

# ALEH עלה

HABONIM DROR SOUTHERN AFRICA הבונים דרור דרוסי אפריקה

JULY 2011

Karla Green on  
the conflicts of  
being an Oleh p18

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explores David  
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# Editorial

GEMMA COWAN

IT IS WITH great excitement that I am able to publish the first edition of *Aleh* in a good few years. Similar to the *Ketzav* magazine that was published in April, *Aleh* is a space for members of the movement to engage with a variety of issues in an open and honest manner. It has always been in the spirit of Habonim members to constantly engage with issues relevant to the movement – this magazine is a true reflection of this.

To write a personal article is to construct a piece of work that is a representation of one's thoughts, experiences and opinions. It often requires deep thought, introspection and analysis, all to be carefully crafted into a cohesive body of words in the hope that others will take interest in what it is that you are writing about, or perhaps, take an interest in you. Writing is no easy task but the act itself can have a cathartic effect – the result can be a streamlined version of jumbled thoughts.

It is clear that the articles written in this magazine are written with a profound sense of exploration – both of the issue at hand and of the self. We are privileged to find ourselves in such a movement where this type of writing is highly valued and fundamentally essential in the progression of the movement itself.

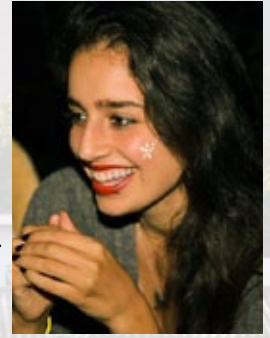
Habonim Bogrim attempt to foster a culture of self-education but I feel as though this has been somewhat lacking in recent years. Perhaps this is a curse of being part of the 'Facebook generation' – one is bombarded by so much information that it's easier to read a 140-letter Tweet, than to pick up a newspaper (let alone a *book!*) If we consider ourselves serious educators, it is essential that we remain engaged with the world around us. We cannot educate others responsibly, if we do not educate ourselves – and responsible education is at the absolute core of Habonim. Indeed, the movement is nothing but a summer camp without it.

I hope that this magazine is one step towards encouraging Bogrim to reignite the culture of self-education that is so precious in the movement. The array of articles in *Aleh* is truly representative of the movement's members today. With articles from a wide range of Bogrim, it is clear that this movement is anything but one-dimensional. Whilst the movement may have an official constitution, the opinions of its members are varied, diverse and ever-changing.

I want to thank all those who contributed towards *Aleh* – thank you for taking the time to provide thought-provoking and honest articles. I hope that you, the reader, give each article its deserved attention and truly gain something from these pages. Reading, too, is an act of honest exploration.

*Aleh Ve'Hagshem* — Rise up and fulfil

Gemma Cowan  
Head of Publications 2011



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Cover Image - Julian Kesler gives a speech before Shabbat at Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot. Photo by Justin van Zyl.  
Back Cover Image - Shomrim channichim relax on the migdal at Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot. Photo by Justin van Zyl.

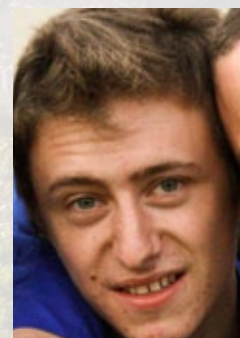
Edited, compiled and designed by Gemma Cowan.

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# Mazkir's Report

ROSS ENGERS

Ross Engers was a participant of the 2007 Shnat gap-year programme in Israel. In 2009, he was S'gan Rosh Ken (Deputy Head of Centre) for Cape Town. He also sat on the Camp Va'ad Poel (Steering Committee) as Camp Organiser in 2009 and 2010. He is currently Mazkir Klali (Chairman) of HDSA as well as Rosh Machaneh for 2011.



Having six people working full time for HDSA in 2011 is an amazing opportunity for the movement. A youth movement can have all sorts of resources at its disposal, such as a wonderful campsite and an extensive *chinnuch* (education) database, but its most powerful asset is the group of dedicated people that sacrifice their time every day to help the movement flourish. I want to prelude this report by paying special tribute to the five movement workers who are dedicating a year of their lives to Habonim. It is thanks to them (and thanks to every single chaver who is involved) that all the following is possible.

We started off the year with our biennial ideological conference, *Veida*. This year was the third *Veida* I have attended as a Boger of the movement and it was without a doubt the most inspiring. It is rare to see this level of engagement and seriousness displayed by a group of young adults; to witness over 50 Bogrim of the movement passionately discussing the future of the movement and challenging each other on matters of Israel, Judaism and South Africa is a powerful experience.

February saw the departure of our 11 Shnatties and Shnat madrich, Jayson Lazar. The Shnatties have left us in order to spend one year learning about the movement, each other and themselves. They spent the first four months of the year on Machon, a pluralist, Jewish, Zionist educational institute in Jerusalem. There they mixed with Shnatties from other countries and movements, whilst learning about a diverse range of topics from a selection of world-class lecturers. The year has been a great success so far and having a South African Shnat madrich from the movement has been invaluable. The level of enjoyment and bonding that the group has shown thus far indicate that 2011 is the beginning of an improved Shnat Hachsharah experience.

Our Johannesburg *ken* (centre) has grown immensely in both the younger and older shichavot. Friday night meetings are attended by a core group of Shomrim and Bogrim who have a strong connection to the movement. We have kept up our relationship with both King David Linksfield and Victory Park and have also now formed a strong presence in King David Sandton. In addition to our weekly school visits, we have run classroom programmes in both Sandton and Linksfield High and Primary. This was a major success and subsequently we have been approached by Linksfield to run additional programmes. Our reach has even gone as far as Reddam, a non-Jewish school in Johannesburg, where we put on a play and ran an Israel store with the Jewish kids at their 'multicultural day'. We have hosted a range of fortnightly events at the Jo'burg Bayit for Garinim (Gr 3&4) - Sollelim (Gr9), including a Lag B'Omer braai, a Shavuot sleepover and a Purim party with *pitot* and mask making.

Cape Town has also been a storm of activity this year. The Mazkirut has been busy running events like the eco-friendly Purim costume party for Garinim. The Bayit has been given a face-lift by a group of Bogrim who committed their time to a 'Fix up the Bayit' day. The Ken has been active in South African civil society. We were, once again, part of the 20 000 people marching with Equal Education for quality and equal education on Human Rights Day. We have started some new initiatives too, like our weekly tutoring programme in partnership with Ikamva Youth in Nyanga. The Friday night *peulot* have been of an excellent standard and well attended by both Shomrim and Bogrim.

In March, we sent eight Bogrim of the movement to Israel on an intense ten-day tour, where they were able to connect with Israel in a very real and meaningful way. Soon after, we saw the largest ever Shomrim and Bogrim One April Seminar, which took place over Pesach on our campsite. We have run Mini-Machanot in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth, where over 300 channichim from around South Africa got to experience the Habonim Machaneh magic. Over 80 channichim embarked on a journey to Israel on our three-week Shorashim tour at the end of June, accompanied by six HDSA madrichim.

This winter, we kept the Habonim spirit alive by launching two new Habonim events. The first was Bogrim Seminar, which took place in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape and coincided with the South African National Arts Festival. The seminar comprised of *peulot* (activities) run by Bogrim themselves, coupled with plays, galleries and panel discussions that the festival hosted. The second event was a Winter Camp for Garinim - Sollelim which took place in Magaliesberg. The success of the camp was due to the meticulous planning by the Va'ad Po'el (Steering Committee) in addition to the very high standard of *hadracha* (leadership) displayed by the madrichim.

The movement has been a vibrant, energetic place over the past six months and I look forward to another six months of learning, educating and growth. Well done to everyone who has been part of Habonim 2011 so far, and welcome to those who will be joining us from here on in.

*Aleh Ve'Hagshem, Le'Het Gashem* — Rise up and Fulfil, Be Fulfilled

Ross Engers  
Mazkir Klali 2011  
Chairman of HDSA

## A Promised Land

HAGAI EL-AD

Hagai El-Ad, Executive Director of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), writes about his visit to South Africa, his encounter with Habonim Bogrim and the similarities between Israel and South Africa in the pursuit of justice.

I WAS RECENTLY IN SOUTH AFRICA for a few days and I haven't even once bumped into Judge Richard Goldstone. As an Israeli, that may be surprising, because from Israel the only recognisable face of South African Jewry is, in fact, Judge Goldstone – and the way he was rough handled by the Jewish community in this country.

But chance encounters do happen. While checking into my Sea Point hotel in Cape Town, I was chatted up by this couple, who happened – so it was revealed – to be Jewish. They were delighted to discover that I was from Tel Aviv. Their next question, however, caught me off guard.

'Are you thinking of leaving?'  
I am not. Israel is my home.

My first visit to Cape Town, back in 2006, was for a transitional justice conference at UCT. This second visit was for a meeting, graciously hosted by South Africa's Legal Resources Centre (LRC), with peers from

other national human rights groups similar to Israel's Association for Civil Rights (ACRI), the organisation that I am the Executive Director of. Clearly, for many around the world, myself included, South Africa plays a global iconic moral role – especially in the context of human rights, equality, and justice – and even more so, in the ability of its people to realise these through an inspiring transformation. And oh, how we need inspiration.

South African Jewry's treatment of Goldstone was no source for inspiration. But the group of Habonim Dror activists I met was. The conversation was of a familiar global-Jewish speak: on the one hand, an ethos of social justice, faith in equality and steadfast commitment to fight racism. On the other hand – Israel. How does a South African Jew live with these values and the desire to have a meaningful relationship with the State of Israel, withstanding the ongoing realities of occupation, discrimination, and segregation?

*"Memory and identity should not – indeed, cannot – be regulated through legislation."*

A recent example of this unjust reality is the decision of the High Court of Justice, in rejecting an appeal brought forward by ACRI and others, to approve the expansive 'permits regime' systematically limiting Palestinian access to their own lands, that happen to be in the 'seam zone', locked between the green line and the separation barrier. The

barrier's route was set by Israel at varying distances east of the green line, thus leaving approximately 10% of the occupied West Bank freely accessible for Israelis, but restricted to the actual owners of the land. What is the proper word for this 'permits regime' system?

Another example is the 'Nakba Law'. For the Palestinians, Israel's establishment in 1948 was a national catastrophe, remembered as the *Nakba*. For the Jews – myself proudly being one – Israel's independence is the fulfillment of generations' dreams. Reconciling painful truths? Recently, a law was passed in the Knesset depriving certain public funding from those who commemorate Israel's independence as Nakba Day. ACRI is appealing against this law. Memory and identity should not – indeed, cannot – be regulated through legislation.

Sugarcoating these unacceptable realities is not an option – morally or practically. Thus, a different path emerges for a meaningful relationship: one that does not try to Disneyfy a complex reality, but rather becomes part of the endeavor to fix it. The young activists I met in Cape Town are no Disney fans. I found their personal struggle, their questioning, and their unyielding commitment to ethically figure it out, inspiring.

I travel back home to Israel with a question close at heart: In the struggle to achieve justice and equality in a land that has yet to fulfill its promise, what role will be played by those from *the* iconic country on this planet that has transformed itself so remarkably towards justice and equality?

## The Departing Words of a Shaliach

YOSSI ESHED

Yossi Eshed has been the Cape Town Community Shaliach, as well as the Habonim Shaliach for the past three years. He returns to Israel this August with his wife, Idit and children, Ron, Shir and Guy.

OFTEN I'M ASKED how one can be a Shaliach for the community and for Habonim at the same time, as they are completely different organisations, socially and politically. Well, coming closer to our departure date, I can tell you that this issue was one of my biggest challenges during my three-year Shlichut.

One of the things I love about being the Habonim Shaliach is that as much as Habonim is a true Zionist movement, our chaverim are also encouraged to be critical thinkers that deal with all issues in an open and honest way. In Habonim, we deal with Israel's challenges without looking for the 'perfect' Israel that does not exist.

Does it make us less Zionist than others? Of course not. Being critical doesn't

mean you are not Zionist or that you don't support Israel; it only means that you express your love, support and care from an open, challenging and realistic place and that you want to make positive changes. I can speak for myself by saying that I am a proud Israeli and Zionist – I can speak endlessly about the things I love about, and in, Israel. But, at the same time, there are many things that I believe should be changed in Israel, and I do try to make a small change in my own way, just like many other Israelis.

I think that if people don't find the space to be critical within the community, the criticism will happen in other spaces, outside of the community and against it. Then it becomes even more attractive and 'cool' to criticise, as it becomes the 'forbidden fruit'. That's my answer as to why some of the people in the community go too far and become far too critical of Israel – there was no space for them to voice a different opinion, they no longer had any forum in which to engage with the community and so, they decided that their reaction would be solely critical.

It is not only about the youth. The entire community should initiate discussions about things that people don't feel comfortable with

in Israel. People should raise their voices and ask hard questions and let anyone in the community do so. These questions should come from all sides of the political spectrum: Should Israel be more active in its response to the ongoing rockets that are fired from Gaza? If Israel is open to the two-state solution, why does it keep building in the territories? Do we support Israel's policy regarding the foreign workers? All of this should take place within the community forums, as we want to have serious discussions and not help those who want to attack Israel.

*"If people don't find the space to be critical within the community, the criticism will happen in other spaces."*

Asking these questions and others, clearly and loudly, is a healthy thing to do. Israel is our country and our home. The community supports it in any possible way and we have the right and the duty to raise our voice for and against what happens there, when we feel it's the right thing to do.

In other words, it's time for all of us in the community to mature and strengthen our connections to Israel by adopting more probing attitudes. Habonim can definitely show us all this path.



**Being Active** | Participants of Shnat 2011 taking part in the annual May Day rally. Their stall educated people about HDSA's social activism within South Africa.

**L-R** | Kiara Klitzner, Mikaela Kagan, Michael Frohlich, Micaela Browde, Jesse Lazarus, Steven Frohlich, Justine Shear, Shaun Rozowsky, Eden Davin, Josh Singer, Joel Croft.

