



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 #38, Issue #2

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

WHEN THE USSR DUMPED THE UJPO

By David Abramowitz

Why our founders championed the USSR even when it meant they would be expelled from the Workmen's Circle is unknown to the current membership. It will be explained in a future article. This relationship stigmatized us in the community at large labeling us as "commies" which is still an incorrect speculation. But we were unceremoniously snubbed and dumped by the USSR, although we were one of the few Canadian organizations which had supported it since the founding of our 1926 precursor organization (Toronto's Labour League Mutual Benefit Society) and its Canadian sister organizations.

When the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) participated in the "Let My People Go" (LMPG) campaign in the early '60's, the UJPO, expelled from the CJC in 1951, was not party to the discussions which developed the Canadian campaign. The UJPO National Board (NB), however, felt the concept was too constrictive. Some of our members had intermarried with non-Jewish citizens of their countries of origin (i.e. Poland, Ukraine, Russia, etc.) It was felt that as far as their non-Jewish senior relatives were concerned, a Jews-only reunification campaign was discriminatory and manifestly unfair.

I was then in my 20's and not a UJPO member, though a participant in its UJPO Theatre Workshop for 10-plus years. My father, an NB member, explained the NB's decision to write to the Soviet embassy in Ottawa expressing our concerns and request they also consider allowing other non-Jewish relatives of their intermarried offspring to join them in Canada. If I recall correctly, the publicized Soviet response to the LMPG campaign was that it wasn't possible as those Soviet citizens held state secrets. I believe that UJPO's correspondence also stated we didn't accept that all pertinent seniors held state secrets.

The outcome was that the embassy staff didn't reply. Till then we were notified of receipt of all our letters and were assured they would be forwarded to the appropriate individual. In this instance, for the first time, they didn't respond. My rapidly-arrived-at conclusion was that they were treating UJPO as "dissidents." My father disagreed. He later relayed that my suggestion was also rejected by the NB.

It remained unresolved for decades: my dad and I never discussed it again. In 1968 I joined UJPO-Toronto, was elected to its Board a decade later, and in 1983 I was elected to the NB as its president. A couple of years later Mikhail Gorbachev, the USSR leader, mentioned one could even hear Yiddish on Soviet streets! With knowledge by then that Jews were victimized under Stalin's leadership, I remarked to Muni Taub, (a mentor for the Morris Winchevsky School on whose Board I also sat) that it would be interesting to learn whether it was true or more Moscow fiction.

Muni wanted to explore it too, suggesting we combine our planned trip to the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising with a USSR tour. The geographic proximity meant an add-on Yiddish Cultural tour of the USSR would be easy. The NB agreed, Muni did the majority of the organizing/publicizing work and in April, 1988, he and I jointly led a group of 30 to Warsaw, 15 of whom followed on to Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev.

There was where I determined my concept was confirmed. In Moscow our Intourist guide, Masha, explained Intourist's planned tour with no reference to any content in our requested

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NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

FROM WINNIPEG

By Mark Golden

The Executive Board of UJPO-Winnipeg continues to meet every month.

In late February, we co-sponsored a panel discussion, “My Jerusalem,” at the University of Winnipeg in response to Donald Trump’s decision to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. Speakers, all with a connection to Jerusalem, included a local Palestinian Muslim, a local Palestinian Christian, and Rabbi David Mivasair of Vancouver. This well-attended event (predictably) drew the ire of B’nai Brith, whose unfounded accusations that speakers had made anti-Semitic comments prompted the university to host a meeting to review just what was said as well as editorials, articles and letters in the *Jewish Post and News*. A video of the evening is available on YouTube.

In late March, we organized a forum on Jews and the Russian Revolution, featuring two admirably different presentations by Henry Heller (Professor of History, University of Manitoba) and Ester Reiter (Professor Emeritus of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, York University). The venue was the Ukrainian Labour Temple, a building contemporary with the events Henry and Ester discussed and often the scene of debates on the issues they raised.

Early April saw the third and final lecture in Itay Zutra’s latest series of well received talks on Jewish literature in Israel and the Diaspora. (We may sponsor another series in the future.) The following evening, our North End Jewish Folk Choir sang at the annual commemoration of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. This year’s speaker (thanks to a generous grant from UJPO’s national organization) was Max Wallace of Toronto, who outlined his new book, *In the Name of Humanity: the Secret Deal to End the Holocaust*. The Choir also sang at the Sholem Aleichem Community Passover later in the month.

Through Lee Anne Block, a member of our Executive Board, we have been involved in and donated to the Healing Forest, located in St John’s Park in the North End, an area rich in associations for Winnipeg Jews. A gathering place, a learning place and a living memorial to Indigenous children lost to the residential school system, the Forest is cared for by a planning group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members.

Our book club continued to meet, reading a novel, *Havana Fed*, by Leonard Padura, and Malcolm Harris’s *Kids These Days: Human Capital and the Making of Millennials*.

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.

