

# UJPO News

Volume 30, SUMMER, 2010, Issue #3

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!

## From our National Office

### UJPO's year of anniversaries!

Shakespeare said, "When sorrows come they come not single spies but in battalions" (from Hamlet). But this year, in UJPO's history, when anniversaries (joys/"mitsves"/blessings) come there are multiple reasons to celebrate.

- ① **Sixty-five years ago**, in August 1945, independent progressive secular Jewish organizations in various nation-wide Canadian cities, merged into one national entity - the United Jewish People's Order, encouraged by and affiliated with the International Workers' Order (IWO). Each of our centres will celebrate!
- ② **Fifty years ago** our current national headquarters building was completed - Toronto's Winchevsky Centre, dedicated as a memorial to the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. We'll be celebrating in Toronto!
- ③ **Eighty-five years ago** a group of progressive working women established a children's summer camp so they could leave the city's hot polluted atmosphere for a cooler water-front ambiance. Unequipped to manage the numerous administrative challenges of running a camp, they transferred the camp's ownership to Toronto UJPO's predecessor, the Labour League Mutual Benefit Society. This is Camp Naivelt's 85th! It is also the 76th year Naivelt is located in a former Canadian National Railway-owned amusement enterprise called Eldorado Park. A prominent sign at the entrance to the park stated "**NO JEWS OR DOGS ALLOWED**". Shortly after this issue is mailed, Camp Naivelt will hold its Gala 85th Anniversary Banquet where its history will be remembered through a musical presentation by the newly formed Naivelt Singers which presented "its work in progress" at the end of camp's music week (story on page 3, photo on page 5). We hope that a portion of this presentation will be part of the festivities when we initiate the year-long National Anniversary Celebration in November.

The National Anniversary Celebration, on November 20 at the Winchevsky Centre, also celebrates David Abramowitz's 75th birthday during the UJPO's 2010 National Annual General Meeting, November 19 - 21. It will initiate a year of celebrations in each of our centres. Details will be in the fall issue of *UJPO News* to be mailed in early November.

### Toronto UJPO calls for independent inquiry on G8/G20

Dear Premier McGuinty:

The United Jewish People's Order (UJPO) is a progressive, secular Jewish organization, and has a long history of principled defence of the oppressed and the defenders of human rights. UJPO is part of a growing list of organizations, including Amnesty International and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, calling for a public inquiry into the excessive use of force by police during the G20 summit in Toronto.

True to our tradition, we stand in solidarity with those calling for an independent public inquiry into police actions during the G8/G20 summits, including disclosure on the role of police leading up to and during events, and

the chain of command for the extraordinary crackdown on legal rights and protests.

The G8/G20 summits were a chance to put human rights, healthcare, women's rights and the global fight against poverty on the G20 agenda. Instead, the voices of thousands were silenced or ignored and the headlines dominated by images of burning police cars and broken windows - while little or nothing was discussed when the G20 announced its goal for deficit reduction.

We were shocked and appalled to find that the Ontario provincial government passed legislation in secret that designated the G20 security zone as a "public work", thus allowing the police to search without warning and arrest individuals within five metres of the four mile long wall surrounding the G20 zone.

Over the course of the weekend of June 25-27 more than 1,000 people had been detained. Many activists were arrested in their homes. On Sunday June 27th, people

who gathered peacefully outside the massive temporary detention centre set up on Eastern Avenue were beaten by police, shot with rubber bullets, and tear gassed after negotiating and discussing with police where, when, and the details of how they would be conducting their peaceful demonstration.

The United Jewish People’s Order is opposed to the violations of people’s civil and political rights in the name of defending G20 leaders. We support the immediate release of all those detained, the defence of civil rights of those facing charges arising from the extraordinary policing practices, and an independent public inquiry into police and government practices before and during the summits.

Marsha Solnicki, President,  
UJPO Toronto Board of Directors

**UJPO sections report**

**From Vancouver**

By CARL ROSENBERG

Our home in Vancouver continues to be at the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture at 6184 Ash St. Here are some recent and upcoming activities in which Vancouver UJPO members have been active.

On Sunday, June 13, the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir-Searle Friedman Founder (VJFC) had its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Concert. They reprised their successful 2002 performance of selections from *Di Yam Gazlonim* (the Yiddish version of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Pirates of Penzance*). The Yiddish translation of this work, by Al Grand, transforms not only the words but also the cultural references, while retaining the humour of the original. The *Groyse General* (Major General) in this version can bake a *challah*, make a noodle *kugl*, say the blessing over the wine every Sabbath eve and then go straight to *shul*; sing the prayers, chant the Torah; and eat chicken soup with dumplings whenever he has a stomach ache.

