

NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

During my first year of ICJW presidency, I have had the opportunity to assess ICJW's special place in the world and see for myself the dedication of our members to ICJW's broad agenda.

I have had the pleasure of meeting and interacting with twelve ICJW affiliate organisations in four different regions of the world, and witnessing their outstanding contributions to their communities.

Attending both the UN NGO Forum Beijing +20 in Geneva in 2014, and the NGO CSW Forum at the UN in New York in 2015, together with a number of ICJW representatives, I was impressed by their capability and input. In this Newsletter you will find an article on the important work contributed by ICJW representatives as NGO volunteers in global and regional organisations.

The ongoing struggle to achieve gender equality continues in both general and Jewish communities and remains a priority concern to ICJW. Two articles dealing with these issues are included: an informed assessment of today's sexual objectification of women in the media, and a look into new initiatives assisting Jewish women to avoid becoming *Agunot*.

2015 has seen renewed violence and anti-Semitism which has impacted upon the Jewish communities of many ICJW members. We have included an article on an insidious type of anti-Semitism: BDS campaigns against Israel.

During 2015, Jewish communities have been horrified by the uncovering of institutionalised child sexual abuse within closed Jewish communities. The importance of counteracting such a scourge cannot be ignored by a women's organisation such as ours, and we are taking a strong position on this in the Newsletter.

The opportunity for a Jewish woman to shake hands with the Pope is surely unusual yet, in the past year, two ICJW Executive members have been accorded this honour. Along with photos recording both events, we present an article focusing on the increasing importance of building and maintaining interfaith and intercultural relationships.

Throughout its history, ICJW has attracted capable Jewish women, and many women of high calibre have built ICJW into the organisation we know today. In this issue we proudly feature and review two interesting books recently published by ICJW Executive members.

We mourn the passing of four ICJW Life Members in the past year, and pay tribute to each woman for her years of dedicated work. Recognising the input of young Jewish women to our affiliate organisations, we also feature a young ICJW committee member and her contribution to our work.

My best wishes for a happy and healthy year 5776.

Robyn Lenn OAM

President, International Council of Jewish Women

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Guest Speakers at ICJW Executive Meetings

Reaffirming Our Commitment to Environmental Sustainability

Environment and Sustainable Development is a priority agenda for ICJW. At ICJW's Executive meeting in New York in November 2014, Elliott Harris, Director of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Program, was invited by ICJW NY UN team member, Joan Lurie Goldberg, to speak on Climate Risks and Sustainable Development.

Mr Harris spoke about his experiences within the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He explained: "The UN has spent the last forty years dealing with poverty eradication. It must now equip itself to support a universal agenda, one that goes beyond poverty eradication. It must become relevant to all its member states. Poverty cannot be eradicated without shifting to sustainability."

He also said: "If it is in a person's central and long-term interest to move to more sustainable patterns of consumption, the change becomes a permanent change in lifestyle."

Mr Harris also made a particular statement about the role of women: "Women in developing countries are the primary providers of water, food and energy at the household and community levels. They are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods and particularly affected by any degradation in the natural environment."



(l to r): Guest Speaker Elliott Harris, with Joan Goldberg and Robyn Lenn.

Following his presentation, the following Topical Statement was agreed and circulated: "The International Council of Jewish Women, meeting in Executive Session on November 11, 2014 in New York City, reaffirmed its commitment to promoting environmental sustainability. We recognise the urgent need to increase awareness of climate change all over the world, and to develop and implement mitigating solutions. Our organisation, representing dozens of affiliates globally, will promote this worthy objective through advocacy at the United Nations, to national governments and with direct actions through its international network."

Meeting a Luminary of the European Parliament

At the May 2015 ICJW Executive Meeting in Antwerp, the guest speaker was Mrs Frédérique Ries, a Belgian politician and Member of the European Parliament for Belgium's French-speaking community.

Mrs Ries spoke about her sixteen years of work in the Parliament, focusing on her involvement with Israel and her continuing efforts to speak out against discrimination and anti-Semitism in Europe.



