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Loyalty, Voice, and Quasi-Exit

Israel as a Case Study of Proliferating Alternative Politics

Sam N. Lehman-Wilzig

. . . voice is just the opposite of exit. It is a far more “messy” concept because it can be graduated all the way from faint grumbling to violent protest; it implies articulation of one’s critical opinions . . . ; and finally, it is direct and straightforward rather than roundabout. Voice is political action par excellence.¹

Until around the time of World War II, political science tended to focus almost exclusively on institutional or “traditional” modes of political activity. Legislation, public law, the interrelationship and inner dynamics of the branches of government, and similar elements were the central foci of the discipline. This is not to say that what later came to be known as extraparliamentary activity did not have any place in the work of earlier political scientists; political philosophers, theorists, and of course propagandists all discussed such phenomena as political violence and revolution. However, in the main this area of the field remained a disciplinary backwater, and in most cases when it was addressed, the perspective was mostly of a situation gone terribly wrong.

As a result of the (merely perceived?) dramatic increase in unconventional political activity around the globe in the post-World War II era, and due to some methodological factors related to the discipline of political science,² the age of “political conflict/extraparliamentary behavior” was ushered in as a recognized subdiscipline. From the mid 1950s until 1980, some 2,400 scholarly articles, in addition to hundreds of full-length books, were published, as Zimmermann found.³ The amount of work devoted to the field does not seem to have diminished in the 1980s.

While there is very little consensus among researchers about the validity of the specific theories which attempt to explain the explosion of such political activity around the world,⁴ there does seem to be fairly broad consensus that normal/formal and extraparliamentary political activities are but two sides of the same coin. In other words, the activist citizen of a state will almost always first choose the accepted path of political communication, through the official channels of government, whether with legislators, bureaucrats, government ombudspersons, or even lobbyists. Only when these do not function or are not effective does part of the public begin to consider and utilize more “unconventional” means, such as protests, riots, and hunger strikes, to bring pressure upon the powers-that-be to change the law or official policy.

Hirschman’s seminal thesis propounding a graduation of citizen behavior running from loyalty to voice to exit attempted to address this dichotomy. In his view, pressure on a political (or economic) system, using either the formal/institutionalized channels for that purpose or more informal extraparliamentary forms, is considered “voice,” a partial breaking of the citizen’s “loyalty” to that system for the purpose of causing it to mend its ways.

This typology matches in a broad sense the two major political science approaches to citizen political behavior: “loyal” (normal) actions, such as voting and campaign work (what I call here politics), and “voice” (parliamentary or extraparliamentary) activity, such as lobbying, protesting, rioting, and the like (termed here extrapolitics). But what of “exit”? Where is the parallel in the real political world?

Heretofore, political scientists have tended to view “exit” on two planes: passive and active. On the passive side, there exist the widespread phenomena of political alienation, apathy, and/or inactivity; on the active side, revolution and/or mass emigration are the two major types of political “exit.” The former are exclusively introverted—attempts to withdraw psychologically from the political world while physically remaining within the state’s territorial jurisdiction. The latter modes are extroverted, albeit with the first trying to eliminate the system while the second attempts to escape from it geographically.

Can there exist something between these two forms of exit, something which combines both withdrawal and undermining, apathy and activism at one and the same time? Moreover, is there a type of political action which lies somewhere between exit and voice? Interestingly, Hirschman enticingly suggested that the latter was what he intended to show: “a niche thus exists for this book, which affirms that the choice is often between articulation and ‘desertion’—voice and exit.”⁵ But it turns out that what he meant was that there is a dynamic interplay between the two choices (true as far as it goes), not that there may exist some alternative middle ground between voice and exit as he defined them, and certainly not that the possibility of a “softer,” less final form of exit exists.⁶

The argument will be presented here that not only can such a thing theoretically exist, but that in fact it exemplifies a relatively new approach (especially regarding its wide scope) by disgruntled publics in the contemporary era. We turn first to a brief theoretical discussion of the phenomenon and then to a national case study which exemplifies what may be called a “lemma” of Hirschman’s theory—perhaps even a condition worthy of the establishment of a new subfield in political science.

