



תקווה
TIKVAH
Beren Summer
Fellowship
2025 | 5785





PROGRAM AND PURPOSE

The Beren Summer Fellowship is an elite eight-week program in New York City that invests in college students and recent graduates committed to living lives of Jewish purpose—anchored in the enduring ideas of Western civilization and the pivotal lessons of Jewish history.

We equip Jewish and American leaders to confront the greatest moral challenges and strategic imperatives of our time with serious thinking. Guided by experts at the seminar table and mentors in the field, we prepare fellows to lead effectively in the public arena.

Our alumni include established thinkers and emerging leaders across intellectual and professional fields. They are ideas-driven contributors to public life and principled decision-makers in private enterprise. They model how to flourish as Jews and Americans after graduation and welcome successive cohorts into their ranks, mentoring the next generation of Beren Summer Fellows.

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CURRICULUM

The Beren Summer Fellowship brings together college leaders and recent graduates for a full summer in New York City, combining a Tikvah masterclass on the strategic challenges facing the Jewish people with independent research projects and internships at organizations within the Tikvah network.



Fellows were individually paired with mentors affiliated with these leading institutions.

Eight weeks in the arena of Jewish ideas and public policy.

WEEKS 1-3 : SEMINAR PHASE

Fellows explore the origins of the modern Jewish condition, religious denominations, and political ideologies, from European origins to adaptation in America and Israel. Discussion shifts to the Jewish role in the American founding, religious liberty and civil religion, and the evolving dynamics of the U.S.–Israel relationship. Within this framework, fellows refine strategic approaches to historical and contemporary questions, guided by world-class teachers and policy experts.

Approximately 700 pages of readings spanning political theory, literature, philosophy, and policy analysis are distributed several weeks in advance.

WEEKS 4-7 : RESEARCH PHASE

Fellows apply these insights over five weeks of independent research, tutorials, and internships, individually paired with experienced mentors to craft high-impact projects. We partner with executives, scholars, and subject-matter experts from our network of research institutions, journalistic outlets, and congressional offices to advise fellows one-on-one.

WEEK 8 : CONFERENCE

Fellows navigate frameworks to apply political ideas to practical policy, balancing tradition and progress. Institutional stakeholders, guests, and colleagues observe Fellows as they present their research work.

GUEST SPEAKERS AND OUTINGS

A lineup of speakers supplement seminar discussions, providing practical examples from their own research and careers. Weekly outings and a shabbaton build cohort relationships.

CALENDAR

SEMINARS

WEEK
1

**JUNE 16 -
JUNE 20**

THE ROOTS OF JEWISH MODERNITY

MON

Modernity and the Jewish Question
Leora Batnitzky

**Jews and the Problem of Modernity:
Tevye, Part I**
Ruth Wisse

The IDF Reserve and the Spirit of Israel
Daniel Polisar in conversation with Jonathan Silver

TUES

**Is Religion the Answer?
And if so, What Kind of Religion?**
Leora Batnitzky

**Jews and the Problem of Modernity:
Tevye, Part II**
Ruth Wisse

WED

**The Rejection of the Answer:
Judaism and Jewishness as Nation**
Leora Batnitzky

**Jews and the Problem of Modernity:
Tevye, Part III**
Ruth Wisse

THUR

**The Rejection of the Problem:
Ultra-Orthodoxy**
Leora Batnitzky

What Ever Happened to Perchik?
Ruth Wisse

FRI

**The Jewish Problem as
the Human Problem**
Leora Batnitzky

WEEK
2

**JUNE 23 -
JUNE 27**

JEW, JUDAISM, AND THE AMERICAN PROJECT

MON

Covenant and Constitution
Samuel Goldman

Jewish Strategy
Eric Cohen

Dinner with Tikvah's CEO
Eric Cohen

TUES

From Toleration to Freedom
Samuel Goldman

**The U.S.–Israel Relationship
During the Cold War**
Michael Doran

**Jews and Christians in America:
A Dinner Conversation with Passages**
Rabbi Mark Gottlieb and R.R. Reno

WED

National Identity and Civil Religion
Samuel Goldman

**The Present State of the
U.S.–Israel Relationship**
Michael Doran

The American Fight Against Anti-Semitism
Adam Beren

THUR

Jews and Race
Samuel Goldman

Zionism, Israel, and U.S. Foreign Policy
Samuel Goldman

FRI

Can Jews Be At Home in America?
Samuel Goldman

SAT

Shabbaton
Rabbi Gamliel Shmalo

RESEARCH

WEEKS **4-8** JULY 7 - AUGUST 8

THEORY INTO PRACTICE

MON-FRI

Research with Mentors
On-Site or at Tikvah Headquarters

EVENING SPEAKERS AND OUTINGS

Covering Israel at War at the *Wall Street Journal*
Elliot Kaufman in conversation with Jonathan Silver

The Enchantment of the Arab Mind
Hussein Aboubakr Mansour in conversation with Jonathan Silver

The U.S.–Israel Relationship During the Cold War
Daniel Samet in conversation with Jonathan Silver

New York Yankees Game
New York City Ferry Tour

CONFERENCE

Political Philosophy, Political Action
Yuval Levin

The Renewal of Jewish Education
Rabbi Mitchell Rocklin

Research Presentations
Fellowship Cohort and Guests

WEEK **3**

JUNE 30 - JULY 2

ORTHODOXY, ART, AND AMERICA

MON

Between Holy and Secular: An Introduction to Israeli Haredi Society
Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer

Making Sense of the Campus Crisis I: *On Settler Colonialism*
Adam Kirsch

Patriotic American Film Tournament: *Miracle* (2004) selected by vote

TUES

Making Sense of the Campus Crisis II: *American Awakening*
Joshua Mitchell

Private Tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Jacob Wisse

WED

The Biblical Legacy in Western Visual Art
Jacob Wisse

Perfection: A Story
Jonathan Silver

THUR-FRI

Independence Day Break

INSTRUCTORS & VISITING SPEAKERS



Adam Kirsch is the author of several books of poetry and criticism. A 2016 Guggenheim Fellow, Kirsch is an editor at the *Wall Street Journal's* Weekend Review section and has written for publications including *The New Yorker* and *Tablet*. He is the author of the recent book, *On Settler Colonialism: Ideology, Violence, and Justice*, as well as *Benjamin Disraeli* and *The People and The Books: Eighteen Classics of Jewish Literature*. He lives in New York.



