

UJPO News

Volume 29, FALL, 2009, Issue #3 & #4

The United Jewish Peoples' Order (UJPO) is an independent, national, socialist-oriented, secular organization

Serving Canada's Progressive Jews as individual organizations since 1926 and as the United Jewish People's Order since 1945!

Criticizing Israeli Government is not anti-Semitic

Text of a UJPO letter sent on August 24, 2009, to the "Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism" which is not what its name implies.

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) is an independent, secular, cultural and educational organization with members in Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver and Montreal. Our immigrant founders, in 1926, consistently promoted social justice movements to improve living standards of all Canadians. We participated in efforts to unionize workers, pushed for the provision of unemployment insurance, universal health care and education, retirement pensions, women's rights, adequate and affordable housing, supported world peace, and campaigned against all forms of racism.

Simultaneously, we developed a rich panoply of cultural activities, theatre, instrumental and choral ensembles, sports leagues, and children's and youth activities, centred on the continuation and perpetuation of our rich Yiddish humanist traditions. We also currently sponsor solidarity and peace tours of Israel and Palestine where participants meet with peace activists of both peoples.

We have, over the years, been harassed by anti-Semitic phone-calls; the building where our National Office and Toronto organizations function, Toronto's Winchevsky Centre, was sprayed with anti-Semitic graffiti and has been the object of related vandalism. We are, thus, increasingly vigilant, as are other Toronto Jewish centres, to ensure that we are not victims of further anti-Semitic attacks. The topic of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism's [sic] inquiry, therefore, is of profound importance to us and we feel compelled to provide our input.

Rational, legitimate criticism of some policies and actions of the State of Israel is not anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is an emotional response and a racist crime of great concern to an organization such as ours whose membership is comprised of many individuals who have lost a whole generation of ancestors in the Holocaust. We feel that our sensitivity to the presence of anti-Semitism justifies our position that classifying criticism of Israeli government policies, by both Jews and non-Jews, as anti-Semitism is meant only as an attempt to shut down discourse and debate concerning Israel.

The Parliamentary Coalition itself, in its attempt to ascertain what anti-Semitism is, has called for a wide range of opinions and input reflective of the democratic process, and we are grateful for the opportunity to express our opinion. Truly democratic states, such as Canada, allow for and even encourage criticism, since freedom of speech is an essential component of

democracy. Criminalizing legitimate concerns surrounding Israeli government policies that may be seen to impinge upon human rights would undermine the very democracy that Israel, a multi-ethnic state, claims for itself so proudly.

Yours Truly,

David Abramowitz and Lyn Center

Co-Presidents, United Jewish People's Order, Canada

Momentous UJPO Convention and Referendum on a name change

Do we fit into the demographic of a number of similar organizations whose membership is aging without having recruited younger members? Toronto has recently recruited several younger members, which is different from most other similar organizations. But the great majority of younger members are not adequately active in our leadership nor attend our events in significant numbers.

Is it disinterest, distraction, lack of time or the non-relevance of programming which results in this apparent indifference? What should we do to foster an active, vibrant and relevant progressive community?

A number of substantial issues were on the agenda of our 2009 National Convention last May. Discussions included what would attract Canadian secular Jews and bi-cultural families to join us now? How do we share the lessons of our past with the very different (though now recurring) economic and cultural issues with newer members? How can we engage more members in our activities and as active participants at our events? That is why developing a national membership campaign is of paramount importance and a major mandate from this convention.

Should we also change our name, and, if so, does it have to convey *everything* we stand for; or is that the function of our mission statement? The majority voted that we change our name, one which would better reflect who we are to today's prospective progressive members. But, of the dozen or so names proposed, which should it be? The decision was to have our members decide, in a referendum, one of the four most popular names selected by the delegates.

Thus, you will find a **REFERENDUM Ballot** included in this issue, which can be mailed to our head office. Or you can choose to tell us your choice via email to our national-office at < bubbyquilter@rogers.com >. If you choose to email your choice please include your name and city as one cannot always identify the senders by their email accounts' names. The deadline is January 31, 2010.

VOTE EARLY



Results in February issue.

**UJPO News: Vol. 29,
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The United Jewish People's Order develops and perpetuates a progressive secular approach on social and cultural matters, our Jewish heritage, the Yiddish language and holiday and festival celebrations; we sponsor secular Jewish education, musical and cultural groups, concerts, lectures, public forums, and take part in social action and related community activities.

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Edited by UJPO National Board Members

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Volunteer produced

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National Summer & Fall Activities

* UJPO Toronto *

By David Shloyme

As a wind-up to our 2008-2009 season we reported on our National Convention earlier. With this issue the ballot for the decided for **Name Change Referendum** is enclosed. Please inform us of your choice as early as possible.

The summer was an exceptionally active one (to put it mildly). As usual, preparation of Camp Naivelt cottages started in late May for the official Camp opening on the first July weekend. This was the first year that there was a shortage of rental cottages! With the increased demand the few still in need of "rehab" will be made habitable for next season. Ester Reiter's report on page 4 compresses the highlights of our summer.

The autumn season got a major kickoff when Winnipeg's Klezmer Kids (KK) filled the Winchevsky Centre Hall with hand-clapping and toe-tapping music. Maxine Hermolin's report on page 5 captures some of the excitement. They also opened the 2009-2010 "83rd" season of the *shule* (Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School, TSJCS-MWS) as reported by Shlomit Segal on Page 5.

While our Rosh Hashone observance usually has a few less than our Yom Kippur event, this year September 19 and 27 each saw 180 appreciative attendees; and we know that some new members were attracted at those events. On October 4 the *shule* held its sukkes celebration at Camp Naivelt with the welcome attendance of some of the Kinder Kaper families. Then on the 17th our theatre club went to a well received performance by Theodore Bikel in *Sholom Aleichem: Laughter Through Tears*, a tribute to the great Yiddish classicist on his 150 birthday.

