

THE BEST OF THE BEST

BETAR ITON 2016

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

THE PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL, REUBEN RIVLIN

MINISTER FOR TOURISM IN ISRAEL, YARIV LEVIN

YORZ HENDEL, ACCLAIMED JOURNALIST AND HISTORIAN

KEVIN NAFFE, FORMER COACH OF THE AFL PEACE TEAM

+ MORE!



THANK YOU

We would first and foremost like to thank all the contributors to this publication, for giving up their time and without whom we would not have been able to provide the variety of content to Jewish communities in Australia

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Our supportive former bogrim

Most importantly our chanichim, madatzim and their parents!

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Betar's Federal Iton is an annual publication curated by myself, the Federal Director of Education for Betar Australia. The Iton is an assortment of writings – articles, letters, interviews – arranged by the bogrim (senior leaders) of the movement for the enjoyment of the Jewish community across Australia. This year, I am proud to say that we have expanded our scope further than ever before and have commissioned works from a variety of influential figures from Jewish communities across the world, including the President of the State of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, in attempt to bring more exciting, challenging and interesting content to you, our audience.

As the Director of Education for Betar Australia, a key concern of mine is ensuring that the educational content of Betar's programs is consistently of a very high standard. When it

comes to overseeing the programs that we run for our chanichim (participants) on camps, seminars and Zohar meetings, there is always a need to ensure that our activities are fun, creative and engaging. However, today we are constantly faced with concerns about the enduring relevance of our peulot (activities). How can we ensure that our chanichim are finding meaning in our peulot? This is just one question I have face as a leader in a youth movement, and it has a thousand different answers.

One of the important things to remember about youth movements is that, as they exist today, they do not serve one singular purpose. Although Betar strives to create the ideal Jew to contribute to the development of the land of Israel and Zionism, our influence cannot be limited to this goal. We play a key role in the social development of the

youth and provide an ideal forum for exploring identities. We provide an opportunity for young people to make friends without the social restrictions of school. We introduce young Jews to other young Jews and enable the creation of friendships for life. We support an alternative framework for young people to express their opinions and have their voices heard on a variety of ideas. The meaning that our chanichim extract from our peulot may not be limited to the educational value or academic content of what we are teaching; it is more often than not about the opportunities we provide through our distinctive culture, which is characterised by central ideas of dugma (being a role model), ruach (spirit) and a freedom to challenge the boundaries (be they social, educational or political).

Despite this, our peulot remain fundamental way in which we discuss our ideology and the values we uphold. However, we live in a world obsessed with the freedom of the individual and staunchly opposed to the notion of ideology. The result of this for youth movements is that it can be hard to justify running peulot that actively aim to foster a love for Judaism and Israel and a connection to the Jewish people, which people see as indoctrination. I think it is important to remember that the values we actively instil in our chanichim should be seen as honourable. At the end of the day, we are a Zionist youth movement with a set of ideals to which we aspire towards, and we should be proud to have something to stand up for. This being said, while we guide our chanichim on how to act – with integrity, propriety and self-respect – the extent to which we teach them how to think should be limited to exercising skills of critical thought and not teaching them to follow ideology blindly.

Ultimately, Zionist youth movements are one of the most important ways for the youth to get involved in the community. Our educational framework provides a unique opportunity for

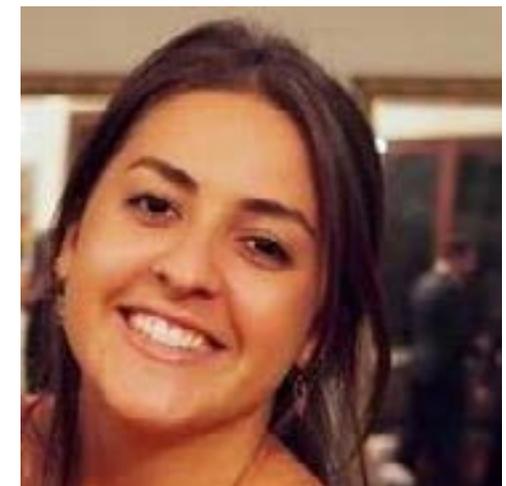
young people to get involved in rigorous and relevant ideas and builds resilience and passion in order to build the leaders for tomorrow's society. We aim to ensure the continued vitality of Jewish communities in Australia by empowering and inspiring our chanichim to fight for a cause for which they are passionate.

Shalom ve'Tel Chai,

Tamar Ruiz

Rosh Chinuch Artist

Director of Education for Betar Australia



A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF BETAR AUSTRALIA



Betar Australia has had a fantastic 2016, continuing to fulfil its important task of engaging Australian Jewish Youth. In Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, Betar runs camps, seminars and weekend activities designed to challenge and inspire our chanichim (participants).

The content of our activities is based on Israel affairs, the Jewish people, leadership and Betar ideology, however beyond this we provide an environment for Jewish youth to socialise. Often our chanichim come from the fringe of the Jewish community, and so Betar serves as a meeting point between those who have attended Jewish day schools their entire lives and those who have barely been to a synagogue. Jewish youth from all parts of the community come together, build strong relationships in their year groups, go on our

Shnat program in Israel, and end up as leaders themselves running the movement.

