

# 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.

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

## UJPO Toronto's 100<sup>th</sup> Celebration- June 11 2026

Graphic by Erfan Talebi

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# NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

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## FROM WINNIPEG

By Harriet Zaidman

### Political action

Winnipeggers came out en masse in February to oppose a proposed "nuisance" bylaw that would have restricted protests within 100 metres of public buildings - schools, libraries, health care facilities and any place of worship, including cemeteries. The councillor who proposed it defined "nuisances" as any demonstration or protest that involved "the expression by any means of objection or disapproval towards an idea, action, person or group based on or related to any specific characteristics." Permits would have to be applied for several weeks in advance.

In response, the City Council received several thousand written submissions opposing the bylaw and more than a hundred people registered to speak against it at the executive council meeting. The coalition that included political activists (including members of UJPO), disabled people, indigenous representatives, cyclists, LGBTQ+ advocates and more. The councillor withdrew the bylaw two days before it was set to be discussed. Nevertheless, more than 200 people rallied outside City Hall the morning of the meeting, and more than 100 people did stay - some for 12 hours to voice their opposition to the danger to democratic expression and civil rights the bylaw posed.

The councillor claimed the widespread response was the result of "misinformation," but as the Winnipeg Free Press pointed out in an editorial, "It is gratifying that protesters created just enough nuisance to convince the councillors to do the right thing."

*More on Winnipeg news by Harriet on page 11.*

## FROM VANCOUVER

By Carl Rosenberg

On April 7, Vancouver's Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture held an outstanding online presentation by Faith Jones on "Vancouver's Left-Wing Jews and the Politics of Respectability." Faith is a librarian, historian, Yiddish scholar and translator, and long-time activist in the Peretz Centre.

Faith's presentation dealt with a long-standing tendency in the Jewish community to "obey in advance" in order to

gain acceptance in the broader society, or to conform to demands of dominant sectors of the Jewish community itself. The community has often been policed to repress and stigmatize individuals or groupings which supposedly transgress accepted standards of belief and behaviour—sexual, cultural, ideological and others.

The specific issues have often varied. Perhaps the first was sexual politics: Jewish involvement in the sex trade was deplored, not out of concern for Jewish women who were trafficked, but for the effect on the reputation of the Jewish community. During the Cold War, the trend became overtly ideological, with red-baiting and attacks on Jews on the left, especially the United Jewish People's Order. In 1953, the Vancouver chapter of UJPO was expelled from the Vancouver Jewish Administrative Council. UJPO was also expelled from three of the four branches of the Canadian Jewish Congress by the executive of each branch. The CJC's Pacific Region, unlike the other branches, held a membership meeting which voted against expulsion, whereupon the CJC national executive expelled UJPO on its own. UJPO was not reinstated in the CJC until 1995.

More recently, a major issue has been Israel and Zionism, with mainstream Jewish organizations stigmatizing or attacking Jewish critics of Zionism and Israeli policies, a familiar story to readers of UJPO News. A recent example in Vancouver was a decision of the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver to refuse entrance to people wearing a keffiyeh. Faith commented that the JCCGV defended this policy on the grounds that any individual would be allowed in, if they took off the keffiyeh and hid it away from sight.

"As a 60-year-old queer person, I am old enough to remember when being gay was absolutely fine, as long as you never mentioned it, especially in Jewish spaces .... Respectability therefore demanded, effacing a central part of identity, and it is this which makes me so angry when a Jew cannot wear a keffiyeh to enact their identity as an anti-Zionist."

Faith described some justifications put forth for these attempts at policing and control. One is that they are done in the name of the good of the community. Another is that dissidents are seen as the wrong kind of Jews, or perhaps not really Jews at all. She quoted from a 1953 statement from the Vancouver Zionist Organization that UJPO members "cannot be considered from our point of view as members of the Jewish community."

Faith's presentation was followed by a lively Q & A and discussion, and Faith's conclusion.

"The Jewish community will never stop policing itself, so the best thing we can do is create alternative structures that serve us better, like the Peretz Centre and similar

organizations across Canada. We also have to guard against respectability politics within the Left and ensure we don't reproduce their harms. The Left itself has its own complicated history of homophobia and transphobia, for example, so we should consider how we can inhabit a truly radical politics of inclusion."

I look forward to further excellent presentations and discussions at the Peretz Centre like this one.

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## FROM TORONTO

By David Wall, Director of Culture & Development and Sarena Sairan, Executive Director

During the fall and winter of 2025/26, UJPO Toronto has continued our busy pace of cultural programming. Here are some highlights from the past few months:

- On September 7, UJPO and Jewish Heretics collaborated with a host of brilliant artists to present Jewish Musicians for Gaza; thousands of dollars were raised, to support the Elham Fund, a grassroots organization dedicated to the well-being of families in Gaza
- Our Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur events were, once again, sold out affairs. This year, the theme of the Days of Awe was "Creation & Destruction" – reclaiming ideas of creative energy in the face of genocide.
- On December 8th, UJPO kicked off our 100th year celebrations with a fundraiser/concert event at Trinity St. Paul's United Church, featuring internationally lauded, experimental Klezmer ensemble, Black Ox Orkestar
- Between January and March, we presented a popular Needleworker's Circle, in collaboration with The Textile Museum of Canada and instructor Alison Moule. Participants were given materials and training to create their own beautiful challah/matzah covers.
- UJPO in-person Yiddish language courses are back! Our Beginner level course started in March, 2026 and will continue into May.
- March, 2026 has also seen the exciting reboot of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, one of our community's most prestigious cultural institutions! Rehearsing has begun and concert will soon be announced (see below!)
- April, 2026 hosted another sold out Third Seyder. Hosting 350 people, we had music, partner orgs (IJV, EFTO) and allied authors team up with UJPO leadership.

· UJPO's first-ever contemporary art show and auction, featuring works by amazing, cutting-edge artists, was held at Gallery TPW on April 21.

Coming up this year...