The next two events we cosponsored with the *Workmen's Circle*, *The Committee for Yiddish/UJA Federation*, and the *Friends of Yiddish*. They were our October 25th *Jewish Book Fair* event - with author David Roskies speaking on his book "**Yiddishlands**", and, on November 2, the excellent *Holocaust Education Week* program, "**Mir Zaynen Do**" (We Are Here), with **Adrienne Cooper** and **Marilyn Lerner**. Our Ester Reiter thanked the author at the former, and Ben Shek thanked the artists at the latter. Both were well attended, and we should note that the long worked for programming partnership mentioned above would seem to be an enduring one for these events in the future (and we hope for additional ones as well).

Our November started with **Outlook** Magazine's annual fund-raising brunch. The featured speaker, **Ronnee Jaeger** spoke on "**Israel: Shifting to Fascism?**" Attendance was the highest **Outlook** has seen for this event in at least a decade with some 50 listening to Ronnee's explanation on how Israeli society can potentially "morph" into a nation so different from the one its supporters anticipated. It was well received AND, at the conclusion Sam Blatt announced that a **2010 UJPO Solidarity and Peace Tour** to the Middle East is in the planning stage with more details to follow (see notice on page 6).

At press time other events for the fall are - on the 24th, **Speaking Out: Jewish Artists Uncensored** a panel discussion with progressive cultural artists **David Buchbinder**, **Reena Katz**, **Kate Lushington**, **b.h. Yael**, moderated by **Susan G. Cole** of **NOW Magazine**, on the 28th a performance of **Hemingway on stage: "The Death Factory"** a one-man play written and performed by Brian Gordon Sinclair (*a joint fundraiser for the Morris Winchevsky School and the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association.*)

In December we will hold a community "latke" fry in preparation for the *shule's* Khanike Party on December 12. And, for New Year, the Toronto UJPO and the Canada-Cuba Friendship Association will welcome in 2010 with their New Year's Eve Gala Dinner, "**MOJITOS & MANDEL-BROIT**" with dancing to **Pablo Terry & Sol De Cuba**. **Have a Happy, Healthy, New Year!**

❁ UJPO Winnipeg ❁

By DORA ROSENBAUM

How can two similar groups operate more effectively? This is a question Winnipeg's Sholem Aleichem Community (SAC) and the Winnipeg UJPO felt it was necessary to examine. To some extent we were working together in many ways already - UJPO organizing the excellent forums and the SAC organizing all holiday celebrations - both organizations publicizing their events simultaneously to both constituencies and drawing audiences/participants from both. UJPO and the SAC held a joint executive meeting in May and another one in September. Some details agreed upon were: (a) that SAC members would cosponsor our forums and help at each function; (b) whenever possible our forums will be held on Sunday afternoons so that more people will be able to attend. This seems to be working well so we'll let you know what the next December meeting will indicate is in the cards in the next issue.

SEPTEMBER:

We opened the 2009-10 season with a most interesting speaker, Dr. Stefan Carter, who was born in Warsaw and is a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto. However he spoke on the anniversary of the Peekskill Riots with his main emphasis on Paul Robeson's participation.

The High Holidays Rosh Hashonah (September 19) and Yom Kippur (September 28) were hosted by SAC at the Robert Steen Community Centre.

OCTOBER:

Sukkes, hosted by SAC, was celebrated on October 4.

NOVEMBER:

The Winnipeg UJPO's Outlook Committee held its fundraising luncheon on November 1 at the Winnipeg Art Gallery with guest speaker Lawrie Cherniak, a Winnipeg lawyer and conflict mediator, who spoke on "**Conflict Resolution: The Middle East Discussion in Our Jewish Community**".

We are quite excited about the forthcoming November 15 concert in which we will participate with the AUUC's choir, folk dancers and mandolin orchestra; our Klezmer Kids (some of them children of SAC members and grand-children of UJPO members) will accompany our fledgling UJPO Choir and we hope to have a report in the next issue about this exciting event.

On November 29 in the Carol Shields Room of the Millennium Public Library the UJPO Forum's topic will be Jewish Poor in Winnipeg (yes they are still here); it will be coordinated by Sid Frankel, Naomi Globerman and Roz Usiskin. "**INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN CANADA**" will be the topic of Cecil Rosner who has 30 years experience in journalism, and is the author of "Behind the Headlines: A History of Investigative Journalism in Canada." He is currently the managing editor for CBC Manitoba.

DECEMBER:

On December 13 we will participate in the Hanukkah program hosted by SAC. Our little choir will again be backed by the "famous" Klezmer Kids!

Coming in 2010:

On January 10 we're planning a forum with Ronnee Jaeger; on February 10 SAC will celebrate Purim; on March 7 we'll show a video on the Rosenbergs and on the 21st a forum on Jewish Secularism at the Library are in the works. After that a joint UJPO/SAC season closing BBQ

in June. But I'm getting ahead of myself so we'll meet again in the New Year.

Till then keep well! Dora

❁ UJPO Vancouver ❁

By SYLVIA FRIEDMAN

Our activities in Vancouver, though missing from these pages in the past, continue to take place in the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture at 6184 Ash Street. It's also where our members create and send out *Outlook* magazine. This last activity is year-long and ramps up after each issue is printed; we all participate in packaging and mailing them to our subscribers.

Our choir rehearses each Wednesday and our *nokhmitogdiker yiddisher leyn krayz* (Afternoon Yiddish Reading Circle) meets at the Peretz Centre on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

We hold monthly secular shabbes eve's which we call *Fraytik tsu Nakht* (in Yiddish). Here is a snapshot of our activities from last spring through to some future programming into 2010.

