



# UJPO News



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The United Jewish People's Order is a national, nonpartisan, socialist-oriented, secular organization, serving Canada's progressive Jews in individual organizations since 1926 and collectively as the UJPO since 1945.

**Volume #36, Issue #2**

Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

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## Wither or *Whither* the NDP?

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By David Abramowitz

No sooner was I weary of the reasons NDPers and others gave for the national party's failure to win last October's federal elections than the ruling Manitoba NDP lost to the provincial Conservative Party whose leader, Brian Pallister, had been absent 20% of the time! But I'll focus now on the national election.

Among the reasons given for Mulcair's loss, we've heard – he wasn't Layton (true); he wasn't a socialist (true; he openly admitted it, but neither is the NDP); he was really a Liberal (true – he was Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks from 2003 until 2006 in the Jean Charest Quebec Liberal government; he had moved beyond the centre (true, as his proposed balanced budget seemed more a Conservative rather than a Social Democratic policy); etc., etc. Has anyone asked why the NDP parroted Obama's 2008 slogan "Change" when, in reality, Canadian voters observed that very little changed under Obama?

Some felt his looks weren't adequately youthful which hasn't hurt Bernie Sanders in the primary debacle for the Democratic candidacy in the forthcoming US election. But Bernie has made an epochal connection which the NDP didn't; to paraphrase Linda McQuaig, "It's the millennials, stupid!" The millennials, previously called "Generation Y" (born after 1980), are a different phenomenon.

In his article in the January 22, 2016 *Toronto Star*, Rick Salutin wrote "...young people don't react based solely on age! ...it's the Internet generations who have unprecedented access to the cultural touchstones of every era; it makes crossing age divides emphatically easier than it's ever been." And Salutin continued, "Bernie's always said he's a socialist. It hasn't killed him yet. And a poll found 43 per cent of Iowa Democrats also call themselves socialists, including a third of Hillary voters."

I was surprised no one else perceived it when, just before this column was originally submitted, the April 21, 2016 *Star* printed Chantal Hebert's column *Millennials Helped, and Could Hurt, PM*: she stated "Early indications suggest the Liberals were the preferred choice of a plurality of younger voters (45 percent) beating the NDP (25 percent) and the Conservatives (20 percent). In comparison to 2011, turnout among that age group went up 12 percentage points."

The NDP fought its left-wing socialist group, the Waffle, from 1969 till 1974. The Waffle supported the nationalization of Canadian industries. Its manifesto stated that "A socialist society must be one in which there is democratic control of all institutions...and where there is equal opportunity for creative non-exploitative self-development. It is now time to go beyond the welfare state..."

The then NDP establishment, threatened by the Waffle's vision, moved from that path when Ontario NDP leader Stephen Lewis, at the party's Provincial Council (June 24, 1972), successfully championed a resolution requiring the Waffle to either disband or leave the NDP. After a three hour debate the Provincial Council approved the motion to disband the Waffle with a 217 to 86 vote. The piecemeal shift to the centre/right continued during the leadership of Jack Layton, and subsequent to his sad death, his replacement Tom Mulcair.

All this data is available on the Internet and it's my contention that the NDP millennials have done their homework. The Leap Manifesto only contains 1,400 words. We've heard the warning of impending climate catastrophe since the '60s from Greenpeace and David Suzuki, etc. If we don't stop being hewers of wood and drawers of tar/oil now, and convert to renewable energy sources, animal life and the planet as we know it will cease to exist, including countries and political parties. The *Leap Manifesto* tells millennials and us that we can have a good life without a capitalist market economy. ♦  
**Read The Leap Manifesto – A Call for Canada Based on Caring for the Earth and One Another at**  
<https://leapmanifesto.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Manifesto-en.pdf>

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# NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

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## FROM TORONTO

By Julia Barnett, President

It's been a busy period once again in UJPO-Toronto over the past few months. Here's a glimpse of our recent events ...

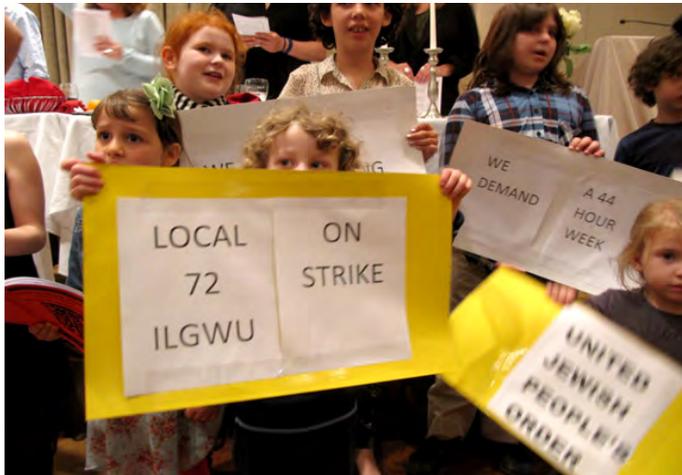
On March 3rd, we hosted a book talk and discussion, with Penny Rosenwasser, author of *Hope into Practice: Jewish Women Choosing Justice Despite Our Fears*. A book about liberation, anchored in Jewish ethical tradition and community, it links personal healing with activism for justice and offers a fair-minded perspective on Palestine and Israel. We recommend reading this activist's call to repair the world!

