LEGITIMATING JEWISH IDENTITY AMIDST CHAOS: ZIONIST PUBLIC DIPLOMACY[1]

By Rudy Stoler
Goucher College

Abstract

How do global contests impact the conduct of public diplomacy? This paper, taking Zionist public diplomacy as a case-study in response to the Israel-as-occupier image, proposes that when critical events shock the Jewish world by striking negatively at the legitimacy of Jewish identity—the right to believe and act as a Jew in a non-Jewish world—they stimulate a public diplomacy backlash. This happened after the Six-Day War of 1967, during the Second Intifada of the early 2000s, and most recently in the lead-up to the unilateral Palestinian statehood bid in 2011. These events provided the motivation for the mutually supportive activities of legitimating Jewish identity and campaigning for Zionist causes. Because these events affected the entire Jewish community and not just individuals, they stirred debates within the Jewish community about the proper role of public diplomacy. These debates, and the public diplomacy produced by their participants, reflected shared national understandings of the events and the vulnerabilities of Jewish identity.

Key Words

Israel, Palestine, Soviet Jewry, Zionism, Israeli Defense Force, crisis management, framing, cultural identity, Six-Day War, Arab-Israeli Conflict, Intifada, media relations

This article observes the roots motivating fundamental shifts in how diplomats understand the role of public diplomacy (PD). I look at the modern Zionist movement,[2] whose unusual decentralized PD community produces diverse opinion and lively debates on the topic. Their debates tend to intensify around events that threaten the Zionist mission. These events, or global contests in the context of this issue of *Exchange*, are prolonged international phenomena emotionally impacting the movement's diplomats. My argument is that when global contests recall Jewish self-confidence failures (i.e., the specters of the pogroms and/or the Holocaust), Zionists search for value in PD and often develop bolder, more innovative PD strategies.

My goal here is to explain the threat that the diplomats recognize in these contests and why that threat prompts major PD innovation. Following the first two sections, outlining the origins of Zionist approaches to PD and

and the relationship between PD and legitimacy, I describe select Zionist diplomats' perceptions and responses to especially influential contests surrounding the Soviet Jewry movement, the second Intifada, and the Palestinian statehood bid.

Origins of Zionist Identification

Common to the various streams of Zionist thought is a belief that non-Zionist Jews are failing in their national mission. In the words of Theodor Herzl to the First Zionist Congress, "Zionism is a return to the Jewish fold, even before it becomes a return to the Jewish land. We … find much to redress under the ancestral roof, for some of our brothers have sunk deep into misery."[3] In this perspective, non-Zionist Jews have either assimilated and become indistinguishable from non-Jews or failed to carry forth their special Jewish global mission (i.e., ignoring the outside world). Zionists typically imagine their Jewish detractors as weak in their identity, and they believe that Zionism is a path to national strength.

Firm in their homeland, Jews would be free to pursue their national destiny. Zionism is not merely about securing Jewish livelihood in the people's national homeland; as Revisionist Zionist ideologue Ze'ev Jabotinsky famously declared in 1937, the "demand for a Jewish majority is not our maximum—it is our minimum;" it is merely the basis for Jewish continuity against the dire situation caused by anti-Semitism.[4] On a deeper level, Zionism is about empowering Jewish "nonconformity," or the ability to be different from other nations and to give Jewish values a role in "fashioning the world of tomorrow."[5] Zionism is a way for Jews to reestablish themselves as "religious witnesses," to "proclaim the power of the Jewish spirit over the chaos of history" and carry the message of G-d[6] and the Bible to the world through their testimony.[7]

Critical aspects of Jewish identity rely on such nonconformity, particularly the concepts of being "a light unto the nations," showing non-Jews the beauty of G-d's righteousness and justice, as well as "repairing the world" (*tikkun olam*) so that society reflects Jewish ideals. Both concepts originate from the Bible, and early rabbis, medieval "court Jews" (*shtadlanim*), and even modern Zionist diplomats have found purpose and direction in them.[8] Embodying these concepts requires not only a sustainable separation from and opposition to other nations, but also a constant effort to carry the Jewish example to the non-Jewish world. Often, for Zionists, this message is not the Jewish faith itself, but rather an advancement of the modern, liberal, and even progressive projects of civilization.[9]

Carrying this message requires international legitimacy: respect as a rightful and admirable nation among nations. Thus, many early Zionist leaders demanded respect for their national legitimacy from other diplomats before establishing substantial relationships. For example, when meeting with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, both Chaim Weizmann in 1938 and Moshe Sharett in 1956—the Zionist movement's principal diplomats at their respective times—told Nehru that their conversations were pointless if he refused to accept the fundamental legitimacy of the Zionist effort.[10] When Zionist leaders fail to assert the movement's basic legitimacy—for example, by appeasing the Soviet Union or wooing anti-Semitic journalists—they lose support within the Zionist movement. On the other hand, bonds with countries that more fully recognize Israel's legitimacy, such as the United States, retain almost universal support.