We take great care in teaching the next generation how to write intellectually stimulating and meaningful activities, and how to hold responsibilities such as managing finances and organising camps. It is because of this process that our community is so strong; it lays the foundations for the future leaders. I truly believe we only have the passion, willpower and naivety to do what Betar does in our youth – the long nights, the tireless arguments, the laughs – these subtleties are the best parts and unfortunately they are reserved for when we are young.

Our chanichim have also, as always, been a source of inspiration for us all this year. They rock up to each activity eager to engage in what their leaders

have planned for them. The bravest are those who attend for the first time. I witness this regularly: a young person (sometimes very young) walking through our doors, or sitting on the bus, not knowing quite where their parents have left them. Seeing old and new chanichim being challenged, socialising with others their age and just having some people sit and listen as they speak their mind and build their confidence, that's why we do it. For any chanich reading this - well done and keep it up. Take it from me – what you're getting yourself into is absolutely worth it. Growing up in Betar has been the greatest positive influence on my life, and it's the same for many others.

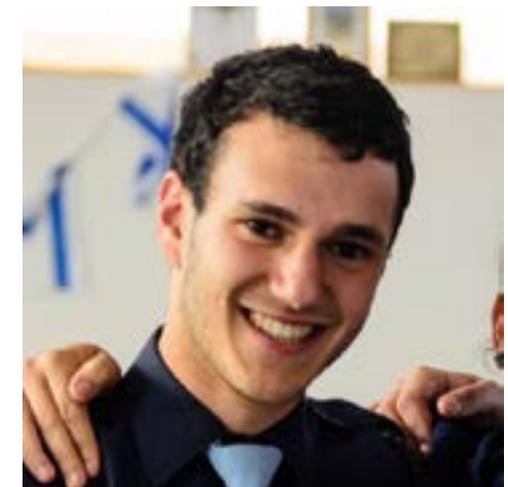
Winter is always a highlight for us. This winter, we held camps in Toowoomba (Queensland), Forster (NSW), and Alexandra (Victoria). Chanichim from year 2 up until year 10 attended in each state and our year 11 and 12 madatzim (junior leaders) helped our bogrim (senior leaders) organise and facilitates the camps. On any of these camps you'll have found singing, chanting and dancing, intense discussions, year level rivalry, sports and musical instruments played, questions being answered and more questions being asked. Importantly, the singing of Hatikva at mizdar every night – we are a Zionist movement, and this is the foundation of everything we do. This summer will be just as good, with our once in a decade federal camp for all ages - Jamboree.

On a more personal note, it has been very humbling serving as Rosh Hanaga Artzi for 2016. This position gives me a glimpse of the full gamut of what Betar Australia does, and shown me firsthand how hard our madrichim (leaders) work and how dedicated they are. I really appreciate the effort every madrich puts in, as well as the support we receive from the community. We have a lot to be proud of, and a lot to look forward to.

Shalom ve'Tel Chai,

Asher Kozma

Rosh Hanaga Artzit
Director of Betar Australia





LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Jerusalem, September 22, 2016 | Elul 19, 5776

Dear friends in Israel and around the world,

On Rosh Hashanah, we come together to hear the Shofar. We hope that each note will carry our prayers up to Heaven, and we pray that the next year will be a year of happiness. But the sound of the Shofar is also an alarm call for our community, our family, and for ourselves.

Today the Jewish community and its leaders - in Israel and around the world - face three very difficult challenges. The first is the well-being of Jewish communities in need. We must work to help them continue to be proud to be Jewish, with security, free from anti-Semitism, and free to wear a Kipa in the street. Every Jew will always have a home in Israel, but should have the right to live without fear where they wish, and we must stand up for this right.

The second challenge is to strengthen the bond between Israel and the Diaspora — especially the younger generation. To the Jewish students and young families in Europe, North America and all over, I want to say, ‘do not take Israel for granted, do not forget that our destinies are tied together’. You hear arguments about religion, between right and left, and you see the conflict that has been forced on us with our neighbors and feel you have no voice. I say to you, this year, come to Israel and visit, come to Israel and learn, Israel is a strong democracy, come and hear and be heard.

Because we are one people, and have a duty to each other.

We also have a third challenge, which is how to build bridges between all the different communities in Israel; religious, secular, Jewish and Arab. We must build together a shared hope for Israel for our shared future in this land. As President of Israel this shared hope is at the top of my agenda, and my dear friends of Beitar Australia, you have an important part to play in building Israel's hope. I wish you all a happy and sweet New Year.

בברכת תל חי, שנה טובה ומשוקה!

Reuven (Ruv) Rivlin



WHY NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO VISIT ISRAEL

As a representative of the Likud Movement and follower of Jabotinsky, I have the honor to serve as Minister of Tourism of the State of Israel and to express to each and every one of you why it is now a great time to visit Israel.

