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A Comparison of Censorship, Control, and
Freedom of the Press in Israel and
Egypt: An Update From the
Journalists' Perspective

by

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JUL 02 1990
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Non-thesis paper submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of The University of Maryland
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
1989

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 1989	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED FINAL		
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A COMPARISON OF CENSORSHIP, CONTROL, AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN ISRAEL AND EGYPT: AN UPDATE FROM THE JOURNALISTS' PERSPECTIVE			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) ZAJACKOWSKI, DONALD THOMAS				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of Maryland University Boulevard at Adelphi Road College Park, Maryland 20742-1642 School of Journalism			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) OFFICE OF THE CHIEF, PUBLIC AFFAIRS (OCPA) HQDA, OCPA ATTN: SAPA-ZDP PENTAGON, WASHINGTON D.C. 20310-1504			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES POC IS MAJ W.M. DARLEY, AVN 225-4660/3405				
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A "APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE. DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED."			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) The paper explores government censorship and control of the press in both Egypt and Israel. It gives an historical overview of how and why government controls evolved in each nation, and provides analysis regarding the state of freedom of the press from the point of view of journalists currently working in each locality. The author analyzes the conditions under which constraints have been imposed and provides observations regarding what conditions must come to exist for press freedom to be expanded.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Mass media; newspapers; public affairs; public relations; journalism; Israel; Egypt; propaganda; press			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 106	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT SAR	

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Chapter 1

Purpose

During the last few years, many stories in both Israel and Egypt have been carried in American news reports, including some stories on how the news media in those countries have not met Western expectations and standards of freedom of the press because of censorship or government control and influence. In the last several years, Americans following the news have read or heard about the Palestinian uprising, or Intifada, in the Israeli occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as of religious strife involving both Muslim fundamentalists and Coptic Christians, and of food shortage riots in Egypt. An understanding of current press censorship and control in Israel and Egypt is vital to the American public and to this nation's policy makers because much of the news originating in these countries and as is being reported in their news media is similarly carried by the American news media, thereby having a potential impact on our nation's major foreign policy role in the Middle East.

This paper will attempt to explore the level of censorship and government control currently affecting freedom of the press in both Israel and Egypt. Although

the constraints and control over the broadcast media, radio and television, are briefly mentioned, an in-depth analysis of those media are beyond the scope of this paper which will focus on the medium of newsprint journalism. In particular, this study will look at how and why censorship and control of the press evolved and their impact on the current status of freedom of the press in Israel and in Egypt, first, from an examination of the latest literature available, and from the perspective of journalists from those countries and from journalists now working there.

Chapter 2

Literature Review & Historical Background

In examining the issues of press censorship and control in Israel, one has to examine how these issues apply to two distinct geographical areas: to Israel, proper, and to the Israel occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which have been under military rule of the Israel Defense Forces since the war in June, 1967. Two distinct sets of rules and regulations apply to these two areas and censorship is applied differently in each, for different reasons. Let us first examine how these issues have been viewed and practiced within Israel.

The Israeli Press

Philosophy of the Press. The press within Israel follows a philosophy that has been a combination of varying amounts of libertarianism, authoritarianism, and social responsibility throughout the brief history of the Jewish state and of the yishuv, or Jewish settlements in Palestine, which pre-dated the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Pnina Lahav (1985), in her chapter on "Israel's Press Law," mentions four dichotomies which have coalesced into one fundamental libertarian-authoritarian dialectic in

Israel's jurisprudence of free speech and free press.

These four dichotomies (p. 266) have been between:

1. Zionism and pre-emancipation Jewish culture in which the former cherishes freedom of expression, criticism, and other values of the Enlightenment in contrast with the latter which, conditioned by a ghetto mentality and rampant anti-Semitism, frowned upon open criticism, including religious and political dissent.

2. British constitutional liberalism of the Zionist elite, which reflected a triumph over censorship and other authoritarian devices of suppression, and British colonialism, which established in Palestine an elaborate legal system of political suppression, including censorship, in an effort to maintain public order amid the political violence between Jews and Arabs.

3. Anglo-American liberalism, which reflected the commitment to a free marketplace of ideas as a guarantor of both a free and open thinking process and self-government and which gives the individual a preferred position over the state, in contrast with Continental (primarily German) liberalism, which emphasized the state as the most precious achievement.

4. Legal formalism, whose adherents applied the highly authoritarian colonial laws inherited from the British Mandate, with little articulated regard to the

values embedded in them or to their impact on the polity, and its dichotomy--social jurisprudence--whose followers recognized the connection between law and politics and endeavored to infuse those laws with liberal values.

Lahav also mentioned three additional factors which have been significant in reinforcing the authoritarian notion (p. 267):

1. The left-of-center brand of Zionism which valued a highly centralized government and which aspired to bring about a socialist transformation. It did not value, nor was it tolerant of, political dissent and caustic criticism. Lahav adds that the 1977 shift to a right-wing Likud (party) government brought about a de-emphasis of the socialist legacy but strengthened the statist element (p. 300 n9).

2. National security problems, resulting from Israel being under a threat of destruction by neighboring Arab nations and being denied legitimacy as a sovereign state, which produced a climate that was both suspicious and intolerant of free expression.

3. Israeli confidence in a regime of free expression was shaken by their belief that Weimar's failure to repress Nazi ideology in Germany was a central cause of Hitler's rise to power and the ensuing Holocaust. This

belief strengthened authoritarian notions that speech be subordinated to order, according to Lahav.

Caspi (1986) mentions that "the independent papers speeded up the transition from the authoritarian orientation characteristic of the party papers--established to carry out the instructions of their political patrons--to one of social responsibility, which is the accepted norm in every Western democracy" (p. 12).

Commenting on libertarian aspects of Israel's press, Viorst (1974, pp. 32-33) said that Israel's newspapers are supposed to be a generator of a lively popular dialogue contributing to democratic decision-making but that the consensus on national security issues has been so overwhelming as to limit the discussion on alternative courses of policy in the newspapers. Viorst writes that, as a consequence, the Israeli government was not provoked into fresh thinking, and tended to grow self-satisfied, if not actually stale, even with a press exhibiting libertarian aspects.

Origins and Background of the Israeli Press. In looking at the origins of the present-day Israeli press, the Jewish newspapers in the yishuv period were less concerned with the conventional task of reporting and more with their ideological and national mission, writes Goren (1976, pp. 120-122). The Jewish press participated

in the struggle of the yishuv, Galnoor (1982) says, by relaying the official policy of the national institutions, counterbalancing the Arab press, and educating the public and new Zionist immigrants (p. 232). The press of political parties had ideological and party considerations, such as mobilization and propaganda, and these party papers educated local leaders, members, and followers to the official line (p. 232).

Davar (Word), Hamodia (The Announcer), and Al Hamishmar (On Guard) are major representatives of the party press. Davar, Israel's second oldest paper founded in 1925, is considered the official organ of the Histadrut (General Federation of Labor). Hamodia is the organ of Agudat Israel, a religious party, while Al Hamishmar is the left-socialist party organ of Mapam (United Workers' Party). The Middle East and North Africa 1989 lists their current circulations at 39,000 for Davar, 15,000 for Hamodia, and 25,000 for Al Hamishmar.

According to Lowenstein (1969), party-subsidized papers have dominated the Israeli press since 1948 in numbers but not in circulation, who added that only three of the regular Hebrew dailies and only half of the foreign language dailies are independent (p. 327). Twenty years later, Lowenstein's observation still holds

true with four of 12 Hebrew language dailies now being classified as independent. However, only three of 17 foreign language dailies are now classified as independent, according to The Middle East and North Africa 1989 (pp. 519-520). Similarly, according to the latter source, the number of party-subsidized Hebrew newspapers in 1989, five, still outnumbers the independent Hebrew dailies which stand at four (pp. 519-520). In circulation, however, party organs have 1989 circulations ranging from only 12,000 for Shearim (The Gates) of the Poale Agudat Israel Party, up to 39,000 for Davar, in contrast with such independent newspapers as Yedioth Aharonoth (The Latest News), which has a daily circulation of 300,000, and Ma'ariv (Evening Prayer) with a daily circulation of 115,000 (pp. 519-520).

Lowenstein (1969) noted that all Hebrew dailies subsidized by political parties and the Histadrut have lost circulation since 1965 due to the shifting nature of Israeli politics (p. 327). In the ensuing twenty years since his study, however, the organ of the Histadrut, Davar, which primarily represents Israel's Labor Party, increased its circulation by 11 percent while the organs of the religious parties increased their circulations by as much as 882 percent, in the case of Hamodia of the Agudat Israel Party. This increase in circulation of the

religious party organs can probably be attributed to the rise to power in the 1970s of the Likud Party, in coalition with Israel's various religious parties, at the expense of the Labor Party which perhaps explains a much smaller rate of increase in circulation for Davar.

Israel currently has four independent Hebrew dailies: Ha'aretz (The Land), Ma'ariv (Evening Prayer), Yedioth Aharonoth (The Latest News), and Chadshot Hasport (The Middle East, 1989, pp. 519-520). Ha'aretz, considered by Merrill (1968) to be one of the elite papers of the world, has been described as a serious, calm and unemotional paper that amasses substantial facts before going into controversy (pp. 51, 89, 91). Ha'aretz, founded in 1919 by the British Army occupying Palestine, is rated third in circulation (at 55,000 on weekdays) of all Israeli newspapers, but is surpassed by Ma'ariv with a daily circulation of 115,000, and by Yedioth Aharonoth which, at 300,000 copies daily, is the most highly circulated newspaper in Israel (The Middle East, 1989, pp. 519-520).

Because of its immigrants from around the world, Israel also has a substantial foreign language press. Besides Hebrew, the Israeli press publishes newspapers in Yiddish, Arabic, English, German, French, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian. Together, these

foreign language dailies account for over 41 percent of Israel's total daily circulation (pp. 519-520).

We have already seen the philosophy under which Israel's press operates as well as the origin and background of various major Israeli newspapers, both independent and party organs. Let us next examine the role of Israel's laws and its courts in controlling the press and guaranteeing freedom of the press.

The Constitution and the Courts. Israel has a series of Basic Laws regulating constitutional issues, but it has no written constitution nor does it have a Bill of Rights, thereby allowing an ordinary statute to legally curtail the rights of free expression and free press (Lahav, 1985, p. 268). Since 1973, a draft Basic Law, the Rights of Man, modeled after that of the Federal Republic of Germany, has been pending before the Knesset, writes Lahav. The bill, while recognizing the right to free expression, fails to address the issue of a free press and allows for considerable restrictions. The proposed Bill of Rights, for example, states that "none of these rights may be limited except by a law whose purpose is to ensure the existence of a democratic rule, to safeguard the defense of the State and the public peace" (p. 269). However, as will be seen, much of the criticism involving censorship in the Israeli

press has concerned not the legitimacy of national security interests over individual freedom, but rather abuse in determining what is actually a national security issue versus a political interest.

Israelis currently enjoy a common law right of free expression and free press which were imported into Israel's legal system when that nation's Court held that Israel's Declaration of Independence, though committed to human rights, was not legally binding but did serve as a device to guide the court in interpreting statutes. Thus a statute with a potentially restrictive effect, notes Lahav, should be interpreted to allow maximum breathing space to freedom of expression (p. 269).

Because freedom of expression and freedom of the press are not assigned constitutional status, the issue of judicial review does not present itself, but the courts, particularly Israel's Supreme Court, do perform a crucial role in shaping the contours of the right of free speech through their review of executive discretion, writes Lahav (p. 269). The importance of Israel's courts lies in their ability to supervise the discretionary powers given to the executive branch by statutes and regulations that Israel's legal system inherited from the British Mandatory Regime (p. 269). The courts can strengthen the press and intensify the quality of its

liberty by limiting the discretion, both through a requirement of due process and through review of substantive standards, says Lahav (p. 269). The Court has done so in a number of cases but, in other cases, it has "upheld the totality of the discretionary powers, thereby making press freedom dependent upon the good will of executive officials" (Lahav, 1985, p. 269).