On March 20th, filmmaker Kathy Wazana led a discussion to a capacity crowd following a screening of her film *They Were Promised the Sea* – the award-winning documentary about the hundreds of thousands of Jews who left Morocco in the 1960s. This important film about dispossession and exile, hope and the possibilities of coexistence, generated a thoughtful and provocative Q&A.

On March 23rd, we hosted a house concert featuring the outstanding, outspoken, prolific wandering troubadour David Rovics – the only Toronto stop on his 2016 world tour. His material continues to be profound and moving. We are looking forward to hosting David at Camp Naivelt this summer.

Our Third Seyder on May Day was a resounding success. The theme, "Honouring our Labour Roots", was integrated into the traditional story "from slavery to freedom". Leading our Seyder were labour activists from within our community. The banquet hall rang out with choruses of *Union Maid* and *Solidarity Forever!*

At the Seyder, a special presentation to Sol Blaser, recipient of this year's Ben Shek Social Justice Award, was made by Lyn Center on behalf of UJPO-Canada. Lyn highlighted Sol's history as a long-time worker in the needle trades, his many years of volunteering in the UJPO and Camp Naivelt and his involvement



Shule students at the May Day Third Seyder

in the recent tour of the Avrom Yanovsky exhibit of political cartoons to Vancouver and Winnipeg.

### At the Morris Winchevsky School ...

Our Purim Carnival on March 20th was a great success. Co-ordinated by Shule parents Lev Jaeger and Max Wallace



Sol Blaser receives Ben Shek Social Justice Award

(also members of our Shule Advisory Council) who drew in several parents to participate and run the carnival booths resulted in a fun-filled morning – complete with costumes, *gragers*, fun and games! It's safe to say "A good time was had by all!"

To mark Earth Day, we had special guest visitor to our Shule, from *Shoresh* – a grassroots Jewish environmental organization – who led a hands-on "Creatures and Critters" workshops with our students. Students learned about honey bees, composting, monarch butterflies and milkweed plants in class and in the nearby park.

To close our Shule season, a special program based on experiential centres to explore *Peysakh* took place – complete with the Passover story centre, a tasting centre focused on the Passover symbols, a Scavenger Hunt which led to finding the *Afikomen* – an interactive and engaging approach to learning about the holiday. Of course, gathering together for music and refreshments culminated another positive year at the Morris Winchevsky School. Next year we will be incorporating an experiential approach with more hands-on learning experiences in our classes. Enrollment is open now for the 2016-2017 Shule year. Contact us for more information.

### Looking forward ...

Upcoming is the 2016 Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO) conference, taking place at York University's Glendon Campus, May 27-30, 2016. The Morris Winchevsky School and UJPO-Canada, affiliates of CSJO, have planned an engaging and enlightening conference. The theme "Our Tradition of Solidarity" will be reflected by keynote speakers Richard Borshay Lee and Lucah Rosenberg-Lee and through a diverse range of workshops. A fantastic concert is planned for Saturday evening, featuring the extraordinary Josh Dolgin, otherwise known as "So-Called" and the *klezmer* group The Horables. Full conference details are available online at <http://ujpo.org/events/2016-csjo-conference-may-27-30/>. Registration is still open. Call 416-789-5502 or email [info@winchevskycentre.org](mailto:info@winchevskycentre.org) to register today.

A summer filled with sunshine, friendships, enlightening discussions, aquafit and more awaits at Camp Naivelt – our summer cottage community. Rentals for a season, a month, a week or two, or a weekend are possible. Among the highlights

are Music Camp (July 10-16) led by the outstanding musician Martin van de Ven, and Art Camp led by the talented artist Michael Burt of Making Room and the Jumblies crew (August 8-13). Call 416-789-5502 or email [info@winchevskycentre.org](mailto:info@winchevskycentre.org) for information about renting a cottage or registering for our special programs.

#### Activists 'R' us ...

- Recently we endorsed the Campaign for Public Education which insists on full public funding for Toronto's schools, daycares and adult education.
- We will be sponsoring a workshop on Indigenous Solidarity and the River Run 2016 in support of the Grassy Narrows community (situated north of Kenora).
- We will continue our involvement as an endorser of the *Leap Manifesto*.
- We will be participating in a workshop as part of Rooting Justice: A Global Week of Action and Education on the JNF in May 2016.
- We will continue our support of Hassan Diab, the Carleton University professor who was extradited to France and imprisoned since November 2014.

*In solidarity,*  
*Julia Barnett ♦*

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## FROM VANCOUVER

*By Carl Rosenberg*

The Peretz Centre continues to be home to many activities in which Vancouver members of UJPO (and the secular Jewish community generally) take part.

I especially enjoy the *Fraytik tsu Nakht* (FTN), our secular Shabbes gathering, with its readings, songs, dinner, and presentations, especially its warm dinner-party atmosphere.

The FTN on Feb. 19 featured Neil Ritchie, speaking on opera singer Beverley Sills, and on March 18 Gordon Cherry gave a presentation on "Leonard Bernstein: Beyond *West Side Story*". Both presentations featured extensive audiovisual clips which gave a vivid sense of the life and work of both musicians. Neil's presentation of Sills' life was especially poignant, showing the tragic aspects of her life – her two children were severely handicapped, and Sills was as devoted to them as to her music.