Alter-Politics: Origins and Conditions

The general assumption has been that when extrapolitical activity does not work, that is, when it is not effective (and of course where normal parliamentary activity has long ceased being an effective means of change), the choice as noted above is either to withdraw inwards or emigrate from the public realm altogether or to ratchet up the level of antisystem activity in order to topple the regime and substitute something more “responsive” in its place. But these are two quite extreme approaches. On the one hand, after the investment of emotion and energy in extraparliamentary action, many people may find it too difficult to admit defeat or turn into passive subjects of the system. On the other hand, a turn to revolutionary action may be even more psychologically difficult for normally law-abiding citizens—not to mention the huge risk to life, limb, and liberty which few are willing to take upon themselves.

In the past, given the rather limited resources of the general population, not much else could be done. But in the postindustrial era, characterized by relative widespread wealth, knowledge, education, and mass communications, another option presents itself. Let us call

it alternative politics: bypassing the traditional system of governmental services and establishing alternative social and economic networks to offer what the official political system can not, or will not, provide.

In one sense, it is surprising that Hirschman did not consider this possibility, for after all his analysis relies at least as heavily on economics as it does on political science. The alternative politics approach is but a special case of increased competition, albeit here in original fashion by the public against the government. Hirschman does indeed note the importance of originality in the voice/exit dynamic but misses the possibility of alternative politics as a solution.

. . . in the choice between voice and exit, voice will often lose out, not necessarily because it would be less effective than exit, but because its effectiveness depends on the discovery of new ways of exerting influence and pressure toward recovery. However "easy" such a discovery may look in retrospect the chances for it are likely to be heavily discounted in *ex ante* estimates, for creativity always comes as a surprise. Loyalty . . . thereby pushes men into the alternative, creativity-requiring course of action from which they would normally recoil.⁷

However, there is more to Hirschman's missing the potential option of alternative politics than simple "discounting" of public creativity. In point of fact, in 1970 there was much less alternative politics in evidence, which is why he (along with political scientists in general) did not relate to it.

The reason for this lacuna lies in the problem of the resources required for the alternative politics "strategy." There are two distinct, albeit interrelated, planes involved here.

On the governmental level, a necessary condition for the emergence of alternative politics is the authorities' inability or unwillingness to provide the services which the public demands. This may be a function, of course, of reduced governmental capability as a result of economic recession or other economic constraints (such as occurred in numerous countries in the wake of the stagflation induced by the oil crisis in the mid 1970s). On the other hand, it could also be a result of the public's rising demands and expectations regarding what it is entitled to from its government. At some point, the two may even be related: the demand for increased social services will lead to either higher taxes or greater budget deficits (or both), thereby reducing in the long run the government's ability to provide these services. In the case of Sweden, the United States, France, Great Britain, and Israel, among others, this point of diminishing returns was reached somewhere in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

If reduced governmental resources is a necessary condition for the development of alternative politics, such a factor is still not sufficient to support the phenomenon for any length of time. Here the other side of the public coin comes into play, for a country's population would need a fairly high level of education in order to know how to set up, coordinate, supervise, and maintain the "alternative systems." In addition, unless a large segment of the public had the economic resources to finance such a system, it would have little chance of continuing success. Moreover, such a network would have to be widespread enough to act as a political bulwark against governmental reprisals, legal or otherwise. Finally, the existence of extensive mass media is an additional prerequisite for the rapid and effective communication of the development and maintenance of such alternative networks.

The media also educate others in the ways of alternative systems, enabling different groups or sectors with their own socioeconomic frustrations to imitate previously proven methods.

These latter conditions were also mostly met in the 1970s and 1980s. While significant economic expansion did indeed take place commencing in the 1950s, the full effects of this were felt among the West's general population only during the late 1960s. Even more to the point, mass higher education became a reality in such countries as the United States and France only in the late 1960s and 1970s. Concomitantly, the rapid expansion of the mass media (cable television, satellite communications, issue-specific magazines, and somewhat later computer networks) reached a critical mass in the 1970s and 1980s.

