
Bulletin

NO. 59 | SPRING 2014

AT A GLANCE

Keeping an eye on Syria's Civil War

Analyzing regional sectarian and minority conflicts

Understanding the Arab-Israeli electorate

The MDC's strong presence abroad





The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies

Bulletin

No. 59

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies seeks to contribute by research, documentation, and publication to the study and understanding of the modern history and current affairs of the Middle East and Africa. The Center is part of the Graduate School of Historical Studies in the Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities of Tel Aviv University. The Center is governed by a Board of Governors, acting on the advice of an International Board of Overseers. It is administered by an academic director.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

More than three years into the “Arab Spring,” stability and security remain elusive. Tumult, violence, and confusion continue to shake the foundations of the societies and regimes of many Middle Eastern states. The intensity of the Syrian crisis and the brutal battles being waged there, by local and non-local actors, has not confined itself to Syria alone, but has profoundly impacted its neighbors, including Lebanon and Iraq, intensifying communal and sectarian divisions as well as violence in these countries. Egypt, too, remains in a state of transition as the ruling military regime continues its crackdown on the Muslim Brothers and its supporters. As always, our scholars continue to follow these developments and provide their analyses to the wider public, decision makers, and media outlets, helping to cement the Moshe Dayan Center’s (MDC) position as a reliable source for insightful analysis of regional events.




The start of the academic year in the fall of 2013 was full of activities. To provide an overview: the 2013–2014 MDC Seminar dealt with the increasing importance of minorities in the Middle East and will culminate in the publication of an edited volume to be published by the MDC in late 2014. At this year’s Annual Moshe Dayan (z”l) Memorial Lecture, Israeli Defense Minister **Moshe Ya’alon** spoke on the current geopolitical and strategic challenges Israel faces, particularly in light of the intensifying conflict in Syria and political instability in Egypt. Several Center Experts and Junior Researchers from the MDC attended and presented papers at the two largest Middle East Studies conferences in the United States: the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Meeting in New Orleans, and the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA) Conference in Washington, D.C. These two important gatherings provide our researchers an opportunity to showcase their contributions to current scholarship and the work of the MDC, abroad.

Through its activities and research, the MDC continues to provide high quality analysis of current and historical events. Besides our regular publications, like *Tel Aviv Notes* and *BeeHive*, Israeli and international media regularly consult our researchers for comments and analyses. I invite you to continue to be apprised of our work by following us on Twitter and Facebook.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Best wishes,


 Prof. Uzi Rabi



TURKEY'S MIDDLE EAST FOREIGN POLICY

On September 10, 2013, the MDC hosted Prof. **Özlem Tür**, of the International Relations Department at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Prof. **Ofra Bengio** presided over the gathering during which Tür elaborated upon the fundamentals of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, particularly Israeli-Turkish relations in light of Israel's rapprochement efforts toward Turkey. In her lecture, Prof. Tür also covered Turkish domestic policy and how it influences bi-lateral relations between Israel and Turkey.

THE DRUZE IN ISRAEL IN THE SHADOW OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS

A Conference of the Konrad Adenauer Program for Arab-Jewish Cooperation at the Moshe Dayan Center

For the past two and a half years, a bloody civil war has raged in Syria between government forces and rebel groups. What began in March 2011 in the southern Syrian city of Der'aa as a popular protest against Bashar al-Assad's Syrian Baath government, and which then seemed to be yet another link in the series of popular revolutions sprouting in Arab states, has become a war of attrition with no end in sight.

On September 10, 2013, the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation (KAP) at the MDC held a conference, "The Druze in Israel in the Shadow of the Syrian Crisis." With a population of 133,000, the Druze community in Israel accounts for eight percent of Israel's Arab minority, or 1.6 percent of Israel's total population. The Druze are a small minority group in Israel, yet their political impact on Israeli society is inarguably significant. For several years, many members of the Druze sect have held senior positions in Israeli security forces, and the sect is typically represented in a government coalition party.

In the opening talk of the evening, **Arik Rudnitzky**, KAP's program manager, addressed the effects of the Syrian crisis on Arab society. After three years of observation, it is clear that the Arab public in Israel has been more strongly affected by the crisis in Syria than by any other comparable crisis arising from the "Arab Spring" in other Arab countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya.

Focusing on the specific case of the Druze community, the conference addressed several issues including: How did the crisis in Syria affect the Druze community in Israel? Is there a common denominator to the effects of this crisis on the Druze who live as a minority in Lebanon, in Syria, and in Israel (in the Galilee and Golan Heights)? Do Druze in Israel have a special role to play in this crisis by virtue of their historical ties to their brethren in Syria?



MR. ARIK RUDNITZKY

Dr. **Yusri Khaizran**, researcher at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem and lecturer at the Open University, compared the positions on the current crisis in Syria held by Druze minority communities in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel. According to Dr. Khaizran, the Druze in Lebanon are divided into two camps. Heading the Syrian government supporters is former Lebanese minister Wiam Wahhab, a Druze closely associated with the Baath regime in Syria. At the other end, Walid Jumblatt, a Druze politician, heads the opponents of the Syrian regime. Jumblatt's opinions represent the heightened concerns of Lebanon's Druze over the growing power of the Shi'i Hezbollah, which has close ties to Bashar al-Assad's Alawite regime in Syria. Growing apprehension drove Jumblatt to declare that any Druze who supports the Syrian government is a legitimate target. As for the Druze in Syria, Khaizran explained that the Druze there remain loyal to the government for several reasons. First, fear of governmental anarchy, or worse, dissolution of Syria as a single territorial state. Second, fear of the rising strength of Islamist organizations such as the Al-Nusra Front, a militant Sunni organization ideologically affiliated with Al-Qaeda.