Our most recent event was the annual summer barbecue at the home of Lee Anne Block and Richard Grunfeld. Richard presided over the grill, Henry Shorr’s son Aaron provided musical accompaniment on the guitar, and we offered a short account of the year’s many activities and a preview of what is to come. Prominent among our plans is the conference on Israel, Palestine and International Law from September 7 to 9, 2018, which we are co-sponsoring here. This features experts from Canada, the United States and the Middle East. For more information, visit israelpalestinelawsymposium.ca. ♦

FROM HAMILTON

By Paul Weinberg

The legacy of Philip Roth’s writing was the topic of discussion at our gathering on Sunday July 8 at the home of Paul Weinberg and Cathy McPherson in Hamilton. Most of us had read one or more of his books over the years or were reading them now and so it was not difficult for people to express their opinions. Generally, it was agreed that Roth’s novels and short fiction combined seriously sculptured paragraphs and comic snapshots to good effect. He was a very political writer delving into the bigger themes of male libido (almost all of his books but especially *Portnoy’s Complaint*), the potential of fascism (*The Plot Against America*), the problematic aspects of Israel and its relationship with American Jews (*The Counter Life* and *Operation Shylock*) and racism (*The Human Stain*).

There was discussion about the unfortunate misogyny in his novels, especially towards Jewish women. Roth has also been compared to our own Mordecai Richler in their shared delight in satirizing Jews in Canada and the US, and

finding themselves absurdly denounced as anti-Semites in the process. In one novel (I forget the title) Roth created a minor character loosely based on the New York Jewish critic Irving Howe, who loved the short story collection *Goodbye Columbus* but argued Roth had jeopardized his future literary promise with his prurient exploration of sexual subjects in works like *Portnoy's Complaint*.

Our discussion turned to whether there are worthy successors in literature to Roth today among Jews in North America. It is hard to think of somebody with his daring political smarts. On the other hand, one hopes that Jewish women writers can come into their own and repair the neglect and damage done. I am not sure how Roth would have handled the MeToo movement and the disgrace of Harvey Weinstein. But we agreed that with all of his faults, Roth is still being read today – witness the line up for those seeking to borrow his books at the local Hamilton library.

At a spring “schmooze and nosh” at Lyn Center’s home, we talked about another cultural form where Jews once predominated and also offered a unique perspective: popular music, from the modern secular Christmas music of Irving Berlin, Robert May and Mel Tormé to the folk and rock contributions of Bob Dylan and Neil Diamond.

We are currently working on organizing a tour of the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto for our group. ♦

FROM TORONTO

By Rachel Epstein

Greetings from sunny Toronto! At least the sun is shining and summer has arrived, while we reel from the election of Doug Ford as our provincial Premier. We will, of course, be joining with many others who are dismayed at this outcome, making our voices heard as we begin to witness the impact of this newly-elected Conservative government.

Camp Naivelt: Camp is in full swing following the opening on the July long weekend. A rich program has been developed for the summer, including Music and Arts Camp, many fabulous speakers and performers, and, of course, aquafit, yoga, dancing and food! Check out the program here: (<https://bit.ly/2zpSUzM>), and think about joining us at camp for a few days. There are still short term rentals available. Camp Naivelt has hired a new camp manager – Victor Sokolov – a current UJPO and Naivelt member. He has been extremely busy whipping camp into shape for the coming season. Also working tirelessly alongside him has been Camp Chair Tina Blazer and Camp Committee member Christine Cushing. Camp Naivelt is also moving along with its Strategic Planning process, with the assistance of Sue Pulfer from MAS. Our first brainstorming session will be held on July 11.

Morris Winchevsky School: The MWS celebrated three wonderful B’nai Mitzvah grads on Saturday, June 23. Max Pearce Basman, Hayden Hermolin and Saskia Laufer wowed their friends and families and the MWS staff with their research presentations and creative projects. We extend a huge *mazl tov* to them and their families! The MWS is currently seeking to hire new Kinder Kapers and B’nai Mitzvah teachers. We are sad to lose our beloved Sarena Sairan, who has been teaching the Kinder Kapers class for many years, and sad also to be saying goodbye to Sterling Stutz who did a stellar job of leading the B’nai Mitzvah class this year. Please spread the word that we are hiring! Education Director Lia Tarachansky continues to work on refining the shule curriculum, and is working again this summer with student Ben Ghan to digitize and make accessible the rich collection of educational resources they have amassed. Registration is open for the 2018-19 school year!

Zing! Zing! Zing!: UJPO’s monthly singing group, led by Rachel Sheinin and Hartley Wynberg, finished its season with an event at the Free Times Cafe. People came for dinner and stayed to sing. Lots of folks came out and had a great time singing the classics. Plans are in the works for more.

The Archives: Our archivist, Ruth Grossman, continues to pore over the boxes of documents in the UJPO office that contain our organization’s history. This summer she too is working with student Ben Ghan to begin the process of digitizing the archives. Before you know it you will be able to go online and browse UJPO’s history!

Other programming: In May we were delighted to host Kevin Nixon who spoke about his research on drag performers in Toronto, and was accompanied by awesome drag performer Victoria Parks. At the end of June we said goodbye to Anton Guz who completed a six-month student internship. Before they left, Anton presented an extremely informative talk and discussion about Ukraine. Anton is also working with Lia Tarachansky, our Education Director, on an activist project to mobilize in response to the rise of fascist groups in Toronto.

