

**THE ANNA SOBOL LEVY FELLOWSHIP
2006-2007**



Left to Right: Arthur Anderson, Relly Davidovici, Zach Mauss, Amanda Staly, Minda Lee Arrow, Matthew Thrasher, Clay Murray, Robert Straus, Elizabeth Vandrei

THE ASL FELLOWS



Minda Lee Arrow will receive a master's in Islam and the Middle East this summer. During the two years that she has been studying for her degree, she has also served as an ASL fellow. Minda's *cum laude* undergraduate degree in Politics with a focus on the Middle East is from Princeton University. She is looking forward to returning to the U.S, where she hopes to find a job which will allow her to continue her involvement and study of the Middle East.



Amanda D. Staly resides in Taylors, South Carolina and is a graduate of North Greenville University. Amanda graduated *summa cum laude* with a BA in history and American studies. In 2007, Miss Staly will complete her MA in Israel Society and Politics with an emphasis in military history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Miss Staly has sought to enhance her experience of living abroad by traveling extensively to Egypt, the Sinai, and Jordan and participating in volunteer work in Israel. She is an avid martial artist and musician and has been able to broaden and enhance both of these skills by gleaned unique perspectives from Israeli culture. This summer Miss Staly plans to return to the United States and pursue a career as an officer in the United States Army.



Clay Murray is from Louisville, Kentucky. He studied at the University of Louisville from 2002 to 2005 (graduated at May 2006) and has a degree in Political Science. He arrived to Israel with his wife Laura, and studied Arabic, Hebrew and Middle East studies at the Rothberg School. In April 2007, Clay left Israel and the program after accepting a job at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC). The company Clay now works for is one of the biggest contractors for the U.S. Department of Defense. Clay works there as a National Security Policy Analyst working at the Pentagon.



Zachary C. Mauss grew up in Dubuque, Iowa and gained the itch to travel at a young age after embarking on a trip to southern India with a close friend. Zach's first trip to the Middle East with the ASL Fellowship was also an eye-opening experience, where he studied in the field of Islamic & Middle Eastern studies and traveled to Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. In the fall semester, Zach completed an intensive 60-hour medical first response training course with Magen David Adom and spent 100+ hours as a volunteer medic on the ambulances in Jerusalem. In his free time, he trained for his passion of endurance sports- over the year Zach completed two half-marathons, an Olympic distance Triathlon in Eilat, and a full marathon in Jordan!

Zach majored in Sport & Exercise Psychology at West Virginia University. Upon graduating at WVU, Zachary was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army's Medical Service Corps. He will attend Army flight training at Ft .Rucker, Alabama to become an Aeromedical Evacuation Officer.



Matthew Thrasher participated in the ASL program before embarking as an officer on board the *USS LAKE ERIE* in the US Navy. He graduated from Tulane University, where he received a BA in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies *cum laude*.

While in Israel, Matthew continued in Middle Eastern Studies, focusing on improving his Arabic and his understanding of various strategic conflicts within the region – including the Arab/Israeli conflict. With other ASL fellows, Matthew traveled across Israel, the West Bank, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt. After completing the ASL program, he will return to America and be married to Caitlin Carballal before leaving to meet his ship on deployment.



Arthur Douglass Anderson III graduated from Pennsylvania State University with an honors degree in Engineering Science. While in Israel, Arthur studied Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, and for the first time studied both Hebrew and Arabic. While in college, Arthur was a member of the naval ROTC and has been posted to the *USS Lassen* destroyer based out of Japan. Arthur will join the ship's crew as an officer beginning in October.



Robert Straus graduated *cum laude* from Oregon State University with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Military Science, as well as receiving a commission from the United States Army as a 2nd Lieutenant. He participated in Oregon State's Student government as the director of Community Affairs while at the same time becoming one of the Department of the Army's top 20% cadets. He was selected to branch into the Military Intelligence Corps following his year in Israel on the ASL program and will be stationed at Ft .Lewis, WA. While at the Hebrew University, he studied Arabic along with several courses concentrated in Middle Eastern politics and history .



