It is our pleasure to introduce the sixth edition of the Israel Institute Magazine. This new issue, “Israel at 70,” celebrates the modern state’s milestone 70th anniversary by looking over the shoulder of Israeli history and unpacking its achievements, challenges, and possibilities.

The Israel Institute’s president, Amb. Itamar Rabinovich, introduces this magazine’s theme by chronicling Israel’s remarkable record of successes — its lights — and its looming domestic and international challenges, or shadows. Another Institute-written piece follows the sabbatical year of one of our recent grant recipients, whose travel to and experience in Israel was made possible by a Faculty Development Grant. Lastly, this edition’s feature article was written by our very own executive director, Dr. Ari Roth, who shares his insights on Israel at this important juncture in history.

Additionally, this issue contains two exceptional pieces by Israel Institute scholars. Post-Doctoral Fellow Nechumi Yaffe takes readers behind the headlines of Israel’s controversial ultra-Orthodox population, while Visiting Professor Rami Zeedan shares his work on the little-known Israel Defense Forces’ Minorities Unit.

Finally, this magazine goes beyond reflections on Israeli history and looks back at the happenings of our 2017-2018 Institute-supported academic and artistic communities. We had a conversation with Amb. Reda Mansour, who became an Israel Institute visiting faculty member at Emory University in between his diplomatic commitments, and with acclaimed Israeli author Ayelet Gundar-Goshen about her most recent work, Waking Lions. As always, our News and Notes section provides an overview of what our grantees and the greater Israel Studies community have been up to this past academic year, across the United States and around the world.

Thank you for your interest in the work of the Israel Institute. We are proud to share with you the expertise of our affiliated community and their work about Israel around the world.

The Israel Institute Team
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On the cover: Illustration by Neil Webb

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In May 2018, Israel celebrated its 70th anniversary. Throughout the past seven decades, the newborn state registered a remarkable record of impressive achievements. In the beginning, the legitimacy and survivability of the tiny fledgling state — 660,920 Jews and an Arab minority of 145,080 in 1948 (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics) — were questioned by many around the world. In 2018, Israel is a powerful country boasting a strong military, successful economy, and thriving culture.

Israel has survived several wars with its Arab neighbors, who became persuaded that their erstwhile enemy is apparently invincible and that it was in the interest of most, though not all, to accept it de facto if not de jure. The young state also managed to go through these wars and rely on a powerful military without cracking its democratic political system. That system was also able to absorb massive waves of immigration, and go through transformations of its citizenry, without damaging its political institutions. Bearing in mind that most Israelis immigrated from non-democratic countries, this achievement is even more remarkable.

Further, with origins as a poor country dependent on foreign aid, Israel turned into an Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member. Its high-tech industry is a striking success story, with Israeli advanced technologies leading the way in several areas, ranging from cyber to biomedicine to sustainability. Israel has also produced numerous world-renowned novelists and is known for its innovative dance and choreography, vibrant film industry, and even its diverse jazz scene.

But, there are also shadows. Israel is still an “unfinished state;” it has no final borders and has yet to come to terms with the Palestinian issue. For as long as the larger Palestinian issue goes unresolved, Israel’s relationship with its own Arab citizens will not be fully settled. Israel is still “Jewish and Democratic” but it can hardly afford to keep these issues pending for an indefinite period. Failure to settle the Palestinian issue emboldens Israel’s remaining enemies, Iran and other radical Islamists, and plays into the hands of anti-Semitic elements, thereby undermining the country’s legitimacy.

On the domestic front, Israel has yet to find a way to turn its ultra-Orthodox community into a full-fledged partner in the national project and to build a more equitable socio-economic system. In a once socialist country, the current gaps between the rich and poor are unacceptable. Finally, Israel’s political system needs to be mended. Some of its political problems are not unique to Israel but are shared by other Western democracies: good people shy away from entering politics; political money leads to corruption; and new social media are transforming the nature of politics (and not necessarily for the better). As Israel marks its 70th anniversary, these are all significant shadows but, all told, the light cast by the endurance of statehood and its remarkable achievements is inspiring.
Teaching Diplomacy

Last semester, a former Israeli ambassador to Brazil and Ecuador brought his real-world diplomatic experience into Emory classrooms.

**IIM:** Welcome back to Atlanta! What motivated you to return to the United States as a visiting professor?

**MANSOUR:** During my diplomatic career, I have been a guest lecturer at more than 50 American universities in over a dozen states. I have always wondered what it would be like to teach my own course and have more in-depth discussions with students about the Middle East, Israel, society, and diplomacy. This year, I got my wish with the Israel Institute and it has been a wonderful and enriching experience.

**IIM:** Throughout your diplomatic career, you’ve kept returning to the classroom: from Harvard and the University of Haifa to earn several degrees, to the Israel National Defense College and Emory to teach, to dozens of universities around the globe to deliver guest lectures. What keeps bringing you back to the classroom?

**MANSOUR:** I have always had a passion for academic studies and research. My plan before becoming a diplomat was to have an academic career, and I was on track to becoming a Middle East Studies professor at the University of Haifa. Even though I chose to become a diplomat, I tend to take time off from my diplomatic career to return to academia every eight to ten years. We need to step outside of our comfort zones every once in a while, and I recommend this to every professional in any career. The classroom gives us the opportunity to reflect on our experiences and reevaluate the way we do things. It has become crucially important in our dynamic world to catch up on new innovations and developments in our fields.

**IIM:** You taught two courses last fall, one on Israeli society and another on Israeli diplomacy. What were some student impressions from the courses? Were they surprised by your unique background as a Druze citizen of Israel?