Daniel Polisar is Executive Vice President and co-founder of Shalem College, Israel's first liberal arts college. He previously served as the president of the Shalem Center, after holding posts as director of research, academic director, and editor-in-chief of the center's journal, *Azure*. Before joining Shalem, he was founder and director of Peace Watch, a non-partisan organization monitoring Israeli and Palestinian compliance with the Oslo Accords, where he led an observer team during the January 1996 Palestinian elections. Polisar received his B.A. in politics from Princeton University and his Ph.D. in government from Harvard University, where he was the recipient of Truman and Fulbright scholarships and a Mellon Fellowship. His research interests include the history and philosophy of higher education, education in Israel, and Israeli constitutional development.



Daniel Samet is a Jeane Kirkpatrick Fellow at American Enterprise Institute, where he focuses on U.S.-Israel relations and Middle East policy. Dr. Samet was previously the George P. Shultz Fellow at the Ronald Reagan Institute, a Tikvah Krauthammer Fellow, and held fellowships in the Office of Senator Tom Cotton, the Rumsfeld Foundation. He is the author of *U.S. Defense Policy toward Israel: A Cold War History*, and his commentary has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Post*, *Commentary*, and *National Review*. He holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Texas at Austin, an M.A. in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a B.A. *magna cum laude* in history and French and francophone studies from Davidson College, where he was initiated into Phi Beta Kappa.



Elliot Kaufman is a *Wall Street Journal* Editorial Board member and editorial writer focusing on Israel and the Middle East, and he was previously Editor of the letters page. He has worked for the Stanford alumni magazine, *National Review*, and the Stanford Men's Basketball Team. His writing has appeared in *Commentary*, *Modern Age*, and the *Jewish Review of Books*. Raised in Toronto, Elliot lives with his wife and infant son in New York. Elliot was a 2016 Tikvah Summer Fellow.



Eric Cohen has been Tikvah's chief executive since 2007. He was the founder and remains editor-at-large of the *New Atlantis*, and he serves as the publisher of *Mosaic*. Mr. Cohen has published in numerous academic and popular journals, magazines, and newspapers, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *Weekly Standard*, *Commentary*, *The New Republic*, *First Things*, and numerous others. He is the author of *In the Shadow of Progress: Being Human in the Age of Technology* (2008) and co-editor of *The Future is Now: America Confronts the New Genetics* (2002). He was previously managing editor of the *Public Interest* and served as a senior consultant to the President's Council on Bioethics. Mr. Cohen currently serves on the board of directors of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the Witherspoon Institute, and *National Affairs* and on the Editorial Advisory Board of *First Things*.



Hussein Aboubakr Mansour is a research fellow at the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy and an Egyptian-American intellectual specializing in modern intellectual history. His work focuses on Arab political thought, Arab intellectual history, and the globalization of antisemitism and revolutionary radicalism. Hussein previously served as Assistant Professor for Hebrew language and culture at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California. His writings have appeared in *Commentary*, *Tablet*, *Mosaic*, and the *Athens Review of Books*. Hussein is a sought-after commentator and speaker on issues of antisemitism and extremism in the Middle East.



Jacob Wisse is Associate Professor of Art History at Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University. He is the former director of Yeshiva University Museum, where he guided its exhibitions and collections and its educational and public programs. He received his B.A. in Art History from McGill University; an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University; and a Curatorial Studies Degree, jointly from NYU and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. He specializes in Jewish art and visual culture, as well as in northern European art of the Renaissance and early modern era. His book on *City Painters in the Burgundian Netherlands* is to be published by Brepols Press. He lives in Yonkers, NY, with his wife and two daughters.



Jonathan Mack is Associate Director of University Programs at Tikvah, where he oversees the Beren Summer Fellowship and year-round opportunities for college students. Previously, he worked as a corporate strategy analyst at DaVita, where he focused on the financial impact of federal value-based care and home healthcare policy. Jonathan holds a B.A. in Middle Eastern studies from Washington University in St. Louis and studied at Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi and Yeshivat Har Etzion. He is an alumnus of numerous Tikvah programs, including the Beren Summer Fellowship.



Jonathan Silver is Senior Vice President and Chief Programming Officer at Tikvah, the editor of *Mosaic*, and the Warren R. Stern Senior Fellow of Jewish Civilization. As the host of the Tikvah Podcast, he has hosted hundreds of writers, rabbis, educators, military officers, artists, and political figures, including members of Israel's Knesset, the U.S. Senate, and the Prime Minister of Israel.



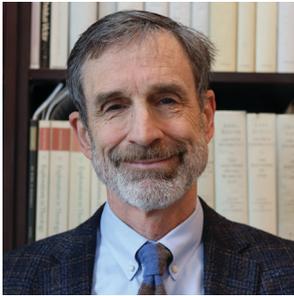
Joshua Mitchell is professor of political theory at Georgetown University, where he was Chairman of the Government Department. He is the author of numerous journal articles and several books, including *American Awakening: Identity Politics and Other Afflictions of Our Time* and *Tocqueville in Arabia: The Anxieties of the Democratic Age*. Professor Mitchell's research focuses on Western political philosophy and theology. In 2005, he was part of the team responsible for founding Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Doha, Qatar. From 2008-10, while on leave from Georgetown, Professor Mitchell served as acting chancellor of The American University of Iraq – Sulaimani. He lives on Maryland's Eastern Shore.