Highlights of the next few months will include several events marking UJPO's big centennial celebration:

- A two-session, online prose writing workshop, led by Professor Aaron Kreuter, for antizionist Jewish folks who are hungry for opportunities to narrate their experiences.
- A massive event at Trinity St. Paul's United Church on June 11, featuring author Naomi Klein, the new Toronto Jewish Folk Choir and singer/songwriters Geoff Berner & Rae Spoon
- A concert at Camp Naivelt on August 22, celebrating the life and music of Phil Ochs and Victor Jara

For more details on any or all of these events, please visit us on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/winchevsky/>

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## WHAT'S IN ORDER

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### Get Well

Rachel Kellogg  
Solly Blazer  
Lynn Lubitz  
Shelley Cope

### IN LOVING MEMORY

By Carl Rosenberg

This tribute was read at a Celebration of Life for Ronnee Jaeger at the Steelworkers Hall in Toronto on Sunday, March 15, 2026.

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our long-time friend and comrade, Ronnee Jaeger. I remember her warmly from my visits to Toronto over the years-- especially in the late nineties and early aughts--to attend conferences of UJPO and *Outlook* Magazine, when I often met Ronnee and her partner Sam.

I remember Ronnee even more vividly from our frequent discussions when she wrote a column for *Outlook* as our Jerusalem correspondent. She was active in the Israeli left and peace movements, especially in the anti-occupation group Women in Black and Machsom (Checkpoint) Watch.

The latter is a human rights organization, of which Ronnee was a founder, of Israeli women who monitor the conduct of Israeli soldiers toward Palestinians at West Bank checkpoints.

Ronnee's reports for *Outlook* were always informative and perceptive, with telling observations, and a poignant human touch, drawing on her own activist experience. In our exchanges she was always helpful and good-humoured in response to my editorial requests and queries.

Ronnee leaves a wonderful legacy of commitment and activism for future generations.

My heartfelt condolences to Sam Blatt, Ronnee's partner of 50 years; her sons Lev and Hal Jaeger, and their partners, respectively, Shlomit Segal and Laura New; Sam's sons Ari and David Blatt, and their partners, respectively, Danae Walker and Tarish; their grandchildren Zohar (Lev and Shlomit's daughter), Aviv and Noa (Ari's children), Aarav (David and Tarsih's son) and Ian (Danae's son).

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## GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

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### Aaron Kreuter



AARON KREUTER IS COMING INTO HIS OWN AS A LITERARY PLAYER

Submitted by Paul Weinberg

In an age when a provincial premier dismisses the value of studying the humanities, newspapers no longer carry book

review sections, Canadian publishers struggle with financial pressures and AI continues to threaten what makes us human, there is a Canadian author who today believes that “fiction can change the world.” Naive? He says that he is not. “I am incredibly passionate about book fiction and literature and its role in the world,” says Aaron Kreuter, a Toronto based author of short stories, poetry and a first novel.

By day he is a 40-year-old professor at Trent University, teaching creative writing, Jewish fiction, world literature, and eco-fiction among other areas. Kreuter's literary career has really taken off. His 2022 poetry *Shifting Baseline Syndrome* was the finalist or short listed for three separate awards -- the Governor General's Literary Award, the League of Canadian Poets' Ray Souster award, and the Vine Award in Jewish Literature.

Ruby, a 21-year-old woman, is the central character in his poignant 2025 novel, *Lake Burntshore*. The highlight of her existence every year while going to university in Toronto is to continue to work summers as a paid camp counsellor up north, overseeing a bunch of younger kids in a cabin. She has attended and loved this camp since she was nine years old.

The major twist in the novel is that Ruby is a committed anti-Zionist Jew (rather like the author Kreuter himself) and she must come to terms with the last-minute decision by the *Lake Burntshore* owners to hire several Israeli soldiers to function as camp counselors due to a staff shortage. Inevitably, she falls in love with Etai, one of the IDF soldier-counselors, who stands out from the rest of his comrades as a conscientious objector refusing to serve in uniform in the occupied Palestinian territory.

A second and somewhat ironical settler colonial subplot pops up in *Lake Burntshore* where the summer camp owner schemes to purchase surrounding Crown land – which is also claimed by a local First Nation as its rightful property. This threatens to ruin a decent relationship with the camp's neighbour. Kreuter says he set the novel in 2013 partially because that was the last major summer for the Idle No More Indigenous activist movement.

“A lot of the book comes from personal experience and experiences of my partner and my family,” Kreuter says.

In conducting research on Jewish summer camps for the book and afterward for a published article in the online publication, *Mondoweiss*, Kreuter discovered that there are approximately 1,500 Israel soldiers or ex-soldiers working in camps like the fictional Burntshore. Some of them are coming from Gaza and they are working in about 155 Jewish summer camps across North America, serving as “ideographical ambassadors for Israel.”

<https://mondoweiss.net/2025/06/1500-israeli-soldiers-will-attend-jewish-summer-camps-this-year-we-must-oppose-this-normalization-of-genocide/>. “There is a whole subgenre in Jewish studies on Jewish camp studies. The Jewish summer camp is the place where Jewish identity is

born. There is a lot of writing on how Zionist indoctrination works,” he informs us.

The issue of Israeli soldiers working probably since the 1970s in Canadian and American Jewish summer camps has taken on greater scrutiny and urgency since Oct. 7. It follows revelations by reputable human rights organizations of genocide, forced starvation, withholding of medical supplies and health care, and other measures directed against Palestinian civilians in Gaza by IDF. Coupled with this are the reports of the IDF working side saddle with the extremist Jewish settlers seeking to expel Palestinians from their homes and farms in the occupied West Bank. Kreuter says there is a lot of money and institutional backing behind this ideological program in the Jewish summer camps. “Camp directors go to Israel; it is all about the soldiers.” “It is very disturbing to me the way these camps welcome in soldiers, some of them are literally war criminals from the killing fields of Gaza...It shows what anti-Zionist Jews are up against,” he says.

Decades ago, US literary critic Irving Howe pronounced the death of the serious Jewish novel following the publication of major books by the likes of Saul Bellow, Philip Roth and Bernard Malamud. What was left to write about after Jews had made the transition in North America from the Yiddish speaking immigrant living in New York’s Lower East (or Toronto’s Kensington Market for that matter) to the fully assimilated secular Jew living like their gentile suburbanite neighbours? Kreuter counters that the crisis of moral failure and intense schisms inside the diasporic Jewish communities, including Canada, with regards to Israel and Palestine makes for a rich subject of exploration. “The dominance and the strength of the Zionist narrative is daunting.”

“I really see the need for Jewish fiction that wants to remain relevant, ethical and grounded in the real world; that really looks back at the Jewish community and how we allowed this violent ethno-nationalistic ideology to take over our identity. I am talking mostly about Jewish fiction from the diaspora, mostly from Toronto. In many ways, Israeli fiction is its own thing entirely. It has been much more critical of the Zionist project than North American Jewish fiction.” One of his current projects is putting together a collection of anti-Zionist Jewish fiction.

Coming out more recently as an anti-Zionist Jewish writer has made him persona non grata at the Canadian Jewish News which has not reviewed *Lake Burntshore*. On the other hand, the same newspaper did review his 2018 short story collection, *You and Me Belonging*, when he was largely unknown. Kreuter says that word of mouth is the primary means the novel ends up getting purchased by anti-Zionist or dissenting Jews “I was at a family event, and someone came up to me and quietly said to me, ‘you know I have read your work and really liked it. My partner warned me not to say it too loudly here.’”

Kreuter counts among his heroes the US novelist Philip Roth who criticized the best-selling 1958 Zionist potboiler novel *Exodus* by Leon Uris, and was the author of more literary bellwether works on Israel such as *Operation Shylock* and *The Counterlife*. Roth, he argues, has proved to be among the exceptions to the rule, as many Jewish writers in the past have either allowed Zionism to be the dominant “hegemonic narrative” or facilitated this trend through “benign neglect,” of the Palestinian issue. This is the subject of his 2023 non-fiction book, *Leaving Other People Alone: Diaspora, Zionism and Palestine in Contemporary Jewish Fiction*.

Here at home, the Montreal born writer Mordecai Richler is also a major influence for Kreuter. He points to Richler’s non-fiction memoir, *This Year in Jerusalem*, where the author ruminated over his left-wing Zionist family roots. “There are different opinions about the book but at the end, [Richler] comes right out and says, if he had been born a Palestinian child, he would definitely have thrown rocks at the Israeli tanks.” “I love Richler; I love his fiction; His novel *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* is a satire of the Canadian settler colonial mindset,” he says. He observes that Richler “excoriates the Canadian Jewish desire to assimilate and become like the wealthy elite, etc.” “Richler has this fearless ability to talk back to power, to satirize and critique without fear of repercussions. He and I also have the same birthday.”

Kreuter spent much of his formative years growing up in the Jewish community of Thornhill, just north of Toronto which is notoriously conservative in its political representation and orientation. Thornhill is also where many of the stories are set in his wonderful collection, *Rubble Children*. “I wasn’t aware of [Thornhill’s Zionist political culture] as a teenager or young person growing up but I definitely am aware of it now.” In Israel, people including soldiers know and have heard of Thornhill in Canada,” he reveals. “It feels like a safe place to visit.”

Note: UJPO will be sponsoring a workshop led by Aaron Kreuter on May 20 and 27th, aimed at non-Zionist Jews who desire guidance in narrating their experience. Please contact David Wall (program@winchevskycentre.org) if you are interested.

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## POETRY & SONG

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### In the Factory (Der Svetshap)

by Morris Rosenfeld

Submitted by Harriet Lyons

Morris Rosenfeld (1862-1923) was born Moshe Yankev Chmielowski in a Russian controlled Polish border town

near Lithuania. After settling in New York in 1886 he changed his name to Morris Rosenfeld. He worked in garment factories in the 1880s and 1890s, at the beginning of his American career. He was a prolific poet, Yiddish newspaper and journal editor, and the author of popular song parodies for the Yehuda Katzenellenbogen Music Publishing Company. He is particularly known for his poems documenting and protesting the conditions under which immigrant labour lived and worked.

Coincidentally, I have chosen to share one of Rosenfeld's best-known works on the anniversary of the infamous Triangle Fire of March 25, 1911, though it will be a bit later when you see it. Morris Rosenfeld (1862-1923) wrote many poems about conditions in New York's garment factories. One of these, translated in this version as "In the Factory," but sometimes called "The Sweatshop" in Yiddish, is the poetry offering for the current issue. Rosenfeld worked for a while in the Triangle factory and authored a poem which became a widely performed memorial song for the victims of the fire, a version of which was recorded in 1988 by the well-known English folksinger, June Tabor, who interspersed English lyrics with Rosenfeld's Yiddish chorus, while keeping the Yiddish title, "Mayn Rue Platz" ("My Resting Place"). You can listen to the song here:

[https://youtu.be/51Qf\\_oYbYYs?si=w7\\_F1VYcYqJUA71Z](https://youtu.be/51Qf_oYbYYs?si=w7_F1VYcYqJUA71Z) and read the lyrics at <https://genius.com/June-tabor-mayn-rue-platz-lyrics>. You can also listen to the song in Yiddish, with English subtitles, at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrQVeF5HTfY&list=RDUrQVeF5HTfY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrQVeF5HTfY&list=RDUrQVeF5HTfY&start_radio=1). Those with access to Apple Music can also listen to a version performed by our own Toronto Jewish Folk Choir

<https://music.apple.com/ca/album/main-rue-platz/452345867?i=452345898>. Rosenfeld's text directs those who would mourn the victims of deadly factory conditions to search for the dead not in beautiful natural settings but in noisy factories, where workers are chained like slaves to machines. The alienation of oppressed Jews from the natural beauty lyricized by famous poets is a recurrent theme in Rosenfeld's work, including a poem about Niagara Falls

<https://niagarapoetry.ca/2026/01/18/rosenfeld/>, and his poem "The Jewish May", an 1897 proto-Zionist plea, on International Workers Day, not for a Jewish political entity but simply for a place where a Jew can enjoy the spring flowers <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-jewish-may/>.

The poem "In the Factory" might be characterized as a worker's antithesis to nature poetry. It recounts the inner experience of a day in the life of a factory worker who struggles to become more than a metaphor for a machine. It

was written in the late 1890s and translated into English in 1898 by Harvard Professor Leo Weiner for his collection *Songs of the Ghetto*. The following version, translated by Helena Frank and Rose Pastor Stokes, appeared in *Songs of Labour and Other Poems* by Morris Rosenfeld, a collection first published in 1914 and available without charge at

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6859/pg6859.txt>.

The poem is distinctive for its focus on what the social theorist Henri Bergson called "the mechanical encrusted upon the living" and for its prefiguring of many other 20th century critiques of the mechanisation of modern life, such as the Charlie Chaplin film, *Modern Times*.

In The Factory

Oh, here in the shop the machines roar so wildly,  
That oft, unaware that I am, or have been,  
I sink and am lost in the terrible tumult;  
And void is my soul... I am but a machine.  
I work and I work and I work, never ceasing;  
Create and create things from morning till e'en;  
For what?--and for whom--Oh, I know not! Oh, ask not!  
Who ever has heard of a conscious machine?  
No, here is no feeling, no thought and no reason;  
This life-crushing labor has ever suppress  
The noblest and finest, the truest and richest,  
The deepest, the highest and humanly best.  
The seconds, the minutes, they pass out forever,  
They vanish, swift fleeting like straws in a gale.  
I drive the wheel madly as tho' to o'ertake them,--  
Give chase without wisdom, or wit, or avail.  
The clock in the workshop,--it rests not a moment;  
It points on, and ticks on: Eternity--Time;  
And once someone told me the clock had a meaning,--  
Its pointing and ticking had reason and rhyme.  
And this too he told me,--or had I been dreaming,--  
The clock wakened life in one, forces unseen,  
And something besides;... I forget what; Oh, ask not!  
I know not, I know not, I am a machine.  
At times, when I listen, I hear the clock plainly;--  
The reason of old--the old meaning--is gone!  
The maddening pendulum urges me forward  
To labor and labor and still labor on.  
The tick of the clock is the Boss in his anger!

The face of the clock has the eyes of a foe;  
 The clock--Oh, I shudder--dost hear how it drives me?  
 It calls me "Machine!" and it cries to me "Sew!"  
 At noon, when about me the wild tumult ceases,  
 And gone is the master, and I sit apart,  
 And dawn in my brain is beginning to glimmer,  
 The wound comes agape at the core of my heart;  
 And tears, bitter tears flow; ay, tears that are scalding;  
 They moisten my dinner--my dry crust of bread;  
 They choke me,--I cannot eat;--no, no, I cannot!  
 Oh, horrible toil I born of Need and of Dread.  
 The sweatshop at mid-day--I'll draw you the picture:  
 A battlefield bloody; the conflict at rest;  
 Around and about me the corpses are lying;  
 The blood cries aloud from the earth's gory breast.  
 A moment... and hark! The loud signal is sounded,  
 The dead rise again and renewed is the fight...  
 They struggle, these corpses; for strangers, for strangers!  
 They struggle, they fall, and they sink into night.  
 I gaze on the battle in bitterest anger,  
 And pain, hellish pain wakes the rebel in me!  
 The clock--now I hear it aright!--It is crying:  
 "An end to this bondage! An end there must be!"  
 It quickens my reason, each feeling within me;  
 It shows me how precious the moments that fly.  
 Oh, worthless my life if I longer am silent,  
 And lost to the world if in silence I die.  
 The man in me sleeping begins to awaken;  
 The thing that was slave into slumber has passed:  
 Now; up with the man in me! Up and be doing!  
 No misery more! Here is freedom at last!  
 When sudden: a whistle!--the Boss--an alarm!--  
 I sink in the slime of the stagnant routine;--  
 There's tumult, they struggle, oh, lost is my ego;--  
 I know not, I care not, I am a machine!...

The Yiddish text of this poem can be found online at the Yiddish Book Center

<https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/collections/yiddish-books/spb-nybc210054/rosenfeld-morris-oysgeklibene-shriften-lider-eseyen-felyotonen-vol-13?book-page=38&book-mode=1up>

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## YIDDISH

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### Yiddish Cultural News: Archival Art and New Translations

By freygl gertsovsky

This fall UJPO and Rad Yiddish collaborated on a series of Yiddish Cultural programming with initial support from a Yiddish Book Center microgrant followed by larger support from the Ontario Arts Council.

We kicked off the season in early September 2025 with two sold-out Radical Yiddish History Tours led by artist and Jewish educator Sharoni Sibony, which had us learning about labour history from Ester Reiter, singing Yiddish Songs on Spadina Ave. with David Wall, learning about the cabaret and police suppression at the Standard Yiddish theatre with Emily Zimmerman, and reciting Yiddish poetry about women's labour issues from poet Yudica, translated by Faith Jones.



Photo of Radical Yiddish History Tour on Spadina Ave., September 14, 2025.



Photo of participants presenting their creations at Art with the Archives workshop, September 21, 2025.

Later that month, Sharoni led a group in a collage-art workshop using archival images of the Toronto Jewish left, including photographs of protests and workplaces, newspaper articles, and broadside posters. Seven artist-participants had their work featured in the Art with the Archives pop-up exhibit in which their radical artwork was installed onto cardboard with sticks resembling protest signs in the lobby of UJPO’s annual fundraiser and 100th anniversary kick-off concert on December 8, 2025.



Art with the Archives pop-up exhibit December 8, 2025.

In November 2025, we explored themes of witches and magic in a storytelling and performance workshop led by community-theatre maker Ruth Howard. We discussed how Western stereotypes about witches are rooted in older forms of European antisemitism, and what it means to reclaim and retell these stories as people with marginalized identities.

Emily Zimmerman came back to town in December as her drag persona Goldie Luxemburg to teach a Yiddish vaudeville, burlesque, and drag workshop. Part lecture-performance on the subversive history of Yiddish vaudeville, burlesque, and comedy and its ubiquitous references through the decades coming up in present-day comedy and drag; part participatory burlesque workshop; this event sure got attendees up and moving. The biggest lessons of the night were the words of Susan Sontag that “[s]uccessful camp, even when it reveals self-parody, reeks of self love”, and Goldie explaining that burlesque boils down to self love, taking pleasure in your body, just having fun, then showing that to the audience.



Yiddish Vaudeville, Burlesque, and Drag workshop, December 14, 2025.



Playing Klezmer for Yiddish Dance workshop, January 17, 2026.

In January 2026, we turned our tastes to klezmer music, inviting beloved Music Camp director Martin van de Ven to teach a klezmer instrumental class, and fiddler Jonathan Cannon to lead a session focused on sekund fiddle, to which many other rhythm and accompaniment instrumentalists participated. Martin taught five specific klezmer tunes which members of Marching Disorder then played as the live band for a Yiddish folk dance workshop taught by Emily Glass. We learned to dance freylekhs, a bulgar, a couples bulgar, a sher, a zhok, and a terkisher.



Yiddish Dance workshop, January 31, 2026.

That same month, Yiddish Book Center staff Mindl Cohen was in town partnering with UJPO on the panel discussion “Found in Translation: Women Writers in Yiddish”. Shule parent Lydia Moed talked about her translation of Chana Viderman and UJPO’s own Sam Blatt presented about the third publication from the Toronto Yiddish Translation Group led by Frieda Forman, *On the Waves of Destiny*, a collection of writing by communist Yiddish writer Lili Berger. Rad Yiddish’s reading group “Lefty Leyenkrayz” met regularly in the fall to read stories in the original Yiddish in honour of the book’s publication.



Event Photo from January 19 2026

At the end of February I traveled to Montreal for KlezKanada’s Yiddish Culture Jam, a 4 day festival right in the heart of Mile End with lectures, concerts, Yiddish dancing, and more. I delivered a workshop called “Playing with Yiddish Poetry” in which I introduced participants to various forms of found poetry from blackout to cento, and then everyone had the opportunity to create their own found poetry using a packet of sources texts of Quebec-based Yiddish women writers with English translations of each. I even threw in the Yiddish open letter written by Zohran Mamdani’s team during Mamdani’s campaign that was published in hasidic newspapers across New York City this past fall.

On March 7, 2025, at the Radical Purim Party, I had the incredibly fun opportunity to revive the character of Pepi Litman as the MC of the show. Pepi was a real-life drag king from over a century ago, who sang on stages across eastern Europe’s taverns, cafes, restaurants, barns, and beer gardens. A [digital archive](#) of Litman’s recordings can be found online. What’s old in Yiddish culture was always already progressive and the working class has always had radical elements. Pepi and other performers of their time were no strangers to the suppression of Yiddish theatre, performance, and publication and had to creatively subvert authorities – tactics we can learn from for our scarily similar times.



MC freygl gertsovski as Pepi Litman with Marching Disorder at Radical Purim Party, March 7, 2026.

The less explicitly-political but very friendly group, Farbreng Toronto, continues to meet every month or two for fully in-Yiddish outings. Their last one was to the aquarium where I learned many new-to-me Yiddish words for animal and plant life under the sea.

The next Farbreng Toronto will take place at a cafe on Sunday, April 12, location TBA. You can sign up for the [Google Group](#) to get the announcement and learn of upcoming events. Our following outing will be to the Wednesday, May 27 showing of Fiddler on the Roof in Yiddish (with English super titles). You can make use of the 15% group discount for the Wednesday show – no Yiddish knowledge required; just call up the Al Green Theatre, tell them you’re with Farbreng Toronto and would like to buy tickets for the Wednesday night show, and they’ll process your purchase over the phone.

Zayt gezunt & shtark / Be well!

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# A LITTLE NOSH

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## Tuscan Salmon

By Harriet Zaidman



This creamy Tuscan salmon is rich, garlicky, and perfect for a surprisingly easy weeknight dinner or a date-night showstopper. Juicy roasted salmon melts into a silky parmesan cream sauce with sun-dried tomatoes, kale, and Tuscan spices — total comfort food heaven. Make it with chicken, too.

This and many other delicious recipes can be found on North End Nosh ([northendnosh.weebly.com](http://northendnosh.weebly.com))

Note: Tuscan spice blend can be a mix of any typical Italian herbs: basil, oregano, thyme, rosemary, and marjoram, according to your preference.

Serves: 4  
Time: 45 minutes

### Ingredients

#### *For the Salmon*

4 salmon fillets (4–6 oz each)  
2 tablespoons olive oil or as needed  
2 teaspoons Tuscan spice blend - (see Note above)  
1 teaspoon sea salt or regular salt

#### *For the Tuscan Sauce*

1 tablespoon olive oil (or 1–2 tablespoon butter) or more, as needed  
4 garlic cloves, minced (or 1 shallot)  
3 tablespoons tomato paste  
5–6 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped  
1–2 tablespoons Tuscan spice blend (see above)  
Sea salt, to taste  
1 ½ cups heavy cream  
1 cup vegetable or seafood stock (chicken stock works too)  
3 tablespoons white cooking wine  
Juice of ½ lemon  
1 cup fresh kale, chopped or spinach or Swiss Chard  
1 cup parmesan cheese, freshly grated (plus extra for serving)

### Method

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Grease a baking sheet or line it with parchment paper. Pat the salmon dry, drizzle it with olive oil, and season with Tuscan spice blend and salt. Roast the salmon for 15–20 minutes, until it flakes with a fork. Remove the pan from oven and set aside.

While the salmon is in the oven, warm the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and sauté for 1–2 minutes until fragrant.

Stir in 3 tablespoons of Tuscan spice blend (above), salt, tomato paste, and sun-dried tomatoes. Cook for 1 minute.

Lower the heat to medium-low. Slowly add the heavy cream, stock, white wine, and lemon juice. Let it bubble for 1–2 minutes.

Thicken the sauce by adding the parmesan cheese and whisk until the cheese is melted and the sauce is thickened (2–3 minutes).

Stir in the chopped kale/spinach/Swiss Chard to soften. Add the roasted salmon to the sauce and spoon the sauce over the top. Simmer 5–6 minutes until coated and tender.

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## CANADA

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### More from the Winnipeg Chapter

By Harriet Zaidman

#### Holocaust Remembrance Day

Winnipeg UJPO collaborated with Independent Jewish Voices to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27 this year. Sixty people attended the online commemoration, which featured Daniel Thau-Eleff, who recalled his zaida's life and experiences during the Holocaust and how they marked his thinking for the rest of his years, Steve Rauh, who spoke about the effects of trauma, and Emèt Eviatar, who offered a valuable spiritual perspective. This was the first time we have participated in marking the IHRD, with several people in attendance expressing thanks and appreciation for this moving panel discussion.

UJPO member Tami Gadir spoke on behalf of UJPO Winnipeg at an event to mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action Against Islamophobia, which was held at the Manitoba Legislature. Her remarks follow:

Normally I prefer to get straight to the point if I am asked to speak somewhere. But when Shahina reached out about this event, she insisted that I begin with something personal. She told me that Winnipeg is a community that wants to know a bit of your personal story so that they can connect with you. In light of that invitation, I will start by telling you that my name, as Krishna said, is Tami Gadir. About a year ago, I moved here from Sydney Australia—the homeland of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. I grew up running from waves and chasing seagulls on Bondi Beach, and I am only one degree removed from victims of the massacre that took place there in December.

My middle name is Ester, after my great grandmother. Ester was a dress-maker and an active member of the Jewish Labour Bund in Vilna—at the time, still part of Poland. The Bund was a secular group of Jewish socialists who fought anti-semitism at home, as well as forming multi-ethnic coalitions with others to fight the bosses who were exploiting all of them. While her political orientation meant that her son, my grandfather, was also raised secular, when he recounted his childhood in Vilna, he spoke with reverence of the central synagogue there. He said it was a huge, magnificent building, about 500 years old. It was built of sturdy stone and had iron gates. From the outside, it looked like a single level building. But once you were inside, it was four storeys high and resembled a great cathedral. People would come from far and wide to see it as an architectural wonder.

The reason for this design, though, was grim: it was built to look as inconspicuous as possible, so that it wouldn't attract the attention of antisemites and could serve as a fortress during pogroms.

The Nazis destroyed it.

The lessons of the horrors that befell this whole period of history are clear: freedom and safety should extend to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or anything else. The prejudices that fuel these forms of violence are focused on attributing outsized power to small groups for large problems in the world—which is to say, scapegoating them. Such prejudices are about targeting groups not for anything they've actually done, but for their perceived group attributes, which are usually based in myths and stereotypes.

And when those prejudices are re-articulated and repeated in different ways—by elected politicians, radio presenters, newspaper columnists, and worse, by the leaders appointed to represent our own communities—some people will hear these messages as incitements to commit targeted violence at those groups.

Along these lines, it will not come as news to anyone in this room that many of the institutions that purport to

represent us, whether elected or not, have been stoking prejudice against Islam and against Muslim people for a long time now.

Some people trace this to September 11, 2001. Certainly, there was a stark resurgence of these prejudices at that time, framed as a necessary and defensive so-called War on Terror. However, 9/11 was not the first time we saw Islamophobia and variations of it. It arose significantly during the Naksa—known by some as the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, or the Six-Day War. Anti-Arab racism was used as a tool of the West in response to the decolonization, national liberation, and revolutionary struggles across South-West Asia and North Africa in the 1960s and 70s. There was a great fear that some of these anti-imperial and anti-colonial struggles would lead to more alliances with Soviet communism. The construction of the so-called "Arab terrorist" was a route to cultivating a "them" versus "us" political consciousness. As media scholar Deepa Kumar has argued, when these prejudices were repackaged after 9/11, and the "Arab" terrorist became the "Islamic terrorist," this was simply a case of "the Empire's new clothes."

There is every reason to reject Islamophobia based alone on the ways that it has served the imperial domination of the US and those aligned with it. But there's another reason to reject it. A massacre of a religious gathering at a Mosque, at a Hanukkah candle-lighting, or in any other context where the violence is carried out only because the people present belong to a faith group, is a regressive political act. It gives ammunition to oppressors to continue to scapegoat the oppressed. It provides excuses for nation-states to conflate constructive, strident political discourse with acts of real violence.

We must therefore firm up alliances like the one that has brought us here today, which are steadfast in their unity against racism and bigotry of all forms.

As Martin Luther King Jr said in 1964, we must learn to live together as [siblings], or we are going to perish together as fools.

## Recent and Upcoming Events



JOIN US FOR  
**UJPO Winnipeg's  
Passover Seder**

<b>12</b> APRIL 2026	<b>DOORS OPEN 5 PM</b>	<b>TICKETS</b>
	Sir John Franklin Community Centre (1 Sir John Franklin Road)	Adults: \$40 Ages 6-12: \$15 5 and under: Free *Or pay what you can

Please consider a donation to support those  
who cannot afford a ticket.

TO REGISTER OR INQUIRE PLEASE EMAIL OR E-TRANSFER  
[UJPOWINNIPEG@SHAW.CA](mailto:UJPOWINNIPEG@SHAW.CA) BY MARCH 31  
OR SEND CHEQUES TO HENRY SHORR,  
203 - 139 ROSLYN RD. WINNIPEG R3L 0G7



The UJPO Book Club in Winnipeg is still going strong. At our next meeting we'll discuss *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*, by Patrick Radden Keefe.

Dr. Itay Zutra continues to enlighten us through his lecture series called *Funny Jews*. We recently viewed the Mel Brooks film *Blazing Saddles*, the plot and characters of which Itay compared to the Purim story. Itay's lectures are full of insight and delight, and we thank him for his scholarly analysis.

Our secular seder took place on Sunday, April 12 at Sir John Franklin Community Centre in Winnipeg.

UJPO Winnipeg held its annual Warsaw Ghetto Memorial on Thursday, April 16 at the Ukrainian Labour Temple. As well as a featured speaker, the North End Jewish Folk Choir will present songs to commemorate the event.

The book *Radical Jewish Tradition* will be launched in Winnipeg on Saturday, May 23 at McNally Robinson Booksellers. Sunday May 24th. Co-authored by Australian activist Janey Storey and Donny Gluckstein, the book recounts the history of Jewish radicalism from the time of the Russian Tsars to Poland and Germany, from London to New York. IJV-

Winnipeg and UJPO Winnipeg will co-host a second event to celebrate the book on Sunday May 24th, with further details to be announced soon.

