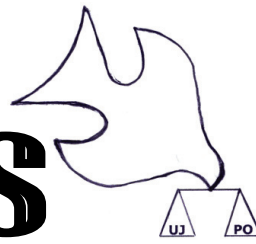


# UJPO News

The United Jewish People's Order is a national, nonpartisan, socialist-oriented, secular organization.



Serving Canada's progressive Jews in individual organizations since 1926 and collectively as the UJPO since 1945!

Winter, 2011 Volume 31 Issue #1

## Our Gala Anniversaries Celebration!

By SHERRI BERGMAN

On Saturday November 20th, our organization hosted a Milestone Anniversary Gala, in celebration of the National UJPO's 65th, Camp Naivelt's 85th, the Winchevsky Centre's 50th and David Abramowitz's 75th birthday. What a mouthful! And what a party it was! I am so delighted and honoured to have participated in this wonderful program. Having been born into the organization, spent all of my younger years at Camps Kinderland and Naivelt, and having had very close family ties with the Abramowitz family, it felt particularly appropriate for me to attend this event marking all of these wonderful milestones.

Lyn Center, co-president of the National UJPO, was our excellent emcee for the evening. Her opening remarks were followed by greetings from UJPO delegates Roz Usiskin (Winnipeg), Sylvia Friedman (Vancouver) and Ben Shek (Toronto) - all of which reminded us of the breadth of the UJPO's activities across Canada. In her greetings from Camp Naivelt, UJPO Toronto President Marsha Solnicki shared a very touching story from a former camper whose life was changed by his experience at Camp Kinderland. Marsha also spoke of her own appreciation for the opportunities and experiences she had at Camp. Over the years, there have definitely been many changes in our community, and we are all very fortunate to still be part of this lively and active summer home.



Sherri Bergman

I read aloud a poem I had written, called "Memories of Home", which expressed my reactions to my experiences in this organization. I also gifted the archives with a poster that I had discovered under the floor boards in my old Camp cottage years ago - a huge drawing dating back to 1947 by Avrom Yanovsky featuring a chainik (tea kettle) a hacker (axe) and the words:

*Do ruen di delegaten fun Poiln. Hak nisht kain chainik!* (Here rest the Polish delegates. Don't rattle my tea kettle [i.e. do not disturb!])

At intermission, a spread of delightful snacks was laid out by Stuart Lubin - thanks for always keeping us well fed! During the break, people could wander and enjoy the many archival photographs, portraits and displays hanging in the Hall and Memorabilia Room. They were a wonderful way to remind us of who has been part of the process of building this organization.

What a trip down memory lane and even pre-memory lane in some cases. Thanks so much to Lisa Roy for creating the displays and to Sol Hermolin for developing the photographs.

The most enjoyable part of the evening by far was the roasting and toasting of David Abramowitz. The wonderful roastmaster/mistress was Ester Reiter, an active member of the UJPO and camp communities. Maxine Hermolin did a brilliant presentation of all of the different hats that David wears in our organization, taking them out of a bin one by one and presenting them to him. Two short plays were performed by original members of the Toronto Ensemble Theatre, "The Journal", a New Year's skit originally written by David in 1987, and "Pastor David", written as a short story by Lyn Center and adapted for the stage by Lisa Roy. Both were directed by Don Mooljie and got many chuckles. The performers included Sylvia Friedman, Stuart Lubin, Sheila Miller, Don Mooljie, Barbara Siegel, Lyn Terry and myself.

The Naivelt Singers, a talented multi-generational chorus conducted by Shifra Cooper, presented us with a wonderful program of songs from the history of the organization, including: *Der International* (the International), *Yugnt Hymn* "Thanks for the Memories" (Youth Hymn) and *Di Tsukunft* (The Future). And "Thanks for the Memories" with special lyrics written for David by Maxine and Lisa, sung by an entourage of admirers, was a delightful way to conclude our tribute.



Thanks to all who worked tirelessly to mount this outstanding event. I would like to conclude with the last two verses of my poem, called "Memories of Home":

I am grateful to those who had the foresight to build it.  
I am grateful to those who maintained.  
Your kinder and your eyneklakh  
Have had so much to gain.

For those of you who are still here  
To carry on the tradition  
I wish you fortitude and success  
As you follow your passionate convictions.

## - From our National Office -

# UJPO National Board AGM – 2010

By LYN CENTER

On November 20-21, the 2010 UJPO National Executive's Annual General Meeting was held in Toronto with delegates from Vancouver, Winnipeg and Toronto.

### Vancouver

Sylvia Friedman reported that while there are still half a dozen UJPO members in that city, they are mainly involved in producing **Outlook**, Canada's only progressive Jewish magazine, and in working with the **Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture**. Sylvia believes there are many potential young members in the Vancouver area and requested that we send a new, young face to Vancouver to help them organize.

### Winnipeg

Roz Usiskin and Harriet Zaidman explained how the Winnipeg UJPO executive had recently been expanded to a board of 12 members, many of whom are younger, and the result has been to reinvigorate the section with new ideas and energy. They continue to sponsor interesting programs and have been successful in attracting new members, aiming particularly at the "silent majority" of Jews who are not comfortable with the dominant Jewish perspective on Israel and the Middle East. Winnipeg's enthusiasm and successes are inspiring to many of us.

### Toronto

Marsha Solnicki and Sol Blaser reported the strong attendance at the Toronto UJPO's High Holiday and Passover celebrations and great enthusiasm and activity at Camp Naivelt, but conceded there are difficulties in attracting large audiences to other programs held at the Winchevsky Centre. While the Kinder Kapers program continues to be well attended, the number of students enrolled in the Morris Winchevsky Shule has declined. Over the last year, the Toronto Board organized three very successful "community meetings" (two at Camp).