Seeking New Board Members: UJPO-Toronto is seeking people to join the Board in November, 2018, following the AGM. It is an exciting time to get involved in our organization – lots of new people, projects, actions and activities. If you would like more information, please get in touch and we will convince you it is a good idea!

See our website www.winchevskycentre.org for more info on all of our programs and activities.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WinchevskyCtr

Twitter: twitter.com/WinchevskyCtr ♦

WHAT'S IN ORDER

Mazl Tov to ...

- Roz Usiskin on her 90th birthday:



- Rachel Epstein, who wrote and directed the film *Hi Mrs. Friedman!* This eight-minute short was screened at the Art Gallery of Ontario on May 30 as part of the Inside Out LGBT Film Festival.
- Elorah and the Wohl-Bennett family, on Elorah's Bat Mitzvah
- Max Pearce Basman, Hayden Hermolin and Saskia Laufer on their B'nai Mitzvah with the MWS
- UJPO commends the City of Toronto's honouring of Human Rights lawyer and activist Charles Roach by naming a lane-way in the St. Clair-Christie area, after him. The ceremony was attended by several UJPO



members who live in the area. Charles Roach is not only remembered for his constant fights for social justice but as one of four founders of the Black Action Defence Committee, created in response to

police killings of Black citizens, which influenced the establishment of Ontario's civilian-led Special Investigations Unit.

Welcome to ...

- New Toronto members Sharona and Jonathan Brookman, Anton Guz, Judy Pocock, and Lia Tarachansky

Get well wishes to ...

- David Abramowitz.
- Barbara Blaser

Condolences to ...

- Sarah Latha on the passing of her mother, Khairoun Latha
- The family of Bea Levis on her passing
- Lisa Smecca on the passing of her mother, Sylvia Glicksman
- The Abrams/Abramowitz family on the passing of Ida (Katz) Abrams
- UJPO extends its sympathy to Dan Yashinsky and Carol Zavitz, on the death of their son Jacob Yahinsky-Zavitz. Dan is a popular story-teller in the community who participates in events at the Winchevsky Centre and Camp Naivelt where he is scheduled to lead a story-telling event in August. ♦

SECULAR JEWISH NEWS

By Carl Rosenberg

I was terribly saddened by the passing of Bea Levis, for many years an honoured member of UJPO and many other community groupings, including the OWN Coop, Care Watch, and the Ontario Health Coalition, in addition to her 28 years of teaching at Mimico High School. Her many awards included the Order of Ontario (2006) and the Ontario Government and City of Toronto Senior of the Year (1995).

My heartfelt condolences to Bea's three surviving children, Kim, Dona, and Jan Levis; her grandsons Sean Levis and Cal Scott-Levis; her grand daughter-in-law, Redonna Enriquez Levis; her great-grandson, Sean Rae Enriquez Levis; and to all her family, friends, colleagues and members of activist circles to which she gave so much.



Courtesy of Kim Levis

Since its founding in 1945, Vancouver's Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture has been the home of many secular, progressive and Yiddishist groupings and activities

in Vancouver's Jewish community. A recent example was the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir's Spring Concert on June 3. The choir sang labour songs in Yiddish and English, with guest performers Solidarity Notes Labour Choir singing a set, followed by both choirs joining together, with narrations and readings, along with the songs.

An extra-special event was held on Sunday, May 27: "Then and Now" Alumni Reunion, for everyone who has taken part over the years in the Peretz Centre's B'nai Mitzvah program and other Peretz activities. In a broader sense it was also a reunion and celebration of the Centre's members, families, friends and supporters. It featured entertainment – musical and otherwise – by Peretz alumni Saul Berson, Lisa Osipov Milton, Sheryl Rae, and Stephen Kaplan; a rich selection of photos from Peretz archives; food, wine, and an open mic for participants to share memories; and a singing of the *Shule Hymn*. Also attending were grads from the Winnipeg Peretz Centre, who sang their school song.

The Alumni Reunion was an outstanding celebration and well-deserved tribute to the Centre and everyone who has worked so hard to make it the vibrant community it is.

On May 18, I attended an event held by the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) and Simon Fraser University's Institute for the Humanities. It dealt with the appalling mistreatment meted out to Prof. Hassan Diab, a Lebanese-born Canadian academic who was falsely accused a decade ago by French authorities of the 1980 terrorist attack on the Rue Copernic synagogue in Paris. He was never formally charged, but was subjected to imprisonment and draconian bail conditions for six years in Ottawa before being extradited to France in 2014. He spent over three years in a French prison before being cleared and unconditionally released this past January.

Perhaps the worst abuse of power was the way Canadian courts and then-Justice Minister Rob Nicholson rubber-stamped Diab's extradition even though Ontario Superior Court Justice Robert Maranger said the evidence amounted to a "weak case" which would probably never result in conviction in a fair trial. This was largely due to Canada's extradition laws, under which evidence for extradition requests are considered "presumptively reliable," so the procedure is heavily stacked against the person whose extradition is sought.

