



UJPO News



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Leonard Cohen sings of love and peace

By Hillel Schenker, *The Guardian*,
September 25, 2009



Three days before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when everything comes to a halt in Israel, Leonard Cohen sang:

Repent, Repent ... I'm the little Jew who wrote the Bible,
I've seen the nations rise and fall,
I've heard their stories, heard them all,
but love's the only engine of survival.

The national football stadium in the Ramat Gan suburb of Tel Aviv has been the scene of many agonising defeats in recent times, but Cohen's performance, with a background of signs saying Shalom, Salaam, Peace, was a triumph of the will. Or as Cohen put it:

Ring the bells that still can ring,
forget your perfect offering,
there is a crack in everything,
that's how the light gets in.

“How many roads must a man walk down, before they can call him a man?” asked his fellow troubadour, so many years ago when they both began to build their tower of song and enter into the consciousness of my generation. For Cohen to be able to reach the point of saying “I'm your man”, he had to overcome the theft of millions of dollars by his former manager, bouts of depression, transformations of identity, a fainting spell in one of his recent performances and a call that he should boycott Israel as a show of solidarity with the Palestinians.

Cohen's response to the call for a cultural boycott was to create a Fund for Reconciliation, Tolerance and Peace and to devote all of the proceeds from the Israeli concert “to organisations and individuals working in Israel and Palestine to advance the recognition and full expression of human rights in the region”.

The singer singled out the Israeli-Palestinian Bereaved Parents Circle, who despite the loss of a close loved one work together for peace and reconciliation. Author David Grossman, who lost a son on the last day of the Lebanon war in 2006, thanked Cohen for his support and the singer answered from the stage that “the bereaved parents' response to their suffering transcends the instinct for anger and revenge, and offers hope from the heart, even the hope for peace”.

I have always believed that constructive engagement, and not boycott, is the way to promote an end to the occupation and build Israeli-Palestinian peace. Last week I participated in a brainstorming session of the Palestinian-Israel Peace NGO Forum, a network of more than 100 civil society organisations, which discussed the challenge of promoting greater awareness in the media of activity for human rights, against the occupation and for peace. This is never an easy matter when media is immersed in a Darwinian survival of the fittest and continues to function under the traditional slogan, “If it bleeds, it leads (and also sells)”. Cohen's concert, with the media saturation it achieved, provided the answer. *[Continued on next page]*

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.

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Banner graphic by Avrom Yanovsky, 1911-1979

I was not surprised to see Member of Knesset Ilan Gilon (Meretz) at the concert, one of the few MKs who openly declares that he is still a socialist, devoted to both a just society and Israeli-Palestinian peace. However, I also saw MK Tzahi Hanegbi (Kadima) who, as a student at the Hebrew University, used to attack leftwing activists but has now mellowed into an opposition MK who is ready to come to a concert held under the flag of peace and reconciliation.

Roger Waters recently narrated a short film called *Walled Horizons*, produced by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. During the film's finale, in a segment from his 2006 concert at the joint Jewish-Arab community Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam, Waters promised to do a performance of *The Wall* when the separation wall comes down, just as he did when the Berlin wall came down. Just imagine the potential impact that Waters might have if he were to perform the concert today next to the wall, with Israeli and Palestinian singers and a joint audience.

In the words of Cohen's mesmerising version of the old anti-Nazi Partisan Song, one of the highlights of last night's concert and an old staple of leftwing hootenannies during the 1950s and 1960s in the US:

Oh, the wind, the wind is blowing, through the graves
the wind is blowing, freedom soon will come; then
we'll come from the shadows.

With a little help from our friend, Barack Obama. ♦

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/sep/25/leonard-cohen-israel-palestine>

NATIONAL UJPO NEWS

FROM TORONTO

By Julia Barnett, Board of Directors President

Whew! What a fall it's been at the UJPO here in Toronto!

First an important preamble before we get to the highlights of our fall programming.

1. Out of the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO) conference, held in Toronto last May, came an exciting initiative. Many of our young members who participated in the conference formed the Next Generation group to help revitalize CSJO and UJPO!
2. At our Third Seyder held on May Day 2016, Jacquie Chic (UJPO-Canada Board member and Social Justice Committee member) challenged us to not only set out our organizational priorities, but to act on them. Out of that, we engaged our members and community participants in a *dotmocracy* [voting with stickers on issues of importance]

exercise – at Camp Naivelt and at our Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur observances.

At the Camp Naivelt Peace Tea, the two top issues were First



Nations solidarity and environmental justice. Other top concerns were LGBTQ+ rights, feminist issues, anti-racism, poverty and housing, Palestine/Israel, global peace, and food security. At the Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur events, the top two issues were Palestine/Israel and First Nations solidarity. They were followed by environmental justice, anti-racism, poverty and housing, healthcare, refugee rights, LGBTQ+ rights and feminist issues.

Now you're ready to hear about our activities! Our Jewish New Year observances continue to be important events in our community. To lead our Rosh Hashonah observance, we invited representatives of the newly formed Next Generation group who did us proud! To lead our Yom Kippur observance, we were delighted to showcase the Morris Winchevsky School team of educators. Our ceremonies included everyone's participation in the *dotmocracy* exercise described above. Within our observances, we expressed solidarity with the struggles of Indigenous Peoples by incorporating songs by Buffy Sainte-Marie: *We Are Circling* and *Carry It On!* And we sang *We Shall Overcome* in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

Our most exciting event this fall was the launch and gala celebration of Ester Reiter's book: *A World Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada* which was held on October 15th. We were delighted to have as special guests Ester's son Daniel Koulack (of



Ester Reiter, her son Daniel Koulack, and her grandchildren Ameena and George Bajer-Koulack.

Finjan fame) and her grandchildren Ameena and George Bajer-Koulack (of Klezmer Kids fame) who came from Winnipeg to participate in the celebration. Ester's presentation was intermingled with musical selections which reflected the times about which she spoke. We wish Ester well on her upcoming visits to Winnipeg and Vancouver, as part of UJPO's 90th anniversary celebrations, to celebrate this important publication.



