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THE BLOGS

Mark Ginsberg

The Battle for Truth: The Fight to Reclaim Facts



Illustration of fake news, disinformation and online propaganda - Shutterstock

The old adage “a lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth puts on its shoes” was coniured in a time before social media. Today, the lie can travel multiple times around the

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place Jewish communities and the State of Israel under sustained pressure.

At the same time, a parallel struggle is unfolding: a battle for public opinion in the United States, where support for Israel, once a bipartisan cornerstone, is eroding at an unprecedented pace.

The numbers are stark. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 60% of Americans nov hold an unfavorable view of Israel, compared to just 37% with a favorable view, a dramatic reversal from just a few years ago. Even more telling is where this shift is happening, with majorities of Americans under 50, across both political parties, now viewing Israel negatively.

This is not a marginal fluctuation. It is a generational realignment, and it is not occurring in a vacuum.

On the far-Right, antisemitism remains rooted in traditional tropes, like conspiracy theories about Jewish control, financial manipulation, and dual loyalty. These narratives, once largely confined to extremist circles, have found renewed life online. They're amplified by algorithm-driven ecosystems that reward outrage and radicalization.

On the far-Left, the language is different, but the effect can be similar. There, antisemitism, often reframed as anti-Zionism, casts Israel not merely as a criticizable state, but as a uniquely illegitimate and evil one.

In this worldview, the Jewish right to self-determination is singled out for rejection, and complex geopolitical realities are reduced to simplistic binaries of oppressor and oppressed. The line between criticism of Israeli policy and the delegitimization of Jewish identity is frequently blurred.

The convergence of these forces, old hatred on the Right, new ideological hostility on the Left, creates a potent and dangerous environment. It is one in which misinformation spreads

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The Blogs: The Battle for Truth: The Fight to Reclaim Facts | Mark Weiss | The Times of Israel

In today's online landscape, perception is often shaped less by verified information than by repetition, virality, and emotional resonance.

Social media platforms, while democratizing access to information, have also enabled the rapi spread of distortion. Images stripped of context, misleading statistics, and outright falsehoods can travel faster and further than carefully sourced reporting.

The consequences are tangible. Polling trends suggest that younger Americans are not only more critical of Israel, but also more susceptible to narratives that frame the conflict in absolutist terms.

As one analysis noted, Israel is "losing America's youth," reflecting a deeper shift in how the next generation interprets the Middle East and the role of the US within it .

If public opinion continues to move in this direction, the implications will extend beyond discourse. They will shape policy, influence elections, and redefine alliances.

Recognizing this challenge, new initiatives have emerged to rebalance the information environment. Platforms such as Jewish Onliner, Allyvia, and Paxpoint represent a strategic response to the digital battlefield.

Their premise is straightforward but essential. Misinformation must be countered not only with rebuttals, but with accessible, credible, and timely facts.

These initiatives reflect an understanding that the fight against antisemitism today is inseparable from the fight for informational integrity. It is not enough to condemn hatred; it must also be confronted at its source, where it is produced, amplified, and consumed.

Yet these efforts, while vital, cannot operate in isolation. They require broader engagement,

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This is particularly urgent in the American context. The US has long been Israel's most important ally, not only strategically but culturally and politically. That relationship has been underpinned by shared values and a broad base of public support.

As that base fractures, the alliance itself becomes more vulnerable to political shifts and ideological swings.

The stakes, therefore, are high.

What is at issue is not merely Israel's image, but the resilience of democratic discourse in the face of polarization and disinformation. Antisemitism, in its modern forms, often serves as a warning signal, an early indicator of deeper societal fractures. Addressing it requires more than reactive measures. It demands a **proactive commitment to truth, to complexity, and to the difficult work of engaging across divides**.

The battle for public opinion is already underway. The question is whether those committed tc facts, nuance, and fairness are prepared to fight it with the same intensity as those who seek tc distort them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Ginsberg is an Israel-based digital marketer and commentator on technology and artificial intelligence, with over two decades of firsthand perspective on the country's innovation economy. Originally from South Florida and now based in Efrat, he analyzes the growth of Israel's tech ecosystem and the broader implications of AI on business, policy, and society.

