JEWISH AND CONTEMPORARY ORIGINS OF ISRAELI *HASBARA*

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Their negative image has become a major concern for Jews and Israelis. Standard arguments such as "reversal image of David and Goliath," Israeli democracy as a news gathering heaven, and split in freely expressed political views as opposed to Arab/Palestinian monolithic control, cannot explain properly the extent of Israeli helplessness in terms of image management. This article argues that the roots of Israeli "hasbara" [a positive sounding synonym for "propaganda"] lay deep in Jewish history and the Zionist stage of Jewish history was not able to make a fundamental change. This article analyzes the various attitudes towards hasbara *and outlines the deeper changes that Israel should internalize as a vital preliminary step towards utilization of effective propaganda.*

The failure of the State of Israel in the realm of *hasbara*,[1] especially in everything related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is an established, accepted fact. The failure covers all sectors and fronts: world public opinion, the Palestinian enemy and the Israeli public itself. It is especially prominent when one faces the fact that the State of Israel is a government body with far more resources than its Palestinian opponent. The onlooker cannot but

wonder how a young country that managed to get hold of nuclear weapons for its defense, build a reputable intelligence service, and build up an excellent army, can look so helpless in the important strategic realm of image. This phenomenon requires a thorough explanation.

True, all the well-known answers are correct. Freedom of movement in Israel enables reporters to move freely all over the country, including the territories (except for the areas known as "closed military areas"), something that is not possible in the neighboring Arab countries. There is almost no censorship in Israel, and reporters are almost completely free to report anything (except for some exceptions such as a report from the place where an Iraqi scud lands). Israel has the technological infrastructure for broadcasting information collected in the territories to networks abroad so that, paradoxically, Israel's technological advancement has become a stumbling block.[2]

The freedom of opinion in Israel prevents it from maintaining a steady political line as Arafat does, first as head of the PLO and then as head of the Palestinian Authority. In addition to that, the democratic-liberal tradition of the regime in Israel reacts with revulsion to what is perceived as propaganda, and associates it with lies and disinformation. That is the reason the official authorities prefer to deal only with the "clean" side of *hasbara*, and to leave the "dirty" side to the secret services.[3]

One can also claim that the Palestinian case is easier to market morally than the Israeli case. The Palestinians, in contrast, have no such inhibitions and they do not shrink from false accusations and staging events in order to demonize Israel. As was said above, all these are true claims and yet they are not sufficient to give a full and convincing explanation of the extent of Israel's five-decade failure when it comes to propaganda.

The roots of such a failure usually lie in both organizational factors, such as faults in the division of responsibilities, allocating resources, decision-reaching processes, professional appointments etc., and in structural factors such as cultural patterns. In the Israeli context, it seems one can point to at least three such indepth patterns: the traditional-Jewish pattern, the Israeli-Zionist pattern, and the Western-democratic pattern. (Of course, there are close connections between these three, in several ways, but for the purpose of theoretical analysis we must distinguish between them). I will try to focus mainly on the first two patterns—the Jewish and the Israeli—and the Palestinian approach as well.

I wish to prove that the roots of Israel's inadequacy with regard to *hasbara* can be found in very deep and fundamental pat-

terns of thought. It is quite clear that some of them can be over-
come, and some can even be gotten rid of, but everything has a
price.

Jews and Hasbara

In order to trace the roots of the Jewish attitude towards *has-
bara*, it seems that one has to delve into the sources that shape
Jewish awareness. Of course, I will not be able to go through the
entire history of Jewish *hasbara*, but I will attempt to present here
some of the major landmarks that, in my opinion, can teach us
something about the childhood diseases of Jewish *hasbara*, from
which its adult faults developed.

Already in the Bible we find a sensitivity to image factors.
When Shimon and Levi attacked Chamor, his family, and the city
of Shechem and his family in revenge for what Shechem the son
of Chamor did to Dina, Yaakov did not express any moral outrage
about the actual act (this outrage expressed itself mainly in the
blessings he gave before he died—Genesis 49:5), but mainly from
a fear of the damage to his image: "to make me odious in the eyes
of the inhabitants of the land" (Genesis 34:30). Indeed Yaakov,
the third generation in the Land of Israel, still saw the Canaanites
as the "inhabitants of the land" and himself as one who is depend-
ent on them, to one degree or another. His image policy was
mainly defensive. When Moses stood before G-d, he also did not
forget to consider the matter of image, and asked: "Why should
the Egyptians say..." (Exodus 32:12). We see here the forming of
policy (the fate of the Jewish people) being influenced by what is
known today as public opinion.

In the periods after the conquering of the Land of Israel, the
Jewish people faced a long line of wars and struggles in which
they exhibited a considerable amount of creativeness and ingenu-
ity, but they did not shine in the realm of *hasbara* propaganda.
The most brilliant propaganda moves at the end of the Israelite
period actually belonged to their enemies: Ravshake's speech at
the height of the siege on Jerusalem and Haman's manipulative
conversation with Ahaseurus in which he convinced Ahaseurus to
agree to the extermination of the Jewish people.

The relationship between Jews and non-Jews during the Hel-
lenistic and Roman periods was extremely tense, even on the
plane of ideas. Professor Menachem Stern, in his comprehensive
book, *Greek and Latin Author on Jews and Judaism*,[4] gives us a
broad and fascinating picture of the Jews' image in the eyes of the

non-Jews. This book brings scores of quotes from the writings of various authors from different periods, and the vast majority show that the Jews' image in the classical world was poor, and usually based on distorted facts. We have almost no sign of any Jewish *hasbara* propaganda effort against these images. Philo did made an effort to explain Judaism in Greek philosophical terms, but it seems that his life work reflects not so much an effort at *hasbara* as a sincere internalization of this culture by Jews of his type. The translation of the Bible into Greek helped disseminate Judaism's messages, but it seems that the initiative for doing it actually came from non-Jews, and the talmudic sages viewed this move almost like an evil decree.

The person who may be regarded as the pioneer of Jewish *hasbara* in ancient times is Josephus Flavius, in his book *Against Apion*.[5] As we know, this book was aimed at the Hellenistic author Apion, who wrote against Jews and Judaism to prove that the Jewish people was a young nation (a shameful characteristic, according to the concept of the times), and that its religious customs were wrong and indecent. Josephus wished to prove the opposite and brought a wealth of sources to show that the Jewish people was an ancient people, that early Greek historians already told of it, and that its laws were good and proper. This is not the place to judge Josephus the man, whose complex figure has already fascinated many historians. However, from the *hasbara* point of view Josephus already presented all the weaknesses of later Jewish *hasbara*: his claims were almost entirely apologetic, there was no criticism of the opponent—except where the opponent went off the track in criticizing Judaism, and there was no attempt to counter the other side's values or culture—only an attempt to show that Judaism fits in with these values and culture. Lastly, there was no "wickedness" or manipulation in the claims: Josephus did not utilize the reader's prejudices, his dark inclinations, or his socio-cultural biases; he only presented fine practical, business-like, clear, and "politically-correct" claims. We cannot judge Josephus, taking into account the historical circumstances in which he acted, but we can say that his *hasbara* is characterized mostly by defensiveness.

The talmudic sages held various debates with the wise men of the non-Jewish world—"Philosophers," "Matrons," and others—and even with opposing cults within the Jewish world. Even though these debates were very different from those that Josephus held, they also show a basic contempt for the opponent and a preconceived despair about the possibility of convincing him of the truth of Judaism as it is. In many places in the Talmud and the

midrash we find that after the Sages answered their opponents, their students came to them and asked: "That one you pushed off with a reed—but what answer would you give us?"[6]

The implicit assumption is that the opponent is not worthy of a real answer, and that he wouldn't understand it anyway. But the other assumption is that the real answer might touch on some raw nerves, and we should not be in a hurry to do that. In the internal discussions of the Sages we sometimes see hatred towards the non-Jews, the Sadducees, the *minim*, the heretics, the ignoramuses, and other "others," but in the debates with them the Sages' stand was always one of careful politeness, and sometimes even something approaching apologetics. It seems that the idea is the one hiding behind the well-known adage of R. Eliezer: "Work hard on learning Torah, and know what to answer the heretics" (Avot 2:14); you must know the Torah as it is, but you must also acquire the ability to present it outside. There is a concern here for the image of Judaism in the eyes of the non-Jews, and perhaps also concern for the image of Judaism in the eyes of the "audience" of the debates—society in general—but also perhaps preconceived despair about the possibility of convincing someone else to see the matter through Jewish eyes. The debates with the *minim* as well—especially with the Christians—do not necessarily reflect respect for someone else's opinion, and it is clear that the debate was in order to check the spreading of their messages to even larger segments of the population.

On the face of things, entering into a debate with other nations and with deviants within Judaism shows a basic respect for their value. Indeed, we find in the Talmud (Shabbat 33b) the position of Rabbi Yehuda, who said: "How nice are the deeds of this nation [Rome]: They have built markets, built bridges, built bathhouses." However, on the other hand there is Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's negative attitude: "Everything they did, they did only for themselves: they built markets—to sit prostitutes in them, bathhouses—to pamper themselves, bridges—to collect the toll." (*ibid.*, and also Avoda Zara 2:b). The debate reflects two different images of the conquering superpower: on one hand, an approach that sees in it a certain amount of moral power ("how nice are the deeds") as well as physical power, and on the other hand, the approach that refuses to give it such a virtue ("Everything they did, they did only for themselves").[7] It is natural then that each one of these approaches produces a different approach regarding the ideological debate with them: Rabbi Yehuda's approach assumes that there is room for an intercultural dialogue between Judaism and the classical world, and Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's approach

assumes that there is no room for such a dialogue. It should be noted that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was Rabbi Akiva's disciple. Rabbi Akiva served as a spiritual leader of the rebels against Roman rule, and supported the idea of an active struggle against the conquering empire. True, we also find by Rabbi Akiva a dialogue between religions that took place with "wicked Turnus Rufus" (Bava Batra 10a), not with philosophers. However, that dialogue between the captor and the captured is not a real, free, and open dialogue, and one can see that Rabbi Akiva did not really expect to convince his opponent, and, as mentioned above, went on to choose a military move. This approach was expressed one thousand and eight hundred years later, by Ben Gurion.

We find a similar approach in the debates between Jews and Christians during the Middle Ages.[8] Here, too, most of the debates were forced on the Jews, and the process of *hasbara* was not done out of a desire to convince the opponent of the truth of Judaism, but out of a desire to survive in this undesired arena. There was never any strident criticism regarding the hypocritical stance of the opponent—Christianity—which was massacring and persecuting others in the name of "love and mercy," nor was there any criticism of the values of the Christian culture in general. The debates always focused on the exegesis of the scriptures and on the theological tenets. It seems that in the Middle Ages the approach opposing Jewish missionary activity won hands down while in the times of the talmudic sages there was a partial expression of the opposite approach, advocating such activity.[9]

In an earlier period of the Middle Ages there was also a fierce debate with the Karaites. A large body of literature, wishing to prove the truth of rabbinic Judaism, gave us some of the masterpieces of Jewish thought. This struggle was accompanied by a political power struggle, of which we don't have much information. But it seems that at this stage the option of *hasbara* had a clear advantage over the option of violent action. The Rambam (Maimonides) said that one must distinguish between the ideologues of religious perversion and "the sons of these mistaken people and their grandsons, whose parents misled them and they were born amongst Karaites and raised according to their opinions." While the former are in the category of "to be sent down" (in other words, full active measures may be taken to do away with them), one who belongs to the latter group is like "a child who has been taken captive," rating a different ruling: "One must cause them to repent and attract them with peaceable words until they return to the true Torah"[10]—namely, *hasbara*.

With the elimination of the walls of the ghetto, in the eight-eenth and nineteenth centuries, Judaism faced a new front. The most notable representative of Jewish *hasbara* at the time was Moses Mendelsohn.[11] In some ways, Mendelsohn's work resem-bles Josephus' *Against Apion* very much, and one can say that while Josephus did what he did out of the instinct of self-defense, Mendelsohn was fully aware of what he was doing. The most no-table example of this is the famous "Lavater controversy." Lavater, a Christian priest, challenged Mendelsohn to defend the tenets of his religion in a public debate or convert to Christianity. Mendelsohn was afraid, for if he were to enter into a religious de-bate it would contradict his social and cultural undertaking of bringing Jews and non-Jews together and of cultivating mutual respect between the religions; if he were not to engage in the de-bate, it would appear as helplessness in the face of his opponent's claims. He chose to write a letter "Jerusalem" in which he ex-plained why in principle he thought that he should avoid debating. He was convinced of the truth of his religion, and wouldn't have accepted this truth without giving himself sufficient reasons for it. However he was prevented from presenting his reasons, both be-cause of the Jews' lowly status in Germany and because he be-lieved that in the end Christianity's values are effective in per-fecting mankind, even if it achieves these values by starting from theological starting points that he thought were mistaken, and therefore it is better to leave the Christian with his faith than to undermine it. Mendelsohn did not miss the opportunity of boast-ing that Judaism, in contrast to Christianity, is not a missionizing religion.[12]

One thousand and eight hundred years of submissive Jewish *hasbara*, which was not combined with any military operation or threat of one, has left its mark upon the Jews. The complicated emotional baggage of the complex relationship between Jews and non-Jews convened into the hidden and the open debate about the Jewish method of *hasbara*. The new realities of the emancipation placed before the Jews in Central and Western Europe an un-precedented challenge: some of them converted to Christianity and, on the other hand, some of them remained in a virtual ghetto by means of dress, language, and "Jewish" professions.[13] Between those two poles there was the full range of identities and solutions for the relationship with the non-Jewish world: Reform in its various forms, a secular Jewish identity, modern Orthodoxy and anti-modern Orthodoxy, and later—the Zionist-national identity.

The question of the legitimacy of bringing non-Jews into the Jewish faith acquired new nuances. Although there was no Jewish

missionary movement, in Italy Rabbi Eliyahu ben Amuzag developed a thesis of setting up a "sons of Noach" movement for non-Jews who had become convinced of the truth of Judaism.[14] Instead of converting, the rabbi suggested that these non-Jews accept upon themselves the seven Noachide laws, which are the ideal that Judaism offers those who were not born Jewish. Many years later this idea became popular, and even acquired much influence after being adopted by R. Menachem Mendel Shneersohn of Lubavitch.[15]

Except for the Noachides, the nineteenth century was rich in apologetic literature about Jews and Judaism. The most outstanding representative of this approach is Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, almost all of whose writings were in German, and were an attempt to enwrap Judaism in the clothes of German Romanticism. Rabbi Hirsch's ornate rhetorical style shows clearly that we are facing a work of *hasbara* that goes beyond the task of just imparting ideology. Rabbi Hirsch's opponent from the Reform camp was no less so. Even the Orthodox circles in Hungary and Galicia, which called for avoiding any kind of debate or ideological conversation with the "outlaws," and held that laboring in Torah was the telling answer against them, conducted intensive internal *hasbara* in order to strengthen the ranks.[16]

Zionism and Hasbara

At the same time, this period was one in which modern, racial anti-Semitism developed, taking the place of religious anti-Semitism.[17] The range of answers to the anti-Semitic challenge matched the range of Jewish existence. At one end there was the approach which held that anti-Semitism will disappear if the Jews will only forsake their Judaism on one level or another. At the other end there was the approach that "It is a known law that Esav hates Yaakov,"[18] which held that any attempt by Jews to lessen the gap between Jew and non-Jew will only make matters worse.[19] Within this range we also find the heads of the Zionist movement, for they were searching for a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism when they wished to establish a state for the Jews. Unlike Pinsker, who saw anti-Semitism as a disease, Herzl, some of whose friends were anti-Semites, showed understanding of its causes and thought that anti-Semitism had a positive role in a solution of the "Jewish problem."[20]

An intensive striving for favor, recognition, and integration was the basis of the behavior of those who left the ghetto. After

generations of being rejected, they now had to overcome not only social and legal barriers, but also emotional barriers, and they were most anxious to change people's feelings towards them. They were willing to invest a tremendous effort in order to achieve that—to publicize, to lecture, and even to change their lifestyle. One can call this phenomenon "longing for love," and it would penetrate all the way to the state that they would establish in the future, and be a powerful weapon in the hands of its enemies.

Zionism, which presented very complex models that were full of internal contradictions in all matters relating to the relationship with other nations and the possibility of absorbing their cultures, failed to change much in this realm. The Zionist movement did abandon Herzl's direction, which wanted *hasbara* to other nations to be the central principle of Zionist activity. However, even the supporters of "Tzionut Maasit" (Practical Zionism) understood, although to a lesser degree, that the Zionist enterprise is dependent, among other things, on the legitimization that it receives from the non-Jewish world. Herzl's way shows an internalization of the European way of thinking, an awareness of the value of *hasbara* and the importance of cultural, moral, and socio-psychological components in the successful advancement of an idea.

The way of the Eastern European Zionists, who were to set the tone for the settlement of the Land of Israel, was different. Ben Gurion, who unseated Weizman and imposed the socialist component on the Zionist Organization, was convinced that "doing" was the key to the success of the Zionist enterprise. This section promoted activism together with a rejection of the traditional Jewish way of thinking. In his fight against the British Mandate, Ben Gurion used political means such as appearing before investigation committees, and did not refrain from using the media. However, once independence was achieved, the activist element was emphasized more and more: settlement, development of the economy, immigrant absorption, and achieving military independence. Therefore there was no point in investing in *hasbara*. The Zionists were badly disappointed when it became clear that the Jewish people was not coming in hordes to the new state, and also that anti-Semitism had not disappeared. But they consoled themselves with the thought that the Jews would eventually come to Zion, and that the source of the new-old anti-Semitism that had appeared in the Arab states was the Israeli-Arab conflict, and once that would be solved, the hatred would disappear as well.

In terms of its content, Zionist *hasbara* was based entirely on the effort to achieve legitimacy, and the claim was and still is ba-

sically a moral one: we deserve it because we are a nation among the nations; we deserve it because we have an "historical right" to the Land of Israel; and moreover, after the Holocaust, we deserve it because we were slaughtered and the option of the exile does not exist anymore. All in all (except for a certain number of Etzel and Lehi activities), not much effort was invested in propaganda in order to arouse animosity, opposition, or fighting instincts against the British conqueror (to this day the average Israeli bears no grudge against the kingdom that ruled his land for over thirty years), or against the Arab enemy, even after repeated murderous attacks. The Zionist attempt to create a "new Jew"—muscular, proud, sure of himself, fierce—was aimed mainly inward, in efforts to uproot the remnants of the exile mentality;[21] outwardly, Zionist *hasbara* put almost all its weight on the "underdog doctrine." Even later, when the entire world was amazed at the achievements of the young state—not a little because of its military power—there was only a small deviation from this line, and *hasbara* went back and focused on the moral supremacy of the IDF and on the moral right of this young society to protect itself. Again, there was almost no *hasbara* developed of the "wicked" type—willing to blacken the enemy, weaken its beliefs, nurture the opposition within, and awaken feelings of contempt among the people for the enemies' culture, values, and strangeness. Of course, officially Israel could not allow itself such *hasbara*, but anyone who knows the area of *hasbara* and psychological warfare also knows that moves in this area are often done clandestinely by sending the necessary messages through indirect channels, camouflaging the true source. It is possible that the real need to prevent harm to the Israeli Arabs and to promote their becoming citizens contributed much to this attitude.

The country's embarrassment in the realm of *hasbara* became apparent quickly, both in the organizational realm and the content. Regarding the organizational realm, the lack of clarity about the goals of the *hasbara*, its audience, the means necessary for it, and how important it is (expressed, of course, by the setting aside of funds for it), brought about organizational chaos which resulted in shifting the responsibilities for it from one body to another. The professional authority for it was divided up according to political associations and personal connections, and not according to professional ability.

The basic assumption of Israeli *hasbara* was that the message must reflect the Israeli consensus. Beyond the Zionist consensus about the importance of a Jewish state (shared by most sectors of society other than the far left and some sections of the ultra-

Orthodox), there was no full agreement about the desired character of the Jewish state and the course of action it should take with its enemies. The Jews copied the ideological split regarding the attitude towards the non-Jews, brought about by the opening up of the ghetto, to their established state; they raised the question, based mainly on an apologetic approach: what is the moral justification for expelling people, some of whom have been inhabiting the land for generations. The internal argument in Israel was not unknown to world public opinion, and it goes without saying that it strengthened Israel's enemies in their propaganda. The moral claim became a disadvantage for Israeli *hasbara* abroad. On the psychological level it is clear that a careful, hesitant approach undermines the professional ability to build a dynamic and exciting campaign. Moreover, it wasn't relevant anymore, for Israel's *hasbara* struggles in the world were no longer about its right to exist, but rather on what it did as an existing state. About those issues, as mentioned above, there was no consensus even in the Israeli public itself.

But the worst failure of Israeli *hasbara* was in relation to the target audiences. Almost all resources were dedicated to the "Poretz" (non-Jewish landlord) abroad, and there was no attempt to create cracks in the wall of the Palestinian enemy that it was facing. The same hidden agenda that the Jewish ethos represented for hundreds of years, completely absorbed the assumption that the basic beliefs and opinions of the enemy, and his basic adherence to his culture and values, are something that cannot be undermined; the most one can do is to work within its framework. There was almost no effort to arouse quarrels between Christians and Moslems, Sunnites and Shi'ites, the religious and the secular within the Arab movement. No attempt was made to remind the Palestinians that their struggle is, after all, about land, and to present them with the dilemma of "land vs. blood." The average Palestinian was not confronted with all the shocking sights of the terror attacks, and the arena was left entirely to hard pictures showing the suffering of the Palestinians. Until the past few years no attempt was made to expose the average Arab-on-the-street to the corruption of his leadership, which is quick to send his sons to the killing fields but keeps their own sons close to their parents or in a safe place abroad. Even in the past few years, when the matter of the corruption within the PA has been brought up, it was done mainly by convincing the powers that be in the U.S., and less by direct propaganda among the Palestinians. Moreover, even when the religious factor at the base of Palestinian terror became stronger, Israeli psychological warfare did not utilize any themes

of "religious war," which succeeded so well in Christian Europe, such as exposing the corruption, lies, and hypocrisy that exist in the religious leadership. This was an historical missed opportunity, for Israel had enormous manpower resources in the immigrants from Arab countries, who were familiar with that culture to the point of intimacy, and could shape and give over the necessary messages. But the cultural and managerial power was in the hands of people of European descent.[22] In my opinion, this reflects the deep roots of the historical struggle for dominance in the Jewish world between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.

In short, the Israeli *hasbara* has remained entirely defensive, and aimed completely towards the public opinion in faraway lands that were not involved in the conflict.

The Palestinian Opponent, Its *Hasbara,* and Its Impact on Israel

As opposed to all that was mentioned above, the Palestinians have never stopped their *hasbara* activities. They have acted on a number of planes. First, on the ideological plane, several divisions developed, influenced by the revolutionary movements of the 1950s—communism, socialism, Maoism, etc. As in the Jewish Yishuv before the establishment of the state, the leadership was less concerned with the character of the state after independence, and more by the ways to achieve independence. When the power of the Israeli military showed itself time after time, the PLO understood that guerilla tactics were irrelevant, and they turned more and more to propaganda.

Three central themes may be discerned in the Palestinian messages of the past thirty years. The first one is "from asset to liability," the second is guilt feelings, and the third is justice. The "from asset to liability" is an overall theme that includes several subthemes. Mainly it is supposed to convince target audiences in the enemy population (and also the neutrals) that the benefits to be derived from the continuation of the occupation are less than the losses it incurs. These losses include lives, political prestige, economic damage, etc. In order to do this one must build a military and semi-military system and make it subservient to a condition of inner moral conviction of the justice of one's ways.

The second theme is guilt. One must cause the enemy to feel guilty. As Ellul noted in his monumental work from the 1950s, an army that feels guilty has lost its efficacy entirely.[23] Creating guilt

feelings is a known psychological warfare technique (psychologi-
cal warfare being the discipline that deals with persuasion in the
military framework in the battlefield) and its essence is causing
the soldier to stop and think, and so to make a crack in the psy-
chological wall that was erected by his state in order to convince
him to commit violent acts that he would never do as a humane,
law-abiding person. The Palestinians did this by publicizing their
difficult living conditions and the sacrifices of the civilian popu-
lation, and by emphasizing strongly the image of the "Zionist
trooper." These images were aimed not only toward world public
opinion, but also towards their internal public opinion, and toward
the Israeli public opinion as well. From that point of view the
Palestinians achieved remarkable cohesion of their message.

The third theme is justice, and that was aimed mainly at the
neutrals and to a lesser degree at the Israelis. According to this
theme, the Palestinians deserve a state because of their suffering
and their historical right. Much effort was invested in creating
this right. It was not difficult for the Palestinian message to pene-
trate Israeli public opinion. In contrast to Arab societies where
information is well filtered from above by strict censorship and
from below by the self-discipline of the media, the Israeli media
were open to accept the messages of the enemy, and even seemed
sometimes to want to buy them. Thus it happened that the Israeli
media showed an inverted "double standard:" Harsh pictures of
terror victims were not broadcast due to a delicate consideration
of the sensitivities of the viewers and respect for the victims, but
harsh pictures of damage done to the Palestinian population were
broadcast, sometimes at great length and with much detail.

The Israeli public could not withstand the pressure. Israelis
who were requested to explain their behavior to world public
opinion found themselves in a position of finding it hard to ex-
plain it to themselves. The cracks in the wall widened, and the
Israelis' moral strength and power of resistance were impaired.

There is no doubt that this success of Palestinian propaganda
was made possible to a great degree because of socio-cultural de-
velopments within Israeli society. Israeli society, raised on social-
istic-Zionistic ethos, went through far-reaching changes in a short
time period. The values of the young Israeli society placed the
collective identity in the center, and many social systems were
drafted to nurture this identity of the "new Jew" of the Zionists.
The generation of 1948 wanted to skip the "exile" and go back to
the times of the Bible, and it saw itself as fighting for national
liberation. But with the rise in the standard of living and level of
consumption—and as Israel became a Western-liberal-capitalistic

society—the values of the "age of ideologies" were pushed aside and replaced with the values of freedom of the individual and his right for individual self-fulfillment. The verdicts of the Supreme Court reflect this process clearly, not only reflecting it passively, but furthering it actively. The Bible got pushed to the periphery— especially among the secular people—and since the ultra-Orthodox never put it in the center of attention anyway, the only group that continued to fashion itself according to the Bible was the national-religious camp. As the fact of the existence of the state became clear and solid, wars stopped being viewed as wars of national independence and the siege-like feeling lessened. Moreover, as the 1948 generation receded in time and in cultural horizons, it became convenient to dim the myth surrounding it. Indeed, as the new historians—who began as a small and eccentric group of far left-wing representatives—proceeded to penetrate to the heart of the Israeli academia and even disseminated their messages in academic forums in the West.

In this atmosphere it was easy for the Palestinian narrative to be accepted and thrive. The Palestinian line in this issue was very much influenced by the propaganda doctrine of the communist-revolutionaries: First one should take over the revolutionary avant garde in the cultural elite; this elite will internalize the message and identify with it; this group at the beginning will seem rejected and deviant, but it will serve as the hard core, from which the influence will spread to ever wider circles that do not identify with the message. Even circles that do not identify with the message will receive it thus in "translation," in a smaller and more diluted dose so that even if they will not internalize it, it will be easier for them to get used to it after the fact, and in any case, their ability to resist it will decrease with time.

This attitude of the communist line of propaganda caused, in its more extreme forms, a phenomenon that can be called "multi-level propaganda." In other words, sometimes the change in the message is so far-reaching that even its content—and not only its form—changes according to the target audience, resulting in different messages for different populations. This technique was applied successfully in the Islamic republics of the Soviet Union, which at the beginning were not ready to accept Marxism-Leninism in its original form, and not even in its lighter, diluted form. Propaganda had to base itself on traditional—and sometimes even religious—themes, occasionally arousing hatred of the Tzarist rule.

A similar method of multi-level messaging can be seen in Arab propaganda activity, especially in matters relating to anti-

Semitism. Arab anti-Semitism is a very interesting phenomenon. The fact is that the Arab world is today the main consumer of publications such as T*he Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Arabs need anti-Semitism firstly in order to strengthen their cohesion and their warring spirit towards the Jewish state, which is seen as a foreign body in the Middle East. However, almost to the same degree, they need it in order to give themselves a psychological answer to the question how five million Jews managed to vanquish larger Arab armies, sent by a population of hundreds of millions.

This anti-Semitism is in direct contradiction to the line that the Arabs present in their propaganda showcase in the Western world. In that showcase they bring up two central claims in order to refute the charge of anti-Semitism: 1. The Arabs have nothing against Jews, only against Zionists. 2. How can the Arabs be anti-Semites, when they are Semites themselves? Actually, it is clear that these claims have nothing to do with reality. Regarding the first claim, one can see that the anti-Semitic images are aimed specifically against Jews as Jews, using the symbols of old and new religious anti-Semitism. As to the second claim, it is merely a semantic ploy, for the term anti-Semitism is aimed only at Jews, according to the European "tradition" of its use. Among Arabs, anti-Semitic feelings are alive and well, and it is clear that Arab propaganda uses this line for the reasons that I have mentioned. How can the Arabs maintain this line when in the Western world they present a different one in which they refrain from anti-Semitic and racist nuances, and they accuse Zionism and Israel of racist characteristics? The answer to that lies in that communist doctrine of multi-level messaging, which has deep roots in different cultures. Every society has its message. When there is a contradiction between the messages it is not always necessary to solve it, and sometimes the cultural borders between the two societies do the work for you. The person watching television in New York is not interested in what messages the person watching television in Cairo is getting, and vice versa. Israel has tried for decades already to expose the duplicity in the Arab messages, but to no avail—the publications did not receive any notice whatsoever.[24] Only after September 11th did the heads of state in the United States begin to interest themselves in the messages that Arab children are being raised on, and what they found—even by their "ally" Saudi Arabia—did not make them at all happy.

In order to engage in propaganda, one should be completely convinced of the justice of one's way. Someone who has doubts will find it very difficult to convince various target audiences. In

Israel there is a severe problem regarding the justice of our claim. The problem exists especially in regard to the question of the expulsion of the Arabs during the War of Independence.[25] It seems that not only familiarity with the facts plays a part in the Israeli feeling of uneasiness about this matter but. also—and perhaps mainly—the lack of familiarity with the facts. As Joel Fishman showed, one can discern a phenomenon of lack of attention to historical knowledge in Israel.[26]

The lack of historical knowledge stems from several causes, and regarding the War of Independence some of them are connected with objective factors: In many of the military headquarters documents were not preserved, and since the IDF was just beginning to get organized, there was great disorder in the camps. In addition to that, the officers made sure to cover up failures, especially since many of them continued on into politics. In everything connected with the Arab side, there was also the fear of political sensitivities, and it seems that not a few documents were destroyed or classified. Another cause for people to refrain from facing history is the anti-intellectual process that Israeli society underwent as the standard of living rose. The fine arts were rejected in favor of practical arts, and the humanities were most affected by this trend. In this way, the new historians could rewrite the history and have it accepted by the generation that grew up several decades after the war.

