



# The Beren Summer Fellowship Research Conference

August 8-10, 2023 | 21-23 Av 5783

Tikvah Summer Fellowship 2023

Conference Presentation Schedule

165 E. 56th St. New York, NY

Thursday, August 3: Early Presentation

10:00 AM: Jacob Shofet

A Game Changing Threat: Precision Guided Munitions and the Sanctions Regime

Partner Organization: Foundation for the Defense of Democracies

Tuesday, August 8: US Public Policy and American Jewry

1:00 PM: Isabella Brannon

Sacred Shifts: The Changing Face of Religious Liberty Law

Mentor: Howie Slugh, Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty

2:00 PM: Natan Ehrenreich

A Summer standing athwart history

Partner Organization: National Review

3:00 PM: Elishama Marmon

Religious Liberty and the Yeshiva University Case

Mentors: Howie Slugh, Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty and Tal Fortgang, Manhattan Institute

4:00 PM: Alexandra Orbuch

An Examination of the Human Rights Campaign’s Impact on Corporate Behavior and Religious Liberty

Partner Organization: The Becket Fund

Wednesday, August 9: Foreign Policy & US-Israel Relationship

9:00 AM: Elaine Abrams

Mapping the Future: Advancing Regional Integration through the Abraham Accords

Mentors: Hannah Zakaria and Zach Thapar, Abraham Accord Peace Institute

10:00 AM: Gabriel Diamond

Iran's Military and Political Influence in the Levant: The Relationship with Russia and Implications of Sanctions

Partner Organization: Office of Sen. Tom Cotton

11:00 AM: Gabriella Negrin

U.S. Foreign Policy: Policy Recommendations for Countering CCP Influence in Key Regions

Mentors: Carrie Filipetti and Sydney Novak, The Vandenberg Coalition

Lunch Break

2:00 PM: Eli Nirenberg

Russia, Ukraine, and the West: Finding Israel’s Middle Path

Mentor: Harry Halem, Yorktown Institute

3:00 PM: Joseph Shumunov

Israel-Azerbaijan Relations: From “Oil for Arms” to Indispensable Regional Alliance

Mentor: Michael Doran, The Hudson Institute

Thursday, August 10: Jewish Education and Jewish Culture

9:00 AM: Natalie Arbatman

Ideological Inheritance: The Imprint of Soviet Anti-Zionism on the Contemporary American Left

Mentor: Sarah Wapner, The Ramaz School

10:00 AM: Tomer Cherki

Jewish Pedagogy for Secular Jews

Mentor: Rabbi Mitchell Rocklin, Lobel Institute for Classical Jewish Education

11:00 AM: Yonatan Kurz

The Current and the TIDE: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's Pedagogical Legacy in the Age of Modernity

Mentors: Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, The Tikvah Fund and Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought

Lunch Break

2:00 PM: Ben Frogel

Virtue and Jewish Theopolitics

Mentor: Professor Alexander Green, SUNY Buffalo

3:00 PM: Michael Hammer

Halacha as a conceptual guide for American Society: Marriage as a Case Study

Mentor: Rabbi Michael Broyde, Emory School of Law



# A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

We are very proud to host this culminating conference for our 2023 Beren Summer Fellows. The Beren Fellowship aims to inspire and empower young men and women to lead lives of Jewish purpose and leadership. In their eight weeks of residence with the Tikvah Fund, students learn from great professors, public figures, and religious leaders who straddle the worlds of academic research and active engagement in Jewish affairs. They also undertake an independent research project or internship, suited to their own interests and exposing them to practical challenges faced by Jewish leaders today. Each fellow works directly with a senior figure from Tikvah’s wide network of practitioners and scholars.

Exploring topics that range from the future of Jewish education to the US-Israel strategic relationship, and from defending religious liberty to combatting anti-Semitism, our fellows build a foundation for themselves as rising leaders. I invite you to explore the background and the project descriptions of all our 2023 Fellows in the following pages.

**Alan Rubenstein**  
Senior Director



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Elaine Abrams, Emory University  
Mapping the Future: Advancing Regional Integration through the Abraham Accords..... 4

Natalie Arbatman, George Washington University  
Ideological Inheritance: The Imprint of Soviet Anti-Zionism on the Contemporary American Left..... 6

Isabella Brannon, University of California, Los Angeles  
Sacred Shifts: The Changing Face of Religious Liberty Law..... 8

Tomer Cherki, Northwestern University  
Jewish Pedagogy for Secular Jews..... 10

Gabriel Diamond, Yale University  
Iran’s Military and Political Influence in the Levant:  
The Relationship with Russia and Implications of Sanctions ..... 12

Natan Ehrenreich, Yeshiva University  
A Summer Standing Athwart History..... 14

Ben Frogel, College and William and Mary  
Virtue and Jewish Theopolitics..... 16

Michael Hammer, University of Michigan  
Halacha as a conceptual guide for American Society: Marriage as a Case Study..... 18

Yonatan Kurz, Yeshiva University  
The Current and the TIDE: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch’s Pedagogical Legacy  
in the Age of Modernity.....20

Elishama Marmon, Yeshiva University  
Religious Liberty and the Yeshiva University vs. Yeshiva University Pride Alliance Case.....22

Gabriella Negrin, George Washington University  
U.S. Foreign Policy: Policy Recommendations for Countering CCP Influence in Key Regions .....24

Eli Nirenberg, Washington University in St. Louis  
Russia, Ukraine, and the West: Finding Israel’s Middle Path.....26

Alexandra Orbuch, Princeton University  
An Examination of the Human Rights Campaign’s Impact on Corporate Behavior  
and Religious Liberty.....28

Jacob Shofet, University of California, Los Angeles  
A Game Changing Threat: Precision Guided Munitions and the Sanctions Regime..... 30

Joseph Shumunov, Kalamazoo College  
Israel-Azerbaijan Relations: From “Oil for Arms” to Indispensable Regional Alliance.....32

Ilay Yunayev, Shalem College  
Plato and Israeli High Schools: “Will Two Walk Together, Except They Be Agreed?” ..... 34



# Elaine Abrams

Emory University

**Elaine Abrams** from Denver, Colorado, is a rising sophomore at Emory University. After graduating high school, Elaine spent a year in Israel at the Shalom Hartman Institute on the Hevruta Gap Year program. This past year Elaine was a freshman representative for Emory Israel Political Action Committee and is the incoming Vice President for this upcoming year. At Emory, Elaine is also involved with TAMID, a business club that works with Israeli startups.

## Mapping the Future: Advancing Regional Integration through the Abraham Accords

Since the signing of the Abraham Accords in the fall of 2020, relations between Israel and Abraham Accords countries have flourished. Accords member countries have found common interest in a variety of areas, ranging from free trade agreements to people-to-people exchanges to energy deals. As these countries continue to become interlinked, the Accords will become more durable and capable of reaching their full potential, facilitating lasting peace among member countries. It is imperative, therefore, while looking to expand the Accords, that areas of common interest among Israel and potential Accords member countries are highlighted. Elaine's research on this subject is aimed at map out possible areas of cooperation between Israel and Accords member countries.

### MENTORS:

Hannah Zakaria and Zach Thapar, Abraham Accords Peace Institute





# Natalie Arbatman

George Washington University

**Natalie Arbatman** is a rising sophomore at George Washington University studying Economics. Born in California to parents from the former Soviet Union, Natalie is a proud Jew and passionate Zionist. She is interested in law, economics, and journalism. She is the Co-Director of Political Affairs for GW for Israel. Natalie is a reporter for the GW Hatchet and has a blog for the Times of Israel where she writes about contemporary antisemitism and campus activism. She is a member of GW Women in Economics. Natalie is also involved with philanthropic Jewish organizations including Jewish Family and Children's Services and Friendship Circle. She is a part of Hillel, Chabad, and MEOR.

## **Ideological Inheritance: The Imprint of Soviet Anti-Zionism on the Contemporary American Left**

The rhetoric of the Western anti-Zionist left routinely demonizes Israel and anyone who supports the Jewish state. It aims to portray Israel as nothing more than a manifestation of European and American imperialism, and a perpetrator of racism, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and apartheid. This framing of Israel as inherently evil in nature serves to "prove" why Israel cannot be reformed, only destroyed. The commitment to Israel's destruction, however, should have little connection to the Western left; it is ultimately a goal of Arab nations. What, then, links Pan-Arabism to Western leftist ideology? The answer is the Soviet Union.

This summer, Natalie researched Soviet and Marxist influences on the modern American cultural landscape and determined to what extent they contribute to the rise in anti-Zionist sentiments among American youth. She wrote an article that tracks the history of left-wing anti-Zionism from its roots in Marxist Soviet regimes, to its introduction onto the world stage at the 1975 UN General Assembly, and its continued propagation in Western media and academia today.

She ultimately argues that only when we acknowledge that this ideology originates in the deeply antisemitic Soviet environment can we begin to fight the virus that is radical anti-Zionism. Natalie contends that the most effective way of preventing young Jews from falling for the libel of radical anti-Zionism is to contextualize its history in Jewish spaces that concern themselves with Israel education. For her deliverable, Natalie will write an op-ed detailing this history and arguing for the inclusion of this material in Israel education.

### **MENTOR:**

Sarah Wapner, The Ramaz School



# Isabella Brannon

University of California, Los Angeles

**Isabella Brannon** is a rising junior at UCLA pursuing a major in Public Affairs and minors in Study of Religion and Digital Humanities. Outside of her studies, Bella is the President of Hillel, Editor-in-Chief of *Ha'Am*, a bass player in the Klezmer Ensemble, and a researcher into bias in artificial intelligence with the School of Technology, Law, and Policy. In her free time, Bella can be found running on the beach, watching Alfred Hitchcock movies, and reading science fiction novels. Bella became involved with Tikvah in high school through the Maimonides Scholars Program and Tikvah Online Academy. Now, she is now a member of the Tikvah College Forum and co-led UCLA's Tikvah reading group on Chaim Saiman's book *Halakhah: The Rabbinic Idea of Law*.

## Sacred Shifts: The Changing Face of Religious Liberty Law

From the Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower seeking religious freedom, to George Washington's many letters to religious congregations stressing the importance of free exercise to the First Amendment of the US Constitution, the freedom of religion is fundamental to American character. Since the country's founding, religious freedom has progressed and regressed through various legal precedents. Although decisions in the era of Smith and Lemon set freedom of religion back, much progress has been made and defenders of this freedom can anticipate further advances. Bella's project focuses on the gains made in religious liberty law in recent years, specifically as they relate to religious minorities. This work challenges the narrative of modern opponents of religious liberty, who frame it as a dog whistle for far-right Christianity.

Bella's project tracks the development of religious liberty in three key areas: Free Exercise from Smith to Fulton, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Lemon and the Establishment Clause. In her discussion, Bella explores the gains that have been made in the protection of religious liberty for all and the work that lies ahead to ensure religious liberty is a right for all to enjoy. Bella hopes to develop her project during the upcoming academic year into a law review article focusing on religious liberty in incarceration.

### MENTOR:

Howie Slugh, Jewish Coalition for Religious Liberty





# Tomer Cherki

Northwestern University

**Tomer Cherki** is an aspiring scholar of philosophy of religion and modern Jewish thought, as well as a professional freelance researcher and translator, working internationally on documentary films dealing with Jewish history. Tomer graduated phi beta kappa and with highest honors from Northwestern University, majoring in Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and Jewish Studies. He is currently enrolled in an MA program in philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, after which he hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in philosophy.

## Jewish Pedagogy for Secular Jews

Tomer worked this summer with the Lobel Center for Classical Jewish Education to create curricula to can be used to teach great works of western literature and philosophy to students from orthodox Jewish families. The writers whose Tomer's work focused on included Marcus Cicero, Augustine of Hippo, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Tomer also investigated how the Classical Jewish education initiative can enrich the learning opportunities for non-Orthodox Jewish communities in America – communities that are under the greatest threat of losing their Jewish identities through assimilation. Having reviewed two Tikvah programs that are aimed at outreach to these communities (the Tikvah Scholars Program and the Millstone Scholars Program), Tomer will present ideas for expanding these efforts into a full primary and secondary education curriculum targeted at non-Orthodox Jews. This must go hand in hand with a push to create a new kind of secular-Jewish school system, around which Jewish communities can be formed.

## MENTOR:

Rabbi Mitchell Rocklin, Lobel Institute for Classical Jewish Education



# Gabriel Diamond

Yale University

**Gabriel Diamond** is a rising senior at Yale University studying political science and history. He is a member of the Alexander Hamilton Society, a Fellow for the Peace and Dialogue Leadership Initiative, and the Social Director for the William F. Buckley Jr. Program. Gabriel is also an incoming Vice-Chair for Hillel International's Israel Leadership Network and former President of Yale Friends of Israel. He has worked as a Research Intern for the Hudson Institute with their Initiative on American Energy Security, and he was a 2022 Political Studies Fellow at the Hudson Institute. This summer, Gabriel worked as an Intern in the office of Senator Tom Cotton.

## **Iran's Military and Political Influence in the Levant: The Relationship with Russia and Implications of Sanctions**

It is no secret that Iran has been involved in the Levant for quite some time. The Levant, referring to Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank, and Gaza, plays a critical role both in the Middle East and on the global stage. With a few thousand troops in Jordan and hundreds in Syria, as well as key bases, the United States has a direct military interest in the region. The unobstructed flow of oil and natural gas in the region remains a key component of American economic interests. Politically, the Levant serves as a testing ground for the influence of regional and global powers. Will the United States remain the dominant force in the region? Or will Iran take what it sees as its "rightful place" as the regional hegemon?

Iran has found a tremendous amount of success. Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, and Hamas in Gaza provide clear evidence. What will determine the future success of these proxy militias and potential new additions? Iran has long partnered with Russia in different areas of cooperation, but some argue this relationship has evolved in light of the war in Ukraine. A stronger partnership with Russia may be the key to unlocking Iranian hegemony, but it may also provide the U.S. with greater political backing to prevent it.

How exactly can the United States stop Iran from achieving its goals and destabilizing the Levant? Preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons is only one piece of the problem. Precision-guided munitions and drones or increasing political legitimacy among militant proxies must be factored in as well. Sanctions are often presented as the solution to these threats, but what form should these sanctions take? Is the United States doing enough in the region or should we be doing more?

### **PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

Office of Sen. Tom Cotton





# Natan Ehrenreich

Yeshiva University

**Natan Ehrenreich** is an incoming Fellow with the Public Interest Fellowship and a Summer Editorial Intern at *National Review*. A recent graduate of Yeshiva University, Natan served as a Straus Scholar at the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought. Originally from Cleveland, Ohio, Natan spent his freshman year of college studying in Yeshivat Orayta in Jerusalem. At YU, Natan served as chair of the AEI and Tikvah campus chapters and as a writing tutor. He is an alum of the Heritage Foundation's Summer Academy Program, the American Enterprise Institute's Summer Honors program, and the Hertog Foundation's Political Studies Program.

## A Summer Standing Athwart History

The 2016 rise of Donald Trump coincided with the resurgence of debates about the principles and role of the American conservative movement. When searching for clarity about how the American right can find its footing after this disruptive period, there is no better place to look than *National Review*, the flagship magazine of American conservatism founded by the legendary William F. Buckley. *National Review* kickstarted the political rise of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan under the banner of "fusionism," an ideology that sought to meld libertarian commitments to freedom with social conservative commitments to virtue and order. At *National Review*, Natan wrote opinion pieces on conservative affairs, politics, culture, and more, with a special focus on advocating for a revival of true fusionism that supports the American tradition of freedom based on the Judeo-Christian ethic. On topic such as Ron DeSantis' campaign, religious liberty, and God's role in conservative political theory, Natan advanced the mission of conservatism's flagship publication by championing a true fusionism in which virtue and freedom go hand in hand to form a political outlook that is broadly compelling, electorally appealing, and true to the principles that have long animated the American right.

## PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

National Review



# Ben Frogel

College and William and Mary

**Ben Frogel** hails from Westborough, Massachusetts, and is a rising junior at the College of William & Mary. Attempting to combine the theoretical with the practical, he double-majors in philosophy and public policy. He is the founder and President of the Theodore Roosevelt Society, a debating society that encourages students to think about the big questions of politics and philosophy. He also founded and serves as President of a Chabad chapter and is a leader of Jewish life on his campus. His writings have appeared in *The American Conservative*, and he has previously served as an Honors Scholar at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. He is currently a member of the Tikvah Collegiate Forum. He is passionate about philosophy's ability to help people live the good life.

## Virtue and Jewish Theopolitics

Ben's project focused on the tradition in philosophical ethics known as "virtue ethics" and how it relates to ideas about the human good in various Jewish philosophers.

Those who work within the virtue ethics tradition emphasize the importance of character traits: is an action done with kindness? Is it courageous to perform such and such an action? Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is in many ways the fountainhead for this tradition. This work is grounded in a model of human flourishing set in the Greek city-state and requires a particular model of human nature. The twelfth century Jewish thinker Moses Maimonides developed a project to accommodate Aristotelian ideas within the Jewish tradition. While he adopts Aristotle's view of human nature, his model of virtue ethics is grounded in Jewish autonomous communal life. Medieval interpreters will take Maimonides' project further, and modern Jewish thinkers will advance a still different conception of virtue.

Ben hopes to provide a compelling account of where Jewish theopolitical claims stand with regard to the contemporary discussion on virtue ethics. With the help of Dr. Alexander Green, Ben wrote weekly summaries of thinkers of importance to the Jewish virtue tradition. He examined the works of Aristotle, Maimonides, Gersonides, Joseph Albo, Baruch Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, and Alasdair Macintyre. He used Macintyre's method of resolving disagreement across traditions and his interpretation of Aristotle's ethics as grounded in the praxis of the Greek polis. In addition to his essays and his final presentation, Ben hopes to publish a review of a recent academic volume on Jewish virtue ethics, which Dr. Green edited.

## MENTOR:

Professor Alexander Green, SUNY Buffalo





# Michael Hammer

University of Michigan

**Michael Hammer** is a rising senior at the University of Michigan, studying Cognitive Science. He is from Lexington, South Carolina. In his adolescence, he attended eight different institutions (everything from an episcopal school to a Jewish boarding school with a semester abroad in Israel) before graduating from Academic Magnet High School in 2020. Since high school, Michael has been heavily involved in Tikvah education as a way of developing a philosophical perspective in line with Judaism. In particular, Michael participated in the Tikvah Scholars Program at Yale and the Tikvah Overseas Student Institute while studying in Yeshvat Orayta. After college Michael plans to obtain a master's degree in rabbinic literature from YU before ultimately attending law school.

## **Halacha as a conceptual guide for American Society: Marriage as a Case Study**

Under the mentorship of Professor Michael Broyde, Michael worked this summer on a law review article that addresses the fundamental question of marriage: is it a status or a contract? American law evolved from British common law, which, in turn, had its origins in Catholic law—a status-based system where the power to marry was vested in the state/church. However, in recent history, American law has shifted towards increased freedom to contract in marriages. Despite the clear positive motivations for such a shift, taking freedom to contract to its logical extreme could threaten the integrity of marriage as an institution of commitment. The Rabbinic system provides guidance to the American system on this issue. Despite a commitment to a contractual framework, Rabbinic marriage must maintain a distinct character to distinguish it from mere cohabitation contracts, preserved by the marital finance contract. Similar distinctions exist in American law. Therefore, American law has the opportunity and the impetus to imbue marriage with a distinct character separate from that of mere cohabitation. The paper largely focuses on the local issue of how halacha can augment our understanding of civil marriage law, but underlying this discussion is a more general moral: halacha is a powerful and influential system that deserves to be taken seriously. It is a system with real import for the future shaping of civil legal systems.

### **MENTOR:**

Rabbi Michael Broyde, Emory School of Law



# Yonatan Kurz

Yeshiva University

**Yonatan Kurz** is a recent graduate of Yeshiva University, where he majored in Political Science and Jewish Thought and Philosophy with a minor in Psychology and was a Scholar at the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought. Prior to his time at YU, Yonatan spent two years in Israel at Yeshivat Sha'alvim. He is passionate about the evolution and future of Orthodox Judaism in America, having served as an NCSY advisor, a legal research intern for the Orthodox Union's general counsel, and a participant at the American Enterprise Institute's Summer Honors Program. Next year, Yonatan will continue to pursue rabbinical ordination at RIETS and a master's degree at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies before eventually attending law school.

## **The Current and the TIDE: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's Pedagogical Legacy in the Age of Modernity**

Yonatan undertook two related projects this summer. In one, with the guidance of Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, he wrote a white paper surveying the landscape of Modern Orthodox high school Judaic curricula and religious programming, examining and identifying the distinctive values offered by each institution. Based on this research, he proposed a model that aims to enrich the religious and spiritual lives of Modern Orthodox high school students while remaining consistent with Tikvah's unique core values and principles. This will be presented at a meeting of Tikvah's working group on Classical Jewish Education.

In his other project, guided by Rabbi Dr. Meir Soloveichik, Yonatan analyzed Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's commentary on the idea of "Torah-im-Derekh-Eretz" as well as his biblical commentary related to the ideology, with a particular focus on his exegesis of the phrase "May God enlarge Japheth" found in Genesis 9:27. The paper explores how Hirsch was able to incorporate these ideas into his pedagogy and educational curriculum. The paper also examined other exegetical commentaries (especially Hirsch's contemporaries) on the concept of "Torah-im-Derekh-Eretz," and alternative movements and perspectives within the recent history of Jewish Classical Education as well. It then sought to examine the reception and evolution of Hirsch's ideology and its various offshoots, particularly the American iterations, before concluding with an assessment of the ideology's current position in today's society. Yonatan will present his findings and analysis in a formal presentation and plans on submitting a more expansive paper as his completed senior thesis.

### **MENTORS:**

Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, The Tikvah Fund and Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought





# Elishama Marmon

Yeshiva University

**Elishama Marmon** is an Honors student at Yeshiva University, double majoring in political science and mathematical economics with a minor in psychology. Elishama serves as the Chief Operating Officer of the Seforim Sale at YU, Managing Editor of the YU Commentator, and as Chief Justice on the student court. Additionally, he works as a Mashgiach in various restaurants in NYC and is a student in Rabbi Hershel Schachter's shiur.

## Religious Liberty and the Yeshiva University vs. Yeshiva University Pride Alliance Case

The YU v. YU Pride Alliance case is an interesting point of entry into current religious liberty jurisprudence. The case can serve as a springboard for a proper understanding of how religious liberty exists within the culture and how the law affects these kinds of cases. It is also a case where it is crucial to properly distinguish what the case is and is not about. This is a religious liberty case, and it's important to clarify that cases like this one are not, at the basic legal level, about the LGBTQ cause. Elishama argues that a failure to recognize this fact compromises the arguments of the dissent in the recent US Supreme Court case 303 Creative v. Elenis. Several SCOTUS justices, he argues, don't properly respect the presence of other factors in cases involving LGBTQ issues. A plethora of articles and commentary in the YU case indicate that this mistake is a common one. Elishama is writing several articles explaining the case, arguing for YU's side religiously, and explaining why it is essential to view the case through the religious liberty lens.

### MENTORS:

Rabbi Mark Gottlieb, Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought



# Gabriella Negrin

George Washington University

**Gabriella Negrin** is an rising Senior at George Washington University, majoring in Political Science with a focus in Public Policy and minoring in both Economics and Psychology. Gabriella has interned as a Development Intern for the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC-NY), helping them with their donor strategy and fundraising efforts. She is active in her GW for Israel Chapter and frequents the Chabad and Hillel on campus. She is also involved in her local DC Jewish community by serving as a Sunday School teacher and Hebrew tutor at a local synagogue. Gabriella was a co-President for her GW Tikvah Chapter this past Spring, participated in Tikvah's Campus Antisemitism Working Group last summer, and is a member of Tikvah's Collegiate Forum.

## U.S. Foreign Policy: Policy Recommendations for Countering CCP Influence in Key Regions

Gabriella spent her summer working at The Vandenberg Coalition in Washington, D.C., a nonprofit organization dedicated to counteracting both the progressive left's more anti-interventionist approach and the growing isolationist thinking within American conservatism. For her project, Gabriella contributed to the development of an event series for the Vandenberg Coalition focused on examining the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) Regional Influence in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, Latin America, South Asia, Africa, Space, and their overall impact on the U.S. economy. The program will consist of a series of pre-recorded panel discussions featuring experts on these specific topics, addressing how CCP influence in these regions poses a threat to U.S. strategic interests and proposing policy recommendations for the United States to counter their influence while strengthening critical ties around the world. Gabriella conducted extensive research on these specific topics and crafted discussion questions for each session. Ultimately, her research for the event series will culminate into several one-page policy memoranda offering background information and messaging on how the U.S. can best counter CCP's influence in these specific areas. The Vandenberg Coalition will use these as supplemental material for briefings with members of congress, candidates running for federal office, and their staff. Gabriella also helped Vandenberg update and revise their "Around the World" booklet that is targeted to political candidates and offers them concise and informative overviews on essential U.S. foreign policy issues.