Elizabeth Vandrei graduated *summa cum laude* from the State University of New York at Albany with a double major in English and Linguistics. She began studying Arabic and Hebrew in connection with her studies in linguistics. Her interest in Middle Eastern affairs grew out of her language study. She is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies in the Rothberg International School at Hebrew University, and will remain in Israel after her year with the ASL Fellowship in order to complete her degree.

THE ASL COORDINATOR



Relly A. Davidovici got released from the army in July 2005, after 8 years of service in different commanding and instructing positions. She took part in the 2001 IDF military academy, there received her cum laude degree, in History and General studies (management, law and security) from the Hebrew university. Captain in reserve, works as training developer and projects manager in a consulting firm. This is her second year as an ASL coordinator. Relly is now pursuing her MBA at the business school of the Hebrew University.

The Surroundings of Jerusalem and the Security Fence

The first tour of 2006-2007 was a fitting visit to various sites around the city of Jerusalem. Our first stop took the fellows to the Crusader church turned mosque by Saladin, Samuel's tomb, in order to survey the surrounding area, especially focusing on the West Bank area and the security barrier. Our guide for the first half of the day, an ex-paratrooper from the IDF, discussed the various military/security concerns of the area, the reason for the security barrier, and some of the history of the greater Jerusalem area—ranging from ancient history to its role in the Oslo negotiations.



Ron, Captain in Reserve, with the fellows, at Nebi Samuel

Our next stop was on the opposite side of Jerusalem in the South to view the various manifestations of the security barrier near Bethlehem. We saw the sections that are fencing and the sections of bare concrete wall. Our guide explained the rationale for the different types of barriers and the group discussed the social, political and security ramifications of the barrier in



Mabat 2000, the Israeli Police control center over the Old City

all its manifestations. After a stop further to the East to survey more of the Jerusalem barrier between communities we departed from our IDF guide and enjoyed discussion of the positives and negatives of this security approach over lunch.

After lunch the group enjoyed a tour of the nerve center for security within the volatile Old City of Jerusalem. We were briefed in the central surveillance center where police monitor hundreds of