We've restarted the tradition of community Friday night potlucks once a month, called *Alternative Shabbes*. So far we've had an evening of storytelling led by Anna Kerz, a sing-along led by Eve Goldberg, and *A Critical Appreciation of Bob Dylan*. In December for Chanukah we are remembering Leonard Cohen and his music.

We've also been pursuing a revival of our musical tradition and hope to expand on this by exploring ideas such as forming an activist singing group – just one of the possibilities. Stay tuned! (get it!)

We have a long tradition of participating in Holocaust Education Week and this year hosted two events in November, one about genocide in central Africa and one about the Rohingya people in Burma.

UJPO Toronto has been actively engaged in Social Justice actions, rallies and political endorsements that include the following:

Sept. 20 – Endorsement of James Graff Memorial Lecture featuring speaker Rafeef Ziadah

Sept. 20 – co-sponsorship and participation in a Hassan Diab event

Oct. 2 – participation in Rally for Decent Work

Nov. – participation in Anti-Trump Rallies

We opened our Shule on September 18th and are in the midst of a busy Shule season. Frances Handlarski continues for the fall term as our Education Director, along with the wonderful Sarena Sairan who leads our Kinder Kapers preschool program, and a new roster of dynamic, promising and capable educators: Lindsay Mockler, Lauryn Kronick and Izzy Waxman. We continue to integrate experiential learning into our program, in particular focused around our approach to the holidays. As an example, our Sukkes celebration on October 23rd at Dufferin Grove Park (see photo next column) was a great success!

The Board has been committed over the past year to engage our members in a variety of ways. Recently, through surveys, we have requested input from members, in connection with our search for a new Executive Director.



Upcoming joint committee and Board meetings are planned – all of which are part and parcel of membership engagement and tying together all facets of our organization.

Our Board's recent decision to participate in the Jewish Global Network for Justice being held in South Africa this December, places UJPO in a current and relevant position within and as part of progressive international voices.

At our recent AGM on October 30th, we elected a new executive to lead us into future. We are delighted to welcome new members Joyce Wayne and Dana Lowi-Merri, a member of the Next Generation group and CSJO Board member, to the incoming UJPO-Toronto Board of Directors. We also wish to extend a *Mazl Tov* to Barbara Blaser who has recently been elected to the position of Co-Vice-President of the CSJO Board.

Going forward, we are preparing for various challenges that we face as we recruit a new Executive Director and a new Education Director, while integrating youth into leadership roles.

We look forward to upcoming events including our *Alternative Shabbes* evenings, our Chanukah celebration on Dec. 18th and a special evening to mark UJPO's 90th Anniversary and Maxine Hermolin's retirement – hold the date Saturday January 14th ... details to follow. ♦

FROM WINNIPEG

By Henry Shorr

- On October 5 Rina Lapidus spoke at a forum on the poetry of five young Russian-Jewish writers and poets who were killed as soldiers in World War II or executed in the Stalinist persecutions.
- On October 16 the UJPO book club met and discussed the book *White Trash – The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*. The author is Nancy Isenberg.
- We had a membership drive and will be sending a current membership list to the National Office.

- On November 20 Ester Reiter told stories from her new book *A Future Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada*. This was with the musical accompaniment of her son Danny Koulack and the vocal accompaniment of her grandchildren George and Ameena Bajer-Koulack. This event was co-sponsored by UJPO, the Jewish Heritage Centre, and the Tarbut Festival of Jewish Culture. This event was very well attended.
- On November 23 Ester led a discussion of her book, with a UJPO focus. About 20 people attended.
- The next UJPO Book Club meeting is on Sunday December 11. We are reading *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl.
- The North End Choir has three engagements scheduled. Rehearsals have begun, including work on a new arrangement by Sid Robinovitch. Discussions continue on a different, more inclusive approach to the annual Warsaw Ghetto Memorial. ♦

FROM VANCOUVER

By Carl Rosenberg

The Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture is the home of many lively cultural programs which will be of interest to UJPO members and readers of *UJPO News*.

I always appreciate the Friday morning Sholem Aleichem Speakers Series. Several times it has featured my old professor Derek Carr, an Hispanist with an encyclopedic knowledge of Spanish literature, culture and history. In his presentation, "Al-Andalus: The History of Moorish Spain," Derek presented a film, *Spain: The Moorish Influence*, which portrays the cultural diversity of the Iberian peninsula over the 800-year period before the expulsion of Jews and Muslims in 1492 and after. Derek also recently spoke on "Girona – A Centre of Jewish Culture and Learning in Medieval Spain." This northeastern Spanish city was a centre of Jewish culture and learning in medieval times, especially known for its Kabbalistic studies.

I also enjoy the Fraytik Tsu Nakht (FTN), our monthly secular shabbes gathering, with its readings, songs, potluck dinners and presentations. Two recent presentations were given by John Silver, on "The Cantor Wasn't Singing Like That Last Time: Jewish Connections to Opera," and Colin Nicol-Smith, on "Jews and the Tower of Babel," dealing with the Jewish contributions to Esperanto, especially its Polish-Jewish founder L. L. Zamenhof.

One of Vancouver's most outstanding artists, especially dear to Jewish Vancouverites, is Yiddish soprano Claire Klein Osipov. Claire, who is also active in the Peretz Centre, especially in the FTN program, before her

retirement enjoyed a distinguished career spanning over six decades from Toronto to Vancouver, on stage, radio and TV. Her life and work was the subject of a documentary, *Claire Klein Osipov: A Life Sung Yiddishly*, by Haya Newman, a Yiddish teacher at the Peretz Centre who is also a documentary film-maker. It was shown as part of the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival on Nov. 10. I and others in the Peretz community were thrilled that Claire was given this richly-deserved recognition.

Another important cultural event was the launch of Ester Reiter's new book, *A Future Without Hate or Need: The Promise of the Jewish Left in Canada (Between the Lines)*. The launch was part of a nationwide tour to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the 1926 founding of the Labour League, which joined other groups throughout Canada to found UJPO in 1945. The Vancouver launch, held on Dec. 1 at the Peretz Centre, was sponsored by UJPO-Canada and co-sponsored by the Peretz Centre and the Shaya Kirman Memorial Foundation for Yiddish Culture. Attendance exceeded expectations! ♦

FROM HAMILTON

By Lyn Center

On Sunday, October 23, to celebrate Rosh Hashana, we enjoyed another "schmooze and nosh" at my house. Ten people, including some from as far away as Toronto and Oakville, came with a wide variety of foods to share, and the conversation covered everything from Trump to family histories.