Frédérique Ries is a strong supporter of Israel in the European Parliament, where relations between the EU and Israel are still poor. She described her years of speaking against resolutions 'bashing' Israel, while in contrast there are very few parliamentary resolutions on human rights or peace within the European region. A particular focus of Mrs Ries' work has been exposing the anti-Semitism within Palestinian schoolbooks.

She is proud of her many achievements, particularly the introduction of Holocaust Remembrance Day to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. She emphasized that remembering where we come from is important in everyone's life.



(l to r): Eliane Sperling-Levin, Robyn Lenn, Frédérique Ries, Lucette Pilcer, Liliane Seidman, Nadine Iarchy at the ICJW Executive meeting in Antwerp, May 2015.

Meeting Pope Francis

Di Hirsh OAM - Chair of ICJW Interfaith and Intercultural Committee

Interfaith dialogue is one of the key areas of concern throughout ICJW. Strengthening our relations with people of other faiths can only result in positive outcomes for ICJW, and indeed for our own Jewish communities wherever we are. There are many different ways to do this, and I urge all ICJW affiliates to seek out ways to engage with people of other faiths, especially women.



Pope Francis meeting Sara Winkowski



Pope Francis meeting Nadine Iarchy

Two ICJW women have had the opportunity over the past year to meet Pope Francis, an outstanding Catholic world leader. Sara Winkowski, former ICJW President and World Jewish Congress Vice-President representing ICJW, was a member of the Latin American Jewish Congress delegation that visited Pope Francis in Rome in September 2014, together with other members of the World Jewish Congress. Pope Francis greeted every person individually. In an informal 45 minute meeting, he spoke of his desire for peace in the Middle East and called on everyone to pray for a peaceful solution.

The Pope affirmed his conviction that a person cannot be a good Christian if he is anti-Semitic, since Christianity has developed from Judaism. He urged all to continue to strengthen their inter-religious dialogue. As the meeting was just prior to *Rosh Hashana*, the Pope wished everyone “*Shana Tova uMetuka*” – a happy sweet year - and shook hands with every person before leaving. Sara was very moved by the visit, saying: “You could feel his charisma, his kindness, his humility and his friendship.” It was an experience she will never forget.

In June 2015, Nadine Iarchy, former Chair of the ICJW Interfaith and Intercultural portfolio and current Chair of the ICJW Anti-Semitism portfolio, attended the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews. It was held in Rome to celebrate the 50th anniversary of “*Nostra Aetate*”, the ground-breaking declaration from Vatican II that opened new horizons in the Catholic Church’s interfaith relations.

The theme of the conference, “The Past, Present and Future of the Christian-Jewish Relationship”, was taken up by the Pontiff when he addressed the 250 participants in Sala Clementina in the Apostolic Palace. He talked about the ancient roots of the Jewish community in Rome, dating back to the second century BCE. “*Nostra Aetate*”, the Pope stressed, “is a definitive YES to the Jewish roots of Christianity and an irrevocable NO to anti-Semitism.” Jews and Christians have coexisted in Rome for nearly 2,000 years, and he considers Jewish Christian reconciliation to be important work. The Pope wanted to be presented to all 250 participants. When Nadine and her husband met him, she took the opportunity to request that the next archbishop of Belgium, soon to be appointed, should be one who is open to dialogue. The Pope’s response was a request for her to pray for him to make the right decision.

Pope Francis is certainly an exceptional leader who often speaks out to encourage interreligious dialogue, not just between religious leaders but among all people of faith from every sector of society. Sara and Nadine are very fortunate to have been able to meet such an inspirational man, who has the capacity to influence so many.

Understanding BDS

By **Julie Nathan** - ICJW Committee Member, Anti-Semitism and Racism, and Research Officer for the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement is intrinsically deceptive. They talk about boycotting Israel, they call for divestment from Israel, and they hope for sanctions against Israel. They do not discuss, at least publicly, whether they support a one or two-state solution.



However, their prime source, the 2005 manifesto, known as the “Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS”, states three aims. These aims, if implemented, would clearly result in the elimination of the Jewish state. It would also, given the history of bitter and bloody conflict, most likely end up with another genocide of Jews. This is something BDS supporters avoid addressing.

