

ISRAEL

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INTRODUCTION

The State of Israel, established in 1948, lies on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, bordered on the north by Lebanon, on the northeast by Syria, on the east by Jordan, and on the southwest by Egypt. Its population is approximately 5.2 million, of which 82 percent are Jewish—split almost equally between those originating from the Levant and those from Euro-America. Of the minorities, 14 percent are Arab Muslims, a bit over 2 percent are Christians (Arab and others), and somewhat under 2 percent are Druze and a small number of others (black Hebrews, Vietnamese, Samaritans, Bahai). The country's two official languages are Hebrew and Arabic, although English is employed in virtually all government ministries and the economy. As a result of mass immigration over the decades, 70 different languages are in use among the Israeli population.

The country has a unicameral parliamentary form of government (120 members in the Knesset), with a democratic, national, purely proportional election system of competing party lists (about 30 parties usually run, with 10 to 15 gaining seats for the four-year term). In 1996, direct election of the prime minister is scheduled to take place, with mounting public pressure to reform the Knesset system to half district and half proportional (similar to Germany). Municipal elections are held every five years, with direct elections of the mayor and proportional elections for the council. However, the degree of local autonomy is limited, as the Interior Ministry oversees most functions while providing grants amounting to 50 percent of the municipal budget.

Israel's economy historically has been quasi-socialist, with the government employing about 25 percent of the national work force and the giant labor federation Histadrut employing another 25 percent through its own conglomerate Hevrat Ovdim and subsidiary companies. As a result of the economy's near collapse in the mid-1980s, significant liberalization has taken place in the Israeli economy through reduced taxation, reform of the stock market, ongoing privatization of government corporations (including the national phone company), and removal of foreign currency restrictions. Today, Israel's economy is decidedly mixed, and the trend clearly points toward more free market policies.

The state's school system has traditionally been divided into a secular and a religious strand, as well as an ultrareligious "independent" system. More recently, greater curricular and organizational variety have been introduced. The same holds true for higher education. Lately, in addition to Israel's seven major universities, several types of academic and vocational colleges have evolved.

Israel's communications organizational framework was also originally highly centralistic and paternalistic, but here, too, significant changes have come about due to public pressure (Lehman-Wilzig, 1992, pp. 85-95). Much of the country's media philosophy was drawn from the British, who supervised the Mandate prior to 1948. The British impressed upon the Jewish authorities a philosophy of communications as cultural uplifter and agent of political socialization. This approach is still dominant today in Israel's public radio and television, which are under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Only recently have the authorities begun to accept the concept of mass media as pure entertainment, grudgingly establishing a commercial "second channel."

Owing to Israel's ongoing serious security problems, an army censorship apparatus still has the authority to censor national security-related material, for by law, all editorial matter must be sent to the censor prior to publication. However, distinct evolution over time in the media's relationship to the governing authorities is discernible.

From 1948 until the early stages of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel's press had basically echoed the government's overall line, especially regarding national security and foreign policy. After the war, with the national consensus breaking down in these matters, the press became ever more critical and probing. The 1982 Lebanon War marked another watershed with extremely critical reports appearing as a matter of course (Negbi, 1986). By the time the Intifada commenced in late 1987, Israel's journalists felt free to publicly discuss virtually all issues, while growing economic competition between several of the mainstream dailies further heightened this trend.

In short, Israel's media philosophy today is closer to being "libertarian," that is, unfettered in its journalistic practices, as compared with the pre-1973 approach of "social responsibility," which demanded self-restraint on the part of the media. Many citizens and most politicians, however, do not fully accept this evolution, leading to occasional strong attacks against the media for overstepping their bounds.

PRINT MEDIA

Newspapers

For a small country, Israel has a very robust and diverse daily press, which reflects the fact that over 85.5 percent of the adult population reads a newspaper on a daily basis (Gallup Israel, 1992). There are 11 Hebrew dailies. *Yediot Akhronot* (*Latest News*) is by far the most popular paper, with 51.7 percent of the country's daily readership during the week. Its popularity stems in part from ideologically neutral reporting, a wide variety of commentators over the entire political spectrum, as well as colorful writing and graphics. Since the late 1970s, the leading paper *Ma'ariv* (from the root "evening") commands 14.6 percent of the readership. Its ownership changed hands in 1992, whereupon it became somewhat more right wing as well as closer in popular style to *Yediot Akhronot*.