At our next gathering on January 22, Ester Reiter has agreed to come to talk about her new book, *A Future Without Hate or Need*. I attended her standing-room only book launch in Toronto on October 15 and was impressed with her presentation, accompanying music, and the warmth and enthusiasm of the crowd. We are very much looking forward to this event. ♦

CSJO News

By Terry Waslow, incoming Executive Director, Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO), October 2016

This month has been filled with much activity as I transition into my new role as the Executive Director of CSJO. I approach this with mixed feelings. I am definitely full of excitement and motivation to make this a very successful move. I am also feeling tugs at my heart as I take over from our previous Executive Director, Rifke Feinstein. I take pause to thank her for the years of collaborative work and leadership. I am happy to say that while relationships may change they do not end. She

continues to be very involved with and a wonderful support to CSJO and to so many of us individually.

Recent Election

We have recently held a special election for Vice Chair. As I write this, the last of the ballots are arriving and are being tabulated. Soon we will announce the results. Thank you to Karen Knecht for chairing the nominating committee and coordinating this election.

Upcoming Board Meeting

We have an upcoming board meeting the weekend of November 11 in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Our meetings are open to the general membership. If you are interested in attending, please email me at congress@csjo.org so we can prepare for non-board member attendees. This is a great way to get to know the board and have an inside view of the governance of CSJO. It also gives you a great introduction should you choose to run for a position in any of our future elections.

Secular Coalition for America

This past month I have also been in contact with the Secular Coalition for America as they get ready to announce CSJO as a new voting member organization. You will soon see our name on their website at www.secular.org. Go to the website and look around. Let me know what you think of the issues that they are presenting.

Affiliate Newsletters

I have been receiving electronic copies of affiliate newsletters. If you are interested in receiving them, please email me and I will be happy to forward them to you. It is great to see all the wonderful things that our affiliates are up to. Lots of exciting programming!

Visiting Our Affiliates

CSJO has a group of vibrant young adults on our board who are eager to visit the youth of our affiliate organizations. Please contact me if you are interested in having them come to your group. They have a strong commitment to our organization and a bright vision for our future. Their enthusiasm is contagious. I am also looking forward to traveling to all of our affiliates. Please contact me so we can set up a date that fits your schedule. Representatives from our youth and I can come as a team so let me know what works best for your group.

Holidays

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are times of reflection and potential, an opportunity to look at our mistakes, face how we have missed the mark and seize the chance to try again. It is a time to make a commitment to do better this time around. We face our shortcomings not to burden ourselves, but to inspire ourselves to reach our potential as

healers and shapers of this world. This is a time to take action to ensure we continue to grow, prosper in the direction of justice and well-being and to teach these values to our children and our children's children so that we can continue to come together as a community, an extended family.

May this year bring us the strength and wisdom to support each other to build a *bessere welt* (better world).

Note: Two of UJPO's members were elected to the CSJO Board of Directors: Dana Lowi-Merri for the Morris Winchevsky School, and Barbara Blaser, for UJPO-Canada. ♦

WHAT'S IN ORDER

Mazi Tov

To Lyn Center on the marriage of her daughter Anna to Kyle Aebker on October 29, 2016

Convalescing

To Sylvia Friedman

Condolences

To Bea and Kim Levis on the death of Colleen, Kim's sister and Bea's oldest child

To the families of David Spring on his sudden death
Paul Weinberg and Cathy McPherson on the death of Paul's mother, Joan Weinberg

HONOURABLE MENTSHN

Remembering Dave Broadfoot

By David Abramowitz

In 1947, after leaving the Royal Canadian Navy at age 22, Dave Broadfoot joined three community theatre groups in North Vancouver, one of which was the UJPO Drama Workshop. With his death at age 90 on November 1, 2016,

he was one of the last of its survivors. The group presented left-wing productions such as "Professor Mamlock", "Waiting for Lefty" and others.

Coming from a devout Baptist family, Dave broke the mold with his secular life-style and felt quite at home in this secular Jewish group of which Sylvia Friedman, still a UJPO member, was an active performer. As Canada mourns his death, his numerous comedic characters – the Honourable Member of Parliament for Kicking Horse Pass



representing the New Apathetic Party, and Sergeant Renfrew of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), among others, are being remembered, in part, for the subtle yet biting political critical parodies/satire contained therein.

In the mid to late 1970's, Perry Friedman (Sylvia's brother-in-law) produced "Employable YOU" at Toronto's Jane Mallet Theatre in which Sylvia and I were narrators and the featured performers were Don Harron and Dave Broadfoot, another UJPO connection.

In 1988 Broadfoot told CBC's Shelagh Rogers that arrangements for his death included having his "ashes spread over (fellow comedienne) Luba Goy's carpet!" We miss him already. ♦

POETRY & SONG

Go to Work on Monday

By Si Kahn

Si Kahn has split his life between being a community organizer and a singer, songwriter and performer. His most famous song, Aragon Mills, which many people think of as just a traditional folk song, has been performed hundreds of times, in several languages.

An article on Si Kahn, by Dan Meaney, will appear in the next issue of UJPO News.

I did my part in World War Two
 Got wounded for the nation
 Now my lungs are all shot down
 There ain't no compensation

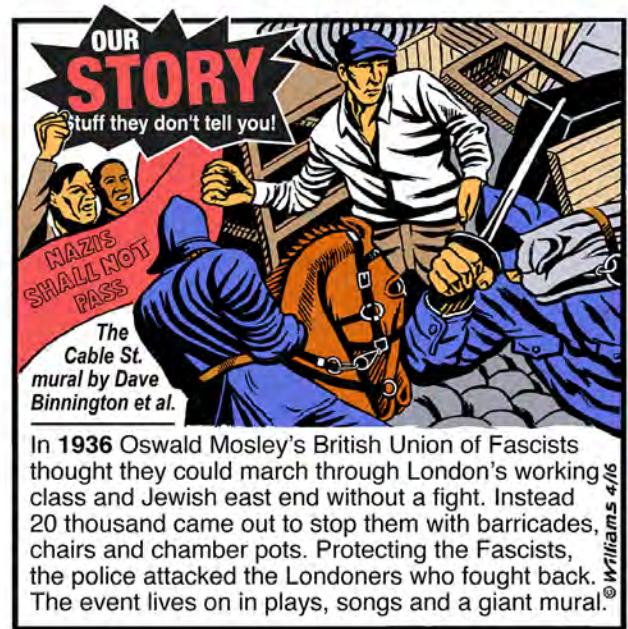
I'm gonna go to work on Monday
 one more time...