The quest for legitimacy, and strengthening it, is therefore a primary objective of Jewish diplomacy. For the early rabbis, confrontational dialogue with anti-rabbinic Jews and (in a later period) Christians was essentially a

1 Research conducted in conjunction with senior thesis project at Goucher College, advised by Amalia Fried-Honick, Sanford J. Ungar, and Jerome Copulsky.

2 Defined here as the Jewish nationalist movement from the mid-1800s to today, Zionism strives to protect the Jewish nation and to ensure the survival and success of the state of Israel. The diplomats described in this article represent a variety of Zionist ideological trends that influence their approach to PD, especially political Zionism (Lishkat Hakesher), religious political Zionism (grassroots Soviet Jewry activists), and revisionist Zionism (Danny Seaman). Arthur Hertzberg's text is an excellent introduction to these nuances. Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Atheneum, 1976).

3 Theodor Herzl, "First Congress Address" (1897), in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 227.

4 Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Evidence Submitted to the Palestinian Royal Commission (1937)" in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea,* 561.

5 On Jewish nonconformity, see Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Existence and Celebration," lecture to Jewish Federation, Montreal (New York: Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Boards, 1965), in Heschel, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux), 28; on "fashioning the world of tomorrow," see Hertzberg, "Introduction," 19, 21

6 For personal reasons, the author chooses not to write G-o-d in its full form.

7 Heschel, "A Time for Renewal," address to 28th World Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, January 19, 1972, in *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, 53.

8 Ron Schleifer, "Jewish and Contemporary Origins of Israeli Hasbara," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 15: 1-2 (Spring 2003): 123-153.

9 Hertzberg, "Introduction," in *The Zionist Idea,* 18-19.

10 Moshe Yegar, "Comments on Israel's Foreign Service (Hebrew: He'arot 'al Sherut Hakhutz shel Yisrael)," Ariel Center for Policy Research, Position Paper #160 (2005), 29, http://www.acpr.org.il/pp/pp160-myegar-H.pdf. Yegar, formerly in charge of hasbara in the Israeli foreign ministry and head of the Information and Communication Department, has written the most substantial history of the government's hasbara efforts. Moshe Yegar, To a Chronology of Israel's Foreign Hasbara Campaign (Hebrew: Letoldoteha shel Ma'arachat Hasbarat Hakhutz shel Yisrael) (Herzliya: Lahav and the Israeli Institute for Propaganda Research, 1986).

response to attacks on their legitimacy.[11] The rabbis had to defend the right to practice their religion by preserving a healthy reputation. Training for this self-defense was crucial; indeed, it was the lesson underlying a popular teaching of first-century Rabbi Elazar ben Arach: "Be diligent to learn Torah and know what to answer an Epicurean."[12] Studying Torah is a joint effort between teacher and student to seek G-d's message, a behavior Goffman would describe as "backstage." On-stage, Jews must defend their belief system before a distrustful outside world, legitimating the separate Jewish identity and message.[13]

Answering the 'Epicurean' on the meaning of Jewish identity and its compatibility with the contemporary ideals is a frequent problem for modern Jews. Facing stereotypes of Jews as backwards and un-American, a Jewish organization called B'nai B'rith, which would later become a powerful PD force for Zionism, erected a Statue of Religious Liberty in 1876 to show American Jews' devotion to ideals of liberty and religious freedom.[14] Likewise, in refusing to participate in a theological debate intended to demonstrate Jewish backwardness, the Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn displayed Judaism's consistency with rational ideals. A debate, he argued was unnecessary and could produce no positive value.[15] He boasted that Judaism's truths, "were identical to those of natural religion," and its values, like those of Christianity, were "effective in perfecting mankind," which was the ultimate goal of the Enlightenment.[16] Mendelssohn took a potentially dangerous situation and transformed it into an opportunity to strengthen his legitimacy before both of his audiences: his "fellow Enlightenment intellectuals and his fellow Jews."[17]

Zionists, facing their own distinct challenges—most notably the global contests discussed in this article—refused to repeat the Jewish timidity before and during the Holocaust. Legitimacy failures, such as the Allied countries' decision to refusal to accept Jewish refugees about the St. Louis in 1943, became clarion calls for improving Zionist PD in later years.[18] Instead, Zionists glorify bold responses that defend the legitimacy of their twofold identity as a nation apart and as a nation with an international purpose. As the case studies show, these responses often changed the way Zionists understand the role of public diplomacy, developing it as a tool to link Zionist causes with such universal principles as human rights, justice, democracy, and international norms.