Leora Batnitzky is the Ronald O. Perelman Professor of Jewish Studies at Princeton University. Her teaching and research interests cover philosophy of religion, modern Jewish thought, hermeneutics, and contemporary legal and political theory. In 2002, she received Princeton's President's Award for Distinguished Teaching. She is the author of several books, including *Idolatry and Representation: The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig Reconsidered*, *Leo Strauss and Emmanuel Levinas: Philosophy and the Politics of Revelation*, and *How Judaism Became a Religion: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought*. She is currently working on two books, the first a comparative study of conversion controversies in Israel and India, tentatively titled "What is Religious Freedom? The Case of Conversion in Israel and India," and the second on the Jewish apostate and Catholic saint Edith Stein, tentatively titled "The Continued Relevance of Edith Stein for Jewish and Christian Self- Understanding."



Michael Doran is a senior fellow and director of the Center for Peace and Security in the Middle East at Hudson Institute. He specializes in Middle East security issues and co-hosts the Counterbalance podcast. In the administration of President George W. Bush, he served in the White House as a senior director in the National Security Council, as well as a senior advisor in the State Department and a deputy assistant secretary of defense in the Pentagon. He was previously a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and held teaching positions at New York University, Princeton University, and the University of Central Florida. He is the author of several books—most recently, *Ike's Gamble*— and has published extensively in *Foreign Affairs*, *the American Interest*, *Commentary*, *Mosaic*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *the Washington Post*, and *the New York Times*.



R. R. Reno is the editor of *First Things Magazine*. He has been published in many academic journals. His essays and opinion pieces on religion, public life, contemporary culture, and current events have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Commentary*, and the *Washington Post*, among other popular outlets. His most recent books include *Return of the Strong Gods: Nationalism, Populism, and the Future of the West* and *The End of Interpretation: Reclaiming the Priority of Ecclesial Exegesis*. Reno has appeared as a guest on CNN's "Crossfire," EWTN's "Faith & Culture," and numerous radio shows.



Rabbi Gamliel Shmalo has taught Jewish philosophy and law at Yeshiva University. He holds a BA from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. from Hebrew University in Jerusalem in Jewish Philosophy. He has also studied at Machon Shlomo, Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh, Heichal HaTorah B'Tzion, and Beit Ariel Jerusalem. He has published widely on Jewish themes, and he lectures internationally. He was the Director of Education for Meor NYU, and before returning to the U.S. he was on the faculty of Michlalah Jerusalem College and Yeshivat Ohr Yerushalym for ten years. His book *Learning to Grow* is published by Kodesh Press.



Rabbi Mark Gottlieb is chief education officer of Tikvah and founding dean of the Tikvah Scholars Program. He previously served as Head of School at Yeshiva University High School for Boys and Principal of the Maimonides School in Brookline, MA, and taught at The Frisch School, Ida Crown Jewish Academy, Hebrew Theological College, Loyola University in Chicago, and the University of Chicago. He earned a B.A. and rabbinical ordination from Yeshiva University, and an M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Chicago, where his doctoral studies focused on the moral and political thought of Alasdair MacIntyre. Rabbi Gottlieb's work has appeared in publications including the *Wall Street Journal*, *First Things*, *The Algemeiner*, and, most recently, *Strauss, Spinoza & Sinai: Orthodox Judaism and Modern Questions of Faith*. He is a trustee of the Hildebrand Project and serves on the Editorial Committee of *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*. He lives in Teaneck, NJ, with his wife and family.



Rabbi Mitchell Rocklin is Director of the Jewish Classical Education Concentration track at the University of Dallas and the academic director and dean of the Lobel Center for Jewish Classical Education. He received his Ph.D. in history from the CUNY Graduate Center, held postdoctoral fellowships at Princeton University and Yeshiva University, and taught at both CUNY and Princeton. He is also a chaplain in the Army National Guard with the rank of Major. Rabbi Rocklin is the president of the Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty, as well as a member of the Rabbinical Council of America's Executive Committee and Military Chaplaincy Committee. His writings have been featured in publications including *The Los Angeles Times*, *National Review Online*, *The Daily Wire*, *The Forward*, *The Public Discourse*, and *Mosaic*.



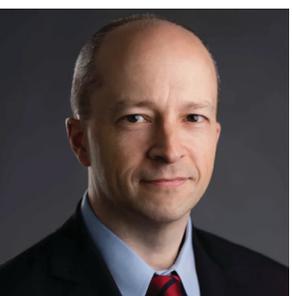
Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer is head of the Haredi Israel division at the Tikvah Fund, running a variety of programs and projects that cater to members of the Haredi and Religious-Zionist communities. Pfeffer was born and educated in London before continuing his Torah education in Israel. He served as a Dayan (Rabbinical Judge) on a Jerusalem monetary court, as chief rabbi and moderator of an international Jewish-law website, and as chief editor of the Ner LeElef Resources program. He has written numerous books and articles on different subjects of Jewish law and thought; lectures extensively for various forums in Israel and abroad; and has taught at several Yeshivot in Israel, currently at Hedvat HaTorah. He has also served as chief halachic assistant to the former Chief Rabbi of Israel and as a researcher for the Israel Law Ministry. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree (*summa cum laude*) in law from Hebrew University, and clerked at the Supreme Court of Israel, also teaching at Hebrew University and the Herzlia Interdisciplinary Center. He attended the Tikvah Summer Fellowship program in 2012.



Ruth Wisse is the Martin Peretz Professor of Yiddish Literature and Comparative Literature Emerita at Harvard and distinguished senior fellow at Tikvah. She is a winner of the National Jewish Book Award and was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President George W. Bush. Professor Wisse's books include *The Modern Jewish Canon: A Journey through Literature and Culture*, *Jews and Power*, and *No Joke: Making Jewish Humor*. Her memoir, *Free as a Jew: A Personal Memoir of National Self-Liberation*, was published in 2021. She is the editor or co-editor of numerous anthologies, including *The I.L. Peretz Reader* and *The Best of Sholem Aleichem* (with Irving Howe). Her essays on Jewish literature, culture, and politics have been published in *Mosaic*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary*, and the *Jewish Review of Books*.