Leonard Bernstein is perhaps best known as the composer of *West Side Story* (for which Stephen Sondheim wrote the lyrics), but Gordon highlighted many other important aspects of his career: his Young Person's Concerts, which fostered deeper appreciation of music among children; his social activism, which led to his being harassed by U.S. authorities during the McCarthy era; his connection to the three orchestras which were his musical homes (New York, Vienna and Israel Philharmonic); his appreciation for his Jewish cultural heritage which led him to create *Symphony No. 3 - Kaddish* (after the assassination of John

F. Kennedy), and the ballet *The Dybbuk*, based on Saul Ansky's Yiddish drama. Gordon's presentation was a masterful overview of Bernstein's rich and varied career.

The Sholem Aleichem Speakers Series also features many superb presentations, and on March 25 Lena Sverdlov spoke on the life, times, and work of Sholem Aleichem in honour of his 100th *yortsayt*. She showed the film *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness*. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to catch Lena's presentation, but I appreciated the film when it was shown as part of the 2013 Vancouver Jewish Film Festival. I have no doubt that Lena's commentary on the film and the writer were excellent.

The Sid and Sarah Sarkin Music Series showcases outstanding local Jewish musicians. The third concert in this series, on Sunday, April 10, featured David Skulski (oboe, English horn, recorder), Keith Lawrence (violin), Katherine Headrick (viola, violin) and Jessica Werb (cello), performing music from the 18th century onward – works by Michael Haydn, Alessandro Scarlatti and Frantisek Kramar. ♦

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## FROM WINNIPEG

*By Henry Shorr*

This is a report on UJPO Winnipeg's activities since February.

- Some long time UJPO members are having significant birthdays. Jeanette Block and Nena Brudy are turning 90. Jeanette's daughter Lee Anne Block is on the UJPO Winnipeg executive. Reta Dordick is turning 100. These women were very active members in UJPO for many years.
- The UJPO Book Club met on April 10. We watched and discussed the movie *Burn*, starring Marlon Brando. In May we will be discussing the book *Solving Poverty, Innovative Strategies from Winnipeg's Inner City*, by Jim Silver.
- UJPO Winnipeg made a \$1000 donation to *Outlook* to help with its debt.
- UJPO Winnipeg and The Sholem Aleichem Community co-sponsored *Sing Stranger: Yiddish Culture in the New World – A Lecture Series* by Dr. Itay Zutra. The series was well attended and feedback was very positive. We are pursuing having another lecture series with Dr. Zutra next fall.
- UJPO Winnipeg co-sponsored, with Independent Jewish Voices, the Heidar Abu Ghosh speaking tour in Winnipeg. About 75-80 people attended and \$2000 was raised.
- Our North End Jewish Folk Choir performed at the Simkin Centre on April 17 and at the Warsaw Ghetto event on May 2.



- The Warsaw Ghetto event, titled *Warsaw Ghetto – Second Generation Perspectives*, was held on May 2. It was co-sponsored by UJPO and the Sholem Aleichem Community. The program included a performance by our North End Jewish Folk Choir with songs and narration, a memorial candle lighting, and a panel discussion on second generation experiences.
- Our annual barbeque will be on June 16.
- The UJPO Winnipeg executive is planning to hold a retreat on June 27. ♦

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## FROM HAMILTON

By Lyn Center

On April 3, Gloria Geller welcomed us to her home for another “schmooze and nosh”. This time we focused on a discussion of a biography by Rosemary Sullivan called *Stalin’s Daughter*. It’s a very personal and absorbing story of the life of Svetlana Alliluyeva in the Soviet Union, the U.S. and U.K.

We also talked about Hamilton’s past, present and future, as Paul Weinberg is one of three writers who are working on a book about the city. We are all looking forward to reading and discussing the book. ♦

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## HONOURABLE MENTSHN

### Howard Kaplan

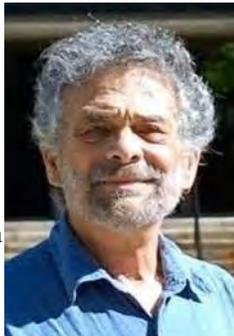
*Howard passed away on April 11. This eulogy by David Abramowitz was delivered April 12, 2016.*

Family, colleagues and friends,

The last time I saw Howard was at a lab where we were both having tests. My results were better.

Howard was not a religious person but a proud secular Jew. His connection with Jewishness came from his desire to celebrate and perpetuate traditional Jewish holidays as historical festivals and commemorations plus a variety of life-cycle events which he marked secularly through his longstanding membership in the United Jewish People’s Order (the UJPO.) As *Peysakh* (Passover) will soon be marked by Jews the world over, I am reminded that a short few years ago Howard was one of the readers in our community *hagode* (the order of service) and that on a more recent occasion he was the M.C. of our *Peysakh* ceremony. And whether he was a participant or an audience member at one of our *Purim* carnivals, or *Khanike* celebrations, he knew he was practising what he believed his heritage to be.

His involvement with Jewish culture, which he held dearly, was demonstrated by his decades-long membership in the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. Through it he expressed his love of Jewish music in all its forms and in the Yiddish language, *mameloshn*. And, whenever he met someone who spoke it a bit



or a lot, he would test himself to see how far he would get in a Yiddish conversation before he’d have to switch to English. By the time his children went to the Morris Winchevsky School, the shule had switched to English as the language of instruction, but Yiddish was one of the cultural subjects.

His sense of humour was unique. And his avid interest in politics kept him involved in discussions and debates with whomever, whenever.

His belief that every person deserved an equal opportunity meant he fervently supported workers’ causes, whether in negotiations, arbitration or on picket lines. He demonstrated his belief in humanism by encouraging and participating in the boycott of South African products and support for the African National Congress.