The doctor says I smoke too much
 He says that I'm not trying
 He says he don't know what I've got
 But we both know he's lying

The last time I went near my job
 I thought my lungs were broken
 Chest bound down like iron bands
 I couldn't breathe for choking

The politicians in this state
 They're nothing short of rotten
 They buy us off with fancy words
 And sell us out to cotton

The doctor says both lungs are gone
 There ain't no way to shake it
 But I can't live without the job
 Somehow I've got to take it



They tell me I can't work at all
 There ain't no need of trying
 But living like some used up thing
 Is just this short of dying

Sitting on my front porch swing
 I'm like someone forgotten
 Head all filled with angry thoughts
 And lungs filled up with cotton ♦

Copyright Joe Hill Music

<http://mudcat.org/@displaysong.cfm?SongID=2312>

YIDDISH

Celebrating Sholem Aleichem's 100th Yortsayt

Part One

By David Abramowitz

Born into an affluent family in Peryaslav, Russia (now Ukraine) in March 1859, Sholem Naumovich Rabinovich was one of nine children. His father, swindled by his partner in 1871, lost everything; their standard of living plummeted. Sholem's mother died of cholera in 1872 when he was 13.

After his father remarried a shrewish woman, Sholem's future as an author sprouted when he compiled a glossary of his stepmother's numerous and varied curses: she blasted her stepchildren with the same insults she used on her own!

After his traditional *kheder* education (a school for Jewish children in which Hebrew and religious knowledge are taught), instead of a *yeshiva*, his father, an Enlightenment (*Haskole*) supporter, believing that Sholem

was gifted, enrolled him in a secular Russian secondary school. Graduating at age 17 with honours (and of conscription age), he somehow evaded the draft. But without documentation that he had served in the Czar's military, he was refused admission to a teachers' institute.

Sholem left home, worked briefly as a lawyer's assistant, then became a tutor to the thirteen-year-old Olga Loyev near Kiev and secretary to her wealthy estate-manager father, Elimelech. Three years later, in 1880, learning of his daughter's affection for her tutor, Elimelech fired Sholem who moved to Louben (Lubny) where he was elected *rabbiner*, a "crown rabbi", functioning as a municipal clerk recording statistics on births, weddings, deaths, and conscriptions of *shtetl* Jews for the Russian government. He also became a journalist in Hebrew under his real name in the periodicals "HaZefirah" and "HaMelitz", wrote two pamphlets supporting the "Friends of Zion", and articles in Russian.

On May 12, 1883, Olga and Sholem eloped. Her father, initially angry, read a Hebrew article Sholem wrote which led to reconciliation and an invitation to live on his estate. By chance Sholem noticed the Saint Petersburg weekly *Yiddishes Folks-Blat* (then the only Yiddish periodical in Russia) and realized that the Yiddish language and literature had a broader Yiddish-speaking audience than Hebrew. There he began publishing stories in Yiddish under his pseudonym while continuing to write in Hebrew and Russian. Two years later, in 1885, Elimelech died, leaving a fortune to Sholem. In 1887 he, Olga, and the first two of what would eventually be their six children, moved into a posh apartment in Kiev. They lived there illegally under the laws for the Pale of Settlement for Jews.

In 1888, with proceeds from his inheritance, he published the *Yiddishe Folksbibliotek* (Yiddish People's Library), an annual which he edited. To encourage writers of Yiddish literature, he paid them well and took great editorial care. Only two volumes appeared (1889 and 1890). In the 1890 catastrophic crash of the Kiev stock market he lost almost everything. Volume three of the *Yiddishe Folksbibliotek* was edited but unpublished as he didn't have adequate funds. He went to Paris, then Vienna and Czernowitz (Chernovtsy) to get away. He returned to Odessa, and back to Kiev in 1893 where he wrote prolifically.

Sholem subsequently created Menachem-Mendl, the eternally optimistic speculating loser. Before long all of his inheritance was gone. His mother-in-law paid off his debts and allegedly never spoke to him again. After the birth of



Sholem and Olga's wedding photo,
May 12, 1883

their fifth child, Marusia (Marie), Sholem and Olga left their children with her mother while Olga studied to become a dentist in Kiev's then newly opened dentistry faculty for women.

By 1903 Sholem was totally devoted to literature creating, among others, the Tevye and Kasrilivke tales. Olga's dentistry practice helped stabilize their financially insecure life-style and legitimized her (and her mother and children's) living outside the Pale in Kiev. But Sholem lived in constant fear of being caught and arrested.

The more affluent life-style to which he aspired was tenuous; for most of his life he constantly toured and wrote prolifically (often two stories a week) to ensure a steady income. After the 1905 Russian revolution and resulting pogroms, he fled Russia. In 1906 Sholem visited the USA with Olga and their son Numa through the generosity of an affluent Jewish American group. Thousands at the dock greeted him. During a reception in his honour, Judge Samuel Greenbaum introduced him to Mark Twain as "the Jewish Mark Twain." Twain graciously replied, "Tell him I am the American Sholem Aleichem."

He had acquired an annual five-thousand-dollar contract with the new Hearst-published *Jewish American* and two plays commissioned for Second Avenue Yiddish theaters. But soon the *Jewish American* ceased publication. His two plays had disastrous productions. He was disgusted by US materialism, the bickering among Jewish groups, newspapers, and theaters and the disgracefully low level of most popular American-Yiddish culture. So, in 1907, they returned to Europe, mostly to Switzerland, but moved about.