The Choir also performed several other Yiddish, Hebrew and Ladino songs, most notably the premiere of Leila Lustig’s setting of Avrom Sutzkever’s poem *“Di Fidl Royz”*, and Choir accompanist Elliott Dainow’s arrangement of *“Oseh Shalom.”*

The Choir is conducted by David Millard and accompanied on piano by Dainow. The guest artists at this year’s



Prominent VJFC & UJPO member, Sylvia Friedman - front row centre.  
*Donna Becker photo*

concert were the Turkish Canada Society’s Turkish choir, accompanied by Musiki Parea, performing works of Turkish folk and classical music. Because of recent tensions between Turkey and Israel, the group had a difficult decision to make in participating in the concert. Their courageous decision was a testament to the desire of many people to bridge the political, cultural and religious divides that lead to ethnic conflict.

For their closing number, the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir and the Turkish choir joined together to sing *“Ode to Peace.”* This version, written to the tune of *“Ode to Joy”* (Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony) has English words, as sung by Paul Robeson, Yiddish words by I.L. Peretz, and Turkish words (anonymously written). Singing together of people’s yearning for peace and brotherhood/sisterhood, the two choirs showed how music creates common ground, enabling us to share our respective cultures rather than allow them to divide us.

The Peretz Centre held its B’nai Mitzvah celebration on June 18. The Choir participated in what was a very moving ceremony. Nine young Peretzniks graduated, under the direction of Bob Heyman.

The Peretz Centre will host the West Coast Regional Conference for Secular Humanist and Cultural Jews—the first conference of its kind—on the Labour Day weekend, from Saturday Sept. 4 to Monday Sept. 6. In attendance will be West Coast residents from BC down to California, belonging to a variety of cultural, secular and humanist Jewish organizations, such as the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CJSO), the Arbeter Ring (Workmen’s Circle), the Society for Humanistic Judaism, and the Jewish Labor Committee, as well as non-affiliated individuals. The conference will feature workshop and discussion topics on Jewish life, culture, identity and continuity, as well as laughing, eating, singing and schmoozing. For more information on what promises to be a very exciting event, call Leslie or Shane Dyson at 604-857-0115 or e-mail <dysonf2f@telus.net.

*(The report on the choir concert is based partly on an article by Donna Becker, Program Coordinator of the Peretz Centre)*

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**From Winnipeg**

All was not quiet on the western front, at least not the Manitoba portion. Areas of western Manitoba, following heavy rains, were on flood warning in June. The region was previously under a flood watch. Road washouts have occurred in some areas. But we were not affected until Winnipeg was a flood victim in early August. Since June we were all busy with personal activities while the organizational ones took a summer vacation.

We all look forward to September when our activities will get underway again. Roz Usiskin made a proposition that our section be managed by a Board of Directors. She suggested that a meeting to discuss and elect people take place in September.

September will see the resumption of our choir’s rehearsals. And, if you don’t recall from the last issue,

many of our activities which we cosponsor with the Sholem Aleichem Community have been set:

Rosh Hashone - September 9th,  
Yom Kippur - September 18th, 2010  
(Fireplace Room)  
Chanukah - December 5th, 2010  
Purim - March 20th, 2011  
Passover - April 23rd, 2011

All celebrations will take place at the RA Steen Community Centre, 980 Palmerston.

We're eagerly anticipating the new season.  
Warm regards to all.  
Dora

Thanks so much to Maxine, Barbara and Lisa in the office. And thank you to all of the Camp Committee and Board members and other Naivelt and UJPO volunteers for your dedication and hard work. A special good luck wish to our vast wave of 18 year olds (and very soon to be 18 year olds) as they embark on a multitude of new adventures. And to Naivelters one and all, your enthusiasm, commitment to values and chutzpah are inspiring, appreciated and to be applauded. We encourage you to participate in Naivelt and UJPO activities in the city – stay connected and involved! Keep the energy of the summer alive throughout the entire year.

## Music Camp Echoed the Charm & Strength of Naivelt Community

By LUCAS MEILACH-BOSTON

This year's Naivelt Music Camp, the second in what is rapidly becoming a fixture in Camp's summer programming, was a resounding success. Culminating in a two-hour performance that incorporated elements of traditional and non-traditional klezmer, jazz, and choral music, the weeklong camp was exemplary of the artistic vibrancy and passion of the Naivelt community. The age range stretched from children to adults, the experience levels varied, but the enthusiasm and dedication of all the participants was uniform. The Camp was led by widely respected Toronto klezmer and jazz clarinetist Martin van de Ven and myself – a first year jazz student at the University of Toronto and an active member of the Naivelt community.

