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THE FOUR TRIBES OF MODERN ISRAEL

Looking at Israel from an outside perspective can make the country difficult to decipher. Division between Arab population and Jewish population is obvious and discussed in the media. Yet the complexity inside the Jewish population is a component of Israeli society that is often ignored by those outside of Israel. This division leads to nearly as much political disagreement as the broader religious division does. The Hasidim (or Ultra-Orthodox), National Religious (also known as traditional), Secular Jews, and Arabs can be said to make up the “four tribes” of modern Israeli society, each different from the others. In Israel last June, we had experiences involving all four tribes, and the blogs that icnext Cohort 7 participants wrote reflected these distinct cultures.

Max Kornblut and Zach Segar, Co-Editors

WE LOOKED LIKE WE DIDN'T BELONG, BUT ANYONE CAN EAT SWEETS

On Wednesday night, our group took a bakery tour of an orthodox community called Meah Sha'arim - a very intimate neighborhood. Residents didn't like to be bothered, so trying to stand out less, the women walked in the front and the men walked behind us. First, we went to Avichail bakery, the last secular bakery in the neighborhood. Not only did the people of the orthodox community burn down the store once, they also burned the owner's car twice. But, the owner didn't give up. We got bagels, rugelach, cinnamon rolls, and a chocolate croissant like thing - the cinnamon rolls were to die for. We then went to Nechama bakery, which is open 24/6, except they are closed on Shabbat. It was a Persian bakery that made eastern bread. We tried a Jerusalem bagel dipped in Za'atar, a Persian cracker, and North African bread - all good, but my favorite was the North African bread.



TALKING WITH A NATIONAL RELIGIOUS RABBI

While walking through the neighborhood, our tour guide, the amazing Toby Abrams, told us about the different people who live here. She told us about all the different types of orthodox people and how to tell which sect they were by looking at them. First, there are the Hasids. You can tell a man is Hasid because he will be wearing a long black jacket, have Payos, and a hat. All Hasidic groups have different clothing. They might have black socks or white socks, pants

Today we learned about the National Religious Community in Israel, from Rabbi Michael Unterberg. Rabbi Unterberg is liberal orthodox man from Cleveland. I know, really sounds like an oxymoron. To quote Amnon, “he is a minority in a minority”, which truly reflects a population of Israelis with political views that do not correlate with their religious views. Rabbi Unterberg does not agree with some of the recent political decisions made by religious political groups in Israel. In

Hannah Light, Israel 2019

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Welcome to ic.news – written by, for, and about Cleveland's Jewish teens!

In the section titled “ic.news” israel.cleveland.next (icnext) participants reflect on their 10-day Mission to Israel in June 2018. Inspired by knowledge gained from the icnext program, they will talk about Jewish identity, changing political, social, and cultural perspectives of

Israelis, the realities of the Israeli conflict, and more. icnext is a two-year program that educates Cleveland's Jewish high school students from all denominations in core issues of Israeli society and the geopolitical situation in Israel today. icnext is a project of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, administered through @akiva.

For information about or to apply for icnext, contact Tina Keller at tkeller@akivacleveland.org.



his own words, one can sum up the recent national religious policies with “we told you so”. In order to understand, you have to learn their history.

At first, the National Religious Community was very leftist. They truly believe that God has set aside the perfect land for a socialist Jewish society. However, this still meant the Palestinian territories. So when in 1967 we conquered “all the cities in the Bible,” meaning ancient Judean cities outside the 1948 Israeli borders, religious conservatives felt legitimized to tell the rest of Israel, “we told you so”. Meaning that this ten percent of Israel's population thought that they were the leaders of Jewish society. This caused them to become extremely hawkish with Israeli foreign policy.

Unterberg suggested that their attitudes toward Palestinians are, for the most part, “we don't care.” In 2005, when the intifada hit, a minority of the National Religious Zionists wanted to reform their policies, but the majority just felt more convinced about their beliefs. Unterberg said that his definition of the beliefs of National Religious Zionism is that “modern Israel is a Religious event, a historical change by God, that prophecies from the bible predicted for life today”. This past election, he changed his kippa because can't understand how people can call themselves properly religious when their political leanings conflict with the morals of Judaism. Overall, National Religious Zionism is a good example of the ideological confusion of today's tribes of Israel.

Emma Lenson, Israel 2019

THE NON-JEWISRAELI EXPERIENCE

Yesterday I had the opportunity to truly experience Israeli culture and better understand some differences in religiosity and observance. On Saturday morning I went to the bar mitzvah of the cousin of Iftach, my host, and it was one of the most weird, interest-



ing, and awkward experiences of my life.

My host family, Eli (who was also staying with Iftach), and I woke up early to drive across the country to a kibbutz outside of Haifa.