Ha'aretz (*The Land*), Israel's most erudite daily with a strong intellectual and dovish/laissez-faire slant, holds 5.5 percent of the market. *Hadashot* (*News*), a recent addition specializing in color, graphics, and short news items, sells to 8.8 percent of the market. The smaller papers include *Globes* (*The Globe*), a relatively new economic daily; *The Financial Times*, with 2.5 percent market share; *Telegraph*, another economic daily scheduled to commence publication in mid-1993; *Davar* (*Mailman*), the organ of the giant labor federation Histadrut (2.1 percent); *Al Ha'mishmar* (*On Guard*), the organ of the socialist Mapam Party (approximately 1 percent); and *Ha'tzofe* (*The Viewer*), the organ of the National Religious Party (0.8 percent). The latter three papers are in danger of closing as a result of their declining readership and the lack of willingness or ability on the part of their party sponsors to continue heavily subsidizing them. Somewhat out of the mainstream are three ultra-Orthodox dailies, each an organ of a different camp: *Ha'modiah* (*The Announcer*), *Yeted Ne'eman* (*Loyal Stake*), and the recently established *Yom Le'yom* (*Day to Day*). The ultra-Orthodox community (about 10 percent of Israel's Jewish population) also has a fully developed alternative mass media system consisting of wall posters for socio-political communication and synagogue newsletters for religious indoctrination.

Aside from the ultra-Orthodox dailies with their own strict standards of what cannot be published (no pictures of women; no reporting on crime, television, sports), Israel's Hebrew press is of generally high quality and extremely comprehensive in its coverage, with the larger dailies publishing magazine supplements almost daily on such matters as sports, economics, consumerism, and culture. Investigative reporting came into its own during the 1980s, mostly in the political and economic realms. Somewhat lagging behind is international news coverage, except when there is an Israeli slant or anything interesting having to do with the United States. However, none of these papers can be considered purveyors of "yellow journalism," although *Yediot Akhronot* and *Ma'ariv* have become somewhat more sensationalist over time.

Israel also has several Arabic-language dailies emanating from East Jerusalem

and a few other cities. *Al-Ittihad* is based in Haifa, while *Al-Kuds*, *Al-Fajr*, *Al-Shaab*, and *Al-Nahar* are published in East Jerusalem. A few Arabic weeklies and monthlies also appear. The former include *Al-Sinnara*, with the largest readership, *Kul al-Arab*, and *Al-Bayadir Assiyasi*; among the latter is *Al-Ushbu'*. The Israeli-Arab press in general is highly unstable, given severe economic problems and stricter press censorship than that found among the Israeli-Jewish publications.

The Jerusalem Post is the only English-language paper issued daily. It attracts about 2.5 percent of local Israeli readership including tourists and diplomatic personnel stationed in Israel. Until the early 1990s it had a moderate leftist slant, but under new ownership (followed by the exodus of most of the paper's veteran editorial staff), it has taken a very hawkish stance in the area of national security, peace, and the territories. *The Jerusalem Report*, commencing in 1990, is a biweekly news and analysis magazine for local and overseas consumption with a relatively dovish slant. *Link* is a bimonthly economic magazine. All the dailies listed above are distributed nationally.

Several national weekly papers in Hebrew are also published, serving Israel's ultrareligious communities: *Yom Ha'shishi* (*The Sixth Day*), *Erev Shabbat* (*Sabbath Eve*), *Sha'arim* (*Gates*), and *Ha'makhaneh Ha'kharedi* (*The God-Fearing Camp*). The weekly *Sha'ar La'matkhil* (*Beginner's Gate*) is an easy Hebrew daily newspaper for new immigrants (youth and adult), while *The Jerusalem Post* publishes three easy English monthly papers for different age levels.

Beginning in the early 1980s, local and regional weekly newspapers began to attract a growing readership. In the lead are Tel Aviv's *Tel Aviv* (of the *Yediot* chain), which has captured 63.7 percent of area readership; *Ha'ir* (*The City*), with 43.4 percent; and Jerusalem's *Kol Ha'ir* (*The City's Voice*), with 65.7 percent. There are three major newspaper chains, each with several local weeklies apiece: the Schocken chain (owners of *Ha'aretz* and *Ha'ir*) and the *Yediot Akhronot* and *Ma'ariv* chains. Other local papers are independent, with many cities having more than one paper competing for local readers.

Altogether, 63 local and regional weeklies were in operation as of mid-1992; this is a large number given the country's overall population of slightly over 5 million. In the three large metropolitan cities, only about 20 percent of the adult population do not read the local papers; in the smaller cities and towns, a mere 10 percent do not read them. As the political system continues the gradual trend toward greater decentralization, the local press should increase in importance even if growing competition cuts back the actual number of papers in print.

Magazines

The number of Hebrew-language magazines is no less impressive, although the variety is somewhat less broad than found in most Western democracies. Still, here, too, readership is quite high, for only 26 percent of both the adult and the youth population do not read any weekly magazines. As Israel entered

the postindustrial age only in the last decade or so, with a concomitant rise in standard of living, certain types of magazines, such as comics and consumerism, have not yet become popular. Still, there are enough magazines to satisfy most tastes.