## From Toronto

By DAVID SHLOYME

After our May 8 Tribute fundraiser (see last issue) our shule had its closing on May 16. Barbara Blaser was the UJPO National Delegate to the CSJO 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference in Cleveland, May 28-31, and the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir had its 84<sup>th</sup> Spring Concert on May 30. Toronto UJPO cosponsored "Stitching for Peace", an exhibit of fabric art of both Israeli and Palestinians by Elizabeth Shefrin at Beit Zatoun (Olive House) June 3-31.

UJPO activities at Camp Naivelt took over subsequently...



## 2010 Naivelt Summer

= positive energy

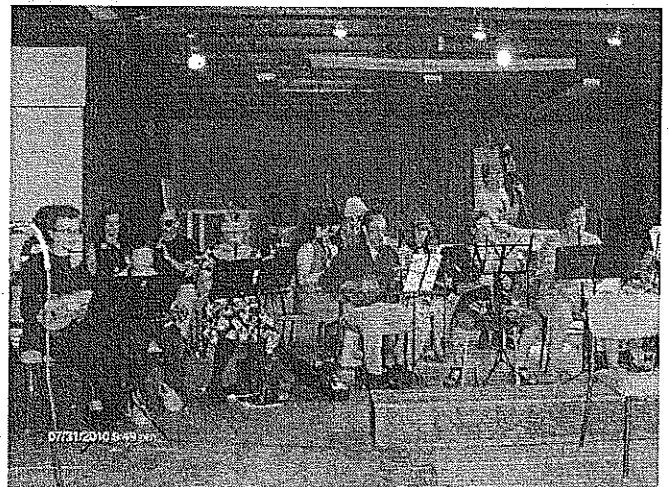
By MELANIE BRENNAN AND SHLOMIT SEGAL  
Camp Committee Co-Chairs 2009/2010

Lots of hot weather, the "Ladies Auxiliary" Book Club, many newcomers, a washing machine, bagel making, discussions about the G20, two black and white bunnies near the gate, Music Camp and Arts Camp, rafting on the river, midnight swims, the Naivelt Singers, the second Kinder Kapers weekend, internet all through Camp, a UJPO community meeting and a mail box for the Naivelt News on Hill 1... these are some of things that have been part of Naivelt 2010. In addition, there have been more people at Naivelt this year since the 1980s!

It's been a great season so far – lots going on, positive energy and, as of this article (the first week of August), still one month to go! Music Camp just finished and Arts Camp has just begun. Camp Naivelt's 85th Anniversary – A Celebration Through Music and Song, is being held on Saturday August 28th, in conjunction with our Closing Banquet.

Mentioning all of the wonderful activities, challenges and people would turn this into a very long article, but one Naivelter summed things up so well:

\*... I am quite simply so happy to be living out here for a couple of weeks, swimming, reading, writing, biking, singing and playing my instrument in a makeshift orchestra, here in a beautiful, safe, nature-filled environment. I am grateful for all of the people who care so much to keep this place running, so that we all reap the benefits of enjoying it with our loved ones.\*



Naivelt 2010 Music Camp Orchestra in performance

A typical day at the Camp started at 10:00-ish (it's Naivelt after all), with the entire group of musicians, numbering about 25, meeting – somewhat sleepily – at the Lasowsky Centre. There, they rehearsed in one of three ensembles: a recorder and ukulele ensemble, a Celtic-influenced ensemble that incorporated pennywhistle and flute, and a larger band with a full rhythm section. Each approached the traditional klezmer repertoire that was the focus of the Camp with a vitality that gave each group its own unique sound.

