



April 2008

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**Journeys of Jewish youth to Poland: Formative Experience or Passing Trend?**

Mandel fellows discuss journeys to Poland for High School students and the role of holocaust education in the crystallization of Jewish-Israeli identity. (Page 2)

**A Heartfelt encounter**

'Dialogue from the Heart of Confusion' is warmly received at an evening to mark the book's launch. (Page 4)

**Investing in Developing**

In response to the growing interest of numerous Mandel graduates who hold leading roles in social and educational organizations, the Graduates Unit has organized a Resource Development course. (Page 6)

**Reading Avram Burg**

In reading groups that meet on a weekly basis, Mandel fellows read "Defeating Hitler", by former speaker of Knesset and Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Avram Burg. They had the opportunity to question him when he visited the Mandel Leadership Institute (MLI) recently. (Page 8)

## **Journeys of Jewish Youth to Poland: Formative Experience or Passing Trend?**

The Holocaust has been one of the continuous themes in Israeli society for the last several decades, constantly present in the media and other public spheres. The role of holocaust education in the crystallization of Jewish-Israeli identity, and specifically the trip to Poland for High School students is a topic which is attracting increasing public attention. The trip is perceived by many as an essential formative experience, but at \$1500, is not a viable option for every student. Indeed, last year only approximately one quarter of the year group in question took part.

As part of their continuing studies about major trends in Israeli society, culture, education and social affairs, Mandel Fellows met with Inbal Kivity-Ben Dov, from the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, to address pressing questions and understand controversial issues in holocaust education today.



Do educational trips to Poland build Israeli identity?

“We are standing on a watershed line,” said Kivity-Ben Dov. “The Holocaust is still at the heart of the Israeli consensus, so the trip to Poland is a central way to connect with the heart of Israeli society. At the same time, there is a problem here, not in the price of the trip, but in the great importance accorded to it in terms of identity-building for Israeli youth.”

Sociologist Yair Oron proposed that in recent years, the Holocaust has become a major factor for young Israelis in defining their identity as Jews. In most of his research, says Oron, the Holocaust is described again and again as an event that is of great significance to the Jewish people at large as well as to their own destiny.

Despite the immense importance of the Poland trip in holocaust education and remembrance, Kivity-Ben Dov claims that the expectation that this trip will succeed in strengthening the Jewish, Israeli and universal identity of the student is somewhat problematic. She proposed to Mandel fellows that they

consider whether the trip to Poland ought to be a solution to problems of Jewish Identity in Israeli society, and if so, is such a solution desirable?

Kvity offered the example of an alternative program which, in terms of identity, is having a similar affect on young Israelis as the Poland Trip. The 'Masa Yisraeli' (The Spirit of Israel Experience Program) is a 6-day educational and spiritual trek through the land of Israel, for Israeli 10th and 11th grade high school students nationwide, which raises the same essential issues as the Poland trip. Its central objective is to reinvigorate Jewish identity in Israel and around the world while confronting the widening rifts within Israeli society and the Jewish people at large.

"We are located at a crossroads in this discussion, which could have a great affect on us. These are questions which must be asked," Kvity told the fellows, concluding an avid discussion.

Mandel fellows continue to explore this issue, and at the end of April, five fellows will participate in an 8-day youth delegation to Poland.

## A Heartfelt Encounter

**‘Dialogue from the Heart of Confusion’ is warmly received at an evening to mark the book’s launch.**

Moving responses to a new publication by Keter/Mandel Foundation were heard at a special evening dedicated to the book’s launch at the Mandel Leadership Institute.

The book ‘Dialogue From The Heart Of Confusion’ records the encounter between twelve Israeli teachers – half of them Russian speaking immigrants, half Israeli veterans, as they met once a week over a year in order to get to know each other beyond the usual stereotypes and to promote a productive discourse in the embroiled relations between cultures in Israel.