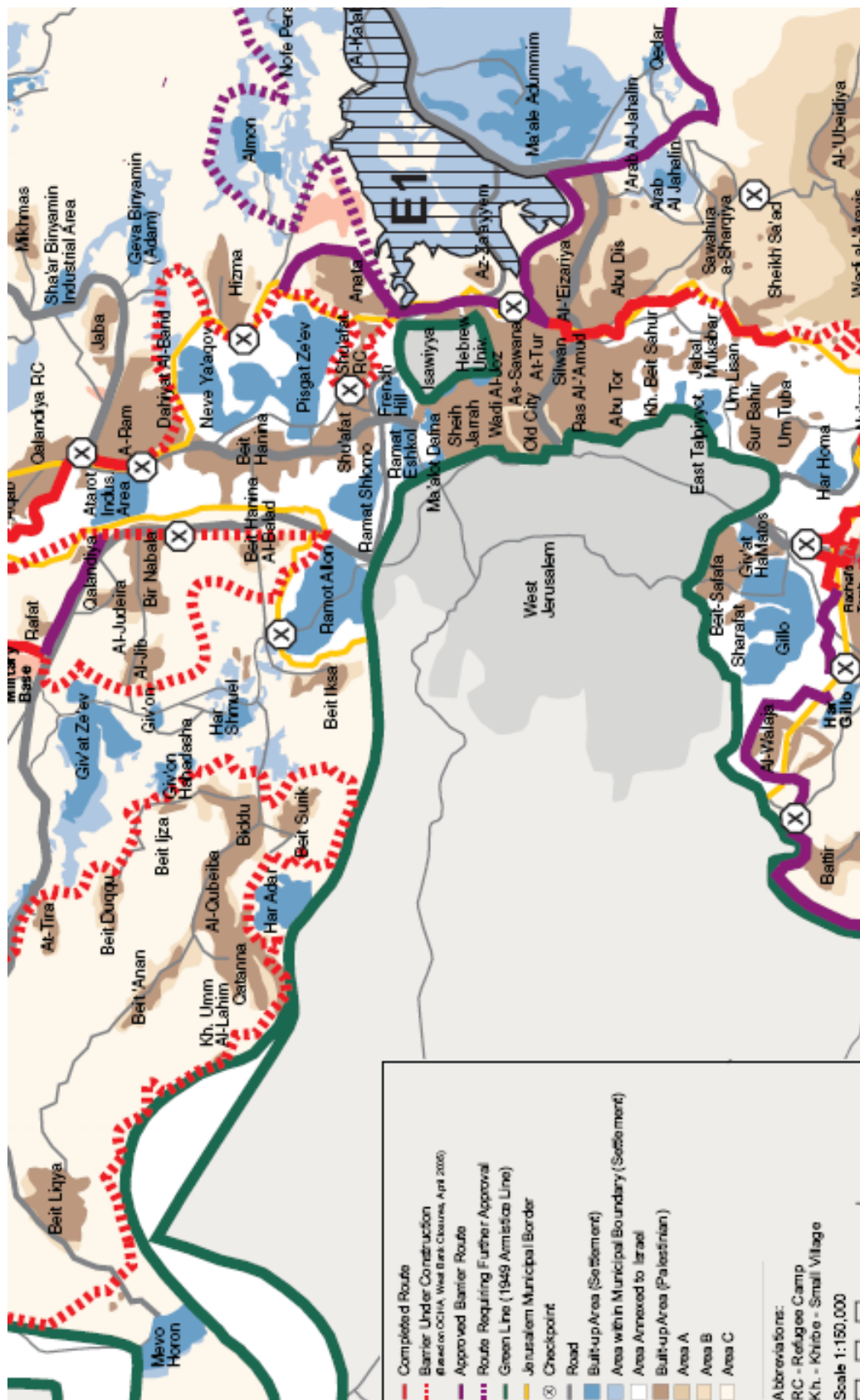
cameras throughout the Old City. The briefer also showed us surveillance videos, including some of the Temple Mount riots that marked the beginning of the Second intifada. Following this the group proceeded to meet with the head of security for the Jewish settlers in the Old City. They protect the Jewish families that are buying up houses within the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the Old City on a daily basis, including walking children to a from any place outside their homes. We visited a few such families and saw how they live, along the way discussing

their viewpoints on politics and reasons for living in the controversial manner that they do. All in all it was wide ranging first tour that introduced us to a few of the many vexing issues facing Jerusalem and Israel today.



The fellows with Ariel, the Commander of the security guards in the Old City

Map of the First Tour - Security Fence



Tel-Aviv: Military Academy and Ha'Aretz

After an early morning tour to the Diaspora Museum at Tel Aviv University, the ASL Fellows were off to the IDF Military Academy for Junior Officers to meet their Israeli counterparts and take part in a round table discussion. IDF Officers attend this two year program following their initial enlistment period and after serving in a platoon leadership position. Along with preparing for their company command position at the academy, the IDF Officers also complete their Bachelors degree through joint programs with Tel Aviv University and Hebrew University.



ASL Fellow Zachary Mauss pictured with five IDF officers attending the Academy.

In discussion with the IDF Officers regarding the many challenges facing them today, in both personnel relations and combat situations, it was obvious that the American military leaders of today are facing many identical problems encountered by their Israeli peers. For example, many of the IDF officers face challenges in taking on combat missions that their unit is not specialized in – one air defense artillery officer spoke of conducting urban cordon and search missions which would normally be carried out by infantry or paratrooper units. Also, the IDF officers faced challenges in banding together soldiers from incredibly different backgrounds (Russian, Moroccan, Ethiopian, etc.) to form one coherent unit. The sense of DUTY among the junior officers in the room, both American and Israeli, was a common value that certainly projected a feeling of mutual respect between all of us.