Press Law and the Origin of Censorship. The State of Israel had inherited a formal system of laws and mandatory provisions which continued to govern the relationship between the press and the newly sovereign State of Israel (Caspi, 1986, p. 13). The most comprehensive of these laws was the repressive 1933 Press Ordinance which empowered the government to close down any newspaper deemed by the minister of the interior to be endangering public security (p. 13). Modelled after the Cyprus press law, it was introduced into Palestine in 1929 after the Arab pogroms on the Jewish population of Hebron in an attempt to reduce political tension that the British attributed to the Arab press (Lahav, 1985, p. 270). The Press Ordinance consisted of three themes: licensing of newspapers, control of content, and sanctions for violations of the preceding two (p. 270).

Publishing a newspaper without a license constitutes a criminal offense according to the Press Ordinance. The

ordinance specifies certain specific age, education, and language familiarity requirements for a would-be editor. However, the most controversial aspect of the ordinance has been the requirement for the execution of a deposition to guarantee the payment of fines should the newspaper be convicted of having violated the Press Ordinance. Yet another controversial aspect is that of how the Press Ordinance provides three mechanisms to control both editor and publisher. These three mechanisms include the requirements to (p. 270):

1. Submit two copies of each issue of a newspaper to the District Commissioner for content supervision.

2. Report any change in information concerning publisher or editor, permanent or temporary replacement of the editor, or temporary travel outside the country.

3. Use all publishing permits at frequent intervals and to not let them lie dormant, which was meant to make it more difficult for a publisher or editor of a suspended newspaper to activate spare permits during a suspension.

Instead of aggressively using the permit structure, which might have forced the courts to examine the ordinance's compatibility with a commitment to a free press, the Israeli government has used another licensing device provided by the Defense (Emergency) Regulations of

1946, initially used by the British to strengthen their control over the press as violence in Palestine had escalated (pp. 270-271). Under the Press Ordinance, a permit could not be denied once all requirements had been met, in contrast to the Defense (Emergency) Regulations which require an additional permit and which vest the District Commissioner with virtually unlimited powers to grant, condition, or revoke the license (Lahav, 1985, p. 271) or to censor any material at his own discretion (p. 269).

The Israeli government has not used the powers of the Press Ordinance to control content by compelling newspapers to publish, free of charge, any official communiqués and official denials of factual information previously published by the newspaper, according to Lahav (1985, p. 272). However, Lurie (1961) mentions that the British had used this aspect of the Press Ordinance in an attempt to dictate to the Jewish newspapers and to compel them to publish material against their will, including official communiqués and accounts of the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 and pictures of half a dozen "wanted" leaders of the Irgun Zvai Leumi, the Jewish terrorist organization (p. 190). As a result of this latter incident, the Jewish editors refused to inform on their own and formed an "action committee," consisting of the

editors of all the daily newspapers, to present a solid front against the British Mandatory authorities (p. 190). This same committee would later establish itself as the Editors' Committee of the Daily Newspapers of Israel on which more will be mentioned later.

The third theme of the Press Ordinance was that of sanctions, one of particular significance being the power of the executive branch to suspend publications without a court order and for long periods of time. Such a suspension may not only stifle criticism but may also be economically damaging to a newspaper if advertising income is lost during the suspension. Lahav notes that the British frequently used the sanction of suspension prior to Israel's independence and that the Israeli government invoked it occasionally between 1948 and 1953 (p. 272). However, the May 1953 suspension of the Communist paper Kol Ha'am (the People's Voice) for "disturbing the peace" in vilifying John Foster Dulles before his visit to Israel provided a test case for freedom of the press. In a landmark decision, the Israeli Supreme Court established a variation of the clear and present danger test as the proper criterion for legitimate suppression of expression (Stock, 1954, p. 487; Lahav, 1985, pp. 272-273).

After its establishment, Israel developed "newer and more efficient legal tools" such as a 1954 Press Law comprised of sections of the Press Ordinance and additional restrictions, including the need for journalists to "obtain licenses granted by a council, whose three members were to be appointed by the government" (Caspi, 1986, pp. 13-14). Vigorous opposition of the daily newspapers, however, forced the draft law to be subsequently shelved (p. 14). Israel's Knesset approved the Law for the Protection of Privacy in February 1981, claiming that it was designed to safeguard individual privacy, but it was interpreted by the newspapers as an attempt to limit the public's right to know (p. 14). Perhaps the most efficient method of press control that Israel developed was the evolution of the Editors' Committee from the "Action Committee" of the days of the yishuv.

The Editors' Committee. Rosenfeld (Fall, 1982) writes that not only did the committee remain intact when the State of Israel was established, it actually tightened its cooperation with the government and regarded itself as a partner to the activities of the government and the state (p. 104). Ben Gurion, and subsequent prime ministers, often gave the editors privileged or classified information to which not even

cabinet ministers were privy, but which the government wished to conceal though not necessarily for security reasons, in order to tie the hands of the editors who had previously agreed not to divulge what had been revealed to them (p. 104).

However, as Caspi (1986) said, "Membership in the Daily Newspaper Editors' Committee became a straitjacket that prevented the newspapers from publishing even information that they had received from outside sources. Consequently, the committee could no longer function as an efficient means of supervision over material to be published" (p. 15). For this reason, Ha'aretz editor Gershon Schocken resigned from the committee claiming that his writers would inform him of the same affairs at his paper's meetings even before the committee had met and, consequently, his participation therein limited him by forbidding publication of information that he had obtained from his own sources, reports Caspi (p. 21 n22).

Other editors refused to be apprised of certain information, in order not to be bound by it, by insisting on being told the subject of the meeting in advance (Rosenfeld, 1982, p. 105). In other cases, editors have refused to comply with what they thought were unjustified requests. The first negative response to the politicians' appeal to the journalists' sense of national

duty and responsibility in maintaining secrecy was the publishing of Prime Minister Eshkol's secret visit to Iran by Ha'aretz in 1966 (Galnoor, 1982, p. 243).

Although this arrangement of government sharing sensitive, off the record issues with the Editors' Committee is viewed favorably by some because of its voluntary nature, it is viewed unfavorably by others as a means of co-opting the newspapers into a secret conspiracy against the public (p. 243). Commenting on the arrangement, Nesvisky (Spring 1985) says that "censorship is the price the Israeli press pays for being privy to the innermost workings of the government and the military," adding that "Either way, the Israeli press philosophically views the system as a win-some-lose-some-situation" (p. 44).

Voluntary Self-Censorship. Friedman (May, 1984) called this gentlemen's agreement, in effect since 1950 in which a committee of predominantly pro-Labor Party editors met with top military and government figures to receive deep background briefings on sensitive material in exchange for assurances that this material would not be published, a system of voluntary self-censorship (p. 49). According to Friedman, the government also periodically has provided the committee with lists of subjects considered too sensitive to publish. Galnoor

(1982) explained that the willingness of Israelis to accept severe emergency regulations and censorship as well as other obligations toward the state, such as high taxes and a lengthy military conscription, is due to the popular support and mobilization that Israelis feel is still necessary in the face of an external threat and a continuing state of war between Israel and her neighbors (p. 37). This system of voluntary self-censorship reflects a basic national consensus about the need for secrecy, according to Friedman (May 1984, p. 49).

Although this concern about an external threat to their nation can still be found among Israeli journalists and editors, "this cozy relationship between the [predominantly pro-Labor] editors' committee and the government broke down" after Begin's election in 1977 when the Israeli press became an adversary press, which it had not been under prior Labor governments, writes Friedman (p. 49). When Begin assumed the office of Prime Minister, according to Friedman, the press started to challenge fundamental government policies, publish more sensitive material, and become more critical in tone. Similarly, since 1977, the committee has, itself, become much more aggressive in its criticism of the government and in its insistence on preserving democratic values in Israel (Lahav, 1985, p. 275).

The editors' committee has, therefore, been more than a body committed to less than total criticism of the government, for whom freedom of the press is secondary to the primacy of the state. The committee has also helped to consolidate the status of Israel's press as a free institution, it has sensitized both the government and the public to the importance of press freedom, and it has managed to impede more than a few governmental attempts to contract and co-opt it (p. 275).

Military Censorship. Although the Editors' Committee has contributed to greater freedom of the press in recent years, it was this same committee which formalized an understanding in December 1949 between those editors of the daily press represented on the committee and the Army General Staff that led to the establishment of military press censorship which exists to this day (Lurie, 1961, p. 191; Rosenfeld, Fall 1982, p. 102). The purpose of military censorship is to withhold information that may be useful to the enemy or damaging to Israel's defense. It is not to be applied to political affairs, opinions, commentaries or assessments, unless these contain classified security information, or unless such information may be inferred from them (Rosenfeld, Fall 1982, p. 102). The provisions of military censorship also called for the establishment of a tripartite

committee, consisting of a senior army officer appointed by the Chief of Staff, a rotating member of the Editors' Committee, and a leading lawyer sitting as an impartial judge (Lurie, 1961, p. 191). The purpose of this committee is to consider objections by newspapers to bans by the censor, and complaints lodged by the censor against the papers, writes Rosenfeld (Fall 1982, p. 102). This tripartite committee has the capacity to impose fines for violating censorship and to uphold or contradict the ruling of the censor, the security nature of which may appear doubtful. According to Lurie, practice has shown that editors have strictly enforced rules against other papers who obtained a scoop by breaking the agreement (Lurie, 1961, p. 191).

Censorship Topics. Strictly defense-related information, such as on troop strength or military capabilities, is not the only subject which must go before the military censor if contained in an article, or which the government expects Israeli journalists to voluntarily hold back from the public. Rosenfeld (Fall 1982, pp. 105-115) lists several other topics which are also considered to affect national security and which must also clear the censor before being published. These include:

- International Terrorism when revealing a story too soon might endanger the lives of Jews.

- Immigration to Israel from countries where Jewish emigration is barred, either for ideological reasons (as in Eastern Bloc countries) or because of national and religious discrimination (as in the Arab states). In many of these cases, it was believed that continued Jewish emigration depended solely on press silence.

- Saving the lives of Jews, whether it be rescuing Jews in Arab lands or gingerly commenting on problems Jews experience in certain totalitarian or semi-totalitarian countries in Central and South America. Indeed, it was the Editors' Committee that of its own accord gave the censor the authority, which had not been granted by law, to ban material on sensitive subjects that might endanger lives.

- Foreign relations, the disclosure of which might be damaging to Israel's national security interests, such as Israel's secret ties with certain countries.

- Economic/trade relations, particularly concerning who supplies oil to Israel.

- Until recently, the illness of public figures was not disclosed to the public. Rosenfeld mentions, for example, that it was only in the early 1980s that it was made public how Golda Meir had guarded the secret of her

fatal illness for years because the press had refrained from prying into the matter.

Lowenstein (Summer 1969) notes that the overall effect of military censorship has been to extend censorship beyond purely military limits since the nature of Israel's confrontation with her enemies is not only military, but economic and political as well (p. 330). Consequently, much economic and political news has been withheld at the source, leading some foreign correspondents to believe that news was censored for propaganda purposes of maintaining Israel's overseas image (p. 330).

Criminal Statutes. Israel's penal code includes provisions prohibiting speech that is likely to impair national security interests. Lahav (1985) mentions that it is a criminal offense to disseminate defeatist propaganda during wartime or to display sympathy toward or identification with a terrorist organization in public. Such a criminal law according to Lahav, can easily be manipulated to "foster unanimity of political thought and to suppress criticism and dissent," particularly against Israel's Arab minority suspected of harboring Palestinian national aspirations (p. 277).