When I was a member of the Knesset I visited Australia and had the opportunity to meet your warm Jewish community. I was impressed by the strong commitment and support for Israel, and had the honor to inaugurate the Betar chapter in Melbourne. I was pleased to meet the members of the Betar Movement and was impressed by their activities. I do believe that the best way to see the complete picture is to board a plane and visit Israel.

Experience an exotic country with breathtaking natural landscapes, one you will never forget. Whether you are a returning visitor or a first timer, you will find new and exciting adventures in this small country. Israel is a melting pot of immigrants from all corners of the world and you will find the Israelis a warm and inviting people. The variety of activities is unlimited; a visit to archaeological sites, classic Holy Land tours, pampering spas, sports and desert adventures, shopping at outdoor markets (shuk), taking an easy dip in the sea or water sports, a journey into mysticism. At the end of the day sit back and enjoy the delectable foods and award winning local wines. Then party the night away at a pub or disco or partake in one of the cultural events.

Discover Tel Aviv, the city that never sleeps with beaches marking the city boundaries, shopping and the nightlife scene. Wander the streets of the Old and new city of Jerusalem. Float in the Dead Sea, the largest natural spa and the lowest point on earth. History comes alive in the biblical archaeological sites throughout Judah and Samaria. Go for treks in Acco and in the rich green nature reserves of the Galilee. In Eilat, bask in the sun, swim with dolphins, go for jeep rides in the desert or enjoy a massage. Relax at hotel accommodations ranging from luxury to spa resorts and pastoral lodgings, all providing first class service and excellent cuisine.

Arrival to Israel is easily accessible with increased choices of low cost and regular international flights. The country is small and major cities are a 30 minute drive from the Ben Gurion International Airport. There is no better way to connect to your roots, to your history and to Betar than to personally experience Israel, a safe and welcoming country with excellent weather year round. Visit the places that are the milestones of Zionism and see the realization of Jabotinsky's ideas as they come true through your steps. I assure you a thrilling experience.

See you in Israel,

Yariv Levin

Minister of Tourism, the State of Israel



WE DON'T WANT TO BLOW OUR OWN HORN, BUT...

“It shall be on that day that a great shofar will be blown, and all those who are lost in the land of Assyria and those cast away in the land of Egypt will come [together] ... on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”

Foreseeing the destruction of the Temple and a great exile, the Prophet Isaiah says this of the return to Jerusalem. Realistically, any instrument or sign could be chosen to herald the coming back of the Jewish people. Why a shofar and not some other sound, sign or storm?

One explanation is that just as a shofar without breath is just a silent horn; similarly a person without speech is silent and incomplete. I remember as a very young child sitting next to my father at Rosh Hashanah hearing the piercing wail of the shofar. The congregation fell silent and listened attentively, many in awe of the rabbi, as if they had woken up startled from a dream. The breath of the rabbi was heard by his whole congregation. In 1930 British law mandated it was illegal to blow the shofar at the Kotel, lest it provoke others in Jerusalem. Yet R' Moshe Tsvi Segal defiantly sounded the shofar at the end of Yom Kippur that year as a resounding cry that the Jews shall continue to return to – and prosper in – Jerusalem. Shofars continued to blow when the Nazis were defeated and the State of Israel was declared. Most famously in 1967 the shofar was blown by Rabbi Goren when Israel re-unified Jerusalem and the Jewish people were finally freely allowed to visit the Kotel after the Six-Day War.

The phenomenal spiritual and military victory reverberated around the world, as Jews from all over the world were inspired to return to Zion and continue to do so.

The shofar integrates a physical, spiritual and historical expression of our Judaism. It requires the breath and energy of individuals to produce its wail, which arouses those within earshot to follow suit. Furthermore, our tradition believes the final redemption of the Jewish people will be catalysed by the Moshiach, a person of great stature who will restore Jerusalem to the peak of its glory.

And what will be his call to us all?

A humble shofar.

Chag sameach ve'leshana haba'ah b'yerushalayim,

Alan Stein

Rosh Chimuch of Betar Melbourne



adracha
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THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

The state of Israel was established out of a vision and out of action. The Zionist movement dreamt of the Land of Israel on both sides of the Jordan River. Keren Kayemet Le'Yisrael (KKL) acquired lands and Jews learned agricultural techniques in parallel with diplomacy skills, while political Zionism achieved a state inside the partition boundaries. It was a dream alongside pragmatism.

It was the War of Independence that changed the borders for the first time and the Six Day War fifty years ago that changed the borders for the second time. Fifty years later is a good time to examine and check what we have accomplished and what we have missed. Did we establish an ideal society? An iron wall? Does the practice connect to the vision?

Geographically, Jews are living in all parts of Israel. Jerusalem is free and the Temple Mount is in our hands. Zionism has won – it established a home in Israel, not in Uganda or in Australia. And for the first time this year, the number of Jews living around the world is the same amount as in 1938 before the Holocaust, half of whom live in Israel. Today, the Israeli security situation is better than ever. The iron wall stands firm while the armies of Arab countries have collapsed; alongside them the idea that Israel can be eliminated has also broken down.