### CSJO

We were pleased to welcome to the meeting guests Rifke Feinstein, the Executive Director of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, and Hans Leander, both from Cleveland. They asked what the CSJO could offer our organization to aid

in our progress/growth and make our affiliation with CSJO more meaningful. The more our members know about the history of the CSJO and its contributions to secular Jewish culture, the more likely they will be to attend the CSJO conference to be held in Toronto at Humber College May 27-30, 2011

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To improve communications, it was recommended that we experiment with new technologies to hold virtual national meetings. We are currently working to update the UJPO website; Sam Blatt offered to act as Web Administrator for the National UJPO. The **UJPO News** continues to be produced quarterly. In Winnipeg a member has created a **Facebook** page, while in Toronto there are two hard-copy/online publications: **L'Khaim** and **Naivelt News**. We are also indebted to our Vancouver members for continuing to produce for Canadian Jewish readers the excellent **Outlook** magazine.

Winnipeg proposed a new youth membership category, at a lower rate, for members under the age of 30, and the Board agreed. Several amendments to our existing national constitution were proposed and accepted. Among them was a new statement, that on dissolution of a Section, 25 percent of remaining funds would be set aside for local disbursement, and the remaining 75 percent would be sent to the National UJPO.

Plans for a long-delayed UJPO-sponsored national exhibit of the political cartoons of Avrom Yanovsky are again underway, with showings in all three centres. Also approved was a national tour featuring Sam Blatt, editor of **Seizing Control of Space in East Jerusalem**, to take place in 2011. Also to take place in 2011 is a UJPO tour to Venezuela organized by Ronnee Jaeger and Sam Blatt. The purpose of the visit is to view, first-hand, the changes undertaken by President Hugo Chavez, their effects on the Venezuelan people, and to investigate the allegations of state anti-Semitism.

Lastly, we anticipate the next national Annual General Meeting will be in Winnipeg in 2011.

## Never Again Tour Report

By LYN CENTER

When the organizers of the tour "Never Again for Anyone" asked the Winchevsky Centre/UJPO for permission to use our facilities for a forum on February 1, the request was considered by the Toronto UJPO Board and approved.

The speakers included a Muslim and a First Nations representative, but the most controversial speaker was Hajo Meyer, a Dutch physicist and survivor of Auschwitz, who believes the way to end the injustices in Israel is to put an end to the state.

That is not the UJPO position. As stated in our current Aims

and Purposes brochure, our position is "We support serious negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians with a view to ensuring equality, peace, justice, security and prosperity for both peoples."

The Winchevsky Centre received two letters prior to the event from the United Jewish Appeal/Canadian Jewish Congress, notifying us that if we went ahead with the event they would "disaffiliate" with the Centre. The Toronto Board believed that the right to freedom of expression was paramount and voted to proceed with the event. Eighty-five people attended; few agreed

with Meyer's position, and some UJPO members were upset with his statements. On the other hand, we have received many messages of support for our decision.

Following the event, we received a letter dated February 3 from the UJA/CJC stating that all ties had been severed, but offering to meet with us. On February 3 we accepted their offer to meet with them; three and a half weeks later the UJA/CJC responded to our letter "in which you suggest a meeting...please indicate

the proposed subject matter for this meeting...". It was UJPO's interpretation of their letter that they were offering to meet with us.

Also after the event, Frances Kraft of the Canadian Jewish News interviewed David Abramowitz, National Co-President, and an article about the UJA/CJC's decision appeared in the newspaper (available online at cjnews.com). A follow-up article appeared two weeks later indicating that the UJPO Board was contemplating its response. To be continued.

## UJPO Sections Report

### From Vancouver

By CARL ROSENBERG

Our home in Vancouver at the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture continues to be the venue for a variety of absorbing activities, including the monthly *Fraytig Tsu Nakht*, which always has engaging presentations on diverse topics. Two recent FTNs were excellent. On **November 19**, Rachel Mines and Gene Homel gave an enjoyable talk and slide show about their **summer in Vilna**, where Rachel took the intensive Yiddish program and both took part in the daily cultural events. On **November 21**, Liliane Zimmerman gave an eloquent and informative talk on, "**New wine in old bottles: Smashing some ageist myths.**"

In October, a launch was held for a new book by long-time UJPO and Peretz member Seemah C. Berson. Her book *I Have A Story to Tell You* is a collection of interviews that Seemah conducted with Eastern European Jewish immigrants who lived in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver in the early twentieth century. Seemah documented these immigrants' recounting of their lives in the Old Country and the hardships of their arrival and new lives in Canada. Many of these immigrants, as well as their descendants, were active in secular Jewish organizations such as UJPO, the Peretz Centre, and the Winchevsky Centre in Toronto.



On **November 28**, the Kol Halev Performance Ensemble and the Peretz Centre presented **Hannukkah in Chelm!**, a new musical by Vancouver author Joan Stuchner. In this tale, the villagers of Chelm try to get Hanukkah to last all year instead of just eight days. Kol Halev is a multi-generational community performing arts ensemble including dancers, singers, musicians and actors dedicated to portraying Jewish historical stories and culture through dance, song, script and music. The group has performed at several Peretz events.