Altogether, then, on both the governmental "supply" side (reduced capability) and the public's "demand" side (the wish for more services) and "supply" side (the socioeconomic resources to go it alone), the last two decades have witnessed a conflation of factors leading to the full-blown development of alternative politics. To be sure, this is not to say that such alternative politics can or will be found everywhere in the contemporary world. In addition to all the above factors, one more must be added: a serious malfunctioning of the political system causing it to be largely unresponsive to the wishes of the electorate and unmoved by the pressure of extraparliamentary activism.

For obvious reasons, not all of the world's advanced democracies suffer from this malady (although the list seems to be growing). It stands to reason that a system free and open enough to enable the society and economy to reach the postindustrial stage of development would also be relatively sensitive to political or extrapolitical input. In other words, in the normal course of events, the "loyalty" and "voice" approaches (voting, lobbying, protesting) should be effective enough to force some sort of appropriate governmental response. However, precisely the same positive characteristics of postindustrialism mentioned above may in the future lead increasingly to the political system's inability to provide such publicly desired output.

The evidence already exists for all to see. The United States—highly educated and quite wealthy by world standards—has begun to suffer recently from a growing political paralysis borne of political and extrapolitical overload. Whatever the issue, enough well-educated and motivated citizens and groups are willing and able to communicate their wishes and demands to their representatives, either politically ("normal" lobbying) or extrapolitically ("unconventional" pressure). This has led not only to the Congress' becoming increasingly fragmented along sectoral and interest group lines, but also to each legislator's finding it very difficult to make a politically "wise" decision. Whatever s/he decides, significant groups will be alienated and will not forget the "transgression" come next election day.

This is not merely a function of the peculiar nature of the American political system in which federal, regional, and sectoral differences compound the difficulties already inherent in a system of checks and balances. Rather, more important and significant, it is due to the nature of both the complexity of postindustrial issues and the makeup of the postindustrial population (highly educated, economically secure, well-informed). Barring a total regression from postindustrial economic, educational, and media trends (not at all likely), or a radical change in the representative system as presently constituted around the world, such political paralysis should only get worse in the years to come, forcing the increasingly frustrated publics of the developed world to take matters into their own hands.

What would such alternative politics look like? We turn now to a country which may be

in the forefront in this regard, although not necessarily representative of the specific direction others might go. Nevertheless, such a case study should afford the opportunity to see alternative politics in action, that is, how an increasingly disgruntled and frustrated democratic citizenry may vex the formal system (by establishing alternatives) rather than exit (through revolution or emigration). This schematic survey will also enable us to perceive in more concrete terms some of the ramifications of alternative politics for those countries that may be involved in the future and in general for the discipline of political science, whose job it is to analyze political phenomena in all their variegated manifestations.

Israel as an Exemplar of Alternative Politics

The state of Israel has been a world “leader” both in its politics and its extrapolitics. For several historical reasons beyond the scope of this essay,⁸ Israel developed a highly centralized and bureaucratized polity, marked by the overwhelming dominance of political parties. One of the country’s most notable early political scientists termed the Israeli polity a *Parteienstaat*.⁹ Not only did the parties own major banks, insurance firms, housing companies, newspapers, and athletic teams, but the government in conjunction with the giant Histadrut trade union federation (which also owned major corporations and is aligned with the Labor Party) employed close to half the nation’s work force a mere decade ago.¹⁰ In short, “all of the Jewish parties in Israel have an unusually wide range both of direct social action and of intervention in the life of the individual.”¹¹

As a result of the ossification of the parties, as well as the extremely unresponsive nature of the general Israeli representative system of government (a function of its national proportional election system, without any district representatives at all), the level of extrapolitics skyrocketed in the 1970s.¹² By 1981, a world record 21.5 percent of the adult population had participated in at least one protest event.¹³

Unfortunately, for precisely the same reasons as just noted, the success level of Israeli extrapolitics was quite low: a mere 38 percent for the largest and most persistent of the protest groups.¹⁴ With electoral punishment of recalcitrant legislators most difficult, and a party apparatus seriously divorced from the “street,” the protest groups found their quite impressive extraparliamentary pressure to be less than effective.