However, Israel still has not made a decision

regarding what she wants to be when she grows up. How do we keep the Jewish national character of Israel? How do we keep her democratic and liberal personality? What is the future of the Palestinians who live in Judea and Samaria?

These questions have produced a broad impact on the perception of Israel around the world. Even though the PLO was established in 1964 (three years before the Six Day War) specifically to fight against the existence of Israel, the above questions have allowed for masked accusations towards Israel and arguments on the democratic and liberal character of Israel and the external struggle on her national character.

In the background of those who oppose Israel there can be found a clear anti-Semitic essence as well as political hypocrisy and blindness to the fact that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. But there is also our own responsibility to provide clear legal definitions. We need a definition of Israel in its Constitution or in the Basic Laws as a national democratic state before we demand it from the Palestinians. We need a clear definition of the status of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria.

However, what is the alternative that people with different views offer, such as the author of these lines, about the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria? What is the alternative if you

don't believe in the possibility of peace as a practical solution? How do you create the vision of political Zionism? The answer is probably Jewish construction and political separation. Building villages in Judea and Samaria and maximum separation from the Palestinians. The annexation of Jordan Valley, the main blocs of Jewish settlements and everything possible within the framework of consensus based on the Palestinian authority territories, as they exist today.

However, more important than sketching a particular plan between different thinkers in the government is establishing a clear statement of the motive for the vision of living in Israel. As Menachem Begin z"l defined it, nationality should comprise a love for Israel and should not be derived from hatred of the other. And that is why we should examine things now, fifty years later as the owners of the land. With great power comes great responsibility, and those in power have the obligation to make a decision as to Israel's future character.



Yoaz Hendel
*Top journalist, Israeli military historian &
head of the Institute for Zionist Strategies*

FIVE OF THE BEST MUSEUMS IN ISRAEL YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF

I've been asked to tell you about the museums in Israel that are most worth visiting. It's almost like asking me to tell you who of my children I love the most, not a simple matter at all. So I will try my best to share with you my love for museums.

This list is a compilation of five of my favourite museums in Israel that you might have heard of. When tourists come to Israel, their schedule is usually very tight and overwhelmed with excitement and experiences. Israel is blessed with many sacred sites, archaeological sites and gorgeous natural landscapes that leave almost no time to visit museums. Yet, if you have free time and you are feeling energized, I invite you to visit a museum.

1 Bloomfield Science Museum, *Jerusalem*

If you happen to have a family vacation with children, I recommend a visit to the Bloomfield Science Museum in Jerusalem. The museum presents exhibitions consisting of interactive exhibits like: *Games in Light and Shadow*, *A Visit to the Amusement Park*, and *Agropolis* – the social and political significances of agriculture as seen through the unique viewpoint of artists. The museum is a lot of fun and learning for the whole family.

www.mada.org.il

2 MUZA Eretz Israel Museum, *Tel Aviv*

The MUZA Eretz Israel Museum is a multidisciplinary museum that focuses on the history and culture of Israel. The museum has exhibits in the diverse fields of archeology,

ethnography, post and philately, folklore, Judaica, traditional crafts, and popular art, cultural history, and local identity.

The museum, is spread over an area of some 20 acres, and comprises about 15 buildings and various installations.

In the center of the museum, adjacent to the buildings and exhibit spaces, stands Tel Qasile, an ancient archeological mound dating from the 12th century BCE. Additional ancient relics, such as mosaics, oil presses, an ancient wine press and flourmills can be found in the gardens surrounding the site.

In addition to the ten permanent exhibitions and ancient sites, the museum displays about 20 temporary exhibits every year. The museum site also houses an innovative planetarium.

www.ereztmuseum.org.il

3 Tel Aviv Museum of Art, *Tel Aviv*

The Tel Aviv Museum of Art is one of Israel's leading artistic and cultural institutions. The museum comprises various departments: the Department of Israeli Art, which holds a comprehensive collection of local art from the beginning of the 20th century to the present; the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, which encompasses international works from the mid-19th century to the present; the Department of Prints and Drawings; the Department of Photography; the Department of Architecture and Design; and the Old Masters Department, with art from the 16th to the 19th century.

In addition to its extensive program of permanent and changing exhibitions, the museum offers a vibrant selection of

programs and activities for adults, youth and children: concerts, classes, lectures, guided tours, workshops, and more. The museum also has a youth wing, where family can find interactive exhibitions.

www.tamuseum.org.il

4 The Design Museum, *Holon*

The Design Museum was opened in March 2010 and is one of the world's leading museums of design. The museum is housed in an iconic building planned by the internationally acclaimed architect, Ron Arad, who was born in Israel. Each year the museum presents exciting and diverse exhibitions. One of the museum's goals is to help visitors gain a deeper understanding of design and the role it plays in our lives.

www.dmh.org.il

5 Beit Hatfutsot, *Tel Aviv*

Beit Hatfutsot, the Museum of the Jewish People, is a unique global institution that tells the ongoing and extraordinary story of the Jewish people. Beit Hatfutsot conveys to the world the fascinating narrative of the Jewish people and the essence of Jewish culture, faith, purpose and deed while presenting world Jewry's contribution to humanity.