The Peretz Centre has recently begun having a **Community Sunday**, with a discussion and pot luck lunch. On Sunday, **January 30**, the discussion topic focused on "**Spirituality and Secularism**," introduced by Seemah Berson. The next Community Sunday, **February 20**, promises an equally fascinating discussion on "**One Person's Journey from Orthodox to**

**Secular Judaism**," introduced by Peretz President Richard Rosenberg.

On Thursday, **February 3**, the Peretz Centre hosted the 2011 Itta and Eliezer Zeisler Memorial **Lecture by David G. Roskies on "Mothers, Motherlands, and the Mother Tongue."** Roskies, the Sol and Evelyn Henkind Chair in Yiddish Literature and Culture and Professor of Jewish Literature at The Jewish Theological Seminary, is a cultural historian of Eastern European Jewry. The latest of his nine books is *Yiddishlands: A Memoir* (Wayne State University Press), the story of modern Yiddish culture as told through his own recounting of his family history, in particular stories told to him as a child by his mother, which he recalls as being far more interesting than anything he was learning at school—"and none of it was age appropriate."

The Zeisler Memorial Lecture is endowed by Betty and Irv Nitkin, in memory of Betty's parents. All of us who were present at this one were fortunate to experience such an informative and lively presentation, which even included Roskies singing a few songs (in various languages) sung to him by his mother.

The diverse programs held at the Peretz Centre constitute an overlooked but vital aspect of Vancouver's cultural scene. I hope that the audience widens to include more members of the Jewish community, and beyond.

### From Winnipeg

by DORA ROSENBAUM

Greetings from frozen Winnipeg. Since our last report - the changing in our method of operation from a Branch Executive to a Board of Directors - we are experiencing a substantive improvement. New and additional people are doing the work; our program committee is performing wonders.



In December we held a film showing "**Heir to an Execution**". It was produced by **Ivy Meeropol**, the granddaughter of **Ethel and Julius Rosenberg**. The film was good and attendance was fair considering it was the Sunday night before Christmas. The DVD is available via Amazon™ (amazon.com) and a trailer of the video on the internet can be viewed at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0388996/>

On **January 30** we held a forum on “**Poverty in the Jewish Community**” with **Willow Aster**, community member, **Neil Cohen** - Executive Director, Community Help Centre and a representative from Winnipeg Jewish Family and Child Services. To meet our deadline for this issue we will report on it in the Spring issue.

Winnipeg members were extremely saddened by the passing of 100 year old **Miriam Schachter**, a long time member. Miriam served as secretary of the organization for several years, including during a period when UJPO was regularly presenting briefs to different government commissions, roundtables, etc. Right up to the end Miriam’s mind was sharp. We also mourn the death of **Sam Block**, a lifelong supporter, survived by his wife Jeanette and daughters Rhea, Lee Anne (Winnipeg) and Sheila (Toronto) their partners and several grandchildren. He was generous with his time, volunteering his skills in Trinidad, Bolivia, and on northern reserves. Sam made an incredible contribution to populations in Manitoba and internationally through his expertise in water engineering.

We have acquired a very enthusiastic Membership Chair, Karen Naylor, and now have four new members; Karen has promised more will join. This is very heartening to our organization.

Our **North End Choir** is busy preparing for our annual **Warsaw Ghetto commemoration** on **May 2** as part of **MayWorks**. We have a very different theme this year; we will be singing songs that emerged from the ghettos. Also, the choir will be singing at several different venues such as the **Sharon Home for Seniors**, and **Sharrey Zedek Synagogue**. The choir is always on the lookout for more people to join.



Winnipeg's North End Choir

See you all in the spring.  
Dora

**Correction:**

In the last issue we erroneously reported “...the combined executives of the Winnipeg UJPO and the Sholem Aleichem Community established board structures.” This should have read “Winnipeg UJPO members, including those who are also members of the Sholem Aleichem Community, established a Board structure”.

The editors regret this error and any confusion it may have caused.

## Remembering Abe Arnold 1922-2011

Abe Arnold C.M., LL.D. was UJPO’s most widely known and honoured member. His death is a great loss to our community, the secular Jewish world, and Canada. A historian who documented Jewish life in Canada, as well as a national leader on the left in Canadian Jewry Abe was also fought for enhanced civil rights in Canada.



Known to some as disputatious, his vigorous intellect and energetic drive made him a veritable force to be reckoned with in many fields. He was involved in the founding of the **Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada** (which he led from 1968 to 1975) and the **Joseph Zuken Memorial Association**.

Abe was active in the Winnipeg UJPO and delivered a well-documented presentation on the significant contributions UJPO had made to Canada at our 2002 UJPO National Convention. He contributed chapters to several books and wrote numerous articles for Jewish publications, including **The Canadian Jewish News**, the **Jewish Post and News** in Winnipeg, **Outlook Magazine**, and **Humanistic Judaism**. He also contributed to the **Beaver**, Canada’s history magazine.

He moved to Winnipeg in 1965 as western regional director of **Canadian Jewish Congress**, was an editor in Toronto (1946-49) and in Vancouver for the **Jewish Western Bulletin** (1949-1960). He also worked as public relations director for the **Jewish Federation/Combined Jewish Appeal** in Montreal (1960-65).

As a historian, his major works were ***Jewish Life in Canada***, published in 1976, and ***Judaism: Myth, Legend, History and Custom from the Religious to the Secular***, a study of Jewish history and tradition from a secular humanist perspective, published in 1995, jokingly referred to as the *Jewish atheists bible*. His historical research into Jewish life in Canada was laudable. His dedication to civil rights, made him very influential in the country as a whole.