Topical. *Ha'olam Ha'zeh* (2.0 percent adult national readership) is the oldest weekly magazine dealing with current events and is also the only one that fits into the "yellow journalism" mold. After having recently changed owners several times, the magazine is now published as a supplement of *Globes*. *Monitin* (0.8 percent), on the other hand, is a very slick, glossy biweekly magazine devoting attention to both hard issues as well as life-style subjects.

Women. *La'isha* (17.1 percent), a weekly, is Israel's largest-selling magazine for women, owned by the *Yediot* conglomerate. *Att* (5.6 percent) and *Olam Ha'isha* (4.9 percent) are monthlies. *Na'amat* (0.9 percent) is a monthly published by Israel's largest women's organization. *Olam Ha'ofnah* is a fashion-oriented monthly.

Military. *Ba'makhaneh* (6.0 percent) is the Israeli Army's biweekly magazine, read by civilians and soldiers alike. Its subject matter ranges widely, in line with numerous nonmilitary functions, such as education, with which the army is involved. *Skirah Khodsheets* is a more serious monthly, covering topics well beyond the military. *Biton Khail Avir* (2.7 percent) covers air force matters.

Juvenile. Israel boasts 15 different weekly, biweekly, and monthly magazines for youth aged 4 to 18 years old. Of these, a *Ma'ariv* publication for ages 12 to 18 (39.4 percent) is the most widely read weekly, while *Rosh-I* (11.1 percent), *P'nai Plus* (11.1 percent), and *Ma'shehu* (6.8 percent) also have a wide readership.

Political. Unsurprisingly, this category forms the largest group of magazines reflecting the entire political spectrum. On the Left, the biweekly *Politikah* deals with sociopolitical issues from a dovish and socially progressive perspective. On the Right, the monthly *Nativ* takes a hawkish perspective on the administered territories and the Arab-Israeli conflict and a neoconservative approach to socioeconomic matters. *Nekudah* is the monthly organ of the settlers in the territories, ideologically linked with the extraparlimentary movement "Emunim."

Sectoral. Four kibbutz- and moshav-related magazines are published: *Kibbutz* (weekly), *Ha'daf Ha'yarok* (monthly), *Moshav* (monthly), and *Kav La'moshav* (biweekly).

Hed Ha'khinukh is a monthly put out by the national teachers union. Other trades and professions also publish their magazines, including:

Computers and Technology. Among the leading magazines covering these topics are weeklies such as *Anashim U'makhshevim* (1.3 percent) and *Reshet Makhshevim*; the monthlies *Mekhonot*, *32 Bit*, and *Technologiyot*; and the quarterly *Khimiyah*.

Management and Labor. As a former Socialist country moving in a free market direction, Israelis have an abiding interest in marketplace-related publications. The major ones are *Hamifal* (monthly), dealing with factory mat-

ters; *Mashabei Enosh* (monthly), covering utilization of labor; *Va'adim* (monthly), reporting on trade union activities; *Nihul* (biweekly), for managers; and *Ta'asiyah Ve'nihul* (quarterly), for industrial management.

Publishing and Advertising. The most distinguished monthly in this field is *Otot*, put out by the Israel Advertising Association. In 1993, the monthly *Tikshoret* began publication, covering much the same areas of journalism, marketing, advertising, and public relations, albeit from a more personal and less professional or academic perspective. Other magazines dealing with more technical aspects, such as printing, are also published.

Culture and the Arts. *Studio* (monthly) and *Mishkafayim* (quarterly) are the two leading art and culture magazines.

Miscellaneous. *Horim Ve'yeladim* (3.2 percent) is a parents' monthly. *Ha'khodesh Ba'meshek* (monthly) deals with economic matters. *Eretz Ha'yaal, Teva Ve'arets* (1.4 percent), *Masah Akher* (monthly; 30,000 subscribers), and the quarterly *Eretz Magazine* (English; 20,000 subscribers, 75 percent overseas) are travel and nature magazines. Other fields in which magazines appear are building and construction, farming and agriculture, accounting, insurance and finance, car driving and racing, medicine, tourism, and sports.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Radio

Since Kol Yisrael, Israel's governmentally run radio network, was transformed from Kol Yerushalayim (which commenced broadcasting in 1936) to Kol Yisrael (The Voice of Israel) with the establishment of the state, Israel's radio scene has expanded enormously. From the perspective of number of listeners, hours of daily broadcasting, and number of channels, Kol Yisrael ranks as the fifth largest radio station in the world.