## A Shnat Update

SHNAT 2011 GROUP

*Shnat* is Habonim Dror's gap year programme in Israel. It is a ten-month programme that consists of four months on the renowned Machon programme in Jerusalem, two months living and working on a Kibbutz and four months living in a house with the Shnat group and volunteering in Israeli civil society (*Kaveret*). There are eleven participants from HDSA on the Shnat programme this year.

The *Shneleven* (Shnat 2011) crew are saying hello from far away. We're missing you all but are having the most eye-opening, stimulating and memorable experience (not to mention having the party of our lives). So here it is – our *shnupdate* (yes we said it) of our Shnat year so far, over the past five months.

Machon was the perfect way to kick off our year here. The programme, teachers, madrichim and friends made will continue to influence the rest of our year and possibly the rest of our lives. The topics covered ranged from Zionism to *hadracha* (leadership) to Judaism. Not only did we learn about these topics in class but we are fortunate to experience them in all walks of Israeli society. Our views were challenged by teachers, fellow machonikim and the opportunities we have of meeting Israeli citizens. Every Thursday was Yom Yisrael (Israel day). Each one focused on and exposed us to the way Israeli society works (education, judiciary, streams of religion, etc.) A memorable day for all of us was crossing over the green line, which included speaking to Machsom Watch, visiting Efrat and thereafter, Hebron.

Every second Sunday, we were given the opportunity to have *mifgashim* (encounters) where we were further exposed to people in the vast spectrum of Israeli society. We met with soldiers, Christian Arabs, Muslim

Arabs and Charedi youth. Not only did we meet with people but we were also given the chance to contribute to Israeli society by volunteering each Wednesday.

As well as being exposed to aspects of Israeli society, we also travelled and learnt about the land of Israel from North to South on *tiyulim* (hikes). We hiked in desert and forest, swam in the Dead Sea, Red Sea and Kinneret and slept in tents – all harvesting a real love and understanding for the land. We had the Druze and Bedouin experience, abseiled down a waterfall, partied on a boat in Eilat, stuffed our faces at the Galita chocolate factory and raced around the country 'Amazing Race' style. We absolutely loved the *tiyulim*, planned and organised by ourselves and our friends – they were hard, but worth it.

*"We absolutely loved the tiyulim, planned and organised by ourselves and our friends – they were hard, but worth it."*

Machon ended with a lot of tears but also excitement for what was coming. We regrouped after an amazing *chofesh* (holiday) for our Kibbutz seminar on Kibbutz Ein Dor. That seminar will always be remembered as the time when we truly became *Shneleven*. The seminar consisted of peulot in which

we looked at the group as a whole and also at the individual roles we play.

We were soon warmly welcomed by Kibbutz Yizre'el, which would be our home for the next seven weeks. We got to know our amazing Kibbutz *tzevet* (team) – Nir, Gazit and Yisrael. We got comfortable and settled into our new accommodation quickly – rooms were picked out of a hat! Our first weekend was an introductory seminar which ended with us choosing jobs. Our jobs include working in the *refet* (dairy), kitchen, laundry, school, almond fields and the workshop. The days are hot and we come home from a hard day's work exhausted. We spend the rest of our afternoons sleeping, swimming and relaxing together. Work days are Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Wednesdays are Yom Kibbutz with our Kibbutz *tzevet* where we go on *tiyulim* around the area and Thursdays are Yom Tnuva (movement day) which we spend with our Shnat madrichim, Jayson and Michal, focusing on Habonim and the *kvutza* (group). Our evenings are also full with fun peulot, movie nights at the pub and Hebrew lessons.

We have named our group *Kvutzat Nematim* – Ants. We wanted something fun and meaningful. Ants are small but strong and they work together with purpose to build something great. We as Shnat HDSA 2011, are trying to do just that.

# A Little Less Conversation, A Little More Action, Please.

ILAN PRICE



**Above:** Members of Habonim take part in a rally for quality education, organised by the Johannesburg Junior Council, on Youth Day 2011.

Ilan Price was a participant of the 2010 Shnat programme. He is currently studying for a BSocSc at UCT and is Rosh Meoravut (Head of Engagement) for HDSA.

HAVING EXPERIENCED the Rosh Meoravut position for the first half of the year now, I've had time to evaluate and think properly about what our goals should be, the problems we face, and how to start fixing them. For me, our engagement as HDSA in the problems of our society is at the core of what Habonim Dror is, and of my Habonim identity. What follows are some thoughts about where Meoravut should be going this year and in the years to come.

I think our goals for Meoravut should be two-fold. Firstly, to make a meaningful educational (and experiential) impact on our chaverim and channichim, and engage them in the problems with the society around us. Secondly, to make a meaningful, albeit realistic, impact on the problems of social injustice which we see in the world. It cannot be one or the other.

On the one hand, we cannot focus solely externally, for our channichim and Bogrim are the movement – its present and future. In order to create a movement which retains this social activism as one of its core elements, we need to focus on continuing education and engagement in societal issues in order to create a value system and develop the passion to actually do something about these issues – to be activists. This goes without question.

Yet, at the same time, it makes no sense for this to be our only approach in this sphere of activism. After all, the purpose of this education is, of course, to create people who will act in more than an educational movement capacity. We are the products of this education, and we need to be activists too. We cannot be apathetic to the issues around us. Moreover, if we are educating for the long-term goal of action, of creating people who will get out there and make a difference,

then an important part of that education, as we all know very well, is to provide inspiring *Dugmaot* (examples) to fellow chaverim and channichim. We need to be those *Dugmaot*.

That being said, I think we are relatively successful in engaging chaverim with the problems around us. We talk a lot at Friday night meetings and camp *peulot* (activities) about these issues. However, I think we need to reconsider our approach to the way that we do this. An important part of this education is most definitely learning about and talking about these problems – the facts and the values. But this is often very distanced, and runs the risk of not inspiring a passion to change things for much longer than a few days after the *peulah* (if that). Another aspect of this education is required: an experiential one. People need to see the problems, meet people affected, feel like they connect with the problems. We (and our channichim) must avoid distancing ourselves from the realities of the issues that we talk about.

*"We must avoid distancing ourselves from the realities of the issues that we talk about."*

A second major problem we face is a commonly noted one: we like to talk far more than we like to act.

HDSA really does not have a culture of commitment to action. Too often we will talk at length about how bad the problems are but make no commitment to do anything about them. This needs to start changing now.

So, how can we achieve our goals and start solving the problems that we face?

Well, it will no doubt take time, much longer than just the rest of this year, but we should still not underestimate the progress we can make before *Machaneh*.

Firstly, I think we should continue to work with partner organisations like Equal Education (EE) and the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) when we agree that their work is important. This is not to say that we will be their 'rent-a-crowd'. No. But we do believe a lot of similar things, and our co-operation

with them allows us to further both of our goals. For example, not only is attendance of a protest march or picket important to increase the strength of the protest, but that type of experience can be particularly inspiring for both channichim and Bogrim, and help create a real emotional engagement with tackling the problem. Furthermore, because the organisation required is minimal, it lets us act and get involved much more regularly than we would otherwise be able to.

This regularity is key to the next strategy – start projects (even if they start small), which require regular commitment. We have started one – the tutoring project with a new organisation, *Ikamva Youth*, where we will go every Saturday morning to help tutor kids who receive devastatingly inferior education. This type of project addresses our goals in multiple ways. Firstly, the idea of regular commitment is absolutely essential in starting to foster a culture of action. But moreover, it provides opportunities to really engage with the society around us. If, for example, we get channichim to actually see and spend time in townships, with EE's youth group kids, that is a very different type of education to telling them how bad things are in that far-away place they have never really been to or seen, for the people with whom they have never really had any interaction. This is the kind of project that will breed a future movement who really knows, cares and is willing to act.

We have already attended two protests organised by EE, helped them make sandwiches for the 20 000 kids who attended their Human Rights Day march, started the weekly tutoring project and participated in the SJC Toilet Queue on Freedom Day to demand better sanitation and safety in the townships. Clearly it is not that we do nothing – yet we can do more. And more importantly, we should have more people participating in what we already do.

I think this year can really be a year of changing the culture of engagement and action in HDSA CT. Let's get involved and get inspired!

Be activists: imagine, educate, engage, stand up and act.

# Bibi's Actions Constantly Undermine Peace Process

ILAN PRICE

As HDSA we have dual interest in a successful two-state solution. On the one hand it stems from our belief in equality and the right to self-determination for Palestinians. On the other hand, we have a selfish interest too – we know that a continued occupation is unsustainable and incompatible with a Jewish and democratic state in the future (a phrase which could be the cause of internal struggle for some Zionists even without the occupation).

With these interests in mind, you'll be hard pressed to avoid being depressed by the recent series of events we have witnessed in and regarding Israel. The political right will have you believe that the only obstacle to peace is the lack of a partner with whom to negotiate. The last few weeks make me wonder if they may just be right – but it most definitely is not simply the absence of a Palestinian partner.

Consider what Netanyahu, in his recent speech to the US congress, demanded as a pre-requisite for negotiations with the Palestinian authority: That Fatah must end the reconciliation agreement with Hamas, before they can come to the negotiating table with Israel. In other words, so long as that agreement stands, Israel has no partner for peace. From the outset, this is just double-standard: how do you think Prime Minister Netanyahu would feel about demands by Fatah as a prerequisite for negotiations, that Likud end its coalition with Yisrael Beiteinu? More importantly, however, the fact that this all stems from Israel's problem with Hamas 'not recognising' Israel as a Jewish state, really shows that it is much more a stalling tactic than an honest concern on Israel's behalf. How so?

Well, first try to answer this question: what does it even mean to have Hamas 'recognise' or 'not recognise' Israel's right to exist? Or, perhaps more precisely, what would be the practical consequences of recognition or lack thereof, were a solution to be reached? The answer is: very little. Israel doesn't need Hamas' permission to exist, nor to do so as a Jewish state. It has international legal grounding here, and quite frankly what Hamas thinks is of very little consequence to Israel.

So clearly the claim must be rephrased: that it's all well and fine for Hamas not to recognise Israel if a solution is reached. The problem is that a solution *cannot* be found with a partner who does not recognise your right to exist.

Note, firstly, that this argument doesn't logically imply the need for recognition as a pre-requisite to negotiations. If it is true, it would at most imply that it would need to be agreed on in negotiations. However, it is even clearer that the argument doesn't apply to a coalition/alliance between Fatah and Hamas. The fact that Israel can negotiate with Fatah, who *does* meet this pre-requisite

criterion, and the fact that Fatah, as a large faction in the government of the would-be Palestinian State, has the possibility of coming to a resolution with Israel, with no real necessary harm caused by the dissent of another faction of government, makes this not only a tactic intended to stall the process, but a massive missed opportunity.

The fact is that whatever solution is found, it is going to have to, in some way, include Hamas. For a number of reasons, though, Israel is very unlikely to negotiate with Hamas directly. Given the fact that it is essential for Israel's existence long-term for it to find a negotiated resolution, it should take the opportunity to negotiate by proxy with Hamas, by including them in the agreement while negotiating the resolution with another party.

The concept of a 'partner for peace' is really about trust in the other side's intentions: that the other side is serious about reaching a sustainable resolution. On this, one could argue that the point about Hamas holds more water – clearly their interests don't appear in line with long-term peace.

To start here to go on about the abhorrence of Hamas' terror tactics would be stating the obvious. But we cannot let those uncontroversial criticisms be the trump card to the blatant insincerity of the current Israeli coalition in its attempts at peace.

## *"Netanyahu's argument about defensibility is one for no concessions at all."*

This is what Netanyahu would have it do, however. He would have us ignore the fact that when he affirms a refusal (before negotiation) to allow any of East Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state, he is saying that the Palestinians don't have a partner that is serious about a solution either – because any realistic sustainable solution is going to involve a resolution on Jerusalem which 'divides' it, in some way. When Netanyahu stipulates the security arrangements (fully militarily surrounding the Palestinian state with Israeli troops on borders with Israel and Jordan) *before* negotiations, it shows that he doesn't respect the negotiation process for finding a solution. When he obviously omits discussion of land swaps when he talks about demographic 'facts on the ground' and not returning to '67 borders, he is saying that Israel is not serious about concessions that will have to be made. And when he talks about those borders being indefensible and thus unacceptable as a basis for the future resolution, then he is saying he is not serious about finding a resolution at all – as was concisely explained in an article in the +972 magazine – Israel is very small, but the West Bank is smaller. Netanyahu's argument about

defensibility is one for *no* concessions at all.

But perhaps this is all rhetoric; politicians being politicians. The speeches don't matter, right? Unfortunately, some actions on the ground in Israel don't send a very promising message either.

In line with Netanyahu's comments about the Jewish claim to undivided Jerusalem, Yom Yerushalayim provided us with some enraging footage of a march of religious Jews through the areas of East Jerusalem. The shocking footage ranges from shouting and singing through the Muslim quarter of the old city at 4 a.m. to marching through other parts of East Jerusalem with loud choruses of 'death to Arabs', all the while nicely protected by their police escort.

Watching this truly is infuriating; the insensitivity, ignorance, racism and hatred makes me sick. Yet I'm confident that the march doesn't come close to representing the general Israeli public opinion, and so to some extent one can try put it down to the good old 'there are extremists on both sides' line.

That being said, the absence of condemnation from the government is shocking. Furthermore, compare the police response to this demonstration, to their action taken against some non-violent Palestinian demonstrations, often involving tear gas and the like, often ending in arrests. The government makes it clear that it has no interest in the pursuit of a Palestinian nation with self-determination – nor that it even respects such an idea.

I've been told by various people not to take Netanyahu's speech, actions by extremist minorities, a new settlement in East Jerusalem (the opening of which was attended by a number of MKs) and so on, too seriously. Perhaps they are right. Perhaps Netanyahu is just saying what he has to say – what really matters is what goes on behind closed doors. After all, right-wing prime ministers have made significant concessions in the past.