Howard was employed in various fields throughout his life and one thread was constant – his belief in the equality of all human beings. I believe he saw that as a significant part of his secular Jewishness. His election as a school board trustee in my riding was not just a personal victory, it was a chance for him to experience serving the pedagogical community. I think it was a fitting final occupation for a guy who believed in egalitarianism, social justice and an educational system which championed them.

UJPO honours his good deeds and name. ♦

Speaking to a local newspaper, *The Mirror*, David called the man he knew for 45 years a positive, respectful person.

“If anyone was a gentle man, Howard fit the bill perfectly,” he said. “He made sure you knew how he felt and where he stood with situations, but he would never offend anyone with his comments. He never went with the flow of political or social opinion, but he didn’t seem to alienate people.”

Memorial donations can be made to the Howard Kaplan Memorial Fund, c/o the Benjamin Foundation, 3429 Bathurst St., Toronto, M6A 2C3, or by calling 416-780-0324.

For a local tribute to Howard, see:

[https://issuu.com/thenorthyorkmirror/docs/noy\\_w\\_apr14](https://issuu.com/thenorthyorkmirror/docs/noy_w_apr14)

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## WHAT’S IN ORDER

### Mazl Tov

To David and Sutarsih Blatt on the birth of their son Araav Moses, and to grandparents Sam and Ronnee (UJPO Toronto).

To Denise Handlarski and Charlie Gardner on the birth of their son Jacob, and to grandparents Frances and Josh Handlarski.

To Solly Blaser on receiving this year’s Ben Shek Social Justice Award, for his lifelong work in promoting social justice in Canada and for his extensive contribution to our organization.

To Winnipeg’s Jeanette Block and Nena Brudy who are turning 90 years old and to Reta Dordick who is turning 100.

To the planners of Toronto's Third Seyder, and to the *Haggodeh* contributors. *Yasher Koyakh*. You did a remarkable job!

## Speedy recovery

To Naomi Binder Wall, Barbara Blaser, Ronit Little, and Joyce Wayne.

## Heartfelt condolences

To Judy Goldie on the passing of her brother, Geoff.

To Jo Anne Chisholm and the Kaplan family on the passing of Howard Kaplan.

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# GETTING TO KNOW OUR UJPO MEMBERS

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## Introduction by Sam Blatt

Dear *UJPO News* readers,

Our UJPO membership is spread over Canada's wide expanse, with readership actually extending "from shore to shining shore". Sometimes we don't really know some members in our own section, let alone in other sections. We have a brand new grouping of UJPO members in Hamilton that didn't exist five years ago! (Not until the exodus of some UJPO members from Toronto, who then worked to organize a group in Hamilton!)

With this issue we introduce a new column: "Getting to know our UJPO members". We plan to interview a cross section of UJPO members, from across all sections – new members, old members, active/not so active in UJPO, names you might recognize, names you don't recognize. We hope with this column our readers – UJPO members and friends of UJPO – will feel they are just a bit closer to our diverse and interesting makeup.

If you are approached by a member of the *UJPO News* editorial team to be interviewed, please consider the opportunity. Prior to publication of the interview, you will be sent a copy of the material for your review and editing (If you wish). We promise no "surprises", as we want everybody – interviewees and readers, to be at ease, and pleased.

This first interview introduces Paul Weinberg, who became a member in UJPO Toronto and participated in a UJPO Solidarity and Fact-Finding Tour to Israel-Palestine. He and his wife Catherine relocated to Hamilton, and are now active in that group. ♦

## Paul Weinberg



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

**Paul:** I can't remember, probably 10 years.

**News:** What brought you to UJPO?

**Paul:** I knew about *Outlook* and knew a circle of people involved.

**News:** Are you active in a UJPO committee, board, other?

**Paul:** I was involved with the Toronto/Hamilton *Outlook* committee and now work with Hamilton UJPOers.

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

**Paul:** I was involved with Barbara Blaser, David Abramowitz and Paula David in setting up events and with a fundraiser for *Outlook*. I also have burial arrangements with my wife who is also a member. When we lived in Toronto we went to more events but moved to Hamilton three years ago so it's harder to get to events.

**News:** What is your life outside UJPO (that you are willing to share)?

**Paul:** My life is quite simple; I do a lot of writing and am now writing some chapters for a book about Hamilton. My interest is Hamilton politics and the legacy of the Red Hill Expressway battle. And I like to read a lot.

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

**Paul:** Yes, through my involvement with *Outlook* – as a writer and journalist. I have also contributed to Hamilton UJPO e.g. a talk on Leonard Cohen and another on ISIS, and a trip to a Yiddish local newspaper journalist exhibit at Beth Jacob's Rosensheim Museum [Henry Balinson].

**News:** Are other members of your family involved in or members of UJPO?

**Paul:** Yes, my wife Cathy.

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

**Paul:** The Hamilton UJPO offshoot.

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

**Paul:** It would be nice to have an event here in Hamilton.

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

**Paul:** Since the organization is more Toronto-focused it is easier to work on *Outlook*. I don't know what else I can do since I don't live in Toronto.