MAY: At May 8th's *Fraytik tsu Nakht* Prof. Claudia Cornwall spoke about her book, ***Letter from Vienna: A Daughter Uncovers Her Family's Jewish Past***. On May 10 we held a combined Lag b'Omer/Mother's Day French Toast Brunch: as Lag b'Omer fell on Mother's Day this year, in addition to being a bit early for a beach picnic, our Sunday School teachers invited us and our children to a French toast brunch celebrating both holidays.

JUNE: The **Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir's Annual Spring Concert** was held on June 7, featuring three Yiddish pieces: the cantata *Oyfn Fidl*, based on a Sholem Aleichem story in commemoration of his 150th birthday; *Yomervokhets*, a Yiddish translation of Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* set to music by the choir's conductor, David Millard; and *In Amerike*, arranged by Sid Robinovitch, based on excerpts from Sholem Shtern's poem *In Kanade*. On June 19, our *Fraytik tsu Nakht* presented excerpts from *Bobbe Mayses* (Grandma Tales) - true and funny stories written in the early '90s by members of the Sholem Aleichem Seniors.

JULY: We don't usually have a *Fraytik tsu Nakht* in July or August but were pleased to welcome Bennett Muraskin, Adult Education Director for the Jewish Cultural School and Society in New Jersey, who spoke about his book, *Humanist Readings in Jewish Folklore* on July 17.

Then we took a summer break.

SEPTEMBER: We kicked off the season with a fund-raising YARD SALE on the 13th and commenced Yiddish Classes with Haya Newman on the 30th.

OCTOBER: Our first *Fraytik tsu Nakht* on the 16th, featured David Skulski; his theme - *Jewish Dancing Masters of the Renaissance*.

NOVEMBER: Our AGM was on the 8th and our next *Fraytik tsu Nakht* will be on the 27th: *P'nina Granirer*, will talk and show slides featuring her artwork.

DECEMBER: Our latke-making bee is on the 6th for our Khanike Party on the 13th; and our *Fraytik tsu Nakht* on the 18th is our **Annual Khanike Party and**

Sing-along.

2010: Next year's calendar is set for the following events: **January** - Tu b'Shvat Seder (31st); **February** - Fraytik tsu Nakht (19th) and Purim Party (28th); and many, many more have been scheduled but we'll catch up in the next issue.

And just a note to "*shep nakhes*" (beam with pride): my grandson, (my son David's son), Anton Friedman, has just received two major scholastic awards: the **Langara College Graduate Excellence Award** (Arts and Sciences) and the **Governor General's Bronze Medal**. Both awards are granted to students graduating from a two-year program with the highest cumulative grade point average. He began his post-secondary education at Langara taking Psychology, Geography and Languages. However, when he took a Biology course to satisfy his science requirement, he fell in love with science! He went on to take Chemistry, Math and Physics. In September, Anton will enter UBC, where he will further his studies in General Biology.

In his spare time Anton is on the Peretz Centre Board of Directors, and Vancouver Youth Delegate to the annual CSJO Youth Conference.

Naivelt's fabulous 2009 summer!

By ESTER REITER



In the first issue of this season's *Naivelt News*, co-editor Hanna Novak wished all Naivelt campers, old and new, an "unforgettable 2009 season." And indeed, we have had a remarkable summer.

We hear about the Naivelt glory days, when thousands would come out to Camp on the weekends for the music, the romance, the fun, and the sheer joy of being in the beauty of the "country." It looks like the good times are here again. We had a wonderful summer last year that culminated with the production of the play "Oy Di Velt Vet Vern Yinger", and this summer, camp is once again a bustling place.

For a number of weekends, we couldn't even find places for everyone who wanted to rent. There's a building boom around here as well – the new screened-in porches are multiplying as I write this – thanks to Jack, Scott, and Andrew. We have a number of new faces to welcome into our community: new cottage owners, new renters and two brand new baby girls, Rosalie June and Venetia Eleanor, spent the first summer of their lives at Naivelt.

Just hanging out here has been grand; watching the gang of *very little* kids (Isabella, Frank, Zohar, Malyan, Hayden, Noah, Simon), the bigger kids, the teenagers and the various gradation of adults, mamas, papas, bobbies, zeydes – all doing their things. It's wonderful watching the bigger kids being so gentle and lovely with the little ones.

We've had our share of sadness as well. Charna Gord and Mari Drexler both recently lost their mothers. This is our first summer without Sonia Reichman. We honoured Sonia with a tribute organized with the help of Ruth and Zoe Grossman and Sonia's daughter Hanna Novak, and everyone pitched in to make it a beautiful

event.

We've had some first class assistance from our Naivelt youth as well, thanks to the first ever Youth Employment Program: Russell Staughton, our techie; Abby Cope, our banquet organizer and top notch cleaner; and excellent child care provided by Shayle Kilroy, Shifra and Helah Cooper, and Robin Blue. Devin and Cory Staughton re-opened the snack bar at the Lak Shak (Lasowsky Centre), often assisted by pals Aiden and Rowen Paredes. Thank you Ronit Little for organizing this new initiative.

This summer's programming was so rich and varied, I can't possibly mention all that has gone on, but here are some 2009 highlights: the *Kinder Kapers Weekend* was a great success, the children's entertainers received rave reviews, and Maxine Hermolin hosted a delicious barbeque. Some bagel brunch highlights include Rachel Epstein discussing LGBT parenting, Gerry Kane's presentation on Jewish humour (see photo), Bryan Young's focus on environmental issues, and the Peace Tea with Sandra Ruch relating what she witnessed in Gaza.