The Relationship Between Dual Identity and Legitimation

Zionist legitimacy without its dual identity is untenable, both internally and externally. As Jewish nationalists, Zionist public diplomats confront a Jewish community that is inherently a distinct kin network bound by a heritage of moral teachings.[19] In order to achieve and retain a legitimate self-image within that network, they must protect familial survival interests and, at the same time, present the Zionist project as embodying their heritage. In other words, the diplomats must sustain an image of a Jewish nation protecting its own communities while behaving as proper Jews. Moreover, in establishing external legitimacy, Zionist public diplomats must emphasize both their perseverance as a people and the universal aspects of Judaism's moral teachings (Mendelssohn's focus), or at least those aspects that resonate with particular foreign audiences.[20]

Attaching Jewish conservation to moral activism is a constant theme among Zionist public diplomats. B'nai B'rith diplomats around the world herald Israel's protection of human rights and religious freedom.[21] Similarly, Natan Sharansky and the Soviet Zionists—not satisfied with merely advocating a return to the national homeland—overcame their fear and teamed up with human rights dissidents. Sharansky continues this linkage to the present day, two-and-a-half decades after his release from the Soviet Union.[22] In both cases, tying Zionist advocacy to human rights grants the diplomats a sense of moral self-identity with which they are comfortable and which they can easily communicate to their audiences. For the same reason, Bentzi Gruber travels the American academic scene highlighting the Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) matchless efforts at protecting Jewish and Arab rights under fire.[23] Merely strengthening Israel as a national homeland is insufficient to legitimate Zionist identity; the state and its activists must fight for a moral excellence that resonates with Jewish moral heritage.

In striving for a pro-human rights image, Zionist public diplomats practice a form of "niche" diplomacy. They tie Israel's image to a seemingly universal value(s) that both international non-Jewish audiences and diaspora Jewish communities can appreciate and identify with. A diplomatic niche can be nearly any specialized trait that distinguishes a country and, in Gareth Evans' words, "generates returns" that translate into international political gains.[24] Building on Evans' qualification that there must be, "returns worth having," Henrikson adds that niches are traits that gain the country international respect and admiration, a reputation for serving the wider public good.[25]

Niche diplomacy has both external and internal effects. Externally, this image, when convincing, grants the Zionists "the power of the better argument;" non-Zionists with an emotional connection to Israel (e.g., through its reputation for democracy) are likely to discount anti-Zionist propaganda.[26] Internally, the self-image of human rights and self-defense strengthens the devotion and confidence of the public diplomats. As Schleifer remarks, "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."[27] However, he adds, "in Israel there is a severe problem regarding the justice of our claim."[28] The global contests featured in this study challenge Zionists by accusing their movement of injustice and, therefore, illegitimacy. The contests repeatedly force Zionist diplomats to reshape their PD strategies to rebut these accusations, "affect[ing] the attributions that [foreign publics] make with respect to their identity."[29]

Second Intifada and Legitimating Self-Defense

After the Israeli stalemate in Lebanon, consolidated in 1985, and the violence of the First Intifada, begun in 1987, Israeli policymakers generally believed an improved image would come from peace negotiations with their Arab neighbors. For most of the 1990s, Israelis tried to secure legitimacy through the Oslo peace process. When the process collapsed and extreme violence resumed in 2000 (the Second Intifada), Israelis encountered an international media that, at least from the Israeli perspective, often applied double standards to criticize Israel and

11 For much of this paragraph, see Schleifer, "Jewish and Contemporary Origins": 127-128.

12 Pirkei Avot, 2:19. Epicurean (epikoreis), in this context, was a generic name used by rabbis of the period to refer to their toughest challengers: those of their pupils who had rejected Judaism's teachings. Educated in rabbinic Judaism, Epicureans were the most able to delegitimize rabbinic authority. Conversation with Rabbi Moshe Dov Shualy, of Baltimore, MD.

13 For an introduction to Goffman's stage theories, see Randall Collins and Michael Makowsky, The Discovery of Society, 6th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 149-152.

14 Deborah Dash Moore, B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 36-38.

15 Schleifer, "Jewish and Contemporary Origins": 129.

16 Jerome E. Copulsky, "The Martyr of Reason" The Jewish Review of Books 2:2 (Summer 2011): 7

17 Copulsky, "The Martyr of Reason": 7; Schleifer, "Jewish and Contemporary Origins": 129.

18 Stuart Altshuler, From Exodus to Freedom: A History of the Soviet Jewry Movement (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 14-15.

19 Adin Steinsaltz, We Jews: Who Are We and What Should We Do? trans. Yehuda Hanegbi and Rebecca Toueg (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 48-53. While one can argue that Jewish teachings often prescribe particular practices, not moral codes, Steinsaltz and most experts on Judaism emphasize that the practices are less critical to the Jewish community than the ethical principles that surround and support them.

20 For a theoretical explanation, see Ben D. Mor, "The Rhetoric of Public Diplomacy and Propaganda Wars: A View from Self-Presentation Theory," European Journal of Political Research 46 (2007): 666-667. On Mendelssohn, see Copulsky, "The Martyr of Reason": 7.

