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The role of the media in international affairs: an analysis of the media's role in relations between West Germany and Israel.

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THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

An Analysis of the Media's Role in Relations Between West Germany and Israel

A Thesis Presented
by
LILA B. ORBACH

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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The subject of Jews has been taboo in Germany since 1945; in the end, this must be counter-productive, for taboos inevitably lead to the taboood subject creating dark and secret fears and making enemies . . .

Rainer Werner Fassbinder
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In less than a century, the mass media, in its various forms, has become one of the most powerful and vital forces in relations between nations. It is difficult to say whether the strength of this new electronic media leads toward international accord or discord. However, it is clear the creation and utilization of the mass media has brought about profound long term changes and will continue to do so. What happens in distant lands and the way it is interpreted for us, has become inextricably enmeshed with what happens at home. Nations have embraced the mass media and the mass media have taken hold of nations, restructuring our economic, political and cultural interchanges for all time.

The potential power of the media in the twentieth century has been dealt with in countless books and essays. One aspect of this power, however, the role of the media in relations between nations -- in particular, two rather antagonistic nations -- has been neglected. But this neglect should by no means undermine the importance of the topic. The mass media of our age, specifically radio, television and the press, have taken on the role of the diplomat, shaping, shifting and shearing relations, simultaneously playing messenger, mediator and miscommunicator. Official diplomacy and the media now function side by side. At times, it's difficult to say which is actually the more powerful.

In order to demonstrate the expanding role of the media in relations between nations and their peoples, I have chosen two countries, the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel.
The two were not chosen randomly. These countries are unique in that they are both relatively "new" nations. While people of both countries may consider themselves descendents of previous, even ancient nations, they both formed into their present systems only in the last four decades. Neither nation, nor the relations between the two nations predate the age of electronic mass media. In their present administrative units, they are both children of the electronic era -- neither existed without the effects and force of the news media. The press, radio and then television played a large part in the development of both nations and the relationship between the two. While much has been written about German/Israeli relations, not one book has focused on the specific role of the media within the political, economic and cultural links of these two young nations. Yet, in both countries, the broadcast media, specifically television, have become the major national news medium and mouthpiece. The subject thus seemed to deserve attention.

The period covered in this case study spans the early 1950s to the early 1980s. However, no chronology is attempted. Not every event, visit, transaction or communication between these two countries is mentioned. Only those specific moments that strongly exemplify the nature of relations and the impact of the media, such as the post-war Reparations Agreement, the Eichmann trial and the massacre at the Munich Olympics, were chosen. Most of the information comes from conversations with politicians, officials of press and broadcasting institutions, journalists, academics and some of Israel's and Germany's main anchorpersons. My depictions of historical events are based on descriptions and analyses written in
periodicals at the time. Facts and figures were verified against other newspaper accounts and information gathered through interviews.

This study was derived from six sources: The research began with direct observation of German and Israeli news operations at various times over the course of three years (1982-1985). Interviews were conducted with news editors, news producers, news executives, political figures, political advisors and professors. The interviews were structured in that they were all asked questions about their views on news, politics and the organizations for which they worked. Informal and off-the-record discussions were held with individuals in peripheral organizations. I explored archives of Israeli and German publications; and finally, I analyzed the logs, scripts and tapes of news broadcasts. While this is also an historical analysis, most of the actual research was done in 1985, and the facts and figures often reflect the conditions of the media and the political situation of that time, unless otherwise noted.

The last part of my research (and perhaps the most important) was carried out only recently at a mid-sized daily paper in the Midwest. In order to gain an insiders look at the media, I took a job as a staff reporter, covering everything from business to sports and ending with a stint as a foreign correspondent, writing a special section on Christmas in the war zones of Nicaragua. More than anything else, my year as a print reporter taught me just how much control and power the journalist has to shape a story. The reports I wrote were not mirrors of an event, but rather an event as seen through my eyes. Due to timing and structural constraints, a perfect reflection of reality is impossible. As Robert Manoff and Michael
Schudson put it in *Reading the News*, "Reporting is inevitably a part of a double reality, both separate from the world it tells stories about and a constituent of that world, an element of the story."¹ So too for this research, which is not a perfect reflection or an official doctrine of the media's role in relations between Germany and Israel, but rather an analysis of the role of the media in relations between these two nations as seen through my eyes.
CHAPTER II
THE MEDIA’S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: UNIFIER OR DIVIDER?

Picture the Persian Gulf, the invasion of Lebanon, war-torn Beirut or perhaps the chancellor of Germany. Most of our personal images of peoples and events outside of our own spheres of activity have been formed by the media. In the twentieth century, aided by video cameras, satellites and zoom lenses, our knowledge or lack of knowledge about foreign countries generally depends not on observation and experience but rather on the news media which "sets the agenda" for public discussion. It is not our eyes and ears that connect nations; it is the media’s eyes and ears. And the quality of the media’s sight and sound play a paramount role within nations and international relations, both as a means of communication between peoples and as an instrument of knowledge and potential understanding between nations.

Images of the world and decisions and judgements about political events are based less and less on direct experience and increasingly on media-generated or "mediated" experience. Perceptions of faraway peoples and places are formed and reinforced by the mass media more than anything else. As Gaye Tuchman asserts in her book Making News, "Those topics given the most coverage by the news media are most likely to be the topics audiences identify as the most pressing issues of the day."\(^1\)

It is quite popular nowadays to mention that people get most of their information or "news" from the mass media, especially television, which the average Westerner is said to watch some seven
hours per day. Clearly the broadcast media dominate the lives of human beings more than any previous medium of communication. This is bound to connect tremendous power to the modern communication media. And, as Herbert Altschull, who has written extensively on the role of the media in human affairs, points out, the tremendous power of the media explains why "those who wield power seek to control or to regulate the broadcasting media in their territory, and that those who seek to wrest power strike first of all at the radio and television outlets."\(^3\)

A main difference between the communication systems of today and those of ancient days is the immediacy factor. The live telecasts and instant polling in today's media have increased the velocity of political events to a degree once unimaginable. Within milliseconds, whatever happens in Washington can be telecast in Bethesda, Bonn and Beijing. We have transformed the speed of communication from the speed of transportation to the speed of light. No longer are political events, political units, political perceptions limited by the constraints of transportation. What happens now is reacted to now and even our reactions are responded to now. We have transformed the order and relations between nations from the written document and the discourse of the diplomat into an electric communications network enveloping all. Leaders of nations are just as likely to announce policy to a journalist on the airwaves as they are to the diplomat, perhaps even more so.
"Diplomedia"

There are many varying definitions of diplomacy. In his book *The Anarchical Society*, Hedley Bull defined it as "the gathering and assessment of information about the international environment" or "the transmit of messages between one individual political community and another." ⁴ In contrast, Ernest Satow defines diplomacy in *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states." ⁵ Under either definition, the media are very much a part of and play an important role in international diplomacy. In order to transmit messages, the media are constantly gathering and assessing information that will greatly influence the public agenda in much the same way as diplomacy. Relaying messages from nation to nation, the media create images, sets scenes, simultaneously paving and plaguing the path of international relations. As Bull concludes, "Without communication there would be no international society nor any international system at all." ⁶

Like the diplomat, the media have become mediators in international conflict, sending messages to and from places that traditional diplomats dare not. The danger in the media's participation in international conflict is the tendency to sensationalize a story, create images and amplify conflict rather than harmony. In addition, the media are used as instruments of persuasion. Even at times when the government will not lend an ear to the leader of an enemy country, the media might. Thus Khaddafi may speak directly to the people of the United States
through the media, though unable to communicate through traditional diplomatic channels. By the same token, certain actors in the international arena are granted an audience within traditional diplomatic circles far more often and in a more balanced way than they are by the media.

Admittedly, a great deal of the vital information that affects international relations is not transmitted through a nation's public news media. Rather it is communicated through ambassadors and envoys in special codes or perhaps on the "red phone." Still, the diplomats, transnationals and governments themselves remain very interested in, concerned about, and even influenced by that which is printed and broadcast directly to the public. Most governments are in fact informed and directly influenced by the mass media and often take action as a result of the news media reports. As Altschull affirms, "The leaders of government pay heed to the news media. Hence, management of the content of the news media is a matter of vital interest both to transnationals and to the national governments."7

Many credit television for arranging and pressuring the meetings of heads of state, such as the meeting of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat in 1977. Still others, such as Ferdinand Marcos, blame the media for the ousting of once powerful political leaders. In some situations when traditional forms of formal diplomacy are no longer functioning, television and the other mass media and their personnel actually take on the role of the diplomat and simply bypass the normal channels of international diplomacy. As much of the work originally delegated to the diplomat is placed in the hands
of the media, the media serve as the powerful transmitter of messages between nations, becoming the maker or breaker, keeper or releaser of valuable, survival-facilitating messages. For example, during the "Iran hostage crisis," as it came to be known, when diplomatic communication had come to a standstill, Ayatollah Khomeini communicated not with President Carter or an ambassador, but with a crew from CBS' 60 Minutes. When diplomatic channels were broken, the channels of the media were capable of maintaining contacts. The media become the great unifier or divider.

War and peace between nations are now narrated by television -- though admittedly war gets more air time than peace. The media are determining the significance or insignificance of political events. As Robert Stein writes in Media Power, "By shaping our picture of the world on an almost minute to minute basis, the media now largely determine what we think, how we feel and what we do about our social and political environment."8

The main difference between the traditional and the electronic diplomats is that they are reporting to different audiences. Unlike much of the behind-closed-doors work of traditional diplomacy, the output of the media is in the open. But like traditional diplomacy, the media are full of hidden agendas aimed at boosting ratings, advertising revenue, credibility and power. The audience is usually kept unaware of these motives. As Altschull says, "The output of the media is in the public, but its director may be in the shadows."9
Cross-National Communication versus Non-Communication

Several studies have concluded that simply increasing the technology and flow of communication into a social system or a nation does not necessarily result in equivalent information gains among all groups within a system or a higher level or quality of "true" cross-cultural communication. After all, these new technologies are no more than extensions of our own human message-processing abilities and liabilities. They are programmed to display, transport, store, duplicate, focus on, magnify or amplify the data we create. The nature of the messages and the uses to which they are put depend on us and not our technologies.

In this century, we have increased the technology and flow of communication to global proportions but the result has not necessarily been an increased level of constructive communication. The fact that two countries, like Germany and Israel, pass messages at a more powerful level of electromagnetic frequency more often than ever before has not necessarily translated into better relations. The fact that relations between these nations were never without the links of modern media and communication devices has not automatically translated into blissful relations. For in each country, attitudes and perceptions about things were formed long before anyone turned on the evening news or read the paper. And the media cater to these preconceived attitudes and perceptions. A nation's language, history and memory banks will shape the news broadcast.

For journalists and their audiences will respond to events not only in terms of what happens but in terms of what they think is
happening. People respond according to their perceptions of each situation, and hence they respond in part to the memories and images which they already have been carrying in their mind. On this subject, Karl Deutsch points out:

Each perception is the child of a message and a memory. With our eyes we may see a red blob, while our memory may help us recall earlier experiences with a red necktie, and so we now may perceive this blob as a necktie of similar shape and color...If we had never seen a necktie before, we might not recognize the first one we saw...We may recombine some of our memories into new images, and later we may perceive something in the outside world that seems to correspond to what we have imagined.10

Rather than a report of reality, the newsmaker, in trying to interest viewers or readers, has consciously tried to fit a news story into a mold that matches preconceived notions of reality and preconceived perceptions. The audience tends to accept the message with little criticism and combines these messages with their own individual concepts of the world. The result is a strictly individual understanding of an event, conflict or crisis that is not necessarily connected to the actual event. A message was chosen, edited by the newsmakers, filtered by the audiences' reception apparatus, and the original message is lost along the way.

Since the end of World War II, just around the time that both Israel and Germany were establishing themselves and their media systems, a growing interest developed in the effects a more powerful mass media have on the community and the individuals they exist to serve. In 1949, Joseph Klapper, in The Effects of Mass
Communication, concluded the media do not create, but mainly reinforce opinions. This supported the traditional argument that the media tend not to reach out beyond their ethnocentric social constructs, but rather reflect the outlook of the society they serve. If the society is sick or violent, then that is the reality that the articles, documentaries or news stories reflect. Each community views a situation, event, crisis or conflict out of their own reality. That is why Germany and Israel view themselves and each other so differently. It is only when issues are new and no firm opinions as yet are held that the possibility exists to influence the ideas of the audience.

On the international level, there exists a great barrier between communication and non-communication, which Michael Marien, in his essay "Non-Communication and the Future," defines as "the multitude of instances when full communication ought to occur but does not." In light of linguistic, cultural, historical, geographic and other obstacles, transmission and reception of a distant reality are an impossibility. Even if the media had the space, time and budget, too many other constraints render the media unable to relay every aspect and element of a foreign nation. "Since most of the news in Germany and Israel is internal news," explained Michal Limor, an Israeli producer and reporter who has worked in both countries, "the share of international news is quite small and necessarily more shallow. The correspondent, if you have one abroad, must paint a picture to one side or the other in a one- or two- minute report. Through this report, he can establish the public opinion of the whole
country to which he is broadcasting towards one side or the other, but it isn't likely to be the whole story."  

In the last decade, German and Israeli media have made great efforts to cover each other in a more in depth and responsible manner. And while many of their main publications have done lengthy stories on internal struggles or party leadership -- sometimes several pages worth -- the reader's efforts to move beyond the "story" to see the reality are to no avail. Few readers are aware that the foreign country only appears to be shown through the media. In essence, the reality is quite different. Foreign correspondents contracted and sent on location to the West Bank or to Bonn to report back "the way it is" are, in fact, creators of an image or fairy tale of the foreign country. In choosing and displaying news, the editors, newsroom staff, writers and broadcasters play an important role in shaping (rather than reflecting) political reality.  

Despite their innate shortcomings, the world has come to rely on the media for balance and organization. For in an ever-expanding and complicated world, the audience yearns for organization. The news media reflect that pursuit. There seems to be a continuing effort to establish order among and between ourselves. That is in fact the role of the diplomat, and that is what we have come to expect from the media. First we relegate rank among our own, choosing leaders and influences, and then we establish walls and borders between ourselves and others. While television to some extent assists in the transcendence of such walls and frontiers, it more often and likely assists in the procurement of order and organization by establishing such walls and frontiers. One
of the ways in which the media helps delineate the nation and world is by categorizing any and every aspect of human life, from human traumas and distant tribes to sports and weather. This organizational process of naming things is a major role of the news media and, according to Altschull, one of the critical aspects of human behavior. It is important to keep in mind the potential effects of such name calling. For "what we call something determines to a large extent what and how we think of it."13

The way the media divides and labels the world has a lot to do with the audience's perceptions of the world. The media's use of categories like "East Bloc," "Third World" or "developing nations" has a lot to do with the audience's understanding (or lack of understanding) of these parts of the world. Whether Israeli media refer to Germany in terms of "Nazi Germany," the "new West Germany" or the "Federal Republic" affects the Israeli perception of Germany and subsequently the relations between the two nations.