**MANSOUR:** There are two “capital D” questions in my life: Druzism and Diplomacy! My Druze identity is very intriguing to my students. We are one of the smallest ethnic groups in the world and most people do not know anything about us. I use it as a gateway to the diversity of Israeli society. Most people around the world, including in Israel, categorize Israeli society into Arabs and Jews. Very few people are aware of the many groups covered by these labels, and even fewer people can teach a course that reviews all the groups under these umbrellas: Druze, Bedouin, Baha’i, Ahmadi, Sufi, Sunni, Christian Orthodox, Maronite, Armenian, and Circassian. This is just a partial list and we haven’t even begun to speak about the Jews in Israel.
Israeli diplomacy is a topic that is a big unknown. Foreign services, unlike militaries, are not used to documenting their organizational memory or their professional methods of operation. You can find memoirs of ambassadors and foreign ministers but those are personal and anecdotal. I designed a course that is historical, from Herzl to Peres, but also one that teaches the different disciplines of diplomacy: Classic, Public, Cultural, Economic, Developmental, Humanitarian, Digital, and more.

IIM: How has your experience serving as an ambassador shaped your approach to teaching and leading discussions about Israel?

MANSOUR: When you have such a long career talking about Israel in many campuses around the world, it becomes easier for you to create an open environment for your students so that they feel comfortable asking politically sensitive questions. Another aspect that surprised me was the thirst I sensed in my undergraduate students for practical tools for their futures. Since diplomacy is a field that touches many professional fields, I presented the issues through the analysis of complex systems. The class became a case study for understanding any future workplace they may be in after they graduate.

IIM: The theme of this magazine edition is “Israel at 70,” where we’re looking back at important changes in the state since its founding. What have been some of the major changes in Israeli diplomacy since its establishment in 1948?

MANSOUR: There have been three major historic changes in Israeli diplomacy. The first in 1977, when the diplomacy of regional wars ended and a new era of the diplomacy of peace began. This meant that public diplomacy became as important as classic diplomacy. The second was in the 1990s, when Israeli diplomacy became more representative of Israel’s multi-ethnic society. Lastly, gender equality in our diplomatic service in the beginning of the 21st century. Today, we are opening cadets’ courses with an equal number of men and woman.

IIM: With the proliferation of mass media and social media, can you share some insights into how diplomats balance the 24-hour news cycle with their work to achieve longer-term goals?

MANSOUR: Mass media and social media are changing everything we know about diplomacy and have also upended every other field. Diplomacy has gone digital to keep up with the 24/7 news cycle, and it is challenging because we need to react to developments as they happen live. However, it also gives us new tools to reach out to the public and overcome the budgetary restraints that are common to government agencies.

Ambassadors can have their own Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages, and show their country and people in a more personal way. In big countries like Brazil, where I was ambassador, I could reach hundreds of thousands of people with a single post. That is unprecedented in diplomatic history.

IIM: One lesser-known fact about you is that you are an acclaimed poet! Do you consider poetry an act of diplomacy?

MANSOUR: Some people say that “poetry is everything that is lost in translation,” which implies that poetry is local and contains many nuances that can be hard for people from other cultures to understand. But I think that poetry is a great tool for diplomacy because, in both fields, we are dealing with the “human condition.” All the poets of the world try to touch the same basic themes of our life: life and death, love and hate. All diplomats need to understand these universal themes to connect to people from around the world.
Anniversaries are opportune times for scholars to reflect on and grapple with the legacy of historical figures and events. It is not an accident that the past year has heralded conference after conference about “Israel at 70,” where the weight of the past continues to challenge the present. Seventy years on, Israel Studies experts find themselves in the spotlight, as interest in Israel from all quarters intensifies. It is against this background that the Israel Institute takes pride in supporting a wide range of scholars who foster the study of modern Israel, communicate knowledge to eager student and adult learners, and probe hard questions about — and offer thoughtful answers to — the complexities of modern Israel.

Israel’s 70th anniversary is, of course, a time to celebrate all that has been accomplished since its founding in 1948. The existential wars of its creation are past. Its economy has transitioned from a hybrid socialist economy to one of the most developed economies in the world, with an especially influential tech sector. Israel’s military prowess has vouchsafed its security and, even as very real threats to Israel continue to hover, Israel’s ability to meet those threats is not in doubt. The field of Israel Studies, and academia at large, has a tremendous role to play in marking these achievements.

At the same time, there are also hard questions to grapple with that cast the celebration of Israel’s accomplishments under
a long shadow. Beyond Israel’s unresolved conflict with the Palestinians and the unsustainable structure of Israeli governance over vast portions of a non-citizen Palestinian population, the maturing state faces a number of other challenges rooted in its early days.

HARD QUESTIONS REVISITED

Scholars of history frequently observe a recurring pattern among states in their early years: states ration their finite resources to narrowly focus on existential priorities, leaving other important issues for later days. This results in a series of political compromises during a state’s birth that do not always comport fully with the stated ideals of that nation (a notable example being the tolerance of slavery in the liberty-seeking United States). As states become more established, they begin to contend with these languishing tensions, many of which have become more acute with the passage of time. For Israel, this pattern manifests during the period between 1948 and 1973 — a period that can be considered a “grace period” for Israeli domestic politics. The need to deal with a sequence of unending emergencies during these early years kept the building pressures of founding compromises tamped down. These compromises included the ambiguous resolutions to questions of the role of religion and state; the open question of whether Israel’s territorial aspirations were satisfied by the partition of Palestine or by the armistice of 1949; uncertainty over what the “Jewish” in “Jewish State” meant; and, most fraught, questions on the full implications of the notion that non-Jewish citizens of the state would enjoy full equality.

By 1973, the state’s acute emergencies were effectively over. Arab bids to remove Israel by force, in 1948 and 1967, had been defeated. Beyond this, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War showed that even when caught by surprise, Israel could both protect itself and inflict enormous costs on its rivals. Consequently, since 1973, Israel has not faced an existential and coordinated adversary. Of course, the threat of terrorism and asymmetric warfare poses a continuing challenge to Israel’s security, as does the possibility that the hegemonic and nuclear aspirations of Iran could one day reintroduce the specter of annihilation to Israel’s security horizon. These
notwithstanding, Israel today possesses an established infrastructure and qualitative military edge that allow it to grapple with its security challenges from a position of relative strength — a stark contrast to the hardscrabble but still underdeveloped army of its early days.

Likewise, other emergency pressures that faced Israel in its early decades beyond the security arena no longer pose the threats they once did. By the ’70s, the giant waves of immigration that had trebled Israel’s population in its first decade were absorbed, albeit imperfectly, and the state emerged from the economic uncertainty of its early years. Israel’s fragile political structures proved their resilience and durability when the founding party fell from grace in 1977 — after nearly 30 years controlling the government — and an orderly transition of power took place. As these immediate pressures have eased, Israelis find themselves more available to reconsider issues previously on the back burner.

CHALLENGES AT 70
As Israel passes its 70th anniversary, a number of political challenges — many with roots in Israel’s founding compromises — have gained prominence in the domestic discourse. The sacred “status quo” agreement between Israel’s first prime minister and religious leaders in Israel, which has governed religion and state in Israel, is fraying as religious populations grow and increasingly demand a larger footprint for religion in both the public and private lives of Israelis. Secular Israelis often find themselves fighting the phenomenon of “religionization,” or Hadata — systemic efforts to align Israel’s relationship to Judaism along traditional and legal lines. In the past, struggles over religion and state under the status quo were limited to specific areas; the sphere of influence of religious authorities extended only to areas of public behavior, Sabbath laws, dietary laws for public institutions, Jewish burial, and “personal status” issues such as marriage and divorce. More recent clashes between religious and secular involve the expansion and institutionalization of Orthodox Judaism beyond the purview of the original status quo. In particular, these are initiatives that prioritize religious Jewish content in state educational curricula as manifested, for example, by debated initiatives of the Ministry of Education to prioritize religious as opposed to cultural Judaism among school-age children.

Along with Hadata is the growth of the Haredi segment of Israeli society. At the time of Israel’s founding, significant accommodations were made to the ultra-Orthodox sector of Israeli society, providing both exemptions from military service and generous social benefits to what was, at the time, a very small proportion of Israel’s citizenry. As the share of Haredim in Israeli society has grown, the moral and economic consequences of those founding compromises are driving a schism in Israel’s Jewish population, as resentment among secular Israelis has fueled the rise of powerful political factions demanding “shared burdens,” which is code for ending the exemptions and financial subsidies offered to Israel’s Haredi Jews.

The Palestinian citizens of Israel, sometimes referred to as Israel’s Arab minority, are also highlighting the fault lines of Israel’s founding compromises. While the
unfortunately prolonged period of Israeli military government over its own citizens ended in 1966, it is only in the last decade-and-a-half that Israelis have been forced to reckon with the implications of the fact that fully a quarter of Israel’s population are not Jews. In both absolute and relative numbers, the share of Arabs as citizens of Israel raises questions about when the rights of such a sizable minority make the ethnic and cultural priority of the majority less reconcilable with Israel’s stated liberal political values and commitment to a just equality. As Israel’s non-Jewish citizens have sought greater integration into Israeli society, they too are wrestling with what living in the national homeland of the Jewish people is supposed to mean for citizens who are, by definition, left out of that nationality.

Through the courts, Palestinian citizens of Israel have helped provide answers to what the rights of the minority are in an ethnic majority state. The assertion of their citizen rights, however, has angered some on the Israeli right who struggle to accept broader Arab integration into Israeli society, an integration that can be seen in the ever-larger number of Arab citizens enrolled in Israeli universities or working in mixed Jewish-Arab workplaces.

No comment on Israel at 70 would be complete without referencing the tension between European Jews, who, for a very long time, enjoyed political, socio-economic, and cultural hegemony, and Jews from the Arab and Muslim world, who are numerically superior in Israel. Intra-Jewish ethnic relations have been strained since Israel’s establishment, when Mizrahim who arrived in Israel in the 1950s were sent to transit camps, ma’dborot, for nearly a decade, while Ashkenazi immigrants were treated to preferential absorption conditions. Sixty years later, helped by increased rates of ethnic intermarriage among Israeli Jews, Mizrahi Jews make up about half of Israel’s Jewish population. However, they are still proportionally underrepresented in all sectors, including the government, military, and academia, and experience poverty at a vastly higher rate than Jews of European descent.

Finally, and perhaps the greatest unresolved issue that discomfits the state, is whether the territorial aspirations of the Zionist movement were fully realized by the terms of the 1949 armistice. For those who believe that they were, the lands
acquired during the 1967 Six-Day War are valued as strategic assets but, fundamentally, are not seen as destined to be held as sovereign territory in perpetuity. As such, those lands can, and perhaps even should, be traded back to others in exchange for peace if certain parameters to guarantee Israel’s security can be met. This, in and of itself, is no small task, and it is further complicated by the ideological considerations of those for whom the acceptance of the 1947 Partition Plan and, later, of the 1949 Armistice was a bitter pill to swallow. For this latter group, the territorial aspirations of Zionism are more fully realized if the lands in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are integrated into the State of Israel. The aspiration to do so, both by a process of transferring civilian Jewish populations into those areas and by formal legal methods, has raised complicated questions about the legality of such settlement activity and who should be the sovereign in that area. However, the most complicated question deriving from this issue involve the tensions inherent in the rights of the resident Palestinian population of those areas. Full enfranchisement of the Palestinians means a numerical balance between Jews and Arabs, with the implication being that it will be difficult to sustain Israel as a Jewish state while still operating as a democracy.

**FOSTERING IN-DEPTH PERSPECTIVES**

The tensions engendered by the increasingly acute fault lines discussed above have surprised many Americans who are interested in Israel, particularly among the student-age generation. The preconceptions of Israel that were long held in the Jewish American imagination have been irrevocably challenged as these fault lines have become more fully revealed. Questions surrounding the legal, cultural, and political place of Israel’s non-Jewish citizens are now more obvious, in part because more student visitors are engaging with Israel’s Arab citizens in universities and other shared spaces than ever before. To be clear, these challenges have long been understood by Israelis. However the Jewish Diaspora is only now beginning to engage in Israeli domestic issues as external existential crises become less potent and Israel-Diaspora engagement takes on different forms.

The impact of these challenges, coupled with their increasing prominence within Jewish American conversations, is fueling the rise of a robust field of Israel Studies, ranging from books to classes to lectures to community events, to help learners sift through the complex reality that is Israel at 70.

“The impact of Israel’s challenges, coupled with their increasing prominence within Jewish American conversations, is fueling the rise of a robust field of Israel Studies... to help learners sift through the complex reality that is Israel at 70.”

students to aspects of Israel like its food culture and towering talent in dance. We also take pride in supporting the publication of new books, from the definitive and weighty tomes on Israel’s political system to more accessible texts on Israeli culture.

Deliberation on Israel’s successes and founding tensions contributes to an expansion of the collective base of knowledge about modern Israel. Those who participate in the scholarly discourse about modern Israel benefit from reflecting upon the canon and wrestling with new legacies and narratives. At this important juncture, the Institute reiterates its commitment to support teaching about modern Israel, the communication of complex ideas about Israel with academic integrity, and the generation of careful, detailed, and informed scholarship about modern Israel through rigorous inquiry, at 70 and beyond.
When Dr. Sean McFate was approached by an Israeli security expert, following his talk on American grand strategy at the National Defense University (NDU), he did not expect the conversation to lead to an extended research trip to Israel. Dr. McFate — a graduate of elite U.S. Army training programs, a former private military contractor in Africa, and an author of both fiction and non-fiction — teaches courses on American warfare and grand strategy at NDU and Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service. Sparked by that initial conversation and enabled by an Israel Institute Faculty Development Grant, McFate will expand his course content to include Israeli strategic culture next year. He is currently using the grant to spend a sabbatical year doing research at Israel’s National Defense College in order to develop a comparative graduate course on Israeli and American ways of war.

His sabbatical year in Israel has afforded him a range of new experiences, including going to Jerusalem for the first time with a group of colleagues from the National Defense College. During this visit, he had the opportunity to interview leading military actors and political leaders, among them Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, as he grappled with the question: “How do you secure one of the most geopolitically-fraught cities on Earth?”

BY NOA LEVANON KLEIN

Dr. Sean McFate visits the Temple Mount with the Israel National Defense College on his sabbatical in Israel.
“It’s quite something to be immersed in the [Israeli] mix. You can’t get that in libraries. It’s an eye-opening experience. I hope to be able to bring that into the classroom when I teach this course.”

According to McFate, learning about Israeli strategic culture is crucial for an American security studies scholar because the United States, following its invasion of Iraq in 2003, is doing some “soul searching.” Given Israel’s extensive internal reckoning in the past decade, following the Second Lebanon War, “it’s a really opportune time to be in Israel and get an Israeli perspective on power and strategy,” he said.

Living in Israel for the year has familiarized him with the country in ways only immersion can provide. “As an American, I’m struck by how Israel is sometimes portrayed in the media because it’s not how Israelis view themselves, to say the least. And it’s quite something to be immersed in the mix. You can’t get that in libraries. It’s an eye-opening experience. I hope to be able to bring that into the classroom when I teach this course.”

McFate is the 17th professor to have been awarded an Israel Institute Faculty Development Grant. The purpose of the grant program is to assist professors who have the interest and desire, but not yet the expertise, to teach courses about modern Israel. In addition to making travel to Israel possible, it allows established faculty members at American and European universities to hone language skills, hire a translator, or pursue any other activity that facilitates adding Israel-focused courses to their regular teaching portfolios.

“Faculty Development Grants are a unique and exciting initiative,” said Program Director Dr. Erika Falk. “They provide tenured faculty with the opportunity to develop new courses about Israel, in any discipline, and add them to their regular teaching rotation. As such, this program targets the strongest faculty members across the nation and ensures, with minimum investment, long-term stability of courses about Israel.”

“The grant program is designed to be flexible so that the funding can go toward buying out teaching time, supporting trips to Israel, learning Hebrew, or whatever the faculty member needs to develop a new course about Israel. The program is structured to enable faculty members to customize their learning and tailor new areas of expertise to their existing knowledge bases,” Falk explained.

To see the full roster of Faculty Development Grant recipients or to learn how to apply for a grant, visit https://israelinstitute.org/programs/mid-career-faculty-development.

### Faculty Development Grants

These grants assist professors who have the interest and desire, but not yet the expertise, to teach courses about modern Israel. They have been awarded to professors at many leading universities in the United States and Europe. Among them:

**PROF. SAMUEL RASCOFF**, of NYU’s School of Law, used his grant to develop a course on comparative national security law in Israel and the United States.

**PROF. STEVEN DAVID** developed a political science course at the Johns Hopkins University, entitled, “Israel’s Future: Threats and Opportunities.”

**PROF. LIAH GREENFELD**, of Boston University, developed a social science course on “A Democracy in the Middle East: Israel as a Case for Comparative Analysis.”

**PROF. JANICE ROSS** developed a Stanford University course on “Dance and Conflict: Israel, the Middle East, and Beyond.” She has also incorporated Israel as a case study into additional dance courses.
The IDF’s Minorities Unit

A brief history of local non-Jewish infantry in the Israel Defense Forces

BY DR. RAMI ZEEDAN

As early as the 1948 War, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) included among its troops local non-Jewish fighters who were part of various infantry units. During the war, the IDF decided to consolidate all the non-Jewish units into one Minorities Unit. The new unit included four parts: the Druze Battalion, which was based on one company of local Druze, mostly from Mt. Carmel, and a second company of Syrian and Lebanese Druze deserters from the Arab Liberation Army; the Bedouin Company of the Palmach; the Circassian Company of the “Golani Brigade;” and a Christian platoon.

In my research, I examined the establishment and history of this Minorities Unit, including the recruitment of the Bedouins, Circassians, and Druze into the IDF, as well as the activities of the unit from the 1948 War through the Suez Crisis. Until the late
“A more developed version of this unit, the Sword Battalion, is well known as Unit 299. This Druze unit participated in many military operations and wars and, within the army, was highly respected for its efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out its missions.”

1950s, the duties of the Minorities Unit were primarily focused on protecting Israel’s facilities and borders. They rarely participated in planned attacks as a unit. Instead, Minorities Unit soldiers were usually assigned to such military activities with other Jewish-majority units. However, the Minorities Unit made a significant contribution to Israeli security in two major ways. First, the veterans and former soldiers from the unit helped establish the Israeli Border Police in 1953. Secondly, trackers from the Minorities Unit developed the Israeli method of tracking. It was used for several decades until it was further developed by the Bedouin Trackers Unit, a new unit established in the 1970s.

In my book, I also discuss Israeli policies concerning the recruitment of minorities to the IDF. A significant part of the book is dedicated to the process that led to the conscription of Druze youth from 1956 and the Circassians from 1958. It is noteworthy that the other Arabs in Israel were excluded from this policy.

This Minorities Unit has transformed several times; however, the turning point was in the 1950s, when it became a de facto Druze unit as many Bedouins were discharged from their military service. A more developed version of this unit, the Sword Battalion, is well known as Unit 299. This Druze unit participated in many military operations and wars and, within the army, was highly respected for its efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out its missions.

In 2011, the army began to consider dismantling the battalion, after army data showed that most new Druze recruits preferred to serve in regular elite units (despite rejection by many Druze leaders). This marked a reversal of the 1948 decision to channel all minorities into one consolidated military unit that, ultimately, had allowed for more control over them. In 2015, the IDF officially disbanded Unit 299, thereby ending the segregation and integrating new Druze recruits into regular field units and, more so, the larger IDF. Other Arab minorities continue to serve in the IDF on a voluntary basis, including Christians and Muslims (most of whom are Bedouin). However, most Bedouins still serve within the Bedouin Trackers Unit. Despite this, many see the desegregation of the Druze unit as a reflection of the high level of integration that the Druze have achieved within the IDF and, more broadly, within Israeli society. ▲

Dr. Rami Zeedan

Rami Zeedan is a political scientist and historian, most recently serving as a 2017-2018 Israel Institute Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. His research interests include Israeli politics, Middle Eastern politics, the history of modern Israel, ethnic politics, urban affairs and local governments, and public opinion. Between 2014-2016, Dr. Zeedan held a two-year fellowship for outstanding post-doctoral research from the Council for Higher Education in Israel, while holding a Taub-Schusterman fellowship with New York University, followed by a Fritz Thyssen fellowship with the Zentrum Moderner Orient (Germany). He has also taught at the Open University of Israel, New York University, and at the Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee. He holds a Ph.D. in Israel studies from the University of Haifa.

One-and-a-half months after I arrived at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the saga of the Mehadrin bus lines burst into the public consciousness. Mehadrin buses were a type of bus line in Israel that mostly passed through and between the ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods in Jerusalem. From 1997 until 2011, these bus lines enforced gender segregation, where the men sat in front and the women in the back. The newspaper headlines screamed that the Haredim, or ultra-Orthodox community, and their extreme interpretation of Judaism were taking over the State of Israel.

For me, a Haredi Hasidic woman, this was the first time I had experienced such a wave of animosity, which was even more pronounced at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During the controversy, as the only Haredi Hasidic woman on a very secular campus, I felt all the anger being targeted toward the Haredi community.
“Haredi society is a modern, 19th century creation that developed in response to several societal changes, including enlightenment and the Haskalah movement, that swept Jews away from religiosity and tradition in favor of modern secular culture.”

Haredi society is a modern, 19th century creation that developed in response to several societal changes, including enlightenment and the Haskalah movement, that swept Jews away from religiosity and tradition in favor of modern secular culture. In an attempt to stop the process of secularization, many rabbis chose to segregate themselves from the secular world as a strategy against modernization. The dominant figure of this separatist movement was the Hungarian Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1792-1839), who is also known by his main work Hatam Sofer; in 1867, his community was legally recognized as a separate Jewish stream. Following his model, several communities throughout Eastern Europe adopted a lifestyle that refrained from fully integrating into the modern world, including the prominent rabbis — some of Rabbi Sofer’s disciples — that led the Ashkenazi Old Yishuv in Jerusalem. Their isolationist position and the pursuit of “walls of Holiness” between the secular state and the community established what would become known as Haredi society. This segregated lifestyle encompassed all aspects of life, from the formation of a new ideology to segregated residential neighborhoods, school systems, and dress codes. In a way, segregation has become not only a means to an end but also a central aspect of the community’s identity. But, recently, the Haredi community has started to branch out, albeit in a nuanced and complex manner.

The Haredi community of today is transitioning from a small and marginal minority in Israel to a substantial minority with a very strong presence in Israeli politics and media. Estimated at ten percent of Israel’s population (2018), forecasts suggest an incremental growth of up to 25 percent of Israel’s population by 2048. Together with these dramatic increases, profound changes are also occurring within the ultra-Orthodox population. As many Haredim go through a deep process of integration and identification with the secular state, the community is diversifying and becoming less homogeneous. A growing number of people in the community are seeking to take on an active role in shaping Israel’s destiny.

The data suggest that major changes have already taken place within the community. Over the past eight years, there has been a sharp increase (146 percent) in the number of Haredim joining higher education institutions and a 20 percent growth in the number of Haredim joining the labor market. Internet usage has expanded, rising from 28 percent in 2008 to 43 percent in 2016. The most surprising figure is an increase of 34 percent of Haredim joining military and civic services in 2016.

These changes have been primarily caused by two factors. One factor is the extreme poverty experienced by many Haredim. A majority of the community’s
families (54 percent) live below the poverty line and are the poorest segment of Israeli society. The second factor is the influence of the Internet, which has succeeded in undermining the “walls of Holiness” that had been studiously erected. Exposure to the Internet and new media in general has exposed Haredim to alternative information, opinions, and ways of thinking.

If segregation, a value at the core of Haredi identity, is losing, how will Haredim maintain their distinctive identity while integrating into secular society? More so, are poverty and integration related and, if so, how? In a comprehensive study, I examined whether the threat of integration has pushed group members to glorify poverty as a strategy for identity management. In other words, does glorifying poverty help make the ultra-Orthodox feel unique and distinct? Research in social psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1978) predicts that when a threat to the uniqueness of one’s group is felt, members of the in-group will accentuate their distinctiveness by emphasizing other dimensions of their identity that help create a distinction between them and any out-groups. Inspired by this theory, my research has since examined how Haredi integration influences their own social perceptions.

Across two experiments, my colleagues and I manipulated the “distinctiveness threat,” which involved creating a story that threatened the unique identity of the group. The study was done amongst the Haredi community. In the course of the study, participants read a fictional newspaper article describing that a large number of Haredim were joining the general labor force and the Israel Defense Forces. The article concluded by quoting authoritative sources predicting that this trend will keep increasing until Haredim completely integrate into Israeli society. We found that Haredim who were exposed to this article managed their threatened identities by glorifying poverty in the community and reconstructing it as a positive virtue and as a sign of spiritual supremacy; this was especially the case among Haredim who strongly identify with their Haredi identity. The implication of this study is that the recent escalation of extremism that has been displayed by some Haredim, like the creation of the Meaherin bus lines or by the blockage of roads in large-scale protests, are a counterreaction to the integration processes phenomenon.

Back to my own experience at the Hebrew University: if public resistance to the Haredi community and its values were to happen today, there would be hundreds of ultra-Orthodox students to explain that the growing Haredi community isn’t one black monolithic entity but, rather, it contains many shades of black and, more so, many shades of colors. ▲

Changes in Haredi Society in Percentages

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<th>2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Military and Civilian Service</td>
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<td>Internet Usage</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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The Israel Institute speaks with acclaimed Israeli author Ayelet Gundar-Goshen about her new book and recent teaching residency at San Francisco State University.

**IIM:** What is the significance of the title, *Waking Lions*?

**GUNDAR-GOSHEN:** As a psychologist and a writer, I am interested in the hidden predator that lays inside all of us. The protagonist of my novel is an Israeli doctor, who thinks of himself as a good man. Like most of us, he has a very solid concept of what kind of person he is — a good guy, not a predator. If Eitan was asked during a dinner with friends, “Do you think you’d be able to hit someone and leave him on the side of the road?,” he’d probably say, “No.” But when he does it — hitting an unnamed refugee after a hospital shift — he’s facing the decision and he makes that choice. It is then that the lion is awakened.

**IIM:** Your novel introduces us to the stratified nature of contemporary Israeli society, detailing the experiences of Eritrean refugees, Bedouin Arabs, and even Mizrahi Jews vis-à-vis their Ashkenazi counterparts. With these nuances in mind, what did you most want readers to take away from *Waking Lions*?

**GUNDAR-GOSHEN:** I prefer people to learn about themselves, rather than about “the Israeli people.” Whenever we read a novel written about a place very far away, we may think it’s about “them” — the Arabs, the refugees. But it’s always about “us.” I wanted readers to finish the book with this question: had it happened to you — driving home to your family late at night,
hitting an unnamed refugee — are you absolutely sure you wouldn’t flee?

GUNDAR-GOSHEN: After hitting the refugee, Eitan flees the scene and tries to return to his safe life. But the refugee’s wife — Sirkit — finds him and blackmails him. He’s stunned by her because he never bothered to look at the refugees around him before. They are the invisible people in Israeli society. As a refugee, Sirkit is one of those people who witnesses everything we do without us giving any attention to her presence. I wanted to investigate what happens when those who are unnoticed notice something that changes the balance.

Waking Lions is set in the Negev, the Israeli desert. It’s the backyard of Israel, where poverty and crime are found in higher rates than in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem. But the desert is not just geographically distant; it’s also psychologically distant; we don’t think of the Bedouins or of the African refugees, they’re in the back of our minds. The desert is also a metaphor for those areas in our conscience which are untouched, suppressed, where we never dare to wonder.

IIM: I read in another interview that you hope “to offer American students a more nuanced picture of Israel than they might get from the headlines.” Have you enjoyed teaching? How would you describe the students’ experience in your class thus far?

GUNDAR-GOSHEN: San Francisco State University is very different from what I’m used to when teaching in Israel; knowledge of Israel is driven mainly from the media, not from one’s own experience. In this case more than ever, art is a bridge across the ocean. Students can identify with Israeli characters: cry for them, feel for them. This moment in literature — when “them” becomes “us” — that is the essence of empathy.

IIM: In your class, on contemporary trends in Israeli art, you’re exposing students to a diversity of voices in the Israeli arts scene, including Haredi and Mizrahi; LGBT; feminist; and Israeli-Arab. While we can’t take your class (and I wish we could), what are some trends in Israeli art that we should be following?

GUNDAR-GOSHEN: The diversity is a bliss. Poetry lovers will want to check out Ars-Poetica, the new Mizrahi poetic revolution. In cinema, there is a new generation of female directors, both Israeli and Palestinian, who are changing the way stories are told. In literature, authors like Eshkol Nevo and Maya Arad are reimagining the Israeli state through writing about it from a very domestic, even claustrophobic, perspective. As a reader, I feel that the best novels are those which have both a universal theme and a strong local connection.

IIM: While Eitan, the central character in Waking Lions, is male, the story is mainly driven by the actions of Sirkit and Liat, two complex, resilient female characters. How did you create such vivid characters?

IIM: In Waking Lions, you wrestle with morality and individual ethics; bias, privilege, and racism; and the global migrant and refugee crisis. What is your opinion on art’s ability to affect change?

GUNDAR-GOSHEN: A novel is not a political statement. It’s a novel. It has, of course, political aspects. It wishes to touch people not only in the personal sense but also in a social and political one. I believe that the two can’t be separated. What we’re talking about here is what it means to be a human being. What moral responsibility — if any — do we carry with us?

I believe that it is the writer’s job to force the reader to look where they usually avoid looking. Literature is an act of seeing, different from the everyday gaze. When I was working as a news editor, the main question was about how much reality people can take while drinking their coffee in the morning. As long as they could swallow their muesli, the paper was doing its job. I hope that literature is more than that; I hope it makes people spill their coffee on the table.
During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Israel Institute was proud to support programs and scholars at nearly 50 institutions across the United States and around the world. In the United States, we placed nearly 30 faculty at institutions such as Brown, Columbia, the University of Chicago, Emory, and Stanford who taught courses about modern Israel to hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students.

This year, we announced the expansion of our Teaching Fellow Program, which places Israel experts at top colleges and universities for three years, to the Washington University in St. Louis.

In January 2018, we held our first annual Honors Symposium, a new workshop for top university undergraduates interested in the study of modern Israel.

After a second successful Teaching with Impact workshop in the United States, we are including Teaching with Impact in our faculty orientation in Israel.

This year, we seeded a new tenure line at the University of Kansas.
“The conference I organized on “Oslo: 25 Years Later” was a very special and unforgettable event for me. I was able to invite some of the best experts - Israeli, Palestinian and other international scholars - for a fascinating, honest, and inspiring discussion on the Oslo process.”

— DR. LIOR LEHRS, 2017-2018 Post-Doctoral Fellow (New York University)
Throughout the 2017-2018 academic year, the Israel Institute continued to expand its academic programming on campuses around the world.

INTERNATIONAL COURSES
We supported several new courses this year, from Austria and the Czech Republic to China, Russia, and Cameroon.

- Fudan University (Shanghai) held their first course on Israeli politics, society, and foreign affairs.
- For the first time ever, The University of Yaoundé (Cameroon) held a course on the history of the modern state of Israel.
- Israeli politics, society, public policy, and foreign relations were the subjects of a new course at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) in Russia.
- A course on Israeli history, from 1948 to the present, was taught at the University of Vienna (Austria).
- Masaryk University (Czech Republic) offered the following course this past academic year: “Israel and Politics of Innovation: The Start-up Nation in International Perspective.”

INTERNATIONAL LECTURE SERIES
Additionally, we supported a lecture series at the POLIN Museum (Poland) featuring prominent speakers such as Dr. Anita Shapira and Dr. Eyal Naveh. In partnership with The Center for Israel Studies in Vienna, Austria, we sponsored a lecture series featuring notable speakers such as author Meir Shalev and former Minister of Education and President of Shenkar College Yuli Tamir.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
We funded a conference at Peking University (Beijing) entitled “Hebrew and Israel Studies in China: Teaching Hebrew and Israeli Culture in a Global Context,” co-organized by Peking University and Middlebury College.
Conference Collaborations

Through its Conferences and Workshops Program, the Israel Institute funds and promotes forums for the study and discussion of contemporary Israel, such as academic conferences and workshops, think tank fellowships and events, public lectures, and more. The Institute was proud to award over 20 grants to hosting organizations in the 2017-2018 academic year.

1. Together with the 8200 Alumni Association, the Israel Institute supported efforts to bring Israeli start-ups to New York and Chicago to engage students, faculty, and community members in Fall 2018.


3. In April 2018, the Y&S Nazarian Center for Israel Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, held a lecture series called “Water in the Middle East and Africa,” which explored how water availability, scarcity, economy, and technology are related to conflict as well as to cooperation and collaboration in different contexts and across domestic, national, and regional levels.

4. Throughout the 2017-2018 academic year, Binghamton University’s Center for Israel Studies hosted several lectures and workshops, such as a lecture on “The Refugee Crisis in the Middle East” and a Knesset simulation, for both undergraduate and graduate students.

5. The 34th annual meeting of the Association for Israel Studies, “Israel at 70: Challenges and Opportunities,” is being hosted by the University of California, Berkeley, in June 2018.

6. Israel @ 70: Continuities, Changes, Challenges: Co-hosted by the Israel Institute, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Center for Jewish History, this event will explore Israel’s evolution from its birth through modern day and offer insights into what lies ahead. Discussions will focus on transformations within Israeli politics and society, the history and current state of U.S.-Israel relations, and challenges for Jewish American engagement with Israel.
ARTS & CULTURE

During the 2017-2018 academic year, 13 prominent Israeli artists completed residencies at top colleges and universities across the United States, including Princeton, Brown, UC Berkeley, and Julliard. With this cohort, the Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist Program has brought over 100 artists from various disciplines to North America.

Promoted by his New York debut at the Baryshnikov Center, Roy Assaf, who taught at Julliard in Fall 2017, was featured in The New York Times along with Israeli choreographers Yossi Berg and Oded Graf, also previous Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artists.

Israeli author Ayelet Gundar-Goshen’s Waking Lions was named one of The New York Times’ “100 Notable Books of 2017.” During her residency at San Francisco State University, Gundar-Goshen spoke to audiences in San Diego, Los Angeles, Chicago, Montreal, Berkeley, and at the international PEN Festival in NYC.

In a variation of our typical residencies, we sent two rising Israeli filmmakers on tour to several East Coast universities: Tamar Kay, whose first film out of school was one of ten nominees for an Oscar in the Short Documentary category, and Or Sinai, whose film screened at Cannes and won Best Student Film over 2,000 competitors.

“I was so impressed and captivated by your work. It resonated with me much more than I anticipated. Especially seeing your culture through your eyes, I found both of your films to be very touching and informative.”

— Student quote from Tamar Kay and Or Sinai’s tour and film screening.

(Above) Composer Hana Ajiaashvili served as a visiting lecturer at Rice University during the 2018 spring semester. (Right) Choreographer and dancer Roy Assaf teaches Julliard dance students during rehearsal in Fall 2017.
What We Do

The Israel Institute enhances knowledge about modern Israel through the expansion of accessible, innovative learning opportunities, on and beyond campus. The Institute’s many programs and initiatives advance rigorous teaching, research, and discourse about modern Israel.

Academics

TEACHING PROGRAMS

▲ Visiting Faculty Program: Our Visiting Faculty Program brings respected Israeli academics to universities in the United States to teach about modern Israel. These programs give Israeli academics the opportunity to spend an academic year abroad teaching about modern Israel and expanding their academic circles, while granting students from top universities access to leading Israeli professors.

▲ Teaching Fellow Program: Our Teaching Fellow Program places academics of various ranks and nationalities, who have the interest and expertise to teach about modern Israel, at American campuses. This program is intended for Israel experts who are available to be placed by the Israel Institute at colleges and universities in the United States.

▲ Teaching with Impact: The Teaching with Impact Workshop is a three-day intensive program designed to help scholars who teach about Israel become better instructors. This dynamic workshop offers instruction in the latest innovations in pedagogy, workshop time to revise or design a state-of-the-art syllabus about modern Israel, discussions about the challenges of teaching about Israel abroad, and opportunities for networking and sharing of best-practices.

▲ International Course Grants: Our International Course Grant Program supports courses about modern Israel at top-ranked colleges and universities outside the United States and Israel that do not have resident experts available to teach courses in Israel Studies. These grants enable scholars to travel to schools to teach intensive or full-length courses about modern Israel.

FELLOWSHIPS

▲ Post-Doctoral Fellowships (United States): We offer post-doctoral fellowships in the United States to newly minted scholars who are interested in academic careers in Israel Studies outside of Israel. Our fellowships enable promising doctoral graduates with invitations from top-tier universities to conduct research, engage in public
events, make professional connections, and receive mentoring while preparing for tenure-track university positions. Post-Doctoral Fellows also pursue active publishing agendas (in English).

▲ **Fulbright-Israel Institute Post-Doctoral Fellowship (Israel):** The Fulbright Program, in partnership with the Israel Institute, provides grants to American scholars who seek post-doctoral fellowships at Israeli universities in the field of Israel Studies. The grants are open to American researchers in all academic disciplines who study modern Israel.

▲ **Doctoral Fellowships:** We offer fellowships for up to two years to Ph.D. candidates, in advanced stages of their degrees, who are conducting research on modern Israel. We seek high-caliber students who are enrolled at top-ranking programs and are interested in an academic career in Israel Studies outside of Israel.

### RESEARCH AND OTHER GRANTS

▲ **Research Grants:** We offer research grants for established scholars conducting substantive research on modern Israel. These grants facilitate the research and writing of books or scholarly articles that make an original contribution to the field of Israel Studies and promote a greater understanding of modern Israel. Areas of study include, but are not limited to, Israeli history, politics, sociology, economics, law, and environment.

▲ **Honors Symposium:** The Honors Symposium identifies top university sophomores, juniors, and seniors and gives them access to cutting-edge scholarship in the field of Israel Studies, an insiders' understanding of graduate work, and strategic advice about how pursue an academic career.

▲ **Publication Support Program:** We provide grants in support of forthcoming books in Israel Studies written in English that have already been accepted for publication by leading university presses.

▲ **Conferences and Workshops:** We co-sponsor and provide grants for academic conferences, lectures or lecture series, and workshops devoted the study of the modern state of Israel. We support public events of various formats and on a wide variety of topics including, but not limited to, modern Israeli history, sociology, politics, economics, law, and environment.

### Arts & Culture

▲ **Schusterman Visiting Israeli Artist Program:** Through our residency program, we bring Israeli artists from various disciplines — including film, music, dance, and the visual arts — to the United States and Europe. Artists-in-Residence reside for two-to-four months at some of the nation’s most esteemed universities.

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ABOUT THE ISRAEL INSTITUTE

The ISRAEL INSTITUTE is an independent, nonpartisan and non-advocacy 501(c)(3) organization that advances rigorous teaching, research, and discourse about modern Israel in partnership with leading academic, research, and cultural institutions.

Our founding president, Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, with the generous help of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, launched the Israel Institute in 2012 to create spaces and resources for students, scholars, and communities to study contemporary Israel in a comprehensive, rigorous manner.

The mission of the Israel Institute is to enhance knowledge about modern Israel through the expansion of accessible, innovative learning opportunities, on and beyond campus. Today, the Institute’s many programs and initiatives serve as platforms for increased teaching, research, and discourse on modern Israel at over 100 universities, research centers, and community organizations across nearly two dozen countries.

We invite you to learn more at www.israelinstitute.org or call us at 202.289.1431 for more information.