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THE BLOGS

Mark Ginsberg

Why Israel Must Fight for Reality Itself



AI, the Internet, and our New Reality

By the time Israel manages to refute a lie, the lie has often travelled the world, been translated into dozens of languages, cited by activists, repeated by journalists, adopted at the United Nations, absorbed into school curricula, embedded into Wikipedia entries, and fed into the large language models increasingly shaping how billions understand current events.

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Israel is fighting a cognitive war alongside its wars against Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran. It may ultimately prove just as consequential.

For decades, Israel's enemies understood something that many Israelis dismissed as secondary: victory is not achieved only on the battlefield. It is achieved in the realm of perception, and by determining which facts people encounter, whose voices are considered authoritative, and which narratives become accepted truth.

The objective is not simply to persuade, it is to construct an alternative reality.

In that reality, Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, is no longer understood as the movement through which an indigenous people returned to its ancestral homeland after centuries of persecution and exile. Instead, it is recast as a uniquely illegitimate colonial enterprise.

In that reality, the world's only Jewish state is transformed from a nation defending itself against organizations openly committed to its destruction into the primary source of instability in the Middle East.

In that reality, claims of "genocide" and deliberate "starvation" are treated not as contested allegations requiring rigorous evidentiary standards, but as established facts repeated with increasing certainty.

None of this happened by accident.

The old propaganda model depended on newspapers, pamphlets, television broadcasts, and speeches. The new model is networked, decentralized, and self-reinforcing.

A report by a respected or even highly-suspect NGO is cited by journalists, journalists are citec by international organizations, international organizations are cited by Wikipedia editors, Wikipedia becomes a source for students, activists, and casual readers.

Large language models trained on publicly available material absorb these narratives as consensus, and future journalists then consult those same systems for background

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information.

The loop closes but has endless ramifications.

What begins as an allegation ends as accepted reality.

We have already witnessed how this process operates.

The controversy surrounding recent reporting on allegations of Israeli sexual abuse by Nicolas Kristoff of the New York Times offered a revealing case study.

Many of his sources can be traced back to one organization, the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, which is run by a virulently anti-Israel obsessive with ties to Hamas and a history of incendiary and false accusations against Israel.

These libels were then amplified through media reporting, echoed in international discourse, and entered broader public consciousness before underlying evidentiary standards had been fully scrutinized.

Nonetheless, the issue extends far beyond any single article or report.

Increasingly, a relatively small number of highly motivated activists understand that the architecture of knowledge itself has become contested territory.

Edit histories on online encyclopedias, search engine optimization strategies, coordinated social media campaigns, selective sourcing practices, and advocacy-driven reports all influenc how future generations understand today's events.

Wikipedia occupies a particularly important place in this ecosystem. For millions of people, it serves as the first stop for understanding complex topics. Researchers have demonstrated that organized groups of editors have systematically shaped entries relating to Israel, Zionism, terrorism, and the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

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This should alarm anyone committed to intellectual integrity: open knowledge platforms can be vulnerable to sustained ideological capture.

The consequences extend into artificial intelligence.

Large language models do not independently discover truth; they identify patterns within the information on which they are trained.

If the available corpus increasingly reflects distorted narratives, omissions, activist framing, or ideologically curated sourcing, those distortions risk becoming embedded into the next generation of digital knowledge tools.

Students asking basic questions about Zionism, the history of the conflict, or the nature of terrorist organizations such as Hamas may increasingly receive answers reflecting accumulated biases rather than balanced historical understanding.

The danger is not that technology becomes anti-Israel.

The danger is that technology mistakes activism for consensus.

Israel's adversaries grasp the significance of this shift.

Iran invests heavily in state media, influence operations, and digital manipulation. Hamas has long understood the value of imagery, symbolism, and emotional narratives. Hezbollah operates sophisticated media networks alongside its military infrastructure.

Meanwhile, many Israelis still cling to the comforting belief that facts speak for themselves.

They do not.

Facts require advocates, evidence requires distribution, and truth requires infrastructure.

This does not mean Israel should embrace disinformation, fabricate evidence, or abandon its democratic values. Quite the opposite. Democracies possess an enormous strategic advantage

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reality itself.