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

**Paul:** *Yiddish for Pirates*. Gary Barwin is the writer. ♦

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# POETRY & SONG

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## Joe Hill

By David Rovics

*Ed. Note: David Rovics performed for UJPO Toronto on March 23. He included the following song, and it is a good follow-up to our previous edition of UJPO News which honoured Joe Hill.*

Joel Haglund came from Sweden  
Which was very far from Eden

By the time he left most of his family died  
 His sisters and his mother  
 His father and his brothers  
 So with one remaining sibling at his side  
 He got a notion  
 To sail across the ocean  
 Where he heard the streets were paved with gold  
 Not long after his arrival  
 As he toiled for survival  
 He realized the bill of goods that he'd been sold  
 He got a whole lot wiser  
 Became an organizer  
 And he organized with artistry and skill  
 He spoke up, raised his fist  
 Got right on the blacklist  
 That's why he changed his name to Joe Hill  
 He heard that it was best  
 If he headed to the west  
 Where the Industrial Workers of the World  
 Were finding the solutions  
 For making revolution  
 With red songbook and red flag unfurled  
 A hundred years ago the bard  
 With the union card  
 Proved his music was too powerful, too strong  
 They couldn't stand the sound  
 They had to take him down  
 Lest he organize the working class in song  
 Soon as he paid his dues  
 He tried hard to light the fuse  
 Speaking, singing, writing lyrics and cartoons  
 He sent off the whole mess  
 To the Wobbly press  
 And they sang his songs as they fought the goons  
 He joined a singing movement  
 That fought for improvement  
 By abolishing wage-slavery worldwide  
 He sang the Wobbly line  
 Beseeching workers to combine  
 Learn from Mr. Block – the bosses lied  
 His life would be cut short  
 By a kangaroo court  
 Eager to determine one man's fate  
 Evidence was circumstantial  
 But that's inconsequential  
 When you've become an enemy of the state  
 They put him up against the wall  
 And that was all  
 They gunned him down in 1915  
 He took all the bullets he could take  
 There by the Salt Lake  
 For being the best bard they'd ever seen ♦

<http://www.davidrovics.com/songbook/joe-hill-2/>

## YIDDISH

### I.L. Peretz: on his 101st *Yortsayt*

Sourced by Sam Blatt from various articles, including the *Internet*, and the *Packentregger* of the *Yiddish Book Centre*.

At the marking of Yom Kippur in Toronto UJPO, the story of the poor woman who is visited by a Rabbi in disguise of a gentile woodcutter, bringing her firewood, has often been presented. This is one of I.L. Peretz's most famous stories, "If Not Yet Higher", (*Oyb Nisht Nokh Hekher*). The Rabbi's congregation had been wondering, "Where does the Rabbi of Nemirov disappear to when he should be at Penitent Prayers (*slikhot*)



Peretz depicted on an old Yiddish-language postcard

prior to the Days of Awe, praying, seeking forgiveness for the year's sins, on behalf of his congregation and humanity. Perhaps the holy Rabbi has ascended to heaven, negotiating on their behalf. Then, one year a visiting Litvak follows the Rabbi, and witnesses the good deed (*mitsve*) the Rabbi is doing; and from that time on, when a disciple tells how the Rabbi of Nemirov ascends to heaven at the time of the Penitential Prayers, the Litvak adds quietly, "If not yet higher". (Read the story in translation at <http://dmissani.net/MNISSANI/esl/higher.htm>.)

Another of Peretz's well-known stories is that of Bontshe the Silent, (*Bontshe Schvayg*). The story relates the heavenly judgment of Bontshe when he dies. Bontshe has led a pious, poor, and tortured life with never having uttered a word against God or a word against any human being. In heaven, the prosecuting attorney cannot find even a blemish on Bontshe's saintly soul. When God then offers him any reward he wishes for leading such an exemplary life, Bontshe can only manage to request: "Then every morning please give me a fresh, hot roll and butter."

Obviously Peretz's message is that the greatest tragedy of suffering, the worst fall-out of an unjust world, is that it robs its victims of the ability to dream, it makes it impossible for them to have the breadth of vision to even contemplate the possibility of redemption. (The story can be read as praise of this meekness, but the ending might also be seen as showing contempt for someone who cannot even imagine receiving more.)

This year marks the 101st *Yortsayt* since the death of I.L. Peretz (May 18, 1852-April 2, 1915), considered the grandfather of Yiddish Literature. (The I.L. initials of his name stand for Yitzkhok-Leyb, but since in Polish his name would be spelled Iccchok Lejbusz the initials I.L. are commonly used for his name.)

Peretz was born in the Poland in the *shtetl* of Zamość, to Orthodox parents. Nevertheless, from an early age (fifteen) he

aligned himself with the *Haskalah*, the Jewish enlightenment, with the secular learning and reading in Polish, Russian, German, and French.

He is one of the three great classical Yiddish writers, along with Mendele Moykher Sforim and Sholem Aleichem. He is described as "...the great awakener of Yiddish-speaking Jewry, while Sholem Aleichem its comforter." (Sol Liptzin).

Peretz rejected cultural universalism, seeing the world as composed of different nations, each with its own character. Liptzin comments that "Every people is seen by him as a chosen people... he saw his role as a Jewish writer to express Jewish ideals...grounded in Jewish tradition and Jewish history."

Though a *Maskil*, he greatly respected the Hasidic Jews; at the same time, he understood that there was a need to make allowances for human frailty. His short stories such as "If Not Higher," "The Treasure," and "Beside the Dying" emphasize the importance of sincere piety rather than empty religiosity.

His initial writings were in Hebrew, of poetry, songs, and short stories. He became a lawyer, until 1889, when his licence was revoked by the Russian authorities, on the basis of suspicion of Polish nationalist feelings. He moved to Warsaw, where he worked in the Jewish community and founded *Hazomir* (The Nightingale), which became the cultural centre of pre-World War I Yiddish Warsaw.