21 See for example Pilar Rahola's B'nai B'rith-sponsored address in Mexico: Emilio Srougo, "Conferencia de Pilar Rahola en Mexico," El Rinco de Hasbara, February 2010, http://elrincondehasbara.blogspot.com/2010/02/conferencia-de-pilar-rahola-en-mexico.html. Much of the insights on B'nai B'rith's diplomacy rely on the author's interview with the organization's executive vice president and one of its leading diplomats, Daniel Mariaschin.

22 See especially Sharansky's glowingly optimistic response to the Arab Spring. Natan Sharansky, "The Democratic Case for Optimism" Jewish Review of Books 2, no. 1 (Spring 2011), 5-6; and his account of the 2007 Prague conference of democratic dissidents, Natan Sharansky and Shira Wolosky Weiss, Defending identity: Its Indispensable Role in Protecting Democracy, ed. Ron Dermer (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008), 112, 227-232.

23 Lecture, Bentzi Gruber, January 2012, Efrat, Israel.

24 Quoted in Alan K. Henriksen, "Niche Diplomacy in the World Public Arena: the Global 'Corners' of Canada and Norway," in The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations, ed. by Jan Melissen (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 67.

25 Henrickson, "Niche Diplomacy," 68.

26 On the "power of the better argument," see Henrickson, "Niche Diplomacy," 69-71. For the insight on building emotional connections to Israel, I am grateful to a lecture by Zavi Apfelbaum, Senior Director, Brand Management Section, Media and Public Affairs, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, January 2012. It is significant that this type of emotional connection is at the heart of the Israel branding projects in the Foreign Ministry.

27 Schleifer, "Jewish and Contemporary Origins": 137. Schleifer equates propaganda with hasbara and public diplomacy. Though the differences between them are significant, they will not be discussed in any length here and his insight about the need for conviction applies equally to all of them. See p. 150 in Schleifer's article.

28 Schleifer, "Jewish and Contemporary Origins": 137-138.

29 Mor, "The Rhetoric of Public Diplomacy": 662

glorify the Palestinians.[30] After considerable soul-searching, many Israeli diplomats and Zionist activists became enraged at the media's perceived biases and developed programs to rebuild Israeli legitimacy. Yet, while the violence undercut Israel's image on a variety of fronts—perceived strength, democratic viability, intelligence superiority, and so on—the attacks that inspired paradigmatic PD change focused on Israel's identity as a defender of human rights, both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Despite efforts to appear otherwise, the IDF gained a reputation for excessive aggression and inattention to human rights during the conflict. The Mohammed al-Dura "murder" and Jenin "massacre" episodes provided the basis for this negative reputation. The term "episode" is useful here because the reality of the events—in both cases far less atrocious than the media claimed—mattered far less than the media narratives.

France-2 television showed a brief video depicting what appeared to be an unarmed father and son (Jamal and Mohammed al-Dura) crouching under fire at Netzarim Junction in the Gaza Strip on September 30, 2000, and, seconds later, the boy collapsing. Blame and condemnation immediately fell on the IDF, which largely failed to contest the accusations of wrongdoing and even accepted the claim that the shots came from the Israeli side before performing a thorough investigation. Even the Israeli media generally blamed the IDF. Nearly two months later, the IDF completed its investigation and held a press conference to contest the media's allegations, but the international press corps barely attended and the damage was already done.[31] Condemnations of the IDF for "murdering" al-Dura continue to this day, despite strong, freely available evidence to the contrary.[32] Early, likely false, IDF claims that al-Dura's death was an unavoidable case of cross fire only made the IDF seem more heartless.[33]

If the Muhammad al-Dura episode painted the IDF as heartless and indiscriminately attacking civilians, Operation Defensive Shield, branded the "Jenin Massacre" by the media, consolidated that image. In April 2002, following the horrifying Passover suicide bombing against Israelis in Netanya, the IDF blocked media access to the terrorist stronghold embedded in the Jenin refugee camp as part of military preparations for a major anti-insurgent operation. Despite IDF assurances that the media ban was for the journalists' protection, and despite the government's establishment of a Media Center in Jerusalem to brief journalists daily on the operation, the media suspected the IDF of illicit activities and favored Palestinian reports of a massacre over official Israeli statements.[34] In reality, most of the Palestinians killed were armed, many of the homes demolished were bomb-making factories, and the IDF's decision to avoid excessive Palestinian casualties by conducting a ground invasion rather than a surgical airstrike cost the lives of thirteen Israeli soldiers in one of the camp's many booby-traps.[35] Nevertheless, the "massacre" label stuck, earning Israel widespread international condemnation. Although this condemnation waned as the truth emerged, even negatively impacting Palestinian credibility for leading the fabrication,[36] the media remained willing to believe and relay, almost unchecked, stories of IDF massacres in military operations in Lebanon (summer 2006), and the Gaza Strip (winter 2008-2009, i.e., Operation Cast Lead).