Samuel Goldman is an associate professor of political science at George Washington University, where he is also executive director of the John L. Loeb, Jr. Institute for Religious Freedom and director of the Politics & Values Program. His first book, *God's Country: Christian Zionism in America*, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2018. His next book, *After Nationalism* was published in Spring 2021. Goldman received his Ph.D. from Harvard and taught at Harvard and Princeton before coming to GW. Goldman's writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and many other publications.



Yuval Levin is the director of Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where he also holds the Beth and Ravenel Curry Chair in Public Policy. The founder and editor of *National Affairs*, he is also a senior editor at *The New Atlantis*, a contributing editor at *National Review*, and a contributing opinion writer at *New York Times*. Dr. Levin served as a member of the White House domestic policy staff under President George W. Bush and was executive director of the President's Council on Bioethics. In addition to frequent interviews on radio and television, Dr. Levin's work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, and *Commentary*. He is the author of several books on political theory and public policy, most recently *American Covenant: How the Constitution Unified Our Nation – and Could Again*. He holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Tuesday, August 5

10^{AM}

Madeleine Monson, McMaster University
Building a Reliable Jewish Guide to American Universities

11^{AM}

Bradley Smart, University of Cambridge
Hebraic Influence on Early Modern Liberal Thought

12^{PM}

Ariella Scheer, Williams College
Jewish Involvement in Social Justice Movements

LUNCH BREAK

2^{PM}

Gabriel Stein, College of William & Mary
Policy Takeaways from Historical Jewish-Islamic Relations

3^{PM}

Benjamin Elkins, University of Pennsylvania
The Cultural Roots of the U.S.-Israel Relationship

Wednesday, August 6

10^{AM}

Bailey Spitz, University of Maryland
Religious Liberty and Title VI Considerations for Jewish Students

11^{AM}

Aliya Zigman, University of Denver
Ideological Conversion Narratives

12^{PM}

Paieka Colligan, University of Florida
Overregulation and the Israeli Housing Crisis

LUNCH BREAK

2^{PM}

Matthew Minsk, Yeshiva University
School Choice Policy Impact on Jewish Day School Tuition

3^{PM}

Sara Shiff, Princeton University
Soviet Anti-Zionism in the Arab World and the West

Thursday, August 7

10^{AM}

Ariane de Gennaro, Yale University
Reclaiming Yiddish as a Zionist Language

11^{AM}

Itamar Gendelman, Reichman University
Redefining the Debate on Educational Freedom in Israel

12^{PM}

Sarit Marmor, McMaster University
Experiential Education in Jewish Day Schools

LUNCH BREAK

2^{PM}

Jacob K., University of Cambridge
Political and Strategic Lessons from the Bar Kokhba Revolt

3^{PM}

Tamar Weiss, Columbia University
Confronting Chinese Intervention in the Middle East

4^{PM}

Julian Weiss, American University
The Future of Israel-India Relations



COHORT BIOGRAPHIES AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW

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Paikea Colligan



Paikea Colligan, from Berkeley, CA, is a rising senior at the University of Florida, majoring in Economics and Mathematics. She participated in her first Tikvah program, the Fear No Evil: Study and Solidarity Mission to Israel hosted by Shalem College, in December 2023. She is the president of the Tikvah chapter at the University of Florida and is involved in Israel advocacy and Jewish life through Students Supporting Israel, Hillel, and Chabad. Professionally, Ms. Colligan is a program associate for the Robert M. Beren Program on Jewish Classical Education and was a researcher at UC Davis, where she authored "The Unaccounted-for Climate Costs of Materials," published by IOP Publishing. She values Tikvah for its serious intellectual discourse that embraces diverse perspectives, its dedication to Jewish and American excellence, and the vibrant network of passionate and curious scholars it cultivates.

OVERREGULATION AND THE ISRAELI HOUSING CRISIS

Paikea investigated how inefficiencies in Israel's building permit system contribute to rising housing costs and constrain housing supply, a pivotal domestic policy issue in Israel. Despite high demand, particularly following recent conflicts and continuing waves of immigration, new construction in Israel stagnates due to its centralized, overregulated approval processes. Long average wait times and bureaucratic inconsistencies have made housing less affordable and slowed reconstruction efforts in areas affected by recent wars.

Paikea worked under the guidance of Ricky Maman, Research Fellow at Kohelet Policy Forum, and researched original regulatory documents, analyzed macroeconomic indicators, and compared inter-country datasets to examine the impact of permitting timelines on housing outcomes. Drawing on variables such as construction duration, institutional design, and approval stages sequencing, her work combines econometric analysis, literature review, and policy synthesis to assess which regulatory approaches lead to greater efficiency. Her research culminated in a policy report designed to inform regulatory housing policy reform in Israel.

MENTOR:

Ricky Maman, Research Fellow, Kohelet Policy Forum

Ariane de Gennaro



Ariane de Gennaro, a New York City native, recently graduated from Yale University with a degree in history. An alumna of Yale's Directed Studies program, she has a background in classics, military history, and Jewish studies, and has studied both Latin and Yiddish. At Yale, she wrote for *The Yale Daily News*, helped lead the Alexander Hamilton Society, and served as Communications Director of the Yale College Council. She was also active in Israel-related programs, including Yale Friends of Israel and the Peace and Dialogue Leadership Initiative, a fellowship fostering dialogue between Yale and West Point students. Ariane has interned at *The New Criterion*, *The Yale Law Journal*, and the Institute for the Study of War, and is an alumna of Hudson Institute and Hertog Foundation fellowships. In her free time, she enjoys drawing and singing.

RECLAIMING YIDDISH AS A ZIONIST LANGUAGE

Ariane worked alongside Andrew Koss, Senior Editor at *Mosaic*, exploring the complex and intertwined histories of Yiddishism and Zionism, as well as the politics of Yiddish in the contemporary world. Historically, Yiddish played an important role in both the secular and Ultra-Orthodox rejection of Zionism, while early Zionist pioneers revived Hebrew to serve as the linguistic backbone of the developing State of Israel. More recently, modern anti-Zionist Jews have likewise rejected Hebrew because of its associations with modern Israel, reviving Yiddish as an alternative symbol of diasporic Jewish identity. Indeed, Yiddish's historical associations with leftist movements like Bundism and its long life in exile have contributed to its recent identification with anti-Zionist and pro-Palestinian politics.