His first Yiddish work appeared in 1888, the long ballad *Monish*, the story of an ascetic young man, who unsuccessfully resists the temptress Lilith. (Sholem Aleichem was the editor of the anthology, *Folksbibliotek*, in which *Monish* was published.)

While most Jewish intellectuals were highly supportive of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Peretz focused more on the pogroms that took place within the Revolution, and was concerned that the Revolution's universalist ideals would leave little space for Jewish non-conformism.

A writer of social criticism, he was sympathetic to the labour movement. He is described as both a realist and a romanticist, who "delved into irrational layers of the soul"; "an optimist who believed in the inevitability of progress through enlightenment", and who, at times, expressed this optimism through "visions of Messianic possibilities". (Liptzin)

Peretz died in Warsaw, on April 3, 1915 with a huge crowd, about 100,000 strong, attending the burial ceremony. There are streets in Zamość and in Warsaw named after him, as well as in New York, many streets in Israel, but, for whatever reason, not in Jerusalem! ♦

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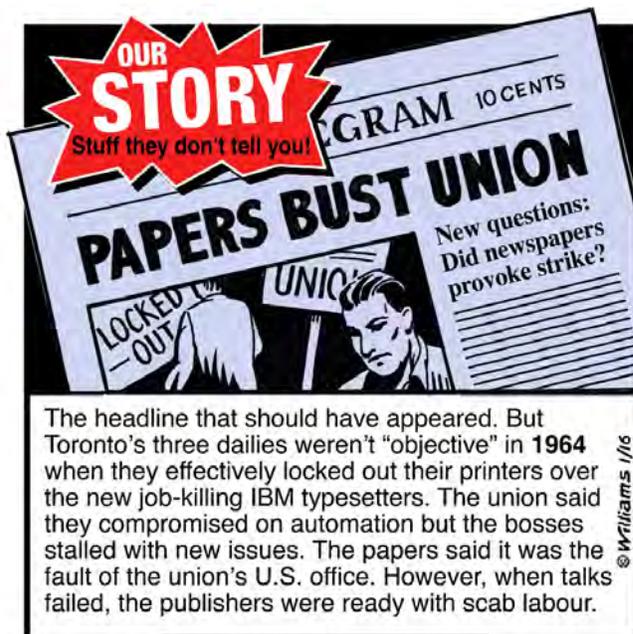
## CANADA

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### Fort McMurray is just the first

By David Abramowitz

The disastrous fire in Fort McMurray is the first in what many anticipate will be a potential pattern in the future. News that



85% of the buildings were not consumed is no comfort to those who had no insurance, were under-insured, whose businesses or places of employment were destroyed, and whose sources of income have vanished. Lives, and in many instances futures, have been destroyed.

Set in the midst of an arboreal forest, with limited entry/exit infrastructure, such forest communities are prone to burning during droughts and periods of extreme heat. Scientists repeat that these conditions are amplified by global warming. The Green Party's Elizabeth May, at the time of writing, is the only political leader who recognized and emphasized the probable connection between these types of fire and global warming.

The generous funds (tens of thousands of dollars) raised to date by our citizenry is commendable; but the basic issues must be addressed by all levels of governance which leads us back to the *Leap Manifesto* referred to on page 1. Please read it and help advocate for its implementation! ♦

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## USA

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### Media disinformation and America's wars: Liars versus Truthers. The "Progressive Left" has been co-opted

By Mark Taliano, *Global Research*, April 27, 2016

Well-documented facts pertaining to the 9/11 wars, all supported by sustainable evidence, have barely made inroads into the collective consciousness of Western media consumers.

The War on Syria is no exception. Despite the presence of five years of sustainable evidence that contradicts the Western narratives, people still believe the "official" lies.

The consensus of ignorance is sustained by what Michel Chossudovsky describes as an "American Inquisition." Beneath the protection of this psychological operation, the engineered

enemy is Islam, and the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) has become a brand to disguise imperial wars of aggression as “humanitarian.”

Thus, huge sums of public monies are diverted from worthwhile, domestic projects such as healthcare, schools and roads, to support a criminal Project for a New American Century (PNAC) that is globalizing death, poverty, and destruction as the U.S. led empire tries to impose a unilateral model of control over the world.

The U.S. is said to be “exceptional,” and therefore the rightful ruler. Manifest Destiny writ large.

Dissent is suppressed within the framework of corporate media monopolies. Predominant narratives are supported by corrupt “NGOs” – totally bereft of objectivity – and intelligence agency “fronts.” Real investigative journalism offering historical context and legitimate evidence are relegated to the fringes, far outside the domain of the broad-based “consensus of misunderstanding”.

The “Progressive Left” has been co-opted. So-called “progressives” (presumably unwittingly) support Canada’s close relationships with Wahabbi Saudi Arabia, Apartheid Israel, and even the foreign mercenaries currently invading Syria (i.e. ISIS and al Nusra Front/al Qaeda).

The source upon which the pretexts for war are built and perpetrated are taboo topics, despite longstanding evidence that the official narratives explaining the crimes of 9/11 – and the subsequent “Gladio B” operations – are flawed. The truth is seen as “heresy,” and fact-based narratives are derided as “conspiracy theories.”

Thus, a firm foundation of lies that serves as a sanctified justification for global war and terror, remains strong.

But the stakes are high, as Western hegemony presses us closer and closer to a real prospect of widespread nuclear war. Already, the use of nuclear weapons is being “normalized” through the introduction of “mini-nukes” into the equation, and the blurring of lines between conventional and nuclear war.