However, reality only matters if people encounter it.

Israel needs to invest seriously in the defense of truth. That means training a generation of editors, researchers, historians, technologists, and communicators capable of engaging where public understanding is actually formed.

It means ensuring that accurate information appears not merely in government archives but in search results, educational resources, encyclopedias, social media feeds, podcasts, documentaries, and AI training datasets.

It means recognizing that a press release issued in Jerusalem is not enough if millions encounter an opposing narrative first through TikTok, Wikipedia, Google, or ChatGPT.

Israel must compete in the marketplace of ideas with the same seriousness that it approaches missile defense.

The cognitive war will not end with a ceasefire in Gaza, a weakened Hezbollah, or a nuclear agreement with Iran. It is a long-term struggle over historical memory, moral legitimacy, and the boundaries of truth itself.

If others write the story of Zionism, of October 7, of Jewish indigeneity, and of Israel's right to defend itself, then military victories may prove temporary while narrative defeats become permanent.

The first responsibility of a free society is to defend its citizens.

The second is to defend reality.

Today, for Israel, the two have become inseparable.

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THE BLOGS

Mark Ginsberg

Israel Must Win the Story Before the Question Is Asked



Online global access to information - courtesy of Shutterstock

For decades, Israel's public advocacy has largely operated in reactive mode. A war begins, a terrorist attack takes place or an accusation is leveled, and Israel scrambles to respond. Officials appear on television to explain military operations, rebut allegations and provide context that should have been established long before the crisis erupted.

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By then, much of the damage has already been done.

The encouraging development is that Israeli public advocacy is beginning to recognize this fundamental weakness. The discussion is gradually moving beyond defending the latest action towards addressing the deeper questions that determine how Israel is perceived: Who are the Jewish people? Why are they in this land? What rights do they possess? What does Israel represent, not only for Jews, but for the wider world?

This is a necessary strategic shift. Israel cannot successfully explain each individual battle if it has already lost the argument over why it has the right to exist and defend itself.

For too long, Israel's advocates have relied on a narrow set of messages. Israel is a democracy. Israel contributes technology to the world. Israel seeks peace. All are true and important, but none adequately answers the ideological campaign that presents Jews as foreign colonizers who arrived in someone else's country.

The answer must begin with Jewish history and indigeneity.

The Jewish people did not select the Land of Israel as a convenient refuge in the twentieth century. Jewish identity, language, faith, calendar, collective memory and national consciousness were formed in this land. Jerusalem is not merely Israel's capital. It has been the spiritual and national center of the Jewish people for three thousand years.

Even in exile, Jews prayed towards Jerusalem, mourned the destruction of their Temple, celebrated agricultural festivals tied to the seasons of Israel and ended the Passover Seder with the words, "Next year in Jerusalem." Hebrew was revived as a spoken national language because it had never ceased to be the language of Jewish prayer, scholarship and memory.

This is not the behavior of a foreign colonial population. It is the story of an indigenous people returning to its ancestral homeland.

Jewish rights in the Land of Israel are not dependent solely on the Holocaust, the United Nations Partition Plan or international sympathy. They are rooted in history, continuous

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Jewish presence, religious and cultural attachment, and modern international recognition, including the decisions at San Remo and the League of Nations Mandate.

This does not erase the rights, dignity or aspirations of others. Rights are not a finite resource. But any serious discussion must begin by acknowledging that Jewish national rights are not inventions and Jewish sovereignty is not an historical accident.

Israel must also speak more confidently about its relationship with the Christian world. Christianity was born in the Land of Israel from within Jewish civilization. Its foundational places, figures and texts cannot be understood without the geography and history of the Jewish homeland.

Today, Israel is the only country in the Middle East where the Christian population has grown substantially over the decades and where Christian holy places are protected by a sovereign government committed to freedom of worship. At a time when ancient Christian communities have been devastated across parts of the region, Israel stands as a guardian of a shared biblical inheritance.

This connection is not merely theological. Israel and much of the Christian world share a civilizational challenge. The assault on Israel is part of a wider confrontation between democratic societies and Islamist movements that reject religious freedom, pluralism and the sovereignty of non-Muslim peoples in the Middle East.

Israel is not fighting Islam, nor are Muslims collectively its enemy. The threat is Islamism: a political ideology that seeks to impose religious supremacy through coercion, terrorism and, where possible, state power. Hamas, Hezbollah, the Iranian regime and their allies may focus their violence on Israel, but their ambitions extend far beyond it.

Israel is on the front line, but it is not the final destination.

The next arena in this struggle is artificial intelligence. Increasingly, people will not learn about Israel by reading books, visiting museums or even searching traditional websites. They

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will ask large language models to explain Zionism, the origins of the conflict, Jewish indigeneity or the status of Jerusalem.

The answers they receive will be shaped by the material on which those systems were trained and the sources they retrieve. If the digital information environment is dominated by decades of anti-Israel activism, distorted terminology and endlessly repeated falsehoods, AI models may reproduce those prejudices with the appearance of neutral authority.

This means Israel's advocacy organizations must do more than publish responses on social media. They must create authoritative, well-sourced and digitally accessible bodies of knowledge about Jewish history, archaeology, law, religion and national rights.

Primary documents should be translated, indexed and placed online in formats that AI system can recognize and use. Hebrew sources must become accessible in multiple languages. Organizations should test major AI models for recurring distortions, publicly document their findings and engage technology companies with evidence-based requests for greater accuracy.

Most importantly, Israel must flood the digital public square with substance rather than slogans. Artificial intelligence cannot draw upon historical evidence that has never been digitized, translated or presented clearly.

Israel's advocacy challenge is therefore no longer simply to respond faster. It is to shape the intellectual foundations upon which future answers will be built.

The battle for Israel's legitimacy will increasingly be decided before a spokesperson enters a television studio and even before a user types a question. Getting ahead of the game means ensuring that when the world asks who the Jewish people are and why Israel exists, the truth is already there.

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THE BLOGS

Mark Ginsberg

You Cannot Boycott Israel Only When It Is Convenient



Israeli settlement of Maalah Adumim - image courtesy of Shutterstock

The British Government's decision to ban trade in goods produced in Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria has been presented as a carefully calibrated measure: opposition to the settlements, not a boycott of Israel; pressure on a particular policy, not hostility towards an entire country. France, meanwhile, is pressing the European Union to impose similar restrictions, while Canada has warned its companies against economic involvement with

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Israeli settlements and joined Britain and France in imposing targeted sanctions connected to alleged settler violence.

The details differ, but the direction is unmistakable. Boycotting Israelis has begun to move from the slogans of activists into the policies of Western governments. The British ban may have only a limited direct economic effect. Trade in settlement goods represents a tiny fraction of the approximately £6 billion in annual commerce between Britain and Israel.

However, that is precisely why the measure is so revealing. It is designed less to change economic realities than to place an official badge of legitimacy on the principle of boycotting Jews depending on where they live.

Governments insist that a neat distinction can be maintained between Israel within the pre-1967 lines and Israeli communities beyond them. Experience tells us otherwise. For the international boycott movement, the settlements have always been the most politically acceptable point of entry.

First, boycott products from Judea and Samaria. Then exclude Israeli universities because they allegedly cooperate with the state. Boycott Israeli artists because they receive public funding. Target Israeli athletes because they compete under the Israeli flag. Pressure businesses because they operate anywhere in Israel. Eventually, the distinction between boycotting “the settlements” and boycotting Israel disappears altogether.

This is not a hypothetical slippery slope, it is the established pattern of the boycott campaign. Israeli academics who have no connection to the settlements have been excluded. Israeli performers have faced demands that their appearances be cancelled. Sporting bodies have been pressured to expel Israel. Businesses operating inside Israel’s internationally recognized borders have been targeted. Even individual Israelis have been attacked simply for having served in the IDF, as almost every Jewish Israeli is expected to do.

Recently, boycott activists even targeted an Adidas campaign featuring Shalev Biton, an Israeli amputee, while spreading false claims about his military service. Biton lost his leg in a motorcycle accident in 2021, two years before the present war began. None of that mattered. He was Israeli, he had once served in the IDF, and therefore he became an acceptable target.

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That is where the supposedly limited logic of boycott inevitably leads. It does not remain attached to a postcode or a particular political dispute. It attaches itself to people.

