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Government and public information in the political system.
A study of formation and systemic relationships, with
particular reference to the Israeli political system, and
appropriate comparison with the United Kingdom.

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A B S T R A C T

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Government information organisation and processes are
studied in limited aspects, often as public relations. This
thesis attempts to present a comprehensive view of them in
contexts of theoretical concept and real-world government.

A distinction is made between government and public
information. Hypotheses are formulated to account for
systemic differences, in terms of government constraints
from a position of information superiority on the extent of
countervailing power distributed to the public with
information.

Influences on inputs, conversion and outputs demonstrate
the extent of mediation which information undergoes within
government. Transfers to the public are subject to further
mediation in direct and indirect communication channels.
Media, in symbiotic relationship with government, dominate
transfer of political information. Discussion is mainly in
terms of competitive political systems; but the influence
of political structure is noted.

Government and public information are examined within
the illustrative real-world example of Israel. Influences
of history, structure, standards and government and public
attitudes are noted. Systemic disarticulations in output and
feedback are discussed and case details given of consequent
information defects. Comparison with the United Kingdom
emphasises disparities in government and public information
which can exist between politically competitive systems. No
decisive relationship to stability is apparent.

Theoretical concepts of response and steering of the
political system are discussed with the aid of a political
communications model. The cycle of information input, output
and feedback has apparent discontinuities in terms of con-
straints in reception, diffusion through media, and thus in
feedback, at the public extreme, and of response and steering
within government, suggesting limitations in the continuous
relationship implied in theoretical models. An alternative
framework of assessment is suggested as an indicator of
stability.

Influences for change are noted, in access and outreach
development. Antithetical tension within the government/
media symbiosis suggests possible alternative government/
public communications.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Theoretical concepts of the political system have come increasingly to see it as a system of communications with a capacity for self-regulation through a cycle of information and feedback. Deutsch and Easton, in particular, have expressed these concepts in well-known abstractions and models. Other analysts, following structural/functional rather than pure communications concepts to formulate political systems theory, nevertheless accept the cardinal importance of information within it.

It is difficult, however, to bridge the gap between deliberately remote and oversimplified abstractions of the political system and the real world of government and other organisation operative within it. Government exercises power, it has elaborate organisation and uses media and other channels through which information, of which it is a major source and user, is transferred within the system and influences its operations. Transfers of information can be seen as distributions of power.

There has, however, been little research penetration into the information processes of government. They tend to be considered as a form of public relations. But government is far too large and complex a form of organisation for such limitations to contain its information processes. These are mediated by a variety of organisational goals, and they have obvious connections with the exercise and maintenance of power. They are processes involved in decision, as well as in public persuasion. This suggests underlying influences which may be hypothesised to account in general terms for the differences between what government knows and what it tells. Such differences express constraints.

What government tells is communicated to the public largely through the media, whose importance to government

is indicated by the degree of specific government
organisation to provide them with a regular and reliable
supply of information, which Gandy (1982) has put in terms
of subsidy, often seen as "managed" news. The dominant
position which media have acquired as channels of
communication for government is emphasised by the symbiosis
which has developed between them, which also expresses the
organisational needs of media for sources. This has been
the subject of study, mainly from the media viewpoint.
Like governments, media are organisations whose goals affect
information which they handle. Chaffee (1975) has described
them as parapolitical organisations, exercising their own
constraints. Details and mechanisms of these influences
have been examined by Tunstall (1971), Schlesinger (1978)
and others, and there is now a body of empirical evidence
on the subject.

A great deal of information produced and distributed
by government for the public does not have news value for
the media, though important to individuals. These outputs,
and the kinds of mediation associated with them are rarely
considered by researchers into government communications,
a field dominated by aspects of political rather than
administrative communication. But all communication
between government and public may have political
significance.

Finally, the public itself is a complex receptor, made
up of individuals with all sorts of orientations to government,
whose perceptions of government are not necessarily drawn
from what they receive through established channels of
communication. Chaffee (1975) has drawn attention to
problems of public understanding and of the diffusion of
information from government, particularly through the media.
This has a clear bearing on concepts of feedback information
and steering in theoretical models.

Thus questions of government information and its transfer
to the public are studied from a number of viewpoints, across
disciplines of political theory and communications. It is
the aim of this study to try to take a more comprehensive
view of them in relation to the operation of real-world
government, in which the generalities of theoretical concepts

face the considerations of power and the machinery of
government through which they must have effect.

Such a view requires comprehensive assessment of the
factors which shape the generation and flow of information
between government and public. The methodology adopted
here for this purpose is to consider theoretical views of
information as a factor in the political system, and to
associate concepts of power and its expression through the
structures and elements of government. This involves
discussion of the power conferred and distributed through
the cumulation and transfer of information. Some basic
relationships are postulated in hypotheses linking government,
power, information and public. The study progresses to a
more detailed examination of "real-world" mechanisms
involved in the formation and transfer of government
information, and the effects and problems of media
dominance of channels of transfer.

The full process of mediation is not operative, however,
in non-competitive political systems in which media are
state-controlled. The factors are discussed briefly in
order to cover the full scope of mediation. Otherwise,
the discussion (with occasional reservations) is in terms
of competitive political systems.

Conclusions drawn from theory need testing against the
characteristics and political culture of a particular regime,
in order to illustrate the complexity and interdependence of
the factors at work. It is also important to display in one
account all the information elements of an operative system,
rarely seen in complete terms. For reasons given, this is
undertaken in relation to the political system of Israel,
drawing on Galnoor's work (Steering the Polity, 1982), to
which I am indebted for its approach as well as its close
application to communications within the structure of
Israeli institutions and society. Galnoor uses Deutsch's
highly abstract concept of the political system as a complete
network of communications, and especially the concept of
steering. From this he develops an approach to comparative
study of political systems and to analysis and classification
of political development in Israel.

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A brief comparison here between Israel and the United Kingdom does not have scope to try to adopt a similar approach. But the political classification of the United Kingdom is well enough established on other bases, and even a summary comparison limited to information characteristics is sufficient to emphasise the differences in information origination and transfer which can exist between two politically competitive systems. The comparison highlights aspects of power and organisation within the hypotheses put forward; but it does not suggest decisive relationships between information and stability, though there are connections.

Further discussion of the concepts of the Easton model in the light of a political communications model by Meadow (1980) suggests a limited relationship between information, response and steering and a different kind of framework of assessment, more closely related to power balances, is suggested.

Finally, the political system is never static. In the information relationships between government and public, and not least within the media which dominate the communication channels between them, a pattern of constraints emerges. They can be held to be a contribution to stability, but they involve the exercise of various kinds of power, in government, particularly, on residual bases of authoritarianism as well as of man ipulation. Influences are beginning to modify government constraints. Modern pressures for more open government, often formalised in freedom of information legislation, are now well-established in a number of states as working features of public communications with government. These have resulted from public initiatives, through groups. There have been less coherent intitiatives from governments to improve their communications with the public, hardly classifiable in the same way as a coherent phenomenon, but at least an influence which offers a further form of access.

Government initiatives are described here as "outreach". Some have been politically committed, and for that reason have met with political reverse. But a good deal of quiet success has been achieved in less controversial ways in offering the individual public information relating to their personal relations with government, as a service on request,

(xi)

with informal and personal means of access to the bureau-
cratic echelons of government. They may be held to involve
mild forms of political socialisation from which government
as well as public can benefit. They are further easements
of constraint in communication between government and public,
and all easements of constraint may be considered as wider
distributions of power.

Such developments could have application, however, in
more specifically political terms. This has a relevance to
the dominance of the media as channels for political
information and the effective constraints of diffusion of
political information among the public noted by Chaffee as
a field for research. The current, even if somewhat
controversial, Social Responsibility theory of the media
gives media no prescriptive monopoly over government
communication with the public, and suggests the possibility
of government in competition with them. The question is too
large to be more than mentioned within this compass, but it
has an importance in relation to media constraints.

It may be, of course, that it is not possible to
expand public understanding of government outputs of
decision and information beyond the personal, mainly
administrative relationship, and that the sometimes elaborate
distribution of information from government merely creates
illusions about the distribution of power in the political
system. Some features of the comparison between Israel and
the United Kingdom give food for thought here. Political
participation remains a minority interest.

At any rate, there is no lack of issues to explore.
Within the scope of this study it is neither intended nor
feasible to research deeply. Its concern is to bring to
closer attention as a whole, using Israel as a working
example, aspects of communication between government and
public which tend to be studied in not always connected
parts, within the framework of competitive political systems
where the interactions can be most extensively seen. It
also tries to clothe some conceptual frameworks, necessary
as they are to understanding of the political systems, with

the elements of communication and power which affect the theoretical information cycle as the activator of operation, response and steering.

Hypotheses formulated in this field cannot be mathematically verified. But if acceptable, they may suggest lines of research into the so far very superficially explored intricacies of government and public information, particularly behind the screens of decision processes within government, where the final interactions of information and power which determine adaptation and steering take place. Despite the easing of some constraints, these are the areas which government assiduously guards against penetration.

PART ONE

CHAPTER   ONE

INFORMATION   AND   THE   POLITICAL   SYSTEM

"Government" and "Public" Information

Information deriving from government and circulating
within the community is a major constituent of information
within the political system. This study is concerned
essentially with concepts of "government information" and
"public information", differences between them, how these
may arise, and the part which they play in the operation
and stability of the political system. "Government
information" is used here to embrace all information
received, collected and originated by government and under
its control. "Public information" is used to denote the
extent of government information which reaches or is
accessible to the public, and the forms which it takes as
the end-product of processes of information transfer within
the political system. To differentiate between government
and public information is to raise questions: how far is
a distinction correctly made; why should it occur; and is
it a haphazard product or a systemic phenomenon following
principles which can be hypothesised and tested?

Basic reasons for a distinction can readily be seen in
the size and political organisation of society. The larger
the society the greater the differentiation of roles and
institutions and the extent of working delegations. The
gap between government and members of the society (the
public) widens, and government may become remote. The
public are unlikely to require as much information as
government, or to be able to assimilate more than small
fractions of it relevant to their needs and interests.
Remoteness may be increased by the form of political
organisation; government may not recognise obligations to

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provide information, especially that which it prefers to withhold, and the public may have no effective means of obtaining it. Moreover, though in theory(political organisation apart) all government information could be made available or accessible to the public, in practice distinctions of privacy and security are general. Few would want their personal tax, medical or criminal records accessible to all; and most would accept some retention within government of information vital to state security. Such selective retentions are elementary constraints in principle, if controversial in extent and control.

The existence of differences between government and public information is clear enough, as are some of the reasons. Differences may be found in all types of political systems in widely varying degree. The aim here is to examine how far they conform to general rules, and how far these affect the operation of the political system generally.

The literature of government and politics discusses some of these questions, and the modern movements for freedom of information are intensely concerned with the removal of constraints on government information and the regulation of those which must remain. But the literature does not distinguish clearly or conceptually between government and public information, though it may incidentally imply and discuss aspects of the distinction. Some of it describes organisational and bibliographical information linkages between government and public. Thus Ogilvy-Webb (1963) describes the information organisation of the British government; Scanlon (1964) describes the organisation of Canadian government information, which he sees primarily as an exercise in public relations. Works such as Johansson's (1984) are primarily bibliographic, identifying and describing the complex published outputs of government; an established periodical, <u>The Government Publications Review</u>, is essentially a professional discussion vehicle for librarians about these outputs. These are restricted contexts. Cherns (1979, 1980) deals mainly with organisational and publishing aspects of

government information, but also discusses some attempts, particularly in Canada and Australia during the 1970's to link government information organisation more closely to the political system.

Others deal with government primarily as a source of news from the viewpoint of journalists and media. These are more concerned with political aspects and with information goals and motivations within both government and media. But they are incidentally illustrative rather than systematic about the influences within government on what is presented to the media to convey to the public. Rosten (1937), Cohen (1963) and Sigal (1973) have produced well-known works of this kind. Tunstall (1971) and Schlesinger (1978) deal more systematically with the origins and treatment of news material, including information from government and associated sources, as well as with media goals. Seymour-Ure (1968, 1974) discusses aspects of political communication, with detailed case studies illuminating the interaction of government, media and public in working political contexts.

Generally, however, the literature does not examine the concept of information and its distribution as distinct from communication between government and public as a general phenomenon of the political system. For this we need to look at the work of political theorists, the place and functions which they ascribe to information in their models, and the extent to which they deal with any differentiation between government and public information.

Information and Political Theorists

Information as a concept tends to lend itself to abstraction because of its very generality and to be semantically involved when considered in particular contexts, e.g. psychology or information science (McQuail, 1975; 15-16). Deutsch's well-known definition of information (1963; 146) as "a patterned relationship between events" conveys a high degree of abstraction; but elsewhere (1967; 274) Deutsch conveys the variability, relativity and elusive meaning of the term which are closely relevant to the political

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context:

> "The important thing about information
> is...the pattern carried by the signal
> and the relation to the set of alternatives
> available in the same information-carrying
> channel. (The meaning of this information
> is something else again: it depends on the
> relationship of the pattern of the signal
> to the set of patterns stored in the
> receiver)".

This emphasises the message - the content - as well as the process, and its meaning to the receiver.

McQuail (1975; 15-18) brings Deutsch's statement closer to the real world of government, in terms of the "information expectations of the communicator" not necessarily fulfilled in the reception of his message. Communication of message content requires shared referents, objects common to the environment and experience of both sender (e.g. government) and receiver (e.g.public), if the message is to have a common meaning for them. This is clearly of great practical importance in the transfer of information within the political system. McQuail emphasises the ambiguity of the content of a message which may derive from "...the possible discrepancy between what is intended by the originator and what is perceived by the recipient". The originator can attempt to create ambiguities in his messages. Chaffee (1975) also carries Deutsch's statement into the political system, by drawing attention to the importance of diffusion of political information and the public's understanding of what the political system is doing.

Political systems theorists attach a pervasive importance to information as a connective and activating factor in political processes, but they are concerned with communication process rather than content, in broad conceptual terms. Their analyses view the political system as a set of abstracted phenomena and interactive mechanisms with a capacity to maintain themselves and adapt to change - that is, to persist. Thus Deutsch (1963), the most "information-oriented" of these analysts, considers the dominant influence in the political system to lie in the

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capacity and organisation to gather and store information, and to transmit this in order to make decisions which modify the system's behaviour. He sees the political system as a network of communication channels for this purpose, forming a cybernetic, or self-regulating mechanism, continuously adapting itself to change through "feedback" information, which takes account of previous action in modifying subsequent behaviour. This is fundamental to the concept of "steering" the political system, which is the ultimate conceptual function of its machinery. We obtain from Deutsch this notion of a cyclical process of information.

But it is difficult, as many have noted, including Galnoor (1982; 8), to apply Deutsch's concepts to a concrete political system. In Easton's phrase (1965; 21): "Deutsch has organised a conceptual structure around the message and its networks as the major unit of a kind of analysis that leads towards a theory of political communications". A view of the phenomena of communications structure and information transfer processes in relation to steering behaviour does not, however, convey a morphology of the political system, or indicate the depth of dimension through which it interacts with its environments and can be conceptually abstracted from them.

Easton gives more indication of dimension and morphology. "The conceptual orientation that I am proposing - systems analysis - is one that stems from the fundamental decision to view political life as a system of behaviour. Its major and gross unit of analysis will be the political system"......"The political system is the most inclusive behaviour in a society for the authoritative allocation of values" (Easton, 1965; 23, 56). The allocation of values involves the control of access to them by deprivation, obstruction and facilitation. We must note that this necessarily involves applications of both information and power ;information about values and circumstances, and the power to allocate or withhold those values. Easton (1965; 64-69) also makes an important conceptual distinction between the political and

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non-political environments within society as sources of
information, and the discernible though moveable boundary,
analytic rather than spatial, which marks the movement of
information from one system of social behaviour to another.

Though equally concerned with information process
rather than content, Easton brings the cybernetic concept
more comprehensively than Deutsch within a morphology of
the boundary-maintaining political system, abstracted from
its environments, self-governming and responding, with
capacity for regulation of stress and persistence dependent
on feedback information, and affected by boundary-crossing
influences expressed through information. Like Deutsch he
deals with information in terms of inputs, or demands in the
system, and their conversion into outputs, or decisions
which may enable the system to adapt and persist through
stress. In a "gargantuan oversimplification...in order to
lay bare the essential framework" of political life as a
system of behaviour Easton (1965; 109, 111) states the
processes of what he terms "dynamic response":

> "Through its structures and processes the system
> ...acts on...intakes in such a way that they
> are converted into outputs.....The outputs
> return to the system in the environment, or,
> in many cases, they may turn directly and
> without intermediaries back upon the system
> itself".

This is the essence of the process of information
cycling between the political system and its environments.
It is, of course, no more than conceptually possible to
regard this complex interchange of information in terms of
the ordered flow implied in Easton's models by input and
output within or across notional boundaries. The political
system is so indissociable from its environments that
information percolates between them by what may be regarded
as osmosis rather than boundary-crossing. The information
environment can be seen as co-extensive with and all-
pervasive in the organisation of society, comprising the
total stock of updated knowledge and opinion within it,
expressed ultimately from the minds of individuals. It
cannot be circumscribed or classified in a political sense;

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the political system is embedded in it.

The complexities of interchange emerge from Easton's well-known model of dynamic response (Fig. 1). In "stripping the rich and complex political processes down to their bare bones" (Fig. 2) the osmotic rather than boundary-crossing nature of the interchange is clearer.

The abstractions of Deutsch and Easton provide invaluable concepts, but they are not concerned with the actualities of government. They need to be brought closer to individuals and institutions. Downs (1957),in a theoretical elucidation of the governing of a particular type (democratic) of political system, provides some valuable general insights for our theme (though we need not follow here his specialised argument based on assumptions of economic rationality - the maximisation of personal economic benefit in attaining goals). Downs does express, however, both the relativity and content of information in a way much more closely related to the individual, the basic unit of the political system. At the same time some of his statements suggest the impracticability of trying to force information into specific conceptual moulds:

> "Contextual knowledge... we define as
> cognisance of the basic forces relevant to
> some given field of operations. It is a
> grasp of relations among the fundamental
> variables in some area...................
> ....
> when we speak of an informed citizen, we
> will be referring to a man who has both
> contextual knowledge and information about
> those areas relevant to his decision-making
> ....
> Information is data about the current
> development in and status of those variables
> which are the objects of contextual knowledge"
> (Downs, 1957; 79).

The informed citizen, in fact, organises and abstracts from his stocks of already assimilated information, and applies his discriminative abilities. But the political or other context cannot limit the range of information which individuals may bring to bear upon a particular topic, if only because they differ in knowledge, perceptions and discriminative ability. This brings into question the very

Fig.1   A Dynamic Response Model of a Political System
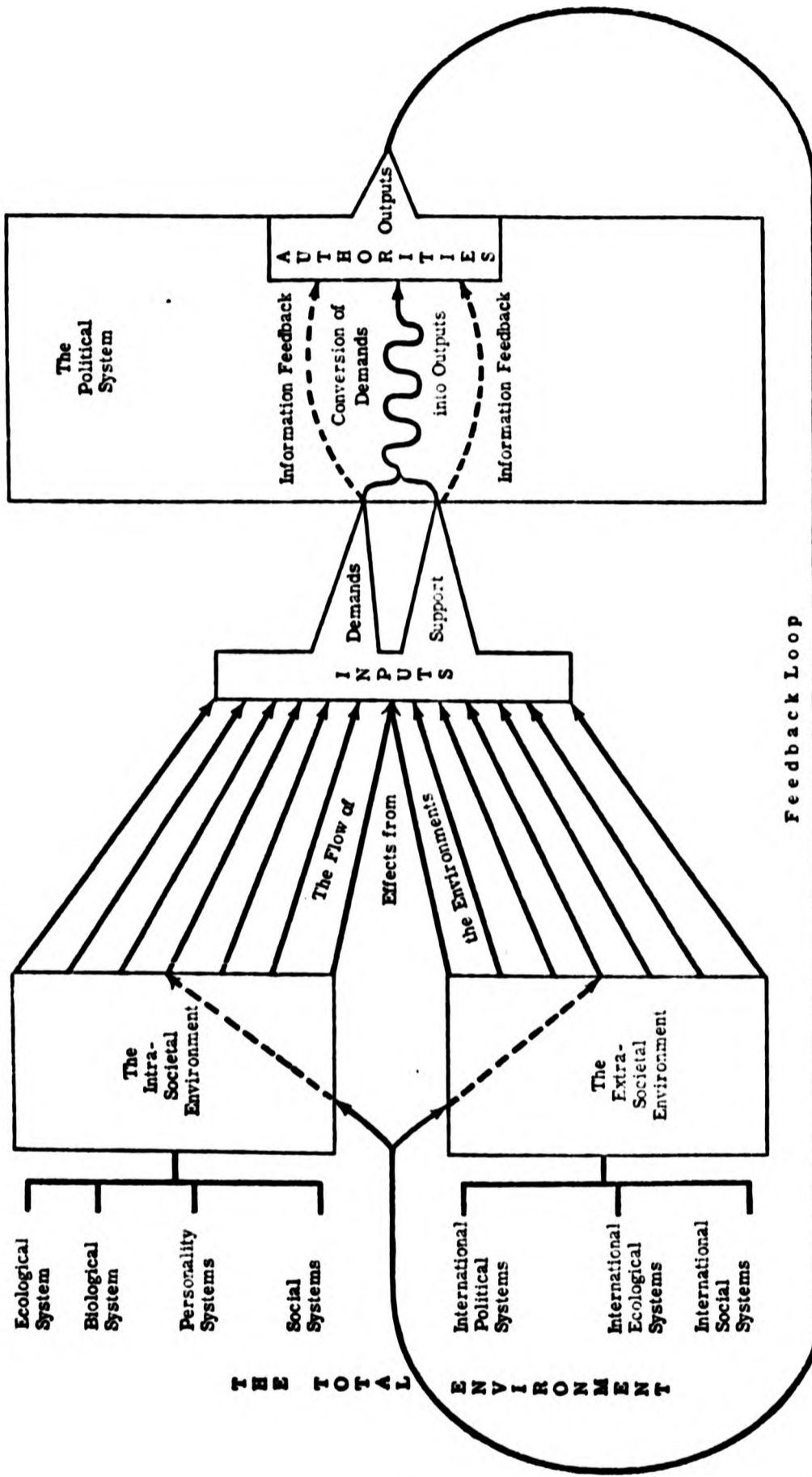
Source: D.Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis, 1965, p.110

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Fig.2   A Simplified Model of a Political System
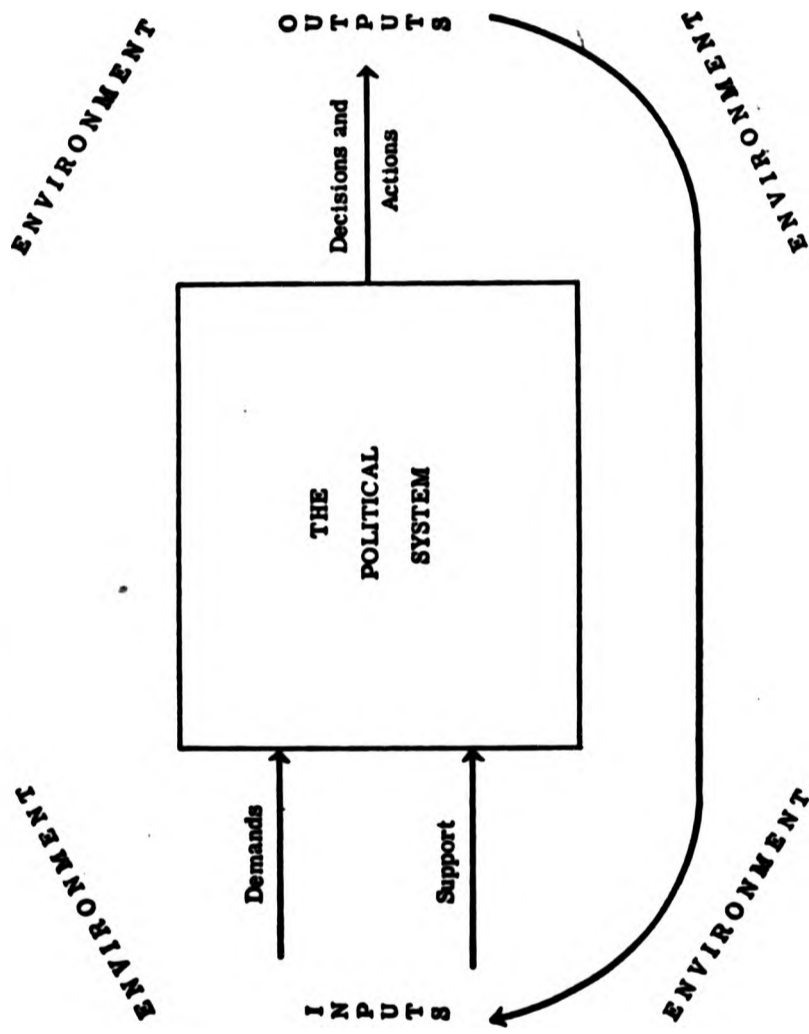
Source: D.Easton, _A Framework for Political Analysis_, 1965, p.112

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broad typological distinction which Downs makes between
information acquired by individuals, as either "enter-
tainment", solely for edification, however serious the
context, and "non-entertainment information", used as a
means to decision and including "political information".
This is analogous to Easton's distinction of political
and non-political environments. But even within the
defined economic rationality of Downs' model it does not
seem possible to maintain such arbitrary distinctions
between classes of information in the minds of individuals.
Downs is obliged to qualify his classification:
"Entertainment sources sometimes yield political
information as a surplus benefit" and "Some citizens
also seek political information purely for its entertain-
ment value, because they enjoy political rivalry and
warfare" (Downs, 1957; 215, 223).

Nevertheless, Downs' approach to a stated form of
political system rather than to a complete abstraction
begins to focus on operative government, in forms,
typology and sources of information. It elaborates the
notion of an information environment, from which there
is selection for the political environment. Information
sources include the governing party, which "publishes
large amounts of information as an intrinsic part of its
governing activities", other political parties, publishers,
interest groups and interpersonal contacts (Downs, 1957;
222). We have here major elements in information transfer
within a competitive political system.

Two important concepts emerge: the sources of an
individual's information in the political sense; and his
own "contextual knowledge", of sources as well as data,
which guides him in his evaluation and decisions. Both
are important variables in circulation, absorption and
effects of information within the political system.

Another approach to the political system is the
structural/functional analysis characterised by the work
of Almond and his associates. This is grounded in
identification and analysis of the functions which must

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be performed within the structures of political systems if they are to continue as systems, regardless of the formal structures or institutional mechanisms which actually perform these functions. The resulting concepts of the essentials of the political system as an entity are still abstractions, but they directly relate the political system to the territorial state and its basis of power. Elements of power and compulsion which are incidental to Deutsch and Easton and confined within the economic rationality and political basis of Downs' democratic model are explicit in the input/output analysis which Almond also considers as fundamental to operation of the political system: "Legitimate force is the thread that runs through inputs and outputs of the political system, giving it its especial quality and salience and its coherence as a system" (Almond and Coleman, 1960; 7).

The framework is, again, of inputs, conversion, outputs and feedback, the dynamic element in change. But Almond identifies input/output functions, such as interest articulation and rule application (1960; 17), from which typology and transfer of information are conceptually indissociable, even if not discussed within the scope of the work. Its relation to functions within actual political systems brings Almond's analysis also to bear on classifications indicative of types and sources of information. Thus output functions are specified as governmental, including outputs of rule. This analysis must lead into concepts of government and public information, channels of transfer and ultimate sanctions for enforcement.

In his concern with the political structures of modernising, predominantly non-industrial societies, Apter (1965) goes beyond structural/functional analysis into the normative behaviour of government. He associates information and coercion in a dynamic and inverse relationship as "functional requisites of government" (Apter, 1965; 238). Varieties of government authority resulting from the opposing relationships of the

libertarian value of the individual and the supremacy of
community goals support a classification of systems of
government.

Apter (1965; 237, 30, 239, 238) makes, but does not
explore some important incidental rather than systematic
statements about information in the political system.
Government "...requires appropriate information in order
to settle problems that arise" is unexceptionable. Cursory
assertions associate information with education and
identify it as the link between public and policy. Input
sources of the information on which government decision
must rest - "what might be called the feedback of decision" -
are indicated. These statements include as a requirement
for government decision "...knowledge of the limits within
which the public will support action". This is an important
variable in the influence of information on government,
which directs attention to the views of Chaffee (1965) on
the understanding of members of the political system.

His direct relation of information with coercion
inevitably brings Apter's analysis to associate information
also with legitimacy and authority, that is with power.
But for analytical purposes he matches Downs' economic
rationality by making assumptions about a flow of
information "...freely available to voters and officials
..." in the political marketplace in which an informed
public and an informed government operate, as a basis for
political choice (Apter, 1965; 30, 293). Nevertheless,
both Downs and Apter recognise, outside their assumptions
of rationality, practical inequalities of information
related to power which distort the principle of political
equality (Downs, 1957; 236) and are characteristic of the
modernising societies on which Apter rests his analysis -
indeed, he recognises the need for modernising elites to
have information that is "...not for the public" (Apter,
1965; 175). Elsewhere Galnoor (1975) has explored the
inequalities of the marketplace for government information,
distinguishing those who have access to it on preferential
terms. Any assumptions of equality or inequality of

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information between government and public go to the root of the distinction between government and public information, and to the reasons for it.

Other statements about information in the political system are found in the literature of political culture - cognitions, feelings and evaluations of a population towards its political system. Almond and Verba (1963; 57-58), for example, relate information to democratic competence, the power of citizens to influence government, and they relate "...valid information about political issues and processes" to this. They attempt to produce simple measures of citizens' information in terms of content, such as knowledge of political leaders, cabinet offices and departments. They rightly concede that "These simple measures...tap only a limited aspect of the dimension of knowledge". But the concentration on the recipients of information emphasises once more the importance of the receptivity and perceptions of the public in the transfer of government information, and therefore the degree of common referent.

Almond and Verba conclude from empirical studies that those who consider themselves politically competent are those with higher education or occupational status. But these attributes (which imply greater ability to make use of information) also suggested by Downs (1957; 235) and Apter (1965; 29-30) are not exclusive or supreme in producing political effects. Almond and Verba (1963; 45-62) also demonstrate that those who have low levels of political information often have a high level of opinions. In Mexico, for example, those with little or no education or information on public affairs who took positions on general political questions were twice as numerous proportionately as in any other country in their sample range. Opinions, however formed, educated or uneducated, are just as much part of the information environment of the political system as more formally organised influences.

Thus we find in main analytical currents of political system and culture a variety of approaches which give or imply an indispensable though not uniform place and salience for information and its transfer between government and public. The input/output pattern, however expressed, the process of conversion which transforms the former into the latter, and the cybernetic analogy of feedback information as an adaptive influence are common themes in varying degrees and forms of emphasis, as dynamically essential to the capacity of political systems to maintain themselves through change.

All theoretical approaches contribute to consideration of government and public information. But modelled abstractions of the political system are constructs deliberately remote from actualities. It is difficult to apply such general concepts as, for example, the interchange between the political system and its environments, without, like Meadow (1980), narrowing the focus much more, as indicated in his model at Fig. 3, adapted from Easton, to the actual elements in political systems through which interchanges are effected, with the many variable relationships involved. Meadow is primarily concerned to depict communication, but his model makes it clear that the cycle of information and feedback between government and public is heavily dependent for continuity on the articulation of the interests and goals of its elements. Power, though indicated within decision systems (government) is given no weighting in relation to other elements. However, the model is far closer to the working framework of real-world political systems.

Models, of course, are over-tidy. It cannot be assumed in real-world political systems that information follows orderly theoretical patterns of progression to adjustment of the steering. The very conceptual completeness of theoretical abstractions may imply a degree of order not to be found in real-world political systems, which are the outcome of confused historical processes, and of complex and untidy heritages of political structure

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Fig.3   A Political Communications Model

CONTROL OBJECTS		FILTERING AND CONTROL MECHANISMS		DECISION SYSTEMS	

CONTROL OBJECTS

CITIZENS

Participants
(Articulates)

Spectators
(Inarticulates)

Individual
Demands

Perceived
Policy Outputs

FILTERING AND
CONTROL MECHANISMS

GROUPS

(1) Cohesion
(2) Aggregation

MASS MEDIA

(1) Editorials
(2) Advocacy

GROUPS

MASS MEDIA

(1) Gatekeeping
(2) Agenda-
Setting

Collective
Demands

Amplified
Demands

Actual
Policy
Outputs

DECISION SYSTEMS

GOVERNMENT RECEPTORS

(1) Organisational Hierachy
(2) Power
(3) Intragovernmental
Co-operation
(4) Processing Capacity

GOVERNMENT EFFECTORS

(1) Information Policy
(2) Press Linkages

Source: R.G. Meadow, Politics as Communication, 1980 p. 42

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and culture which affect their attitudes to information as
a political factor.

The real-world government is driven by balances of
ideological and pragmatic forces which can manipulate the
transferred content of information which it originates and
controls. It is not cybernetically bound to feedback
corrections if these are incompatible with its aims. It
may set a course perverse in relation to information
received, but rational in its ideological terms. And
however cybernetically responsive, the system may be
overwhelmed by the impact of new ideologies or circumstances
which break the accustomed moulds of the political or
social culture and confuse the mechanisms of adaptation
and stability. Inputs or feedbacks too extreme or rapid
for the system to absorb can destabilise the response of
cybernetic systems.

Above all, the real-world system is based upon
variable distributions of power which affect the ways in
which government information originates and is controlled,
and the machinery of government which deals with it.
Variables such as content, circulation and articulation of
the machinery of government and of communication channels
may give rise to spasmodic, unevenly distributed,
incoherent or ambiguous information which will be reflected
in conversion, outputs and feedbacks. The analysis of
power rather than system brings us to the operative
political realities through which the traditional direct
equation between power and information is expressed. In
its simple form it is a statement of potential, realised
only through complex interactions within the political
system, to determine what Deutsch (1963; Ch. xi) has
characterised as steering - in effect, making and applying
the decisions which direct the affairs of the polity
towards desired goals.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONTEXT OF POWER

Power and Consent

Power is the essential attribute of state and
government, which embrace specific territoriality and the
exclusive right to the use of force, or coercion, in the
maintenance of rule and order (Easton, 1971; 109, Dahl,
1976; 12). The potential for coercion underlies
acceptance of authority, on which the exercise of
government commonly rests, "the untested acceptance of
another's judgement", closely linked to legitimacy,
"...the acknowledged right to command and the acknowledged
obligation to obey" (Easton, 1958; 178).

The literature of power distinguishes between coercion,
the threat of deprivation to secure compliance (Lukes,
1974; 17), and influence to secure compliance without
sanctions. Deutsch (1974; 32) sees power as imposed from
outside, while influence involves appeal to thoughts and
feelings. Wrong (1979; 53) suggests the practical limits
of coercion in government as more effective in restraint
of behaviour than in causation. Influence can be a subtle
and hidden expression of power, put by Galbraith (1985; 23)
as conditioned power "...exercised by changing belief.
Persuasion, education or the social commitment to what
seems natural, proper or right causes the individual to
submit to the will of another or of others. The submission
reflects the preferred course; the fact of submission is
not recognised".

Dahl (1961), Parsons (1967), Arendt (1970), Bachrach
and Baratz (1970), Partridge (1971), Lukes (1974) and
others discuss power from many aspects and with much
semantic refinement. Government usually seeks legitimacy

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through acceptance. The acknowledged obligation to obey must be eroded, and legitimacy undermined, by the use of coercion to a point at which it may secure obedience only at the cost of felt obligation. Authority and legitimacy are maintained by consensus, the pursuit of collective goals, achieved through influence in Galbraith's sense of conditioned power. Consent is manufactured by "...defining issues or problems, assembling and distributing information ...engaging in public persuasion" (Patridge, 1971; 41). Public opinion is prepared for prospective government policies and measures. This is the organisation of people's attitudes, in which accepting Galbraith's statement of conditioned power, there are elements of manipulative influence, not recognised as such by those influenced.

The manufacture of consent involves fostering agreement rather than encouraging dissent. The potential for either may be present. Information is not necessarily consensual, and submission seens a strong term for choice of a preferred course. Approval, support or assent are the objectives. There are judgements to be exercised on the basis of established attitudes and perceptions by both government and public about information put out by the former and received by the latter. The choice of preferred course may require conscious compromise on both sides in relation to the perceived importance of consensus rather than dissent. By no means all consensus is manipulated. The choice is often deliberate between courses of action or assent in relation to the pragmatic considerations which affect political decisions.

Galbraith (1985; 23-24) identifies organisation as the most important source of power in modern societies, having its foremost relationship with conditioned power. Lukes (1974; 17) notes Schattschneider's well-known statement (1960; 71) that "organisation is the mobilisation of bias", and Bachrach and Baratz associate this with the discussion of power, as "...a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures ('rules of the game') that operate systematically and consistently to

the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense
of others" (1970; 43-44).

In government these rules of the game may be seen to
be even more than systematic and consistent. They are
systemic, implicit in the nature of political organisation
in which specific interests with a virtually monopolistic
command of   sources and machinery of information are
inevitably led to mobilise the bias of their position.
This is applied to processes of selection and emphasis,
inclusion and exclusion involved in the formulation of
government information and its transfer to the public as
a vehicle of influence, and may be as much unconscious,
the outcome of implicit conditioning by the internal
culture of government (Galbraith, 1985; 39), as conscious
persuasion. Those who command power are subject to personal
and collective impulses to maintain their position.
Conscious intent is no less systemic in government than
implicit conditioning. We need not attach normative or
moral values to the association of bias with information
processes; it is inherent in any selection of data, and
is not a pejorative term in this sense.

The processes within government are only part of the
complexities, because government needs channels of
communication in order to transfer information to the
public, and these have their own characteristics and goals.
They may be within government control or outside it; they
may be completely autonomous, or subject to degrees of
government influence. Between the original information of
government and what is received by the public there is a
complex chain of mechanism. A review of the ways in which
government information is formed and projected, the
characteristics which it acquires, and the influences to
which it is subject in selection and transfer to the public
will illuminate the working relationships of power,
information and influence in the political system.

The Authority and Superiority of Government Information

Government information carries a historical inheritance
of authority. Authoritarianism, the principal form of
government until modern times, regarded government
information as the preserve of ruling elites. It was for
them to decide what the public might know about the
processes by which it was governed.[1] Ruling elites were
served by bureaucracies, whose secretive habits were in
full harmony with the authoritarian philosophy that those
outside the apparatus of government had no rights to know
what those inside were saying and doing, what information
was available to them by virtue of their position, and
how they came to conclusions on it.

Though major barriers to the circulation of government
information have been broken down with the decline of
authoritarianism in many states it retains an authority of
its origin, sustained by deeper social forces. Sennett
(1980; 1, 18, 20) notes authority as an aspect of social
psychology involving desire for stability and order, bonds
of loyalty and fraternity, and "the force of habituation".
Such forces are associated with government as an institution.
The mere mention of government authority tends to confer
authenticity.[2]

The modern state and its bureaucracy extend their
authority far beyond the central machinery of government,
into what is termed the public sector. They penetrate
deeply into the community in economic and social regulation.
(In states which are still authoritarian the public sector
is virtually the state itself). The resulting bureaucratic

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[1]The British Parliament, whose Hansard is now an archetypal
public document, treated public reports of its proceedings
and debates (about public affairs) as a punishable breach
of privilege until the late 18th century.

[2]Traces linger in the formal legend "Published by Authority"
still to be found on some United Kingdom official documents,
such as The London Gazette (whose origins exemplify the
exercise of government power over dissemination of
information - Handover, 1965; 1-18).

organisation has been noted as a major source of conditioned power, by which bureaucracy "...has made the state extensively the instrument of its own purpose" (Galbraith, 1985; 139).

To the basic authority of its information government adds formal powers (e.g. a periodic census of every household in the country) and an unmatchable range of access to sources and control of the machinery of collection and collation from which it derives an information superiority in range, quantity and quality over other elements within the political system. Its authority and control promote acceptability of information and impede challenge. The complexity of many public issues on which government controls the essential information enhances its superiority. It is able to supplement its own information resources by drawing on those of special interests which often work in close co-operation with it, such as financial institutions and industrial and commercial organisations, particularly where it commands powers of patronage to key appointments.

Information Potential and Its Discharge: A Distribution of Power

This information superiority can be expressed as the accumulation of a charge, or "information potential", at the disposal of government. It sees discharges from this potential as positive or negative: positive if likely to further its purposes and gain public acceptance or approval; negative if likely to evoke public criticism or disapproval. Though government controls the content and intensity, e.g. the coverage, channels and emphasis, of discharges, their polarity is not immutable. It may be strengthened, reduced or even reversed in channels of transmission or in ultimate public reception. Nor is control of content and intensity absolute control of discharge itself. The most authoritarian regime cannot function without some discharge of information. Competitive political systems must function imperfectly without sufficient discharge of information from government for its performance to be assessed as a basis for choice. The power of discharge implies the power of retention, or constraint.

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In discharging or distributing information government
will tend to try to select it for, or to give it positive
potential, possibly by manipulating content as well as by
presentation, and to neutralise, reduce or screen out
negative potential. It will do this in accordance with
the identifiable political values which it sees attached
to it. The value with which it is intimately concerned is
maintenance of its power, and we can call this attached
value the power-content of the information. This is not
intrinsic to the cognitive content of the information; it
may be implicit in it, or separable from it. It may
overlap explicatory values. For example, the most
convincing explanation of why it is necessary to impose a
heavy tax on some popular commodity is likely to have some
potentially negative power-content. Power-content of
specific information may derive from information previously
distributed, or not within government's control, or from
relationships or associations in the minds of the receivers.
Nor is it a fixed quality. The United Kingdom government's
annual Report of the Northern Lighthouses Commission is low
on intrinsic power-content, as is some obscure amendment
to a specialised piece of legislation, but both are capable
of developing power-content in some unusual circumstances.
Some information may be intrinsically high in power-content,
for example, information that the police have shot and
killed a number of demonstrators against the government.
The contextual political circumstances will determine
whether this power-content has positive or negative
potential for government.

These are extreme examples, and the possible variations
in relation to government information are very much more
complex. But the tendency of government will be to make
the most of the power-content of information for its
purposes, and in any case to try to limit or reduce the
power-content distributed to the public. It may attempt
to suppress information, in the above example, of what
might be regarded as a brutal massacre, or not mention the
number of casualties, or represent the demonstrators as
subversive agitators, or claim that the police were

provoked to fire in self-defence, or link this information with other information to suggest that it has successfully halted an insurrection. Whatever the information may be, forms of content and presentation will be used to turn it to government's advantage, or lessen disadvantage.

