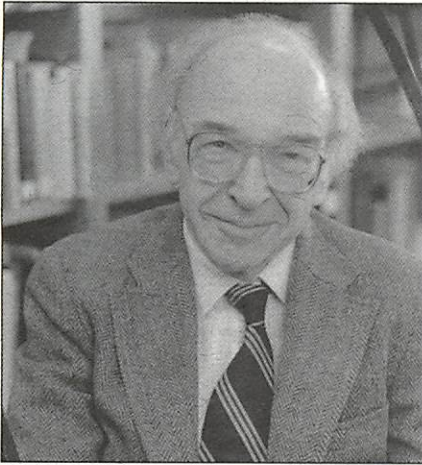


Law Fellows Program at WCL trains Israeli Lawyers in Civil Liberties



Professor Herman Schwartz, founder of the New Israel Fund Law Fellows Program.

When Professor Herman Schwartz went to Israel in 1983, there were only two civil liberties lawyers practicing in the country. No litigation on behalf of civil liberties or civil rights was taking place in Israel at that time, due to a lack of finances and training to support attorneys doing public interest work, but also due to the historical culture and background of the country, which was lacking in the tradition and substructure of concern for civil rights. During his visit, Professor Schwartz decided to help develop a Civil Liberties Bar in Israel, with a cadre of lawyers trained in the field who would promote civil rights and civil liberties through *pro bono* litigation, education, and involvement in public debate and opinion formation. Schwartz hoped that these lawyers would become future leaders, thereby influencing the furtherance of democracy and freedom in Israel.

Because a culture of civil liberties was lacking in Israel at that time, Schwartz came up with the idea of bringing Israeli lawyers to the Washington College of Law, as part of a complete fellowship program, where they would obtain a Masters of Law while taking advantage of the many internship opportunities available in the fields of civil liberties and civil rights in the D.C. area. After a year of intensive study and hands-on work experience, the participants would then return to Israel for the second year of the fellowship program. During this year, the participant would work with an

Israeli civil rights organization, using his or her skills and education to benefit and promote civil rights and civil liberties in Israel. Graduates of the program would also be asked to commit themselves to take *pro bono* cases.

Schwartz's project became a reality with the support of both the Washington College of Law, which agreed to waive tuition costs for the law fellows, and The New Israel Fund, which provided the seed money and continues to support the program financially. The New Israel Fund also selects the law fellows from the many applicants and provides them with a one-year fellowship when they return to Israel, usually at the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. During their year in D.C., Professor Schwartz arranges an internship for each law fellow, often with the American Civil Liberties Union, but he has also found opportunities for the law fellows at the Children's Defense Fund, the Center for International Environmental Law, the Mental Health Law Project, and the Women's Legal Defense Fund, among others. The only condition Schwartz placed on the selection committee was that one of the two law fellows chosen each year be a woman. This condition has been met every year except one, and sometimes both law fellows have been women. Furthermore, every year for the last five years one Arab Israeli has been selected.

Fifteen years after its inception, there is no doubt that Schwartz's brainchild has had an impressive impact on Israel's legal community. There are now over 28 graduates of what became the New Israel Fund Law Fellows Program. These 28 attorneys form the nucleus of the Civil Liberties Bar in Israel. Many are full time public interest lawyers, and all are involved in civil rights work in some way.

Their accomplishments could fill an entire book, but a brief sampling shows the variety and substance of their work. The first law fellow, Joshua Schoffman, helped establish the Litigation Department at the Association of Civil Rights in Israel, and is now the Deputy Attorney General of Israel; Neta Ziv-Goldman co-founded both the Women's Legal Defense Center and the Center for Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Dan Yakir is the Pro Bono Legal Advisor for the Israel AIDS Task

Force; Dana Marshak is the Public Defender in Tel Aviv and Moshe Hacohen has just been appointed the Public Defender in Jerusalem, both played a major part in establishing the Israeli Public Defender system based on their studies in the United States; Tawfiq Jabareen founded the Arab Legal Defense Center of the Association of Forty for Recognition of Arab Villages, an organization devoted to obtaining government services for unrecognized Arab villages; Gidon Bromberg founded and works for Eco-Peace, an environmental group that is the only regional group in the Middle East and which is a program of Adam Teva V'Din, the Israel Union for Environmental Defense; Hassan Jabareen founded Adalah, The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, which is the first Arab-run legal center in Israel. These are just a few examples of a long list of graduates whose cumulative impact has had a significant effect on legislation, policy, practice and legal education.

Thanks to Professor Herman Schwartz, The Washington College of Law, and the New Israel Fund, the Law Fellows Program has become a successful part of legal education, training, and representation in the field of civil rights. As graduates of the program continue to advocate for social justice and civil rights, the New Israel Fund Law Fellows Program will continue to flourish within the civil liberties community. 🌍

To read an article on the Arab minority by one of the current law fellows, Jamil Dakwar, see page 6.

