reinterpreting our programming and sense of community within a virtual world, major changes in staffing, economic challenges, internal strife and dissent within a group of our members, coming to terms with our outdated Constitution and bringing it into the 21st century, all while simultaneously working on relocating and moving out of our long-term home on Cranbrooke. Hannah navigated the diversity of dissent, the arguments, occasional apathy or negativity, the frustration and still provided leadership while moving us all through the chronic crisis of a global pandemic. She represented the Board calmly and with grace as it navigated the past few years. This would have been a daunting

challenge for any of our seasoned leaders, but Hannah in her new role as both an UJPO Toronto Board Member and Chair remained determined, committed and steadfast.

Even while working so hard internally, she also speaks for UJPO externally. She has been actively involved in Limmud-Toronto, a global movement that celebrates 'diverse Jewish thinking as an active and evolving conversation'. This year Hannah is co-Chair of their annual conference. She is also actively involved in IfNotNow-Toronto – an organization which strives to 'end the American Jewish community's support for the occupation and gain freedom and dignity for all Israelis and Palestinians'. Hannah has welcomed several new UJPO members from within her various communities, and our Organization is benefitting. As stated, our UJPO values and legacy are embedded in Hannah and while not unique within UJPO's young adult population, she is the first of her generation to become involved in the present leadership while simultaneously reaching out beyond our immediate membership and introducing us to young adults looking for a relevant and inclusive community. She is part of our future and represents a young, energized group of progressive Jews who will re-vitalize and combine both the legacy of our past and the potential of our future as we move forward to our next 100 years. ♦

HONOURABLE MENTSHN: Max Wallace

Helen Keller as political crusader? Max Wallace reveals what happened 'After The Miracle' in new biography

By Janet Somerville, *Toronto Star*, April 14, 2023

At a 1901 dinner honouring Helen Keller (1880-1968), that's precisely how Mark Twain introduced her to the crowd. In 1906, he described her in further superlatives when he wrote his autobiography: "She was the most marvellous person of her sex since Joan of Arc, fellow to Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon, Homer, Shakespeare, and the rest of the immortals."

Now, bestselling writer and disability rights advocate Max Wallace's fascinating fourth book, "After the Miracle," reclaims the life of the international icon through the lens of her pioneering political activism, including speaking out against racism, poverty and disability. Speaking by phone recently from his Toronto home, Wallace said he hoped to challenge the well-worn narrative that her teacher Annie Sullivan was the one responsible for Keller's extraordinary achievements, her miracle worker.

"Helen's been reduced to a secondary character in her own story, the cliché of the six-year-old deaf-blind girl at the water pump. Frozen in time. A secular saint famous for one thing," he said. It was Helen, though, who was prodigiously gifted, a woman fluent in six languages, articulate in her writing, calling out demagogues and injustice, her rage palpable.

While writing his previous book, "In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust," Wallace discovered that Keller's book "How I Became A Socialist" (1912) was one of the few books by Americans burned by the Nazis when they took power. He was "intrigued by the idea that one of the world's most beloved figures attracted the ire of the world's most ruthless dictator." That's when his research about Keller began in earnest and he learned "that throughout the 1930s she was like the original anti-Fascist."



Max Wallace

In May 1933, for example, Keller wrote a letter to Hitler: "History has taught you nothing if you think you can kill ideas. Tyrants have tried to do that often before, and the ideas have risen up in their might and destroyed them ... Do not imagine your barbarities to the Jews are unknown here."

"She was reading periodicals and newspapers in German, so she was calling him out in real time. She was so savvy about world politics that she wrote about a conspiracy alarmingly imminent. About Franco and Hitler," Wallace said.

Much earlier, after Keller was the first deaf-blind person to graduate from Radcliffe College, where she'd studied under Charles Copeland, the same composition professor as poet T.S. Eliot and novelist John Dos Passos, she joined the Socialist Party. "Predictably her politics were blamed on her disabilities. A move that always infuriated her. And, unfortunately, during her earliest socialist period, she used a lot of stale rhetoric, which doesn't convince in any era," Wallace said.

Around the same time, in 1911, however, Keller had an epiphany in which she recognized a link between disability and capitalism: she had recently learned that industrial accidents caused by a lack of workplace safety were responsible for blindness and other disabilities in America. She believed poverty was society's greatest plague. She called it the "unconscious cruelty of commercial society ... an abomination."

“She travelled the world decades later talking about systemic poverty and how cycles of poverty lead to disability. Her lawyer wanted her to talk about her story of overcoming disability. But she’d talk about commercial greed and poverty. She was frustrated that people only wanted to hear about her inspirational life story and the hagiography of Annie Sullivan,” Wallace said.