Following the discussion and tour at the IDF Officer Academy, the next stop was a visit to the offices of Haaretz Newspaper, which many would equate as the New York Times of Israel. The central topic of the day in meeting with the newspaper's editor in chief was Israel's use of censorship in all domestic media outlets. Newspapers, television & radio broadcasts, and news websites are all censored through the government as a means of national security. The



ASL Fellows with the officers at the Military Academy

censorship specifically deals with military and defense issues, and is only applied to news articles of those topics. Censorship is rare however, and journalists are usually free to break the story as fair and balanced as possible. An example of incidents requiring the use of the censor are in times of war when Israel has been attacked by Katyusha or Qassam rockets. In this situation,

reporters would be forbidden from publishing photos of where the rockets had landed or reporting specific locations in the story, for obvious reasons. The Haaretz Editor noted that having this censorship prevents him from carrying any moral burden regarding a story and its possible repercussions, since the duty is held by the censor's office.

Sde-Boker

In November 2006, the ASL fellows visited the grave of Israel's first prime minister, and participated in an extended day-hike through the Wadi Havarim. Finally, the fellows visited the *Gadna* IDF training base located in the Negev region of Israel.



The Negev desert, located in the arid southern portion of Israel, was chosen by the late David Ben-Gurion as a final resting place. Ben-Gurion, remembered for his leadership during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, chose to be buried in the Negev based on the ideological belief that the Negev would provide the necessary land for the expansion of Zionism and the future of Israel. This is a dream that has not yet been realized. His burial site is located very close to both

his home and Ben-Gurion University. Normally, Israel's leaders are buried in Jerusalem at the military cemetery in Mt. Herzl.

The fellows enjoyed a pleasant hike through the Wadi Havarim led by an IDF guide. The guide presented interesting and interactive information on plants and wildlife unique to the Negev region. Wadi is an Arabic word meaning "dry river bed." Hikers are able to walk through these wadis and experience the beautiful cliffs and spectacular desert landscape.



An IDF spokesperson briefed the fellows in the purpose and function of the *Gadna* IDF training base which has a unique role within the country's military organization. As a pre-army training facility for young, prospective conscripts, high school students from all over Israel as well as students planning to make aliya (immigrate to Israel) participate in this week-long pre-army training program to get first-hand experience in military life. They learn basic training techniques, and there is a large emphasis on IDF values. Those who participate in this program come from low socio-economic backgrounds and are more inclined to seek employment rather than military service after high school. Although the IDF is a mandatory conscription army, there are a variety of loopholes by which Israeli citizens may opt out of military service. This program promotes the long-term and cultural benefits of military service in Israel.

The fellows enjoyed a nice lunch in the mess hall before participating in a few interactive group activities. These activities mirrored the same experiences of *Gadna* participants and included various leadership and problem-solving drills. The fellows enjoyed the opportunity to sharpen their own physical and mental skills and get out in the sunshine.



Gilboa Prison and Kibutz Sde-Eliahu

After a 30 hours of traveling back from the United States, I wasn't too optimistic about spending more time traveling up to the north of the country to visit some detention center. Furthermore, for the first time in who knows how long, it snowed in Jerusalem the day before the trip; so obviously I just wanted to sit around and build snow men and throw snow balls at people from the roof of our building.

We arrived to the detention center not really knowing what kind of experience we were to have when entering the facility. As we unloaded out of the van, we saw several dozens of Palestinians, mostly wives and children of the inmates coming to visit their loved-ones in what's probably only a monthly opportunity for them.



Gilboa Prison



I, along with the rest of the fellows felt horrible as we were passing by them on our way for the tour while they sat outside for hours, maybe even days to see the people they cared for. Looks were given at as from everyone; children stopped playing and the feelings of disgust in my stomach rose dramatically.