The stereotypes and labels created by the news are a result of the media's tendency to quickly interpret "the other" in ways that their audience are sure to understand: East versus West, Left versus Right, superpower versus underdog, etc. In order to capture and hold their audience, the media try to relate "others" to the audience by using terms and concepts the audience understands. However, in reporting across cultural boundaries on unfamiliar subjects, the terms of the audience may be inappropriate. Such reporting may show part of the story but not all. What is said may be true but in the context of the event, it may not have been significant. Rather than
explaining something substantive about the "other" society, the story more likely reinforces aspects and convictions of one's own society.

In addition to personal stereotypes created by individual journalists, there are those that result from the process of news gathering over time. For the images created by the media are the culmination and results of journalists and other media personnel working within set confines. Edward J. Epstein, author of *News From Nowhere*, summarizes the result:

> The relatively constant procedures by which networks select planned events for coverage, reconstruct them into stories and integrate them into news programs tend to give stories on the same subject similar perspectives.14

At least for the first two decades, the media of both nations referred to the ties between Germany and Israel as "special relations," thus influencing the audiences' perception of the relations. To call this relationship "special" is not just an historical reality, it is a clear expression of a value judgement. The same goes for calling the Federal Republic "the New Germany," or classifying politicians as "leftists" or "right-wing." The media in both countries played a major role in categorizing the nations and politicians both internally and internationally.

The Media – An Imperfect Reflection

Establishing the nature of relations between Germany and Israel and the role of the media as diplomat during the last four decades is no easy task. Without exception, Israel's policy toward
Germany and Germany's image in the press show strong symptoms of schizophrenia. Ambiguity dogged issue after issue. The Israeli government, like the people, have been divided into two camps -- those looking to the past, opposing any and all ties with Germany and those looking to the future, who see such ties as essential to Israel's interests. Germany's actions and attitudes as defined by the media can be described in much the same way. The country is similarly divided by those unwilling to ignore the past and therefore repent by shying away from any type of criticism of Israel and those who feel after 40 years of guilt, apologies and reparations, (the economic assistance given to Israel by Germany as a sort of compensation for war damages,) "enough is enough." They are the ones who claim it's time to look beyond (if not away from) Nazi Germany. While the characters and catastrophes have changed over the last four decades, the scenes as portrayed by the media have remained constant from story to story.

In light of the tragic history and circumstances under which each of these two states emerged, the reason behind this polarity is understandable. It is further understandable, in light of the media's tendency to reinforce such polarities. In their search for drama, the media tend to review and reflect events in black and white, (e.g. Us versus Them, Good Guys versus Bad Guys.) These simplistic, two-sided formats of the media have more likely perpetuated polarities between Germany and Israel than alleviated them.

In addition to their tendency to polarize stories, the media tend to tell stories that will satisfy the audience's ego. Often times, the history, habits and expectations of the audience influence the
Aims and purposes of a nation's media more than the news or countries the media claim to report on. A review of Israeli and German news broadcasts and articles since the early 1950s reveals the media have not necessarily been reporting events of the other nation, but rather reporting on only those events that would relate to, interest and touch the audience. This is a contention few journalists agreed to. Of the German and Israeli journalists I interviewed during the last few years, the majority claim they are reflecting as opposed to shaping world events. They are convinced their versions of "truth" mirror reality and not the audiences' expectations. They assert with strong conviction that "events, not news organizations, determine the content of the news." But can television or any form of media truly mirror reality?

"My role in the news is to broadcast reality," said Joe Bar El, Israel's manager of Arabic television. His response was typical of most of the journalists I spoke to. It is perhaps most gratifying for those of the media to maintain such a myth or belief that their function is to hold up a mirror to the other nation. But according to Epstein, a conception of the news media in such mimetic terms "necessarily requires a certain blindness toward the role of the organization and organizational routines in the shaping of news reports and pictures; ... a blindness that leads to a number of serious misconceptions about the media."

As opposed to the messengers, carrier pigeons and other communication devices of ancient days, the modern-day media of Israel and Germany have offered an immediacy in communications
previously unknown. Even so, the myth of this mirror media suggests an immediacy that still does not exist. As Epstein explains,

While it is true that certain events ... are broadcast live, virtually all of the regular newscasts, with the exception of the commentator's 'lead-ins' and 'lead-outs' from the news stories, are prerecorded on film, which must be transported, processed, edited and projected, or on videotape, before it can be seen. In most cases immediacy is thus illusory ... The notion of a 'mirror of society' implies that whatever happens of significance will be reflected on the news. 

The mirror analogy tends to neglect the component of 'will,' or decisions made in advance to cover or not to cover certain types of events. Rather than make such an admission, the media are more likely to deliver a slogan that convinces the audience they are receiving the news on the minute as eyewitnesses on the scene. Just as we do in the United States, the German and Israeli media use certain slogans to sell their product, claiming to be immediate, independent and impartial.

Rather than a mirror or a window on the world, the news is the great magnifying glass, choosing a line of a book or a portion of a map and focusing in on it. Rarely, if ever, does the audience see the entire text. Their attention is guided in certain but not all directions. As Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw concluded in "The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media," the media "are constantly presenting objects, suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about." That, in fact is the
job of the editor, who is paid to pick out the "essentials" of a story and toss out the rest.

Thus, the message imparted by the media is more a reflection of the policies and predecisions of those who create the news than of the happening itself. What has been transmitted about Israel and Germany to either country has depended on where the correspondent was located, the budget he or she was granted and the audience for whom the story was being written. It isn't reality that is reported, it is what the organization was best able to capture in the least amount of time on a very limited budget in a specific location. But the media never admits that the process of news gathering has innate limitations and that only part of the story is given in the limited time slots and column inches. As Epstein writes, "Like map making, news cannot realistically hope to produce a model which perfectly represents all the contours and elevations of reality, but at least the basic distortions in any given mode of projection can be clarified."20

In his essay "The Distorting Mirror," E. Alexander points out that the injunction to hold up a mirror to nature sounds sensible enough until we remember that mirrors may be dirty or clean, concave or convex, cracked or whole; and that everything depends on which portion of nature you choose to reflect, how often you reflect it and how much you reveal of the history of the reflected images. "To describe the mass media as mirroring events necessarily involves seriously neglecting the importance of the chain of decisions made both before and after the fact by executives and newspeople, or, in a word, the organizational process."21
It is more realistic to say that the media are most concerned with reporting or mirroring that which will interest the audience. They must report the news as it fits their audiences expectations and desires. The audience must be able to easily relate to the event. More often than not, the mirror is held up to the audience.

Even now, more than 40 years after the Holocaust, the Israeli media remain conscious of their audience's sensitivities toward Germany. For years the audio on news reels which included German speakers was turned down and dubbed in Hebrew. German movies were dubbed or subtitled. The German language rarely if ever was transmitted over the Israeli airwaves. This doubtless affected the Israelis attitude toward both the German language and the people of Germany. Only recently has the Israeli media loosened its boycott on the German language, opting for a wider coverage of Germany. Likewise, German media have become increasingly more tolerant of reports critical of Israel. This gradual shift in the media of both countries is bound to have an effect on future relations. However, my intention here is not to predict the future. My purpose is to call attention to the past and present and raise questions of what's to come.
CHAPTER III
THE CASE OF GERMANY AND ISRAEL

"Special Relationship"

The ties between the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel have long been described by the Israeli press under the code word "special relationship." As a result of their special historical relations, there have been special financial relations, special diplomatic relations, special cultural and sports-related relations and special expectations of one another unparalleled by any two other countries.

An examination of the West German press in their coverage of Israel also reveals a "special" approach. For many years, the Germans were reserved in their coverage of Israel, revealing part of the story but not all. In the first few decades, the Israeli was often portrayed as the exalted pioneer in the Holy Land. With the wounds of World War II still very much inflamed, any critics of Israel were suppressed in the daily press. In Israel, any reports on Germany were shaded by the horrors of the past. Nothing was reported without some reference to the Holocaust.

Even after diplomatic relations were established in 1965, relations between the two nations remained strained at the very least. Now, for more than two decades, West Germany and Israel have been sending diplomats to one another and are regularly exchanging heads of state for brief visits. Cultural and commercial exchanges have gradually increased. German journalists, once reserved in their criticism of Israel, are hard pressed
to hold anything back. Even so, more than 40 years and some two generations since the Holocaust, relations between the two countries are far from normalized. Based on historical intertwining and extraordinarily intense interaction, the special relationship has endured. Lilly Gardner Feldman, in The Special Relationship Between West Germany and Israel, writes, "The mutual experiences yielded a psychological response among the two peoples which fostered the special relationship, and later maintained it."22

What is it that keeps the Germans and Israelis apart from one another? What holds them within this "special relationship?" Upon understanding the dynamics and complexity of these countries and their peoples, my aim is to analyze the role of the media within this "special relationship" and to find if the media hold some responsibility for maintaining this relationship as a "special" one.

According to Feldman, "History/intensity and psychology are both necessary for the development of a special relationship."23 Within the reports and articles of the German and Israeli media, both history, intensity and psychology in the form of emotional images are maintained. It is clear that the media of Israel and Germany treat each other as they treat no other country. Their coverage of each other is special -- schizophrenic, but special.

**Two Nations Born on the Air**

Throughout the developing nations of this century, the press was of paramount importance within the process that came to be identified as "nation building." For each country, the press played a major role in their development of an identity and self-appraisal.
Like the nations of Africa upon gaining independence, when Israel and Germany reestablished themselves as nations, the press was used to spread the words of political freedom, of nationhood and the opportunity to assume an honored position among the reputable nations of the world. As Herbert Altschull writes in *Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs*, "The belief was now universal in the power of the press and its companion in education, the schools, to raise a citizenry dedicated to the principles of democracy and social justice."24 Along with the president, the flag, the national currency and the national soccer team, the media organizations themselves, particularly the major national newspapers and radio stations of Israel and Germany, have become symbols of their country's identity.
CHAPTER IV
THE MASS MEDIA OF GERMANY AND ISRAEL

When analyzing the mass media of a nation or of two nations such as Germany and Israel, it is important to ask whether the media as a whole provide a sufficiently rich marketplace of ideas in terms of themselves and the other nation. In addition, the analyst must be careful not to mistake quantity of information with richness and diversity. According to Ben Bagdikian, one of the foremost media critics, "there is a tendency to avoid social analysis of media content because it is only partially quantifiable, is highly subjective, and involves politics and ideologies." Still, such social analysis is vital in understanding the workings of a particular medium and its potential effects.

The analyst must determine and be mindful of who and what can become a part of the media message. The analyst must ask, "How many voices, how many subgroups of society, how many creators of ideas and analysis have entry to the mass media?" As populations increase, there is a growing gap between the number of voices in a society and the number heard in the media. In Israel, for example, only a handful of people out of a population of three and one-half million decide what's news for the entire nation. One single Israeli television correspondent in West Germany depicts Germany for all of Israeli television. Keep in mind, however, this is not so unusual. For example, at one time there was a CBS correspondent stationed in Bonn (without any knowledge of German) who was responsible for
reporting all the news from all the German speaking nations for the United States. Bagdikian warns:

If a powerful system is narrow in its content, its very power becomes a threat to public intelligence. Loud noises and masses of trivia do not offer choices or enhance freedom of thought.27

In spite of such warnings, economic and time constraints do not allow anything more than narrow coverage, even in the wealthiest and most powerful of media empires. The journalist, and subsequently the audience, is forced to make the most sense out of the least detail.

In their understanding of Israel, the West German must piece together bits of footage and articles dealing at length with war, the Palestinians and occupied territories. Little, if anything, is reported on the daily life of the Israelis. Little, if anything, is reported without a strong sense of drama and conflict. Though many more Germans cover Israel than the amount of Israelis covering Germany, there is still a sense of sameness in reports. In a kind of organized plagiarism, reporters tend to begin where yesterday's report left off, or simply reconstruct or reiterate the reports of another broadcast or article. Certainly individual reporters will offer distinguishable stories on different people or different parts of Israel, but after months of close examination of German news reports on Israel, certain common threads -- common tones and pictures of the West Bank and of Lebanon -- emerge. The day to day coverage is dreadfully similar.
Diverse ownership, according to Bagdikian, is a prerequisite to public tolerance of diversity. It is this acceptance and tolerance of diversity that will enhance cross-cultural understanding and better international relations. (It was exactly a lack of tolerance that led nations such as Nazi Germany to destroy bonds and relations between cultures.) For, a public that has been conditioned to a narrow range of ideas will come to regard this narrowness as the only acceptable condition.

With these thoughts in mind, I examined the makeup of the German and Israeli media, two countries where people seem obsessed with -- perhaps even addicted to -- the media. The major media of each nation, influenced by ownership and the audience to which they report, select not only which events will be portrayed as national and world news, but also which parts of the taped or printed portions of those events will be left out. It is the media of both these nations that have the final say on what parts of a report will stand for the whole story. And the symbols chosen to represent the different aspects of a particular society will become a part of the definition of that society for the reader or viewers.

For example, the soldier has become the symbol of choice for German media stories on Israel. And in the minds of the German viewer, the soldier is likely the symbol of all of Israel. And even for the young generations of Israel, pictures of neo-Nazis transcend into symbols of all of Germany. For these symbols are used and reused; so much so that the symbols, headlines, graphics and approaches of last night's stories will doubtless be repeated again tonight when
 updating or reporting on a similar story. The stereotypes tend to be self-perpetuating.

The news reports and symbols for those stories chosen by the media shape the perceptions of the other country for the millions of viewers and readers in Israel and Germany. Those issues which receive the most coverage (reparations, Nazi war trials, diplomatic visits, arms sales, etc.,) become the pictures in an album of managed reality. With this album, each nation is provided with its own individual shared political experiences and "reality." Surely, if each country received news from the same source and from the same perspective, the nature of public opinion and political relations would likely be different. But each country has its own glasses through which it views the other and through which it forms mass political stands. The media in each country serve as behavior and attitude models. In the process of image creation, the media indicate which attitudes and behaviors are acceptable and even praiseworthy and which are unacceptable or outside of the mainstream.

The more distant an image is from an individual's zone of relevance, the more potent the power of the media to create a reality. Thus, when the Germans report on an issue like Israel, an aspect of the world that most Germans experience only through the media rather than directly, the German media have the ability to paint in any color -- to actually create 'reality' and even a controversy where none exists. The fact that most Germans and Israelis rely on television to teach them about the events of the world is evident. In Germany, my research attested to the fact that those who are avid TV
viewers profess to know more about Israel than those who are not. The television is their source of 'reality'.

