



DISGRACE AT DUT

Professor Antony Arkin

A day after Leila Khaled spoke on the Durban University of Technology campus the Student Representative Council demanded that all Jewish students be expelled from DUT. SRC Secretary Mqondisi Duma said "As the SRC, we had a meeting and analysed international politics. We took the decision that Jewish students, especially those who do not support the Palestinian struggle, should de-register". All Jewish students who supported Israel and all students who are sponsored by the Israeli government should be kicked out.

The vice-chancellor of the university, Prof Ahmed Bawa, correctly called the demand of the SRC and the Progressive Youth Alliance "totally preposterous, unjust, unfair, unreasonable and unconstitutional". He went on to argue that it "was a deep violation of our National Constitution and every human rights principle". He said the university was committed not to "discriminate against any person based on their race, religion, colour, ethnicity, sexual orientation or political affiliation".

The following day in a "clarification" the SRC coupled Zionism with anti-Semitism as the sole example of racism. They called instead to deregister 'Zionists'. "Once more we repeat our position. Israel is an apartheid state that should be fully isolated, on this point we will not concede". This is the direct continuation of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) strategy of anti-Israel activism, whereby Israel and Zionism are equated with colonialism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing and genocide. These words are not chosen because they somehow reflect reality, but because they are universally considered evil. The effect of the continuous repeating of Zionism / Israel = Evil is to create an intellectual climate in which physically ridding the world of Israel would be considered desirable, even noble.

DUT, having given Khaled an open platform to churn out her message that "violence is the mainstream and ISIL (The Islamic State of Iraq, and the Levant) is a Zionist plot, now has the responsibility to recognize the anti-Semitism embedded in the institution. As Mary Kluk, chair of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies argued in *Die Burger* "welcoming hate-mongers like Khaled ... sends out a message that it is legitimate to discriminate against Jews, something that runs completely counter to the South African ethos of non-racialism, equality and tolerance".

The Council of Kwazulu-Natal Jewry is right to have warned that the singling out of any student for discrimination based solely on their religion, race, gender or political affiliation goes against the values and principles of a democratic South Africa proudly enshrined in our constitution.

Eric Pickles, the British cabinet minister has warned in the *Telegraph*, "The history of anti-Semitism shows the worst atrocities can begin when ordinary people turn a blind eye to small acts of discrimination and minds drifts lazily towards a mainstream, even fashionable, acceptance of prejudice".

Having served for eight years as the Academic Vice-Rector and Acting Principal I am fully aware of the enormous support the local Jewish community gave the institution over many decades. It is hoped that the core beliefs in human rights, civil rights, pluralism and freedom of expression will again be its guiding principles. A fully integrated education program for all its stake holders must speedily be introduced. We all need to fully endorse the stated policy of both Israel and South Africa of two states for two peoples, living side by side in peace and security.