While not terribly convincing, I guess this is a possibility. One thing remains clear though: Israel is its own worst enemy at the moment. The longer settlement expansion carries on, the longer Netanyahu stalls negotiations; the longer we go without a solution, the worse it is for our dream of a just Jewish and democratic state. Things are already beginning to bubble up (looking ahead to the UN meeting in September regarding recognition of Palestine). Time is against Israel now, with international pressure likely to come on stronger and stronger (even though the vote is likely going to be unsuccessful in September with the US's stand on it). For Israelis *and* Palestinians, we cannot have the Israeli government creating addition blockades to peace.

The Israel we want needs a just, moral leadership, it needs a strategic, forward thinking leadership. It's time for Israelis to start seriously demanding it.

# An Unrivalled Experience

ALLY SAMAKOSKY

Ally Samakosky is in her first year of being a Bogeret in HDSA. She is a student at King David Linksfield and has been involved in HDSA for many years.

**B**OGRIM ONE APRIL SEMINAR has been described by Bogrim as 'one of, if not the most important thing that Habonim runs.' I could not agree more with this statement as my relationship with the movement has intensified as a result of my experience at this seminar.

This growth is down to the many stimulating *peulot* (activities) that were run, such as 'how to be a madrich' as well as a *peulah* on the concept of *Dugma Ishit* (personal example). The various roles that a madrich plays were explored, which provided us with a clearer image of how to be role models to our channichim. We learnt that we have the right to educate our channichim and that there are many ways in which this education can be created for the enrichment, inspiration and motivation of the channich. Certain tactics were learnt such as how to maintain the attention of the channich and how to ensure that they do not grow tiresome or disinterested.

*Dugma Ishit* was explored and I realised how we, as madrichim, may not always see the influence that we have in the channichim's lives, yet this is always apparent. In this light, we learnt how to portray ourselves as role models.

Shnat, a year in Israel with Habonim, was explained to us as we explored where we see ourselves in the future. It was interesting to see where everyone sees themselves in the upcoming year as well as their dreams, goals and aspirations. Past Shnatties spoke to us about their experiences and their reasoning for choosing to be a part of this programme and it was beneficial to hear about their experiences first hand.

The most inspirational *peulah* for me was the one that focused on where we want to take the movement. This was one of the moments I felt most connected with the movement and with what it is that we do in Habonim. Everyone shared their own personal thoughts about the movement, as well as how they uphold their strong passion and connection for it. It was heart-warming to hear the love others share for the movement and to see how we are all connected through something that is greater than ourselves. Our madrichim shared their experiences of how and why they decided to become a part of Habonim. It was interesting to hear the journeys our madrichim have had and it made me appreciate and admire their passion and commitment to the movement.

Bogrim One Seminar was a time in which I formed a very strong connection with the movement in a short period of time. This appreciation and understanding was truly valued. It is amazing to think that Habonim is run and held together by such strong-willed and passionate individuals whom I aspire to be like. This seminar allowed me to realise how close Habonim is to my heart and gave me the opportunity to spend an entire week with the most amazing, intellectual and passionate

individuals. At Bogrim One Seminar, I felt at peace with myself because I knew that I was contributing to something which is truly life-changing – Habonim has helped mould me into the person I am today.

I encourage all Bogrim Ones to attend this seminar in future. I view it as a truly inspirational, life-changing experience which changed the way I view and connect with the movement and myself. This is a fundamental experience for all individuals and I believe that this seminar has the power to alter views and stimulate minds in order to uphold this strong connection, as well as to enrich the lives of others with the experience and knowledge gained on the seminar. Don't miss the boat.

"It was heart-warming to hear the love others share for the movement and to see how we are all connected through something that is greater than ourselves."





## Two Homes

ROXANNE JOSEPH

Roxanne Joseph is studying English and Classics at UCT. She has been an active Bogeret for two years and is currently Rosh Ken (Head of Centre) in Cape Town.

THE QUESTION OF how Zionist a movement we really are is something that I have often encountered over the past year and a half. In Janaury, at our biennial *Veida* conference, we entered into a three-hour debate, which almost every Boger present took part in, about the highest aim of our movement (*chalutzic aliyah*), after proposals to first remove it and then to change it. The rationale was that the aim of Habonim chaverim making *chalutzic aliyah* has become somewhat irrelevant. Over the last few years, approximately 15 members of the movement have made aliyah, but this is only fulfilling half of the requirement, as our highest aim calls for them to go to Israel and involve themselves in such a way that they are attempting to better society. The word *chalutz* derives from the word *halus*, which is used to describe a pioneer. However, while some people are considered *chalutzim* in the eyes of the movement, doing all kinds of political and social activism work within Israeli society, many others have faded into the background and their Aliyah cannot be considered *chalutzic aliyah*.

About three months ago, I was lucky enough to be invited to join seven other Bogrim on the movement's highly political Leadership Tour, where we travelled around Israel for ten days, meeting various NGOs and individuals who are directly engaged in issues of civil society. On the second day, we went to Kibbutz Tzora to attend a meeting with the *Vaad Yeutz*, a group of ex-South African Habonim chaverim, who made aliyah back in the 70s. The *Vaad* serve as a connection between us back home and those in Israel. Made up of ex-Mazkirim, Bogrim and madrichim, some of whom attended machanot back in Parys, the room was filled with a variety of people and we all learnt a great deal from one another. We described the success of our last few machanot to great excitement on both parts, yet what ensued was a rather heated discussion about what is happening to our Zionist fervour.

The problem that we currently face is this: as left-wing Zionists of a South African Jewish youth movement, we have a dual identity and therefore, have more than one obligation. As South African citizens, we have an obligation to use the vast amount of resources, connections and abilities that we possess to try and fix the problems that our society faces, such as the issue of unequal education, poverty and unemployment. However, as Zionist Jews, we also have a responsibility to try and fix everything that is wrong with Israeli society, the place that some of us would call our 'homeland'. This

raises a variety of questions regarding our responsibilities, from our own community, to other youth movements and our Israeli allies back in the Holy Land. At the meeting on Tzora, our level of Zionism was questioned and criticised. This surprised and upset me, as it did my fellow chaverim. We dealt with the situation tastefully and explained to them why we disagreed and that to us, our love of Israel remained as strong as ever but at the same time, we will always continue to care for South Africa and have the ability to fight for both causes.

If I had had my Zionism questioned when I was still in school, I probably would have agreed with the members of the *Vaad Yeutz*, in that I had no connection to Israel and that perhaps I was not a Zionist at all (due to my lack of understanding of what it truly meant to be one), but I also probably would not have cared what they thought. As I sat listening to my peers and myself explain what we were thinking and feeling (although I believe some of us had to grit our teeth harder than others), I realised that I was more a Zionist now than I had ever been before. At school, I was virtually repulsed by the idea of learning about Israel and had no connection to the country whatsoever, even after attending the Encounter programme, which was fun, but somewhat 'fluffy'. Now, after almost two years of being heavily involved in HDSA, I can proudly call myself a Zionist, whilst remaining true to my physical home, South Africa.

*"At school, I was virtually repulsed by the idea of learning about Israel and had no connection to the country whatsoever."*

I was raised by parents who were always in support of their country – when the government did the right thing, of course. My father, a journalist, was around and actively reporting during apartheid and continues to grapple with the ongoing issues of South African civil society to this day, along with my older sister, who has subsequently joined the profession. He made a point to keep me engaged with what was going on in my own country and taught me to speak out against whatever I believed to be wrong. This has most certainly aided my passion and drive as a member of HDSA, to constantly engage in critical thinking and action. It has also helped me to come to terms with my dual responsibility to both Israel and South Africa.

However, I understand that not everyone in the movement shares my views and opinions and that perhaps I am being far too idealistic. I have the ability to go to Israel, to physically make it my home and to face the battle head on. I fully understand this, yet I do not see myself actually attempting this anytime soon. If I and others within the movement feel this way, then can we really allow our highest aim to remain *chalutzic aliyah*? Should we not simply change it and transform it to better suit our needs? And if this is the case, then can we still call ourselves true Zionists?

In an conversation between members of the Hanhaggah (National Executive of HDSA) and Cape Town Bogrim, the issue of the legitimacy of defining one's Zionism arose and the responses were quite interesting. Someone mentioned that the fact that we are being called 'bad Zionists' by someone from 'our side' is not what disturbs them, but rather the fact that 'what it means to be a Zionist is being decided and owned by someone else'. Initially I disagreed, but after contemplating it for a while longer, I realised that for anyone, left or right-wing, to try and decide how Zionist someone else is and place them in either the 'bad box' or the 'good box' is far more disturbing. There is no one in the world who can tell you how to be a Zionist, exactly what it means to be a Zionist and who can decide how good a Zionist you are. That, chaverim, is all up to you, as an individual.

The fact of the matter is that HDSA and its members do support *chalutzic aliyah* and although not every single one of us may choose that particular journey to embark upon, some of us will. And while they'll be at the forefront of the problems that Israeli civil society faces, the rest of us will remain here and continue to learn, educate each other, our channichim and our community and most importantly, we will never stop fighting for Israel to be a better place. We will never cease to recognise our responsibility towards Israel and towards the people living within it. It is possible for us to remain in the Diaspora and still be true Zionists.

I believe that as individuals and as members of HDSA, we all affiliate ourselves with different aspects of the movement, whether it be the culturally religious aspect, the Zionist aspect, the social activism aspect, or the South African aspect. As human beings we are inclined to do this, but we also have the ability to embrace diversity and while we may feel very strongly towards one thing, we also manage to successfully engage in the multitude of aspects that HDSA offers. I don't think that we're bad Zionists at all and the fact that so many of us are able to engage on a variety of levels with our dual responsibilities is what makes me proud to be a member of this movement.

Sitting around a table filled with the bold, the old and the new on Leadership Tour, I had a realisation. I have always been proud of our movement from the very moment I entered it as a Bogeret two years ago, but in that particular moment, I felt such a strong sense of achievement on the group's behalf for standing our ground and explaining to a group of middle-aged and old men that we are true Zionists and that our love for Israel will never waver, even if South Africa occasionally does take a front-row seat. So what I want to say is this: well done, to all those who attended *Veida* and managed to stay in one room for over three hours while we passionately debated the essence of our movement and to my peers who did not allow themselves to feel disheartened by harsh words, but instead, revived their passion and led us to claim our Zionism as our own.

# Report Back: Bogrim Leadership Tour

At the end of March, eight Bogrim of HDSA left South Africa to embark on the third annual Bogrim Leadership Tour. They spent ten days exploring the depths of Israeli politics, people and culture. They visited the high-profile cities such as Hebron and S'derot, as well as forgotten and unrecognised Bedouin villages. Intimate discussions were had with people from all sides of the political spectrum, from Eran Sternberg, a former Gush Katif spokesperson, to leftist *Haaretz* journalist, Gideon Levy.

...

The purpose of Leadership Tour is to enable Bogrim to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and diversity within Israeli society and to bring this knowledge and experience back to HDSA. In this way, Bogrim can provide a richer education to channichim through their personal experiences, rather than through hearsay.

...

Each member of the tour contributed to a report, documenting all that was experienced of the ten-day period. What follows are three extracts from this report, each describing a different day of the tour.

## \* Day 4 - 28/03

ROSS ENGERS

THE DAY STARTED OFF early for us. We left our Jerusalem hostel for the last time and got onto a mini-bus, where we met the world-renowned Ron Shatsberg. Shatsberg is an expert in the field of security and diplomacy in Israel and has covered the areas of the security wall for the past 15 years. We drove along the Route 443 road, the main highway connecting Jerusalem, Modi'in and Tel Aviv.

Often, complaint is heard that these so-called 'liberal' tours of Israel tend to focus too much on problems rather than solutions. In this regard, the tour was quite refreshing. Ron has no issue with pointing out the problems and criticising the Israeli state for its actions regarding the settlements and decisions it takes on the path of the wall for example, but instead of simply pointing out all the mistakes, he offers sustainable and tangible solutions. These solutions are not based on naïve idealism but instead on a realistic understanding of Israel's security needs. I think what the tour really displayed to us, is that there are moral solutions out there to the very real terrorist threat that Israel faces today. When we stop talking about the 'hypothetical threat' and look at the reality on the ground, there is a way.

After the tour, we made our way to our hostel in Tel Aviv. We took some time to debrief our tour with Ron. Most of us were pretty exhausted so we

had a short rest in the afternoon. We then hopped on a bus heading to the north of Tel Aviv, where we arrived just in time for our meeting with famous *Haaretz* Journalist, Gideon Levy.

We met with Gideon Levy in his natural habitat, one of Tel Aviv's numerous trendy coffee shops. The topic of discussion was 'the role of Israeli media in the occupation', but like all good conversations, it took many tangents and turns. Levy has been covering the Israeli occupation for over 20 years. He writes a weekly column for *Haaretz* and is surely one of the most unfeigned writers of our time. He would describe what he does as simply 'telling it as it is'.

"When we stop talking about the 'hypothetical threat' and look at the reality on the ground - there is a way."

Whether or not one agrees with all his conclusions, he certainly is one of the only liberal voices we find speaking out against injustice and reporting on the occupation so fervently, within Israel.

Levy spoke and explained how he sees his own role within Israeli society.

He does not want Israelis to be able to say in ten years time that they simply did not know what was 'happening in their own backyard'. After his short talk, the group engaged in informal questions and answers. We asked what potential role the youth can have, and whether or not Diaspora Jewry should still be making aliyah. His answer to the latter was, perhaps, surprising to hear from Levy, (I guess he does not have many conversations with Left-wing Zionist organisations based outside of Israel). He promoted the idea of young Jews coming to Israel and contributing to creating a just and democratic state. When asked, he told us that he considers himself a Zionist and has an unwavering love for Israel - after all it is his home. But he compares the relationship with that of a good friend who is a drug addict. You can help them by blindly giving them money or you can take your friend to a rehabilitation centre. The latter is usually very painful and they will no doubt endure a lot of suffering, but it is the choice that a real friend would make.

Although the discussion carried a very helpless tone, I found it exceptionally inspiring. Here is a man, who despite the endless onslaught of criticism thrown at him, remains true to his values and ideals. Regardless of one's political stance, I think this message is a universal one.

