

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

HIGH HOLIDAYS

High Holidays 5787

Many Flames, One Fire:
Protest & Prayer

Join D'ror Yikra &
United Jewish People's Order



Tickets Erev Rosh Hashanah, September 11: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/many-flames-one-fire-protest-and-prayer-high-holidays--5787?share=true>

Tickets Kol Nidre, Sept: 20: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/many-flames-one-fire-protest-and-prayer-kol-nidre--5787-2?share=true>

NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

FROM WINNIPEG

By Harriet Zaidman



UJPO's 100th anniversary was celebrated in a big way on Thursday, June 25 in Winnipeg. The theme *Joy and Struggle* was represented through rousing musical performances, remembrances of the history of our storied organization, and through our persistent and public determination to continue fighting for social justice.

The evening's agenda included performances by the talented musical group *The Shandes* from Toronto - UJPO's own David Wall and Sarena Sairan, accompanied on violin by Winnipeg musician and conductor Kaitie Reider. Katie led the *North End Jewish Folk Choir* in a series of songs that ran the gamut of its repertoire, ending with a respectful tribute to the fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising through the song *Zog Nit Keyn Mol*. We enjoyed and appreciated the collaboration with Toronto in organizing our event. It was wonderful working with Shayle Kilroy, David, Sarena and the many UJPO members who came in from Toronto.

Ellen Karlinsky and Harriet Zaidman shared the emcee duties, with Harriet providing a history of UJPO's century of activism, listing the many activities and events in support of social justice carried out under the UJPO banner - not all of them, because no one could remember all of them. Greetings were offered by former National President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Paul Moist, and the president of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians

(AUUC), Glenn Michalchuk. See the attached speeches.

We were honoured to have in attendance Abigail Bakan from the UJPO National Board, along with other members of the Palestine Content Advisory Committee for the *Palestine Uprooted: Nakba Past and Present* exhibit. They received a rousing and supportive reception from those in attendance.

The celebration took place in a fitting location - the Ukrainian Labour Temple, a symbol of the unity between progressive groups in the Jewish and Ukrainian communities since our forebears arrived in Canada at the turn of the 19th century.

The nearly 100 people who attended the celebration cheered our most recent accomplishments in standing up to demand justice for the Palestinian people, and in rebuffing the pressures exerted by the legacy Jewish organizations. Inspired by our history, motivated by our present, we pledged to continue fighting for social justice, to honour the legacy of those who began UJPO.



MESSAGE OF GREETINGS TO THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE UNITED JEWISH PEOPLE'S ORDER IN WINNIPEG

JUNE 25, 2026

Glenn Michalchuk

It is my pleasure and honour, as National President of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, to bring greetings to the Winnipeg Celebration of

the 100th Anniversary of the United Jewish People's Order.

On behalf of the AUUC I welcome all of you to the Ukrainian Labour Temple for this historic anniversary.

The United Jewish People's Order was formed to promote secular Jewish culture, socialist values and social justice; and it has done so throughout its 100 years of activity.

In these difficult, but transformative times, the voice of UJPO, as a progressive Jewish organization, is extremely important, if not critical, to speak out against injustice, intolerance and racism; and to break through the institutional silence of governments and political leaders that enables fanaticism to wreak havoc.

UJPO's activities for social justice are also important at a time when the concept of equality and the responsibility of society to serve all its members is being eroded further.

At a time of increased warmongering and the resurgence of a Cold War mentality amongst political leaders UJPO's consistent stand for peace and dialogue amongst nations is important

UJPO and the AUUC share common values. We are fellow travellers in the work to build a world that reflects human rights, tolerance, respect between nations, peoples and cultures

The National Committee of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians, and all our members, send you our most hearty congratulations on the 100th Anniversary of the United Jewish People's Order and its work over those many years for social and human progress. We look forward to future collaboration to realize our common goals.

Paul Moist Speaking Notes

100th Anniversary of UJPO

June 25th, 2026

Good evening, it is a great honour to bring greetings on this important celebration of the centenary of the United Jewish People's Order. I have over the course of my trade union career, had the good fortune to know and work with many progressives from UJPO.

It's difficult in a few short minutes to relay the connections between labour and the Jewish left in Winnipeg, and I struggled with how to accomplish this. It then came to me to just share some of my own inter-face with your community over the past half-century.

I think writer Jack Ludwig, quoted in Harry Gutkin's book, *The Worst of Times, The Best of Times*, captured the Jewish community he grew up in, here in north Winnipeg when said:

"...the heart of what I must tell you about North Winnipeg is not its places, but its people...a whole generation of Jews who broke away from Orthodoxy – devoutly secular, politically committed to humanitarian causes, reaching out to the world culture and proud of their Yiddish inheritance. These were the people of my childhood."

My encounters with the progressive Jewish left have been numerous, here are a few examples.

Jacob & Rose Penner

The Penners are featured in the 1919 General Strike Brookside Cemetery Walking Tour that I developed in 2019, the 100th anniversary of the General Strike.

Jake, a member of the Bakery Workers Union, was a member of the General Strike Defence Committee. The Penners' home was raided by police as part of the round up of strike leaders.

The Penners, both born in Russia, met in Winnipeg after immigrating here in the first decade of the 20th

century. They met in 1908 at a public lecture sponsored by the Winnipeg Radical Society. The speaker that evening was Emma Goldman.

Jake Penner served almost 30 consecutive years on Winnipeg City Council, his service interrupted only due to his internment in an Alberta camp, his crime being his membership in the Communist Party.

Their son Norman Penner wrote *Winnipeg 1919: a Definitive History of the Winnipeg General Strike*. Another son, Roland, whom I knew well, served as a cabinet member in the Pawley government and as Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba.

Jake Penner's political longevity is a legacy of the General Strike. The Strike was smashed by the state and was no victory for the workers of the day, but those workers supported their leaders, electing many of them to all levels of government, over and over.

Political Diversity

The left in Winnipeg was indeed united in the 1919 General Strike, which saw 35,000 workers, a third of whom did not belong to a union, walk off the job for six weeks in support of building and metal trades workers' fight for collective bargaining rights.

When it came to politics, the unity was not so evident. Some were members of the Socialist Party of Canada, the forerunner to the Communist Party. Other were members of the Social Democratic Party of Canada, loosely put, a forerunner to the CCF/NDP. Yet others were members of the Independent Labour Party.

In the 1923 civic election, General Strike leaders, Helen Armstrong, Edith Hancox and Thomas Flye, ran against each other in Ward 2 (the Weston / Brooklands area).

Joe Zuken served over 40 years at the school board and municipal levels, a stellar electoral record by this champion of the poor and marginalized. I met

Joe in the late 70s. He was a friend of all workers, including the civic employees' local I belonged to at the City of Winnipeg.

When he passed away in 1986, friends established the Joseph Zuken Memorial Trust Fund administered by the Winnipeg Foundation. I served as a Trustee of the Fund for its first two decades. It is here where I met many members of UJPO and the progressive Jewish left.

Between 1990 and 2017 the Zuken Fund awarded just over \$140,000 in grants to a range of organizations, including, Canadian Jewish Outlook magazine (26), the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, CCPA-MB, the Sholem Aleichem Cultural Group and numerous other groups.

The Fund today is administered by the CCPA-MB and has supported research into the annual State of the City Report, and other critical inner-city research.

Roz Usiskin was an active member of UJPO and prominent researcher. I recall fondly Roz speaking about the progressive Jewish left and the General Strike, alongside Harriet Zaidman, in a 2019 event at the Rady Centre.

When Roz passed in 2022, Ellen Karlinsky reached out to me for a few sentences to post in memory of Roz, and I wrote to her, saying: "As a trade union leader, I valued Roz as an ally and a mentor. Most importantly, I valued her clarity of thought, her progressive values and her friendship."

Fred Narvey, a noted writer and activist, recalled for me how the General Strike and the Spanish Flu pandemic affected his family. He joined Joe Zuken's progressive Arts Club in the early 1930's. In 1934 Fred was Chair of the Jewish Anti-Fascist League, and he was part of the group that included many labour activists, who gathered in Old Market Square and blocked fascists who planned to march through Winnipeg. After this near-riot the fascists never again tried to march in the city.