Already in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the outlines of a new approach were in evidence and continued to gather strength through the remainder of the decade. Indeed, there was little other choice: while some citizens emigrated from the country, this was not a viable alternative for most Jewish Israelis who believe in the historical necessity of living within the autonomous confines of a sovereign Jewish state. On the other hand, given the persistent hostility of Israel’s neighbors, revolution from within was even less thinkable, for it would have invited the destruction, not only of the constitutional regime, but of the state itself.

The only real option remaining to the public was quasi-exit: the establishment of alternative social systems which would exist side by side with the official ones. In some cases there was no legal bar to doing this, but in most instances it bordered on the quasi-legal if not outright illegal. A few examples described briefly here should suffice to depict the nature and extent of the phenomenon.¹⁵

Settlement Traditionally, both before the state's establishment and afterwards, it was the function of the authorities alone (Jewish Agency, ministries of absorption and housing) to decide where, when, and whom to settle in new development areas—unlike, for example, the settlement of America's West. In the 1970s, despite the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 war, subsequent Israeli Labor governments were not enthusiastic about settling Israelis in these territories in order not to hurt the chance for peace negotiations.

The reaction of Gush Emunim and other nationalist groups was to break precedent in the mid 1970s and set up settlements in the territories without government approval or support. Prefabricated caravans and modular housing units were transported (sometimes overnight), thus establishing a *fait accompli*. The ultimate result (despite occasional setbacks) was to force the government's hand in approving these (and additional) settlements over the years. It should be noted that this is an interesting case of an extraparliamentary movement ("voice") moving, not in the direction of greater parliamentarism ("loyalty") as is usually the case (that is, political cooptation), but rather towards "quasi-exit": establishing its own rules on a specific issue without fully divorcing itself from the general political game.

Media By law, the Israeli government held a monopoly on electronic broadcasting, including radio (three channels) and television (one channel). As a result of the limited fare offered, the Israeli public in the 1980s began to actively support the proliferation of (patently illegal) neighborhood pirate cable television stations. These were usually local studios established in an apartment, with cables strung over building roofs or along telephone wires, supplying videocassette fare (also pirated) straight to the neighborhood's subscribers. At its height, an estimated 250,000 families were subscribing (out of a total of one million households in the entire country), with the authorities loathe to crack down given the "institution's" widespread popular support.

However, due to the fact that such illegal cable television eventually came under the control of Israeli "organized crime" elements, the authorities threw in the towel in the latter part of the decade and enacted legislation providing for municipal franchise cable television, regional radio stations, and a privately owned second channel of regular broadcast television (modeled somewhat on the British ITV model).

Education In light of severe budgetary restrictions as part of its program to reduce hyperinflation, the Israeli government significantly curtailed the amount of elementary and secondary school hours (the former ending classes before noon!). In reaction to this, the Israeli middle class began to establish private afternoon sessions on school premises, hiring the best teachers to supplement the reduced morning education. And this, in addition to a large-scale increase in private tutoring, the expansion of the quasi-public ultrareligious "independent" school system (which incorporated about 10 percent of the country's elementary school population by 1990), and several other grass-roots wrinkles, added to the official system.¹⁶

The problem here was that such grass-roots after-hours enrichment programs struck at the educational establishment's long-held "social integration" policy, was perceived to be inequalitarian, and also threatened to undermine the quality of regular education by drawing away the best teachers who could now make a better living teaching after-hours classes

exclusively. Nevertheless, despite the ministry of education's attempts to abolish such programming, the public's desire to ensure a decent education for the children could not be stopped, and once again the government relented in the late 1980s by announcing the appropriation of large sums in order to return to the previous "long school day."