Nevertheless, Ariane's work challenged the assumption that Yiddish is inherently leftist or anti-Zionist. She explored the crucial role of the Yiddish language in Zionism's proliferation and examined the works of influential Yiddish Zionists including author Sholem Aleichem and politician Shmaryahu Levin. By highlighting these Yiddish Zionists, her work rejects the claim that Yiddish is essentially antagonistic to the Zionist project.

MENTOR:

Andrew Koss, Senior Editor, *Mosaic*

Benjamin Elkins



Benji Elkins hails from Lower Merion, Pennsylvania and is a rising senior at the University of Pennsylvania. He is majoring in history with a concentration in intellectual history and classical studies. His intellectual interests include early Zionist thought, foreign affairs, and eras of great political transition, especially Caesar-era fall of the Roman Republic and pre-Bolshevik Revolution Imperial Russia. Benji served as President of the Alexander Hamilton Society at Penn, a foreign policy organization, and Senior Editor for *Under the Button*, Penn's satire magazine. Benji enjoys connecting with his Jewish identity through Hillel, Chabad, and Meor on campus and appreciates Tikvah's fusion of Jewish and Western thought.

THE CULTURAL ROOTS OF THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Benji served as a research assistant to Michael Doran, investigating the shift in American partisan positions towards Israel following the October 7th attacks and the subsequent war. While Americans initially organized in familiar left-right political camps, an increasingly extremist pro-Israel/anti-Israel divide has eclipsed this familiar political orientation. Arguments weighing the validity of Israel's military actions and its very existence have revealed an emerging pattern: disagreement about the State of Israel often stands as a proxy for disagreement about the essence of the United States.

Benji investigated this phenomenon, conducted extensive research into the origins of the U.S.-Israel relationship, American approaches towards Israel and theology, and current manifestations of American identity at stake in the national debate concerning Israel.

MENTOR:

Michael Doran, Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute

Itamar Gendelman



Itamar Gendelman hails from Israel. He is pursuing a B.A. in government at Reichman University in the Honors Program in Strategy and Decision-Making. He is active in the debate club and Monday.com's Impact Lab, supporting teens affected by October 7th. He works as a public sector analyst at TARA Consulting. Itamar completed his military service in April 2024 as a commander in the Duvdevan Unit, having previously led a team in the Givati Brigade, and studied Jewish thought and philosophy in the Elul Program. Before the army, he attended a pre-military leadership program at Ma'ayan Baruch and was a counselor at URJ Camp Harlam in Pennsylvania through the Jewish Agency's Shlichim program. In high school, he studied arts and played for Israel's national rugby team.

REDEFINING THE DEBATE ON EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM IN ISRAEL

Israel's education system struggles with deep-rooted underperformance. Ranked last among fifty-one countries in educational equality and consistently behind OECD nations in overall student outcomes, the system suffers from demographic complexity and structural rigidity. Reform efforts championing "school choice" proposals have been repeatedly blocked by powerful teachers' unions and defenders of the centralized system. These stakeholders argue that allowing families greater autonomy would fragment the public sphere, undermine social cohesion, and erode the state's regulatory authority. In this charged context, reform efforts must address the legitimate fears and ideological rifts at the crux of the debate before proposing alternatives.

Mentored by *Hashiloach* editor-in-chief Sagi Barmak and Heritage Foundation research fellow Jason Bedrick, Itamar penned an essay exploring these tensions through a unique interpretive lens, drawing on historical context, public policy analysis, and Jewish philosophical sources. He surfaced each side's values and concerns sympathetically. Itamar's work equips policymakers and the public with a richer understanding of what is truly at stake in this pivotal national debate.

MENTOR:

Sagi Barmak, Editor-in-Chief, *Hashiloach*, and Jason Bedrick, Research Fellow, the Heritage Foundation 15

Photo Withheld
By Request

Jacob K. was raised in London. He received a BA in history, graduating with Double First-Class Honours from Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he subsequently completed his MPhil. He works in his family's business, providing offshore support vessels to the oil and gas industry in niche and emerging markets. In August, he will move to Beijing to study for a master's degree in global affairs as a Schwarzman Scholar at Tsinghua University.

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC LESSONS FROM THE BAR KOKHBA REVOLT

Jacob examined the Bar Kokhba Revolt and its aftermath as a case study in Jewish political leadership and strategy under the guidance of ancient Rome expert Professor Barry Strauss. Jacob examined the role of messianism as a driving force behind the revolt, revisiting previously overlooked Mishnaic texts that mention Rabbinic involvement to clarify inconclusive academic literature on the subject. He contrasted historical approach found the Mishnaic account of Bar Kokhba's disastrous campaign with prior historical authors like Josephus. This historiographical shift reveals a transition from a Greco-Roman approach that emphasized rational causation, empiricism, and political instruction, to a theologically centered outlook.

Jacob's research culminated in an essay arguing that Rabbinic involvement in the revolt, followed by a retreat into theodicy, inhibited the extraction of pragmatic political lessons. This theological overcorrection, political disengagement, and rejection of the Greco-Roman historical approach stymied the development of a Jewish political tradition until the 19th century—when shifting conditions allowed the emergence of a new historical consciousness. Jacob's analysis of this pivotal moment offers valuable insights into contemporary strategic questions surrounding Jewish autonomy within a waning sphere of imperial influence.