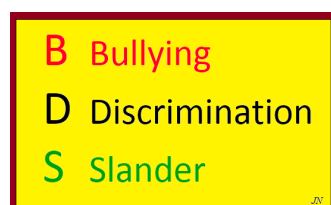
In fact, the BDS movement is increasingly becoming an open source and conduit of antisemitism. Rhetoric and incidents keep surfacing that reveal the antisemitism inherent within the BDS movement. Whether it is threats to kill Jews at an Israeli trade expo in South Africa, or a planned protest outside a synagogue on Shabbat in Australia, or throwing kosher food on the floor in European supermarkets, or intimidating Jewish students in American universities, the level of anti-Jewish hatred in the rhetoric emanating from within the BDS movement, and the number of antisemitic incidents to which it gives rise, continue to escalate.

The BDS movement poses very little economic threat to Israel, although it could in the future. However, it does not actually aim to bring Israel economically to its knees. The BDS movement has its sights, words and actions squarely aimed at delegitimising Israel, making Israel a pariah state, just as once Jews were a pariah people. Hence, their use of words like ‘racist’, ‘ethnic cleansing’, ‘war crimes’ and ‘genocide’ to falsely attribute these traits to Israel. It is a war of narrative and propaganda rather than of economics.

Within Israel/Palestine itself, the BDS movement opposes any cooperative endeavours between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs. This is their anti-normalisation program.

It aims to ensure that Jews and Arabs are kept apart and kept as enemies. It is not about healing the wounds but keeping the wounds festering.

Despite its veneer, the BDS movement is not actually pro-Palestinian. It speaks out only for Palestinians where blame can be placed on Jews. Palestinians suffering at the hands of fellow Arabs or Muslims or others do not interest the BDS movement. The Palestinians are used as a mere tool with which to bludgeon Israel.



The BDS movement is characterised by three forms of behaviour – bullying, discrimination, and slander.

Bullying is a favoured tactic and includes invading public places and causing disruption wherever Israeli people are performing or lecturing, or invading malls and shops where Israeli goods are being sold. People planning to visit Israel to perform, lecture, attend conferences, or participate in other events, are subject to bullying through various means including mass emailing, often including intimidation and threats to deter them from attending events in Israel. Bullying aims to stop interactions and relationships with Israelis.

Discrimination takes many forms. It includes refusing positions to Israelis, especially in academia and at conferences, refusing to accept Israeli academic papers, refusing to sit with Israelis in forums, refusing to translate books into Hebrew, and not accepting bookings by Jewish or Israeli cultural groups. Discrimination serves to exclude and marginalise Israelis.

Slander, defamation and libel is done by accusing, individually or collectively, Israelis or Israel of things they have not committed. For example, flooding Gaza by opening non-existent dams, targeting Palestinian children, controlling the media, banking and politicians in the USA. These and other events are twisted and cited out of context, giving rise to horrendous but empty accusations. All these accusations are aimed at demonising Israelis.

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Breaking the Silence On Child Sexual Abuse

Awareness of the magnitude of the problem of child sexual abuse is growing worldwide. It occurs within all societies including Jewish communities, and recent disclosures of child sexual abuse and cover ups occurring in Australian Jewish institutions have emphasised the urgency of finding ways to deal with it on a worldwide basis.



ICJW is very concerned to see that urgent action is taken to protect children from all types of abuse. We encourage rabbis and Jewish communal leaders to work side-by-side with specialists to expose and eliminate child sexual abuse in our communities. We need to work towards the protection and well-being of children to keep them safe.

Manny Waks went public with his personal story of child abuse in 2011 and the following year founded the Tzedek (Justice) organisation in Australia, to enable other victims to come forward. He publicly disclosed his personal experiences of child sexual abuse in a Jewish religious setting through an Australian Royal Commission in 2014. He supported others who also disclosed their abuse at this Commission. Unfortunately there were many attempts within his community to silence Manny and others who were disclosing their abuse.

Manny is now living in Europe, and has set up a global initiative that will advocate and offer support on child sexual abuse within Jewish communities for victims and survivors. He is currently gathering data on the occurrence of child sexual abuse.

ICJW strongly supports Manny's courageous stand in exposing the existence of child sexual abuse and its cover up in closeted Jewish communities. It is undoubtedly the responsibility of Jewish women like us to protect all children from this scourge.