DR. YUSRI KHAIZRAN

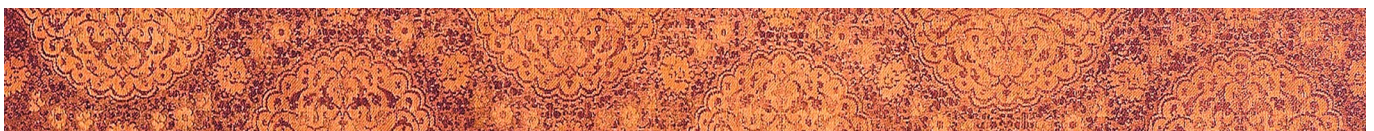
According to Khaizran, the position of the Druze in Israel on the crisis in Syria (including the Druze in the Golan Heights, some of whom accepted Israeli citizenship) is divided. Some continue to support the Syrian regime, mainly due to their fear for the fate of the Druze who will become a vulnerable minority “the day after” the collapse of Assad's regime. The Druze in the Galilee, who are Israeli citizens and the vast majority of which serves in the Israeli security forces, are also extremely uneasy about the future of their brethren in Syria. In March 2013, they even held a demonstration led by the spiritual leader of the Druze sect in Israel, Sheikh Muwaffak Tarif. Hundreds of young Druze who had served in the IDF expressed their willingness to enter Syria to fight alongside their counterparts against the militant Islamist organizations. Others oppose the regime for the enormous injuries caused to Syria's civilian population.



FORMER MK MAJALI WAHHABA

Former MK **Majali Wahhaba**, who also held several senior positions in the Israeli government, including deputy Knesset chair in the last Knesset (2009-2013) and deputy foreign minister, addressed the implications of the Syrian crisis for the Druze in Israel and in Syria based on his personal experience and familiarity with the situation on the ground. He stated that the Druze sect in Israel adheres to a fundamental idea called “protecting one's brother,” which is one of the seven tenets of the Druze faith. To implement this principle, Druze are willing to sacrifice their own lives, which explains the popular mobilization among the Druze sect in Israel to provide humanitarian aid to their counterparts in southern Syria. In such times, Wahhaba explains, what matters is not the civic affiliation with this or that state—Syria or Israel—but the principle of protecting Druze wherever they live. Wahhaba also presented his position on the repercussions of the crisis for the Druze living in Syria. He stated that the vast majority of Druze continues to be loyal to the government, although a small percentage prefers to maintain neutrality in order to avoid being targeted by the government or the rebels. Another section of the Druze community of Syria—especially Druze in the city of Aleppo in northern

Syria—collaborate with the rebels, yet even they are ultimately motivated by a desire to protect the integrity of the entire Druze community.





EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISITS THE MDC

ON November 4, 2013, a delegation from the European Parliament and officials from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited the MDC. MEP **Bastiaan Belder**, of the European Friends of Israel (an organization that coordinates parliamentary friendship groups between EU officials and Israel), organized the delegation. Alongside Prof. **Uzi Rabi**, MEP Belder facilitated a roundtable discussion between delegates and MDC experts. Delegates hailed from various EU countries including Italy, Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, and the Netherlands.

At the roundtable, Rabi addressed the group on recent developments transpiring between Israel and the Arab World. Additionally, **Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak** gave a short lecture on trilateral relations between Israel, Turkey, and the European Union.



PROF. UZI RABI AND HAY EYTAN COHEN YANAROCAK DISCUSSING ISRAEL IN THE REGION

SYRIA: REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR

Annual Lecture in Memory of Avishai Ben Zvi, Yehoshafat Netzer, and Ziv Balali

ON November 4, 2013, the MDC held its annual lecture in memory of Avishai Ben Zvi, Yehoshafat Netzer, and Ziv Balali. After Prof. **Uzi Rabi** delivered opening remarks, Prof. **Eyal Zisser** discussed the Syrian civil war.

According to Bashar al-Assad, said Zisser, the regime's survival in ongoing warfare is due to the fact that, unlike the regimes that were toppled in the "Arab Spring" revolutions, he is not facing a popular uprising but rather a mercenary army, financed by foreign governments. Zisser contended that one of the main reasons for Assad's survival is the Syrian army's support for the regime, which is bolstered by divisions among the rebels who, aside from removing Assad from power, lack both leadership and common goals.

In the meanwhile, Syria is torn apart by the struggle between the murderous Assad regime and the brutal Islamist, Al-Qaeda affiliated forces. Syrian civilians,



PROF. UZI RABI (LEFT) AND PROF. EYAL ZISSER



MEMORIAL TO AVISHAI BEN ZVI, YEHOSEFAT NETZER,
AND ZIV BALALI

who once supported the protests, are becoming apathetic; some are even supporting the regime again. According to Zisser, this dynamic might eventually lead Assad to victory.

While it is impossible to predict Syria's future, it is safe to say it will never be the same. Regaining control over the whole country will continue to elude Assad, and the fighting will likely draw out indefinitely. Assad will have other challenges to face as well: Rebuilding the devastated Syrian economy and deciding how to reposition his country in the global community.

CHALLENGES TO THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN THE CHANGING MIDDLE EAST

Minister of Defense Moshe Yaalon Speaks at the Annual Memorial Lecture for Gen. Moshe Dayan z"l

ON November 17, 2013, Israel's Minister of Defense **Moshe Yaalon** delivered the keynote remarks for the annual memorial lecture of General Moshe Dayan (z"l). Prof. **Uzi Rabi** set the tone for the evening's main lecture with an overview of the diligent work of the MDC and its researchers in keeping up with current developments in the changing Middle East.

In the overflowing Bar Shira Auditorium of Tel Aviv University, Minister Yaalon delivered his speech, "The Challenges of the State of Israel in the Changing Middle East," praising Moshe Dayan's contribution to Israel's security and self-defense doctrine. Yaalon touched upon a number of ongoing



PROF. UZI RABI

contemporary regional developments, which he defined as "nothing less than revolutionary," and put emphasis on the dissolving Arab nation-states phenomenon that began with the Arab uprisings.

Yaalon emphasized Israel's need to adapt to the changing, sectarian Middle East, as he believes this dynamic is the main threat to state security, which is compounded by the failure of Israel's neighbors to create stable national identities. Yaalon concluded his remarks by addressing the challenges posed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, admitting that he does not foresee a long-lasting, peaceful resolution in the near future.



MINISTER OF DEFENSE MOSHE YAALON



ARAB LOCAL POLITICS IN ISRAEL: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2013 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS RESULTS

ON November 21, 2013, the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation at the MDC organized a conference examining the municipal elections results of October 22, 2013 (and the run-off elections of November 5), in the Arab electorate of Israel. With 84 percent voter turnout, the voting rate in the Arab electorate significantly exceeded the national average of 51 percent.