MENTOR:

Barry Strauss, Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution



Sarit Marmor is a rising senior from Toronto, Canada at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada. She is majoring in political science with a specialization in public law and judicial studies. During her year at Midreshet Lindenbaum, Sarit was a participant in the Tikvah Overseas Student Institute. Sarit's interests lie at the intersection of Jewish communal life, politics, and law. She is an alumna of the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) Fellowship and served as the Vice President of Communications for Hillel McMaster. In her spare time, she enjoys working with children in educational settings within the greater Toronto and Hamilton communities.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION IN JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

Working with Caroline Bryk, Co-Director of the Jewish Parents Forum, Sarit researched the emergence of experiential Jewish education in American Modern Orthodox high schools. Enthralled by the psychological theories of John Dewey and David Kolb, educators have transformed traditional classrooms into dynamic experiential learning environments. In American Modern Orthodox high schools, increased adherence to this educational approach manifests in expanded *shabbaton* programming, "color wars," and other increasingly lively celebrations of Jewish holidays.

Sarit examined the role of in-school Jewish experiences in shaping students' Jewish identities, the relationship between experiential learning and student and parent satisfaction, and the proper technical distinctions between experiential and informal education. Drawing on academic literature, interviews with educators, and conversations with high school alumni, Sarit crafted a report presenting her findings on the past, present, and future direction of experiential Jewish education.

MENTOR:

Caroline Bryk, Co-Director, Jewish Parents Forum

Matthew Minsk



Yeshiva University®



Matthew Minsk is a rising senior at Yeshiva University in New York City majoring in American political thought and mathematical economics. He is a Scholar at YU's Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought, where he studies the intersection of the Jewish and Western traditions. Prior to matriculating, Mr. Minsk spent two years studying in Israel at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh. On campus, he is the incoming Yeshiva College Student Council vice president, the managing editor of the *Beis Yitzchak Talmudic Journal*, and the co-president of the Alexander Hamilton Society campus chapter. The co-president of Tikvah's YU Chapter, Mr. Minsk is an alumnus of the Tikvah Scholars Program and Overseas Institute. Mr. Minsk is originally from Atlanta, Georgia.

OVERREGULATION AND THE ISRAELI HOUSING CRISIS

Thirty-five states (and counting) currently offer a form of school choice, allowing parents and taxpayers to direct government funding to private schools. The Educational Choice for Children Act added a federal component, creating a tax credit in states that opt into the program. Amid the expansion of school choice programs, Matthew considered emerging questions surrounding new financial incentives that may reshape Jewish day school fundraising and revenue models, potentially increasing reliance on government funding that could later be rescinded.

Matthew worked under the guidance of Professor Jack Wertheimer, building on ongoing research from the Orthodox Union's Teach Coalition, analyzing Jewish day school enrollment data compiled from state sources in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin, and tuition revenue data in IRS Form 990 filings. He examined the impact of school choice programs—vouchers, tax credits, and education savings accounts (ESAs)—on tuition prices and analyzed the ratio of tuition-based school revenue to contribution and donation-based revenue.

MENTOR:

Jack Wertheimer, Professor of Jewish and American History, The Jewish Theological Seminary

Madeleine Monson



Madeleine Monson hails from Toronto, Ontario, and is a recent graduate from McMaster University, where she completed a combined honors degree in music and psychology. She will be entering her first year at Osgoode Hall Law School this fall. Alongside her academic studies, she has independently cultivated an interest in political philosophy, Jewish thought, and contemporary cultural debates. Through Tikvah, she has deepened her understanding of the foundational ideas underpinning Western and Jewish civilization.

BUILDING A RELIABLE JEWISH GUIDE TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Political upheaval and moral decay at once-revered American universities have perplexed Jewish high school students as they approach the college application process. Traditional academic rankings and Jewish life “guides” do not align with conflicting social media and news reports. In response to this turmoil, Tikvah has started to invest in a new tool that will guide American Jewish families, students, and educators towards colleges that both foster vibrant, genuine Jewish life and uphold the principles of a serious, liberal education.

Madeleine analyzed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts at various colleges and universities, and their influence on campus culture. She catalogued anti-Israel protests and encampments, logging event duration, culpable parties, scope, level of disruption, and administrative responses. She assessed institutional leadership, noting public statements, disciplinary actions, and legitimate legal or Title VI proceedings. To evaluate true strongholds of Jewish life, she conducted unfiltered, firsthand interviews with Jewish students on the ground, who shed light on both traditional bellwethers and niche aspects of campus Jewish life: comprehensive access to kosher food and shabbat accommodations, the vitality and enthusiasm of *minyanim* and student-led learning opportunities, the nature of community social dynamics and character, and the efficacy and vitality of on-campus legacy Jewish organizations such as Chabad and Hillel.

MENTOR:

Samuel Helyar, Project Manager, The Menorah Index

Ariella Scheer

Williams
College



Ariella Scheer is from Princeton, New Jersey, and is a rising senior at Williams College, double majoring in history and religion with a concentration in Jewish studies. She serves on the History Major Advisory Committee and will be Co-President of the Williams College Jewish Association. Ariella was appointed to the Williams Ad Hoc Committee on Poster and Protest Policy, contributing to campus protest reforms following October 7th. She recently interned at the Anti-Defamation League, gaining hands-on policy experience. At Williams, Ariella is a member of the College's leading improv troupe, writes and performs comedy, and hosts a weekly radio show. She also founded the Williams College Tikvah chapter, inspired by Tikvah's mission to promote intellectual engagement across diverse viewpoints.

JEWISH INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

Jewish progressives have long served at the forefront of social justice causes. From revolutionary movements like the Jewish Labor Bund to marches alongside African Americans during the American Civil Rights Movement, Jews have always played a critical role at the center of social activism. Increasingly, however, the very movements once pioneered by Jews now isolate them. Ariella conducted in-depth research for an upcoming book project with the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) tracing this evolution.

Ariella's work highlighted moments that shaped the Jewish relationship with social justice and progressive thought from the Enlightenment-era emancipation of Jews to October 8th Jewish rejection. This research also explored shifting viewpoints of Israel—from early progressive support to later wholistic vilification, and subsequent ramifications in other social justice circles. Ultimately, this work understands how Jews who were once central to movements for equality and justice eventually came to be excluded from the very causes they helped shape.