## \* Day 5 - 29/03

RAPHAEL CHASKALSON

Raphael Chaskalson has been a Boger in HDSA for three years. He is currently studying for a BA at UCT and is S'gan Rosh Shomrim (Deputy Head of Gr 11) for HDSA in the Cape Town ken (centre).

WHEN WE WERE TOLD that each participant of Leadership Tour was to write a report on one day of the tour, I immediately jumped at the opportunity to write about the fifth day. We spent the day galavanting between Tel Aviv, Be'er Sheva, an unrecognised Bendouin village in the northern Negev and Sderot. I believe this day was the most meaningful, depressing, yet amazingly inspiring day of the trip.

We started off by leaving Tel Aviv for Be'er Sheva. In typical fashion, we were late for our first meeting. Our driver, Adi, made this inexplicably clear to us as he drove us in his trademark good humour. We arrived in Be'er Sheva an hour late. The purpose of our visit was to see a woman called Vivian Silver and her Bedouin colleague, Amna.

They started off by giving us a run-down of the Bedouin plight in Israel. Amna described how a traditional, ancient society

was abruptly pushed into modernisation by the government. She also told us chilling stories of entire villages being forcefully relocated into state-planned concrete towns. The villages that refused to move became 'unrecognised' and now receive no water, electricity or other basic services from the government.

"It was clear to me that this school fostered true multiculturalism and tolerance, something which is sorely lacking in Israeli society."

Amna and Vivian have made it their mission to fight this injustice, through legal means and by educating as many people as possible about it. For me, this was an absolute eye-opener – partly because I knew so little about the Bedouin plight before and partly because I was so inspired by Vivian and Amna. The partnership they've created is an enormously important step in bridging the deeply-entrenched ethnic divides in Israel. If I ever live in Israel for a sustained period of time, I would be honoured to

be involved with such an organisation.

We then moved on to a kindergarten in Be'er Sheva. Started by a visionary group of Arab and Jewish parents, this school is completely bilingual and is strictly maintained 50% Jewish and 50% Arab. Classes are evenly split between Hebrew and Arabic. I think this is an absolutely fantastic project. It was clear to me that this school fostered true multiculturalism and tolerance, something which is sorely lacking in Israeli society. The children playing were clearly oblivious to the endemic racisms and prejudices that have come to characterise each ethnic group. I believe that if a whole generation can grow up in such an environment, we can look forward to more moral, tolerant and socially conscious Israelis in the future.

This was followed by a visit to one of the unrecognised villages in the northern Negev. One of the village leaders took us on a brief tour of the kindergarten they have established. It was one room without electricity. However, it was still incredible to see how much the village has achieved without government help. They have created a functional kindergarten with boys and girls learning together. They've also been helped a lot by Vivian and Amna. But in spite of these immense successes, (cont..)



The Leadership Tour group walk down Shuhada Street in Hebron, the largest city in the West Bank, whilst on a tour with Israeli NGO, Breaking the Silence.

(cont...) the way the Israeli government has neglected them is inexcusable. Seeing the village with my own eyes made me realise quite how unacceptable the idea of an 'unrecognised village' is. A true democracy has an obligation to provide basic needs to all its citizens. I am appalled that the Israeli government doesn't yet think that this Bedouin community is worthy of those rights.

The next place we visited is, shall we say, the *pièce de resistance*. Participants of the tour will remember my daily rants about S'derot, the not-quite-so-bustling metropolis next to the Gaza Strip. The place is dire. In fact, I don't think that describes it well enough. Perhaps it is more appropriate to call S'derot an urban cesspool of squalor, dust, dismal buildings and unhappy people. Whatever you want to call it, it's a pretty rubbish excuse for a town.

Don't let my anti-S'derot rant detract from our real purpose of visiting (because we would *never* go there unless we had *really* good reason to). We were greeted at the police station by a gaunt looking guy called Eliran, from the S'derot Media Centre. He gave us a brief rundown of the town's not-so-illustrious history – how it was formed in the 50s because the government had nowhere to put hundreds and thousands of Mizrahi *olim*, and how after 1990, the town became overrun with Russians. However, the aim of his tour was to show us the daily terror under which ordinary people from S'derot live. At the police station, he showed us three different prototypes of rockets that have been fired from Gaza into S'derot since 2005. He also gave us a brief rundown of a few safety measures should one of their cousins strip into S'derot during our visit – i.e.

run like hell for the nearest bus stop or bomb shelter. During the tour, he took us to a park in the suburbs. There is a large concrete caterpillar next to the jungle gym that serves as a bomb shelter for the kids. I cannot imagine growing up living under this constant fear.

"He ran the tour in complete monotone, as if he had become completely accustomed to recanting the horrors that he described."

We were all struck by what a sad character Eliran was. He ran the tour in complete monotone, as if he had become completely accustomed to recanting the horrors that he described. He seemed resigned to the fact that, more likely than not, another rocket would find its way into S'derot very soon. It turns out that two hours after we left, that dreaded siren did go off. It luckily landed outside of the town. I spent the tour feeling a deep compassion for Eliran and all the residents of S'derot. He mentioned that over 75% of people in the town suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and that over half of the town's sixteen-year-olds cannot sleep alone. That is a startling statistic. Surely a society cannot function under these conditions? For me, Eliran's tour humanised the suffering of the town's ordinary people. I shudder to think of life there, where everyone must be just as sad and messed up as him.

After his tour, we visited an urban kibbutz in the town. We were given a talk by a lady called Nomic, who has formed

an organisation called 'The Other Voice'. She was one of the most amazing, inspiring people I have ever listened to. The Other Voice was started by a group of women, some of whom live in S'derot and some in the Gaza strip. They arrange frequent telephone conferences, where they talk to each other about their experience of the conflict – for Israelis, the terror of living under rocket fire and for the Palestinians, the horror of living in what Nomic calls 'the world's biggest prison'. In this way, she argues, each side begins to see the other as human beings, who suffer just like they do. I cannot articulate how much respect I have for this initiative. But even more so, for Nomic herself. She recalls times when sixty rockets were hitting S'derot *per day*. How she is still a functional human being is one thing. But to be able to put that aside and see those who many perceive as the aggressor, as fellow human beings is truly unique.

I came out of this hectic day with one important realisation – humanising the conflict is of paramount importance. The visits to the unrecognised village and S'derot were unique exhibitions of human suffering in Israel. The personal nature of each tour made it so real. However, people like Vivian, Amna and Nomic have not let this suffering deter them. They have created initiatives that are based on one core value – the equality of every human being. So I ask you, Habonim Dror, not to let your knowledge of the conflict be based solely on statistics, ideology and history. Rather, see it from the point of view of the people living it. Only when we truly empathise with those living on the ground, can we ever make a real difference.



Members of the Leadership Tour meet with participants of the 2011 Shnat group.



Julian Kesler and Roxanne Joseph, on a tour of the Separation Barrier with Ron Schatzberg.



L-R: Kelly Powell, Lee Lobel, Ross Engers, Julian Kesler, Raphael Chaskalson, Erin Maserow, David Idesis, Roxanne Joseph.



## \* Day 8 - 1/04

ERIN MASEROW

Erin Maserow is studying for a PPE degree at UCT. She is currently S'ganit Rosh Bogrim (Deputy Head of Leadership) in the Cape Town ken (centre).

**I**F THERE IS ONE THING I learnt from Leadership Tour, it is that Israel is not a simple place. It is a multifaceted, complex and diverse society with millions of opinions to be heard, thousands more perspectives to be seen and countless stories to be told. Leadership Tour 2011 was a whirlwind of all of the above meshed into one explosive ten-day educational adventure, one that I can only hope more Bogrim in our movement will have the chance to experience. I am grateful for having been part of such a tour and I feel both honoured and responsible to share my experience, even if it is just of one day.

In retrospect, this should not have been a happy day. Half of our group had either come down with a fever or been struck by some other unknown disease that rendered them incapable of joining us for the day, yet the schedule continued.

Two people less, we left Kibbutz Yizre'el early and drove through the biblical Jezreel Valley until we reached Kibbutz Beit Ha'Shita. We were meeting with Binyamin Yogev, an oleh from New York, who welcomed us into the Kibbutz' Chagim Centre. Yogev explained to us that the Chagim Centre was founded by Aryeh Ben-Gurion, nephew of Israel's first Prime Minister and a member of Kibbutz Beit Ha'shita, in the 1930s. Aryeh envisioned a centre for the documentation of the pioneering and dynamic spirit of festivals as celebrated in the Kibbutz movement, and began collecting printed materials and memorabilia. In time, the collection of bits of paper filed away in milk crates under his bed became an expansive archive, relating a story of communal creativity applied to the eternal roots of Jewish sources. In the 1990s, the archive evolved into an educational institute, run by Yogev.

The institute's mission is the creation of a significant pluralistic dialogue about Jewish cultural activity, with focus on Jewish festivals in Israel by reinforcing humanistic values in Israeli society with emphasis on helping individuals,

their families and their communities to connect to the heritage of Judaism and *Eretz Yisrael*. The Chagim Centre view the institute as a spiritual and cultural home for idealistic Jewish communities and Zionist youth movements.

While, at the time, such a visit may have seemed out of place in the greater scheme of our tour, this visit to the Chagim Centre was uplifting for us. It was the first time on Bogrim tour that I feel we really did engage with our Jewish heritage and culture in a more specific sense. We had a very interesting discussion surrounding Pesach and the Jewish values associated with it, from a rather different perspective. We read extracts from the Kibbutz Haggadah and discussed the meanings of the verses and concepts in relation to the conventional Pesach Haggadah. While our visit to the Chagim Centre may have been much shorter than we would have liked, it was a refreshing experience and Binyamin's passion for his work provided us with a much-needed energy-boost that set a great tone for the rest of the day.

*"In retrospect, this should not have been a happy day. Half of our group had either come down with a fever or been struck by some other unknown disease."*

After our visit to the Chagim Centre, we made our way to Kibbutz Eshbal to hear about their social activist work in the Karmiel mountains. We met with Miriam who explained to us that Kibbutz Eshbal is a new model of kibbutz – an educator's kibbutz – that is based on the values of sharing, equality of human values, Zionism and socialism. The Kibbutz was founded in 1997 by 60 members of Ha'noar Ha'oved Ve'halomed – the sister movement to Habonim Dror in Israel. Members of Kibbutz Eshbal see education as the means of social change in Israel and their goal is to create leaders amongst Israeli youth through social values and activism.

Miriam told us about some of the projects run by members of the Kibbutz and Ha'noar Ha'oved. For me, the most inspiring aspect of their project was the boarding school that was established in

April 2000 for Ethiopian youth that feel disconnected from Israeli society. It was inspiring to hear stories of how these youth manage to turn their lives around through development of their leadership skills and education. This is something that I, as an educator in HDSA, strongly identify with. It made me proud to hear that the importance of education and development of youth is not a value that is exclusive to Habonim Dror. I felt proud to be identified with Ha'noar Ha'oved and the work that they are doing on Kibbutz Eshbal. We left the Kibbutz feeling pleasantly surprised and inspired, which is always a great feeling.

After leaving Kibbutz Eshbal, we made our way towards Manof to meet with ex-Mazkira of HDSA, Janina Kahn and her husband, Neil. It was truly amazing how they welcomed us into their beautiful home and they were so excited to hear about the movement today, our trip to Israel and us as individuals. We chatted for hours about the occupation, segregation within Israeli society and the movement. It was amazing to hear about Israel from the perspective of chaverim who have made Aliyah and are an active part of the struggle within Israeli society and of the Left, in particular.

They explained to us how in their very own community, Manof, bills were in the process of being passed that sought to prevent any non-Jews or Israelis from buying houses and moving into the suburb. Anyone who wishes to move to Manof, and other similar communities, are required to go through a tedious process of interview and questionnaires upon application. There are also others within the community who, like Janina and Neil, are very unsettled by such bills.

It was inspiring to see that even though they left the movement decades ago, we still found it easy to identify with Janina and Neil and their views about Israeli society and the happenings therein. They made us feel at home and at ease by listening to what we had to say and offering their views and advice about challenges we face as a movement today.

All in all, we had a very inspiring, busy, and uplifting day in the North of Israel; more so than I expected. It was great to return to Kibbutz Yizre'el to share the stories of the day's happenings with our sickly friends, and I'd like to think they felt uplifted by it as well.

# A Nation Fleeing the News

MIA CANDY

Mia Candy has been a Bogeret in HDSA for six years. She has an Honours in English Language and Literature from UCT and is currently the S'ganit Mazkir Klali (Deputy Chairman) of HDSA.

*"The manipulation of the language is one of the most efficient weapons of the regime in order to eternalise the situation".*

– David Grossman, *Writing in the Dark*.

I AM NOT ISRAELI. I do not pretend to understand what it means to be Israeli, to be subject to military conscription, to have friends and family die in war or in terror attacks. I often wonder: who am I to make any comment on the situation that is the occupation, or to criticise Israel and her people's actions? My response is that it is my moral obligation to speak out against the actions of countries that are unjust and undemocratic. The fact that I am Jewish and that the country in question is Israel, does not make this any less true. On the contrary, it is my role and the role of every Jew and every Israeli to fight against actions by the government which are, day by day, eroding Israeli democracy. My hope is that in voicing my concerns, someone will hear and that in the end it might, in some small way, lead to positive change. Having said this, for a long time I have not had the strength or confidence to say what I feel for fear of being wrong, or for not having a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Reading David Grossman's latest novel *To the End of the Land* brought me to realise that I am not wrong. There are Israelis, there are Jews, and there are Zionists that feel the way that I feel and this knowledge gives me the confidence to say the following: I am really sick of adults acting like children, fighting over land like it's a toy in the sandbox. I am terrified by how quiet the sane, rational voice of the Left is, in the face of all this insanity – all the constant blame, accusations of who started it, the absolute unwillingness to recognise humanity in our enemies. There are moments when my frustration and anger towards the intractable mess that is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are so strong that I feel like I am suffocating on the empty promises and rhetoric coming at me from all sides. I am terrified that Israel is heading towards self-destruction and that by the time we realise the urgency, it will be too late.

