



Hasbara

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Hasbara refers to the propaganda efforts to sell Israel, justify its actions, and defend it in world opinion. Using contemporary euphemisms, it is Public diplomacy for Israel, or using a pejorative interpretation, then it is apologia. Israel portrays itself as fighting on two fronts: the Palestinians and world opinion. The latter is dealt with hasbara. The premise of hasbara is that Israel's problems are a matter of better propaganda, and not one of an underlying unjust situation.

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The techniques utilized

- Smearing/defaming critics of Israel, aka, attacking the messenger. This is even the terminology found in the *Hasbara Handbook*
- Selective discussion of issues
- Framing of issues, and setting the terminology used in discussing Israel
- Harassing media about its coverage, aka, flak
- Challenging the portrayal of an alternative narrative, and attempting to keep the zionist narrative as the dominant one.

Hasbara Campus Manual

The Hasbara Handbook: Promoting Israel on Campus, is now available online. And this is an interesting admission (page 31 onwards):

Propaganda is used by those who want to communicate in ways that engage the emotions and downplay rationality, in an attempt to promote a certain message.

The manual goes on to describe seven propaganda techniques:

1. **Name calling:** through the careful use of words, then name calling technique links a person or an idea to a negative symbol.
2. **Glittering generality:** Simply put, glittering generality is name calling in reverse. Instead of trying to attach negative meanings to ideas or people, glittering generalities use positive phrases, which the audience are attached to, in order to lend positive image to things. Words such as "freedom", "civilization",...
3. **Transfer:** Transfer involves taking some of the prestige and authority of one concept and applying it to another. For example, a speaker might decide to speak in front of a United Nations flag, in an attempt to gain legitimacy

for himself or his idea.

4. **Testimonial:** Testimonial means enlisting the support of somebody admired or famous to endorse and ideal or campaign.
5. **Plain folks:** The plain folks technique attempts to convince the listener that the speaker is a 'regular guy', who is trust-worthy because they are like 'you or me'.
6. **Fear**
7. **Bandwagon**

The examples given are very interesting, and worth reading.

Proponents and Practitioners

- Elias Buchwald
- Frank Luntz

Resources

- "Habara Handbook: Promoting Israel on Campus", World Union of Jewish Students, March 2002.
- Fadi Kiblawi, Israel's Campus Concerns, *The Palestine Chronicle*, Oct. 23, 2003. Quote: "The Hasbara Handbook prescribes fascinating instructions on attacking the messenger and avoiding the message at all costs 'in ways that engage the emotions, and downplay rationality, in an attempt to promote' their cause. In a section entitled 'Name Calling,' Israel's Jewish Agency writes, 'Creating negative connotations by name calling is done to try and get the audience to reject a person or idea on the basis of negative associations, without allowing a real examination of that person or idea.'"
- Conal Urganhart, Israel uses TV show to find its best spin doctor, *The Guardian*, Nov. 27, 2004.
- Gary Rosenblatt, "Hasbara' Goes Prime Time", *The Jewish Week*, December 3, 2004.
- Hilary Leila Krieger, Expert: Israeli PR improving, but..., *Jerusalem Post*, December 16, 2004. Interviews Frank Luntz during the 2004 Herzliya Conference.
- Gary Rosenblatt, "Inside Israel's Image War", *The Jewish Week*, January 19, 2007.

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