The most elementary purpose of discharge, or distribution of information is basic to government - to secure compliance with outputs of rule and regulation. The public must know what to obey. Beyond that are legal and conventional obligations on government to give account of its conduct and decisions. A great deal more information is distributed in the exercise of Galbraith's conditioned power, effort to obtain persuaded belief, which he regards as "...central...to the functioning of the modern economy and polity and in capitalist and socialist countries alike". Galbraith is in fact maintaining that this conditioned power is systemic in much modern government, regardless of its nature.

Power-Content and Public Countervailing Power

Distribution of power-content of information, however basically cognitive for the recipient - a simple accretion of knowledge - is a potential transfer of power, in the possibility of intrinsic or contextual evaluation which it confers. Evaluations are formative of opinions, which may be expressed to government through channels of articulation and aggregation. If supportive these enhance government's authority. But critical or oppositional opinions may influence government to refrain from or modify some course it would otherwise have taken (or to take some course it would otherwise not have taken). This potential to encroach on government's freedom of action is a form of public power by way of response to transferred information as the public sees it. It is basic to what Galbraith (1985; 80-81) calls countervailing power, a collective response called into being by the exercise of government power, and expressed through interest groups and organisations. Clearly, public countervailing power derived from government information received is more likely to be

effective when organised or aggregated. In extreme cases
public countervailing power can be coercive, for example
strong, possibly violent public demonstration which forces
its will on government.

In terms of power-content we may distinguish between
two main classes of information from government, adminis-
trative and political information. Administrative
information is distributed as an intrinsic function of
government, and comprises basically the regulatory and
administrative laws and directives and other formally
prescribed and mandatory information relating to the
continuing relationships of citizen and government, which
incumbent governments continue and new governments take
over. Unless some significant change occurs or is
contemplated it is only marginally the political concern
of incumbent government. Its substance generally requires
all or most of its power-content to be distributed with it,
but this is more an enhancement of government than a basis
for public countervailing power; it is a manifestation of
authority. Nevertheless, government often has adminis-
trative discretions in forms of presentation and
availability, through which some influence on power-content
can be exercised.

Administrative information also comprises outputs of
advice, reports and reviews which often relate closely to
government activities and policies, and government has
much more discretion in this. It is closer to political
information, concerned with current considerations,
decisions, policies and actions of government, which are
often the subject of political controversy. It is therefore
not only "news", and thus of close interest to the media,
but it is also the basic material of government image-
building and the manufacture of consent. Its power-content
will be manipulated accordingly to produce positive public
reactions and to minimise accretions of public counter-
vailing power.

Manipulation of information may frustrate its purpose
if it goes so far as to be in plain conflict with
observable fact. It then tends to produce negative

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instead of positive potential which it was meant to achieve. There comes a point where manipulation can no longer bridge the discrepancy between visual evidence or commonsense about human and political behaviour and the information which issues from government. The result is to undermine the credibility of the information. No amount of explanations attributing shortages of food or goods in the shops to temporary causes or doctrinaire rigidities of belief will ultimately prevail in acceptance by the public against the constant sight of empty shelves in the shops and a thriving black market in the commodities of shortage. The public becomes aware that the information it is receiving is meant not to inform but to obscure. Persistent unemployment conveys more information to the public about government policies than plausible explanations that it is a passing phase, or even that it is necessary in the longer-term public interest, particularly if alternative policies are apparent.

If information loses credibility it gains negative potential, and the government sources of it lose authority. Their decisions and explanations no longer carry the authenticity and acceptance which is an attribute of government information in the eyes of the public, and acquire characteristics of propaganda, dissemination of a doctrine.

To retreat from such a position is to lose further credibility as a screen of manipulated information issues from government in order to disguise a change of ideological direction. It is politically naïve to assume that manipulation of information by government is always unidentified as such by the public, which accepts that governments have difficulty in terms of ideology, prestige and maintenance of power in making open admissions of doctrinal error. The manipulation of information may be seen in such circumstances as a nominal deffence against the augmentation of public counter-vailing power which an unsustainable manipulation created in the first place. There must be limitations of credibility on the extent to which information from government can depart from overt actualities and retain authenticity in the public mind.

The known or suspected retention of information or power-content within government may in itself augment public countervailing power. This situation is most real for government in political systems where there is nominally effective distribution of power-content with information. Nevertheless, public dissatisfaction with the information received from government, even if it can find no effective channels of expression and aggregation, is rarely without some influence on government in the long term, if only to evoke some more coercive means of sustaining authority than persuasion. Apter's pivotal relationship between information and power is relevant. Growth of public countervailing power in relation to information from government is implicit in the modern movements for freedom of information, the right to know and open government, which penetrate and weaken government's command of discharge from its information potential.[3] There is now an extensive international literature on these intertwined concepts of public availability and access to government information.[4]

It is a straightforward proposition in principle that government information generated and collected by public appointees at public expense is public property, to which access should be constrained only on defined and demonstrable grounds of public interest determined by some authority independent of executive government. Acceptance of this proposition would be anathema to authoritarian government in which such public rights are not recognised

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[3]·Open government is complemented by the "right to know". Goren (1979; 29) dates the expression of this concept as late as 1945, as a function of the citizen's right to criticise government (she writes on liberal democracies) and to enjoy rights and freedoms which can be protected only by adequate information.

[4]·A useful bibliography which documents the present position of developments in countries with established legislation and practice is to be found in a United Kingdom report (Civil Service Department, Disclosure of Official Information, 1979; A 143-50).

in the political structure. But even in nominally non-authoritarian political systems it is a notable demonstration of the persistence of ingrained inheritances of historical authoritarianism that movements against constraint of information from government are surprisingly modern.[5] The successes achieved in recent years may be more symbolic than effective; concessions won may often be little used by the public at large. But they diminish the area of discretionary government constraint, and the consequent wider scope and availability and accessibility of government information must have an effect of augmenting public countervailing power.

The Public Dimension

There are further influences on the complete process of transfer of government information to the public, not least in the characteristics of whatever communication channels may be used. But public receptivity and perceptions are the final factors in communication and impact of content. These can never be accurately predictable. Government itself is not always organisationally a tightly demarcated source of messages. But the public is a highly diffused receptor, physically definable within the spatial boundaries of the state, but otherwise an amorphous collectivity of individuals with whom the extent and precision of common referent with government are often topic-specific, fluid and uncertain. Messages from government, as they reach the public, about a devaluation of the currency may encounter many different degrees of indifference, understanding or misunderstanding. Messages about the harmful effects of smoking, or a reduction in income-tax will register more uniformly on

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[5.] A League of Nations Conference of 1927 discussed barriers to freedom of information. A basic international forum for views was established at the United Nations International Conference on Freedom of Information as late as 1948. The subject has since had much discussion in the United Nations and Unesco contexts, the former seeking to formalise the right to receive and distribute information, the latter (controversially) seeking to establish a right of control in developing states over the reports of foreign media organisations operating within them (Canada, Task Force Report; II. 5-6).

broader and less differentiated audiences. A motorist may
be indifferent today about the price of petrol, as long as
his employers are paying, but acquire a sharp political
interest tomorrow if government proposes that he should in
future pay himself out of taxed income.

Almond and Verba (1963; 33 et seq.) have identified a
range and mix of orientations to government which
individuals may exhibit out of the differences in their
acquired knowledge, interests and perceptions. A message
from government may call any permutation of these variables
into response. Easton's conceptual statement (1965; 69):
"...a person might act in any analytically differentiated
role without changing his setting or empirical role",
expresses the fluidity with which information may give rise
to individual response. Communication, if process can be
separated from content, is a necessary condition of
response formation; but content is the activator of
referent and response, and the pattern of meaningful
communication between government and public is in practice
an extremely complex factor in the operation of the
political system.

Chaffee (1975; 95) emphasises the "support-oriented"
and "authority-directed" view of Easton's analysis of the
political system, and draws attention to the importance of
members' understanding of what the system is doing. This
must be determined partly by the diffusion of information
within the system, and this must be related to channels of
communication and public orientations and consequent
perceptions of a particular item of information. Clearly,
there is a relation between diffusion and public counter-
vailing power. There is also a reverse dimension. What
does government receive and understand from the public
through possibly faulty or inadequate feedback channels?
Public countervailing power is also a potential; to be
effective it must have a means of discharge to government.

Government and Public Information: A Hypothetical Framework

All these complexities are contained within the comprehensive abstractions of political systems models. The many variables involved can be regarded as part of the allocation of values within Easton's approach to adaptation, stability and persistence, or as contained within the structural and functional relationships discussed more particularly by Almond and Apter. But the direction rather than the mechanisms of steering which determine the attainment of system objectives must rest on transfer and retentions of power with information, within systems of government with elements of ideology, authority, bureaucracy, communication channels and public perceptions. Their interactions produce differences between government and public information.

We can at this point usefully summarise the primary relationships of government and public information so far discussed within three hypotheses which provide a systemic framework. They are, of course, operative within the conditions, power-distribution, related structures and conventions of particular political systems; but they are applicable in principle to all:

1. Government and public information as defined are neither co-extensive in content nor identical in form;
2. The discharge of information from government's information potential tends to restrain public countervailing power which may be derived from it;
3. For this purpose government tends systemically to emphasise the positive and to reduce the negative potential, as it sees them, of information which it distributes.

The discussion which follows of the processes of accumulation and discharge of information by government will illustrate how intimately the systemic influences are embedded in them.

CHAPTER THREE

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION POTENTIAL:
FORMATION AND TYPOLOGY

The Collection of Government Information

Collection of the information which underlies its
outputs of decision, action and regulation is a constant,
basic government activity. The instrument of government
especially involved is bureaucracy.[6]

The theory of bureaucracy as an indispensable adjunct
of government and other forms of organisation has an
extensive literature, stemming largely from the work of
Mosca (1896, tr.1939) and Michels (1911, tr.1962) and
Weber (tr.1947, 1962). Modern sociologists and management
and organisation theorists, such as Dimock (1944), Blau
(1955, 1956), Simon (1957) and Crozier (1964) have much
modified Weber's concepts of the ideal and rational
bureaucracy in a framework of legitimacy and authority.
Apter (1965; 152-53, 221, 259) discusses aspects of
bureaucracy in modernising states, in technical and
political roles.

Allbrow (1970; 54-105) discusses seven modern
concepts of bureaucracy, of which "Bureaucracy as Public
Administration", and "Bureaucracy as Administration by

[6].Allbrow (1970; 16) traces the origin of the term to
de Gournay in 1764 and notes its early association with the
arrogation of power by officials. Cremieux-Brilhac (1973;
14) cites a notable early modern bureaucrat, Sebastien
Bottin who, as Secretary.General of the Prefecture of Bas-
Rhin, published in 1788-89 the first in his series of
Statistical Annuals, which he developed into a mine of
demographic, economic and sociological information - a
forerunner of the systematic organisation of information
within modern government.

Officials" convey the sense of a communication function of government within which questions of organisation, efficiency, rationality and power involved in the discussion of the phenomenon itself may be subsumed. Allbrow discounts the idea of "Bureaucracy as Rule by Officials", considering bureaucracy as a component of government rather than government itself, though it may acquire power.

The political and bureaucratic echelons of government, in working combination, exercise the authority and carry on the affairs of the state. The political echelons hold, by whatever elective or other process they attain it, the power and responsibility of directing these affairs and of making the necessary decisions. The bureaucratic echelons consist of those salaried and permanent officials, organised into departments and hierarchies, whose basic functions are to serve and advise the political echelons (which involves informing them) in their decisions, and to give effect to them; to seek political decision as necessary for the processes of government; to maintain continuous administration of the regulatory outputs of government.

Casual and 'systematic collection of information are diffused throughout the machinery of government, in day-to-day administrative casework and in organised collection operations. The accretion of information is continuous and fragmentary over the whole field of government. Diversity and diffusion make it impracticable in any sizeable government organisation for any one hand or office to control it. The quality of the information product is affected by both internal and external standards.

The internal standards are those of bureaucratic efficiency, objectivity and integrity. These vary greatly from state to state. LaPalombara (1963; 10) notes that classic Weberian attributes of hierarchy, responsibility, rationality, professionalism and discipline may be largely irrelevant to the needs of less developed countries or unattainable within the concepts of their societies.

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Skills and orientations of administrative cadres may be inadequate at managerial levels, where the collection and processing of government information are organised. Relatively scarce skills and abilities of higher administrative cadres may draw them into the political rather than bureaucratic orbit. Low standards may result from poor remuneration and status, particularly in contexts of petty corruption. Lack of co-ordination or over-compartmentalisation within bureaucracy may confuse responsibility for collection. In highly developed societies bureaucracy may be penetrated by influential pressure groups (Key, 1964; 147-48) which import or inject information organised in their interests.

The variables in internal standards are complemented by those in external standards, particularly by the affective orientations, the feelings about government or the political system, of the population which supplies the majority of government information - the public. Very high rates of taxation generate evasion not only of tax but of information about personal or corporate finances. Governments imposing unpopular policies have difficulty in collecting relevant information. Information sought by government may be seen by businessmen, trades unions or other interests as associated with government policies which they consider hostile and have no wish to assist with information. Political divisions may generate suspicion. Few types of information sought by government can be regarded as politically value-free in the minds of all respondent individuals and organisations.

Government may also be seen as over-demanding information to the point of nuisance, causing its requests to be treated with perfunctory inaccuracy, or ignored. Requests for information may not be easily intelligble to respondents, who may give it by proxy. Widespread minor inaccuracies cast doubt on the accuracy of statistical consolidations.

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Governments themselves may influence input information at source by commissioning it. The composition and terms of reference of official committees are almost invariably at the discretion of government. The "whitewashing" committee is a well-worn device to put preferred information on the authoritative record.

Perfection in the collection of government information seems unlikely even in the best-organised bureaucracies and the most co-operative and literate of populations. The quality, coverage and objectivity of collection must be at least questionable on some occasions in all bureaucracies, and at least dubious in some. The full details of collection and compilation are usually known only to those who organise and carry out the work, and inaccessible to others. There is little basis on which it can be publicly challenged. The context does not necessarily corrupt the function or undermine the integrity of bureaucrats, who may be fully aware that if perfection is unattainable, imperfections can be absorbed into information which, at least, cannot be refuted. Whatever its standards, however, information collected by bureaucracy is the core of government information potential and the basis of further processing within government, though it must often be an approximation, even if a close approximation, to the actualities - the best information available within the internal and external circumstances of collection.

All this mass, variety, detail and accretion of information builds up the superiority of government information. The sources, motivations and interests involved in its collection are primarily bureaucratic. Though conscious intent may be a factor in deciding what information, and in what forms, to collect (or not to collect) it is likely to be marginal in political rather than bureaucratic terms. The political echelons of government have only peripheral contact with this largely routine and undisplayed activity of government, most of it continuing regardless of changes in political direction.

Government information potential does have political
inputs, from political parties and their declared policies
in relation to information collected or collectable and
from parliamentary institutions, whose debates and
proceedings draw on political constituency and special-
interest sources. Much of this information is equally
accessible to public and to government, but parliamen-
tarians and bureaucrats may have extensive information
exchanges on preferred terms behind the public scenes
(Galnoor, 1975), (Norton, 1985; 83-87). Some parliamen-
tary proceedings may not be published (e.g. committee
proceedings in some parliaments) though bureaucrats may
be closely involved with their work. Some parliaments,
of course, particularly where there is no political
competition, have very formal roles and produce virtually
no information.

The media are also a source of information for
government, of opinion rather than fact in terms of
organised information, though investigative journalism
can sometimes bring to light information inadequately
known within government, such as the effects of housing
or welfare policies on which the bureaucracy lacks a
"fieldwork" as distinct from statistical approach.
Moreover, where the machinery of government is poorly
co-ordinated, government departments may sometimes obtain
more information about each others' activities and policies
through the media than they do from each other. In states
where the media are completely controlled by government,
input from the media is "internal", reflecting currents of
policy which often give information and clues to the
bureaucratic and political echelons.

Added Values of Government Information

The information potential is not a simple matter of
volume, variety and reliability. The intrinsic value of
its content is enhanced by its concentration within the
bureaucracy, where it acquires added value of:

a. continuity and accumulation, building up
    a record against which the significance
    and proportion of accretions may be
    measured (e.g. changes in population
    composition; distribution of wealth
    and incomes);

b. association, relating types or items of
    information on particular themes (e.g.
    changes in imports in relation to customs
    duties; the cost of providing medical
    care for geriatrics);

c. internal government co-ordination,
    facilitating association of information
    gathered by different departments.
    Bureaucracies with effective co-
    ordination derive a greater added value
    than bureaucracies in which deficiencies
    of organisation and control impede co-
    ordination;

d. incontestability, a valuable attribute of
    government possession of the only information
    of its type or coverage available; there
    is no other basis on which its content and
    accuracy can be challenged.

A Typology of Government Information

A brief typology of government information potential
is suggested below. Types of information have characteristics
which bear on use. The typology suggested is not exhaustive,
nor are the types mutually exclusive or always consciously
defined within government itself. Any item of information
may be appropriate to several classes according to the
content and the context in which viewed. The feasible
combinations are an indication of the flexibility of the
information sources which government is able to use in
selecting, presenting or withholding information in pursuit
of its goals.

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Information within government may be considered as:

a. <u>Primary information</u>, as it arises or arrives in the form of data, reports and general administrative detail. This raw material of government information potential is divisible into:

   i. <u>particular and personal information</u>, identifiable with individuals and organisations, often gathered under pledge of confidentiality, e.g. tax returns, medical records;

   ii.<u>generalised information</u>, relating to topics or activities in impersonal and generalised form, usually consolidated from particular and personal information (e.g. criminal statistics consolidated from records of offences; trade statistics compiled from details of transactions). Generalisation is a major and exclusive added value of government information and its superiority.

b. <u>secondary information</u>, the recorded discussion experience, opinion, advice, recommendation, and decision with which primary information becomes associated. History and ambience, records and precedents set a framework for consideration (Vickers, 1965; 15). It is the accumulated memory of government, the substance of dissociation and re-combination (Deutsch, 1965; 85-86) at the disposal of bureaucracy, which controls it.

From another point of view primary and secondary information may be classed as:

c. <u>active information</u>, used in processes of advice and decision within government, possibly published in detailed or consolidated form, with or without accompanying explanation, by obligation

or convention, or at government discretion.

d. <u>passive information</u>, accumulated within government without positive use. It may be made available outside government at bureaucratic discretion, sometimes to special interests and at some compensating advantage to government (Galnoor, 1975). Passive information often has a latent power-content which events may activate. Meanwhile it is simply not known to the public, or often even to bureaucracy beyond its immediate area of collection.

In terms of public access government information is either:

e. <u>open information</u>, published or freely accessible in principle to the public. Access in principle requires government organisation to be effective in preservation and systematic recording. Government papers are extensively "weeded" before passing into archives, and information may be destroyed, sometimes deliberately, but usually because no further interest is seen in it. Effective access requires competent archival resources within government, and often legislative safeguards.

f. <u>constrained information</u>, deliberately restricted in access or circulation by formal or informal rules. Constraints on information operate within government, and between government and public. They are common to all forms of organised government, usually formalised in legislation conferring extensive dis-cretionary powers on "the authorities", or enforced in convention or doctrine (e.g. collective responsibility for

government decisions). Constraint is
difficult to contest, or even identify,
because of its formality and subject-
matter, and is correspondingly liable
to political and bureaucratic abuse to
avoid embarrassment or to pursue hidden
objectives. Constraint also emphasises
the perceived power-content of the
information to which it is applied. It
is usually maintained by bureaucratic
procedures for "classifying" documents
with formal degrees of restriction.
Bureaucracies which administer systems
of constraint tend to use such devices
to the point of stultification, and
constraint is often maintained by inertia -
the absence of systematic declassification
procedures. Constraint is the most
discussed and contentious aspect of
government information.

The primary information bases of government are a
systemic product of administrative routines and operations
in the hands of the bureaucracy. The added values which
they acquire are similarly derived from accumulated stocks
of information and bureaucratic knowledge of how to
combine, select and associate them in relation to specific
topics. The political echelons of government are
functionally remote from these processes, impermanent in
office, and thus unlikely to be able to have more than
fitful and particularised influence on them, confined to
occasional topics which they see as of significance to them-
selves. The very continuity of information collection,
however, tends to throw political interference with it
into relief (e.g. attempts to change the form of housing
statistics which are regularly published).

Bureaucracy itself has no absolute standards of
efficiency or motivation. Its composition and standards
are the product of the ambient political and social culture.

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Individual bureaucrats have goals, discussed by Downs (1967; 11-88), and self-interest and bureau goals tend to be uppermost in their behaviour. Moreover, bureaucrats are close to their departmental functions and interest; overriding bureaucratic interests are largely limited to conditions of service, status in the community and relations in general with political echelons. In the wide diversity and diffusion of information collection in which they engage for departmental needs and purposes it would be next to impossible for any one hand or office within the bureaucracy itself to control the collection of government information in any detail. It is doubtful whether such a collective concept of government information would be recognised by individual bureaucrats in their departmental work-places.

Once collected and collated, however, information becomes the basis for advice and policy formulation both within bureaucracy itself, and between bureaucracy and political echelons. At this stage it begins to pass through processes of conversion which may modify its content and form, a possibly extensive mediation related to the purposes for which it is being considered. Conscious intent becomes a more applicable and common influence. Nevertheless even intent may be a systemic product of the operation of the hypotheses put forward at page 29 above, no less systemic for being purposeful.

Conversion processes are almost entirely in the hands of bureaucracy, and we can examine the influences which they exert on information subject to them, and the extent to which political echelons may be involved.

CHAPTER FOUR

INFORMATION CONVERSION WITHIN GOVERNMENT

Selective Loss in Conversion

Easton (1965; 131-32) relates the regulation of
stress and the capacity of the political system for
persistence to the conversion processes which translate
inputs of demand and support into outputs to meet demand
and retain support. In this sense, conversion is a crucial
process. It absorbs and selects inputs from the information
potential, prepares them for the appropriate level of
consideration or decision and decides whether and how to
communicate the converted information inside government,
and possibly outside. Conversion involves the quality of
the information potential, levels of efficiency and
co-ordination in government, the typology and power-content
of the information concerned and the orientations and goals
of political and bureaucratic echelons.

Once identified as needing further examination,
information begins to move through conversion processes
comprising labelling, screening and summarising which aim
to reduce it to manageable proportions for decision-making
levels. The very extent of its information-gathering
imposes on government a burden of digestion to which it
must match its machinery and capacity to handle information
if it is not to suffer from what Deutsch (1967; 162)
describes as "communication overload" or "decision
overload", with a consequent risk of confusion or breakdown,
or of inability to cope with stress and to innovate.

All this involves a selective function, making use
of secondary symbols attached to primary information, in
a process which Deutsch (1963; 200-05) discusses in terms

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of the "consciousness" of the organisation in associating
a wide range of information for a particular purpose.
This gives an initial influence to bureaucracy, which
generates and attaches the secondary symbols and messages
which signal the significance of information, to determine
outcomes or promote syntheses providing new insights. It
is able to draw with the aid of modern methods of
information association and retrieval on the full
typological range of information.

The upward presentation of information is designed
to reduce it to essentials, with a display of options and
recommendations additional to the information itself.
However, information cannot be reduced pro rata; it
loses content, with the probability that the residue which
comes through all processes may have its significance
changed or distorted by losses on route. A complex
situation may be reduced to a statement of the one fact
considered crucial, accompanied by discussion brushing
aside anything apparently not immediately relevant to it
and embedding it in opinion and advice.

There are no precise measures of such losses and
distortions, which are qualitative as well as quantitative.
Government departments are characteristically what Downs
(1967; 57) describes as "taller" hierarchies, with long
chains of command in which the more important the decision
the higher in the hierarchy it is likely to go, the less
time high-level officials have for it, the greater the
compression of information and the greater the influence
of opinion. Downs (1967; 112-30, 269) concludes that
repetitive condensation through many officials significantly
distorts the final output. A model of hierarachical
distortion of information formulated by Tulloch (1965;
137-41) through a bureaucratic hierarchy of seven levels,
arrives at something of a reduction to absurdity - a loss
of 98.4% of the original data. Applying a modified loss
factor Downs himself still arrives at a loss of 62%. Such
degrees of lost meaning must cast doubt on the validity of
decision-making. But as Downs points out, the high-level
decision makers are aware of the dangers from their own

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knowledge and experience, and take precautions to inform themselves from other sources as a counter-balance. Nevertheless a proportion of original content is removed.

Frames of Reference

The decision-makers are themselves usually working within the frames of reference of the bureaucratic organisation; a bureaucratic frame and a wider political and social frame. Their skills of selection and reduction are professionally conditioned by bureaucratic objectives, personal and departmental. In hierarchical organisations, where material rewards are not excessive, there are compensations of power and prestige in advancement, and few bureaucrats will deliberately prejudice advancement by the advice they give. They will tend to select and marshal their information to make it acceptable or to mention unpalatable courses without appearing to support them. Bias can be subtly mobilised by those who, like professional bureaucrats, are professional advocates, able to select, emphasise and argue those facts and elements of a situation which support a particular standpoint.

In so doing, however, bureaucrats are also concerned with departmental loyalties and policies, which Downs (1967; Ch. xix) emphasises as deeply affecting higher bureaucratic levels, to the point of "departmental ideology". The interests of the department will be protected as far as possible in the formulation of bureaucratic conversion outputs. There is a power relationship between the bureaucracy and the political echelons of government, and this will follow within the bureaucracy the general principles expressed in our hypotheses, that is, that the negative potential for the bureaucracy will be restricted and transfer of power-content screened, so as to minimise the enhancement of power vis-à-vis the bureaucracy within the political echelons. Established departmental attitudes and policies will be especially protected. They are not casual incidents in activity over which mistakes can be casually explained; they are the result of positions adopted over time whose

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exposure to criticism might seriously damage the prestige
of the department (and those responsible for it).
Governments come and go; departments are committed to
continuing lines of policy and action, are often in
contact with the public about them, and live close to
administrative realities and possibilities. They are
essentially in the business of making government work,
and develop pragmatic attitudes, resistant to changes
of course not seen to develop from compelling circumstances.

Downs (1967; Ch.ix) formulates a Law of Increasing
Conservatism by which "...there is an inherent pressure
upon the vast majority of officials to become conservers
in the long run". This is a form of inertia often
associated with bureaucracy. Conservatism may involve
the exercise of "will", which Deutsch (1963; 105)
conceptualises as a blocking mechanism to screen off data
or impulses incompatible with internally labelled decisions
and anticipated results. In its simplest expression it is
"...the capacity not to learn" (Deutsch, 1970; 156) which
may generate a "deliberate cognitive impoverishment".
Perhaps we can call it a desire not to be confused by the
facts beyond a certain point. Its bureaucratic manifesta-
tions may, however, be a form of stabilising mechanism,
compelling change to justify itself irresistably, and to
have a continuity with the past:

> "The processes of institutional decision
> are documented, sometimes very fully...
> minutes...record decisions, and sometimes
> reasons and dissenting views. It does not
> follow, of course, that what happened is
> fully explained by what is recorded; but
> it would require a high degree of cynicism
> to regard the record as irrelevant" (Vickers,
> 1965; 15).

But failure to absorb feedback adequately may be
destabilising.

The wider political and social frames are not always
conservative, and bureaucracies may be positive instruments
of change. Eisenstadt (1967; 96-119) stresses the political
involvement of bureaucracy and its instrumentality in social

change in developing countries. Fainsod (1967; 233-67) distinguishes among other types the party-state bureaucracy "...penetrated and controlled by the party bureaucracy... claiming a monoply of wisdom, intolerant of opposition and impatient to move ahead with the tasks...which they have set themselves". In such committed bureaucracies information is even more a means to an end, in which outputs are designed to reinforce objectives and protect bureaucratic policies from criticism.

Political echelons are not as a rule concerned to penetrate bureaucracy as much as to impose their ideologies on it. Deutsch develops his concept of will to include political will, in which (1963; 247) "If 'will' implies the desire not to learn, 'power' may imply the ability not to have to do so". This is a limitation of ideology on deliberation, producing decisions rationally consistent in terms of political ideology but perverse in relation to information and advice. These may be selectively used, or simply put aside in favour of what are seen as indispensable political objectives.

Bureaucracy adjusts itself to such bounded decision processes. This creates an internal feedback variable, described by Easton (1965; 114) as a "withinput", an input arising within the political system itself rather than entering it from its environments. The more ideologically-bounded the political echelons of government, the more bounded their deliberations, and the less likely the bureaucratic advisers to put forward advice in forms in which they know it will be disregarded. The politicians set the internal frame of reference; for example, in a government dedicated to the idea of "privatising" state-owned enterprises the bureaucracy is unlikely to put forward direct proposals for further extensive nationalisation.

Ideological "withinputs" influence conversion processes down the bureaucratic chain, but bureaucracy may seek to make its counter-arguments and information known through informal channels, such as "leaking"

information to press or to politicians of other persuasions. This does not imply the abandonment of bureaucratic objectives, which may still seek internal means to modify, frustrate or defer political decisions. A percipient political figure in the United Kingdom has recorded the persistence and strength of the bureaucratic efforts to direct, push and cajole him, as Minister, into the line required by the Ministry, including the mobilisation of support from other branches of the bureaucracy. In the broader framework of government he notes the bureaucratic suppression and manipulation of Cabinet minutes in order to affect the way in which Cabinet decisions were interpreted.[7]

Crossman was experiencing the influence of social controls within the British bureaucracy no less powerful than those of policy, reprimand, career prospects and others commented on by Warren Breed (1965) in the newsroom. These pressures are not remote in kind from those which Breed notes as the outcome of goal-oriented processes in the newsroom. But in the bureaucratic environment they are more consistent and subtle, absorbed through continuous contact with standards, aspirations, esteem for superiors, respect for continuity and precedent, conformity with wider policies, including those of other departments, and other influences within government. The dominant frame of reference is that of bureaucratic power, expressed as successful influence, and its preservation through political changes.

In maintaining its influence the bureaucracy alone is continuously familiar with the full range of information available, comprised within the typology suggested above, which provides a flexible resource for information functions. Personal information may be misused, selectively and confidentially; generalised information may be used to

[7]·The Crossman Diaries, pp. 51, 590 contain much-quoted passages. The bureaucratic behaviour which Crossman notes is systemic rather than personal, and would apply in almost any developed bureaucratic system.

obscure or conceal awkward particularities; passive
information may be activated or kept in the background as
desired; classified information may be invoked to bar
inquiry. Few topics which arise in government are without
history and parallels containing information known or
accessible to the bureaucracy. In the United Kingdom the
papers of previous administrations of different complexion
are known to bureaucrats, but (by convention) inaccessible
to the incumbent political echelons. The bureaucracy
controls such continuity of knowledge by indirect means.
Those who know where and how to find and use information
within the government machine have an advantage over those
who must rely on them for it.

The Transition to Public Outputs and the "Public Agenda"

Bureaucratic conversion outputs are often for internal
goverment use; they contain material and views which could
be damaging or embarrassing to bureaucratic or political
echelons. If intended as public output, therefore,
information is mediated to deprive it as far as possible
of such power-content. Suitable mediation may be suggested
in bureaucratic advice in parallel with advice for internal
use. The objects are to protect the department (retaining
negative potential) or to present information compatible
with the complexion and declared policies of government,
adapted to the proposed channels of issue and anticipated
public reactions (emphasising positive potential). The
restraint of power-content passing into public hands is a
restraint of public countervailing power. Power-content
which cannot be withheld or restrained may be submerged in
appeals to patriotism, loyalty or support of whatever
package of government policies is currently being presented
as the solution to national needs, necessitating the
endurance of temporary inconveniences or deprivations.

Such final conversion activities are sometimes loosely
described as "defining" or "setting" the public agenda, the
issues for public discussion, and the bases on wich it takes
place. But the public agenda at any time consists of events
and issues arising or continuing from environments beyond
government control, as well as those which originate from

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government. Many of the former force themselves there or
are brought there by extra-governmental agencies, such as
the press or interest groups. Widespread drug abuse, the
collapse of a major financial institution, a riot in a
prison, revelations in the press about the stationing of
nuclear weapons, new types of evironmental pollution may
all force matters on to the public agenda whose incidence
government cannot regulate, though it may have to deal with
them or declare a position. (Even in the most tightly
regulated political societies a major disaster wuch as the
Chernobyl disaster in the U.S.S.R. in May 1986 cannot be
kept off the public agenda, if only because too many of
the public have been involved and know).

Those matters which it originates for the public
agenda are of course much more within government control,
though many of them find their way there in the routine
outputs of government. Agenda-control in the sense noted
by Bachrach and Baratz (1963), of keeping issues off the
public agenda, is feasible where government has complete
control of the circumstances as well as the items; but
there is no cause to assume that this is more than marginal
in modern societies where government and public are con-
tinuously and intimately involved with each other. (In
societies where government has complete control of the
instruments of public discussion an "underground" agenda
may be in circulation).

But the importance attached to information which finds
its way on to the public agenda from government, or to
which government makes a contribution from its own
information resources, is indicated by the selection of
channels, discussed in the following chapter in relation
to types of information, and the organisation of specific
points and facilities in government to deal with the
transfers. This is a final stage; by the time that
information intended for the public has reached the points
of transfer it has already undergone several varieties of
mediation within the machinery of government. It has been
selected from the information potential (which alone

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implies the importation of bias - page 19 above) bound to
be systemically conditioned within the objectives and
frames of reference of those involved; it has been
associated with other information similarly selected;
it has probably been reduced, possible drastically, in
original content and loaded with secondary comment and
opinion the further it travels up the bureaucratic and
political hierarchy of decision. At every stage power-
content which might provide a basis for criticism at
superior stages or react against the interests of those
providing it has been reduced or removed, or overlaid or
deflected by the emphasis of positive potential.

It would, of course, be an exaggeration to suggest
that any content which might possibly be power-content is
removed from what finally passes into channels of transfer,
or that every fragment of information released by government
is minutely scrutinised for it. Moreover, some of the
channels, such as autonomous media and interest groups,
may not accept it without question. But government outputs,
so far as a continuous cycle may be said to have a
commencement point, are usually taken as the beginning of
the theoretical information cycle. The extensive mediation
within government is supplemented by further mediating
influences in the channels which convey information from
government to the public receptors. This phase of
mediation needs to be examined before it is possible to
assess what actually reaches the public and its probable
effects on feedback into the cycle.

CHAPTER FIVE

PUBLIC INFORMATION OUTPUTS

Government information outputs to the public are
broadly either obligatory, leaving little or no discretion
as to content and form, or voluntary, with issue itself,
as well as composition, at government discretion. Outputs
may be directly available to the public through government-
organised channels, or indirectly, mainly through the media,
which may be autonomous, or under government control, or
subject to forms of government pressures.

<u>Obligatory Outputs</u>

Compliance outputs of basic legislation, backed by
condign power, must be formally published and accessible
to the public in the precise forms in which they have been
passed into law before they can sensibly have legal effect.
The mode and channels of output are therefore legally
prescribed as a precondition of validity. The mode is
print and the channels are direct: any member of the
public must be able to obtain copies personally from
defined official points or agents. This is the least
mediated type of public information in issue. But it is in
legal form and language, not readily intelligible to the
lay public, and its direct public are legal and other
professionals, whose mediation is necessary for the general
public.

Extensive regulation having the force of law issues
from departments of modern governments under delegated
legislative powers, in execution of their functions. This
follows legal prescription for publication and availability,
but it affects the daily lives of the public at many points.
It relates to conditions of welfare, pensions, employment,

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follows legal prescription for publication and availability,
but it affects the daily lives of the public at many points.
It relates to conditions of welfare, pensions, employment,

credit purchases, quality standards of food and goods, and other personal involvements. It brings the public into frequent direct contact with officials and government offices. It is formulated by the responsible departments, whose discretions may be incorporated in it.

Again, the legal form is rarely suitable for direct public use, and departments supplement it by what can be called secondary compliance information, in print, defining and explaining obligations or entitlements and the associated bureaucratic procedures. This is issued through departmental or other government offices, and possibly distributed widely through libraries and voluntary bodies.

These are nominally voluntary outputs of public information though extensive administrative systems could hardly function without providing this guidance. But content and form are subject to the systemic mediation of official interpretations within limits. The public sees these outputs as authoritative and definitive. They can also be seen as a diffuse but positive form of bureaucratic socialisation within the political system; not a consciously conceived form of political influence, but part of a background of habituation, the continuing relationship between the individual public and "government", which is always there. Mediation of transactions through the bureaucratic machinery, particularly by personal application for e.g. welfare and unemployment benefits strengthens "authority". This effect is likely to be strong and direct in smaller and less literate societies in which personal guidance from low-level bureaucrats is easily transformed into instruction.

Mediation may lie deeper than the texts. The emphasis of secondary compliance information may be manipulated to suit administrative and political objectives. Presentation and distribution may be affected by political considerations, such as parading the availability of benefits, or emphasising those available to particular sections of the community which government may wish to reach (and influence). Bureaucracy can hinder the application of measures which it cannot stop but does not like by producing little or

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complicated guidance. Bureaucratic mediation easily
develops into a form of control which, even if detected,
is at bureaucratic discretion not easily challengeable in
the courts.[8] Forms of mediation adverse to the public are
often detectable only by the expert experience of such
mediating services as citizens' advice bureaux, legal
advice centres and similar public- oriented organisations
which grow up to mediate between the public and the
bureaucracy.

Compliance outputs of all kinds attract little media
attention after the appearance of basic legislation unless
some facet of administration, general or individual,
becomes news rather than administration, in some overt
injustice or minor scandal.

Other obligatory outputs bind government rather than
public, though they concern the public in a collective
political sense. Government is commonly bound by law or
established convention to make public periodic reports and
accounts of institutions and activities managed by
government or supported by public finance. This is an
aspect of accountability, the obligation of government to
expose its activities and responsibilities to public
judgement. Outputs of this sort may have substantial
power-content for the public, which automatically enters
the public agenda. Accompanying voluntary outputs of
information may manipulate their positive or negative
potential in government's favour. Power-content which
cannot be disguised or retained may be weakened by
tactical devices, such as publication during holiday
periods, or timed to be overlaid by some more striking
information or event. Content and implications are
generally conveyed through the media, which can provide
interpretation and comment of their own.

[8.] Goverment refusal in the Untied Kingdom to publish in-
ternal codes of practice (the "A-Codes") prescribing hidden
rules and criteria on certain welfare benefits is a classic
example of bureaucratic retention of power-content. Some of
the criteria applied in secret have become known and widely
criticised, affecting official policies (Michael, The
Politics of Secrecy. 1982; 13). Hidden bureaucratic codes
are common when bureaucrats are empowered to make rules
affecting the rights and treatment of individuals.

Voluntary Outputs

Compliance and associated voluntary outputs are basic public information. Even if discretion is often circumscribed by obligation, government can exercise it in the content, form and presentation of the voluntary components, and will do so as a systemic routine.

But beyond this governments maintain a volume of voluntary outputs in routine reports of departmental activities, minor official committees, cultural, research and other government bodies, with little overt political significance except a public relations content. Nevertheless, they seek diffuse support for government in the impressions which they present to the public, and may be used as vehicles for communication of government policies and emphases. Departmental annual reports are strong on achievements, muted on derelictions; committee reports, if critical and unable to be kept from circulation, or be tendentiously summarised, will be accompanied by expressions of concern and review, in order to forestall enhancement of public countervailing power. There are few activities of government which do not have the opportunity in publishing information to seek to turn it to government (often bureaucratic) account, and to reinforce public acceptance or approbation.

These outputs are an index of the importance which government attaches to communication with the public, and may become part of the public agenda. But they are diffused, with selective readership, and do not constitute any co-ordinated attempt to influence the public through information unless they deal with matters of central importance to government. An indication of this is the low standard of co-ordination of information output to be found in government, in which developed central information and publishing systems are rare, even in long-established states.[9]

[9]. Cherns (1979) reviews in detail the publishing and information systems of twenty governments, and comments on widespread inadequacies. The U.S.A. and the United Kingdom, with the "old" Commonwealth which inherits many of its practices, are among the best organised. Bibliographic reference is generally deficient. In Eastern Europe it is difficult even to identify government publications; they are not differentiated by the state publishing houses.

Reliable statistics of public information outputs are difficult to find, and even more difficult to compare, because of differences in government organisation and administrative practice. The United Kingdom, among the most prolific government sources of public information, has an output of around 8,000 sale publications per year. But about 2,000 of these are separate formal and compliance documents which would find publication in many other states through the single vehicle of an official gazette. A further 4,000 or so have a parliamentary origin, including many accountability documents which might not appear from this source elsewhere. Among the remaining 2,000 are not more than about ten per cent from central departments of government, and of these perhaps half which could be said to be part of any deliberate intent to set or influence the public agenda (on which many of the subjects would appear by force of circumstance). These figures of sale publications through a central government agency exclude what Johansson (1976) estimated at a further 25,000 published documents issuing from individual departments in pursuit of their own policies and interests (including voluntary compliance outputs).

Organisational diffusion of this kind is common to most governments. In relation to population, editions of most official publications are small. In the United Kingdom, with a population of some fifty-five millions, editions not in some continuing series are exceptional if they exceed 5,000, and are commonly less than 3,000.[10]

Even so, for lack of central organisation governments fail to make the most positive use of their voluntary information outputs. It is not easy in most countries to identify and obtain official publications, or to gain library access to them. In a survey on the availability of official publications in libraries, covering fifty-six countries, Cherns (1983) identifies a very heavy library dependence on government deposit as the principal means of

[10].Author's personal experience. Few governments have any organised information of this kind. Clues can sometimes be found in printers' imprints. For example, the letter "K" in imprints of U.K. government publications indicates 125 copies. K 20 means a print of 2,500 copies.

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acquiring government publications. Deposit is far from
universal, but fifty-three per cent of libraries surveyed
rely on it for over seventy-five per cent of these
acquisitions. Mechanical and administrative deficiencies
seriously weaken the effectiveness of such library
collections. They also tend to be concentrated in academic
and institutional libraries (an indication of the scope of
their readership) which are not natural sources of first
resort for the public at large. Public libraries are
poorly served in comparison, and in all types of libraries
guidance to this complex body of material is indifferent;
nor do supply procedures often make available to library
users publications of current interest.[11]

Parliamentary Outputs

Nominated or elective assemblies also vary widely in
their information outputs. Those with more of a formal and
symbolic significance than a real function of legislation,
debate and enquiry have sparse outputs; others with more
deeply involved roles within the political system often have
a profuse information output in their reported proceedings
and published documents. They have an input of information
from executive government, which may lead them to seek more.
They may contain an opposition, seeking to force disclosure
of information. Government supporters as well as opponents
seek information on behalf of constitutents and interests.
Many parliamentary assemblies retain much independence
within rules and procedures of a constitutional body on
whose support the government of the day usually has to
depend, and must often persuade rather than coerce.