Mannie Waks can be contacted at info@mannywaks.com

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The most insidious aspect of the BDS movement is that it creates a poisonous atmosphere for diaspora Jews. The use of canards, stereotypes, and imagery once used against the Jewish people and the Jewish religion, are now being directed towards the Jewish state and reflecting back onto all Jews. The constant and pernicious demonization of Israel serves to vilify Israel and its Jewish supporters. This is the constant drip, drip, drip effect of demonization.

Peace and justice can only be built on a negotiated two-state solution. This ensures that both Jews and Arabs can realise their national aspirations. To work towards these ends, the BDS movement must be exposed, countered and defeated.



"Daddy, why do we live in a cave?"

"Well, honey, once we started boycotting Israeli products, one thing led to another..."

Based on an original illustration by Irma Deremeaux

ICJW's International Representation

By Karmela Bélinki PhD - ICJW Representative to the Council of Europe

NGOs are by definition non-governmental organisations, but this does not mean that they do not work according to standards set by governments. To keep up the illusion of total independence or even of repudiation of these standards, seems today antiquated romantic ideals stemming from post WWII sentiments, as well as the claim to be non-political. NGOs, even humanitarian or environmental organisations, might in the best of cases be non-partisan or multi-partisan, but they are definitely not non-political.



ICJW is represented within the scope of its goals as an NGO in many of the most important international bodies - Jewish, general and specialised - from UN bodies and agencies in New York, Paris, Vienna and Geneva to regional organisations, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe. As a Jewish organisation, its presence is of major importance as a

vigilant observer and presenter of the Jewish viewpoint. The policy of active participation both in Jewish and general issues has given ICJW a special reputation and even respect among its peers. In all the bodies where ICJW is represented, there are many veteran activists who all deserve special recognition – and an endless number of incidents and adventures of unwritten history.

ICJW has been represented at all UN world conferences for women since Copenhagen 1980, contributing programmes of its own at the NGO Forums at these events, and participating as an observer at the main conference. There have been many difficult sessions, with Israel being constantly attacked.

Israel being a perpetual issue on the international scene means a balancing act also for ICJW between defending the existence of Israel and criticising or not criticising the acts of Israeli governments. For Israel-based international organisations such as WIZO, it is even more difficult to maintain their policy of absolute loyalty, considering the growing discontentment amongst the member organisations with this policy.

ICJW operates on two levels - the local stage and the international arena. The international level may seem distant to many members, but in today's global world where we can experience everything in real-time, even international events become personal, and as the feminist slogan goes: the personal is political!

Today there are so many international NGO events all over the world that ICJW has to prioritise where to send representatives. There is a lot of unused expertise and it is vital that local and national members, both affiliates and individuals, are recruited for representation and participation.



ICJW representatives attending the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Beijing+20 NGO Forum in Geneva in November 2014

Agunot: An Update

By Sharon Shenhav, J.D. - ICJW Chair, Status of Women in Jewish Law

Over the past year, the ICJW Status of Women in Jewish Law Committee has been actively engaged in several new events regarding the plight of Agunot – women who are denied a religious divorce by their husbands.

Fueled by the world wide success of the award-winning Israeli film “*Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*”, the issue of Jewish women trapped in unwanted marriages has become a subject for discussion in many Jewish communities.



As a result of this renewed interest in religious divorce, I have had the opportunity to travel to conferences and community gatherings in Europe and Israel to speak about various solutions which can be applied. Susie Ivany has been very active in Australia, where the film has been widely screened, and the Melbourne community has formed a coalition of organizations to improve the Jewish divorce process.

Pre-nuptial agreements have become increasingly popular as a preventive solution to the problem of *get* (halachic divorce) refusal. In Israel there has been a national campaign to encourage the signing of such agreements, using videos and social media and advertising at wedding fairs. Many couples now proudly announce that they have signed a pre-nuptial agreement during their wedding ceremony under the *chupah*. In the U.S., pre-nuptial agreement signing parties have become widespread, even taking place at hotels accompanied by the serving of cocktails and elegant food! An increasing number of rabbis now publicly support the signing of these agreements and participate in the signing parties.