After being introduced to the entirety of my host's family, the “service” finally began. This “service” was nothing like an American traditional service because it was full of joy, song, and celebration. When I asked Iftach what the service would be like he responded with “what's service? This bar mitzvah with no religion.” At first I had a hard time imagining a non-religious bar mitzvah considering the basis for a bar mitzvah is religion. After the small group of about 70-80 people finished their songs and reading Torah I began to realize what Iftach meant when he said that. This celebration was more of a glorified birthday party than a religion based celebration.

I realize now that a large group of Israelis don't necessarily recognize a god or even bring this religious culture into their everyday lives. This bar mitzvah as well as many others like it represent how many Israelis like and utilize Israeli culture, but not necessarily Jewish religion. While this trip has taught me a lot, one major takeaway is that not all Israeli-Jews observe and celebrate holidays and traditions the same way. This is just a part of normal life in Israel.

Isaiah Jacobs, Israel 2019

A HISTORY OF HONOR

Each narrative has two perspectives, often those on opposing sides are isolated from the views of his or her “enemy.” Following our days of freedom in Beit She'an, a two-hour drive accompanied by a (well needed) nap refreshed my mind as we headed to the Arab village of Jisr Az Zarqa.

When we arrived, our cohort and ten Arab teens from Jisr Az Zarqa gathered in a circle. Following the typical sharing of names, ages, and “fun facts,” our newly intertwined

In “more.teen.news” @akiva presents teen events in the community. From preparing students for the challenges on their future college campus, learning Hebrew and how to advocate for Israel, to original Jewish theater (testimony.theater.cleveland) @akiva offers opportunities for teens to develop strong connections to Israel, and train to be Jewish leaders.

more.teen.news

CLEVELAND TEENS DELEGATION TO: THE ANTISEMITISM, HATE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CONFERENCE, PITTSBURGH, PA Sunday November 10, 2019

On October 27, 2018, Congregation Tree of Life in Pittsburgh, PA, became the site of the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States. The shooting resulted in the loss of eleven lives that day. Since the shooting, American Jews have had to grapple with new manifestations of Antisemitism, and what it means to be a Jew in America.

Recognizing that today's high school students are living in an age when anti-Semitism manifests in everything from large scale incidents of violence to micro-aggressions, @akiva sought to provide local teens with the opportunity to learn about this growing threat and process their own feelings, while paying respects to the victims of the Tree of Life shooting. On November 10, a group of 50 Cleveland Jewish teens and chaperones attended a conference on Antisemitism, Hate, and Social Responsibility in Pittsburgh, PA., organized by Classrooms Without Borders. The teens, representing twelve high schools, thirteen different synagogues and youth movements, and all Jewish denominations, heard from a diverse spectrum of speakers. Highlights included conversations with former violent white supremacist Shannon Foley Martinez, and with Dr. Laurie Eisenberg, member of Congregation Tree of Life about the shooting and the global response. Students explored modern



group headed down to the beach to play games in the sand. On the walk to the beach, I approached Ahmad, a fellow sixteen-year-old, who shared my interests in physics, engineering, and computer science. We chatted for a while and shared our opinions regarding many different topics.

Even though I gained more knowledge and enjoyed discussing certain things more than what I am about to write about, two of his opinions relate better to the goal of our mission: one regarding his lifestyle and religion, and the other, the conflict between Israel and the Arabs. Ahmad described himself as a non-religious Muslim. When contrasting the American lifestyle to his he mentioned that he does not touch women. He claimed that eating, sleeping, and intercourse are activities of animals. Because of this he gets up early in the morning and runs with his mother, does not like to eat out of the house, and will not touch a woman unless he will marry her because this is his way of offering respect. When asked if he ever thought there would be peace in the Middle East between Israel and the Arabs

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Antisemitism, paid tribute to those who lost their lives at Tree of Life, and considered what it means to be a



Jewish leader in Cleveland, and on their future college campuses.

The teens closed the day by sharing their take-aways, lingering questions, and commitments coming out of this experience. Among the pledges that they made were:

- I am committing to educating myself, speaking out against anti-Semitism, and being kind to others.
- I am committing to listening to each other's stories, and advocating for others.
- I am committing to getting more involved in my Jewish community.
- I am committing to being informed so that I can help educate others.

he responded with a confident “no.” He proclaimed that he himself along with other Muslim Arabs have honor. He told me that when Israel wanted to share the land with the Arabs, the Arabs had honor and stood up for themselves. In his view, during the Six Day War, when the Arabs wouldn't give up their land, Israel came in and took what it wanted in under a week using guns and new technology while the Arabs defended their honor by throwing rocks. From his point of view, the conflict is not one of religions, but that of people who will never stop fighting in order to defend their honor.

Jisr Az Zarqa is located just thirty minutes north of Tel Aviv, the economic powerhouse of Israel, yet, surrounded by wealth it is the poorest Arab village in Israel. This neglected community shows that although the divide between Israel and Arabs is shrinking, it is still a profound issue. Additionally, from this poverty-stricken community, I met one of the brightest minds and was lucky to have (what has been and what likely will be) the most enlightening conversation of the entire trip.

Ben Wyant, Israel 2019



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