MENTOR:

Oriana Marie Krüger, Director of Operations, Combat Antisemitism Movement

Sara Shiff



Sara Shiff, from Minneapolis, Minnesota, studied history and vocal performance at Princeton University. A passionate member of Princeton Chabad, she was a Sinai Scholar, member of Tigers for Israel, and participated in Tikvah's Redstone Leadership Forum. An accomplished operatic soprano, Sara recently soloed with the Princeton Orchestra and in a Juilliard master's recital. Notable performances included Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, scenes from *Norma* and *La Traviata*, and Mahler's Symphony No. 4. Her senior thesis explored Soviet and Arab disinformation and propaganda in shaping anti-Zionism. She continues this research as a contributor to the upcoming docuseries *Fakeland*. Sara aspires to ultimately pursue a career as a professional opera singer with crossover in film.

SOVIET ANTI-ZIONISM IN THE ARAB WORLD AND THE WEST

Sara laid the groundwork for a forthcoming documentary exploring the ideological underpinnings of Soviet and Arab anti-Zionism disseminated in the West, expounding on her undergraduate thesis. She synthesized new research into "one sheets," concise bibliographies of scholarly work, to be used by a film director in an upcoming docuseries. These guides will be used to inform the direction of interviews, which will structure the narrative arc of the film.

She profiled twenty leading scholars and their research, providing concise biographies, synthesized summaries of their most relevant work, and tailored interview questions to elicit key insights. This process involved analyzing primary texts, interviews, and lectures, then distilling the material into a format accessible to the documentary team. Her work serves as a bridge between academic research and grounded, film-ready content, ensuring the material remains intellectually substantive while still engaging and digestible for a broader audience.

MENTOR:

Zoe Tara Zeigherman, Producer

Bradley Smart



Bradley Smart, a final-year Theology student at Cambridge, developed a deep affinity for Jewish resilience and the State of Israel from a young age. His freshman year studies, focusing on Jewish studies and Biblical Hebrew, led him to explore political Zionism and the transition to Enlightenment Judaism through figures like Moses Mendelssohn. He is an active supporter of his Jewish peers through Cambridge's Israel Society. A committee member of the University's Conservative Association, he promotes free speech, organizing events discussing current affairs whilst emphasizing the deep Jewish roots of Enlightenment freedoms. Bradley believes this understanding is essential for modern democracies. Through Tikvah, he has deepened his understanding of Western thought and the Jewish impact on Western civilization.

HEBRAIC INFLUENCE ON EARLY MODERN LIBERAL THOUGHT

Bradley served as a research assistant to Dr. Alexander Green, Assistant Professor of Humanities at the Hamilton School at the University of Florida, developing a published article analyzing Spinoza's theological understanding of civil religion. He explored Spinoza's identification of freedom of thought and expression at the center of liberal democracy, informed by his Biblical exegesis and his perception of the Hebrew Commonwealth. Bradley highlighted the role of the Book of Judges and its messages about societal structure in early modern liberal thought.

This study of Spinoza's corpus is a valuable tool to understand the prominence of Jewish and Biblical ideas in developing liberal systems of governance. This work understands engagement in liberal democracy as not only a civic act but also an expression of the ethical and political vision found in the Hebrew Bible. It expounds the enduring Jewish contribution to Western ideals, particularly in scholarship, to better understand the intertwined flourishing and shared vulnerabilities of both civilizations.

MENTOR:

Alexander Green, Assistant Professor of Humanities, Hamilton School



Bailey Spitz, originally from Florida, is a rising senior at the University of Maryland majoring in government and politics with a minor in law. Her interests include history, Jewish thought, and the intersection of policy and legal analysis. She has worked at GS2LAW and the Louis D. Brandeis Center, researching antisemitism on campuses. On campus, Bailey serves as Education Chair for Terps for Israel and also sits on the General Orthodox Community Board. She is the Co-President of Yavneh on Campus, a national Jewish leadership fellowship. Bailey is passionate about Jewish life and advocacy, and interested in the connection between law, policy, and Jewish identity.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND TITLE VI CONSIDERATIONS FOR JEWISH STUDENTS

Bailey examined legal protections for Jewish college students, focusing on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the First Amendment. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in federally funded programs, but its application to religious discrimination, especially against Jewish college students, remains the subject of evolving legal debate. Meanwhile, First Amendment jurisprudence continues to shape the boundaries of religious liberty protections, often in ways that directly affect Jewish communal life.

Bailey's work integrated legal analysis with public-facing writing to address these issues. Mentored by Howard Slugh, Founder and General Counsel at Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty, she researched legal precedent as well as ongoing cases, exploring how courts' rulings impact religious liberty law. The writing component translates these complex legal questions into opinion pieces that communicate to Jewish leaders, students, and communities why these cases matter and how they shape the future of Jewish life in the United States.

MENTOR:

Howard Slugh, General Counsel, Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty

Gabriel Stein



WILLIAM & MARY
CHARTERED 1693



Gabriel Benjamin Stein is a rising junior at the College of William & Mary, where he studies government and finance. Originally from Charlotte, NC, he has a strong interest in domestic policy, financial management, and Jewish political thought. Gabriel is deeply involved in Jewish life on campus, serving as the Israel Chair for W&M Hillel, Sentinel for the Tau Pi Chapter of the Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity, and a Teaching Assistant for the Judaic Studies Department. He is also the Civics Trustee on the Board of Hillel's Israel Leadership Network and co-founded his campus's Tikvah Chapter. Gabriel serves as President of the Theodore Roosevelt Society at the College and interned for Congressman Ralph Norman (SC-5). In his free time, Gabriel enjoys golfing and flying.