Keller made a horrific public misstep in 1915 – something that stains her legacy to this day – when she embraced eugenics and came to the defence of a Chicago doctor who allowed a disabled baby to die, a fact that Wallace did not gloss over, instead quoting what Helen shockingly, for the time, wrote: “he performed a service to society as well as to the hopeless being spared from a life of misery.” Wallace said that her flirtation with eugenics continues to taint Keller’s legacy in the disability community even today.

Late in the editing process, Wallace also discovered that Keller’s father was the first Ku Klux Klan member in Alabama, a fact that underscored her shame about her Southern family’s slave-owning past, a shame she shared with Mark Twain, one of her dearest friends. She would recall with affection time spent with Twain, “when talk was fragrant with tobacco and flamboyant with profanity.” Keller also wrote that they bonded over social justice: “He knew that we do not think with our eyes and ears, and that our capacity for thought is not measured by five senses.”

“I was most struck in my research by Helen’s crusades in anti-Black racism and how poignant it was to read her correspondence from 1915 to 1916,” Wallace said. In 1916, the NAACP appealed to her to endorse its work. She did and also donated \$100, a significant sum that was then equal to almost one-fifth of the average annual income. She wrote, “What a comment upon our social justice is the need of an association like yours! ... a most blind, stupid, inhuman prejudice ... Let us hurl our strength against the iron gates of prejudice until they fall, and their bars are sundered.” Unsurprisingly, three years later Keller would become a founding member of the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union).

The most exciting part of Wallace’s research involved interviewing Gandhi’s grandchildren about Keller’s 1951 tour of South Africa, which lasted two-and-a-half months. “They remembered clearly her visit three years after apartheid began and how important it was for a famous American to come and speak out, standing up for people of colour,” he said. Keller gave an interview in which she went on the record about the appalling treatment of Black South Africans. “It was one of the many times that people around Helen exerted intense pressure to downplay her

controversies. It was like political whack-a-mole trying to maintain her image as a secular saint,” Wallace said.

Eight years after that the African National Congress wrote to Helen requesting her public support when a then-unknown Nelson Mandela and other party members fighting against apartheid were put on trial for high treason and faced the death penalty. “Seventy-nine-year-old Helen did not hesitate. She issued an appeal for funds and condemned the poison of racism and oppression,” Wallace said.

With whiplash narrative drive this meticulously researched account of Keller’s legacy clarifies the lifelong commitment of a progressive radical whose social justice advocacy remains timeless. It’s an essential read that shifts the well-worn tale of one of the 20th century’s most intrepid figures. ♦

Janet Somerville is the author of “Yours, for Probably Always: Martha Gellhorn’s Letters of Love & War 1930-1949,” available now as an audiobook read by Ellen Barkin.

<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2023/04/14/helen-keller-as-political-crusader-max-wallace-reveals-what-happened-after-the-miracle-in-new-biography.html>

WHAT’S IN ORDER

Mazl tov to:

Mazl Tov to Charna Gord and David Chudnovsky on the birth of their grandson Tell Reid Chudnovsky. Tell Reid was born on March 11, 2023 in Kentville, Nova Scotia or the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia – where he lives with his dad Paul and mom Jordyn Chudnovsky, and big brother Levett Henry (who just turned 2 on March 20, 2023).



And to Abbie Bakan and Paul Kellogg for becoming grandparents (again)! Proud parents Rachel Kellogg and Michael Stephens, and brother Gabriel are thrilled to welcome Elijah Llewellyn Stephens to the world on April 20, 2023.



Get well to:

We continue to wish Solly Blaser good health.

Heartfelt condolences to:

We are sending more condolences to Barb Linds and family. On April 22, 2023 many UJPO members attended a Celebration of Life for Barb’s daughter Sarah Kapetaneas.

Our heartfelt condolences to Toronto’s Howard-Cooper family, Ruth Howard, Steve Cooper, Shifra and Helah

Cooper, and Eli Howard, on the death of Ruth's mother and the grandmother of their children, the late Toni Howard.

And condolences to Winnipeg UJPO member Joel Kettner whose mother Ruth (Wiseman) Kettner died peacefully at home in her 100th year on February 16, 2023. ♦

GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

Barb Linds

Interviewed by Sam Blatt

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

I've been a member of UJPO Toronto since the mid 1990's.

What brought you to UJPO?

I grew up in Regina in a Conservative congregation of about 250 families.