Parliamentary debates are closely documented and usually
published verbatim. Arguments, as well as decisions and
resolutions can thus be publicly followed without systemic
mediation of the direct output. Participants contribute
information inputs. Committees may range widely over the
activities and performance of government, recording their
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[11]·An analysis by Hennessey (1979) of relationships between
libraries and the political system emphasises their social
setting and need for public funding. The tentative conclusion
that "...libraries seem to be specially vulnerable to politi-
cal influences, direct or indirect..." is not convincing in
relation to library collections of official publications. The
many deficiencies are predominantly administrative. But vir-
tually no research has been done in this field.

transactions in detail. This is public information from a major branch, of government which attracts attention because of its status, adversarial and uninhibited context, and its symbolic position as a representative body. This output is, however, highly specialised in form, not publicly oriented in presentation of complexities of debate and procedure, the language is formal, the subject-matter is involved, and the recorded forms of verbatim proceedings are often difficult to follow. Committee reports may be mines of public information, containing evidence, submitted papers, views of expert and knowledgeable witnesses, and summary reports, sometimes with dissenting reports. But the texts have very limited circulation outside the narrow and selective circles of organised interests.

The main means of public dissemination of parliamentary proceedings are the media, and in some countries they are broadcast in whole or in part, or on specially important occasions. Selection may have a political significance, and the ready availability of authentic texts as a check on media and other reports is important. Cherns (1979; 472-81) notes widely varying national practices in availability of parliamentary debates. These are indicators of the importance of the parliamentary body in the political system.

Direct Government Outputs to the Media

Voluntary information in printed form, including parliamentary output, is a direct government output in the sense that it can be obtained in original by the public. But in terms of day-to-day communication it is conveyed to the general public by the media, for its news value. A substantial further voluntary output is not designed for direct communication to the public, but is communicated to the media through the information offices of government departments and media contacts with parliamentary institutions. "Media releases" or announcements are made at press conferences and accompanied by specific briefing. These are news as well as information occasions. Tunstall (1971; 163-65, 173-88) emphasises the importance and variety of government as a news source. He also draws

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attention to the organisation of government public relations methods geared to the interests and technical requirements (e.g. press times) of the media, and providing readily usable material.

At the centre of government the formal media conference at, say, the Prime Minister's Office is a means of releasing and propagating news and views of major political interest in government rather than purely departmental affairs. In political systems with a relatively independent parliamentary body this may be complemented by a parliamentary "lobby". This privileged corps of specially accredited media correspondents is given access on a largely unattributable basis to items of political news and speculation which readily find their way into the media as an expression, however disguised, of authoritative views. Briefing often deliberately obscures precise sources, lending itself to manipulation and suggestion. It is also selective, official spokesmen have access to information which may be concealed, emphasised or distorted, in consonance with official goals. Skilful spokesmen set the stage for media comment on the information made available. These are the final stages of government mediation, in which the potential for influencing the public agenda is carefully assessed within government.

For the media the criterion of selection is news value, and direct access to sources of government information charged with political interest naturally has more news value than information on routine affairs. Pressures may be exerted for this reason on correspondents whose use of information may offend the powers behind the sources which control access. Margach (1978; 140-58) gives accounts of such pressures in the United Kingdom, particularly under the Wilson governments of 1964-1970 and 1974-1976. Though Tunstall (1971; 186) suggests that the relationship between organisational sources and the media is collective, and that in practice facilities cannot be withdrawn from one corres-pondent "...unless he lacks the minimal support of his competitor-colleagues", there must nevertheless be some desire among correspondents not to court such conflicts.

Each item released through these channels within
government has been considered from the point of view of
its public power-content and negative or positive potential
for government, and its scope and presentation framed
accordingly. This constitutes probably the most
deliberately managed body of government information output.
Tunstall (1971; 173-201) explores the background in British
government, including the contacts which may take place
outside the scope of official briefing between selected
journalists and government officials. Government
information offices are usually staffed by specialists,
often themselves with a journalistic background, who are
familiar with media needs.

An analysis of media releases from departments of the
United Kingdom government over a three-month period, Table 1,
indicates, however, that the flow of departmental informa-
tion to the media tends to deal with day-to-day administra-
tion and public relations rather than with high politics.
But it provides the media with the "subsidised" stream of
ready-made "news" and comment to which Gandy (1982; 234,
302) has drawn attention. Around twenty to thirty media
releases per day from government departments, of interest
to general and special publics in some way, is a distribution
of departmental and government objectives for which a wide
circulation is assured. The fluidity with which media
releases can be used by government is indicated by the
United Kingdom distribution arrangements organised to reach
target areas or combinations of media interest.

The releases cover a very wide variety of departmental
responsibilities, referring to the day-to-day work of
departments, aiming at publicity for achievements and
ministers' statements and speeches, and drawing attention
to significant changes and innovations within the
department's scope of operations and to the issue of
particular publications. They do not contain major
political statements or comment, for which political rather
than administrative channels - e.g. the Parliamentary Lobby,
briefing at the Prime Minister's Office - are used. Notices
in the routine context of releases from the Prime Minister's
Office - a centre of political information - concern petty
formalities.

TABLE 1

PRESS NOTICES RELEASED BY U.K. GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS DURING THREE MONTHS IN 1983

Department	March	June	September	Subject-Matter
Agriculture	62	73	52	Mainly about administration of agricultural schemes and prices. Minister' speeches and statements
Central Statistical Office	9	7	10	Drawing attention to the issue of statistics
Customs and Excise	4	14	3	Administrative notices - regulatory
Defence	25	16	22	Publicity for defence changes and "events"; drawing attention to Ministers' speeches and statements
Education	45	31	43	Mainly educational administration and drawing attention to Inspectors' reports and Ministers' speeches
Employment Manpower Services	22 / 9	15 / 22	16 / 14	Mainly employment administration "
Energy	14	14	16	Mainly about departmental achievements, appointments, Ministers' speeches
Health and Social Security	28	35	25	Administration, appointments, achievements, Ministers' speeches
Home Office	13	14	13	Administration; Ministers' speeches and statements
Health and Safety Commission	4	6	10	Administrative notices; publicity; statements and speeches
Inland Revenue	12	44	8	Administrative notices
Northern Ireland Office	2	6	-	Publicity; achievements in local administration (no reference to IRA situation)

TABLE 1 (Cont.)

Department	March	June	September	Subject-Matter
Office of Population Censuses and Surveys	12	6	6	Drawing attention to social trends and related statistics
Prime Minister's Office	12	20	14	Almost entirely minor ecclesiastical appointments in the Prime Minister's gift.
Trade and Industry	85	64	74	Variety of administrative notices; achievements, speeches and statements
Transport	43	31	39	Administrative notices; achievements, speeches and statements
Treasury	19	22	11	Financial administration; Ministers' speeches
Minor Departments	45	48	66	Mainly administration and minor publicity
	465	488	442	

Source: Analysis of Central Office of Information Distribution Service Lists, by subject-matter of notices.

Notes

1. "Subject-Matter" summarises the main elements in each department's notices.

2. Notices are issued daily to the media and other interested organisations.

3. Distribution is to a variety of Lists - e.g. Short List, Special List, General List (Press) - as indicated by the subject of the notice and agreed with the Department of origin. Combinations of Lists are often used to expand or restrict circulation. Occasional items are embargoed in relation to some timed event or speech.

4. Ministers' speeches are made on formal occasions, such as opening new public facilities, or at annual conferences or dinners of interest groups/associations. Their political and policy content is confined to departmental interests.

Leakage Outputs

    Even officially "unattributable" sources of
information may carry a government authenticity which
appears in some form ("informed sources", "sources close
to the Prime Minister"). They are supplemented by "leaks",
disclosures of formally constrained information from within
the government machine. Leaks may be authorised or
unauthorised, but are outside organised channels of
communication. Leaks are used by government (internally
authorised) as a means of testing public reactions or
creating public impressions without official commitment, of
mobilising advance support for some course of action or
frustrating the mobilisation of support by political
opponents, or preparing the ground for release of unwelcome
information. In this light they have a function in
maintaining stability by reducing shock effects. Unauthorised
leaks tend to be destabilising, indicating unresolved
conflicts within government, within or between bureaucratic
and political echelons, and casting doubt on the credibility
of government.

    Authorised leaks may have departmental rather than
general government origin, a mark possibly of limited
interests, but also of intra-governmental conflict in which
departments seek to enlist public sympathy as a means of
internal influence. Defence departments under financial or
organisational pressures within government are a common
source. Covert departmental support blocks action against
sources. A controlled power-content is conveyed to the
public for a manipulative purpose.

    Unauthorised leaks may have a variety of personal and
interest-inspired causes. As the right of government to
suppress or manipulate information has come increasingly
under question, the "whistle-blowing" leak has increased -
an unauthorised individual reaction of political or personal
conscience against news management beyond the bounds of
individual acceptability. A representative of senior
British civil service levels brought this type of dilemma
into the open in 1981:

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> "Faced with instructions to present government
> policy in a way that suppressed relevant facts
> or involved lying, could it be argued that a
> civil servant was the trustee of Parliament
> and the public when ministerial policies
> failed to take their interests into account
> ....?"
> (Ward, <u>The Times</u>. London, 13 April 1981).[12]

The British civil service has maintained a traditional
stance of political non-involvement, but "whistle-blowing"
may have more politically motivated objectives where the
bureaucratic and political lines are less tightly drawn.

Leaks of all sorts depend heavily on the news values
of the media, to give them public circulation. As they
convey power-content which the public would not obtain
through normal processes, and may be dramatic in timing
and substance, revealing political scandals, penetrating
the veils of official secrecy and confidentiality, and
involving élite persons, they are natural news. The media
are sometimes the prime movers in them. By nature leaks
tend to be directed at those media channels likely to give
them currency; presentation to the public is often in the
form of a media "scoop" loaded with sensationalism, which
may multiply the intrinsic power-content of the information
they contain.

Of the major types of government information outputs
the obligatory outputs of regulation and the voluntary
outputs associated with them are the least mediated form of
public information within government. But even these
outputs are not used by many of the general public without
some further mediation by professionals and public-oriented
organisations. Though the scope for bureaucratic mediation

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12. Changes in the social composition and background of the
British civil service and its increasing politicisation at
senior levels have since intensified the dilemma, with more
leaks from individual bureaucrats and a cause célèbre of
prosecution and acquittal under Official Secrets legislation.
This exhibited in the public arena details of manipulation
of information for the public, through Parliament, at
ministerial levels. (Ponting, <u>The Right to Know</u>: <u>The Inside
Story of the Belgrano Affair</u>. 1985).

is limited and may be challengeable, existence of
bureaucratic discretions does leave room for some systemic
manipulation of positive or negative potential and control
of power-content. (Restraint of power-content is also
implicit in hidden codes of rules applied by bureaucracy).

These extensive transfers of government information
to the public are virtually ignored by the media, for which
they rarely have news values. They have no active political
significance. But as a general affirmation of authority
they must have a stabilising influence within the political
system. Too many individuals are involved for public codes
of practice to diverge radically from public habituations
and expectations without a broad feedback to government in
terms of demand which could not be lightly ignored. Changes
are therefore likely to be slow and cautious. From
government's point of view they may involve many voters who
normally express no political demand. From the point of
view of the individual there must be hesitations about
strong expressions of political demand which might endanger
the system, rather than the government, on which increasing
numbers are substantially dependent for benefits and
assistance.

Other published government outputs cover the complete
range of government activities and interests. Without
necessarily endorsing Downs' assumption of economic
rationality as the basis on which citizens inform themselves,
it is reasonable to accept his expectation (Downs, 1957;
229) that they delegate a large part of the task to
specially interested groups and persons, and also use the
"subsidised" information in the mass media (it is
subsidised by government, in Gandy's sense, as well as
by advertisers, in Downs'). Information with the most
political interest, and corresponding news value, relates
to the actions, decisions and proposals of government.
Parliamentary outputs will follow the same channels to the
public. The texts of individual publications will have a
limited and specialised direct readership; the salient
points for the general public will be picked out by the

media.[13] Finally, the media carry to the public the
information transferred to them by media releases and
briefing from government information offices, parliamentary
lobbies and other media points of contact with politicians
and bureaucrats.

Thus, except for mainly administrative and specialised
outputs, most information from government travels through
media channels. By the time it actually reaches the
public it has undergone possibly extensive systemic media-
tion within government in processes which are obscured from
both public and media. The media, however, are not
necessarily simple dissemination vehicles for government.
They may add dimensions of mediation, beyond the government/
media interfaces, which need examination. These may result
in significant differences between information which
government releases for public information and what is
actually received by the public.

(In order to consider the full context of mediation
some assumptions already implicit above about the
transfer of information and the position of media in
relation to government are further discussed in Chapter
Seven).

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13. There are rare occasions when the text of a government
publication acquires a high news value on its own account,
and it becomes a best-seller. One such example in the
United Kingdom was Lord Denning's Report (Cmnd 2152,
Session 1962-63) on the Profumo scandal of 1963. All-night
queues formed outside government bookshops awaiting
publication. Government presses were kept running in order
to cope with the unassessable demand - well over 100,000
copes were sold within days. Many requests were received
from foreign publishers for translation rights. The
combination of élite personalities, government, parliament,
sex, suicide of a principal character, ruthless judicial
revelation and a flavour of espionage stoked a public
imagination, already well-supplied by the media, to the
point of requiring the full, authentic text. (Author's
note from personal knowledge).

CHAPTER SIX

THE FULL PROCESS OF MEDIATION

Government and Media in Public Information Outputs

Information which may never become the subject of
public outputs may be extensively mediated within government
between bureaucratic and political echelons in the business
of administration and decision-making, the systemic
influences being confined to their relationship and power-
interests within the structure and machinery of government.

Information outputs which leave the area of government
are subject to further government mediation for public
consumption. This is a continuation of systemic processes,
aimed at influencing the public impact which the information
may have. This mediation takes place out of public sight
and is protected by sanctions against disclosure. The extent
and provenance of the information involved is often
unverifiable from other sources. The scope for manipulation
within government of the information and of its public
presentation is therefore abundant. What is presented as
public information reflects the ability of government to
restrain the power-content, and thus the power, which it
may transfer to the public.

The main channels of transfer to the public are,
however, the media. Both government and media have the
characteristics of organisations, and there are similarities
in their handling of information. But there are radical
differences in the environments, criteria and objectives.
For example, the abundant volume of general information
input to the media requires drastic selection for use, in
order to keep it manageable. Tunstall (1971; 16) estimates
that over nine-tenths of material available to a national
news organisation each day is not used. Nothing is said to

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be as dead as yesterday's news. Both the figure and the
circumstances are inappropriate to government information;
what is not immediately usable is stored in some form, and
it may later add value to other information, acquire added
values itself or be reactivated. Government is gathering
information, not seeking and selecting ephemeral news.

The continuities of interest and policy which are the
systemic concern of gatekeepers and goals in government are
of a different order from those in newsgathering and
selection for transient news products, whose content is not
continuously absorbed into future decisions and policies.
Nor are those in news organisations concerned with the
intention to deprive information of news value (and power-
content) which often motivates government mediation. The
interests of government are to shape its public information
outputs as closely as possible to its purposes, by manipula-
tion of content, presentation, evasion, distortion or
suppression if necessary. The instinct of government is to
withhold what it need not disclose or gains no advantage
from revealing. Its interest is to embed fact in secondary
information and comment in order to influence its reception
and impact. The systemic interest of the media is to reveal
what government tries to conceal, and its professional ethic
(if not unvarying practice) is to distinguish between fact
and opinion.

The systemic differences between government and media
as information-handling organisations may narrow virtually
to extinction in political systems where the media become
an arm of government, conveying "public information" in
whatever form government wishes it to be received by the
public. In political systems with autonomous media the
relationship is far more variable and the systemic
differences are marked. The media determine over a wide
field just how government information which they receive
is passed on to the public.

The Government/Media Symbiosis and its Tensions

The dominance of the media as the main channels for final transfer of government information to the public is established by their capacity for reaching mass audiences very quickly. For government they have become prime instruments for conveying the forms of persuasion by which governments seek to maintain their support and authority and attempt to manufacture consent. The importance attached by government to media channels, where they are autonomous, is illustrated by the degree of organisation developed for the specific purpose of passing information to them. Steinberg (1980; 38-39) notes within U.S.A. government:

> "...at least 3,000 government workers whose principal goal is the generation of public information that produces or reinforces an impression of government competence and efficiency, or results in the adoption of a preferred perspective on some policy".

A British House of Commons Select Committee (H.C. 509, Session 1976-77; 67) noted more than a thousand specialist "information officers" in post in the civil service at the beginning of 1977, engaged in dealing with public relations and with the media.

The importance attached by media to government as a news source has been illustrated by Sigal (1973; 120-29), who identified 58.2 per cent of 1,146 stories beginning on page one of the New York Times and Washington Post as coming through routine government channels (41.7 per cent through press releases and conferences). Background briefings added a further 7.9 per cent. He concludes that "The routine channels for newsgathering thus constitute the mechanism for official dominance of national and foreign news in the two papers". Gandy (1982; 3, 62) expresses this routine supply as an information subsidy to the media in terms of economic rationality, reducing journalistic costs and thus increasing the probability of use. In short, information systematically supplied to the media is reliable and cheap for them to use. Economics are not, of course, the only consideration. Because of its élite personalities and the important events in which it is involved, government is a natural source of news values.

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There are clear symbiotic implications for media and government. But the symbiosis has inbuilt advantages for government, which not only controls the supply of information, but prepares it for media consumption behind screens whose penetration (e.g. through unauthorised leaks or investigative journalism) in itself makes news. However autonomous the media, government will attempt to extend its influence on public information as far as it can towards the public itself, through the media channels. The temptation to use these advantages for internal as well as external government purposes is strong. Sigal (1973; vii) examines the question of officials' use of the press to accomplish government aims, drawing it into the governmental process, and involving parts of government in exercising pressures on other parts through it. Though he concedes that circumstances make the practice more intensive in the U.S.A. than in the United Kingdom, tactical use of the media by government is common.

The further the process can be carried, the more likely that power-content which may be released can still be influenced beyond the government/media interface and public countervailing power restrained or confused. But the attempt may result in unintentional loss of control, confusing government itself, as well as media and public, with a consequent danger of detaching decision-making in government from realities. Confusion of basic information with feedback from government-induced leaks, or with statements to the media designed to influence comment in order to put pressure on other parts of government, does not add to the clarity of the messages and their origins.

Sigal (1973; Ch. viii and 159) illustrates from the history of the 1962 Skybolt missile controversy, in which the international scale, the rapid movements and message interchanges of statesmen, and the press reports inspired by interests within government created at times a "...big blooming buzzing confusion". The organs of public information in both government and media were manipulated to create mazes of misunderstanding, puzzling rather than informing the public, whose interest had been put on one side.

Sigal (1973: 195) concedes that while the traditional independence of the U.S.A. press from direct forms of control has hardened, its susceptibility to government news management has spread. Galnoor (1975) places the media among those organisations within society uneasily "...faced with the conflict between symbiotic and independent relations with the government". That conflict need not be resolved in favour of government. Autonomous media, at any rate, are not supine recipients of information handouts from government with a "hypodermic" effect. They have close enough experience and contacts with government to try to correct what they see as overt distortion, and their professional goals incline them towards interpretive balance. They may cast enough doubt on information from government and motives behind it to modify or even reverse the positive or negative potential derived from government management. They may augment or even restore power-content which has been reduced or removed. The mere exposure of manipulation in government outputs adds power-content of its own.

There is, in fact a tension within the symbiosis, rooted in the differing objectives of government and media, which tends to move media to opposition simply in a perceived role as proponents of public interests versus government. Further, in competitive political societies one party or political interest may attain a dominance which leaves the media, particularly the press, the only effective opposition, examining and criticising the government's public information outputs, or lack of them, almost as a surrogate for an effective parliamentary opposition. This role is mainly for the press, because broadcast media, however apparently independent, are subject to some measure of state franchise which enables government to exercise pressures on them which compromise autonomy (Smith, 1976; Ch. v).

The press itself may be predominantly oppositional in ownership or policy towards governments of particular complexions, and become identified to public as well as government as the mouthpiece of specific political interests or sympathies. This may influence treatment of information as news to an extent which compromises professional goals

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in the public eye. The press may not merely correct or
modify government presentation of information for the
public, but add its own oppositional mediation. Government
information which reaches the public is thus liable to be
confused and compromised by "loaded" potential and possibly
misleading power-content. The press is as capable of
"managing" news as government is of "managing" information,
and as the ultimate channel of communication has the last
word with the public. If government has the advantages of
information, the press retains those of presentation.

Circumvention of the Symbiosis

Circumstantial problems of public information expose
the tensions within the government/media symbiosis.
They appeared in unusually acute form between federal
governments and media in Canada and Australia from 1968 to
1974. In both countries the long supremacy of one party
and political interest gave way to a brief period of rule
by rival parties long excluded from office. These had come
to see the media as permanently biased against them. They
therefore attempted to by-pass the media and communicate
more directly with the public, through comprehensive
organisations for public communication specially established
within government. These organisations were, however,
widely perceived as partisan, they inevitably attracted the
hostility of the press, and they failed to establish a
coherent place or rationale in communication between
government and public. They collapsed after brief periods
for these reasons.[14] Media channels may also be simply
inadequate to the task, in which they have an accepted role
but no binding duty. The Canadian and Australian experiments
chose to identify the media for these reasons among others
as a positive barrier between government and public, biased,
self-serving, irresponsible and frivolous, preventing

[14.] Cherns (1979, 1981) gives detailed accounts of these
episodes, particularly in Canada, where they were given much
intellectual background in a government-commissioned study
(Task Force Report on Government Information, 1969). He
also notes the residue of improvement which they left in the
flow of administrative information to the public.

government information from reaching the public which needed it.

Though unsuccessful in their declared objectives, these experiments direct attention to the problems of information transfer from government through channels dominated by ideologically or otherwise hostile media, using, rather than transferring government information, to give incomplete or distorted public information as a political rather than an organisationally systemic output. It would be facile to dismiss these two situations as passing oddities deriving from exceptional local conditions; similar tensions arise elsewhere between government and autonomous media, whose criticism is easily seen as inimical by committed politicians in and out of power.

The possibility of media inadequacies which might impede government was mooted many years ago, by Siebert (1948) in a brief discussion of "Communications and Government" in the U.S.A. context, in which he suggested explicitly "...direct contact between the government and the people through government instruments.......The possibility that additional information and ideas may reach the public is great". He did not hesitate to suggest that the federal government might own and promote a national radio network, parallel with the commercial networks. He did not, however, pursue these ideas, or deal with the inevitable perception of propaganda outlets for government which such services would readily attract. It is difficult to see government as the people's champion in relation to its own information. Cognitive and motivating information in government have a natural affinity.

Siebert's suggestion of a government broadcasting network was made before the general advent of television as a medium of public influence greatly intensified political suspicion of partiality to which broadcast media are particular liable. Smith (1976; 202) suggests the reason:

> "politicians tend to be guilty of a kind of
> categorical fallacy when they look at broad-
> casting organisations; they find it hard to
> understand an organisation which is wholly
> owned by the public but eludes the grasp of
> the politician. They fail to understand the

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> full range of pressures which play upon
> the broadcasters, of which they are only
> one, and indeed one which the broadcaster's
> traditional journalistic ethic drives him
> to obstruct".

The problem is wider than the particular political circumstances of Canada and Australia in the 1970's. It relates to what may be called "outreach" by government to transfer information direct to the public in its own forms, focused on the individual, in parallel with or over the heads of the media. The media have become government's main channels of public communication. But they are aimed at general audiences, are selective in what they communicate, possibly tendentious beyond their systemic interests, and liable to be seen by government as inimical to its public information objectives.

The Full Process of Mediation

But, in now accustomed moulds in modern states, the full process of mediation which government information undergoes in its transfer to the public is complex in itself and largely indirect in its final stages. The routine and diffused outputs of information for the public may be a broad and unspecified basis for assent rather than positive affirmation of consent. Most of them reach the public through mediating channels. Political information outputs persuasively seeking specific consent come from a limited range of specially framed documents, from the proceedings of parliamentary bodies in which government actions and proposals are debated, and from the political centre – cabinet and senior ministers, through media conferences and parliamentary lobbies or correspondents. If specifically departmental they may be inserted into the otherwise routinely administrative flow of news items from departments, possibly in ministers' speeches or declarations, or fed into known sympathetic media ears through selective contacts. Autonomous media may be drawn into government manipulation of these outputs as far as government can influence them through its symbiotic relationships.

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The variety of relationships which press and broadcast media may have with government ensures that what the public ultimately receives as public information has been subjected to mediation in passage from government which may significantly alter its content, form and impact as a basis for influencing the agenda of public affairs. Yet what reaches the public is the substance for evaluation and feedback involved in choice or consent. It is the theoretical basis of adjustments to the course on which the polity is steered, if the information cycle is to run its full course.

There is a final influence which neither government nor media may be able to judge. The final penetration and impact of information from government on the public are problematical, dependent on the vagaries and degree of public interest and of commitment to public affairs. Many of the public are likely to have non-participant orientations to political life, though they may retain a keen "spectator" interest in it as presented by media channels which constantly bring it to their ears and eyes. For others the sports or entertainment review may be the only media content they absorb. Politically conscious consumers of news and information are likely to be already conditioned by education and experience to set political attitudes through which information is finally filtered, adding personal interpretation to that already present from government and media.

The importance of opinion-leaders and the two-step flow of communication through which media information reaches the mass of the less or casually participant population has been well established by the work of Lazarsfeld and Gaudet Berelson (1948) and Katz and Lazarsfeld (1956). And it is, in the end, the political interest which the individual public may develop in particular items of government information - in the form and through the channels in which they have arrived at this destination as public information - which determines its impact. Chaffee (1975) emphasises the importance of diffusion in the information cycle, of public understanding of what government is doing. For those whose political orientations are minimal, or entirely subject, political information from government, however, persuasively framed,

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and with whatever degree of media comment, falls upon deaf ears.

The receptors of public information who attach political values to it are no more value-free in their assessments than the mediation which the information undergoes from government and media en route. The full process of mediation passes at the point of public reception out of the influences which government and media can bring to bear on it. So far as it has an influence on feedback into the information cycle it may reflect influences other than those which result from mediation. But an overt feedback response may not - indeed does not - complete the output of information processes. The final element of information in the system may be what the public thinks but does not express through any political channel. This may be an accumulation of feedback absorbed and unexpressed within the limits of habituation. This has a potential for discharge which may be activated by some accretion of apparently little significance. The public may shrug its shoulders at political inadequacy, scandal and manipulation up to a point; but the last increment may be too much. An accumulated discharge of feedback may wrench the steering from its accustomed hands, or at least cause a hurried adjustment of course, a possibly destabilising change.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE INFLUENCE OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

In order to consider the processes of mediation at
their fullest, the discussion in Chapters Five and Six has
been, with some reservation, in terms of autonomous media
within political structures - systems and institutions of
government - in which government distributes information
and power-content to the public over wide areas of its
activities and responsibilities. General theories and
models of the political system in the abstract are eclectic
enough in principle to accommodate any kind of political
structure within their generalities. But in associating
theoretical constructs with the actual information processes
of systems of government we cannot go very far without
beginning to make assumptions and beg questions about the
relationships within systems of government which can produce
very different outputs of public information. The transla-
tion of theoretical concepts into processes of government
requires differentiation between systems of government and
their characteristics.

Labelling systems of government as democracies,
dictatorships or otherwise involves semantic and subjective
distinctions. The political and governmental systems of the
U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., for example, look very different from
each other's viewpoints. Even similar systems of government
and institutions may vary widely in their working structures
and internal relationships. In order to consider information
transfer between government and public the need is for some
broad definitive distinction between systems which determines
the characteristics of government and public information. A
cardinal distinction between competitive and non-competitive
political and governmental systems will illustrate
determinative features of their internal information

relationships which can be generally applied. For these
purposes competitive systems are considered as those in which
the public (electorate) is able to exercise a periodic
choice of government among freely competing political parties
and have free access to autonomous media, that is, media not
controlled by government. Non-competitive systems are
considered to be controlled by one political party, not to
offer political choice, and to have non-autonomous media,
controlled by government.

There is no absolute division between classes of
systems in these terms. Free political competition may
produce a dominant party, not large and powerful enough to
govern without the co-operation of other parties, but able
to frustrate the formation of any government in which it does
not have the dominant role. The information relationships
are the outcome of political relationships.

Elements and features of government are common to all
systems, competitive and non-competitive. Their balance in
relation to the essential characteristics of the system
produces the information relationships between government
and public and determines the channels of transfer and
possible influence on the steering. All governments contain.
elements of bureaucracy and political echelons. They have
features of accountability, ideology, expectations and
habituations developed within government and public.

Apter (1965); 243) rates accountability of government -
answerability to a group other than itself - as a structural
requisite of government generally, its degree indicated by
the influence and control exerted over government by non-
governmental and quasi-governmental bodies (including
political parties) and patterns of consent. The degree of
accountability is essentially a product of political
competition. A public required to exercise political choice
has an expectation of information about government performance
and policies as a basis for it. It may not make its choices
entirely on that information and its evaluations of it, but
will have the outstanding features somewhere in mind, even if
in a narrow personal rather than broadly political sense.

Where political choice is exercised there are political channels, e.g. an opposition, through which the demand for accountability may be expressed. An opposition may be an alternative government; its function is to criticise and to propose alternatives. It requires accountability information which enables it to perform that function. The more competitive the system, the stronger the public demand for information, through competing parties, is likely to be, and the greater the habituation of government to provide it (in content and form as favourable to itself as possible).

A public required merely to affirm support of a single party, accustomed to government by that party as fixed, remote, uninformative and arbitrary, handing down only authoritative, compliance outputs of information, and statements rather than explanations, has no call and does not expect to be admitted into information about government's performance and processes. If the party in power cannot be dislodged there are no pressures on it to produce information through which it can be held accountable, to nourish any public countervailing power. Public information is reduced to what government wishes to issue; and it acquires no habituation to provide more.

Information, Actualities and Political Competition

Accountability and ideology are major variables in the degree to which information within the political system diverges from actualities, that is the facts and situations related to them in the information environments as far as they could in theory be objectively ascertained. Government is constantly drawing primary inputs of information from its environments. As noted above (p. 32) defects of origin or collection may cause divergence from actualities at that stage, and these pass into government's information potential and may cause further divergence. Facts and situations in the environments may be unkown and unperceived until some event brings them into relationship with government.

As government and public information are subjected to the processes of mediation discussed in Chapters Four to Six, the greater tends to be the potential divergence of content and form from actualities. The tendency is systemic

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and inevitable; without it the raw material of primary
information entering government would often have little
organised significance in the purpose for which it is used.
The degree to which divergence may occur and develop is
largely a function of accountability and ideology within
the system of government.

Political competition tends to limit divergence of
government and public information from actualities.
Accountability and voluntary government outputs expose
information and may initiate demand to supplement it.[15]
Despite government monopoly of much of its information, some
can be checked against actualities in the information
environments. For example, government claims to be in
control of inflation will not be accepted in face of
steeply rising prices and tumbling value of the currency.
Government statistics suggesting that nuclear reactors
constitute no significant environmental hazard may be
contradicted by independent medical evidence of the
incidence of radiation-associated disease. Interest groups
have specialised information sources, and are often
suppliers of primary information to government.

Government's need for credibility, availability of
alternative information, the doubt and scrutiny of autono-
mous media and a watchful opposition help to limit
divergence of government and public information from
actualities. Demand for access by right to government
information is a phenomenon of competitive political
systems, and where established is a check on government
information at source. The strength of limitations on
divergence depends on the effectiveness of political
competition and the channels through which demand can be
expressed and challenge to government mounted.

Divergence may be present in government management
of public information outputs as part of the attempt to

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[15].A justification of the retention of information within
government in the Belgrano Affair (footnote 12, p.61 above)
put forward by the then British Minister for Defence in
November 1984 was that: "...it was quite apparent to me
that the more information we provided the more it would be
argued yet more information was needed" (Ponting, 1985,
preliminary quotation).

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generate a supportive, or at least not hostile feedback.
Transfer to the public by autonomous media,and public views
otherwise conditioned,are countervailing influences to
attempts at feedback management; there is a potential
discrepancy between feedback which reaches the steering
and the feedback which government may try to manipulate for
it (both will diverge from the actualities). If response
is close to the feedback actually reaching the steering the
polity will naturally have a slightly erratic course in
relation to actualities. A strong government ideology and
information management may accentuate the effect of such
deviations to the point of inconsistency with actualities;
but this will tend to be corrected in the following further
information cycles which result from steering responses.

Competition does not necessarily enhance stability,
which does not always depend on information. Stability may
be jeopardised by competing ideologies or confused circum-
stances with which government is unable to cope. Political
objectives of parties within the system may not be oriented
to stability. Nevertheless, reasonable correspondence of
information with actualities is an aid to continuous self-
correction by adaptation, without the potential instability
which could arise, from lack of correspondence,to a point at
which the actualities themselves may force sudden and
disruptive change.

Moreover, the processes of circulation, digestion and
feedback of information within competitive systems take time,
as well as restrict the freedom of action of government.
There is a relationship between the power which government
distributes with public information and the power it may
need to retain to cope with acute or sudden stresses calling
for arbitrary action. In times of acute stress, such as war,
competitive systems tend to restrict their normal conventions
of competition and information. Chaffee (1975) draws
attention to Siebert's proposition (1952) that government
constraints on the press increase in times of stress on the
total political system. Constraint is limitation of the
transfer of power-content, leaving less ability to criticise,
with government freer to act as it sees fit. Information to
the public tends to call for diffuse rather than specific

support, within a framework of consensus on the need for constraint itself.

Non-competitive political systems are marked by exclusive ideologies, highly centralised power and correspondingly low accountability. Government projects ideologically determined information, virtually deprived of power-content, through channels dedicated to that purpose, in order to produce an amplifying, reinforcive feedback (Deutsch, 1967; 287) of diffuse support rather than of specific demand. In the absence of competing or independent elements within the political system public information may be subjected to extremes of the hypotheses stated at p.29 above. Non-autonomous media are completely a branch and instrument of government. It follows that the public must be insulated by physical and technical controls from other sources of information. Schramm (1976; 105-46) gives an account of the complete integration of media into the apparatus of the state, of the technical restrictions, uses of broadcast media and the absence of the news criteria and goals which characterise autonomous media in competitive systems.

This is conditioned power - persuaded belief - in intense form, with condign power ready to suppress manifest disbelief and its expression, even individually. Condign power need not be openly coercive; it can be exercised in subtle and indirect ways, through constraints on education, employment, opportunity or admission to power-holding circles. Given the non-competitive structure and strong, unopposed ideologies of such political systems these characteristics and the constraints to which they give rise are systemic, and pervade the outlook of bureaucracy, government and public. Habituation of the public to the information it receives is heightened by the absence of alternative information or ideology.

Divergences between information circulating from government and the actualities of the information environments may be very wide, but the public has no political channels of identifying and penetrating them. They may be insulated from the effects by artificial rates of exchange, internal pricing systems and other forms of control extending into every

activity. Divergencies which cannot be disguised are ideologically rationalised in terms of objectives and hostile influences, in order to maintain support. In the weakness of channels of demand and the extent of public habituation to government outputs, feedback from the public is hardly effective; the internal information cycle which may influence the steering is confined within elite circles.

So long as those who control the steering can make enough pragmatic adaptation to reconcile the operation of the system with the actualities of the environments, and remain in complete control of public information, non-competitive political systems can be very stable and persistent. Stresses in the environments whose actualities cannot be rationalised in terms of ideology, such as economic breakdown,whose effect cannot convincingly be disguised, may lead to the growth of critical (negative) feedback with a potential to modify steering. Information may be illicitly circulated which conflicts with the information from government and undermines its credibility. But the political system permits the ready use of condign power and rationalises it in order to maintain the system. The importance attached to the suppression of illicitly-circulated information in ideologically-dominated, non-competitive systems emphasises the role of completely-controlled public information.

Israel as an Illustrative Example for Study

Within the framework of the generalised theoretical models, actual systems of government can produce complex patterns of information transfer between government and public and deal with feedback and adaptation in different ways. The balances of systemic and other mediation in government, the interests and location of power, its use of constraints, the strength of ideology, the autonomy and effectiveness of the media and the ambient political culture ensure that the differences between government and public information and their effect on the steering of the polity present no consistent pattern in the real world. The complexity and interdependence of the factors at work can be illustrated only by examination of their operation in

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actual political systems and cultures.

A non-competitive political context would, however, afford an illustration of self-steering through total control of information rather than of response to it. It would demonstrate projection of ideologically determined information from government with a minimum of power-content, through non-autonomous channels, in order to produce an amplifying feedback of diffuse support, rather than of variable and specific demand. The information cycle is closed. Such a study in the techniques of information control would not adequately illustrate the more complex interactions to be found in competitive systems, whose steering is closer to actualities because of the independent pressures of accountability and autonomous media.

Adequately illustrative systems are not plentiful. Systems at extremes can only present over-emphases. Long-established systems often lack the dynamism of newer societies not yet settled into firm patterns of political culture in which development and interaction of variables can be followed at close range. New and developing states tend to have unstable political systems and cultures in which information generation and transfer are circumstantially haphazard.

Israel has been selected as a state with a political system and culture particularly illustrative for this study. Though comparatively new (established 1948) it is more developed than most other new states, but still developing at a rate which facilitates identification of changes. An elective system and free political competition which produce a tendency towards fragmentation and factionalism have nevertheless been marked by an unusual political stability. The political culture has a strong eastern European in-heritance, remote from immigrants from Moslem lands without political experience or tradition in their countries of origin. Their influence is still being absorbed into the social and political framework. Ideological authoritarianism was a powerful factor in development, and ideological symbolism is a factor in much public information.

The external pressures of hostility from Arab states, and occasional war, maintain exceptional constraints on public information, and afford cover for political manipulation. The autonomous press accepts a voluntary measure of control by co-operation with government; it has strong party parallelisms. The media virtually command the channels of communication between government and public, but political attitudes to them retain strains of authoritarianism. The broadcast media are subject to direct political pressures which may limit their expression. Public opinion has not altogether accepted the Social Responsibility role of the media in areas of national sensitivity. The state is persistently confronted with information problems rooted in its structural peculiarities and ideologies. It has a particular problem in relation to the West Bank of the Jordan, which generates divisive internal differences across established party lines.

This unique mix of factors tests and illustrates the hypotheses advanced. Comparison and analogy with the far more settled pattern of institutions and information transfer in the United Kingdom will distinguish some of the special influences at work. Some information analogies can be drawn in relation to the West Bank and Northern Ireland, though the political circumstances are very different. Comparison will also illustrate the variations in the patterns of information generation and transfer which can develop within the range of competitive political systems. Israel and the United Kingdom occupy different positions in this spectrum, but what they have in common will help to identify the essential divergence between competitive and non-competitive systems which finds expression in the information relationships between government and public. The comparison should also throw light on the applicability of theoretical models, in relation to the requirements for stability and response to change in the political system, and may suggest new ways of approach to some problems of government communication with the public.

PART   TWO

CHAPTER EIGHT

ISRAEL: THE   INHERITANCE   OF   THE   STATE

The Zionist Impulse

The characteristic features of government, political
system and power in Israel, and the ambient information
environment, were formed before the creation of the state
itself in May 1948.   The patterns of government and public
information in the present-day state are fully explicable
only in the light of the pre-state history and organisation,
and its dominant Zionist content.

The history of Zionism and the settlement movement to
which it gave rise, first in Ottoman Palestine and then,
from 1920, under the British Mandate from the League of
Nations, are extensively documented.   Modern works by Lucas
(1974), Sacher (1976), Safran (1978) and Isaac (1981), among
others, continue the story into the development of the state,
while Frankel (1980) presents an "anatomical" survey of its
features and institutions.   The summary which follows is
concerned mainly to identify aspects of history and develop-
ment which bear significantly on government and public
information in the present-day state.

The pre-state Jewish community in Palestine, usually
known as the Yishuv (lit: settlement), numbering by 1948
not more than 650,000 in a Palestine population of some
2,000,000 was exceptionally highly organised and substantially
self-governing.   It had a degree of structural differentiation
in institutions, political parties, bureaucracy, communica-
tions media and an electoral, representative system more
characteristic of a state than a community.   Its institutions
were recognised by the territorial power   and maintained
formal relations with it.   An elected Assembly (Asefat
Hanivharim), constituted in 1920, became the effective

instrument of community government, through its executive
organ, the Va'ad Leumi (lit: National Council). It was
juridically recognised in 1927 by the Mandatory Government,
and became the Knesset Ysrael (lit: Assembly of Israel).
Through the Jewish Agency affairs were conducted with the
Mandatory Government (Lucas, 1974; 136-37). Institutions
provided quasi-state services of health, education and
welfare. The Yishuv "government" had its own defence
organisation. It allocated authoritative values for the
Jewish community. in the sense that "...a policy is clearly
authoritative when the feeling prevails that it must or
ought to be obeyed" (Easton, 1953; 13, 133). It controlled
the principal channels of information output and of its
dissemination to the public through the Yishuv press.

Though the Yishuv lacked the formal territoriality and
legally coercive powers of a state, it had de facto elements
of the former. Jewish settlements carried on intensive
agricultural colonisation of particular areas, on land owned
by community institutions, supported by funds channelled
through the community. There were Jewish urban areas, and
Tel Aviv was a wholly Jewish city. These territorial
identifications were strong enough to be the bases of pre-
1948 British and United Nations partition plans.

The driving force of the Yishuv was secular Zionism.
Though a tenuous religious and messianic Jewish connection
with Palestine had been maintained in some form over the
centuries, secular Zionism, a movement which incorporated
religious elements, but whose aspirations were fundamentally
social and political, was the mainspring of modern Jewish
"redemptive" settlement in Palestine, and the subsequent
establishment of the state. Its intellectual roots were in
the socialist doctrines with which Europe, particularly
Tsarist Russia, was fermenting in the late 19th century.[16]

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16. About five million Jews then lived under Russian rule,
largely segregated by law in the Pale of Settlement, along
the western borders of Russia. They were subjected to
crippling legal and economic discriminations, and direct
official persecution which reached its peak from 1882 onwards.
A large proportion became pauperised (Lucas 1974; 5-7).

The pogroms of the 1880's in Russia and the reconciliations
of Marxism and Zionism in the works of two socialist-Zionist
philosophers, Borochov (1881-1907) and Syrkin (1867-1924),
provided the practical and intellectual drives. Theodor
Herzl (1860-1904), who saw in the Dreyfus trial of 1894 the
failure of Jewish assimilation, legitimised Zionism as a
political movement on an international scale, convening the
first Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897.

The formative process of Zionist settlement began in
the 1880's. It was marked by surges of immigration, of
which five are usually distinguished between 1882 and 1947,
each known as an aliya (lit: going up; by usage:
immigration to Palestine). The Second Aliya in particular,
from Russia (1904-1914), included many young and fervent
socialist-Zionists, influenced also by the ideas of the
1905 Russian revolution. They brought exceptionally strong
and tenacious ideological drives, and were determined to live
by them. The Third Aliya from eastern Europe (1919-1923)
contained similar elements.