Every now and then, there comes a powerful voice of reason from within Israel – David Grossman is one such voice. When I picked up his latest novel, *To the End of the Land* (The original title in Hebrew translates

to 'A Woman Fleeing the News'), I had no idea how deep it would reach into my sense of self, and into my sense of the world. In brief, the story follows Ora, a mother whose son has just left for a military operation. Unable to sit at home waiting for the knock on the door that will tell her that her son, Ofer, has been killed, she flees to the Galilee, kidnapping, en route, an old lover of hers. The novel follows their hike through the north as she tells the tale of her son in the hope that her words will protect him. She convinces herself that if noone is home to receive the news, then it will not be true. *To the End of the Land* functions on so many levels of reality – it is Ora's story, but also Grossman's – he lost his son in the second Lebanon war, while writing the book. Above all, it is a story of a nation's denial, of a nation fleeing the news.

I had always imagined that when I found a book that would change my life it would hit me in the face and leave me dazed. Instead,

*"My hope is that in voicing my concerns, someone will hear and that in the end it might, in some small way, lead to positive change."*

Grossman's words have quietly planted themselves in my mind and having read this novel, I find that the way I understand the Israeli crisis has been subtly and irrevocably changed. No – not changed exactly – but rather, solidified, articulated – my suspicion confirmed: the true tragedy of the current situation is the way in which it is taking its heavy toll on the life of every Israeli family.

This is not a book review. The book is wonderful and you should read it. Instead, I want to draw your attention to a few fundamental elements of the novel that can and should contribute to our understanding of Israel's dilemma. The first is the relationship between the state and the individual. Israel's very existence is built on existential fear and it is naive to think that this fear does not permeate every element of Israeli society, every individual life. Grossman, in his poignant article *Writing in the Dark*, talks about 'the void that is growing, ever so slowly between the individual human being and the external, violent and chaotic situation within which he lives. The situation that dictates his life to him in each and every aspect... this void never remains empty. It is filled rapidly – with apathy, with cynicism and, more than anything else, with despair.' The experience then, is at once a national invasion of the individual and in response, a rejection of this personal invasion in the form of denial. Grossman refers to this coping mechanism as the "shrinking of the 'surface area' of the soul that comes into contact with the bloody and menacing world out there."

The 'shrinking of the surface area of the soul' in order to protect oneself is the most intimate and nuanced description of personal tragedy that I can imagine. This is Grossman's

genius: through his writing he touches the essence of what it means to be human. He takes the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – its massive religious and social complications, its broad national and political history – and brings it to the realm of the individual human being. In this way, the characters are no longer strangers – they are familiar mothers and sons and families and lovers. *To the End of the Land* is a universal story of love and loss, of crying, fearing and fighting. The detailed exploration of humanity, of our own humanity and that of our enemies is a prerequisite for peace that is hardly ever discussed. In *Writing in the Dark*, Grossman describes his attempt at this: 'I do my best not to shield myself from the just claims and sufferings of my enemy. Nor from the tragedy and entanglement of his own life. Nor from his errors or crimes or from the knowledge of what I, myself am doing to him. Nor, finally, from the surprising similarities I find between him and me.'

*To the End of the Land* is a terrifying exploration of human nature, as well as of mortality. Throughout Ora's hike in the Galilee, she talks to us about her son's life – his first word, his first steps, his whims, fantasies and fears. Word by word, she builds for us an image of this boy, this son of hers, this brother, this soldier, this citizen. As one reads, one comes to conceive what mortality means – mortality is the ever present threat that all those millions of seconds, all those moments of a human life can dissolve in a single second, with a single bullet. 'Thousands of moments', Ora writes in her journal, 'and hours and days, millions of deeds, countless actions and attempts and mistakes and words and thoughts, all to make one person in the world.' That is Israel's tragedy – that for every parent with a child in combat, every moment is potentially the moment right before the knock on the door.

Perhaps what makes it worse is that this has come to be accepted as a normal way of life. The Israeli youth emits collective apathy – where is the massive outcry? Why are only 5000 Israelis willing to show up to a peaceful two-state solution march? How many young Israelis take an active interest in politics, in critically engaged newspapers and human rights organisations? In one of the most poignant moments in the novel, Ora discovers her son whittling himself a club, but as she struggles to reconcile this image of him with the son she knows and loves, he refuses to acknowledge her heart break: 'he usually avoids getting into those arguments with me... he could never be bothered with that kind of talk, always said politics just didn't interest him... he was doing his job and that's that, and when he got out, when

everything was done, he promised he would think over exactly what had happened.' There is an ever-widening gap between the man he is becoming, the life he leads and the life she had dreamed for him. She holds onto a painful, irrational and unconditional love for this child of hers, even in the face of his actions as a soldier serving in the Occupied Territories. One day, without warning, Ofer is involved in an incident in Hebron that

*"That is Israel's tragedy – that for every parent with a child in combat, every moment is potentially the moment right before the knock on the door."*

threatens to tear their family apart. That her son could do anything to harm another human being is too much for Ora and she breaks down to her husband: 'But it's Ofer, do you understand that, Ilan? It happened to us. It's our Ofer. How could Ofer, how *could* he?'

There is something else about the situation in the Middle East that pains me. I strongly believe that the most powerful tool we have at our disposal is the body of words that we can use to speak out, to say 'No! This is wrong! This is not my vision of Zionism and the current state is not in line with the spirit of Judaism!' I feel as if this tool has been usurped by propaganda and rhetoric. I feel that there is little left to be said that will make any difference – our words of protest have become (have perhaps always been) impotent in the face of stale arguments, empty words and clichés, the language of fear, of militarism, of hate. Grossman's novel allows an escape

from a world of stereotypes and rigid political identities. Instead of the 'fixed and banal mutual accusations among enemies or among political adversaries in the same country' (*Writing in the Dark*), Grossman's literature provides a space in which we can breathe again. Grossman himself articulates this idea in the following passage taken from *Writing in the Dark* – it is one of the most exceptional pieces of writing I have come across:

'I write, and I feel how the correct and precise use of words is sometimes like a remedy to an illness. Like a contraption for purifying the air, I breathe in and exhale the murkiness and manipulations of linguistic scoundrels and language rapists of all shades and colours. I write and I feel how the tenderness and intimacy I maintain with language, with its different layers, its eroticism and humour and soul, give me back the person I used to be, me, before myself became nationalised and confiscated by the conflict, by governments and armies, by despair and tragedy.'

I asked Grossman, during HDSA's video-conference call with him in February, whether he feels that politically conscious literature has the power to provide Israeli society with the wake-up call that it so desperately needs. Unsurprisingly, he has lost the idealism and optimism of his youth and

sees the role of literature in political activism as slowly dwindling. There is, however, one fundamental way in which literature functions that no other discipline allows: it allows one to stand outside of oneself. To take on every position, to understand one's situation from every angle and in this way, to come to terms with the larger reality – the reality that 'it is not only our justice for our people, it is also the Palestinian justice for their people.' It also allows one to explore alternatives and to discover that things do not have to be this way – we are not doomed to this fate. Grossman writes that 'many times every day, as I sit at my desk, I touch on grief and loss like one touching electricity with my bare hands, and yet I do not die.' This is the fundamental lesson to be learnt – that to be honest and to break out of our denial, will not kill us. To speak out, to criticise and to be concerned is what is going to save us. As Grossman said during our video-conference, we need to reclaim 'the accuracy of words: not to allow the government or the army or any political party or even the media to give us the dictionary because they are so manipulative and they are cheating us and creating for us a vocabulary that does not fit reality...'

I refuse to be silent. I refuse to look back one day and admit that I did nothing. I will read and I will write and I will speak until someone on the other side stops running and listens. There has been a knock on the door for a while now – it is time to open up, and move forward.

## Building a Future

GEMMA COWAN

THE NAME FOR this year's Machaneh is Machaneh Bonim Atid – 'Building a Future'. When thinking of a name for camp, one has to try think of something that encapsulates the values of the movement as a whole and also relates to the society and world in which we live.

Building a future is all about setting the foundations that will spark change in society. Involvement in Habonim can make a significant change to people's lives, but what really counts is the differences that people make in the world after their time in the movement. If those who leave Habonim fail to strive towards change in society, the movement has not fulfilled its goals.

Habonim aims to build critical thinkers, activists, caring, humane and thoughtful people. But the movement is nothing if these people do not use their knowledge as a positive influence in society.

There are many challenges in our world.

We cannot build *the* future, it is too vast and incomprehensible. But we can build *a* future. A future for ourselves based on the values that have been entrenched in us by our families, friends and the movement.

The word 'build' is one that demands action. It is not 'dream' or 'inspire' - these are intangible concepts. The call for action is one that needs to be loud and clear. We will not affect change merely by talking and dreaming about things, but by doing them. This cannot, however, come in isolation – the importance of dreaming is not to be underestimated but it is futile if it is all that we do.

The concept of 'building' harks back to Habonim's Labour Zionist roots, too. It is reminiscent of getting our hands dirty to create that which we love, that which is just and that which stands tall as the epitome of our values. It is not only reminiscent of those who built Israel, but of those who built – and rebuilt – the movement too.

Often our value system is based on the injustices of the world. We see what is wrong in the world and look for ways to make it right. Machaneh Bonim Atid is about the actions that we take on as individuals in this pursuit of justice, peace and freedom. This means active involvement in South African civil society. It means standing up for that which we know to be true. It means constantly and actively working towards a just Israel. It means being proud and confident of our left-wing opinions and refusing to be silent - or silenced - in an increasingly conservative environment.

Last year's machaneh was Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot – 'Power to Change'. This year we acknowledge that this change can only come through educated, meaningful and positive action. Machaneh Bonim Atid aims to instil in every channich, the values and foundations on which this type of action can be pursued.



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1 - Opening ceremony of Machaneh Koach LeShanot 2010 | 2 - Shutlin channichim on Mini-Mach LeChalom LeHaagshim in March 2011 | 3 - Ross Engers raises the HDSA flag during a game of Kikar Olympics on April Seminar 2011 | 4 - Adam Klass, Max Reich and Steven Kimmel during a Shomrim rnaeh session on Machaneh Koach LeShanot | 5 - Shutlin channichim, Aaron Sherman, at a rnaeh session on Machaneh Koach LeShanot | 6 - Shomrim channichim, Janine Day and Daniella Bloomberg, take part in Kikar Olympics on April Seminar | 7 - Channichim on tiyul at Machaneh Koach LeShanot | 8 - Gary White and Daniel Kruss in chulizot on Machaneh Koach LeShanot | 9 - Begrim vote on changes to the HDSA constitution (Chikkid) at the biennial Veida conferences in February 2011



10 - Shomrim channichim help decorate and stock a school library in partnership with Equal Education as part of their Projects Week on Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot | 11 - Jake Nudelman and Nathan Sklair on Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot | 12 - Kerem Setton and Josh Leon on Mini-Mach Le'Chalom Le'Hagshim | 13 - Gary Ganz during A-guard of Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot | 14 - Jonathon Ferrer stands with fellow Bogrim Ones on April Seminar 2011 | 15 - Rosh Machaneh, Jodi Wishnia, leads a ruach session on Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot | 16 - Adam Klass leads a Shomrim ruach session on Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot | 17 - Ameirim channichim prepare themselves for their shichwah project 'Survival Night' | 18 - Sayarim channichim wear chulitzot before Shabbat on Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot



Caitlin Le Roith



Justin van Zyl



Gemma Cowan



Justin van Zyl



Gemma Cowan



Justin van Zyl



Justin van Zyl



Justin van Zyl



Justin van Zyl

# A Conflicted Aliyah

KARLA GREEN

Karla Green was involved in HDSA for 11 years and completed her final year as a Bogeret in 2008. She has an Honours degree in Gender Studies from UCT. Karla moved to Israel in 2010 and has since been involved in non-violent activism against the occupation. She is currently working for the Israeli NGO, Breaking the Silence.



IT WAS NEW YEARS EVE. I was sitting at home in Jaffa getting ready for the celebrations. As I was leaving my apartment, I got news that a 32 year old woman had died in the small West Bank village of Bil'in. Jawaher Abu Rahma had died from complications related to tear gas inhalation. Earlier in the day, roughly 1000 Palestinian, Israeli and international activists passionately chanted while proceeding towards a portion of Israel's Separation Barrier which bisects Bil'in's agricultural lands. As the demonstrators came close to the barrier, Israeli soldiers opened fire with large amounts of tear gas, covering the small village – home to less than 2000 people – with a veil of tear gas. Some people were rushed to the hospital in a state of seizure from the gas and one, Jawaher, succumbed to the effects and died. The news was particularly shocking to me because I had been at the demonstration earlier that day and I had choked on the very same gas which killed Jawaher.

I attended the demonstration in Bil'in for the same reason that I have attended demonstrations in half a dozen other villages in the West Bank; I have come to understand that the essence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is based on human and civil rights. I remember the

first time I timidly attended a Palestinian non-violent protest. I had never met Palestinians who were using non-violence as a way of making their voices heard. I remember feeling energised as the group of Palestinians, Israelis and internationals chanted and walked with signs towards the village's farmlands to protest the Jewish-only settlement that had been built on its land.

*"The essence of the conflict is based on human and civil rights."*

I remember clearly my shock when the Israeli soldiers guarding the settlement began firing at us even though they could see that we were an unarmed peaceful group, including men, women and young children. Moreover, how could these soldiers fire at Jews and Israelis? It took a few more demonstrations before I came to understand why Palestinian non-violence is such a major threat to Israel and why the soldiers reacted with such force. When Palestinians use violence, the world ignores Israel's blatant moves to entrench the occupation. Quite simply, we forget about the occupation when Palestinians resort to violence. However, non-violent resistance to the occupation highlights the rights-

based nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Images of chanting protesters force us to reconceptualise how we understand power dynamics in the conflict.

Two days later, as I walked into the Ministry of Absorption office in Tel Aviv, thoughts of tear gas and Jawaher were fresh on my mind. I had come to sign for my Aliyah benefits, which I am entitled to as a new immigrant for the first eight months after immigrating. It's always a frustrating experience having to deal with bureaucracy in Israel or anywhere else. But today the experience is even more absurd.