In 1993, Kol Yisrael consisted of seven channels. Five broadcast AM (amplitude modulation) and FM (frequency modulation): Channel A broadcasts cultural programs (4.4 percent adult audience); Channel B emphasizes news and current events along with popular music (26.8 percent); Channel C is youth oriented, a rock music station (28.6 percent adults, 43.7 percent youth); Channel D carries Arabic-language news and entertainment programming; and there is also the classical music channel (3.4 percent). Two others appear on AM only: The foreign-language channel provides mostly news and some music for non-Hebrew-speaking groups and broadcasts primarily in English, French, and Russian but also in nine other languages such as Yiddish, Rumanian, and Spanish. All of Kol Yisrael's channels together broadcast 112 hours daily. Funding for all these channels comes both from an annual broadcasting fee paid by the listening public and from commercial advertising.

The most popular adult station in Israel is Galei Zahal (38.3 percent audience

share), an Israeli Army radio station founded in 1950 under the British Mandate. Since 1973, Galei Zahal has increased its broadcast time and fare in order to offer troops and civilians a broad range of round-the-clock programming, including news, rock, jazz, talk shows, and even over-the-air university lectures. The army is not interested in continuing its support of this station, and an alternative setup is being sought.

In 1973, peace activist Abie Nathan's Voice of Peace (3.1 percent) began broadcasting as Israel's first offshore "pirate" radio station. Despite many financial problems, it continues to broadcast, even adding news programs in 1992. In 1988, Channel 7 (6.5 percent), a second offshore pirate station emphasizing religious and nationalist themes, began operation. These stations are heard on AM and FM.

Israel's radio programming tends to be very eclectic, which is in line with the sundry population sectors and the diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of its citizenry. The one constant feature throughout all programming is news. Because of Israel's security problems and ongoing peace negotiations, all Israelis are news junkies. Thus, almost all the stations, including the pirate channels, carry Kol Yisrael's 5-minute news spot every hour on the hour. Full-hour news programs are also broadcast on Galei Zahal and Channel B at least three times a day, and both offer scheduled news updates every 30 minutes throughout the day. These two major stations have their own reporters for party, parliamentary, military, economic, and political affairs coverage. Other programs such as call-in talk shows, satire, and interview shows have a heavy news component. Israeli journalists do not stick to one medium. Many reporters and commentators appear steadily in the printed press, radio, and television, even though only one of these media generally serves as their salary base.

Television

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, refused to countenance the idea of television, considering the medium a culturally corrupting force. Nonetheless, television was introduced in 1965 as the Educational TV Channel under government auspices. Known as Reshut Ha'shidur, the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA), it is controlled by a board of directors composed of political appointees. Three years later, regular prime-time programming was instituted on the same channel, Israel Television (ITV), but proved to be a disappointment. The reasons for dissatisfaction included political pressure regarding content, perceived overly critical news coverage, and lack of sufficient funding for original programming. Hence, most entertainment programs are American or British; very few locally produced comedy or dramatic series have succeeded in Israel.

With increasing television competition in the late 1980s, Israel TV began to

seek other sources of funding beyond the annual license fee paid by each viewing family as dictated by law. ITV began to invite corporate sponsorship of selected programs. Consequently, paid public service ads have been running from the start, with the definition of *public service* used rather broadly.

Overall, for the first 20 years of Israeli television, Israelis had only one local channel. During the daytime, its broadcast fare included educational programs (math, science, foreign language), juvenile material (cartoons, children's movies), and an occasional satirical entertainment program before 6:00 P.M. The evening hours of 6:00 to 8:00 were slotted for Arabic-language programs, especially news, sports, and drama series. Prime-time programming has emphasized current events and news; the most popular program in Israel is the 30-minute news show *Mabat* (65.8 percent adult viewership) at 9:00 P.M. Entertainment programs such as sports, talk shows, quiz programs, and foreign series (*L.A. Law*, *The Cosby Show*) run until approximately midnight. Due to the relatively narrow fare, Israelis began to tune in to neighborhood pirate cable TV stations in the mid-1980s, and as a result of this growing pressure, several changes and reforms occurred.

In the late 1980s, a half-hour news program, *New Evening* (37.9 percent), was introduced at 5:00 P.M., followed by a 15-minute English-language news show. Late-night Hebrew programming was extended to run well past midnight. *Good Morning Israel*, a light news and feature program, aired from 6:30 to 8:00 A.M., began in 1992. More important, a Second Channel was experimentally established in the mid-1980s and slowly grew in popularity and sophistication. Despite severe lack of funding, it reached about 20 percent viewership overall. The Second Channel finally turned commercial in 1993, with the expectation of reaching at least parity with Channel One within a short time. Also, legislation was enacted setting up privately owned cable television franchises throughout the country. Depending on where Israelis live, many receive several external channels: Egypt TV, Jordan TV, and the Christian Broadcasting Network's Middle East TV emanating from Cyprus.