The mixed audience, including new and old immigrants, native Israelis, teachers, academics, Mandel fellows and graduates was fitting for the launch of a pioneering initiative focused around inter-cultural discourse and activity.



Yael Bar Lev welcomes guests

Yael Bar Lev, co-Director with Dr. Daniel Marom of the Visions of Jewish Education Project at the Mandel Leadership Institute facilitated the evening.

“This is one of the books which have widened my world,” she said. “The book and the activity surrounding it enrich me with a different vision, helping me observe the reality in Israel through questions, thoughts and deeds.”

“Reading this book arouses great excitement and leads to new insights we didn’t have previously to understanding “the other”. A great step has been taken here,” said Annette Hochstein, President of Mandel Foundation-Israel. Hochstein, recalling her own experiences as a new immigrant in Israel, praised those involved in the project, and stated that the book provides a dive into the depths of Israeli society.

Various aspects of the books were discussed by guest panelists Mandel faculty member Prof. Moshe Halbertal, of the Hebrew University; MK Yuli

Edelstein, Deputy Chair of Knesset and a Mandel graduate; and Iris Wolf, currently a Mandel fellow.

Prof. Halbertal described the book as, “human to the point of tears in its sensitivity, modesty, generosity and patience.”

“The book testifies to changes in society, it shows Israeli society has reached the ability to create listening which didn’t exist before, and in this there is an aspect of repair,” said Halbertal, adding that the book highlights the difference between pluralism and multiculturalism: “The book ‘Dialogue from the Heart of Confusion’ for me was a multicultural experience – where ‘the other’ makes you think about who you are. The multiculturalism of the “other” makes you interpret yourself.”

Commenting on chapters in the book which discuss Jewish identity, Halbertal claimed the questions raised are much deeper than those of identity, they are questions of what it is to be human. “From these questions of culture and identity I can learn about what type of person I am,” concluded Halbertal, “We have so much to learn as people from this encounter”.

MK Edelstein agreed that the book awakens questions “within” and drew from a chapter discussing the different kindergarten experiences of the teachers from Shevach-Moffet, which resulted in a discussion of different principles of educators and the purpose of the education system.



MK Yuli Edelstein reviews the new publication

Iris Wolf perceived the book from a different angle. Before joining the Mandel Leadership Institute as a fellow, Wolf was principal of a school in Lod where 30-35% of the student population were new immigrants. She told the audience that school is the natural place where intensive encounters of the kind investigated in the book are created: “Principals in Israeli society do not have the privilege of ignoring this subject,” said Wolf. “You have pioneered a way which is visionary and exciting,” she told the editors of the book, praising them for challenging school principals to initiate discourse.

The evening concluded with ‘I Was Born Here’, a one-man play by actor Vladimir Friedman, which takes a humorous look at the encounter between cultures in Israel. Nonetheless, Bar-Lev stressed:

“We don’t see this book as a book about Russian immigrants or aliya but a book about encounters and how we can have encounters. We see in this book an opening for these encounters and important conversations that need to take place.” The success and value of the book, Bar Lev emphasized, is not in its existence on the bookshelf, but in its potential use to positively affect the education system.

**'Dialogue from the Heart of Confusion' edited by Daniel Marom and Micky Miller is published by Mandel Foundation and Keter Books.**

## **Graduates Unit Opens Course for Resource Development**

In response to the growing interest of numerous Mandel graduates who hold leading roles in social and educational organizations, the Graduates Unit has organized a Resource Development course.

The course is being taught by Mr. Avi Armoni, consultant to the CEO of the Edmond J. Safra Fund, and Directorate Chairperson of the Israel Association of Community Centers, who has extensive knowledge and expertise in the field of resource development.



Mr. Avi Armoni

Many Mandel graduates cope with the challenges of fundraising on a daily basis. The purpose of the course is to enable them to obtain tools and skills with which they will be able to analyze their organizational situation, and formulate paths of activity which suit the character and unique needs of the organization. These tools and skills will give leverage to the graduates’ personal abilities, as well as enabling the organizations in which they work to create sustainable change in their fields. Furthermore, graduates will acquire tools which will enable them to advise other members of the Mandel community in this field in the future.