Diab gave a moving presentation, and was joined on the panel by his wife Rania Tfaily – like her husband a professor of sociology – who worked fiercely for his release, Itrath Sayed, Professor of Women's Studies at Langara College, and Hasan Alam, a board member of BCCLA and a member of Critical Muslim Voices. The speakers described factors that have led to horrific human

rights violations in such cases, including xenophobic hostility to people of Arab and Muslim background and the desire for scapegoats in the "war on terror." I hope further protests and publicity bring such abuses – in Canada and elsewhere – to an end.

In the reading group "English-Language Exploration of Jewish Writers" led by Al Stein, we've been reading stories by Howard Fast, known for his historical novels. I recently learned that Fast also wrote science fiction and fantasy, collected in his books *The General Zapped An Angel: New Stories of Fantasy and Science Fiction* and *The Edge of Tomorrow*, so I selected two stories to read in our group. His SF/fantasy stories are full of sharp social commentary, sometimes amusing, always mordant.

In the Sholem Aleichem Speakers (SAS) series, at the closing luncheon before the summer, we were treated to a variety of songs by a local Vancouver group, Los Tres Amigos, who performed "Summertime," "Bye Bye Blackbird," "*Quizás, quizás, quizás*," "This Land Is Your Land," "*Que será, será*," "*Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn*," and "Those Were The Days." The band is made up of Yom Shamash (guitar, percussion), Steve Glass (flute) and Ian St. Martin (guitar). ♦

GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

Harriet Lyons

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

I joined, along with my husband Andrew Lyons, in the autumn of 2012, shortly after moving to Toronto from Waterloo, where we had lived since 1977.

What brought you to UJPO?

We had known Richard Lee and Harriet Rosenberg for a long time through professional networks, and we were invited to Richard's 75th birthday party shortly after we moved to Toronto. One of the celebratory speeches was by Maxine Hermolin, and that was the first we heard about UJPO and the Winchevsky Centre. The idea of a secular, politically left Jewish organization intrigued us, and we signed up to go to the *Kol Nidre* service a few days later. It wasn't as secular as we'd expected, but we loved the people we met and the hope of political activism and new friends. We were particularly attracted to being allied with a group of Jews who were critical of Israeli policy, an



environment in which we felt more comfortable than we sometimes had been in other contexts where we worked on these issues. Some great folk music and the link with the legendary history of the Jewish left were also strong magnets.

In which boards and/or committees are you active?

Andy and I have been on the Social Justice Committee (and the old Cultural Committee) since joining and were briefly on the Toronto Board.

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

We've been involved in the Alternative Shabbes series since the beginning, we helped plan various lectures, concerts, the big anniversary celebration, really too much to list. Two highlights for me were Sheryl Nestel's course on the history of Zionism (first time round) and the protest against Stephen Harper's award at the Negev Dinner.

What is your life outside UJPO?

Travel, reading, and a bit of creative writing are the main indulgences of my retirement. I feel a bit guilty for not doing more politically, and would welcome some more nudges in that direction.

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

Only once, when I was asked to give a talk about Jewish humour at an Alt-Shabbes (my Ph.D. thesis was about theories of humour). It was lots of fun, and I was asked to repeat it at the Yiddish Vinkl. I would love to see some more events that called for anthropological expertise.

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

My husband Andy is, as I mentioned.

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

As the news from the outside world gets darker, I see both a struggle to remain relevant and internal soul-searching, especially about Israel. There is also the obvious aging and loss facing much of our membership, though there are also some heartening attempts to reach out to a new generation.

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

As I mentioned, I would like to see the organization be somewhat more secular. I am glad to see the interest that is developing in LGBTQ2S issues, and hope this will grow in the future. Some things that would personally interest me would be a writing workshop and (somewhat fancifully) a bridge club. I'd also like to see us working more on local

issues, which are likely to become dire during the Ford years.

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

I'd be glad to work on any of the things I have mentioned above, and I'll keep soldiering on with what I'm doing already.

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

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri. Best Actress Oscar well-deserved. While we were in Australia recently, a friend took us to see *Terror Nullius*, a very clever spoof on Australian hegemonic culture. It's available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE-ycxu_-Oo ♦

POETRY & SONG

Ballad of the Triangle Fire

Ed. Notes (Sam Blatt): The Triangle Fire in the garment area of New York City is of course well known, and many songs have been written about it. I have chosen the one by Ruth Rubin because she devoted a lifetime to the collection and preservation of Yiddish folklore in poetics and songs. Starting in the 1930s she amassed a collection of about 2000 songs – love ballads, lullabies, songs of the factory and streets – still considered unparalleled in scope.



Ruth Rubin was born in Khotin, Bessarabia, and came to Montreal, in 1906, when she was four years old, where she attended the Peretz Shule. Her late sister, Esther Marks (a UJPO-Toronto member), helped us prepare a memorial concert attended by 500+ at Temple Sinai. Her niece, Elyssa, is a volunteer on the UJPO archives project, continuing the connection between UJPO and Ruth Rubin.

http://www.protestsonglyrics.net/Labor_Union_Songs/Ballad-of-the-Triangle-Fire.phtml

In the heart of New York City, near Washington Square
In nineteen eleven, March winds were cold and bare.
A fire broke out in a building ten stories high,
And a hundred and forty-six young girls in those flames did die.