Arik Rudnitzky, project manager of the Konrad Adenauer Program, opened the conference with an overview of Arab electorate voting patterns and the factors that influence voting decisions in these communities. According to Rudnitzky, two outcomes of the elections indicate little change in voting patterns among Arab voters. Firstly, political divisions typical of most Arab localities continue to persist. Secondly, while the number of elected female politicians is on the rise, women still lag far behind men, proportionally.



LEFT TO RIGHT: DR. NOHAD ALI, ARIK RUDNIITZKY, AND DR. TAGHREED YAHIA YOUNIS

Following opening remarks, **Dr. Nohad Ali**, from the Western Galilee College and the University of Haifa, was the first speaker on a panel titled, “The Municipal Elections in the Arab Sector — Summary and Analysis.” Ali spoke on the Islamic Movement’s role in local politics, a movement comprised of two main factions — a “dogmatic” (northern) faction which refuses to participate in national elections based on ideological grounds, and a more “pragmatic” (southern) faction, which maintains that electoral participation does not compromise the Movement’s religious, educational, or social mission. From the percentages of the Arab electorate that voted, for Ali, the October 2013 elections also elucidated that most Israeli-Arabs are more concerned with local political races than national ones. This, he argued, is evident from the Arab sector’s lower turnout for Knesset elections.

Providing the historical context of Arab voting patterns in local elections in Israel, Dr. Ali elaborated upon four different stages in the recruitment of Arab politicians since 1948. Initially, local notables played a significant role. However, with the rise of the Islamic Movement in the early 1970s, religious authorities gained influence over these races — first at the local level and then at the state level. Shortly after the turn of the millennium, the northern branch of the Islamic Movement focused on the issue and influence of religion, which highlights growing religious fundamentalism but is *not* a symptom of growing political extremism, according to Ali.

The third phase in the recruitment of Arab local politicians became apparent with the dominance of the *hamula* (extended family, clan). Instead of voting based upon favored political platforms or ideological criteria, a majority of voters decides to support a candidate from their *hamula*. This explains, among other factors, why the number of local parties and independent candidates in the Arab sector is extraordinarily high. However, as indicated by the municipal elections in 2013, the Arab sector has entered a fourth phase, which Dr. Ali described as the “post-hamula phase.” In this fourth phase, the traditional hamulas have split

into many communities under the leadership of university-educated clan members, who do not represent the *hamula*, but run for office and win votes on their own merits.

The second speaker, Dr. **Taghreed Yahia Younis**, of Tel Aviv University, presented initial findings on the participation of Arab women — voters and candidates — in the 2013 local elections. Although patriarchal dominance remains and is perpetuated by the *hamula* organization in the Arab sector of Israel, the number of women participating in politics is indubitably increasing. For example, Younis shared that in the municipal elections of 2013 an unprecedented number of Arab women (in total 302, including 42 in mixed Jewish-Arab municipalities) ran for office. Only five years ago, in the local elections of 2008, there were 149 female candidates. In Nazareth, considered the “capital” of the Israeli-Arabs, Knesset Member Hanin Zouabi, representing the National Democratic Alliance party, ran for the mayoral seat and received over 10 percent of the town’s vote. With a total of 18 Arab female candidates elected to local governing bodies in 2013, Younis reported this as an increase of 133 percent from 2008 election outcomes.

The second panel, “Arab Local Government and Post-Election Challenges,” was moderated by **Anna Hazan**, lecturer at Sapir College and former head of the Department of Local Development in the Ministry of the Interior. On this panel, CPA **Ziyad Abu Habla**, head of the section of transparency research at Tel Aviv University, posed the question: Whether the economic and financial crisis of recent years in many Arab communities is a temporary phenomenon or permanent? Referring to the socio-economic framework of the Arab sector as the main cause of ongoing municipal budget crises, Abu Habla described high rates of unemployment, poverty, and the resulting inadequacies of the local education system. Furthermore, insufficient tax revenues in this economically stagnant part of the country and costly expenditures on social services only compound existing problems.

The *hamula*’s influence over local political elections also contributes to budget issues in Arab municipalities. Abu Habla explained that a majority of voters support the candidate of their *hamula* regardless



ZIYAD ABU HABLA



MORDECHAI COHEN

of whether or not they possess leadership and management skills. This pattern leads to unstable local governments lacking expertise in balancing municipal budgets, for example. However, according to Abu Habla, the shortcomings of state officials also perpetuate economic crises in Arab communities. State expenditures and income distribution do not take into account that Arab communities, generally, have smaller populations and lay at the periphery of the cities. In order to address these issues Abu Habla called upon the state to recognize the particular challenges facing Arab communities.

Mordechai Cohen, head of the Local Authorities Department of the Ministry of the Interior, spoke about the future prospects of local governments in the Arab sector. Contrary to Ali, Cohen stressed that the situation of Arab communities is not unique as municipalities throughout Israel generally face various challenges. In fact, he argued that Arab municipalities at the periphery of cities stand to gain from the development of industrial parks and commercial areas, and the corporate tax income such ventures provide. However, in order to properly reap the benefits of these projects, policy makers must



be actively involved. In this context, Cohen called for municipal law reform that would benefit local governments and the professionalization of these governing entities. In his conclusion, Cohen advised the audience not to simplify the current situation of the Arab municipalities in Israel, but to view the issues in their full complexity. He also stated that the national government must be held accountable for closing the gaps between Arab and Jewish communities.

Attorney **Aaref Krayem**, project manager at *Injaz* — the Center for Professional Arab Local Government, analyzed the challenges and opportunities faced by newly-elected Arab mayors. In 2013, 73 percent were mayor-elects and 27 percent were returning incumbents (elected in 2008). The first challenges a new mayor faces, explained Krayem, are the assumed responsibilities over the municipal budget and administration. Due to ongoing economic crises, mayor-elects become overburdened with budget issues that consume most of their time in office without improvement. While there may occasionally be a mayor with vision and abilities or, at least, someone willing to learn, between the dominant families there are often bilateral agreements stipulating that a mayor will only serve for one term. Consequently, short-term thinking prevails among local elected officials, which stymies any motivation to generate sustainable improvements. Of course, in order to successfully address urban development challenges: to establish a stable education system, to strengthen the role of women, and to lower unemployment and poverty, long-term solutions and dedicated leaders are essential. Despite the challenges, Krayem noted a number of recent improvements: budget deficits decreased (albeit minimally), tax revenue is increasing, and the hostile tone of Knesset discourse vis-à-vis Arab municipalities has improved. This reality, and the fact that there is a rising number of Arab academics seeking and winning office (outside the *hamula* system), leads Krayem to believe that Arab communities are better positioned than they were ten years ago.

JEWISH MIGRATION FROM TURKEY AND OTTOMAN EMPIRE

ON December 3, 2013, MDC scholars attended a conference in Istanbul titled “Jewish Migration from Turkey and the Ottoman Empire,” hosted by Kadir Has University. Prof. **Ofra Bengio** discussed the history of Jews in Iraq. Dr. **Esther Webman** spoke about the concept of migration and the historical motivations behind it in the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire.



HAY EYTAN COHEN YANAROCAK



PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE

Ceng Sagnic and Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak discussed Jewish communities of Kurdistan and Turkey, respectively. The conference was a collaborative effort of the Turkish Institute for International Relations (TUIC), the Center for Jewish Learning in Istanbul, and the *Turkish Review*.

THE GEOPOLITICS OF SECTARIANISM AND THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR: SHIFTING REGIONAL DYNAMICS

A Joint Program of the MDC and the International MA in Middle Eastern Studies (MAMES) Program

ON December 3, 2013, **Jonathan Paris**, non-resident fellow of the South Asia Center of the Atlantic Council, delivered a joint lecture with Dr. **Benedetta Berti**, a research fellow of the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), covering the geopolitics of sectarianism in the Syrian civil war. Paris explained how the weakening of the Arab state ignited sectarian conflict, consequently strengthening the non-Arab states in the region. Dr. Berti elaborated on this point by explaining the Sunni-Shi'i sectarian rift in Syria, with respective Iranian and Saudi backing.

More importantly, however, the previous decade of economic restructuring in Syria led to the development of a significant wealth divide that favored urban centers over the periphery. An elite core of largely minority Druze and Alawite business leaders and government insiders included a large fraction of the Sunni majority, forming a bloc that maintained enough legitimacy to hold the regime in power until 2011. Socio-economic forces eventually fueled dissatisfaction and frustration among all sectors of Syrian society, culminating in non-violent protests three years ago that were immediately met with heavy repression by the regime.

According to the speakers, it is in the regime's interest to continue portraying the conflict as sectarian in nature to ward off accusations of strangling the Syrian economy, though continuing to do so only strengthens pre-state identities at the expense of a national dialogue. In support of this claim, Paris elaborated on the rise of Shi'i geopolitical power after the 2003 Iraq War, discussing how Iran in particular continues to influence sectarian conflicts around the region in its favor through groups like Hezbollah in Syria and Lebanon, and the Huthi rebellion in Yemen.

THE ISRAEL BUSINESS CONFERENCE

ON December 8-9, 2013, the MDC participated in the 2013 Israel Business Conference, hosted by Israeli financial newspaper *Globes*. Prof. **Uzi Rabi** participated in a panel titled, "The Middle East — Politics, Security and Economics," along with Dr. **Soner Çağaptay**, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and Dr. **Elliot Hentov**, from Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC. Rabi discussed the geopolitical changes that have occurred in the Middle East since the "Arab Spring" and their implications both for historical research and for political analysis.

The MDC's Economic Forum, co-chaired by **Yitzhak Gal** and Dr. **Paul Rivlin**, hosted a panel at the Conference discussing the gas sector in the Middle East. The panel included: M.K. **Binyamin (Fouad) Ben-Eliezer**, **Joseph I. Paritzky**, and **Moshe Shachal**, former ministers of national infrastructure; **Morris Dorfman**, deputy head of the national economic council at the prime minister's office; and **Amiram Barkat**, *Globes* energy and infrastructure correspondent.



AT WAR WITH ISRAEL: THE SOVIET BLOC AND SYRIA

On January 16, 2014, Prof. **Jeffrey Herf**, of University of Maryland, College Park, delivered a lecture on the relationship between East Germany and the Soviet bloc in relation to Israel during the Cold War era. He began by asking: Why an ostensibly anti-fascist government would support Arab states in the war against Israel? In explanation, Herf deferred to history.

Throughout the Soviet bloc, anti-cosmopolitan purges in 1949 led to the hanging of many officials who were supportive of the fledgling Israeli state. As the narrative of alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union in defeating fascism and anti-Semitism in Europe quickly faded, a new agenda took form that focused on combating Western imperialism. This platform closely aligned itself with the Arab narrative of Israel acting as the spearhead of Western hegemony in the Middle East. For example, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) stopped short of sending troops into the Six-Day and Yom Kippur wars, but they did contribute arms and financing to the Arab states. In addition, they participated in an extensive propaganda campaign and cooperated with PLO intelligence services during its most active years.

Herf attributes the enthusiastic support of the Arab cause by East Germany to national self-interest despite their allegedly Communist ideology. Specifically, the Hallstein Doctrine of 1955, implemented by West Germany, threatened to cut diplomatic ties with any state that normalized relations with the German Democratic Republic. Yet, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen all established diplomatic relations with East Germany in 1969 because of its participation in the war effort against Israel. Moreover, the East German government successfully redefined fascism by equating it with Zionism, invoking traditional European anti-Semitic themes of Jewish world domination and justifying the destruction of Israel by claiming it as a victory against fascism.

INAUGURATION OF THE RENOVATED GLAZER MULTIMEDIA ROOM AT THE MDC

On February 19, 2014, an inauguration took place of the MDC's renovated audiovisual library. After months of renovations, the Glazer Multimedia Room is now fully equipped to meet the needs of students and researchers, and is up-to-date with social media technologies. The Glazer Multimedia Room hosts a media center, which offers students and researchers a unique opportunity to explore Middle Eastern history through the lens of feature and documentary films, music, and broadcasts from the region. With an extensive collection of more than 500 films on various topics related to the Middle East (places, persons, culture, music, conflict), the Glazer Multimedia Room adds a cultural component to Middle Eastern studies, and contributes to a further understanding of the region by offering an alternative way to stay informed about recent developments in the Middle East.