Abe, along with Roz Usiskin, helped found the **Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties (MARL)** in 1978 where he served as its first Executive Director. He was honoured in 1994 with the **Manitoba Human Rights Achievement Award** as a “life-long advocate of human rights and civil liberties.” He received the Winnipeg Jewish community’s **Shem Tov Award** in 1997. He received an **honorary doctorate from the University of Winnipeg** in 2001 and was appointed a **member of the Order of Canada** in 2004. He also received UJPO’s **Order of the Order** and **Mentsh Among Mentshn** awards.

To Bertha, Abe’s wife of 66 years, his son, Mark, and his family in Toronto, and daughter, Shelley, and her family in Winnipeg, and sister Rose Harrod and her family in Vancouver, we express our profound condolences in your loss. He was a giant among giants, and we were indeed extremely privileged to be the beneficiaries of his wisdom, counsel and friendship over the years. We shall all miss him dearly, hold his memory in our hearts, and honour his name.

## From Toronto

By DOVID SHLOYME

If nothing else this was a most hectic period of activity in Toronto for a while so we'll get down to reporting.

**Outlook Magazine's** annual brunch on **October 16** featured the book launch of "**Seizing Control of Space in East Jerusalem**" by Dr. Meir Margalit, and edited by our own Sam Blatt. The book, very graphically, chronicles the illegal, systemized Judaization of this highly contentious territory. Sam's pictorial presentation was intently followed by the larger than usual crowd and will become a **National UJPO Tour** in the fall when he takes this presentation on the road to Winnipeg and Vancouver. Copies of the book will also be available.

For **Holocaust Education Week**, we joined with the Friends of Yiddish, Committee for Yiddish and Workmen's Circle (at their hall) on **November 7** for a showing of the film "**Life in the Lodz Ghetto**" preceded by a Yiddish talk about the creation and history of the ghetto. About 150 attended.

Then, the highlight of our year, on **November 20**, our **Gala Milestone/Anniversary Celebration**, the story of which opens this issue. It was held in the middle of our National Board AGM, the report of which also appears earlier in this issue. And if our

November wasn't full enough, **on the 25th** we had a theatre night and saw "**Bethune Imagined**" an original play about Canada's famous doctor and the women in his life. His politics were cleverly interwoven into the well directed production.

And with khanike falling early in 2010 we moved far south-west of the Winchevsky Centre. Here's Shlomit Segal's chronicle of the event.

## Our Chanukah Moves South

By SHLOMIT SEGAL

On **December 4**, the fourth night of Chanukah, more than 100 people gathered to celebrate Chanukah at the Mary McCormack Recreation Centre in Toronto's west end.

The goal of this first-time collaboration between UJPO, our Shule and the **West End Tribe of Secular Jews**, a group of like-minded progressive and secular families, many with children in downtown alternative schools, was to bring our style of Jewish celebrations to south of Bloor Street.



David Wall and Josh Engel engage kids in song

## Canada News

### UN finds Canada and Ontario violate human rights

Marketwire

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: 19/11/10 — The UN's International Labour Organization (ILO) has ruled that Canada and Ontario, through Ontario's ban on farm unions, violate the human rights of the more than 100,000 migrant and domestic agriculture workers in that province. It follows a complaint filed in March 2009 by UFCW Canada — the country's largest private-sector union and a leading advocate for farm workers' rights for over two decades. The ILO is the United Nations agency responsible for formulating international labour standards including basic labour rights.

"The ILO has sent a clear message to the Canadian and Ontario governments that Ontario must end its blatant abuse of the rights of the workers who grow and harvest our food," says Wayne Hanley, the national president of UFCW Canada. "These are farm workers, not farm animals, and people have human rights including the right to collective bargaining."

The ILO ruling was handed down in Geneva ([www.ufcw.ca/ilo](http://www.ufcw.ca/ilo)). It found that Ontario's Agricultural Employees Act, 2002 (AEPA) which denies all Ontario agriculture workers the right to join a union and engage in collective bargaining is a violation of human rights under two United Nations conventions: Convention No. 87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, and Convention No. 98 – Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining.

Canada is a signatory to Convention 87 and supported Convention 98, "so you would expect a federal government that bid to get on the UN Security Council would have the integrity to follow up on the UN conventions," said the UFCW Canada president. "The feds can say it's a provincial matter but the reality is that both the Harper and McGuinty governments are partners with the farm lobby in plowing under the human rights of people doing some of the hardest and most dangerous work there is."

The ILO ruling reinforces a November 17, 2008 Ontario Court of Appeal ruling that found the AEPA violated Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms by denying Ontario farm workers their freedom of association. The Ontario government appealed that decision to the Supreme Court of Canada which has twice before upheld the Charter guarantee of collective bargaining rights. The Supreme Court heard the appeal in December 2009 and its final and definitive ruling is pending.

"While Ontario continues to stall by using the courts, the lives of the workers continue to be at risk," says Hanley. "Without labour rights, Ontario farm workers remain powerless when faced with abusive employers and dangerous working conditions. The Ontario courts have said it. The Supreme Court has said it, and now the United Nations has said it. Labour rights are human rights, and that must include Ontario farm workers."

UFCW Canada, in association with the Agriculture Workers Alliance (AWA), operates ten agriculture worker support centres across Canada. The AWA is Canada's largest national association and support network for both domestic as well as migrant agriculture workers.

# Reflecting on 11 social movement successes

By HARSHA WALIA, [vancouver.mediacoop.ca](http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca)

It is hard to characterize 2010 as one of victories amidst growing societal poverty and social isolation, and movement despair, trauma, fear, disillusionment, frustration. While these seem insurmountable, the following list pays tribute to 11 social movement successes as we mark the beginning of 2011.

## 1) G20 and Olympics Convergences

The No Olympics on stolen land convergence in Vancouver and anti-G20 mobilizing in Toronto marked resurgence in coordinated movement organizing.

## 2) Environmental Justice

As part of the international movement under the banner of “system change, not climate change”, a growing number of environmentalists are rejecting green capitalism. Green-washing attempts such as the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement and the Ontario Far North Act were challenged by anti-capitalist environmentalists, as well as by Indigenous communities. An inspiring example of anti-colonial environmental justice organizing has been resistance to the Alberta Tar Sands and Enbridge Pipeline in BC. Campaigning at various levels, grassroots voices from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Lubicon Cree to Wet’suwet’en and Carrier Sekani have participated in international speaking tours, called for the boycott of the Royal Bank of Canada and Royal Bank of Scotland, and coordinated with environmentalists to organize healing

## 3) Shutting Down Industrial Projects

A number of localized movements have confronted corporate development and environmental degradation: Mohawks in Kanesatake rejected a niobium mine; the Okanagan Indian Band blockaded against Tolko Industries logging in their watershed; fisherfolk in PEI filed a lawsuit against BP for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill which affected tuna’s northern migration; Halalt First Nation blockaded the Chemainus River to protect their aquifers; environmentalists repeatedly opposed the Raven Underground Coal Project in the Comox Valley; Innu communities blockaded against New Millennium Capital and Labrador Iron Mines Holdings; and highway developments from Gateway in BC to the Humbolt Highway in Saskatchewan have been resisted.

## 4) Boycott Divestment Sanctions

Queers United Against Israeli Apartheid in Toronto successfully reversed the censorship of “Israeli apartheid” from the Pride Parade. Several campuses and cities participated in Israeli Apartheid Week events and in the global day of action for the campaign to boycott Israeli apartheid on Land Day.

## 5) Prefigurative Politics

Though often less glamorized, it requires tremendous commitment to create social organizations where dynamic revolutionary change is manifesting: media co-ops, anarchist bookfairs, community acupuncture and herbology, childcare collectives, legal defence networks, organic gardens and farms, drop-ins for street and queer/trans youth, communal houses and squats, Indigenous

language and food revival, independent bookstores, coalition and community building

## 6) Strikes and Workers Assemblies

With unemployment and outsourcing in an era of austerity, a number of prolonged labour disputes have marked this past year: the 9-month Sudbury strike against mining giant Vale Inco, the 6-month picket by warehouse workers against Sears, almost 10 months of conflict between real estate developer Cadillac Fairview and maintenance and skilled trades workers, the striking administrative workers at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine trying to achieve a first collective agreement, and the organizing of hotel workers’ strikes against no less than ten hotel chains. Particularly inspiring have been wild-cat strikes by migrant agricultural workers.

## 7) Anti-Racism and Migrant Justice

The sustained mobilizing of the Education Not Deportation campaign and Shelter Sanctuary Status campaign won major victories in Toronto. The Toronto District School Board provided guidelines to ensure that students without immigration status are not denied access to schools.

## 8) Justice for Missing and Murdered Women

Three decades since Indigenous women started raising the alarm about missing and murdered women, living in extreme poverty and predominantly Indigenous, the issue is at the forefront of feminist organizing. Ten communities organized Memorial Marches this year, with 5000 people attending in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside from where a disproportionate number of women are missing. Public pressure has finally forced a public inquiry into police misconduct, racism, and sexism in the Robert Pickton investigation.

## 9) Police and Prison Abolition

While thousands demanded accountability for police actions during the G20, radicals pushed an analysis of social control as inherent to these institutions. The proposal to shut down prison farms was met with massive civil disobedience in Kingston.

## 10) Political Participation

While mobilizing around “democratic deficit” is limiting and often relegated only in opposition to the Conservatives, there is growing disillusionment more generally of governments and corporations with anger directed against bank bailouts, Olympic spending, environmental disasters, military expenditures, public service cutbacks, and political party cronyism.

## 11) Strengthening Alliances

This past year has seen continued growth of and collaboration amongst grassroots groups. Working through and across differences, while maintaining the diversity of an intergenerational anti-oppression movement and radical politics, has strengthened the terrain for inclusive, participatory, and revolutionary struggle.

*Harsha Walia is a South Asian organizer in a range of social movements based in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories. The preceding are excerpts from his article available online in full at: <http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/blog/harsha-w/5565>*

# Middle East News Clips

Coming soon: a special edition of UJPO News, focused on the Israel-Palestine conflict

## Victory in struggle against ill-conceived welfare-to-work program

After a long-fought battle by the NIF Family, the Israeli government has finally scrapped the contentious Wisconsin Plan, a punitive welfare-to-work program for the unemployed begun in 2005. The campaign was spearheaded by Wisconsin Watch, set up by NIF grantees Mehuyavut: Commitment to Peace and a Just Society and Community Advocacy: Genesis Israel with assistance from SHATIL and other NIF grantees Sot El Amel – Laborer's Voice, Rabbis for Human Rights and ACRI. Wisconsin Watch uncovered systematic abuses of program participants by the private companies who operated the program.

nif.org

## ARZA rejects ruling opposing renting homes to Arabs

By ANNETTE POWERS, urj.org

New York, December 9, 2010 -- ARZA (Association of Reform Zionists of America) reacts with alarm to a recent report that 50 leading Israeli municipal chief rabbis, all employed by the State of Israel, have signed on to a religious ruling that forbids renting homes to gentiles--a move particularly aimed against Arabs. This ruling comes just months after the Chief Rabbi of Safed initiated a call urging Jews to refrain from renting or selling apartments to non-Jews.