Beit Hatfutsot is undergoing a comprehensive renewal process, which began this year with the inauguration of a new wing housing the Alfred H. Moses and Family Synagogue Hall and the Tamar and Milton Maltz Children's Gallery. In 2019, the renewal process will culminate with the opening of a new 66,000 square feet permanent exhibit.

The Synagogue Hall displays *Hallelujah! Assemble, Pray, Study – Synagogues Past and Present*, a new spectacular exhibition based on the famous collection of Beit Hatfutsot's synagogue models. The exhibition presents

21 models representing various communities as well as Jewish life relating to the synagogue. Alongside each model an original ritual artifact, either from the synagogue or its respective community, is on display. The exhibition also includes films, video art, and interactive activities for adults and children alike.

Heroes - Trailblazers of the Jewish People, in the family gallery of the museum, is an innovative and inspiring new interactive exhibition that reveals how heroes are a vital part of Jewish culture. Visitors meet different types of Jewish heroes throughout our history including scientists, intellectuals, leaders, revolutionaries, cultural figures, athletes and more – men and women with unique talents.

www.bh.org.il

Well, that was a drop in the sea of the museums in Israel. There are about 150 museums, 56 of which are accredited and supported by the Ministry of Culture. I hope that next time you come to Israel you will find the time and visit at least one of our wonderful museums.

Dorit Wolenitz

Director and Curator of the Man and the Living World museum former Chair of ICOM ISRAEL





PEACE THROUGH AFL: AN INTERVIEW WITH KEVIN NAFTE

Kevin Nafte is the ex-Head Coach of the AFL Peace Team established by the Peres Peace Foundation. In an interview with Tamar Ruiz, he talks about his experiences bringing together Israelis and Palestinians.

TR: *So you're currently living in Israel – could you tell us a bit about how you got here?*

KN: Actually, I'm about to move to San Francisco. I have lived in Israel for 11 years. I first came to Israel from Perth when I was 19 on AUJS birthright then decided to come back as a madrich for the 6-week AUJS Academy program. Though I'd seen the whole country, I still felt like I didn't know what it meant to live here so I came back and joined the army, but it wasn't for me so after 6 months I decided to leave and volunteered at Kibbutz Ein Gev during the time of Second Lebanon War when there were lots of rockets and fighter jets.

After the war, I left Israel because I was a bit traumatised. I came back to Australia to finish a degree in accounting but soon realised that I wanted to be back in Israel. I was trying to work out a way to get back to Israel and through my involvement in CSG I found out and applied for a Masters degree in government and counterterrorism that was sponsored by Masa.

TR: *Wow, you really have done it all. When and*

how did you get involved in the AFL Peace Team project?

KN: I love AFL – I'm a Fremantle supporter – and heard about group of Aussies that would play footy every now and again, so I got involved with them. At some stage I was contacted by the Peres Peace Centre to help them create the AFL Peace team. The aim was to use sport to foster peace, and they wanted some Aussies to be a part of it to get this project off the ground – so I changed my residency status in 2007 to that of an olah to be a part of the project. It complemented my studies in counterterrorism; I still believe it's a big part of counterterrorism because it changes the hearts and minds of Israelis and Palestinians.

We started training and advertised for players all across Israel, mainly through sports clubs. The first time we got together was in Abu Ghosh. We were all put in one room; everyone was unsure of each other, it was very tense. We put a couple of videos from YouTube up to explain the sport and had training near Beit Shemesh once a week.

TR: *Did the political and security situation seep into your AFL training and games at all?*

KN: Definitely! It would take the Palestinian players hours to get through the checkpoints and we had to organise special security permits for them to come to games and training.

TR: *How did the relationships between the players change through the course of the project?*

KN: Initially, everyone was hesitant and there was not a lot of verbal communication, least of all because of language difficulties. Each group had been stereotyped to the other, with the Palestinians seen as terrorists and Israelis as arsehole soldiers, but in fact we had a huge spectrum of players: religious and secular, Israelis living in settlements and Palestinians from villages who had family members who had been arrested.

However, the game became a mode of communication and helped to develop trust between the players. There were some sessions with professional Palestinian and Israeli mediators that got quite heated, where everyone spoke about their experiences. Players would speak about their narratives and family stories. It opened the players' eyes to different narratives they hadn't been exposed to. The players were able to overcome their differences and even though they didn't all agree, they could acknowledge their different experiences and appreciate each other. In the end, the relationships got so close that in 2011, when one of the Palestinian players got married he invited the players to the wedding. Many of the Israelis were nervous but when we arrived, we were treated like kings!