The German Media

A random survey conducted in 1985 showed that out of every 100 households in the Federal Republic of Germany, 95 have at least one television, and one radio and 77 subscribe to or regularly purchase a newspaper. The media, in short, is all-penetrating. In an average work day, over 95 percent of the population will be reached by either a television, radio, newspaper or all three. More than 50 percent of the population watch the news daily and another 25 percent watch it several times a week.\(^\text{28}\)

The proper measure of a country's mass media, however, is not the number of homes reached, but rather the quality of the message communicated. According to Bagdikian, the appropriate measure of a nation's media is "whether by thorough examination and reporting, they increase understanding of important realities, and whether through presentation of the widest possible spectrum of thought and analysis, they create an adequate reservoir of insights into the social process."\(^\text{29}\) If the media do not produce a rich marketplace of ideas and serious information, they fail a prime function. Though this may once have been acceptable in primitive and unchanging times, it is not today. For in a dynamic society, especially a democracy in a changing world, a lack of diversity in fact and thought leaves a population partially blinded. Bagdikian maintains that diversity and richness in the media are not ornaments of a democracy but essential elements for its survival.
Especially on the international level and within these nuclear times, a better, richer and more diverse understanding of other nations and cultures is vital to international and even global survival.

The German Print Media

The German press is almost exclusively organized in private business. At present, there are just over 500 daily and weekly newspapers with an estimated cumulative press run of approximately 21 million copies per issue. The number of newspapers with a completely autonomous editorial staff which produces its total editorial content has shrunk from 225 in the early 1950s to less than 100 in the 1980s. In addition to the daily and weekly newspapers, there are about 230 popular magazines which appear either weekly, bi-weekly or monthly and which have a cumulative press run of about 63 million copies per issue. Complementing these are the innumerable trade journals, school, office and professional publications, circulars, customer and home magazines. The number of professional magazines alone is estimated to be much more than 10,000 titles.

Similar to the trend in the United States, the general rising costs and the introduction of ever more sophisticated and costly techniques and machinery within the print medium have forced smaller companies either to enter into amalgamation with others or to be taken over by one of the giants in the publishing business -- a situation that also suggests parallels with developments in Germany in the early decades of this century.
The German press is quite free of government control. No daily is directly owned by a political party, and though some ten percent of papers support a party line, the majority of newspapers, including all major dailies, are politically independent. The most important and influential national dailies include Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung of Munich and Die Welt of Hamburg, all of which maintain equal circulations of approximately 350,000.

The Influence of Axel Springer

A discussion of press concentration in Germany would not be complete without mention of the publishing empire of Axel Caesar Springer (1912 - 1985). At the time of his death, Springer's share of the West German daily newspaper market stood at over 30 percent. His conglomeration of press within Hamburg and West Berlin are still between 60 and 70 percent. The nearest rivals to the concentrated ownership of the Springer empire controls a mere three percent.

In general, it is West Germany's boulevard press that enjoys the largest circulation. One of the most successful of these tabloids, Die Bild Zeitung, is owned by the Springer empire. The Bild, filled with gossip of the private lives of celebrities and exotic crimes, is Germany's only real "national" daily. With a circulation of 5,400,000 papers, printed in eight different provincial centers, the Bild is read by almost a third of the country's adult population. Its layout is comparable to U.S. supermarket tabloids; similarly, the Bild is known for never letting the facts get in the way of a good story.
In addition to the most popular daily paper, Springer also publishes the European continent's widest selling weekly, *Hör Zu*, with a circulation topping four million. Springer's monopoly of national Sunday papers is total: Only two major Sunday papers exist in West Germany, *Bild am Sonntag* and *Welt am Sonntag*, and both belong to the Springer press, as does one of the country's four widely distributed quality dailies, *Die Welt*, and its biggest evening paper, *Hamburger Abendblatt*.

But Springer didn't stop there. He also added two publishing houses and other ventures that turned the Springer organization into the largest concentration of newspaper ownership anywhere in the world. The fact that this major media monopoly was established by Springer is significant. For Axel Springer was one of the most visible, vocal and powerful supporters of Israel in all of West Germany. That a man in Springer's position can exert immense power in the shaping and directing of public opinion is obvious. His power to influence public opinion through the *Bild* has met with strong criticism from the Left, who claim the empire is too conservative, too narrow in its coverage and far too powerful.

The Springer press are perfect examples of newspapers and journalism that reflect the readers' views rather than the news. The papers are conservative in nature, with a clear emphasis on law and order. Showing West Germany as the "good guys," the messages they muster offer a sense of national unity while pointing to the enemy, which is most assuredly the Communist East -- the Soviet Union and, above all, the German Democratic Republic. Concepts, countries and calamities are oversimplified to the point of
inaccuracy. National pride and "fluffy-cutsie" stories are used to cover over any conflict or division within society. The paper is meant to give the reader a sense of belonging. Springer himself formulated some of his objectives in an advertisement that appeared in the London Times in June, 1969:

The Axel Springer publications stand for progress but oppose all attempts to destroy or subvert our society; support all peaceful moves to restore German unity in freedom; work for reconciliation between the Jewish and the German people; reject any kind of political extremism; uphold the liberal market economy. [Emphasis added.]

In the case of the Springer press, or any press for that matter, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove any direct effects of their portrayal of the world. It's like the old question of which came first, the chicken or the egg. Does the mass media, like the widely-read Bild, reflect public opinion or does this popular press shape public opinion or both. Most authors on the subject maintain that the relationship between the two is a symbiotic one.

The Germans are often described as "square," rigidly holding on to their ways, beliefs and stereotypes. They will do anything to avoid taking risks. They are a people in search of stability and financial and social order. In light of their history, this description is perhaps understandable. The average elderly readers, having survived two world wars, have seen the rise and fall of two Empires and one Republic, the destruction of an economy, bestial misuse of power, the uprooting of vast numbers of the populations and the
division and loss of half their country. As John Sanford puts it in Mass Media of the German Speaking Countries, "It is not surprising that many West Germans cling with almost neurotic obsessiveness to the system they see as having raised them from the rubble and chaos of 1945 to their present affluence and stability. The greatest fear -- and it is very deep rooted in many older Germans -- is of change, of anything that might conceivably tip their country back into the old anarchy and wretchedness." 30

The success of the Bild most likely means the public is comfortable with the paper's "reflection" of the world -- simple, sensational, gemütlich. The readers are looking for those pieces of information that will interest them but not attack them. And their interest is best perked by easily recognizable and palpable images, and conversely, most distracted by unfamiliar or confusing images; thus Israel's complex issues are presented in terms of human experience rather than abstract ideas. In order to entice the reader, papers like the Bild are quick to interpret "the other" (e.g. Israel) in ways that their audience are sure to understand -- Left versus Right, superpower versus underdog, etc. Parts or aspects of a story are amplified and others are left out for lack of sex appeal. While a story may include a beginning, middle and an end, they may all three have been fabricated or subjectively chosen. It is a problem that journalists are faced with every day -- trying to decide which portion of a story is necessary and easily understood and which is not.

Ulrich Sahm, a German correspondent who has reported on Israel for over a decade, explained the difficulty:
I have to present the Germans with an incredible amount of very complicated material concerning religious affairs or Israeli politics. Things that are culturally essential in Israel sound absolutely ridiculous to anybody else. Try telling a German what *mikve* means or *brit melah*. I have to decide to what degree these things interest the Germans and what is the minimum that I can tell them so they have at least some idea of what's going on in Israel. First I have to think about my readers because I'm going to have to sell my story.31

Perhaps it is vanity that causes people to look for reflections of themselves and their own experience in the media. For the audience will tend to select those parts of an argument they agree with and ignore the parts they object to or put them down as "lies." Through *selective retention*, the reader will choose to remember those messages that support already existing beliefs and forget opposing facts. A newspaper, for example, is usually selected if it reflects or conforms to the readers' own opinions and political convictions. The mass media of nations of the free world are expected to reinforce the already existing opinions of the readers and listeners. In this respect, the media are not affecting a change, but rather reinforcing and reiterating firmly planted views.

While popular newspapers like the *Bild* may not play a major and direct role among politicians, they do play main roles as agenda setters and meters of public opinion. The *Bild*, for example, reinforces a longing for stability. It plugs itself as the great watchdog and guardian of the Federal Republic. The *Bild* carries the image of keeping the enemy under the light, while praising the power of West Germany. Springer once recognized the Germans' fear of self
criticism coupled with their fear of someone upsetting the status quo when he said, "There was one thing the German reader did not wish -- to think about anything."32 It seems that reality is not the goal of this popular press, entertainment through self-aggrandizement is.

**German Television**

Unlike West Germany's print media, German television and radio, until now, have been exclusively organized under public ownership and control and extensively correspond to the federal political structure. (However, at the time of this writing, cable was stretching its web throughout Germany, greatly expanding the possibilities for private ownership.)

Germany's first regular transmission of a television program started up on November 1, 1954 on station ARD. Since then, two more networks have established themselves. The First Programme is produced by ARD (Association for Public Law Broadcasting Organizations of the Federal Republic of Germany.) The Second Programme, ZDF, is completely separate and is controlled by a public corporation of all the länder (German states.) It is partly financed by advertising. The Third Programme provides cultural and educational service in the evening organized by several regional public bodies.

In June 1984, there were 27,856,997 radio receivers and 33,340,623 television receivers in use in the Federal Republic. But the addition of three television networks, countless radios and televisions doesn't necessarily lend itself to better communication. It's is proof of the fact that more communication through added
technology is not necessarily better. Virtually all of the pictures of national and world news seen on television in Germany are the product of three government run news organizations. While these stations may vary in style or personality, their differences are minor on any realistic scale of the total values of society. Similar to the three major U.S. networks, there are no real differences in the content or approach between the German networks. At each station, the process by which the news is gathered, edited and presented to the public is more or less similar. They share a narrow, common outlook, not out of a conspiracy, but out of the constraints of a government-run operation. The economics and politics of the station are geared at sustaining the status quo. The German television media are an institution of the country, not unlike other federal institutions. The networks therefore have certain self-interests as does any individual or institution. The difference between the media and other institutions is that the media have power over public opinion and debate and are thus better able to pursue their self-interests.

The potential power and the expanded quantity of messages fed to the German audience does not, however, guarantee expanded quality of information nor the relation of the information to reality. By the time the millions of messages of the media reach the audience, they have already been through a complex filtration process. Consider what occurs:

a. Something happens in government. [In the Israeli parliament, for example.]
b. Government officials decide how to announce or present this occurrence. This may differ from (a).

c. Through a press secretary, the news media are presented with this government announcement. This may differ from (a) and (b).

d. A reporter produces a story of the occurrence. This may differ from (a), (b) and (c).

e. The media organizations processes the reporter's story for presentation to the public, either directly or through its client newspapers and broadcast stations. This may differ from (a), (b), (c) and (d).

f. The public receives an image of the occurrence. This may differ from (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e).

Second-Hand Relations

Though it is rarely acknowledged, our perspectives on the world are based on second-, third-, fourth-, even fifth-hand information. Without knowledge of the screening and filtering process that transpires between the event and the article or newsreel, the audience responds as if the media had actually created a mirror of reality. Of the average Germans and Israelis I interviewed, few, if any, were familiar with the processing of information that occurs in news making in order to fit time slots and budgets. They were unaware, or at least not willing to admit that their opinions were based on synthetic news stories and partial information. They were seemingly unaware of the media's organizational inputs -- economic and political considerations -- which influence the output of the news. Ultimately, the output is what colors the audiences'
perspective of the other nation, perspectives based on subjective distortions of reality.

The Israeli Media

Like the Germans, the Israelis are news hungry. Faced with constant conflict and life-threatening situations, the Israelis are avid newspaper readers. The news is broadcast hourly on the radio -- and they listen. And, despite the poor quality programs on their one television station (due to a meager budget), they are avid television viewers, as well. Most of all, they love to read about themselves. They continue to show strong interest in reports about Israel that appear in the foreign press. Such reports are consistently replayed in the Israeli media. While U.S. media are apt to quote the New York Times, Tass, Reuters, or other news services, there is barely a limit to the number of papers the Israeli media will quote if the subject is Israel.

The Israelis' powerful interest in the news and the existence of hourly broadcasts puts a lot of pressure on the media to produce. "The need for news every hour creates a lot of artificial news," said Uri Savir, the media adviser and press officer for the Israeli prime minister. "There is a tremendous vacuum here that leaves room for the politicians to come in and create news. Make one sexy statement and it's enough to get you on the news in an hour. This room for news makes politicians do things in order to get printed or aired. Today almost nothing happens without the politicians translating it into news. This has an impact on both style and substance."34
The mass media of Israel are national. Newspapers printed in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem are nationally distributed. Journalists, both print and broadcast, are concentrated in both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the seat of government. Geographically, the country is so small, that the connection between the government and the media is easily facilitated. So small is the country, in fact, that the "provincial" or local papers so popular in Germany do not really exist in Israel. For what happens in the capitol of Jerusalem, directly impacts the business metropolis of Tel Aviv and vice versa.

Such close relations between the media makers and the politicians often places the media in an almighty position to influence (though not necessarily to determine) the timing and focus of decisions. When the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, is in session, there are consistently some 25 members of the press on hand. All of Israel's major papers keep at least two reporters at the Knesset. According to Sara Yitzhaki, head of the Knesset Press Office, the foreign journalists assigned to the Knesset pay little attention to anything but those issues with direct implications for international affairs. "The media's reports don't directly influence the political decisions here," said Yitzhaki. "But they greatly influence the parties, which influence the decisions."35

In the political systems of Israel and Germany, the media are used as a link between the governed and the governors. Communications through the media is the glue that holds them together. The media are used not only to connect the country to the government but also as a communications channel between political parties and their members, both for disseminating information and,
especially at election times, to inject enthusiasm and to boost morale. The media, by bringing or not bringing certain issues at certain times to public notice, are, along with the politicians, setting the public agenda and thus playing an important role in the politics of nations internally and internationally.

Sitting at his desk in the prime minister’s office, Israeli government media adviser and spokesperson Uri Savir is surrounded by newspapers and magazines from all over the world. The nearly one dozen telephones that surround him are ringing constantly with calls from Israeli politicians and journalists from every corner of the globe. The study of this connection between media and politics has become Savir’s main occupation — his lifeline:

Today there is such an enormous symbiosis between the government and media that it is hard to distinguish what starts where. Many politicians today behave like journalists and many journalists behave like politicians ... Today nothing is done without taking into account the impact of the media. There is an interdependence between us. They [the media] need us for information and we need them for the kind of news we want to deliver. What I’m doing for the government is translating government policies into news.36

In the age of image politics, politicians in both countries rely on the media in order to matter. And the media of both countries rely on the politicians. Generally, politicians and journalists agreed they could not survive without one another. Explained Israeli journalist Michal Limor:
Today the politicians are using the media. They cannot function today without the media. They need the media because a politician only exists if he is known and if his ideas and that which he has to say are known. In the modern media, his face must also be known. Otherwise he does not exist. And the media needs the politician, because the politician supplies the stories and is also responsible for the decisions that are made in government. And the function of the media is to expose and to bring out the deeds and misdeeds of the governmental institutions. So the politicians need the media in order to expose themselves and the media need the politicians to cooperate and leak stories.37

The Israeli Print Media

The number of newspapers supported by the Israelis is great, indeed. There are some 25 daily papers -- 13 Hebrew, 4 Arabic, and to serve the various waves of immigration, one each in English, French, German, Yiddish, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian and Russian -- for a population of less than four million. The most widely read, by both politicians, Israelis and foreign correspondents, are the Hebrew dailies and the English daily, The Jerusalem Post. (These are also the papers I concentrated on.) The other papers seem to hold only a marginal journalistic or editorial impact. They are read by only a third of the population and are rarely quoted in the foreign press.

