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(During their Israel Mission in June, 2016, icnext Cohort 4 visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem...an experience which adds a

Welcome to ic.news – pages written by, for, and about Cleveland's Jewish teens!

In the section titled "ic.news" israel.cleveland.next (icnext) participants reflect on their 10-day Mission to Israel in June, 2016, and comment on current issues of interest to Cleveland's teens. They are creating an ongoing source of news about the community, Jewish teens and Israel, inspired by knowledge gained from the icnext program. They will talk about Jewish identity, changing political, social, and

unique perspective to discussion of UNESCO Resolution 200EX/25)

On October 12th 2016, UNESCO, or United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, passed a resolution (200 EX/25) which addresses the historical significance

cultural perspectives of Jews and Israelis, the realities of the Israeli conflict, and more. There will be photos that document their 10-day Mission during the summer of 2016, and those that document current events, whether in Jewish Cleveland or Israel. icnext is a two-year program that educates Cleveland's Jewish high school students from all denominations in the core issues of Israeli society and the geopolitical situation in Israel today. icnext is a project of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, administered through @akiva. For information about or to apply for icnext, contact Tina Keller at tkeller@

akivacleveland.org.

In "more.teen.news" @akiva presents different teen programs in the community. From preparing students for the challenges that will face them on their future college campus, to learning Hebrew and how to advocate for Israel; from theater (testimony.theater.cleveland) to music (HaZamir Cleveland), there are so many opportunities for our teens to form a special community. Most importantly, this programming fosters an incredibly strong connection to Israel, and trains teens to be Jewish leaders.

of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. However, this resolution was not good news for Israel. This resolution continuously only refers to the site by its Arab name, ignoring its Hebrew roots. Additionally, the resolution condemns the Israeli government for their treatment of

the site. This resolution puts Israelis and Jews worldwide in a difficult situation on how to both react to their history being erased, and what to feel in response to this development. The questions remains— to fight or to accept.



We are Not the Exception

As I progressed throughout my day, I realized the United Nations was going to make a decision on document 200 EX/25, and Jerusalem's connection to the Jewish people. A decision on the legitimacy of Israel was set to be discussed. A decision that I expected to have a massive amount of influence on society. A decision I thought... or rather I hoped, would go my way.

Like a splash of ice cold water at the crack of dawn, the resolution passed— not in the favor of the Jewish people. This resolution that constantly refers to Israel as the "occupying power" was passed and accepted by numerous world powers. As I attended school, other students were speaking out and vocalizing the results from the UN. I, however, abstained from contending with the decision because I didn't fully understand what it meant. How could a simple agreement change the reality I've grown up with for 16 years?

The simple answer is, it won't. For now. In the status quo, Israel is still standing and thriving. Existing and persisting. While it is discouraging that twenty-six countries voted for the resolution, there is a silver lining. The decision wasn't unanimous.

According to the October 14th issue of *The Atlantic*, twenty-four countries didn't vote, and six countries, including the U.S., voted in opposition. UNESCO's director-general, Irina Bokova states in response to the resolution, "To deny, conceal or erase any of the Jewish, Christian or Muslim traditions undermines the integrity of the site." In spite of the resolution passing, it is clear that some voices within UNESCO are still willing and able to acknowledge the significance of Judaism in Jerusalem.

After visiting the Temple Mount this summer with icnext Cohort 4, I understand firsthand this complicated situation. The status quo is that Muslims freely enter and exit the site, while Jews and Christians must go through strict evaluation before entering. Clearly, there is strong evidence that the Jews are not infringing upon the Muslim artifacts as the resolution insinuates, because of the precautions taken to ensure cooperation on the Temple Mount.

While it may seem that the world is against Israel, there is a pivotal narrative to remember. The narrative is that of the Jewish people. In essence, the Jewish people are *The Little Engine That Could*—the resistance against oppression. No matter the ob-



stacles, the Jewish people have successfully surmounted the odds to overcome that oppression. The present is no exception.

- Gabrielle Sudilovsky, Cleveland 2016

(Again, during their Israel Mission in June, 2016, icnext Cohort 4 attended a very special graduation ceremony)

One ceremony....two views.... A visit to the Israeli Air Force's Aviation Academy Graduation Ceremony

Lights. Sounds. Smiling family members and 30 pilots make up the Israeli Air Force Graduation Ceremony on the base of Chatzerim in the Negev Desert. This graduation also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Entebbe Rescue Operation and honored its heroic Air Force pilots. Of course this Air Force ceremony included an impressive air show. Americans have air shows on Memorial Day and other holidays, but for me personally, this air show felt uniquely different. This air show was a display of Israeli perseverance and pride in their country, the promised land of the Jewish people. Excitement and determination was evident on the faces of pilots and family members in the audience. Community feeling and Zionist pride filled

the amphitheater. The pilots marched in unison and a band played Israeli music. The graduates were introduced and applauded, and the Commander of the Israeli Air Force gave a speech. Finally, high powered modern aircraft performed exercises with perfect precision showing Israeli strength, power, and resolve for the future. I felt pride in being Jewish and pride in the accomplishments of Israel.