As I sit in front of the woman who acts as if I am working for her, I think to myself what if this person knew that I spend time in Palestinian towns and villages to participate in joint non-violent resistance? How would she react? Would she call me an anti-Zionist or even an anti-Semite? I'm quite sure she'd have a problem with me receiving the government benefits. Tragically, this woman living her life in Tel Aviv probably does not even know about the joint Israeli-Palestinian non-violent resistance. Too many people living here turn a blind eye and refuse to investigate or simply acknowledge the injustices happening even half an hour away. This woman has



probably never even heard of Bil'in.

I feel uncomfortable in the Ministry of Absorption offices. It's quite simple to me; I'm an immigrant who has access to all sorts of rights, while the indigenous Palestinian population has no access to these rights. If I wanted to, I could move to Modi'in Ilit, the settlement responsible for the theft of Bil'in's land. I could move into a brand new house, complete with a charming view of the Mediterranean sea. The Israeli government would actually make it cheaper, through tax breaks and incentives, for me to move there, than to live in Tel Aviv. But I choose to march, peacefully and defiantly, with Palestinians who have the moral clarity to welcome me, not as an occupying immigrant but as an equal in the struggle for human rights.

After spending much time here, I am increasingly convinced that the Jewish community, in Israel and abroad, will be the last people to create real and equitable change on the ground. The victim mentality is so pervasive that often people in the street tell me that 'the world is out to get them'. I see a tired and weary people content with the status quo. And why not? Most Israelis barely interact with Palestinians outside of their military service. Israel's complex myriad of

checkpoints and walls has all but erased the Palestinian mark on this land for Israelis.

*"The Jewish community, in Israel and abroad, will be the last people to create real and equitable change on the ground."*

I often recount my experience of learning the history of Israel. Like all adults, thinking back on high school involves a mix of nostalgia and forget. However, living in Israel has forced me to reflect on my education to understand the history of this conflicted land. I remember my high school days sitting in the 'Pillars of Fire' Jewish studies class, learning the Zionist narrative of the creation of Israel. I recall the story of how the Palestinians left their homes in 1948 by their own accord at the behest of neighbouring Arab countries and after the war, simply chose never to return.

I have slowly, and perhaps painfully, come to realise that never was I taught the Palestinian narrative of 1948. Never did I hear the Arabic word 'Nakba', the term used to describe the displacement of as many as 750,000 Palestinians in 1948. Now, only after living in Israel, have I

found that there is a lively debate about the history of 1948 and many Israelis are at the forefront of it. Why was I left out?

Amongst my fellow madrichim, we often spoke about what it meant to move to Israel and to play an active role in society. I believe that I cannot justify living in Israel without actively engaging in and contributing to the struggle to end the occupation. This process necessarily requires reflection on my educational upbringing. I am not blind to the struggle for human and civil rights which is taking place here. Therefore, I am compelled to join the Israelis, Palestinians and internationals who are taking action.

My desire to wrestle with these issues stems from my Habonim education. The movement, where I spent 11 years of my life, is where I was socialised and politicised. If it weren't for these precious years – for which I am eternally grateful – I would not be here in Israel-Palestine doing what I do. If it were not for my years in Habonim, I would not be able to visit a place like Bil'in. I would not be able to see the struggle for human rights coalescing around me and muster the courage to challenge my community on what is right, even if it might seem radical at the moment.

# Hooked on a Feeling

LEE LOBEL

Lee Lobel grew up in Zimbabwe, where she was introduced to Habonim. She moved to Cape Town in 2002. Lee was a participant of the 2009 Shnat programme. She is currently studying Psychology and Criminology through UNISA and is Rosh Bogrim (Head of Leadership) in Cape Town for HDSA.

**I** OFTEN QUESTION myself and wonder what it is about Habonim Dror that keeps me coming back for more. What is it that puts a smile on my face? What is it that gives me butterflies in my stomach, that takes me to another world and that brings me back home feeling like something big is missing after a camp or seminar?

Habonim is more than a movement with an ideology. It is more than a movement that strives to make a change in the world, South Africa, Israel and humanity. There is something deeper to Habonim, an intangible element. It is something that I think many members of Habonim Dror find it hard to explain. It's always just 'that feeling.'

When I come back home from a mini-mach, machaneh or seminar, I always find that for a few days after, I am thinking about the Habo experience that I just had. I often switch myself off. It happens so often that my friends and family know that they can't get much out of me for those few days, as I am still adjusting to reality.

I have been a part of HDSA for a long time. When I used to live in Zimbabwe, Habonim held Sunday meetings every week where we would have peulot, run around and play games and at the end of every meeting we would all stand together, get a chocolate and sing Ha'tikvah. Even then, I always had a feeling of belonging – knowing that every Sunday I would meet with the people that inspire me. I will never forget my first mini-mach. I must have been ten or eleven years old and Joey Hasson, Dovi Myers and Benji Lunsky all came down to help run the mini-mach. I was blown away by what was going on around me – the education, late nights and the icing of Marie biscuits. I went home after that mini-mach crying my eyes out. I felt heartbroken that it was over – whenever I would think about it, the tears would just start falling.

I then moved to Cape Town, and it was time for 'big camp'. I wasn't one who would leave home for long periods of time, so I didn't go that first year of living here. But there was a Visitor's Day and my parents and I went to go visit my cousin who was on camp. I remember we parked our car near the rock between the Amelim chader ochel and the Amelim toilets. It sounds ridiculous but I'll never forget the feeling I had as I walked onto kikar – this HUGE patch of land with music pumping – you could just stand there and feel the energy of the place. Every year more than 1000 people go on and off that campsite, more than 1000 stories a year fill the campsite. If only that Sayarim wall could talk or if every chader ochel (dining room) could talk, or even better, if every tent could talk. I spent that day on the campsite and on the beach. My

cousin took me around the Sollelim gedud site and I felt like I was in some rainforest dream. I also went to visit my friends in Shtilim and even that was a maze – tents everywhere with people laughing. I asked my parents if I could stay on for the rest of camp but I wasn't allowed to. I was so upset. I went home that day thinking about the 'what ifs'. What if I had stayed on? What would I have experienced? What would I have seen?

*"That feeling isn't just one thing. You can't define it in one sentence or one word."*

The following year came and I went to camp – Bonim '03. I spent most of that camp feeling extremely homesick. Back then I was the quiet girl that never sang during ruach and never danced during havdallah and sat outside the chader ochel crying to my madrichim and wanting to go home. But it's funny, even with all those feelings, I stayed the full three weeks, went home and was still very sad that machaneh was over. Amelim '04 I went again, not homesick this time around, but still one of the shy kids. Sollelim '05 and Sayarim '06 I took a break. But Shomrim '07 – that was when it really all came together. Before machaneh I went to the bayit in Cape Town and had a long chat with Daniel Barnett. He showed me a camp video, said something like 'it will be the best three weeks of your life' and I was in. I went home, filled out my forms and yes, I had the best three weeks of my life. But more incredible things happened during those three weeks – I sang during ruach, in fact, I went crazy during ruach and when it came to havdallah, I danced like never before. But there was one special night. The Shnatties of 2007 came to Shomrim for dinner, showed us a few videos of Shnat and at that moment, I decided that Shnat was for me.

My Bogrim One year came, and with it, the camp before Shnat. It was one I will never forget. It had its hard times and its great times, but it was one that was full of excitement because I was going on Shnat a month after. Shnat came and ended and Bonim tzevet of '09 flew by. And of course, after that I really came back home out of it, getting over Shnat and machaneh and dealing with the realities back home.

But 2010 was full of new experiences – I was voted Rosh Middle School, was S'ganit Rosh mini-mach and Rosh Bonim and Amelim of Winter Camp. And then, another 'life changing' moment – I was asked to be S'ganit Rosh Amelim at Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot and work closely with the Rosh, Gemma Cowan. Working on machaneh for three months before, bonding as a tzemed

(pair) and as a tzevet (team), I knew this camp was going to be one of the best. Amelim Machaneh Ko'ach Le'Shanot began. It was a month filled with pure laughter, inspiration and great satisfaction. For the first time as a Bogeret, I cried my eyes out as the buses full of channichim drove off the campsite.

It is now 2011, I am in my fourth year of being a Bogeret, Rosh Bogrim of Cape Town and I still feel those feelings I felt when I was 10 or 11 years old having left that mini-mach in Zimbabwe.

I thought that I had experienced the ultimate inspiration having been on Shnat and having sat on the VM of machaneh, but I was wrong. After coming home from leading Shomrim on April Seminar, I can say that I have never felt so inspired by channichim as I did on this seminar. Sitting in peulot, smiling, being completely motivated by what every person said. Even outside of the peulot – chatting to them, sitting with them during meals, laughing with them, singing around the shlichsville fire and staying up until three o'clock in the morning talking about everything under the starry sky with them. You leave a week like that questioning 'that feeling' even more, because the more inspired you are, the more you feel like you are closer to the answer.

'That feeling' isn't just one thing. You can't define it in one sentence or one word. That feeling is when you look into someone else's eyes during havdallah, when everyone is singing along to 'Salaam' and you both know that you are exactly where you want to be. That feeling is during a peulah when a channich says something and looks you right in the eye and you know that you are both on the same wavelength. That feeling is when a channich shares the same excitement about being part of Habonim as you do. That feeling is when a channich questions something you have said. That feeling is when over 100 people are screaming at the top of their lungs in the chader ochel and you just feel the vibration of the sound. It is when the day has come to an end and you all stand in a circle singing 'Taps', feeling completely satisfied with your day. It is when a channich comes up to you and says 'thank you'. That feeling is when all the hard work comes together and is executed perfectly. That feeling is when you all sitting around the shlichsville fire, killing yourself laughing. The list of feelings could go on forever.

Maybe I am never meant to find the exact answer, and maybe it's not just one answer. But the next time you feel that feeling, just stand for moment and feel it and see if you can find the answer.

"Each one shall teach one."

## Defying the Mundane

GABI ALTAMIRANO



Gabi Altamirano has been a Bogeret for six years and was a participant of the 2007 Shnat Programme. She has a degree in Interior Design from CPUT. She is currently the National Youth Worker for HDSA and sits on the Camp Va'ad Poel (Steering Committee) as S'ganit Rosh Machaneh.

I AM CURRENTLY sitting in my little corner office at 34, 10th Avenue, Highlands North. While I should be working on brochures, emails and budgets, I find myself fixated on a conversation I keep having with Mia. A conversation about how in 20 years time when I look back on my movement career and the world is a different place, what role would I, or rather would Habonim, have played in shaping those changes? It got me thinking back to a discussion I'd had with the Hanaggah, in which I spoke of the 'pursuit of happiness' and why I am a part of Habonim. I think it is a question that never gets old. My Habonim career has been filled with those 'what the hell am I doing in Habo?' moments, because the movement is a bloody strange thing. We're all under the age of 23 and while we should be focused on studies, jobs, boys, girls and going out, we often fill our time with *hadracha* (leadership) training, peulot planning and political debates and discussions. It's weird – and I guess it's also what makes us unique.

As the saying goes, 'life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans.' Haboim is a lot like that. It is not part of the plan, or at least it was never a part of mine. But to throw on a chultzah and to be a member of this movement is a privilege, an honour and something that makes me happy.

And so I come back to this idea of what I am going to see when I look back on my movement history. It is not just the fun times, the friends made and the lessons learned. The fact that we, as Habonim, like running on a treadmill and constantly trying to reach a goal, are a group of people who are striving for something more than the norm – something that may seem impossible. We make a conscious decision to not turn a blind eye to all the problems in society and all the injustices that affect the world, which is often the easier option. And although we make the harder choice, with added commitment and responsibility, we are all aiming for happiness and envisioning the bigger picture. Along the way, it's the uplifting moments, like seeing your channichim attend a rally or watching the sense of accomplishment on a madrich's face when a good peulah has been executed or knowing that we worked our butts off to send a kid to machaneh or Shorashim or April Seminar that would not otherwise have been able to go. All those moments are going to get us through the hardships.

*"Habonim teaches me more about myself and others than any other experience in my life. It has forced me to break out of the bubble of apathy and to learn to care about the world."*

So I do not want to slip into the motions and have the same routine comprised of waking up, having my Special K, sitting at my desk, sending emails or writing documents, cooking and then going to bed and repeating it all over again. That is easy and mundane and I do not want to lose touch with what it is that is actually important and meaningful. So back to that plaguing question that runs rampant through our minds at the worst times, yet seems so natural to answer: 'Why

am I a part of Habonim?'

(I have stopped for a minute to truly think about that question, because just the idea of stopping what you are doing and breaking free from everything, even if only for a minute, is refreshing in itself. The perspective you get from just sitting back and thinking for yourself, not because someone has told you to, is a very liberating experience and something that Habonim has taught me.) Because...

Habonim teaches me more about myself and others than any other experience in my life. It has forced me to break out of the bubble of apathy and to learn to care about the world. It inspires, motivates and excites me to be a part of a world that I would not otherwise be a part of. Going to rallies, building libraries, pamphleteering, educating and knowing that at the end of the day, if one child walks away learning one new thing, or thinking about societal ills or being critical and not just accepting or defending, then I have made a change. And although I was not up in the front line, I played my part.

Now the truth is that I want to do more. I think I can do more and as a movement, I believe that we should do more. In 20 years time, I want to look back proudly at the role I played, the lives I affected and the change I potentially set in motion. I do not underestimate the power of informal education, discussion and debate. We are an incredible body of people, who without realising it are creating and developing the future leaders of not only this movement but of this community, society and world. We actively groom the future leaders, who, like so many already have, commit more time and more of themselves in the struggle towards social change. Maybe we are just a vehicle or a platform, or a principle part for all these changes and fights, but ultimately we play a vital role. We set the groundwork for the critical and active thinkers of our community. And that is why I am a part of Habonim.

