

Anna Sobol Levy (ASL) Fellowship

2019 – 2020



Final Report & Activity Summaries

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Intelligence Information & Commemoration Center

27 November 2019



This trip to the Israel Intelligence Heritage and Commemoration Center marked the first ASL trip of the school year; the center is dedicated to all of those who have given their lives in service to Israel, specifically within the intelligence community. The day began with a short video introduction to the center's research arm, the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information center.

The video gave a broad overview of how Israel strives to stay up to date on significant terror activity and maintaining its capacity to be aware and prepared for various types of security threats. Following the video, we were led back outside to see the commemoration site where over 700 names of Israeli warriors who have given their life are etched into the walls of the memorial labyrinth; this includes Israelis from the Israel Defense Intelligence (IDI), those from special combat units, the Israel Security Agency (ISA), and Mossad. After having visited the labyrinth, we were able to speak with Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser who gave us a detailed look of a variety of issues present today in the middle east and the effects that Israel faces due to these issues both directly and indirectly. Finally, we were led to our last stop where we were shown various examples of terrorist propaganda from expositions memorializing suicide bombers to confiscated terror materials such as those used in the creation of bomb vests.



This first trip was a very interesting look into Israel's intelligence apparatus as a whole as well as how multifaceted and complex the issues are that they face. The staff from the center were all quite friendly and knowledgeable and the complimentary refreshments provided during the 90-minute talk with the general were very accommodating.



As our first trip this was a rather good choice given the interests of everyone involved with the ASL Fellowship program. The only critique I would offer is that 100% of the excursion was guided and heavily structured to the point where personal interest differences are completely unaccounted for; that is to say, carving time out of the day in order for the attendees to freely walk about the museum in order to see and read about certain aspects that more suit our own interests would be a nice adjustment to the schedule.

Lecture with Dr. Chaim Weizmann & Trip to Palmach Museum

21 January 2019



This was our third lecture of the academic year and second field activity. We began our lecture with Dr. Weizmann, who has a long and rich experience in Israeli public sector and during his career was, among other functions, a scheduler and personal assistant to President Shimon Peres and senior policy adviser to the Minister of Justice and Religious

Affairs. The primary purpose of this lecture was to explain the Israeli electoral system and discuss trends in election and voter history since Israel's Pre-State Era. After the conclusion of the lecture, we then proceeded to the Palmach Museum for a 90-minute tour, dedicated to covering the legacy of the Palmach fighters who died fighting for the establishment of the State of Israel.

Dr. Weizmann helped us understand the complexities of the Israeli election system and took extra time to explain the special case in this year's third upcoming elections. It was very helpful to see comparisons to the U.S. and other European systems, and made the concepts of the Israeli parliamentary system much easier to comprehend. The Palmach Museum covered the Palmach legacy through the stories of individuals and groups, beginning from its establishment and advancing through the story of the Palmach until the end of the War of Independence. The information was presented in an extremely innovative manner through the account of a fascinating personal story accompanied by three-dimensional decor, films and various effects incorporating documentary materials.



This lecture was a good opportunity for the fellows to spend time with Dr. Weizmann, and the timing was appropriate given the current electoral situation in Israel. It was evident he is not only extremely knowledgeable about the Israeli electoral system, but also very passionate about it and this showed in his



lecture. It was helpful to receive further clarification regarding Israel's electoral system and to be able to ask questions in a more intimate and personal setting. The Palmach Museum was also engaging, but the most noteworthy part of the day was speaking with the museum guide, a young female soldier in the IDF. It was interesting to hear her personal take on the museum and Palmach history, as well as some of

her personal accounts. In the future, I would recommend organizing more time and events for fellows to speak with people in the field, as it provided a deeper context to Israeli history that we would not have necessarily gleaned otherwise.

Lecture with Dr. Eran Shadach

29 January 2020

On Wednesday January 29 the ASL fellows took part in a special lecture with Dr. Eran Shadach on the psychology of terror actors. Dr. Shadach served in the IDF for over 15 years, first as a platoon commander in the armored corps, and now serves in reserves as a psychologist in the IDF "Crisis Management and Negotiation Unit" at the rank of lieutenant colonel. After his service, Dr. Shadach has worked as a lecturer, as Acting Head of the Dept. of Clinical Psychology and Acting Dean of the School at the Academic College of Tel-Aviv-Yaffo, and today also teaches a course at the IDC in Psychological Aspects of Terrorism. His current focus of research is on the psychology of stress and anxiety in academic, medical, and in conflict situations.

During the lecture with the fellows, we discussed what factors go into a psychological analysis of terrorists, terrorist leaders, and terrorist organizations, using concepts and tools in the fields of social psychology, individual and group psychology. Dr. Shadach presented to us the various ways people's psyche are developed and the various factors that go into decisions and feelings of potential terror actors including family structure, culture, religion and it's history / beliefs, globalization and technology, gender and how they are all interconnected.



IDF Officers Training Base (Bah'd 1)

13 February 2020



On Thursday February 13th, the ASL fellows took a trip down south to the officers' training base in Mitzpe Ramon. We started off our day with snacks and a brief introductory lecture. We were surrounded by cadets from many different backgrounds such as special combat units, canine handling units, iron dome units, etc. After our introductions, we were guided to lunch where we enjoyed a meal with the cadets while getting to know them better.

