



Message from the Director

After a long winter, spring is finally upon us. Here in Israel, spring is short; it's the 30 min period between winter and soaring temperatures...



One of the highlights of this season is Yom Yerushalayim (יום ירושלים), which celebrates the day Jerusalem was reunified in 1967 during the Six-Day War. Since the War of Independence in 1948, east Jerusalem, including the Old City, had been under Jordanian sovereignty. With the recapture of the eastern part of the city, the Jewish people finally regained sovereignty over the Holiest sites in Judaism. The first time in 2000 years.

Yet nothing good comes to Israel without sacrifice and a high cost. While the victories of the Six-Day War were unparalleled in Jewish history, we lost nearly 800 soldiers on the field of battle ... proportionately equivalent to over 88,000 Americans losing their lives today. Perspective is everything.

Similarly, we just celebrated Israel's Independence Day, Yom Ha'Atzmaut (יום העצמאות), where we commemorate Israel regaining sovereignty in the Holy Land for the first time since the destruction of the Second Temple. Yet during the war, we lost about one percent of the population at that time – the equivalent of over 3 million Americans today losing their lives.

We have much to be grateful for and will forever be indebted to those who made the ultimate sacrifice so that we could return home.

Wishing you all a chag sameach... *from Jerusalem.*

Ari Rudolph
Director

IRF Newsletter ***Issue 2, May 2012***

IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Director
Fellows – Profiles
Fellows on the Web
Alumni in Profile
Alumni on the Web

Fellows 2011/12

For those of you that don't know here is the make-up of the current IRF Fellows (note that all fellows are based in Israel):

Fellow	Country of Origin	Placement
Duda, Patrizia	Germany	The Institute for National Security Studies
Greenberg, Alex	UK	Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs
Looks, Elka	USA	Headline Media
Persiko, Yinnon	Israel	World Union of Jewish Students
Phillips, Yael	UK	Reut Institute
Shampanier, Shir	Israel	Institute for Policy and Strategy
Shaviv, Gidon	UK	NGO Monitor
Stern, Margot	USA	World Jewish Diplomatic Corps
Valk, Jonathan	Netherlands	UN Watch

In each monthly newsletter we profile two fellows; this month, Elka and Yinnon.



Elka Looks

Elka worked as a journalist at the *Haaretz* news desk and served as the editor of the 'Jewish World' section on Haaretz.com. She launched several successful blogs for *Haaretz*, including *The Jewish Thinker* and the *Rabbis' Round Table*. Elka holds a B.A. in Diplomacy and International Relations (magna cum laude) from the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (IDC). She was awarded the President's Scholarship for academic excellence, was editor of the IDC student magazine and managed several student union

campaigns. For her fellowship year, Elka is working at *Headline Media* in Tel Aviv, where she is a political media consultant for government and NGOs.

Project and Accomplishments

Thus far Elka has worked with a plethora of Israel advocacy and political groups, empowering them to promote a positive image of Israel to the world at large. She is a communications trainer for both groups and individuals, and has also worked with representatives from the Israeli public and non-profit sectors, helping them prepare for public speaking and interviews with the mass media. Some of the organizations and government agencies she has worked with include the Israeli Foreign ministry, *MASA*, *HaBonim Dror*, *Young Judea*, *The David Project*, *Kol Voice Seminars*, *Hasbara Fellowships*, *Young Jewish Republicans*, *the Reut Institute*, and *The Israel Project*.

Elka is also a member of *Headline Media's* PR team, most notably working with the *Israel Democracy Institute*. She has worked on several major conferences, and garnered international media coverage about crucial political developments in Israel.



Yinnon Persiko

Yinnon is a Major in the Israeli Air Force where he serves as a pilot. He has received a special award for his outstanding performance as a pilot. Most recently, he was head of the Israeli Air-Force Infrastructure Branch. Prior to his service in the Air Force, Yinnon served as a Captain in the 'Egoz' Reconnaissance Unit of the Israeli Defense Forces. He has been sent to Sweden as a 'young ambassador' as part of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegation. Yinnon studied for his BA in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy at Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, where he was chosen as an Argov Fellow. For his Fellowship, Yinnon is working at the *World Union of Jewish Students* (WUJS).

For Yinnon, joining the IRF has enabled him to come full circle vis-à-vis Israel's security needs. Since the age of 18, he has been involved with Israel's physical, hard-power security concerns; he is now in a position to learn about – and contribute to – Israel's soft-power half through what he terms 'informal diplomacy' at WUJS.

Project and Accomplishments

Yinnon has played an integral part in the following projects at WUJS:

- YPLT (Young Political Leaders Trip): 19 young non-Jewish leaders from nine countries who visited Israel were given an objective perception of what Israel is, its relations with its neighbors and the current conflicts it is involved in;
- WUJS congress: 120 Jewish students from around the world came to Israel for 6 days of seminars and networking;
- WUJS teaches English: a new WUJS project focusing on the relationship between pupils (11-12 grades) and WUJS students around the world. The central idea is that Israeli schools contact foreign students and personally have conversations (in English) about everyday issues. Both sides benefit: the Israeli pupil increases his fluency in English and the WUJS, international student, receives lessons on Israel.

Fellows on the Web

[An ode to Frankenwinheim on Holocaust Remembrance Day](#)

ELKA LOOKS, April 19, 2012

HAARETZ.com

On this day we grapple with a tragedy that today seems unfathomable; we have repented, we have learned, we have said 'never again,' but the people of Frankenwinheim have repaired.

My grandfather, my Opa, and I just returned from a trip to Frankenwinheim, a small farming village in Bavaria where he lived with his family until 1937. The home my Opa grew up in is no longer there, instead there is a plaque that reads “Here lived Mr. Max Gottlieb [my great-grandfather] until he was driven out of house and home.” The synagogue is now a private home, but if you walk around the back, you can see where the women used to watch the men in prayer, the side room, the cheder, in which young boys used to congregate and study Jewish texts.