Abe & Bertha Arnold were both active in the Zuken Association, I attended their home for meetings often. Both were staunch human rights activists. Abe headed up the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties. Bertha was a lifelong CCF/NDP member, and worked as an assistant to Saul Miller, a member of Ed Schreyer's cabinet. They taught me that labour rights are human rights, and no society could call itself truly democratic without extending human rights to all citizens.

Leon Mitchell was a huge player in the labour movement in Winnipeg for 40-plus years. He was fired for organizing a union at Western Glove. At age 25 he returned to school to get his Grade 12. He worked as a full-time Business Agent for the Federation of Civic Employees, the forerunner to my union, CUPE Local 500. In 1952 he led the union to secure the 40-hour work week, with no loss in pay plus, a healthy wage hike.

In 1954, at 38 years of age, he enrolled in the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba. He practiced law for unions only alongside Sid Green and Sam Minuk. He gave his practice to Mel Myers in the early 60s when he moved into a role as an arbitrator and prominent vice-chair of the Manitoba Labour Board.

Mel Myers. Myers was Manitoba's most prominent labour lawyer from 1962 – 2002. He co-founded the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers. He was to me both a mentor and a dear friend; he passed away just a few short months ago. He was an active member of the Western Canadian Jewish Historical Society.

David Orlikow was a long-serving NDP MP for Winnipeg North, he also served as a school trustee and for four years as a CCF member of the Manitoba Legislature. He was a dear friend of mine, and of all workers. In 1994 when we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the General Strike, one event was held here in the Ukrainian Labour Temple: a meeting of the CLC executive, a dinner and the staging of a play commissioned to commemorate

the General Strike. It was David's first time entering this building, owing to the political divides of era.

Daniel Stone, many of you know Dan Stone as a prominent historian and active member of the Jewish community. I first met him at an important conference held in the city in 2001, Jewish Radicalism in Winnipeg, 1905 – 1960. His book on the conference, *Jewish Life and Times, Volume VIII* is required reading for those wanting to understand the progressive Jewish left in Winnipeg and its relations with the labour movement.

In 2022 Dan contacted me and a group of us, including Sid Rabinovich, Lionel Steiman and Stan Carbone worked to raise some money and stage the play, *Waiting for Lefty*. In the midst of the COVID pandemic, we pulled this off and were able to pay actors their union rate at a time when work for them was scarce.

So, in closing, I have been blessed over the past 50 years to have met and worked with so many activists from the Jewish left. I congratulate the United Jewish People's Order on a century of activism and wish you all the best as you embark on your next century.

We are living in strange times, and it has always struck me that reaching out to embrace relations with other progressives beyond the labour movement made me a better trade unionist, and labour as a whole stronger.

We should all heed the words of Professor Ruth Frager who spoke at the 2001 Jewish Radicalism conference, where she said, "Times have changed but not the essential challenge of building meaningful solidarity while protecting human diversity."

Thank you for the opportunity to bring greetings, and Happy 100th Anniversary.

Paul Moist is a former National President of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

FROM VANCOUVER AND TORONTO

By Carl Rosenberg, President of UJPO National

In recent months, I attended two events commemorating anniversaries of major organizations in our political and cultural life.

On Thursday, June 11, an outstanding event was held in Toronto, at Trinity St. Paul's United Church, "UJPO's 100th Celebration: Joy and Struggle." Two of the groupings that came together in 1945 to form UJPO on a national level were founded in 1926: the Labour League in Toronto, and the Canadian Labour Circle (CLC) in Montreal. Both were breakaway groups from the *Arbeiter Ring* (Workmen's Circle). In 1932, the Liberty Temple Association in Winnipeg also broke away from the *Arbeiter Ring*. In 1945 they joined with the Labour League and CLC, along with sister organizations in Hamilton, Calgary and Windsor, as well as Camp Naivelt, the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, the Morris Winchevsky shules in Montreal and Toronto and the Sholem Aleichem shule (previously the Liberty Temple shule) in Winnipeg, to form the new national UJPO.

The keynote speech of the anniversary event was to have been given by renowned activist and writer Naomi Klein. Sadly, Naomi was unable to attend due to the passing of her father, progressive physician Michael Klein. An excellent discussion panel was quickly convened, on topics ranging from the climate crisis to resistance to Israeli genocide in Palestine. The panelists, all UJPO members, were Molly Kraft, Alejandro I. Paz, Alan Silverman and Anna Zalik. The panel was moderated by Shiri Pasternak.

There were also stirring musical performances by the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir (revived this year after 13 years with Shifra Cooper as Director and Danielle Vachon as Accompanist), Geoff Berner, David Wall, Sarena Sairan, and Marching Disorder. Ester Reiter gave an excellent overview of UJPO's history, which she recounted at greater length in her 2016 book *A Future Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada*.

This history was also covered in an informative commemorative booklet, *Celebrating the Past*,

Creating the Future (Mir farbreynge di fargangenhayt, Mir shaf'n di tsukunft), produced by a committee comprised of Marsha Fine, Maxine Hermolin, Ester Reiter, Erf Talebi and Max Wallace. It features a vivid selection of images from UJPO's history (photos, posters, concert programs), quotes from long-time UJPO members reflecting on our history, and an extensive written history and chronology recalling our milestones: the 1926 founding of UJPO's initial constituent organizations, the 1945 founding national convention, UJPO's relations with the Canadian Jewish Congress, the formation of the musical group The Travellers at Camp Naivelt, the 1959 split which produced the breakaway group the New Fraternal Jewish Association, the 1961 move into new headquarters on Cranbrooke Avenue, the 1969 formation of the congregational Secular Jewish Association (later Oraynu), the closure of UJPO Montreal in the 1980s, our 100th anniversary this year and the revival of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir.



The turnout was excellent, and the event introduced UJPO to many newcomers. My sister Anne, who lives in Toronto, attended and has now joined UJPO.

All the participants, volunteers, organizers, and contributors, including the planning committee

(David Wall, Tina Blazer, freygl gertsovski, Maxine Hermolin, Shayle Kilroy, Dora Rosenbaum, Sarena Sairan, Max Wallace, Harriet Zaidman), the commemorative booklet committee, the archival team (Ruth Grossman, Hayden Hermolin, Tina Blazer), Emcees (Sarena Sairan, David Wall, Shayle Kilroy), Yiddish translators (Sam Blatt and Ester Reiter), film-maker (bh Yael), musicians, UJPO staff (Sarena Sairan, David Wall, Shayle Kilroy, Erf Talebi, Ella Dayan), technicians (June Epstein, Anil Wazana, Gordon Peck) and stage manager (Dylan Tate-Howarth), deserve enormous credit for this wonderful evening. (Kudos also to the other National Board members whom I have the honour of serving with—Abbie Bakan, Julia Barnett, Ellen Karlinksy, Andrew Lyons, Lana Rabkin, Ester Reiter, and b.h. Yael.)

Facebook subscribers can access great photos of the event at:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1283963507105175&set=pcb.1283963650438494>

Videos of the Choir's performance can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xMxQ_sg8lQ&list=PLb6CazUVA0wZWEY5tzQiwsCRAUKPvVVnM

On May 23, Vancouver's Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture held an event, "The Peretz 80th Anniversary: A Wedding Between Peretz and the Past, Present and Future," with shared memories from long-time members and activists, featuring music arranged and presented by Daniel Carkner in the style of a European Jewish wedding, performed by a special ensemble together with the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir, and ably Emceed by Stephen R. Kaplan.

The Vancouver Peretz Institute was founded in 1945, with the late Ben and Gallia Chud in leadership roles, and renamed the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture in 2001. Since its founding it has given a home to progressive secular Jewish culture and community through a variety of programs, with a special emphasis on Yiddish language and culture.

The Peretz Centre's current programs include celebrations of Jewish holidays, the Pnei Mitzvah coming-of-age program, the Zumershule (a two-week summer program for youth ages 8-13 to explore artistic expression related to Jewish culture), Yiddish language classes at various levels, two history courses and speaker series, "Zhargon: A Journey through the Histories of Yiddishkayt," and "Doikayt: Histories of Jews Going West," the Fraytik Tsu Nakht secular shabbes gathering, and the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir, founded in 1980 by Searle Friedman.