- Jessica Linden, Israel 2016

No conflict. Peace. Friendly relations.

Can you imagine a world where not only all of this is possible, it is a reality? Visiting Israel, a Jewish state in the middle of unstable Muslim countries, it was hard to even imagine peace could be possible. The graduation ceremony was like any graduation, names were called up, honors were given and caps tossed up in the air. Afterwards, the air show began... straightforward enough, all kinds of planes used by the Air Force did cool tricks in the air, followed by a demonstration of water bombs and the like. However, when it was over I was left with a feeling of disappointment and sadness, uneasy about the



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On Sunday, November 20, @akiva led a delegation of 45 high school students as part of the community's college prep initiative to the University of Michigan. Participants explored collegiate Jewish life, and spoke with our graduates about the recent wave of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activities on campuses. The trip was sponsored by The William and Anita Heller Family Jewish Community Fund.

This reflection was written after the November 20th trip.

Exploring Jewish Life on a College Campus

The @akiva trip to University of Michigan was an exciting time, there's no denying that. I'm very intrigued by politics and history, so going to a university with a larger Jewish student population than most, definitely fed my desire to learn more. To me, history and politics go hand-in-hand, and they can be very influenced by biases. While at Michigan, I definitely heard a pro-Israel bias with which I may not completely agree.

Something we talk about at my school's newspaper, The Shakerite, as well as in my history classes, is how to recognize the biases of people. From my experience thus far, I believe that when it comes to personal stances about Israel - whether for or against - people can sometimes lose their objectivity. I'm not against bias completely, because without it I don't believe people would hold the morals they do or be as passionate about what they believe in, but when it comes to history and politics one has to be careful.

casual display of violence. I wished that Israel wouldn't automatically go to violence as an answer. I continued by talking about my wish for peace without violence and without compromising the integrity of the Jewish state, with Oren, the man who made our attendance possible. He was quick to interject that he completely agreed about the wish for peace sans violence. He also confided in me that the whole world would be watching this ceremony, including the "enemy" regimes, and Israel had to demonstrate its considerable power so they would be afraid of attacking. Then Oren shared a story about the last battle they had fought at this base. His family lives on the base; his wife and children were evacuated when the base was under attack during Operation Protective Shield in the summer of 2014. For 51 days he did not see them as the situation was unstable and dangerous. Israel's fight, our fight, is far from over. We are constantly under attack by people who do not believe we should be here. It's this point exactly that explains why we have to keep fighting, both with warfare (although I am not a fan) and with words. They might have numbers on their side, but we have a reason to keep fighting, a reason to achieve peace and finally, a reason to win.

- Shira Ophir, Israel 2016

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To me, Israel is a topic that we need to be careful with. While at the University of Michigan's Hillel, we listened to a few students talk about issues related to the Jewish population and their beliefs. A girl named Mara talked about how she grew up going to a private Jewish day school in a moderately observant home. The University of Michigan Hillel has become her "home away from home."

Within the Hillel are 50+ student interest groups, all having Judaism as their common core in some way. One of these groups is focused on uniting Muslim and Jewish students. A student named Kevin said that he believes in trying to influence the audience that typically leans anti-Israel rather than the neutral audience because it would make a greater impact. I don't agree - I don't believe it's right to try and change the viewpoints of others because most people have their own reason for feeling the way they do. I met an Arab man while I was in Israel who talked about his experience being on a raid in Gaza while he served in the Israeli army. This conversation added another point of view to my perception of Israel. He spoke about being an Israeli and serving his country, but then while serving his country he had to charge into his family's "homeland". That hurt him. It also thrust a knife into my heart and I remember thinking that this man was so strong to have done such a thing. So how could Israel always be right if it sometimes hurt innocent people?

There's a bias to every story. Going to Michi-

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gan definitely gave me a stronger sense of Jewish pride, but also showed me how to stick to my own opinions while listening to others'. I asked Kevin "to what extent do you believe pro and anti-Israel biases affect people's understanding of each other's sides?" I wanted to dig deeper into understanding his view of it. However, there wasn't much he would say, other than that some students just weren't pro-Israel. I really enjoyed this trip. It was fun to travel with everyone, but it was also a learning experience. The most important lesson for me was learning to find the balance between listening to the viewpoints of others while still holding onto my own.

- Hannah Kornblut, Cleveland 2016

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