The Palestinians, on the other hand, deal with reconstruction and documentation intensively. The Palestinian Authority has allotted many resources for this. The Orient House in Jerusalem was the site of extensive activity in this realm, headed by Faisel Husseini. There the trend is also towards blurring and covering up, but there one can see that the tendency is to make research subservient to propaganda interests, and not to have it work against them. Within this trend, the Palestinians created independent historical theses, even about the distant past. In that way, a thesis was developed claiming that the events of the Bible took place in Africa, based on linguistic and archeological research. In addition to that, there is a thesis that presents the Hebrews as a nomadic tribe that invaded and integrated with the local populations, the Palestinians being the direct descendants of the Canaanites.[27] This is not a joke. The goal behind those theses is to break the ties between Israel and its land, and discredit the ancient ties of the Jews to the area—thus undermining the main claim of the Zionist movement. Of course, no Western person will "buy" such historical theses, and if they were to be presented they would be greeted

with ridicule. But here, too, there is a trend towards "multi-messaging": these claims are for local consumption among the Palestinians themselves, who are willing to receive such theories, and the very fact that these ideas are being discussed strengthens national cohesion.

Given the above-mentioned developments in Israeli society, it is easy for Palestinian *hasbara* to get its messages through. The contrast between the picture of Israeli society—advanced and rich—as opposed to the distress of the Palestinians in the refugee camps and at the roadblocks, and the image of the "conqueror" or "Zionist soldier" work psychologically. In the eyes of many Israelis the Palestinians were now national freedom fighters.[28] The military defeat of the Palestinians in the 1982 Lebanon war, their diplomatic and propaganda success in that same war, and the rousing success of the Israeli protest movement against the war—all made the Palestinians cite "strengthening the peace camp in Israel" as the most important strategic goal of their activities.

On the other side, the settlers were seen as the most dangerous group for the Palestinians and the Arab world, and therefore, first and foremost, there was an overall campaign of delegitimation. The reason for this was not necessarily their physical existence in the territories and their effect on the Arab demographic advantage, but mainly because of their religious motivation and orderly ideological creed. As such, they are a powerful obstacle in the persuasion campaign. The religious settlers draw their legitimacy from the distant past, from the Bible, and in that way are somewhat similar to the fathers of Zionism. However, the latter tried to create a new human being, and take a European Jew "back to the Bible," jumping over all the *halakhic* works that were built upon it in later ages. The "small problem" of erasing two thousand years of history did not exist in religious Zionism, that wished to "return to the Bible" without harming the foundations of the traditional identity. The religious Zionists are a new ideological being in the Jewish world, in the sense that they find both their legitimization and their liturgy in the Bible,[29] while preserving the *halakhic* development.[30] In this sense the ultra-Orthodox relate to their place of living only as a municipal area—without its biblical-historical meaning—although statistically their percentage in the population living in the territories is on the rise. The ethos guiding them is still, to a great extent, the eastern European ethos.[31] It is in this context that the "liability rather than asset" technique was implemented. The settlers were presented repeatedly as "obstacles to peace," and supportive Israelis stressed the extra economic burden that Israel has to bear together

with extra manpower strain, expressed in added days of reserve duty.

When we speak of *hasbara* activity as part of the process of "psychological warfare," we have to remember that sometimes we are talking of "warfare" in the simplest meaning of the word. The easier it is for propaganda messages to reach the enemy, the more they influence soldiers and their ability to fight. In principle, the army sees itself as a closed authoritative system, which conducts a close watch on the soldier's activities; but the more the army is connected to the democratic civilian system the less it can pre-serve its closeness and authority. Thus, after the motivation crises of the Lebanese war, similar crises appeared in the fighting during the first intifada. For the first time, the commander of a brigade asked to be released from service for reasons of conscience, thus setting a precedent that kept the military education system busy for many years thereafter. Moreover, the army commanders wanted, at the order of the political echelon, to lessen the influ-ence of the religious component in the army. Lubavitch *hassidim* were forbidden to enter army camps, and the advancement of young religious officers was stalled by a "hidden hand." The paci-fistic play "Johnny Comes Marching Home," which deals with the painful and pointless price of war, became a part of the educa-tional plan for fighting soldiers in the IDF for a number of years. When the chief education officer wished to stop that show a hue and cry was raised.[32] Against the claim of the chief education of-ficer, who thought that the play is pacifistic propaganda, the spokespersons of the Israeli left claimed that it is not propaganda, but rather "a basis for dialogue and for open discussion." Need-less to say, no play that had a religious, nationalistic, or militaris-tic side to it was ever presented as a "basis for dialogue and for open discussion," and any suggestion of the sort would have been rejected immediately. In this case, the Palestinian *hasbara* could celebrate its victory.

The characteristic of psychological warfare as "warfare" arose also in everything connected to sensitivity about POWs and soldiers missing in action. The "warfare" in this case was ex-pressed in the fact that the Arab propaganda machine (in this case the Hizballah and not the Palestinians), had the sense to change a relatively minor military success of taking a few Israeli prisoners into a huge propaganda achievement. It is doubtful whether this achievement could have been possible if the enemy had not util-ized not only the weak circumstances, but also the deep and in-herent weak points, and in this context—the sacred value in Israel of releasing prisoners. In the IDF this is a much-valued issue, but

in reality it is as old as the Jewish people. The Mishna says, "prisoners should not be redeemed more than their value."[33] The kidnapping of hostages was a thriving industry in the Middle Ages as well. A significant part of the responsa deals with the topic of redeeming prisoners.[34] This moral duty is embedded in the genetic code of the Jew and it continues on into the Jewish state. In the IDF there is a unit that deals with locating missing soldiers, and it tries to locate missing soldiers—alive and dead— some of them dating back to the War of Independence. The Shi'ites in Lebanon understood this principle, and they are quite adroit at exploiting it in their struggle against Israel. The first time was what is called "the Jibril deal," in which four Israeli soldiers were exchanged for 1,150 Palestinian terrorists. According to the GSS this deal contributed significantly to the outbreak of the 1987 intifada. The Israeli navigator, Ron Arad, was taken prisoner in Lebanon in 1984 and disappeared. Israel is expending immense efforts trying to find out what happened to him. Arad is a valuable asset in the psychological warfare that Hizballah engages against Israel. So, too, are three soldiers who were kidnapped in October 2000, and a senior reserve officer who disappeared after he was enticed to go to Lebanon. As mentioned above, the military success is intertwined with the propaganda one, because these events work on the unconscious levels of the Jewish-Israeli psyche, and strengthen the feeling of helplessness in the face of the enemy, which stands strong and never loses its self-confidence. Here, too, it is noteworthy that the anti-moral and anti-humanitarian aspect of the enemy's moves in these incidents has not been exploited at all by the Israeli *hasbara* bodies abroad, and the Israeli effort to have the prisoners released has been focused mainly on pleading with the enemy.[35]

Weaknesses of Israeli *Hasbara*

The processes in Israel were influenced not a little by the difficult condition of world public opinion. Israeli society, and especially the Israeli state *hasbara* bodies (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs above all), showed especially high sensitivity to the growing anti-Israel criticism. It seems that one sees the direct outcome of the phenomenon of "longing for love." The strong desire to look good and to achieve recognition, acceptance, and favor for the State of Israel became a leading line in Israeli foreign policy. True, every country has to be concerned about its interests and a

positive image is a strategic need (both for diplomatic relations and for more civilian needs such as trade, tourism, investments, and knowledge), but in the Jewish-Israeli case the longing has reached exaggerated, perhaps pathological proportions. From the moment this longing was noticed by the Arab world—and especially by the Palestinians—it became a powerful lever with which Israel could be subdued.