*Images from Winnipeg's Third Seder:*



## Personal Notes

UJPO Winnipeg lost a longtime and beloved member, Dr. Henry Heller, in January. Henry was an esteemed professor of French history at the University of Manitoba, a Marxist scholar and an activist for progressive causes all his life. Our condolences to his wife, Laura, and family.

Our condolences to UJPO member Avrum Rosner, whose wife, Dr. Marnie Frain, died in January in Montreal. Always advocating on behalf of the working class, Marnie practiced family medicine for 26 years in Montreal before moving to St. Sauveur and working with geriatric patients for another 15 years. Our deepest sympathies to Avrum and family.

Happy Birthday to Ellen Karlinsky, UJPO Winnipeg's heart and soul. Ellen is celebrating a Big Birthday, and we wish her good health and happiness in the coming years.

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# BOOK REVIEW

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## CHAIN OF IDEAS: THE ORIGINS OF OUR AUTHORITARIAN WORLD

New York: One World, 592 Pages

By ANDREW LYONS

In the 1950s and 1960s, the British periodical, *The New Statesman*, had a weekly column that consisted of ridiculous sayings that were all too typically British. I recall one that said,

"Sociology, social work, socialism -- they're all the same thing, and they should be stopped!"

It seems that the State of Florida endorses at very least one part of this proposition, because Sociology has just been removed as a core requirement in the universities of that benighted state.

A few years ago, Governor de Santis stepped in to prevent the teaching of Critical Race Theory in Florida's schools. It was by no means clear that he and his supporters knew precisely what Critical Race Theory was (it was originally a turn in legal theory that viewed racism as embedded in legal institutions in the USA). It was clear that CRT, whatever it was and may be, said that racism was a very bad thing, that it pervaded all of American life, and that many heroes of American history were racists. It was said to have originated with the writings of people like Angela Davis who were trained by Cultural Marxists (in her actual case, Herbert Marcuse), many of whom had nasty cosmopolitan names. Clearly it had to be banned. That is precisely what has happened in Florida and some other Red States

Ibram X Kendi, the best-selling author of *Stamped from the Beginning*, a history of racist and racist thought in America, and *How to be an Antiracist* was denounced by the far-right journalist, Christopher Rufo, as the most dangerous exponent of CRT. Rufo's advice was sought by De Santis when he introduced his educational reforms. He is now a governor of Florida's formerly prestigious New College. He is otherwise known as the person who offered a \$5000 reward for anyone who could produce proof that Haitians in Ohio eat cats. However, he has stated that he is opposed to racist conspiracy theories from both the Right and the Left, and the reader will doubtless agree that is good to know.

As it happens, I don't think Kendi is flawless. In *Stamped from the Beginning* he attaches the racist label to some thinkers who had no racist sentiments, and he fails to note the role of my own academic discipline, anthropology, in combatting racism. His main arguments are persuasive.

Racist ideas arise from racist practices, and "race" is a fiction in biological terms but all too real as a social construct. These are indeed notions he shares with many exponents of CRT and most anthropologists.

*Chain of Ideas* is the best possible response Kendi could have made to his critics. It is the most accessible attack yet on the movement sometimes known as the "New Fascism." It is far longer and more detailed than the writings of scholars like Jason Stanley and Timothy Snyder, but the rambling narrative style is addictive. It is less concerned with the mechanics of power but very concerned with issues of ideology. It also attempts to examine the ways in which the new fascism ostensibly departs from the old.

Kendi argues that the key elements of the new fascism can all be found in a book published in 2011 by the French writer, Renaud Camus, *Le Grand Remplacement*. Great replacement theory is defined by him as "a political theory that powerful elites are enabling people of color to steal the lives, livelihoods, cultures, electoral powers and freedoms of White people who now need authoritarian protection (Kendi 2026: xxiv)." Uncontrolled immigration is a way this change can be effected, and, in some cases, it supposedly could lead to a "genocide" of the white population. Camus, a gay novelist and travel writer, was greatly disturbed when he realized that his bucolic region of France had become 40% Muslim. The intrusion of alien elements into France was compounded by failure of the host population to breed. Great replacement theorists are often strongly pro-natalist, and they condemn social changes that allegedly weaken the family as a breeding unit, such as abortion, gay and transgender rights. For this reason, the new authoritarian Right is strongly "anti-woke"

Kendi examines in considerable detail the ways in which these or very similar ideas have been voiced by politicians like Trump, Vance, Elon Musk, Marine Le Pen in France, Santiago Abascal in Spain, Orban in Hungary, Duda and the Polish Law and Justice Party, Kast in Argentina, Alice Weidel and the AFD in Germany, Meloni in Italy, Berlusconi in Brazil, Farage and Braverman in Britain, and Netanyahu in Israel (where, he argues, the leadership claimed that Palestinian victory would bring a second Holocaust). He further notes that three of the leaders of the trucker convoy in Canada were believers in The Great Replacement, and he views both Bernier and Poilievre as dangers to Canadian democracy. The dictator who has funded the New Fascists throughout Europe, particularly France, is Vladimir Putin who is personally an admirer of a Russian fascist philosopher, Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin, who died in 1954 (p. 467). His pretext that he is "Denazifying Ukraine" is viewed as total hypocrisy by Kendi.

Most of the voters who elect parties of the authoritarian Right share little in common with the leadership, which usually represents the class interest of a fraction of the ruling elite, and exploits its own poorer followers. That was true of Mussolini's Fascists and of Hitler's Nazis, and it is just as true now, but the lie was and is conveyed in convincing fashion, whether in a mass rally or in contemporary social media. It's an obvious fact, but Kendi explains it very well.

The notion of the Great Replacement itself predates the days of the old fascism, and indeed its roots are in the nineteenth century. Kendi does not say anything about de Gobineau and his disciples, and has little to say about the beginning of eugenics (Galton and Karl Pearson). He does mention the anti-Dreyfusards in France, the antisemites in the Vichy government, Charles Henry Pearson in the USA, and the two American racist writers who so influenced Nazi Germany, Madison Grant, founder of the Bronx Zoo and author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, and Lothrop Stoddard, author of *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy*. Hitler was, Kendi correctly informs us, particularly indebted to Grant's work. More recently, the prize-winning Jean Raspail in his 1973 novel, *Le Camp des Saints*, anticipated the Islamophobia of Renaud when he prophesied that France would soon be overcome by foreign hordes.