The media mishandling of these two episodes enraged Israel's public diplomats. Through "clumsy and faulty" PD, to use the chastising words of *hasbara* practitioner and expert Moshe Yegar, Israel gave the Palestinian cause

legitimacy and "created the impression that the terrorist attacks are even advancing the solution."[37] Citing the response to al-Dura as an example, Yegar argues that poor hasbara strategy has led to "tactical mistakes of worthless reactions, like the haste to acknowledge guilt for events that were not caused by Israel."[38] In a slightly softer tone, Gideon Meir of the foreign ministry claimed that Israeli media preparedness failed to achieve its objectives for Defensive Shield: attain legitimacy and "freedom of action" for Israel, "confront and challenge" international anti-Israel efforts, and situate Israel's campaign within the international War on Terror[39] After listing a wide array of operational recommendations intended to ease government-media communications, Meir added, "real change will only come when communicating Israel's message to the outside world is considered a critical weapon by political leaders, and the resources and authority are given to the relevant government bodies."[40] The legitimacy of Israeli self-defense was at stake, and hasbara strategy at the time was clearly unprepared to protect it.

In the aftermath of these PD failure episodes, Danny Seaman, director of the Government Press Office (GPO), bred controversy for confronting media double standards head-on. Recognizing that the Palestinians were using the media to delegitimize Israel and challenge Israel's right to self-defense, he decided to, "not play games with reporters who don't take this as seriously as we do."[41] An especially gruesome suicide bombing about two months after Operation Defensive Shield drove this radical change in his thinking about PD. Touring the scene, he heard a reporter describing the "alleged bombing" to a distant audience. The reporter was treating this tangible disaster, which for Seaman recalled the Holocaust-style butchering of his people, as a questionable affair. At the same time, the media was generally ready to blame Israel for atrocities with only mere rumors as evidence[42] To him, irresponsible journalists quick to blame the Israelis for crimes like "murdering" Muhammad al-Dura were not simply misguided; they were perpetuating "blood libels," the predominant historical source of Jewish persecutions.[43]

Seaman's position in the GPO gave him the ability to arrange exclusive interviews and the authority to issue press cards, which ease foreign correspondents travels through the conflict zones. With these tools, he sought to cultivate media professionalism by boycotting and delaying flagrantly anti-Israel reporters and strictly enforcing the legal requirement for press-card-holders to be "working press" and not simply anti-Israel activists employed by fringe media outlets. This contrasted with prior GPO policies of treating journalists well in hopes that they would return the favor.[44] Though the media tried to punish Seaman for his policies, even taking him to court, he and his policies survived. In his opinion, he was doing his duty as a civil servant and as a Zionist; government officials who reacted passively to media attacks on Israel were failing in their jobs for the state and in their obligations to the Jewish people.[45]

The media's double-standard tendencies persisted well after the Second Intifada waned, returning in force during the Second Lebanon War and again during Operation Cast Lead, and to lesser degrees during numerous other episodes. Since accusations based on these double standards gained a strong foothold on college campuses, many Zionist diplomats responded by targeting college students.[46]

Colonel (reserves) Ben-Tzion "Bentzi" Gruber's Ethics in the Field traveling lectures focus more narrowly than the above-listed programs on cultivating an image of the IDF defending human rights. Self-described as "a true Zionist

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[30] The media, drawn to the conflict for headlines, has tended to favor Palestinian narratives and assume Israeli culpability. For the extent and origins of this double standard, see Joshua Muravchik, *Covering the Intifada: How the Media Reported the Palestinian Uprising* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003); and Stephanie Gutmann, *The Other War: Israelis, Palestinians and the Struggle for Media Supremacy* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005).

[31] Gutmann, The Other War, 39-42, 50-52, 56-65.

[32] The truth about al-Dura remains obscure to this day, but Israeli investigations showed that, given the physical positions of the IDF, al-Dura, and the surrounding structures at the time, the IDF could not possibly have shot the boy. Since the evidence was quickly obstructed under Palestinian control, no definitively guilty party was named, but speculations included that the event was a staged shooting (by Palestinian militants claiming to be Israelis) that went horribly wrong, or a complete forgery. In recent years, Israel has won legal battles against France-2 for irresponsible reporting of the incident.

[33] Gutmann, *The Other War*, 56-67.

[34] Adir Haruvi, "Jenin: the Operational Considerations." In The Battle of Jenin: A Case Study in Israel's Communications Strategy, ed. Hirsh Goodman and Jonathan Cummings, Conference Proceedings: Tel Aviv, July 2002, Memorandum #63 (Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 2003), 16; James Reynolds, "BBC Coverage of Operation Defensive Shield in Jenin," in The Battle of Jenin, 23-24; Charles Enderlin, "Coverage of Jenin on France-2 TV," in The Battle of Jenin, 25.

[35] Hirsh Goodman, "Introduction," in The Battle of Jenin, 10. Most statistics agree that over 30 of the about 56 killed Palestinians were armed, and approximately 130 homes were destroyed. See the summary of the accusatory Human Rights Watch report, included in *The Battle of Jenin* as an appendix. Also available at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/israel3/.