We then listened to a lecture given by the Commander about leadership in the IDF and what it takes to become an officer. He explained the officer dynamic and a few of the different companies within the IDF. After his lecture, we made our way to the gym for a CrossFit styled workout. It was a high intensity training circuit that left all of us absolutely winded. Following the interval workout, we were lucky enough to run through the O-Course wearing weighted vests, which we learned was only a portion of the actual timed evolution that involved a run and a shooting event. The final period of our trip consisted of time with the cadets to talk about whatever we wanted and to exchange contact information before departing the base.

I believe this excursion was extremely beneficial for us to learn about becoming an IDF officer on a more hands-on level. Getting to know the cadets and participating in the physical activities was a great experience and certainly enhanced our level of understanding of the IDF. Since the majority of the ASL fellows are/are going to be Naval/Army officers in the U.S military, this experience benefitted us to see what officers in foreign militaries look like and what they have to do in order to become an officer. It was engrossing to see how the paths to become an officer differed between the U.S and Israel. I talked quite a lot with the 3 female cadets more than anyone else, and it was neat to hear their life stories and answer their questions about what it's like being a female officer in the American military.



Speaking for all the ASL fellows, this was by far the best field activity we have been on. The hands-on activities, small discussion groups, and lecture by the commander were all so different yet extremely engaging in their own ways. It was great to separate into two groups to have a more intimate conversation with the



cadets. I personally enjoy a smaller group setting to really get an understanding for the people I am talking to. Overall, the cadets were all so welcoming and we learned so much about what it takes to be an IDF officer. Visiting more bases in the future/having more hands-on activities would be very enjoyable.

Visit to Druze Village of Julis

11 August 2020



Within moments of our arrival in Julis, we were met by Nashat Amar and immediately invited into his childhood home for a traditional Druze breakfast. After introducing ourselves over a meal of zaatar-coated pita, olive oil-soaked labneh, homemade olives, and date juice, Nashat outlined the planned events for the day. Our initial stop was the El Mona Gardens, a site ranked among the 9 greatest places to celebrate love. After briefly meeting with the owner of the garden, we began our walking tour of Julis; seeing a variety of local shops, homes, and making our way to the tomb of Amin Tarif. Our last stop of the walking portion of the day's tour was a visit to Nashat's family gravesite; where we learned more about the Druze view on reincarnation and their private religion. To finish off the day, we returned to Nashat's home for a late lunch. We discussed topics such as marriage in Druze culture, his experience as a soldier in the IDF, and his perspective on the IDF's de-escalation efforts with Gaza (his area of expertise).

The Druze minority population is commonly overlooked by western society, yet the culture and history of this group is rich and unique. While we were only able to experience Druze culture for a few hours, the importance of family, tradition, and loyalty is apparent. The Druze' disposition to serve in the IDF while maintaining their own individual identity, not characterizing themselves as Jews or Arabs, makes them one of the most unique ethnicities in the region. Conversely, the acceptance of Druze soldiers within the IDF, among all levels, speaks to Israel's propensity to accept all minorities among its ranks- in addition to Arabs, Jews, Bedouins, and Christians.



As our first ASL group trip in nearly 6-months, this was great way to get back into studying Israel. Visiting a traditional Druze village with a local guide is an entirely different experience. Being relatively close in age, Nashat knew the locations and information that would most peak our interests. With his thorough understanding of our interests, we were able to focus our conversation to information pertinent to our studies. I would recommend continuing to use guides who are similar in age to the ASL fellows as they are more likely to present information more closely related to the interests of the group.

Lecture with Capt. Gal A.

24 August 2020

For our first lecture online via Zoom, we were joined by IDF Captain Gal A. who is currently finishing his degree at the IDC in Law and Government, working towards becoming a lawyer, and is also on the Israel National Rugby Team. Capt. Gal A. spent seven years in the IDF as a Navy Special Forces Combat Operator, and is still active in reserve duty today. During our lecture, Capt. Gal A. told the fellows about his background and various experiences as a special forces captain in the Israeli Navy. We focused our discussions on the translation of military skills to business and sports, using academic skills in the military, and the relationship between Israel and the US on a tactical level including why it is important, personal experiences, and various collaboration efforts.



Lecture with LT. Bernardo C.

26 August 2020

At the end of August the ASL fellows got a chance to speak with Lt. Bernardo C. who spent over 10 years in various combat positions within the IDF and is now a Sergeant Major in the Israeli Police SWAT team. Lt. Bernardo C. started with a step-by-step analysis of a recent operation his unit had conducted to arrest a Palestinian criminal in one of the Arab cities in the West Bank. He discussed the various factors needed to take into consideration in an operation like this, and showed video examples of some other operations done during his time with the SWAT team.