The Peretz Centre also sponsors three reading circles—an online Yiddish *Leyenkrayz* (reading circle), Jewelers of the Ummah Reading Circle (organized by the UBC Jewish-Muslim Cultural Intimacies Project), and Exploring Jewish Writers (which I've enjoyed since its founding in 2017). Other programs include Klezjam/KlezWest (a space for an informal group of Yiddish musicians and dancers), and the Kirman Library. The latter was created by devoted readers and Yiddishists Paulina and Shaya Kirman, and features the largest Yiddish collection in Western Canada, as well as an excellent English-language collection. Faith Jones, David Kaetz and Al Stein have also worked on the library since its founding. Related to this is the Shaya Kirman Memorial Foundation for Yiddish Culture, established in 1983, administered by the Peretz Centre to foster the study and appreciation of Yiddish culture in Vancouver. It has funded projects including delegations to attend international conferences on Yiddish, and concerts of the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir.

Another excellent Peretz-related project is the documentary, *Four Pillars of Peretz*, written and directed by Michael Kissinger. The film is a celebration of four women who played a major role in the Peretz Centre over many years: Bluma Field, Claire Klein Osipov, Gallia Chud, and Sylvia Friedman (with whom I had the honour of working on *Outlook Magazine*). The film draws on interviews with their families and Peretz members, and was funded by Peretz members.

The Peretz Centre has achieved this through the tireless work of its board (currently Patricia Waisman, Paige Knorr, Sarah Levine, Mo Pareles,

Veronika Gorlova, Shirarose Wilensky, Michael Fraser, Franziska Astor, Adam Frank), volunteers, and staff-co-Executive Directors Adi Burton and Itamar Manoff, Senior Program Coordinator Donna Becker, and Facilities Manager Iosif Gershtein.

In their introduction to the commemorative anniversary booklet (produced by Adi, Itamar, Donna, and Claudia Bulaievsky, with an 80th anniversary logo created by Jess Goldman), Adi and Itamar wrote, “We hope to live up to the examples of those who came before us and take up their work, which is always unfinished, in the pursuit of *un shenere un besere velt fun ale* (a better and more beautiful world for all).”

UJPO aptly summed up the Peretz Centre’s legacy in its greeting in the booklet: “Your decades of commitment to Yiddish culture, progressive values, and community-building continue to inspire us deeply. The bond between the Peretz Centre and the Winchevsky Centre is more than historical, it is familial. We celebrate your achievements as our own and cherish the shared traditions, struggles, and joys that unite us.”

Between them, both organizations have achieved an outstanding history of giving a political, social and cultural home to Jewish progressives and our families and friends. Long may they continue!

NAIVELT NEWS: Thanks are in order for Jacob Bakan who just stepped down from Naivelt’s Camp Committee and his role as budget-maker after almost a decade! Thank you Jacob!

MAZEL TOV

Mazel Tov to parents Sadie Epstein-Fine and Zach Templeman, grandparents Rachel Epstein and Lo Fine, and big sister Zevi Grace Lynn Templefine on the birth of Aiden Jo Templefine to Zach on July 17. Aiden was named after Amy Jo Gottlieb, and her nickname is “Noodle” after her great-grandfather Norman Epstein, both of whom were treasured UJPO members.

IN MEMORIAM

Gerald (Gerry) Arthur Kane

Long time UJPO member, and noted Yiddishist Gerald Arthur Kane, passed away on July 21. A lengthy and touching obituary can be found [here](#).

Mike Constable

Mike Constable, a long time Naivelter and member of UJPO, and gifted cartoonist and activist, died on Friday, 3 July, quietly in Toronto. He had spent his last few years in a wrestle with Alzheimer’s disease. A memorial get-together was held on July 12 in Kensington Market.

To watch a short documentary about Mike, [click here](#).

Lynn Lubitz

On June 8, 2026, Lynn Lubitz passed away unexpectedly, surrounded by her loving husband, Dan, and her loved ones. Lynn worked as UJPO’s bookkeeper for many years and was a valued member of our community. A Celebration of Life is being organized for sometime in the fall. Details will be shared as they become available.

Condolences are extended to Dan and the entire Lubitz family. Those wishing to offer personal condolences or share memories are welcome to reach out to Dan at dlubitz@livezen.ca.

Gert Rogers

Gert Rogers, loving sister, mother, mother-in-law, friend, aunt, Bubbe and Grand Bubbe, passed away on Tuesday, April 21, 2026. Her presence was widely felt. She impacted many lives and will be greatly missed. Her funeral was held on April 24, at Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park in the United Jewish People’s Order section. Sincere condolences are extended to the family.

REVIEW ESSAY

NEW CHARTER MYTHS?

Donny Gluckstein and Janey Stone, *The Radical Jewish Tradition: Revolutionaries, Resistance Fighters and Firebrands*. Verso Press, 2026, orig. Bookmarks Publications, 2023.

Molly Crabapple, *Here Where We Live is Our Country: The Story of the Jewish Bund*. One World, 2026

By Harriet Lyons and Andrew Lyons

There is a Jewish joke that goes, “All Jewish holidays are the same: ‘They tried to kill us, we won, let’s eat.’” This summary encapsulates contradictory aspects of a foundational understanding of Jewish identity: Jews as perennial victims and Jews as a people chosen by God to defeat their enemies. This contradiction is at the core of the Zionist charter myth: the ever-present danger of antisemitism justifies aggression and redefines that aggression as self-defence. The tag “Let’s eat,” suggests that in bourgeois Jewish homes in the North America, and perhaps elsewhere in the diaspora, the contradiction isn’t taken too seriously, and the holidays are about familial good times. In Israel, on the other hand, the festivals that celebrate triumph over historical enemies include public, state sponsored events, choreographed to reinforce support for military adventure. The Holocaust, followed by the foundation of the state of Israel, and the ensuing series of wars, has provided another story to add to the list of tales of persecution and retaliation. Until recently, the vast majority of diaspora Jews accepted this charter myth of the Jewish state, though there was great variation in the degree of commitment, ranging from donating money, to planting trees, to serving in the Israel Defence Forces. At minimum, telling the story of the State of Israel recapitulated the plot of the joke with which this review opened. Although support for Israel among Jews in North America and Western Europe remains high,

increasing numbers of Jews in those places are deeply disturbed by Israel’s treatment of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Jews, particularly young Jews, have participated in the demonstrations and encampments in support of Palestinian rights, and many have not been afraid to use terms like “genocide” and “apartheid” to describe what they are fighting against. For this they have been accused of antisemitism and self-hatred, and many have found themselves in need of a new charter myth to counter the tale of universal persecution followed by divinely approved retaliation. The books we will discuss here are attempts to provide such a story: each of them is a revision of history that is always mindful of the current moral crisis.

The anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski described charter myths as precedents that give validity to social hierarchies, land rights, and customs, tracing them back to a primeval and sacred social reality. Zionism would seem to fit this definition on all counts. To counter it, left wing, pro-Palestinian Jews, who still wish to be identified as true Jews, need a story in which their values are both historically and morally linked to Jewish tradition. In many ways, these books can be seen as providing that story from different perspectives. Gluckstein and Stone’s book (which was completed before October 7 and first appeared in hardback shortly thereafter) is a detailed history of radical Jewish movements in multiple locations: the Russian Pale of Settlement (especially Poland) London, and New York. Its central thesis is that antisemitism was not universal and inevitable, but rather a top-down imposition of feudal overlords, Russian Tsars, and finally capitalists, as part of a policy of divide and rule. They note that in situations where a class of Jews held wealth and power, their efforts on behalf of poorer Jews were often minimal at best, and that in many cases they were a significant part of the problem. On the other hand, they document situations where Jews were joined by working class non-Jews in fighting exploitation and oppression. Important examples are the successful efforts by East End London Jews and Irish dockworkers to keep Oswald Mosley’s Fascists from marching through Cable Street in 1936, the combined resistance of Jewish and other exploited tenants against Bronx landlords (many of

