

RUDERMAN PROGRAM FOR AMERICAN JEWISH STUDIES

Student Profiles

AVISHAG ZACHI – I received my B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My thesis dealt with the challenges that Israeli law and Jewish Halacha face vis-à-vis modern technology. For the last seven years I have worked for the AIPAC Jerusalem office as the Missions Coordinator, where my colleagues and I focus on educating leaders from across the U.S. on the complexity of life in Israel and the region, and broadening their understanding of the strategic, political and social aspects of our life here.

ORYAN KIRSCH – A lawyer. From an early age I was passionate about Israeli Hasbara and American politics. I served in the I.D.F. Spokesman's Unit and I am a *StandWithUs* fellowship alumna.

AYALA SHANEE – A fellow at the "Tmura" Rabbinic program that ordains secular rabbis. Tmura is the Israeli branch of the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, founded in the USA in 1985. In 2006 I began officiating Jewish-Humanistic weddings, bar mitzvas & birth-related ceremonies in a secular setting. I am a personal & business development coach since 1993, with significant experience in English-language training in Israel and abroad. Secular-Humanistic Judaism has become part of my way of life and I am eager to learn about the creation process of this movement in the American-Jewish and Israeli societies & to find ways to connect the ideas of "Judaism as a pluralistic culture" to Israeli society. I live in Givatayim. I am married with three boys.

ELIRAN COHEN – Graduated from Bar Ilan University with a BA in Political Science and Communications and completed the *StandWithUs* Fellowship Program. I am an Alumni of the College Diplomacy and Strategy in Jerusalem and the Program for Jewish Educators in Beit Hatfusot, Tel Aviv. I am a partner in a facilitation company called Kelim Shluvim. Co-founder of the Tel Aviv Moishe House. I run various MASA and Birthright programs and was a shaliach in the United States. I have enrolled in the Ruderman Program in order to develop knowledge of Judaism in the United States and learn about the connection to Israel.

ELAD UZAN – Elad Uzan is a graduate of the Ruderman M.A Program in American Jewish Studies at the University of Haifa. He has recently finished his L.L.M at the IDC Herzliya, with a thesis on the relationship between philanthropy and financial performance in public corporations in Israel, after finishing his L.L.B in government and law at the same institution. He is also a member of the Israeli Bar Association. Elad published many academic and popular articles on various themes and problems in Jewish history and contemporary Jewish culture. His articles appeared in specialized academic journals such as *Corporations and New Directions*, and in newspapers and magazines such as *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Jerusalem Post Magazine*, *The Jewish Chronicle*, and more. In addition, Elad is a pianist and the classical music critic for *Yedioth Ahronoth* - Israel's most popular daily - where he publishes a weekly column, as well as concert reviews.

OSNAT MOSKOWITZ – I'm a second-generation Israeli, married to an immigrant from Massachusetts. Our three children have dual citizenship and fully identify as both Israelis and Americans. In the 1990s, we lived in the U.S. and played an active and leadership role in the local Jewish community. In my work and personal life, I am in constant contact with a broad range of Americans and feel a deep connection to both the Israeli and American Jewish communities. I am excited about acquiring additional knowledge and tools for strengthening the ties between these two communities.

EREZ LINN – My fascination with American politics goes way back, to 1998, when my parents took me on their sabbatical. I read, live and breathe anything that has to do with the inner workings of the presidency, Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court. I lived in Canada for about six years, and worked as a summer camp counselor in the U.S. due to my affiliation with Habonim Dror, a Zionist youth movement. Through the interaction with kids, I became much more aware of how Jews in the Diaspora view Israel and Judaism as a whole. Currently I am a translator at a newspaper, having completed a degree in translation in 2012.

BETTY ALKOBI – Married, mother of 2 children, from the Lower Galilee. I have B.A. in Criminology and Sociology from Bar Ilan University. I am an education officer at the Israel Prison

Service. I work at a prison which specializes in the rehabilitation of prisoners. I was looking for an interesting Master's program and then I found this degree program which deals with American-Jewish Studies, a topic that is very interesting. After reading further, I realized how little we, as Israelis, know about this vast and highly influential community. In view of the above, I hope I get the opportunity to expand my knowledge, to meet representatives from the field and to help forge ties.

DAFNA KOREN-COHEN – I live in Rehovot with my husband Ido. I have a Bachelor's degree from the University of Haifa's Land of Israel Department. I have been working as a Tour Guide in the past six years, mainly in educational programs for students from the U.S and Canada, like "Birthright" and "Masa," and I have developed with them strong and caring relationships and they started to fascinate me as a group that has an outstanding importance to Israel, and vice versa. As part of my studies in the program, I hope to expand my knowledge, challenge it, and get a new perspective that will also help me in my work with them in the future.