Security Fence / Barrier Discussion

26 August 2020

For our last activity in the Fellowship we met with Mr. Jonathan Davis (IDC's Vice President) in Café Mandarin, a restaurant in Raanana. In this meeting, Mr. Davis talked to us about the history of the Green Line and the security fence. He spoke about different aspects of it, including the utility of Israel's fence and the security checkpoints; also about Israeli settlements, East Jerusalem and the Second Intifada. It was fascinating to listen to Mr. Davis' knowledge on the topic and it definitely made our last meeting a very valuable one.



COVID - 19

The year 2020 brought with it the COVID-19 virus, also known as the Corona virus, which spread through the countries quickly, creating a pandemic. This pandemic affected every aspect of life as we know it. All of a sudden there was a need to wear masks, to do quarantine, avoid social gatherings and to cancel work and school. The IDC was no exception, many students were not able to return to Israel because flights were cancelled around the world, having to finish their studies remotely from their home countries. This situation made it very difficult to continue with the planned activities from the ASL Fellowship, nevertheless thanks to technology we were able to create new ones and keep on learning from wonderful lecturers throughout the rest of the year.

2019-2020 Fellow Bios

Autumn Ballesteros

Autumn is from Minneapolis, Minnesota and attended Arizona State University while training in the Naval ROTC program. She earned a degree in Russian Studies with a minor in Military Science. She spent 5 months enhancing her language skills in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2018, and graduated from Arizona State in 2019. Furthering her education, she studied Government with a specialization in Homeland Security and Counter Terrorism at the IDC Herzliya. For her internship at IDC, she worked on a personal research project on designating the Mexican Cartels as a terrorist organization. She will commission into the Navy as a Surface Warfare Officer and after two years will transfer to being an Intelligence Officer.



Joseph Conant

Joseph Conant is originally from Torrance, California. He graduated Magna Cum Laude graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in French Language and Culture and a minor and certificate in Arabic Studies. Joseph was part of the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) and was one of four people to receive a slot to attend Naval Flight School. Moreover, he attended universities in both France and Qatar where he continued he's international and Arabic studies. Joseph decided to come to Israel to study Diplomacy and enroll in the ASL Fellow at IDC.



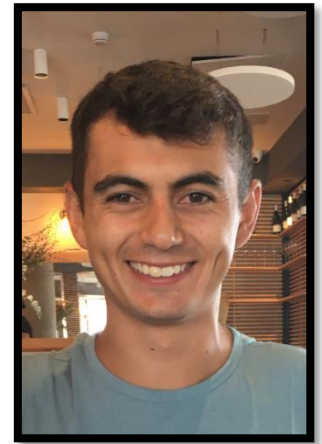
Ashlyn Dorn

Ashlyn Dorn is from Anchorage, Alaska and graduated from the University of Alaska magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in International Studies focusing on Latin America. During her time at the University of Alaska, she completed a number of study abroad programs throughout South America, Europe, and the Middle East and interned with the Department of Defense in Washington D.C. Ashlyn was an ASL Fellow for the 2019-2020 academic year and chose to pursue a Master's degree in Government with a specialization in Homeland Security and Counterterrorism.



David Mitchell

David is a native of Denver, Colorado and a graduate of the United States Military Academy with the class of 2019. During his time at West Point, David majored in International Affairs with a regional focus on the Middle East, while also serving as the captain of the school's NCAA men's tennis team. He commissioned as a Military Intelligence officer with a Branch Detail in Armor. Currently, David is the recipient of the Ana Sobel Levy Foundation Fellowship where he is studying government, specializing in Counter Terrorism and Homeland Security at the IDC School in Herzliya. Following the completion of his studies, David will attend Basic Officer Leadership School, as well as Airborne and Ranger training in Fort Benning, Georgia.



Jacob Pettit

Jake is a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota and graduate of the United States Military Academy with the Class of 2019. During his time at West Point, Jake served as a Company Commander and Regimental Physical Development Officer, overseeing the physical training of over 1,000 cadets. Jake commissioned as an Infantry officer. At West Point, Jake studied international relations and Spanish, participating in the West Point Thayer Honors Program and graduating in the top ten percent of his class. Jake is grateful to have been awarded an Ana Sobel Levy Foundation Scholarship to study Conflict and Diplomacy at Reichman University's Lauder School of Government.



Adam Schmitz

Adam Schmitz is from St. Louis, Missouri. After graduating from Missouri Military Academy he attended Norwich University, receiving a degree in International Studies. Following his graduation from Norwich he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) in the United States Army. Prior to his assignment at IDC Herzliya, Adam worked at the Institute for Defense Analysis in Alexandria, VA providing analysis in support of national security initiatives. While at IDC, Adam received a MA in Government with a specialization in Counter-Terrorism and Homeland Security. His MA work primarily focused on State-Sponsorship of Terrorism as well as CBRN. Adam will attend the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course at Fort Benning, GA.



Chris Schwenck

Christopher Schwenck is originally from Pennsylvania, and he comes from a large military family. He is a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. Christopher graduated through Norwich University ROTC in 2019, and holds a B.A. in Political Science. As an ASL Fellow at the Interdisciplinary Center, he opted to pursue an M.A. Government in the Diplomacy and Conflict Studies track with the goal of using the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a lens to observe and learn with real-world, practical examples. Chris's research primarily focused on foreign and security policy as well as great power competition.