Another important part of the criminal law, Lahav writes, is the offense of aggravated espionage under

which falls the actions of a reporter who publishes secret information, or information violating the censorship regulations. A reporter who does so is liable for criminal prosecution and imprisonment for 15 years (p. 277).

Control and Censorship of Other Media. Although an in-depth examination of media other than newspapers is beyond the scope of this study, a few words should be said about them to give the reader a wider view of limitations on freedom of speech and freedom of press within Israeli society.

Galnoor (1982) mentions that radio had been controlled by the Prime Minister's office until 1965 and had become the semiofficial spokesman for the government (p. 227).

Television in Israel is a state-regulated, public corporation. After Begin's assumption of office in 1977, the reform-minded Likud Party men appointed to the Board of Governors, the State Broadcast Authority's watchdog agency, instituted a series of rules and other guidelines which have since hampered freedom of speech over television (Friedman, May 1984, pp. 50-51). These include:

- Banishing the term "occupied territories" and requiring the use of the biblical names for the West Bank--Judea and Samaria.

- Forbidding interviews of pro-PLO Arabs by TV journalists, thereby barring most prominent West Bank Palestinians from appearing on Israeli television. This ban was subsequently struck down by the Israeli High Court in 1983.

- Pressuring the TV news department to support government claims of Jewish sovereignty in the territories and to minimize or ignore tensions among settlers, Arabs, and the army.

- Restricting access or movement of TV journalists trying to cover the news in the occupied territories and in Lebanon.

The Israeli Censorship Board, whose authority is based on an antiquated British law, exists to review all films and stage shows presented in the country and to decide if they meet the moral norms of Israel's society (Variety, Oct. 24, 1984).

Israel's Education Ministry has also involved itself in censorship through its banning of books, by Nobel Prize winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer and others, in Israel's religious schools because such books were not considered suitable for religious students.

Instances of Censorship. Several examples of censorship in recent years are worth noting:

- The Hebrew language tabloid Hadashot was suspended for four days in June 1984 for publishing a picture of a captured but uninjured Palestinian who had hijacked a bus and who, subsequently, died of his "wounds" on the way to the hospital. This was the first time a Hebrew journal had been suspended (Deming & Kubic, Newsweek, June 11, 1984).

- In February 1988, the extreme left-wing Israeli paper Derech Hanitzotz (Way of the Spark) was closed and its Jewish editors imprisoned not for what they wrote, supposedly, but for having become agents of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

- In 1988 a Tel Aviv weekly was prohibited by the censor from publishing an article criticizing the competence of the director of Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service. However, in January 1989, the Israeli High Court held that "just calling the Mossad director a jerk is no longer censorable" (Williams, Los Angeles Times, January 12, 1989, p. 6). Glenn Frankel reported the significance of this ruling as the first time the high court has ever overruled the military censor and as possibly leading to greater press freedom at the expense of Israel's powerful security

establishment (The Washington Post, January 12, 1989, p. A33).

Credibility. The result of this combination of withholding news at the source, voluntary censorship and military censorship is the publication of many speculative stories which have decreased credibility in the Israeli newspaper, writes Lowenstein (Summer 1969, p. 331). In other cases, newspapers lost credibility when editors who had justified withholding a story were embarrassed when government officials, themselves, revealed secrets and made a public "scoop" at an election rally or in a volume of memoirs (Rosenfeld, Fall 1982, pp. 114-115).

Working with Censorship. Israel's journalists have viewed censorship as an irritation that could be circumvented if necessary (Time, April 4, 1983, p. 45). Reporters have resorted to sending material out of Israel in packages or via couriers to be published abroad; once a story appears in a foreign newspaper, it can then be published in Israel (p. 45). Reporters have sometimes simply left the country to file a sensitive story (Time, p. 45). However, an Israeli journalist doing so may face criminal charges upon return while a foreign correspondent may not be permitted to return to the

country with press accreditation, writes Nesvisky (Spring 1985, p. 45).

Experienced journalists also know how to delete certain words, such as the rank or unit of a soldier involved in a traffic accident, in order to get an article past the censor (p. 45). For the foreign reporter, modern communications such as telephones and facsimile machines make it easy to circumvent the censor; however, a reporter's press credentials can still be withdrawn if the published story meets with the disapproval of the censor. There has also been an admission by an Israeli censor of taps and intrusions into telephone calls and of garbled telex cable transmissions of stories journalists did not submit to prior censorship because, they contended, the stories did not breach matters of national security (Time, April 4, 1983, p. 45).

A Double Standard. Various writers have mentioned two different types of a double standard when referring to Israeli censorship. One such double standard is that of how harshly the West criticizes Israel for its limited censorship in comparison to the greater degree of press censorship and control exercised by most of Israel's Arab neighbors, who receive scant attention on this matter

from the West (Rosenthal, 1988; Chafets, 1983; Time, July 12, 1982 and April 4, 1983).

The second type of double standard refers to Israel's varied application of censorship and press freedom for Hebrew language publications within Israel and Arabic publications in East Jerusalem and the occupied territories. Until 1967, the Israeli press had been relatively homogeneous and had not questioned the legitimacy of Israel or the essence of Zionism, which requires Jewish political sovereignty. Following the 1967 War, Palestinian newspapers, which were published in East Jerusalem and which identified with Palestinian nationalism and supported the Palestinian cause, caused a dilemma for the Israeli government which desired to pursue democratic processes yet faced a nationalist struggle set against Israel's existence. It was not until 1981, however, when Israel's Minister of Interior first ordered the suspension of a Palestinian newspaper, the daily Al-Fajr, for endangering the public peace by praising and encouraging terrorist activities (Lahav, 1985, p. 273). This moral dilemma, resulting from the acquisition of Arab East Jerusalem with its Palestinian publications, ultimately led Israel to follow a double standard of censorship and press control: one for pre-1967 Israel and one for the Arabs of East Jerusalem and

the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Friedman (May 1984, p. 49) notes the following about this double standard:

Both the Hebrew-language media and the Palestinian press in Israel operate under the same restrictive press laws inherited from the British, which give the authorities sweeping powers of censorship, including the power to close down a newspaper without prior warning. In practice, however, only the Palestinian press is subject to strict government regulations with harsh penal sanctions against violators.

Palestinian editors are required to submit every news item . . . editorial, picture, caption, . . .

crossword puzzle, cartoon and even death notice to the Israeli military censor in West Jerusalem.

Israeli editors must submit to the military censor only stories that could affect national security

. . . Israeli editors can appeal the military censor's decision with a committee comprised of government officials and journalists supervising the process [the tripartite committee previously mentioned].

Let us next turn to an examination of the background of the Palestinian press and its experiences under Israeli rule.

The Palestinian Press

Functions of the Press. Newspapers of the Palestinian press serve two functions, according to Maroz (September 1973, p. 63):

Because they are commercial, each must be more extreme than the other in order to gain the widest possible reading public. On the other hand, in the absence of any recognized political body in the territories and Israel's refusal to authorize political gatherings and associations of leaders and notables, they serve as the only forum for Arab statesmen, functionaries, and thinkers.

According to Bahbah (Winter 1985, p. 17), the Palestinian press fulfills two contradictory objectives, regardless of what it perceives its role to be: Israel's objective of maintaining its occupation at minimal cost and the overriding objective of the Palestinians in ridding themselves of the occupation.

Philosophy of the Press. One would be hard-put to classify the Palestinian press. It exhibits elements of libertarianism because it has encouraged a free flow of

ideas, but censorship, not of their doing but by the Israeli authorities, has limited that outlook. Perhaps it can be seen exhibiting social responsibility or elements of a developmental press in serving to further the goals of Palestinian society and in serving as a forum for Palestine's intelligentsia. But perhaps it might be best classified currently as a "revolutionary" press whose objectives, as stated above, are to rid the occupied territories of the Israelis and to strive for an independent Palestinian nation. Consequently, as Curtius (The Christian Science Monitor, August 27, 1987) writes, "Palestinians under the occupation readily acknowledge that they are political activists first, journalists second."

Background of the Palestinian Press. The Middle East and North Africa 1989 lists six Arabic-language dailies under the Israeli press, all of which are published in Jerusalem (pp. 519-520). A seventh Arabic daily, Al Mithaq (The Covenant), was closed down by Israeli authorities on August 12, 1986 on the ground that it was financed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. It was the first Palestinian daily to have lost its license to publish on a permanent basis when it was shut down, along with the weekly Al Ahd (Sunday). Although reflecting views of the PLO, the two

publications' editors claimed their publications were financially independent but their hastily concluded legal battle consisted of a closed court session from which the papers' lawyers were barred (The Nation, September 27, 1986, p. 271). Another Palestinian weekly, Al Awdah (The Return) was also closed down by Israeli authorities in April 1988 (The Middle East and North Africa, 1989).

The first East Jerusalem Arabic language newspapers to be published under occupation were Al Anba (The News) and Al Quds (Jerusalem). The former publication, having a circulation of 10,000, is owned by a government association and is considered by its readers to be extremely reliable in explaining to the public in a moderate manner the official postures of the Israeli government, and in serving as a free forum for the best Arab writers and journalists in Israel and the territories (Maroz, September 1973, p. 62).

Al Quds, with a 1989 daily circulation of 40,000, has consistently opposed Israeli rule in Jerusalem and in the territories and has expressed strong reservations against Arab guerrilla operations. Al Quds has been a supporter of King Hussein's federation plan between the East and West Banks of Jordan, in the past, and of maintaining the unity of Jerusalem. The most frequently discussed topic has been the plight of the Palestinians and their future,

although Al Quds generally has maintained a moderate policy and never went to extremes except when the rights of Palestinians were endangered (Nasser, Summer 1975, p. 208; Maroz, September 1973, p. 62). Al Quds, according to Viorst (1981-1982), is the "establishment," representing the interests of the West Bank's landed gentry, carrying most commercial advertising, and acting as the social register with announcements of births, deaths, and marriages of prominent families (p. 43).

Other Arabic dailies include An Nahar (Day), which is considered pro-Jordanian, and Al Mawqif, which is owned by the Arab Council for Public Affairs (The Middle East and North Africa 1989, p. 520).

Having a current circulation of 15,000, Ash Sha'ab (The People) was founded in 1972 as a competitor to Al Quds. The paper's general policy, according to Nasser (Summer 1985) aims at "complete Arab unity under which Palestine and East Jordan form one unit of the Greater Syria plan. It does not advocate the ideas of establishing an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank, and sees in this a solution toward surrender" (p. 208). Unlike Al Quds, Ash Sha'ab is very critical of the Jordanian regime and King Hussein's federation plan and opposes Israeli annexation of Jerusalem and the occupied territories. Giving prominence to such news as

confiscations of land by Israeli authorities and Israeli diggings near the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, Ash Sha'ab sends for censorship a daily budget of news and feature material filling more than eight pages and, at press time, has barely enough "approved" material to fill four daily pages along with white spaces they occasionally leave in to indicate censorship, writes Nasser (1975, pp. 208-209). In 1981, three editors of Ash Sha'ab had been held under town arrest, for reasons never announced by the army, and for over a year had to send copy by phone or courier.

Al Fajr (The Dawn), an ideological newspaper, serves as a forum for philosophers and advocates of a Palestinian entity and is considered to be the most extreme and dangerous journal of all the Palestinian newspapers. This newspaper, according to Maroz (September 1973), has consistently pleaded for the establishment of a Palestinian state unattached to Jordan and has opposed continued Israeli occupation. Al Fajr has been outspokenly anti-Jordanian and has consistently justified the existence and activities of the guerilla organizations, notes Maroz (p. 63).

Whom Does the Palestinian Press Serve? Nassir (Summer 1975) and Bahbah (Winter 1985) both contend that press freedom and the Palestinian press in the occupied

territories are like a double-edged weapon which serve Israeli interests but which can also be exploited to serve Palestinian interests.

Nasser (p. 210-211) notes that Arab editors believe that by allowing freedom of expression the Israelis can achieve the following aims:

1. A free press will prevent the establishment of an underground press and otherwise defuse tension among a segment of the population and possibly prevent violent action.

2. A free press is exploited to maintain the existing conflict in Arab public opinion regarding the future of the occupied areas.

3. Extreme Arab writers are encouraged by Israeli authorities to justify their influence over the occupied territories, thereby convincing the Israeli people that military suppression is the only way to maintain order in these areas.

4. The Arab press can be used as a channel of propaganda for Israeli achievements in the occupied territories by establishing in the minds of local readers the idea that the occupation is striving for their progress and welfare.

Bahbah (pp. 17-18) adds that the Israelis receive other benefits from the Palestinian press such as:

1. Sources of information and political analysis useful for Israel's intelligence services in the occupied territories, not only from those articles published but also from those censored articles that the public never reads. Interestingly, Bahbah notes, Israel has made it a point to grant publishing licenses to Palestinians with divergent political views to gain access to ideas of various factions, to provide "evidence" that Palestinians are divided, and to enhance Israel's "liberal" image in allowing groups to express wide-ranging political views.

2. In connection with this latter point, the Palestinian press provides Israel with "evidence" that its occupation is a "liberal" one in that Palestinian publications under Israeli control are quite often freer and more critical than most of the press in the Arab world.

However, Bahbah and Nasser also mention ways in which the censored Palestinian press can serve Palestinian interests such as:

1. Keeping the conquered Arabs well-informed, enlightened, and their morale high (Nasser, 1975, p. 211).

2. Gathering information which, even if censored, serves to document Palestinian history in the occupied territories (Bahbah, 1985, pp. 19-20).

3. Enabling the PLO to monitor various opinions, ideas, and trends among the Palestinian intelligentsia and the general public. Editorials of the Palestinian press, for example, are carefully monitored by the PLO as indicators of public opinion in the occupied territories (pp. 19-20).

4. Allowing the PLO, in its disputes with other Arab governments, to criticize them from the occupied territories when it is not possible for PLO media to do so within those countries (p. 19).

5. Mobilizing public opinion by presenting the beliefs of leading nationalist personalities on particular issues (p. 19).

6. Exposing "traitors" and agents of the occupation, even under the eyes of the censor (p. 20).

7. Playing a social role of and role of peacemaker on a non-political level for everyday complaints and grievances (p. 21).

8. Giving Palestinians a place to turn to in the absence of a national government authority and with the dismantling of most Palestinian municipalities (p. 21).

The Who, What, When, Where, Why and Ways of Censorship. In an article on the Israeli view of the role of the Palestinian media in Journal of Communications, Shalom Kital (Winter 1985, p. 23) notes

that between 15 percent and 30 percent of all material received is rejected by the censor. Kital points out that such censored items might include ads calling for strikes and violation of the civil order, a picture showing the Palestinian colors, or a crossword puzzle including a definition whose answer is "PLO." Yet a year earlier, The Progressive (February 1984, p. 13) noted about Al Fajr that of 605 articles written during a six month period in 1983, 32 percent were completely blocked by the censor, 13 percent were partially cut, about 5 percent were irreparably altered, and a handful were simply "lost." The day's editorial was usually suppressed, the article added.

However, censorship was perhaps the least of Al Fajr's problems in the Israeli authorities' attempts to control it. This same article mentions that the paper's journalists had been arrested and interrogated and its offices fire-bombed. Office telephones have been disconnected on some days, some mail never arrives, and the Israeli military has prohibited distribution of the paper in the West Bank and Gaza. Al Fajr was also shut down by the authorities for a month and a half in 1981 (p. 13).

According to Kital (Winter 1985, p. 24), "Israeli authorities maintain that different standards must be

applied to the Arab and Israeli presses because they deal with different societies. Israeli newspapers, critical as they are, do not want to see Israel vanish, as some of the Arab newspapers advocate." Kital adds that:

Both sides agree that the Palestinian press's ambitions go far beyond those of a typical newspaper that supplies news and views. An Arab journalist in East Jerusalem usually emphasizes the term "responsibility"--responsibility to the cause of Palestinian aspirations--as key to his activity, while his Israeli colleague would prefer "credibility" as a trademark. The Arab press therefore is perceived in Israel as a political tool, willingly and conscientiously serving a political cause" (p.24).

Friedman (Fall 1983) documented the subjects and methods of censorship of the Palestinian press in an article by the same name in the Journal of Palestine Studies. Among those noted were (pp. 98-100):

- Politically motivated and arbitrary censorship.
- The systematic censoring of certain Arabic words such as "awda" signifying the "return" of Palestinian refugees to their homeland, and "sumud" meaning steadfast in the context of standing firm against the Israeli occupation.

- The process of double censorship wherein Palestinian newspapers must submit galley proofs of every article to the military censor the night before publication and must resubmit a photostat of each page to a different group of censors in the Civil Administration office the next morning.

Friedman (Fall 1983) also mentions five categories of Israeli press censorship as perceived by Palestinian editors. These include (pp. 99-100):

1. Local news, the most rigidly controlled, which includes such topics as new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories or the seizure of Arab land.

2. Activities and statements of the PLO such as arrests of suspected PLO members and the demolition of homes belonging to them or their families.

3. News about Palestinian resistance to the autonomy plan or to Israeli rule, including mention of school closings or deportation of Palestinian intellectuals and political leaders.

4. Criticism of the Israeli government.

5. Almost anything about the West can be written by the Arabic-language press.

Not only Palestinian newspapers are censored. Cockburn (The Nation, August 16/23, 1986, p. 105) reports that Birzeit University, on the West Bank, has had

extreme difficulty in receiving Arabic publications. Not just those on the official list of banned books, but all Arabic publications are seized at the borders with Jordan or Egypt, and taken to the censor's office in Jerusalem where some disappear or else are subject to a severe taxation.

For a while, the Weizman rule applied to the Arab papers; whatever has previously appeared in the Hebrew press was publishable, Viorst (1981-82, p. 44) notes. An improvised system of collaboration resulted from this rule in which Arab editors would tip off Israeli journalists to stories in which they were interested, which the Arabs would rewrite as soon as the Hebrew papers published them (p. 44). The Palestine Press Service (PPS), in particular, steered Israeli reporters to stories Palestinians think the Israeli military censors might try to suppress (Curtius, The Christian Science Monitor, August 27, 1987). However, the PPS was closed down in March 1988 (The Middle East and North Africa 1989) and Palestinian papers were arbitrarily forbidden to print some stories which had even appeared previously in the Hebrew press about this time as well (Fisher, Los Angeles Times, April 16, 1988).

In 1988, Brinkley (New York Times, June 5, 1988, p. E2) reported that 30 Arab journalists under arrest had

been placed under administrative detention in which they are held in jail for up to six months, even though no charges have been filed or hearings held. Earlier that same year, Freed (Los Angeles Times, February 7, 1988, p. 19) reported that Al Quds had been banned for 45 days from circulating on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where 90 percent of its readers are found. Also in 1988, more military zones, which were closed to the media, appeared in the occupied territories as the Intifada heated up and as talk began in Israel of a total ban on the news media, a la South Africa.

Such was the state of freedom of the Palestinian press through 1988. Let us next turn to an examination of the Egyptian press.

The Egyptian Press

Philosophy and Early Background of the Press. "The Egyptian press has always lived in the shadow of authoritarianism," writes Ochs (1986, p. 112). Through the 19th century, under autocratic Ottoman rule, until the demise of the Ottoman Empire at the conclusion of World War I, Egyptian newspapers would be instantly closed for attacking the ruler (p. 112). Later on, under the monarchy of King Farouk, newspapers were censored inconsistently according to their attitude towards the

government. Newspapers would complain that censors not only stopped certain news unfavorable to the government, but also cut news articles from independent papers to give them to papers friendly to King Farouk (International Press Institute, 1959, p. 177).

In July 1952, Farouk was deposed in a revolution led by a group of army officers. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), that they established, abrogated the constitution and imposed press censorship as criticism of the military takeover mounted (Almaney, Summer 1972, p. 342). Censorship was briefly lifted in March 1954 but was reimposed by Nasser one month later after he eliminated his political rival General Naguib. Newsmen, at the time were given a stern warning to be "either approving of the government's activities or to be noncommittal" (p. 342).

Subsequently, as we shall examine later, censorship and control of the press increased under Nasser. The Egyptian press had not only become an authoritarian press, but also a mobilization press in representing the ruling group which regarded itself as a revolutionary vanguard of the people and which was highly conscious of the need to appeal for the active support of the people through the mass media (Rugh, 1979, pp. 36-37).

Since the 1952 revolution, Egypt has had an authoritarian press. Its severest control came under Nasser, was decreased somewhat with control exercised only periodically under Sadat, and was allowed to be more open with less frequent governmental interference under Egypt's current leader, President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak. In commenting on the differences of press control exerted by Egyptian leaders since the revolution in 1952, Mustapha Amin, founder of what became the daily Al Akbar, said that "Nasser jailed you. Sadat fired you. Mubarak shouts at you" (Ochs, 1986, p. 119).

The Contemporary Press. Despite a fairly high illiteracy rate, the Egyptian press is well developed, with Cairo being the biggest publishing center in all of the Middle East, according to The Middle East and North Africa 1989 (p. 400). This same source lists six dailies published in Alexandria and eleven published in Cairo.

The largest circulating Egyptian dailies are Al Ahram (The Pyramids) with a weekday circulation at 900,000, Al Akbar (The News) circulating at 789,268, and Al Gomhouriya (The Republic) at 605,000 (p. 400). Al Ahram, which has been published since 1875, is considered a conservative paper drawing its readers from among government officials, businessmen, and university professors (Rugh, 1979, p. 44). Al Akbar is actually the

highest circulating paper in Egypt since a third of Al Ahram's circulation is outside of Egypt. Al Akbar is somewhat more sensational and popular, and appeals more to bureaucrats, students, and others who prefer its livelier approach (p. 44). Al Gomhouriya is Egypt's third leading daily which, until recently, writes Rugh, appealed to leftist intellectuals, workers, and others who like its tendency to stress Arab socialist ideological issues and leftist causes. The paper's editors have tended to focus on political commentaries more than news because, since 1952, they have been influenced by the principles of the revolution more than have the other papers (pp. 44-45).

Censorship and Press Control Under Nasser. With Egypt's revolution in 1952, militant Arab socialism and a one-party state were decreed. Journalists were imprisoned for press offenses or deviations, some of them for life and some of them enduring torture for days on end, writes Ochs (1986, p. 112). The International Press Institute (1959) noted that the Middle East News Agency (MENA), created at the beginning of 1956, tended to make the Egyptian press increasingly government-inspired and stereotyped (p. 180). Rugh (1979) mentions that MENA, a government-controlled national news service, was expected to convey news of the regime's activities, which the

press is then expected to carry, and to provide occasional commentaries or backgrounders which contain the regime's interpretation of events (p. 42). However, unlike other Middle Eastern national news services, Egypt's MENA does not require all incoming foreign news to be filtered through it (Ochs, 1986, p. 121).

According to Merrill (1968), the biggest blow to press freedom during this period occurred that same year, in 1956, when Nasser transferred ownership of all papers to the National Union (the government party) in order to assure popular support for his regime (p. 50).

In 1960, Nasser placed the Egyptian papers in groups or units, each having an administrative council appointed by the government (Merrill, 1968, p. 50). Nasser referred to the action as giving ownership to the people, rather than nationalization. Rugh (1979) writes that Egypt's Law No. 156 of May 24, 1960 stipulated that: no newspaper could be published without permission of the country's only political organization, the National Union (later renamed the Arab Socialist Union); ownership of the four large publishing houses was officially transferred to the National Union; and that the National Union appoint the board of directors for the papers it owned. Also termed the "Press Organization Law," an Egyptian aspiring to be a journalist would have to obtain

an authorization from the National Union (Almaney, Summer 1972, p. 344).

In a note accompanying the nationalization decree, the "organization of the press" was said to have been necessary to serve national rather than selfish individual interest; private ownership was said by the government to have been "divisive, self-centered, and detrimental to the country's goal of attaining social and economic justice through a socialist revolution" (Almaney, 1972, p. 345). Nasser, himself, had expressed annoyance that publishers had devoted more space to various sensational news than to the government's social and economic programs (p. 345).

As a result of the atmosphere created through these measures, through the consequent repetition of such themes as Arab socialism, Arab unity, revolutionary spirit, imperialism, reactionary elements, and the people's gains, and through the absence of any criticism of Nasser or his regime the Egyptian press became known as dull and predictable, notes Almaney (p. 345). "Even after Egypt's disastrous defeat in the 1967 war with Israel," Almaney notes, "the press lacked the moral courage to level serious criticism. Journalists were so timid in their writings that Nasser's confidante, Mohammad Hassanain Heykal, began urging his colleagues to

abandon their ingrained habits of self-censorship and speak out" (pp. 345-346). This was, of course, impractical advice in a country where the government controls all publications and where a journalist risks his means of livelihood by speaking out.

Ochs (1986) mentions that Nasser had tried lifting censorship and probably wanted to do away with it but that Nasser thought it did not work and, thereafter, official censors were placed in all newspaper offices. Ochs mentions that like most censors, they did not have any professional judgment to apply to news (p. 113).

Censorship and Press Control Under Sadat. After Nasser's death in 1970, Sadat assumed power in Egypt. Under Sadat, the Arab Socialist Union withdrew the professional licenses of more than a hundred journalists in 1973 so that they had to leave the newspapers (Rugh, 1979, pp. 40-41). Rugh notes that the incident was meant to remind them of their dependence on the regime for their livelihood; after six months, their licenses were restored and they returned to their positions. Most were paid salaries during this time but "the threat of being prevented from exercising their profession on a long-term basis hung over their heads as an effective incentive," notes Rugh (1979, p. 41). Arrest and detention, as tools of control, were used more by Nasser. Subsequently, a

kind of "gentlemen's agreement" was in operation, says Rugh, in which the government does not have to resort to censorship because of self-censorship by newspapermen who will write independent news stories and editorials when possible, but who will support the official policy when they touch upon areas sensitive to the regime (p. 41).

These "sensitive areas" would preclude the Egyptian press from attacking the basic tenets of the government's foreign policy, such as on the Arab-Israeli conflict, or its basic principles of socialism, national unity and social peace (Rugh, 1979, p. 43). Rugh notes that criticism of government bureaucrats for failing to execute policy appeared in the press under Sadat, but that alternatives to the top leadership were not proposed in the pages of Egyptian papers at this time (p. 43). For example, pollution, traffic and other problems were addressed but officials were rarely criticized by name. Economic analyses describing difficulties could be printed so long as they did not blame the leadership or politicize the issues. Rugh added, however, that Egyptian papers were not a Pravda-like, dull, predictable mouthpiece of the regime and editors felt under no obligation, for example, to print the full text of a speech by the President of Egypt (p. 43). Reporters and editors were able to criticize the status quo in subtle

and indirect ways through short stories and poetry, to convey criticism through symbolic fiction, or through gentle jabs at the regime and at the system in political commentaries (Rugh, 1979).

During the war in October 1973 with Israel, Sadat put censors in the newspaper offices but they did their work more by negotiation than by order, before they were withdrawn four months later (Viorst, May/June 1974, p. 34). Viorst found from his sources that, with or without censorship, Egyptian editors knew how far to go and they did not stray beyond, as evidenced by the claim that the censors' absence did not seriously modify what appeared in print (p. 34).

Ochs (1986) noted that when Sadat came to power, he clearly wanted some fundamental changes and, although he supported state control of the national dailies, in 1974 he finally removed censorship and eased other press restrictions (p. 113). Sadat also rehabilitated and gave responsible press positions to prominent journalists exiled or jailed under Nasser (Rugh, 1979, p. 45). During 1974-1975, debates appeared in print over the need for the revival of political parties, Nasserism, student discontent, as well as over freedom of the press, along with the appearance of some investigative reporting of official corruption (pp. 45-46).

The Egyptian government laid more stress on the goal of eventual press freedom when, in 1975, it created the Higher Press Council to share ownership of the press with the Arab Socialist Union and to encourage self-regulation (Rugh, 1979, pp. 48-49). Rugh notes, however, that it "did as much to reinforce the responsibility theme as it did to promote liberty" (p. 49). The following year, 1976, Sadat allowed the emergence of political parties and in 1977 party newspapers were permitted to appear but were "required to express their views within the carefully circumscribed framework of the national dialogue" Rugh says (p. 49). Rugh added that these changes were in form rather than in basic substance (p. 49).

When rioting over consumer price increases, which occurred in January 1977, was reported to be a spontaneous expression of mass disaffection rather than being inspired by radicals, the government view, Al Tali'ah was replaced with a science magazine and the editor of Rose al Yusif was replaced by someone more supportive of government policies (Rugh, 1979, p. 46).

After this time, press freedom again began to take a slight turn for the worse. Sadat's "Law of Shame" in 1979 was supposedly aimed at Egyptian critics of the regime writing from abroad and provided jailing and

confiscation of property for a number of alleged abuses (Ochs, 1986, p. 115). The 1980 Press Law, however, granted protection of journalists in the confidentiality of their news sources, and stressed journalists' independence (p. 115).

Ochs (1986) notes that under Sadat, "Opposition newspapers yanked in and out of business like yo-yos" (p. 113). In the last few months before Sadat's assassination in the fall of 1981, hundreds of journalists along with lawyers and university professors were imprisoned, adds Ochs (p. 113).

Censorship and Press Control Under Mobarak. One of Hosni Mobarak's first acts as head of state, writes Ochs, was to release the renowned journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, Nasser's close confidante who had been fired as editor of Al Ahram and later jailed by Sadat (p. 110). In March 1985, Mobarak stated that Egypt's press was "free, without covert or overt censorship" (p. 110). This, however, was not exactly true since the government still owned the daily press and provided a policy line on all substantial questions, and since, in self-censorship, the opposition press did not go beyond a certain point in its criticism. This type of censorship continued on such sensitive topics as subsidies on bread and other foods and on religion and social mores. Concern on this latter

subject explains why Egypt has not been able to implement an aggressive family planning program using the mass media; it would be too difficult politically in Egypt's social and religious climate (Ochs, 1986, p. 111).

In recent years, Egypt's opposition press has pushed to get press freedoms guaranteed by law, not just by presidential whim. In 1987, Wafd, organ of the opposition New Wafd Party, criticized the interior minister on the frequent use of the state of emergency laws placed in effect after Sadat's 1981 assassination and which were renewed for two more years in April 1986 (Jane Friedman, The Christian Science Monitor, December 15, 1987, p. 9). Wafd editor Mustapha Sherdy has a broader objective, however, in campaigning to have Egypt's current journalistic freedoms protected by law since the 1971 Constitution and current statutes do not guarantee such civil liberties, reports Friedman.

World Press Review (February 1988, p. 53) reported that in September 1987 a temporary ban had been imposed on the weekly Al Ahali for calling on Egyptians to vote against Mubarak a week before the country's uncontested referendum which confirmed him for a second term. At the same time, it was reported that distribution of Al Wafd was delayed and that the Egyptian government also had

revived the practice of censoring foreign publications by ripping out pages.

Censorship in Other Media. The state monopoly in radio and television is complete and the Broadcast Law of 1979 is broad and inclusive in what are prohibited offenses, notes Ochs (1986, p. 120). Broadcasting is also subject to daily guidance by the government, Ochs adds (p. 121). On April 18, 1988, Jane Friedman of The Christian Science Monitor wrote that Egyptian television had cut a CBS News film showing Israeli soldiers beating an arrested Palestinian in violation of army orders. Egyptian officials regard the Palestinian unrest and the unpopularity of the peace treaty as issues, much as the issues of scarcity of food staples and rising prices, that could trigger street demonstrations and potentially sweep away the regime. Friedman had quoted one Egyptian diplomat as saying that this latest censorship was done to "calm emotions" and to "just show glimpses of what is going on" rather than showing "maximum violence because it would create an immediate reaction."

Although there is no "formal" censorship of newspapers, books are subject to censorship (Ochs, 1986, p. 114). The Index on Censorship (May 1986, p. 11) noted an account by Egyptian women's rights activist and novelist Nawal al-Saadawi of how the government had

purchased books in large quantities so that they are removed from the market.

In drama, Ochs (1986) writes, the censor is obligated to be on the scene during rehearsals, even of university students' plays, and one may not deviate from the prepared script (p. 114). The government is apparently concerned about political ad libs; Egyptian artists are some of the world's best at it, according to Ochs, (p. 114).

The censor, who must be on the scene for films made in Egypt, pays minute attention to sex, violence, and morality for all films that will be shown in Egypt, mentions Ochs (p. 115).

Chapter 3

Methodology

We have examined the background and origin of censorship, press control and press freedom, in Israel, Egypt, and among the Palestinians of the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, through secondary sources that have taken us up to the present. The remaining half of this study will examine the most current situation in these regions through the acquisition of primary source material gathered through telephone interviews of Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian journalists who have or who are working in these areas and who have experienced the press censorship and control previously mentioned.

In conducting research for this paper, this writer initially contacted Nancy Greenberg, Press Attache at the Embassy of Israel and Miss Lourdes of the Press and Information Bureau, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Both of these ladies were extremely helpful in providing names and telephone numbers of their foreign correspondents based in Washington and New York. Both ladies also provided this writer with general, background information on their government's perspective on these issues. Either this material was too general or too

propagandistic in tone and was, therefore, not heavily referred to in the first half of this study. Indeed, much of these government's perspectives was better presented and was available in other secondary sources which this writer made greater use of. Mr. Ali of the Information Section of the Arab Information Center and Pamela Cadora of The Jerusalem Fund were of enormous assistance in putting this writer in contact with the Washington Bureau Chief of Al Fajr, a Palestinian newspaper based in East Jerusalem.

This writer attempted to contact numerous correspondents from both countries. Some were unable to be contacted after weeks of attempting to do so. Several correspondents refused to be interviewed on the topic of this study. Ultimately, the following journalists from the following newspapers were interviewed:

Israeli:

Yo'az Karny	<u>Ha'aretz</u>	May 2, 1989
Drora Perl	<u>Ma'ariv</u>	May 1, 1989
	<u>Davar</u>	
	<u>Israel Defense Forces Radio</u>	
Ofra Yeshua-Lyth	<u>Ma'ariv</u>	May 1, 1989
Dalia Shehori	<u>Al Hamishma</u>	May 2, 1989
Erol Guney	<u>Yedioth Aharonoth</u>	May 3, 1989

Palestinian:

Ghassan Bishara	<u>Al Fajr</u>	May 3, 1989
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Egyptian:

Tawfik Houda	<u>Al Gomhouriya</u>	May 4, 1989
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In addition, correspondents of the Associated Press bureaus in both Jerusalem and Cairo were contacted and interviewed to obtain the most up-to-date perspective on censorship and press control in both Israel and Egypt, since many of the other journalists interviewed had been assigned to this country for several years already.