# Habonim Foundation Covers New Ground

JULIAN KESLER

With exciting new facilities on the campsite and aims to create a self-sustaining project, the Habonim Foundation is moving into an exciting new phase to secure the long-term, financial independence of South Africa's largest Jewish, Zionist youth movement.

In 2004, Habonim had firmly cemented itself as the pioneering Jewish youth movement in South Africa. Habonim's growth, however, also meant rising expenses and subsidies for campers. The movement faced financial uncertainty and the status quo was deemed unsustainable by movement leadership. The Habonim Dror Foundation was established to transform the movement's financial instability into eventual sustainability. The foundation aims to achieve financial independence and long-term self-sustainability in the movement, through developing the Habonim campsite in Onrus. This, in turn, will generate regular revenue for the movement.

## | Achievements of Campsite Development Project

Phase one of the campsite development included the refurbishment of the main *kikar* (square) grass field, modern ablation blocks for Shtilim and Sollelim, two new *chadrei ochel* (dining room) structures and the now famous Shtilim cabins. The cabins, now an established camping facility for schools and groups, provide a continuous source of income for the movement and provide our youngest campers in December with a comfortable three-week machaneh.

## | Latest Developments

In 2009, the second phase of the campsite development known as the 'Docsville Project' began. This new development was designed as a means to generate profit that would help fund future Habonim subsidies and gap year programmes in Israel.

The Docsville Project has seen the development of a new conference facility that is used as a hospital during our December machaneh as well as the construction of 20 modern bungalow units, each fitted with an en-suite bathroom and self-catering facilities.

We are currently fundraising in order to complete the final construction stage of Docsville. The old Docsville buildings have now been demolished to make room for the final two modern units.

## | What Comes Next?

Once all major construction is complete, each unit will be furnished with new linen, décor and furniture. Preparation for this has already begun and we aim to have the Docsville facility fully operational as soon as possible. We appreciate the help and support of our parents, donors and chaverim to ensure that we remain financially self-sustaining and independent as we continue to grow as the largest Jewish, Zionist youth movement in South Africa.



# Looking Back, Moving Forward

JULIAN KESLER

Julian Kesler has been involved in HDSA since 2003. He is currently S'gan Mazkir (Deputy Chairman) of HDSA. Julian is also a member of the Camp Va'ad Poel (Steering Committee) as Rosh Chinnuch (Head of Education).





WHAT WAS MEANT to be a brisk surf through the Habonim Reunited website, turned into a long afternoon after being absorbed by the load of material that I found. The site is a virtual museum of Habonim debates, speeches, tributes and reminiscing by past Habonim chaverim. The Habonim Reunited project (available at [www.habonimreunited.com](http://www.habonimreunited.com)) is an incredibly rich archive of Habonim history and memories. Today, however, it seems that this important archive is not revisited by Bogrim in the movement. A piece that I found particularly relatable was an essay by former Mazkir Klali (Chairman) of 1977, Simmy Zawels. Zawels' essay, entitled 'The Poverty of Political Consciousness', is imbued with a revolutionary spirit demanding a greater consciousness and response from the movement to the realities facing Israel and South Africa.

In the past I have been vocal about the dangers of Bogrim longing for an ideal that has expired. I have always advocated that to simply hark back to narrow ideologies of the past, that were relevant in a different era, or to strictly adopt a narrow stream of Zionism that fails to deal with the issue of the occupation, would be detrimental to the movement. My concern for narrow – despite being modern or even secular – ideologies relating to Israel, those which decline to delve into the most crucial issues of the occupation, inequality, democracy and racism, does not negate the value that I place on the history of Zionism and the history of Habonim. It is hard to read articles of ex-chevre, recounting their experiences, without getting at least a touch emotional. Reading the material on the Habonim Reunited website reminded me of the enormity and vast influence of the movement. This magnitude and great history is often forgotten in the everyday activities of planning and running the movement.

Dealing with Israel's – and ultimately Zionism's – challenges going forward, we need to remain engaged in developments on the ground and ensure that we are reading and writing on these issues. The brand of Zionism or Israel engagement that the movement has crafted in recent times, is one that speaks openly and honestly about Israel, her challenges and shortcomings. It is one that seeks to be involved in actively educating at home and working with civil society in Israel, with Israelis and Palestinians. Zawels' message in his call to arms of 1977, despite referring to a different government, still resonates with Habonim today:

*"It is crucial to ensure that we foster a new appreciation amongst Bogrim for the movement's history."*

"Today we have in Israel a new government which is, in many respects, the very antithesis of everything we have always educated towards in Habonim. Its social philosophy advocates things we simple do not educate towards. A belief in absolutes vis-à-vis rights and boundaries. A commitment to creating political fait accompli through physical presence. A lack of introspective humility and ongoing questioning. Placing mere mortals beyond the realm of criticism. Subscribing to a philosophy that has not changed in half a century."

The movement has successfully remained ideologically relevant up until 2011 and this has ensured that it continues to exist. For as long as it has an ideological platform and direction that is challenging and has Bogrim engaged, the movement will continue to thrive. We have seen what happens when movements fail to be introspective, self-critical and to

ensure that their ideological outlook remains relevant. Indeed, such passion and drive for debate and self-education was visible at February's *Veida*, where the future and the past were robustly debated. This type of discussion should not be reserved for the biannual *Veida* conference. The ideals and values discussed at *Veida* are void of meaning, unless they are pursued through action and continued discussion. Zawels fittingly wrote 'Habonim cannot merely observe the world. That is too shallow. Nor can it merely interpret it. That is no less so. Our existence is vindicated only when we change it. That is the point.'

It is imperative that Habonim continuously self-evaluates, remains relevant and seeks innovation. If we fail in this regard, it will lead to our demise. The world we live in is constantly changing and so should we. I do expect to see a strengthened, critical engagement with the movement's ideology going forward – constantly questioning and as Zawels demands, 'eternally self-critical'.

However, it is essential that while we look forward, we also look back. It is crucial to ensure that we foster a new appreciation amongst Bogrim for the movement's history. The familiar saying 'you have to know where you come from to know where you are going' is indispensable to the movement's future. We can only learn from past achievements, failures and successes. My argument is best summarised by Zawels in his essay:

"It seems to be abundantly clear that we have lost those traits which distinguish us from those who live around us. I'm not one for lauding the so-called 'good old days'. A youth movement should be looking forward, not back. Yet neither am I prepared to be ahistorical. I will not summarily jettison conceptual modes of thought which have validity beyond the particular circumstances in which they may have been originally formed. One such conception is that of being 'different.'"

# The Context of Left-wing Zionism

KELLY POWELL

Kelly Powell was a participant of the 2009 Shnat programme. She has been an active Bogeret for four years and is currently the Shnat Coordinator for 2012.

**A** FEW WEEKS AGO, I attended a talk by Israeli anarchist, Jonathan Pollak, a co-founder of the radical leftist group, Anarchist's Against the Wall. Pollak has been active in the non-violent struggle against the occupation for years. He came to UCT to give a talk about the occupation and Israel's deplorable behaviour regarding Palestinian rights. Pollak was accompanied by Zackie Achmat, who introduced him to the mixed crowd. Pollak, who has been arrested and even shot by the Israeli army,

*"I found myself feeling uncomfortable to be a Zionist in the room, even though I agreed with a lot of what Pollak was saying."*

told us about his efforts, along with those of his Palestinian friends, to protest against the injustice that exists in the Occupied Territories, and how these protests are shot down – quite literally – by the Israeli army.

His talk was powerful. And his efforts fighting for justice and human rights is something that Habonim Dror commends and stands by. But as a member of a Zionist youth movement, something felt

uncomfortable to me. We were sitting in a diverse room of people and this man, whose bravery and sense of morality correlates with Habonim's values, was openly anti-Zionist. I couldn't help thinking about what context we were in. Having gone on Leadership Tour in March, what he was saying was nothing that we hadn't heard before, and something that the older Bogrim of the movement debate and deal with often. I found myself feeling uncomfortable to be a Zionist in the room, even though I agreed with a lot of what Pollak was saying. I was critical of the environment in which his speech was delivered, and of the type of audience in the room, and realised that I had never grappled with these issues outside of a Jewish or Israeli context. I didn't know how much Pollak's audience knew about the situation on the ground in Israel and I did not know their intentions of attending the talk either - it was an unusual thought to have.

It got me thinking. Attending a talk like this in South Africa is very different than it would be in Israel. But why? If this talk had been on our itinerary for Bogrim Leadership Tour, I would have received the information differently than I did at UCT. Why? After the talk, I saw a friend of mine who knew I was a member of some youth movement, but did not know much about it. He said, 'Oh, Kelly – I didn't expect you to be here.' What did that

mean, exactly? That he thought being part of a Jewish youth movement meant blind support for Israel? Or if that was not the case, then we felt the same as Pollak? Or worse: that the only way to associate ourselves with Palestinian rights is if we, too, were anti-Zionist.

Ironically, the talk was the same day as Yom Ha'atzmaut and SAUJS had a stall at the bottom of Jammie Steps. Coming straight out of that talk, I did not want to be seen standing with some of my friends who were running the stall. This thought made me sad and a little confused. I felt as though I could not proudly say that I was a Zionist – even though I do not identify with the South African Jewish communities' Zionism – because I felt that people would not understand my disposition without jumping to conclusions first. I also know that my friends running the SAUJS stand would not have attended Pollak's talk because of their own affiliations, values and form of Zionism, and that they, too, jump to conclusions about Habonim and our leftist ideals and principles.

I cannot answer the questions I posed earlier, but they are the types of questions that Habonim members grapple with on a daily basis. On our Leadership Tour, we met with the renowned Israeli journalist, Gideon Levy. During our talk he told us he thinks that we, as left-wing Jews in South Africa, have it a lot harder than the left-wingers in Israel. This notion has stuck with me, and I think he's right. Just as I found myself stuck in the middle that day – feeling strange about being in that talk as a Zionist, and not wanting to stand by the Yom Ha'atzmaut stand – so too does Habonim often find itself in the middle, specifically in our South African context.

## Forum Tzora: Statement of Purpose

**Forum Tzora is a group that was established in 2011 by Israeli citizens, many of whom are ex-HDSA chaverim. Forum Tzora was established by people who recognise that they have a role to play in the betterment of Israeli society. Members of Forum Tzora have undertaken to be outspoken and active in Israeli civil society.**

WE ARE AN ASSOCIATION initiated by Israelis of firm Zionist conviction, concerned at the direction we see our country to be taking.

We are gravely concerned at the erosion of the liberal spirit of our Declaration of Independence, which promised 'development of the country for all of its inhabitants... based on freedom, justice and peace as envisioned by the prophets of Israel' and 'complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, irrespective of religion, race or sex'. Among us are some who have experienced in their countries of origin how easily democracy can be subverted and people can slide into racist attitudes. Those of us who come from South Africa view with particular anxiety the imminent danger of Israel becoming a state that perpetuates differential civic status

for sections of the population under its governance, and represses opposition voices.

We believe that the core of our problem is the perpetuation of the drive to settlement in the context of a regime of rule over another people. This erodes the moral basis of our Zionist belief in Israel as the just expression of the Jewish people's national self-determination. It provokes severe criticism even from true friends, and tarnishes our image as part of the democratic community of nations as well as in the eyes of many Jews abroad. In so doing, it also imperils our secure existence.

We wish to expand our ranks and join whatever political and social forces sincerely strive toward a negotiated settlement with the Palestinian people that

will end any form of occupation regime.

We are determined to actively oppose ultra-nationalist and anti-democratic or non-democratic forces, whether religious or secular, which act with growing assertiveness to thwart the possibility of territorial compromise, disseminate racist interpretations of Judaic sources, incite to hatred of foreigners, and label Zionists who uphold views that differ from theirs as 'traitors'.

We aspire to change the pattern of bystander passivity and political inaction that has characterised so many of those Israelis who share our background and Zionist convictions. Instead, we urge and seek ways of effective action, both social and political, here and now.





## Breaking Ground is Hard to do

JONATHAN ZAUSMER

Jonathan Zausmer is an ex-chaver of HDSA. He made Aliyah in 1977 and currently lives in Kohav Yair. Jonathan is a co-founder and facilitator of Forum Tzora as well as a member of the *Va'ad Yeutz*.

**A**N EMAIL ARRIVED IN my inbox under the subject 'can you send this out to Tzora forum?' saying something like 'this sounds like an excellent project – something where people like us can bring lots of added value'. Attached was a document describing the Annual English Summer Camp 'hosted by the Nazareth Community Centre'.

Who sent it originally, we do not know. It passed quite a few in and out boxes on the way to me. I looked at the phone number at the bottom of the page. Kamel Barghouti was the contact. I called.

Barghouti answered. He had no idea who I was, what Forum Tzora is and what we are trying to do, but after a short chat, he said 'we are for peace and coexistence. You are welcome to bring some volunteers to work with us.' But who? I thought. 'People like us' work. 'People like us' don't go to Nazareth – it's too far. 'People like us' have forgotten how to do *hadracha* with children of ten years old. But then I remembered. People like us, or at least from a similar background to us, are starting their young careers as thinkers and leaders on the Shnat programme now, at Kibbutz Yizre'el.

Two days later, Jayson Lazar (22, madrich of the Shnat group) and I (57, facilitator at Forum Tzora) found ourselves in Nazareth in the unendowed neighborhood of Al Mutran, talking to Kamel at the local community centre. It became apparent that this is a life's work. That imparting education to children is Kamel's mission and that, as he says, 'English is the passport to your future.' We agreed that the Shnat group would take on one day of the programme and that his regular, overseas volunteers would have a break. The programme, which involves rotating from one activity to the next,

needed a lot of preparation and thought, so the work was cut out for the Shnatties, so to speak. Just one small matter needed to be sorted. The municipality of Nazareth who sponsor the programme would have to give its final stamp of approval.