We took everything out of our pockets: cell phones, cameras, keys, etc. We sat down for a short meeting with the accompanying food and drink of a normal Israeli discussion. We learned the facility was built in response to the Second Intafada, housing several key 'personnel' of that uprising. After the meeting we toured around the facility and what I thought wouldn't be done, was.

We entered another secured area where many of the inmates were able to walk around freely outside their cells. We all entered the same area as they were walking back and forth in what looked like a daily ritual. The area was no bigger than a tennis court for them to walk and relax in.

As we entered, one of the convicts, a formed Fatah member who killed a Palestinian collaborator gave us a 'rundown' of how things were in the prison from his perspective. He also gave us his own individual tour of his cell that he shared with seven others. He pointed out that the food and 'knick knacks' on hand were supplied by the Palestinian Authority and other outside groups. While he was concluding his talk to us, the prisoners were lining up for one of their five daily prayers. One of the fellows who probably knew the most from the Qur'an led the prayer and they all prostrated and followed along.

We left that part of the prison and entered the area where prisoners were able to communicate through hard plastic windows to their loved ones via telephone. It bothered all of us that we held up the prisoners from talking to their loved-ones because we were so ‘privileged’ getting our own personal tour. What right did we have to delay them? We then departed the facility, having gained a very unique and some-what depressing experience.

We made our way to Kibbutz Sde-Eliahu near the prison, right off the Jordan River by the Gilboa Mountains. Enjoying a buffet lunch, we discussed our thoughts of the prison and also what we were doing at this random Kibbutz. This Kibbutz, unlike most was a mixed community of religious and secular Jews; but like most, they harvested several crops for consumption by the Israeli public.



The fellows learning about the Kibbutz life

One of the specialty ‘crops’ this Kibbutz grew were Bio Bee’s.

What in the heck are those you’re asking? Well, without these little annoying creatures, one would have a hard time pollinating crops within a greenhouse. Furthermore, the farmers purchasing these so-called Bio Bee’s don’t have to use insecticide, enabling farmers to keep up organic crops for all those Lefty’s out there (don’t worry, I’m one of them). Although usually I would be very interested in how the environment is helped by these little buggers, due to my lack of sleep from traveling and the amount of jet lag I had, I wasn’t too interested of the inner

workings of Bio Bees and how they help farmers.



Beit-Shean Valley as seen from Sde-Eliahu

It was a long day, but a very well rounded trip. Never had I ever thought I was going to see the inside of a high-security prison housing some of the major players of the Second Intifada. This is the trip I mention when anyone asks, “what exactly do you do on those fellowship trips of yours?” The Bio Bee’s, well, that just gives me something to laugh about every once in awhile.

Jerusalem and Kfar Adumim

On January 2007, the fellowship began their tour with a visit to the Social Political Museum in Israel, more commonly known as the Museum on the Seam. The museum specializes in contemporary art that brings many of society's dark places into light, and shows how much the individual can influence the environment versus how much the environment can influence the individual. The exhibition on display for the ASL Fellow's visit was the museum's most recent: Equal and Less Equal. Dealing with a range of problems – discrimination, exploitation and even humiliation – the exhibition reached both from within and beyond the borders of Israel, to provide subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, examples of transgressions committed by mankind against mankind. The museum's goal is to create a renewed awareness to the dulled social sensitivities of their audience, in hopes that someday the world will know a greater justice than it knows today. This trip provided a rare opportunity for the members of the Fellowship to open their minds to a slightly different way of thinking.

From the Museum on the Seam, the Fellows hopped into a minibus for a drive to a unique Israeli settlement, Kfar Adumim. This settlement is unique in the fact that here, Jews from both ends of the spectrum, from Orthodox to secular, are able to live together in an especially unusual compromise. Kfar Adumim is also unique in that it is being managed by the Fellowship's coordinator's predecessor, **Tal Hazan**, who was to revisit his old job this day as the ASL tour guide, even if only for a few hours. The excursion began with an interview of one of the settlers, who gave an interesting dialogue, providing valuable insight into the minds of the residents. It was difficult not to notice that during the interview, the settler's daughter was wondering the hills behind her, with an IDF guard never more than a few feet away – a constant reminder that the village is surrounded by people that don't want them there. The interview was followed by a brief visit to the local synagogue for a talk with their rabbi, and also a tour of the rest of the settlement, including the amazing surrounding view.