Kairos's Agenda Disqualifies it from Public Funds

GIDON SHAVIV, November 03, 2011



No one is claiming that Hass is not entitled to present her biases to an interested audience, or that liberation church groups like KAIROS should be prevented from supporting such views by their sponsorship. The pertinent question is whether Canadian public funds need to support their dissemination. Why should Canadian public funding be restored and used to support the spreading of biased political accusations?

Alumni in Profile

An exciting new feature of the newsletter is our 'Alumni in Profile' section where we profile two ex-fellows and see what they are up to.

Guy Seeman

Guy has spent his career and academic training on government and politics. During his university studies in Washington, D.C. he worked as a political journalist, an aid in the U.S. Senate and on the campaign of then Presidential candidate Senator Obama. Thereafter, Guy moved to Israel where he completed a fellowship at the Prime Minister's international press office. In 2010, he joined the Ministry of Defense and the Israeli Defense Force's international coordination unit where he worked hand-in-hand with Palestinians and development organizations to foster economic growth in the West Bank. Following his army service Guy became a Legacy Heritage Fellow and rejoined the Israeli Prime Minister's Office as a junior adviser to the National Security Adviser working on strategic and policy initiatives with the United States. In parallel, Guy managed multiple social change projects in Israel.



After one and half years serving in the Prime Minister's Office, Guy left for Haiti to take up his current post managing TBT/IsraAID's Haiti Initiative as the Country Director. He directs

development projects in the areas of agriculture, health, community development and business training for the earthquake affected region.

Guy is a student of physics and astronomy, dances, plays soccer, tennis, and loves to surf.

Lianne Pollak

Lianne Pollak is currently a Master's student for Public Management and Governance at the London School of Economics, where she is 'Chevening scholar'. Lianne served as an intelligence officer in the IDF, and graduated in 2008 from the IDC, Herzliya after completing a B.A. in Government, Diplomacy and Strategy in the 'Argov Honors Program'. After graduation she worked in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, where she was a Legacy Heritage Fellow. There she was part of the negotiation team during the Annapolis peace process. Following the Fellowship, Lianne worked at the Israeli National Security Council, where she was a Foreign Policy Advisor specializing in Palestinian affairs.



Lianne lives in London with her boyfriend, Tomer, who works in a private equity fund, focusing on Renewable energy. Lianne just got back from a study tour to Kenya, working with a local social enterprise that encourages Kenyan farmers to grow honey as an alternative income stream to their usual crops.

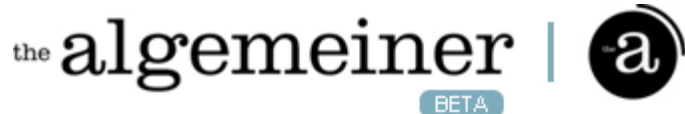
Alumni on the Web

Here are three articles published by our alumni recently. To be sure, our alumni have published a lot more, but we couldn't possibly include them all...

[Keeping U.S. and Israeli Red Lines Pink on Iran](#)

MATTHEW BRODSKY, class of 2008/09 (the American foreign policy Council)

March 9, 2012



Iran's steady march towards building a nuclear weapon dominated the 2012 American Israel Public Affairs Committee's (AIPAC) policy convention in Washington, DC. It also was the focus of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meeting with President Obama on Monday afternoon. A day earlier, Obama declared at the AIPAC conference that his administration was committed to a policy of prevention—stopping Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, rather than containment—preventing Iran from deploying nuclear weapons after acquired. In working to prevent Iran from passing the nuclear threshold, the president said, "I will take no option off the table," including military efforts.

Matthew is currently the Director of Policy for the Jewish Policy Center (JPC), the Editor of the JPC's journal, *inFOCUS Quarterly*, and Senior Geopolitical Analyst for IntelliWhiz LLC.

Bibi Said What?

ELHANAN MILLER, Class of 2007/08 (Israeli Knesset)

February 24, 2012

Newsflash: The Israeli prime minister did not declare on Facebook that he wishes death to 355 million civilians.



An incredible chain of events has recently played out in the Middle East, demonstrating the lengths to which opinion-shapers and politicians in the Arab world will go to demonize Israel.

It all began with a tragic road accident just north of Jerusalem last week. A school bus collided with a truck and flipped over, killing several children and a teacher and wounding dozens. Israeli and Palestinian emergency teams rushed to the scene and cooperated to rescue the surviving children and evacuate the worst injured to hospitals in west Jerusalem.

Elhanan is the Arab affairs reporter for the Times of Israel and a research fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence at King's College London.

President Peres in the Lion's Den

ANDRE OBOLER, class of 2007/08 (NGO Monitor)

March 5, 2012

Facebook's position on Holocaust denial is arbitrary and confusing.



On Tuesday, March 6, 2012, President Shimon Peres will visit Facebook, a company which refuses to recognize Holocaust denial as a form of incitement to hatred. While there, he will launch two Facebook pages for the President of Israel and meet with Facebook CEO and co-founder Mark Zuckerberg. Dare he raise the issue of Holocaust denial? Facebook's position on Holocaust denial is arbitrary and confused. It does not regard Holocaust denial as hateful in its own right, but recognizes many of the comments posted in denial groups, such as calls for a new genocide of the Jews, as hateful.

Facebook defends its current policy by arguing it regularly shuts down Holocaust denial groups because of these comments. The anti-Semitic groups, however, persist.

Dr. Andre recently founded the Online Hate Prevention Institute, <http://ohpi.org.au>. He is also Co-Chair of the Online Antisemitism Working Group of the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism.