

## René Cassin Fellowship Program

The René Cassin Fellowship Program (RCFP) is a year-long educational program for Jews ages 25-35 with an interest in human rights, international relations and social justice. Each year, 36 Fellows will be selected, with equal representation from Europe, the United States and Israel. The key components of the Fellowship experience are:

- Monthly seminars, starting in May, focused on a curriculum that has been designed especially for this program. Each Fellow will partner with their counterparts from the two other regions for monthly follow-up discussions of the common curriculum. A key component of the monthly seminars will be the opportunity to hear from leading human rights lawyers, academics, politicians, Jewish scholars and community leaders.
- A nine-day study tour in Israel for all 36 Fellows that will take place in early June. The study tour will examine some of the most challenging issues in international human rights and also afford the Fellows the chance to meet some of the key figures shaping this debate in the State of Israel.
- The Israeli and European Fellows will also participate in a three-day study tour of Geneva in the fall, where they will have the opportunity to meet with leaders of an array of international agencies working on issues across the human rights spectrum that range from refugee rights to genocide and transitional justice.
- Each Fellow will hold a placement with a governmental or non-governmental agency where they will work together in pairs or groups of three on an Impact Project. These projects will begin in the summer and run through the following May. Fellows will be expected to spend approximately 20 hours per month on their Impact Project.

### Program Objectives

The goals of the René Cassin Fellowship Program are:

- 1) To deepen participants' appreciation of and engagement with Jewish visions of a just society through the study of classical and modern Jewish sources, the State of Israel and international human rights law.
- 2) To wrestle with the dilemmas and value-conflicts raised by the interplay of international human rights law, Jewish tradition and the contemporary social and political reality of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. This will be achieved through the examination of examples from Israel, diaspora Jewish communities and other societies.
- 3) To strengthen the social capital of the Jewish people by engaging socially/politically active young Jews from three continents in a program of study, cross-cultural dialogue, travel, and internships.
- 4) To galvanize a movement of young Jewish social activists who will be equipped with the skills and passion to promote social justice and human rights locally and globally.

### Target group

- The first cohort will be comprised of 36 young men and women (aged 23-35), with equal numbers from Israel, Europe and the USA.
- Groups will be a diverse mix of young Jewish professionals from a variety of religious and political backgrounds, with various levels of Jewish engagement from marginal to major.
- All participants will have the intellectual curiosity and appetite to explore and engage with Jewish sources and human rights literature, and the passion to make a difference in this field.

## Sponsoring Agencies

**René Cassin** is a London-based non-profit organisation that uses the historical Jewish experience and positive Jewish values to campaign and educate on universal human rights issues such as discrimination, detention and genocide.

The organisation is named in honour of Monsieur René Cassin, a French Jew and Nobel Laureate who was one of the principal co-drafters of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Monsieur Cassin founded the Consultative Council of Jewish Organisations ('CCJO'), which is the parent body of René Cassin. Monsieur Cassin was also the Chair/President of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Arbitration at The Hague.

Through the CCJO, René Cassin enjoys accreditation at the United Nations (UN). In fact, René Cassin is the only Jewish organisation worldwide that campaigns for universal human rights and possesses UN accreditation. The organisation uses this accreditation to give voice to Jewish values within the international human rights community.

**Makom** is the organizational co-sponsor of the RCFP in Israel. An initiative of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Makom trains leaders and creates educational content to embrace the vibrant complexity of Israel, the people and the place. Non-partisan yet passionate, Makom has an expert team of educators that develop cutting-edge approaches to experiential Israel education. Makom's mission is to realize the untapped potential of Israel and Jewish peoplehood in our lives. Makom believes that a flourishing Jewish People needs a moral conversation at its heart. Makom prizes multi-vocality, a deep encounter with Jewish civilization, and an activist orientation to address tough issues in a creative way. The partnership with RCFP is a natural extension of Makom's work with young adults, Israel and peoplehood content, and experiential education.

**UJA-Federation of New York's Commission on the Jewish People** is the lead funder for the René Cassin Fellowship Program.

## Professional Leadership

**Rabbi Sid Schwarz** is the Project Director of the RCFP. Based in Washington D.C., he will also oversee the New York-based U.S. regional cohort. Sid is a nationally prominent leader in the fields of Jewish education, Jewish identity and social activism and is currently a senior fellow at Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. As the founder of PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, Sid was one of the pioneers in the integration of Jewish learning, values and social responsibility and he edited several of the earliest curricula in the field. Tens of thousands of young American Jews were exposed to leadership, activism and service in a Jewish key through PANIM. His book, *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World* (2006) is one of the seminal works on Jewish social justice. In 2002, Sid won the Covenant Award for his social entrepreneurship in the field of Jewish education. Sid's new book, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future* will be published in 2013.

**Simone Abel** is the Executive Director of René Cassin. She will oversee the European regional cohort based in London. Simone came to René Cassin from the New York office of Human Rights Watch (HRW) where she assisted in conducting research and developing policy on issues concerning international law, human rights and corporate governance. Prior to transitioning into human rights, Simone was an attorney at leading law firms Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP, New York, and Mallesons Stephen Jaques, Sydney. She also worked as a journalist for the *Australian Jewish News* and as student editor for the *Australian Journal of Human Rights*. Simone holds a BA/LLB and is currently completing a Masters of International Law at the University of New South Wales. She is a graduate of the Centro de Estudio del Espanol, Buenos Aires, and has lent her skills to the Migrant and Refugee Rights Project, the Jewish Care Prison Outreach Program, Room to Read, the Downing Center Duty Solicitor Scheme and the National Indigenous Project.

**Rabbi Gideon Sylvester** will serve as the educator and co-Director of the Israeli regional cohort. An Orthodox Rabbi with a passionate interest in human rights issues and its roots in the Jewish sources, he currently directs the *Beit Midrash* for Human Rights at the Hillel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. There he has developed an entirely new course to teach students ancient and modern Jewish approaches to contemporary human rights. A native of the U.K., Gideon is a frequent scholar in residence for Encounter Program meetings between rabbinic students and Palestinians. He has been involved in interfaith work in Israel and England, working with Christians and Moslems. Gideon previously worked as an Adviser at the Office of the Prime Minister of Israel. Before moving to Israel, he served for seven years as Rabbi of Radlett United Synagogue. During his tenure, it became the fastest growing synagogue in England. In addition to rabbinic ordination, Rabbi Sylvester has an MA in the philosophy of education and a teaching certificate from London University.

### Timetable

December 1, 2012	Fellowship applications due
February 15, 2013	Fellows notified of their selection
April 2013	First gathering of regional cohorts and orientation to the program
May 2013	First monthly seminar
June 4-12, 2013	Israel Study Tour
Summer 2013	Impact Project teams and placements set up
October 2013	Israel and European cohorts travel to Geneva for a study tour
May 2014	Presentation of Impact Projects. Gathering includes the new class of RCFP Fellows

### Cost

The program fee for U.S. and European Fellows will be \$500, and for Israeli Fellows will be \$250. The program fee will cover a small portion of the cost of Fellows' participation in the RCFP. All other costs, including round-trip airfare to Israel and the cost of the three-day trip to Geneva for the European and Israeli delegations will be completely covered for RCFP Fellows. There will be some meals on both trips that Fellows will need to pay for themselves. Fellows should consult with a financial advisor/accountant as the program fee may be deductible as a professional education expense.

### Deposit

We also ask that all Fellows selected to participate in the RCFP pay a deposit that is equivalent to the program fee (an additional \$500 for U.S. and European Fellows and an additional \$250 for Israeli Fellows). This amount will be due upon acceptance into the program and will be refunded to Fellows upon successful completion of the program. Exceptions are available in instances of demonstrated financial need.