Health Due to mismanagement by the predominant Socialist health maintenance organization (*Kupat Cholim Clalit*) run by the Histadrut labor federation, duplication between its health facilities and those of the government, and general inefficiency in the allocation of health resources, the deterioration of Israel's public health system reached crisis proportions in the early 1980s (with sporadic strikes by physicians, nurses, and other workers on a rotation basis). Patients regularly had to wait from six months to two years for open heart surgery; altogether, 37,000 invalids were waiting for operations in government hospitals in the mid 1980s. Adding insult to injury, Israel's physician/citizen ratio of 2.9 per 1,000 was almost 50 percent higher than the norm for the West's richer industrialized nations!¹⁷

On the personal level, most citizens at the time had no choice regarding who their doctor would be or in which hospital treatment would be offered. Moreover, 95 percent of Israel's physicians did not recognize their patients' right to full medical disclosure, that is, the right to see their personal file. What with maladministration and inefficiency from on high and medical paternalism lower down, the public began to fight back.

To circumvent several of these deficiencies, what came to be called "black medicine" arose in Israel. This was a system whereby patients would see the department head privately in his/her after-hours clinic, a fairly large sum would be disbursed to that head physician, and the waiting time for the operation would be reduced to a few weeks. Additional sums of money would also guarantee the presence of the most experienced surgeon instead of the potluck rotation system in vogue.

In addition, for the first time in Israel's history private health facilities and medical insurance plans were inaugurated, with increasing success (5,000 operations annually in the first such health facility in Herzliya). Although the health ministry has placed bureaucratic obstacles in the way of other private hospitals (several of which have had to go to court to get the licenses due them), the trend continues, promising/threatening to undermine the entire public health system as traditionally constituted. In the years 1982–1986 alone, an 18.1 percent annual increase was registered in private hospitalizations, compared to a 2.5 percent rise in the *Kupat Cholim Clalit* and government hospitals taken together.¹⁸ As a result of all this, the government is presently considering a major overhaul of the entire health care system, in line with the 1990 recommendations of a state commission of inquiry, headed by a justice of the Supreme Court.

Religion and State In the areas of marriage, divorce, and other "personal status" issues (for example, religious conversion), sole authority for implementation and decision making has been given to the Orthodox rabbinate (in the case of non-Jews, the same type of system is set up for each respective religious group). But because of religious law, certain relationships are proscribed to specific sets of Jews (for instance, a Cohen, descendant of the priestly class, can not marry a divorcee).

On the other hand, Israeli society is predominantly secular in nature—numerically and culturally—and this presents certain problems for the ultra-Orthodox who do not wish to be influenced by anything smacking of modernity. As a result of this religious dichotomy, alternative politics is to be found on both sides of the religious divide.

The ultra-Orthodox have taken to stoning cars which pass through their neighborhoods on the Sabbath and, where possible, to closing off entire streets to vehicular traffic on the day of rest. They have destroyed bus stop shelters displaying ads of scantily clad swimsuit models, torched stationery stores selling “pornographic” magazines, and attacked bakers for selling leavened bread on Passover. On the other hand, they have voluntarily ghettoized themselves, even to the extent of setting up an entire religious educational network outside the state system (the latter already included a religious subset, albeit too “moderate” for the ultra-Orthodox).

The secular population, for its part, has become no less active. Couples who are not allowed to marry in Israel have in fairly large numbers (tens and hundreds each year) married by proxy through Paraguay, flown to Cyprus and returned with marriage license in hand, which must be recognized by Israeli law, and agreed to “civil marriage contracts” which legally bind the couple as an economic unit. Despite restrictive abortion laws, sociolegal loopholes (for example, “psychological burden” for the potential mother) are utilized to the fullest extent on this sensitive issue. Thus, while both the political and extrapolitical battles heat up visibly in the public realm, alternative activity continues unabated by both sides to make life more acceptable from their respective standpoints.

Economics Of all the areas of life involving alternative politics, the one most widespread in Israel and around the world is obviously what has come to be called the “underground economy” and “black market.” A full survey of the Israeli situation in this regard would take up too much space, but some of the broad outlines can be succinctly delineated.