On the top floor of that building, ten stories in the air
These young girls were working in an old sweatshop there;
They were sewing shirtwaists for a very low wage.
So tired and pale and worn-out! They were at a tender age.

The sweatshop was a stuffy room with but a single door;
The windows they were gray with dust from off that dirty floor;

There were no comforts, no fresh air, no light to sew thereby,
And the girls, they toiled from early morn till darkness
filled the sky.

Then on that fateful day – dear God, most terrible of days!
When that fire broke out, it grew into a mighty blaze.
In that firetrap way up there with but a single door,
So many innocent working girls burned, to live no more!

A hundred thousand mourners, they followed those sad biers.
The streets were filled with people weeping bitter tears.
Poets, writers everywhere described that awful pyre,
When those young girls were trapped to die in the Triangle Fire.

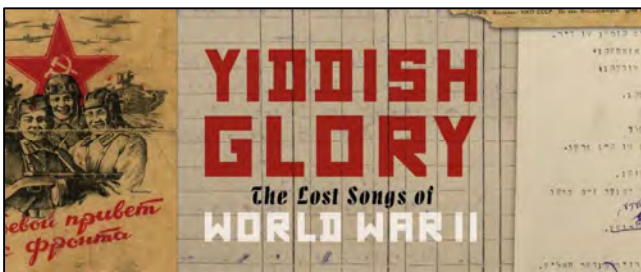
Ed. Sources:

<https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/pakn-treger/ruth-rubin-life-song>

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/rubin-ruth>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/17/arts/ruth-rubin-93-folklorist-of-yiddish-songs.html> ♦

YIDDISH



Yiddish Glory: The Lost Songs of World War II is the new recording of music created during the darkest chapter of European Jewish history. In the midst of World War II, a group of scholars led by ethnomusicologist Moisei Beregovsky (1892 – 1961) discovered songs written by Jewish Red Army soldiers, refugees, victims and survivors of Ukrainian ghettos. One song was written by a 10-year-old orphan who lost his family in the ghetto in Tulchin, another by a teenage prisoner of the Pechora concentration camp, and yet another about a Red Army soldier who learns, upon his return to Kiev, that his family had been murdered in Babi Yar. These were the people, whose voices are rarely heard in reconstructing history, none of them professional poets or musicians, but all at the center of the most important historical event of the 20th century, and making sense of it through music.

Following the war, the researchers were arrested during Stalin’s anti-Jewish purge. The songs were discovered in unmarked boxes stored in the archives of the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine in the 1990s.

In the early 2000s, a lucky coincidence brought Yiddish Professor Anna Shternshis to Kiev where she

learned that these songs had survived all of these decades following the researchers’ arrests. Quickly deteriorating, most hand-written, they contained some of the most poignant and historically important Soviet Yiddish songs of World War II.

Many pieces were the first grassroots testimonies of German atrocities against Jews, detailing massacres in Babi Yar, Tulchin, Pechora and others places in Ukraine. Sometimes, composing music calling to fight against fascism was the first thing a person did prior to the invasion by the German Army, and sometimes it was the last act during one’s final moments. The raw emotional ballads convey despair, hope, humor, bravery, resistance and revenge.

The album, released February 2018, is the result of a remarkable collaboration between artist Psoy Korolenko and Yiddish Professor Anna Shternshis. Most were simply lyrics written on small scraps of paper. Psoy Korolenko engaged in “musical archaeology,” took a leap of imagination in order to create or adapt music for the texts. Sergei Erdenko (Russia’s greatest living Roma violinist, founder of the group Loyko and longtime collaborator of Yehudi Menuhin) created multi-instrument arrangements and wrote original music for one song (“Kazakhstan”).

The epic discovery of Yiddish songs from World War II and the Holocaust led producer Dan Rosenberg to bring together an ensemble of five vocalists (including Juno-award winner Sophie Milman), and five conservatory trained instrumentalists. The album “Yiddish Glory” is the fruit of this three-year-long process, and is not just a breathtaking recording, it is a time capsule that reveals how Jewish men, women and children fought against fascism, tried against all odds to save their families, and in their final moments chose to reveal their hopes and dreams through music. For the first time, the public will hear the voices of the Soviet Jews who were thought to be silenced by Hitler and Stalin. ♦

<https://www.sixdegreesrecords.com/yiddish-glory/>

CANADA

Project: Indigenous Land Defence Across Borders

Indigenous Land Defence Across Borders is a feminist led initiative to build grassroots connections between Indigenous activists from Turtle Island, Palestinian organizers and their allies.

Thank you for visiting the fundraising page for the Indigenous Land Defence Across Borders project (ILDAB). ILDAB is a grassroots, feminist-led initiative to build greater relationships between Indigenous nations and communities on Turtle Island and Palestinian communities.

As part of the project, a delegation of five Indigenous women will be traveling to Palestine in the summer of 2018 to connect with local organizers and civil society organizations.

Following the summer 2018 delegation, the project will be arranging for two delegations of Palestinians to visit Six Nations and the Six Nations Land Reclamation site; one of the delegations will be local, and the other delegation will be of Palestinians living in Palestine.

ILDAB's goal is to educate our respective communities and build the global network to raise awareness and respond to colonial confiscation, resource extraction and forced expulsions.