The Fellows with Tal, looking over Mishor Adumim valley

The last stop of the ASL Fellowship for the day was to the Sakta-Rashi Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1984 in order to serve the needs to Israeli children that lie on the periphery of society, helping the underprivileged to receive the same benefits and opportunities many of their peers enjoy. The main highlight of this trip was a sit-down with the head of the foundation, Rony Kalinski, who laid down the basic goals and guidelines of the foundation, and the three main doorways through which it operates – education, social welfare, and health care. Rony Kalinski, who served formerly in the IDF as a commander for special and disadvantaged soldiers, understands the importance of reaching out to disadvantaged Israeli children at a young age, not just for the sake of their welfare, but also to prepare them to be better soldiers in a country where military service is mandatory, and where the quality of the army is existential.

Wadi Mishmar Hike

During February 2007, the fellows took a day hike in Wadi Mishmar.

The Wadi is one of the biggest Wadis crossing the Jehuda Desert. Relly is a big fan of hiking throughout Israel, and wished to give the fellows a taste of the desert's wonders, hoping that by coping with the challenge they would learn to appreciate both the changing and magnificent nature of Israel (after some of the fellows discovered those of the neighboring countries...) and the harsh conditions people that wish to live in those parts of the country have to deal with. It was a fun day, with great opportunities to work as a team, help each other, and overcome physical hardships.



The fellows climbing a cliff



Before...



After...



Rob and Zach



North Tour

When most of the 2006-07 fellows arrived in Israel last summer, they arrived to a country at war with Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon. While the war ended prior to the commencement of fall classes, the relationship between Israel and Hezbollah remains one of great concern both to the fellows, their Israeli hosts, and the international community. In order to learn about the most pressing IDF concerns about the situation in Lebanon, ASL traveled up north to an Eastern Brigade base near the Israeli-Lebanese border. An IDF intelligence officer spent a rainy morning with us, explaining how Israeli intelligence about Hezbollah's activities has changed since the war and describing his experiences during the course of the fighting.

Following the officer's sobering analysis, we traveled south to the Havat HaShomer base. Here the IDF operates an extended basic training course for conscripts who have faced significant challenges during their first eighteen years of life, and who, without this course, would be exempted from military duty. Following their time at the base, the soldiers are conscripted into regular service. The basis operates with the belief that service in the IDF will help these young men turn their life around and become productive members of Israeli society. The fellows dined in the mess hall, attended a presentation from a current officer, during which we learned about the important role that women officers play at the base, and had an opportunity to ask questions of the current conscripts.



The Galilee Sea as seen from our way up North

Tel-Aviv Tour

ASL's trip to Tel Aviv was a great time to understand the contrasts between Jerusalem, the country's capital and our home during our stay in Israel, and Israel's largest city. We learned about the history of Tel Aviv's founding and its founders through a trip to the historic Trumpeldor Cemetery, where some of Israel's greatest authors, philosophers, and politicians are buried. We saw the graves of Chaim Nachman Bialik, Ahad Ha'am, and Meir Dizengoff, among others. From the cemetery we traveled to the center of Tel Aviv, in order to see the building where David Ben Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and to learn about Bauhaus architecture through a stroll down Rothschild Boulevard. Due to the high concentration of Bauhaus buildings in Tel Aviv, UNESCO declared Tel Aviv-Jaffa's White City to be a World Cultural Heritage Site in 2003.