These pioneers set in motion an intensive process of
social mobilisation based mainly on agricultural collective
(kibbutz) settlements. Ideologies of collectivity and
redemption were institutionalised as a form of secular
religion expressed in disciplined action and submergence of
self which established its members as a social and political
elite. The Second Aliya threw up charismatic figures; it
provided the founding fathers of the state whose ideological
convictions, key organisational positions and roots and
associations in Zionist pioneering were to dominate the
Yishuv and then the state. Later waves of aliya particularly
the Fifth Aliya of the 1930's, with its refugees from Germany,
brought artisan, middle and professional classes less
purposeful and dedicated and correspondingly more bourgeois
in political orientation. There were other forms of
agricultural organisation, less collective and socialist than
the kibbutz. But the ideologies of the Second and the Third
Aliya retained the organisational and practical command which
they had early established.

Safran (1978; 140-47) traces the pre-state evolution of
the multi-party system from the need of the entirely voluntary

Zionist movement to maximise membership, and therefore to accommodate all views. This was accomplished through full proportional representation, which became the established system for election of Zionist Congress delegates and for allocation of posts in the supporting bureaucracy. Thus everything became allocated numerically on party and faction strength. The system was reflected in the Zionist organisation of individual countries, and "...when their members emigrated to Palestine they brought with them the party, baggage and flag" (Safran, 1978; 147). Some twenty parties competed within the Yishuv for membership, influence and institutional power, in intense ideological factionalism fuelled by the intellectual stimulus of a new society.

The Organisation of the Yishuv

Lucas (1974; 124-35) notes the piecemeal progress of institution-building during the pre-state period. Each major party tried to establish "...as comprehensive a range of institutions as it could, a kind of non-territorial state of its own, but within the framework of the overall Zionist efforts" (Elazar, 1976; 228). This containment was vital in face of the mandatory government and the growing threat of Arab violence. These "secondary centres" formed a complex network of party support.

Two forces grew to dominate the organisation of the Yishuv, the Histadrut and Mapai. The Histadrut (lit: Federation; by usage, the normal term for the Hebrew equivalent of the General Federation of Jewish Workers in the Land of Israel) was a 1920 federation of Labour groups, but a supra-party organisation, open to all. It organised the provision of work for new immigrants, as well as social welfare schemes, particularly the Kupat Holim (lit: Sick Fund), a comprehensive system of health insurance and treatment. It ran a bank, schools, workers' colleges and training schemes, sports organisations, pension and provident funds, a daily newspaper and other publishing activities. It controlled the labour exchanges. In 1924 it established the Hevrat HaOvdim (lit: The Workers' Society), in form a capitalist enterprise, as the owner of the Histadrut assets and enterprises. As the country's dominant manufacturer and public works and building contractor

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(a major source of work for new immigrants) the Hevrat
HaOvdim ensured for the Histadrut an economic base,
financed by ploughed-back profits.

In 1929 a number of Labour groups came together as
Mapai (Hebrew acronym for Israel Labour Party), and in
1930 Mapai gained control of the Histadrut: "The political
ascendancy of the labour movement virtually placed control
of the capitalistic economy in the hands of the labour
bureaucracy". (Lucas, 1974; 128). By 1933 Mapai
dominated the principal institutions of the Yishuv and
commanded the economic infrastructure and the major sources
of information. The Histadrut became a valuable source of
patronage for Mapai's politically active members. Galnoor
(1982; 115) notes that: "The Histadrut attracted politicians,
especially at the middle level......Party members were paid
for their work in the Histadrut, while their activities in
the Party remained voluntary". It may be added that they
therefore had very strong personal reasons for not dis-
pleasing the Party. Fig. 4 indicates the extent and
ramifications of the organisation, and thus the range of
information which it commanded, as well as the scope for
patronage. It was the main secondary centre of the Yishuv,
in some respects more powerful than the primary "government"
institutions (Shapira, 1977; 74-89).

Other parties developed their institutional bases until
party was pervasive in education, medical insurance, banking,
youth movements and economic enterprise. Perlmutter (1970;
4-5) illustrates the correspondence in the Yishuv of political
and social mobilisation and institutionalisation during
periods of high immigration, such as 1920-1940. An intricate
political and institutional network allocated positions of
influence. An extensive bureaucracy developed, not on
premises of merit, even-handedness and public service, but
on allegiance to party or faction,the pervasive basis of
proportional representation, or "party key" on which offices
and resources were shared out.

This system of power-sharing drew all elements into the
coalition by giving them a practical stake in the allocation
of influence and resources. The Yishuv achieved "...a stable
political order via the dynamics of fulfilled expectations,

Fig. 4 **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE HISTADRUT—**
THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF JEWISH LABOR
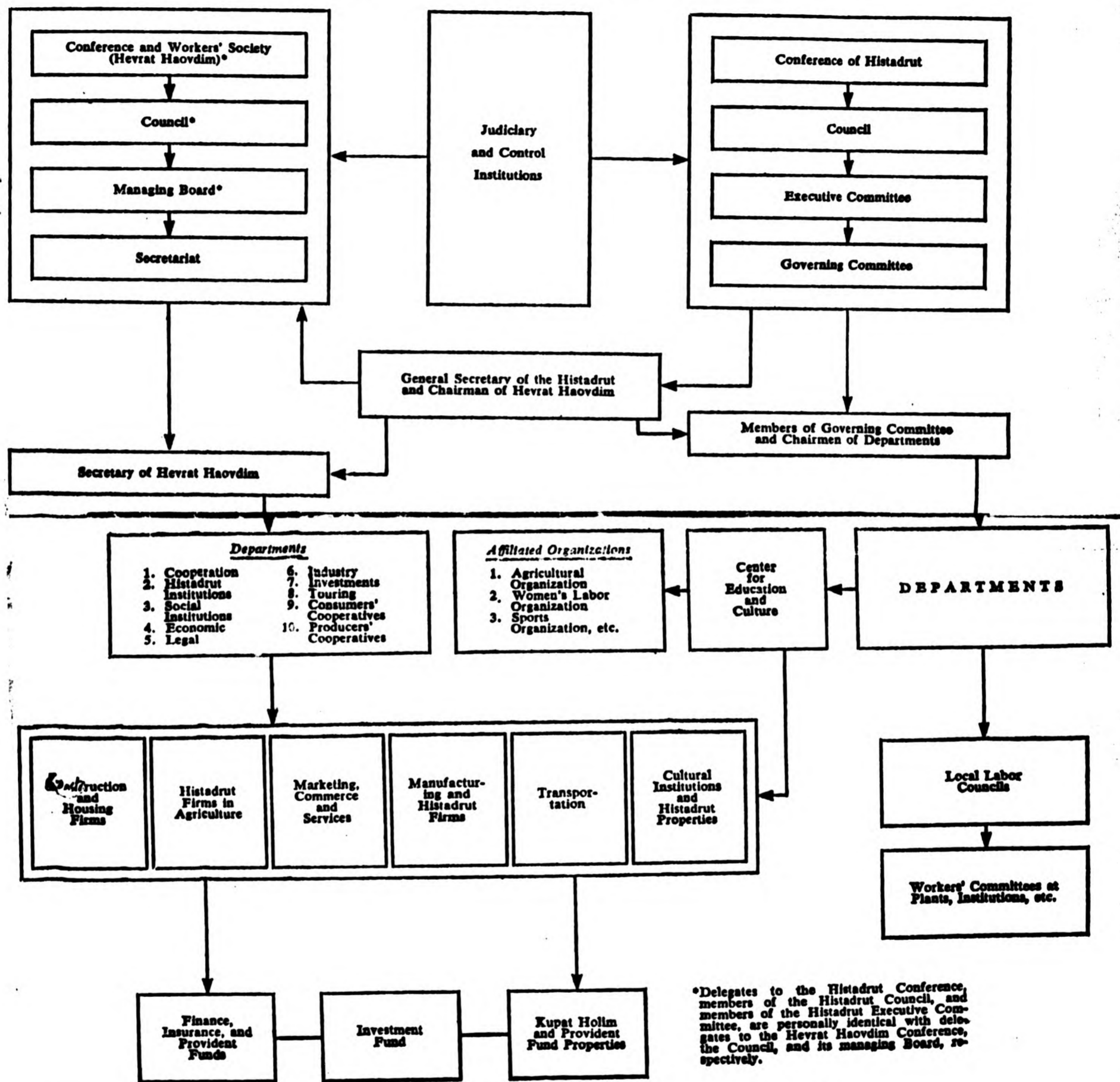
Source: The Executive Committee of the General Federation of Jewish Labor, *Histadrut Annual 1962/63*, p. 65 (Hebrew).

an integrated stratification system, élite accommodation, and the mitigation of structural, institutional and ideological differences". Zionism provided the consensus which restrained factionalism from disintegrating the institutional structure (Perlmutter 1970; 4). Though in 1935 the militant right-wing Revisionist party broke away from the Zionist leadership it was no real challenge to it.

Despite its institutional complexity the Yishuv was managed by a small power élite. It is often referred to as an "intimate society". There were close intellectual and aliya ties, often further bound by close kinship ties.[17] The party organisations themselves had many roots in the kibbutz and other settlement movements, of which leaders and officials remained members. A limited circle of leading personalities were to be found at the centre of, or closely connected with all major decisions and activities. This institutionalised "establishment" was entrenched in the Yishuv by the 1930's. Family, workplace or settlement ties and contact with party officials kept touch throughout the system, which had exceptional political and social cohesion.

The Yishuv also possessed defence capacity and a press. Lucas (1974; 167-84) traces the evolution of the former, the Hagana (lit: defence), from settlements' early self-defence needs into an organised community defence system, as conflict developed from the 1930's with the British mandatory power as well as the Arabs, and ultimately as a political instrument for the Yishuv. Though poorly equipped it became virtually an underground army, whose penetration of the community, and intelligence sources within the structure of the mandatory government gave it exceptional value as an information channel for the Yishuv authorities,

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[17].Davis (1977; 76-77) traces kinship relations within a group of families, at the heart of Yishuv affairs, coming from the area of Minsk, in the Russian Pale of Settlement. Elite and informal networks are to be found in most societies; in the small society of the Yishuv they were especially penetrative. See also Lupton and Wilson (Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies, XXVII i(1959) 30-35 on the "old boy net" revealed in financial regulation in the United Kingdom by the British Bank Rate Tribunal of 1957.

and as a channel for clandestine activities, such as organisation of illegal immigration (i.e. without government certificates). The community was habituated to the protection of information; many questions were not asked; information was not given. These attitudes became embedded.

Press and Information

The press reflected the community's origins; no political party on the eastern European model was complete without its newspaper, periodical or broadsheet. The Jewish population was almost entirely literate and the party press was an important means of political communication and maintenance (Galnoor, 1982; 227, 231). Major Hebrew dailies became firmly established - Table 2 - associated with or run by the main political parties. The press fulfilled both party and community functions. "The ideological preoccupation of Hebrew newspapers during the Mandate, and their close connection with Jewish institutions, meant that they considered themselves the mouthpieces of the different branches of the Zionist movement rather than the conveyors of information" (Goren, 1979; 88). They were vehicles not so much for news as for communicating party decisions and speeches for discussion by party branches, institutions and members. Most journalists worked in the party press. Party officials could double as editors, and contributors were often not journalists but party leaders and intellectuals, some with a notorious contempt for the press as such, to whom the party newspaper was simply a vehicle for party purposes (Wolfensohn, 1979; 6; Goren, 1979; 87, 98).

In addition, there was a strong working liason between main Yishuv institutions and the press, especially through the Jewish Agency's Political Department, which gave policy directives. As external pressures tightened (a 1933 Press Ordinance imposed licensing of printed media, and direct government censorship was introduced in 1936) the Yishuv press functioned as an arm of the community authorities for information control and mobilisation, in accordance with Zionist policy. Voluntary co-operation was formalised in 1942 in the Reaction (or Response) Committee, comprising the Editors of main newspapers, accepting voluntary censorship

TABLE 2

THE YISHUV MAINSTREAM DAILY PRESS

Title	Ownership	Comment
Haaretz (The Country) Hebrew	Private	The oldest major daily, founded 1919. Israel's prestige paper, independent, highbrow and investigative. Widely read by the "establishment", professional and middle-classes. Good overseas news services.
Davar (Word) Hebrew	Histadrut (Labour Federation)	Founded 1925 as the daily of the Labour movement. The left-wing orientation nevertheless allowed a good deal of editorial freedom, and non-editorial criticism of Histadrut policy.
Yediot Aharonot (Latest News) Hebrew	Private	Daily, founded 1939. Right-wing and anti-Soviet leanings, but many views accommodated. Israel's first mass circulation newspaper.
Palestine Post English	Editor (Agronsky) with private backing. The Jewish Agency had about eight per cent voting rights	An English-language daily founded in 1932 (after 1948 became the Jerusalem Post). Provided a platform for the Yishuv to the Mandatory Administration, the diplomatic, foreign and journalistic community. Generally Labour sympathies, but wide range of views.
Hatsofe (The Watchman) Hebrew	National Religious Party/ Mizrahi	Founded 1938 as the daily paper of the orthodox religious parties; partisan circulation.
Al Hamishmar (On Guard) Hebrew	Mapam party (United Workers)	The party organ, founded 1943, ideological in character; partisan circulation.
Haboker (The Morning) Hebrew	General Zionist Party	The party journal. Middle-class orientation.
Herut (Freedom) Hebrew	Herut party. Right-wing	The party organ. Ideological; partisan circulation.

Notes: a. Hebrew was not the mother-tongue of the majority of the Yishuv population, and a variety of minor productions catered for linguistic groups - various European languages.

b. Newspapers were normally published early in the morning. Yediot Aharonot nominally an afternoon paper, was on sale by mid-morning. There were no "Sabbath" editions: Friday issues carried "weekend" supplements.

c. Closely partisan organs had a limited circulation; but the main newspapers (first four) had much cross-readership among an almost totally literate community. Most readers of Haaretz took at least one other paper.

Sources: Nyrop (1979; 309); Frankel (1980; 140-47); Newsview (8 June 1982); present Jerusalem Post management.

and acting in concert against the mandatory government in the agreed interests of the Yishuv, sometimes successfully defying, by collective action, censorship and punitive measures (Goren, 1979; 89-90).

In what amounted by the 1930's to a revolutionary struggle the Yishuv press was authoritarian rather than libertarian, used "...to inform the people of what the rulers thought they should know and the policies the rulers thought they should support" (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1976; 2). The Jewish community numered less than a hundred thousand households; short and rapid internal communications enabled every Jewish community and settlement to receive the daily newspapers within hours (Galnoor, 1982; 223). Radio was not yet a serious competitor to the press in information dissemination.

The flow of information between the Yishuv "government" and its public inevitably reflected the political organisation. Information input was "filtered" through party and ideological machines, especially if it might be the basis of allocation of community resources. The effective machinery of government was manned by party-affiliated bureaucrats; Galnoor (1982; 181-83) notes their influential gatekeeping role in Mapai, in the exchange, report and co-ordination of information through party organisation and channels. He adduces this organised information flow as a positive factor in Israeli political development. In the web of party and personal objectives it would inevitably have been susceptible to systemic distortions. The manipulation of information, of its positive and negative potential and its power-content, was built into the political structure. The information which might reach the Yishuv public through its party affiliations could hardly be unscathed.

Information expectations of the community "public" were limited by its support of the Yishuv leadership in consensus (though not always unwavering) about community objectives. The intimacy of the society as a whole meant that much information passed by inter-personal contact. It was understood that there was voluntary community censorship, and that information was manipulated in the press for community purposes.

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Transition to the State

On withdrawal of the British power in May 1948 the
sheer speed and pressure of events - the first a war for
survival - virtually imprinted the complex political
patterns of the Yishuv on the new state. Overnight, the
dominant party became the basis of the new government and
Knesset (Assembly); Yishuv institutions became the basis
of the new state administration; the senior bureaucracy of
the Histadrut became the senior bureaucracy of the new state.
As the state organisation expanded to meet new demands, the
political and bureaucratic systems expanded, willy-nilly,
with it, on the established party key basis. Thus, the
framework of the Yishuv became legitimised as the framework
of the state. Yishuv leaders moved to crush any appearance
of separatism, to unify armed forces, and to impose the
supreme authority of the state whose leadership they now
assumed. It was natural for those in power to see the
continuation of that power as a necessity in face of
critical situations which demanded action, and for the
Yishuv to accept it.

Mass immigration, into the early 1950's, succeeded the
armistice agreements of 1949 with surrounding Arab states.
It drastically altered the social composition of the state,
whose population had been predominantly Ashkenazi Jews (lit:
German; by usage European) with mainly central and eastern
European cultural, political and educational experience.
By the end of 1951 the new state had more than doubled its
Jewish population, absorbing the remnants of European Jewry
and whole new communities from Moslem countries of the
Middle East and North Africa, to whom Israel's war with the
Arabs brought persecution in their countries of settlement.
Jewish communites from Moslem countries, accustomed to the
tolerated but inferior status given to non-Moslem communities,
had no significant political experience; the ideologies of
pioneering Zionism and the drives which these created were
unknown to them. The majority were Sephardi Jews (lit:
Spanish; by usage: descendants of Jewish refugees from
16th century Spanish and Portugese persecutions) with low
educational and cultural levels by Ashkenazi standards.
This mass immigration was for the most part destitute,

flooding into the small country left financially and
otherwise chaotic by the British withdrawal, and recently
disrupted by war (Lucas, 1974; 270-73).

Whatever the social problems, the political pattern
remained unbroken. Immigration and absorption processes
"...enforced a strict party key that assigned immigrants
to party representatives on the basis of each party's
existing electoral strength" (Isaac, 1981; 113). Medding
(1972; 226) notes that employment and housing were often
allocated on party criteria. A verdict looking back from
the 1965 and 1969 elections was able to conclude that
"...the Israeli political establishment and major political
blocs derive power equally from the old Yishuv and the new
Israeli constituencies, and the process of voter institu-
tionalisation favours the aggrandisement of the establishment
parties" (Perlmutter; 1970; 43).

Their grip was strong. Functions, values and systems
which they had organised for their adherents penetrated
deep into daily life and could not be changed overnight,
even if there were any agreement on change and its
direction. Party machines and leaders were entrenched and
self-perpetuating. The state - a novelty - inevitably made
its own demands in relation to what are normally state
functions, such as education, employment, defence, law,
health and welfare, water resources and social insurance.
But the grip of party on some basic services was not broken,
especially on the health services, a stronghold of the
Histadrut, whose sick fund, embracing some ninety per cent
of the insured population, remains crucial to its membership
and influence. However, over the years many party
institutions, though nominally independent, became heavily
dependent on government subsidies.

The Decline of Consensus

For some twenty years after 1948 the state was driven
by the urgent needs of survival and nation-building, and
government was sustained by the impetus of the Yishuv, its
organisation, leadership and ideologies. Notwithstanding
the many pragmatic adaptations of ideology which had to be
made, the Mapai/Histadrut combination was able to dominate
the political scene on the basis of a consensus about

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national needs and objectives.

The ideologically - infused leaders who had brought
the state into being maintained a tight grip on the
political machinery. Goodman and Landau (1975; 179) have
suggested an elite of about five hundred people as the
decision-makers, many of them pre-state leaders or their
selected successors. Nyrop (1979; 143) puts the number of
the political elite in 1978 within this circle at about two
hundred, the majority professional party politicians —
"askanim". These were the leaders, the ideologists, the
party and Histadrut "apparatchiks" who had common roots of
origin, immigration, the kibbutz and the Hagana, who had
worked closely with each other over the years in various
capacities. They controlled information and mobility within
the institutions and parties; they trained and nominated
their successors in the same mould. Élite circles were not
exclusive, but entrants needed more than ability; they had
to demonstrate party loyalty and to command support from the
top. Inevitably they were supported by functionaries and
time-servers who looked to patronage for their rewards - a
system most conveniently exercised behind the scenes.

Beneath the surface there were changes. Eisenstadt
(1985) has analysed in detail the influences which began to
transform Israeli society, as events, the integration of the
now Sephardi majority and the weakening of Zionist ideals,
with the achievement of their main objectives, exerted their
influence. The dramatic victory of the Six-Day War of 1967
relieved the immediate pressures on survival, but brought
new - and divisive - problems of acquisition of territory
with a million Arab inhabitants. Thenceforward there was
a move away from the traditional ideological differences
towards polarisation around the question of peace, security
and the future of the occupied territories.

Galnoor (Arian, 1980; 122-23, 126) identifies the
Yom Kippur War of 1973 as the event which shook the surival
capacity of the political system as shaped in the Yishuv,
though "...as a catalyst for processes of transformation
which had already begun". Above all, a failure of
government and public information shattered the passive
trust of press and public - a voluntary abnegation of

countervailing power - in military and political leaders
and organisation. The Meir government, forced to resign in
1974, was the first to be brought down by public pressure
rather than political manoeuvring. As consensus was eroded
so was the power of Mapai and its coalition allies. New
demands for administrative organisation and economic and
political reform began to emerge, no longer completely
controllable from the political centre through the networks
of secondary institutions which were the habitual channels
of information and negotiation, out of public sight.
Political competition was sharpened by the advent of new
parties and a more fluid political environment.

Loss of political certainty eroded the confidence of
the bureaucracy and government, and a no longer entirely
manageable Knesset began to show signs of independence which
resulted in unaccustomed government reverses amd some loss
of control of Knesset committees. Government began to rely
more on appointed committees and inquiries to strengthen its
hand, and some of its authority passed to the Attorney -
General and the courts, as it sought similar authoritative
backing for its actions. Independent investigation of
various public scandals, and especially the Agranat
Commission Report (1974) on the mismanagement of the 1973
war, brought into the public arena information of kinds
never before displayed, undermining the credibility of the
political and military establishment. Broadcasting, which
had been removed from direct government control to that of
a public authority in 1965, and television, introduced in
1968, brought events more directly to the public eye, opening
up public interest in the information which lay behind them.

As political processes became more visible, government
began to lose its historical control of information which
confined circulation to élite circles on the basis of
selection and need to know - i.e. the retention of power-
content in the hands of the power-holders. In the more
fluid and uncertain political environment leaks of informa-
tion from government at all levels, exploited by a press
often linked with contending parties and factions, and more
professionally independent as the power of central government
loosened, became a normal feature of the political system,

which no government has been able to stop. The failure of
government to settle contentious issues firmly on a
governmental basis encourages departments and their
ministers to press their cases on the public, usually by
using the media.

In the political "earthquake" of the May 1977 election
the Mapai-led Alignment was overthrown by a new power.group,
the centre-right Likud coalition, heavily supported by
younger and Sephardi voters, whose basic ideology was
assertively nationalist and populist. The Camp David
Accords of 1979 with Egypt and the evacuation of Sinai
which followed in 1982, the problem of the West Bank, towards
which Likud policy has been openly annexationist, the 1982
Lebanon war and its involvements, the runaway inflation and
economic crisis of 1983 and 1984, resulting from Likud
economic policies, brought Israeli society to a complete
polarisation. The Lebanon war exposed dangers of mis-
management of government information and of its concealment
even from the Cabinet, further diminishing public confidence,
strengthening the influence of the media, and eventually
bringing down the government. In the election of August
1984 neither Mapai nor Likud was able to form an effective
government. Under acute military and economic pressure
they were forced in September 1984 into an uneasy joint
Government of National Unity. T his has temporarily post-
poned the underlying conflicts which will determine whether
the political system can adapt itself to new situations
successfully, or will undergo possible violent transformation.

Questions of government and public information have
been intimately involved in the events of the last decade or
so, and still retain strong characteristics from the Yishuv
structure and habits. But the media, in particular, have
strengthened their influence, while the Knesset has failed
to communicate itself to the public, partly because of its
inbuilt information deficiencies (discussed in Chapter Ten).
The examination of the generation and transfer to the public
of government information, in and through major institutions
of government, which follows, and of the underlying attitudes
of government and public, will provide a test of the three
hypotheses stated (p.29) in an actual political environment

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hypotheses stated (p.29) in an actual political environment

under stress. In a wider setting it will help to assess
the applicability of political theories and models in an
operative political and social environment.

As discussed by Shapiro (Arian, 1980; 23-37), Goodman
and Landau (1975; 165) the outstanding feature of the
Israeli political system until the 1970's was the dominance
of one party in the competitive, multi-party political
environment. The "dominant party" identification,
associated with Duverger (1967), relates to a party which
may not have an outright electoral majority, but attracts
a much larger number of voters than any other party,
commands a concentration of ideological and material
resources and is able to inspire wide public identification
with its political philosophy, "identified with an epoch".
Shapiro holds the Yishuv conditions to have been ideal for
the emergence of such a dominant party, in Mapai, with its
command of the Histadrut and Jewish Agency and its powerful
and practically expressed Zionist ideologies.

Continued into the state, this domination was a
strongly stabilising influence. Goodman and Landau (1975;
171) attribute the maintenance of political stability
partly to the external threat to national existence, partly
to the need for cabinet coalitions between main political
groups (or "camps"), on the model of "consociational
democracy" put forward by Lijphart (1969). Despite deep-
rooted differences, the political leadership showed a strong
tendency to accommodation and consensus. Shapiro (1980;
30-31) also emphasises the control of information about the
activities of the Mapai party machine as a factor in
stability - "...the general public was not aware of just
how pervasive the machine was in the political system...".
The information which began to emerge as the dominance of
Mapai crumbled in the 1970's hastened its decline; it had
been based substantially on the public's uninquiring faith.
Thus the power-content of the information newly obtained by
the public strengthened its countervailing power against a
party machine in which confidence was eroded.

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CHAPTER NINE

GOVERNMENT AND INFORMATION OUTPUTS

Composition and Organisational Characteristics of the Bureaucracy

Nachmias (1978) has discussed the bureaucratic culture of Israel. Aspects of bureaucratic structures and relationships have been examined by Katz and Eisenstadt (1960), Globerson (1970, 1973), Robinson (1973), Dror (1971), Danet and Hartman (1972), Katz and Danet (1973) and Caiden (1970). Galnoor (1982; Ch. vi) has emphasised the communication role of the bureaucracy in Israeli politics and society and its non-bureaucratic roles and behaviour in the absorption of new immigrants.

Preparations made in 1948 to create a state bureaucracy with qualities of professionalism and detachment in mind were immediately brushed aside by partisan pressures and the urgencies of survival (Sherf, 1959; 113). The bureaucracy was heavily and tenaciously politicised in the image of the Yishuv. By 1954 some forty-four per cent of senior civil servants came from the political organisations and institutions of the Labour sector (Globerson, 1970; 53). At lower levels particularly the bureaucracy absorbed many new immigrants. Reuveny (1974; 24) notes that by 1953 about thirty-five per cent of civil servants were new immigrants, and that this recruitment did not lack a political content.[18]

Distribution of public offices was a central payoff to supporters and coalition partners, and the dominant political element was Mapai. In the early days of the state

[18.]Nachmias (1978; 51) notes the same phenomenon in the U.S.A., where "...patronage was interwined with the integration of large immigrant populations".

"...services were performed chiefly for the party faithful
...certain ministries became hardly distinguishable from
party cells" (Fein, 1967; 189). "Politicians in Israel,
especially members of the smaller political parties believe
that the Israeli civil service is the administrative arm of
the Mapai party" (Robinson, 1970; 51).

Since 1951 a Civil Service Commission has substantially
reduced political abuses in appointment and promotion and
has encouraged professionalism. But Frankel (1980; 112-13)
notes that the proper procedures for filling posts are still
often circumvented. For example the State Controller's
Report No. 36, for 1985, draws attention to the "rigging" of
application procedures by the Prime Minister's Office in
order to ensure the appointment of a particular candidate
(reported in the Jerusalem Post, 12 May 1986, p. 6).
Political preference or acceptability is often the criterion
for circumvention of the rules. Transgressions of this
kind against public probity occur in other countries, but
seem to cause a minimum of public offence in Israel - an
aspect of public attitudes to administration. At senior
levels of the bureaucracy patronage is both a valuable
political resource and a means of reducing personal and
political incompatibilities.

On the organisational level the exigencies of coalition-
building result in allocation of ministries, as well as jobs,
to parties or factions, to transfer of functions between
ministries to remove them from control of a coalition partner,
and to creation or maintenance of superfluous organisations
in order to create jobs. Dominant coalition partners have
retained control of central ministries, such as Finance,
Defence and Foreign Affairs. The Ministries of the
Interior and Religious Affairs have been virtually the
preserve of the religious parties, who hold a politically
balancing position, and are packed with their adherents
(Frankel, 1980; 112).

Galnoor (Arian, 1980; 138-39) notes that while
politicisation is not precisely aligned to party there is
a significant link between the minister's party and the
most senior bureaucrats in ministries; also that bureaucrats
display greater loyalty to their own ministries than to
the civil service as a whole. Moreover, bureaucrats are

closely involved in a wider political sense in relationships
with secondary centres and pressure groups, almost all of
which have strong political affiliations. At the highest
levels of the bureaucracy appointments have been subject
to "...ability to function in the labyrinth of ministries,
secondary centres, parties and affiliated organisations"
(Galnoor, 1982; 213).

Political influences and sympathies are likely to be
strongest in major departments of direct political importance,
and weakest in those post-state areas of bureaucracy, such
as the Central Bureau of Statistics and the National
Insurance Institute, which are by function apolitical, with
activities often closely prescribed by law. In the second
Likud government of 1981-84, however, political encroach-
ments upon higher bureaucratic appointments increased. The
directorship of the National Insurance Institute, for
example, was given in 1982 to Likud nominees. In Likud
eyes, of course, this is seen as part of a redress of the
over-weighting of appointments with Mapai nominees during
the long dominance of that party.

No firm central control or co-ordination of the Israeli
bureaucracy has been achieved. It is inhibited, above all,
by the political system which makes ministries virtually the
fiefs of parties within the ruling coalition. Functional
overlaps, especially in the control and disbursement of
funds are complicated by the tenacious survival from the
Yishuv of the Jewish Agency[19], which maintains departments
paralleling some government departments, with quasi-
ministerial status, but no direct government control.
Disarticulation is built into the bureaucratic organisation.
It is compounded by the disinclination of coalition
governments to arrive at firm common policies in areas of
contention, leaving ministers and departments to duel in
public, mainly through the media.   The committed

[19].This body, once the representative channel of the Yishuv
to the Mandatory Government, has become the major fund-raising
channel from diaspora communities. Its power rests on
disbursement of large funds in immigration, settlement and
education (Frankel, 1980; 250-54).

ideological bent of the political echelons within depart-
ments fosters areas of bounded consideration, projected
downwards from senior levels which have a survival need
to be responsive to immediate political demands.

Thus personal, organisational and political influences
pervade the bureaucratic structure. They affect the
collection or co-ordination of information which might
result in unpalatable advice. Ministries and jobs
controlled by the religious parties are unlikely to expend
effort on gathering or publishing information which does
not reflect favourably on maintenance of their purposes.
Information about the disbursement of funds may contain
political sensitivities, and is often fragmented and
obscured. It would be difficult to obtain comprehensive
information within the Ministry of Religious Affairs about
the full extent and variety of state financial support for
religious institutions. During the long period of Mapai
dominance it would have been similarly difficult to find
or obtain complete information in the bureaucracy about the
direction of funds towards some kibbutz and associated
activities. Under the Likud government of 1977-84 there
was little desire or intention to gather or produce full
information about the extent of financial support for
controversial West Bank settlement, which passes through
many governmental channels, sometimes in deliberate
obscurity.

The Information Base and Conversion Influences

The characteristics of the bureaucracy and its political
direction are thus reflected in government's information base.
But there are other important variables in this, in terms of
efficiency in reaching the population sources from whom much
of it comes, and in their affective orientations or feelings
towards government and towards the bureaucracy perceived as
its agent. Political affiliations run deep, government tends
to be regarded as a hostile institution (a deep-rooted
inheritance from the diaspora), taxation of all sorts is
very heavy, regulations on personal and business life are
numerous and onerous. Machinery of enforcement is generally
inadequate to its task. In consequence information evasions
flourish. Personal and corporate financial information has

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to be regarded with reserve, and there must be reservations about related inputs to the National Insurance Institute and welfare networks, as well as to other government agencies. The phenomena are not peculiar to Israel, but the influences are strong.[20]

The information base is also unusually widely deployed, through state-owned enterprises and military industries. Bureaucratic access to information is thus extensive, but often indirect, through sectional interests which may be loosely articulated to central government. Moreover, the origination in party institutions of what is effectively national information deprives the bureaucracy of important information at first hand. The Kupat Holim (Sick Fund) of the Histadrut is almost a national health service, and, as such, an important source of information input to the bureaucracy. It is difficult to believe that some kinds of information, especially about the utilisation of funds, flowed as readily into Likud governments, whose objective was to force the Kupat Holim into public ownership, as into Mapai governments.

The information base must also be affected by internal bureaucratic standards. The Israeli bureaucracy retains a persistent reputation for petty inefficiencies (Nachmias, 1978; 112). Galnoor (1982; 217) charitably observes that there is enough slack in the Israeli system to leave room for administrative ineptitude, which Caiden (1970; 38 et seq.) puts more graphically in terms of "...a variety of styles related to position, experience, age, political ideology and personal ambition". Nachmias (1978; 155 et seq.) concludes that the Israeli bureaucracy is histori- cally socially unrepresentative, unduly attractive as an

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[20.] Nyrop (1979; 186-87)reckons Israelis in the late 1970's to be "Probably the most heavily-taxed population in the world", with a miximum marginal rate of sixty-nine per cent operative at an annual income of less than the equivalent of US$10,000. Indirect taxation was also extremely heavy. Spot checks of tax returns in 1976 indicated that tax liabilities of the self-employed were often double those indicated by the taxpayer. Information bases built on such foundations were bound to be unreliable.

employer to less-educated groups seeking job security. Professional standards are affected by such factors.

Added values of co-ordination and association of information within the bureaucracy must also tend to be limited by weakness of common rule administration and the consequent flaws in accumulated administrative information, which may require conversion into political information and advice. Galnoor (1982; 207) emphasises the historical roots of the ambiguity, or flexibility, of bureaucratic administration in the social tutelage role of the bureaucracy in the earlier days of the state. Nachmias (1978; 94) notes the frequent contact of individual Israelis with the national bureaucracy in this centralised polity and their dependence in both vital and trivial matters on its decisions. Katz and Danet (1973) and Katz and Eisenstadt (1960)deal more fully with the subject, and the former note the particularism in bureaucratic responses. This is likely to affect the recording of accurate information.

Inefficiencies, disarticulations, lack of departmental and inter-departmental co-ordination, changes in political control and the bounded consideration which results add their influence. The information potential of the government, the base for formulation of information and advice in conversion processes which may ultimately affect the steering of the polity, may therefore be incomplete or unbalanced. It may also be overriden by the strength of party ideologies present at ministerial levels and at the higher bureaucratic levels at which parties are able to influence appointments. It would not be possible to quantify the factors involved, which are not unknown in more developed countries. In terms of administration they must be judged against the tasks which the bureaucracy has had to tackle, its history of social involvement and the very rapid pace of development, which has often called for improvisation and ingenuity and encouraged particularism. But in terms of steering the polity, intelligent political judgement must often be as reliable a guide to decision as the quality of information available from bureaucratic sources.

Bureaucratic Outputs of Public Information

The formal compliance outputs of the Israeli bureau-
cracy in legislation, delegated legislation and other
regulation are published in <u>Reshumot</u> (lit: Records), the
government gazette. They are mediated to the public
mainly by the bureaucracy itself in its working contacts,
through legal and professional channels or media.

Secondary compliance information, explaining and
interpreting the primary compliance outputs, is not profuse.
It issues mainly free from the National Insurance Institute
and the Ministry of Labour and Welfare, and to a lesser
extent from departments, such as the Ministry of Immigration
and Absorption, involved in information to individuals in
personal relationships with the state. It is generally
simple in language and structure, broadly explanatory
rather than detailed. Israeli administration is involved
in complex systems of exceptions, exemptions and circum-
stances for special treatment difficult to codify in
general terms, and in often confusing ad hoc changes for
which no time is allowed to prepare and distribute clear
public information. Government intervention in economic
life is exceptionally widespread, with systems of grants,
rebates, subsidies and special treatment difficult to
absorb and interpret. The affected public tend to seek
solutions through personal negotiation or political
channels. There are few definitive "rule-books", and
constant changes of rule which make issued guidance in
some areas (e.g. immigration and absorption) notoriously
unreliable.

All this gives the bureaucracy, of course, a power
derived from command of information. Galnoor (1982; 320,
326) comments on the difficulties of access to information
for individuals who do not know how to make use of party
or political channels, and on similar difficulties for
organisations which try to be independent of the established
networks. The communal penetration of the Israeli bureau-
cracy and its intimate contacts with established party and
institutional networks have left little scope in Israel for
the tier of voluntary organisation which often grows up to
mediate administrative information to the public, and thus

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to constitute a public countervailing power in its own right.
It is consistent with the centralised power of the Israeli
bureaucracy and the extensive coverage of secondary centres
that this kind of possible focus of public power barely
exists.

Citizens' Advice Services are an example. The
Ministry of Labour and Welfare contains a small organisation
known as SHIL (trnasliteration of a Hebrew acronym for
Sherut le'yeutz la'ezrach, lit: Service for Citizens'
Advice) which covers the country through some thirty local
offices staffed mainly by professionals and specially
trained volunteers. A citizens' advice service which has
full internal access to operative bureaucratic rules is
apparently in a strong position for its purposes. However,
as a government unit, SHIL has no authority to communicate
this information against bureaucratic wishes, though it can
and does institute legal proceedings against government
departments in appropriate cases. But clearly its position
as part of the bureaucracy, controlled by funding if by
nothing else, limits its potential for information output.
The service is not well-known or heavily used, probably
because there is no general bureaucratic disposition to
develop an internal focus of criticism.

What would elsewhere be independent interest and
pressure groups are, similarly, in Israel part of the
government secondary centre organisation. Galnoor comments
(in Arian, 1980; 239) that "Even consumer protection
groups belong to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry,
the Histadrut and the local authorities". In a Knesset
debate on voluntary work on 1 June 1985 speakers suggested
that substantial allocations of funds for voluntary
organisations were swallowed up in bureaucratic super-
structure "...the antithesis of voluntary work" (Jerusalem
Post, 9 June 1985 p.3).

The bureaucratic output of reports and accounts from
departments, state-run enterprises and institutions required
to publish regular material in specified form (e.g. Bank
of Israel) is often limited in circulation and imperfectly
available to the public by sale or otherwise. Some of it
is agenda-setting in importance to debate in the Knesset

and discussion in the media. Statistics have a special importance in government, and the well-developed outputs of the Central Statistics Bureau are exceptionally well-organised and available. Many direct voluntary outputs are specialised, e.g. agricultural advice, teachers' manuals from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Public accessibility to special material on subjects of current interest or controversy is often difficult. Departmental and advisory committee reports are rarely published; their findings communicated to the media may be in departmental summaries which investigative journalists sometimes find garbled and misleading in relation to conclusions not to the department's liking. Research and similar departmental information circulates within and between government departments, and to lists of outside specialists built up over time and updated by personal contact (Sources: Departmental officials, press reports and observation). The assumption is that there is no wider public interest. In a small community this may be convenient and economic for government; but the immediate bureaucratic objectives are uppermost. In keeping with this is the marked absence of public discussion documents intended to brief or to elicit considered reactions from the public, or of "popularised" summaries on important questions which would indicate any felt need to communicate with the public about them. The deeper reasons may be political; what seems a public lack of interest is both cause and effect.

Indirect Information Outputs and Departmental Spokesmen

Indirect government information outputs are maintained through departmental spokesmen, whose role in Israel government departments is as elsewhere: to tell the public, via the media, what the department and its minister want it to know. A comment by Galnoor (1982; 249) indicates a subjective conditioning of attitudes; in a 1971 survey almost all the twenty-five spokesmen contacted thought the amount of information distributed by the government, as well as their own department's information policy, was "adequate" or "very adequate":

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"...They did not favour a law to clarify
the people's rights to know or the boundaries
of government secrecy. Most of these spokes-
men were previously newsmen and their attitudes
reflected a high degree of satisfaction with
the general state of affairs and the relationship
between the government and the media".

No views appear to have been sought elsewhere on the
question.

Most information in formal releases is routinely
administrative and public relations, in which spokesmen
act for their ministers as well as their departments, in
distribution of texts of Knesset speeches and apologetics.
For example, the sudden burst of activity by the Ministry
of Tourism Spokesman in promoting the Minister's activities
abroad after he had been publicly criticised for his absence
from an important domestic event in November 1985 drew some
press comment (Jerusalem Post, 22 Nov 1985 p.2.). Table 3
indicates the generally routine content. Otherwise as
elsewhere, official spokesmen do much behind the scenes to
foster support for their departments' decisions and actions.
The political affiliations of Israeli journalists help them
in selection of suitable channels for release of information.
In the context of bureaucratic and political sensitivities
spokesmen need to move cautiously. Projected releases may
find themselves blocked by departmental or political
interests (Source: discussion with departmental spokesmen)
and the public may remain in ignorance of developing
situations until they break surface in other - often
political - forums.

The Information Center

One government department, the Government Information
Center (Merkaz HaHasbara), is specifically concerned with
production of public information, and has acquired some of
the functions of a general government publisher. Its output
includes some secondary compliance material, on aspects of
personal and family law and rights, and the Government
Year Book. By origin, however, it is a specialised unit
with an essentially educational output. Its expressed
principal information role is maintenance:
"...strengthening the identification of the citizen with

TABLE   3

SUBJECT-MATTER   OF   PRESS   RELEASES

ISRAELI   MINISTRY   OF   HEALTH   (SEPT. - NOV.1982)

Subject-Matter	Number of Releases
Notices about setting-up and reporting of committees	5
Notices about laying of corner-stones for new hospital departments, extension of existing facilities etc.	14
Pollution investigations and tests, evironmental improvements	12
Health and hazard warnings	9
Administration and organisation, including doctors' examinations, dental price lists	7
Health co-operation with Lebanon (in the military occupied areas)	4
Technical notices	3
Closure orders	3
Notice disowning extreme opinions against abortion expressed by Dr. Sadan (adviser to Minister) in a television interview	1
Announcement of International Medical Congress meeting in Israel	1
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Source: Ministry of Health Press releases (in Hebrew).

Notes.
a. Notifications of committees are not necessarily ex-
    haustive; their reports are mostly unpublished.

b. Many notices arise from legal/administrative functions
    of the Ministry.

c. The largest number of notices reflects credit on the
    work of the Ministry.

d. Only one release (on Dr. Sadan's views) had overt
    political significance, from which the Minister
    hastened to distance himself.

TABLE 3 (cont.)