Israeli television and radio traditionally did not have a sophisticated ratings system, but recently semiannual surveys have been inaugurated on a steady basis—at this stage, more for advertising purposes than for changes in programming. Once advertising comes on stream in the Second Channel and perhaps later in cable television, ratings should become a much more important factor in Israeli broadcasting.

Finally, until a few years ago, the major radio and TV studios were to be found within the walls of Kol Yisrael and the IBA in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, plus one or two independents such as Herzliya Studios. With the onset of the Second Channel and its statutory requirements for local production, the competing companies have established several highly sophisticated television studios around the country, which will form the basis of increased production for local origination programming on cable TV and the Second Channel, as well as for export.

Cable Television

Cable television is regulated under the Bezek Law of 1982. The law privatized, to a limited extent, all telecommunications services in Israel. The Cable Television Council was formed to develop policies concerning cable TV broadcasting and to oversee their execution.

The council divided the country into 31 service areas and started awarding franchises in 1988, with actual broadcasting beginning in January 1991. The service areas were awarded in blocs, which enabled the council to impose a less attractive area on a contractor bidding for an area with more commercial potential. Bloc awards ensured service to the entire population. In practice, once adjoining areas were awarded to the same bidder, those areas were combined into one, at least for the initial 12-year life of the franchise. Legislation is pending that would limit any one franchise company to maximum 33 percent ownership of the whole country's potential market.

Twenty percent of all broadcasting must be of local production. Every franchise must carry all legal over-the-air regular TV broadcasts; this includes a future satellite channel. A special channel has been allotted to the instructional television center at the Ministry of Education. Cable broadcasts currently include local theme channels (children, science, family, sports, and movies) and imported channels from around the world.

The success of cable television in Israel is overwhelming, by Western standards. By the summer of 1992, about ten areas had their infrastructure installed and had commenced broadcasting, mainly within their urban sectors. In these areas, the first wave of signed-up subscribers passed the 50 percent mark of all households, and up to 60 percent in areas where additional marketing efforts were made. Installation and monthly subscription rates are regulated by the council.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Videocassette recorders became very popular in the 1980s. Some 49.5 percent of Israelis viewed at least one video feature film a month in 1987, with 26.5 percent viewing four video films or more.

A cellular phone network was established in Israel in 1984. This network is operated jointly by Bezek (Israel Telecommunications Corporation) and Motorola (Israel), covering all populated areas in the country.

Bezek also operates two satellite stations for the broadcasting of telephone and television signals to satellites over the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Israel is the supplier of satellite services to the Republic of Kazakhstan. Future expansion of these services is expected. While Bezek's satellite dishes broadcast 98 percent of the time, many satellite dishes are used for reception by other bodies such

as the Israel Broadcasting Authority, the various cable television companies, and many private households.

Isranet, a national fiber optic data network, serves all major media, research institutes and universities, major banks, and insurance companies. Both national and international data bases are accessible through this network.

MOTION PICTURES

The first Hebrew cinematograph production can be traced to 1911 (Gross & Gross, 1991); organized forms of the Israeli film industry can already be identified in the 1920s (Shir-Ran & Zimmerman, 1988). In 1927 the first film review appeared in Hebrew, in *Ha'aretz* (Zimmerman, 1988). The first Hebrew films produced were of two genres: feature films and newsreels. By the time the state was established, two film labs were operating, and two movie magazines were being published on a regular basis. But modern Israeli film is not a continuation of the Hebrew films during the British Mandate, neither in organization nor in substance, as new studios were established and the content began to reflect the new Israeli sociopolitical reality (Gross, 1974).

A decline in movie attendance and subsequently in the number of films screened occurred between 1970 and 1990. In 1970 a total of 417 movies were screened in Israel, compared with 229 in 1990. According to the *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (1991), while 62.9 percent of the population attended a movie theater at least once a month in 1969, only 41.5 percent did so during 1986–1987. By 1993, as an Israel Advertising Association (IAA) poll found (IAA, 1993), the percentage had dropped further to 35.8 percent of the total population testifying to visiting a movie theater during the previous month and 56.2 percent in the previous six months. A much higher proportion of youngsters up to the age of 18 (84.9 percent) visited a movie theater than that of the general population (51.4 percent).

The total number of movies, screened in 130 movie houses, grew from 180 in 1989 to 231 in the summer of 1992. This growth is due to the popularity of multiplex movie theaters, some with as many as nine screens, built inside the growing number of modern shopping malls throughout the country. Israel's first Omnimax giant screen theater is scheduled for completion by 1994 in the central region city of Rishon Le'Zion.