It should be noted at the outset, however, that a major reason for Israel’s suffering from such a high level of “alternative economics” is, paradoxically (but not surprisingly, given the earlier analysis of the factors underlying alternative politics), the heavy extent of governmental involvement in the national economy. For example, in 1980 Israel was the clear “winner” among all western democracies with a government budget amounting to 76 percent of the country’s gross domestic product, as compared to runners-up Ireland and Sweden, far behind at 51 percent and 41 percent, respectively.¹⁹ At the least, such a high level of government expenditure generates expectations of public services output which the highly bureaucratized and inefficient system can not come close to fulfilling. Beyond supplying these services themselves, the Israeli public’s other alternative is to avoid feeding the financially voracious government.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that Israel also ranks among the democratic world’s leaders in income tax evasion, with the underground economy estimated at approximately one-sixth of GNP, compared to 3.5 percent in England, 3.6 percent in Sweden, and 4–10 percent in the United States in the late 1970s.²⁰ Even more to the point from the perspective of alternative economic politics, the emergence of large-scale “black dollar” (that is, foreign currency) trading and hoarding meant that the government could not even be master of monetary policy. While exact data are impossible to obtain for obvious reasons, most

educated guesses put the amount of black dollars in the public's hands at around \$5 billion (over \$1,000 for every man, woman, and child in Israel).²¹ This situation forced the finance minister to float the idea of "dollarization" of Israel's currency, leading not only to his resignation (for deigning to even think about undermining Israeli monetary sovereignty), but also to the total collapse of the Israeli stock market in 1983 in a further public rush away from the shekel to the dollar.

To be sure, this general "alternative economic approach" did not commence in Israel in the 1980s. It was relatively extensive already a decade earlier. Thus, in the final analysis alternative politics in Israel (and probably in most other places where it exists) starts in the economic realm and spreads out from there. Political economy, then, is the primary present subfield for beginning the task of researching the overall phenomenon.

Before continuing to a discussion of some broader theoretical implications of alternative politics, one important point must be added here regarding the Israel case. While the general social, political, and economic factors noted earlier are worldwide, Jewish political culture may predispose Israelis more to this sort of general "alternative" response than many other cultures. For approximately 2,000 years, living among non-Jewish nations (Christian and Moslem) in *diaspora*, the Jewish communities around the world developed a comprehensive, voluntaristic network of all the necessary social services which the ruling government could not or would not provide. Indeed, such an approach emanated from even earlier biblical injunctions and norms, becoming part and parcel of the very essence of the Jewish political tradition, not easily expunged even with the establishment of the modern state of Israel. The extent of previous national experience with different forms of social voluntarism, therefore, constitutes one additional variable which needs to be taken into account when investigating the existence and extent of alternative politics.

Preliminary Hypotheses and Political Science Implications

The Israeli case suggests a number of possible preliminary conclusions, from which certain hypotheses may be posited. Of perhaps foremost importance, it is clear that there is a direct relationship between alternative politics and politics, despite the fact that the former is an attempt to get away from the clutches of the latter. Indeed, the great irony here is that there may be a greater probability of systemic change in the traditional system as a result of alternative politics than of extrapolitics, which more consciously tries to bring about such reform!

The reason for this is that the successful development of alternative service systems by the public strikes at the very heart of the established system's legitimacy (and authority). It is one thing to pressure the government on its own turf, as extraparliamentary politics does; this at least reinforces the government's inherent legitimacy, notwithstanding the demands for change. It is quite another to avoid the authorities altogether, as if they are no longer relevant to the issue at hand. No regime can long endure such benign neglect. Either it forcefully prevents alternative politics from succeeding (increasingly difficult given the nature of the population it is dealing with, as noted earlier), or it removes the necessity for the alternative system by reforming itself along similar lines.