SUBJECT-MATTER OF PRESS RELEASES
ISRAELI MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (April 1986)

Only four releases were issued from the Office of the
Ministry of Transport Spokesman during April 1986. Three
were headed "Press Announcement" and one was headed
"Announcement to the Public, though, of course, this was
meant to be made through the press. The content of these
releases is summarised below.

1. This press announcement summarised the Minister's
   participation in, and address to, a forum on road
   safety at the Ministry. The Minister aired the
   departmental policy to press for the institution of
   a national traffic police force. He notified and
   discussed budgets and measures for road safety
   improvements, and the Ministry's plans for 1986.
   names and appointments of leading participants were
   given.

2. This announcement explained the projected construc-
   tion of a new airport at Eilat, in the context of
   a recent announcement by the Prime Minister on
   economic growth measures. Otherwise the announce-
   ment dealt with acclamation of recent U.S.A. action
   against air transport terrorism, and detailed the
   Ministry's activities, plans and participation in
   international co-operation on the subject.

3. The third press announcement was a notification by
   the Minister to representatives of the driving
   schools organisation that vehicle licensing offices
   would not be closed during August. The Minister
   also announced that he hoped the Sadan Committee,
   expected shortly to present him with its report,
   had been asked to pay special attention to some
   problems about driving examinations, on which he
   hoped it would provide solutions.

4. This announcement to the public, via the media,
   notified the closure of the Ministry's offices
   during the whole of the Passover period, and asked
   the public who required various services to arrange
   their business in advance of that time.

Comment.

These are routine types of mainly adminsitrative
announcement, propagating the Ministry's policies, with
some public relations benefit to the Minister and the
assumption of credit.

Source.

Translated press notices in Hebrew issued by the
Spokesman's Office of the Ministry of Transport, Jerusalem,
in April 1986.

the state - the democratic regime, its national destiny and
its struggle" (1982/83 Programme of Work p. 3).

The Center's stated functions reflect its origins as
an administrative component of the Ministry of Education,
established in 1954 to produce material for the accultura-
tion of the then large numbers of new immigrants with many
cultural backgrounds, but little civic education or Zionist
background:

> "The Information Center disseminates
> information conducive to the knowledge
> and understanding of Israel's past and
> present, its achievements and problems,
> its aims and policies. The Center
> contributes to civic education aimed at
> orientating the citizens and encouraging
> them to participate in public affairs and
> in the democratic process"

(Statement in English issued by Information Center).

The Center's status and its semi-independent functions
shield it from excesses of executive interference, and it
has been regarded as politically uncontroversial. The
translated headings and detail from the Center's mid-1985
publishing list at Table 4 indicate its concentration on
state and Zionist topics, problems and history, and
background civic information.

About a million prints, including Arabic editions,
are distributed annually, about eighty per cent free; only
substantial material is sold. The educational system
absorbs the majority, some of the publications being
important reading for school examinations (Source:
officials of the Information Center). In a small country
this is a substantial activity, but barely concerned with
the day-to-day processes of government and public
information.

The Identification and Composition of Bureaucratic Printed Outputs

It is not easy for the Israeli public to identify the
formal information output of the bureaucracy, or for
anybody to assess its penetration. Sale arrangements, and
distribution of free material, are not comprehensive, and
there are no co-ordinated access tools, such as a current
list of new government publications. Some newspapers note

TABLE 4

PUBLISHED OUTPUT OF THE INFORMATION CENTER

Catalogue Series	Subject-Matter	Number of Listed Booklets etc.
Know Your People	Judaism and Zionism Men and Leaders	27 4
History of Settlement	(Until the establishment of the State)	12
Documents	Foundation of the state; West Bank autonomy; Camp David Accords etc.	4
Meetings	A selection of lectures for study-days and meetings - mainly pre-state subjects	5
Know Israel	Factual background on aspects of national life, industry, population, welfare policy etc.	11
Wars of Israel	Accounts of various campaigns and selected bibliography. Symbolic accounts of historic wars and sieges	11
Know	Surveys and data on e.g. development of Galilee and Negev; education; the P.L.O; peace negotiations	12
Know the Government	Factual accounts of presidency; elections; Israeli government; State Controller and Ombudman; local government	8
The Economy	Consumer index; water problems, consumer protection; updated economic material	5
The Middle East	Accounts of Middle East countries	9
Various Publications	Israel in Numbers; The 11th Knesset and Government; Jerusalem in Numbers etc.	6
Maps	Various	6
Broadsheets and Posters	Historic personalities; Israeli railways; 100 years of Settlement, Israeli Independence etc.	19

TABLE 4 (cont.)

Catalogue Series	Subject-Matter	Number of Listed Booklets etc.
Books		
Know the Law	Information and guidance on aspects of law and the legal system, women's and personal rights.	9
Israel	Population; settlement; Economy; foreign relations	4
Meetings	Mass communication; Zionism and State; War of Independence	3
Others	Variety of books on special subjects - e.g. Eichman trial; Holocaust; Israeli/Egyptian peace treaty; Government Year-Book; Remembrance Day; collection of documents on State history	19
		174

Source: Translated from Catalogue of Publications available from the Publication Service of the Information Center - January 1985.

the issue of significant government publications. Some
departments with a specific publishing function (e.g. the
Information Center) produce catalogues and lists from which
their published outputs can be identified. The Central
Statistics Bureau and the National Insurance Institute
(which also carries on research) are the most professional.
The incompleteness of bibliography and distribution would
not, however, be much out of the ordinary in far more
developed states, and this extends to the only comprehensive
catalogue, Israel Government Publications, compiled annually
by the State Archives. This covers publications deposited
by law, but observance by department is admittedly incomplete.

The analysis at Table 5 from the State Archives
bibliography clearly relates the preoccupations of the
Israeli government with its published outputs. The main
constituents are administrative and financial reviews and
reports, technical agricultural publications, reflecting
the importance of this highly organised activity, accultura-
tion and symbolic material, emphasising the history of
Zionist ideology and pioneering and of military organisation.
The Ministry of Defence and the Information Center have
substantial education roles. Public "agenda-setting"
information is notably lacking.

The Political Executive: Information Outputs from the Cabinet

Under Israeli law the Cabinet is a formally constituted
body, with secrecy of its proceedings legally protected
(Basic Law: The Government, Article 28). Authorised
disclosures may be made (Yaacobi, 1982; 270-72), and it is
the practice for the Government Secretary to make a formal
statement to the media following Cabinet meetings.

However, the peculiar circumstances of Israeli
government have produced what Yaacobi, (1982; 274) calls
a "parallel culture" of leaking. The coalition structure
which has become the basis of Israeli government as a
result of proportional representation, with government,
containing disparate elements, in which Cabinet seats are
allotted to parties and filled by party nominees over whom
the Prime Minister has little effective control, negates
the principle of collective responsibility. Ministers

TABLE 5

ANALYSIS OF ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS - 1983

Issuing Department	No. of Pubns.	Type of Publication			
		Admin. Reports	Technical & Training	Information & Education	Comments
Government Printer					
Reshumot (Records)	14	14			Formal collection of laws, amendments, digests, trade-marks and patents. Text of Israel/Lebanon Agreement.
					The government gazette.
Councils and Commissions	7	7			Reports of bodies appointed to examine specified issues (including the Kahan Commission into the Events in Beirut Refugee Camps).
The Knesset	1	1			The series of verbatim reports of Knesset Plenum proceedings
The Prime Minister's Office	1	1			
Adviser on Arab Affairs	1	1			
Atomic Energy Commission	5		5		
State Archive	4	4			
Government Press Office	3			3	Series of bulletins and translations for the foreign press, extracted from the Israeli media.
Central Bureau of Statistics	69	69			Statistical surveys and tables on all aspects of Israeli life and activity.
Prime Minister's Council on Status of Women	2	2			
Ministry of Finance	16	16			Central government budgets, finances, taxation, planning etc.

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TABLE 5 (cont.)

Issuing Department	No. of Pubns.	Type of Publication			Comments
		Admin. Reports	Technical & Training	Information & Education	
Ministry of Defence	26			26	Most of these are translations from foreign books on war subjects (including novels) used in military educational activities. They are not meant for outside information.
Aviation Industry	1		1		
Israel Defence Forces	36	1		35	
Rehabilitation Branch	2	2			
Ministry of Health	21	6	13	2	
Ministry of Communications	5	4		1	
Ministry of Religious Affairs	1	1			A Druze bulletin
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	20	10		10	Includes information bulletins in English issued by missions overseas
Ministry of Education and Culture	89	7	81	1	The Ministry of Education produces a large volume of teaching aids and guidance, and basic teaching books.
Information Center	34			34	The Information Center's output of largely "symbolic" publishing goes mainly into the educational system.
Ministry of Agriculture	47	14	31	2	
Ministry of Commerce & Industry	13	12		1	
Ministry of Justice	3	3			Includes the Karp Report on Judea and Samaria.
Ministry of Labour and Welfare	43	42	1		
Ministry of the Interior	13	13			Includes Prisons, Police and Environment
Ministry of Transport	30	29		1	Includes Railways and Airfields.
State Controller's Department	24	24			Includes one report as Commissioner for Public Complaints (Ombudsman). Covers Municipalities and Local Councils as well as central government
Ministry of Tourism	4	1		3	

TABLE 5 (cont.)

Issuing Department	No. of Pubns.	Type of Publication			
		Amin. Reports	Technical & Training	Information & Education	Comments
Ministry of Energy & Infrastructure	37	17	18	2	Includes 6 periodicals and 10 technical reports in English of National Council for Research and Development, and Geological Surveys.
Local Authorities	23	23			
State Corportations					
El Al	1	1			The National airline
Szold Institute	3		3		A Research foundation
Mekorot (Sources)	1	1			The national water authority
Israel Electric Corpn.	2	2			
Dead Sea Enterprises	1	1			
Israel Port Authority	4	4			
Zim	2	2			The national shipping line.
Remembrance Authority	4	4			The Holocaust Institute and Museum.
National Insurance Institute	18	16		2	
Bank of Israel	29	26		3	Includes 8 reports in English
Israel Standards Inst.	4	4			
Safety & Hygiene Inst.	5	5			
Israel Broadcasting Authority	1	1			
Museums	12			12	Mainly catalogues and monographs.
Nature Preservation Authority	1	1			
Securities Authority	1	1			
Nature Protection Authority	30			30	Brochures on sites and topics.
Israel Management Center	1	1			
Centre for Office Mechanisation	1	1			
	724	403	153	168	

Notes: a. Publications of Ministry Defence, Defence Forces, Ministry of Education and Culture, aimed at special readerships, account for 186 publications (25.6%).

b. Of the 168 publications(23.2% of the total) classified as "Information and Education" 95 (56.5%) are from Ministry of Defence, Defence Forces and Information Center, not meant to inform the general public. A further 30 (17.8%) come from the Nature Protection Authority.

c. Technical and Training publications constitute 21.1% of the total.

Source: Translation and analysis from Israel Government Publications 1983, published by State Archive, Jerusalem.

perceive their primary loyalty and responsibility to the party which nominates them to their post, rather than to the Prime Minister who formally appoints them or to the government as such. They and their aides hasten after (sometimes even during) Cabinet meetings to keep their parties and the media informed, or to dissociate themselves publicly from Cabinet decisions which do not conform to their party's line, notwithstanding their own formal part in them. Leaks and public declarations are often at variance with the formal statements made by the Government Secretary. Press reports give almost verbatim accounts of exchanges across the Cabinet table, detailing arguments and disputes between Cabinet members and revelaing not merely the voting balance but the voting of individual ministers. They make it clear that the relations between Cabinet and journalists are very close indeed, and that some members of the Cabinet must take profuse notes to pass on to their contacts.

The language of Cabinet communiqués is, as would be expected, bland, exposing only positive political potential. For example, in the communiqué of the Cabinet meeting on 8 September 1985, which discussed inter alia emergency economic regulations, the Prime Minister is noted as citing positive figures and situations for budget cuts, the national debt, economic growth, imports and exports and foreign currency reserves. All these subjects continuously figured in public and media discussion, in which they often appeared in a far from positive, if not fiercly controversial light. The Prime Minister's views are given prime exposure. In a series of seven Cabinet communiqués issued in September and October 1985 (1, 8, 22, 29 September and 8, 13 and 20 October) he is personally quoted in twenty-four of thirty-seven items cited, of which he was present for thirty.

While the official communiqués present the Prime Minister and the views of the dominant coalition partner in the most positive light, the public picture is modified by the leaks, statements, disclaimers and arguments reported in the press. They are concerned to make party and personal capital by disclosing information not given in the official communiqués, by stressing its positive potential for the

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informants and their parties and negative potential for others. In the knowledge that they will be reported in the press ministers are addressing in Cabinet wider audiences than their colleagues.

Table 6 reproduces and comments on the four items dealt with in the Cabinet communiqué dated 20 October 1985, selected at random, together with the following day's reports in the Jerusalem Post. One item (travel tax) was not dealt with in the communiqué, the public, already confused by newspaper information derived from conflicting departmental and ministerial statements which had been appearing, is still left in confusion about travel arrangements for more than three weeks ahead.

Table 7 reproduces the Jerusalem Post report following the Cabinet meeting on 27 October 1985, preceded by the relevant extract from the official communiqué. Clearly, during the seven-hour debate mentioned in the newspaper account more views and arguments were aired than the newspaper could report. But the exploitation of positive and negative information potential by various elements of the Cabinet is evident. The framework is that of the National Unity Government formed in September 1984, which contained totally disparate elements (Alignment and Likud), formerly Opposition and Government.

Yaacobi (1982; 271-82) details some of the steps which Israeli governments have taken to try to protect Cabinet secrecy, without a great deal of success. But agreement on secrecy must be collective to be effective, and the whole constitution of the Cabinet undermines the collective concept. The device of turning part of a Cabinet meeting into a Committee on Security Affairs, with criminal sanctions against leaks, instituted by the Likud government in 1977, has been used to cloak political rather than security censorship (though of course it has legitimate uses). In recent years the most notorious example was the transfer by the Likud government in May 1978 of the controversial subject of settlement in the occupied territories from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs. Goren (1979; 162-63) points out that this "...technique tantamount to political

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                                TABLE   6

        A   CABINET   COMMUNIQUÉ   AND   ITS   ACCOUNTS   IN   THE   PRESS
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                        JERUSALEM, 20 OCTOBER 1985

CABINET COMMUNIQUE

AT THE WEEKLY CABINET SESSION:

A) THE DISCUSSION ON EFFORTS TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUED.  THE DISCUSSION
WILL CONTINUE AT A CABINET MEETING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

B) THE CABINET DECIDED TO ABSOLVE THE SELF-EMPLOYED FROM PAYING PARALLEL TAX.

C) AT THE OPENING OF THE MEETING, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF
EDUCATION AND CULTURE YITZHAK NAVON ANSWERED A QUESTION BY THE MINISTER OF
SCIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT REGARDING TUITION AT THE UNIVERSITIES, AND REPORTED THAT
THE MATTER WILL BE DISCUSSED BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE FINANCE MINISTER.

D) THE DEFENSE MINISTER REVIEWED RECENT EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN THE AREA OF
SECURITY.  THE REVIEW WAS GIVEN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A MINISTERIAL DEFENSE
COMMITTEE.
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Comments   (Reports reproduced from Jerusalem Post, 21 October 1985)
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Katsav: At this rate we'll have 150,000 unemployed by '86

By ILAN CHAIM
Jerusalem Post Reporter

A) With some 120,000 people jobless and an 8 per cent national unemployment level, Labour Minister Moshe Katsav yesterday presented the cabinet with his plan to combat unemployment.

No decision was taken, other than to put it on the agenda for next week, when Prime Minister Shimon Peres will be back from his trip to Washington.

"We must begin immediately with programmes to foster economic growth, if we are to prevent worsening unemployment," Katsav told reporters after the cabinet session. If the present trend continues, Katsav warned, there may be 150,000 jobless by next August.

Katsav's plan focuses attention on the plight of development towns, whose unemployment rate of over 54 per cent is about seven times the national average.

The major points of the plan include: beefing up vocational training programmes, both at government centres and at work places themselves; providing tax breaks for industry to encourage hiring; granting incentives for new investment, particularly in small factories in development towns; providing special job-training programmes for demobilized soldiers; and deporting the country's estimated 10,000 illegal foreign workers. Katsav has estimated the cost of implementing the plan at $21 million.

Interior Minister Yitzhak Peretz said it would cost about $750 per person to locate and to expel illegal workers. The $7.5m. it would cost would be well worth the price, Peretz was reported as saying, since this would be an economical way to create thousands of jobs.

Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i rejected Katsav's unemployment figures without elaborating, but said that any government solution to the unemployment problem would require another budget cut to encourage industry to create jobs. The extent of the cut mentioned was reportedly about $500m., to be made in January.

At a parallel discussion of the problem, Histadrut Secretary-General Yisrael Kessar yesterday told a meeting of the Histadrut central committee that government-initiated public works projects may be the only way to effectively combat unemployment.

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Though the matter is still under Cabinet discussion, without any detail in the Cabinet Communiqué,
Ministers display their arguments in public to make party and departmental points, one Minister
rejecting another's figures.
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TABLE 6 (cont.)

B) ## Employers to pay health funds 0.5% more

By ILAN CHAIM
Jerusalem Post Reporter

The cabinet yesterday agreed on the final form of the government's bill to raise employers' contributions to their workers' health funds, by voting that the 0.5 per cent increase would apply only to employers, not the self-employed.

The ministers voted 10 to 8 in support of Justice Minister Moshe Nissim's objection to applying the raise in the employers' premium *(mas makbil)* also to the self-employed. "We can't ask a poor shoemaker to pay more taxes," Nissim was quoted as saying

All the Likud ministers voted with Nissim, except Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, who abstained. Moda'i argued against the increase of tax for the employers as unwarranted and reportedly said that the $18 a year per self-employed person that the increase would have involved was "not serious."

The 0.5 per cent increase was intended to reap some $35 million a year for the country's health care system, wiping out a Health Ministry deficit that has disrupted medical care for over a year. The bill is to be presented to the Knesset today, where it is expected to pass easily.

The exclusion of the self-employed from the bill will mean a loss of about $3m. in revenue, a sum that will have to be made up by the government or other sources if the health care deficit is to be completely eliminated.

The newspaper report puts the decision in its context. But it also summarises the Cabinet discussion and discloses individual views and voting. (Parallel tax - mas makbil - is levied as a health services contribution).

C) ### Won't end strike until Moda'i meets them
Arrests as student protest turns violent

By GREER FAY CASHMAN
Jerusalem Post Reporter

More than a dozen students, including Eyal Yaffe, chairman of the National Union of Students, were arrested yesterday when strike action at university campuses across the country erupted into violence. All those arrested were later released.

Students demonstrating against high university tuition fees blocked access to university entrances and disrupted traffic in streets adjacent to the campuses. The union rejected an appeal from Education Minister Yitzhak Navon to call off the strike.

The only institute of higher learn-

ing in which students did not strike was Hadassah Community College, whose student body is not affiliated with the union. Science Minister Gideon Patt yesterday suggested that a wrong form of fee linkage had been calculated by the Treasury and the rate should be $900 as demanded by the students.

Students say that they will call a halt to the strike as soon as Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i agrees to meet with them. But Navon backed Moda'i's stand that the strike must end first. A change in fees will take several days to implement and Navon wants to get students back at university as soon as possible.

The Cabinet Communiqué has no real meaning without mention of the background of controversy over student fees, which was taking up much space and time in the media.

D)   Mention of the Ministerial Defence Committee imposes secrecy on the proceedings, and there are no substantive press reports. However, two days later the Minister of Defence gave a briefing, fully reported by the press, to Alignment (i.e. his own party) M.K.s.

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TABLE 6 (cont.)

Ministerial committee to fix travel tax

Post Economic Reporter

The cabinet failed to decide the level of travel tax after November 13 at its meeting yesterday, and authorized the Ministerial Economic Committee to decide. The current tax of $114 plus 20 per cent on tickets is due to end on November 13.

Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i said last week that he now favoured maintaining the current rate. An earlier proposal from the State Revenue Administration had been to abolish the 20 per cent ticket tax and raise the travel tax to $228. Moda'i feels that this will benefit long-distance travellers and discriminate against those going shorter distances.

The ministerial committee will now have to make a final decision. If a new proposal is not brought to the Knesset Finance Committee by November 13, the travel tax will lapse.

This item is not mentioned in the Cabinet Communiqué, though the subject was causing public confusion and inconvenience following contradictory statements published by the Ministry of Finance and its Minister. The final decision was delayed until almost the last moment, while government arguments continued and travellers and agents did not know any certain details for making their future travel arrangements.

TABLE 7

THE CABINET MEETING OF 27 OCTOBER 1985
COMMUNIQUE AND PRESS REPORT

JERUSALEM, 27 OCTOBER 1985

CABINET COMMUNIQUE

AT THE WEEKLY CABINET SESSION:

THE PRIME MINISTER REPORTED ON HIS TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE, AND ON
HIS MEETINGS WITH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND WITH FOREIGN MINISTERS, AS WELL AS ON
HIS TALKS WITH THE HEADS OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION.

THE PRIME MINISTER DETAILED THE STANDS HE PUT FORWARD WITH RESPECT TO THE
IMMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

HE ALSO REPORTED ON A SERIES OF AGREEMENTS ON ISRAEL-U.S. COOPERATION.

IN HIS TALKS IN THE UNITED STATES THE PRIME MINISTER PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL
WHEREBY THE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD CALL ON THE PARTIES
TO THE CONFLICT TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS, AND IN THE WAKE OF THAT CALL DIRECT
NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE CONDUCTED BETWEEN THE SIDES.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT HE PERCEIVES A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN ISRAEL'S
INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AT THIS TIME, A CHANCE FOR THE REJECTION OF THE PLO, AND
FOR PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND A JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN DELEGATION.

FOLLOWING THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS THE CABINET HELD A DISCUSSION.

<u>Comment</u>

The real substance of the Cabinet meeting is brushed aside in the last item of the Communique.
There is little or nothing in the heads of the Prime Minister's report which was not already public
knowledge. The full and detailed report from the <u>Jerusalem Post</u> of 28 October (overleaf) conveys
not only the detailed publicity given to Cabinet proceedings on occasions, but also the atmosphere
of party point-making, dissociation and personal by-play which infects Israeli Cabinets, even in
a so-called Government of National Unity. The reporters clearly have their ears very close to the
Cabinet table. There is no pretence at maintenance of a collective front. The public is rather
more fully informed than in the official communiqué.

TABLE 7 (cont.)

By MICHAEL EILAN
and ASHER WALLFISH

The Likud's ministers presented a far from united front in the cabinet yesterday morning when Premier Shimon Peres reported on a "dramatic" change for the better in Israel's international standing.

Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Minister without Portfolio Moshe Arens accepted Peres's idea for some sort of international backing for peace negotiations with Jordan, but Industry Minister Ariel Sharon emphatically dismissed any international involvement in peace talks.

The premier opened the meeting with a statement on his trip to the U.S. His main success was, he said, in distancing the PLO from the diplomatic process. He also reassured the ministers that the "international support" he talked about in the UN General Assembly was not the international conference that Jordan is demanding.

This was followed by a seven-hour debate on the peace process. The premier won the support of the majority – the three religious ministers and those of the Alignment. But Peres could not bring his statement to a vote of endorsement because Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir had told him beforehand that he would use his prerogative to bring the issue before the inner cabinet where the Likud and Alignment are stalemated.

Most of the debate was calm. But Peres reacted sharply when Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i vehement-ly insisted – as he had last week – that Peres had deviated from the guidelines of the coalition agreement during his U.S. tour.

At this point Peres said angrily that he had not expected such crude criticism from the Likud while he was abroad. Peres said that when he was in the opposition, he had refrained from criticism while former Premier Menachem Begin was abroad. When Moda'i began to reply, Peres then cut the finance minister short saying: "Stop talking, you're reacting without even having read the (General Assembly) speech."

Housing Minister David Levy, who also criticized the premier, said that the proof that Peres had strayed from the coalition agreement was the enthusiastic response he got in the U.S. and Europe. "They are not stupid," Levy argued, adding that they would have not gone out of their way to praise Peres if he had stuck to the coalition guidelines.

Sharon said that if he was in the Alignment he would want the Likud to stay in the government at least for the first month or two of the peace process. Then elections could be held. For this reason, he said, the Likud too should be interested in staying in the government – to ensure that there was no deviation from the coalition guidelines.

Shamir and Arens were far less critical in tone. Talking about the favourable atmosphere created by the Peres trip, Shamir said he was worried that this atmosphere might be the result of a mistaken assumption by foreign statesmen that Israel was willing to attend an international conference. An international conference is the opposite of direct negotiations...going to such a conference is like agreeing in advance to withdrawal from all the territories and the creation of a Palestinian state," he said.

Arens, who spoke immediately after Peres, said it was a pity that the cabinet did not hold a full-dress debate before the prime minister's trip. Such a debate could have prevented some misunderstandings, he said.

Arens said he opposed an international Midde East peace conference. But he would not object if the Security Council gave its blessings to direct negotiations. The international role should not be extended any further, Arens said.

Economics Minister Gad Ya'acobi said that whereas Peres's trip had bolstered Israel's image, the international standing of the PLO had dipped as a result of recent terrorist actions.

Ya'acobi said that a continuation of the *status quo* without progress towards some arrangement would mean the emergence of a bi-national state. Even today, he said, the number of children born annually to the Arabs of Israel and the administered areas combined exceeded the number of Jewish children born.

Shas Interior Minister Yitzhak Peretz, who praised Peres for his achievements in the U.S., said Israel was now viewed by the world as a nation open to reason.

He said the Shas movement favours the principle of territorial compromise in Judea and Samaria.

When the National Religious Party minister of religious affairs, Dr. Yosef Burg, asked Peretz just when the Tora Sages Council (which directs Shas) decided to favour territorial compromise, Peres stepped in to prevent an argument which could embarrass the Shas minister, and suggested the two men talk about it privately after the cabinet session.

Burg lauded Peres for "enhancing Israel's image" on his U.S. trip.

Israel had dealt the PLO a military blow in the Peace for Galilee operation in 1982, he noted, but then the PLO rebounded politically. Now the PLO has sustained a political blow, Burg said.

Alignment Health Minister Mordechai Gur said history showed that a country should not follow a policy of "noes."

Following the Yom Kippur War, when the disengagement agreements were negotiated at Geneva, an international framework was set up first and afterwards the involved parties negotiated directly, with the assistance of the U.S., Gur said.

Peres created some real progress, Gur said, and now was the wrong time for the cabinet to get cold feet.

Shinui Communications Minister, Amnon Rubinstein, said that far greater international involvement in the peace process than Peres is proposing had been approved in the past by Alignment and Likud governments alike.

Israel should keep the PLO on the sidelines of the negotiations, he said.

Likud Justice Minister Moshe Nissim said that there was nothing wrong in the UN Security Council issuing the formal call for the parties to the dispute to meet and negotiate. But international auspices are unacceptable, he said.

censorship to deny the public information..." had been used by the former Labour governments. It is an attempt to curtail the possible growth of a public countervailing power which would be generated by disclosure of information on controversial public topics.

The effects on public information are both positive and negative. On the positive side the public, via the media, obtain a far more realistic view of the conduct of government and the realities of coalition politics than they would have from the formal announcements, which gloss over disagreements. In situations where differences and incompatibilities between coalition partners make it extremely difficult for government to formulate clear policies and statements which can provide a basis for public discussion and opinion-forming, the prevalence of leaking adds a substantial, if sometimes confusing dimension to the public agenda. On the negative side, fear of leaks tends to drive Cabinet discussion underground, to small and informal bodies - "kitchen cabinets". The current National Unity Government has formed an official "inner Cabinet" of ten, but that barely protects its proceedings against media disclosure.

Though widely used in other countries for political "kite-flying", or to soften up public opinion for reception of unpalatable news or measures, leaking has become institutionalised in Israel, as almost an imperative of circulating enough information to maintain the political system. Its prevalence suggests in part the inadequacy of official information outputs; but its immediate motivations are political and party manoeuvring, personal rivalry and ambition. Galnoor (Arian, 1980; 138) notes that the bureaucracy, with its relationships with sectors and pressure groups "...is considerably involved in channelling information to the media...". As elsewhere, the media are the indispensable channels for circulation.

CHAPTER   TEN

CASE   DETAILS   OF   INFORMATION   DEFICIENCIES

The brief selection of cases, with comment, which
follows illustrates some of the deficiencies in public
information which result from the preoccupation of the
Israeli "establishment" with politicking, from political
and administrative disarticulations, and disregard of
day-to-day information needs of the public in its contacts
with government. Some deficiencies are deliberate
concealments and confusions of information for political
advantage. The bounded considerations which flow from
ideological fixations within government also have a
tendency simply to ignore the possibility of a public
need for or interest in information which affects it.
Public habituation to lack of information is a factor.

Personal experience of some situations is sometimes
the only way to appreciate the lack of public information.
For others the lack of any official source makes it
necessary to study press reports. Some of these have
their own bias. Reports from the <u>Jerusalem Post</u> are
cited here. As a source this newspaper avoids the
possible ambiguities and imprecisions of translation;
the paper is, with minor exceptions, a balanced and sober
source of information; its reports are well-informed and
tend to have a concept of public interest which is sometimes
lacking in more politically committed journals.

Case No. 11 (Information about the West Bank and
Gaza) is somewhat extended because of its importance to
the future of the country and the degree of deliberate
concealment of information from the public for ideological
purposes.

CASE DETAILS

SOME EXAMPLES OF SYSTEMIC INFLUENCES
ON PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ISRAEL

1. Summer Time - 1982-86

The government authority for summer time is the Ministry of the Interior, for many years until 1984 the ministerial preserve of the National Religious Party (NRP), a minority grouping of the religiously orthodox in the mainly secular population, deriving power from its balancing position in various coalitions.

Public feeling is overwhelming in support of summer time,whose advantages have been long demonstrated in other countries. On its own merits the issue hardly makes a political argument. But NRP policy was to oppose summer time for religious reasons, though no publicly convincing case has been put forward. The Ministry of Energy, for obvious reasons - Israel imports all its fuel for power-generation - has been a constant proponent of summer time, producing and publicising figures and arguments in support. The government did not resolve the policy issue because of the importance of NRP adherence to coalitions.

In April 1982 a private petition to the courts forced the hand of the Minister of the Interior (Dr. Burg), whom they severely criticised for failing to make a thorough study of the subject - i.e. the Ministry was not interested in information-gathering which might be unpalatable to its views. Dr. Burg then appointed a committee, whose report in December, 1983 was not published, though the substance was made known. Twenty-one of twenty-eight organisations, including government departments, which testified were in favour of summer time; only three, including the Ministry

of Religious Affairs (another NRP preserve) were opposed.
Dr. Burg had little option but to accept the committee's
recommendation for a two-year trial with subsequent evalua-
tion of the results.

After the 1984 election the NRP, with reduced support,
lost its command of the Ministry of the Interior to a two-
member ultra-clericalist party (Shas), and Dr. Burg was re-
placed by Yitzhak Peretz, a rabbi with no previous political
experience. Peretz first dragged his feet on review of the
trial period, and then prevailed on the Cabinet, without
public notice or consultation, to curtail it.

Despite a proposal by the Minister for Energy that
summer time for 1986 should begin on 27 March, Peretz delayed
the appointment of the review committee until late February.
Its membership was generally considered "stacked", it had
insufficient time to make a study, squabbled about the
validity of evidence, was ignored by the majority of depart-
ments and organisations invited to testify, and reached no
clear conclusions or majority. Its report, presented to
Peretz on 1 April, and unpublished, was the opportunity for
him to attempt to stifle the issue, without any consulta-
tion within government, by suspending the introduction of
summer time for two years, during which further investiga-
tion was to be made.

The government still gave no lead, but private bills
were put forward in the Knesset by ι minority parties and
applications were made to the courts. The NRP and other
religious groups abandoned their previous opposition, sens-
ing a public backlash (and having discovered that most of
their own members were in favour of summer time). The back-
lash took the form of widespread declarations by some
municipalities, the Histadrut, the Manufacturers' Associa-
tion, banks and other large employers that they would intro-
duce their own versions of summer time. In face of likely
confusion the government was eventually obliged to instruct
the Minister of the Interior to introduce summer time, though

several weeks of it were lost. Nevertheless , Likud members of the Cabinet absented themselves from the decisive Cabinet meeting, or abstained from voting, though known to agree with the decision, which they knew would be carried without them. Newspaper reports (e.g. <u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 21 April 1986, pp.1-2) detailed events at the Cabinet meeting, and the chagrin of Peretz, whose defence of his position avoided the religious grounds on which it was known to be based, in favour of debatable statistics of road accidents. He went so far as to attempt to deny the authority of the Cabinet in a decision which he claimed as the prerogative of the Minister of the Interior. An examination of the religious arguments (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 10 April 1986, p. 10) left them with little apparent substance. The attempt to impose the cancellation of summer time on the largely secular majority, and in the end on even the religiously orthodox,appeared to be irrational bigotry by an ultra-orthodox faction.

The episode emphasises the ideologically bounded consideration of a major government department, the failure of government bounded by purely political considerations to produce a policy ruling until public action virtually forced its hand, and the resulting public differences of view between two major minist ries in which the public were presented with no authoritative and agreed information from government as a whole,while such reports as were commissioned were not published, the public being entirely reliant on the media for information.

2. Price Controls

In late 1984 the government applied extensive price controls, with other measures, in an attempt to arrest inflation, and these took immediate effect. There was, however, no mechanism for informing the public of the controlled maximum prices for goods which they were buying for their everyday needs; administration had got into the habit of relying on the media to notify changes in the subsidised prices of a very limited range of commodities. For some time until the government could organise the printing and distribution of the official price-lists the public had to rely on the media for lists of controlled prices which they could not check against official lists at the place of purchase.

3. Travel Tax.

The late 1984 measures included a travel tax complicated in its application by a separate ticket tax, value added tax, and consideration of exemption or partial exemption for Israeli citizens and permanent residents who were authorised to maintain foreign currency accounts. Several government departments were involved, and bureaucratic disarticulations caused confusion in which individual travel agents were attempting to obtain decisions on individual journeys from officials in the headquarters of various government departments. Often no department could give a final answer, departmental answers were conflicting and unreliable, and were sometimes in conflict with conditions being imposed by lower-level officials at airports, who had to cope with the immediacies of travellers and flights. The arrangements were put into effect by departmental fiat before endorsement by the Knesset Finance Committee.

Changes in travel tax are particularly confusing for the public. Very many Israelis travel abroad, and have to make advance arrangements in ignorance of possible "instant government" measures which may affect them and which are often introduced without clear information. In October 1985 the Ministry of Finance announced without warning that it would ask the Knesset Finance Committee to double the existing tax and make other changes. This was announced without the political clearance which was necessary - the Minister was abroad and his department tried to by-pass him. Newspaper reports (Jerusalem Post, 20 Oct 1985, p.1) disclosed that the proposal had been prepared and a memorandum drafted for the Finance Committee without consultation with the Minister. On his return he quashed the proposal. Premature publicity for an unsanctioned proposal may have been intended to force his hand, but was certainly publicly confusing.

These are examples of disarticulations of policy and administration, between departments and between a department and its Minister, in which the practical information needs of the public are not taken into account.

4. Health Ministry

Accused in the press of having "shelved" a departmental report, favourable to the Kupat Holim in an argument over the future of certain hospital services in Jerusalem, which might have conflicted awkwardly with its intentions. The report was stated to have come to the attention of other interests "by chance", i.e. probably leaked by Kupat Holim sympathisers in the Ministry. (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>. 25 April 1984, p.3).

5. Education Ministry

The Ministry was demonstrated (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>. 20 Sept 1982) to be manipulating published statistics in order to show its policies in a favourable light (thus casting sus- picion on the reliability of its statistical claims in general). The Ministry declined to comment.

6. Foreign Currency Reserves

In August 1984 a public scandal broke over figures pub- lished by the Ministry of Finance which were seen to contain book-keeping and "window-dressing" manoeuvres designed to obscure, shortly before the pending election, a drastic fall in foreign currency reserves brought about by the financial policies of the then Likud government. The principal device was the injection into the statistics of sums representing substantial holdings of foreign currency in commercial banks not previously included in the figures. With other expedients, all used with the connivance of the Bank of Israel (whose Governor had been appointed by the Likud government),this was clearly intended to disguise the steep fall in reserves. The Bank of Israel was accused by the Knesset Finance Committee of trying to conceal informa- tion from the public before an election. The general credi- bility of government economic information was not enhanced. Official statistics which should be unimpeachable were per- verted to political purposes and their value undermined, though the public have no other reliable information on this question.

7. __Misrepresentation of Official Statistics for__
   __Political Purposes__

The highly professional Director of the National
Insurance Institute was dismissed and replaced in February
1982 by a nominee of a small (two-member) faction (Tami)
in the Knesset (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 10 Feb 1982). In January
1984 (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 27 Jan 1984) the dismissed former
head accused his successor of undermining credibility of
the NII reports by presenting routine statistics in a mis-
leading way in order to inflate their significance in
assessing "poverty" and its extent to support his party's
claim to increased benefits for certain sections of the
population. In noting the occasion (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 20 Jan
1984) a reporter exposed the ignorance of the Knesset
Finance Committee about the basis and significance of the
figures.

8. __Unreliability of Official Information__

The Minister for Tourism explains in a newspaper article
(<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 16 Oct 1985, p.8) why he and the Minister
of Transport must be at public loggerheads over the question
of charter flights to Israel. These increase tourism, but
undercut the national airline (El Al). The ministers bandy
antagonistic speeches and figures in public to support their
positions, without any kind of objective study which would
enable the public to form judgements, and without any clear
policy decision by government, based on authoritative in-
formation which would enable a policy to be determined.

The Minister for Agriculture publicly blames the
Minister of Finance for the current high prices of fruit
and vegetables, by failing to increase price guarantees,
i.e. subsidies. Government policy is to reduce subsidies,
and there are other explanations for the high prices, in
trade which circumvents marketing. rules. But the
Agriculture Minister, an old Mapai stalwart, is playing to his
constituency of farmers, scoring off a political opponent (who
is nevertheless in the same cabinet). No reliable informa-
tion is forthcoming from either side. (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>,
11 Sept 1985, p.2.).

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The Minister for Energy and Infrastructure defies the
Finance Minister by signing a deal for oil exploration on
terms opposed by the Ministry of Finance (_Jerusalem Post._
28 April 1985, p.l). Again, government policy is at odds
with itself, and the public have no clear understanding
or information.

9. Government Departments and the Jewish Agency

Immigration is the subject of constant friction
between the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the
Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency. Immigrants
receive conflicting information and statements of assistance
available, whose implementation is frustrated by non-
co-operation between these two official bodies. The public
is regularly bemused with differing estimates from these
two agencies on which they erect policies and commit staff
and public funds.

Examples:

a. A meeting presided over by the Prime Minister
on 21 April 1985 announced a scheme to double
mortgage facilities to make room in govern-
ment absorption centres for Ethiopian
immigrants, who are having to be accommodated
in hotels. By mid-June none of the loans
promised had been granted, though some
immigrants had committed themselves on the
basis of promises. Press investigation
disclosed that plans had been secretly watered
down by officials. Moreover many immigrants
who had moved from absorption centres on
promises of increased rental subsidies for
private accommodation had been let down, and
"...the absorption authorities' credibility
has greatly suffered" (_Jerusalem Post,_ 12
June 1985, p.2).

b. Housing stock for new immigrant families is
a matter of co-ordination between the Ministry
of Housing and Construction and the Ministry
of Immigrant Absorption. In September 1983
the former claimed a stock of 1,700 flats in
hand while the latter claimed that the figure
was only 400. Estimates used by the two
Ministries were found to vary by a factor of
forty per cent. Clearly, different bases were
being used. Government information was faulty;
public information lacked credibility; no
firm explanation could be given to families
awaiting housing. (Jerusalem Post, 14 May
1985, p.7).

c.   The Head of the Jewish Agency Immigration
     Department publicly criticises a Ministry of
     Immigrant Absorption plan for housing new
     immigrants, despite approval of his own
     department's senior representative on a joint
     committee, and the endorsement of the Jewish
     Agency itself. (Jerusalem Post. 25 Oct 1985,
     p.2).

d.   Thousands of forms with potentially valuable
     information gathered from emigrants interested
     in returning from abroad are reported to lie
     "untouched and unused" in a Ministry of
     Immigrant Absorption office, which has not
     even made them available to interested
     organisations. The lack of contact is ascribed
     to "long-standing conflict between the Jewish
     Agency and Ministry of Immigrant Absorption"
     (Jerusalem Post. 10 July 1984). Information
     available is not used.

10.   Channelling of Funds

The Ministry of Finance is accused by Alignment members
of the Knesset Finance Committee of giving preferential
loans, at the instance of the Finance Minister, to munici-
palities in the hands of the Likud and National Religious
parties. (Jerusalem Post, 3 June 1982). The public cannot
check for itself in the unpublished proceedings of the
Committee. It takes the press report as no doubt accurate;
but has little doubt that as much irregularity could be
found in the actions of Alignment Finance Ministers. The
Finance Committee has extensive powers to allocate public
funds. Its allocations often come to public notice only by
indirect means.

11. ISRAELI GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

The Background

The Six-Day War of 1967 left Israel in military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) containing an Arab population of over one million, excluding East Jerusalem, since annexed to Israel. The Camp David Accords of 1978 envisaged an (undefined) interim form of autonomy pending final negotiations between Egypt, Israel, Jordan and elected representatives of the territories concerned. But this has remained a dead letter: no negotiating parties with Israel have come forward. The future of the West Bank particularly is crucial for Israel. It dominates, geographically, the heartland of the Israeli state. The broad options for Israel are either an Israeli-enforced unity, thus converting Israel into a bi-national state with a greatly increased Arab minority, or separate development for the West Bank in some form of federation or integration with Jordan, but with territorial and other safeguards for Israeli security.

From 1967 onwards, under Mapai-dominated governments, Israeli settlements were established along the lines of the Allon Plan, envisaging the return to Jordan of most of the Arab population of the West Bank, but with Israeli retention of strategic territory along the Jordan River. The Allon Plan was never formally adopted by the Israeli government, for political reasons, but by the end of 1978 some 5,500 settlers, had been established in the West Bank areas designated in it (Gilbert 1979; 113). From the mid-1970's, however, small numbers of ultra-orthodox settlers had established unauthorised settlements in the high-density Arab areas.

The accession of the Likud government in 1977, with strong ideological orientation against any territorial concessions on the West Bank, radically changed the settlement

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policy. From 1978 to 1984 an intensive policy of settlement
was pushed forward in high-density Arab areas, and in areas
easily accessible as satellite developments of Tel Aviv
(the West Bank boundary comes at one point within nine miles
of the Mediterranean coastline) and Jerusalem. Extensive
housing developments and road and administrative infra-struc-
tures were put into commission. Every sort of government in-
centive was given to settlers on the West Bank, with the aim
of "creating facts" which would in time make the separation
of the West Bank from Israel virtually impossible. Bahiri
(1984; 14) notes that the WBG territories had already be-
come largely integrated into the Israeli economy, and over
35% of the WBG labour force was employed in Israel, particu-
larly in building construction and agriculture. A leading
expert on the West Bank (Meron Benvenisti, quoted by Bahiri,
p.5) estimated in late 1983 a growth of 20,000 settlers from
Israel since 1977;   a rate of development which could make
the Israeli commitment over 120,000 settlers by 1995 (Bahiri,
1984; 16).