Like the dominant German papers, the main Israeli dailies are privately owned and have no formal affiliation with political parties. The morning paper Ha'aretz has a circulation of 51,000. Maariv and Yedioth Achronot are the larger papers with circulations of 140,000 each. The fourth largest Hebrew daily is Davar, with a circulation of
37,000. Davar is formally the organ of the Histadrut, Israel's Labor Federation. However, the output of the paper depends a great deal on which party is dominating the Histadrut and how powerful that party is.

For the Israeli, like the German, the media are less a reflection of reality and more a reflection of the people and their history. Rather than attempting to capture the news event, the papers are attempting to capture a mass audience. For example, as the makeup of the population has changed, so has the flavor and content of the news covered. In the last 40 years, the population has shifted from the pioneers, the ideologically motivated and those who sought refuge from the Nazis and later from hostile Arab governments, to their children and grandchildren who are still establishing their identity as Israelis. The media reflect that shift. Germany, for example, was once covered with extreme reservations. Now, as the audience changes, so does the broadcast. Soccer games, cultural programs, even German movies can now be seen on Israeli television. Perhaps these types of broadcasts will assist in bringing the two nations closer together. However, the news of political developments, exchange of diplomats, heads of state and arms sales, are still broadcast with strong emphasis on the past, which serves as a constant pressure point between the two relatively young nations.

With the emergence of a new generation of journalists, views of the past have changed and serve as less of a constraint in news reporting. When Israel first declared independence, the journalists and the press in general shared a commitment to the furthering of the Jewish State. While there is still strong dedication to the preservation of
Israel, it has become much easier to take a more critical stance on government actions and policies.

**Israeli Television and Radio**

Unlike the Israeli press, the airwaves of Israel are a state monopoly run by Israel Broadcasting Authority, a public corporation. In theory, the Authority is apolitical, but in actuality, the members are appointed by their respective political parties and apportioned according to party representation in the Knesset. All directors and major managers of Israeli broadcast news are government appointees. And, while many claim to be apolitical, objective broadcasters, they generally conform to Israel's government policy.

Israel's different radio stations offer a wide variety of musical and various other cultural programming. Almost every language in the world is represented at one time or another on the different stations. But each station, regardless of its type of programming, carries the same newscast. And the radio newscast is tightly bound to the television newscast. This close coordination between the radio and television broadcasts makes for quite a monopoly for the Israeli government. This monopoly, emphasized by the existence of only one television station, is a tool of significant political impact, doubtless promoting a somewhat homogeneous view of the outside world for the Israeli viewers and listeners. (At the time of my research, the government had just approved tentative plans to create a second television network.)

Foreign correspondents in Israel have played an increasingly significant part in enlarging the amount of information in
circulation in Israel. Since its establishment, Israel has remained a hot and coveted news beat. And ever since the Six-Day-War of 1967 and increasingly since the Yom Kippur War of 1973, rarely a day goes by without some word from Israel. Every major news organization in the world is represented, with the exception of those from countries with which Israel still does not share diplomatic relations, such as Soviet Bloc nations. The Israeli journalist has learned to use this foreign press corps to his advantage. Unlike the foreign correspondent, the Israeli journalist is faced with serious censorship on issues dealing with the military and national security. However, there is nothing to stop the Israeli journalist from quoting foreign media sources. Thus, it is not uncommon for an Israeli to leak a story to a foreign journalist and then quote the foreigner in order to circumvent stringent legal sanctions.

In addition to his own instincts and the occasional assistance of an Israeli journalist, the foreign correspondent in Israel is likely to gather information from the government, which has developed a strong official network for the dissemination of information. The more influential spokesmen in both local and international media include those for defense, the foreign ministry and the military. These are the voices most often quoted in the German media. Spokesmen for labor and finance are of interest to the Israeli press but are rarely quoted outside of Israel.

Realizing the importance of coordinating information for the media, in the last decade care has been taken to establish a more formal system of information distribution from the prime minister's
office. All information emanating from this office is channeled through the press officer. Said Savir:

I'm trying to influence what the media are saying. Today the press officer plays a more manipulative role. Really what we're doing is shading the press the best way for our own government. Domestically it's [the Prime Minister] versus everybody, and internationally it's Israel versus everybody. We try to paint the news the way we want to see it. We have a tremendous amount of power in terms of what they're going to report.38

In recent years, serious attempts have been made to coordinate Israel's information efforts abroad. Rather than pictures of soldiers, military and war, the Israelis are hoping to communicate other aspects of daily Israeli life. One such project began in Germany in 1985 under the direction of Michal Limor:

My goal is to expose Israel more than it is exposed now to the German public. This program can expose the daily life of Israel; the things that happen in Israel not only which are interesting to the news people but things that happen behind the news as background. Once things like this are brought to the viewer in Germany, of course his attitude toward Israel can be changed altogether. The attitude of viewers toward what they see in television is normally black and white. They get either the good guys, the heroes or the bad guys. That is the normal approach of the news. But once they see longer stories, background stories, other stories, they'll start to understand or to accept that it is not black and white and that there are many degrees. The bad guys are not always bad or only bad and there are sometimes grays and pinks and the good guys are not always good. They are also sometimes bad. The reality comes out. It is
something that contributes to the better image of Israel.\textsuperscript{39}

While it is still too early to gauge the reaction to Limor's broadcasts, it is interesting to note the extent to which the Israelis are relying on the media to assist in improving their image among the Germans.
CHAPTER V
THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN WEST GERMAN/ISRAELI RELATIONS

The German and the Israeli have access to an extraordinary volume of media output in print, broadcasting and recordings. Each morning the German wakes up, turns on the radio during breakfast, begins the morning paper, finishing it on the streetcar on the way to work. The radio is on at the office and when he arrives home, dinner will be accompanied or followed by a substantial amount of hours in front of the television set. Meanwhile, the Israeli is following much the same routine. He reads the paper every morning on the bus and the bus driver will play the radio, turning it up every hour, enabling the entire bus to hear the news report. As in Germany, radio and television will accompany the Israeli through their afternoon and evening.

It is difficult to gauge how this media saturation is affecting the non-media communication and perceptions in these two nations. However, it is clear that in both societies, people have turned to the media for positioning. Faced with ever-changing and shifting situations, the Israeli and German rely on radio, television and the press for bearings. In their search for self-image, self-appraisal and belonging, they have come to count on the media. The media, in turn, plug themselves as the guiding light, offering heroes, villains and public values. After 40 years, the relationship between the Israeli and German public and their respective mass media, has grown, expanded and solidified. A brief glance into the history of Israel or the history of West Germany exemplifies again and again the pivotal role this
relationship played on the politics of the nation and between the two nations.

The 1950s -- Reparations

As already stated, the relations between West Germany and Israel are marked by the scars of history. The scars are deep, passing from one generation to the next and leaving the two countries in an often ambiguous relationship. Germany wanted to establish good relations without giving up too much and Israel wanted to avoid making enemies, but remained unwilling to forget the past. Throughout, the media played narrator, moderator and mediator.

From 1948 through 1951, there is a noticeable veil of silence in the media of both Germany and Israel on the subject of their tragic past. Sifting through the yellowed papers and clips of the times, little if anything is to be found. The focus was on building. Of this, Feldman writes, "Feelings, whether of horror or guilt on the German side, or of grief and hostility on the Israeli side, simply were not expressed on a large scale or in any public or official way."40

Demonstrating the role of the media during the initial years of nationhood of Israel and the Federal Republic is an article published in the Munich Neue Zeitung on August 31, 1951. The article, written by German journalist Erich Leuth, is credited later by historians for launching the process that culminated in the signing of the German/Israeli reparations agreement a year later.

"Wir bitten Israel um Frieden," (We ask Israel for peace) appeared as an editorial in the liberal Munich daily on that date and in the Social Democratic Telegraph of West Berlin the following day,
coinciding with the publication of a similar article entitled "Friede mit Israel," (Peace with Israel) by Rudolf Küstermeier in the independent Hamburg *Die Welt*. (At that time *Die Welt* was owned by the British. Springer bought the paper in 1953.)

The two articles had an electrifying effect in Germany. Leuth and Küstermeier had pierced the silence. Their articles were reprinted fully or in part in many other newspapers and long extracts were read over various radio stations. During round-table discussions held on North West Germany Radio, it was proposed that a dialogue be opened between the two countries. One immediate "effect" of the enthusiastic reception of the Leuth and Küstermeier articles was the birth of the "Peace for Israel" movement, which served as a strong lobby for relations between the two nations. In addition, the articles seemed to have a profound affect on the way relations between the two and the subject of German/Israeli relations were thought of. Six months prior to their printing, Israel's call for reparations had met with very little response anywhere in the world and least of all from Bonn. Suddenly that changed.

In his article, Leuth did not attack his readers. He was able to make the reader feel like the good guy, the innocent victim -- an approach often used in Germany within articles and discussions of the Holocaust. Lueth told his fellow German that he was, of course, aware of "the thousands of Socialists, Democrats and Christians who, because of their resistance to the Nazi regime, shared in Hitler's concentration camps the death as their Jewish brethren." Leuth went
on to call for Germany to speak to Jews and open communication between Germany and Israel.

While the messages transmitted in Germany during the early 1950s were slow to reach Israel, once they did, the echoes of Leuth's articles were heard. No article was written in response, but a letter was sent from the office of the Israeli prime minister directly to Leuth, praising Leuth for his efforts in the press and calling for a beginning of reparations. Leuth relayed the letter to proper authorities within the German government. Since then, the German/Israeli dialogue has virtually never ceased. And throughout, the media has played an integral, albeit ambiguous, role.

Within one month after the media's initiation of the "Peace with Israel" movement, the German government reacted. Taking his cue from the media and the subsequent public reaction, Germany's Chancellor Konrad Adenauer finally broke the government silence. At the end of September 1951, speaking before the Bundestag, Adenauer declared, "The Federal Government are prepared, jointly with representatives of Jewry and the State of Israel ... to bring about a solution of the material indemnity problem, thus easing the way to the spiritual settlement of infinite suffering."41

Leafing through the articles of the early 1950s, the indecision and lack of clarity that characterized the issue of reparations is readily apparent. The controversy blown up by the articles of the day was between those who were demanding assistance in the rehabilitation of the survivors in Israel and at least partial payment for plundered Jewish property, and those outraged by the thought. Their exact reasoning was often unclear. But each article is formed into two
sides. There were those who totally opposed permitting the Germans to make amends, charging that Germany was interested only in gaining readmission to the family of nations. They opposed any contact with Germany. Others, especially Mapam, a small socialist party, did not oppose reparations in principle but were against Israel's negotiating with the Germans. The government, too, declared that reparations did not mean "forgiving and forgetting" and it did not envisage forming ties with Germany.

In both countries, the media was used as a forum for the public outcry. And while messages were sent between the two nations, the echoes were slow and relations, diplomatic and cultural, were almost non-existent. Such a situation allowed for limited communication. In general, the early 1950s are marked by crippled relations. Each nation was apparently more interested in establishing itself than opening up to each other. Even more than the Germans, the Israelis were very slow to break their silence. However, once the media reported on the establishment of direct negotiations with Germany, the Israeli public exploded.

On January 7, 1952, in one of the largest and most aggressive protests on the steps of the Knesset, hundreds came to show their opposition to contacts with Germany. The army had to be called in to supplement the police force. The tension was reflected in the press accounts of the protest. The *New York Times* reported:

A mob of 1,000 adherents of the extreme right-wing Herut Party today stormed through police barricades, set fire to or demolished automobiles, and stoned the Knesset building ... Steel-helmeted policemen, carrying ... shields to protect
themselves from a shower of stones, fought the mob with tear gas, smoke bombs and nightsticks. Tear gas poured into the building through broken windows.42

Not surprisingly, the media focused on the conduct of the protesters rather than the content of the problem. This is a phenomenon that remains in the media still today. When the German news reports on the Palestinians of the West Bank, it is not their history, hopes and aspirations that is reported, but rather their actions, the numbers wounded and killed.

Only a week before the January 1952 protest, the Israeli daily Maariv had conducted a poll that reported 80 percent of those surveyed were against negotiations with Germany.43 Media and government were painted with intense emotion. Nowhere was there any sign of a middle ground. But the issue was intensified. To the backdrop of the conflict between those calling for negotiations and those refusing any contact with Germany, direct negotiations between West Germany and Israel opened in March 1952. In spite of strong opposition, the Reparations Agreement between the two countries was signed that year. The parameters of the debate implanted by the media of the early 1950s were institutionalized, setting the framework for media, policy and public opinion to the present day.

The decision of Israel's to seek and accept economic assistance from West Germany culminated in the signing of a Reparations Agreement in Luxembourg in September, 1952. Israel desperately needed the financial assistance and Germany was in need of political rehabilitation. The Agreement laid the basis for continuously
expanding ties between the two countries. The sudden flow of economic support from Germany served as the impetus for a flow of media coverage. And the governments of both nations began to take the power of the media more seriously. On one occasion, the Israeli Minister of the Interior tried to use his powers under the Press Ordinance, 1933, to prevent the official organ of a right-wing opposition party (Herut) from publicly attacking the government's policy. After issuing an initial warning to the editor, the minister did not carry out the threat. The first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, who strongly supported the policy of building relations with Germany, tried over the next several years to keep the issue out of the media and away from the public eye. In the late 1950s, this policy led to a showdown within his cabinet in which the press had an important role.

In December, 1957, Ben Gurion planned to send Moshe Dayan, who had concluded his term as chief of staff to West Germany, to negotiate an arms deal. But suddenly the echoes of the media from overseas were getting louder. Though the cabinet was not informed of the decision, one of its members, a representative of Mapam, read of the decision in a German news magazine. The member brought the matter up in a cabinet meeting. Ben Gurion called for a vote and his policy was narrowly approved despite the opposition of Mapam ministers and Ahdut Ha'avoda, two of the smaller parties in the government.