TR: *What was the highlight of being in the team?*

KN: The climax was travelling to Australia in 2008 for International AFL Cup. I was injured a week before so I couldn't really participate, but I realised then that the real message was about showing the players and their communities that Palestinians and Israelis can get along using sport. It's also significant that it's an Australian sport – so much of the conflict is based on ownership and because AFL is Australian, it's a sport they can't claim as their own! For the Cup, we played games in Sydney, Melbourne and Warnambool, where we were smashed by Great Britain. We also visited Jewish and Muslim communities in Melbourne and Sydney and managed to get funding for the next Cup in 2011, which was when I became the head coach.

TR: *Do you think the Peace Team has had a lasting impact on Israeli/Palestinian relations?*

KN: I don't think it had such a big impact on the wider communities, but with the immediate communities it definitely did. The personal impact was massive; it changed me and definitely changed all the players' perspectives.

The PR was great in Australia for the wider Australian audience, but in Israel and Palestine where the harsh reality hits day-to-day it wasn't as strong. After the 2011 war broke out in Gaza, it was difficult to coordinate AFL activities. We kept in communication and every now and again there would be reunions, but after the 2014 war the communication broke off. The Palestinians had to ask for a lot of help after wars for ill family members and to find work but we couldn't really help. It is very difficult to get over the physical boundaries, as many didn't have permits to come over to the Israeli side. One of the Palestinians even got heavily chastised for working in AFL Peace Team. He was called a traitor and his family got some threats. It was so bad that his wife divorced him.

TR: That's awful. What then do you think is the future for grassroots initiatives such as these?

KN: These projects gave me so much hope that there was a solution, but after a while my hope evaporated. I still think the grassroots approach is important, but it's not enough. The government needs to invest in these kinds of projects on a broader level. The impact needs to be more of a cultural and social change, which is one of the big reasons I want to work for the government. I believe that a large part of the solution is the grassroots approach but also a massive burden falls on the governments to invest in these policies. However, we now live in a world where transnational corporations like Google, Facebook and even other minor start-ups are having a growing social impact. There is potential for us all to fix the Israeli-Palestinian conflict!

JEWISH ART

Jaella Goldstein is an artist based in Brisbane who focuses on creating Jewish themed artworks of all sorts. As mother of two, she is an extremely talented woman creating some amazing pieces of Jewish artwork for the community. From handcrafted challah bread covers to larger canvas paintings so finely and beautifully painted with menorahs and Magen Davids, Jaella has produced several pieces of artwork over the years. A recent project was that of a Brisbane Holocaust survivor George Stein, where she painted a large portrait, incorporating such beautiful meaning into all aspects of the work. Below, Jaella shares with Shaina Rother the story behind this portrait, as well as parts of her story as an artist.

SR: *What is it like being an artist in the Brisbane Jewish community?*

JG: In Greenslopes in particular, being an artist here I'm surrounded by a lot of confident, amazing, creative women, who besides being immediately encouraging, I'm also encouraged by their own fabulousness.

SR: *Why did you decide to base a lot of your artworks on Jewish themes?*

JG: I base a lot of my art on Jewish themes because a lot of the natural symbolism sits comfortably with me being also inspired by the 'The Pre Raphaelite Brothers' aesthetic ideas on Art and Nature. And of course the expressions of the themes are inspiring and lend themselves to beautiful imagery.

SR: *Where do you get your inspiration for your paintings?*

JG: Inspiration is everywhere!