whom were Jewish) in the 1930s, and, most famously, bridges between socialist and communist gentile Poles and their Jewish compatriots inside the Warsaw Ghetto during the uprising in 1943. This, in their minds, was especially significant because Poland has long been regarded as a hotbed of especially virulent antisemitism. They don't deny that antisemitism was widespread there, but they suggest that class consciousness can overcome ethnic and religious barriers. Their book gives space to multiple, left-wing Jewish movements, including the Jewish Labour Bund, the subject of Crabapple's book, but it is especially sympathetic to communists, albeit not to Stalinists. Following the Trotskyist tradition associated with the late Tony Cliff (Gluckstein's father), it argues that the antisemitism and authoritarianism in Soviet Russia emerged at a period when the USSR had embraced state capitalism, rather than communism. The authors are critical of the factionalism that weakened the Jewish left, but stress that nothing could have prevailed against the Nazis. They are particularly keen to point out that, even when resistance movements lost, they demonstrated that Jews were not passive victims, thereby contradicting a pervasive tenet of Zionism. There is a quite provocative chapter on Israel in which they argue, as many others have, that Israel was ultimately a product of British colonialism, coupled with the refusal of Western democracies to admit refugees from Hitler. Most interestingly, they challenge Zionism's socialist pretensions, arguing that Arab workers in Palestine were paid less than Jews, where they were not entirely excluded, and that the kibbutzim, billed as a great experiment in collectivism, were established on expropriated land and excluded Palestinian workers.

The Radical Jewish Tradition is written as a detailed social history, with a coherent argument, and many statistics to back it up. Not everyone will be willing to shift the blame for antisemitism from the gentile masses quite so easily, but it does offer some challenges to the universality of the "they tried to kill us" line of the old joke.

Here Where We Live is Our Country is written in a quite different, more personal style. It tells the story of the Jewish Labour Bund, founded in Vilna in 1897, through the life histories of several members, including the author's great grandfather, an artist

called Sam Rothbort, who left numerous pictures both of daily life and of Bund resistance in Volkovysk in Poland (now in Belarus), where he worked in appalling conditions in a tannery, fleeing to New York in 1904, after being implicated in the assassination of a policeman. Rothbort was never a senior Bund leader, but he worked loyally for the Bund in New York, attending meetings, raising money for its activities in Poland, and offering help and shelter when needed. It was his art, particularly a picture of a Bund girl throwing stones through a window, that first inspired Crabapple, herself an artist and activist, to research and write about the Bund. The passages about Rothbort's life in Volkovysk give the reader a clear idea about the living conditions of the workers whom the Bund hoped to liberate, although most of the leaders profiled in the book came from more privileged backgrounds, like Sophia Dubnova, the daughter of a famous historian and her husband Henryk Erlich, who came from a comfortable middle-class background. Vladimir Medem, the son of an Army doctor, who had converted to Lutheranism and had his son baptized, became important as a speaker and recruiter for the Bund, though he had to learn Yiddish to do so. He died in New York in 1923, shortly after arriving there. Pati Kremer came from a wealthy Vilna family, but her husband, Arkady Kremer, was a poor boy from the shtetl. Their first encounter occurred when she visited him in a squalid tenement room and he tried to educate her about the realities of the life of the poor. He died of natural causes in Vilna in 1935. Pati was shot in 1943 by drunken Lithuanian Nazi sympathizers, near a prepared trench, leading other doomed Jewish women in singing the Bundist Oath. When Crabapple visited the site where this happened, she sang The Oath herself, which suggests that even a movement as secular as the Bund was can inspire a feeling of sacred space in those who come later. (The same might be said of some of the places like Cable Street and the sites of the Bronx rent strikes mentioned by Gluckstein and Stone. Harriet Lyons, for one, was moved to investigate how far the street where she was born in the Bronx was from the latter.). There is actually a lack of clarity about the circumstances of Pati's death. There is another account of it which places her in the Sobibor death camp, and it is unclear which account is correct. Crabapple clearly prefers a heroic narrative.

Another important Bundist figure, Bernard Goldstein, came from an impoverished shtetl background, and is portrayed in the book as the Bund's muscleman, somehow showing up with weapons and backups, whenever fighting power was needed, including the Warsaw ghetto uprising. He is portrayed as being particularly expert at forging contacts with the working class, non-Jewish left, which ultimately led to his survival.

Much of Crabapple's focus is on the Bund's doctrine of "hereness" (do'ikayt), encapsulated in the book's title, the notion that freedom had to be sought at home, not through a quest for a Jewish homeland. It is the stress on do'ikayt, in large measure, which has made the book an instant classic among young Jews looking for an alternative charter myth to Zionism. Where Zionists claimed sacred precedent for Jewish ownership of a piece of land, the Bund provides an undeniably Jewish story of resistance to that narrative, and its replacement with a mandate to fight for justice wherever one happens to be. Like Gluckstein and Stone, Crabapple stresses the non-passivity of Bundists, their willingness to employ violence and to break the law where needed. As a result, Bundists spent a lot of time in the early 20th century abroad, when they weren't in jail, and in their time in what Crabapple refers to as "Exileland" they experienced the cosmopolitan cultures of Zurich, Geneva, Paris, and London, to name a few places. Lenin and Trotsky crossed paths with them in Exileland. Along with the revolutionary groups that became the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks the Bund were involved in the organization of the Second International and the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, but their focus on the rights of Jewish proletarians was not deemed to be sufficiently internationalist by Lenin and others, so they drifted in and out of the International. When the Revolution finally happened, the Bund weren't welcomed in the government that finally prevailed in the Soviet Union. Most of its leaders deplored the Bolshevik drift to authoritarianism which was already evident by 1920.

The Bund was decidedly secular. Members were known to eat pork in public places on Yom Kippur. Secularism was indeed the order in most of the

revolutionary groups in which radical Jews participated.

After WWI, Bundists experienced their greatest influence in Poland, now an independent state. Their goals had expanded from labour organization to education, social welfare, and general culture, particularly drama, literature and song. Having learned early on that Yiddish was essential to reach the Jewish masses, they made the development and perpetuation of Yiddish an important part of their program, thereby providing another anchor for present day progressive Jews disillusioned with Zionism. The Bundist youth group, Tsukunft (The Future) combined outdoor sporting activities like camping with training in military preparedness. The Vladimir Medem Sanatorium near Warsaw operated from 1926 till it was destroyed by the Nazis, and provided nourishment, care, and unprecedented freedom to children from the slums in danger of tuberculosis. Women and girls were an important part of the Bundist movement from the beginning. Both books we discuss here express some wonderment about what might have happened had the various factions of the Jewish left been able to work together, but that didn't happen, despite their doomed cooperation, along with some mostly young Zionists in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

Marek Edelman, the Bundist who took a leading role in the uprising, survived it by 66 years. He was to the end an anti-Zionist, as Crabapple notes, and he was a supporter of Palestinian rights (but she fails to mention that he supported the NATO action against Serbia and the American attack on Iraq in 2003 - he thought that Saddam was a fascist). The Holocaust was essentially the end of the Bund in Europe. Henryk Erlich, Sophia Dubnova's husband, committed suicide in a Soviet prison during the Battle of Stalingrad. She herself managed to get to New York, via Montreal, with their two children, and lived there till the age of 101 as a writer and activist in both the Civil Rights movement and anti-Vietnam war protests. The Bund was not a formal political party under that name in North America before the end of the Second World War. However, some immigrants who were former Bundists became union militants in the USA and were involved in many of the strikes described by Gluckstein and Stone. Bundists,

temporarily and permanently resident in the U.S.A., raised money for Bundists in Europe. Above, all else former Bundists were involved in the creating of the Arbeter Ring (Workmen's Circle) a network of voluntary associations that were not only involved in political action, but also provided education to children of school age, organized social events and provided mortuary benefits. Much of their business was conducted in Yiddish. The preservation of that language and associated traditions later became an explicit goal of the groups in the Arbeter Ring. Although it was not formally connected to these groups, the Yiddish Journal Forverts (The Forward) was inspired by similar principles.

When the post-revolutionary Third International expelled the Bund and Bolshevik Rule became increasingly authoritarian, tensions arose in the Arbeter Ring between those who were willing to accept the Moscow line and those who wished to be free of it. In this case, it was the pro-Bolshevik associations who had to leave. That included the Canadian group that then became the Labour League Mutual Benefit Society (later UJPO). This means that UJPO and its predecessor stayed loyal to Moscow through the 1930s purges, the Nazi-Soviet pact (some members dissented and left) and the Doctors' Plot. Our association formally severed its ties after the Twentieth Congress, although the party de-Stalinized and a substantial number of members remained CP members. The schisms that followed Khrushchev's revelations of Stalinist crimes resulted in a major loss of membership, a trend that has only recently been reversed.

Over the years UJPO has proudly retained its commitments to progressive politics and its Yiddish heritage in literature, music and folklore. At the same time the class basis of our membership has changed, and this change involves the descendants of many of its founding members. There are few tailors, few garment workers left, although we still have a number of members who are prominent in trade union affairs. There are many professors, teachers, social workers, lawyers and accountants. Our politics with respect to gender have changed, and gay, lesbian and transgender people have become leading members of our association. We are well informed and active with respect to aboriginal

issues and the climate crisis. We have now joined with other progressive Jewish groups throughout the diaspora in protesting the genocide in Palestine, and in so doing we must question our own past as well as the present.

After the establishment of the Israeli State, and in the wake of the Holocaust, a large part of the Progressive Left was attracted by the promise of the Kibbutz movement, and the UN had, after all, approved a partition of Palestine. Peter Seeger and the Almanac Singers (later the Weavers) sang "Tsena, Tsena." Few of them envisioned just how reactionary and oppressive the Israeli state would become, although the Bundists and many others, including Einstein, Arendt and Buber, had issued clear warnings. The Separation Wall, the unencumbered expansion of the settlement movement, the Gaza blockade, the language law, and the brutal reaction to the Hamas incursion and atrocities on October 7th have led to a revival of the Jewish Left in North America. As we noted earlier, our protests against the genocide have been met with accusations of antisemitism and betrayal of Jewish traditions. That is why some have searched for an alternative history, a charter myth of our own. Most charter myths are tied to events at very specific sacred sites. Zionism is tied to Jerusalem. The Bund was tied to its Slavic homeland (Russia and/or Poland). So, will Do'ikayt tie us to here, to there and to everywhere?

The success of Crabapple's book arises from its success in both echoing and amplifying sentiments and desires of so many of the contemporary Jewish Left in North America. However, some caution could be observed. The Bund lost, because the Nazis had all the weapons, and they had few. Military failure does not mean that the cause was wrong. Sometimes the bad guys win. When Bund members engaged in labour action, strikes, etc., they took considerable risks, broke unjust laws, damaged some foes by violent action and took many blows themselves. The garment workers in New York, whose actions more than 115 years ago were in part inspired by Bundists, took very real risks in an unjust society where the scales of justice were askew. Will we ever be asked to take comparable risks this side of the Canada/US border? How will we respond? A final caveat

should be observed. In the present crisis in the Jewish community that has followed October 7th, maintaining a distinctly Jewish, progressive identity may have its advantages. However, as the Bund's progressive opponents once counselled, socialist movements that have been most effective have been international in scope.

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IN THE SALTY SEA, by S. An-Sky

POETRY & SONG

IN THE SALTY SEA by S. An-Sky

Submitted by Harriet Lyons

To complement the review of *Here Where We Live is Our Country*, here is a poem by S. An-sky, (pen name of Shloyme Zanvl Rappoport) a major Bund author, who also wrote the Bund's *Oath*, as well as the famous play *The Dybbuk*.

"In The Salty Sea," also known as "To The Bund," was written by An-sky in 1901 and published in *Der Arbeyter* a year later. It became a popular Yiddish song when music was added by an unknown author. The first published version was printed in 1919 by *Jacob Glatstein* in Warsaw, in the book *Freiheits Lieder* (פרייהייטס לידער 'Freedom's songs'). The poem and song were dedicated to the Bund.

The text has often been considered controversial, with its direct critiques of wealthy Jews, Zionism, and. Messianic beliefs. Following The Holocaust, in 1945, the First, Second, Fifth, and Final stanzas were published in Mikhl Gelbart's Yiddish song book *Zingt mit mir*, and it has become conventional to perform only these verses so as to omit criticism of other elements of the Jewish community. *Daniel Kahn* however has recorded and performs the full version. Here is a link to Kahn's recording:

<https://youtu.be/tYY2XCDfFjw>

The two paragraphs above are a summary of the description of the poem on Wikipedia, where the Yiddish and English texts of the poem were also

Yiddish original ^[d]	Romanization of Yiddish	Translation by <i>Daniel Kahn</i>
אין זאַלציגען ים פון די מענשליכע טרעהערען געפינס זיך אַ שרעקליכער תהום ער קאָן שוין נישט טיפער נישט פינסטערער ווערען איהם צייכענט אַ בלוטיגער שטראָם	In zaltsikn yam fun di mentshlekhe trern Gefint zikh a shreklekher thom, Er ken shoyt nit tifer, nit fintsterer vern, Im tseykhnt a blutiker shtrom. Dem thom hobn toyznter yorn gegrob Emune un sine un payn, Un toyznter yorn, alts tropn nokh tropn Es gisn zikh trern arayn. Un ful iz der thom dos iz yidishe trern Er hot nisht keyn toes in zey A blutiger trer tut deym kibbutzin geheren Deym nagid - a vayse vi shney Nor aykh bali- malokhes, ab'yonem, kibbutsim	Beneath the salt sea of humanity's weeping A terrible chasm abides It couldn't be darker, it couldn't be deeper It's stained with a bloody red tide And thousands of years have created this chasm Of piety, hatred, and pain, And for thousands of years all humanity's weeping Flows like a limitless rain. So much of the sea has been filled with this sorrow Endured by the suffering Jews But only the tears of the poor ones are bloody The rich cry as

נאָר אייך בעלי- מלאכות, אביונים, קבצים געהערט דאָך דער בלוטיגער תהום און אייערע ברידער, די, רייכע גזלנים געהערט נאָר פון אויבען דער שוים	Gehert dokh der blutiger thom Un ayere "Brider", di raykhe gazlonim Gehert nor fun oyben der shoym Shoyn ful iz der yam un ferfleytst ale bregen Vu zenen di helden, di leyt Di, velkhe velen zikh mutig dervegen Tsu varfen in thom zikh, in shtreyt Dem arbeter ver-zhe vet endlekh derleyzn Fun hunger un eybiker layd? Un ver vet dem veg im tsu frayhayt bavayzn Tsu bridershaft, glaykhkayt un freyd? Di gvirishe kinder, mashkilim, rabonim Zey rufen in Tsiyen dem yid A lidel an' alte fun undzere sonim "A geto deym eybigen Jid!" Zey rufen un	clear as the dew Yes only the worker, the pauper, the beggar Belong to the bloody abyss. While those you call "brother", the rich and the greedy, Fly high overhead in their bliss. The ocean flows over and floods out the levees, There isn't a hero in sight, Yes where are the ones that will stand at the ready To dive in the chasm and fight? And who will at last free the worker from slavery, Give hunger its final relief? And who will be guiding the pathway to freedom, To brotherhood, justice and peace? The children of wealthy, enlightened, the	אונזערע שונאים אַ געטאָ דעם! "אייביגען זשיד" זיי רופען און זוכען, די קאַלטינקע מתים פון הייליגע קברים אַ לאַנד און דאָס, וואָס עס ליידען און זיפצען הקדושים צו דעם איז מען טויב ווי די וואַנד משיח און - יודענטום ביידע געשטאַרבען אַנ'אנדער משיח קומט אָן דער יודישער אַרבייטער גבירישער קרבן הויבט אויף שוין פון פרייהייט די פאָן דער העלד וועט די וועלט אי בעפרייען, אי היילען ער ט'גרייכען דעם תהום ביז'ן גרונד זאָל לעבען פון רוסלאַנד, פון ליטאַ און פוילען דער יודישער אַרבייטער-בונד	zukhen, di kaltinke meysim Fun heyliche kvorim a land Un dos, vos es layder un ziftsen hakdoyshim Tsu dem is men toyb vi di vand Moshiakh un yidentum - bayde geshtorben An'ander Moshiakh kumt on Der Yidisher arbeyter gvirisher korben Hoybt oyf shoyn fun frayhayt di fon Der held vet di velt i bafrayen i heyln, Er t'greykhn dem thom biz'n grund, Zol leben fun Rusland, fun Lite un Poyln, Der Yudisher Arbeyter-Bund.	clergy — Into Zion they call the Hebrews, We've heard this old story before from our enemies "A ghetto for the Eternal Jew!" They say that they answer the prayers of our fathers From deep in their graves, hear them call While souls who are living in sorrow and hunger To them they're deaf as the wall. Messiah and Jewry are both dead and buried, Another messiah's to come: The new Jewish worker the banner will carry To signal that justice is done. The world will be freed and be healed by this hero, Who dives to the root of its wound! In Russia, in Poland,
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in Vilna all hail
now
The
Great Jewish
Workers Bund!