[36] Ephraim Kam, "Damage Assessment: an Overview" in The Battle of Jenin, 28-29.

[37] Yegar, "Comments on Israel's Foreign Service," 31. Hasbara (literally, explanation) is the Hebrew term Israelis use for public diplomacy and official information dispersal.

[38] Yegar, "Comments on Israel's Foreign Service," 31. For simplicity, I have loosely translated Yegar's Hebrew word "shlemieliot" as worthless. This is a bit of understatement, because the word is a harsh derogatory term adopted from Yiddish connoting complete ineptitude.

[39] Gideon Meir, "Jenin: The Diplomatic Cost," in The Battle of Jenin, 30.

[40] Meir, "Jenin: the Diplomatic Cost," 32.

[41] Gutmann, The Other War, 248; David Horovitz, "Editor's Notes: Danny Seaman's Farewell Voyage," Jpost.com, November 5, 2010, http://www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=194079.

[42] Gutmann, *The Other War*, 245-248.

[43] Horovitz, "Editor's Notes"; author interview.

[44] Gutmann, *The Other War*, 248-251.

[45] Author interview.

[46] The list of programs that followed this pattern is immense, including the Israeli foreign ministry's Brand Israel as well as the Zionist Organization of America's annual Student Leadership Mission to Israel (which this author attended in 2012, providing some of the resources and experts included in this article). While all of these projects are innovative and influential, they deal with too large a host of issues related to Israel's image to dissect here.

and hasbara Superman," Gruber's presentations respond directly to misinformed vilifications of Israel and the IDF.[47] Rather than dispel each individual myth, however, he focuses on the IDF's "Code of Ethics" in the field: the meanings of proportionality and collateral damage and their measurement against reducing the human threat terrorists pose to Israelis. He emphasizes that, as it did in Jenin, the IDF frequently puts its soldiers in significant risk in order to avoid excessive collateral Palestinian damage. Gruber's presentations combine his personal accounts and comments on Israeli policy with interactive footage and information that citizens and journalists rarely see.[48] His position is an uncomfortable one for Israeli officers—he claims to have received frequent heckles—but he has become a useful resource for Zionist groups on college campuses to educate their classmates about the conflict.

Just as importantly, Gruber also runs a project called "Chesed (Lovingkindness) in the Field," which trains Israeli soldiers to be sensitive to the weak in society, especially the young and disabled, and to recognize that there is no difference between Israeli and Palestinian children.[49] In this sense, he is not only committed to defending Israel against demonization of the IDF on college campuses, but he is also strengthening the IDF's attachment to Jewish and universal principles of human rights.[50]

One of the aspects of the conflict since the Second Intifada most poorly covered in the media has been the frequent shelling of Jewish neighborhoods near the Gaza Strip, most famously Sderot. Thanks in part to the locally funded Sderot Media Center, the atrocities inflicted on Sderot's residents have finally received significant attention. The Media Center's director, Noam Bedein, gives on-site tours and delivers lectures at universities, especially in the United States.

Though Bedein covers the statistics on the rocket attacks in his presentations, he concentrates on the human challenges that the rockets pose for residents.[51] He rushes to the scene of the rocket strikes with camera in-hand for publicity. Further, the Media Center's museum (the "Kassam Gallery," situated in the Sderot police department's parking lot) consists of a few cases packed with seemingly endless rows of battered rockets. These constitute the basic record of the attacks that maintains media attention. Yet, his main story is the contradiction between the terror constantly surrounding Sderot residents and the human right not to live in fear. Critical to his approach is a refusal to compare casualty figures with Gaza; unlike journalists, who frequently use these figures to imply symmetries or asymmetries of suffering, Bedein dwells on the right to a terror-free quality-of-life on legitimate Israeli land. In spite of that right, he emphasizes that Sderot residents live next to bomb shelters (which serve as nurseries for the children too young to run into them with just five seconds warning), reinforce their schools with shielded roofs or build them underground, and send their children to a playground shelter shaped like a caterpillar. The psychological implications of this life resonate with college students in a radically different way than dry news reports and underlines the importance of Israeli self-defense as a means of protecting human rights.

Legal Delegitimization and Cultural & Moral Bonds

The Palestinian Authority prodded the United Nations (as yet unsuccessfully) to declare a Palestinian state outside of a negotiated settlement in 2011. Their primary claim, in the eyes of Zionist diplomats, was that Palestinians deserved a state, had the institutions to succeed, and Israel—an unreliable negotiating partner and a rogue regime undeserving of international norms—was standing in the way of legitimate Palestinian rights. Whatever merit the Palestinian leadership's claims to internal viability may have had, their attacks on Israel derived from historic legal campaigns to delegitimize Israel through international legal forums, including the United Nations' 1975 Zionism-equals-racism resolution, the Durban conferences, and the Goldstone Report on purported Israeli war crimes in the Gaza Strip, as well as the BDS movement.