LEFT TO RIGHT: PROF. UZI RABI, DUYGU ATLAS,
JOYCE VAN DE BILDT, AND ILANA GREENBERG

In addition to its vast film collection, the Glazer Multimedia Room offers access to satellite services and broadcasting of important regional channels. The opportunity to follow regional broadcasting will increase the MDC's up-to-the-minute analysis of the region and offer unique teaching materials for professors and their students.

Finally, the Glazer Multimedia Room functions as the recording studio for the MDC's podcast, *Diwaniyya*, an online radio show providing thought-provoking conversations on Middle East culture, history, and politics, and featuring local and global Middle Eastern experts.



GLAZER MULTIMEDIA ROOM AT THE MDC

ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST: BETWEEN REVOLUTION AND UPHEAVAL

On February 25, 2014, the MDC held a conference titled "Israel and the Middle East: Between Revolution and Upheaval." Beginning with a lecture by Prof. Uzi Rabi on the changing paradigms in the Middle East, the MDC's director claimed dramatic changes have taken place in the past three years. Namely, the barrier of fear that protected the old regimes disappeared, turning the public into a collective, active participant in the political game. According to Rabi, the most



PROF. UZI RABI

significant components of the new Middle East include Syria as a source of regional instability; a Sunni-Shi'i



DR. MIRA TZOREFF

confrontation, in addition to minority groups working towards achieving autonomy; and Iran's new foreign policy, aimed at ending its international seclusion.

The first session of the conference, titled "New Political Culture and Geopolitics," included lectures by Dr. Mira Tzoreff, Prof. Eyal Zisser, and Dr. Yoav Alon, of Tel Aviv



PROF. EYAL ZISSER



DR. YOAV ALON

University. In her comments, Tzoreff compared Tunisia and Egypt, two countries that ousted their “soft dictators” and elected Islamic leaders, as well as discussed the countries’ prospects for democracy. Zisser provided an overview of the war in Syria claiming that while the regime is steadily weakening the political system continues to survive. All the while, rampant divisiveness among the rebel forces is costing these factions much of their popular support. Providing for a well-rounded picture of the hot spots in the region, Alon discussed the growing significance of tribes in Libya and Yemen, which are filling up political vacuums created by the fall of the previous regimes.

The second session, titled “Historical Processes and Structural Changes,” featured Prof. **Shimon Shamir**, Prof. **Asher Susser**, and **Yitzhak Gal**. Shamir discussed the disintegration of the territorial state, a process affecting both new, “artificial” states such as Iraq and Syria, as well as old nations such as Egypt. Susser



PROF. ASHER SUSSER

technological revolution. According to Prof. Susser, these theories have blinded onlookers to the neo-traditional forces of political Islam, sectarianism, and tribalism. Providing analysis from an economic standpoint, Gal



PROF. SHIMON SHAMIR

discussed the clash of tradition and modernity, which he suggested to be the correct analytical framework for considering the Middle Eastern upheavals rather than a democratic uprising against an authoritarian regime or a



MAJOR GENERAL (RET.) GIORA EILAND



YITZHAK GAL

discussed the enormous differences between Middle Eastern economies, from the wealthy Gulf States to the struggling Yemen. Accordingly, many Middle Eastern countries currently face multiple challenges: an energy crisis, a large unemployed youth sector, and growing dissatisfaction among the population.



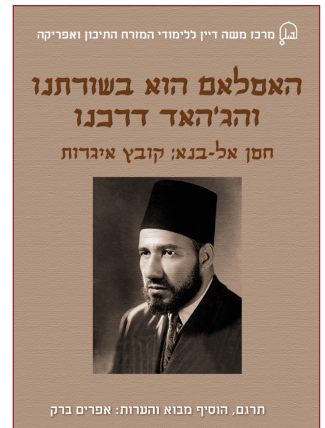
The conference concluded with remarks given by Major General (ret.) **Giora Eiland**, former Israeli national security advisor, and **Tzipi Livni**, minister of justice and chief negotiator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Both speakers discussed Israel's position in the Middle East and the importance of continuing of the peace process.

JUSTICE MINISTER
TZIPI LIVNI

HASSAN AL-BANNA AND THE MUSLIM BROTHERS IN EGYPT: IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS

On February 26, 2014, the MDC and the TAU Department of Middle Eastern and African History held a joint colloquium to celebrate Dr. **Ephraim Barak's** latest publication *Islam is Our Call, and Jihad is Our Way – a Collection of Letters* (The Moshe Dayan Center, 2013). The book is the first of its kind, a publication of Hebrew translations of Muslim Brotherhood Founder, Hassan al-Banna's messages.

Prof. **Israel Gershoni** delivered opening remarks for the colloquium, noting that no other movement in the Middle East has survived as long as the Muslim Brotherhood, which is now more than eight decades old. According to Gershoni, the movement's intellectual strength and ideology have played a significant role in its survival and continuing relevance. Hassan al-Banna wrote the program of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and was able to transmit the Islamic message to the uneducated masses. Moreover, he was charismatic and had excellent organizational skills. Although political, social, and economic circumstances have changed significantly over the 80 years of the Brotherhood's existence, al-Banna's texts remain relevant until this day.



PROF. ISRAEL GERSHONI

Prof. **Ella Landau-Tasserou**, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, spoke on the "Islamic layer" of al-Banna's writings, which pose challenging interpretational decisions to the translator that are required for almost every sentence of al-Banna's teachings. Coming from the field of Arabic Language and Literature, Landau-Tasserou praised Barak's book for his immense accomplishment of masterfully translating al-Banna's words in consideration of both the cultural context in, and the audience for which, they were written.