For many of us, the program highlights were two Naivelt firsts: a week-long Music Camp with Martin Van de Ven and a week-long Theatre Camp with Lisa Roy. Martin took a bunch of us, between the ages of eight to sixty-eight, with experience levels ranging

from complete beginners to quite skilled, and turned us into a band. We all had a lot of fun.

This was followed by a week in Cheim, at the drama camp. The children created their own Cheim play, and we all enjoyed the hilarious performance on Saturday night, in particular 'Mayor Mottl' played by three-year-old Simon Bakan. It rained pretty well all week, but thanks to Lisa, the participants had a good time. There's more: Zak Harrison's band The Phonebooth Criminals, the potlucks and coffee house. We love the less flashy events as well – Barb Lipton leading aquafit each Saturday and Sunday, and Barbara Blaser's handicrafts workshops. And there's more to come, including the "Promenade of Passions" with Ruth Howard, campfires, and our grand finale banquet (see photo on next page). In short, Camp Naivelt is the place to be this summer.

Thank you to all of us who made this happen, but let's acknowledge Mitch Willer for all of his work on programming, Hilarie Klapman and Hanna Novak, who brought the Naivelt News to new journalistic heights, the hosts of the bagel brunches and the Camp Committee. It's been quite a summer and we look forward to many more.



Naivelt campers serenade at closing banquet

Winnipeg's Klezmer Kids were great!

By MAXINE HERMOLIN

On the weekend of September 12 and 13, we proudly welcomed Winnipeg's teenage musicians the *Klezmer Kids* for a Saturday night concert and Sunday morning Klezmer and Folk Dance Workshop. And what a weekend it was! It was an absolute joy to host these fantastic young people. 'The Kids' infuse spirit and passion into traditional klezmer music, and from the moment they arrived, their talents and personalities filled and surpassed our expectations.

There was much anticipation in planning both events. Many of us had heard The Klezmer Kids perform to acclaimed reviews at the 2008 Toronto Ashkenaz Festival; inviting them back to launch the 2009-2010 season of Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School (TSJCS) seemed worth pursuing; after all, 'The Kids' are former students and graduates of the Sholem Aleichem Community School, our sister school in Winnipeg. Together with Vancouver's Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture, these three Shules comprise a national network of secular progressive Jewish supplementary schools with links to the UJPO.

The Klezmer Kids have been together since 2004 under the leadership of award-winning klezmer musician Daniel Koulack, (violin) - also a member of Finjan and North End Project. 'The Kids' include: Ameena Bajer-Koulack (lead vocals), George Bajer-Koulack (drums, vocals), Anna Blankstein (clarinet), Mischa Decter (violin), Michael Etkin (piano), Max Fraser (electric bass) and Zak Johnson (flute). For our weekend of events, they were joined by special guest clarinetist Martin van de Ven (leader of the music camp at Naivelt this summer).



Daniel & Ameena

The highlights of our Saturday night concert were many, from *Bay Mir Bist Du Sheyn* to *Mayn Rue Platz* to *The Funky Freilachs*. The vocals of Ameena and George, Daniel's witty introductions and anecdotes and George's joke-telling added lovely touches to the evening. Not only are 'The Kids' talented and very professional, they are also adorable. They were quite the

sight when they came out for the second act in their psychedelic tie-dyed shirts!

I believe it's safe to say that we were all shepping nakhes (taking pride) in the wonderful music that filled our hall, especially our own Ester Reiter, who has the distinguished honour of being Daniel Koulack's mother and the bubby of Ameena & George Bajer-Koulack. And it was great to see so many members of our community come out to support and be part of this musical experience, including several of the kids who had been part of the music and theatre camps at Naivelt this summer.

Our community truly came together with a genuine and generous sense of volunteerism for this weekend of events. Many thanks to our dedicated Program Committee, who worked so hard on the planning and promotion for this ambitious concert. Thanks as well to everyone who helped in so many ways with all the details of the weekend, including: accommodations,

airport runs, equipment rentals, preparing meals, etc. It was especially nice to get together at Ester's house for a send-off dinner on Sunday evening. We relaxed together and basked in the glory of a musical weekend that will long be remembered.

Klezmer music, through the vitality and inspirational talents of the *Klezmer Kids*, is an important example of how we are proudly keeping this important tradition alive. Our kudos to Daniel Koulack and 'The Kids'!



George Bajer-Koulack

Klezmer Kids Workshop at our shule

By SHLOMIT SEGAL

After seeing Daniel Koulack play klezmer tunes at the Toronto Ashkenaz and Winnipeg folk festivals, I was curious to hear his ensemble the Klezmer Kids at our *shule's* (school's) opening.

My three-year-old daughter Zohar loves music and dancing, so we attended the *Klezmer Kids Workshop* on September 13th, and brought my mother along too. We saw other multi-generational families and I realized that this was going to be an event for all ages. First, the band played a number of classic klezmer tunes such as *Abi Gezunt* and *Hobn Mir a Nigndl*, explained by Daniel and to which we all listened. Ameena Bajer-Koulack, the vocalist, has a lovely voice and genuine stage presence. Then came the folk dancing part.

Accomplished folk dance expert Helen Winkler taught everyone some hora-type steps, in order to do a simple dance to several tunes which the *Klezmer Kids* played with gusto. At first, my daughter was shy, but after watching everyone else dance, she had to join in (see photo). Helen also taught a *broygez-tantz* (an angry dance), where we waved our fingers at each other. If only the world's conflicts could be resolved by a simple *broygez-tantz*!

This diverse type of program is terrific for the *shule* - it was an opportunity to nurture a new generation of klezmer musicians, a chance to learn about klezmer music and dancing, and it provided a lot of fun for everyone!