Israel is generally perceived as being beset by three ongoing conflicts—between Jews and Arabs; between secular and religious Jews; and between new immigrants and old-timers, which is mainly a conflict between Middle Eastern and European Jews. These same conflicts have been the raw material for Israeli films since the first productions in 1950 and have continued. Shohat (1989) claims that both Palestinians and Oriental Jews were denied serious representation in Israeli film, an industry dominated by European Jews, just as in daily political life in the country.

More than 500 full-length Hebrew films were produced in Israel between 1911

and 1991 (Gross & Gross, 1991). These films included made-for-television movies. Nearly 400 films were produced by Israelis in Israel between 1948 and 1989 (Vert, 1989). Since the 1960s, from 10 to 19 films have been produced in Israel every year. Israeli films have received international awards at the Cannes Film Festival, Berlin Festival, and Academy Awards (1971 and 1984).

The first attempts to support Israeli film production were embodied in the Support of Israeli Film Law of 1954, in which movie theaters were required to show a certain number of Israeli films annually. More substantial support came with the establishment of the Foundation for the Advancement of Quality Israeli Films in 1980. The foundation has so far invested between \$50,000 and \$150,000 each in 46 original productions. Furthermore, the amount of government support to the film industry was tripled in January 1, 1993, laying a more solid foundation for the production of Israeli documentaries.

Of the 229 films screened in Israel in 1990, only 12 were local productions. The rest were imported from a variety of countries, especially the United States (141 films). Unlike 1970, when 54 of the 417 imported films originated in Arab countries, none were imported from those countries during 1990. All foreign films are subtitled in English and, occasionally, Arabic.

Monitoring of films in Israel is as old as cinematography in British Palestine. The Cinematograph Films Ordinance of 1927, which was subsequently incorporated into Israeli law, creates a supervising council whose license is required before public screening of any films. Disregarding the council's orders is a criminal offense. Until the 1989 suspension of the Public Performances Ordinance, the council was also charged with licensing plays. It is a common practice of the council to rate movies according to the major categories "for adults only" and "for general viewing." This practice is self-enforced by the movie theaters.

MEDIA OWNERSHIP

As long as the print media were under private ownership and the broadcast media were government monopoly, the question of media ownership was a nonissue in Israel. The introduction of two commercial electronic media in the early 1990s brought to the attention of policymakers the full-blown dilemmas of cross-ownership.

The first debate concerned the Second Network for Television and Radio. The network provides three franchises each with the right to broadcast two days a week and Saturday, on a rotation basis. A seventh of broadcast time is allotted to Educational Television, a government enterprise. In mid-1992 the auction for the franchises took place, but potential bidders refused to participate because of two limitations. First, the agreement with Educational Television as a fourth partner receiving income without any investment was seen as unfair government interference in a commercial enterprise. More significant was the fact that the groups formed to compete for the franchises consisted mainly of print media owners, and the fear of cross-ownership engendered strong opposition to these

partnerships within the Knesset, academia, and among government officials. A revised agreement was reached only in March 1993 (two years after the Second Network began the bidding process), providing the print media with a maximum 30 percent share ownership of a franchise, but only up to 24 percent in voting power. The compromise paved the way for seven groups to put in bids by the deadline of March 31, 1993.

Simultaneously, legal procedures have been undertaken concerning the cartelization of the cable industry. All seven cable franchisers formed a conglomerate known as Israel Cable Programming (ICP). The conglomerate purchased all the local cable channel programming that the franchises broadcast. Complaints regarding lack of competition led to the antitrust commissioner taking the ICP to court on charges of an illegal cartel.

The commissioner offered a compromise that would allow the cartel to exist for three years since the commencement of cable broadcasting (January 1991), after which a new settlement would be agreed upon. The idea behind the compromise was to let the cable industry penetrate Israeli homes in its initial period as a legal cartel. The ultimate structure opening the cable market to competition is unknown.

MEDIA REGULATION

The 1933 Press Ordinance regulates the printed press. The Broadcast Authority Law of 1965 and the Second Network for Radio and Television Law of 1990 regulate the broadcast media.

The Press Ordinance states that no newspaper in Israel can be published without previously receiving a license signed by the Ministry of Interior Affairs. The ordinance enumerates the eligibility requirements of a person wishing to serve, for example, as a newspaper editor, such as a minimum age of 25 and a high school matriculation diploma.

The ordinance empowers the Minister of Interior to close a newspaper when it has published either a news item that might jeopardize the public's safety or a false account that causes panic or despair. This provision was given a restrictive interpretation by the Supreme Court in 1953, subjecting it to the 1948 Proclamation of Independence as the quasi-constitutional basis for such an interpretation. The court ruled that enforcement of Section 19 of the Press Ordinance should be carried out only if there was a "near certainty" of danger to public safety.