POLICY TAKEAWAYS FROM HISTORICAL JEWISH-ISLAMIC RELATIONS

Gabriel re-examined one of Israel's enduring geopolitical challenges, probing the historical roots of Jewish-Islamic tensions under the guidance of Dr. David Adesnik, Vice President of Research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD). Gabriel focused on the history of Jews in Arab and Muslim lands, culminating in a policy memo intended to guide legislators and other key stakeholders. His work responds to a recognized need among policymakers and academics to inform MENA strategy with a deeper, historically grounded understanding of underlying regional conflicts. His research provides a valuable knowledge base for FDD and its partners in future analysis.

Gabriel highlighted the period between 1856—the Ottoman Empire's landmark decree abolishing formal religious discrimination against non-Muslims—and 1979, when the Islamic Revolution in Iran precipitated the collapse of the last flourishing Jewish community in a Muslim-majority country. Contemporary scholarship frequently obfuscates the distinction between nominal Jewish rights and inconsistent de facto norms. Gabriel analyzed a broad range of primary and secondary regional sources, assessing cultural, political, economic, and social conditions to offer a holistic and objective understanding of the Jewish condition throughout the period of study, integrating his findings into the policy memo.

MENTOR:

David Adesnik, Vice President of Research, Foundation for Defense of Democracies



Julian Weiss is a rising senior studying history and political science at the American University in Washington, D.C. He will spend his final year in a study abroad program at The London School of Economics and Political Science. He is an active member of the Columbus, Ohio and Washington, D.C. Jewish communities. He has been involved with pro-Israel politics since high school, and founded the Society of Jewish Scholars, a club for Zionist intellectuals in the DMV area to reinvigorate academic studies of Israel and the Middle East. He has also had a passion for interviewing and connecting with Holocaust Survivors. Julian is a longtime reader of *Mosaic* and is passionate about the future of Jewish and Western civilization.

THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL-INDIA RELATIONS

Julian researched recent developments in India-Israel relations under the guidance Bill Drexel, Fellow at the Hudson Institute. Despite a limited history of cooperation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has driven a strategic shift in Indian diplomacy since leading the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to victory in 2014, bringing India closer to Israel. In addition to sharing longstanding concerns over Islamic terrorism and regional instability, India and Israel have recently developed closer economic ties, collaborating on major agricultural and defense technology projects. Recent polls suggest that Indians, on average, maintain stronger support for Israel than Americans.

Julian examined the durability of this relationship, noting hesitancy from India's largest opposition party, the Indian National Congress, and political developments among India's Democratic Socialist left, Hindu nationalist right, and sizable Muslim minority. He also assessed the future trajectory of India-Israel relations and analyzed the potential implications of this deepening partnership for American interests in the region.

MENTOR:

Bill Drexel, Fellow, Hudson Institute

Tamar Weiss



Tamar Weiss grew up in Great Neck, New York, and is a rising junior at Columbia College, where she is majoring in political science. Tamar channels her passion for politics and policy as a fellow in the Inside the Middle East fellowship, where she studies the political, historical, and geopolitical dynamics of the region. She also serves as a research assistant to Professor Joshua Mitts of Columbia Law School, researching university governance, the application of Title VI and anti-discrimination policies at peer institutions. As a proud Zionist, Tamar is the Public Affairs Chair of Aryeh, Columbia/Barnard Hillel's pro-Israel group, and she worked as both an advisor and an intern at Shalom Task Force. Her article, "An Incomplete Narrative," appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*.

CONFRONTING CHINESE INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Tamar interned with Zineb Riboua at the Hudson Institute, conducting in-depth research on China's evolving engagement in the Middle East. She explored China-Middle East relations before and after October 7th, Sino-Iranian relations surrounding Israeli and U.S. airstrikes, Chinese involvement in Iraq, and China's foreign diplomacy, trade policy, and strategic rhetoric. Amid growing Chinese efforts to undermine American influence in key sectors, Tamar evaluated the strategic importance of continued U.S. support for Israel. She culminated her findings in a policy memo that underscores the necessity of enduring strong U.S. support for Israel as the U.S. and China struggle for regional power. Drawing on media sources, trade and investment data, and diplomatic statements, Tamar produced additional research to inform briefings and projects at the Hudson Institute.

In addition, Tamar participated in collaborative sessions at the Hudson Institute, engaging with fellow interns and senior research analysts to consider underexplored Middle Eastern events and frame foreign policy around geostrategic competition. These collaborative experiences enhanced Tamar's understanding of Chinese economic and diplomatic tools used to influence the Middle East and offered direct exposure to the inner workings of a leading think tank.

MENTOR:

Zineb Riboua, Research Fellow, Hudson Institute



Aliya Zigman, born in Los Angeles and now based in Park City, Utah, recently graduated from the University of Denver with a degree in psychology and philosophy. Her work focuses on Jewish advocacy, writing, and Middle Eastern affairs. A former StandWithUs Emerson Fellow and Director of Education for Students Supporting Israel, she spent a transformative year in Israel volunteering in Kibbutz Harduf, where she taught English to Arab children and worked with individuals with disabilities. These experiences deepened her connection to Judaism and Israel. Aliya has published essays on Jewish identity, feminism, and trauma, and recently completed a fellowship with Inside the Middle East, where she interviewed Iranian and Israeli women on gender, violence, and global silence.

IDEOLOGICAL CONVERSION NARRATIVES

Aliya examined the phenomenon of political transformation in an age of ideological rigidity, exploring the drives behind individuals who reject the political communities that once defined them. She studied key prominent intellectuals who shifted away from progressive circles, realigning themselves within conservative movements. Her research centered on the emotional, philosophical, and moral costs of this ideological dissent.

Through a close reading of political memoirs by Ruth Wisse, David Horowitz, and Norman Podhoretz, Aliya examined the deeper forces of belonging, conscience, and disillusionment that underlie these shifts. She complimented her analysis by interviewing contemporary thinkers who have undergone similar evolutions, seeking patterns in the stories of those who forsook ideological orthodoxy in pursuit of truth. Her project offers both a personal and intellectual reflection on what it means to leave a political “home” behind and to build a worldview rooted in moral clarity in lieu of tribal allegiance.

MENTOR:

Josh Tolle, Krauthammer Fellow, Tikvah



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