Zohar & Shlomit (on the left)

Remember to cast your vote in our referendum for your choice of our new name by Canada Post or email.

It must be post-marked by January 31, 2010 to be accepted.

The successful choice will be announced in our February issue.

"Yiddish language structures"

international workshop

November 30 - December 1, 2009

וועבזייט

Middle East News Clips



Nabila Espanioly among 50 most influential in Israeli education system

nif.org

[Ed note] Participants of both the 2005 and 2009 UJPO Solidarity and Peace Tours spent an evening over dinner with this inspiring woman]

22/09/09 – New Israel Fund Board Member Nabila Espanioly has been chosen by Tel Aviv newspaper Ha'ir as one of the 50 most influential people in Israel's education system. The article describes her as "a feminist leader and central figure in women's peace, social and human rights organizations."



Nabila Espanioly: "If the State does not provide early childhood education in the Arab sector, then we Palestinian women will do it for them."

The article pays tribute to her role in founding the **Al Tufula Pedagogical Center** in Nazareth in 1988 to concentrate on early childhood care in the Arab sector and women's empowerment. Through Al Tufula, she helped develop early childhood education in Israel's Arab sector and train kindergarten professionals "based on international know-how and rooted in humanistic values."

The article also cited her contribution to producing Arabic language learning materials for elementary schools.

DEXIA ISRAEL stops financing Israeli settlements!

By MARTIJN LAUWENS, intal.be/nl

The Belgian-French financial group Dexia has announced it will no longer finance Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories through its Israeli branch Dexia Israel. This is the result of a months-long campaign in Belgium, supported by NGO's, political parties, local authorities, trade unions and other organisations. Dexia's management states that financing Israeli settlements is indeed against the bank's code of ethics and it will stop giving loans due to this.

In 2001 Dexia Group bought the Israeli bank Otzar Hashilton Hamekomi and renames the bank Dexia Public Finance Israel. Just like other Dexia subsidiaries, Dexia Israel is specialised in financing municipalities and other local authorities.

It takes until October 2008 for a few Belgian

By Dr. SANDRA BIRZER

The Slavonic Department of the University of Regensburg (Bjrn Hansen and Sandra Birzer) welcomed abstracts for the international workshop "**Yiddish language structures**" which were held on the above dates in Regensburg, Germany.

The main focus is on structural aspects of the description of "the Yiddish language system" which includes both theoretical and empirical questions.

Areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- phonology, lexicology, morphology and syntax of Yiddish

- contact-induced grammaticalization
- borrowing asymmetries
- Corpus linguistic research on Yiddish

The following scholars will deliver keynotes at the workshop:

Steffen Krogh (University of Aarhus); Johan van der Auwera (University of Antwerp); Yaron Matras (University of Manchester); Gertrud Reershemius (Aston University).

The workshop also plans to be a forum to discuss the new project of an on-line "**Corpus of Modern Yiddish**" (CMY) which aims to compile a balanced text of Modern Yiddish of about 10 million words. The CMY is a joint project of scholars from Regensburg and Moscow.

The conference languages will be English, Yiddish and German. Access the conference homepage at:
http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/phil_Fak_IV/Slavistik/YLS/

**Dr. Sandra Birzer, Institut für Slavistik,
Universität Regensburg, 93040 Regensburg,
Germany.**

Announcing the third UJPO ISRAEL-PALESTINE Solidarity & PEACE TOUR



April / May 2010



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sambl39@yahoo.com or 416-463-8500

solidarity groups to discover that Dexia Israel is not only financing regular Israeli municipalities but is also granting loans to illegal settlements in the Palestinian territories. In a document of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), the director of Dexia Israel, Mr. David Kapah, confirms that the bank has indeed granted credits to seven settlements and three regional authorities in the occupied West Bank between 2003 and 2007.

This 'smoking gun' evidence entails the start of a fast growing campaign in Belgium. United under the slogan 'Israel colonises, Dexia finances', the campaign knows its first successes. In the following months petitions are being launched, MP's are being questioned and local actions are being started up. Very important is the support of local Belgian authorities such as municipalities and provinces, as they hold a vast amount of shares in Dexia Group.

Today the action platform consists of 61 Belgian organisations, gathered over 4000 signatures and got 29 local authorities to sign a resolution. They all demand that Dexia breaks off its relations with the settlements and stops financing the occupation immediately.

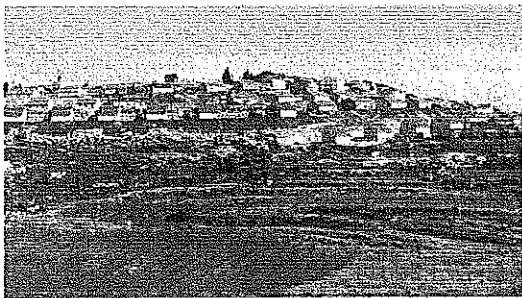


Photo Les Blough www.axisoffogic.com

Dexia: 'Guilty, but we won't do it again'

For several months the Belgian government and the Dexia management never really responded to the demands of the action platform. However as the campaign started to get more media coverage and the pressure started to rise, something changed. On May 13, the activists of the campaign were able to voice demands at the annual shareholders meeting of Dexia Group in Brussels.

In response, Jean-Luc Dehaene, chairman of the board of Dexia and former Belgian prime minister, admitted that the bank has been extending loans to Israeli settlements. He stresses however that, since September 2008, there has been no additional financing of these or other colonies.

Dehaene declared no new loans will be granted to the settlements. He added that the credits and loans to the settlements which are granted before are in runoff and will not be prolonged any longer; neither will they be replaced by similar loans.

Stopping Construction.