Michel Chossudovsky explains in “Is the Bush Administration Planning a Nuclear Holocaust?|Will the US launch ‘Mini-nukes’ against Iran in Retaliation for Tehran’s ‘Non-compliance’?” that

“The Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations outlines the procedures governing the use of nuclear weapons and the nature of the relationship between nuclear and conventional war operations.

The DJNO states that the: ‘use of nuclear weapons within a [war] theater requires that nuclear and conventional plans be integrated to the greatest extent possible’ (DJNO, p 47. For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, *Nuclear War against Iran*, Jan. 2006)

The implications of this ‘integration’ are far-reaching because once the decision is taken by the Commander in Chief, namely the President of the United States, to launch a

joint conventional-nuclear military operation, there is a risk that tactical nuclear weapons could be used without requesting subsequent presidential approval. In this regard, execution procedures under the jurisdiction of the theater commanders pertaining to nuclear weapons are described as ‘flexible and allow for changes in the situation...’ ”

The taboos need to be lifted, and the repeated lies contradicted.

Some of the more pernicious lies covering the escalating war on the democratic republic of Syria include unsubstantiated memes that fit neatly into the propagandists’ toolbox of false representations, and of projecting the West’s crimes onto the victims (Syria and Syrians).

The War on Syria is not a “civil” war; the “uprising” was not “democratic;” Assad does not “starve his own people;” Assad, does not “bomb his own people;” Assad is the democratically-elected president of Syria, and not a “brutal dictator.”

Conclusive evidence demonstrates, and has demonstrated for years, that the war is an invasion by Western proxies, which include ISIS and al Qaeda/al Nusra Front, and that there are no “moderates.”

The initial uprisings were marred by foreign-backed violence perpetrated against innocent people, soldiers, and police. Peaceful grassroots protests were hijacked by these murderous foreign-backed elements (as was the case in Ukraine) – all consistent with “hybrid war” as elaborated by Andrew Korybko.

The illegal sanctions imposed by the West – including Canada – coupled with terrorist practices of theft and hoarding of humanitarian aid – are responsible for the starvation.

Assad is a democratically elected reformer, and hugely popular with Syrians, not a brutal dictator. Claims that he “kills his own people” were further debunked when the so-called “Caesar photos” evidence was proven to be a fraud.

Many Syrians criticize Assad for not carpet bombing terrorist occupied areas (as US occupiers did in Fallujah, for example). Syrians sometimes refer to Assad as “Mr. Soft Heart.”

Unfortunately, though, the well-documented truth is not widely accepted. We need to shatter the “Inquisition” which serves to protect the criminal cabal perpetrating and orchestrating this global catastrophe. Truth and justice must prevail over lies and crimes. Currently, the opposite is the case.

*The original source of this article is Global Research. Copyright © Mark Taliano, Global Research, 2016.*

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# MIDDLE EAST

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## An Open Letter to Dr. Mamdouh Shoukri from Jewish organizations in the GTA

*UJPO-Canada endorsed this letter. Also signed by Independent Jewish Voices, International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network – Canada, and York University Jews Against Colonialism.*

As Jewish community organizations in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), we want to commend you for recently defending the right to freedom of political expression at York University in the presence of heavy-handed pressure from Israel lobby organizations.

It is false to assert that Jewish students are subject to intimidation, bullying, marginalization, bigotry, or other forms of discrimination at York University. Nevertheless, Israel lobby organizations, claiming to be “advocating for the Jewish community,” continue to assert this claim.

There is nothing in the mural at York University that incites violence or bigotry. An objective view of the mural will recognize its depiction of the destruction of Palestinians’ homes and uprooting of trees, and Palestinian resistance to these oppressive Israeli measures. A failure to acknowledge this points to the racist lens through which these lobby organizations view this issue.

B’nai Brith of Canada, The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC), Hasbara Fellowships Canada, Hillel Ontario, StandWithUs Canada, and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto (UJA) distinguish themselves by their unconditional support for the policies of the Netanyahu government of Israel. These include the policies of brutal occupation and colonial settlement of the West Bank, the blockade of Gaza, administrative detention of political activists, the repeated arrests of women, men and children for no other reason than simply being Palestinian, forcible prevention of the return of Palestinian refugees, and racist discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel.

These organizations may represent their members, but in no way can they claim to represent, or speak for, all Jewish communities. Jews are diverse in their political views, religious beliefs, and ethnic backgrounds.

Membership in our respective organizations includes students at York University, alumni of York University, faculty of York University, and emeritus faculty of York University.

More and more Jewish students, faculty, and community members feel alienated from the racist policies of the Israeli state. We organize and speak for a growing number of Jews in the GTA who are dissatisfied with political Zionism, and who seek inclusion, not in a Zionist “consensus,” but in a broader community dedicated to freedom, justice and equality.

This intervention on the part of Israel’s apologists has been calculated to intimidate all people, including Jews and Palestinians, who want to speak out and organize in solidarity with the Palestinian people. These apologists for Israeli misconduct aim to impose censorship on political education, discussion, and debate, and to impede solidarity action. They aim to promote anti-Palestinian bigotry.