In the formation of the National Unity Government in
September 1984 coalition commitments were given to the Likud
about schemes already approved. But the political lead is
held by Mapai, and the 1984 economic crisis in Israel was
used to slow down development. Nevertheless the future of
the West Bank, with its large Arab population, will determine
the future character of the Israeli state, and opinion within
Israel is deeply divided across traditional party lines.
Radicalisation of the Arab population, and a fanatical Israeli
settler element,which has to be sustained by army support and
has developed a vigilante organisation, contain dangers of
something approaching civil insurrection of Israeli settlers
if negotiations over the future threaten their position.

Also since 1967 West Bank and Gaza, particularly the
former, have absorbed Israeli military and other resources,
in housing, education and other infrastructures which have
been diverted from development of areas of Israel proper.
Likud policies, and events on the West Bank have attracted

hostile international attention, which reflects on the
country generally. Israelis have therefore every good
reason for needing to be well-informed about the
administered territories on the West Bank. They will be
called upon to make or support very difficult choices. It
is of interest to examine what government information is
available to the public about the West Bank and the issues
which may arise there, and what effective countervailing
power this transfers to them.

Information Sources

Very little coherent government information in terms
of policy has emerged in recent years, except in the form
of doctrinaire statements from ministers and individuals,
rather than from Knesset debates or cabinet consideration.
These are short on fact and long on emotional appeal. For
example the (Likud) Prime Minister (Shamir), addressing a
convention of the Federation of Builders and Contractors
in late 1983 is reported verbatim (Jerusalem Post. 6 Dec
1983, p.1): "Our assent at Camp David to discuss autonomy
for the people in Judea and Samaria (note: the preferred
Likud term for the West Bank, carrying emotional and
historical connotations) does not mean that we have yielded
the right to settle that region and develop it. We are
building communities in Judea and Samaria and will continue
to build up all of Eretz Yisrael" (lit: the Land of Israel,
another unspecific and emotional term favoured by the Likud).
But rhetoric on these issues is not an adequate substitute
for the considered facts, for which the public is reliant
on press and other extra-governmental sources.

A primary source of information about policy develop-
ment, together with the resources which must be devoted to
it, is the decision machinery within government. Settlement
policy beyond the 1949 borders was controlled by the
Ministerial Committee on Settlement, but the Ministry of
Defence, which is responsible for military occupation (with
the defence commitment which new settlements establish)
makes some decisions, and is able to exercise military

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censorship. One of the first acts of the Likud government, in 1978, was to shift the responsibility for settlement policy from the Ministry of Agriculture into the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs, automatically rendering its proceedings and decisions a secret whose breach carried criminal sanctions. This was apparently a deliberate move to reduce the amount of information available on the subject, and to cloak it with military security. There were protests from the press, and shortly afterwards a prominent Knesset member (Sarid) found his letter to the Minister of Defence, complaining that settlement information was being withheld from the Knesset Committee on Security and Foreign Affairs, denied publication by the military censor. It was released after further protest. (Nyrop, 1979; 276, Goren, 1979; 163-64).

These were attempts at censorship and secrecy at the fountainheads of policy, under the guise of "military security". But government policy cannot help being reflected in all sorts of official documentary sources. A decision to establish settlements involves the provision or requisitioning of land, the allocation of army resources for defence, of money from the housing budget, the education budget, the road construction budget, the absorption budget, and so on through all government departments involved. Capital expenditures involve continuing commitments on budgets for future years. Government departments give income-tax and other advantages to settlers in the territories. There is no source of government information which attempts to take a composite view of the subject, still less to elucidate it for the public. Information flows to individual settlers, mainly through the inevitable network of secondary institutions which has extended itself to this activity - housing associations, religious movements, political parties and the like - while the settlers themselves have formed representative bodies with links to relevant institutions in Israel proper, including many with influence within the Knesset, particularly its powerful Finance Committee.

Often it is not clear who has responsibility for information in circulation, which is fed to the media by departmental spokesmen unattributably or comes from ostensibly non-government sources. The <u>Jerusalem Post</u>. 27 Apr 1984 pp. 1 and 3 carries a report drawn up by the "Committee for the Renewal of Jewish Settlement in the City of the Patriarchs" in great detail for settlement of 3,000 Israelis in five separate areas of Hebron, where there is very strong opposition to Israeli settlement. The city contains both Jewish and Moslem holy places, and settlement on the scale envisaged would commit the Army to defensive arrangements. Extensive security, housing and other plans are detailed, almost all of them requiring support and funds from government, and creating a high possibility of communal tensions. It is unlikely that government departments concerned were not consulted, including the military authorities. But officials in the Housing Ministry are reported not to have seen the plan, and to have no budget for it. It is similarly unlikely that the many Knesset members with links to West Bank settlers would be unaware that the plan was being formulated, or that it does not have influential ministerial support. The <u>Jerusalem Post</u> for 5 Oct 1983 carries a long and detailed article about the new neighbourhoods being built and planned around Jerusalem. Government financing is heavily involved in these, and the information almost certainly comes from government sources.

A good deal of information about West Bank settlement development appears in the press. But there is a studied absence of coherent information, particularly on policy and plans, directly from government and with its authority. Information percolates through various channels, in low key, without that authenticity. Official documents with relevant information have generally a controlled availability, and very few are on public sale. One of these is the complex Budget Book. So far as financial provision is either informative in itself, or a reflection of policy, the Budget Book is of variable utility; projects may undergo fundamental financial reappraisal. The principal budgetary headings

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under which information is to be found are:

a. <u>Ministry of Communications</u>: Details of budgeted expenditure on telephone and associated works. An indication of the locations and degree of development of settlement.

b. <u>Ministry of Education and Culture</u>: Expenditure would be an important indication of settlement activity. However, it is very difficult to extract from the published form the significant detail for the West Bank and Gaza.

c. <u>Ministry of Transportation</u>: Details of expenditure planned on roads and associated works - an important item of infrastructure.

d. <u>Ministry of Defence</u>: No significant information about the West Bank and Gaza, though an Army presence is associated with settlements, some of which are on a quasi-military basis. Information in the Budget for Defence expenditure generally is deliberately obscure, for security reasons.

e. <u>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</u>: Some information about the West Bank and Gaza activities can be extracted.

f. <u>Ministry of Housing and Construction</u>: This gives some useful information about the scale of new buildings for settlers. Major housing programmes are involved, particularly for the new suburbs around Jerusalem and new West Bank cities (e.g. Ariel).

The Budget Book is not accompanied by any memorandum which deals with this aspect of government planning. Nor does any single government document attempt to do so. The Central Bureau of Statistics provides valuable figures of population movements and economic growth. Very little information is obtainable from other official or quasi-official sources, such as the National Insurance Institute and the Histadrut. The Bank of Israel, which is virtually

a government department, produces an excellent annual
report, with an economic survey of the West Bank and Gaza,
and this is widely distributed, though not on public sale.
It is left to those individuals and institutions interested
in the question to ferret out, associate and draw con-
clusions from the official information available in order
to present any coherent picture. Some of these publish
studies, e.g. Peaceful Separation or Enforced Unity:
Economic Consequences for Israel and the West Bank/Gaza
Area (Bahiri, International Center for Peace in the Middle
East, Tel Aviv, 1984) of academic quality. But by origin
such documents do not carry government authenticity. The
output of official information is largely under the control
of the Ministry of Defence (who control the operation of the
Military Censor), and the civil administration makes the
information which it publishes difficult to obtain.

The Karp Report

There is a sensitivity on the part of the West Bank
authorities, the settlers and many of the general public in
Israel to news or published material about the West Bank
which, in their view, can be exploited against the Israeli
occupation. The history of the Karp Report is a bizarre
example of the effect of these sensitivities on official
information.

The Karp Committee was appointed by the Attorney-
General of the then Likud government in April 1981, following
a petition by fourteen Law Professors nine months previously.
It was headed by Yehudit Karp, the Deputy Attorney-General
of Israel. Its report was submitted to the Attorney-General
in May 1982. It was passed to the Minister for the Interior
in November 1982, and a committee of three ministers (Defence,
Justice and Interior) was set up to consider it. Repeated
requests by the Knesset Law Committee for the report to be
read by them were fended off on the grounds that ministerial
consideration was not yet complete. Yehudit Karp resigned
her Committee appointment in frustration. Only on 7 February
1984 did the Government Press Office release part of the
report, followed by the bulk on 9 February, in an edited
version in Hebrew. There was a good deal of international
interest, and the London Times 8 February 1984 reported that

Government Press Office efforts to publish a simultaneous
English-language version "were sabotaged by the Public
Relations Branch of the Justice Ministry". A Government
Press Office version in English did appear subsequently
with about twenty names deleted. No uncensored version
has ever appeared.

The report gave chapter and verse, despite systematic
obstruction from the West Bank authorities, for the
impression that Israeli settlers were under special and
benevolent protection of the Army, and that violent acts
against the Arab population, and disputes arising out of
the arbitrary requisitioning of land under "security" cover
were virtually immune from the normal processes of law
enforcement by the police. The report was characterised
by a former President of the Supreme Court as prudent,
objective, balanced and restrained (Jerusalem Post. 15
Feb 1984, p. 8).

The release of this government-commissioned report by
the highest official legal authorities was accompanied by
extraordinary government reactions. Even before publication
it was virtually dismissed around the cabinet table
(Jerusalem Post. 7 Feb 1984). Its fuller publication two
days later was accompanied by a profusion of statistics
from the Justice Ministry seeking to confuse and rebut its
conclusions. The Justice Ministry was criticised for
distortions, by other official sources. Yehudit Karp was
publicly accused of political prejudice. Every official
attempt was made to undermine this report, which did not fit
the government's ideologically bounded view of events on
the West Bank. (The lawless nature of some settlement on
the West Bank was revealed later in the year, when a number
of prominent settlers were arrested, charged, and many later
convicted of membership of an underground organisation and
of committing and planning acts of violence against the
Arab population). There was also substantial Army involve-
ment with the settlers' objectives which called into
question the partiality of the military authorities.

In terms of government information and its transfer to
the public the Karp report is a paradigm of attempts by
government to suppress an unpalatable document which it had

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itself commissioned, and to discredit and undermine it when
pressures forced publication on them. The vehemence of
these efforts is an indication of the prevalence of
ideological will in the Likud government about settlement
on the West Bank over all considerations of fact and reason
brought to its notice by its own highest legal authority at
the instance of its chief Law Officer. Finally,release
and publication of the Karp report did not mean that it
was available publicly on sale, but that copies were made
available to the Knesset, press and others with some
special interest. The general public were therefore once
more dependent on media reports and summaries - on this
contentious subject these showed considerable difference of
fact and emphasis - and on personal contacts with those
"in the know". The only text accessible in Israel as a
sale publication is the English version (as it appeared
from the Government Press Office) published in the U.S.A.
by the Institute for Palestine Studies).

The Israeli government is understandably reluctant to
foreclose any options, against the possibility of eventual
negotiations about the future of the West bank (particularly)
and Gaza. Nevertheless, the options are limited, and some,
e.g. the Allon Plan, have been publicly displayed, even if
not formally endorsed by government. It seems important that
the Israeli public should be well-enough informed about
situations, developments and their implications to be able
to form judgements in good time about what may be the most
far-reaching decisions for the future of the state they may
ever have to make. They receive in fact no co-ordinated
information from government sources, and their cognisance
of events and options comes mostly from news, which by nature
commonly relates to disturbances, and the occasional
informative or academic review, in the press or in the
review pages of the newspapers. Power-content of information
which could restrict government's freedom of action is
not only conserved within government, but obscured beyond
easy reach.
There are some analogies here with the United Kingdom
problem in Northern Ireland. These will be briefly noted
in terms of public information, in Chapter Thirteen. The
circumstances are different, but both situations have
information needs.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

INFORMATION INPUTS AND OUTPUTS OF THE KNESSET

Like most modern parliaments the Knesset confers the
legitimacy which it derives from election on the legislation
which it debates and passes; but it has little control of
policy-making and decision, which have passed into the hands
of the political executive. Norton (1985; 5-8) associates
scrutiny of legislative and executive action in parliamen-
tary bodies and attempts to exert influence over them as
closely interdependent sub-functions of legitimisation.
Information of high power-content and positive or negative
potential for government is associated with these sub-
functions of a body which is not only part of the govern-
mental process, but contains elements of opposition and of
enquiry not entirely subservient to the executive. To some
extent, e.g. in reports of its proceedings, information
within the parliamentary body naturally becomes public
information. But the extent and value of this to the
public are defined by the extent of the information outputs,
the underlying degree of accountability between executive,
parliament and public which informs them, and by the channels
through which they reach or are accessible to the public.

Comprehensive accounts of the Knesset and its procedures
have been given progressively during its existence by three
of its officials, Rosetti (1966), Zidon (1967) and Sager
(1985). Likhovski (1971) gives a more independent review
of the Law of the Knesset in relation to its procedures.
But these works are concerned with procedure more than
relationships, and so far as they deal with the latter are
hardly analytical. Yaacobi (1982) gives much valuable
working background. Others, such as Frankel (1980), give
brief summary accounts of the Knesset in works of broader

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scope and limited depth. There is little mention of
penetration in them of the questions of information and
communication which are vital to the effectiveness of a
parliamentary body in the political system as a whole.

More than in most parliaments in modern politically
competitive systems the Knesset membership is dominated
by party. The voter in the Yishuv had the right to delete
names from the party list of his choice, and names deleted
on half the votes cast for the list dropped to the bottom.
Under the state even this limited expression of preference
disappeared. Votes are cast for the party or bloc, and
the ballot contains only the Hebrew acronyms which are
party election symbols. The party presents its list, as
it stands, to the constituency of the whole country on the
basis of full proportional representation (Sager, 1985;
45-46). Goldberg and Hoffman (Arian, 1983; 61-87) note
the tendency for the power of small, authoritarian nominating
committees which have traditionally controlled party lists
in the major parties to give way to institutionalisation
of nomination on a broader basis.

Party organisation and ideology are nevertheless the
foundations of Israeli politics, and the power of nomination,
however acquired, is a potent party discipline. Knesset
membership is the key to further patronage, including
membership of Knesset committees. Also M.K.s have very
extensive personal privileges, immunities and financial
benefits. They have every personal and political reason
not to fall out with their parties, unless they have the
stature to face political exile, or take their chance,
possibly with other disaffected colleagues or elements, of
forming a new party which may gain Knesset seats (the
threshhold is very low; only one per cent of votes cast is
enough to gain a seat).

The strong links between party organisation and
Knesset membership produce a high proportion of "askanim" -
professional politicians. Gutmann and Landau (1975; 181)
so identified about seventy-five per cent of 374 M.K.s, past
and present. Mahler (1981; 39, 146-56) notes that many
M.K.s held party office and had spent between eleven and
twenty years in the party organisation before entering the

Knesset. They were thoroughly conditioned to party
supremacy, and identified themselves within the Knesset
with their parties and factions rather than with government
or opposition coalitions. Overwhelmingly (eighty-three
per cent of those interviewed) they conidered themselves
accountable to their parties, not to the public. It is
generally conceded that many "party hacks" could not hold
their seats in direct elections.

Information Facilities and Inputs to the Plenum

Members of the Knesset who want to inform themselves
have sparse personal facilities. They have no offices,
secretarial pool or proper legislative reference services.
Parties have some office accommodation on the premises and
dispose of small allowances and some secretarial help meant
for Knesset business. Each M.K. can draw a small monthly
allowance (currently equivalent to US$200) for research
assistants or secretaries, and about half of them are known
to employ such help, usually university students in their
spare time (Mahler, 1981; 98 et seq. and information from
Knesset staff). These limited personal facilities can be
supplemented from the Knesset library, which maintains a
margin of research staff on top of a permanent staff of
eleven (in 1983). The Library deals with about five hundred
information briefing requests a year - mainly from a limited
number of M.K.s - and prepares perhaps a dozen occasional
position papers on specific topics (e.g. the Camp David
Accords of 1979), some of them for general circulation.
But the Library facilities are sparingly used by M.K.s,
and a newspaper criticism by one of the more active (Weiss,
Jerusalem Post. 27 Jan 1983) describes the Library as
"desolate".

M.K.s thus neither have nor demand much assistance
from Knesset services in informing themselves on the often
complex legislative matters before them. Barker and Rush
(1980),among others, have examined the certainly not
excessive information available to British M.P.s. in a far
more "information-intensive" environment of parliamentary
services. Menhennet (1965), Englefield (1965), Menhennet
and Pool (1967) and Coombes (1966)have displayed and
examined the important part played by the British House of

Commons Library in providing research and information to
M.P.s. The Knesset, even making every allowance for the
comparative intensity and scale of activity, is not highly
serviced for basic information and research, and there is
little sign of general concern to improve its position.
The demand from M.K.s is not present, a reflection of both
membership and function. Scrutiny cannot be effective
without information and study, and as Norton (1985; 6)
points out, influence is ineffective without scrutiny.

As a body (the plenum) the Knesset meets on three days
per week, of which two are "government days". Atendance of
many M.K.s is notoriously poor, the Knesset taking second
place for many to their private interests and professional
and other outside employments. There are no attendance
requirements or records, or necessary quorum for business.
"Party" debate time (the majority) is apportioned on the
basis of party representation, and parties allocate their
time to nominated speakers, who address the Knesset from
the rostrum. The agnda is sometimes chaotically disrupted by
procedural devices exploited by M.K.s, which consume much
time to little purpose. Such proceedings are confusing to
follow, and often go unreported by the media (Rubinstein,
Jerusalem Post, 28 Feb 1986, p.6).

An agenda which is in effect a list of outstanding
business for the session is issued at the close of each
week's sittings to M.K.s (at their desks in the Chamber).
Items actually to be taken in the course of the following
week are listed in an order paper (Seder HaYom, lit: Order
of the Day) drawn up at the commencement of that week's
business. It is the primary input of information about the
business currently before the Knesset. Its technical status
is as a press communique; it is the key for media, public
and M.K.s themselves to the Knesset programme. Its content
is perfunctory, as the translated specimen at Table 8 shows;
some texts, e.g. legislative proposals, are separately
circulated. In the nature of business the agenda is
frequently and often confusingly arranged. Seder HaYom is
not reissued, but partial revisions are displayed on the
premises (Sager, 1985; 108-110).

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TABLE   8

No. 28   THE   KNESSET

ORDER   OF   THE   DAY

For Sessions of the Knesset

10.5.82 - Monday at 4.0 p.m.
11.5.82 - Tuesday at 4.0 p.m.
12.5.82 - Wednesday at 4.0 p.m.

1. Questions and Answers

2. Minister of Energy and Infra-   Two hours allotted for
    structure's review of the work   debate
    of his department and debate

3. Courts of Justice Law (amend-   Legislative Proposal
    ment No.15) 1982   178

4. Penal Code (amendment No.21)   Legislative Proposal
    19*0 (First Reading)   180

5. Local Authorities Law (rate   Legislative Proposal
    relief for war-wounded soldiers   179
    and police) (amendment No.2)
    1982

6. Planning and Construction Law   Legislative Proposal
    (amendment No.19) 1982   1579
    (First reading)

7. National Energy Authority Law   Legislative Proposal
    (amendment) 1982   1579

8. Nazi War Crimes Law (amendment   Legislative Proposal
    No. 11) 1982 (First Reading)   1579

9. Compensation for Road Accident   Legislative Proposal
    Injuries Law (amendment No.5)   1566
    1982 (First reading) - con-
    cluding debate

10. Civilian Damage (State Liability)   Legislative Proposal
    Law (amendment No.3) 1982   1566
    (First reading)

11. Neighbourhoods Rehabilitation   Two hours allotted
    plan - Members of the Knesset   for debate
    S. Arbeli-Almoslino, G. Cohen,
    M. Vilner and M. Shitrit

(Translated from Hebrew original)

The first reading of legislative proposals, on general principles, is held in the plenum, where M.K.s use procedural devices to widen the scope of discussion. But detailed examination is remitted to committee. The committee report is referred to the plenum for second reading, at which only dissenting members of the committee (and other Knesset members who have been allowed to register amendments) may debate their proposed minority amendments, and the committee chairman replies. Other M.K.s may not participate in this debate, their function being to vote at the subsequent third reading, which gives formal endorsement to the outcome of the limited second reading.

The Knesset receives virtually no organised information from the executive by way of papers meant to inform its legislative or other debates, such as statements of policy or reviews of particular topics and situations. Important statements may be made by senior ministers to initiate debates, and are on the record, but they are not followed or illuminated by documents submitted to the Knesset with background information or statements of the arguments, facts and proposals for reference and evaluation. The Knesset has a void in information inputs of this kind. Such other documentary information as it receives comes from the output of government departments and of official institutions, such as the Bank of Israel, which may initiate debates. These may be put into the Knesset for M.K.s, with the Speaker's permission. But only those which relate to the formal business of the Knesset are "laid on the Table" and noted in the proceedings. Most of the rest can be identified in the Knesset Archive.

Only a handful of occasional and miscellaneous internal papers originating in the Knesset can be identified in any year from Knesset and State Archives. These are typically digests of the work of particular committees, drawn up for committee use and merely summarising information already on record; House Committee papers on matters of internal management, notes of symposia and honorific occasions (e.g. visits of foreign dignitaries); and a few hints and guides to M.K.s and journalists. Some of these

papers are not fully circulated within the Knesset, and internal papers are not systematically noted in any series record from which they may be identified.

Thus government inputs of information to the Knesset are formal and limited. But as in other parliaments there is an input direct from the community, in complaints, attempts to recruit support and influence and requests for information. Many M.K.s are known to find this casework the most satisfactory part of their Knesset activities. In the Israeli system the M.K. is not, however, the natural focus of a definable constituency of all interests and parties and this must limit the range of his casework to known particular interests and affiliations, personal and institutional. Question procedures, though often used only as a last resort to obtain casework information which other channels have failed to elicit, are some index to casework, and Frankel (1980; 16) notes the lack of a consituency related to the individual as limiting the range and specificity of Questions asked in the Knesset.

Caspi (1982) notes another source of casework in which the press plays a leading role in furnishing M.K.s with material for many of their Questions. More than half the Questions asked in the Seventh Knesset (1969-1973) had the media as their stipulated source. Almost half of these were inspired by three main independent newspapers (Haaretz, Maariv and Yediot Aharonot) and thirteen per cent originated from party-dependent newspapers. In effect, the press, with various sympathies and affiliations, substantially determines the content of this part of the Knesset agenda. Caspi attributes this dependence to the absence of other efficient information services.

Ministers take their time, sometimes many months, to answer written Questions. Sometimes they simply disregard or brush aside those which they find inconvenient to answer, (Jerusalem Post. 13 Jan 1985, p.3, 31 July 1986, p.8).

The verbatim report of proceedings is an important information input to M.K.s themselves, particularly in view of the often minimum personal attendance, as the full and authentic record of plenum business. An immediate

record, the so-called <u>Stenographic Protocol</u>, is produced on
the premises within a couple of hours of debates and
proceedings which it covers. It is unpublished, marked
"unamended" and is meant for the internal use of the Knesset
and for the media. M.K.s have the usual opportunity in
parliaments to correct errors of grammar and style made in
the heat of the moment, provided that they do not alter the
sense of what they said. The <u>Stenographic Protocol</u> is not
an output to the public, except as a media source.

Inputs To and Through Committees

The principal inputs of information into the Knesset
are through its ten standing committees, and a feature of
the committees is the extent to which some of them,
particularly Labour and Welfare, and Finance, deal with
executive as well as legislative or other deliberative
business. Ministers, senior civil servants and invited
experts appear before them. Committees are constituted
generally on the party key basis; information given to them
passes beyond direct government control. The Foreign
Affairs and Security Committee, though purely deliberative,
is a body of great status, and membership, particularly the
chairmanship, carries prestige and seniority. But Peri
(1983; 177) points out that it carries little power
"...since political mobility in Israel is sponsored mobility -
pull from the top rather than push from below - the chair-
manship is subject to pressures to conform and adapt to
cabinet policies". Members of this committee are privy to
much classified information, must sign a declaration of
secrecy, and cannot be replaced by their parties, as can
members of other committees, for casual absences.

A great deal of information of high power-content for
the committees themselves, as scrutineers of the executive,
and for the plenum, passes through committees. Yaacobi
1982; 60) notes the formal expression in Knesset regula-
tions of the right of committees to demand information and
explanation from ministers, and, with their consent, from
their civil servants. But Knesset Regulations are not part
of the Basic Law: The Knesset, and committees do not have
powers to compel attendance of witnesses. Conflicts of
authority with the executive arise (as they do in the

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United Kingdom Parliament, for example) and ministers
occasionally refuse to appear or to provide information,
or let their staffs do so, though they are generally
co-operative. Powers of the Knesset to set up standing
committees to obtain information are virtually unused -
they require government consent (Yaacobi, 1982; 62-64).

A fundamental limitation on committees is their lack
of independent research and advisory facilities to test the
information put before them. Most committees have to make
do with a clerical/administrative staff of two; the Finance
Committee has a staff of six, including economic and legal
advisers. The Foreign Affairs and Security Committee has
two part-time consultants in addition to its normal staff
of two. Four legal advisers serve the ten committees. These
are restrictive levels of staffing, and committees often use
the press as a source for their examinations. The input of
government information into committees is largely in the hands
of the executive. Lack of facilities may be more than
incidental; a former chairman of the Foreign Affairs and
Security Committee is said to have suggested that one reason
for it is the reluctance both of the Cabinet and departments
to"...enhance the professional weight" of the committees
(Peri, 1983; 183). The situation lends itself to bureau-
cratic manipulation of information put to committees,
especially where there is a receptive chairman. A senior
Minister and M.K. of long standing is reported as thinking
that "Knesset members are being fed slanted data by experts
appearing before their committees." (Jerusalem Post. 26 Jan
1983, p.3).

Attendance at committees is notoriously poor; regular
attenders have been estimated at twenty per cent of members
(Sager, 1985; 124). Issues are frequently settled by the
chairman and a handful of members. But Likhovski (1971;
183) notes that standing committees may and do delegate
much of their work not concerned with statutory powers to
sub-committees, and "...very little is in fact known about
their work". Sub-committees, entrusted with specific tasks
of study and drafting, may work more effectively than their
parent committees, which tend to continue political debate
in a smaller forum. But sub-committees are without the

formal weight of the full committee in obtaining information from ministers and bureaucrats. The Foreign Affairs and Security Committee is known to form numerous sub-committees.

Inhibitions on committee powers to obtain information come out perhaps most clearly in examination of the annual budget, among the most important and influential of parliamentary functions anywhere. Budget documents can display or obscure information with much power-content about the organisation and activities of government. In any government they tend to be technical and abstruse; Israeli budgets are confusingly framed, and unaccompanied by explanatory material adequate to summarise and evaluate them in lay terms. The public relies, as elsewhere, on the press for evaluation.

In Israeli circumstances the Defence Budget accounts (in 1986) for about twenty-four per cent of the national budget. It goes no further in the Knesset than joint consideration by the fifty members of the Finance and Foreign Affairs and Security Committees, and for security reasons none of the documentary material may leave the committee room. Some sections are security-classified even for committee members (Peri, 1983; 227). Only four members attended all four meetings of the joint committee on the 1986 Defence Budget; twenty-three attended none at all, and nine attended only one meeting. Efforts to improve the system of examination meet solid resistance from the defence establishment (Jerusalem Post, 11 April 1986, p.3). The methods of preparation and monitoring of the Defence Budget have been much criticised, but the situation remains that "Although the defence budget devours the largest slice of the national budget and decisively influences the whole of society, it is determined and carried out in virtual independence from external influences of decision-makers in the civil sphere" (Peri, 1983; 230).

Meetings of the Knesset committees "...are not public unless otherwise decided by the Committee" (Knesset regulations, Article 75). The media are occasionally invited into committee rooms for some presentational purpose ; otherwise committee meetings are closed. A verbatim record is kept, for committee use only, and a

protocol (minute) is compiled by the committee clerk. This
may not be circulated outside committee or referred to in
the plenum (this rule is not inviolate: breaches are ruled
out of order but nevertheless sometimes appear in the plenum
record). Formal communiqués may be issued at the close of
meetings, at the chairman's discretion, laconically
informative. Only formal decisions are remitted to the
plenum, and these appear in its record of proceedings.

Thus major information inputs to the Knesset do not
reach the plenum in any form in which they can be evaluated
in relation to the adequacy of information requested or
submitted as a basis for decisions. Nor can judgements be
formed as to whether, or how far, the decisions reached are
consistent with, or even based on the information received.
The information given to or collected by sub-committees is
even further out of sight.

Verbatim recording and publication of committee
proceedings in parliamentary bodies of small countries is
not universal (e.g. Norway), particularly where parties are
not numerous or dominated by ideology. There may be a case
for unpublished discussion behind closed committee doors,
to allow pragmatism to mitigate the formal rigours of party
position. But in the party-ridden Israeli political
system this appears to put a premium on manipulation and
"deals" which might not otherwise survive exposure.[21]
Committee procedures in the Knesset are often clearly used
to withhold or manipulate information or its power-content
in the interests of controversial decisions. When important
legislation is being considered relevant committees become
the focus for interest groups and others to put their cases

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[21.]The extremely generous compensation, widely considered
scandalous, awarded to some settlers in northern Sinai dis-
placed by the return of the territory to Egypt in 1982, is
one example. In another, arrangements reached behind closed
committee doors for channelling funds to certain religious
institutions on lists controlled by individual committee
members were so publicly scandalous that the Director-
General of the Religious Affairs Ministry publicly dis-
sociated his Ministry from responsibility for the
distribution of such funds "transmitted" through it but
controlled within committee (Jerusalem Post Magazine, 3 Feb
1984, pp. 4-5).

to members. Selection of witnesses and evidence to be
heard is largely at the chairman's discretion (Sager, 1985;
127).

Information of a sort is not lacking, however.
Leaking from committees is so prevalent that even
information from senior ministers to the Foreign Affairs
and Security Committee is often given beforehand to the
plenum or the media, on the supposition that it is best
leaked in the form in which the executive wishes it to be
known (Jerusalem Post, 20 May 1986, p.3). But real
security material is generally respected, and a chairman
of high standing has claimed that the Foreign Affairs and
Security Committee actually receives better briefing than
the Cabinet itself, who "...wield the power of decision
without being informed" (Abba Eban, quoted in Jerusalem
Post, 22 May 1986, p.3).

Information Outputs of the Knesset

The information outputs of the Knesset reflect both
the limitations of its inputs and its attitudes to the
public. The Stenographic Protocol undergoes little
amendment ;   in a country so small it would involve
trivial effort to deposit copies immediately in public
libraries and, say, town halls. It would have as much
authenticity as e.g. the British Hansard. It would serve
more promptly as an information output to the public than
the formal printed public record, Divrei HaKnesset (lit:
Proceedings of the Knesset). This is not a timely record;
in recent years it has been as much as fifteen months
behind the periods to which it relates, because of a
change in production methods. By mid-1986 it had recovered
to a time-lag of only one month. But in Israeli circum-
stances interest in it by the time of its appearance is
institutional and archival only. Some 450 copies are
issued on subscription and by deposit to libraries which
request it.

As verbatim records the Stenographic Protocol and
Divrei HaKnesset maintain high standards. Rubinstein
(Jerusalem Post, 13 Jan 1985, p.3) notes a minor cover-up
in the record for an erroneous remark by the Deputy
Speaker. However, despite the Speaker's rulings to delete

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them, heckling interruptions in distasteful language, for which the ideological and personal differences which run through Israeli politics make the Knesset a notorious forum, mostly remain on record. Ministers occasionally use a permitted facility of having their material inserted in the record without having been delivered in the plenum.

The inviolability of the official record, is in fact upheld, though occasionally impugned. For, example, following an acrimonious debate on 23 September 1982 on the massacres in Beirut refugee camps, M.K.s supporting the then Defence Minister (Sharon) attempted to have corrections to his statements, put forward by another prominent M.K. (Herzog), excised from the record. The Chair ruled that both the correction statement and the argument against including it should be recorded (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 24 Sept 1982; <u>Divrei HaKnesset</u>, 10th Knesset, Session 122, p.3705). It is difficult to see that any other rational decision could be given in relation to a verbatim record (apart from ruling Sharon's motion out of order); but the mere attempt suggests that some elements in the Knesset do not regard the official record as above party or personal interests, though there is no suggestion that it has been allowed to accommodate them.

The official record gives at present no information about the attendance or voting behaviour of M.K.s Unless specially requested no count of votes is taken, a simple "majority" for or against being recorded. It is not unknown for M.K.s to speak for the record in one way, but vote in another. Likhovski (1971; 183) comments that <u>Divrei HaKnesset</u> "...all but ignores" the existence of sub-committees.

As a body, therefore, the Knesset has no significant and developed outputs of information to the public other that the formal records of its proceedings. The mass of detail considered by committees has no systematic outlet, and even the texts of various documents considered, such as legislative proposals, motions for the agenda and so on are not published in any systematic series of papers, though some of them, e.g. legislative texts find inclusion in the

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official gazette (<u>Reshumot</u>) - a publication controlled by the Ministry of Justice. The void of documentary outputs from the Knesset in terms of types of information without which neither Knesset nor public can be sufficiently informed to hold government to any continuous and detailed account lends point to Galnoor's comment (1982; 67) that the Knesset: "...serves as a public arena where outputs of politics, usually predetermined, are displayed and occasionally argued". This is more of a symbolic than of an instrumental role of the public display of information and distribution of its power-content.

The constraint of information to the plenum inevitably strengthens constraint of what is available when it might attract adverse attention. An instance is the Knesset budget itself, containing information about M.K.s' salaries and allowances, and Knesset staffing and expenses. A joint committee (House and Finance) normally revises (upward) Ministry of Finance proposals. Details are obscured within broad headings, and supplied only to committee members. On the one budget on which it must be presumed to have full intelligence and which is under its own control the Knesset is notably unforthcoming with information, which it apparently does not care to expose to a public evaluation. The joint committee is reported to be "communiqué-shy" (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 20, 25 Aug 1983, p.3).

The State Controller's Reports - A Knesset Input and Output

Only in the reports of the State Controller can the Knesset (and, through the media,the public) be said to be well supplied with documentary input as a basis for oversight, though retroactive , of the executive. The State Controller is the public auditor, whose powers run wherever public money is expended: his reports cover efficiency, management and probity in expenditure of public funds, but are not executive in effect. The breadth of the public sector in Israel gives the Controller an unusually wide scope.[22]

[22.]There are currently (June 1986) moves to restrict the State Controller's remit to government departments only, thus putting a great deal of public expenditure beyond his reach.

Since 1971 he has also been the public Ombudsman; and since
1969 his remit has embraced the government finance extended
to political parties.

The Controller is appointed for a renewable five-year
term. Though office is regarded as non-political, and the
term of serving Controllers has invariably been renewed, the
last appointment, in 1982, was not free from political
wrangling, and it would not be safe to put any public
appointment in Israel beyond the reach of party influence.
Attempts in the plenum to fix a term for a non-renewable
appointment,less dependent on a politically consituted
Knesset Committee, have been unsuccessful (Jerusalem Post.
1 Jan 1982, p.8).

There is some vetting of the State Controller's reports,
before publication, on security grounds. The Controller has
made stringent criticisms of the defence forces' mismangement
from time to time, and expenditure of public money extends
deeply into areas (e.g. military industries) with security
sensitivities. Given the political and personal interests
which pervade Israeli public life and the kinds of mis-
management which the Controller's reports habitually reveal,
it is not unlikely that vetting goes marginally beyond
strictly necessary limits.

Other influences can be exercised. Deference to the
Knesset is generally considered to have bean involved in
the delay in publication of the State Controller's 1981
Report on Party Financing,which was held back until the
Knesset had passed retroactive legislation to cover clear
malfeasance in election overspending (not for the first time)
by the major parties.

There is no reason to suggest that reservations on the
Controller's independence are more than marginal in effect,
though they are politically exploitable. His Annual Report
is a fully published document, displaying a mass of
information about the operations of government which can be
obtained from no other source, and would otherwise not come
coherently or at all to Knesset and public notice. The
effect is flawed by the regular repetition of past criticisms
and the extent to which lack of action on them has to be
deplored. The Knesset is not inclined to deal with some

kinds of criticism, particularly of financial practices
deeply ingrained in the disbursement of party favours. Also,
the will to press criticism to conclusions is vitiated by
political factors. But the reports are a major media
occasion, and they release into the plenum and the public
arena a cumulative and substantial power-content with
negative potential for the government, since by the nature
of his function the State Controller is critical. Explana-
tions put forward by those criticised, produce more
information, even if meant to deflect or evade rather than
to inform.

The State Controller is an exceptionally full and
independent source of information, but deals with the past
on a limited remit. Clearly, the Knesset must be in general
a much better-informed body than would appear from the other-
wise sparse information it receives from government or even
its own committees. In an assembly of which about a quarter
of members are ministers or deputy-ministers, and in which
every member (ministers excepted) has a committee assignment,
some with plural memberships, there is a flow and interchange
of information through informal and interpersonal channels,
as well as through parties. It must be doubtful whether the
Knesset could function meaningfully without this. But these
forms of communication lend themselves to manipulation by the
way of selective use and restriction of power-content in the
interests of control over the distribution of power by the
executive. The element of intent to withhold information
must be strengthened by the limitations on the normal supply
of information to the nominally sovereign Knesset.

The Media and the Knesset
        In the absence of timely, verbatim public reports of
plenum proceedings and of any full reports of committee
proceedings, the media dominate the communications of the
Knesset with the public. There is no lobby system; the
media maintain accredited Knesset correspondents, whose
personal contacts and sources within the Knesset supplement
the formal committee communiqués. Despite the closed
committee proceedings the media often carry very full

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reports of meetings, with apparently verbatim accounts,
liberally spiced with "reportage", which could only come
from committee members. Major newspapers run regular
Knesset columns and occasional features in which Knesset
behaviour and institutions are critically discussed, and
underlying political motivations for current action and
attitudes are analysed. This is a normal type of informed
media comment and gossip.

Live television broadcasts from the Knesset plenum
have been allowed since the inception of the television
service in 1968. Excerpts from important debates may be
included in the main television news, whose audience is
virtually the whole population. But coverage is not
regular; routine Knesset sessions, as in any parliament,
can be dull and very sparsely attended. The cameras fasten
mainly on the rostrum speakers, but are also allowed to
roam into the chamber - a major complaint by M.K.s is that
they are too prone to show Members nodding, and rows of
empty seats.

The television cameras are occasionally invited to
record brief excerpts which committees sometimes stage for
presentational and publicity purposes. They also have the
facility to interview M.K.s on the premises as they emerge,
for example, from committee meetings. After a controversial
and heated session, when members of committees are anxious
to score points and emphasise their parties' positions, the
resultant "images" and off-the-cuff comments can be
revealing to viewers.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE ISRAELI MEDIA

The media are the principal channels through which
political and much administrative information reaches the
Israeli public. The Knesset, in particular, has virtually
no other current public outlet. The degree of media
autonomy, the working contacts of government and media and
their attitudes to each other and the public are therefore
crucial to the formation and transfer of public information
at its final stages. The affective orientations of the
public towards government as a source and the media as
channels are no less important as influences on public
receptivity and belief.

Constraints on the Media

The Israeli media are autonomous in the sense that they
are not formally owned or directed by government. But they
function under definable constraints. There is the historical
constraint of co-operation with government which was exempli-
fied in the Yishuv through the Reaction Committee. There
are the formal and legal constraints related to a continuous
state of war and terrorist attack, internal and external.
There are constraints of ownership by and identification with
specific parties. Finally, there are constraints of public
attitudes, including the general attitudes of politicians,
about the media role.

Continuation of the Yishuv press pattern helped to
maintain established relations with government. Statehood
brought no major changes to an already well-established
press (Table 2). But a group of journalists broke away from
Yediot Aharonot to start a new major daily Maariv (Evening)
in 1949, independent but with a right-wing inclination.
Many minor party and specialised periodicals are published,

but _Haaretz_, _Davar_, _Yediot Aharonot_ and _Maariv_ have remained the "big four" of the daily press, followed by the retitled English-language _Jerusalem Post_. No precise circulation figures are provided in Israel, but _Yediot Aharonot_ and _Maariv_, which have the largest circulations (the former in excess of 200,000), are reckoned to be read by some seventy per cent of the population. There is substantial cross-readership (Frankel, 1980; 140-47, Galnoor (1982; 226-28)). In 1983 a new tabloid, _Hadashot_ (News), was established, with support from _Haaretz_; but this is a lightweight, catering for sensation and sport for young readers. Time and changes in composition of the population have brought a greater orientation towards the Sephardi element of the population, particularly in the mass-circulation newspapers.

The Yishuv role of the press as an instrument of government policy continued throughout the pressures of the early days of the state. Galnoor (1982; 245-48) emphasises its value as an instrument of legitimation for government and the political system, exercising self-restraint, with a high symbolic output in fostering solidarity and identification with the political and organisational needs of the new state. This was not necessarily subservience; there were common goals.

Self-imposed limitations continued, through the Editors' Committee, the 1953 successor to the Reaction Committee. But the relations of the press and community institutions in the common struggle of the Yishuv against outside power were not quite the same in the framework of a state with competing internal interests. Behind the screen of national interest in the Editors' Committee was now the power of government, within competitive politics,to manipulate information for its own purposes, facilitating an insidious form of co-operation, aimed at voluntary suppression by the press of news which the government preferred not to see released. The regular and purposeful sharing of confidential information with the Editors, making them virtually accomplices in restricting the flow of information which it would be hard to cover by security rather than policy considerations, could be a means of restricting the release of its power-content into the

political arena. The Editor of _Haaretz_, the major
independent newspaper, eventually left the Editors'
Committee for a time in order to protect his freedom of
action. Actual censorship sometimes transgressed into
the realm of policy rather than security. Rationed news-
print seemed to find its way to papers favoured by the
government, a question on which the Knesset inflicted its
first defeat on the government in 1950 (Goren, 1979; 106).

There was a general sensitivity to press reports, even
in the revelation of public scandals, which could be
construed as inimical to the image or interests of the
state. Moreover, the country was still officially at war.
Goren (1979; 100-01, 111-12, 122-29 and Galnoor; 228-30)
give details of press manipulations by government sometimes
in conflict and sometimes in connivance with the Editors'
Committee, to keep information from the public or to give
out false information. Galnoor also notes government
control of newsreels, and the dependence of the media on
official sources and their versions of events.