Following the ensemble rehearsals, the Naivelt Singers, a choir led by Shifra Cooper (photo on p. 5), would congregate to rehearse their diverse and progressive repertoire. Finally, when the choir had disbanded for the



*anti-Israel agitators. The Jewish human rights organization has also contacted the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Ontario, and the Mayor of Toronto, all contributors to the Pride Parade, asking for a review of the funding in light of the stated agenda of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid.*

And after Pride Toronto remarkably agreed to censor the two words "Israeli apartheid" from the parades (while it's perfectly legal to utter the phrase in Israel or write it in Israel's most prestigious newspaper), it seemed as though B'nai Brith and friends won. But after a massive backlash, Pride Toronto has just announced it has overturned the ridiculous decision. *Xtra* (a Toronto gay publication) reports:

*Pride Toronto (PT) has reversed its May board resolution banning the term "Israeli apartheid" and will instead require all participants to sign and abide by the City of Toronto's non-discrimination policy.*

*Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) — the target of the ban — has declared a victory and congratulated the queer community for pushing PT to reverse its censorship decision.*

*"This is a victory for the Palestine solidarity movement, which has faced censorship and bullying tactics from the Israel lobby for far too long," said QuAIA member Tim McCaskell in the release.*

Of course, QuAIA now owes a debt of thanks to their opponents who have done more than anyone to make sure the phrase "Israeli apartheid" would be on the lips of just about everyone in Canada following the story. Plus, before the ban was rescinded, QuAIA didn't waste any time in offering an alternative free speech track for pride events. This is creative organizing.

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## Toronto UJPO supports QuAIA

April 28, 2010

Dear Pride Toronto 2010,

United Jewish People's Order (UJPO), is a progressive, secular Jewish organization, and has a history of principled defence of the oppressed. True to our tradition, we stand in solidarity with those Israelis and Palestinians who fight for peace based on freedom, equality, and justice.

We strongly believe that the organizers of PRIDE Toronto have taken public steps to censor the political message of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA). PRIDE seems to be encouraged in this direction by the right-wing Zionist supporters of racism, settler colonialism, and denial of Palestinian rights.

The Toronto Board of the United Jewish Peoples Order (UJPO) vigorously protests this worrisome new development of political censorship.

The McCarthyist attempt to silence and marginalize QuAIA is an attack on LGBTQ people's rights of political expression, and as such, is an attack on all supporters of human rights. We demand that PRIDE be open to free expression of all political opinions, including those of

QuAIA, without any undemocratic conditions or restrictions.

For the Toronto UJPO Board  
Julia Barnett, Henry Lowi

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## Quebec Jewish Congress supports free speech

Quebec Jewish gay group *not* seeking ban of  
QuAIA in Montreal Pride Parade

By ATARA BECK, *jewishtribune.ca*

MONTREAL:10/08/10 – In the name of free speech, Jewish LGBT group Ga'avah (Hebrew for pride) will not protest Queers Against Israeli Apartheid's (QuAIA) presence at this year's annual pride parade.

"As a free society, we would be remiss to stop this or any other group from promoting our collective rights in Montreal," Ga'avah spokesperson Carlos Godoy told Montreal's Gazette, although he acknowledged that QuAIA's Israel-bashing agenda is "unfortunate and divisive."

"We're not asking for QuAIA to be banned," said Eta Yudin, Quebec Jewish Congress's (QJC's) communications director. "But we do take issue with their messaging."

QJC [Quebec Jewish Congress] President Adam Atlas will be marching with Ga'avah at the parade on Sunday. "Ga'avah has been working very hard to make sure there is a strong pro-Israel presence," and QJC is pleased that the parade organizers this year are calling attention to the violation of human rights for gays in several countries, Yudin said, adding that the QJC is proud to work with Ga'avah on this event.

B'nai Brith Canada-Quebec Region has voiced its disappointment with the organizers of this year's Montreal parade, who are allowing QuAIA to march with its anti-Israel signs and slogans for the second year in a row. The Jewish human rights organization called upon "all respectable stakeholders to disassociate themselves" from QuAIA's agenda.

"We are concerned that Israel apartheid campaigners who seek to delegitimize the Jewish state and its supporters here in Canada will be marching in this parade in an attempt to divert its messaging," said Allan Adel, national chair of B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights. "The very phrase 'Israeli Apartheid' is nothing but hateful propaganda, which should have no place in a parade that celebrates diversity and respect."



Shifra Cooper leads Naivelt Singers' rehearsal

See Music Camp  
article on page 3



**Council of Canadians  
warns Premiers on  
economic & water policy  
in Canada-EU free trade talks**

*council-of-canadians@topica.email-publisher.com*

As provincial Premiers gathered in Winnipeg, Manitoba for their annual Council of the Federation meeting, the Council of Canadians was there to warn about the potential loss of control of our water resources and public services if the proposed Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) goes forward.