In 1908, on a lecture tour in Russia, he fell ill with tuberculosis, missing the Chernovitz Conference which established that the two official Jewish languages were Hebrew and Yiddish. He continued writing, initiating many works, including *Motl Peysi the Cantor's Son*, *The Flood*, and a second volume of *The Correspondence of Menachem Mendel and His Wife Sheyne Sheyndl*. He also wrote in Russian for an Odessa newspaper and for the then leading Russian Jewish publication, and in Hebrew for *Ha-melitz*.

Though regularly writing for the Yiddish press, his stories appeared in translation in *The New York World*; but adequate income plagued him. Publishers withheld royalties, journals paid late if they paid at all, etc. In 1909 an international jubilee honouring his 50th birthday and 25th anniversary as a writer were held. His friends gave him a gift resolving his financial problems and they bought the rights to his entire works. He thus published an

inclusive edition of his assembled works which sold well and provided a comfortable income for the rest of his life.

An alien in Berlin at the outbreak of World War I, he and his family fled to Copenhagen where daughter Emma cared for his ill son Misha. There he started writing his tragicomedy *It's Hard to Be a Jew*. In 1914, he returned to New York. In 1915 he wrote his well-received story and play *The Great Prize*. But tragedy hit: fifteen year old Misha died of tuberculosis.

Sholem remained depressed over Misha's death. His own dormant TB returned and his diabetes became unstable. Informed that his time was limited he drafted his will. Unfinished was his autobiography *From the Marketplace* and *Motl Peysi the Cantor's Son*. He died May 13, 1916, a day after his 33rd wedding anniversary.

His funeral, allegedly the largest in New York till then, was estimated at 100,000 mourners lining the streets. The funeral procession stopped in every New York Jewish neighbourhood where different Jewish luminaries delivered eulogies. His will was published in the *New York Times* and read in the U.S. Congress. ♦

Sholem Aleichem's Legacy Part 2 will appear in the next issue of UJPO News.

CANADA

CETA threatens Canadian democracy!

By David Abramowitz

We read that Wallonia opposed CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) because tariff-free Canadian farm produce would undersell their own. While that was a real factor it wasn't the major concern. The real threat is the Investment Court System (ICS), formerly the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), which allows transnational corporations to sue governments for changes to laws, policies or practices that impact corporate profits, thus removing legal disputes from national courts to a by-pass process which undermines the sovereignty of participating countries, i.e. "the death of democracy".

Marchers by the hundreds of thousands paraded across Europe and gathered 3.5 million signatures opposing CETA and the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) with similar ICS provisions. The ultimately signed agreement has four pages of conditions. Belgium's signature requires that the agreement's provisional application not include the ISDS provisions which would come into effect only after full ratification. If ratified, CETA will restrict how local governments spend money by banning "buy local" policies, add hundreds of millions of dollars to the price of pharmaceutical drugs in our public health care system,

create pressure to increase privatization of local water systems, transit and energy, and much more.

After much pressure from all participants, including Canada, the agreement was signed adding four pages of conditions as a formal declaration into the EU's confirmation that all European parties have signed. Belgium's signature is conditional on the agreement deleting the ISDS provisions, and would come into effect only after full ratification.

Thus future efforts by Canada's Liberal-Conservative elites and their European neo-liberal partners to force the CETA through will become even more challenging once Europeans, and hopefully also Canadians, wake up to the regressive aspects of the CETA which go beyond the ISDS provisions.

A constitutional challenge against the CETA, on behalf of former Tory Cabinet Minister Paul Hellyer and others, was launched in our federal court. The Plaintiffs seek interim injunctions to prevent the federal government from signing, ratifying and implementing the CETA until four challenges are addressed by the court. The road ahead could be rough if the public here and abroad realize and react to the pitfalls yet to be disclosed.

US President-elect Trump has already stated that his administration won't ratify TPP so there may be hope that CETA won't succeed, though our PM will try to have it ratified in February or March. This might (we hope) be prevented by the above mentioned legal challenge. Stay tuned. ♦

Rally for Decent Work



Photo and article by Sam Blatt

On October 1, a pleasant Saturday afternoon in Toronto, approximately 3,000 people gathered at a Queen's Park rally marking the start of "The Rally for Decent Work". The event was organized by the Ontario Federation of Labour, partnering with the community organization "Fight

for \$15 and Fairness”. The rally was timed to coincide with the Ontario government’s conducting a “Changing Workplace Review”. Eight UJPO members attended the rally.

Prime amongst the demands was that for a \$15.00 minimum wage. Ontario is raising its minimum wage to \$11.40 per hour, up from the last increase in 2015 to \$11.25. (Alberta has pledged to bring its minimum wage to \$15 by 2018.)

Josephine Petcher, of UNIFOR, said “It also has to be easier for workers employed in ‘precarious’ jobs to form a union. A union is the best way out of poverty and into the middle class,” and that “Temporary workers should be paid at the same scale as other employees.”

OFL president Chris Buckley told CBC News “We have people working two and three minimum wage jobs . . . , and at the end of the week, they’re going to food banks to feed themselves and their families.” ♦

USA

It was the Democrats’ embrace of neoliberalism that won it for Trump

By Naomi Klein, The Guardian, 9 November 2016

People have lost their sense of security, status and even identity. This result is the scream of an America desperate for radical change.

They will blame James Comey and the FBI. They will blame voter suppression and racism. They will blame Bernie or bust, and misogyny. They will blame third parties and independent candidates. They will blame the corporate media for giving him the platform, social media for being a bullhorn, and WikiLeaks for airing the laundry.

But this leaves out the force most responsible for creating the nightmare in which we now find ourselves wide awake: neoliberalism. That worldview – fully embodied by Hillary Clinton and her machine – is no match for Trump-style extremism. The decision to run one against the other is what sealed our fate. If we learn nothing else, can we please learn from that mistake?

Here is what we need to understand: a hell of a lot of people are in pain. Under neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatization, austerity and corporate trade, their living standards have declined precipitously. They have lost jobs. They have lost pensions. They have lost much of the safety net that used to make these losses less frightening. They see a future for their kids even worse than their precarious present.

At the same time, they have witnessed the rise of the Davos class, a hyper-connected network of banking and



tech billionaires, elected leaders who are awfully cozy with those interests, and Hollywood celebrities who make the whole thing seem unbearably glamorous. Success is a party to which they were not invited, and they know in their hearts that this rising wealth and power is somehow directly connected to their growing debts and powerlessness.