The autonomy of the press as a channel between
government and public is inevitably compromised to some
degree as long as the Editors' Committee continues to be
pervertible on occasions to political use; though in
Israel's position some form of government/press co-
operation on genuine security matters cannot be avoided.
The consequences are, in Goren's view (1979; 100, 158)
that the Committee "...plays a vital part in conditioning
newspapers to support the official line, thereby reducing
their ability to play a meaningful part in criticising the
government", and that on occasions "...it is instrumental
in restraining rather than fostering the political debate".
Goren's assessment that the logical effect is "...greatly to
reinforce the stability of the political structure"
emphasises the relationship of information constraint to
stability generally; in Israel a stability of conformity
to the views of those who rely on their "inside" knowledge
and position rather than on public discussion and feedback
for steering the polity. Since Goren wrote, however, the
press has become distinctly less co-operative with govern-
ment in matters which are not clearly security.

Voluntary co-operation is backed by formidable legal
sanctions. Galnoor (1977; 229-31) reviews the secrecy and
security restrictions on the media, and Goren (1979; Chaps.
xiii, xiv) discusses specific cases involving the press.
Shapiro (1982) gives a general account of security and
censorship in relation to the press. The formal legislation
derives from the pre-1948 British Mandate, carried into
Israeli law. The Press Ordinance, 1933, and Defence
Regulations (Emergency) 1945 imposes press licensing and
supervision by administrative order, and confer extensive
powers of military censorship. Israel has no explicit
constitution, and the balance of public and media rights to
government information remains uncertain.

Had these potentially draconian provisions for control
of information not been inherited, there can be little
doubt that the State would have had to legislate on similar
lines, against the background of constant military threat
and geo-political isolation. Goren (1979; 94) remarks that
retention of these inherited restrictions "...cannot be
considered a mere oversight on the part of the legislators".
The formal and rigorous powers of control over the press are
now rarely exercised.[23] Government has relied far more on
voluntary press control in the interests of national security.
Political misuse of powers has been resisted by the press,
and in 1953, when the government suspended the Communist
newspaper Kol Ha'am (lit: Voice of the People) for its
attack on certain government policies, the Supreme Court
quashed the order and publicly established the principle
of press freedom as an attribute of democracy. (Goren,
1979; 97; Supreme Court of Justice No. 73/53-83/53:
Kol Ha'am v. the Minister of the Interior).

[23.]Nevertheless, they are far from being a dead letter. In
April 1984 the military censor shut down Hadashot for four
days for flouting a censorship ruling - the first such
closure for thirty years in Israel proper. The censorship
is more regularly applied or threatened in East Jerusalem,
which, though formally annexed to Israel, has newspapers
and press services sympathetic to the Palestine Liberation
Organisation; these become involved in uncertainties of
Israeli policy (Jerusalem Post. 4 May and 1 Oct 1984). A
small Israeli settlers' publication on the West Bank was
temporarily suspended in 1985 for publication of inflammatory
views.

The influence of party as distinct from government on the press has not unduly cramped political debate in public. Wdfensohn (1979; 8-9) draws attention to the autonomy of the press in intra-party debate. Notwithstanding its partisanship and value as a power-base for party leadership, the press has shown political flexibility and autonomy, sometimes leading the party into political change. Intra-party debate is not information from government; but in the intimate connection between party and government in Israel it must enlarge public information on government thinking and trends. <u>Davar</u>, the organ of the Labour Party, has had some major and notorious differences with the party powerful (Frankel, 1980; 143). <u>The Jerusalem Post</u> records its own transition from intimate co-operation with leading Labour government figures to positive criticism and opposition, as the Labour establishment developed cracks in policy and conflicts in personality (Erwin Frenkel, "A Newspaper's Loyalties" in <u>Jerusalem Post Jubilee Supplement</u>, 1 Dec 1982, p.8). Galnoor notes (1982; 231) that the independent newspapers were sufficiently independent to be widely regarded as the only viable opposition to the government (he writes about the period to the end of the 1960's, when Mapai was politically dominant).

There were, and remain, deeper underlying constraints than those accepted voluntarily or imposed by law. Notwithstanding the clear declaration of the Supreme Court in the <u>Kol Ha'am</u> case, that "...the democratic process is by open debate and the free exchange of ideas on matters of public interest. 'Public Opinion' plays a vital part in that discussion...", the ideological, eastern European influence which saw the press as instruments of party and state was never far below the surface. Arguments more appropriate to the one-party state could be publicly aired from influential quarters. As late as December 1968 Yisrael Yeshayahu, a Labour party "apparatchik" who became Speaker of the Knesset, attacked the non-party press as a danger to democracy, because "The public needs full, reliable and objective information. That is why we should not rely on the private, commercial press, by its nature intent foremost... on making money" (<u>Jewish Chronicle</u>,

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London 20 Dec 1968). In July 1971 Yeshayahu asserted that the non-party press propagated hatred of the political parties, and "the absence of parties endangers democracy". Haaretz dismissed this in an editorial as "the Bolshevik mentality". But it illustrates an attitude that has never disappeared from Israeli political life (Jewish Chronicle, London, 2 July 1971, Elizur, 1973; 99).

Authoritarian attitudes to press and to public information were widespread, even if not always extreme. The early leaders of the state, notably Ben Gurion, had a well-known contempt for the press and its needs and functions (Goren, 1979; 98-99), with no hesitation in manipulating information given. Pinchas Sapir perhaps Israel's most able Finance Minister, was accused (Jewish Chronicle, London, 30 Dec 1971) of a "Pasha-like unconcern for informing the public".

The Yishuv inheritance, that the press is an instrument of the community, which it betrays by public criticism, is still deeply rooted. A survey report in March 1983 (Dahaf Research Institute Poll, Dr. Mena Zemach), during the divisive Lebanon war, in which sections of the press virtually filled the opposition role, showed some sixty-five per cent of the country's adult population to consider the Israeli news media "detrimental to the national interest", compared with fifty-one a year before. Israeli society across the political spectrum, though generally sympathetic to press freedom, has been less than outright in its support when it felt that damaging images were being presented to the outside world. A substantial section of the population wants to have press information only of the "right sort".

The Emergence of the "Opposition" Press

Both press and public long maintained the Yishuv confidence to which they had been heavily conditioned, that if there was manipulation and restriction of information from government it was for acceptable reasons. Galnoor (1982; 249) gives an astonishing figure of ninety-six per cent in a 1970 opinion poll who "always or almost always" or "usually" believed government spokesmen. Attitudes began to change in the 1960's as the society consolidated and newspapers acquired readerships with a rising standard of

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education, weaker ideological commitments and more readiness
to criticise. Eisenstadt (1967; 331) notes the upsurge of
independent public opinion during the controversy over the
Lavon affair, a complex security cause-célèbre which rocked
the Israeli political establishment in the early 1960's.
The censorship also came under accusations of serving
political interests, and confidence in government demands
for secrecy weakened. Goren (1979; 123-41) describes a
series of events which undermined press confidence in the
tight hold which the Defence establishment held over
military information. The Yom Kippur War of 1973, when
information about early reverses was suppressed and
otherwise grossly mishandled, undermined public as well as
press willingness to accept official statements on defence
and foreign affairs without question. Moreover, after the
Six-Day War of 1967 a large foreign press corps had
established itself in Israel, and this exerted pressures on
the control of manipulation of information. In particular,
it became more difficult to exclude foreign news reports.

The 1970's saw the breakup of consensus politics in
Israel, finally expressed in the political "earthquake" of
1977, ending the long dominance of Mapai in favour of a
right-wing, Likud (lit: Unity) government. It was a mark
of the habitual restriction of information from government
that the press itself made a significant contribution to
the loss of the support for Mapai which occasioned the
change. Goren (1979; 158-61) points out that it left the
press unduly dependent on official handouts and on political
leaks which "...usually consisted of conflicting data which
did little to inform the public about what was happening in
real fact...". The press sought information elsewhere,
exposing financial scandals and rifts within the Labour
establishment which helped to discredit the government.
Self-imposed press limitations were weakening, and Galnoor
(1982; 249) comments that "...the relationship between the
Israeli mass media and the political system was becoming more
and more similar to that in other western democracies",
especially in accusations that the mass media undermine
the system's legitimacy.

The press was in fact beginning, though unevenly, to develop along Social Responsibility lines, in the recognition of positive obligations to provide interpretive depth and conflicting views for public information (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1976; 87-90). The mainstream press was strongly critical of the Likud government which had no significant press of its own, and contained some notably illiberal elements. The long dominance of Labour fostered Likud accusations that the press and broadcast media were "a leftist mafia" intent on bringing down the government. There were attempts to carry press censorship well into the political field, and to update the restrictive 1933 Press Ordinance (Goren, 1979; 162) which had virtually fallen into disuse since the 1953 <u>Kol Ha'am</u> case. This was dropped in face of unanimous press reaction, but public attacks on the media continued, from major Likud figures, including the Prime Minister (Begin), who was convinced of a media bias against him personally (reminiscent of Harold Wilson's relations with the media in Britain's1960.'sLabour governments). The Editor of <u>Haaretz</u> put his finger on the underlying cultural clash: the Israeli media were modern and western: Begin was a vintage east European politician who regarded media criticism as unpatriotic (<u>Newsweek</u>, 19 April 1982, p.50).

The trend away from forms of co-operation with government was accentuated by the hostility and actions of the Likud governments of 1977-84 towards the press, in which the Minister of Defence, who controlled the military censorship, was involved as much as the Prime Minister. In the last stages of the evacuation of the Sinai peninsula in April 1982, involving civil disobedience which had to be put down by the army, media access was severely restricted, and the media were banned, in March 1982, from Druze villages whose inhabitants went on extended strike against acceptance of Israeli identity cards following the extension of Israeli law to the occupied Golan Heights. The Journalists' Association of Israel, meeting on 13 September 1982, strongly criticised the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence for attempting to curb free speech. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 and the deep national controversy

over its objectives sharpened the conflict, with the press emerging as the essential supplier to the public of information which the government would have suppressed, and as a powerful voice of criticism. The press played the major part in exposing the Beirut massacres by Christian Phalangists in September 1982, and led public opinion against government attempts to paper over the situation (Schiff and Ya'ari, 1984; Chap. xiii).

The movement of the press into a generally oppositional position reflects also both the low public esteem of the Knesset and its ineffectiveness as an instrument for holding the government to account. The growing demand for more public information comes, however, more from press pressures in specific, controversial circumstances than from any general expression of desire for more public countervailing power. Nevertheless, government has become more open, and its exposure through appointed committees of inquiry more frequent and revealing. The Agranat Committee on the Yom Kippur War mismanagements of 1973 sat in camera and the government published only parts of its findings. By contrast, the Kahan Commission, on the Beirut massacres, sat mainly in public and almost all of its report was published and reproduced in the press. It was a new experience for Israelis to find not only the most senior ministers, including the Prime Minister, but also the Army - almost a sacrosant institution - publicly criticised before the world in an official report. It marks an enhanced political maturity, and a realisation that the public cannot be insulated from important news by official deprivation (especially when they can pick up foreign television broadcasts). Moreover Israel has come a focal news source for the foreign press since 1967.

It has become increasingly difficult for government simply to attempt to withhold or suppress information once the leaks begin to break surface and its hand begins to be forced by press publicity and comment. The growing element of Social Responsibility gives this a component of public instrumentality as well as sensationalism or party interest. Even the State Controller's Report of 1984 on the bank shares collapse of 1983, which left the country saddled with

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enormous public debt, and widely involved individuals, would
probably not have resulted in the appointment of a judicial
commission of inquiry (the Bejski Commission) but for the
pressure of the press on both Knesset and government.

The Bejski Commission's public sessions and extended
examination of major establishment figures in the commercial
banking world, the Bank of Israel, officials of the Ministry
of Finance, ministers and former ministers were extensively
reported and analysed in the press. Its unsparing con-
demnations of individuals as well as system, and its demands
for resignations, introduced concepts of personal and public
accountability not previously recognised in Israel. It
exposed the extent to which information of vital importance
to the whole community, which ultimately had to bear the
price, had been controlled or set aside by those in power
(whose considerations had sometimes been less than
objectively or ideologically based).

Even the long-privileged status of state security is
no longer an automatic rebuff to unwelcome questions. The
highly-controversial actions of the intensely secret "Shin
Bet" internal security service in suborning witnesses at an
official enquiry two years previously broke public surface
in June 1986. They involve further questions of the
accountability of political figures, and they quickly
overwhelmed the military censorship attempts to stifle them.
The outcome is a police enquiry, despite the efforts of
politicians involved to smother the affair.

These are, however, exceptional occasions of outstanding
public significance and news value. The press shows little
or no sign of progressing from the particular scandal to the
general demand for more openness and accountability in
Israeli public life. No demands for freedom of information
and access emerge from the media, or from the public, as a
general question of a public right to know.

Tension between politicians and press remains never
far below the surface. Though generally responsible the
press has its sensationalist elements, professional
standards in checking sources of information are sometimes
less than adequate, and many journalists are themselves
politically committed. Invasions of privacy, the prevalence

of attempts to slur political figures and other breaches of
professional behaviour, over which the Press Council appears
to be able to exert little control, expose the press to
intermittent fire from the political world. This went so
far in late 1985 as the secret drafting of a bill to
license journalists through a statutory Press Council.
Following exposure in the <u>Jerusalem Post</u>, 30 Dec 1985,
prompted by a liberally-minded Attorney-General (Yitzhak
Zamir) the proposal went no further. Ironically, it was
drafted at the instance of a minister (Moshe Shahal) who had
been responsible for attempts to introduce a Freedom of
Information bill. But the episode illustrates the continuing
latent hostility from authoritarian elements across the
political spectrum towards the media, supported by the high
level of latent public anti-media sentiment.

Broadcasting in Israel

From 1948 to 1965 broadcasting was confined to radio
and directed by the Government Information Service, part of
the Prime Minister's Office. Broadcasting is everywhere
subject to some government control and it was certainly not
in the nature of the highly politicised Israeli establishment
to regard this powerful means of communication as something
independent of political requirements. Policies were kept
in line with those of the ruling Labour Party (Frankel, 1980;
138); issues were avoided and certain politicians were kept
off the air (Mishal, 1978; 35-45). It was not unknown for
the Prime Minister's aides to telephone with instructions how
to handle a particular item (Kollek, 1978; 131). Inevitably
the service came to be staffed by journalists and executives
acceptable to the ruling elite.

It was not indefinitely defensible in a state which
professed democratic institutions for broadcasting to remain
under direct government control. The Broadcasting Law of
1965 set up the Broadcasting Authority (IBA) as an independent
corporation, ostensibly on the lines of the British Broad-
casting Corporation; no serious thought appears to have been
given to any other model. Amendments were subsequently made
to cover television services (Broadcasting Authority Law
No.451/1965 as amended by Law No.483/1968 - IBA, 1970,
available in English translation).

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The introduction of television was long resisted, by the opposition, which feared an extension of government influence, by religious parties, by the Finance Ministry, who feared it would stimulate consumption. The formal detachment of broadcasting services from government did not overcome the resistance, though privately financed educational braodcasting began in 1966 (Neev, 1973). Those Israelis who could afford heavily taxed television sets received broadcasts from neighbouring Arab states.

It took the 1967 war to rouse the Israeli authorities to the need for a domestic television service, and then with the object not so much of informing Israelis as of countering programmes from Arab countries. A million Arabs lived in the newly-occupied territories. In 1968, when the government began seriously to organise an Israeli service, it was estimated that all West Bank Arabs had access to television receivers, that the then 300,000 Israeli Arabs had 10,000 sets, and that the almost ten times as numerous Jewish Israelis had 25,000 sets, receiving Arab programmes (Neev, 1973). Few things so plainly indicate as the tardiness and motivations of these developments the fixity of the Yishuv inheritance in the early period of the state, that public communications were an instrument of political power rather than of public information.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the governing thirty-one-member plenum of the Broadcasting Authority and the Director-General are appointed by government. The plenum, though nominally composed of representative and cultural elements, soon came to be constituted in accordance with the ubiquitous party key. The strings are in the hands of the government of the day; and in order to prevent any in-congruence between the direction of the IBA and the complexion of the government, if that should change, ten members of the plenum may object to the responsible Minister (of Education and Culture) against any resolution passed against their will. This is far removed from the studied distancing of the British Broadcasting Corporation from the government. However, in the context of the Israeli system the devices for maintaining congruence may be seen as a conflict-avoiding measure.

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Clause 4 of the Broadcasting Law lays upon the IBA the
task of giving "...appropriate expression of different
outlooks and opinions prevailing among the public", as
well as supplying reliable information. The balance
between government and opposition is considered by Elizur
and Katz (1980) to have been "studiously reflected in the
media", even through the long Labour reign from 1948-77.
But like every other Israeli institution the IBA is
politicised in its upper reaches, and like their newspaper
counterparts television journalists are often close to
political parties. Smith (1976; 201) comments that "The
entire atmosphere of Israeli television is bedevilled by
politicking". A number of changes in which obvious talent
was reckoned to be second to political sympathies were
part of a redress of balance after 1977 in the IBA, which,
in the Likud's eyes, resembled the press in being filled
with leftist sympathisers. 1985 was marked by acute tensions
within the organisation and its governing bodies between a
Likud-appointed Chairman, the plenum and the staff. Public
bickering and political manoeuvring to circumvent the normal
appointment rules over the appointment of a new director of
television services continued throughout the year.

The conflict between professional and political
considerations leads to a professional caution about news
and programmes which could be construed to have political
undertones, and an avoidance which tends to deaden news
presentation of "eyebrow editoralising" or personal comment.
Political sensitivities are acute. This is a milieu in
which the Chairman of the IBA could object to a broadcast
comment (harmless in itself, but containing the dangerous
word "morale") attributing the rise in price of meat to a
rise in the world market (confirmed next day from official
sources) as "potentially critical of government and poli-
ticisation of the news" (Roeh, Katz, Cohen, Zelizer, 1980;
168). Inevitably caution extends to any kind of experiment.

Attempts to steer a course between professional needs
and political perils produce a somewhat tortuous discussion
in Israel about the role and content of television broad-
casting. A limited experiment to broaden the basis of the
late-night news is discussed for almost two hundred pages,

with a good measure of linguistics and abstraction (Roeh,
Katz, Cohen, Zelizer, 1980). A study by Peleg of objectivity
in Israeli television news concludes that Israeli television
journalists have created a "paraideology" of news based on
an "enlightened liberal approach and a professional orienta-
tion" which is in fact an origin of bias, creating a
distortion in the coverage of reality". For this para-
ideology" they should substitute a "paraobjective", a term
which, for Peleg, "...well expresses the intermediate
situation in which there is no objectivity in the news, and
yet the news is not subjective in the usual sense of
intentional political slanting". What this appears to
imply is need for current affairs programmes, "...broadening
and diversifying both the news bulletins and background
programmes". A further conclusion is the need for "education
for critical consumption of the media" (Peleg, 1981; English
abstract 26-28). Peleg's conclusions that television news
constructs a product presented as reality but not quite true
to it are not new; but his line of thought illustrates the
preoccupation of some Israeli thinking on the subject, with
a degree of intellectual paternalism.

     The broadcast media are often the first with the news,
and must often use the information coming from leaks which
makes it intelligible; without the freedom of the press
to comment they do this with a minimum of interpretation.
Israelis, therefore, tend to draw their understanding of
events from the less inhibited press. Radio is the dominant
channel for news broadcasts, which are frequent, universally
heard on buses and in public places, and rapidly diffused by
interpersonal contact. Television competes almost entirely
on the evening news broadcast (Mabat: lit: Look); 94.5%
of Israeli households have television, and Mabat is estimated
to be watched by 97% of them, covering approximately two
million people, some 90% of the adult Jewish population.
(Source: officials of IBA). The Arab population has an
Arabic news service within its own IBA programme. Mabat
is supplemented weekly by an extended bulletin (Second Look)
and by an interview programme (Moked: lit: Focus) with a
figure of major public note. But radio, rather than
television, runs regular programmes on the press, the news

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behind the headlines, economic and current affairs.

The one television channel is divided between separate educational, Arab and Hebrew programmes, and subject to competition from cross-border programmes. It lacks time facilities and finance to develop, though a second (commercially financed) channel is under consideration. Television ranks behind personal influence and the press as the medium helping most with decisions (Survey results by Modi'in Ezrahi (lit: Citizen Information) quoted in Elizur and Katz, 1980; 196) Election campaigning on broadcast media is severely restricted by law, and the press takes the leading part in defining election issues. Elizur and Katz also draw attention (1980; 209) to the difference between the Israeli radio and television, "...more platforms for party rhetoric..." during an election, and the lead taken in England and elsewhere in Europe in "...identifying the issues, explicating them, and forcing the parties to take a stand on each. The politicians do not trust the broadcaster to do this job fairly or well...".

The political influences are in fact never far away, through pressures on the Chairman and members of the Authority, by restriction of funds to maintain dependence, public criticism by M.K.s and occasional calls in the Knesset by more inflammatory members of coalition or government to take over management of the organisation under emergency powers. For example a Deputy Speaker of the Knesset (Cohen-Avidov) presented a motion for the agenda on 7 July 1982 pressing "...the urgent need to put a stop to the lies and calumnies on Israel Television". The period was that of the Lebanon war when, though television reporting was of high standard, Israelis did not see on their screens the full coverage of the bombing of Beirut which was influencing the rest of the world, and prominent figures too critical of the war were edged off screen. Government pressures are aided by the relatively low public standing of the media. During the same period a television unit gathering views on the war in a pro-Likud area of Jerusalem on 26 September 1982 was physically attacked. Violent anti-media attacks have occurred elsewhere (Jerusalem Post, 2 August 1985, p.18) attributed to right-

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wing militants.

Pressures show no sign of abating. A display of
independence by the IBA in refusing to allow an emergency
provision of the Broadcasting Law to be exploited by the
National Unity Government in order to put over its economic
policy directly on television brought threats from both
Mapai and Likud sources to reshape the rules to allow the
government to issue instructions rather than recommendations
to the IBA (<u>Jerusalem Post</u>. 8 July 1985, p.1). The
Histadrut, the main party to economic negotiations with
the government, subsquently stopped by strike action a
Prime Ministerial broadcast (arranged instead within the
scope of a routine programme); television journalists had
complained that they were being made government puppets.
In October 1985 the Minister of Education (nominally
responsible for the IBA) used his powers to ban an early-
morning broadcast of a football match relayed from
Australia, on the grounds that it would encourage
schoolchildren to play truant, and that he thought it a
poor use of limited funds. There was no IBA reaction to
this ministerial intrusion into its management. (Direct
pressure a few months previously by the Home Secretary in
the United Kingdom which caused the BBC to ban a television
showing of a film involving IRA terrorists in Northern
Ireland had sparked off a protest from television journalists
which blacked out BBC services for a day).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

ISRAEL AND THE UNITED KINGDOM: SOME COMPARISONS

The differences between the United Kingdom and Israel
are so great in terms of history, development, size,
resources and populations that there is little point in
making comparisons of government and public information for
their own sake, even if there were any means of comparative
evaluation against different social and political environ-
ments. But comparisons have some common ground in relation
to two competitive political systems, of markedly different
characteristics, but to be clearly distinguished from
non-competitive systems. The object of such comparison
is not to attempt to form value-judgements about government
and public information, but to relate the characteristics
in each case to their bearing on the concepts of the
information cycle, response and steering within the
political system.

Political Features and a Basic Israeli Constraint

First some features of the two systems which have a
constant bearing on the comparison must be noted. We have
taken Israel to represent, at least until 1977, a multi-
party system with a dominant but never majority party and
ideology, firmly established in its founding history, leading
complex coalitions. The system is now moving towards
broader but more competitive political polarisation, in
which the dominant consensus has been significantly eroded.
The central features of United Kingdom government have been
exhaustively analysed over the years, from Bagehot onwards.
Beloff and Peele (1980; 1-8) identify some changes which
have been taking place. Since 1945 two major, centrally-
oriented parties, Labour and Conservative, have alternated
in governments which, though in an electoral minority, have

commanded a parliamentary majority, save for a short-lived
exception in 1974 (Beloff and Peele, 1980; 141). The
growth of a third, centrist force, an alliance of Social
Democrats and Liberals is introducing fluidity. Both the
United Kingdom and Israel have been passing through a period
of social and political change likely to bring stresses to
bear on the established political systems. The communication
channels between government and public, and the content which
they convey, must be significant variables in adaptation and
change.

The comparison must begin by noting a fundamental
difference in public information about government in the
widest sense. Confronted so far with an effective choice
between two parties, the British public knows very largely
what the policies of the incumbent government will be on
most issues, discounting the rhetoric of electioneering.
The coalition bargaining of Israel's complex governments
places a primary constraint on this information. The
declared party programmes will be compromised beyond the
usual differences between promise and performance by
elaborate, and sometimes secret coalition terms. There is
a constraint of information about policies and programmes
at the formative stages of the ruling coalition. A basic
information link of electoral choice is compromised, and
with it an element of accountability in the public mind.[24]

As political systems the United Kingdom and Israel
have an institutional similarity, in competing parties,
free elective processes, representative assemblies, cabinet
government ultimately dependent on parliamentary confidence,
extensive bureaucracies and autonomous media. They have
quite different representational patterns, deriving from
their electoral systems. Full proportional representation
in Israel produces an accurate diversity of party in the
Knesset, but lacks direct constituency. The British

[24.]An outstanding example occurred in 1977, when the Demo-
cratic movement for Change, whose election platform included
electoral reform towards a constituency system, split in
coalition negotiations. That half which joined the Likud
government effectively abandoned pursuit of the electoral
reforms which the party had strongly advocated (Torgovnik,
in Arian, 1980; 87-96).

majority, territorial constituency leaves minority parties under-represented in Parliament, but maintains direct linkage between M.P.s and specific publics. M.P.s also require some minimum personal qualities, beyond party affiliation and sponsorship, even if many of them are no less party nominees or nominees of particular interests (e.g. trades unions). Though the modern United Kingdom Parliament is built around party, it was not until as recently as 1969 that a candidate's party allegiance was allowed to appear on the ballot paper.

British governments and parties have not been intensely ideological; an excess of ideology risks a diminution of electoral base which may eliminate rather than merely reduce their representation. The Israeli system tends to encourage ideological factionalism, because it is not difficult for a small faction to pick up over the country-wide constituency the one per cent of votes cast which will gain a seat in the Knesset.

Government Information Potential

The bureaucracy is the main instrument in formation of government information potential. The characteristics of the Israeli bureaucracy have been discussed in Chapter Nine above. Beloff and Peele (1980; 220-37) emphasise the long history and growth of a central bureaucracy in the United Kingdom based on merit, closely cohesive and centrally controlled. Traditionally aloof from politics, even if class-oriented at higher levels by social and educational origins, and effectively free from patronage appointment, it has only since the late 1960's begun to accept party-nominated political advisers within departments. An administrative elite is able to develop a high quality of information intake and processing in the government's potential. A generally greater respect for government, effective enforcement, and less reason for evasion make this information base more reliable than the corresponding Israeli base, while the generally higher standards of administrative co-ordination must be presumed to produce greater added values. Insulation from close political interference in administrative tasks must also produce

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more complete and impartial conversion processes. It also facilitates sytemic manipulation in order to further bureaucratic policies and frustrate ministerial intentions (Beloff and Peele, 1980; 231-32). As a basic tool of government and a source of public information the United Kingdom information potential is superior to the Israeli in scope and reliability. Administrative policies at any one time are under uniform political direction.

Government Controls Over Information

Both systems have blanket restrictions and classification systems relating to national security. Michael (1982; 36-59) discusses the persistent criticism of Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, 1911 in the United Kingdom and its use to try and protect government from embarrassment rather than espionage. Embarrassment results from media disclosures, but in peacetime the United Kingdom has no specific media controls. Israel has the specific press licensing and censorship legislation inherited and continued from the Yishuv. The former is now rarely used, but the censorship, under military control, is in regular operation, in close co-operation with the media. In the involvements of Israeli politics and foreign relations it is by no means confined to military matters, and Goren (1979; Chap. xii) cites cases in which it has been evaded, defied or outflanked through foreign media. In her view, however, the censorship has not played a vital part in political life and press-government relations. The Ministerial Committee on Security, backed by penal legislation (Revision of Penal Law (State Security) - 1957; decree of June 1966) has been more concerned· with political aspects of secrecy. Generally, security retentions of information in Israel are more extensive than in the United Kingdom.

Both countries have privacy legislation under development particularly in relation to the use of computerised records. But this kind of retention is peripheral to the wider questions of government and public information.

The main reservations of information and its power-content by government are made under cover of political and bureaucratic discretion. In both the United Kingdom and Israel the range of discretion to authorise disclosures

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is undefined, and the fact and extent of retention are unknown; there is no access to sources. This is the principal area of manipulation and suppression for government seeking to minimise the transfer of power-content and negative potential to the public.

The United Kingdom's reputation for bureaucratic secretiveness has been slowly modified since the 1950's by pressures for more open government. Michael (1982; Chap. xi) details progress since the landmark decision of 1952 by the bureaucracy, under pressures, to publish inspectors' reports on which ministerial decisions are made in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Aided by the growth of vocal pressure groups, in a favourable climate of public opinion, the introduction of freedom of information legislation is now reckoned a matter of time. Important government papers on the subject have been published,[25] though progress was halted for the time being by the Conservative governments of 1979 onwards.

No organised impulse or interest exists in Israel for more open government. The secondary institutions which surround government and deal with it often have as much interest as government itself in manipulation and suppression of information. The press, though it may comment on particular retentions, shows no deeper interest of principle,[26] and no kind of public opinion is in evidence. The security background is inimical to more open government; Israelis accept government secretiveness as part of the system to which they are habituated. Discretionary retentions of information by government are rarely exposed to public pressures. Official declassification procedures and

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[25]. Notably Reform of Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 (Cmnd. 7285); Open Government (Cmnd. 7520), a "green paper"; Disclosure of Official Information: A Report on Overseas Practice (1979).

[26]. See Jerusalem Post, pp.3 and 8, 9 Dec 1985 on restrictive and unorganised declassifications, and the same source, pp.1 and 8, 1 June 1985 for contravention of the Archives Law by the Histadrut.

the Archives Law (1955 and 1981) are sometimes openly defied
by departments and institutions on which the central
disciplines of the British bureaucracy have never been
effective.[27]

In both the United Kingdom and Israel public access
to government information not otherwise communicated is at
official discretion, and Israelis would not expect co-
operation from a government department in giving it to them
without some special influence. Some basis does exist in
the United Kingdom, under the terms of the Croham Directive
of 1977, opening the way to disclosure of background papers
within the bureaucracy (fact was to be separated from advice).
Internal bureaucratic regulations and the Public Records
Act provide other channels (Michael, 1982; 216-17). These
official channels of access are not always enthusiastically
regarded by the bureaucracy; but they exist.

Leaks of Government Information

Authorised leaks of information are regularly used in
United Kingdom government for its purposes, but the machinery
of government is coherent enough to control information.
The seriousness with which unauthorised leaks are still
regarded in the United Kingdom illustrates their peripheral
place in the transfer of government information to the
British public. But whistle-blowing leaks arising from
conflicts of interest or conscience and duty, have increased,
to the embarrassment of government. The revelations in the
Ponting case in early 1985, and Ponting's subsequent
published account, throw light on the deliberate manipula-
tion of information in order to retain power-content within
government, at the highest levels of a government department
where political and bureaucratic echelons are in close
contact.

In Israel, as noted, Chapter Nine, the political system
could hardly function without profuse leaking, authorised
and unauthorised. This reflects the constitution of govern-
ment, its tendency to avoid controversial decision and the

27. See *Jerusalem Post* leader, 6 May 1986, p.8:   "Who Owns
the Facts?", on retention by Ministry of Health of details
of radiation contamination in Israel following the Chernobyl
disaster in Russia.

disarticulation and political distribution of parts of the
machinery of government to coalition partners. Leaks are
thus a normal part of the transfer of government information,
deliberate and from the most senior sources. They are a
constantly larger and more important discharge from
information potential than in the United Kingdom, and less
within government control. Leaks tend to be politically
slanted rather than administrative information, and are
thus an uneven basis for public information evaluation.

The release of government information potential
through departmental spokesmen isin both countries organised
on the basis of communication to media in official state-
ments and briefings in which the systemic influences within
government are brought to bear.

Information and Parliamentary Insititutions

Israel has, of course, no second chamber; but the
essential business of the United Kingdom Parliament is
carried on in the House of Commons, with which some valid
comparisons may be made. Beloff and Peele (1980) and Norton
(1985) between them give up-to-date accounts of the
constitution and work of Parliament, and discuss changes
which have taken place in the past decade.

British M.P.s have limited facilities and allowances,
comparable with those of M.K.s rather than with, say, the
remuneration and facilities of U.S.A. Congressmen and
senators. Norton (1985; Appendix 2) gives details. Like
M.K.s, M.P.s are able to carry on other activities; but
their time, for five days per week, is far more intensively
committed to parliamentary and constituency responsibilites.
Their territorial constituencies provide a direct input
from the public of all (or no) political opinions. Most
M.P.s maintain close constituency contacts, a source of
Questions and of contacts on casework with officials and
Ministers. Norton (1985; 73, 86-89) stresses the
commitment of M.P.s to the constituency casework, and its
importance as a source of information and feedback. Some
eight to ten per cent of constituents are estimated to
contact their M.P.s at some time, often with grievances
about government. British M.P.s have closer contacts
through their constituencies with the general public on a

non-political basis than their Israeli counterparts.

To inform themselves from parliamentary facilities M.P.s have at their disposal the very active and extensive Library of the House.[28] Apart from the many individual demands made, it prepares as a matter of course series of research and background papers on current legislation and topics of broad public interest which provide M.P.s with a constant basic briefing. The House Magazine, a weekly periodical for discussion, produced with Parliamentary approval, gives further background and discussion of parliamentary events to M.P.s and the interested public alike. Like the agenda documents of the Knesset, those of the House of Commons are complex and barely intelligible to the public. The daily agenda (known as the Vote) containing constantly updated detail and texts, is used within Parliament and by the media and interest groups, though it is also on public sale. A much simplified document, the Weekly Information Bulletin (specimen contents cover at Table 9) containing over twenty pages of agenda information for the past and coming week, with a complete background to business, is available to the public as a statement of the content and state of parliamentary business for which there is no parallel in the Israeli Knesset.

Legislative procedures are comparable, but they bring the complete matter of bills, after committee, under debate on the floor of the House. For major bills the whole House may constitute itself a committee. No M.P. is precluded at any stage from taking part in debate of a bill. Though legislation is determined usually on party lines, the level of information from internal sources which individual M.P.s are able to obtain and deploy is far higher than in the Knesset.

28.·On a basis of a very extensive library collection and a staff of about 100 - at least twice as large proportionately as the Israeli staff - the Library services about 50,000 requests for information annually, and gives written replies to over 6,000 information requests from M.P.s An on-line computer service provides reference backing (Norton, 1985; 172). Making all allowances between the House of Commons and the Knesset, the advantage of the former in information resources and backing is formidable.

TABLE 9 - CONTENTS OF HOUSE OF COMMONS WEEKLY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Saturday 8 February 1986

Session 1985-86 No. 11

Weekly Information Bulletin

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Compiled in the Public Information Office of the House of Commons Library

London	Her Majesty's Stationery Office	£1.75 net

THIS *BULLETIN* INCLUDES INFORMATION ON THE WORK OF THE HOUSE IN THE PERIOD
31 JANUARY - 7 FEBRUARY 1986 AND ON FORTHCOMING BUSINESS FOR 10 - 14 FEBRUARY 1986

The main differences in public information between the systems are, however, in the published outputs from United Kingdom Parliamentary committees, and from the House of Commons itself. No House of Commons committee has any executive power or role, and committees are not, therefore, involved in the day-to-day distractions and often random incidence of executive business which affects the proceedings and programmes of, say, the Knesset Finance Committee.

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be agenda-setting; but they do provide an agenda, and in depth.

All information arising from proceedings of the House of Commons is published. In 1983, for example, it included 884 issues of committee proceedings and reports and 628 Command Papers, many formal, but others (about 200) widely informative, covering subjects as diverse and important as:

<div style="margin-left: 2em;">

Democracy and Trade Unions (Cmnd.. 8778)

The Government's Expenditure Plans (Cmnd. 8789)

Public Transport in London (Cmnd. 9004)

Financial Management in Government Departments (Cmnd. 9058)

Policy for Roads (Cmnd. 9059)

Streamlining the Cities (Cmnd. 9063)

</div>

(Source: H.M.S.O. Catalogues).

Hansard, the verbatim record of House of Commons debates and proceedings is on public sale every morning while Parliament is in session, covering the debates up to a fixed "cut-off time" the previous evening (the House often sits very late into the evening, and Hansard is printed overnight). A weekly consolidation is also published. Any corrections are made in the bound volumes, which may appear much later and are archival. The Knesset Stenographic Protocol is actually a faster production than Hansard - it is not printed - but it is not a published document, though its text has virtually the same degree of authenticity.

The British public very clearly has an overwhelmingly greater degree of information from parliament than the Israeli public and accessibility to it, and the degree of difference is to be explained by more than the differences in historical development of two competitive political systems. Beloff and Peele (1980; 121-22) note an outstanding educative function of the British Parliament, in which many procedures and much information "...have their ultimate justification in the extent to which they make available to the public information about the workings and quality of the British governmental process", The Knesset simply does not conceive of itself in such a role. It is

in operation, however symbolic as a political institution, inward-looking, with a low regard for public information interests. There is no kind of parallel with the concern which the British Parliament has often made explicit since the mid-nineteenth century, that its papers and reports should be available to the public.[29] Its proceedings engulf, in committee, information of public interest and potential feedback value, whose absence must diminish the effect of the information cycle.

Published Discharges from Government Information Potential

Publication of the authentic texts of compliance information is standard in both government systems. United Kingdom availability is more diversified in publication of the texts of each enactment and instrument of delegated legislation, with periodic composite volumes. The Israeli system (like most European systems) relies on publication through an official gazette (Reshumot), with similar composite volumes. (In the United Kingdom the official gazettes have a varied history as conveyors of "state intelligence", but now carry a miscellaneous collection of minor official notices).

Secondary compliance information in the United Kingdom comes from a more highly organised bureaucracy, is profuse and detailed, readily available in print from government offices. The comparable body of information in Israel is relatively undeveloped, confined to a few departments. Close contact between public and bureaucracy, the latter's degree of social involvement, the possibilities of particularism and the advice obtainable from secondary institutions, all contribute to a lesser degree of felt need for this type of information. In both countries the media are more likely to be interested in contested interpretations, administrative mishaps and personal hardships than in the adequacy of the information as a class.

[29.] For example, resolutions of both Houses as early as 1835 following report by a Select Committee (H.C. Jnl. 1835). The sentiment was periodically repeated (e.g. H.C. 356, 1881). It is emphasised in the official circular on Crown Copyright (GEN 75/76, 12 August 1975). See also H.C. 509, 1976-77, on House of Commons Services, expressing concern that information about proceedings of Parliament should be fully available to the public.

A substantial output of political information in government documents is directly available to the United Kingdom public on sale, simultaneously with its availability to the media (parliamentary documents are normally given to the press in advance, but embargoed until they are presented to parliament and publicly available). This material can be studied by general as well as the special-interest public. The full and authentic texts are a check on media reports and the basis of alternative views and public debate. The range is determined departmentally, and consideration of it no doubt embraces those dimensions of power which lie in the ability not to raise undesired issues or to transfer power-content which can be withheld. But generally the diverse origins within government provide an extensive discharge from government information potential, and the range of information transferred maintains continuity and perspective in public information.

There is no real comparability of range and availability in the Israeli system, where a concept of systematic public information barely exists. Even documents whose importance demands public availability are often in media and "privileged circle" circulation long before they are available to the public. Meanwhile, the media and interested parties have had their say, and public perceptions have been formed. A notable example is the Bejski Report of 20 April 1986 on the bank shares scandal of 1983 (p. 170 above). It would be publicly unacceptable in the United Kingdom that the report of this judicial inquiry, made available to the Knesset Finance Committee, the media and governmental and closely associated circles, should not be available to the general public at the same time. In late August, 1986 the report is still not publicly available, though determined individuals can obtain it from official sources. The media and the public accept this as normal.

Attitudes and Expectations

The Bejski report is a current example (there have been others) of both government and public attitudes to the publication of government information. Israeli official publishing has been aligned to the special needs of nation-

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building rather than to systematic public information, and
lacks the dimension of government-originated material
readily available and formative of attitudes and opinion on
current issues. Agenda-setting by such means is not
developed. Controversial reports particularly are often
limited in circulation, if not retained within government.
Their power-content is not always retained with them but
finds its way to the public with distortions of passage.

The United Kingdom is habituated to a particularly full
parliamentary information output, readily available, and to
a well-articulated transfer of information from government
as an output of a cohesive and co-ordinated system of
departmental and ministerial discussion and conflict
resolution. Government information is regarded as reliable
and authoritative, and the many interest groups are close
enough to affairs to recognise the systemic influence in its
public presentation. A high level and quality of public
information from government, built up over many years, is a
public expectation.

The Israeli public is habituated to much lower levels
of information, and virtually none from the Knesset, with a
content of often dubious reliability, administratively and
politically. But the public is also accustomed to a stream
of leaks from political institutions and bureaucracy which
must make up much of the difference, and often gives them a
closer idea of what is actually happening in government than
their more officially and blandly informed British counter-
parts. But it is also more confused and dubious.

Public expectations are also related to feedback
channels. Public information can be used in the United
Kingdom as a basis for the exercise of countervailing power
through ready access to the centre. The Israeli citizen
has less interest in acquiring countervailing power, because
the channels through which it can be exercised are much less
effective. A consequent remoteness from government has been
noted by observers. The citizen's efficacy (belief that
access to the political system can be translated into action
and influence) is described as "astonishingly low" and
contrary to studies elsewhere (Galnoor, 1982; 330).
Etzioni-Halevy and Shapira (1977; 78) relate this to lack

of party and electoral sensitivity. Arian (1971; 67)
refers to a lack of individual conviction about personal
influence on policy. Israelis exhibit a high degree of
political interest, as evidenced by election turnout
(Galnoor, 1982; 330). But this interest is not carried
into participation, which Galnoor (1982; 362-65) describes
as responsive rather than committed, interested in personal
rather than political objectives, filtered and muted through
the established secondary institutions. Galnoor sees this
as a stabilising mechanism, carefully controlling and tuning
public interest to the preference of the political centre.
The result must be to help insulate the political centre
from the public as well as vice versa. Significantly in a
justification of Israel as a democracy, because its citizens
can have an impact on the steering,he has qualifications about
the free flow of information within the system.

The Public Linkages

The last stages in the outgoing cycle of information
from government, in whatever variety and volume, are its
conveyance to the public and the public's perception of it.
In both Israel and the United Kingdom the media are the
essential carriers of political information, while most
administrative information is communicated through the
bureaucratic machinery of government, attracting media
attention if it has some special news value.