What will the funds be used towards?

The funds raised will be used to cover the costs of the delegations. This includes: flights, accommodation, ground transportation, translators (where required) and materials for educational.

Why \$16,000?

The estimated cost of the project is actually \$32,000, but thanks to the strength of word-of-mouth fundraising prior to launching this FundRazr and a small grant, we were able to raise an initial \$16,000.

How are the funds managed?

ILDAB is partnering with No More Silence (NMS). NMS has kindly agreed to administrate the ILDAB project funds. NMS, founded in 2004, aims to develop an inter/national network to support the work being done by activists, academics, researchers, agencies and communities to stop the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women, girls, trans and two spirits. Together with members of the February 14th Planning Committee, the group has been holding a strawberry ceremony on Valentine's Day to commemorate the deaths and disappearances of Indigenous women, girls, trans and two spirit people at police headquarters in Toronto for the past 13 years. This year's event was attended by over 1000 people.

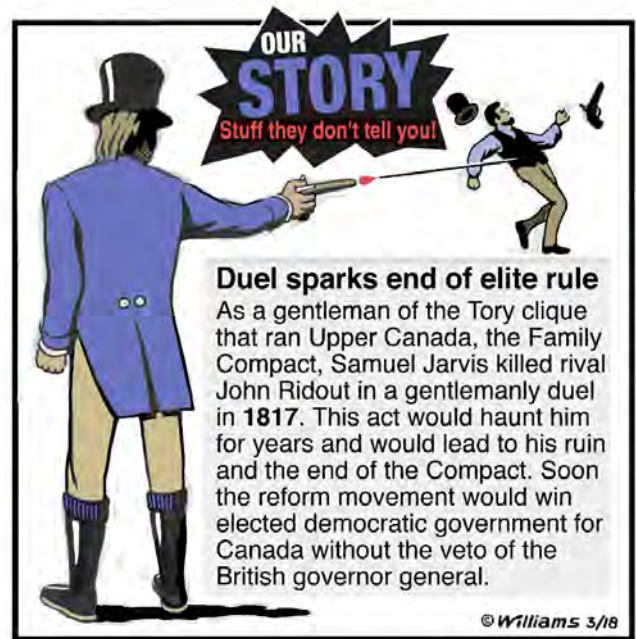
Unfortunately, donations are not tax-deductible as NMS is not a registered charity.

What happens after the delegations?

Delegates will return to their communities and participate in events where they will have an opportunity to relay their experiences and educate others about the links between settler colonialism, racism, capitalism, imperialism, and hetro-patriarchy across borders.

Thank you for your support! ♦

https://fundrazr.com/e1LpJ4?ref=ab_9Z2nd7XZtxP9Z2nd7XZtxP



Cartoon by John Williams

USA

Bernie Sanders' criticism of Israel is radical. And he's taking it mainstream

By Peter Beinart, *The Forward*, June 11, 2018

Not many in the media are noticing, which is understandable given the burden of keeping up with Donald Trump, but in the shadow of Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu, Bernie Sanders is dramatically challenging Beltway discourse on Israel.

In 2020, when Sanders likely runs for president, and journalists begin paying attention, they're going to be shocked. The Israeli government and the American Jewish establishment will be scared out of their minds.

Last month, Sanders crossed one of the red lines demarcating politically acceptable Washington discourse about Israel. He organized the first letter written by multiple senators criticizing Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip. Then, last week, he raced past that line again with a video that is unlike anything I've ever seen from an American senator.

To understand how radical Sanders' video is, it's worth remembering how liberal Democrats like Barack Obama, John Kerry and Hillary Clinton talked about Israel and the Palestinians as recently as two years ago. While Obama, Kerry and Clinton did sometimes criticize Israeli policy, they generally did so in the language of Israeli self-interest, not of Palestinian human rights. Israeli settlement policy was bad for Israel, they argued, because it threatened Israel's future as a democratic Jewish state.

On Gaza, the Obama administration never publicly urged Israel to negotiate with Hamas, even as former Israeli security chiefs did. And Obama effectively endorsed Israel's position that Palestinians should not be allowed to hold elections because Hamas might win. (This despite the fact that Israeli parties that oppose the two state solution – among them, Likud – run in Israeli elections all the time).

When Gaza came up in a 2016 Democratic primary debate, Clinton placed the blame for its people's suffering exclusively on Hamas. "Remember," she declared, "Israel left Gaza. They took out all the Israelis. They turned the keys over to the Palestinian people. And what happened? Hamas took over Gaza. So instead of having a thriving economy with the kind of opportunities that the children of the Palestinians deserve, we have a terrorist haven that is getting more and more rockets shipped in from Iran and elsewhere." Her comments, which are demonstrably false, could easily have come from Marco Rubio or Ted Cruz.

Contrast that with the video Sanders released last week. (It's the third he's released on Gaza since April). For starters, it consists entirely of interviews with Palestinians in Gaza. That alone is extraordinary. Palestinians in Gaza are almost never included in the debates on American TV. Palestinians are rarely invited to hold public briefings on Capitol Hill, and when they are, it's hugely controversial.