Those interviewed included:

Dania Aligh	AP, Cairo Bureau	May 4, 1989
Sergei Shargorodsky	AP, Jerusalem Bureau	May 4, 1989

Such a technique of interviewing more correspondents currently assigned to those countries, or of native Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian journalists working within their own countries might have yielded more current and accurate findings. However, financial considerations precluded this writer from contacting more than the two AP correspondents who were interviewed. In an attempt to circumvent the cost of several transatlantic calls, this writer contacted the foreign editors at several major newspapers and wire services

hoping that any recent censorship problems might have been relayed back from their foreign correspondents based out of Jerusalem and Cairo.

Dick Homan, Middle East Editor, and William Drusdiak, Foreign Editor, of The Washington Post and the foreign editor's office at The New York Times were all contacted and queried on any censorship problems that their correspondents may have recently faced in filing stories. Similarly, Richard Gross, Foreign Editor at United Press International (UPI), and a representative at the World Desk at Associated Press (AP) were also contacted and questioned about any recent experiences of their reporters in these countries. AP's World Desk reported that they have had "flags on stories from Israel if they've been censored by the military." All other foreign editors only mentioned that there have been no problems recently and referred this writer to their bureaus in Jerusalem and Cairo, for which they provided telephone numbers. However, as previously mentioned, only two such contacts were interviewed due to financial considerations.

Based on this study's initial findings in the literature search of secondary sources, questions were developed to determine the current practices of censorship and press control in Egypt and Israel,

including the Palestinian press of the occupied territories. A journalistic style of interviewing was used in the questioning, and different questions were posed to Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian journalists because of the different situations in their respective countries/homeland. Those questions posed were:

Israeli Press

1. What is your viewpoint on: the balance between security and freedom of speech/press in Israel; the Editors' Committee and their guarding/withholding information rather than publishing it; old censorship laws from the days of the British Mandatory regime remaining in effect?

2. Has censorship been effective? Has it done more harm to Israel's international image than "good" in preventing news from being disseminated (that can be had, anyways, from other sources such as radio and television stations from Jordan, Syria, and Cyprus)?

3. Has the credibility of Israel's press been hurt by censorship?

4. How has censorship extended beyond purely military aspects of national security into the realm of economic and political affairs? Has this been abused recently?

5. Is there now more or less of a tendency for journalists and editors to censor themselves?

6. Has there been any censorship of articles written in the United States before being published in Israel?

7. What has the reaction of Israeli journalists been to the first suspension of a Hebrew journal, Hadashot in 1984, and to the closing of Derech Hanitzotz, in February 1988, the first such case since the closure of Kol Ha'am was sought in May 1953?

8. Have more newspapers petitioned the Israeli courts against the military's censors since the January 1989 decision by Israel's Supreme Court in favor of Ha'ir (a Tel Aviv weekly) being able to publish an article about the director of Mossad? Has this decision led to greater press freedom in Israel?

9. Has censorship and press control increased under the Likud Party and the subsequent coalition governments in comparison to Israel's prior Labor Party governments?

Palestinian Press

1. What subjects/topics have been censored recently?

2. How much of the censorship has been politically motivated? Are words such as "awda" (return) or "sumud" (steadfast) still censored?

3. Is there still a double censorship with Palestinian papers being required to submit to both a military censor the night before publication and Civil Administration Office censors in the morning?

4. Are the censorship guidelines still seen as unclear, such as on what is considered "provocative"?

5. What is the opinion of Palestinian journalists of the Israeli censors? Are they fair? Consistent? Professional? Understanding? Or malicious? Arbitrary? Capricious?

6. Has censorship helped the Israelis in their occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or have the Palestinians been able to effectively get news from other sources, such as radio and television stations in Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria?

7. How have the Israelis recently censored or controlled the Palestinian press through suspended distribution, house/town arrest of journalists and editors, or through deportations of editors and journalists?

8. In Israel's allowing the Arab press to exist, how has the Palestinian press served Israel's interests versus the interests of the Palestinians?

9. How would you respond to Israel's claim that censorship in the Israeli occupied territories has not

been as harsh on the Palestinian press as have other Arab governments in whose countries Palestinian papers have been published, or as the Jordanian government was when it ruled the West Bank until June 1967?

10. Has the circulation of Palestinian newspapers increased since the beginning of the Intifada?

11. Has censorship hurt the credibility of Palestinian papers and have Palestinians turned more to the radio for news?

12. What are your comments on the assertion that Palestinian journalists are political activists first and journalists second? Hasn't this participatory journalism hurt objectivity and credibility? Or is responsibility to the Palestinian cause considered of utmost importance to the Palestinian journalist?

13. If the Palestinian press has been censored to the extent that has been reported, how then was the Intifada able to get started and spread to the extent that it has?

14. Does Al Fajr still have a Hebrew edition? Does it attempt to reach out to Israelis and to communicate the ideas behind the Intifada?

Egyptian Press

1. What is censored now? What is the reasoning behind the censorship?

2. Is there more self-censorship now, rather than overt censorship? How do Egyptian journalists feel about self-censorship and printing the regime's interpretation of events? What do journalists censor out? Are their jobs at stake, through suspension, if they exceed the boundaries of government guidance? Are they rewarded if they don't offend the regime?

3. What penalties are imposed for failure to censor oneself? Recently, have there been any suspensions, loss of licenses, arrests, or detentions?

4. Do most Egyptian journalists feel politically committed to the regime to be able to support official policy, or do they do so only because they have to? Do Egyptian journalists believe in Sadat's "freedom with responsibility"?

5. Have there been censors in the newsrooms, or only during the wars?

6. Can Egyptian journalists now attack basic tenets of the government's foreign policy (e.g. the Camp David Peace Accord)? Can they go beyond criticizing government bureaucrats and suggest other candidates as alternatives to the top leadership?

7. How have journalists and editors circumvented the censors and censorship in Egypt?

8. How would Egyptian journalists compare censorship under Nasser, Sadat, and Mobarak?

9. Has the Higher Press Council actually promoted liberty as much as it has reinforced responsibility and encouraged self-regulation among Egypt's newspapers and their editorial staffs?

10. Have editors recently kept out or filtered out foreign news from foreign wire services?

11. How do Egyptian journalists view the future for the Egyptian press and the possibilities for completely ridding it of any vestiges of censorship or government control?

Chapter 4

Findings

Yo'az Karny of Ha'aretz

Yo'az Karny is the Washington correspondent for Tel Aviv's Ha'aretz (The Land) newspaper. While working in Israel, Karny wrote more on international issues than on domestic issues within Israel, and so did not have much contact with the censor.

Karny, however, was able to relate one instance in which he had written a story on Israeli arms shipped to Guatemala, in late 1986, in which elements of his story were never published. The censor's reason, according to Karny, was that no Israeli newspaper is allowed to be first in publishing a story on Israeli arms exports; such a story must first appear in a foreign newspaper before it can be printed in Israel.

Another exclusive story on Israel's military relations with Guatemala written by Karny was entirely killed. Subsequently, Karny said, his managing editor dealt with the chief military censor, but not through the Editors' Committee, and finally got approval to run the story.

Such censorship nowadays, says Karny, is "kind of a rarity . . . but you can't argue with such issues."

Because of the immense power of censorship, the censors have dealt with politics and other non-military issues not seemingly related to national security. It is this infringement into areas not supposedly subject to censorship that Karny sees as "the gravest development in the last 15 years." Karny adds that this type of censorship has happened quite a few times in the last 15 to 20 years and has led to newspaper editors arguing with the censors.

Karny noted that the Military Censor has been elevated to "the level of watchdog" in Israeli society and is, in essence, a semi-autonomous body in the government. The Ministry of Defense exercises control over the Military Censor, but rarely does it get involved; only in a very few cases, said Karny.

In comparing the level of censorship and press control under earlier Labor governments with that under a Likud government, beginning with Prime Minister Begin, and subsequently, Karny said, "If anything, there is less censorship now than 15 years ago." Karny explained that there had not been more censorship with the Likud Party, but that this decreased censorship was due to a cultural and social relaxation that had occurred since the 1960s. Israel had become more Westernized, Karny said, since the 1960s; back then Israel was more East European with a

bureaucracy and freedom of information that was learned under Bolshevism. "You have to remember," Karny said, "the founding fathers of Israel imported the political culture of East Europe [with them]." Since the 1960s, said Karny in contrast, there has been an open-mindedness, and pluralistic rather than partisan papers.

"It is nothing short of scandalous; it is a conspiracy against freedom of speech," Karny said of the Editors' Committee. Karny said that his own paper, Ha'aretz, has been more reluctant than others in accepting the "regime" of the Editors' Committee. Adding a caveat, Karny said that such thoughts are idealistic. "You're dealing with a society under siege, with life and death issues on a daily basis. I can understand why stories are killed, but I can't accept hearing 'since the editor heard it [on the Editors' Committee], you can't publish it,'" Karny said. He explained his frustration with this latter regulation by describing a situation in which the editor comes back from an Editors' Committee meeting and 12 of the 15 stories his reporters have he has just heard about and is unable to publish them. The loudest critic of the Editors' Committee has been Uri Avnery, author and editor-in-chief of Haolam Hazeh, who has been committed since the early 1950s in his

opposition to the Committee and who has decided not to share in the conspiracy, mentioned Karny.

On the suspension of Hadashot over the publishing of a picture of a not very wounded Palestinian hijacker who "died of his wounds," Karny stated that, at the time, "no paper protested out of solidarity, but [this incident] was not much of a concern." Karny said the concern of Israeli journalists is on human and civil rights because of the lack of a Bill of Rights, without which they are dependent on the whim of the state and the courts which, in effect, legislate press rules because there are no Bill of Rights laws. A draft Bill of Rights was now being completed in the Knesset, said Karny who added that the Bill "would have to qualify it [the freedoms of speech and press] because of the circumstances."

Drora Perl of Ma'ariv, Davar & Israel Defense Forces
Radio

Drora Perl believes that freedom of speech is almost sacred except for national security, the meaning of which depends on the interpretation of the censor. Perl says the censor has to be a person that can "give the right meaning," meaning whether the news needs to be censored or not. "Freedom has to be broad," says Perl, "but censorship can't be everything [under the guise of national security]."

"Most [Israeli journalists] will agree," Perl said, "that censors have been very broad-minded." She said that in only a few cases have there been disputes between journalists and censors and then, Perl added, journalists could turn to their editor and the Editors' Committee. Perl said there are ways to go around the censorship, such as if the story is first reported elsewhere. In the past when the censor tried to cover up a story, the press was persistent in overcoming censorship, Perl said in pointing to the Spring 1984 bus hijacking incident for which Shin Beth personnel were eventually relieved for the murder of two captured Palestinian hijackers.

Journalists think highly of the Editors' Committee and the serious ideas and opinions that the government shares with the Committee, according to Perl. Some editors share this information with their team of journalists and all then agree not to publish such stories until a later date, Perl said. According to Perl, journalists do not think of this system as collusion with the government but who, instead, believe that there are things not to be compromised and that the Editors' Committee is the best group to decide what such compromise is. Perl said that 80 percent to 85 percent of the general public knows little about the Editors' Committee but, she added, the general public leans to the

far right, politically, and is for keeping more information out of the papers. "The [general public's] feeling is that everyone is against us and that we must give up some freedom," Perl said. As a result, said Perl, journalists feel that they must tighten up rules on censorship and, consequently, there might be more censorship now.

"There's 'real' censorship and then there's emphasizing certain [political] angles," Perl said of the inclusion of political and economic matters under censorship in recent years. Perl claimed that the government in its censorship was more "rightist" now in its political views towards such issues as the Intifada. "You hear this especially for TV, who work for the government, that they don't feel as free as they used to," Perl added.

Self-censorship is exercised to quite a degree in Israel, according to Perl. She attributes this to the fact that almost all journalists have served in the Israel Defense Forces and, therefore, realize security considerations. A lot of self-censorship, Perl says, depends on the political views of individual journalists: some may feel it is important to expose a news story while others feel they are helping national security by censoring a story they feel should not be exposed. This

varied outlook suggests why a neutral censor is needed, Perl believes. However, according to Perl, most journalists believe that "to help you have to publish a story and so they leave the decision to censor or to publish or not" to the censor as they go ahead and write the story.