There is a new trend towards post-nuptial agreements, in which a couple who have been married for several years sign an agreement which declares that neither side will act to prevent a Jewish divorce. Several synagogues in the U.S. have sponsored festive post-nuptial agreement signing parties, held at fine hotels with gourmet food and drink served. These post-nuptial agreement signing parties are becoming increasingly popular, and couples who have been married for many decades eagerly participate, proud to show their friends and families that they are against *get* refusal at any stage of a marriage.

Another new and somewhat controversial approach to solving the problem of Agunot has been used by a group of women in the U.S. who have changed one word in the traditional Jewish marriage ceremony. Instead of the groom declaring “*At mekudeshet li*”, he states “*At meyuchedet li*”, meaning “You are unique to me” instead of “You are consecrated to me”. According to Jewish law, this word change eliminates “*Kiddushin*”, which means that a Jewish marriage has not taken place, although the ceremony looks like a typical Jewish marriage ceremony. Legally, therefore, since there is no *Kiddushin*, there would be no need for a *get* if and when the marriage ends. This method is highly controversial, but it is being used by some women to prevent *get* refusal.



Sharon Shenhav speaking at the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance UK meeting in London.
Photo: Karen Simon

A very positive approach to the problem of Jewish divorce has involved the hiring of Orthodox women lawyers by the rabbinical courts in New York, London and Melbourne. These women are now part of the rabbinical court staff, available to counsel women as well as assisting the *dayanim* in dealing with recalcitrant husbands.

There is no doubt that the work of ICJW and the Committee

on the Status of Women in Jewish Law has contributed to these changes. Our efforts to highlight the plight of Agunot worldwide has succeeded in gathering support from community lay leaders, as well as the religious establishment in many countries. ICJW affiliates who have chosen to be pro-active on the need to restore fairness and justice for women in the Jewish divorce process, have led the way in their communities and gained a great deal of publicity for their efforts, both locally and globally.

New Faces: Laurel Ginges from Sydney, Australia

What is your position in NCJWA and ICJW?

I am an ICJW Status of Women committee member. For the past six years, I have also been involved in NCJWA Status of Women work. In 2009 I brought a key speaker to address NCJWA on People Trafficking and Prostitution. In 2012, I presented an illustrated talk on the topic of Sexual Objectification in the Media for International Women's Day. I have since written articles for the NCJWA Bulletin in 2013 and 2014 on that topic.



Tell us a little about yourself?

I was born in Sydney, Australia. Both of my parents work in helping professions, which has certainly influenced my choice of career. I studied at the University of New South Wales and graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work degree. I have been working as a social worker for over ten years, in Sydney and London. I have held a number of roles in child protection and out of home care, in mental health care settings, and as a family counsellor working with young people and their families. This has included many issues including domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, prostitution and teenage pregnancy. Currently I work in the aged care sector, although I remain active with a number of groups, including "Collective Shout", a grassroots campaign against 'sexploitation' that addresses the ever increasing sexism and sexual objectification in the media.

It's just as well that I am married to a good humoured and supportive man! We are blessed with a gorgeous cheeky girl, soon to be two years old.

How many generations of your family have been involved with NCJWA?

I am the fourth generation to be involved in NCJWA. My maternal great-grandmother, Nancy Levy, was an early member when the Australian organisation was formed by Dr Fanny Reading in Sydney in 1923.

My grandmother, Julie Morris, was an active member of NCJWA for decades. Three of her four daughters are long-term NCJWA board members, and each of them, my mother Anne Morris and my aunt, Robyn Lenn, have been ICJW Executive members for some years, while the third, Jeannette Tsoulos, serves on an ICJW committee. If NCJWA were genetic, my own young daughter has already inherited the gene, with several visits to Council House and her photo in the NCJWA Bulletin!

What is the major project you are currently working on?

I continue to be active in the area of challenging the sexual objectification of women and girls in the media and popular culture, particularly in advertisements, magazines, music video, video games, fashion, television and radio.

Can we get more young professional women involved with volunteer organisations?

ICJW needs to remain relevant to young women who are generally time-poor, who are parenting and juggling work and family, while also identifying common issues affecting young women around the globe.