SR: *Can you tell us about the various forms of Jewish artwork that you create?*

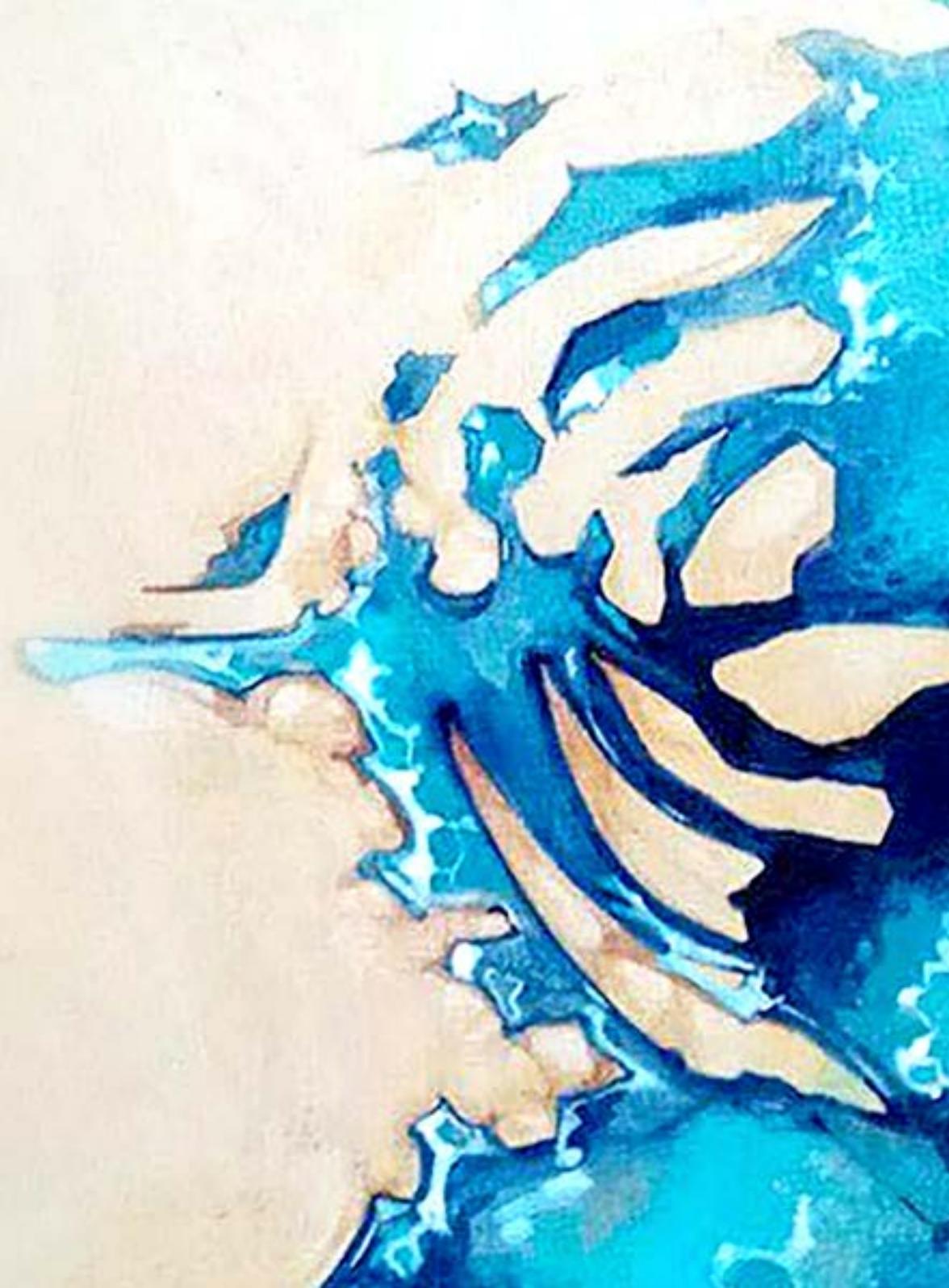
JG: Technically the forms are paintings that are more in the style almost of drawings, which is artwise, my true love. I enjoy the decorative design aspects of art at this time; also executing elaborate paper cuts with a surgeon's scalpels. All eventually loan themselves to Jewish greeting cards and posters.

SR: *What is the story behind the portrait of holocaust survivor, George Stein?*

JG: The portrait of George Stein started as an idea by Gail Paratz. I found myself staring at George Stein at Shule, (hopefully less than a stalker!) and when everything finally aligned with a space to paint, a canvas large enough and with George Stein's permission, Ari Heber and I visited him. George Stein is, objectively from an artist's perspective, a noble figure. I was also grateful to be allowed to paint in the Jewish Community Centre in Burbank, which has walls of windows and a glorious bush view, so I could paint in natural light with the room to stand back far enough to assess progress whilst my young sons (thank you) could muck around.

SR: *And what was the process of creating such an image?*

JG: Ari took photos and I did drawings, not of what I was going to paint, but to learn about whom I was painting. On another date there were more photos and drawings done with permission at the Greenslopes Shule. As I learned more about George Stein, my composition for his portrait increased as my knowledge of his accomplishments increased. I learned about his own artistic creativity in the menorahs he handmade, his wife Trudi Stein and her embroideries and their commitment after all they had been through to eventually end up in Brisbane and build the Synagogue in Deshon St.



FACT VS FICTION: MAKING ALIYAH

Almost four months ago I left behind the sunny city of Brisbane for the even sunnier country of Israel. As graduating from university, starting work like an adult, and finishing my time as a Bogeret with Betar coincided, it seemed like a great time to embark on the adventure of my dreams and make Aliyah.

Why did I do it? It's the trickiest question to answer because there are numerous reasons.

We're so fortunate to be alive in a time where a Jewish state exists, no matter how flawed you may think it is. Living in and giving back to our historical homeland is an unbeatable feeling for me. And the fact that Israel is a fun, happening country also was a drawcard.

There are many reasons to NOT make Aliyah. I was consistently told that Israel is far away, life is 'hard' in Israel, it's unsafe, and that it is hard to find work there. Read along as I bust these myths through sharing my own experiences.

Israel is 'far away' from Australia

Geographically, this statement is correct. It takes about 26 hours to fly from Australia to Israel. Though it certainly is far away, I tried to bring a bit of Australia with me. I speak to my family almost every day, I have several Australian friends here in Israel, and I am also comforted by living in Israel.

Life is 'hard' in Israel

Prior to my Aliyah, people would often tell me that life is 'hard' in Israel. I wasn't sure what that meant until I experienced hardships of my own. Learning and communicating flawlessly in Hebrew, navigating Israel's bureaucratic chaos in many *misradim* ("ministries"), and missing friends and family were and are my 'hardest' things. I deal with them through talking to my close friends at my Ulpan, who are all going through similar experiences. A 'hard' life isn't exclusive to Israel – difficulties present themselves wherever you're living. If you have a positive attitude, you're bound to succeed wherever you are, especially in Israel!