### MENTORS:

Carrie Filipetti and Sydney Novak, The Vandenberg Coalition





# Eli Nirenberg

Washington University in St. Louis

**Eli Nirenberg** is a native of Indiana and a recent graduate from Washington University in St. Louis with a BA in Economics and Political Science. There, he was the President of the WashU Israel Public Affairs Committee (WIPAC), a student group promoting the bond between the US and Israel. Eli has previously worked on political campaigns and interned at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). He has also written various articles, including in the Washington University Political Review, Jewish News Syndicate, and the Times of Israel. Eli has also participated in Tikvah's Campus Antisemitism and US-Israel working groups, as well as the Tikvah Collegiate Forum. He has a passion for politics and a particular fascination with the US-Israel relationship. After attending yeshiva this fall, he aspires to find a career path where he can engage with both these interests.

## Russia, Ukraine, and the West: Finding Israel's Middle Path

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine War has captured much of the world's attention. Israel, which has largely remained neutral, is facing increasing pressure from its greatest ally, the United States, to step up support for Ukraine. However, due to Russia's importance in Syria and Iran, Israel is wary of how angering Russia would affect its security. Eli's project investigates whether Israel can find a middle path, increasing support for Ukraine to satisfy the US while avoiding a Russian backlash in Syria and Iran. Eli has engaged in vigorous research on Russian foreign policy, the war in Ukraine, American interests in the Middle East, the Israel-Iran rivalry, and other regional powers including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and China. Eli has been mentored by Harry Halem, who has worked for the Hudson Institute and the Yorktown Institute. Eli's presentation will detail the issues at play for Israel in the Russia-Ukraine War and highlight his proposed "middle path." He plans to release a publication shortly discussing his findings in depth.

### MENTOR:

Harry Halem, Yorktown Institute



# Alexandra Orbuch

Princeton University

**Alexandra Orbuch** is a Junior at Princeton University majoring in History with minors in Jewish Studies, Near Eastern Studies, History and the Practice of Diplomacy, and Creative Writing. She serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Princeton Tory*, the University's journal for conservative thought, and writes for a host of other campus publications including the *Princeton Legal Journal* and *Nassau Weekly*. Alexandra has also been published in national publications including the *Washington Free Beacon*, *The Algemeiner*, and *The Jewish Journal*. Alexandra's interests lie at the intersection between law and politics. In that vein, she previously interned in the offices of Sen. Tom Cotton and Rep. Kevin McCarthy and worked on the communications team for Gov. Ron DeSantis' most recent gubernatorial campaign. This summer, Alexandra is interning at The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, where she focuses on the legislative affairs and communications aspects of the firm's religious liberty work.

## An Examination of the Human Rights Campaign's Impact on Corporate Behavior and Religious Liberty

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is the largest LGBTQ lobbying organization in the world and a frequent critic of organizations like the Becket Fund and their engagement in court and advocacy for religious liberty in the academy and the public square. Alexandra conducted research on the HRC's lobbying activities, legislative priorities, and key projects with a particular focus on the organization's Corporate Equality Index (CEI). The CEI, which the HRC publishes annually, scores companies based on their stances on issues like racial equity and gender and sexuality. Alexandra explored how the CEI affects corporate behavior regarding the intersection of religious liberty and LGBTQ issues.

### PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

The Becket Fund





# Jacob Shofet

University of California, Los Angeles

**Jacob Shofet**, born and raised in Los Angeles, is an incoming law student at UC Berkeley. He studied political science at UCLA while representing 18,000 citizens to the LA City Council as a member of the South Robertson Neighborhood Council. As an Ibrahim Leadership Institute fellow, he translated Farsi and Hebrew while engaging with policy makers and religious leaders in Oman, Jordan, Israel, and Ramallah. Jacob served as a law clerk in the LA District Attorney's office, reviewing and organizing witness testimony to murder and gun charge prosecutions. He cares deeply about social work, working clinically as a behavior therapist for autistic children, coordinating programs for the non-profit Friendship Circle and connecting special-needs young adults to employment. Jacob likes to unwind by lap swimming, puzzling over Gemara and hiking SoCal's mountain ranges.

## **A Game Changing Threat: Precision Guided Munitions and the Sanctions Regime**

Historically, precision guided munitions have exclusively been found in the arsenals of state actors. Their sophistication runs from state-funded missiles fabricated from global supply chains to cheap "dumb" rockets retrofitted with a guidance system to armed drones. These weapons, capable of downing civilian aircraft or bombarding American military bases pose a new threat to Middle East stability and American security interests in the region. As the technology enabling their precision cheapens, Iranian patronage, by means of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, awards these systems to favored terror organizations and militias like Hezbollah.