CETA is a wide ranging deal that would put pressure on our provincial and territorial governments to open up public services for water, transportation, child care and public health care to private European companies. Under the agreement, Canadian corporations are looking for better access to the European market without having to meet stricter EU rules. European negotiators want to give corporations Canadian service contracts, which would transfer the \$100 to \$200 billion our local governments spend annually on goods and services into corporate profits. The EU wants public hydro, public water and most major cities banned from applying local preferences or other forms of social, ethical or sustainable criteria to public tendering.

CETA could have a major impact on access to public water service and infrastructure as Europe is home to the largest water corporations in the world, which have their sights set on privatizing Canada's public utilities.

"There is every chance a private water company would invoke new legal trade protections in cases where a city council decided to keep a water utility public on the grounds it would be more accountable, cheaper to run, or simply more democratic," said Stuart Trew, the Council of Canadians trade campaigner in a media release in advance of the Premiers' meeting. "Even conservation strategies have come under attack in Europe by the large private water companies. If the Council of the Federation is truly concerned about protecting water, they shouldn't be helping EU water companies dismantle protections in Canada."

The Council of Canadians joined with more than 30 other organizations calling for transparency of CETA negotiations in a letter sent to Premiers in advance of the meeting. A copy of that letter is available in French and English on the Trade Justice Network website at [www.tradejustice.ca](http://www.tradejustice.ca). The Council of Canadians is calling for an end to the CETA negotiations, which are set to enter into the fifth round at meetings in Ottawa, Ontario this October.

While the Premiers met, our Winnipeg Chapter and the Climate Action Network co-organized an event called "Unsustainable Compromises: The trade threats to provincial leadership on climate change." Presentations at

the event explained how this trade deal will restrict provinces' and territories' abilities to build and promote green energy industries or to introduce stricter environmental protections than currently exist. There are also reports that CETA could include a proportionality clause as exists in NAFTA, which binds Canada to a constant level of oil and gas exports to the United States no matter the circumstances.

**Water diversion plan defeated!**

A water diversion plan in Milton, Ontario was given thumbs down by the local township council after many concerned residents spoke out against the plan to have a 12 kilometre pipeline move water to service a casino expansion, entertainment complex, hundreds of new houses, a golf course, hotel, big box stores, industrial enterprises and more.

The Council of Canadians supported the community efforts against this water diversion by participating in meetings and events. The local Peterborough-Kawartha chapter also joined the community's "It's About Water" human chain as part of World Water events this year.

Community organizers in the fight against the water diversion plan gave special thanks to the many individuals and groups involved in the campaign and included "special recognition" to Council of Canadians: Catherine Kaye, Board and chapter member Roy Brady and Ontario-Québec Regional Organizer Mark Calzavara. The letter acknowledged "all of the support, meetings, inclusion in Council of Canadians newsletters and agendas right up to the letter of support from Maude Barlow."

**Middle East News Clips**

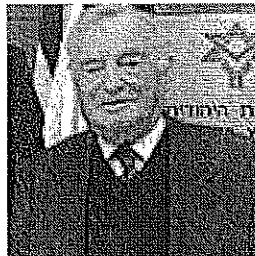
**Shoah survivors say**

**Kids' deportation inhumane**

In letter to Netanyahu, survivors say decision on foreign children goes against 'Jewish conscience'

*Ynetnews.com*

08/08/10 — Heads of the umbrella organization of Holocaust survivors in Israel sent a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday in which they demanded that he cancel the deportation of 400 children of illegal foreign workers.



Noah Flug.  
Signed on letter  
Photo: Sasson Tiram

In the letter, signed by Noah Flug and Alex Orly, the Holocaust survivors wrote that they, like the rest of the country's residents, were shocked and pained by the

cabinet's decision to deport the kids.

"The look in the sad eyes of the children and their tears cannot leave us, survivors and children of the Holocaust, apathetic," they wrote to the prime minister.

They called the decision inhumane: "The State of Israel is a Jewish country founded on a Jewish heart and conscience. We are a nation with a history and Torah that instruct us on precisely how to behave towards a foreigner. It is unacceptable that a Jewish government will act in such an inhumane and unscrupulous manner."

The survivors mentioned that children were torn away from their parents during the Holocaust. "We who experienced the Holocaust were witnesses to the death camp selection and the separation between children and their parents," they wrote to Netanyahu. "We especially cannot see pictures of miserable children who are not responsible for their situation and remain indifferent. We are overcome by a sense of suffocation and shame."

### 'They must not pay the price'

In the letter, the survivors also raised other reasons why the children should not be deported from Israel. "These children were born here and study in public schools. They must not pay the price as part of an attempt to solve the problem of the unemployment."

In addition, the survivors said that should the issue of foreign workers need to be resolved, adult workers staying illegally in the country should be targeted.

"We believe that entry visas must be granted more stringently and that the country must start with the removal of workers remaining in Israel illegally. However, we must show compassion, heart, soul, and humanity towards the children who are not responsible for the fate that brought them to Israel," the letter reads.

"The Jewish State with a past such as ours must not fail in terms of humanity and morality. This would damage us as a merciful society with a Jewish soul. These children know only Israel; they speak our language; they dream in Hebrew, and aspire to take part in building Israel. We must not let a child who grew up here be uprooted merely because of his origin. This lesson is engraved in the flesh of the Jewish people.

"We believe that now more than ever it is fitting that the voice of the Holocaust survivors should be abided on this issue," they wrote to the prime minister.

"We must preserve the State of Israel's honor and remove this embarrassing chapter from our agenda as if it never happened."

## Obama extends Jerusalem embassy waiver

*jta.org*

WASHINGTON: 03/06/10 — President Obama has extended a waiver for an additional six months delaying moving the U.S. Embassy [from Tel Aviv] to Jerusalem.

Obama's waiver, issued Wednesday, follows in the footsteps of predecessors Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, who also extended the waiver every six months since the law was adopted in 1995 calling for the move of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Presidents are permitted to delay the move on national security grounds.

Some Jewish groups have pushed for the United States to move the embassy as a way to bolster Israeli claims to the city. Those favoring the use of the waiver say that such a step would anger the Arab world and put the United States in the position of taking sides on an issue that should be settled in peace talks.

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## Vanunu sent back to prison

*AP via independent.co.uk*

24/05/10 — Mordechai Vanunu, the nuclear whistleblower who spent 18 years in prison, went back to jail yesterday for violating the terms of his parole.

Vanunu has been barred from leaving the country or meeting with foreigners since he was released from prison in 2004. In December, Israeli authorities arrested Vanunu, accusing him of having contact with a number of foreigners, including journalists, and a Norwegian woman whom Vanunu said was his girlfriend. Israel's prison service said he would serve three months.

"Shame on you Israel for putting me in prison after 24 years of speaking the truth," Vanunu said outside the courthouse yesterday. He criticised what he called "stupid" Israeli institutions, and Arab and international bodies he said should have protected him.

"Shame on you, all the world media, for not protecting freedom of speech," he said.

Vanunu was a low-level technician at an Israeli nuclear plant who leaked details and pictures of the clandestine operation to The Sunday Times of London in 1986. Foreign experts who reviewed the material concluded that Israel had a formidable nuclear arsenal.

Israeli intelligence agents kidnapped him in Rome and brought him back to Israel to stand trial. Vanunu served 11 years of his 18-year sentence in solitary confinement. Israel has neither acknowledged nor denied having nuclear weapons.



Protest against deportation of foreign workers' children  
Photo: Gil Yohanan



Rosh Hashone greetings to  
members and friends for a sweet,  
healthy and prosperous year

## Fall in Racism at Israel's Premier League Clubs

nif.org

11/06/10 — As the nations of the world gather together in South Africa for the World Cup, NIF's campaign to reduce racism in Israeli society through soccer - Kick Racism Out of Israeli Soccer - has reported its results for the 2009/10 season. Most encouraging was a 175 percent increase of educational activities by the clubs themselves this past season, and a 32 percent increase in fans condemning the racist behavior of fellow fans.



Ashdod fans receive the NIF Israel Football Association prize for the fairest fans in Israel. The prize includes soccer equipment and accessories.

Yiddish reborn! - וויד'יש

## Young Israelis Turning to Yiddish in Search for Roots

By SUE FISHKOFF, [jta.org](http://jta.org)

03/05/10— Sue Fishkoff writes about the revival of interest in Yiddish and Yiddish culture among young Israelis which has led to the launching of a new Center for Yiddish Studies at Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva, Israel.

In recognition of this steadily growing interest, Ben-Gurion University this spring launched a new Center for Yiddish Studies housed in the department of Hebrew literature. The idea is to create an academic fellowship of Yiddish scholars already working in the field and reach out to larger audiences with conferences, publications, analysis of the Yiddish press from Eastern Europe and perhaps even stagings of classic Yiddish theater pieces.

Dr. David G. Roskies, the Sol and Evelyn Henkind Chair in Yiddish Literature and Culture and Professor of Jewish Literature at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City (JTS), will head the new Center. A preeminent scholar and teacher in Yiddish language, literature and Eastern European Jewish culture, he will work on BGU's Marcus Family Campus one semester per year beginning

in February. Roskies is internationally recognized for his work in Jewish literary history.