Building Peace ☆

By EDGAR M. BRONFMAN,
huffingtonpost.com

24/08/09 – These are not easy times for all of us who care deeply about Israel. It has become clear that the governments in Washington and Jerusalem are at loggerheads, primarily over the issue of settlements on

the West Bank.

As someone who even during the Carter administration, 30 years ago, called publicly for a halt to settlement building on the part of Israel, I remain even more steadfast in my belief that settlements are inimical to the interests of peace, and therefore inimical to Israel's long-term interests and viability.

The expansion of settlements in the West Bank, as we all know, has been promoted by the religious Zionist right in Israel as a form of holy work, meant to hasten the return of the Messiah through the possession of the entire biblical Land of Israel. Governments all across the Israeli political spectrum have allowed this to continue for decades, due usually to political expediency and pressure.

Now it seems as if the international community, including the U.S. government, is requesting that Israel freeze construction on these settlements as part of a process aimed at restarting stalled peace talks.

It is time even the Israeli right, including the current Likud government under Benjamin Netanyahu, look to the precedents set by Menachem Begin and Ariel Sharon on the issue of settlements.

After all, it was Menachem Begin who first embraced the concept of "land for peace" as the basis for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict: in return for normalized relations with Egypt, Israel relinquished the entire Sinai Peninsula.

Today we have most of the Arab and even Muslim world putting forward a proposal, the "Arab Peace Initiative," which calls for a normalization of relations in return for an Israeli withdrawal back to the 1967 borders. While negotiations on the exact implementation of the initiative are needed, an Israeli freeze to settlement expansion is part of a necessary first move toward realizing this historic offer.

An even more telling precedent is the case of Ariel Sharon, the man tasked with taking down the settlements in the Sinai, and who as prime minister subsequently took down the settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Sharon became convinced that the demographic threat to Israel's existence outweighed his life's work of settlement construction. As Sharon understood clearly, there was no way to keep controlling the Palestinian people indefinitely and to simultaneously maintain Israel's Jewish and democratic character.

At a certain point, there will be more Arabs than Jews living between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, thereby leading to one de facto apartheid state if no resolution to the conflict is reached via a two-state solution.

Nearly as important, Sharon's evacuation of Gaza, opposed so bitterly by the Israeli right in the Knesset and by settlers on the ground, was a triumph for Israeli democracy and governance. Once the government took the decision, the various organs of the state worked respectfully to uphold the rule of law. This should be kept in mind every time another illegal outpost sprouts up on the West Bank, in direct contravention of Israeli law.

It is these types of decisions from an Israeli prime minister regarding settlements that the Obama administration has said repeatedly it wants to see from Netanyahu.

The American Jewish community has, over decades, been a steadfast source of strength for Israel -- inside Israel and out, and from our local communities all

the way up to Washington. As Zionists, I and the vast majority of American Jews will always remain committed to the security and well-being of the Jewish state.

However, on the issue of settlements there is seemingly a divergence of opinion: a majority of American Jews agrees with President Obama and does think that a halt to settlement construction is a reasonable request in the interest of peace.

To be sure, the Arab states and the Palestinians have to do their part, too, and the international community needs to hold them to account. After all, a future Palestinian state has to be a viable economic and political entity if it is to succeed and there is to be a lasting peace.

But continued "natural growth" in West Bank settlements cannot be allowed to take priority over the possibility of normalized relations with the entire Arab world. Peace with its neighbors, not the sensitivities of a small minority of religious settlers, has to be Israel's ultimate objective.

People have taken to calling this the "tough love" approach towards Israel, but this is wrong. Rather, it's the only approach you can take if you truly love Israel and care about its survival. A peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with two states for two peoples, is the only realistic way for Israel to ensure its Jewish and democratic character, and hence its existence.

Muddling through for another 30 years on the present course, only to have someone write again about the need for an end to settlements, is not only unsustainable but unloving.

*Edgar M. Bronfman is the President of
The Samuel Bronfman Foundation and the recent author of
Hope, Not Fear: A Path to Jewish Renaissance.*

Pete Seeger's role in ending Israeli house demolitions *

By NIR HASSON, Haaretz.com

Israel: 08/11/09—Anyone who owns a radio probably knows the song "Turn, Turn, Turn" (To everything there is a season) very well. A number of versions of this song have become permanent fixtures on the play lists of most popular music radio stations. Here's what the listeners don't know: every time this song is played, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions receives a few dollars, which accumulate to "several thousand dollars every year," according to the committee's co-founder and coordinator.

The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) is a non-profit organization that uses non-violent means to oppose Israeli demolition of homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Seeger has been donating some of the song's royalties to ICAHD for ten years.

The banjo-playing Seeger, 90, is considered one of the pioneers of American folk music. He is known for his political activism no less than for his musical achievements. In the 1930s he was involved in the establishment of worker unions, in the 1940s he opposed the war against Germany and in the 1950s he was interrogated by Senator Joe McCarthy over suspicions of belonging to the Communist Party. In recent years Seeger has been involved in efforts to clean up the Hudson River

in New York and performed at U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration celebration.

The lyrics of the song "Turn, Turn, Turn" are the words of King Solomon from the book of Ecclesiastes. "All around the world, songs are being written that use old public domain material, and I think it's only fair that some of the money from the songs go to the country or place of origin, even though the composer may be long dead or unknown," Seeger said in an interview with Acoustic Guitar magazine in 2002.

"With 'Turn, Turn, Turn' I wanted to send 45 percent, because [in addition to the music] I did write six words and one more word repeated three times, so I figured I'd keep five percent of the royalties for the words. I was going to send it to London, where I am sure the committee that oversees the use of the King James version exists, and they probably could use a little cash. But then I realized, why not send it to where the words were originally written?"