From 1912-1914, An-Sky conducted an ethnographic expedition to record Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement (mainly in Ukraine). This trip resulted in written, oral, and visual materials which were stored in vaults in the Soviet Union until the 1990s. They are currently housed in the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg and the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine. Books, conferences and exhibitions have centred on this work, and the Petersburg Judaica Centre has produced a six-part "Catalogue" illustrated publication on the An-sky expedition, with an accompanying video. The Ukrainian Jewish Encounter, in cooperation with the Petersburg Judaica Center, has created a four-part video presentation, as well as a talk about the collection by Valerii Dymshits, available at the following YouTube Locations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4i-Crf7rGs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7uZVms8oys>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfIVpSodgXM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7YL73mn-XU>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxRAQrWjvcM&t=65s>

Thoughts about Phil Ochs and Victor Jara

By Andrew Lyons

Due to debilities of age, this writer and his life partner missed the performance at Naivelt on August 22nd, but we were very much there in spirit. Like many in our generation, we were connected to people who knew Phil Ochs and Victor Jara, and we did see a memorable and important performance by Ochs. The two singers themselves met briefly in 1971 in Chile during Salvador Allende's all too brief presidency. They came from contrasting backgrounds. Jara was born in rural poverty – his mother was partly of Mapuche descent. Few in his family were literate. Phil Ochs came from a middle-class Jewish family. He had attended a posh

military school before completing all but a term of his degree at Ohio State. He also had some training in classical music; he played the clarinet. Jara achieved great success as a theatre director and university lecturer as well as a folk musician in the Nueva Canción Chilean tradition established by Violeta Parra. Ochs gained a great reputation as a song writer, but he never enjoyed security, and his last seven years were marred by episodes of manic depression and alcoholism.

Had it not been for a tragedy, Harriet Lyons and I would have never heard Phil Ochs sing. We weren't yet in Canada, when he sang at Camp Naivelt. In February 1970, we were graduate students in Britain, when we accepted an offer of teaching at a university in Ohio we'd never heard of. Ten weeks later, after the National Guard killed four students, the whole world knew of Kent State. On September 28, 1970, about three weeks after we arrived on campus, Phil Ochs performed at Kent – a free concert, his own heartfelt gift, at a special memorial event in a packed auditorium. He had an enormous rapport with the students of his home state. He sang many of the songs that are still sung at Naivelt and at UJPO ceremonies, but the song which brought the house down was a nostalgic recollection of his childhood and that of many of his audience, "[When I was a Boy in Ohio](#)." Ochs could capture many moods: compassion, as in "There but for Fortune," a hit for Joan Baez; righteous sarcasm and irony ("Draft Dodger Rag", and "Love Me, I'm a Liberal"); defiant anti-militarism ("I Ain't Marchin' Any More"); anger at the betrayal of African Americans by sections of organized labour (the marvellous "Links on the Chain"); wistful and sad reflection on one's past life – "No More Songs"); wistful reflection combined with a touch of humour ("When I'm gone"); respect for elders in the folk tradition ("Bound for Glory – on Woody Guthrie"); a song of love, joy, lust and sadness ("Pleasures of the Harbor"); and righteous disgust ("Here's to the State of Richard Nixon). Some of Ochs' lyrics might be deemed politically incorrect by today's standards. "The Ballad of Alferd [not Alfred] Packer" is about a case of survival cannibalism in nineteenth-century Colorado : "when he ate his friends, he'd never heard of Duncan Hines."

Perhaps some of you know the distinguished Canadian Jewish anthropologist, Michael Asch. He is a prominent advocate of indigenous land rights. He joined Harriet Lyons and me just three years ago in getting the Canadian Anthropology Society to pass a motion rejecting the IHRA definition of antisemitism which has been endorsed by Zionist groups and far too many governments, political parties and professional associations. Michael's granddad was Scholem Asch, and his father, Moses Asch, was the founder and steward of Folkways Records in New York City. In 1962 and 1963, Michael became friends with Phil Ochs and saw quite a lot of him. He persuaded Joan Baez to listen more closely to Phil's music. "There but for Fortune" was the first Phil Ochs song I ever heard.

Ximena Bunster was an anthropologist at the Universidad de Chile who had a PhD from Columbia University. She was briefly a colleague of mine. She came from a communist family. Her brother was divorced from Joan Turner, a British dancer and intellectual. They had a child whose stepfather was Victor Jara. They were all close to Compañero Presidente. During the last few days before the coup, Ximena left home in her car with a briefcase, a packed suitcase, cash and a passport, prepared either for work or the airport. On that other September 11, the day of the coup the CIA funded, she boarded a plane to New York City. Her friends there included her teacher Margaret Mead and three Marxist feminists, the prominent anthropologists June Nash and Helen Safa and Eleanor Burke Leacock. All of them are deceased now. We did not personally know Leacock who co-edited an important volume on foraging and hunting societies with UJPO's own Richard Lee, perhaps the foremost expert on band societies. We knew the other three anthropologists personally, although we knew Mead much less well than her last partner and widow, anthropologist Rhoda Métraux. June and Helen (who were also friends of Allende's wife, Hortensia Bussi) encouraged us and helped us when we were insecure, unpublished academics. Their friend Ximena stayed in a succession of temporary jobs because of her extensive networks until it was safe for her to return to her home and job (her sojourn in the USA was not always happy – she was involved as accuser in one of the first sexual harassment cases). Perhaps because of these

connections, I bought a Victor Jara LP. that contained many of his best songs except for "El derecho de vivir en paz" (the right to live in peace) which expressed his support for Ho Chi Minh and the people of Vietnam. The album did contain the beautiful song "[Te recuerdo, Amanda](#)" (I remember you, Amanda) about a young working girl, whose lover, Manuel, dies fighting for the rights of ordinary people. "Cuando yo voy al trabajo" (When I go to work) is a love song dedicated to his wife, Joan, who lived just long enough to see most of his murderers (and the murderers of so many others) brought to justice. "Plegaria a un Labrador" (Prayer to a Farmer) is a revolutionary anthem, written before Allende came to power, and therefore at least four years before the coup. It ends with the strangely prescient lines:

Juntos iremos unidos en la sangre
Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte.
Amén, Amén, Amén.
"We shall go forth together united by blood, now
and in the hour of our death. Amen."

Less than three years after Joan Jara's death, Pinochet's admirer, José Antonio Kast, son of a German Nazi, won the Presidential election in Chile. This time there was no need for a coup. A friend of Kast, and a friend of tyrants everywhere, is in power in Washington. Perhaps, progressive Americans will adopt and only slightly change some of Phil Ochs' lyrics (originally about the State of Mississippi, later about Richard Nixon):

"Oh here's to the land you've torn out the heart of!
Donald Trump, find yourself another country to be
part of."

YIDDISH

YIDDISH CULTURAL NEWS: THE WORK OF THE YIDDISH LEFT CONTINUES

By freygl gertsovski

This spring Yiddish Farbreng Toronto went to a performance of *Fiddler on the Roof* in Yiddish as

the phenomenon, known as Yiddler for-short, came to town for a few weeks. The well-known musical was very well produced and stood up to the original version of Yiddler that had several off-Broadway runs in the last decade. That night a Yiddish studies graduate student and printmaker friend of mine, Caleb Sher, was working the supertitles. It's always fascinating to see the creative choices in how the script's lines are translated in English, sometimes matching, and sometimes wildly differing from, the Yiddish being spoken or sung on stage.