The right to close publications is also granted to the military censor under another British regulation, the Emergency Defense Regulations of 1945. This regulation is one of four powers given to the censor. The other three powers are (1) the right to request a review for all material intended for publication ("prior restraint"), (2) the administrative penal authority to confiscate printing presses used for printing forbidden materials, and (3) the authority to forbid

publication of material that might jeopardize the security of the state (Segal, 1990).

In a 1988 ruling of the High Court of Justice, the same legal construction adopted for interpreting the extent of the civil authority's power to close newspapers was applied to the military authorities. The court ruled that the British military regulation should be interpreted within the context of its new democratic environment.

The reason the military censor's actions were not questioned until 1988 is due to the existence of the self-regulatory body known as the Editors' Council. The council is a joint body of all the Hebrew dailies (except *Hadashot*, which refused to join), the Israeli Broadcasting Authority, Galei Zahal, and ITIM (Hebrew acronym for the Associated Israel Press Service). The council operates under an agreement in which issues concerning national security are brought by the government for discussion in informal briefings and will not be published in the Israeli media. The council has a procedure for appealing any decisions by the Israel Defense Force's chief of staff. The legal significance of this agreement is that the regular military censorship procedures do not apply to the media participating in the council. This presumed positive discrimination in itself has not been challenged in court (Segal, 1990).

Another self-regulatory body is the Press Council, which was formed in 1963 by the National Organization of Israeli Journalists, the Editors Council, and the newspaper management union (Strassman, 1986). The Press Council oversees the ethical conduct of journalists in Israel with its published ethical code applying to all media, including nonmembers of the council. According to the Press Council's own declaration, the ethical code only deals with how to report. The right to decide what to report, though limited within the boundaries of elementary etiquette, is up to the editors of the respective media.

Notwithstanding all these regulations, laws, and institutional bodies, the operating environment for Israel's Arabic-language press is far more stringent than for the Jewish press (Hebrew and foreign language). First, the former are not part of the Editors' Council. Second, given Israel's sensitivity to its security situation, the Arabic press is held to stricter standards of political "incitement" and discussion of military-related issues. As a result, Arabic-language newspapers have been closed down for limited periods of time and on a few occasions have been forced to go out of business permanently.

Regulation of broadcast media has been revolutionized in 1990 with the adoption of the Second Network for Television and Radio Law. Until then, all broadcasting was regulated under the Broadcasting Authority Law of 1965. The main difference between the two networks is that broadcasting in the Second Network's TV channel is given to commercial franchises for a term of four years, while the IBA's broadcasts are supervised by the government. Both networks are overseen by government-appointed councils.

The commercial nature of the Second Network led to special attention being given to broadcast content. The programs may not include incitement to racism,

other forms of prejudice, or political broadcasting. Similar provisions concerning content are applied in the Bezek Law of 1982 concerning cable broadcasting. The Second Network council has the power to enact a fairness doctrine (Barak, 1987).

In addition to the franchises' share, instructional television has been apportioned one-seventh of broadcast time on the Second Channel. At least one-third of all broadcasts must be locally produced, while at least half of these must be purchased, and not produced by the broadcasting franchises, from independent studios. These two provisions were instituted in order to strengthen Hebrew/Israeli culture in the face of foreign-language dominance, as well as to ensure that independent local producers continue to survive as a counterforce to the full-time production staffs within the various channels. The Second Channel is allowed to broadcast news, but no commercials are permitted during the news program. Broadcasting of commercials in general is limited to 10 percent of all television and 15 percent of all radio broadcast time.

The appearance of the Second Channel and the drift of viewers to cable's huge variety of programming after years of broadcast monopoly have led to a rethinking of the role and status of the IBA. A ministerial committee appointed by the Ministries of Justice and Education was to present a new structure for the IBA by May 1993. The committee's charter seeks to redesign the legal, economic, and organizational structure and status of the IBA.

EXTERNAL MEDIA SERVICES

Other than the two hours devoted to Arabic programming and a quarter-hour evening news show in English, all Israeli over-the-air television is in Hebrew (or accompanied by Hebrew subtitling). However, depending on their location, Israelis can receive signals from Cyprus, Syria, Jordan (two channels), and Egypt as well as several foreign channels via cable.

Foreign-language radio fare is more diverse: BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) World Service, Voice of America, and Monte Carlo are the dominant three, but with minor effort, Israelis can hear radio programs from virtually the entire Middle East and most of Europe.

Conversely, for a small country, Israel has a large presence in the world's overseas airwaves by broadcasting shortwave radio programming during the hours 3:00 to 22:00 GMT (Greenwich mean time) to every continent in Hebrew (regular and simple), English, Russian, Yemenite, Bucharian, Georgian, Persian, Yiddish, Rumanian, Hungarian, French, Spanish, Ladino, and Arabic. The primary audience is world Jewry, although a large number of non-Jews tune in as well, owing to their interest in the State of Israel.