We need to understand the issues facing teenage girls and young women in universities and the struggles they face, including online bullying, sexism and the growing trend of sexual attacks on women on campus. We should employ a media officer to encourage and enable media involvement and engagement using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and blogs. We should also work with men's organisations like "White Ribbon", who share a message of non-violence to women and gender equality.

The Sexualisation of Women and Girls in the Media

By Laurel Ginges - ICJW Status of Women committee member

As women's rights are progressively recognised around the world and gender equality is seen by governments and societies as a positive and achievable goal, the foundations for these are being rapidly undermined by an ever growing trend: the sexual objectification of women and girls (treating them as sexual objects). This is escalating in our media, in advertising, in music videos, magazines and video games. It has become an increasingly accepted part of popular culture and the developed world and sets the standards for what is considered "normal".

American Apparel is one of the companies that runs deliberately controversial ads that objectify women.

At the same time that we attempt to combat child sexual abuse, marketing targets younger and younger girls as sexual objects. Major retail chains sell sexualised clothing for children, including padded bras, skimpy bikinis and high heels for toddlers. Children's magazines and shops portray girls as flirtatious and sexualised, destroying the barriers between childhood and adulthood.

These images originate from pornography. Whilst a healthy sexual relationship or experience is based on equality and respect, pornography creates inequality and disrespect. Yet the mission of popular culture media is to persuade us that relationships based on pornography are the norm.

The sexual objectification of women and girls perpetuates unhelpful stereotypes and shapes young people's behaviour and beliefs. Whilst boys and men are persuaded to become more macho and dominant, girls and women are encouraged

to present themselves as sexually available and submissive.

This one-dimensional representation of women and girls has little or no parallel for men and boys, and 96% of sexually objectifying images are of women. Research has shown that after viewing sexually objectifying images of women, men are more likely to talk about women as things rather than people. This reduces empathy and creates the perfect environment for violence against women to occur.

There is mounting evidence that these images lower the status of women and encourage beliefs that women are sexual objects, who do not need to give consent prior to sexual conduct. They are directly associated with increased violence against women, and an acceptance of ongoing gender inequality. UN Women reports that: "Around the world, one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence".

Common repercussions for girls and women include depression, habitual body monitoring, depressed cognitive functioning, eating disorders (90% of anorexia sufferers are female), body shame, lower self-esteem, lower self-efficacy, and female competition.

What you can do:

- Become knowledgeable on the topic and raise awareness of the issue within our own families and communities.
- Join campaigns such as Collective Shout or Object! Women Not Sex Objects! If you see offensive material, forward it to them to help prepare a campaign.
- Encourage boys and men to be aware of this issue and speak out against sexual objectification.
- Stop buying products and magazines that flaunt sexual objectification.
- Contact your local Advertising Standards Bureau to complain about a sexually objectifying or degrading advertisement.
- Start your own online petition on Change.org and gather support from around the globe!

BOOK REVIEW

“Daughters, Mothers – Untold Stories by Jewish Women II”

by Dr Katalin Pecs-Pollner

Review by Liane Froneman, M.A. (Org. Psych.) ICJW Headquarters Secretary

It is only in recent years that more accounts of women's experiences and perceptions of the Holocaust have emerged. These women's narratives enrich our understanding of the Holocaust by showing how women's suffering differed from that of men, and how these women endured those long and terrible years. As the nurturers in our society, many women reached out to support their Jewish sisters, but their feelings of pain, shame and humiliation made it difficult for many of them to speak about it for many decades.

This is Katalin's second collection of Holocaust stories, some of which are told by survivors, but the majority are told by their second and third generation descendants. These stories largely focus on the many problems that resulted from the silences of their mothers and grandmothers.

The book is an excellent addition to the growing body of literature on women's narratives of the Holocaust, and of the difficulties experienced by subsequent generations.

In publishing this book, Katalin has prised open a Pandora's box of incomplete and haunting memories that have been transmitted by verbal and non-verbal means to their children and grandchildren. The second and third generations continue to try to make sense of it all. Their struggle is keenly felt in their stories about how they felt they never really knew their mothers, or in their own resultant ambivalent attitudes toward their Judaism and Jewish observance.