At UJPO's 100th birthday bash on June 11, the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir sang several songs in Yiddish including *Yiddish is mayn loshn*, *Dos naye lid*, and *Arbetslozer marsh*. During our twelve weeks of rehearsal, there were the typical 4 Yiddish speakers, 10 opinions about Yiddish pronunciation, intonation, syllable stress, what have you. In the end, we agreed on some things and not others, but all agreed we sang beautifully, if not shvitsingly, at our end-of-season performance. A few weeks later, on June 25, the North End Jewish Folk Choir sang at the Winnipeg chapter's local celebration of UJPO's 100th.

Jennifer Young, whose research on the Jewish People's Fraternal Order (the American equivalent to UJPO) appears in the 2025 edited anthology *From Popular Front to Cold War: The Interracial Left and the International Workers Order 1930-1954*, came up to Camp Naivelt on August 1. She gave a very informative and engaging talk and was interviewed by Ester Reiter. An audience Q&A followed. Copies of the book, which includes a chapter on UJPO, sold out. If you would like an at-cost copy, write to me, freygl gertsovski, by September 1. I will obtain more books from co-editor Elissa Sampson who manages the IWO/JPFO archives at Cornell University's Kheel Center, and bring them to Toronto in September.

From Popular Front hasn't received nearly as much attention as it deserves. Similarly, neither has *With Freedom in Our Ears: Histories of Jewish Anarchism* co-edited by Anna Elena Torres and Kenyon Zimmer.

On the other hand, Molly Crabapple's widely popular *Here Where We Live is Our Country: The*

Story of the Jewish Bund has been experiencing huge success. Molly's book was published in a moment where the neo-Bundist revival has been making a stronghold on college campuses and cities across North America and Europe with a high degree of local and international organization. I certainly take no issue with Bundist politics – their mutual aid, direct action organizing and diasporist, pro-Palestinian solidarity politics were laudable and led to formations like the Workers Circle and eventually JPFO and UJPO. However, the popularity of *Here Where We Live* has convinced some on the Jewish Left, who only recently have searched for a connection with lineages of Jewish socialist movements, that the Bund was the only player in town. (I know because I've had to debunk these myths with some of my friends).

However, there were dozens of Yiddish socialist movements and factions, each arguing philosophies and tactics. These three intersecting strands of Yiddish Leftist – socialist, communist, and anarchist – are worth studying and understanding. As fascism and xenophobia continue to rise, the Left cannot afford to fracture like our movement ancestors, but we must know about all our activist lineages, ancestors, and what they fought for to organize in strong Left cross-movement coalitions today.

Meanwhile, mainstream Judaism continues to talk about Yiddish as if it's experiencing a "revival", often because a journalist will encounter a new Yiddish music or cultural project for the first time. [An article like this](#) used to be published every five or so years, but now it's so commonplace for mainstream Judaism not to know that Yiddishists have been deeply and meaningfully engaged in Yiddish culture forever, that my partner Sorke Schneider wrote a [madlibs](#) to satirize it.

Sore Biskowitz was in Toronto August 11-16 conducting oral history interviews for the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project, including UJPO's Sam Blatt, Ester Reiter, and freygl gertsovski, filmed by Lia Tarachansky. These will eventually be added to the YBC website in a year or two.

Coming up in September, Yiddish Farbreng Toronto is planning an in-Yiddish birdwatching outing (exact date and location TBD). You can sign up for the [Yiddish Farbreng Google Group](#) to get the announcement and learn of their upcoming in-Yiddish, all levels welcome, events.

CANADA

THE NAKBA EXHIBIT

By Harriet Zaidman

Palestine Uprooted: The Nakba Past and Present opened at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg on Friday, June 26. The exhibit features objects and the testimonies of Palestinian Canadians about their or their family's displacement and the effects they experienced.

Much anticipated, the display, which took four years to curate, is modest in size, only about 130 square feet in floor space as well as a panel 12 metres long. It begins with excerpts of poetry by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish projected onto a painting by Malak Mattar, on three floor-to-ceiling panels which display historical and contemporary photographs.

The panels are followed by a collection of donated items that represent people's lives in Palestine - keys from a home and the deed from a property to which families were never allowed to return, a paper wrapping for oranges a family sold from their orchard, and an example of tatreez embroidery that adorned women's clothing. Short video interviews with the owners of the objects related the stories and what had happened to each person's family.

The 750 people in attendance listened to speeches by Isha Khan, CEO of the CMHR, Isabelle Masson, Chief Curator of the Nakba Exhibit and Rana Abdullah, whose advocacy over the years resulted

in the exhibit. Poems were read and the members of the Advisory Committee for the exhibit were introduced. Abbie Bakan read an open letter in support of the exhibit from the Jewish Faculty Network, entitled "*Dear Museum.*"

While the display is modest in size, the announcement of the exhibition and its opening received outsized reactions. Many people lauded the museum for finally, ten years after it opened, acknowledging the Palestinian struggle for rights as part of the Canadian story. In contrast, the legacy Jewish organizations began an assault on the museum before they had seen the exhibit, withdrawing from planned programs and insisting that it should not proceed. Because they had not been consulted about the content, it could not possibly be legitimate.

Thus began a debate, which is still going on. The museum has consistently pointed out that the exhibit was curated objectively to reflect the story as Palestinians experienced it. That did not satisfy the pro-Zionists, who claimed that without their "side", the exhibit would promote anti-semitism. About two hundred of their supporters picketed the opening of the exhibit.

Minister of Heritage Marc Miller had previously refused to interfere with the exhibit, but made remarks a few days later, stating that "some words are regrettable," that Hamas should have been identified as a terrorist organization, then adding, "It isn't up to me to speak to, or insert myself in, the curation of any particular exhibit." Reaction to Miller's interference was swift, with organizations and individuals slamming him for buckling to the pressures of traditional Liberal Party supporters. The pro-Zionist lobby leaped at the chance to demand "accountability" from Isha Kahn and the museum. Kahn has been steadfast in defending the museum staff and its processes. A prominent member of the Jewish community, Gail Asper, whose family foundation contributed substantial amounts of money to establish the museum, and who is an honorary trustee, has withdrawn from future donations and fundraising activities as a pressure tactic against the museum and the staff.

The controversy is unlikely to abate, as pro-Zionist organizations try their best to link anti-Zionism with anti-semitism. The exhibit is scheduled to remain in place for two years; its presence, the museum's independence and the positions of the staff who work there are all in jeopardy because of political pressure.

This is a profoundly important exhibit. It tells a story Canadians need to hear. We celebrate *Palestine Uproots: Nakba Past and Present* at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights and encourage every Manitoban to see it (and encourage people to come visit Winnipeg).

EXPERIENCING HONESTREPORTING CANADA

By Paul Weinberg

Like an octopus squirting its black ink to ward off predators, the pro-Israel lobby in Canada has many tentacles. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs handles the lobbying of politicians; the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center infiltrates the educational system; and B'nai Brith purports to be a human rights body, even though it hasn't seriously been engaged in that area for years.

My focus is a separate tentacle, HonestReporting Canada which targets journalists for their allegedly biased coverage of Israel and the Palestinians.

HRC calls itself "an independent grass-roots organization promoting fairness and accuracy in Canadian media coverage of Israel, the Middle East and matters affecting Canada's Jewish community, and which works to challenge anti-Jewish rhetoric, particularly when antisemitism hides behind a mask of anti-Israel criticism."

The HRC, like all member organizations in the Israel lobby, takes the position that everything in the Israel Palestine issue begins with the Oct. 7 Hamas attack with all its horror, minus the context.

Minimized or denied is the decades old siege of Gaza by Israel, the longer history of settler colonial

Zionist settlement, the 1947-1948 expulsion and displacement of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and villages, and the longer-term consequences still manifesting today in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Credible Israeli human rights organizations such as B'Tselem, will state categorically that Israel is an apartheid, settler colonial state committing genocide, starvation and ethnic cleansing against Palestinians today.