The gathering also included a comparative literary analysis of Iraqi pan-Arabist Sami Shawkat's work, to those of al-Banna, given by Prof. **Meir Hatina**, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. While scholars argue that the writings of the Muslim Brotherhood fall largely into the category of religious Islamic writings, Hatina claims that the picture is more complicated and that al-Banna was influenced by secular, nationalist influences as well. Al-Banna, in fact, succeeded in the appropriation of secular concepts to an Islamic framework. Hatina compared several concepts used in both Shawkat's and al-Banna's writings, such as the concepts of *sina'at al-mawt* (the art of death), power, and sacrifice. He emphasized, as did some other speakers during the conference, that the concept of *jihad* is often used to refer to religious duties in the sense of communal activity, not just for holy war. Prof. Gershoni echoed Prof. Hatina's words in that, overall, al-Banna recognized the authority of the Egyptian government and thus revolution against the government was not part of his message. However, when it came to external enemies such as the Zionists or the British, the Brotherhood was less moderate.

For the colloquium's second panel, Prof. **Haggai Erlich** opened the second panel on the continued relevance of Hassan al-Banna's writings. Prof. **Uri Kupferschmidt**, of Haifa University, continued with a presentation titled, "An Islamic 'moral economy'? From the messages of Hassan al-Banna to Mohamed Morsi." Kupferschmidt explained that al-Banna had a vision about the "correct" economic model based on Islamic concepts. Indeed, Barak's book draws attention to part of al-Banna's views in this regard. For example, the volume addresses al-Banna's "50-point manifesto" in which he made a set of economic demands, including: dealing with the organization of *zakat*, the encouragement of businesses and economic projects, protection against monopolies, and raising the wages of civil servants.



PROF. URI KUPFERSCHMIDT

However, from the years 1954 to 1974, in the face of persecution and an unfavorable political climate, the Muslim Brotherhood was forced to concentrate on priorities other than the economy. Kupferschmidt showed how in the years that followed, some of the Muslim Brothers benefited from the period of *infatih* (opening the door) initiated by Sadat and continued by Mubarak, which meant the introduction of a neo-liberal market economy. Nevertheless, in the election campaign of 2012, the Brotherhood's economic program reflected some of Hassan al-Banna's understandings of the economy, for example, the emphasis on the organization of *zakat*.

In his presentation "Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi against al-Banna: a cultural war," **Israel Shrentzel**, of the department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Tel Aviv University, addressed the commonalities of 'Abd al Fatah al-Sisi's military regime to the Nasserist era. One of the factors that play into this comparison is that the regime has taken an uncompromising stance when it comes to the Muslim Brothers. To that effect, Shrentzel gave a few examples of the current discourse of demonization and de-legitimization of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. In fact, this discourse goes as far as accusing al-Banna of being Jewish. Shrentzel pointed out that the Muslim Brotherhood has to decide on a future strategy and has thus far not generated critical analysis by members of the Muslim Brotherhood of what went wrong during their year in power. In conclusion, Shrentzel commented on whether or not the failure of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt is good for Israel. Certainly, Morsi's removal from power was perceived as positive, as was the rise to power of the military government and the interim government's dealings with Hamas. Moreover, the current regime indicates a turn towards a pragmatic Islam that is more open to the West, which would be positive for Israel. However, Shrentzel reminded the audience that the Muslim Brotherhood's rule ended in an undemocratic way and has thus far resulted in significant bloodshed, which does not necessarily bode well for Egypt's future.



DR. EFRAIM BARAK

The ideology of al-Banna is unmistakably important in Egypt where it is learned, its influences continue to spread, and his quotes are used widely on the Internet, both inside and outside of Egypt. During his election campaign of May 13, 2012, Mohamed Morsi repeated al-Banna's words that "The Qur'an is our Constitution, Allah is our goal, Jihad is our path, and Death for the sake of Allah is our desire," among other references. Furthermore, in Gaza today, banners with al-Banna's Islamic messages continue to be a common sight at protests. Yet, there is still of lack of knowledge and understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology.

Although the translation of al-Banna's texts was an enormous challenge, Barak felt compelled to see this project to completion. His intention for the book is that it will serve as a teaching tool to explain the texts to students of the Middle East and Islam, and that it will facilitate analysis and discussion of an important thinker that continues to influence the politics of the Middle East and regions beyond as well.

THE 2013–2014 MDC SEMINAR: MINORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In 2009, Prof. **Ofra Bengio** together with Prof. **Gabriel Ben-Dor**, of Haifa University, published an edited volume entitled *Minorities and the State in the Arab World*. The work presented a theoretical and practical framework for understanding the place of minorities, whether national, religious, or ethnic, within the polity and society of Arab States, from the Maghreb to the Gulf.

Amidst ongoing regional tumult, fifteen years later, attention and awareness has returned to the various minority communities in the region as new questions have arisen regarding majority-minority relations, state-minority relations, and relations between minority communities. To address these developments, this year's MDC Seminar, "Minorities in the Middle East," has brought scholars and students together to discuss and consider this issue anew, first by laying out a theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing minorities and then proceeding to study particular ethnic, national, and religious minority communities.

With Prof. Bengio and Prof. **Uzi Rabi** serving as co-chairs, the seminar met for seven sessions in the fall semester. The first meetings focused on establishing a general framework for understanding minorities, including discussions on "Minorities in the Middle East," "Minorities in the Middle East in Western Perception," and "Arab Discourse on the Question of Minorities." Under this framework, the Seminar went on to address "Religious and Inter-Religious Minorities" in the region.



BEEHIVE: MIDDLE EAST SOCIAL MEDIA

The MDC is delighted to draw your attention to its newest online publication, *Beehive (Kaveret)*. In this monthly e-newsletter, the MDC's Middle East Network Analysis Desk (MENAD) summarizes and analyzes noteworthy trends of discussion taking place on Arabic, Turkish, and Persian-language social media networks.

Beehive positions these trends within their broader regional and global contexts, providing timely analyses on issues actively discussed by the people of the region. Advanced research tools allow the MDC's researchers to focus exclusively on discussions that are significant in terms of their duration and number of participants, which often exceeds tens of thousands.

To subscribe to *Beehive: Middle East Social Media*, please visit our website and click on the "Contact Us" tab.

NADI CINEMA

EACH month, *Nadi Cinema, the MDC's Middle Eastern Film Club*, features a film screening and discussion group led by an expert in Middle Eastern Studies.