From the center of town, we traveled to its edge – to the part of the city that most clearly distinguishes it from Jerusalem – the Mediterranean Sea. At the city's marina, we joined Israeli politicians and sailing enthusiasts from around the world as they sent off the yachters participating in a sail-for-peace that had taken them from Turkey to Israel from where they were continuing south to Egypt. After the festive send-off, we went swimming and played Frisbee on the water's edge. Yet the sun and sand did not deter us from continuing with our scheduled itinerary and soon enough we were back on the van heading to the neighborhood of Neve Tzedek, known for its concentration of artists. We learned that Neve Tzedek was the first neighborhood "outside the walls" and connected back to what we heard during the visit in the cemetery about the history of Tel Aviv and the beginning of the Jewish Settlement there. From Neve Tzedek we continued our day with a trip to Jaffa, where we visited the weekly flea market and ate a traditional lunch of shakshuka (an egg and tomato sauce treat) before heading home to Jerusalem.



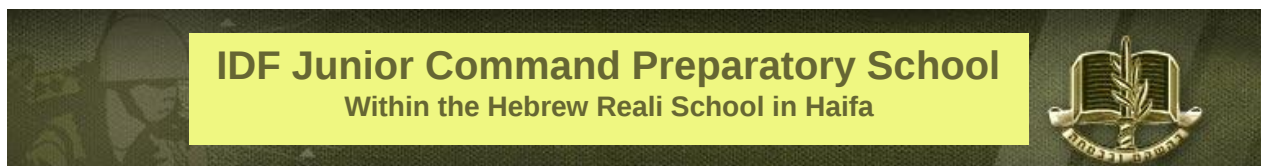
ICT and Military Boarding School

During our all-day tour on June 11th, we first attended the morning session of a conference, titled The Threat of Terrorism to Stability in the Middle East, at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. This conference was organized by the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism and the Italian Embassy in Israel. It was an enlightening and thought-provoking morning. The lecturers we heard included Alessandro Politi of the Outpost for Strategic and Security Scenarios in Nomisma, Cameron S. Brown, the Deputy Director of Global Research for International Affairs, and Ely Karmon, Senior Research scholar at ICT. Politi provided a broad overview of the strategic situation in the Middle East. Brown discussed the unique difficulties faced by the small Gulf Emirates with regard to homegrown terrorism and threats from neighboring states. Karmon spoke in urgent terms about the dangers of a nuclear Iran. Another researcher, Nicola Pedde, discussed the heterogeneous nature of Iranian politics – in particular, reformist opposition.



After lunch, we traveled to Haifa to visit with students at the military boarding academy affiliated with the prestigious Reali High School in Haifa. The academy was founded in 1953 by Ben Gurion, in order to prepare gifted and interested high school students to become officers in the Israeli Defense Force. The students are selected after a series of psychological, academic, and physical evaluations. The student body is diverse, coming from places all around Israel. The school is also co-educational; at the time of our visit, there were seven female students. In addition to their studies at Reali, academy students take courses in strategy, Arabic language, and Israeli military history, as well as participating in physical education. Most graduates do go on to become officers, after completing their regular military service.

On arrival, we were met by three of the students, two boys and a girl, and were taken on a short tour of the academy campus. We visited the library – a modest, quiet study room lined with books. A small and softly-lit area beyond the library housed the photographic memorial for graduates of the academy who have been killed in action. We also saw the dormitories, where students live two or three to a room, and walked briefly over to see the Reali High School buildings. Back at the academy, we watched a presentation on the history and goals of the academy. The students answered our questions, describing their demanding schedule, their future plans for military service, and their reasons for applying to attend the academy – citing patriotic sentiment and an understanding of the threats facing their country. While some Israeli high school students undoubtedly view their compulsory military service with apprehension or indifference, for these young people it is a cherished goal.



Our trip ended with a quick stop to look at the Baha'i Gardens. Unfortunately, our tour of the gardens had been cancelled, so we were unable to go inside. We talked a little about the history of the fascinating religious group who built and continue to maintain the gardens, and about their complex relationship with the Israeli government.



The Baha'i Gardens in Haifa