The Israeli Knesset has recently reviewed a number of bills designed to insure that the country remains a Jewish state by isolating Israel's Arab population. Statements by some of the chief rabbis make clear their motives: "We don't need to help Arabs set down roots in Israel," said Rabbi Shlomo Aviner of the Beit El settlement. "Racism originated in the Torah," said Rabbi Yosef Scheinen, who heads the Ashdod Yeshiva. He added that he did not see the move as racist so much as segregationist.

ARZA recognizes with pride the work of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) and the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) in opposing this statement and others through public protest and legal action.

ARZA calls upon all relevant Israeli governmental bodies to reject and condemn the statement of the chief rabbis. And, we praise those Israeli Orthodox rabbis who have openly criticized the ruling of their colleagues, as well as Israeli politicians who have strongly condemned this statement. Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that it was forbidden for such comments to be made in a democratic state, "especially in a Jewish democratic state that respects Jewish tradition and the Bible."

We hope and pray that all Israelis, no matter their political affiliation or religious practice, will take to heart the words of the Israeli Declaration of Independence that calls upon "...the Arab

inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship."

"At the very moment when Israel's very existence is being questioned, Israel must not add fuel to that fire by allowing statements or acts that are racist in nature," said Rabbi Robert Orkand, President, ARZA. "These comments are completely contrary to our understanding of what the founders of Israel meant when they spoke of a Democratic Jewish state."

## Public wedding strives to end orthodox monopoly on marriage

nif.org

Yulia Tagil and Stas Granin welcomed their family and friends, as well as hundreds of passers-by, to their non-Orthodox wedding ceremony in Tel Aviv. The wedding was funded and organized by NIF and grantees Havaya – Israeli Wedding, Fishka Club and Bina: Center for Jewish Identity and Hebrew Culture. The couple chose the public ceremony to protest the religious monopoly on marriage. Since Israel has no civil marriage, the couple was forced to travel abroad for a legally-recognized civil ceremony.



## IRAC mobilizes Israelis, making gender segregation illegal

The Pluralist - IRAC Newsletter

*Mobilizing Israeli activists, the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) sheds light on the growing phenomenon of gender segregation in Israel and vows to end it*

JERUSALEM: 10/01/11 — The Israeli Supreme Court declared on Thursday that gender segregation on public buses was illegal. The Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) presented hard evidence to the judges collected from 128 "freedom rides," proving that gender segregation on these bus lines directly causes discrimination and abuse.

IRAC, the public and legal advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel, mobilized a group of volunteers from all across Israel to monitor the gender segregated buses in order to record cases of verbal and physical abuse against women that chose to sit in the front of these buses or even enter through the front door. The organization initially filed a petition against the Ministry of Transportation and Egged in 2007, representing five women who were verbally or physically abused on gender segregated buses. When IRAC discovered that the Ministry of Transportation did not monitor these lines as per a demand from the Supreme Court in

a February 2010 hearing, the organization orchestrated its own system of monitoring the buses by mobilizing female volunteers accompanied by another female or a male to ride on these bus lines and record discrimination from other passengers or the driver. In many cases, women or the men who accompanied them were verbally abused, threatened, or even denied entrance to the bus.

“Once, a group of men chanted in unison, rallying to get me thrown off the bus,” told Anat Hoffman, Executive Director of IRAC. “I know what women face for daring to consider themselves equal to the men.” Hoffman faced harassment and threats on many of the dozens of freedom rides that she personally took.

And the freedom rides aren't over. Although the court's final decision on January 6 declared gender segregation illegal, the judges did not insist on ending the practice of voluntary segregation on these bus lines. “IRAC will be representing any and all women and men who suffer while riding these buses,” says Hoffman, pledging that as long as there is segregation, there will be freedom riders.

Last month, IRAC released a detailed (and the first ever) report about the increasing phenomenon of gender segregation in the

public sphere in Israel. In addition to discrimination on buses, the report includes detailed information about gender discrimination in health clinics, post offices, police stations, hospitals, even public streets and other public spaces.

IRAC was founded in 1987 and is committed to promoting pluralism, tolerance and equality in Israel through focusing on issues of religion and state.

## **UJPO denounces Itamar murders**

UJPO Canada unequivocally denounces the slaughter of the five Fogel family members in their Itamar Settlement residence. The taking of innocent lives cannot be justified no matter what the underlying circumstances.

In addition to the denunciation of others which mass media reported, Palestinian Authority's Minister of Religious Affairs, Mahmoud Habbash, was quoted in The Jerusalem Post as stating “this is a big crime against civilians in their homes, an inhuman crime...We are against such crimes from both sides, and against any murders, whether from the Palestinian or Israeli side. We want to see all the civilians living in peace in the Holy Land.”

## **Yiddish Reborn**

### **Ot Azoy! (Here's How!)**

By GERALDINE AUERBACH, [jmi.org.uk](http://jmi.org.uk)

#### **Yiddish crash course at U of London**

The famous Jewish Music Institute's (JMI) immersion in Yiddish Language and Culture for people of all ages and backgrounds (where complete beginners learn to speak, read, write and even dream in Yiddish in a week) takes place from August 14 - 19, 2011 at SOAS University of London, Russell Square Campus. Classes at 4 levels are led by respected linguistic tutorial experts.