Katalin has built up strong relationships of trust with her storytellers, enabling them to confront a painful past. She describes her role as “a guardian of the written texts”.

All the stories have tremendous strength, partly due to the seemingly simple way in which they are told, each in a

different voice. Most of them were written explicitly for this volume. Many are profound and gut-wrenching, and you can feel their inner pain as they courageously bare their souls. There is also the beauty of Jewish sisterhood, together with the resultant strength that each woman found within herself.

The result is a collection of unflinchingly honest narratives, written sparingly and starkly, which makes them all the more powerful. The feeling at the end is of admiration for every one of these women, and also of hope for the future.

The book has been published in Hungarian (shown here), and the German version will be available in December 2015. The English version has yet to be published but seven stories, already translated, were made available for this review.

It is the sequel to “Salty Coffee”, Katalin's original volume of Untold Stories by Jewish Women, documenting the memories of Hungarian Jewish women who survived the Holocaust, which was published in 2007 in Hungarian and English, and in 2010 in German.

Katalin Pecs-Pollner is a lecturer in contemporary Jewish literature and film. She is an ICJW Executive member and founder and president of the Hungarian ICJW affiliate, Esther's House Association in Budapest, which focuses on contemporary Jewish culture and feminist values.



Katalin Pecs-Pollner

BOOK REVIEW

“Feminine Leadership: A Personal Journey”

by Leah Aharonov

Review by Anne Morris PhD - ICJW Chair of Environment & Development

Only during the last decades have there been enough women leaders for a distinctive style of women’s leadership to emerge: relationship-based, consultative, affirming and encouraging of others. Women willingly take on responsibility but are less comfortable with wielding power. They prefer to share power and lead as one of a team. As women flourish through encouragement and trust, it is not surprising that mentoring and networking play major roles in women’s development.

Leah Aharonov’s recent book on feminine leadership explores her topic from several directions: she illustrates women’s leadership using her own life and relationships, she illuminates it through her speeches given over many years, she argues that the world needs more consultative and collaborative women leaders, and she explores her experience of leading ICJW as President from 2006-2010.

The narrative begins at the end of her presidency and describes the culmination of a career of voluntary work for Jewish women’s organisations. She faced many challenges, not least because the “mutual support at lower levels of leadership” declines as women ascend the leadership ladder, and the small number of women in high positions makes it difficult to find peer support. Further, it is a challenge for women to lead in the collaborative, inclusive style they prefer, which contrasts with the more autocratic and task-oriented masculine model long accepted as the norm.

While men often portray their rise to a lofty position as a solitary, individualistic climb, Leah’s journey depicts an interweaving with family and community. She outlines the illustrious rabbinic lineage of her

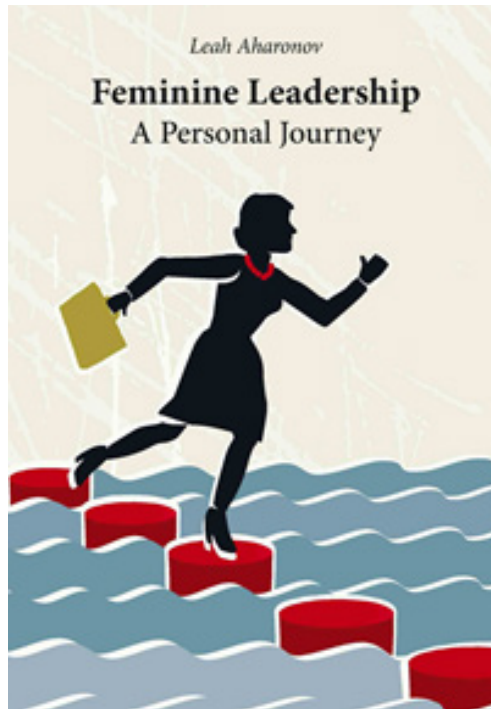
family and she describes her youth in New Jersey. Leah majored in Political Science at Stern College, the women’s college of Yeshiva University, where she frequently represented the University as a speaker. Perhaps her personal development as a Jewish Orthodox woman can be understood as a feminine flowering from this masculine legacy, at a time when women’s perspectives and qualities could finally blossom into the public sphere.