On November 14, 2013, Dr. **Ronen Zeidel**, of Haifa University, presented *Minority at Risk*. This short film series consists of two documentaries, one on the suffering of Iraqi women and the second on the plight of Iraqi Christians in post-Saddam Iraq. The screening was widely attended by students and researchers of TAU's Department of Middle Eastern and African History, and also attracted a significant audience from the local Iraqi-Jewish community. The evening program inspired a lively discussion on the history and treatment of minorities in 20th century Iraq.

On December 12, 2013, Nadi Cinema hosted a screening of the feature film *Heya Fawda? (Is this Chaos?)*, the final film of Egypt's award-winning director Youssef Chahine. Dr. **On Barak**, from the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at TAU, gave a fascinating presentation that addressed Chahine's characteristic screenplays and the recurring themes in his movies. Underlining the centrality of Chahine's movies in Egyptian

popular culture, Barak noted that much of what Egyptians remember of the second decade of the 20th century is through Chahine's films. *Heya Fawda?* tells the story of a corrupt and sadistic police chief that stirs the resentment of the citizens, leading up to a dramatic culmination of events in the movie's finale. The film is full of economic, social, and political commentary. Released in 2007, the film has been considered a prophecy for the Arab Spring.

On January 9, 2014, **Duygu Atlas** presented the Turkish movie *Zenne Dancer*. Inspired by true events, this feature film tells the dramatic story of the male belly dancer Can and his friend Ahmet, who comes from a conservative family and faces problems at home because of his sexuality.

Nadi Cinema screenings take place once a month on Thursdays at 4pm in Gilman Building, room 133, and are free and open to the public.

The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies

Nadi Cinema

Middle Eastern Film Club

Join us for a film screening and discussion!
Thursdays, 4pm – 7pm, Gilman Building, Room 133
Refreshments will be served

Fall 2013 Screenings

November 14, 2013
Minority at Risk (Iraq)
Two documentaries on the suffering of Iraqi women and the plight of Iraqi Christians in Post-Saddam Iraq.
Opening remarks by Prof. Uzi Rabl
Presented by Dr. Ronen Zeidel

December 12, 2013
Heya Fawda (Egypt)
"This is Chaos," the final film from Egypt's award-winning director Youssef Chahine.
Presented by Dr. On Barak

January 9, 2014
Zenne Dancer (Turkey)
Inspired by the murder of a gay man by his own father, the film examines homophobia and sexual identity in Turkey through the story of a male belly dancer.
Presented by Duygu Atlas
To RSVP email carl.mames@gmail.com

MOSHE DAYAN CENTER FORUMS

Forum on Kurdish Society, History and Culture

ON December 30, 2013, the *Forum on Kurdish Society, History, and Culture* convened for its first session of the 2013-14 academic year. Junior Researchers **Joel Parker** and **Ceng Sagnic** delivered a joint lecture titled “*Kurdish Autonomy in Syria: Prospects and Challenges*,” which explored future prospects for the Kurdistan region of Syria as well as current challenges facing Kurdish autonomy.

In his remarks, Parker discussed the history of the Kurdish populations in Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. He focused on the Kurds in relation to the development of Arab nationalism, which served to exclude Kurds from political life, particularly in Syria. However, with the advent of the “Arab Spring,” Parker argued, Kurds have begun to view the Syrian state as an irrelevant entity in their quest for national self-determination. In Iraq, for example, Sunni-Shi’i violence is driving Iraqi Kurds toward forging a stronger partnership with their Syrian counterparts. Sagnic supported Parker’s thesis by sharing that recent lucrative border trade between the Iraqi and Syrian Kurdish regions has provided independent financial support for Kurdistan or, *Rojava*, as Syrian Kurds refer to their region. This development has also led to a growing discourse among the Kurds of Syria envisioning an independent Kurdish state.

“Don’t Jews Pray to Walls?” – An Israeli Jew’s Insider Account of Iraqi Kurdistan

ON February 24, 2014, **Lazar Berman**, a former project advisor to the Council of Ministers of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), presented a lecture to the Kurdish Forum’s second meeting of the semester. Discussants at this meeting included Prof. **Ofra Bengio**, **Ceng Sagnic**, and **Eliezer Tsafir**, former Mossad specialist on Israeli-Kurdish relations.

According to Berman, Jews and Kurds share lengthy collective memories of historic oppression. This commonality, coupled with the transition to statehood for the Jewish people via Zionism, are an inspiration to the Kurdish drive for self-determination. Speaking on current affairs, Berman suggested that a strong and fruitful relationship between Israel and the Kurds appears to be a mutually beneficial possibility. Yet, presently, U.S. foreign policy stands in the way of such developments.

Kurdish Language Classes

ONCE again the MDC is offering Kurdish classes in the Kurmanji dialect. Taught by **Ceng Sagnic**, a native Kurdish speaker with extensive knowledge of different Kurdish dialects, it is the third beginner’s Kurdish course offered by the Kurdish Studies Program of the MDC. The course is open to both students of Tel Aviv University and interested members of the public. Additionally, an advanced course is also being offered for students interested in translating Kurdish texts.

Economic Forum

ON December 24, 2013, the MDC’s Economic Forum met and welcomed guest lecturer Danny Rubinstein, former Palestinian affairs correspondent for *Davar* and *Ha’aretz* and lecturer on media and the Middle East at the Hebrew University and Ben Gurion University. Rubinstein discussed everyday life and economic conditions in the West Bank and their implications for regional security, politics, and society.



THE MDC VISITS THE “BIG EASY”

THE 47th annual meeting of the Middle Eastern Studies Association (MESA) convened in New Orleans from October 10–13, 2013. As in previous years several scholars from the MDC presented on a variety of panels. Prof. **Uzi Rabi** and Prof. **Eyal Zisser** sat on a panel titled, “Israeli Domestic and Foreign Policy after the Israeli Election of 2013,” sponsored by the Association for Israel Studies and organized by Prof. **Robert O. Freedman**. Dr. **Bruce Maddy-Weitzman** participated on the panel “The King’s Dilemma: Politics and Protest in Contemporary Morocco,” and presented his research on the Amazigh Movement and Morocco’s “Democracy Spring.” Dr. **Harel Chorev** presented his paper, “Networking Organizations: A New Approach to Elite Families in the Fertile Crescent,” on the panel discussing the politics of notables in *Bilad al-Sham*. **Heidi Basch-Harod** gave her paper analyzing the changing roles of Kurdish women in Turkey on a panel called “Scars of War.”