The Center will organize workshops and colloquia, bring to light forgotten and unpublished Yiddish works of poetry, prose, drama and memoir, and help access the great volume of Yiddish media from Eastern Europe. Catering to the increasing interest in Yiddish culture in Israel, the Center has plans to publish classics of Yiddish literature in Hebrew translation.

The Center will work to forge partnerships with the Goldreich Center for Yiddish at Tel Aviv University, the *Centre Medem* in Paris and the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst. Within BGU, the Center will also seek to create partnerships with the University's departments of literature, linguistics, Jewish history, Jewish thought and Israel studies.

## The Future of Jewish American Literary Studies

Call for Papers ([deadline extended to 10/15](#))

### *The Future of Jewish American Literary Studies*

A special Issue of MELUS

(Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States):

Guest Editors: Lori Harrison-Kahan and Josh Lambert

Addressing questions raised by the 2009 MLA roundtable "Does the English Department Have a Jewish Problem?," this special issue of MELUS will survey the current state of Jewish American literary scholarship and explore new directions for the future of the field. The issue aims to highlight innovative approaches that will reinvigorate and redefine the study of Jews and Jewishness in American literature and to examine challenges posed by Jewish literature to the disciplinary and theoretical paradigms of American and ethnic literature.

We invite a broad range of contributions, but topics of particular interest are listed below. We are particularly seeking additional essays that deal with American Yiddish and Hebrew texts.

- Pedagogical approaches to integrating Jewish literature into multi-ethnic literature curriculum - New opportunities for the study of Jewish literature created by recent critical approaches such as whiteness, transnational, comparative ethnic, and multilingual studies, and book history - Moving beyond equations of Jewishness with whiteness (e.g., essays on American Jews of color, Sephardic Jews, and non-Jewish ethnic writers whose work addresses Jewishness) - Gender, sexuality, and queer identity (e.g., essays on underrepresented women, gay, and lesbian writers) - Aesthetic contributions of Jewish writers to the development of American literature - Texts written, in whole or in part, in languages other than English, such as Yiddish and Hebrew - Studies in genres other than prose fiction, including poetry, autobiography, drama, criticism, children's and young adult literature, graphic narratives.

Completed papers in MLA format should be between 7000-9000 words, including notes and works cited. Queries concerning possible submissions are welcome. Please send essays as e-mail attachments to Lori Harrison-Kahan (harrislo@bc.edu). The author's name should not appear on the manuscript, but should be included on a separate title or cover sheet, which should also contain complete mailing and e-mail addresses.

Deadline for submission: October 15, 2010

## INTERNATIONAL

### **U.S., Cuba meet but reach no deal on Haiti aid: Cuban official**

By Staff Writers, *terradaily.com*

Washington (AFP): 21/04/10 — Cuba and the United States have held a series of unprecedented talks to coordinate aid to earthquake-stricken Haiti but so far have failed to reach agreement, a top Cuban official said Wednesday.

The two longtime foes, which have had no diplomatic relations for half a century, have met three times so far to discuss cooperation on Haiti and could meet again soon, said Jorge Bolaños, who heads the Cuban Interests Section in Washington.

"We have to continue because we have not produced any agreements" on how to coordinate bilateral aid to impoverished Haiti after it was devastated by a massive earthquake that killed an estimated 220,000 people in January, Bolaños said.

"We have not produced a definition of what the US could do" to rebuild Haiti's health system, he added.

Cuba dispatched doctors to its Caribbean neighbor to assist in the aid effort, and 700 of them remain, according to the Cuban envoy. It also opened up its airspace to the United States for aid transfers after the quake, in a gesture widely hailed by US officials.

"That shows the disposition of Cuba to cooperate with any country, including the US," Bolaños said in English.

Cuba wants to build a hospital in Haiti, where Cuban doctors would help train Haitians to eventually manage the health center. But Bolaños said the project needed cooperation from other countries to be implemented.

"We need unity in Haiti," Bolaños said, warning that aid to the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere should not be "a charity project," nor should it seek to divide up the country into "market segments."

Haiti's sovereignty must be respected by countries participating in reconstruction efforts, he said, "so that the Haitian government could exercise its authority and work for the benefit of the Haitian people, not foreign companies," he said.