There is also a profound hypocrisy at the heart of the entire enterprise. The same countries that publicly condemn, sanction and boycott Israelis continue to benefit every day from Israeli ingenuity.

Their hospitals use Israeli medical technologies. Their citizens rely on Israeli-developed treatments, diagnostic systems and medical devices. Their computers and mobile phones contain technology designed or refined in Israeli research centers. Their farmers use Israeli irrigation and agricultural innovations. Their banks, airports, utilities and government departments depend on Israeli cybersecurity expertise.

When terrorists plan attacks in European cities, intelligence supplied by Israel can help prevent bloodshed. When hostile drones and missiles threaten Western forces or allies, Israeli defense technology becomes extremely desirable. Governments that denounce Israel in public frequently seek its experience in counterterrorism, missile defense, cyberwarfare, border security and intelligence gathering in private.

Apparently, Israeli goods may be morally unacceptable on the supermarket shelf but Israeli intelligence is entirely welcome when it saves European lives.

Those calling for boycotts are rarely willing to follow their own reasoning to its honest conclusion. They do not stop using their smartphones to investigate which components or patents may have emerged from Israel. They do not ask hospitals to remove Israeli medical equipment. They do not demand that Western intelligence agencies reject warnings originating from Israeli sources. They do not refuse Israeli cybersecurity protection when their personal information or national infrastructure is under attack.

Their boycott ends precisely where their comfort, health or security begins. That is not moral consistency, it is **political theatre**.

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Nor are settlements treated according to any universal standard. There are territorial disputes occupations and contested borders across the world. Yet the international campaign to identify, label, isolate and economically punish individuals based on their address is directed with unparalleled intensity at the one Jewish state.

One may oppose Israeli settlement policy. Many Israelis do. One may argue about the future borders of Israel and a Palestinian state. Israelis have been doing so for decades. Nevertheless, legitimate criticism of policy does not require collective economic punishment, and it certainly does not justify creating a category of Israelis with whom commercial contact is considered morally contaminated.

The measures may also hurt the very Palestinians their advocates claim to defend. Israeli businesses operating beyond the Green Line have frequently employed Palestinians at wages and under conditions unavailable elsewhere in the Palestinian economy.

When such businesses are driven out, the consequences are not borne only by their Israeli owners. Palestinian employees lose their livelihoods as well. More fundamentally, boycotts do nothing to build the coexistence supposedly sought by their proponents. They discourage economic cooperation, punish shared workplaces and tell Israelis and Palestinians that separation, rather than engagement, is the international community's preferred model.

Britain, France and Canada will argue that their actions are intended to preserve the possibility of two states. However, when they and a host of other countries recently recognized a Palestinian state for the same reason, this act of performative diplomacy failed to move the needle one iota.

Unilateral actions and punishment directed exclusively at Israel sends Palestinians the opposite message: that international pressure can deliver results without negotiation, compromise or recognition of Israel's security needs. It rewards rejectionism while removing incentives for direct dialogue.

Palestinians are encouraged to believe that international isolation will eventually force Israel to concede everything. Israelis are shown that even friendly governments are prepared to turn economic discrimination against them into policy.

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The West cannot have it both ways. It cannot increasingly legitimize the boycott of Israelis while continuing to benefit from everything Israel contributes to its health, prosperity and security. It cannot treat Israeli innovation as indispensable and Israelis themselves as disposable.

If Britain, France and Canada believe that boycotts are the appropriate response to political disagreement, they should at least acknowledge the precedent they are creating.

The first step may be labelled "settlement goods," but the boycott movement has never hidden its ambition to travel much further.

Today it is a bottle of wine or a box of dates from Judea and Samaria. Tomorrow it will be an Israeli university, an Israeli artist, an Israeli athlete or an Israeli-owned company in Tel Aviv. Eventually, it is simply the Israeli.

The boycott movement understands this progression perfectly. It is time Western governments did too.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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D **dr.hangmannneuss**
24 September, 2026

A strategic relationship has consequences in both directions. Britain cannot expect Israeli intelligence as an entitlement while treating Israel as an adversary. Let London decide whose intelligence it would rather rely on.

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