ICAHD's Jeff Halper met with Seeger in New York last week and remarked that "he said he thought it was appropriate that the biblical part of the song make its way to Israel but he doesn't want to take credit for it."

Halper brought another message from Seeger to the Israelis: "He said that artists and cooks - it was important for him to include cooks - must stand up and demand a just peace. That is the duty of artists and cooks."

U.S. Congressman Dennis Kucinich, blasts 'Operation Cast Doubt'

pulsedmedia.org

Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) made the following statement on the House Floor [on November 3, 2009] about Resolution # 867, which condemned the 'Goldstone Report' or the Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict:

TRANSCRIPT

"Today we journey from Operation Cast Lead to Operation Cast Doubt. Almost as serious as committing war crimes is covering up war crimes, pretending that war crimes were never committed and did not exist.

"Because behind every such deception is the nullification of humanity, the destruction of human dignity, the annihilation of the human spirit, the triumph of Orwellian thinking, the eternal prison of the dark heart of the totalitarian.

"The resolution before us today, which would reject all attempts of the Goldstone Report to fix responsibility of all parties to war crimes, including both Hamas and Israel, may as well be called the "Down is Up, Night is Day, Wrong is Right" resolution.

"Because if this Congress votes to condemn a report it has not read, concerning events it has totally ignored, about violations of law of which it is unaware, it will have brought shame to this great institution.

"How can we ever expect there to be peace in the Middle East if we tacitly approve of violations of international law and international human rights, if we look the other way, or if we close our eyes to the heartbreak of people on both sides by white-washing a legitimate investigation?

"How can we protect the people of Israel from existential threats if we hold no concern for the protection of the Palestinians, for their physical security, their right to land, their right to their own homes, their right to water, their right to sustenance, their right to freedom of movement, their right to the human security of jobs, education and health care?"

"We will have peace only when the plight of both Palestinians and Israelis is brought before this House and given equal consideration in recognition of that principle that all people on this planet have a right to survive and thrive, and it is our responsibility, our duty to see that no individual, no group, no people are barred from this humble human claim."

☆ American Jews Rethink Israel ☆

By ADAM HOROWITZ & PHILIP WEISS

This article appeared in the November 2, 2009 edition of The Nation. Below is a condensed version.

This year has seen a dramatic shift in American Jews' attitudes toward Israel. In January many liberal Jews were shocked by the Gaza war, in which Israel used overwhelming force against a mostly defenseless civilian population unable to flee. Then came the rise to power of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, whose explicitly anti-Arab platform was at odds with an American Jewish electorate that had just voted 4 to 1 for a minority president.

These stirrings on the American Jewish street will come to a head in late October in Washington with the first national conference of J Street, the reformation Israel lobby. J Street has been around less than two years, but it is summoning liberal--and some not so liberal--Jews from all over the country to "rock the status quo," code for AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee).

Sure sounds like a velvet revolution in the Jewish community, huh? Not so fast. The changes in attitudes are taking place at the grassroots; by and large, Jewish leaders are standing fast. And as for policymakers, the opening has been slight. There seems little likelihood the conference will bring us any closer to that holy grail of the reformers: the ability of a US president, not to mention Congress, to put real pressure on Israel.

There's no question the Gaza conflict has helped break down the traditional Jewish resistance to criticizing Israel. Gaza was "the worst public relations disaster in Israel's history," says M.J. Rosenberg, a longtime Washington analyst who reports for Media Matters Action Network.

Grassroots Jewish organizations have experienced a surge in interest since the Gaza war. The Oakland-based Jewish Voice for Peace has seen its mailing list double, to 90,000, with up to 6,000 signing on each month.

The shift is most pronounced on campuses, where being pro-Palestinian has become a litmus test for progressive engagement. Last winter a battle over divestment from the Israeli occupation rocked Hampshire College, and many students spearheading the movement were Jewish. The Hampshire students are part of an international boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement that demands Israeli accountability for human rights violations.

Then there was the Toronto International Film Festival in September, at which a number of prominent figures, including Jane Fonda, Viggo Mortensen, Danny Glover, Julie Christie and Eve Ensler, signed a declaration

opposing the festival's association with the Israeli consulate and a city-to-city program featuring Tel Aviv as part of a campaign by the Israeli government to "rebrand" itself after the Gaza conflict. The declaration read, in part, "especially in the wake of this year's brutal assault on Gaza, we object to the use of such an important international festival in staging a propaganda campaign on behalf of what South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, and UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann have all characterized as an apartheid regime."

President Obama tried to change the game by speaking of Palestinian "humiliations" in his June speech in Cairo and calling for a freeze in Israeli settlement growth as a condition for progress toward a two-state solution. But the Israeli government has defied him, secure in the knowledge that Jewish leaders in Washington will back it. And so when Obama has seemed to lose his nerve--say, when he helped to bury the UN's Goldstone report, which said Israel committed war crimes in Gaza--there has been very little resistance in the Jewish community to his capitulations. When Netanyahu was reported to have maligned Obama aides David Axelrod and Rahm Emanuel as "self-hating Jews," there was little outcry in the American Jewish community.

Some critics on the left argue that conditions on the ground have already made the two-state solution unreachable. There are more than 500,000 Israeli settlers occupying the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with more arriving every day, and Gaza remains under siege. Add to this the political scene inside Israel, where Netanyahu has balked at Washington's request for a settlement freeze, and you could say that in the sixteen years since the Oslo Accords were signed, the possibility of two states in historic Palestine has never been as far off as it is today.