My grandparents were the first Jewish couple to be married in Regina in 1904. They and their 7 children were ardent Zionists. I went to Hebrew school from age 5 to 13 every evening except Friday, and also on Sunday mornings, and to junior congregation on Saturdays. I went to Camp B'nai B'rith (Pine Lake Alberta) from age 7 to 17. When I moved to Toronto and had children (Sarah and Niko Kapetaneas), I looked for a community where they would grow up with an appreciation of being Jewish both historically and culturally and with progressive and social justice politics. I found UJPO! They both attended the shule and did their B'Mitvahs. We owned cabins at Naivelt in the 1990's (Hill 3, Cabin 30, then Hill 3, Cabin 32). We sold our cabin in 2002 when Eric (DePoe) and I got together. Eric already owned a seasonal tea room near Kingston, which he ran for 17 years. We currently live in Napanee.

In which boards and/or committees are you active?

In the 1990's I was on the Toronto Board and the Camp Committee, and chaired both at various times. I was elected to the UJPO Toronto/MWS board at the 2021 AGM, and currently am a member of the HR committee. This past summer I filled in as Interim Executive Director of the organization. I was also a member of the Camp Program



Eric DePoe and Barb Linds

Committee. We bought a derelict Camp owned cabin (Hill 2, Cabin 20) in 2021, and this past summer we rehabilitated it.

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

It's been a really busy year for the Board and for the HR committee. One of the highlights was the hiring of Sarena Sairan, our new Executive Director. At Camp I was involved in a really great theatre project. Renowned playwright John Lazarus worked with Camp folks to create a staged reading of his play *Village of Idiots*.

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

I retired in 2009 after 30 years at the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, where I held a variety of positions, including both bargaining unit organizer and campaigns organizer. My volunteer commitments have been many and varied, and have included theatre and arts boards, and social justice, peace and climate activism.

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

My whole adult life has focused on union, social justice and arts activism. I bring all of this background into my work with UJPO.

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

Eric and I have a family membership. He is currently on the Camp Environment Committee and intends to get more involved in volunteer work at Camp.

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

I am in the second year of a two year term on the UJPO Toronto/MWS board. This past year has been a busy one, with lots of changes and challenges. I'm looking forward to working with the board and our new ED, Sarena Sairan, as we move forward with our staffing plan, move to a new office, and update our bylaws so they are consistent and conform to the new Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

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

I recently watched *The Present* for the second time. This is a short film, directed by Palestinian-British film maker Farah Nabulsi, which was nominated for a 2021 Oscar for best live action short. It is a heartbreaking film that shows a part of the humiliation and suffering that Palestinians face every day at Israeli checkpoints. ♦

POETRY & YIDDISH SONG

Introduction by Sarena Sairan

May 15, 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the Nakba or Palestinian Catastrophe, a term used to describe the events of 1948 which began the ongoing persecution, displacement, and occupation of the Palestinian people by the state of Israel – in the face of which Palestinians continue to resist.

We recognize too that there has always been Jewish resistance to the idea of a state that grants special rights and privileges to some of its citizens, but not others, and that the numbers of Jews who oppose the Israeli occupation is rapidly growing.

Through poetry we can honour the courage of resistance, the significance of solidarity and our insistence on a reimagined world. Because the founding of the State of Israel was based on the idea of a “land without people,” Palestinian existence itself is resistance. Palestinians are refusing their erasure. (JVP – Haggadah)

Here is a poem by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish called Ahmad Al-Za'tar:

For two hands, of stone and of thyme
I dedicate this song.. For Ahmad, forgotten between two
butterflies
The clouds are gone and have left me homeless, and
The mountains have flung their mantles and concealed me
..From the oozing old wound to the contours of the land I
descend, and
The year marked the separation of the sea from the cities of
ash, and
I was alone
Again alone
O alone? And Ahmad
Between two bullets was the exile of the sea
A camp grows and gives birth to fighters and to thyme
And an arm becomes strong in forgetfulness
Memory comes from trains that have left and
Platforms that are empty of welcome and of jasmine
In cars, in the landscape of the sea, in the intimate nights of
prison cells
In quick liaisons and in the search for truth was
The discovery of self
In every thing, Ahmad found his opposite
For twenty years he was asking
For twenty years he was wandering
For twenty years, and for moments only, his mother gave
him birth
In a vessel of banana leaves
And departed

He seeks an identity and is struck by the volcano
The clouds are gone and have left me homeless, and
The mountains have flung their mantles and concealed me
I am Ahmad the Arab, he said
I am the bullets, the oranges and the memory ♦

YIDDISH SONG:

Introduction by Sarena Sairan

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was the 1943 act of Jewish resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto in German-occupied Poland during World War II to oppose Nazi Germany's final effort to transport the remaining ghetto population to Majdanek (my-DAH-neck) and Treblinka death camps. After the summer of 1942, in which more than a quarter of a million Jews were deported from the ghetto and murdered, the remaining Jews began to build bunkers and smuggle weapons and explosives into the ghetto. The uprising started on April 19 when the ghetto refused to surrender to the police commander, who then ordered the burning of the ghetto, block by block, ending on May 16. A total of 13,000 Jews were killed. German casualties were probably fewer than 150.