The very next day, the Ahdut Ha'avoda newspaper, Lamerhav, carried a front page story headlined, "Ahdut Ha'avoda Demands an Urgent Cabinet Meeting to Cancel a Grave Decision."
The article did not mention the nature of the decisions, but asserted that parliamentary representatives of the party were shocked. Another paper partially disclosed the content of the decision when it wrote that Ben Gurion cancelled the defense mission to Germany because Ahdut Ha'avoda leaked the story to further its electoral interests.

These incidents in the press sparked a government crisis. Ben Gurion demanded the resignation of the Ahdut Ha'avoda ministers. When they refused to resign, he resigned. Under Israeli law, the resignation of the prime minister automatically results in the resignation of the entire cabinet. Ben Gurion refused to re-form a new government until he secured a promise that legislative steps would be taken forthwith to tighten secrecy procedures to prevent leaks from cabinet meetings to the press. Eventually, some ten years later, the pledge resulted in the passage of such a law, but by this time, "leaks" were an integral part of government/media relations.

Since the early 1950s, whenever division has haunted the Israeli cabinet, an all-too-common occurrence, the media has been put to work. For the past generation of politicians, it was good strategy to publicize disagreements in order to maximize support in the party and with the general public. Calculated leaks serve this purpose well.

Throughout the 1950s, the media reported on the reparations, the political debates and political relations -- or lack of -- between Germany and Israel. No attempts were made in Israel to report Germany as it actually was: reforming, redeveloping, reblooming. Rather than portray Germany's return to the arts and culture, all
stories on Germany within the Israeli media were written and read through the glasses of the Holocaust. Had coverage been less focused on the past, perhaps relations would have developed differently. Instead, relations remained stained and strained. The media and the people hold tightly to the Holocaust. The dilemma was widened by the fact that the government, reflecting the nation as a whole, never really was able to decide whether to deal with the new Germany or yesterday's Third Reich.

Thus, the words of the journalist catering to the Israeli audience, immediately became embroiled in the emotions imprinted by the past, and the words and policy became ambiguous. This was a neurosis shared by both countries. For what Israel cannot forget, the Germans are unwilling to remember. They were quick to avoid the Holocaust, choosing rather to emphasize the bold steps of the Israeli and the assistance of Germany in Israel through reparations.

In short, the two countries were not communicating on the same level. They each created and maintained their own realities. As the 1950s turned to the 1960s, the moral dialogue in Germany was ending. Israel continued to speak of Germany's obligations and Germany began to speak in terms of her interests. The average German still knew little of this small country of Israel. Even with the intensive expansion of economic relations, for most Germans, Israel remained a faraway, unknown and unvisited land. Few Germans were granted visas to Israel. In 1955, a total of 497 German citizens traveled to Israel. For the majority of Germans, however, information about the new Jewish State remained unclear and exotic. Only toward the end of the 1950s did the Germans begin
traveling in larger numbers to Israel, eventually becoming one of Israel's largest tourist groups.45

The 1960s -- The Eichmann Trial

The turning point on the stage of German/Israeli relations came in 1961. And the media played the leading role. In March of that year, German television stations commissioned copies of the videotape of the trials of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. The following month, the trials were broadcast over German television, which made the headlines in Israeli papers. But the direct effect was not seen in Israel. In Germany, however, the effects were powerful, indeed.

The airing of the Eichmann trial on public television represented a change of policy for all German media. Suddenly the unspoken and the nameless was reawakened. The trial was shown together with an hour-long documentary on the life of Eichmann. For millions of West Germans, the trial and subsequent film were their first views of the Nazi atrocities. For others who had long chosen indifference or resentment on the subject of the Holocaust, the film and trial pushed them to think differently. The effects of television were almost immediate.

Only the night before the viewing of the Eichmann trial began, swastika daubings were reported to have taken place in Germany but there was no report of protest. Following the Eichmann broadcast, the swastika daubings were suddenly protested in full force. In a small town in Westphalia, the Jerusalem Post reported that the local branch of a German Trade Union Federation held demonstrations.
Factories in the town of 20,000 closed early to enable employees to take part in a protest, march and rally.

For more than a month, the Eichmann trial was given extensive coverage in the German press and on radio and television, undoubtedly having a great impression on the German government and the German public at large. German media gave more detailed coverage to the trial than any other nation in the world. Still without television, Israel was unable to air the trial. But the coverage in Germany reopened the Federal Republic to a past that had been locked for more than a decade. According to reports in the Jerusalem Post, major cinemas in Germany began screening such films as "Mein Kampf" and "Eichmann und das Dritte Reich," both seen by thousands of Germans. Sixteen years after the end of the war, the media was used to bring the immenseness of the Nazi crimes against the Jews into the German home.

Immediately after the war, when told of the barbaric deeds of the Nazis, the defeated and stunned Germans seemed in no mood to sympathize or read about anyone else but themselves. Apathy and the will to forget characterized the messages transmitted in the media for an entire decade after the war. Israel's image in the German media of the 1950s and into the 1960s is shown through rose-tinted glasses. Few, if any, imperfections were revealed. As a rule, German papers were generally supportive of Israel from reparations to the establishment of diplomatic relations and into the Six-Day-War.
"Conditional Relations"

The coverage of the Eichmann trial opened many Germans' eyes. Suddenly the dialogue changed. The press in both countries were filled with articles and editorials on the subject of German/Israeli relations. Reacting to the public mood, the media was setting the agenda -- setting the course for future relations. By July, 1961, the German public began to react. German unions, students, professors, etc. were now calling for ties with Israel. During their July convention in Kiel, the Deutsche Gewerkshaftsbund, the major German union federation, passed a resolution urging the German government to speed up the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. Such reactions were widely reported in the Israeli press.

More than any other news event since the end of Nazi Germany, the Eichmann trial forced the Germans to face facts they preferred to ignore. Many young German students born after Hitler died, learned the details of the Gestapo tortures, the gassing of millions, and other bestial crimes of the Third Reich for the first time. The German media's exposure of the Eichmann trial led to what appears to have been an emotional upheaval, vented through demonstrations and protests throughout the country in favor of relations with Israel. Prior to the trial, coverage of Nazi crimes had been managed and soft-pedalled. But the trial was aired in its entirety, unedited.

In November of that year, a German/Israeli association was formed called "Die Brücke." Its aim was "to foster friendly relations between the two countries by organizing meetings of Germans and
Israelis of all professions and trades."^46 Articles on the subject of German/Israeli relations were filling the press. Most articles focused on arms sales, cultural ties, arts, politics and student exchange programs. In Israel, the press had now expanded their focus from the Germans' frank look at the Holocaust to their relations with the Arabs. Ambiguity surfaced again. By January, 1962, Israel was calling for cultural ties, however they were calling for "conditional" cultural ties.

The ambiguity voiced by the Israelis was relayed to the Germans through the press. And the German press responded in kind. One after another, the German papers contradicted each other in their reaction to the Knesset's "restricted" ties. Even papers of the same party affiliation were taking opposing stands. While one Christian Democratic daily, the Deutsche Zeitung, held that existing cultural ties will be maintained even following the cabinet decision approved by the Knesset, another paper, the Koelnische Rundschau, called the Israeli measures "foolish" and "a doubtful service to German/Israeli relations."

Die Welt deplored the decisions as being a threat to the present "shaky cultural relations" and as being contrary to Prime Minister Ben Gurion's views that the two peoples would get acquainted and appreciate and understand one another. In paper after paper, the Germans were discussing relations with Israel. The Eichmann trial, coupled with the Knesset debate and the new rules governing cultural relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel, were piped through the media and brought forth a wide range of comment in the German press. The expanded coverage kept the
topic alive and deserves some of the credit for reviving the discussion about Israeli/German relations within official circles. Only a few years earlier, this debate had been abandoned in Germany. The government, bound by the Hallstein Doctrine, maintained it could not undertake steps in the direction of diplomatic relations without risking Arab retaliation through the recognition of East Germany. At least this is how the situation was recaptured by the press.

Suddenly, in the early 1960s, the prominent commentators began urging the Bonn government to abandon their excuses and recognize the Jewish State. Writing in the Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger, Dr. Joachim Besser, chief commentator of the German television system during the Eichmann trial, said that the State of Israel signified its willingness to establish diplomatic relations with Germany no less than three different times. "But there was silence in Bonn." At first, the German press had blamed Israel for its "foolish" and "regrettable" act which threatened "to nip in the bud of cultural relations that are shaky in any case." However, when the exact tenor of the Knesset decisions became known, a calmer approach made itself felt and a powerful, pro-Israeli trend in the German press prevailed.

One of Germany's most influential dailies, the Frankfurt Allgemeine, reported, "The Knesset decision has not closed the door toward a better future, it remains open ... The Federal Government should make earnest endeavors towards a reconciliation with Israel. This may not be the central problem of German foreign policy, but it certainly is a matter which the nation has at heart ... Whether the
new Israeli rules will have a restrictive effect depends on the way they are handled and this will be directly influenced by our (the Germans') attitude." The Frankfurt Allgemeine was not alone. Close examination of the German papers of this period shows a widespread interest in the Jewish State.

One after another, day after day, the German and Israeli papers quoted each other. At times it seems that newspapers were quoted more than diplomats. The German papers quoted mostly from the Jerusalem Post. Toward the end of January 1962, papers in Germany were paying great attention to the fact than an Israeli daily, "closely linked with the foreign ministry," urged reconsiderations of the Knesset decisions. It is important to note here that the countries were using the media, as opposed to the diplomats, to relay messages of public opinion and government policy.

The press of both countries continually quoted the other's papers, praising and crediting the press for making or breaking public opinion. In newspapers I reviewed, the articles and editorials were constantly citing the influence of the media, a practice, no doubt, aimed at lending credit to the media's power and importance within nations. Whether true or false, the media created an image of being indispensable.

Updates on Germany's stance toward relations with Israel came to Israel through the press. Criticism of Germany from the Israeli public and the Knesset came through the press to Germany. The climate for the development of diplomatic relations was set up not through traditional diplomatic channels, but rather by the media. By the middle of 1962, Reuters had a report stating that Germany's
Chancellor Konrad Adenauer declared that relations between the two nations were improving. Soon afterward, the West Berlin newspaper Telegraf reported that Dr. Nahum Goldmann, President of the World Jewish Congress said he expects normal diplomatic relations to be established "in the not too distant future."

Diplomatic Relations

It is often said that once people start talking about things, they happen. Through the media, the people were talking. Others were listening and reading about it. The parameters of the discussion had been reduced by the media, as expected, to two sides: whether or not diplomatic relations would be established soon or very soon.

It was in the early 1960s that the German politicians really perfected the art of using television to raise public support. In October 1964, during a televised broadcast in Bonn, Herbert Wehner, deputy chairman of the SPD party, accused the CDU/CSU German government of hypocrisy in its policy toward Israel and demanded the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.47 In the same program, Eugen Gerstenmaier (CDU), president of the Bundestag, demanded the recognition of Israel by the West German government. A few days later, foreign minister Gerhard Schroeder, revealed in a report in the weekly Der Spiegel that he did not approve at present of diplomatic relations with Israel for fear of "revenge" by the Arab nations. (NOTE: Spiegel is the German word for mirror -- as if to suggest the magazine is mirroring reality.)
As has come to be expected, the media showed the discussion of German/Israeli relations in terms of two sides: those for and those against. Surely there existed those in the middle and those undecided and those apathetic. However, the media reports, by revealing only those pro and those con, firmly set the parameters of the discussion.

During this same period, the extent of weapon exchanges, a secret agreement of direct military aid to Israel from Germany that many had suspected for some time, was exposed by the media, threatening the shape of foreign policy. Military assistance had been kept secret as the Germans feared Arab reaction and Israel feared opposition at home. But once out in the open, Arab states again threatened to use their most powerful tool -- the recognition of East Germany. The West German government immediately reevaluated its arms policy. By exposing the arms deals, the media had directly influenced the fate of Germany's relations to the Middle East. Tensions were rising.

It was also around this time that Egypt's President Nasser wanted to develop a rocket for his battle against Israel and commissioned German scientists to assist in the project. Israeli intelligence, having learned of the operation, and that German government funds were indirectly supporting the work, alerted their government, which appealed to Bonn to intercede. The German government cut their connection with the scientists but did not stop them from continuing their work.

Israel called Germany "morally bankrupt" for not completely halting the work of the scientists. Egypt, on the other hand, accused
West Germany of setting fire to the Middle East. Meanwhile, West Germany chose to continue sending arms to Israel, at least temporarily. It wasn't until Nasser began entertaining East German Premier Walter Ulbricht in Cairo that the West German cabinet halted arms to Israel.

By the end of 1964, the press reported an overwhelming support for German/Israeli relations among the West Germans. At the end of November, Reuters reported that German professors were declaring themselves in favor of Israel and called for measures to stop the work of German scientists in Egypt. The same day, a West German youth organization was reported to have called on the government to take up diplomatic relations with Israel as a contribution to the reconciliation of Germans and Jews. On December 2, former Defence Minister Franz Josef Strauss, now the chairman of the CSU and the main initiator of special military relations with Israel, was reported by Stern to have called for the diplomatic recognition of Israel by West Germany. "The moral and political restitution (of Germany) with respect to the Jews will be achieved only when the German Federal Republic settles its relationship to the State of Israel by means of diplomatic relations," Strauss told Stern.49 To have a strong personality such as Strauss speak out in such a widely read and sensationalized magazine such as Stern doubtless had a substantial impact on public opinion. (NOTE: Stern is the German word for star -- as if to suggest the magazine is somehow the guiding light.)

The press' coverage of German support for Israel continued. On December 6, it was reported that West German churches in the
All German Evangelical Church Council called for the normalization of West German relations with Israel as well as measures to stop German scientists working for Egypt. Press conferences (an artificial or pseudo-news event created specifically for the mass media,) were held where politicians answered questions on the development of relations between the two countries. Responding to questions at the mid-December conference, Chancellor Ludwig Erhard (CDU) said that his government did not intend to establish relations with Israel "at one leap," Germany had a "high responsibility, however."

The support for Israel gauged and reported by the media had powerful effects on public opinion. By December 20, according to a poll conducted in Tübingen and reported by Reuter, 50 percent of West Germans favored the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. Of the other 50 percent, only 10 percent were against such relations, 15 percent were indifferent and 19 percent refused to answer.50

On February 12, 1965, out of fear that Egypt was going to recognize East Germany, Bonn gave official notice of the decision to halt the weapon flow to Israel. This, together with the boycott of German goods and descriptions of a "crisis" situation, were the focus of Israel's media reports on Germany. The urgency of the reports stressed a need for action. The tension was building. On February 28, the media reported that several hundred German university students in West Berlin demonstrated to rally support for an immediate establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.
A little over a week later, the news arrived: On March 8, West Germany's main newspapers splashed on their front pages news of Chancellor Erhard's decision to set up diplomatic relations with Israel. Bonn had decided not to sever relations with Egypt and rather to react to Israeli disappointment by improving relations between the two countries. Some gave more prominence to Bonn's offer to Israel, but most devoted the headline to the decision not to sever relations with Egypt.