#### **Yiddish song course at U of London**

There is also a special course for singers with classical and folk backgrounds who wish to engage with Yiddish repertoire. Study Yiddish vocabulary and grammar in the mornings with Ot Azoy! In the afternoons some of the finest exponents of Yiddish song led by Shura Lipovsky (Amsterdam) with theatre star Joanne Borts (New York), Polina Shepherd (Brighton) and Hilda Bronstein (tbc) will guide singers in pronunciation, meaning, style and interpretation of this huge and varied repertoire - this year emphasizing Yiddish Theatre song. We will hold a concert of Yiddish Song on Sunday 14 August.

To enquire further or register:  
Geraldine Auerbach MBE,  
Director, Jewish Music Institute,  
SOAS University of London,  
Russell Square Campus,  
Thornhaugh Street,  
Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Tel: 020 8909 2445  
Moblie: 07971 818 262  
Email: [jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk](mailto:jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk)  
Web: [www.jmi.org.uk](http://www.jmi.org.uk)

### **Summer seminar in Yiddish language and culture Warsaw, 4-22 July 2011**

From July 4-22 submerge yourself in the intensive 9th International Yiddish summer course and a variety of language-related activities in our new, modern equipped Yiddish Center. We offer a wide range of afternoon cultural events, lectures and workshops. Discover the pre- and postwar history of Yiddish culture in Poland. Get to know contemporary Jewish life in Poland. Meet native Yiddish speakers from Poland and learn their stories.

Visit the once vibrant center of Yiddish culture. Explore the resources of Warsaw archives, libraries and visual collections documenting Jewish life in Poland. A limited number of scholarships is available. All details, and an on-line application form are available at:

Center for Yiddish Culture of the Shalom Foundation,  
ul. Gen. Wadysawa Andersa 15,  
00-159 Warszawa.  
Email: [jidysz@shalom.org.pl](mailto:jidysz@shalom.org.pl)  
Web: [www.jidyszland.pl](http://www.jidyszland.pl)

## **U.S. workers united but anti-labour bill passed**

By DAVID ABRAMOWITZ

In Madison, Wisconsin, one of the strongest and continuous U.S. labour demonstrations in decades made recent headlines in response to the right-wing attempt to eliminate collective bargaining rights for public-sector workers. Solidarity demonstrations in 38 states occurred as thousands arrived to support the Wisconsin workers' demonstrations as corporations and the super-rich declared all out war on workers and the poor. The workers' message: protect workers' rights - we did not create this crisis and we should not have to pay for it. Senate democrats, who would have opposed the legislation, left the state for 3 weeks to block quorum, but Wisconsin Governor Walker's anti-union agenda was passed after a special legislative committee used a technicality to alter the quorum for passage of the bill.



Students cut classes to support strikers

The Madison-based South Central Federation of Labour's 45,000 members endorsed a resolution calling for preparations for a general strike which would doubtlessly be supported by sympathetic workers and students across the U.S. As this struggle continues, the UJPO recalls similar past struggles in Canada and we express solidarity with the strikers and their objective to regain and retain their collective bargaining rights.

## **Castro Celebrates Hanukkah**

HAVANA: 06/12/10 — President Raul Castro joined the Cuban Hebrew community to celebrate Hanukkah at Havana's main synagogue, and conveyed to the participants his best wishes. As part of the ceremony, the president was invited to kindle the first light of Hanukkah.

"We feel extremely happy and proud to participate in this festivity with you, and I hope to be back to learn more about the Hebrew Community in Cuba and about the fabulous stories of the Hebrew people," Raul Castro told the congregation.

As part of the ceremony, the president was invited to kindle the first light of Hanukkah.

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple (the Second Temple) in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BCE.

The festivity is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev according to the Hebrew calendar, which may occur at any time from late November to late December in the Gregorian calendar.

The Cuban president recalled that a day like today, December 5th, fifty four years ago, the expeditionaries of the Granma yacht fought their first clash with the enemy after landing on Las Coloradas beach, eastern Cuba.

Adela Dworin, chairwoman of the Cuban Hebrew Community, presented Raul Castro with a Chumash, a compendium of the five books of the Torah, the sacred book of Judaism, as a souvenir of his presence on the fifth day of Hanukkah of the year 5771.

During the celebration a short video was screened to commemorate the participation of the leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, in the Hebrew Festival of Lights Celebration of December 20th, 1998.

Among other guests at this year's festivities were the historian of the city, Eusebio Leal; Episcopal reverend Pablo Oden Marichal, who is the executive secretary of the Council of Churches of Cuba, and Raul Suarez, director of the Martin Luther King Memorial Center.

Also representing the government was Caridad Diego, head of the Religious Affairs Office of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

<http://www.escambray.cu/Eng/cuba/raulcastro101206857>

## **U.S. poor to benefit from subsidized Venezuelan heating oil**

By JUAN REARDON, Venezuelanalysis.com

MÉRIDA: 28/01/11 — Yesterday Venezuela's Petroleum Corporation CITGO announced the start of its sixth year providing subsidized heating oil to low-income people in the United States. An estimated 132,000 households across the U.S. will benefit from the program this year, amounting to \$60 million dollars worth of savings.

Joseph P. Kennedy II, son of the late U.S politician Robert Kennedy and president of Citizen Energy Corporation, the U.S.-based non-profit organization that partnered with CITGO in 2005 to launch the CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Program, spoke at the CITGO ceremony on Thursday.

"Every year, we hear from families who struggle each and every day to put food on the table and heat their homes," he said.

"We are deeply grateful to CITGO and the people of Venezuela for their generosity to those who need help keeping their families warm. Every year, we ask major oil companies and oil-producing nations to help our senior citizens and the poor make it through winter, and only one company, CITGO, and one country, Venezuela, has responded to our appeals," he said.