In addition to broadcasting, Israel provides a wide array of foreign-language publications due to its polyglot origins. Altogether, there are 29 locally produced dailies and weeklies in the following tongues: 11 Russian, of which the leaders are *Vremya*, *Vesty*, *Nasha Strana*, and *Novostz*' (Milner, 1992); 5 Rumanian; 2

French; 2 Spanish; 2 Yiddish; and 1 each in Polish, Bulgarian, Georgian, German, Hungarian, Turkish, and Ladino (Israel Government Press Office, 1992).

Over 1,000 different foreign-language publications are imported by the giant Steimatzky bookstore chain. About half are in English, with the rest mostly in French, German, and Russian. The main foreign-language newspapers are *International Herald Tribune*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*; weekly topical magazines—*Time*, *Newsweek*, *Der Spiegel*, *L'Express*; and general monthlies—*Burda*, *Byte*, *Cosmopolitan*.

NEWS AGENCIES

Israel has one news agency, ITIM, which is composed of representatives of all the major newspapers (plus stringers). The agency distributes material domestically and overseas, as well as translating selected overseas material for domestic use. In addition, the Israeli press uses foreign agencies, primarily Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and Agence France-Presse (AFP).

Within Israel, there are three official bodies that distribute information to the press. The Government Press Office is attached to the Prime Minister's Office; it services local and foreign reporters (foreign press authorization, translated abstracts of the Hebrew press, official statements, and documents of the various government ministries). Reporters can and do go directly to specific ministries for information as well. The Foreign Ministry Press and Information Departments transmit detailed information to local and visiting journalists alike, provide tours for the latter, and offer daily press briefings. Overseas, the Israeli embassies and consulates provide much the same information to the foreign media. The Israeli Army Press spokesman is attached to the Office of the Chief of Staff; this unit provides information regarding military matters to the local and foreign press, arranges and authorizes interviews with high-ranking officers, and offers periodic briefings.

THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The important role of Israel's mass media in national development is demonstrated in institutions formed for that purpose, as well as in the media's participation in ceremonial and traditional events. Instructional television started broadcasting in Israel in 1966, two years before the beginning of regular TV broadcasts. It broadcasts daily on the IBA's channel from 8:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., except Saturdays. The morning programs are geared for the schools. From a predominantly instructional medium, the service changed its character in the 1980s to become more family oriented, especially in the afternoon hours. New programs include entertainment and news. Concurrently, it also changed its name to Israel Educational Television (IETV). As noted earlier, IETV is allotted one-seventh of the Second Channel's broadcast time and one channel in the

cable TV system. So far, both options have not been exploited. Indeed, the restructuring of Israel's broadcast system has led to a rethinking of the role of educational television. A plan to privatize the enterprise is being debated.

Fortunately, the role of media in education and national development is not limited to formal institutions. As a rule, the media are mobilized to support national efforts and to participate in national events. Examples of this support can be seen in the context of the country's main national efforts as defined by the state: the absorption of immigrants and national security issues. During the massive waves of immigration during the early 1950s and the late 1980s, the electronic media made a special effort to broadcast programs aimed at teaching Hebrew to the immigrants, broadcasting in their own language or adding subtitles to television broadcasts. During the Gulf War of 1991, all the radio stations, including Galei Zahal, combined to broadcast as one. Participation in national events and ceremonies is most evident during the special broadcasts on Independence Day, Memorial Day, plus the lack of, or limited broadcasts, on Jewish holidays such as Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) and Tisha B'av (commemorating the destruction of the temples at Jerusalem).

The commercial print media has also joined in the national effort. The *Histadrut* has owned a chain of newspapers in various European languages since the 1950s, while the Hebrew dailies began publishing special editions and supplements in Russian to help the several hundred thousand immigrants arriving from the former Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

CONCLUSION

Israel has always had a variegated and strong free press, circumscribed somewhat by its serious problems of national security. Per capita newspaper readership is among the highest in the world, with the number of printed press venues far beyond what one would expect from such a small country.

On the other hand, until very recently its electronic media fare has been quite limited due to governmental control of all official radio and TV channels. Public pressure and the citizenry's development and support of alternative media venues have forced the government's hand, and Israel is now in the process of a complete media revolution that by the mid-1990s should bring it in line with most Western democracies.

A more educated citizenry, new communication technologies, as well as a gradual reduction of national security tensions are all increasing the pressure on the authorities to lessen censorship and other communications regulations. In line with greater liberalization of economic policy, the Israeli media scene attitudinally, philosophically, and organizationally is steadily becoming more open to private ownership of the electronic media and even greater freedom of expression among the print media.

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