These campaigns have sought to reverse the fundamental basis of Zionist legitimacy, that international norms of tolerance and respect for national identity justify the existence of Israel. They argue that creating the Israeli state

was a mistake.[52] Many Zionists perceive a parallel between this delegitimization and older forms of anti-Semitism: a belief that Jews are somehow less worthy and more repugnant than other peoples. Marketing, branding, and conventional tools of PD are insufficient to rebut these attacks because they strike a deeper cultural and moral chord than these tools can reach.[53]

Many Zionists discount the value of responding to such legal attacks from within the international norms framework. Israelis often view international bodies like the United Nations, which many derisively refer to as "Uum Shmuum,"[54] as hopelessly anti-Semitic. However, with the statehood bid, some Zionist public diplomats took them more seriously and developed methods to forge deep cultural and moral connections with various societies and counter the incursions attempted by the Palestinian Authority and its allies.

B'nai B'rith, an international Jewish organization with American roots, runs and works with an enormous variety of programs to confront these legal delegitimization efforts. No specific global contest radically spurred the organization to develop these programs; they reflect B'nai B'rith's heritage and gradual development over its century-and-a-half-long history.[55] However, the organization constantly adapts to respond to these new challenges and develops new ways to carry the Zionist message. For example, when the 2010 earthquake in Haiti caused a humanitarian disaster, B'nai B'rith ensured that an Israeli medical team be one of the first to arrive, a profound boost to public opinion of Israel in Haiti and around the world.[56] Similarly, B'nai B'rith encourages its student partner organizations—B'nai B'rith Youth Organization, Hillel, Alpha Epsilon Pi, among others, all of whom today frequently encounter BDS campaigns among their peers—to engage fellow students in conversations and programs concerning the merits of Zionism and the cultural achievements of Israel.[57]

B'nai B'rith diplomats also frequently expose anti-Zionism as a modern form of anti-Semitism, a demonization of the Jewish people.[58] For example, during B'nai B'rith's annual Holocaust memorial event at the United Nations in 2011, Executive Vice President Daniel Mariaschin spoke alongside Christian clerical leaders on the importance of tolerance and the threat of modern anti-Semitism. In his own remarks, Mariaschin highlighted the connections between Iranian President Ahmadinejad's ability "to at once doubt and mock the truth of the Holocaust while calling Israel illegitimate and solely a product of the Holocaust rather than the focal point of millennia of Jewish prayer and civilization."[59] When the Palestinian Authority's statehood bid reached a crisis point, Mariaschin traveled the world arguing that the statehood bid was not a continuation of the 1947 vote to partition the Palestine Mandate (which nominally created Israel), but rather a rejection and delegitimization of both Israel and the international norms requiring negotiated settlements.[60] In these ways, B'nai B'rith has sought to draw human and moral connections between Israel and its audiences and to deflect anti-Zionist campaigns to break those bonds.

On the other hand, Itamar Marcus and his Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) adopt a different strategy and expose audiences to the intolerant and counter-productive practices of the Palestinian government. Marcus asks a basic rhetorical question: "Is the Palestinian Authority preparing its people for peace?"[61] They are not, he claims, and

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[47] Bentzi Gruber, "'Ethics in the Field' Lectures" Bentzi Gruber, accessed June 25, 2012, http://www.bentzigruber.com/?page_id=160. Gruber began his lectures in 2009, following Operation Cast Lead. Much of this section relies on Gruber's presentation to the 2012 ZOA Leadership Student Mission to Israel, January 7, 2012, Efrat, as well as personal communication with him.

[48] Gruber, "'Ethics in the Field' Lectures."

[49] See Bentzi Gruber, "'Chesed in the Field' Charity Programs" Bentzi Gruber, accessed June 25, 2012, http://www.bentzigruber.com/?page_id=159.

[50] It is significant to note that Chesed is a theologically and morally central concept in Judaism.

[51] This description of Bedein's approach relies on his presentation to the 2012 ZOA Student Leadership Mission to Israel, January 1, 2012, Sderot.

[52] Daniel S. Mariaschin, "As D&D Go Mainstream, a Threat to Israel and a Threat to Jews Everywhere," *B'nai B'rith Magazine*, Spring 2011, 8. See also Natan Sharansky's Three D's of anti-Semitism: demonization, double standards, and delegitimization: Natan Sharansky and Ron Dermer, *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror (*New York: PublicAffairs, 2004), 224-226.

[53] Fishman, "The Relegitimization of Israel and the Battle for the Mainstream Consensus," *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2012): 11.

[54] A play on the Hebrew acronym for the UN, the "U.M."

[55] Author interview, Daniel Mariaschin.

[56] Allan J. Jacobs, "Our Perpetual and Unbroken Covenant," *B'nai B'rith Magazine*, Summer 2011, 5; "Haitian Disaster Update" B'nai B'rith International, accessed September 3, 2012, http://www.bnaibrith.org/Haiti.cfm.