In an editorial titled "The Middle East Knot is Loosened," the pro-government Kölnische Rundschau said the Bonn government had acted intelligently and decisively but that the problem was not yet solved.

The independent General Anzeiger said one still had the dark feeling that German difficulties in the Middle East were by no means settled. "In any case it is intelligent that the break with Cairo is being averted for the time being."

Said the Frankfurt Allgemeine: "The clarity now achieved is that of a compromise. This should make it possible to minimize the damage caused by the debacle ... but it will make no one totally satisfied."

And Die Welt wrote: "A new epoch has begun in German Middle East policy of a painful process. This applies initially and above all to Israel."

These editorials or portions of them also appeared in the Israeli press. One week later, the Knesset accepted Bonn's offer of diplomatic ties in a vote of 66 to 29. Diplomats were exchanged shortly thereafter. However, the diplomatic role of the media as
messenger and mediator, which had begun shortly after the two nations were established, would continue.

With the report of the establishment of diplomatic relations, opinion polls showed that the Germans' support for Israel had risen. In May, the Institute for Applied Social Sciences in Bad Godesberg reported that 57 percent of the German population favored the move. Again ten percent expressed the view that the government should have given in to Arab demands and not recognized Israel. The survey showed no significant difference between the attitude of supporters of the two major parties.

From the moment diplomatic relations were established, articles and reports in the media take on an air of crisis. From the beginning of the negotiations between Jerusalem and Bonn, in fact, the majority of the press was prepared to deal with the issue with more hysteria than reason. An example of this came with the appointment of a German counselor to the new German embassy in Israel. The uproar does not appear to have been caused by any specific accusations or by any doubtful actions on his part, but rather by the loose and sensationalist reports of an Israeli journalist in Bonn who is said to have made a charge of guilt by association without examining the facts in the case. As often occurred, the German counselor was unjustly labeled a Nazi. True or not, the accusations were enough to spark a massive scandal and probe into the Nazi past of the newly appointed counselor, Dr. Alexander Toeroek.

The incident spread through the German papers as well, heightening the issue. The Israeli papers continued to investigate
the allegations against Dr. Toeroek's past. But the attack by the media caused the German foreign ministry to issue a statement repudiating the accusations. This was a perfect example of the media having a direct impact on international relations, a chilling impact.

In November 1965, Toeroek felt compelled to return to Bonn to "prove allegations against him were baseless." The affair was then further heightened by an article published in a Hungarian Communist journal and picked up by Israeli newspapers. The publication of this article, which further accused Toeroek of wrong doings, led to an official government probe into Toeroek's past. It also sparked several well-publicized student demonstrations at Tel Aviv University against the presence of Toeroek in Israel. The controversy abated pending the result of the investigation.

Through the exchanging of diplomats, Israel was hoping for increased German support and Germany was hoping for increased normalization of relations. Germany was disposing of "special relations" and Israel was clasping to them. This in itself created for special relations. At this time, Rolf Pauls was chosen as the first German ambassador to Israel. He was sworn to treating relations with Israel on the same level as any other nation. He never called the relations "special" and was therefore greeted with great opposition. After a year he became openly critical of Israel. In spite of his stark approach, Pauls eventually gained recognition and respect -- according to the German media. Former Prime Minister Ben Gurion became one of his strongest allies in Israel.51

In February 1966, the German network ARD set up a television bureau in Tel Aviv. This move had profound effects on
the German peoples' image of Israel. Suddenly Germany had the capability to capture the faces and families of Israel in addition to stories on politics and commerce on a regular basis. The focus of the reports could be seen as well as heard. The types of stories were given a more human quality. The visits of heads of state began and were now broadcast across the Mediterranean. During that year, former Chancellor Adenauer and former Prime Minister Ben Gurion met again, this time in Sde Boker. (They had first met in 1960 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.)

Reports on the visit between Adenauer and Ben Gurion were not all positive. In May 1966, Die Welt reported that Israel's reaction to the visitor still showed signs of schizophrenia. "The schizophrenia which became evident there was continued in the officious and official statements by the representative of Israel."

In the months to follow, the Israeli papers focused on Israel's sale of explosives to Germany, the ban on Wagner-Strauss music in Israel and the rise of the neo-Nazi party. While each item certainly had to do with the events of the present, they were intertwined with memories and events of the past. And while both countries were reporting on similar topics in reference to their relations, the tone in either country was quite different. Israelis were still able to criticize Germany far more than Germany dared criticize Israel. As for the Toeroek case, it seems the media let the case go and so did the government.

In September 1966, the president of the World Zionist Organization, Nahum Goldmann, who had been examining both the
German and Israeli press of the time, made comments on the Israeli press that appeared in the Jerusalem Post.

Criticism is more important to them (the media) than praise. They would rather emphasize the sensational than the positive. They like to point out misdeeds and shortcomings. This has a distinctive effect on those parts of the populations who are not sophisticated enough to evaluate properly what they are reading.\(^5\)

In May 1967, Egyptian forces reoccupied the garrison left by U.N. forces at Sharm el-Sheikh, near the southern tip of the Sinai and closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, effectively blockading the Israeli port of Eilat, situated at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. In retaliation, Israel attacked Egypt and other Arab countries in June. This Six-Day-War, as it came to be known, left Israel in possession of all Jerusalem, the West Bank area of Jordon, the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Gaza Strip and Golan Heights.

During this period, the flavor of Germany's reports on Israel remain generally positive. In congruence with these reports, Germany's public support for Israel reached an all-time high. The Institut für Demoskopie reported that in June 1967, 55 percent of those asked which side they favor, the Israelis or the Arabs, responded in favor of Israel. By the end of that summer, the percentage had risen to 59 percent. Only two years earlier, before the two countries had established diplomatic relations, a similar poll revealed that only 24 percent of Germans sided with Israel should a war break out between Israel and the Arabs.\(^5\) By the time of the Six-Day-War, that had changed. The Germans had reached an
unprecedented level of support for Israel. It was temporary and it has yet to be repeated.

As the 1960s came to an end, so did the German media's unquestioning support of Israeli policy. If one were looking for clues or hints of the destiny of these two nations, they were plain to see in the media reports of the late 1960s. Germany was letting go of its past. Though the choice of the German ambassador to Israel was marred by controversy, (due to his work as a career officer in World War II,) he was not immediately replaced. The Germans did not feel compelled to support or endorse Israel in the aftermath of the Six-Day-War. And there was no question that Germany was attempting to cater to the Arabs, particularly those ten Arab states that had cut ties with West Germany in protest of German/Israeli relations. It was a signal of the shift away from Israel and further into the Middle East. The Germans were seeking a more balanced policy in the Arab/Israeli conflict.

Not quite pro-Arab, the articles and documentaries of these years come across clearly less pro-Israel. During the last years of the 1960s, Germany's need for Israeli support declined. But Israel's need for German support grew. The media played a substantial role in this transformation. Germany reduced its public expression of support for Israel, a move that caught on and stuck. Israel, in the meanwhile, extended its emphasis from the past to the prospects of a cooperative future.

The first sign of the Germans' shift is found as early as June 26, 1967, when Der Spiegel published one of the first blatantly pro-Arab articles in the popular German press. The article, "Unsere Araber"
(Our Arabs), was written by Otto Koehler. And though it was unique for 1967, within ten years, especially once the Likud party had risen to power in Israel in 1977, such articles critical of Israel become commonplace in German media.54

The 1970s

One of the main differences between West Germany of the 1960s and West Germany of the 1970s was the country's status in the international arena. Within ten years, the Federal Republic moved from somewhat of a political dwarf to a full member in the United Nations. Prior to the 1970s, Germany maintained little or no presence to speak of in the Middle East, especially as compared to the superpowers, Great Britain or France. But the low profile maintained throughout the first two decades of nationhood changed by the 1970s. Within this brief decade, West Germany completely revamped her policy toward Israel and her Arab neighbors. The scope of these changes is measured by both the change in tone of the media and the official policies of the government. Germany's internal politics during the 1970s also experienced a major shift with the formation of the SPD/FDP coalitions in 1969 under Willy Brandt's chancellorship.

In 1970, the official Germany policy toward Israel was summed up in the following few sentences: 1) the Middle East problem and world peace are interrelated; 2) West Germany wishes to reestablish friendly relations with the Arab states; 3) West Germany respects its tragic relationship with the Jewish people; 4) the resolution of the
Arab/Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolution 242.

But by the time the Munich Massacre, the Yom Kippur War, two energy crises and the decade were over, it took the German government a dozen pages to summarize its policy on the Middle East. By 1981, the number of factors in Germany's Middle East policy, though vague, had more than tripled. The following points were dealt with in detail: 1) The Middle East in an overall peace policy; 2) securing energy sources and export markets; 3) the special quality of West German relations with Israel; 4) the interdependence between the Soviet threat in the Middle East and the resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict; 5) the West German even-handedness and neutrality in its Middle East policy; (6-11) some basic principles relating to the resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict; 12) the Euro-Arab Dialogue; 13) Lebanon; 14) the necessity for a new Middle East initiative.

In 1968, Israel opened her first and only television station. With the emergence of television, each country was creating new images of the other and of themselves. Suddenly, the actions and reactions of the government and military as well as the public at large could be reviewed at the end of each day on the evening news. An already tiny country, comparable to the size of New Jersey, Israel became even "tinier." And, as in Germany, Israel suddenly had access to parts of the world once unimaginable.

Television has had a strong effect on Israel and her own internal politics. In contrast to wars of previous decades, the Yom Kippur war, which broke out on October 6, 1973 coinciding with the
holiest day of the Jewish year, would be the first one reenacted each evening in every Israeli's living room. In simultaneous attacks on Israeli-held territory, Egyptian forces crossed the Suez Canal, while Syrian troops launched an equally strong offensive on the Golan Heights. Ending only after heavy losses of men and materials, cease-fire agreements were made on October 24. But actually watching this war develop each evening in black and white had an immense emotional impact on the Israelis. "With the emergence of television, the borders of the battlefield were broadened," said Yaakov Heichel, a national security advisor to Israel's prime minister. "Now the war can be brought straight from the battlefield to the home of the small person or even the decision makers. It used to be that our national strategies were assessed by a) the characteristics of the arena, b) what we wanted to achieve and c) the method we would use. Now, in the last decade, there is a new element: The media." As for Germany and Israel, Heichel said, "Television took away all distances. Now, on the southeast side of Germany, there is Israel. You can simply climb over all the countries in between."57

Though it remained black and white for more than ten years, the installation of television in Israel brought moving pictures of a new Germany — a Germany that strongly contrasted with the movies and memories they still held of the Third Reich. With the further development of media relations, the Israeli public grew friendlier towards Germany. Cultural and societal ties developed. In March 1972, 56.3 percent of Israelis polled favored continued ties with Germany, while only 17.9 percent opposed.58 Television played a major role in presenting a more human side of Germany; but, at the
same time, it was television that brought to Israel the violent scenes of the Olympic massacre of 1972 and clear pictures of Germany's new relations with the Arab World.

The "Mediasized" Munich Massacre

On September 5, 1972 at 4 a.m., eight Fedayeen terrorists in track suits, carrying large bags filled with arms, climbed over the fence and into the athlete's quarters of the Munich Olympics. They moved directly to the Israeli dormitories, seized nine hostages and in the process killed two other Israelis, a weightlifter and a wrestling coach. By dawn the Munich Olympics had become a gigantic stage for a terrorist spectacular. In total, 11 Israeli athletes were killed. Practically every television organization in the world was present. And the cameras were connected to most of the globe by satellite. This real-life drama was enacted for untold millions of viewers.

In an effort to strain relations between Germany and Israel while gaining recognition for themselves, the Palestinians had emerged in the headlines and thus the international arena. Though first introduced in the 1960s, it was not until Munich that the sound of the Palestinian became unavoidable. At first the coverage of the terrorists was negative throughout the German media and the German authorities took various measures aimed at the prevention of further terrorist activities in Germany. Two Arab extremists, however, were still able to hijack a German airliner flying from Damascus to Frankfurt. They then threatened to blow up the plane, to secure the release of the three Arabs who had been detained after the Munich Olympics massacre, with whom they flew on to Tripoli.
In the eyes of the Israelis, the Germans showed little remorse for the lack of security and for allowing the release of the terrorists without ever totally condemning their actions. Israel's reaction turned to outrage.

In either country, the press was used to defend the interests of their own nation. In Germany the press was used to justify the German security measures, both during the Olympics and in the aftermath of the hijacking. In Israel, the press echoed the outcries of the Israelis who protested the release of the Munich murderers. The headlines of the Jerusalem Post best review the situation: "Bonn Used Release to Advance Own Interests" ... "Brandt Reflects Accusations By Israel" ... "Israeli Refuses to Step Foot on German Soil" ... "Envoy Ben-Horin Called Home for Talks" ... "Cabinet Blasts at Bonn for Freeing killer." The language is powerful and sensational. The Israeli media firmly differentiated the good guys from the bad guys.

Several months after the massacre, headlines and relations began to improve: "Bonn's New Balance" ... "German Aviation Labor Leader Will Help Fight Terrorism" ... "Israel and Bonn Seek Constructive Course." Israeli attitudes towards Germany remained positive. In November 1972, a poll conducted by the Public Opinion Research of Israel (PORI) showed 34.6 percent of those polled considered Germany a friend and only 9.4 percent saw Germany as a foe. By the beginning of 1973, reports came out that the liberal parties in the government coalitions of West Germany and Israel were resolved to pursue closer cooperation and facilitate a dialogue between the two countries and parties. Increased dialogue was
joined by increased criticism of Israel in the German press. The media seemed to have paved the way for a more accepting and tolerant public opinion on issues that only a few years earlier would have been considered far too contrary to Israel's interests and simply unacceptable.

In June 1973, following the successful and highly publicized visit to Israel of Willy Brandt, the first German head of government to visit Israel while still in office, Israelis held a very positive image of Germany. Of the Israelis polled that month by PORI, 66.6 percent favored good relations with Germany, while 19.7 were against. Things were different in Germany. Stern, Germany's largest picture magazine, (circulation at that time was 1,300,000), unleashed a violent anti-Israel campaign. The first of a series of articles said that "terror and force were used by the Jews in the compulsory founding of their state in 1948. They turned the Arab inhabitants of the country into serfs and appointed themselves as their landlords. The coveted land of peace was turned into a state of murderous confrontation." For two decades, German journalists had held back from any criticism of Israel. Those days were over.

"Explaining" the establishment of the Jewish state, the writer, Kai Hermann, wrote that the fate of the illegal immigrants incited world public opinion against the British. A full-page picture shows the bloody bodies of the two British sergeants executed by Jewish extremists in retaliation for the hanging of more than a dozen of their own comrades. The caption read, "Fascism had many admirers amongst the Jewish terrorists." Despite outrage in Israel and the Israeli press, the next edition offered another unabashedly hostile
reportage on Israel. The *Stern* articles were typical examples of an overly simplified, sensationalized, "Us versus Them" approach. While German public opinion generally remained favorable toward Israel, channels for criticism had been opened and would remain so for at least the next two decades.