"Everyone is very openly politically biased," Perl said in referring to the censors as well as more than a few journalists. The censors are not political appointees, however, and are considered to be professional and evenhanded, said Perl.

Since the Likud Party came to power, there were more problems between the Editors' Committee and Likud and there were more conflicts with the press, in general, said Perl. As a result, Perl said, "Many papers which were coalition papers are now in opposition."

According to Perl, most Israelis would agree that there should be some censorship and that "Israeli censorship is reasonable." Some believe that it is politically dangerous to pursue policy without the public knowing but, Perl said, most Israeli journalists believe that certain things are not to be discussed or else they can weaken a country. In expressing her personal beliefs, Perl said that "censorship has to be checked

according to the circumstances of whether there is peace or danger in an area."

Perl did not consider credibility to be a problem of the Israeli press, which she said was "very free . . . in a general way." Perl mentioned that Israel's image has been hurt terribly and "not justly so, because they [Western TV camera crews] show what they want." Perl did not consider it direct censorship when Israeli security forces limited access to the West Bank, "especially if there was no clear line," Perl said.

On the January 1989 Israeli Supreme Court ruling on the Mossad director story, Perl did not feel it was a precedent but that it did strengthen freedom of the press. It was not necessarily an asset for other journalists, Perl said, but "a reminder that freedom is there for one who asks for it."

Perl said that Israeli journalists were wary of the editorial staff of Darech Hanitzotz, closed by the authorities in February 1988, because "it was not clear who they stood for." Journalists were critical about the closing and most felt that the government should not do anything to the paper until all the facts had come out in court, Perl said. However, journalists did not feel threatened by this closing as much as they did by the earlier suspension of Hadashot, according to Perl. She

said that journalists then felt that "freedom has to be protected, especially when abused," and that "we have to define the borders [of press freedom versus control] and who is on what side and who is not."

Ofra Yeshua-Lyth of Ma'ariv

Ofra Yeshua-Lyth said that censorship, ideally, only deals with security issues such as Jews in Ethiopia or on Israel's energy sources, but that nothing on political views had to be submitted. If a moral issue was involved, such as mistreatment of Palestinians, editors would argue and become firm with the censor and, if that did not work, they would probably violate censorship by printing the story or a white space in the paper, Yeshua-Lyth said.

In discussing the Editors' Committee and its withholding of information, Yeshua-Lyth said that military correspondents and editors had information on Egyptian forces preparing for war in 1973 but they did not want to create a panic and so the stories were cut by the censors. Subsequently, she said, some Israeli journalists leak to the foreign press, such as The Washington Post to circumvent the Editors' Committee; the story is then printed the next day after appearing overseas.

According to Yeshua-Lyth, most Israelis are in favor of stricter censorship and there is a great deal of hostility by Israelis especially toward television and the press. Nor are many Israeli journalists against the censorship laws. "If soldiers are risking their lives, we'll go along with censorship, but you have to be a watchdog of the watchdog," said Yeshua-Lyth. She said that "in cases where they [the censors] have tried to totally suppress a story, it backfired; if a paper went along with the censors, another paper printed it." In the past, press credentials might have been taken from a journalist for violating censorship, Yeshua-Lyth said, but they were given back shortly thereafter.

Yeshua-Lyth said her filings must still go through the censors if it is on a defense issue, such as if the IDF Chief of Staff visits the United States. Otherwise, everything published here in the United States is free of censorship for her. "In the 1950s and 1960s this wasn't the case," she said, "and even though the world press dealt with it, it still wouldn't be published [in Israel]."

Censorship of the Arab press is a completely different issue which is under military control, Yeshua-Lyth mentioned. "They [the Palestinians] are not even allowed to reprint Israeli paper articles," she said.

She also mentioned that Arab journalists are very well organized now and have a higher degree of credibility now than before on such issues as casualties in a terrorist attack. Israel is getting less distorted stories about the PLO now and, in fact, Arab journalists are the best sources for Israeli journalists on news in the occupied territories, said Yeshua-Lyth.

On censorship/closure cases in the Israeli courts, Yeshua-Lyth said that in the case of Derech Hanitzotz, it was proven that their editorial staff received money from the Palestinian Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). At first there was a big uproar among journalists about this case but, subsequently, the consensus was that the paper's editorial staff "went too far--they took money from the enemy," Yeshua-Lyth said.

Yeshua-Lyth did not attach much significance to the January 1989 Israeli Supreme Court decision. She said that Ha'ir, not being a national paper, did not have access to the Editors' Committee and that is why the censorship disagreement had to go to the Supreme Court instead of being worked out on the committee.

"If the censors keep their heads down and are not intolerable, the future will probably be alright," Yeshua-Lyth said. She characterized the Israeli press as aggressive and intolerable of censorship, particularly if

politics is involved in censorship. Finally, Yeshua-Lyth

did not see much difference between a Labor government or a Likud government in the amount of censorship.

Dalia Shehori of Al Hamishma

Dalia Shehori, who was a diplomatic correspondent for Al Hamishma for 13 years prior to coming to Washington, said that there has been an unwritten voluntary agreement between the government and the Editors' Committee to censor defense matters, immigration from states not having diplomatic relations with Israel, stories which might harm immigrants, and mention or discussions with states having no formal relations with Israel.

However, Shehori said that the press is always on guard to "see that the government isn't using something political, that it is national security [issues being censored]." It is the business of journalists, Shehori said, to find out if censorship issues are purely defense related or if the government has tried to mix in political issues that were not convenient for the government. "Sometimes you can't separate the two," she added. Shehori also mentioned how the government has abused censorship, in the past, by saying that certain issues, which the government did not want made known to

the public, were discussed in the Ministers Committee for Defense Affairs, automatically making those issues secret and unpublishable.

Shehori calls the Editors' Committee a "ridiculous institution that doesn't have a place in any democratic state Maybe when the state was new [it had a place], but today there's no self-justification." Some papers' editors do not come to the meetings of the Editors' Committee, Shehori said in reference to Gershom Schocken of Ha'aretz. Other papers such as Haolam Hazeh and Hadashot do not belong to the Editors' Committee either, she noted. Shehori added that the Committee is not necessary because there is "self-censoring among a free press."

There is a tendency for journalists to censor themselves, Shehori said, because of a sense of responsibility, particularly if the news can cause damage. "If it can cost one life for one scoop, then I don't want any scoops," said Shehori. "On the other hand," Shehori added, "if the government decides to censor, then they [Israeli journalists] go to The New York Times" and the article can be published after it is published there. Shehori considers The New York Times the best newspaper in the world for maximum exposure and the publication of choice for news leaks. According to

Shehori, Israeli journalists circumvent censorship by giving stories to The New York Times correspondent in Israel, rather than going abroad to file and facing the possibility of having to stand trial upon their return to Israel.

Shehori contends that "democracy is in good shape in Israel" and that censorship has not negatively influenced it. "You have to remember," she points out, "that Israel has security problems. The problem is how you use it [censorship]." Shehori said that "censors are for people who want to talk, but shouldn't; they are a 'big brother' who keeps it in a box, otherwise people would have to be more responsible."

Credibility was a problem for the Israeli press at the time of the war in Lebanon when Defense Minister Ariel Sharon was a "master of censorship" who used it to his own benefit, recalled Shehori.

Shehori called the January 1989 Supreme Court ruling a "very good . . . very important decision to not make it [censorship] more secretive than it should be."

Erol Guney of Yediot Aharonot

Erol Guney has been the Washington correspondent for Yediot Aharonot for over three years. He had previously been the head of a French news agency in Israel. In that position, Guney had to send a number of stories outside

the country in order to get them published in Israel, he mentioned. Guney also reported having had his telephone lines cut a few times, but only when he was discussing military affairs. "If you sent your stories by telex or cable, you had to bring it to the censor, then it was sent to the post office" to be transmitted, Guney said. Now journalists have their own telexes and word processors and, in that sense noted Guney, "foreign journalists are now freer than Israeli correspondents" in being able to circumvent censorship. Guney added that sanctions only against foreign journalists for circumventing censorship are light.

Guney noted that while there are questions you cannot touch, such as Israel's nuclear potential, overall there have been more combined political/military issues restricted by the Editors' Committee than purely military security issues. Guney added that this was especially true during Israel's War of Attrition with Egypt from 1970-1973.

Censorship on the Lebanon war was not for military reasons; it was politically motivated censorship meant to protect Defense Minister Ariel Sharon whose plans in Lebanon were not approved by the government, according to Guney.

In contrast with its application to issues within Israel, the application of censorship to the Intifada is, according to Guney, a "different story." Guney mentioned that censorship was a problem, but it did not obstruct one's work until the Intifada began. Before, censorship had primarily been on purely military or nuclear issues, but now, with the Intifada, it is a different situation with permission to print a related story being frequently withheld, Guney said. Guney also pointed out abuses by government agents who are using press cards to get into West Bank villages to arrest people.

Even after censorship problems were reported in both Lebanon and the occupied territories, Guney does not believe that the credibility of the Israeli press was hurt. Guney said that Israeli TV was hurt by the Director General, who closed off the West Bank, but the press continued to write stories. However, Guney noted, the problem was more a lack of interest among the Israeli public than a lack of credibility in the Israeli press. "There's no story when a Palestinian is killed, only when an Israeli is killed," said Guney.

Guney confirmed that there is a tendency for Israeli journalists to censor themselves. However, he added that much depends on the sort of journalist that one is and the sort of paper one works for, with some newspapers

having representatives of the extreme left and the extreme right.

In Israel, most readers are right-wing, noted Guney, adding that a journalist must watch his wording to still get his (other than right-wing) ideas across to the public. "On the Intifada, the public is very right-wing; people are ready to kill and throw all Arabs out," Guney said. As a consequence, some journalists write the way the public feels and some journalists feel the same way as the public, said Guney. However, Guney also said that other journalists are "more cultural or intellectual and 25 percent to 30 percent of them are for an agreement with the Palestinians."

Guney said he thinks the January 1989 Supreme Court decision will lead to greater press freedom. "They won't use censorship in a large context, but in a narrower context," Guney said.

Looking into the future, Guney believes that there "will always be censorship as long as Israel is in a state of war, but it does not have to tend to be more strict." The recent Supreme Court decision will deter much censorship except for national security issues, according to Guney, or unless there is a civil war between right and left wing factions, which Guney said was quite possible. Guney did not believe that the

latest court ruling, however, would affect censorship on the coverage of terrorism. Lately, there has been more censorship of Jewish-inspired terrorism than on Arab terrorism, Guney said. "Israel would be a very democratic and good country if it found a way to give Arabs their autonomy," said Guney.

Sergei Shargorodsky of AP, Jerusalem Bureau

The Associated Press correspondent in Jerusalem, Sergei Shargorodsky, said that he does not encounter censorship in his day-to-day work; it is mostly limited to military stories. Shargorodsky said that AP correspondents do go to the censor when writing on a covered topic rather than trying to circumvent the censor. However, they do not submit material on the occupied territories unless specifically demanded by the censor, from whom there have been no demands recently, Shargorodsky said. In the past, the only censorship problems Shargorodsky faced was having a story held, such as when the next of kin of a soldier killed in Lebanon had yet to be notified.

However, with the Intifada on the West Bank, said Shargorodsky, there is censorship and Israeli troops have established closed military zones. He mentioned that security forces had abused the closed zoning process by carrying blank forms that declare an area closed and

filling them in to show to journalists when they appear. Shargorodsky added that areas where people have been stoned are usually put off limits.