Thus, alternative politics has a double effect. Not only does it establish alternative service

systems, but its perhaps unintended (although from the practitioners' perspective wholly salutary) consequence is to actually succeed in altering the traditional system. It is because of this possibility (perhaps probability?) that alternative politics can not be truly considered final "exit" in the sense of Hirschman's theory, for the road back to the traditional political authority is a short and easy one (assuming that the alternative political effort engenders significant systemic reform).²²

Why is it more than likely that alternative politics will be crowned with at least a modicum of success? As we have seen from the Israeli case, there always exists the possibility that such alternative systems will degenerate into rank illegalism or that seamy population elements will become heavily involved and enriched. Thus, beyond the direct competition which such systems constitute in relation to the official system, the secondary effects can be socially deleterious and have influence far beyond the limited purview of the problematic issue at hand. The attempt to forestall this wider social eventuality compels the authorities to respond sooner or later with force or concession.

Beyond this, the Israeli case suggests that the phenomenon of alternative politics may be found equally among democratic and nondemocratic nations, for different reasons. On the democratic side, while on the one hand there may be less need for such an approach due to the fact that a democracy is generally more responsive to politics and extrapolitics, on the other hand the resources of the population as a rule will be greater, enabling it more easily to establish such alternative systems. Second, democratic law usually works under the assumption that anything not expressly prohibited is permitted; this allows for greater latitude by the disgruntled population to find "holes" in the law for the purposes of alternative politics.

Nondemocracies are more governmentally coercive and more legally restrictive but overall also less successful in providing the services (and productive economic environment to support such services) which the public craves. Moreover, some autocratic regimes, especially those without undue socioeconomic ideological baggage, may actually secretly welcome a measure of alternative politics, which can serve to provide some of the output which the established system is incapable of producing.

Where, then, are other examples of alternative politics? To give but two examples, from opposite sides of the democratic divide: in the United States, speakeasies during prohibition, all-white private academies during desegregation, underground abortion clinics in states with restrictive legislation; in much of preglasnost eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the extensive black market economy.

The latter example, of course, illustrates that alternative politics is not exclusively a postindustrial phenomenon. Indeed, in both Israel and Germany one finds a variant in the early twentieth century, both cases involving political parties offering a wide array of social, cultural, and economic services. In the former case, this was a result of the official government's lack of resources (both the British Mandatory government and the Jewish communal government),²³ whereas in the latter instance it was due to the workers' exclusion from the state prior to 1914 (with the German Social Democratic Party stepping in to fill the service void).²⁴

Nevertheless, these were both rather unusual circumstances (as was the Jewish situation in Diaspora through the millenia) in that the respective official governments (medieval Christian/Moslem, British Mandate, German Empire) purposely excluded these respective

populations from receiving the services they could have provided. The contemporary situation is both different and more widespread precisely because the governmental wherewithal is not at hand. Alternative politics in the contemporary era is no longer a matter of group-specific discrimination, but rather is an expression of the objective gap between the general population's desire and the authorities' ability to fulfill that desire.

What are the practical implications for political science? First, to recognize the existence of these quasi-institutions and networks and to determine the extent to which this general phenomenon is prevalent around the world. Second, to understand that such public activity is not merely socioeconomic in character but at base quite political as well. In other words, we should be exploring the reasons for the development of alternative politics in various nations through the prism of political dysfunction. One of the more interesting questions is whether there exists some universal law whereby alternative politics appears only after political and extrapolitical means were attempted by the public and failed. It may well be (especially in nondemocracies) that the extrapolitical stage is skipped over, for fairly obvious reasons.

A third question is whether indeed a certain level of socioeconomic advancement is a necessary condition for the appearance of alternative politics or whether in certain circumstances (for example, eastern Europe) even a backward segment of a relatively underdeveloped country may get successfully involved in such activity.

Fourth, and finally, it would be worthwhile to test the hypothesis that alternative politics may be more successful than extrapolitics in fomenting systemic change within the regime. That this was largely the case in Israel does not mean that it is true everywhere. Vexing the government authorities through alternative political service networks may not necessarily guarantee that they will feel an imperative to change the way they run their own service system.

In the final analysis, there seems to be little doubt that a broad ground exists in the polity between failed voice and final exit. It is a nebulous area, heretofore bereft of scholarly effort, even of much academic notice. If postindustrial Israel is anything to go on, we would do well to start paying some attention to this research *tabula rasa*.