Another very Israeli phenomenon is the longing to go abroad. The ultimate prize one can offer an Israeli is still a trip abroad. This can be explained by the siege mentality that is caused by Israel's geopolitical isolation, and perhaps by Jewish roots and the "wandering Jew," hidden in the heart of every Jew. In any case, the fact is that this is a singular phenomenon by every standard. The bureaucratic system utilizes this tendency in order to reward its workers. It seems that the percentage of Israeli government representatives who are abroad, for one reason or another, is much higher than one would expect considering the size of the country and its population.

Another matter is the double standard with which Israelis relate to America. On the one hand, Israelis admire America's size, power, and wealth, but on the other hand, there is much contempt expressed towards the American personality and behavior. With American Jews this may be the result of either jealousy or disappointment that they did not leave the "flesh pots" and come to join the Israelis in coping with Israel's difficulties. This ambivalent attitude gets in the way whenever Israel tries to explain itself (in those cases when it is decided that *hasbara* should be employed). The Israelis display an approach that seems paternalistic to the Jewish community and this causes a rift between the two sides. On the other hand, Israel has made almost no effort to satisfy the immense desire of American Jews for deep and reliable information on what is happening in Israel. American Jews, who live in a more liberal and open society than Israelis, were not open to boring, banal, and stale messages, and were quite aware of the internal discussion in Israeli society.

Israel's ethnocentrism and self-confidence, which were so effective in the time of the Palmach, became its stumbling block in its contacts with world Jewry. Israelis were viewed—rightly or wrongly—as arrogant, and when they replaced the khaki work clothes with evening dress, their basic approach did not change. The self-confidence developed into an approach of "we know the international arena and we'll manage." The Jewish community watched helplessly as the country's image was eroded by poorly worded pronouncements, poor English (except for the noteworthy

appearances of Abba Eban in live appearances and Binyamin
Netanyahu on television), and lack of understanding of the lan-
guage of the media. The Palestinians, in contrast, learned their
lessons, used the world Palestinian community in order to develop
contacts and penetrate the media, and stuck to a few simple and
basic messages that could reach the feelings and the eyes of the
viewers without their having to have any previous knowledge of
the Middle East's past and present. They used talented spokesper-
sons such as Hanan Ashrawi and Edward Said, and built an effi-
cient Arab lobby along the lines of AIPAC.[36] The Arab diaspora
received a simple and clear message without any debating and in-
ternal arguments, that was very different from the messages re-
ceived by American Jewry from Israel.

As for the non-Jewish population, there was another problem.
A significant percentage of the American population is not at all
involved in the discussion about Middle East problems. This sec-
tor knows very little about what is happening in the area, is even
less interested in it, and is indifferent about the possible outcome
of the struggle. Needless to say, this sector does not have much
say in the moves that concern Israel. On the other hand, there are
groups of people who know, are interested in, and are very much
involved with what is happening in Israel, but Israel is not always
comfortable with their concern—the Christian Evangelistic factor.
Most of the leaders of the state are suspicious about these reli-
gious Christians because of their own distance from religion in
general, because of their instinctive revulsion from the plastic
character of this religiosity, and because the American Jewish
community sees them as a threatening missionary factor. Above
all, the *hasbara* people in Israel were afraid of becoming identi-
fied with the "backward" forces in American society, and contin-
ued to hope for an improvement in Israel's image among the more
"respectable" elites, such as the media and the academia. The ab-
surdity of this hope is made even clearer when one notes that it
was not translated at all into practical resources. Whereas the Pal-
estinians had built a strategic plan already in the 1970s, using
student organizations on campuses worldwide, coordinating mes-
sages and campaigns, in Israel one official in the Foreign Ministry
was appointed, on a part-time basis, to deal with the academic as-
pect worldwide. The Evangelist Christians were never seriously
targeted by Israeli *hasbara,* and their support of Israel came not
because of the *hasbara* policy but in spite of it. Thus it happened
that now, when the "longing for love" could finally be somewhat
satisfied, it was cold-shouldered by the Israelis themselves.[37] The
Palestinians, in contrast, built a continuous presence with the

Christian world in the U.S., among other things by using libera-
tion theology, developed, ironically enough, by the Soviets during
the Cold War.[38]

Mass persuasion has already been taking place for decades on
television. This is an essentially visual medium. Roger Ailes,
George Bush Senior's media consultant, describes in his mem-
oires how he would test anchormen when he was sent by televi-
sion stations to examine potential candidates. He says he would
reach a place, check into a motel, turn on the television "with the
voice down," and decide on the basis of the anchorman's body
language whether or not he was good.[39] Television and the inter-
net are media in which the picture is the main thing. After follow-
ing the materials coming out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
for the past two decades, it can be said that the vast majority of
the material is verbal. The ratio between visual material and
printed material published by the ministry for the purpose of *has-
bara* in the past fifty years is in tenths of percents. One can also
see the Jewish influence here. Visual material is unconsciously
understood to be "Christian business;" Jews prefer to deal with
abstract ideas and the written word, and maybe with the spoken
word as well. The fact is that in all the years of Israel's existence
very few of its painters or sculptors achieved worldwide fame.
The Israeli movie industry also did not shine. Israelis apparently
still prefer the power of the word.

The watershed from the point of view of the Ministry of For-
eign Affairs was the lynch in Ramallah, the footage of which be-
came available only thanks to a mistake on the part of the Pales-
tinian security forces, which missed one reporter and didn't con-
fiscate the material he had filmed. For the first time the Ministry
used explicit atrocities. The pictures were very effective, because
the lynch itself was not photographed—only the bodies being
thrown out the window and the bloodstained hands of one of the
perpetrators, as he held them up to the cheering crowd. Without
planning it, Israel got hold of an effective clip; the murder itself
would not have been shown on television all over the world be-
cause they would have been afraid of overly shocking the viewers.
The bloodstained hands were a powerful image that symbolized
the barbarity of the murderers, and thus implying the entire inti-
fada. But there is no proportion between the degree of usage of
this film and the degree of the use the Palestinians made with the
tape of Mohammed A-Dura, the Palestinian boy who was killed
during the fighting in the Gaza Strip. While the incident of the
death of Mohammed A-Dura became a founding event in terms of
forming the national Palestinian identity, the lynch in Ramallah

did not become a founding event in terms of forming the Israeli national identity. The *hasbara* bodies let it sink slowly out of sight and made no effort to bring it back, let alone foment interest in it, and today it is slowly being dropped from the collective Israeli memory.

Following the siege on the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem and the successful spin that the Palestinians made about the desecration of holy Christian places by Israel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced a short clip on videotape and disc, in which the Palestinians are shown to be the desecrators of holy places. One may assume that some thinking was done in the course of the production, but it is not certain whether the creators of the clip understood its historical implications. For the first time, Jews turned directly and explicitly to Christians by attacking Moslems. Historically, the relationship between Jews and Moslems was usually good, as it was the Christians who perpetrated pogroms and massacres.[40] However, even if the message was formed a bit clumsily, at least this was the first serious attempt in the direction of a *hasbara* move that was of an attacking nature, sophisticated, and aimed at the feelings and prejudices of the target audience. Such moves could have succeeded long before then, but they were never made seriously, mainly because of the benign attitudes of the Israeli *hasbara*, formed by the embedded Jewish and Zionist way of thinking.

Towards a New Approach

Beyond the embedded weaknesses, such as they are, what we are dealing with here is the matter of Jewish identity. As mentioned above, the question of Jewish identity rose to the fore mainly after the walls of the ghettos came down, and it became even stronger after the emergence of Zionism. Besides the question of the components of this identity, there was also the question of its "marketing." The two questions are inseparable, because the Jewish identity—as with any separate identity—is built through its differentiation from a non-Jewish identity. Therefore the forming of a Jewish identity included in it the component of the relationship with those who do not have this identity—the non-Jews. Obviously then, this component had no little say in what one should do about the Jew's image in the eyes of the non-Jew.