For the people who saw security and status as their birthright – and that means white men most of all – these losses are unbearable.

Donald Trump speaks directly to that pain. The Brexit campaign spoke to that pain. So do all of the rising far-right parties in Europe. They answer it with nostalgic nationalism and anger at remote economic bureaucracies – whether Washington, the North American Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization or the EU. And of course, they answer it by bashing immigrants and people of colour, vilifying Muslims, and degrading women. Elite neoliberalism has nothing to offer that pain, because neoliberalism unleashed the Davos class. People such as Hillary and Bill Clinton are the toast of the Davos party. In truth, they threw the party.

Trump’s message was: “All is hell.” Clinton answered: “All is well.” But it’s not well – far from it.

Neo-fascist responses to rampant insecurity and inequality are not going to go away. But what we know from the 1930s is that what it takes to do battle with fascism is a real left. A good chunk of Trump’s support could be peeled away if there were a genuine redistributive agenda on the table. An agenda to take on the billionaire class with more than rhetoric, and use the money for a green new deal. Such a plan could create a tidal wave of well-paying unionized jobs, bring badly needed resources and opportunities to communities of colour, and insist that polluters should pay for workers to be retrained and fully included in this future.

MIDDLE EAST



Amos Oz presents prize to Breaking the Silence

By JewishNews-Ilan as reported by Ynetnews, Nov. 8, 2016

(Ed. Note: This article was abridged in the print version of UJPO News.)

Amos Oz awarded controversial Israeli human rights organization Breaking the Silence a cash prize on Monday during a conference taking place at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The alternative prize was awarded after Ben-Gurion University President Rivka Carmi decided to prevent the organization from receiving the Berelson Prize for Jewish-Arab Understanding, in memory of Yitzhak Rabin.

“Sometimes in history, those who were dubbed ‘traitors’ are in time shown to be trailblazers,” Oz told the crowd when presenting the prize.

A human rights organization that publishes testimonies of fighters in the IDF, Breaking the Silence has been accused of using classified information and called “traitors” by the political right. The award it was denied focuses on efforts relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Oz, who spoke at the ceremony, said that Breaking the Silence deserved the prize. According to Oz, “Lately, especially in the last few days, I ask myself why organizations like Breaking the Silence, B’Tselem and Peace Now raise such feelings of fear, anger and hostility in people. Not only for members of the far-right, but also for people who see themselves as members of the middle. Moderate people. The reason for this hostility is not that our adversaries are racists. The vast majority are not racists. It isn’t because most of our adversaries seek to shut us up. The vast majority of them do not seek to shut us up. The vast majority of them do not hate Arabs.”

Oz continued to say that “People want to feel good, and Breaking the Silence disturbs that feeling. People want the State of Israel to look good, and Breaking the Silence ruins that image. It is completely human, I do not despise that emotion. It mistakenly appears to them that what makes the country not look good are the people who expose the country’s moral distortions.”

In his remarks, Oz added, “I want our adversaries to ponder that moral force is not a luxury but an existential matter. I would like to tell our adversaries in the country that one of the few reasons to feel good as Israelis is that there is still freedom of speech and freedom of the press and that there are organizations such as Breaking the

It could fashion policies that fight institutionalized racism, economic inequality and climate change at the same time. It could take on bad trade deals and police violence, and honour indigenous people as the original protectors of the land, water and air.

People have a right to be angry, and a powerful, intersectional left agenda can direct that anger where it belongs, while fighting for holistic solutions that will bring a frayed society together.

Such a coalition is possible. In Canada, we have begun to cobble it together under the banner of a people’s agenda called The Leap Manifesto, endorsed by more than 220 organizations from Greenpeace Canada to Black Lives Matter Toronto, and some of our largest trade unions.

Bernie Sanders’ amazing campaign went a long way towards building this sort of coalition, and demonstrated that the appetite for democratic socialism is out there. But early on, there was a failure in the campaign to connect with older black and Latino voters who are the demographic most abused by our current economic model. That failure prevented the campaign from reaching its full potential. Those mistakes can be corrected and a bold, transformative coalition is there to be built on.

That is the task ahead. The Democratic party needs to be either decisively wrested from pro-corporate neoliberals, or it needs to be abandoned. From Elizabeth Warren to Nina Turner, to the Occupy alumni who took the Bernie campaign supernova, there is a stronger field of coalition-inspiring progressive leaders out there than at any point in my lifetime. We are “leaderful”, as many in the Movement for Black Lives say.

So let’s get out of shock as fast as we can and build the kind of radical movement that has a genuine answer to the hate and fear represented by the Trumps of this world. Let’s set aside whatever is keeping us apart and start right now. ♦

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/09/rise-of-the-davos-class-sealed-americas-fate>

This issue of UJPO News is sent to all members for our 90th anniversary in addition to the email version.

Some members earlier indicated a preference for the print copy.

If you prefer the print version as well please contact us by phone, email or mail.

Silence and B'Tselem and Peace Now. The things that Israel is doing now will not make Israel feel better. I'll let you in on a secret: I love Israel even at times when I can't bear to because of the long tradition of debate."

"Everyone shouts, but few listen. I listen sometimes and from that I make a living. I understand our opponents and honor them this evening. The defense apparatus that says 'It's not possible that our boys are doing this,' every attempt to encrypt injustices will end up detonating itself. It is better to open our wounds as early as possible and as publicly as possible, in favor of our opponents here and abroad. Those writing talkbacks called the Prophet Jeremiah a leftist and threw him into a pit. When Begin returned the Sinai, people in his own party called him a traitor. I could go on all night. When I'm called a traitor, it puts me in extraordinary company."