NOTES

1. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

2. Ekkart Zimmermann, *Political Violence, Crises, and Revolutions: Theories and Research* (Boston: Schenkman Publishing, 1980), p. 1. These factors included the development of computers and a growing interest in cross-national studies leading to the development of data bases.

3. *Ibid.*

4. "The commentaries on theory reflect a level of contentiousness among conflict theorists that resembles their subject matter." Ted Robert Gurr, *Handbook of Political Conflict: Theory and Research* (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 14.

5. Hirschman, p. 31.

6. Hirschman does devote half a page to one type of "middle ground," boycott (p. 86). While this is one element of alternative politics as described below, it is passive and therefore of limited utility in achieving the ultimate goal of systemic change as explained further on in this essay.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

8. See, for instance, Peter Y. Medding, *The Founding of Israeli Democracy, 1948–1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 8–11, 134–165.

9. Benjamin Akzin, "The Role of Parties in Israeli Democracy," *The Journal of Politics*, 17 (November 1955), 509.

10. Michael Wolffsohn, *Israel: Polity, Society, and Economy, 1882–1986* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1987), pp. 211–213.

11. Akzin, p. 521.

12. San Lehman-Wilzig, *Stiff-Necked People, Bottle-Necked System: The Evolution and Roots of Israeli Public Protest, 1949–1986* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 89–99.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 116. The question of "success," of course, is fraught with difficulties, and this is amply discussed in that chapter. It should be noted that Wolfsfeld's study on Israeli protest came to a different conclusion regarding the level of success: his analysis was based not on scoring events, but rather on survey research of protest group leaders and participants, who are probably not the most objective people responding to such a question. Gamson's and Goldstone's pioneering work on American protest success relied on scoring and evaluating the events and their ultimate effectiveness. Notwithstanding their significant methodological and substantive conclusions, they both report far higher success ratios than was found by my study on Israel. See Jack A. Goldstone, "The Weakness of Organization: A New Look at Gamson's *The Strategy of Protest*," and William A. Gamson, "Understanding the Careers of Challenging Groups: A Commentary on Goldstone," *American Journal of Sociology*, 85 (March 1980), 1017–1042, 1043–1060.

15. For a fuller explication of the several ensuing alternative politics phenomena, see Sam Lehman-Wilzig, *WILDFIRE: Grassroots Revolts in Israel in the Post-Socialist Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

16. For example, by law the parents of school children can determine up to 25 percent of curriculum content. Aside from the socialist *kibbutzim*, this was almost never carried out until the 1980s. At this time, several parent groups around the country began to form associations called TALI (an acronym for "enriched Jewish learning") and successfully managed to force far greater Jewish content into their respective secular schools.

17. Gerald Steinberg, "Mikh'sholim Ba'derekh Le'shinui Mivneh Ma'arekhet Ha'briyut Be'Yisrael" [Obstacles on the Way to Structural Changes in Israel's Health System], *Bitakhon Sociali*, 34 (December 1989), 61–78.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

19. *IMF Yearbook 1983* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1983).

20. For an estimation of the extent of the Israeli underground economy in comparative perspective, see Ben-Zion Zilberfarb, "Omdaney Ha'kalkalah Ha'shekorah Be'Yisrael U'bekhul" [Estimates of the Black Economy in Israel and Overseas], *Rov'on Le'kalkalah*, 122 (October 1984), 319–322.

21. By the 1980s trade in black dollars had become so widespread and normative in Israel that the newspapers began reporting the going "black dollar rate" on their front page!

22. Hirschman does note in another context that for citizens of a state "full exit is impossible" (p. 100). The reason for this is that, while an individual may actively withdraw from a service system, s/he continues to suffer/pay for its deficiencies in the taxes which go towards maintaining the official service system as well as the socially deleterious effects of its product (for example, poorly educated students). This is the reason that, despite the withdrawal of the practitioners of alternative politics from the regular system, it is still in their interest to see the established system undergo reform.

23. Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Origins of the Israeli Polity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

24. Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).