Kendi repeatedly intersperses his account of authoritarian leaders, parties and ideologies with narratives of the actions and manifestos of mass killers and right-wing assassins like Anders Breivik in Norway and Brandon Tarrant in New Zealand. They were adherents of Great Replacement Theory.

We have observed that Renaud's theory is merely a restatement of quite old ideas. In what ways then does the new fascism, which is based on this doctrine, differ from the older version? Kendi's answer is that fascism now wears somewhat different clothes, but the body hasn't really changed.

It's no longer, apparently, a good idea to admit that one is a racist. The new fascists now talk of the threat to Christian or even Judaeo-Christian culture posed by alien cultures that threaten to swamp it. "Cultural relativism," espoused by woke liberals and Cultural Marxists is supposedly destroying Christian families, eroding moral standards and weakening the resistance to the alien invasion. The antithesis of cultural relativism is a traditional, hierarchical notion of culture. "Culture" is indeed a word that can mean many different things. Indeed, an entire book, *Culture: A Critical View of Concepts and Traditions (1952)*, by the anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn (1952) was devoted to expounding some 300 of its meanings. Kendi quite wrongly accuses the anthropologist,

Ruth Benedict, of espousing a hierarchical notion of culture, because of a reference to "simple" cultures, which she did not intend to be derogatory. In fact, she advocated a strong form of relativism and was criticized for it by more conservative scholars.

Kendi is doubtless aware that racism always lies beneath the surface of new fascist discourse, but it is often concealed, except when debate breaks out (as was the case a few years ago) regarding the free speech of scientific racists (e.g. Noah Carl in the pages of *Quillette.com*).

Kendi notes that there is often an evident, direct link between the new fascist movements and personnel and the Fascist and Nazi movements of the Axis. One of Elon Musk's grandparents was involved with the antisemitic Social Credit Party in Alberta. His family supported South African apartheid. Trump's father marched with the Klan protesting Catholic immigration in the 1920s. Meloni was an enthusiastic leader of the youth wing of Fini's neofascist party in her late teens, and at that point in her life sang the praises of Mussolini.

As Prime Minister of Italy and leader of the Brothers of Italy party which she founded, Meloni claims that she never was a fascist. Fascism is dead and buried. She is a proud Thatcherite, a disciple of Roger Scruton, the British philosopher who defended Victorian values. Similar claims are made by supporters of Orban in Hungary, including John O' Sullivan, a former Thatcher advisor and editor of *National Review*, who now heads The Danube Institute in Budapest. One could easily forget the Iron Lady's strong attachment to that staunch democrat, Augusto Pinochet, but she did respect democratic norms of governance in her own country. Meloni and others who describe themselves as Thatcherites and the like are employing a strategy Kendi calls "orchestrated distancing." However, if Meloni continues to respect her defeat in a referendum on judicial reform, a key element in her agenda of turning Italy into an "illiberal democracy" like Hungary, she may indeed have transitioned into a Thatcherite ruler, albeit by default.

"Proximity Denial" is another strategy of the authoritarian Right. At his posh private school, Dulwich College, the teenage Nigel Farage used to hiss in the ears of Jewish classmates to imitate the sound of the gas chambers. Now he has welcomed the former Tory minister, Suella Braverman, to his Islamophobic Reform Party which currently has the support of 27% of the British electorate. Braverman is of Indian Hindu and Catholic descent, and her Jewish husband (also a Farage supporter) is Jewish and once lived in Israel. Given that some of his "best friends" are coloured and Jewish, Farage claims to be exempt from charges of Nazism or racism. Arguably, the strongest form of proximity denial is that embraced by people like

Braverman and her husband, and by Senator Tim Scott and other African American Trump supporters. I might point out that some members of immigrant communities in Britain and the USA are attracted by the "anti-woke" policies of the New Fascists, because they perceive threats to traditional family structures.

Both "orchestrated distancing" and "proximity denial" may involve attempts by authoritarian politicians to rewrite history. Such strategies, as Kendi rightly acknowledges, are the theme of Jason Stanley's book, *Erasing History*. Today's fascists and racists say they were never fascists and racists. Rather (in their belief) they are besieged by anti-racists who make false accusations, woke professors who pervert education and destroy free speech, not to mention feminists, homosexuals and transgender people who seek to deny biology and destroy the family.

Our last sentence reminds us that we should note that, although Kendi is committed to intersectionality as an approach, he has less to say about gender and class than race, although what he does say is perfectly pertinent. The word "transgender" occurs only three times in the index of his book, which is rather strange, given the social panic the Far Right is trying to create regarding issues of transgender sport, gender dysphoria, transitioning, use of public toilets, etc.

The Great Replacement is a conspiracy theory, and such theories by their very nature are not confined to the bounds of the rational. Kendi notes that governments and parties of the Far Right (with some exceptions) tended to combat Covid restrictions. Trump was publicly sceptical of the restrictions Fauci imposed. The Canadian truckers, Le Pen and Meloni opposed mass vaccination. Kendi observes a certain level of opportunism here, but there was also a belief in dangerous Deep State conspiracies. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has all too appropriately said that it's hard to distinguish where conspiracies begin and end. Kendi might have gone further in discussing the Right's fascination with forms of the irrational, such as a passion for the Middle Ages, a hierarchical world where there were real heroes and real faith. In the USA, both Evangelical Protestants and Ultra-Traditionalist Catholics (such as J. D. Vance) play major roles in the MAGA movements. Vance has just announced in a podcast that he believes that the crew of UFOs are agents of the Devil.

All told, Kendi has written a fascinating book about the frightening political reality we now face. It is a book the UJPO members should make an effort to read.

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## UNITED JEWISH PEOPLE'S ORDER

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PO Box 10541  
RPO Bloorcourt, ON. M6H 4H9  
**Phone: 416-789-5502**

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

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

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