The annual reunion of the TAU Summer Workshop on Israel and the Middle East saw the attendance of 25 alumni at MESA Annual Meeting. As in previous years, alumni joined together for dinner, the opportunity to rekindle friendships and to exchange views about current events in the Middle East. As of 2013, the TAU Workshop has hosted over 150 participants with whom the MDC continues to correspond and pursue joint academic activities such as conferences, student exchanges, and journal publications.

The MDC would like to congratulate Dr. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, who received the L. Carl Brown AIMS Book Prize in North African Studies at this year’s MESA gathering. Established in 2013, the L. Carl Brown AIMS Book Prize is awarded annually to the outstanding book in the area of North African Studies. The winning work reflects the innovative intellectual achievements in North African Studies exemplified by the Garrett Professor in Foreign Affairs and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, L. Carl Brown. Maddy-Weitzman received this year’s prize for his groundbreaking book, *The Berber Identity Movement and the Challenge to North African States* (University of Texas Press, 2011).



DR. BRUCE MADDY WEITZMAN AND TAU WORKSHOP ALUMNUS ABDELILAH BOUASRIA

TIDES OF CHANGE: LOOKING BACK AND FORGING AHEAD IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Middle East and Africa (ASMEA)

ASMEA is an academic organization that seeks to promote the highest standards of academic research and teaching in the fields of Middle Eastern and African studies and related disciplines through programs, publications, and services to support its members, the international community of scholars, and interested members of the public. Marking its sixth year in 2013, the ASMEA conference annually draws a dynamic crowd of academics, scholars, and policymakers from around the globe for panel discussions and roundtables,

excellent networking opportunities, important keynote speakers, and new opportunities to present research.

This year, for the first time, the MDC attended ASMEA's annual conference in order to promote our outreach among this distinguished pool of scholars. In addition, two of our junior researchers presented papers at the gathering, which took place in Washington, D.C., from November 21–23, 2013.

Traveling from Tel Aviv, **Joyce van de Bildt** presented a paper titled “Using Facebook as a Tool for Examining



LEFT TO RIGHT: HEIDI BASCH-HAROD AND JOYCE VAN DE BILDT AT ASMEA



ANNIE TRACY SAMUEL PRESENTING AT ASMEA

Collective Memory: The Emergence of ‘Nasser’ Facebook Pages in Egypt.”

Visiting from her fellowship at Harvard University’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, **Annie Tracy Samuel** gave her paper “War and Nationalism in Iran: The Islamic Revolutionary Guards and Nationalism in the Iran-Iraq War.”

NEW PUBLICATIONS

CONTESTING IDENTITIES IN SOUTH SINAI: DEVELOPMENT, TRANSFORMATION, AND THE ARTICULATION OF A “BEDOUIN” IDENTITY UNDER EGYPTIAN RULE

by *Joshua R. Goodman*
(Moshe Dayan Center, 2013)

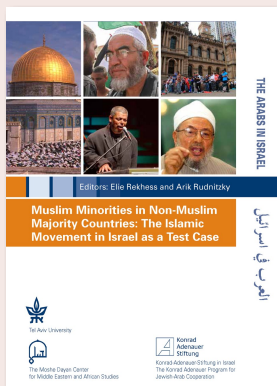


This book examines the emergence and articulation of Bedouin identity in the Aqaba region of South Sinai alongside patterns of economic and social change, locating the source of both within the changing landscape of South Sinai’s tourist towns. Based on fieldwork centered in the town of Dahab, this work provides a bottom-up view of the transformative effects of recent economic development on the Bedouin both as individuals and as a group.



MUSLIM MINORITIES IN NON-MUSLIM MAJORITY COUNTRIES: THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL AS A TEST CASE

editors: *Elie Rekhess and Arik Rudnitzky*
(Moshe Dayan Center, 2013)



This collected volume provides a framework for comparative analysis between the status of Muslim minority communities within Western countries and the status of the Muslim community within Israel. It includes seven articles that address various aspects of history, religion, and politics. These articles are based on lectures delivered during a conference held in March 2010 at Tel Aviv University, which was organized by the Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation.

YEMEN: ANATOMY OF A FAILED STATE

by *Uzi Rabi*

(Hebrew, HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 2014)



This book tells the story of Yemen from the 20th century to the present day - a largely unexplored chapter in the history of the modern Middle East. In this edited volume, exploring the particulars of Yemen's dramatic history also reveals the main challenges to the Arab world, as a whole, in the modern era: ethnic struggles between revolutionaries and conservatives, the competing loyalties of tribal affinities and nation building, the tension between tradition and modernity and that between religious and secular factions.

THE PERSIAN GULF AND THE ARABIAN PENINSULA: STATES AND SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION

editors: *Uzi Rabi and Shaul Yanai*
(Hebrew, Moshe Dayan Center, 2014)



In recent decades, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula have become a source of interest to academicians, government officials, and the international media. Changes in the beginning of the 21st century led to new geopolitical, national, and social developments in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, which are explored by a number of scholars in this edited volume.

EXPERTS

- Prof. Uzi Rabi, *Director, Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Irit Back, *Research Fellow*
- Prof. Ofra Bengio, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Harel Chorev-Halewa, *Research Fellow*
- Dr. Brandon Friedman, *Research Fellow*
- Yitzhak Gal, *Research Fellow*
- Prof. Motti Golani, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Ephraim Lavie, *Research Fellow*
- Prof. Meir Litvak, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, *the Marcia Israel Principal Research Fellow*
- Prof. Itamar Rabinovich, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Itamar Radai, *Research Fellow*
- Dr. Paul Rivlin, *Research Fellow*
- Prof. Shimon Shamir, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Prof. Asher Susser, *the Stanley and Ilene Gold Research Fellow*
- Prof. Mordechai Tamarkin, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Mira Tzoreff, *Research Fellow*
- Dr. Esther Webman, *Senior Research Fellow*
- Dr. Daniel Zisenwine, *Research Fellow*
- Prof. Eyal Zisser, *Senior Research Fellow*

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