For its part, J Street knows these are desperate times for the liberal goal of a two-state solution. As Israel becomes more and more isolated globally, the Israeli government and the traditional lobby have only gotten more intransigent. At the AIPAC policy conference last spring, its executive director warned that Israel's enemies were establishing a "predicate for abandonment" that only AIPAC's faithful could reverse. Don't expect such hysteria at the J Street conference, but behind all the hoopla, the organization will similarly be trying to preserve the old ideal of a Jewish state.



Marek Edelman

Last Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Leader dies

news.bbc.co.uk

On October 2, 2009 the last surviving leader of the 1943 **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising** against the Nazis, **Marek Edelman**, died at the age of 90.

The uprising - triggered by the Nazis' decision to send residents to concentration camps - lasted three weeks before it was crushed.

Mr Edelman, then 23, was one of 200 young Jews who fought German troops.

Former Polish Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski paid tribute to him.

"He reached a good age. He left as a contented man even if he was always aware of the tragedy he went through," he told the *Gazeta Wyborcza* newspaper.

"I don't want to say he was irreplaceable, nobody is, but there are few people like Marek Edelman."

Pitched battle

For nearly a month in the spring of 1943 a group of young Jews; armed with pistols and home-made bombs, held off the German army before the ghetto was razed to the ground.

Jewish residents fought for nearly a month before the uprising was crushed.

By then the Nazis had sent 300,000 Jewish residents of the ghetto to the gas chambers at the Treblinka death camp.

The first clashes occurred at the start of 1943 as residents took up arms to prevent more Jews being sent to the camp. The full-scale uprising began in April in response to Nazi plans to wipe out the 60,000 remaining inhabitants.

Thousands of Jews died in the fighting as Nazi troops resorted to explosives to destroy the ghetto - created by the German occupiers in 1940.

More than 55,000 Jews were then killed/deported to concentration camps when the uprising was crushed.

Mr Edelman escaped and helped coordinate anti-Nazi resistance. After the war he became a doctor and joined Poland's democratic opposition, speaking out against racism and on human rights.

"He will remain in my memory as a fighting hero, a man of great courage," former Israeli Ambassador to Poland Shevach Weiss said.

"He never ceased in his struggle for human freedom and for Poland's freedom."

Marc Ellis in Hamilton

By LYN CENTER

Recently I worked with Independent Jewish Voices to organize a public meeting with Dr. Marc Ellis and four panellists at McMaster University. About 100 people of all ages attended.

Ellis is a professor and founding director of the Center for Jewish Studies at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. His latest book is called "**Judaism Does Not Equal Israel**".

He described three streams of thought among Jews today:

(1) "**Constantinian Jews**", who support a kind of colonialism that mirrors the empire-oriented Christianity that emerged in the 4th century. These Jews tolerate violence and atrocities while claiming innocence. They promote their own views while they censor others.

(2) **Progressive Jews**, who support a two-state solution, a return to pre-1967 boundaries but without a Palestinian army or control of their own resources. *J Street* and *Tikkun* communities are examples of organizations with these views.

(3) **Jews of conscience**, those who are in solidarity with the right of Palestinians to be free in their own homeland.

Ellis defines himself as a Jew of conscience, someone who tries to understand and **act** against the injustice committed in the name of Jews and Jewish history. The distinction between progressive Jews and Jews of conscience is essential. Jews of conscience are not interested in proclaiming Jewish innocence, and they are serious about Jews recognizing Palestinians as equal, to the point where they risk physical and cultural exile for it. Ellis believes that the possibility of a viable two-state solution in Israel/Palestine has passed.

The first panellist to speak was Mervyn Russell, Ecumenical Honorary Assistant at St. Jude's Anglican Church. He believes the root of the problem is a Jewish state that gives Jews priority and privilege. Jews claim a divine or a moral right to the land of Israel, and this is seen to supersede human rights. Resistance is seen as either evil or immoral. The state can continue because of its support from the US and UK but is not truly democratic.

Russell said that Palestinians have failed to promote the justice of their cause and there is a lack of support from neighbouring states. He believes settlement building must end and the PLO must become more active and accept Hamas.

The next panellist was Ted Schmidt, editor of *New Catholic Times*, a Canadian online Catholic newspaper. While he accepts Ellis's "dark" analysis, he has a more optimistic appreciation of Jews of conscience. Schmidt has a history of defending the oppressed and has been supported by Rabbi Slonim who, Schmidt says, believed that the 1967 war corrupted Jewish ethics and led to the asymmetry of power in today's Israel.

Next to speak was a McMaster student, Anisa Mirza. By origin a Muslim Pakistani, she is concerned that criticism of Pakistan and other Muslim nations is acceptable, but across campuses criticism of Israel - by Jews and non-Jews - is censored. She applauds Jews of conscience who, because of their views on Israel, may be alienated from their community and families, and added that we all have a call to justice.

In ending she said that in Palestine hope is all they have. She pointed out that if you had told Jews during the Holocaust, or Blacks under apartheid, that it would end, they wouldn't have believed it.

Ronnee Jaeger was the last speaker. Ronnee is a UJPO member, a founder of MACHSOM (checkpoint) Watch, and a dual citizen of Israel and Canada. Ronnee sees Israel's actions as a "classic" occupation, no better or worse than Britain or France or Spain. "Occupation creates resistance, resistance creates repression," she said. "Religious/cultural attachments don't give you ownership rights and should not be used to steal land and resources."

Ronnee stated that Israelis understand full well that in the end they will all have to live together. Palestinians need their own land and equal rights. Israelis must end the occupation for themselves as much as for the Palestinians. Our job is to keep speaking, writing, acting.

A question and answer session followed, with Prof. Ellis and all panellists participating. When disgruntled audience members could not articulate arguments, they attacked the panellists personally. But most of the audience were supportive and civil, and many stayed well past the ending of the meeting to continue the discussions.