Yochanan Manor created a scale of attitudes toward *hasbara*. At one end there is the attitude that "*hasbara* can do anything,"

and at the other end, there is the feeling that *hasbara* is a waste of
time and effort and only deeds can determine anything. I suggest
adding on another scale, that of the possibility of contending with
anti-Semitism. At one end of the scale there is the approach that
nothing can be done about anti-Semitism ("It is a known law, that
Esav hates Yaakov") and that one must continue the ancient Jew-
ish strategy and wait for it to pass. At the other end of the scale
there is the approach expressed forcefully by the supporters of
emancipation, according to which anti-Semitism is a learned char-
acteristic and not inherent, and the Jews should expose the beauty
of Judaism to the Christian world. Crossing these two scales will
give us a table of four combined approaches:

	Hasbara **can be effective**	*Hasbara* **is not effective**
Anti-Semitism **is contingent**	American liberals	Israeli liberals
Anti-Semitism **is inherent**	Moderate right-wing (Israeli conservatives)	Ultra-Orthodox

Needless to say, these approaches are not clear-cut, and each
one of them has gradations and sub-gradations. However, for the
purpose of the general model, I will note here only the extremes,
with the various nuances determined by their closeness to or dis-
tance from them. In any case, as I have mentioned, the crossing of
these approaches presents us with four combined approaches:

1. *Hasbara* is not effective, and anti-Semitism is unchange-
   able
2. *Hasbara* is not effective, but anti-Semitism is changeable
3. *Hasbara* is effective and anti-Semitism is changeable
4. *Hasbara* is effective and anti-Semitism is unchangeable

1. The first approach is that of the ultra-Orthodox. They bring
support from Jewish history—rich in persecution—and from the
new forms of anti-Semitism such as "anti-Semitism with no Jews"
(Poland, Japan). As a group they are closed, and they see in their
social and cultural entrenchment an existential ideal; therefore
they do not bother to invest in improving their image. Still, some-
times there is an attempt at redress when they are worried about a
rightful complaint of non-Jews about Jews. Lately, for instance,
when there were financial irregularities in federal funding, the
ultra-Orthodox community in the U.S. called upon its members to
make sure not only that their food be kosher, but also their trans-

actions with the government. In this case the motivation is what is called in *halacha* "*darkhei shalom*" (because of hostility). It is in the immediate interest of the Jew to prevent danger to life. Until a few years ago, the ultra-Orthodox had not acquired any systematic knowledge concerning the media.

2. The second approach is that of the Israeli liberals who think that in some cases it is possible to change anti-Semitic approaches, not necessarily by the method of *hasbara*, but by changing the Jews and Judaism. A Judaism that will welcome universal values and encourage the integration of Jews in general society, in the course of things will bring about the refuting of anti-Semitic opinions, and as a result anti-Semitism will disappear as a cultural-social phenomenon. This norm is integral to Israeli *hasbara*. The representative of this opinion in Israel is Shimon Peres, whose influence on the foreign relations of Israel was and is considerable. He was the one who worded the epigram "You don't need good *hasbara*; you need good policy." Yossi Beilin, who also implemented this way of thinking in his term as deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, brought this approach to its complete consummation during his term.

3. The third approach is the Jewish, Western-liberal assimilated approach, that sees the achievements of propaganda in the political and commercial context. Its advocates claim that anti-Semitism is an opinion like any other, and so is subject to change, using the appropriate media. Considerable resources should be devoted to changing these opinions. The reason that anti-Semitism is still prevalent—even the type that is camouflaged as anti-Zionism—is that sufficient resources have not been used for this purpose, and the *hasbara* activity has not been good enough.

4. The fourth approach is that taken by the moderate right-wing in Israel. This approach sees *hasbara* as being effective, as can be proven by many examples from a variety of disciplines, from political through commercial. However, there are exceptions to this rule, and anti-Semitism is one of them. In religious phraseology, this explanation hangs on the rule we have already brought: "It is a known law that Esav hates Yaakov." More secular-naturalistic explanations present anti-Semitism as a cultural phenomenon of such depth which is so strongly rooted that it is almost impossible to imagine it being uprooted from the collective sub-consciousness. In my opinion, paradoxically enough, most of the Israelis and many of the decision-makers in Israel hold this opinion even though they are not considered religious in a normative way. Even though it is a paradox, we know from per-

sonal experience and from research that people are capable of
holding on to two contradicting positions simultaneously.

The practical solution, according to this approach, is to dele-
gitimize anti-Semites of various sorts, or to cause them to feel
inappropriate—uncomfortable both personally and socially—in
order to further Zionist objectives.

This assumption is not based on empirical research, and on
the face of things it seems groundless, because the main point of
Zionism was to find a solution for anti-Semitism through political
activism. However, from following the public discussion in Israel
about *hasbara* for the past two decades, it seems that this is the
real attitude that most Israelis have regarding this subject. They
will deny it vigorously; they will voice all the organizational and
political claims, but I maintain that the real, deep reason is their
view that anti-Semitism is unchangeable. This view is not a prod-
uct of the past century; it is as old as Judaism. Despite Herzl's
Zionistic attempt to find a political solution to the problem of
anti-Semitism, the failure of this solution—in the sense that anti-
Semitism has not ceased to exist—has caused the spreading of the
opposite approach. As Ben-Gurion allegedly put it: "It doesn't
matter what the goyim will say; what matters is what the Jews
will do."[41]

But it seems that this thesis is not only wrong, it is also dam-
aging. This is not the right place to go into it, and therefore I will
just make a short observation: The vast literature on anti-
Semitism teaches us that the anti-Semitic approach, like any other
social thinking, is subject to change and influences, and there are
many historical examples of this. Such a thesis leads to apathy
and inactivity. Even Herzlian Zionism started off with the as-
sumption that anti-Semitism is the result of given circumstances,
and Herzl himself even thought that it could be channeled into
positive directions. In any case, the *hasbara* strategy should start
off with the assumption that not all non-Jews are anti-Semites,
and even if many of them are latent anti-Semites, one can at least
cause them to feel uncomfortable when they come to take action
against Israel.

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be deduced from this approach:
1. On the global plane: If Israel is interested in improving its
hasbara, the Israelis must clarify to themselves whether they are
really willing to pay the price. If *hasbara* can make a difference,

one must invest thought, organization, and funds in it. As mentioned above, this is not the place to discuss these aspects—the gist of this article is the significance of the deep sensibilities involved—but one must emphasize that *hasbara* is a profession, requiring much skill and experience. It combines disciplines such as public relations, marketing, advertising, international relations, anthropology, sociology, and psychology on global levels. In order to operate it correctly it must be integrated within the state's strategic policy formation. It must be part of the political, military, and diplomatic calculations—both covert and open. One must provide the resources for training manpower—worldwide—and to provide sums of money suitable for international competition, for both one-time and ongoing campaigns. Anything less than that would not be considered a serious effort, and would end up as merely a journalistic-polemical discussion that appears in the State Comptroller's reports year after year. The situation today is one of reluctant action, unconvinced of the effectiveness of *hasbara*, and it is a total waste of resources.

2. Once the organizational and budget systems are set, one needs a redrawing of goals and content. First of all, one must rethink the matter of "marketing" visual and emotional messages; secondly, one must acquire professionalism regarding the multilayering of the message and conquering cultural "avant gardes," from which the message can spread, in different ways, to other areas.

3. One must have the willingness to discontinue the benignity of the Israeli *hasbara* message; this should be done with suitable sophistication. One should go in the direction of hatred of the enemy, appealing subtly to the "dark sides" of the target audience. Moreover, one must make a basic change in approach regarding the possibility of influencing the Arab audience, especially the Palestinians, by going around the censorship mechanisms in that society.

4. More than anything else one needs to conduct internal *hasbara* and systematically build the Israelis' attitude towards themselves, the state, and their history. This stipulation is more comprehensive and demanding than the others, and its implementation necessitates an overall cultural revolution that many think is not desirable and others see as having a result that does not justify such a price. But I cannot relate to this matter here. I will just say that one cannot measure this need in values of 0 or 1. The more one advances in this process, the greater will be the success in *hasbara*, and the more one holds back, the success will decrease. However, even partial success could be extremely useful.