Leah made *Aliyah* to Israel in 1969, where she met and married Yaakov, had two sons and became increasingly involved in the Emunah women’s charity. After chairing the Council of Women’s Organizations, which is ICJW’s Israel affiliate, she became President of ICJW in 2006.

As President, Leah visited Jewish communities in all parts of the world, and came to appreciate their differing circumstances and the challenges these created for the women who came together in ICJW. Her description of meetings with ICJW representatives on major international bodies such as the UN, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, The Human Rights Council and the European Women’s Lobby pays tribute to their outstanding work.

Indeed, in charting not just Leah’s experience of leadership, but the team effort of her many colleagues in ICJW, her book demonstrates how women’s leadership is embedded in relationships, and acknowledges the multiple threads connecting Jewish women around the world.

Bella Azburg reflected: “I believe women will change the nature of power rather than power changing the nature of women.” Leah’s book confirms this, illustrating how leadership and power become transformed through care for service and community.



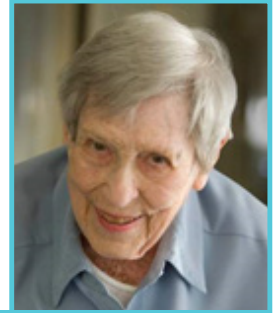
Leah Aharonov with Eva Robey at the launch of her book in New York.

IN MEMORIAM

The following ICJW Life Members have passed away during this past year.

ESTHER LANDA

Esther Rosenblatt Landa died three days after her 102nd birthday. She was National President of NCJW USA (1975-1979) and an active member of the Salt Lake City Jewish community. She was a feminist, an inspiring leader and a good mentor to others. Esther actively campaigned for equal rights, women's issues (including launching the women's studies program at the University of Utah), and children's education. She was described as "witty and sharp as a tack until the end". Most of all, Esther enjoyed being Grandma, Nanny and Great Grandma.



THEA ZUCKER

Thea was the founding President of the Belgian Council of Jewish Women, and was instrumental in the Council becoming an affiliate of ICJW. She rose to become European Chair of ICJW, and she was passionate in working for Israel and the greater good of Belgian Jews. She was ahead of her time in her insistence on interfaith dialogue. Her daughter, Nadine Iarchy, also a Life Member of ICJW, fondly remembers Thea inviting her to a Herzceg Seminar in the late 1980s, which linked in with Nadine's work on Judaism and interfaith. Thea was blessed to have her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren with her for her 95th birthday 2 months before she passed away.



ALMA GOLDMAN

Alma J. Goldman passed away in Newton, Massachusetts, USA, in February 2015. She was an Honorary National Board Director of NCJW USA and a Life Member of ICJW. Her volunteer career with the National Council of Jewish Women spanned 55 years. She served as national secretary and later treasurer of ICJW, in which role she traveled the world. Her daughter, Louise Grossman, describes her as an outstanding woman in the business and philanthropic community at a time when it was very difficult for a woman to do this. When she was a plant manager (1940-45), she was required to assume a man's name for contact with the outside world. She was clearly ahead of her time.

MARGOT FRIEDMAN

Margot was the Chairperson of Swedish affiliate Judiska Kvinnoklubben (JKK) for many years and also involved internationally with ICJW for many years. She was deeply engaged in Jewish cultural and social life. Margot loved music, was an accomplished pianist and helped many young musicians to start their careers, including many "refuseniks" from the then Soviet Union. She was instrumental in organising a well-known exhibition about "The White Buses" that saved victims from concentration camps, which was shown in many Swedish cities. Margot passed away aged 90.

ICJW CALENDAR

October 25 – 29, 2015	Mexico City - ICJW Latin American Regional Conference and Executive Meeting
May 17 – 19, 2016	Nashville, Tennessee - ICJW Executive Meeting
November 13 – 17, 2016	Madrid, Spain - ICJW European Regional Conference and Executive Meeting
May 2017	Israel - Herczeg Seminar and Executive Meeting
November 2017	London, UK - ICJW Executive Meeting
May 2018	Sydney, Australia - ICJW Convention and Executive Meetings