In his video, Sanders lets Palestinians from Gaza speak for themselves. And they say things American politicians simply don't say. Again and again, the speakers, who are not politicians but rather academics, students and journalists, call Gaza a "prison".

A young man says his "biggest dream is to travel from Gaza for one time in my life. To see how life is from outside the walls of the prison." He later comments that many of his friends have contemplated suicide: "They cannot continue to live without any types of hope." A young woman says, "I want the situation to change to where I feel like an equal human being to Israelis."

By allowing ordinary Palestinians to describe their plight, Sanders' video allows Americans to see the Great Return March as the product not of blind hatred of Israel but of a quintessentially human desire for a better life.

And by allowing ordinary Palestinians to speak for themselves, the video shows how dehumanizing it is to describe the people protesting Israel's blockade as mere pawns of, or "human shields" for, Hamas. Brilliantly, Sanders' video shows clips of American pundits blaming Hamas for the protests, and then lets Palestinians in Gaza do something they can rarely do on American television: respond.

"The majority of the people are not following Hamas," insists the young man. "They are just participating peacefully because they just want to be free."

Criticizing Hamas is both legitimate and necessary. But Sanders' video shows how the media's obsession with Hamas obscures the human causes of Palestinian protest, and the human consequences of Israel's brutal response.

"The right question to ask is not whether there is someone asking them to go to the fence," argues a young woman. "The right question is what is driving these people to walk up to the fence. What kinds of conditions would drive someone to risk their lives knowing that there are snipers who are willing to shoot them?"

For decades, the conventional wisdom has held that a video like Sanders', which focuses without equivocation or apology on Palestinian human rights, is political suicide. But that conventional wisdom has rarely been tested. Democratic politicians and foreign policy experts are so accustomed to self-censorship that AIPAC and its allies rarely have to make an example of them. They make an example of themselves.

Sanders is betting that the political ground has shifted. In a sense, he's doing in the Democratic Party what Trump has done inside the GOP. For years, polls showed that ordinary Republicans were moving away from their party's elite on trade and immigration. But until Trump, no Republican presidential frontrunner had been sufficiently unconventional and sufficiently unafraid to put that proposition to the test.

That's what Sanders is doing on Israel. He knows that Netanyahu's opposition to the two state solution, and his support for the Iraq War, and his battles with Barack Obama, and his bromance with Trump, have deeply eroded support for Israel among African Americans, progressives and the young. He knows that his likely 2020 competitors are moving left on issue after issue in an effort to keep pace with a Democratic base that has been radicalized by the financial crisis, stagnant wages, failed wars and Donald Trump. But he knows that when it comes to Israel, those competitors are constrained by their fears of the American Jewish establishment.

Bernie Sanders, who now stands a better chance of becoming president than any Jew in American history, is not afraid. And, as a result, over the next two years he just might alter the American debate over Israel in ways we have not witnessed in decades.

Perhaps the courage of the protesters in Gaza is proving contagious after all. ♦

<http://peterbeinart.net/bernie-sanders-criticism-of-israel-is-radical-and-hes-taking-it-mainstream/>

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli NGOs: ADDAMEER – Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association

Submitted by Sam Blatt with material collected from various websites.

This is the fourth in a series on Israeli NGOs, of which there are tens, if not hundreds, if one were to include the entire spectrum; however, the ones we are describing in this column are focused primarily on human rights! Some are Jewish/Palestinian, some are majorly Palestinian; we are alternating between the two for each publication of UJPO News. Previous issues of UJPO News have covered Gisha, Adallah, and B'Tselem.

ADDAMEER (Arabic for conscience) is a Palestinian non-governmental, civil institution that works to support Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli and Palestinian prisons. Established in 1992, the NGO offers free legal aid to political prisoners, advocates their rights at the national and international level, and works to end torture and other violations of prisoners' rights through monitoring, legal procedures and solidarity campaigns.

Although Addameer defines itself as having four major platforms – Documentation/Research, Advocacy/Lobbying, Training/Awareness, and Legal Aid, it is most widely known for its legal aid work. Addameer's lawyers provide free legal representation and advice to hundreds of Palestinian detainees and their families every year, and work on cases of torture, fair trials and other violations affecting political prisoners.

There are currently over 6000 political prisoners, including sixteen under the age of sixteen, six Palestinian Legislative Council members, 63 female prisoners, and 63 administrative detainees (i.e. held without trial). Major issues Addameer addresses include prisoners held in isolation and solitary confinement, family visits, medical negligence, and access to education. (The goal of the prisoners' mass hunger strike in April 2017 was for Israel to end its policy of long-term isolation for "security" reasons.) Both measures – isolation and solitary confinement – are obviously used at great cost to Palestinian prisoners and detainees. To learn the difference between these two punishments, as defined by the Israeli prison and military justice system, see http://www.addameer.org/key_issues/isolation. Of particular concern is the plight of the arrest of children from (East) Jerusalem (1100 Jerusalemite children were arrested last year), from the young age of even eight to 18. Their harsh interrogation – while handcuffed – abuse, humiliation, scare tactics, sleep deprivation – affect them forever after



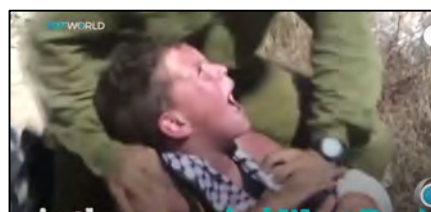
release. (See film: Precarious Childhood: Arrests of Jerusalemite Children, <http://www.addameer.org/content/precarious-childhood-arrests-jerusalemite-children>).