Dr. Shoukri, we urge you to remain steadfast in the face of such bullying. Universities must take measurable steps to support freedom of political expression and academic freedom. We hope to see you take steps to uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people, including York University students, faculty, and staff. ♦

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# INTERNATIONAL

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## CNN doesn’t want you to know the truth about Venezuela’s voting system

*By Eva Golinger, December 4, 2015*

On Monday of this week, November 30, I received a phone call from a CNN en Español producer asking me to write a column on the upcoming legislative elections in Venezuela, scheduled for this Sunday, Dec. 6. Pleasantly surprised at the opportunity to publish in a media outlet widely known for its biased anti-government coverage of Venezuela, I accepted the offer.

Over the next day and a half, between work and personal responsibilities, I found barely enough time to write the article. In fact, I first wrote one piece that was heavy on the politics, and subsequently decided it wasn’t appropriate, or effective, for the CNN audience. The most critical issue to discuss with an audience already biased against the government in Venezuela was not why government policies are good or bad, or who will win at the ballot box, but rather the integrity of Venezuela’s voting system.

The article was only a page and a half, under 800 words. The majority was dedicated to outlining the process of voting in Venezuela, which I have gone through numerous times as a Venezuelan citizen. I opened the article citing Jimmy Carter’s famous phrase on the Venezuelan electoral system, which he referred to in 2012 as “the best in the world,” after observing over 90 elections worldwide.

Towards the end of the article, I made a brief mention of poverty reduction under the administration of President Hugo Chavez, and also referred to errors pollsters have made in Venezuela over the years during tense elections. After sending in the article, a few hours later CNN asked me for sources on poverty reduction under Chavez, and cites for the polls. I easily obliged with their request and provided credible, accessible citations.

They sent me back an edited version, this time with an added sentence after Carter’s statement on the Venezuelan electoral process, stating that the Carter Center had abandoned

Venezuela in 2015 and was no longer observing their elections. The statement seemed to disqualify Carter's 2012 applause of Venezuela's elections, basically implying that while Carter may have said that then, now was a different story and the Carter Center wanted nothing to do with it. I told CNN there was no way I would include a statement discrediting Carter's 2012 affirmation of the Venezuelan electoral process as the best in the world. If they wanted context, I could write that the Carter Center no longer operates in Venezuela because the system there is flawless and no longer needs external observation. I didn't hear back from them for over 24 hours.

I sent a message asking when the article would be published and stating I would need to review the final edits and authorize before publishing, and the CNN producer responded affirmatively, saying the piece should be up by Thursday (it was Wednesday night). After hearing nothing from them through most of Thursday, I asked the producer what was going on. Her response was, "the editor says the article must make clear that the Carter Center no longer operates in Venezuela, or that statement cannot be included. It's a requirement to publish." I wrote back that that was not acceptable. I would not allow CNN to impose a sentence on my article as a condition of publishing, especially one that had no relevance to the original statement made by Jimmy Carter. Late Thursday, they sent me a message stating that "internal consultations at the highest level were underway regarding publishing my article." Hours later, I received another message stating that "all editors were consulted and the decision was not to publish the column."

What CNN did was outright censorship. They refused to publish my article because it presented documented and well-sourced information favorable to the integrity of the electoral process, and the possibility of a government victory. Why doesn't CNN want its readers to know that Jimmy Carter, one of the most respected US leaders of all times, believes Venezuela has the best voting system in the world? Because CNN, along with other US and international media, such as *The Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*, are preparing to support opposition claims of fraud in Venezuela in the probable event of a government win.

Already, leading voices from the Venezuelan opposition, including Lilian Tintori, Leopoldo Lopez's wife, have stated that "either the opposition wins or it's fraud." *The Washington Post* echoed these claims in a piece on Monday, claiming "anything other than an opposition win is likely to produce charges of fraud" and the *Financial Times* mentions a "perception that the government has stolen the election" if the opposition loses. Even *The Guardian* is aiding and abetting the international stage to discredit the elections in the event of a favorable pro-government result, writing today, "Barring some very large election fraud, the opposition will win by a wide margin. The ruling party majority is almost certain to get wiped out."

Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has claimed the Venezuelan government is attempting to "rig" the elections in its favor. Of course the US State Department has issued several warnings against Venezuela, hypocritically criticizing the lack of formal elections observers (which the US does not allow for its own elections) and calling on the government to cease intimidation and political violence after an opposition politician was killed on stage during a political rally last week. What the US and other international media didn't report is that three suspects in the killing were already detained and confessed to killing Luis Manuel Diaz as part of a gang dispute. Credible evidence surfaced linking the victim to organized crime, confirming his murder was not politically motivated. No connection between the government or government supporters and the murder has been evidenced, despite unsubstantiated claims in US media.

As I state in my original article, censored by CNN, (now published on RT) Venezuela may have its problems, but the credibility of its electoral process is not one of them. The same electoral system used in this Sunday's elections, also was used to elect the more than one third of the legislature the opposition current holds, along with the opposition governors and mayors in the country's most populated states and cities. Why is it fraud then when only one side loses? The answer is simple: it's not fraud, it's called being a sore loser. In democracy, the results are respected, no matter who wins, and no matter who loses.  
<http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/11745>

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The United Jewish People's Order develops and perpetuates a progressive secular approach to social and cultural matters, our Jewish heritage, the Yiddish language and holiday and festival celebrations; we sponsor secular Jewish education, musical and cultural groups, concerts, lectures, public forums, and take part in social action and related community activities. Opinions expressed in signed articles are the authors' and not necessarily those of UJPO.

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Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA);  
International Institute for Secular Humanistic  
Judaism (IISHJ)

Edited By UJPO National Board Members

Volunteer produced

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