CITGO is a subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A.

In 2010, an estimated 500,000 people in the U.S. benefitted from the program, including 157,000 low-income households, almost 850 large-scale apartment buildings, 245 homeless shelters, and over 250 tribal communities. In total, 26 million gallons of heating oil were distributed to people in 25 states, as well as Washington, D.C.



CITGO has delivered 170 million gallons (772 million liters) of heating fuel since the start of the program, according to AFP.

"CITGO is very proud to mark the sixth anniversary of our Heating Oil Program, our flagship social development initiative, which is in alignment with the humanitarian and solidarity principles endorsed by the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela through its national oil

company, Petróleos de Venezuela, S.A (PDVSA)," said CITGO president Alejandro Granado, during yesterday's ceremony.

"What would each one of us choose if we could only afford one or the other? Would you warm your home or feed your family? Those are decisions no one should have to make," said Granado.

In a 2005 Boston Globe column, Kennedy wrote on the impact of rising fuel costs on low-income U.S. households:

"To middle class households, higher energy prices mean less disposable income. But for the poor, higher prices and eroding benefits mean cutting back on necessities, huddling around the kitchen stove, using dangerous space heaters, closing off rooms to cut fuel bills, and wearing coats indoors. Child nutrition in poor neighborhoods dramatically declines during periods of cold weather and rising fuel bills."

Author's Note: People in the U.S. struggling to pay for home heating oil are encouraged to call Citizens Energy Corporation at (1-877-563-4645) or apply online at [www.citizensenergy.com](http://www.citizensenergy.com) to see if they are eligible for heating oil assistance from the CITGO-Venezuela Heating Oil Program.

## UJPO Fact Finding and Support Tour to Venezuela, Fall 2010

In the reality of the harsh capitalist world, Venezuela presents an alternative possibility. The Bolivarian group (Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela) offers the hope of a socialist vision. Within this group, only Venezuela has the resources (oil) to finance this plan, but already the winds of war are being directed against Venezuela.

**Now is the time to show our solidarity and learn more about the actuality.**

With this in mind UJPO - Canada is organizing an educational, solidarity and fact finding tour to Venezuela, in the Fall of 2011! The exact dates to be determined so as to accommodate those interested in joining the tour.

Approximate cost will be \$3000.00, including return airfare from Toronto, land travel, two meals, hotels entrance fees, and honourariums. Personal non-tour activities are at one's own expense, e.g. concerts, separate restaurant meals, personal visits. A deposit of \$300.00 is required at the time of booking.

The tour group will be limited to a maximum 15 participants.

While we will do our best to schedule the activities listed in the itinerary, last minute changes should be expected.

This tour will involve both walking and travel by bus. You must be in good general health to participate fully in this tour. If special accommodation is required, we will do our best to accommodate you. Please discuss this with us in advance.



For more info contact  
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### Affiliations:

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO); Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA); International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism (IISHJ)

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

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

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# CSJO Annual Conference

## May, 27-30 in Toronto!

“Jewish Traditions Today - Continuity in Change.”



Presented by United Jewish People's Order, Canada

**Never been to a CSJO Conference before?  
This is your big chance!**

The UJPO-Canada and the Morris Winchevsky School participated in CSJO's founding 41 years ago to fill the void left by the required dissolution of U.S. progressive Jewish schools and organizations in the wake of the McCarthy era. We are very proud to host its 41st annual conference.

CSJO has provided a base and centre of focus for secular, progressive, humanistic and/or cultural Jews. Its conferences offer an opportunity to come together with like-minded North American organizations and *shules* (schools) to share issues of growth, attracting new and young members, learn from each other, network, develop and strengthen the work and activities of all affiliate groups. The camaraderie of the participants is a bonus!

The strong presence of youth at conferences is another admirable achievement of CSJO – a tribute to the enduring lessons and values that are passed on and absorbed by the next generations. There are parallel youth and young adult workshops and all participants are welcome to attend any of the workshops, thus there is a cross pollination of ages and interests.

Holding the conference in Toronto is an opportunity to showcase our local riches. There will be **keynote addresses** from our **Professor Ester Reiter** and from young adult representative **Kerry Dyson** from our sister organization, the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture, in Vancouver.

There will be dozens of workshops covering educational, arts, cultural and political/social

justice topics featuring workshop leaders from Toronto's *crème de la crème* - such as

- **Professor Richard Lee:**  
**Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean**
- **Gerry Kane:**  
**Making Secular Jewishness Relevant**
- **Esther Gartner:**  
**The Soul of Jewish Music**
- **Ruth Howard:**  
**Enhancing Programs through Theatre and Community Arts**

The Friday evening **Oneg Shabbat** will feature the **Vancouver Peretz Centre youth**. The Saturday night cultural program will feature our **Naivelt Singers** presenting excerpts from **“Our History Through Song”** honouring our Camp Naivelt's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary as well as a special *tzedakah* project with *Ve'ahavta*: the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee. And Sunday evening's talent show is always a hit at every conference.

Get on the bandwagon! Help volunteer in the planning phases and during the conference, and **by all means be sure to register and attend.**

You'll be warmly welcomed from the moment you arrive. You'll learn; you'll network; you'll enjoy and meet the exceptional people who comprise the CSJO *mishpokhe* (family).

You won't be sorry.

The full newsletter/brochure/registration form can be downloaded at:

<http://www.csjo.org/images/PDF/2011CSJOConferenceReg.pdf>

Or contact us to get involved: 416-789-5502  
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