One can summarize and say: perfect *hasbara* necessitates action on three main fronts: world public opinion, the enemy, and the internal front. Each one of these has its own complexities, each one of them needs a different strategy, and each one of them demands a different "price." In the Jewish-Israeli case, the question of *hasbara* places before the people not only organizational and economic dilemmas, but also cultural ones. One can say that it places the public in front of a mirror, where the people must face their identity, their relationship to their religion, their history—ancient and current—and their relationship to the other nations of the world. In the case of Israel it seems, that the strategic choice of effective *hasbara* also includes a very significant choice of values and ideology. One could, of course, continue to avoid making the decision, or continue to conduct *hasbara* the way it has been conducted up till now, but it seems that the results of the Jewish and Israeli *hasbara* that we see today do not encourage continuing in this way. The practical recommendation of this article could, then, be summed up in several simple sentences that are almost always appropriate: learn the given factors, face the question courageously, make the ideological decisions, and be willing to pay the price.

Notes

1. The synthetic Israeli terminology for propaganda.
2. Today this is not significant, since the information is sent by satellite phone, without any need for recourse to central satellite services.
3. Moshe Jager, the assistant Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described in his book the organizational aspect of the *hasbara* failures in that ministry. Investigation committees, ombudsman reports since the 1950s and strong public criticism are normal events in this ministry which is responsible for the country's image abroad. Endless articles have been written in Jewish journals, especially in the U.S., about the lack of communication between the establishment and the community, and the lack of understanding of Israelis of the mechanisms that operate in American public opinion. See M. Yagar, *The History of the Foreign Hasbara of Israel* (Hertzlia: Lahav, 1986) [Hebrew].
4. M. Stern (ed.), "Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism" (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), p. 97. Manaseas of Patra was the first to bring the story that the Jews worshipped the head of an ass, and Apion followed in his footsteps and wrote his anti-Semitic book.

5. A. Kasher (ed.), *Neged Apion* [contra Apionem] (Jerusalem: Zal-man Shazar Center, 1997) [Hebrew].

6. In a debate with the *minim* (the early Christians): "they asked R. Simlai...what would you say to us?" in a debate with a non-Jew, Midrash Vayikra Rabba 4:6. There the expression is "broken reed." Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat, ch. 8, etc.

7. On the Jewish sages' attitude to non-Jews and to Greek wisdom, see S. Lieberman, *Greeks and Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1963).

8. A comprehensive picture of these debates can be found in the popular collection of Eisenstein, *Otzar Havikuchim*. Although this collection is not scholarly and has several glaring faults, it is very convenient in terms of its being very inclusive. Y.D. Eisenstein, *Otzar Havikuchim* (New York, 1922).

9. Eisenstein, *Otzar Havikuchim*, pp. 20-21.

10. Maimonides, *Hilchot Mamrim*, 3:1-3.

11. A. Altmann, Moses Mendelsohn—A Biographical Study (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1973).

12. Y. Katz, Out of *the Ghetto, the Social Background of Jewish Emancipation 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 51-53.

13. Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, chapter 11.

14. Rabbi Eliyahu Amuzag, *Israel and Humanity* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1967) [Hebrew].

15. http://webpages.charter.net/chavurathbneinoach/bnei_noach.html.

16. Maharam Shik on Pirkei Avot 2:14 ("Know what to answer the heretic"); one must answer such a Jew only when there is a chance he will repent. If there is no chance, or if it is a distant chance, one should not spend time on it at the expense of Torah learning. (First printing 5650 [1890]). (Jerusalem: Bnei Moshe, 5756 [1996]).

17. Y. Katz, *Hatred of the Jews, from Hatred of the Religion to the Negation of the Race* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1979), pp. 7-14 [Hebrew].

18. Rashi, Parashat Vayishlach, Genesis 33:4, following Bereishit Rabba.

19. See one strident expression of this approach in the twentieth century by Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstamm of Zans-Kleusenburg, *The Way We Go, Chapters of Education and Guidance* (Igud Chasidei Zana Be'Eretz Hakodesh, 1980), p. 16. Paradoxically, Herzl, too, relates anti-Semitism to the over prominence of Jewish financiers. S. Avineri, *Herzl, the Matter of the Jews—Journals* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik-Hasifria Hazionit, 1997), vol. 1, p. 18.

20. E. Pawel, *The Labyrinth of Exile—A Life of Theodor Herzl* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1989) p. 197.

21. Oz Almog, *The Sabra—A Portrait* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1997) [Hebrew].

22. It would be inaccurate to say that nothing at all has been done, but the continuing financial problems of the "Voice of Israel in Ara-

bic" radio station and the poor intelligence resources given to the Israeli psychological warfare unit over the years show that the issue had a very low place on the list of the security priorities of Israel.

23. J. Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), p. 189.

24. One of the most widespread publications of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for many years was a publication called "Double Talk," which brought quotes from Arafat and other Palestinian leaders from the Western media, as opposed to their words in the Arab media.

25. The tide started with Professor Benny Morris's book on the roots of the refugee problem and evolved into a fashionable academic trend called the "new historians" which was quickly embraced by the Palestinians and left-wing academics in the West. Morris realized the impact of revisionist conscripted history and altered his views, but then he was no longer useful for the circle he unwittingly helped create. B. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Problem 1947-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

26. J. Fishman, "Information Policy and National Identity—Israel's Ideological War," *ACPR Policy Papers,* no. 142 (2002).

27. Hadad, "Israel and the Bible in Africa—Sources," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 3, iv (1974)97-113.

28. Prime Minister Ehud Barak said that if he were a Palestinian he would have joined one of the underground Palestinian organizations.

29. Among other things, one can see the reflection of this phenomenon in the names given to children born in the settlements. Birnbaum calls these names "theophoric." See B. Birnbaum, *Proper Names of Secular and Religious Children Born Between 1983-1992* (MA thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 2000).

30. G. Aran, "Introduction," *From Religious Zionism to Zionist Religion—The Roots of Gush Emunim and its Culture* (Ph.D. thesis, Jerusalem, 1987), p. 20.

31. Although even here there is a growing trend towards adopting the "settler" ethos, *de facto*, if not *de juro*.

32. Ariana Melamed, www.ynet.co.il, 15 January 2002.

33. Mishna, Gittin, 4:6.

34. The most famous example is that of the Maharam of Rotenburg, the leader of German Jewry in the fourteenth century, who died in jail because he refused to allow his congregants to pay the ransom.

35. Singularly enough, internally there was an opposite trend, and the media gave much attention to the captives and the missing soldiers, and did not hesitate to arouse strong empathy for their distress and consensual public cohesion around them. We had here, then, a factor that strengthened Israeli society's cohesion, but there was no guiding hand behind it, so the success cannot be laid at the door of any *hasbara* policy.

36. ADC—Anti-discrimination Committee, headed by Dr. James Zogby, a most eloquent and creative American citizen of Lebanese descent.
37. Menachem Begin was the first to publicly use the evangelical support during the Lebanese war of 1982.
38. N.S. Atik, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1989).
39. R. Ailes, *You are the Message—Secrets of the Master Communicators* (Homewood, Il: Dow Jones-Irwin, 1988), p. 35.
40. Even so, between Moslems and Jews there were also residues of hostility that in extreme cases reached persecution of Jews and in other cases caused continuing discrimination. In this context, one must reject as a distortion of history the Palestinian claim that until the Zionists came the relationship between Moslems and Jews was one of love and peace.
41. Indeed, the social developments in the Western countries supplied additional confirmation of this attitude: one can see a return to the motif of anti-Semitism, first in the extreme right-wing in Europe, as the world media criticized Israel, and then, much more implicitly, in other forms of criticism that have seeped into the general public.