“The course is important in my eyes because it gives tools beyond resource development. It is helping us with our organizational identity,” said participant Yuval Ivri, a recent graduate of the Mandel School for Educational Leadership. Ivri, who coordinates the Center ‘People Facing the Periphery’ at the Hebrew University hopes this process will help him and other course participants to clarify the vision, aims and successes of their organizations.

Subjects taught during the course will include ways of recognizing and referring to sources of funding; questions of motivation for giving; the discussion of central aspects of marketing; interaction between philanthropists and social organizations; and processes of strategic planning of resource development in which essential components such as vision-building, organizational values and declaration of the organization’s mission will be presented.

“Avi Armoni brings with him experience as a fund raiser together with managerial experience in a public company and the private sector. I hope to receive from this course the tools to raise funds and develop resources together with tools for vision-building and measuring success. I would also like to become acquainted with the world of foundations and philanthropy,” said Ivri.

In order to benefit the wider Mandel graduate community, The Graduates Unit is active in the assembly and preservation of the unique knowledge developed in the course. The course is accompanied by an active website on which exclusive materials produced for the course can be found. Amongst these materials are the PowerPoint presentations and video recordings of each meeting.

## Reading Avram Burg

Four years after leaving Israeli politics Avram Burg, former speaker of Knesset and Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel is now a citizen of France and a successful businessman. Burg hit the headlines last year upon the release of his book, “Defeating Hitler”, which expresses a harsh attitude toward ‘Israeliness’ and Israelis.

In reading groups that meet on a weekly basis, Mandel fellows read “Defeating Hitler”, and had the opportunity to question Burg when he visited the Mandel Leadership Institute (MLI) recently. Dr. Motti Shalem, Director of the Mandel IDF Leadership Development Program, facilitated the reading group.

“Defeating Hitler” is an attractive choice,” said Dr. Shalem, “it is a book which asks questions on identity and Israeli society, and touches upon many of the issues the fellows are examining in the course of their studies at the Mandel Leadership Institute.”

Burg’s audience were a mixed group of Jews, Muslims, religious, and secular, with differing opinions on his book and the controversial claims made within it about the State of Israel. Mandel Fellows came with challenging questions for the man who claims to like argument and debate because “it is a tool of creation”.



Avram Burg: "Debate is a tool of creation"  
photograph courtesy of Haaretz

In his book, Burg addresses his complex relationship with Zionism and said that since its publication, he has often been asked if he is a Zionist.

“It is a simple question which has been bothering me for many years,” he admitted. “I define Zionism as a chapter, not a book, but a defining chapter,” he told the fellows. “I think it was Ben-Gurion who said that the Zionist movement was the scaffolding to build the home, and that after the state's establishment it should be dismantled.”

Burg, who describes himself as a citizen of the world, and in his book calls on everyone who can to obtain a foreign passport, was asked by a fellow if his obtaining a French passport and voting in the French Presidential elections was merely a provocation?

“The passport is a metaphor,” replied Burg. “I look at Israel on the one hand and myself on the other hand. Israel takes advantage of the dual loyalty of Jews in the world which is a dangerous game. As an Israeli I want to exercise my dual responsibility. I am a citizen of the world and I want to express dual loyalty and dual responsibility. If I can influence, I will.”

Fellows discussed with Burg trips to Poland and issues of forming Jewish and Israeli identity. Questions were also raised about Arab citizens of Israel, whom Burg described as a significant factor in defining his own identity.

“I want a state in which there will be ‘others’”, said Burg. “The dialogue between Jews and Arabs is essential.”

Fellows, who have been delving into and encountering different sectors of society throughout their studies, said they found Burg's book thought-provoking.