Breaking the Silence Director Yuli Novak responded to the prize by saying, "It's heartwarming to discover that when faced with a herd mentality, violence and silencing, there are still those who are strong and brave, who are willing to stand up and refuse to relinquish democracy, and who fight for the right and obligation to criticize and uncover the truth about what goes on in the occupied territories." ♦

<http://jewishnews.com/2016/11/08/amos-oz-presents-prize-to-breaking-the-silence/>

INTERNATIONAL



Fidel Castro remembered

By Dovid Shloyme

Fidel Castro, vilified by many, is remembered by progressives for his decades of campaigning for

world-wide social justice, championing socialism, denouncing capitalist exploitation and destruction and its imperialist warmongering. He defeated US puppet dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Cuban citizens, as a right, now receive free medical, dental and hospital care. Free education through university became the new norm. He survived at least 638 assassination attempts! Eisenhower's blockade, till today, didn't decimate the impoverished country though it and the USSR's collapse caused severe austere periods. Through the US missile crisis and other potential existential and economic disasters, Cuba survived with difficulty.

In spite of repression of opposition, Canada's friendship and that of other nations permitted development of tourism and provided much needed revenue. Joint

ventures, as with Canada's Sherritt, developed nickel mining and oil production.

Curiosity to evaluate China's success with capitalist adaptations during Castro's 1995 visit convinced him that an IMF loan, requiring elimination of national education and health care policies, was not a choice for Cuba.

The love by the overwhelming majority of his nation secures his legacy. ♦

See "*Media Coverage Of Fidel Castro's Death Has Been Abysmally One-Sided*": http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/stephen-kimber/fidel-castro-death_b_13371596.html/

Refugees

From Médecins Sans Frontières Dispatches

Top countries of origin for international refugees:

Syria: 4.9 million
Afghanistan: 2.7 million
Somalia: 1.1 million
South Sudan: 0.8 million
Sudan: 0.6 million

Top countries by number of internally displaced persons:

Syria: 6.6 million
Colombia: 6.27 million
Iraq: 3.29 million
Sudan: 3.18 million
Yemen: 2.5 million



A REFUGEE is a person who has fled his or her country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS are not defined as refugees because although they have been forced out of their homes, they have not fled their countries; while their needs may be the same, they are not accorded the same rights as refugees under international law. ♦

Libya, David Cameron's "Iraq"? Damning report shreds another war monger

By Felicity Arbuthnot, TruePublica, Sept. 20, 2016

Former UK Prime Minister David Cameron is consistent in just one thing – jumping ship when the going gets tough. He announced his resignation in the immediate wake of the 23rd July referendum in which Britain marginally voted to leave the EU, a referendum which he had fecklessly called to appease right wing "little Englanders", instead of facing them down.

He lost. The result is looming financial catastrophe and the prospect of unraveling forty three years of legislations (Britain joined the then European Economic Community on 1st January 1973.) No structure was put in place for a government Department to address the legal and bureaucratic enormities should the leave vote prevail. There is still none.

Cameron however committed to staying on as an MP until the 2020 general election, vowing grandiosely: “I will do everything I can in future to help this great country succeed”, he said of the small island off Europe which he had potentially sunk, now isolated from and derided by swathes of its continental neighbours – with the sound of trading doors metaphorically slamming shut reverberating across the English Channel.

David Cameron has now jumped again, resigning unexpectedly and immediately as an MP on Monday 12th September, giving the impression that he was not in agreement with certain policies of his (unelected) successor, Theresa May. He stated: “Obviously I have my own views about certain issues ... As a former PM it’s very difficult to sit as a back-bencher and not be an enormous diversion and distraction from what the Government is doing. I don’t want to be that distraction.” What an ego.

Over the decades of course, the House of Parliament has been littered with former Prime Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers who have remained constituency MPs without being a “distraction.”

The following day the real reason for his decision seemed obvious. Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Select Committee released their devastating findings on Cameron’s hand in actions resulting in Libya’s near destruction, contributing to the unprecedented migration of those fleeing UK enjoined “liberations”, creating more subsequent attacks in the West – and swelling ISIS and other terrorist factions.

“Cameron blamed for rise of ISIS”, thundered *The Times* headline, adding: “Damning Inquiry into Libya points finger at former PM.” The Guardian opined: “MPs condemn Cameron over Libya debacle” and: “Errors resulted in country ‘becoming failed state and led to growth of ISIS.’ ”

The Independent owned “I”: “Cameron’s toxic Libya legacy”, with: “Former PM blamed for collapse in to civil war, rise of ISIS and mass migration to Europe in Inquiry’s scathing verdict” and “Cameron ignored lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan ...”

The Independent chose: “Cameron’s bloody legacy: Damning Report blames ex-PM for ISIS in Libya.”

No wonder he plopped over the side. The Report is decimating. The Foreign Affairs Select Committee concluding: “Through his decision-making in the National Security Council, former Prime Minister, David Cameron was ultimately responsible for the failure to develop a coherent Libya strategy.”

The disasters leading to that final verdict include the UK’s intervention being based on “erroneous assumption” an “incomplete understanding” of the situation on the ground, with Cameron leaping from limited intervention to an: “opportunist policy of (entirely illegal) regime change”, based on “inadequate intelligence.”

Once Gaddafi had been horrendously assassinated, resultant from the assault on his country: “... failure to develop a coherent strategy ... had led to political and economic collapse, internecine warfare, humanitarian crisis and the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) in North Africa.”

After his death, Gaddafi’s body, with that of his son, Mutassim, was laid out on the floor of a meat warehouse in Misrata. (“I”, 14th September 2016.)

“We came, we saw, he died”, then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton told the media, with a peal of laughter. Just under a year later US Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three US officials were murdered in Benghazi. Payback time for her words, taken out on the obvious target?

Muammar Gaddafi, his son Muatassim and his former Defence Minister were reportedly buried in unmarked graves in the desert, secretly, before dawn on 25th October 2011. The shocking series of events speaking volumes for the “New Libya” and the Cameron-led, British government’s blood dripping hands in the all.

The UK’s meddling hands were involved from the start. France, Lebanon and the UK, supported by the US, proposed UN Security Council Resolution 1973.

Britain was the second country, after France, to call for a “no fly zone” over Libya in order to: “to use all necessary measures” to prevent attacks on civilians. “It neither explicitly authorised the deployment of ground forces nor addressed the question of regime change or of post conflict reconstruction”, reminds the Committee.

Moreover: “France led the international community in advancing the case for military intervention in Libya ... UK policy followed decisions taken in France.” Former Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder confirmed to the Committee: “Cameron and Sarkozy were the undisputed leaders in terms of doing something.”