Somebody using those words in the Canadian media will be denounced by HRC as antisemitic, and as thereby encouraging Jew hatred in this country.

A little more than a year ago, I was personally being targeted by HRC

"As for [Paul] Weinberg, his web site [Steel Town Scribe] shows his long involvement in anti-Israel activism, including accusing Israel of genocide," Honest Reporting Canada said of me in the summer of 2025 on its web site,

<https://honestreporting.ca/> (search for Paul Weinberg)

HRC was targeting the Hamilton Spectator which published my July 18, 2025, op ed piece, "*Bubble Zone bylaws impact the politically marginalized*." (A longer version appeared in an earlier issue of UJPO News)

I was exploring through various interviews a proposed ban on protests in front of places of worship in Hamilton. The by-law was being introduced by a local city councillor before Hamilton city council. It is currently stalled.

The concern by critics was and is that the measure would deliberately target pro-Palestinian protesters who are specifically campaigning against questionably legal sales of occupied Palestinian land on the West Bank

What particularly upset HRC was the inclusion in my piece of quotes from the high-profile, retired rabbi and anti-Zionist, David Mivasair.

"In fact, Mivasair is an active member of the radical organization Independent Jewish Voices (IJV). IJV

has been accused of promoting Holocaust denial, has defended Hamas's use of violence against Israelis and falsely accused Israel of being an apartheid state."

That is typical of the bombast coming out of HRC, which makes assertions and potentially defamatory statements without citing sources or evidence. It is ironic that media organizations, that exercise due diligence in their own journalistic practice, turn around and accept HRC statements and accusations at face value.

For the record, IJV membership does include people like me whose parents or grandparents experienced the Jewish Holocaust in Europe during the Second War. It is something many of us appreciate profoundly, and we sometimes draw comparisons to what is happening today in Gaza (understanding at the same time that the character of every genocide is different.)

My encounter with HRC happened about a year ago. Since then, it appears that the proposed bylaw has been stalled at Hamilton City Council which has other priorities.

I should add that what happened to me as a freelancer, writing mostly for small and local media, was small potatoes compared to the journalists working full-time in mainstream media newsrooms in Canada and seeing their careers on the line.

The title of a 2025 collection edited by Martin Lukacs, Dania Majid and Jason Toney and published by Breach Media, says it all: "*When Genocide Wasn't News: How Canadian media covered up the destruction of Gaza.*"

One chapter by Loubna Chlaikhy details how HRC and its self-estimated 70,000 members screen the coverage of Israel Palestine by major print and broadcast media outlets to ensure that they toe a pro-Israel line. This lobbying has been generally successful. Witness how few Palestinians are interviewed in the Canadian media.

Among the high-profile journalists facing such negative HRC scrutiny is Samira Mohyeddin who

worked as a CBC producer on *The Current* for eight years. Although her parents came to Canada to escape the Iranian Revolution and she is personally opposed to the regime as a progressive feminist and lesbian, HRC described her as a tool of the Iranian theocracy. That's because she has repeatedly condemned Israeli atrocities against Palestinians. Today, she does her own podcasting show, *On the Line Media* on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/@SamiraMohyeddin>

Recently, I emailed Mohyeddin asking if the continued attacks by HRC on the CBC has meant that the public broadcaster may finally be doing something right in their Gaza coverage.

Mohyeddin's reply shows she is not ready to relax on her former employer.

"[The HRC] always attack CBC, every single week and they have favourites. *Front Burner*, *The Current*. *As It Happens*, Sara Jabakanji [and] Evan Dyer," she says.

"There is absolutely no change at all in how [the CBC responds,] There is very little pushback. As a public broadcaster, they have to reply to every single email. HRC knows this. That's how they operate. They flood the inbox. That's their MO [mode of operation]."

The latest wrinkle in the saga about HonestReporting Canada's controversial charitable status has received scant attention outside small or alternative media.

Indeed, it was the *Investigative Journalism Foundation* (an independent online site that covers corporate lobbying of government and elected politicians) working with a partner organization, *Future of Good* which broke the story this spring that the Canada Revenue Agency is seeking to revoke the charitable status registration of HR Canada Charitable Organization, an arm of HRC.

The two IJF reporters, Bethany Lindsay and Abigail Turner write about how the HRCCO was officially set up for educational purposes, a requirement which is central to achieving charitable status.

In fact, they continue, HRCCO is what the CRA calls in its July 14, 2025 communications a “conduit” for donations flowing into HRC which cannot legally have charitable status because of its political advocacy.<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/registering-charitable-qualified-donee-status/apply-become-registered-charity/establishing-charitable-purposes.html>

HRCCO is described by the CRA as a front organization, as it shares with HRC an executive director, digital director, assistant director, director of operations and research analyst.

But there is another wrinkle in the HRCCO story that could delay things, says the IJF.

HRCCO is challenging the constitutional basis of the CRA decision of revocation at the Ontario Superior Court of Justice and the Federal Court of Appeal, according to court documents obtained by *IJF* and *Future of Good*.

CRA actions are described by HRCCO as “draconian” and potentially causing “irreparable harm to the organization, its directors, the Canadian Jewish community and the broader Canadian public.”

For the time being CRA has maintained its registered charitable status but they cannot issue tax receipts for donations, the IJF reports

Meanwhile the official Oct 2025 cease fire negotiated by Israel and the US has meant a decline in the media coverage. Yet, Israeli attacks have continued, resulting in close to 1,200 deaths of Palestinians living in tents in Gaza under horrendous conditions.

HRC has broadened its scope and smears by targeting US based analysts such as Trita Parsi on the US and Israel war on Iran. Parsi, who was born in Iran and grew up in Sweden, was recently interviewed on CBC’s *Front Burner*. (Parsi also is the founder and executive vice president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft which is based in Washington DC)

honestreporting.ca/petitions/cbc-podcast-front-burner-a-relentless-platformer-of-anti-israel-guests-features-interview-with-trita-parsi-who-critics-say-is-a-pro-iranian-regime-lobbyist-in-the-united-states/

“Any diversion from Israel’s genocide and HRC will focus on it,” says Samira Mohyeddin.

“[HRC is] currently very busy trying to rebrand in order to evade and fight the revocation of their charitable status by the CRA,” she adds.

A LITTLE NOSH

SICILIAN POTATO SALAD - INSALATA PANTESCA

By Harriet Zaidman

Potato salad without mayonnaise for summer barbecues. Pantesca salad is a traditional recipe from the island of Pantelleria, located between Sicily and Tunisia. Quickly pickled onions add a burst of flavour that gives the dish a real pick-up. Adjust the quantities of each ingredient according to your preferences.

Serves: 2

Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

3 large potatoes

1 1/2 cups (300 grams) of cherry tomatoes or chunks of tomatoes

1 large red onion

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 1/2 - 2 tablespoons (20 grams) chopped fresh basil or 2 - 2 1/2 teaspoons dried basil (or adjust according to your taste)

1 tablespoon fresh or 2 teaspoons dried oregano

1/2 cup (70 grams) green olives and/or kalamata olives, according to your taste

2 heaping teaspoons (10 grams) capers

Fine sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Olive Oil

Method

Boil the potatoes until the centre is easily pierced with a fork. When they're ready, drain them and let them cool.

While the potatoes are cooking, slice the onions thinly into rings and sprinkle with a pinch of salt. Put them in a bowl with the red wine vinegar and work the vinegar into the onions. Add the basil, oregano, green olives and the capers. Mix well and let sit for 10 minutes.

When the potatoes are cool, chop them into chunks (you can leave the skin on or remove it, according to your preference). Mix with the onion salad in the bowl.



Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature.

Other serving options: Toss in some tuna, feta, burrata or cheese of your choice to turn this into a main dish.

UNITED JEWISH PEOPLE'S ORDER

The United Jewish People's Order develops and perpetuates a progressive secular approach to social and cultural matters, our Jewish heritage, the Yiddish language and holiday and festival celebrations; we sponsor secular Jewish education, musical and cultural groups, concerts, lectures, public forums, and take part in social action and related community activities.

Opinions expressed in signed articles are the authors' and not necessarily those of UJPO.

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