The combination of closed military zones and areas under curfew have made it especially difficult for television journalists, Shargorodsky said. They are stopped by the army when the soldiers see the camera, and they are also stoned by the Palestinians who suspect them of being police agents in disguise, said Shargorodsky.

With news sources being inaccessible on the West Bank and the Palestinian Press Service having been closed for over a year now, every news agency has had to develop its own network of sources, according to Shargorodsky. He mentioned that Israeli journalists have developed their own Arab sources in order to continue gathering the news under the latest restrictions.

Ghassan Bishara of Al Fajr

Ghassan Bishara is the Washington correspondent for East Jerusalem's Al Fajr. Bishara said that censorship occurs only occasionally against the Hebrew press but that it occurs every day against the Arab press. Anything and everything that is published in the Arab press they want to see and they have the liberty to censor in total or in part, said Bishara in reference to the Israeli authorities. He called Israeli censorship

very arbitrary, adding that it was difficult to find a trend. Bishara said a lot depends on the mood of the censor or the political situation; the censors sometimes allow something and other times they do not.

The Israelis also reserve the right to shut down papers anywhere from a week to permanently, to deny the paper use of the Israeli postal system to distribute, and to require all editors to renew their license to publish each year. The Israelis can also detain journalists, said Bishara, who pointed out that seven Palestinian journalists of Al Fajr were currently under administrative detention and that 56 out of a total of 170 Palestinian journalists on the West Bank were under arrest as of March 1989.

"It [censorship] just lets Palestinians know they [the Israelis] are the masters, the powers to reckon with, and to harass them [Palestinians]," Bishara said. He said he did not think censorship had helped the Israelis in their occupation, otherwise they would have censored long ago. Bishara said that the censorship has not been that effective since people can listen to the Voice of America or to European radio stations. He also pointed out how he, himself, had skirted the censorship when, after having had the last interview with Abu Jihad before he was assassinated in Tunis by Israeli commandos,

Bishara had the story published in The Washington Post and eventually had it published in Israel.

The Palestinian press has served the Israelis, by its existence, in perpetuating the myth of Israel being a democracy, said Bishara. There is some press freedom in Israel, Bishara said, but if compared to France, England or the United States, then Israel cannot be considered a democracy in how it allows the Palestinian press to function.

The continued existence of the Palestinian press, circumscribed though it may be, has helped Palestinians, as well, said Bishara. According to Bishara, the harassed press has managed to help Palestinians by: allowing them to read and to publish at least some of what they want published; exposing them to some materials written by Palestinians; and helping them through exposure to some semblance of a free press in Israel.

Bishara admitted that there was more press freedom in Israel than in other Arab countries, but he called that analogy a poor one because the Arab countries "have a long way to go." Israel is European oriented, whereas the Arab countries are in the Third World and do not claim to have freedom of the press, Bishara said.

In comparing control over the Palestinian press by the Israelis and the Jordanians, who held the West Bank

until June 1967, Bishara said that, in general, there was more press freedom in Israel than in most Arab countries, including Jordan. However, Bishara added, "Back then, the issues under Jordanian control were different. When Jordan controlled the West Bank, there were no confiscations of land and no closings of universities, so you can't draw a comparison [between Jordan and Israel]."

Concerning the objectivity versus nationalistic "responsibility" of Palestinian journalism, Bishara explained that objectivity is a uniquely American concept and that the Palestinian press was more like the European press. Bishara said he viewed the Palestinian press as being more akin to the press of the Third World which defines its role as wanting to take sides on issues and as not only bringing facts, but in providing alternative solutions. In pointing out other occupations throughout history, Bishara said the press could not behave "objectively," being blind to reality and treating the occupier as equally as the occupied.

Censorship has hurt credibility in a sense, Bishara said, because readers know their news has been approved by Israeli censors. But the Palestinian people have no choice but to support their press and to read what is available to them since not everyone can read Hebrew, English or French, said Bishara.

As a result of the Intifada, Bishara said he assumed that circulation of Palestinian newspapers had decreased, but he did not know for sure. However, Bishara said that he thought that the circulation of Al Fajr had increased in spite of the censorship.

With increased censorship and decreased circulation, the Intifada was spread not through the pages of Palestinian newspapers but through leaflets and other ad hoc publications put out by the Unified Command of the Intifada, according to Bishara. Facsimile machines and telephones have also played a prominent role in passing news of the uprising, Bishara said. Bishara said he was not aware of any increase in underground newspapers, however, as a result of more closures of publications on the West Bank recently.

Al Fajr printed a Hebrew edition for a short while, but Bishara mentioned that a Hebrew monthly may now be being published. The Palestinians are still trying to reach out to Israelis with articles in Arabic and English, both for political as well as for commercial reasons, said Bishara.

Bishara said he did not see any noticeable difference in the amount of censorship between Israel's Labor or Likud governments.

Bishara was pessimistic about the future for the Palestinian press. "The longer the Intifada continues, the more they're under pressure and isolated, the more they'll turn the screws, . . . and the more they'll crack down on the Palestinian press," said Bishara of his expectation of Israeli actions.

Tawfik Houda of Al Gomhouria

Tawfik Houda claimed there has been no more censorship since Sadat was in power. However, there may be "directions," she said, from the government on how to explain something, to the chief editors of the government papers. No one is actually responsible for censorship now, said Houda. As a result of this freer atmosphere, many opposition daily papers came out, noted Houda, and "nobody can control them." The government cannot confiscate the papers or stop the news, she said, although "maybe they give ideas on how to explain; how the opposition papers got the story wrong, then the editor will write such a story [the correct way]."

There was censorship under Nasser, said Houda, but now there is only self-censorship. However, Houda said that "if journalists are not [politically] convinced, they won't answer the opposition paper's story with one of their own; they don't have to write, and sometimes they don't respond." Some journalists feel pressure to

support official policy, but not all of them do, said Houda who added that her editor does not always write what the government wants and that he also criticizes the government.

Houda said that Egyptian journalists are now allowed to criticize government officials, including the cabinet ministers, on both policy matters and personal issues. In fact, according to Houda, President Mubarak encourages such criticism, calling his officials public servants who should expect criticism. However, added Houda, journalists for the government papers cannot criticize Mubarak directly but they can criticize his policies. The opposition papers do criticize him, however, notes Houda.

Houda maintained that Egypt has the freest press in the whole area. Government papers may show the government's viewpoint, but they are not government owned, Houda said. All are independently operated, and receive neither subsidies nor supervision from the government, Houda asserted.

On the role of the Higher Press Council in reinforcing responsibility and promoting liberty, Houda said that the HPC acts on behalf of a paper when there is an administrative problem. However, when a paper does not fulfill the rights of a journalist, said Houda, the

journalist may complain to the press syndicate and if the problem is not redressed there, the problem goes to the HPC.

Dania Aligh of AP, Cairo Bureau

Dania Aligh of Associated Press in Cairo also said there was now no sort of censorship in Egypt. "It was different in the early 1970s in Sadat's time when everything had to go through the censor. Now, there are open lines--telephones and CRTs," said Aligh. She said she believes that the telephones are tapped occasionally, but there is never censorship on their stories.

Aligh classified Egypt's newspapers as being either government papers, controlled by the government with government-appointed editors, or opposition papers, which the government sometimes gives a "hard time" for printing "atrocious things," many of which are lies, Aligh said.

Self-censorship is a practice journalists do themselves; it is not directed by the Information Minister, Aligh said. She said she did not know of anyone penalized recently for not self-censoring, although some time ago President Mubarak had directed that stringers for Western newspapers no longer be allowed to cover the presidency because of an embarrassing remark made by Mubarak that had been reported. Subsequently, Egyptian reporters covering the

presidency had to be accredited to either a government or an opposition paper, said Aligh.

On journalists' political commitment to the regime, Aligh said: "They do their job. They report what the government says; they, like the people, don't believe what the government says, but they report . . . A job is a job." Aligh added that "Those who feel [the need to say] more can join opposition papers."

Until recently, many Egyptian journalists worked for both government and opposition newspapers because a journalist is not paid very well, said Aligh. However, a recent government decree barred journalists from working for both types of papers, making it an offense to do so, Aligh said. As a result, Aligh explained, this measure would pressure journalists to keep only their government job, only because it paid better.

Every now and then, according to Aligh, an opposition reporter is put in jail for a few days by the government under powers granted to it by the Emergency Laws enacted in 1981 when Sadat was assassinated.

As the interview continued, Aligh mentioned other incidents of press control that would come to mind. Aligh mentioned how an opposition paper, New Wafd, had one issue confiscated in December 1984 for violating reporting restrictions on Muslim fundamentalists. Two

days later, the civil court ordered the issue released, Aligh mentioned. Aligh recalled that another, similar incident had occurred again in 1988, but she could not remember specific details.

Aligh again reversed herself in mentioning, in contrast, that the Intifada in the Israeli occupied territories is receiving wide coverage in the Egyptian newspapers. Interestingly, Aligh noted that the Israeli government had mentioned that Egyptian newspapers were "making too much [of a fuss] in the press" and that they were "being too much anti-Israeli" in their coverage of the Intifada. Overpopulation and family planning have been sensitive topics to devout Muslims in the past and have been issues subject to censorship. However, since Mobarak has made national issues of these, the news media has been able to cover them by avoiding the religious aspects and stressing economic development aspects, instead, Aligh said. She added that one can find controversial issues in both government and opposition papers, although such an article might receive limited coverage and appear a day later in a government paper, especially coverage of religious strife. Foreign policy is also now subject to criticism, Aligh noted, and it is "no big deal . . . to take apart the Camp David Accord."

There is only a limited amount of foreign news in Egyptian papers, according to Aligh, but it is not due to editors keeping out or filtering out foreign news from the foreign wire services. Aligh said that one might find an article on the PLO or an Arab country on the front page and another half page inside with foreign news. "Egyptians aren't interested in it [foreign news]," Aligh said.

On prospects for the future of press freedom in Egypt, Aligh said that it "doesn't look like there's a possibility of freedom becoming less for the next few years, at least. With this regime it [press freedom] will remain." More and more papers are dealing with controversial issues, and Mobarak, himself, is coming out with the "bitter facts on foreign debt and the importing of food."

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Both Israel and Egypt have made substantial inroads in recent years against censorship and press control. However, by Western standards, they would both fall short of being considered as having a free press. Perhaps one thing that the reader has hopefully learned from this study is that the perspectives of the journalists were more than an update on current censorship practices. Their perspectives can also provide the reader with insight into their thought processes as members of their respective societies and into the collective, historical experiences those societies endured. With this in mind, readers from the West should not be so quick in casting moral judgment on such countries for having different levels of press freedoms than does the West. However, a few points need still be stated.

Freedom of the press, as an ideal, is slowly taking root in the minds of some Israelis as that nation has become more Westernized and less "Bolshevik." However, a continued external threat has allowed censorship and press control to persist longer than it might have otherwise lasted. Sadly, until such time that a peaceful compromise can be achieved on Israel's occupied

territories, full press freedom cannot come to fruition for either the Israelis or for the Palestinians. It appears that greater press freedom is also becoming a reality in Egypt as that country also becomes more Westernized.

Codification of freedom of the press may go a long way in promoting lesser control and censorship if Israel's Bill of Rights is ever approved. In Egypt, press freedom requires that the Emergency Laws be dropped from the books and that the freedom gained under Mobarak be made a permanent fixture of government not subject to the decision of some future capricious leader.

But perhaps the biggest change that needs to occur before true freedom of the press can occur in these countries and before censorship and press controls can be abolished, is in the minds of their people. It is perhaps understandable to want to censor for national security or to prevent social strife that might further hinder national development. But perhaps there is a limit to how much censorship one should be willing to want. Ought not journalists and editors of these and other similar countries be less willing to "do the devil's work for him" through their eager indulgence in self-censorship?

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