Preventative air strikes can damage and degrade PGM sites but fall short of identifying and destroying each system while inviting retaliatory missile strikes. Jacob will be working with Dr. Jonathan Schanzer and other senior fellows at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies to identify and present options to expand the existing sanctions regime to focus on precision-guided munitions. As little research exists on the threat of PGMS given their novelty and even less American policy to address them, Jacob will examine arms treaties, executive orders, congressional legislation and supply chain networks to provide comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of sanctions policy options.

### **PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

Foundation for the Defense of Democracies



# Joseph Shumunov

Kalamazoo College

**Joseph Shumunov** is a rising junior at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, where he is majoring in Political Science and International Area Studies, concentrating in the Middle East. At Kalamazoo College, Joseph served as the vice president of Kalamazoo's Hillel, a tutor for refugee high school students, and an Interfaith Student Leader. Joseph is also a member of Kalamazoo's Model United Nations Club and will serve as the club's president next year. He recently completed a public affairs internship with the US Embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan, where he created content for their social media accounts and wrote a diplomatic cable on Iranian disinformation for Ambassador Litzenberger. He is also passionate about Jewish engagement with the Middle East, and dialogue with Muslim groups. After the fellowship, Joseph will begin his study abroad in Jordan to continue his intensive study of Arabic.

## Israel-Azerbaijan Relations: From "Oil for Arms" to Indispensable Regional Alliance

"Amidst the changing global dynamics following the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and realignments of major world powers, an unexpected friendship has emerged between Israel and the Greater Middle East. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Israel and Azerbaijan have maintained a unique and discrete partnership based upon historical ties and realist state interests. Historically, the partnership was facilitated by an "oil for arms" dialogue, where Azerbaijan exchanged its vast Caspian oil for Israel's weaponry, intelligence, and foreign investment. Both states also see Turkey and the West as partners, while viewing Iran as an existential threat. Pressures from Iran and the Arab world, however, kept their official relations mostly hidden until recently. The 2nd Karabakh War and the aftermath of the 2022 Russian invasion led to a proliferation of diplomatic relations, culminating in the opening of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Tel Aviv. In other words, a once discreet partnership is accelerating into a fully diplomatic, multifaceted alliance.

Joseph aims to delve into the past, present, and future of Israel-Azerbaijan relations amidst this evolving world order, exploring the factors that restricted openness in their relationship, the reasons behind the deepening of ties post-2022, and the historical context of their covert partnership. He will create a comprehensive report of their nearly 30-year long as a helpful reference for analysts on this growing Muslim-Jewish relationship. Through an op-ed article, he intends to shed light on this overlooked regional alliance, and its recent developments.

Alongside this work, Joseph assisted Hudson Institute Senior Fellow Dr. Michael Doran as a research intern, providing analyses on Russian-language media coverage in Azerbaijan, and a timeline on Azerbaijani relations with Iran.

### MENTOR:

Michael Doran, The Hudson Institute





**Ilay Yunayev**  
Shalem College

**Ilay Yunayev**, a Shalem College undergraduate in Jerusalem, studies philosophy and Jewish thought. Before IDF service, he spent a year studying great books and Jewish studies in the Golan Heights. As a command & control systems operator in Battalion 50 during his military service, he remains active in the army reserves. Post-military, he worked as an executive assistant in a bio-cosmetic company

### **Plato and Israeli High Schools: “Will Two Walk Together, Except They Be Agreed?”**

The quality of High school education is at a very low point in many places around the world. To put it plainly: students don’t know much, and not enough people see this as a problem. In Israel, the situation is particularly acute since the Ministry of Education has central control over most schools and is constantly lowering the standards. Translating and adapting Classical Jewish Education curricula developed by the Loeb Institute for Israeli students is an urgent task for the future of Israeli society. This summer, Ilay worked with a team of educators who are creating curricula to bring the best of Western philosophy and literature to Jewish schools in America. His challenge was to translate study guides and other materials into Hebrew and to help adjust the focus and presentation of these guides to be maximally effective for an Israel audience.

Ilay also participated in a working group on Jewish Classical Education and Liberal Learning, hearing presentations on the challenges facing American colleges and writing a reflection essay on how the unique approach to higher education offered by his own college, Shalem College, might inform Tikvah in its efforts to reform higher education and even, perhaps, to create a school of its own

### **MENTOR:**

Rabbi Mitchell Rocklin, Lobel Institute for Classical Jewish Education

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