HILA MADAR – I was born and raised in Mikve-Israel - the first agricultural school in Israel. As a tour guide, I work with a variety of populations as part of my efforts to educate and teach about the land and nature. I have an undergraduate degree in geography and Land of Israel studies. I also work as a coordinator at a non-profit organization that helps disabled people go on tours and I also lead Birthright groups on their tours in Israel. As an amateur ornithologist, I occasionally run bird-watching tours and participate in bird-ringing events.

HILA SHAULSKI – I am 27 years old, originally from Reu't but now I live in Tel Aviv. I hold a B.A in political science and Israel studies, from Ben-Gurion University. My interest in American-Jewish life was a result of two meaningful years in the I.D.F as an instructor in Sar-El unit and my successive roles as a Hebrew teacher at a Ramah summer camp, a fellow at StandWithUs and a Jewish agency Israel fellow to Hillel of greater Philadelphia for two years. I work as a coordinator at "Bina," working jointly with Masa and The Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism. I was privileged to take part of a program that explores American Jewry and their relationship with Israel, through an academic perspective, which allowed me to engage in an in-depth study of the issues affecting this community, which are relevant to my professional life and Jewish identity.

Yael Frank – I have a Bachelor's degree in Land of Israel Studies from the University of Haifa. After I graduated I was an emissary of the Jewish Agency for one year in the state of Illinois, USA. During this year I have been exposed to the Jewish life in that part of the world. The Ruderman Program was a way to combine my fascination with the Land of Israel Studies with my desire to expand my grasp of the Jewish-American experience. I work as a coordinator for The Israel Movement for Reform & Progressive Judaism, and as part of my job I devise the school curricula, in consultation with Israeli schools and other Jewish institutions around the world.

MORAN ORBACH – Married with two daughters and lives in Alon,. In the Judean Desert. I received my BA in Israel Studies and **Geography** from the University of Haifa. In addition to military service as an officer in a variety of positions, all my life I was involve with guiding and informal education. Following my love for open spaces I turned to tour guiding. I am certified as a tour guide for diverse audiences including business people from around the globe, communities of Christians from different churches and the World Jewish-Birthright, American organizations, communities and families. In my work I realized how much I need knowledge about the complexities of American Jewry and how interesting for me it will be to dive into this subject. That is also how I got the position as director of education on Birthright and had me involved in educational tourism

NAVE DROMI – The director of "Human Rights Blue and White" organization, which is part of "the Institute for Zionist Strategies". She was the Jewish Agency Israel Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. Nave graduated from Ben-Gurion University with a Bachelor's in Politics, Government and Middle-Eastern Studies. During her studies she worked for the student body to defend students' rights, and later got promoted to a manager position at the student union's marketing apparatus. During her studies she was also active in the public diplomacy organization "Stand With Us" an organization that strives to increase the bond to Judaism and Zionism among youths. Currently she is working on her Master's thesis and is a student at The Jewish Statesmanship Center in Jerusalem.

NIRA AMITAI – I have a daily connection to the American Jewish world. I love learning and teaching history. As a history teacher in high school, I am teaching the important and essential contribution of U.S Jewry to the State of Israel from the end of the 2nd world war until now. Joining the program will help me enrich my knowledge on the American Jewish community, their needs, their political orientation and the relationships between the US Jewish community and Israel. The insights of my study will help me to convey more coherent knowledge to the next generation.

ADI COHEN – Holds a B.A. in political science, economics and philosophy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Following his service as an analyst officer at the IDF Intelligence Directorate's Research Department, he worked as a financial analyst at the Ministry of Finance, as the head political correspondent of the Knesset Channel and as a Lantos congressional fellow in Washington D.C. He currently works as a Head of Desk at the IDF Intelligence Directorate's Research Department. During his time at the Ruderman Program, he is interested in focusing on the ideological disparities between Israel and the U.S. Jewish Diaspora.

INBAL KOHALI – I have an undergraduate degree in political science and government from Ben Gurion University and was certified by Elbaum College as an equestrian therapist. I was awarded a distinction for my role as a Jewish Agency emissary in Binghamton University, New York, where I spent two years. I have always been fascinated by the world Jewry, its history and its connection to Israel. This is one of the main reasons to why I chose to participate in a youth delegation to Canada, my grandfather's origin, and led student leaders on campus. As an emissary, I took part in fascinating conferences and led students on Israel-Birthright programs – as part of my efforts to strengthen the bond between the two people. After experiencing and engaging with the American Jewish culture I joined the Ruderman Program at Haifa University so I can learn and explore it more in depth.