The US was then “instrumental in extending the terms of the Resolution” to even a “no drive zone” and “assumed authority to attack the entire Libyan government’s command and communications network.”

Institutional ignorance

On the 19th March 2011, a nineteen nation “coalition” turned a “no fly zone” into a free fire zone and embarked on a blitzkrieg of a nation of just 6.103 million (2011 figure) people.

All this in spite of the revelation to the Committee by former UK Ambassador to Libya Sir Dominic Asquith, that the intelligence base as to what was really happening in the country: “... might well have been less than ideal.”

Professor George Joffe, renowned expert on the Middle East and North Africa, noted: “the relatively limited understanding of events” and that: “people had not really bothered to monitor closely what was happening.”

Analyst Alison Pargeter: ‘expressed her shock at the lack of awareness in Whitehall of the “history and regional complexities” of Libya.’

Incredibly Whitehall appeared to have been near totally ignorant as to the extent to which the “rebellion” might have been a relatively small group of Islamic extremists.

Former Chief of the Defence Staff, Lord Richards was apparently unaware that Abdelhakim Belhadj and other Al Qaeda linked members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group were involved. “It was a grey area”, he said. However: “a quorum of respectable Libyans were assuring the Foreign Office” that militant Islam would not benefit from the rebellion. “With the benefit of hindsight, that was wishful thinking at best”, concluded his Lordship.

“The possibility that militant extremist groups would attempt to benefit from the rebellion should not have been the preserve of hindsight. Militant connections with transnational militant extremist groups were known before 2011, because many Libyans had participated in the Iraq insurgency and in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda”, commented the Committee.

Iraq revisited. Back then it was the “respectable” Ahmed Chalabi, Iyad Allawi and their ilk selling a pack of lies to the seemingly ever gullible, supremely unworldly Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Much was made by William Hague, Foreign Secretary at the time and by Liam Fox, then Defence Secretary, of Muammar’s Gaddafi’s threatening rhetoric. The Committee pointed out that: “Despite his rhetoric, the proposition that Muammar Gaddafi would have ordered the massacre of civilians in Benghazi was not supported by the available evidence.”

Further, two days before the 19 nation onslaught: On 17 March 2011, Muammar Gaddafi announced to the rebels in Benghazi, “Throw away your weapons, exactly like your

brothers in Ajdabiya and other places did. They laid down their arms and they are safe. We never pursued them at all.”

Subsequent investigation revealed that when Gaddafi’s forces re-took Ajdabiya in February 2011, they did not attack civilians. “Muammar Gaddafi also attempted to appease protesters in Benghazi with an offer of development aid before finally deploying troops.”

Professor Joffe agreed that Gaddafi’s words were historically at odds with his deeds: “If you go back to the American bombings in the 1980s of Benghazi and Tripoli, rather than trying to remove threats to the regime in the east, in Cyrenaica, Gaddafi spent six months trying to pacify the tribes that were located there. The evidence is that he was well aware of the insecurity of parts of the country and of the unlikelihood (that military assault was the answer.) Therefore, he would have been very careful in the actual response...the fear of the massacre of civilians was vastly overstated.”

In June 2011 an Amnesty International investigation failed to find corroborative evidence of mass human rights violations by government troops but did find that: “the rebels in Benghazi made false claims and manufactured evidence” and that: “much Western media coverage has from the outset presented a very one-sided view of the logic of events ...”

Condemnation; aiding ISIS

The Committee wrote damningly: “We have seen no evidence that the UK Government carried out a proper analysis of the nature of the rebellion in Libya. It may be that the UK Government was unable to analyse the nature of the rebellion in Libya due to incomplete intelligence and insufficient institutional insight and that it was caught up in events as they developed.

“It could not verify the actual threat to civilians posed by the Gaddafi regime; it selectively took elements of Muammar Gaddafi’s rhetoric at face value; and it failed to identify the militant Islamist extremist element in the rebellion. UK strategy was founded on erroneous assumptions and an incomplete understanding of the evidence.”

Moreover: “The deployment of coalition air assets shifted the military balance in the Libyan civil war in favour of the rebels”, with: “The combat performance of rebel ground forces enhanced by personnel and intelligence provided by States such as the UK, France, Turkey and other regional players.” Lord Richards informed that the UK “had a few people embedded” with the rebel forces.

Arms and tanks were also provided to the rebels by members of the “coalition” in contravention of Resolution 1973.

Was the aim of the assault regime change or civilian protection? Lord Richard said: “one thing morphed almost ineluctably in to the other.”

The Committee summarized: “The UK’s intervention in Libya was reactive and did not comprise action in pursuit of a strategic objective. This meant that a limited intervention to protect civilians drifted into a policy of regime change by military means.”

The Cameron-led UK government had “focused exclusively on military intervention”, under the National Security Council, a Cabinet Committee created by David Cameron.

The Committee’s final observation is:

“We note former Prime Minister David Cameron’s decisive role when the National Security Council discussed intervention in Libya. We also note that Lord Richards implicitly dissociated himself from that decision in his oral evidence to this inquiry. The Government must commission an independent review of the operation of the NSC ... It should be informed by the conclusions of the Iraq Inquiry and examine whether the weaknesses in governmental decision-making in relation to the Iraq intervention in 2003 have been addressed by the introduction of the NSC.”

Cameron who said he wanted to be “heir to Blair” seems to have ended up as just that, pivotal cheerleader for the butchery of a sovereign leader, most of his family, government and the destruction of a nation.

“Muammar Gaddafi inherited one of the poorest nations in Africa . However, by the time he was assassinated, Libya was unquestionably Africa ‘s most prosperous nation. Libya had the highest GDP per capita and life expectancy in Africa and less people lived below the poverty line than in the Netherlands. Libyans did not only enjoy free health care and free education, they also enjoyed free electricity and interest free loans. The price of petrol was around \$0.14 per liter and 40 loaves of bread cost just \$0.15. Consequently, the UN designated Libya the 53rd highest in the world in human development.”

End note: David Cameron jumped ship yet a third time – he refused to give evidence to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. ♦

<http://truepublica.org.uk/united-kingdom/libya-david-camerons-iraq-damning-report-shreds-another-war-monger/>

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