Hirsh Glik, a young 24 year old poet and partisan in the Vilna Ghetto, heard of the Uprising and wrote Zog Nit Keyn Mol, which has become the anthem of Jews everywhere. You can hear David Wall and Marilyn Lerner perform Zog Nit Keyn Mol here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/besozihcxnmkz4y/Zog%20nit.mov?dl=0>

Repeat the last two lines of each verse:

Zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg
Ven himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg
Kumen vet nokh undzer oisgebenkte sho
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot, mir zaynen do.

Fun grinem palmen land biz vaysn land fun shney
Mir zaynen do mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey
Un vu gefaln s'iz a shpritz fun undzer blut
Shprotzn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.

S'vet di morgn-zun bagildn undz dem haynt
Der shvartzer nekhtn vet farshvindn mitn faynt
Un oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem kayor
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tzu dor.

Geshriben iz dos lid mit blut un nit mit blay
S'iz nit kayn lid fun zumer foygl af der fray
Nor s'hot a folk tzvishn falndike vent
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

To zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg
Khotch himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot, mir zaynen do.

Never say this road will be the last for you.
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue.
Because the hour that we have hungered for is near,
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble:
We are here!

From land of palm-tree to the far-off land of snow
We are here with all our torment and our woe
And wherever our blood was shed in pain,
Our fighting spirit will resurrect again.

We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow
And our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe.
And if the time is long before the sun appears
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

With blood, not lead we wrote this song we sing.
It's not a caroling of birds upon the wing.
But 'twas our people midst the crashing fires of hell
That sang this song, and fought courageous till it fell!

So never say this road will be the last for you.
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue.
Because the hour that we have hungered for is near,
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble:
We are here!♦

A LITTLE NOSH

Cauliflower Puttanesca



By Harriet Zaidman

Here's a main or side dish bursting with big flavours, which will appeal to vegan as well as vegetarian diners. Vary the amount of garlic, olives and capers to suit your own taste preferences, but the advice is "go big". This version uses less oil than the original recipe on Epicurious calls for – I found the amount they suggested made the dish too greasy. Add feta to make it an even heartier main dish. Either way, this is a quick and appealing dish you'll want to make again. This and over 250 more recipes can be found on my website: northendnosh.weebly.com.

Serves: 2-4 **Time:** 25 minutes

Ingredients

1 large head cauliflower (about 3 pounds), leaves removed, cut into bite-size florets
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided in two halves
2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus a pinch
10 large cloves garlic (or equivalent), finely chopped
1 cup drained oil-packed roasted or sun-dried tomatoes, halved
3/4 cup pitted mixed green and black olives, large ones halved or quartered
1/4 cup drained capers
1 teaspoon cayenne OR 1 1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes
Large handful basil leaves, chopped or torn
Small handful small parsley sprigs, whole, chopped or torn
1 lemon

Method

Preheat the oven to 450°F. On a rimmed pan, combine the cauliflower, 1/4 cup of the olive oil, and 2 teaspoons of the salt, then give it all a toss to coat. Spread the cauliflower in a single layer and roast, without stirring, until deep golden, roasty, and tender but with a soft crunch to the stems, 10 to 20 minutes, but don't let them get mushy, OR heat a barbecue grill and roast the cauliflower on medium heat until tender and golden.

In the meantime, heat the remaining 1/4 cup of the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and the remaining pinch of salt and cook until the garlic is golden, about 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, olives, capers, and cayenne and cook, stirring occasionally, just until it's all warmed through, 2 to 3 minutes.

When everything is ready, put the cauliflower in a big bowl and pour in the contents of the skillet. If desired, spoon the flavoured oil on as well. Add the basil and parsley. Use a microplane to grate in the lemon zest, then cut the lemon in quarters or halves and squeeze in the juice, according to your taste. Stir well and transfer to a bowl or platter to serve. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Optional: Sprinkle feta, parmesan or other salty cheese on top to add protein.♦

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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