**The Energy Crisis**

Following the extensive coverage of the Yom Kippur war, German public opinion further rose in favor of Israel. But this was the last hoorah. For against the backdrop of this war came the first of two major energy crises which would introduce the western world to the Arab world in an unprecedented manner. The outcome doubtless had effects on German public opinion and Germany’s policy toward the Middle East.

Until the 1970s, Germany’s energy policy was organized around the subsidization of coal. That changed in 1969 when the country switched its focus to oil. Even though Germany was financially better off than many other nations at this time, the media’s use of the word energy "crisis" (1973-74) sent widespread panic throughout the Federal Republic. The German government’s reaction was to drastically reduce energy consumption and institute rationing, a move it later decided was more drastic than necessary.

Toward the end of the decade, the second energy "crisis" was reported (1979-1980). The German economy was not as stable as it had been in the early 1970s. The media suggests a stronger level of panic. "The years to come are going to be critical," warned Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (SPD) in June 1979. "Demand for oil is
already growing beyond all measure, not only in the United States and Western Europe ... The Soviet Union will badly need oil ... World politics are certainly going to be very difficult during the eighties."60

Perhaps the greatest impact of these energy "crises" was the emergence of the Arab in German media. Once unaware or perhaps choosing to ignore the Arabs, suddenly they were unavoidable in the German media. The energy "crises", followed by noticeably expanded diplomatic interest in the Arab World, lightened the shadow that had been cast over the majority of the Middle East for most Germans. With increased media coverage, the Arabs became less and less foreign and relations, economic, cultural and political, between Arabs and Germans improved.

By 1975, the Federal Republic reestablished diplomatic relations with all the Middle East Arab states. Once established, the media had better access to these regions and the Germans became more tolerant, even interested in the perspectives of the Arab World. Articles detailing Arab oil resources, Arab trade relations with Germany, economic prospects in the Arab world and general cover stories on the Arabic way of life surfaced in both television and print media. The expanded media coverage greatly altered the Germans' perspective of the Middle East and indeed the relations between Germany and Israel for all time.

Still, as open as the Germans became toward the Arabs, there was a limit to how friendly they could be -- at least publicly. The Holocaust remained a scar that would not go away. Through the power of the media, both German and Israeli, the Holocaust remains
an obstacle that continues to hold major influence on any policy Germany attempts to pursue in the Middle East. Any attempts by the Germans to expand military assistance to the Arabs has met with strong reminders of Germany's other life. Not a week passes that the Holocaust isn't mentioned on German television. The constant presence of the past not only flavors German policy in the Middle East, it also serves as somewhat of an irritant to German/Israeli relations.

"How much of this can we take?" screamed one young German student during a course on the Middle East conflict at the University of Freiburg in the spring of 1985. "I was not alive during the Holocaust. I am not guilty of anything. And I don't need to see this every night on television. For me, Israel is a bad taste in my mouth."

The sentiments expressed by that student in Freiburg are not new. They have been brewing in young Germans for more than a decade. Back in June 1973, the Israeli paper Haaretz began a series of eight articles written by Shabtai Tevet dealing with the growing anti-Israel sentiments among German youth. Ever since the Germans began to let go of their past and allow for more and more open criticism of Israel and Middle East policies, the voices of the German New Left and other radical groups which were especially receptive to the Palestinian point of view, got louder. The youth of the early 1970s and 1980s, born after the ashes of World War II had been swept away, were without any of the emotional constraints felt by their parents; moreover, they had a media willing to voice their cries. Public opinion polls taken during the first half of the 1970s indicate,
however, that the extensive publicity these youth organizations received in the early 1970s was not in proportion with public views. At least at that time, sympathy for Israel still outweighed sympathy for the Arabs in the 16-19 age group. More recent polls indicate that is no longer the case.

Despite an end to Israel's preferential treatment in the German press, relations between Germany and Israel in the Israeli press following the Yom Kippur War were still noted as "special." The German media, politicians and diplomats did not feel as called upon to preserve the principle that the two nations maintain relations of special moral quality. When Chancellor Schmidt referred to the current situation in the Middle East, he spoke frankly and mentioned the Holocaust publicly only under pressure or when the subject was totally unavoidable. Schmidt articulated a clear shift away from a solely pro-Israel stance. However, sympathy for the Arabs did not eliminate the German's belief in Israel's right to exist. Thus, even as increasingly critical articles and documentaries appeared in Germany, a thread of support for Israel was maintained in the media.

The internal Israeli malaise of the mid-1970s, which included the resignation of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin after he lost the support of the National Religious Party, fully reported in Germany, also was partly to blame for the decline in Israeli prestige. And the German media's coverage of left-wing attacks on Jewish real-estate speculators in Frankfurt did not do the general Jewish image any good. In 1976, after an extended period in which Israel's reputation in Germany suffered, there came a hint of enthusiasm and praise.
The coverage of Israel's successful raid on Entebbe, when Israeli commandos attacked Uganda's Entebbe airport and freed 103 hostages held by pro-Palestinian hijackers, left the German press cheering. At least for the moment, criticism was swept aside, demonstrating that the press can change its tune in an instant.

Around this time, German public opinion was as confused as the obscure messages they were receiving through the media. Only a decade earlier, the media would not have dared open the microphone to the Arabs and enemies of Israel. Suddenly they were more tolerant. But a barbaric act like the Entebbe hijacking was a chance for the Germans to satisfy their basic political instinct, which is to make themselves look good by again cheering the achievements of the Jews. But even their praise was managed and reserved. The press had to be very careful. Though praising the show at Entebbe may warm the Germans' hearts, Arab oil warms their homes. By now, their praise, like their criticism, was tempered.

It wasn't until the mid-1970s that the media of Germany and Israel finally found a level of relations to report on free of ambiguity and schizophrenia: sports. The soccer game is theoretically a cement of friendship between the two nations. Sports coverage, free of the stains of history, has, more than any other media coverage, done much to develop more harmonious relations between Germans and Israelis. And, while the coverage is a clear example of the "Us versus Them" approach, at least both teams are playing on the same field. The fact is, the average Israeli is more likely to know the name of his favorite German soccer team than the name of the German chancellor.
By the end of the 1970s, the Germans had crossed all boundaries once set up to avoid criticism of Israel. The feeling was widely shared in Germany that Israel was no longer the underdog. There was a drastic change in public opinion vis-a-vis Israel and her neighbors. Criticism of Israel's policies in the occupied territories, coupled with a second oil "crisis" led to growing German support for improved relations with the Arab states. Germany's stronger hand in the Middle East was joined by an end to its own silence on the subject of the Holocaust. Some specifically credit the 1979 showing of the film "Holocaust" on German television with the final break of silence. Like the airing of the Eichmann trial, "Holocaust" was viewed by 15 million Germans (an average 35 percent of all German viewers during the four nights it was aired), igniting heated debates and discussions.61 Reaction was immediate. 30,000 telephone calls to television stations were logged and thousands of letters to editors were written filled with confessions, remorse and astonishment. Visits to concentration camps increased, as did requests for further information on the period of the Holocaust. The airing has also been credited with influencing the July 1979 repeal of the German Statute of Limitation on murder, which had prevented any Nazi criminal still undetected from prosecution. And, while the immediate emotional effect of "Holocaust" faded, the repeal of the Statue of Limitations was permanent.

The 1980s

Despite the complex web surrounding Germany's Middle East policy, a web that necessarily entailed interests of oil, export,
industry, history and national image, the media's rendition of German/Israeli relations was simplified. On the one side stood the Israelis, on the other, the Arabs. The image was best portrayed in an editorial cartoon published in the liberal Süddeutsche Zeitung on June 16/17, 1980. The drawing is of a seesaw. On the one side sits Israel's big-lipped, frowning Prime Minister Menahem Begin, struggling to hold down his end. On the other is a gleaming Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. In the middle is a European, deftly attempting to even out the scale.

The media of the early 1980's reveals that Germany had taken a much stronger interest in the Middle East. German correspondents were sent from one conflict to another -- and the numbers of conflicts steadily grew. The decade began with the outbreak of the Iran/Iraq war, the ever-growing force of Muslim fundamentalism, the continuation of the Lebanese civil war and eventually Israel's invasion. Germany maintained a steady force of some 40 correspondents in Israel alone. But the increased level of communication did not necessarily translate into better communication. The messages were of war, action and politics -- and plenty of it. The amount of news from the Middle East appearing in the German media had doubled, tripled and quadrupled.

"Sometimes I feel what I'm doing here is ridiculous," said Ulrich Sahm, a German correspondent in Israel. "I can use material from the last page of an Israeli newspaper and they'll put it on the front page in any German newspaper just because it's from Israel."
The Begin/Schmidt Affair

In 1980, the media in both countries had basically positive reports on their relations, reporting that the two countries agreed "to maintain closer and more frequent high-level contacts -- especially before taking new steps in Middle East policy." Shortly thereafter, in April 1981, Chancellor Schmidt made a state visit to Saudi Arabia. A speech made by Schmidt during his visit and widely broadcast launched a level of verbal crossfire -- media warfare -- from Israel that hadn't been seen in nearly three decades. In his speech, Schmidt said:

In the Palestinian conflict, one cannot attribute all morality to the one side and shrug one's shoulders in reference to the other side ... Particularly this cannot be if one is a German, living in a divided nation and raising the moral claim of self-determination for the German people. Then one must recognize also the moral claim of the Palestinian people to self-determination.64

While many Israelis objected to the apparent equation of Palestinian and Israeli moral claims on Germany, it was Prime Minister Begin who assailed Schmidt:

From a moral point of view, Schmidt's statements certainly rank as the most callous ever heard. It seems that the Holocaust had conveniently managed to slip his mind, and he did not make mention of a million and a half small children murdered, or of entire families wiped out ... He doesn't care if Israel goes under. He saw this almost happen to our people in Europe not so long ago. He served in the armies that encircled cities, until the work was finished by the Einsatzgruppen.65
Ulrich Sahm was the first German correspondent to obtain the full text of Begin's assault. He immediately notified every German news agency and radio station, informing them that he had the story in its entirety. "You've heard all kinds of rumors," Sahm reported to German radio. "But I have exactly what the story is right here." All radio programming was stopped immediately and for the next three minutes, Sahm quoted Begin word for word without commentary. "I was the text," said Sahm proudly. "I blew the whole thing up and made a big story out of it. I'm sure it had a great effect. When they discussed the incident in the Bundestag the next day, it was my report they were basing their information on. It had not yet made it into the papers." At least for three minutes, Sahm had been the diplomat, "the transmitter of messages between one individual political community and another."

The battle between Begin and Schmidt did not stop there. For the next week, Begin used the Israeli press, radio and rallies to personally attack Schmidt. By now, the issue was publicized in the media the world over and the entire Federal Republic went on the defensive. Words uttered thousands of miles away in Israel got an immediate emotional response from the German people. A sufficient time period had passed since the Nazi era and, influenced by the modern media, the Germans' reaction to Begin's comments were swift, perhaps even extreme. After nearly 40 years, the Germans were no longer willing to take full blame for the acts of World War II.

One magazine after another during this time shows the German citizens enraged by Begin's words. As so often is the case,
the leader of a nation becomes the symbol of that nation. Begin was now the media-created symbol of Israel. For Germany, it was not only Begin, but all of Israel that had insulted them.

The reaction was blown up in the German media. On May 6, the cover of Spiegel asked, "Sind Wir Alle Nazis?" (Are we all Nazis?) And Spiegel was not alone. Stern reacted in an almost identical manner. In fact, the German media in general was critical of Begin and therefore the Israelis. The only paper to remain a staunch Israeli supporter, as could be expected, was Die Welt. Other major papers, like Die Zeit, remained critical but not foes of Israeli policy. An examination of the fall in Germany's public opinion of Israel suggests that the media's reporting on the Begin/Schmidt affair had a direct effect on the way Germans viewed Israel. According to the Allensbach polls, in 1978, 44 percent of the Germans said they were on the side of the Israelis, as opposed to 7 percent on the side of the Arabs and the rest undecided. By the end of 1981, only 21 percent were siding with the Israelis, while 24 percent were now favoring the Arabs. For the first time in three decades, the polls showed a stronger leaning toward the side of the Arabs.68

The Invasion of Lebanon

Israel's invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 was reported in Germany, as elsewhere, as an aggressive and "flagrant violation of international law and of the most basic humanitarian principles."69 The German media launched some all-out critical attacks on Israel. On June 16 the cover of Stern asked, "Wissen die Israelis Noch Was Sie Tun?" (Do the Israelis still know what they're doing?)
Throughout the summer, Israel was portrayed as a military state that had gone so completely overboard that they were capable of initiating nuclear war at any moment.\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Spiegel} went as far as calling for the termination of further "special relations."\textsuperscript{71} Those involved in the media insisted, it was not they who changed the image of Israel, it was Israel who changed. It was not a reemergence of anti-Semitism or prejudices they were reflecting, say the journalists, it was reality.

Dramatic coverage of the Israeli invasion, featuring crying mothers, bombed out buildings and mangled bodies, had powerful effects on German public opinion. By the end of the summer of 1982, polls indicated a dramatic drop in sympathy toward Israel as compared to the Arabs. Polls taken shortly after the Beirut massacres indicated 20 percent of those Germans who responded favored Israel and 26 percent favored the Arabs.\textsuperscript{72} Though public opinion is by no means the decisive factor in developing foreign policy, in a democratic nation foreign policy cannot continually run against public opinion without eventually losing its support. At least from the media, it appeared that Arafat had sent Begin flying off the seesaw pictured in the aforementioned \textit{Süddeutsche} cartoon.

In November 1982, in an interview with the Israeli daily \textit{Davar}, former Chancellor Willy Brandt warned, "I cannot deny that in the existing circumstances there is a danger that reservations and lack of understanding for Israel's policy and behavior could contribute to the reemergence of prejudices ... It is difficult to understand certain positions taken by the Israeli government and its arguments."
Since 1982, the term "special relationship" has surfaced less and less. Still, the notion of special relations can be heard in the media reports. At least on the part of Israel, the past is not likely to completely slip away from any discussions of German/Israeli relations. This past has limited and shaped Germany's actions for nearly four decades. However, as we move into another generation of media professionals, one step further removed from the horrors of the Holocaust, it is questionable whether the memories of the past will be strong enough to shape German policy in the future.