Israel is 'unsafe'

I was in Paris for the Nice terror attack in July, and even though they're at opposite ends of the country, I was terrified. In the days following, there was no security or armed police officers in sight. It sounds ironic but having my bag scanned at every shopping centre, movie theatre and major transport centre in Israel makes me feel safe and secure. Israel knows they're faced with a security threat, and they have the security to match it.

You can't really find work in Israel

Israel is the same as everywhere – you can't wait for a job to find

you. If you're not afraid to put yourself out there, to check Facebook and job-hunting sites diligently, there will be something for you. Also, you can use the connections available to you through the Jewish Agency, which are abundant and worthwhile. I emailed the Times of Israel and have since started interning with them – it never hurts to ask.

Israel is an amazing country, and it's all ours. She's young, but she's growing. See what the fuss is about – if you're in school, you should go on Betar Shnat and get to know Israel. If you've finished school, do a program, or come and intern here. If you've done all of that, what are you waiting for? Open an Aliyah file and go on the adventure of a lifetime!

Gabrielle Briner

Rosh Chinuch Artist of Betar Australia 2014-2015, Recent olah to Israel



THE "NOT-SO" MISSING LINK

There's something about Australian Jews that make us so connected to Israel. The love for our homeland is stronger here than it is anywhere else in the world, despite us living it what amounts to a paradise. A study from Monash University found that 80 per cent of Australian Jews regarded themselves as Zionists, 76 per cent felt a special fear if Israel was perceived to be in danger, 74 per cent had relatives living in Israel, and 86 per cent had visited Israel.

These statistics are higher than anywhere in the world. I remember once listening to an Israeli guest speaker who said "When I came here I was so surprised at how much love for Israel there is here. You guys are more Zionist than actual Israelis!" These statistics are followed by the fact that less than 15% of Jew in the US will visit Israel once, while around 80% of Australian Jews have been to Israel... twice, and as such the rate of Aliyah for Australian Jews per capita is also the highest in the world.

To be clear, a longing for another homeland is far from uncommon in Australia. Many minority groups stemming from migration answer calls to action for countries afar. Could it have something to do with Israel's geographical location? We're so far away from most homelands (bar our own, and New Zealand).

But unlike most ethnic minorities in Australia, Jews don't come from their 'homeland'. They come from everywhere else. You'd think that the second generation of South African Jews would long for South Africa in the same way a second generation Greek would long for Greece.

Could this undying love be due to the influence of Zionist organisations? Australia really doesn't lack any of these. There are many bodies that bind the Jewish community together and prioritise Jewish and Zionist learning. But I would argue that this is consequent of our love for the Jewish state, not the other way around.

The most probable reason for this connection we have is the high amount of Holocaust survivors who are part of our communities. According to the Australian Jewish Museum, about 27,000 survivors of the Holocaust migrated to Australia in the aftermath of the Second World War. Australia doesn't just have one of the highest numbers of survivors per capita of Jews, but also one of the highest amounts of survivors of any country in the world.

Could it be that with so many of us related to those who feel the need to have a place where it's guaranteed that nothing like that can ever happen again? Have we been influenced to

take in a failsafe; a last resort in case things don't go too well in paradise?

Well, we can never be fully sure. Maybe it's a combination of all of those? Maybe it's none? Maybe it's just they way things are. Regardless, it's interesting to know that they Jews who live in the country with the second highest human development index in the world have such a longing for another land.

Itai Ktalav

Rosh Chinuch of Betar Sydney





HEY THERE!

Just imagine for a moment, faces from all around Australia, with the madrichim you all love, all together in the same place, bringing all our loudest ruach, the best chinuch and one of the best Betar experiences to be had in a whole ten years!

The date is slowly creeping up as our excitement see all your screaming happy faces at our once-in-a-decade event Jamboree! Jamboree follows the same structure as a federal, winter or summer camp – a fun group, educational and team building activities, dancing and singing Hebrew songs. As you may know, many of us come back with no voice because we all try to sing louder than other groups! It’s always great fun. However, at Jamboree we have all of our chanichim from across Australia in grades 3-12 on one camp. That’s around 200 chanichim!

Jamboree is going to be a once in a lifetime experience. You’ll make friends for life and meet madrichim who are there to guide you and help you realise your greatest potential; you’ll learn to let loose and be your own person, while also learning about exciting and different ideas about the world through creative and challenging activities.

We truly can’t wait to see you there,



Robyn Katz, Liav Shalev and Lauren Satill
Roshim (heads) of Betar Jamboree 2016

Betar Jamboree will be held from 4-8 January (juniors) and 4-13 January (seniors) in New South Wales. Please contact Robyn on 0415 168 367 for further details, or visit www.betar.org.au/jamboree



Betar Australia
בית"ר אוסטרליה