[57] Regarding the ambassadorial role of Zionist youth groups, B'nai B'rith's Daniel Mariaschin sees these youth programs as critical ways to expose youth to Jewish literacy and to cultivate an appreciation for Israel, Jewish history, and Jewish values. Author interview, Daniel Mariaschin. The foreign ministry's Brand Israel program is similar in that it seeks to draw emotional connections with young American males. Although the program is not a response to a specific global contest (and therefore not pertinent to this article) it merits considerable PD analysis. See Efe Sevin's useful study of Brand Israel in his *Controlling the Message: A Strategic Approach to Nation Branding* (Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert, 2010).

[58] Author interview, Daniel Mariaschin; also, Mariaschin, "As D&D Go Mainstream," 9.

[59] "Religious Leaders Convene for Panel on Interreligious Reactions to Holocaust," B'nai B'rith International, accessed June 28, 2011, http://www.bnaibrith.org/latest_news/holocaustpanel012810.cfm.

[60] Daniel Mariaschin, "Latin American Recognition of a Palestinian 'State'—Repercussions for U.S. and Israeli Diplomacy," Presentation, May 25, 2010, Washington, D.C.: Hudson Institute, http://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=hudson_upcoming_events&id=848.

[61] Itamar Marcus, presentation to 2012 ZOA Student Leadership Mission to Israel, December 29, 2011, Jerusalem.

have no legal basis for delegitimizing Israel. His presentations and website, www.palwatch.org, attest to this argument and provide frameworks for learning about Palestinian failures to carry out their end of the peace process. Using Palestinian government-controlled media as a barometer of policies and intentions, Marcus argues that the government refuses to recognize Israel and its history, demonizes and incites hate against it, and supports and glorifies terror and violence.[62]

Recently, Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik co-authored a book based on the website's material. Their title directly paints the Palestinian statehood bid itself as illegitimate: *Deception: Betraying the Peace Process—Palestinian Authority non-recognition of Israel, hate incitement and promotion of violence during the 2010 peace talks and through 2011*.[63] Thickly referenced but also filled with easy-to-access illustrations, the book is a useful PD tool. Israel's Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs deemed it so useful that they decided to distribute this book to lawmakers around the world as well as Israeli ambassadors in an effort to present Israel's case against the Palestinian Authority.[64] Rather than simply defend Israel against the Palestinian leadership's accusations, the book worked to undermine the gains made for the Palestinian Authority's reputation in recent years.

A key aspect of PMW's projects is highlighting the Palestinian Authority's threats of violence and support of hatred against Jews and Israelis. This complements B'nai B'rith's programs designed to strengthen the positive emotional connections between foreign audiences and Israel. While B'nai B'rith forges the bonds, PMW raises the fear that the country on the other end of that bond (i.e., Israel) is under existential threat.

Final Notes

The ever-transforming quest for legitimacy, among both Jews and non-Jews, drives major innovations in Zionist thinking about PD. With the Soviet Jewry movement, Zionists combined the practical political interest in aliyah with civil rights and religious freedoms. Secondly, in response to media double standards concerning IDF operations, a later generation of diplomats took an aggressive stance to protect the image of the Jewish right to self-defense on moral, humanitarian grounds. Lastly, in their efforts to tackle legal delegitimization campaigns, the diplomats revived Zionism's once-neglected attention to international bodies and norms and strove to connect with audience emotions on a cultural and moral level.

Combining a variety of these innovations is an intriguing program of the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs called Masbirim (literally, those practicing hasbara). Masbirim trains Israeli citizens to be representatives for Israel abroad. The goal, according to a senior official, is to "get the image across through using the people of Israel."[65] Rather than deploying knowledgeable and professional government spokespersons, Masbirim gives a forum to Israelis with interesting stories—about Israel and its tolerance, or its international aid, or its high-tech industry, and so on—where they can speak with foreigners and put a human face on the country. Training consists of skills for successful communication, but it does not include the substance of the message, giving the representatives largely free rein to express themselves before audiences. Despite media and official ridicule, at least 80% of the Israeli public supports the program, and in just a short time, 12,000 have undergone the training.[66] This enthusiasm reflects the transformations in how Zionists understand the role of PD as covered in this article: It allows Israelis to take pride in their national achievements, defend their rights to their political beliefs and security interests, and connect with international audiences on a cultural and moral level.

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[62] Itamar Marcus, presentation to 2012 ZOA Student Leadership Mission to Israel, December 29, 2011, Jerusalem. Note that Marcus's PD differs from others in this article by emphasizing anti-Palestinian themes.

[63] Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik, Deception: Betraying the Peace Process—Palestinian Authority non-recognition of Israel, hate incitement and promotion of violence during the 2010 peace talks and through 2011 (Israel: Palestinian Media Watch, 2011).

[64] Author Interview, Danny Seaman.

[65] This description of the Masbirim campaign is based on an author interview with Danny Seaman. Also, see the Masbirim website, http://www.masbirim.gov.il.

[66] Interview with Danny Seaman.

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