Of those Germans polled in February 1983 by the Institut für Demoskopie, 52 percent sided with the statement that "Germany should not place good relations with Israel above all else. The Arab countries are important for our oil needs. Therefore, we should not become enemies of these countries on Israel's account." Only 18 percent agreed with the opposing statement that "still today it is important for the Federal Republic to attend to its especially friendly relationship with Israel. We have brought on ourselves too much guilt concerning the Jews."73

For years, Germany was little more than a painful memory for many Israelis. But the effect of expanded coverage of the new Germany and German society in Israel's media greatly opened the Israelis to the Federal Republic. Social ties, realized through student and cultural exchange programs, developed rather quickly. Once unthinkable, German movies and music can now be seen and heard in Israeli theaters. German cultural centers have opened, including the Goethe Institut. As young people become more and more interested in the past and present Germany, Israeli universities are
expanding their programs in these areas. Israelis are now traveling at record rates to Germany. It is not unusual to hear Hebrew spoken in the streets of Munich. German imports fill Israeli clothing stores, appliance stores and supermarkets. While this acceptance of Germany is limited, and at times sensitivities from the past resurface, clearly the once staunchly negative reaction to Germany has faded.

The Hourglass of International Relations

Despite an appearance of near normalcy in relations between Germany and Israel, the presence of the Holocaust remains. "We don't forget the Holocaust," said Amnon Linn, a lawyer and member of the Israeli parliament, during a private interview in the Knesset. "The Holocaust is a source of strength and with this strength, Israel can get money from Germany to be stronger. This is a great way to avenge the Nazis and to strengthen the Jews. The media plays a big part in keeping the Holocaust alive." 74

Not everyone agrees. Yaakov Achemeir, Israel's foremost T.V. anchorperson and Knesset correspondent, claims, "The historical impact of the Holocaust has a bigger impact than the media. The media only reflect a sad reality. The Holocaust was the most major event since the destruction of the Second Temple. The Holocaust is within us -- with or without the media. The Armenians remember their Holocaust without the media and we would remember ours. The media is a carrier of things that would be within us even without the media." 75
It is true. With or without the media, the events of the world, celebrations, catastrophes, victories and defeats, have been and will continue to take place. The media are not in control of these events, but rather are in control of the hourglass of world events. Depending on how the media choose to tip the glass, events can be accelerated or even decelerated. Often, though admittedly not always, the sands of the hourglass (international conflict, peace treaties, diplomatic relations, etc.) will inevitably fall on their own. The "when" and the "how" are now largely controlled by the media. War and peace within nations have always been an intrinsic part of the human condition. However, in the twentieth century suddenly the media are largely responsible for the change in the nature, focus and logistics of such events. The media are the great magnifying glass.

In short, the event, such as the terrorist attack at the Olympics, the exchange of diplomats, the murder of Klinghoffer or the unrest in the West Bank will happen regardless, but its size and importance in terms of the scheme of world events is now determined by the media. Today, when someone throws stones on a side street in the Middle East, you can be sure the whole world is watching. The media are taking an event or an occurrence and giving it life, color, drama and feeling like only the media can do. They are successful in that they are usually able to match their messages to audience interests. It is not the event that the media are creating (well, not always), but rather it is the essence and the meaning of the event. The media are monitoring, magnifying and accelerating interests and processes.
For nearly four decades, the media of Germany and Israel have remained focused on each other. In Germany, they have focused on the reparations, the Eichmann trial, the German scientists in Egypt, the establishment of diplomatic relations, the reestablishment of relations with the Arabs, the Statute of Limitations on Nazi criminals and the selling of weaponry in the Middle East. In Israel, the subjects shifted from negotiations to reparations, Nazi war criminals, diplomatic relations, the Munich massacre and the Germans' openness toward the Arabs.

Despite the technological advances of the media in the last four decades, communication between the countries does not seem to have improved. Each country is communicating with itself and not the other. Michael Marien, communications specialist and editor of Future Survey maintains that communication itself is an ideal and that non-communication, is widespread.76 It is not that Israel and Germany are lacking in information to communicate to one another. Rather, they fail to make constructive use of this information in order to smooth relations. This, according to Marien, is a central problem of modern communication. And it is not that Israel and Germany are lacking in the proper technology to communicate. But increasing the technology and flow even to global proportions does not necessarily result in an increased level of constructive communication. Improving the technological links between nations has not shown to improve the communication and relations between nations. Besides, journalists claim, and perhaps rightfully so, that improving relations is not what they're paid to do.
"It's not my job to enhance relations" said German correspondent Sahm. "I'm here in Israel reporting, representing my readers." 77

"It is not the role of the media to improve relations," said Michael Karpin, editor in chief of the Israeli television news. "That is not important for the media -- not for the editors and not for the correspondents. They are describing what's happening in Germany and Israel. That's all." 78

Still others, perhaps the more idealistic, claim there is much the media could do to improve relations. "We could try to cover more about the new Germany and other aspects of the Germans beside history," said Joe Bar El, manager of the Arabic television of Israel. "We could switch and show good relations and how we're trying to do things together." 79

Israeli Knesset member Amnon Linn feels the German media could do a lot to improve relations. "They should show the beautiful sides of Israel: the Kibbutz, the education, interviews with the young. Their media shows only the negative. This plays a big role in relations. Their media does not show the destruction of Israel by the Arabs." 80

It is crucial to pay attention to these words of the journalists and those who shape public opinion. For the nature and quality of the communication between Israel and Germany could never be any better than the journalists who produced it. These journalists are crucial figures in transforming social order, for, as Altschull writes, "it is they who paint the pictures of the world on which decisive human actions are based." 81
In hiring these journalists, the media organizations of Germany and Israel most certainly play a substantial role in setting the standards of what will and will not be reflected in the media of either nation. "Through its choice of 'experts,' the media establishes what range of views is acceptable." Admittedly, these "experts" are rarely told what to write about a specific subject, however most are told daily on what subject to write.

In short, the perspectives of Israel and Germany that emerge through the news are, in the final analysis, selected and reconstructed by a small group of journalists within each country. That is why it is commonly assumed that any particular slant that news appears to have can be explained by examining the personal values of the newsmen involved in the selection process, which is precisely what I have attempted to do over the last few years in my interviews in West Germany and Israel. Interestingly enough, the journalists with whom I spoke maintained that they do report events from a neutral and objective standpoint. It appears that this goal of objectivity has been so widely disseminated and accepted that the journalists have come to believe that they are able to enter the super human sphere of truth.

**Conclusion**

After reviewing hundreds of articles, documentaries and news reports on German/Israeli relations, it appears that on the international level, due to physical, economic and human constraints, the technology of the media are reinforcing already existing patterns of thought, perhaps even cultural bias. As an
industry that must sell itself, the media are apt to ignore their innate subjectivity and make claims like *Time* magazine's or CBS' slogans, "Time will take you there" or "CBS brings you the world." And while *Time* and other mass media may have the potential to "take us there," they are more likely to leave us at home. The complexities of modern society, as portrayed in thirty-second news spots, are more apt to breed increased non-communication than clear communication. Factors such as organizational and economic constraints, human and cultural bias, advertising interests, language barriers, and national self-interests prevent clear access to the happenings within the other country. Thus, despite the potential of the tools the media have created, history, culture and other limitations prevent the two countries from realizing their potential and keep them in a constant state of flawed communication -- at times rigidly divided.

The expanded power of the media has expanded the media's potential to foment the discord and disharmony that divide and separate nations. Rather than turning the world into a global village, the expanded technology might well create, infuse, magnify and reinforce global divisions. On the other hand, it is quite possible that as we extend the wires and waves of communication, we continue to extend and perhaps broaden the divisions between peoples and cultures. This thesis, based on one case study, was by no means a condemnation of the media's new-found strength, but rather an attempt at a critical analysis of the mass communications process in the twentieth century and the potential effects on international relations.
It is difficult to pinpoint the exact effects of the media on international affairs, or specifically in the relations between Germany and Israel. The relations between the electronic media and politics are still too young for us to have a complete understanding of the ramifications of this linkage. However, upon closer examination, certain characteristics and aspects of the outcome of this connection become apparent. Indeed, in a world of six billion people, we surely would know little of the billions beyond our shores were it not for the media. It is the media alone that tell us about the distant lands and governments that we would otherwise not bring to mind. It was with this in mind that Bernard C. Cohen, some 30 years ago, came up with the still applicable statement that "while the press might not tell us what to think, it does tell us what to think about"83... or not to think about. The media are shaping all of our images of the world and actually dictating to us which subjects we should have opinions on.

With their awesome power to control what we think about, the mass media of our age could be leading us toward a global society without boundaries or deeper into a world of divided xenophobic nations. Like the mushroom cloud that carries the seeds of both knowledge and death, the mass media of our time can lead us towards war or towards peace. "The press can render it easier for humankind to destroy itself ... Or it can assist in the creation of a global harmony."84

The misperceptions or deceptions of the newsmakers lead to the audiences' misunderstandings of the distant lands and distant peoples. Unlike local or national reporting, international reporting
has the added burden of making the completely unknown and unseen familiar in a few minutes or a few seconds. More often than not, the news relays not the event, crisis or catastrophe itself unfolding before a live camera, but rather a created version or story about the event recreated on tape or in news print from selected portions of the actual event or perhaps from other second-hand stories as reenacted by another news medium. In the world of international relations, it is this imperfect media that set the parameter or agenda of the international debates and provide us with a lexicon for international confrontation. The way we perceive the other nation and the vocabulary we use in our descriptions depends on the reports of the media. Sadly, the same objective reporting that is a virtue and an aim when reporting on one's own country does not seem to be as crucial when reporting on a foreign country. But why should the audience accept such biased and often inaccurate international reports?

It seems that in the constant search for identity, security and recognition, a nation feels more secure when other nations are described as the irrational aggressor. By putting down other nations, a people can feel uplifted and gain a certain sense of national self-righteousness. Perhaps it is also an offshoot of the audiences' pursuit of organization that allows them to so easily accept the division between themselves and the "other" rather than a merger with those "others." Distant lands are viewed not in order to transcend borders, but to establish them. In world news, "we" or those who live within reach of the media and the prevailing ideology are carefully categorized as the "Good Guys" and "they," or
those outside of the frontiers who engage in different and therefore deviant behavior are the "Bad Guys." In an attempt to compress reality into clearly defined molds, the media are quick to label and categorize. It is as a result of such oversimplification and labeling by the media that misunderstandings between nations are created and persist.

Bringing two nations together rather than further dividing them requires a more in depth understanding of how people think and behave beyond our shores. It may also require stepping outside of the organizational constraints of a medium and really trying to grasp what the "other" is all about rather than just reporting what the organization or audience wants the "other" to be about. The journalist must be willing to go beyond the easily accessible, economically feasible, accepted and comfortable ideological system from which he stems in order to shrink the divides that exist between nations and thereby inform, educate and assist in the resolution of international conflict. As J. Herbert Altschull concludes, "Access to the news media must be given to the Bad Guys as well as the Good Guys if there is going to be a genuine understanding. The code of objectivity may not be discarded at the water's edge."85

The dangers of developing divisions and creating a foe out of the "other" nation or people is not a new phenomena. The difference between the present and the past is the ability of the mass media to label and amplify those differences. Sigmund Freud warned of the dangers of such labeling back in 1915 in his brave essay entitled "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death." In his
writings, Freud noted the ease with which Europe had descended into a nightmare of dangerous and dividing nationalism -- just at a point when he and many others believed a more inclusive European culture was emerging:

The great nations themselves, it might have been supposed, would have acquired so much comprehension of what they had in common, and so much tolerance for their differences, that 'foreigner' and 'enemy' could no longer be merged, as they still were in classical antiquity, into a single concept.86

Freud blamed the "experts" of his epoch, the anthropologists and psychiatrists, who, much like our media "experts" of today, were endowed by the people with tremendous respect. For these "experts" then, like our "experts" today, raced to declare the enemy or foreigner a "degenerate," an "inferior" race with a "disease of mind and spirit." Rather than challenging these xenophobic divisions, the "experts" of Freud's day, just as the "experts" of the mass media, perpetuate and deepen them. The difference is the mass media today have a more powerful technology with which to amplify their language of conflict.

In studying the media of a nation, what stands out is the media's tendency to minimize any existing similarities between nations and greatly exaggerate the differences. Moreover, peace will always take a back seat to war. News is conflict, especially international conflict. International harmony and good relations between nations are more stabilizing and surely more conducive to global survival but it is not news. That is why the journalist has
difficulty creating pressing issues that are considered media worthy out of unpressurized situations. The journalist, therefore, finds it difficult to point out where Us and Them agree and share the same goals and values.

More research is needed on the future of international communication and the potential role of the mass media. For as inventors continue to perfect the technology of communication, the power of the media to unify or divide the world increases. More than technology, we must continue to perfect our ability to communicate. For the future system of communication between nations will play a greater role in the economic, political and cultural exchanges. The difference between the twentieth and the twenty-first century is the more global nature of these exchanges. In this respect, communication is perhaps as important as defense is as a means for achieving and maintaining global peace.87
NOTES

6 Bull.
7 Altschull, p. 267.
9 Altschull, pp. 140-141.
13 Altschull, p. 143.
15 Ibid., p. 13.
16 Joe Bar El, personal interview, tape recording, Amherst, MA., April, 1986.
18 Ibid., p. 15.
20 Epstein, p. 273.
21 Ibid., p. 25.
22 Lilly Gardner Feldman, The Special Relationship Between West Germany and Israel (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 28.
23 Feldman, p. 262.
24 Altschull, p. 149.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
29 Bagdikian, p. 97.
32 Sanford, p. 36.
The CDU, the Christian Democratic Union, which became a federal party in 1950, stands for the united action between Catholics and Protestants for rebuilding German life while guaranteeing private property and the freedom of the individual - guaranteeing close ties with Allies within NATO and the principle of self-determination. The CSU, the Christian Democratic Union, is an anti-socialist party aiming for a free market economy. They combine national consciousness with support for a united Europe. The FDP, the Free Democratic Party, formed in 1948, stands for democratic and social liberalism and makes the individual the focal point of the state and its laws. The SPD, the Social Democratic Party, maintains that a vital democracy can be built only on the basis of social justice. A positive attitude toward national defense is upheld, while there remains a favoring of controlled disarmament. They hold a policy of religious toleration and reject any political ties with communism.

58 Public Opinion Research of Israel (Established in 1966, they began polling on German/Israeli relations in 1970).
59 Institut für Demoskopie, 1974.
60 Jerusalem Post, June 22, 1979.

62 Sahm.

63 *Jerusalem Post*, September 1, 1980.

64 Deutsches Fernsehen, April 30, 1981.

65 *Jerusalem Post*, May 4, 1981.

66 Sahm.

67 Bull.


70 *Der Spiegel*, July 19, 1982.

71 Ibid., August 16, 1982.


73 Ibid.

74 Amnon Linn, personal interview, Jerusalem, Israel, December 1985.

75 Yaakov Achemeir, personal interview, Jerusalem, Israel, December, 1985.

76 Marien, p. 62.

77 Sahm.


79 Bar El.

80 Linn.

81 Altschull, p. 298.


84 Altschull, p. 4.

85 Ibid., p. 299.


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