Well seasoned in local politics in Israel and many municipal hours in Arab town councils specifically, and sadly well aware of issues that get thrown completely out of proportion, I mentioned to Jayson that one small matter of municipal approval may turn into a big issue: the word 'Zionist' does not go down well with Palestinians whether they be Israeli or not. Habonim Dror is defined as a Zionist movement. Forum Tzora is of Zionist conviction: we may wish to see the end of occupation, of illegal settlement, of conflict – but Zionist is Zionist. In Nazareth, as it turned out, the Zionist molehill was to become a mountain of opposition as it went up the political ladder all the way to the Mayor. Less than 24 hours before we were scheduled to do the project, Kamel called to say he was laboriously campaigning to persuade the council and would come back with an answer.

*"We may wish to see the end of occupation, of illegal settlement, of conflict – but Zionist is Zionist."*

When I finally spoke to him, it became clear that the extremists lingering in the background were ready to rip moderate local governance apart for letting the Zionists loose on their children. The ruling: we could come and observe, but no instruction was allowed.

By this time, the Shnat group was well into making final preparations for their programme the next day and had chosen what to do and how to go about doing it. Jayson explained the situation and I called Kamel. The easiest thing to do at that point would have been to walk away. We could have easily said: 'We are Zionists, we are socially and politically aware, we are reaching out and we don't need to apologize for who we are. Goodbye and good luck.' But then I thought for a moment and realised that had this been my town – Kohav Yair – and had Kamel called me and

offered that his young instructors (some of whom are excellent, by the way) who see themselves as proud Palestinian-Israeli Arabs, come and run a day's activity in our municipal summer camp, I am not sure the reception would have been any better. In fact, probably a lot worse. If people in my town are offended by Arab citizens of our neighboring towns walking through the neighborhood, would they even consider an offer that their young children be exposed to a day's education by them? And if this was a machaneh in South Africa? Would the Jewish community welcome in Kamel and his instructors for a day's *tochniet* (programmes) at camp?

Fortunately, I remembered that we live in Israel where the words '*Ke'ilu*' in Hebrew, '*Ya'ani*' in Arabic and '*kombina*' (to make a plan) in common slang, play an important role. The Shnatties would 'observe' but if there was a need, and still 'observing', they could take part.

And so it was, that on the 14th of July 2011, the Shnat group pulled up in a minibus to the parking lot of Tukan primary school and took part in the English Summer Camp at Nazareth. It wasn't an easy day. Heat of up to 37°C, no air conditioners, not really knowing our roles as passive or proactive, small classrooms with bad acoustics and lots of hyperactive children. But the fact is that they did it. They went very far out of their comfort zone and engaged, reached out, took part, communicated both with the children and the young instructors who translate and help run the programme.

The moment of fulfillment for me was when Kamel asked – despite the powers that be – that the Shnat group help with the 'story telling' activity, which had been an unruly, unstructured activity. They managed to take a group of very rowdy children from jumping on chairs and shouting, to full attention and real interest as they listened and acted out the story which was told in English by some of our group.

In a way, this seemingly insignificant adventure encapsulates much of our pain and mistrust as somehow the moderates always seem to be outflanked by extremists. But in the end, the politicians were nowhere on the landscape and people communicated and worked together. Maybe this is the ray of light we need to hold on to.

# An Introduction to the Next Generation of Shlichim

YOSSE ESHED

Ladies and Gentlemen, Chaverot Ve'Chaverim, Bogrot Ve'Bogrim... our new shlichim are almost here and that's a good enough reason to have an interview with both of them. So give them a big welcome and spend five minutes reading the following lines to learn more about them.

## Let's start with Reshef, who will be located in Joburg:

'Well, I'm a 32 year-old Israeli, who has been dealing with formal and informal education for the past 16 years. I'm an educator, a teacher and a person who cares about what's going on around him. In my spare time I like to read, play and watch basketball, hike, camp and eat a good hamburger!'

## Yaniv will be our Cape Town Shaliach:

'I'm married to Maya, we have two beautiful kids – Ido is a five-year-old boy and Noam is two-year-old girl. We live in Hod Hasharon in the center of Israel, near Kfar Saba and Ra'anana. I work as a regional director in the Perach project, which is Israel's national tutoring and mentoring project and involves over 25 000 students. I like spending time with my kids and inventing games with them (especially imaginary ones...) I also love sports, particularly basketball and football, not as an active participant, but as an active watcher. Another old love is reading books.'



**Above** | Reshef Burde, HDSA's new National Shaliach, will be arriving in August.

## You both have great careers in Israel. Why did you decide to leave them and come to do Shlichut?

R: 'I've decided to leave my career because I felt that this is the right time for me to take some time off from my profession, before I have to go on with my studies and before I jump into the next level of my career. The school that I established with my friends five years ago is stable and strong enough at the moment. This allows me to have the freedom to take some time off to develop my skills and identity through Shlichut, so that when I come back to Israel, I will be much more ready for the Headmaster position of a school.'

Y: 'First of all, it was a decision made by both Maya and me, as we are both leaving behind our careers. We think that on the family level, we will gain a unique and unforgettable experience and Ido and Noam are at the perfect age for that. On the more personal and professional level, I see the Shlichut as a direct continuation of my work – just on a more international level!'

## For Reshef, coming here is like 'closing a circle' because of his family background. But despite this, his first trip to South Africa was in preparation for his Shlichut.

'My grandparents from my mother's side are both from South Africa, so for me this is the best opportunity for exploring and experiencing the culture and the way of living in the place where my grandparents grew up. I heard about the country from my grandmother, who is originally from Cape Town and made Aliyah in 1952 with my grandfather, who was from Jo'burg. My grandmother was actually involved in Habonim in South Africa!'

## Yaniv, on the other hand has been to Cape Town twice before, but didn't actually ask to come here this time.

'In fact, because I speak Spanish, the initial idea was to send me to South America. But after my conversation with Tamar Lazarus in Israel and after being in Cape Town for the *chafifa* (handing over), I'm thrilled that we got to come to this amazing place and be a part of this amazing community. The first time I came to Cape Town was nearly 30 years ago, with my parents and my grandparents, when I was just four years old. From that visit, I remember riding an ostrich and baboons stealing my toy car at Table Mountain! The second time I came to Cape Town was during my post-army trip. We had a five-month trip throughout the southern parts of Africa (South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe). We had a great time, especially in the Cape Town surroundings – bungee jumping, hiking up Table Mountain, shark-cage diving and all sorts of extreme sports. We even spent 2001 Yom Ha'atzmaut in Cape Town. I still remember myself paying R35 at the entrance to the event.'

## What was your biggest surprise during your *chafifa* here?

R: 'From my *chafifa*, Habonim looks to me like a movement filled with serious people, who think and express their ideology strongly. I like this – I think that it's very important that people who are involved in a youth movement are critical thinkers and clear about their values and principles. This is how they will set the foundations of the education that they provide for channichim. Also, watching a soccer match between the Golden Arrows and Orlando Pirates was amazing. The game was really fun because the Pirates won and there was a great celebration!'

Y: I was really surprised with how warm people are over here. I thought the hugging and kissing thing was only a South American habit. People here have been absolutely great. Another thing that surprised me was how many open spaces are here – I've been to some kindergartens (not

only for professional interest but also as Ido and Noam will be a part of them) – the playgrounds are enormous and the staff are really lovely.’

**What do you see as your biggest challenge as a Shaliach?**

R: ‘To get more Bogrim in Jo’burg to be active and involved during the year.’

Y: ‘As I come from Perach, I am a big fan of informal education and I realise the huge power of mentoring. I would love to try and make a local project based on that. Another big challenge will be to fill the huge shoes that Yossi left.’

**What do you want people to say about you when you finish your Shlichut, in three years time?**

R: ‘Oh, that is a hard one... I think I’d like them to say that I was a person who they loved to hang out and work with and that I helped them to do whatever was needed. Also, that with my assistance we reached some newer and better levels of being connected to Israel.’

Y: ‘I want people to feel that I was able to give them a taste of Israel with my own flavour attached to it. I want them to say that people from Israel are very warm and friendly and that we managed to become a part of this wonderful community.’



**Above** | Yaniv Nachmias, with his wife Maya and their children Ido (5) and Noam (3). Yaniv will be the Community Shaliach in Cape Town as well as the HDSA Shaliach.

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# Thanks

The day-to-day running of HDSA would not be possible without the continuous hard work, dedication and support of many members of the movement and community alike. It is because of each of you that the movement can continue to function as the largest Jewish youth movement in South Africa. We thank you all.

## **CAPE TOWN MAZKIRUT**

Rosh Garinim (Gr 3,4) - Sarah Moross  
 S'gan Rosh Garinim - Saul Chilchik  
 Rosh Shtilim (Gr 5,6) - Keren Setton  
 S'gan Rosh Shtilim - Joshua Leon  
 Rosh Middle School (Gr 7,8,9) - Jed Cohen  
 S'gan Rosh Middle School - Michael Susman  
 Rosh Shomrim (Gr 11) - Gary Ganz  
 S'ganim Rosh Shomrim - Raphael Chaskalson and Dylan Oblowitz  
 Youth Council - Daniel Sive  
 Rosh Meoravut (Head of Engagement) - Ilan Price

## **JOHANNESBURG MAZKIRUT**

Jaimi Meyerowitz  
 Ori Miller

## **HANNAGAH ARTZIT (NATIONAL EXECUTIVE)**

Mazkir Klali (Chairman) and Rosh Machaneh (Head of Summer Camp) - Ross Engers  
 S'ganit Mazkir Klali (Deputy Chairman) - Mia Candy  
 S'gan Mazkir Klali (Deputy Chairman) and Rosh Chinnuch (Head of Education) for Machaneh - Julian Kesler  
 National Youth Worker and S'ganit Rosh Machaneh (Deputy Head of Summer Camp) - Gabi Altamirano  
 Mazkira Chinnuch (Head of Education) - Mika Klitzner  
 Shnat Madrich - Jayson Lazar  
 Camp Organiser - Bianca Sossen  
 Head of Publications and S'ganit Rosh Machaneh (Deputy Head of Summer Camp) - Gemma Cowan  
 Rosh Ken CT (Head of Centre) - Roxanne Joseph  
 Rosh Bogrim CT (Head of Leadership) - Lee Lobel  
 S'ganit Rosh Bogrim CT (Deputy Head of Leadership) - Erin Maserow  
 Rosh Bogrim JHB (Head of Leadership) - Lynzi Bennun  
 National Shnat Coordinators - Kim Harrisberg and Kelly Powell  
 Rosh Eastern Cape and Camp Va'ad Poel (Steering Committee) Assistant - Joshua Lazarus  
 Rosh Shorashim - Jenna Segal  
 Rosh Winter Camp - Daniel Kruss

## **SHLICHIM**

### **Cape Town Shaliach (2008-2011) – Yossi Eshed**

Yossi has been the Community Shaliach in Cape Town as well as the Cape Town Shaliach for HDSA since mid-2008. His Shlichut ends in August 2011. Yossi and his family have become valued and loved members of the movement over the past three years. Yossi has been a vital link between the Cape Town community and HDSA. We thank you for your unwavering support and love of HDSA, your invaluable guidance and for never hesitating to lend a hand. You have given us, the leadership of the movement, the space to grow and progress whilst never letting us get ahead of ourselves. You have kept us grounded with your advice and modest with your wisdom. You will be missed greatly.

### **National Shaliach (2008-2011) – Tzachi Levy**

Tzachi worked as the National Shaliach for HDSA from mid-2008 until July 2011. Tzachi also sat on the Camp Va'ad Poel (Steering Committee) for two years as the VP Shaliach. Tzachi, your tireless efforts and hard work were of great value to the movement and we thank you for your commitment and contribution to HDSA. You often went above and beyond the call of duty and always ensured that your job was done to the best of your ability. We thank you for all the time you dedicated to the movement and wish you and your family well in your future endeavours.

### **Cape Town Youth Shaliach (Jan-Jun 2011) – Ayal Elbaz**

## **STAFF**

Melissa Bennun | Taryn Rabin | Shirley Magid

## **HABONIM FOUNDATION STAFF**

Daniel Barnett | Yoni Bass

## **2010 MAZKIRA KLALIT - JODI WISHNIA**

Jodi served the one-year term as Mazkira Klalit in 2010, having been an active member of the Bogrim body for seven years. Jodi led the movement with humility, passion and conviction. Jodi, we thank you for the time you dedicated throughout your movement career and in particular, as Mazkira Klalit. You are a true *Dugma* (example) to many Bogrim and your hard work, along with your principled and passionate nature, set the movement in good stead.

## **MANHIG (HONOURARY PRESIDENT) - ERROL ANSTEY**

Errol has served as the Manhig of HDSA for eleven years. His role has been integral in the growth and development of the movement. Errol, thank you for your continuous support and critical advice to movement leadership. Despite your many community and council commitments, you have always made time for HDSA and we deeply appreciate this. We are eternally grateful to you for your dedication and guidance.

# Machaneh Bonim Atid

## Building a Future

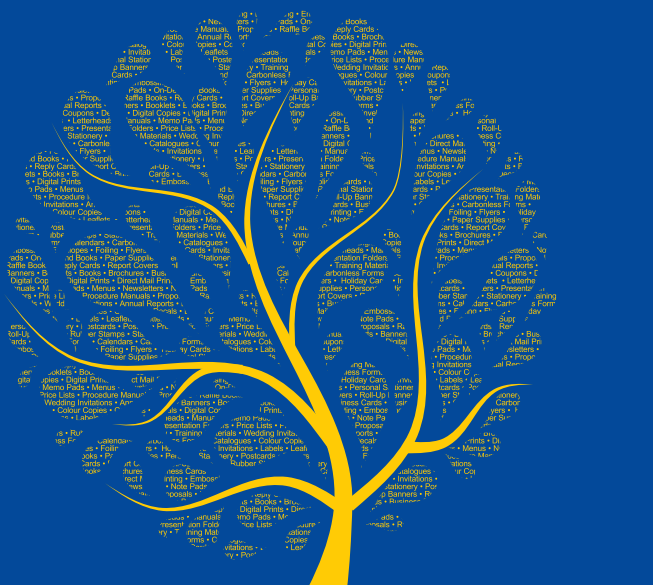
"If not now, when?"

- Hillel

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