### **Venezuela extradites two spies!**

#### **One sent to Cuba and one to Washington**

By Tamara Pearson, *Venezuelanalysis.com*

MERIDA, Venezuela: 08/07/10 — Francisco Chavez Abarca, who was recently extradited to Cuba, confessed to having been contracted by Luis Posada Carriles to carry out destabilizing acts in Venezuela leading to the September national assembly elections.

A key opposition strategy in recent years before Venezuela elections has been to promote riots, as well as scarcity of certain food items, combined with media campaigns to create a sense of insecurity among the Venezuelan population.

Chavez Abarca, on arriving at Caracas international airport last Thursday, was arrested and taken to the SEBIN (Bolivarian Intelligence Service) headquarters for questioning.

And on Tuesday, Venezuela president Hugo Chavez announced that alleged drug trafficker Carlos Renteria, who is wanted in Colombia, had been captured by Venezuelan authorities the day before. Renteria is also wanted in the United States for conspiring to import, possess, and distribute cocaine, *El Correo Del Orinoco* reported.

According to *El Espectador*, the US state department is offering \$5 million for his capture, and on Tuesday Chavez announced that Renteria will be extradited to the U.S.

Footage obtained by Telesur shows Chavez Abarca's arrival at the airport, then it shows him being led away by airport officials after his passport was discovered to be false and that there was an Interpol code red on him by Cuba.

Telesur footage also shows the suspect responding to questions by SEBIN. When asked who was his superior, Chavez Abarca replied, "Luis Posda Carriles."

"Where does he give orders from? Where is he?" The officer asked.

"I don't know because I haven't talked with him since '97."

"How do you receive instructions?"

"Through Daniel."

Daniel Barrundia, according to Radio Mundial, is connected to the counter-revolutionary Cuban-American Foundation, located in Miami.

The officer then asked Chavez Abarca how he knew there was contact between Barrundia and Posada, and Chavez Abarca responded, "I know how he talks, I know how he acts, I know how he thinks. I know what he could say and what he wouldn't."

Chavez Abarca allegedly came to Venezuela to study what disturbance he could cause in order to sabotage the government's chances in September's parliamentary elections.

### Divide and conquer

In response to a question about what sort of actions he was planning, he said, "Riots. Riots... tire burning... riots in the street...the other thing that could be done is attack one political party... so the (pro-Chavez) parties start fighting."

According to the SEBIN, Chavez Abarca received his instructions via email, which suggested meeting three people, two of them Venezuelans, in a restaurant near the airport.

Finally, Chavez Abarca said his fee for the work was up to him.

Venezuelan legislator Juan Mendoza and other Venezuelan authorities have publically accused Chavez Abarca of wanting to commit a "wave of terrorist attempts" in Venezuela and he also criticised the lack of coverage of the issue by the private Venezuelan press, saying it was suspicious.

However, the private media have given a lot of coverage to comments by Chavez Abarca's wife, Karla Trigueros, who accused Cuba and Venezuelan intelligence agencies of forcefully bringing her husband to Venezuela from Guatemala as part of a "secret operation".

Venezuela deported Chavez Abarca to Cuba yesterday, but said they would continue investigating the case, to discover who he had been planning on working with.

Retired Cuban general, Fabian Escalante, said the Venezuelan government's decision to extradite Chavez Abarca was positive, "This is a character who has been trained by the best schools of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and by the Bin Laden of the Western Hemisphere, Luis Posada Carriles, who is guilty of the attacks against Cuban tourist installations in 1997."

General Escalante said that Chavez Abarca would be given a "fair and transparent" trial in Cuba.

After Chavez Abarca was deported, minister for the interior and justice affairs, Tarek El Aissami, told the media that Venezuela maintains a serious struggle against terrorism. "It's a commitment ...to peace, to ...the real struggle against criminal organisations dedicated to killing, to creating panic among our peoples," said El Aissami.

According to Legislator Mendoza, Chavez Abarca, a Salvadoran citizen, was the "head of organised crime in El Salvador."

In the 1990s he was allegedly involved in drug trafficking, arms sales, and counterfeiting. In April 1997 he was accused of setting bombs off in a hotel in Havana, on two separate occasions.

He also is alleged to have set off a bomb in Mexico that year and contracted a mercenary, Ernesto Cruz Leon, to carry out terrorist missions in Cuba. Cruz Leon later confessed to setting off bombs in hotels in Cuba, which resulted in the death of one Italian.

Posada Carriles is a nationalized Venezuelan who is wanted for his responsibility for the attack on a Cuban plane in 1976 that left 73 passengers dead. He is

currently in Miami where he is being protected by the U.S government, which, going against international law, refuses to extradite him.

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