A recent much publicized arrest of a Palestinian youth, with world-wide visibility, in which Addameer had a presence (her counsel was Gabby Lasky, formerly counsel in Public Committee Against Torture), was that of Ahed Tamimi, the 17 year old girl who was videoed slapping an Israeli soldier (see photo above). (Her cousin, Nour, and mother, Nariman, were also arrested.)

(<http://www.addameer.org/news/ahed-tamimi-charged-assault-and-several-other-counts>). Because of the instant social media distribution, this event helped publicize Ahed's arrest, and the injustice and daily abuse of / by the Israeli occupation. (It also helped publicize the abusive and racist comments by members of the Israeli Knesset (Parliament).

A current example of Addameer's campaigns is that in support of Khalida Jarrar Khalida; former Director of Addameer, and elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in 2006. She has been imprisoned since July 2017 without charge or trial, and her Administrative Detention will likely be renewed June 2018. "If you are a committed advocate for the human rights of the Palestinian people, then you are likely to lose your freedom in your struggle for basic dignity."

Addameer is an important, active NGO, without whose presence the thousands of Palestinian prisoners, including juveniles, held in jails both in the West Bank and in Israel, would have no defence against the Israeli authorities. ♦



Israeli soldiers arrest 13-year-old Palestinian boy for no reason

When the USSR dumped the UJPO continued from page 1

itinerary previously faxed to Intourist by our travel agent. I complained immediately and Masha replied “we did not receive it.” I stated that our Toronto travel agent showed me an Intourist Moscow fax confirming receipt of “the UJPO itinerary”. I wanted to request a copy of that fax but before the internet, there were communications complexities which we were unable to overcome.

Fred Weir, a Moscow-stationed correspondent for the *Canadian Tribune* had also met us at the airport, and joined us (with his friend Sergei). I gave him (as well as Masha) a photocopy of the faxed itinerary. As our tour started, I expressed our frustration that we wouldn’t meet, as requested, the editorial Board of Soviet Homeland (*Sovetish Heymland*), an English language Soviet-Jewish journal, or march in the May Day Parade, or hold a ceremony at the Babi Yar monument in Kiev, among many other items. Fred took note.

We proceeded with most of the Soviet version of the tour, but the items mentioned above were actually included on the days our itinerary had requested! How, we had no idea. As a matter of fact, the ceremony at the Babi Yar monument (though, unbeknownst to us then was not the actual site of the massacre) had a video crew waiting and, as we learned later, was broadcast throughout the USSR. We subsequently learned that ours was the only non-governmental Babi Yar commemoration in the monument’s history.

On May Day in Leningrad, Masha told us at breakfast that we would be marching in the parade. We marched proudly, clueless as to why or how it was arranged. We also met with the superintendent (*gabe*) of the Kiev Shul. *Sovetish Heymland* organized a mini concert for us in its overcrowded boardroom but we were removed from it before its conclusion so the Intourist rep could get us to the Moscow Circus. How these few choices of ours were inserted into the Intourist itinerary remained a mystery at that time.

I had to leave the tour early due to my teaching schedule so I couldn’t review it with the group, but Muni and I reflected on it afterwards. We believed there was a deliberate attempt to disregard our requested itinerary and I repeated my hypothesis that the Soviets considered us dissidents; Muni concurred. Should we try again and see whether they ignore our requests? After explaining our frustrations to our travel agent we arranged another tour in 1990 and the second experience was fantastic – the opposite of the 1988 trip. While the 1990 tour was successful, we were sadly witnessing the Soviet version of socialism/communism failing around us. We saw workers lining up to get into stores for food and daily necessities that were too often sold-out before all were served.

Muni and I believed that the first tour’s issues were more than a mere snub. In camera discussions with the then NB members were unsuccessful in disseminating the fact that the Soviets had written us off after our letter in the ’60’s during the LMPG campaign. Nonetheless it is an essential part of our history which must be known. Since 1983 the NB has never communicated on any issue with the Soviet Embassy.

* * * * *

It took a few years to determine why/how the few items from our 1988 original itinerary were accomplished. Before returning to Canada I asked Fred Weir for Sergei’s surname; “Sergei Grigoriev” he said. The next time I heard that name was years later on Michael Enright’s CBC “Sunday Morning” broadcast. He introduced Sergei to discuss the former USSR, Gorbachev and *perestroika*. Sergei, employed by a US university, was introduced as a former Gorbachev adviser! The discussion revealed that not all of Gorbachev’s confidants provided him with factual information leading to decisions which counteracted his establishment. Sergei, at our Babi Yar demonstration, was my simultaneous translator into Russian. I believe he used his influence to realize the other requests from our original itinerary and thus that mystery was put to rest. ♦

Sergei Grigoriev link - <http://students.sras.org/sergei-grigoriev/>

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.

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