PAULINE KELIF – Born in France and raised in Israel since the age of 4. I have been working in informal education in Israel since the age of 16, in various positions, through my youth movement, my army service and later on as a civilian. Since 2005 I have started working with Jewish communities from around the world through the Israel Experience and the Jewish agency, as a program coordinator and forming educator teams in Jewish education. In the last few years, as a licensed tour guide, I have been working a lot with the North American Jewish community, from both the US and Canada, and I have realized that the amount of knowledge and understanding we have on the development and the success of the Jewish community outside of Israel is very limited. For me, the Ruderman program is a chance to form bridges of understanding and communication in the Jewish world between different communities.

RONI MARGALIT – A journalist. I served as a cultural affairs correspondent on Army Radio and as an investigator on Channel 2 News. I was also an editor for a travel magazine and composer of several tourist books while I worked for the Metropolis Publishing House. I am a social advocate who champions the rights of immigrants and refugees in Israel, having worked as a spokeswoman for Kav Laoved – Worker's Hotline, which helps the underprivileged workers in Israel obtain their rights. I successfully completed the Arts and Humanities Honors program at the University of Tel Aviv and I am currently writing my thesis on Emma Lazarus, whose famous sonnet from 1883 emblazes the base of the Statue of Liberty.

RAN BAR-YOSHAFAT – A lawyer and Project Manager of the IJC (The Israeli Jewish Congress). Ran has conducted numerous Israel advocacy speaking tours in the USA and Israel, focusing on politics, defense, identity, Jewish streams, public diplomacy, democracy and nationalism. He has also worked on leadership-related projects and carried out Israel advocacy for almost ten years, going on various missions on the behalf of many organizations. Ran also worked for the Legal Department of the Knesset, and the Knesset's Education Culture and Sports Committee and the Committee for the Rights of the Child. Ran was the director of the Jerusalem District of the EZ-Way Psychometric Company for several years. In addition, he has led groups of Masa young adult participants in Israel and has given lectures to a wide group of audiences on various matters relating to Israel and project building. Ran has an L.L.B from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and is now about to finish his MBA at Tel-Aviv University.

SHLOMIT SOLOMON DE-LOUYA – Lives in Reut with her family. Earned a bachelor's degree from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in History of the Jewish People and Contemporary Jewry and Communication and Journalism. As a daughter to a mother who came on Aliya and a father whose

parents did the same, American Jewry has been present in my life since childhood. But only when I started guiding Jewish groups from Northern America through the field school I was in, was I really exposed to the diversity and richness of its Jewish population. This encounter intrigued me, and led to many years of working in the field of educational tourism in Israel, writing trip itineraries and educational programs dealing with questions of Jewish identity and Israel. Years of showing Israel and its different aspects to American Jewry left me wondering how balanced our knowledge about each other is. I feel a great need to finally learn more about the rich history and about present day life and growth of the Jewish community in North America and am grateful to be part of this program.

OFER BARGEV – Both America and Israel have always been a central part of my life and of who I am. My mother made Aliya from California in 1970. I was born in Israel but over my life I have been back and forth between Israel and the U.S. numerous times. I grew up in Zichron Ya'acov, on Ramat David Air-Force base in Israel, and in Fort Worth Texas (in the 1980s). It was the Israeli Air-Force that brought my father from Israel to California in 1968 to study the F-4s that the Israeli Air-Force had then acquired, and my parents met at Friday night service at Temple Emanuel in San Bernardino, California and have been together ever since. In the late 1980s, as a teenager, I lived with my family in Fort Worth Texas, once again when my father was sent to the U.S. by the Israeli Air-Force, this time when the F-16 aircraft was acquired by Israel. For me, the special relationship between the Jewish communities in the US and the State of Israel is very much connected with my personal family history and my life experience and thus very close to my heart. I served in the Israeli Army Artillery Forces and as an analyst in the IDF Intelligence Directorate in the early 1990s. I received my undergraduate degree in Economics & Accounting from the University of Haifa. I was licensed as a CPA both in Israel and in the U.S. and throughout my career as an international tax specialist I have worked at big accounting firms in Israel and the U.S. In 2012 I founded an accounting Firm in Haifa Israel, specializing in US & International tax. In 2009 I returned to Haifa Israel from the U.S., with my wife and three kids after a six year period in Florida and in Atlanta Georgia. I will be very happy to take part in strengthening the relationship between the Jewish communities in the U.S. and the U.S. in general and the State of Israel.