The United Kingdom has autonomous media not subject to
the extent of formal restriction and less formal pressures
applicable to the Israeli media, and not closely associated
with government in voluntary restriction. Its press is
commercially rather than party-aligned and based. But
Curran and Seaton (1985; 119-121) comment on its movement
to a generally right-wing orientation, often out of sympathy
with public feeling on important issues and tending to
reinforce attachment to the status quo. During the same
period Israeli newspapers were moving into more radical and
oppositional positions, also at some odds with public opinion
on sensitive national subjects. Leigh (1980; Chap.2)
discusses the moribund system of D-Notices, a form of
collusion between media and government on security informa-
tion. But this has never attained the close co-operation
of the Israeli press with government through the Editors'

Committee. Leigh also discusses other means of manipulating the British press, including the use of privacy legislation, and of the Lobby system for unattributable briefing of accredited parliamentary correspondents. This is used by government as a channel of authorised leaking which does not exist on a systematic basis in Israel, where Knesset correspondents have no recognised Lobby. But they have close personal contacts in the Knesset and parties, and their reports, if more personalised, have more diversity.

The United Kingdom broadcast media play a part in explaining, as well as presenting political information, as independent commentators, far beyond anything which would be permitted to Israeli broadcasters. This most powerful of all media for reaching the public is kept under restraint in Israel by political considerations. The lack of diversity in broadcasting on the single television channel has so far muted debate on such issues. The official sanctioning of cable television services in August 1986 is likely to extend only entertainment facilities which will not raise questions of news and views.

The United Kingdom and Israel exhibit marked contrasts in outputs of public information within competitive political systems. Government in the United Kingdom is more publicly accountable and thus distributes more public countervailing power with information, in terms of informed public capacity to intervene in the political process, through more sensitive feedback channels. This countervailing power tends to be enhanced by moves towards some measure of freedom of information. Political stability has been maintained in a fairly even balance of two major parties, neither of them dominant or strongly ideological (though the tendency is towards more parties with stronger ideological elements).

The prolonged dominance of one party in Israel inhibited the development of government accountability, and thus of public information. Ideology remains a powerful force, but its tendency to extremes has been historically constrained by a now weakening consensus. In the developing realignment of political forces around the future character and security of the state public countervailing power is constrained by

deficiencies of public information and feedback channels.
Under pressures of development and survival Israel has
tended to maintain historic elements of information
constraint, distributing power in the circulation of
information mainly within an inner circle of institutions,
rather than to the general public.

An Illustrative Comparison: Northern Ireland and the West Bank and Gaza

The extent to which such differences may affect concepts
of response and steering, and possible effects on stability,
are considered in the following chapter. But divisive
issues are a potential source of instability, and public
information about them is an important variable in govern-
ment and public attitudes. Differences of approach may be
illustrated by a comparison of public information available
in the United Kingdom about the situation in Northern Ireland,
and in Israel about the West Bank and Gaza.

There is, of course, no exact comparison of the two
political situations. Northern Ireland is an integral part
of the United Kingdom. But there are similarities: religious
emotions and political sentiment are inseparable; terrorism
and violence are central - indeed, much more severe in
Northern Ireland; armed forces and police are heavily
committed; there are incompatible communities; a neigh-
bouring state is involved; no solution has been found;
the problem engages feelings and actions in the wider world.

The ambient public information situation about the West
Bank and Gaza has been noted in Chapter Ten, with the story
of the Karp Report. Table 10 gives a selection of documents
related to the political issues in Northern Ireland which
have been published by the United Kingdom government over a
decade. Few examples could suggest more clearly the
difference of approach in these two states to public
information, after making all allowance for differences of
territorial status and the settled existence for many years
of a Northern Ireland administration producing regular
information of all kinds.

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TABLE   10

NORTHERN   IRELAND : A   SELECTION OF PUBLIC DOCUMENTS ON
POLITICAL   ISSUES

Year	Publication
1972	Violence and Civil Disturbance in Northern Ireland in 1969. Report of Tribunal of Inquiry (Scarman) (Cmnd. 556).
	The Future of Northern Ireland. A Paper for discussion.
	Report of the Commission to Consider Legal Procedures to deal with Terrorist Activities in Northern Ireland (Diplock).
1973	Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals (Cmnd. 5259).
1974	Prosecutions in Northern Ireland. A Study of Facts.
	Northern Ireland Constitution (Cmnd.5675).
	Discussion Papers:
	1. Finance in the Economy
	2. Constitutional Convention - Procedures
	Report of the Law Enforcement Commission (Cmnd. 5627).
1975	Discussion Paper. Government of Northern Ireland. A Society Divided.
	Report of a Committee to consider, in the context of Civil Liberties and Human Rights, measures to deal with terrorism in Northern Ireland (Gardiner) (Cmnd. 5847).
	Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights. Annual Report for 1974-75 (H.C. 632, Session 1975-76).
1976	Courts in Northern Ireland. The Future Pattern.
1977	Northern Ireland Convention (Cmnd. 6387).
1978	Working Party for Northern Ireland .
1979	The Government of Northern Ireland. A Working Paper for a Conference (Cmnd. 7763).

TABLE 10 (cont.)

Year	Publication
1980	The Government of Northern Ireland. Proposals for Further Discussion (Cmnd. 7950).
1982	A Framework for Devolution (Cmnd. 8541).
1984	Review of the Operation of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978 (Baker) (Cmnd.9222).

Source: H.M.S.O. Catalogues.

Note: The list above is a selection of documents specifically related to political developments, issued by the United Kingdom Government directly and through its Northern Ireland Office. Many other routine but informative administrative documents are published through the Northern Ireland Office and through the separate Northern Ireland departments. The normal devolved Northern Ireland Government has been suspended for long periods.

PART   THREE

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INFORMATION, RESPONSE AND STEERING:

A LIMITED RELATIONSHIP

The Information Cycle in a Communications Framework

The essence of general systems theory on the Easton
model is the capacity of the political system for response
to stress and subsequent self-regulation by conversion of
inputs of demand into outputs, which maintain support and
meet or appear to meet demand. If the system cannot continue
to produce authoritative outputs, accepted by its members,
its persistence will be endangered. A continuous cycle of
information is integral to these processes. Within it,
feedback information is crucial to response. The many
variables within this model information cycle (in which there
is no need, for theoretical purposes, to attach or examine
values) may have major consequences for the operation of the
system.

Models derived from theory are abstractions whose
practical application can be evaluated only by testing the
degree to which the concept of the information cycle and
response survives the evaluation and interaction of the
variables in real-world contexts. Such an assessment is
possible only by reference to real-world systems in which
values are allocated - that is, power is exercised - related
to the theoretical model by means of some framework which
imports common structural elements and a communications
pattern within which the variables operate.

Meadow's political communication model (Fig. 3), based
on Easton's dynamic response model (Figs. 1 and 2), indicates
these factors in a sufficiently broad framework for the
purpose. It sets out a pattern of communication linkages
through which the passage of information between government

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and public (Easton's authorities and members of the political system) may be followed. In following it, influences on changes of form and content associated with particular stages and linkages can be identified.

Though Meadow's model serves to link theory with operation, it is inevitably over-simplified in order to represent main communications mechanisms, and cannot indicate the full complexity and interaction of the communications between government and public. Output and input channels are, of course, operatively facets of the same organisations. Government, groups and media are both effectors and receptors, but filtering and control are not exclusive to them; the functions occur also extensively within government, and to some extent within the public. Articulate participants and inarticulate spectators do not adequately represent the variability and topic-related fluidity of individual attitudes to information received or perceived. The lack of schematic representation of direct channels of communication between government and public is to be noted; it does not correspond with reality unless the absence of political significance is assumed. Parliamentary outputs of major political significance (for which no origin is indicated) may be direct. Nevertheless, the exclusive interposition of media and groups between government and public serves to emphasise the dominance of the channels and linkages through which many transfers of information from government to public are articulated.

The association of "information policy", with "press linkages" must be questioned as implying too positive a control of content and channel to apply to the diffused organisation through which government information is released for transfer to the public. These elements can be seen as contained within the systemic duality of government mediation in the framework of the hypotheses stated (p. 29 above). Within this it is an expression of the degree to which government accepts or implements obligations to provide the public with information. As evident in examination of information transfer in Israel and the comparison with the United Kingdom, this is more a matter of attitudes to the transfer of power-content than of deliberate policy.

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Gatekeeping and agenda-setting cannot be attributed solely to media. They occur within government also, though much of the agenda of public affairs derives from events whose incidence is not under government control. Government has a power of initiation from its information potential, as well as of timing and content, and media have a complementary power (which often emphasises the government advantage) of revelation, disclosure, the recall of issues and the use of timing and emphasis to try to create effects. Government and the media may co-operate, in Israel through the Editors' Committee, in the United Kingdom through the D-Notice system, to keep information out of the public agenda.

Seymour-Ure points out also the ability of media to affect the climate of politics, as well as the public agenda at specific times; he quotes a revealing political comment about the concern of the British Cabinet "...with the agenda that the press and media are setting out as the crucial issues before the nation at any one time". Intensity, the relationship between a communication and other communications going on at the same time, and frequency of communications about a subject, are noted as other influences in defining what media audiences (the public) think about (Seymour-Ure, 1974; 36-37). This does not, of course, necessarily define what they think. It is now well-accepted that their opinions may already have been formed or obtained from others.

Primary Feedback: Constraint and Limitation

Ex hypothesi (p.29), and as recognised by Downs and Apter (p. 12) there is inequality of information power-content in the political system in favour of government. Its effect is to restrain countervailing power. There is thus a fundamental constraint on the congruence of government's information potential with the possible feedback from public information. Moreover, systemic mediation within government is aimed at determination of supportive feedback.

Meadow's model does not distinguish feedback as such, and in actuality it seems doubtful whether feedback is clearly identifiable as a discrete phase of the information cycle. The antithesis inherent in the differing obectives of government and media within their working symbiosis (p. 68) must associate potential feedback so closely with initial outputs of information from government as to be almost inseparable from them. Journalists attempt to evaluate, criticise and penetrate government information at its point of presentation, in search of significance, implication and news values. The journalistic need for interpretive depth will have been foreseen before presentation and at government briefings (many government information staff are recruited for journalistic experience). A degree of "anticipated feedback" from media may already have modified power-content released and retained at the final stages of its transfer to the media, beyond the original intention.

Groups may also be in close enough relationship with governments to produce similar anticipation. This is particularly relevant to Israel where independent interest groups barely exist (pp. 105-06). But whatever their relations with government, groups are specially sensitive or receptive to particular kinds of government information, and media releases from government departments are often directed at specific groups.

Media, groups and government thus often collaborate consciously or unconsciously in primary feedback processes around the points at which government information is released for public distribution. Their selective biases may therefore be represented in what reaches the public as the "perceived policy outputs" of government.

The major feedback to government from information which it presents to the media for transfer to the public comes, of course, from the media themselves. It is systemic in their routines of publication or broadcast and in their organisational goals, which include comment and interpretation as simultaneous with and part of what now becomes public information through their instrumentality. The systemic urgencies of publication alone preclude testing public

reaction except in the most random and immediate ways.
Editorials and advocacy must reflect the goals, commercial
as well as political, and possibly the ownership of the
media themselves. These are involved, but relevant
questions. Curran and Seaton have noted unrepresentative
views of the British press (p.191 above). There are party/
press parallelisms in Israel, even if not rigorous.

Moreover, the content and form which media give to
information from government is affected by news values.
Tables 1 and 3 suggest that routine releases from government
are largely about routine matters. But items will be
treated by media on the basis of their value as news rather
than information. Information which government wishes to
have a news impact on the public in political terms is
communicated to the media through announcements and
briefings at the centre of government rather than in
departmental releases.

Chaffee (1975; 99-104) discusses the constraints on
content which media exercise as parapolitical systems.
Seymour-Ure (1974; 36) notes the emphasis of the British
press on the "Westminster view" of British politics, and on
parliamentary news deriving from the overlapping of journalism
and politics, the accessibility of Parliament as a news
source and its desire for publicity. There are differences
in weighting of the factors in Israel, but they arrive at
the same effects; the Israeli press tends to emphasise the
"Knesset/Cabinet view" as news, surrounded by the leaking
and speculation inherent in the political system and the
lack of centrally co-ordinated information for the public.

At the media publication stage there are no other
coherent feedbacks available to government. Ministers and
senior bureaucrats immediately study media feedbacks for
assessment of public reception of their information releases.
They are absorbed into government's information potential,
and thus possibly into the content and form of further
releases. The systemic mediation of the information
originally released, including any "anticipated feedback"
content, may not always be discounted, introducing into the
information potential an element of "self-fulfilling"

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distortion. Interaction of government information outputs
and feedback thus takes place within a limited area of the
information cycle, between politicians, bureaucrats and
media staff all involved in or close to political life, who
think mainly in political terms. The relationship between
filtering, control and decision is much closer than Meadow's
model (which is, of course, a statement of process rather
than relationship) indicates.

Feedback from groups, which may also be parapolitical
organisations in close contact with government, can be
considered in similar terms.

Constraint in Public Feedback: A Discontinuity

So far feedback to government has been considered in
terms of organisations rather than individuals. But public
information, after all mediation, is finally received by the
individual public. It is clear from the Israel/United
Kingdom comparison that the public may receive much more
information in some competitive political systems than in
others. They also receive it in different forms, related
to the characteristics of the system.

Chaffee (1975; 95) has suggested that the problems
of mediation in the minds of the public (of Meadow's
"perceived policy outputs") are not those of the "support-
oriented and authority-directed" Easton model, but relate
to the diffusion and understanding of information among the
members of the system (the public). Research has identified
an array of constraints that operate within the individual
members of the system to the absorption of political
information from the media; cognisance of government
decisional outputs is notoriously low and "Novel demands
are expressed long before the audience becomes widely
aware of them" (Chaffee, 1975; 100-01). Some conclusions
are consistent with Gandy's emphasis on government "subsidy"
of news provision, which Chaffee notes as crowding out
information which the public might find more enlightening
but requires more effort than the press is willing to
expend (Chaffee, 1975; 98). Further constraints are
identified in the media, considered as parapolitical
systems, and in the political socialisation of the public,

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whose view of information received from government depends
on its relevance to their orientation towards the political
system. In considering it they do not differentiate between
opinions and information.

Political information is communicated to the public
very largely through the media, and Chaffee cites
researchers, including Klapper (1960) and Hyman and
Sheatsley (1947), for now widely accepted evidence that its
diffusion is low. There is a paradoxical incompatability
between media concentration on political news and the lack
of public political involvement. The general picture is
one of diffuse public support, and "Diffuse support and
acquiescence simply don't lend themselves to the journalistic
procedures our national media have developed..." (Chaffee,
1975; 99, 107).

Chaffee's arguments and the evidence he adduces
suggest that feedback from public to government is secondary,
behind events - i.e. decisions have been taken without it -
and low in specific demand. Government cannot rest entirely,
however, on the primary feedback of media and groups. The
information potential must be supplemented by political
calculations of the effects of ultimate secondary feedback
from the public, especially on support. The uncertainties
of diffusion on specific topics, as well as in general, make
these difficult calculations. Seymour-Ure concludes that
"The significance of media - induced effects...will depend
on the virtually endless range of political questions in
which an inquirer may be interested". In relation to
elections media effects are wider and more complex than
generally indicated by studies (Seymour-Ure, 1974; 63, 239),
and in competitive systems elections are the public judgement.
Meadow's classification of the public who are not actually
participant and articulate as inarticulate spectators does
not negate the possibility that on topic-specific issues
they may both become articulate and seek channels for
expression.

Response and Steering

The diffusion constraints in the minds of the public to which Chaffee draws attention identify a discontinuity between media and public at one extreme of the theoretical information cycle. A different type of discontinuity can be identified at the government extreme, in response and steering.

Neither response nor its translation into influence on steering are imperatives of system theory, which simply accepts that failure to maintain support and meet demand may lead to breakdown and transformation. The system fails to adapt. Response can be seen as capacity for adaptation, and steering as the setting and maintenance of a course towards objectives which are the underlying information in the minds of those who control it. How far they allow it to be adapted by information which reaches them is a matter of political judgement. There is a selection process of subject and extent of change.

Steering is influenced at minimum by systemic deficiencies of government's information potential. It is also a function of continuity which governments inherit with commitments. Incoming United Kingdom governments of the 1960's found themselves committed to rolling five-year financial programmes. Successive Israeli governments find themselves committed to external debt repayments and defence commitments which pre-empt some two-thirds of the annual budget. Government balances all sorts of other pragmatic pressures.

Judgements of steering adaptations are essentially intra-government decisions in which the outcome is a vector quantity, a resolution of influences of which input and feedback from media, groups and general public are only part, conditioned by the initial extent and mediation of output. The characteristics of government and the body of retained power-content in information which has never been exposed to the modifying influence of public countervailing power are components of the decisional influences. Though in the widest terms thiss all comes within the scope of "information" within government, it suggests a discontinuity in the concept of input, output and feedback as a continuous and

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complete cycle of self-regulation within the political system.
Information, response and steering have a limited relation-
ship. In the end, the predominant influence is that of
government and its power to make decisions

An Alternative Framework

A framework of consideration which admits power in
relation to information and change may be more closely
applicable than the cyclical concept to real-world political
systems. The mechanisms of adaptation and change can be
expressed by reference to two limits which underlie transfers
of information and power-content, rather than in terms of
direct causation by information itself. The first is the
level of ideological "will" in government (pp. 43-44),
bureaucratic and political, determining the degree to which
it is prepared to take decisions in which information is
secondary to conviction. The second is the habituation
level of the public, or the extent to which it will passively
accept government decisional outputs as authoritative.
Beyond that limit stability and persistence of the political
system are liable to be endangered. The communications
between government and public are vital to the interactions
of these two variables.

A lowering of the public habituation level would
indicate a closer public concern about government decisions,
calling for more accountability information, channels
adequate to carry less acquiescent feedback to the points
of decision and greater expectation that it would be taken
into account. This implies a heightening of public
participation. A higher level of ideological will in
government would indicate a propensity to dogmatic decision,
which government would tend to shelter from criticism by
intensifying constraint of information, and thus of public
countervailing power and of political competition. The
higher the public habituation level, the greater the retention of power-
content. A low public habituation level would suggest a
substantial distribution of information power-content,
reflected in public countervailing power. It is suggested
that such a framework would take account of the realities
and balances of power which infuse the distribution of

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information from government. It would also throw into relief the adequacy of communication channels.

It would be possible for example, to view the Israeli and the United Kingdom political systems within this framework. Up to 1977 competition in Israel was limited by the dominance of one party in a context of consensus. The public habituation level was very high. Government ideology was strong. Though the pragmatic pressures and the necessity for coalition kept it from extremes, many decisions were influenced by ideology rather than information. Circumstances and the paucity of accountability information, which competitive pressures were inadequate to improve, could be used to exploit public habituation and give government an unusually free hand. From 1973 onwards, as consensus declined, the level of public habituation was dropping, driven down by media revelations of incompetence and scandal in government. Public countervailing power grew on these in the absence of feedback channels adequate to elicit response and change from government against its "will", until support was eroded. This could have resulted in instability and transformation of the system, but its structure was strong enough to absorb the shock. The peaceful transfer of power in 1977 is considered to have been a watershed of the system's capacity to persist.

From 1977 to 1984 the level of Likud government ideological will was high, but the falling level of public habituation did not succeed in extracting more accountability from government. The movement of the press into opposition was an indicator of lower habituation. Government's steering decisions, particularly in the economy, on the West Bank and in the Lebanon war of 1982, were screened by constraints of information. Disarticulated public communications failed to convey a strength of public feedback which might have modified ideological fixation, until the essential messages from the public had to find means outside the normal channels to force themselves on government - overt discontent in the Army with the dubious objectives of the Lebanon campaign of 1982 and unprecedented public demonstration against its outcome. The tendency was again towards instability, fed by an inflationary crisis, but

temporarily resolved in 1984 by electoral deadlock and a national coalition within which ideological extremes are held in check.

By contrast, the public habituation level in the United Kingdom is lower, competition produces an adequate variety of accountability and other information, and ideology in government has not gone to extreme levels. Far more power-content than in Israel is distributed with information from government. In consequence government response and steering adjustment come under closer public scrutiny. Thus when an unusual degree of ideological dogmatism appeared in the Conservative governments of 1979 onwards over monetary policies, higher levels of public countervailing power expressed in loss of support, together with more effective group and direct communications between public and government influenced a modification in the steering without potentially destabilising stress in the political system.

These are indicative examples which suggest applications to stability. High levels on both counts would suggest stability, perhaps extreme stability inhibiting change at an adequate pace to restrain the accumulation of un-recognised pressures. A low level of public habituation and high level of ideological will may be seen as potentially destabilising. The relationship can be considerably explored. Analysis and comparison developed within a framework of this kind in relation to types of political systems or to real-world systems and particular events or situations within them could throw empirical light on aspects of systems theory. The implied continuity of the information cycle which underlies the Easton-type model, so far as it can be related to an operative framework, is open to doubt except in the most abstract sense.

Structural/functional and behavioural views of the political system discussed briefly in Chapter One provide an association of information with power and communication. Apter, in particular, postulates the inverse relationship between coercion and information around which comparative analysis on the basis of the content, form and communication

of government and public information might usefully be
developed. But the theoretical systems are concerned with
the formulation of a complete theory in terms which it is
difficult to apply to real-world political systems.

Within the operation of the information cycle
constraints appear at every stage. Constraint of
information is a recognised phenomenon in competitive
political systems under pressures of security and survival.
Its function is to restrain public countervailing power in
the interests of firm and quick decisions which require
unusual freedom of action for government. There is a clear
connection with stability and external pressures.

The relationships of information to adaptation and
stability in normal circumstances are not so clear. But
both government will and public habituation tend to adjust
themselves to each other. A failure by either to adjust to
distinct changes in the other must be an influence either
towards less responsive stability, or towards an instability
in which government or public attempt to force their will on
each other, possibly by means outside the normal framework
of interaction. Otherwise, instability may result from
sudden and quite exceptional influences to which the system
has developed no normal capacity to adapt, such as military
disaster or economic collapse from internal or external
causes.

The constraints to which Chaffee has drawn attention
are in media information and its absorption by the public.
There is a suggestion that it is irrelevant to the needs of
politically active individuals. On the other hand, newspapers
survive by providing information relevant to the activities
of their audience. Research into the relevance of media
information, in relation to audiences expressed in politically
socialised categories, is suggested (Chaffee, 1975; 99-113).

This is an approach to the study of constraint in
communication and reception. But the possibility of reducing
constraint in government should not be overlooked. One
movement towards this has come from the public itself,
through pressure-groups, in demand for freedom of information,
access and open government. An aspect which has not come

sufficiently to attention is awareness by government itself
of its communications with the public and the moves it has
made in response, to which the self-descriptive term of
"outreach" can be applied. These have been mentioned
briefly above (pp.69-71). These questions merit further note
here, not least because they are indicative of movements
in the balances of government and public information. They
also call into question the so far virtually unchallenged
instrumental role of the media and the rapid technological
developments in communication. Finally they focus attention
on the role of public information particularly in the
political system.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

INFLUENCES FOR CHANGE

Access and Outreach

The mere provision of information by government in a
politically competitive system has an implicit dynamism,
expressed through interest groups and media particularly as
a demand for access to information beyond the government
screens, at its least mediated or unmediated point. That
demand has been intensified over the last two decades by
the growth of access legislation and practice, in the form
of freedom of information and more open government in
North America, countries of Western Europe and Australia.
The movement has been essentially political, from politically
conscious and participant groups, who "...see access as a
primary means of holding government publicly accountable
for its policies and actions" (C.S.D., 1979; 49).

The effects include reduction of constraint. Govern-
ments which know that information is ultimately accessible
are less inclined to conceal or unreasonably distort it.
Transfer of power-content to the public increases as
discretionary control of it by government is eroded, and
public countervailing power is augmented. Government retains
tactical advantage, because access procedures have limitations,
take time and retentions are not always obvious. Bureau-
cratic difficulties and evasions slow progress. But the
strategic advantage of government's information superiority
is curtailed, modifying the information inequality. More
complete and accurate information from government must also
tend to enhance the quality of feedback. So far as feedback
influences steering, it must make it more accountable to
information and less able to be arbitrarily determined by
the influence of unaccountable ideological will.

In the attention given to access by right or
concession, with its concentrated political interest as a
form of power-struggle with dramatic political quality,
other developments from government itself to provide more
information to the public by direct means have attracted
little notice. The term "outreach" has been used here to
identify this type of government activity, barely recognised
as a coherent phenomenon of communication between government
and public, because of its variety of mostly unremarkable
forms. It does not have the uniformity of concept and
practice of the idea of access.

The bases of action in outreach organisation are
found in the presumed alienation of the public from the
increasing complexities of government; in a government
duty to provide the public with "neutral" information
backgrounds relating to government concerns and decisions -
i.e. greater understanding of government; in government-
perceived need for public information which the media do not
carry; and in the similarly perceived inadequacy or
unsuitablility, or both, of the media as channels for the
information which they deliver as public information. These
justifications do not necessarily, or usually, occur in
combination, and outreach organisation to which they give
rise differs in form and objectives. As a phenomenon of
direct government information relations with the public,
outreach has a relevance to the diffusion problems (p. 201)
in which Chaffee has suggested fields for research.

A note on some forms of outreach and the parallel
development of access in some instances is appended.
Though the initiatives come from government, outreach
provides a form of access - the phenomena can be seen as
complementary - on a selective individual basis within the
form of service offered, in contrast to traditional and
indiscriminate discharges of mainly printed information in
limited fields, often needing further mediation.

Nevertheless, any government penetration of public
consciousness has significance as a form of political
socialisation. And the most comprehensive and forceful forms
of outreach to have appeared, in Canada and Australia, were
overtly political in inspiration (Appendix, p.iv). Their

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particularly distinctive feature was their positive hostility
to the media, which they attacked as a barrier to communica-
tion, irrelevant or unsuitable to meet public needs for
information from government. In both countries there were
special problems of the identity of federal governments
superimposed on largely self-governing sub-divisions. But
the aim of the Canadian outreach experiment to reach the
"unreached", who were claimed to be in process of alienation
from remote and complex government raises some questions of
functions of government and the role of the media as its
principal channels of public communication.

Outreach and Media

The antithesis of government and media interests within
the symbiosis which has developed may be seen as a modus
vivendi for differences ultimately irreconcilable within a
competitive political society with autonomous media, possibly
jeopardising the symbiosis itself. The Social Responsibility
theory of the press developed by the U.S.A. Commission on
Freedom of the Press (1947), discussed in Siebert, Peterson,
Schramm, 1976; 73-103, lays obligations on the press in
servicing the political system by, inter alia, providing
information, discussion and debate on public affairs. To
the extent that the press does not meet these obligations,
it is proposed that some other agency - and in the end that
must be government - should carry them out.

Hocking (1947; 182-93), puts forward the view that
"Government remains the residuary legatee of responsibility
for an adequate press performance". In pursuit of this
responsibility "It may enact legislation to forbid flagrant
abuses of the press which "poison the wells of public
opinion", for example, or it may enter the field of communi-
cation to supplement existing media". Though government
"...should not aim at competing with or eliminating
privately-owned media". Terms of regulation which could
cover such dangerously suggestive phrases as "poisoning the
wells of public opinion" are impossible to define, let alone
enforce, in a context of media goals, selection, headlining,
positioning, eyebrow-editorialising, comment and tone of
voice. Regulation on these terms must in the end be

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incompatible with the position of autonomous media in a competitive political system.

Nor can government itself be regulated. Even though the Commission recognised obligations on government not to manipulate the data on which public judgement is formed (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947; 8), we have discussed above the degree of manipulation systemically rooted in it. For both press and government the Commission linked rights and duties, but they could not be forced on the press without retrogression towards authoritarian ideas, in which government reserves the right in the end to say what public information should be.

The modus vivendi between media and government has been maintained by media self-regulation, often under some government pressure. But it does not always bridge the divergent interests, and the antithetical tensions erupt from time to time in various forms. In Canada and Australia the tensions threatened the continuance of the symbiosis; circumstances made them particularly acute. But accusations from government that the media misrepresent and distort information, or do not preserve a fair balance of opinion, are both widespread and commonplace. They can be seen in two typical forms: the well-known Agnew criticism of the U.S.A. press in the 1960's as event-dominated, to which Chaffee (1975; 99-100) refers in his discussion of the media as parapolitical organisations; and, for example, the complaint of the Likud government on assuming office in Israel in 1977, that the media were totally biased against it, and that it had no media channel to represent its views.

These are complaints not without substance. Peterson's view of the Social Responsibility theory of the press as still emerging, but as containing an obligation to provide the public with accurate, objective and interpretive comment - "full access to the day's intelligence" (Siebert, Peterson, Schramm, 1976; 73-103) is in some conflict with the view of media as parapolitical systems exercising constraints, or otherwise, in a specifically broadcast context, (Schlesinger, 1978) presenting the public with their own images of presumed actuality. Media have an instrumental power which Galbraith (1985; 166-69) discounts as partly illusory, accepted as

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successfully persuasive when in fact only reinforcive of belief. Nevertheless, he notes that it combines "...in organisation and conditioning the great modern source and the great modern instrument of power".

The suggestion of alternative government action in communication is both compatible with competitive political systems and of more practical interest to explore as a possible contribution to public information. Siebert's tentative conclusions (1948), in a passing consideration of the role of government in public communications were:

> "Let the government keep its hands off information content, let it be efficient but cautious in regulating the market-place, let it be unhampered in facilitating the work of existing media, and let use its own media when such use seems desirable......
> ....
> The possibility that additional information and ideas may reach the public is great".

The use of government media (or government use of media) to convey information direct to the public in competition with autonomous media would be a radical development of outreach; but in principle it need be no more than extension of the direct channels which government already uses for types of information which do not interest the media. Siebert's thought is not unthinkable. It can be argued that an elective government in a competitive political system has the right to present its information to the public direct if it so wishes, particularly if the normal media channels of communication are clearly seen to be inadequate or flagrantly unrepresentative, and unable to regulate themselves. Perversely oppositional media can be represented as infringing the right and the duty of government to govern, in which adequate provision of accurate information to the public is essential.

In competitive political systems (at least) government is regarded with suspicion as a source of information about its own actions and decisions, behind which are preoccupations of power. But this information is given to the media as the basis for their own transfers to the public, and they

surround it with their own preoccupations. Government cannot claim a right to run newspapers - and newspapers limited to information from government alone would hardly command mass circulation. But if suitable channels are available it is difficult in principle to deny government a right to use them to convey to the public at least the information which it conveys to the press, including some of the background briefing.

Use of obvious, broadcast channels by government is widely restricted, by political jealousies and fear of propaganda, to "service" broadcasts and specifically political broadcasts under strictly defined conditions. But rapidly developing communications technology provides new sorts of opportunities. As a medium for news, print is now more confirmatory than original; but it can be created and displayed on the video-screen, and recorded and recalled at will. News services are already offered on teletext, and in the United Kingdom, for example, details of new government publications are publicised through the same means. It seems neither reasonable nor ultimately feasible for government to be barred from methods of communication which can convey information direct to the public who may be interested to receive it. Outreach services use an established and simple communications technology, the telephone, but there is obvious potential in electronic channels, even for the secondary compliance information now distributed in the inflexible medium of print, with greater particularity for the individual and continuous updating.

Direct presentation of authentic texts would enable the public to assess the information presented in the media. But the Documentation Française has demonstrated now for many years that information backgrounds from government on political questions can be made available to the public, in parallel with the media, without either accusations of propaganda or usurpation of media functions. This form of outreach is capable of being developed beyond its present élitist audience, to supplement existing media in diffusion of government information intended for the public. It can draw on the superior information resources of the state.

The Documentation Française defined its position in relation
to the public in 1973:

> "The right of the citizen to information
> has as corollary the informative
> responsibility of the State.......public
> authorities resort to all available
> techniques of communication, and firstly
> to publishing.......State publishing is
> the documentation of the State put at the
> disposal of the citizen (Crémieux-Brilhac,
> 1973; 15, tr.).

The thought is not carried to its conclusion in terms of
communication technology; publishing is not confined to
print. The same source stresses the control of parliament,
the normal financial and policy oversights, and also the
control of the public, free to buy or not to buy. "On
demand" services in any communication mode are not
compulsory.

Siebert's idea may be one whose day has not yet
arrived, but tensions between government and media may
bring it nearer. So far, outreach experience suggests that
whatever the public attitudes to media news, there is no
demand for government to provide its own. The needs
are more bureaucratic than political. The political maturity
of the society would be fundamental to other extensions of
outreach. They can be visualised in the United Kingdom or
the U.S.A. They would not be feasible in a political
environment such as Israel's where there is no central
capacity for political agreement, nor adequate organisation
of central information resource.

No other outreach developments have shown political
involvement or potential. The most systematic forms of
outreach, in the U.S.A., reflect initiatives from government
about alienation from the bureaucratic rather than political
echelons of government, and earlier developments were well
in advance of the sweeping access legislation of the mid-
1960's and since. But the Federal Information Center
Program, the most widespread outreach organisation, was

roughly contemporaneous with access. The Consumer Information Program, instituted in 1970, has some linkage with what was, and remains a political concern in the U.S.A. about the position of consumers in relation to powerful manufacturers. But the material which the Program provides is not framed in any political terms. Smaller states, in Europe, have pursued minor forms of outreach, suited to their own administrative environments.

Any speculation about the possible effects of outreach on diffusion of political information from government encounters the constraints in the public's minds. Mainly passive public orientations to government may simply imply that concern is misplaced, and that much government information in circulation, however it reaches the public, is in any case superfluous. The profusion of information from government in the United Kingdom, for example, may simply help to create a public myth about the distribution of power. If information is not absorbed its power-content is not distributed, and the public's countervailing power is exercised for it by interest groups and media, whose power to influence government steering is not necessarily exercised on the public behalf.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

A study of this kind cannot reach precise conclusions.
But some broad conclusions which it suggests are summarised
below:

1. Outputs of information from government are
   distributions of power to the extent to which their
   content provides a basis for public evaluation and
   criticism, augmenting public countervailing power
   which may limit government's freedom of action.

2. Government therefores tends systemically to
   constrain the content and form of information which
   it distributes from its information potential,
   within the terms of the hypotheses formulated, in
   order to restrain power transferred with it.

3. Information undergoes systemic mediation within
   government for internal use and decision in relation
   to bureaucratic goals and standards and the ideology
   of political echelons. Information for the public
   undergoes further government mediation, on the bases
   hypothesised.

4. Political information is transferred to the public
   mainly through media channels which apply further
   constraints related to their own systemic charac-
   teristics and goals as parapolitical organisations.
   These may modify the power-content of the informa-
   tion which government distributes. Mainly
   administrative information transferred to the
   public through direct channels nevertheless often
   undergoes bureaucratic and other mediation, in issue
   or at the point of use.

5. Political competition requires information from
   government and is therefore a determinant of the
   extent of accountability and voluntary information

outputs from government.

6. Competitive political systems can vary widely
   in volume and content of public information. The
   "dominant party" history of the Israeli political
   system accounts for much of the disparity evident
   in comparison with the United Kingdom. Historical
   influences and government and public attitudes are
   also relevant. But it is clear that competitive
   systems of different kinds can maintain adaptation
   and stability on very different information levels.
   Full political competition and relevant public
   information tend to limit excesses of government
   "will", through the countervailing public power to
   which they give rise, and thus contribute capacity for
   gradual adaptation related to information available.
   Limited competition and notable information constraint
   tend to produce disarticulations of adaptation, but
   not necessarily instability.

7. Examination of the operation of the theoretical
   information cycle in a political communications
   framework suggests that primary feedback to govern-
   ment comes from media and groups. Its anticipation
   may modify government outputs at source. Public
   feedback is secondary, tends to follow decision and
   is inhibited by diffusion constraints associated
   with media and with public understanding of govern-
   ment outputs. A discontinuity in the theoretical
   information cycle is apparent.

8. Further discontinuity may occur within government in
   relation to information which it retains and to the
   overriding of information by ideological will. There
   is a limited relationship of information, response
   and steering.

9. Mechanisms of adaptation and change may be more
   realistically expressed within a framework of
   public habituation and government will, rather than
   by reference to the continuous cycling of information
   through the system. No decisive relationship between

information and stability is apparent, though there are clear connections.

10. The growth of forms of public access and of government outreach tends to limit government capacity for manipulation of information and thus to augment public countervailing power. Forms of outreach may also be seen as forms of access, but are concerned mainly with personal, administrative information.

11. The dominance of media as channels of mainly political communication is open to challenge within the terms of Social Responsibility theory, in a framework of competition rather than control. Forms of outreach are capable of political development within that framework.

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APPENDIX

OUTREACH AND ITS VARIETIES: A SUMMARY NOTE

Deliberate action by government on its own initiative to provide or improve information for the public by direct means is included here as "outreach". In its more passive forms outreach shades into minor bureaucratic action. In its more active forms it offers the public new, informal and personal forms of contact with government, through special communications systems. Some relevant comments on access to government information are included.

Outreach and Its Varieties

Outreach in the forms in which it can be identified is not congruent with access in areas of interest or as any answer to penetration of government. It may sometimes be an anticipation of incoherent demand in the political system which might ultimately find political expression. But it is largely an apolitical expression of the interests and functions of government as government, rather than a product of politics in which the very term "government" tends to have a pejorative connotation. Outreach is not normally definable in terms of specific political interests or objectives. It opens access to government information on a basis of individual selection rather than as a "blunderbuss" discharge subject to the mediation of extra-governmental transfer channels.

Any government penetration of the public, however, has political aspects. Though not always specifically associated with forms of access, outreach is sometimes equivalent to a variation of them, instigated and controlled by government, and therefore not free from the considerations of power and

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authority which run through all government communication with the public.

An early form of outreach appeared in the U.S.A. in 1935 as a result of Congressional pressures which established the Federal Register as an obligatory channel for accurate communication to the public of the then rapidly growing body of administrative law. Later provisions (1946) established mandatory periods for public comment before adoption of certain kinds of proposals - a measure of public participation. The rapid post-1960 growth in environmental, health and safety and consumer safety legislation multiplied the range and numbers of individuals and interest groups able to intervene administratively or legally in bureaucratic processes opened to them in the Federal Register. Its Office also has responsibilities for clarity of language used, adequate preamble statements, explanations of purpose and critical dates of applicability. It goes far beyond the cursory mention of it in a British official survey as equivalent to the United Kingdom's Gazette (C.S.D., 1979; 24).

Very extensive information content is thereby delivered into the hands of the U.S.A. public, mainly through interest groups, but not unused by individuals. Chaffee (1975; 97) comments on the limited coverage given by the media to the conversion of political inputs into proposed legislation, because of time and space requirements which media "gate-keepers" reject in favour of more immediately newsworthy material - a source - imposed constraint on public information in the media channels. Direct communication by government through the Federal Register counteracts this kind of constraint, though without the media trimmings of comment. The Office is also responsible for an information counterpart, the U.S.A. Government Manual, an uninmaginative title for the most comprehensive guide to government organisation and information sources to have emerged from any government, designed as a public tool for penetrating the U.S. bureaucracy and the information available from it.[30] The essential

[30] A brief historical account of the Federal Register system and relevant legislation appears in the Document Drafting Handbook, a guide to federal departments, available from the Federal Register Office.

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purpose of the Federal Register group of publications, to keep the public informed about the decisions and proposals of government, is consistent, of course, with general U.S.A. concepts of checks and balances in government.

The far-reaching U.S.A. legislation on Freedom of Information, a penetrative series of measures for public access, dates from as late as 1966. The investigative traditions of American journalism played a large part in these. They cover different ground and experience has shown them to be abused in some ways by large corporations. The mere existence of the legislation often makes resort to its legal provisions unnecessary for the media. Outreach organisation from government was first in the field, and its importance as a direct channel for public information implanted in the bureaucracy with independent powers on the public behalf is generally overshadowed by the more politically exciting Freedom of Information legislation.

The U.S.A. was also the first in the field with a form of outreach specifically aligned to the difficulties experienced by the individual public in dealing with government agencies. The Federal Information Centers were initiated by government in 1966 to improve the public accessibility of government. They work mainly by toll-free telephone (almost 70% of enquiries),guide individuals to the correct government office or source to deal with their problem,and monitor a proportion of enquiries for effectiveness. The benefits are reciprocal - the public receives quick, personal and verbal guidance, mainly at the end of a telephone line; government is able to consolidate enquiries to produce useful feedback to improve administrative processes. Since its foundation the Federal Information Center Program has operated from the Federal buildings to be found in most American cities.

There are other kinds of U.S.A. public information activities e.g. the Consumer Information Program providing a special series of publications. But the Federal Register organisation and the Federal Information Centers, both set up in relation to no particular political controversy but as a widely perceived public need, epitomise the purposes of outreach information organisation in the U.S.A. They bring

important government information to the notice and use of the collective and individual public, which would not receive it at all or in easily usable form from the remoter bureaucratic organisation. These are cognitive rather than motivating information outputs of government, though the items of the public agenda implicit in much of the <u>Federal Register</u> notices may have some motivating effects.

We may contrast with this the ambitious outreach services set up in the 1970's in Canada and Australia, of which the Canadian experiment was the prototype. Cherns (1980) has emphasised its essentially partisan political origins and involvements with political and communications theorists around the themes of "participatory democracy" and "reaching the unreached" in Canadian society, over the heads of the media. The speedy collapse of Information Canada, an inflated outreach activity, seen as a political instrument without a proper role in government organisation. followed from the politically controversial circumstances of its establishment and the hostility of the press. But an Enquiry Service, in which the emphasis was on toll-free telephone contact, found a public need, and remained, with the unqualified endorsement of a Canadian Senate Committee which considered it to be "...among the most valuable and potentially most significant of Information Canada's opera-tions, from the point of view of effective contact between Canadians and the federal government". The Committee pin-pointed the advantage:

> "To many people the prospect of writing a letter to officialdom is uninviting, and presenting oneself to a bureaucrat in order to obtain information is even more intimi-dating. Seeking information by telephone is an anonymous process, it is faster, and it is much less inhibiting to those whose standards of literacy make written communication difficult" (Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, 1974; 28).

Canada is, of course, a federal state, and the Canadian Provinces profited by the example of Information Canada, mainly by strengthening their information services for the media , rather than competing with them, but particularly by setting up or extending toll-free telephone enquiry facilities

until by 1980 six major Provinces of the ten had these in operation and another two had centralised departmental arrangements. There were parallel developments in access legislation, in which the Provinces were generally ahead of the federal government, which legislated on access to personal information in a Human Rights Act in 1978, but did not adopt full access measures until 1981.

The feedback through which Information Canada had hoped that Canadians would express their views to the federal government did not materialise in any significant form. The political channels continued to absorb these. But adminis- trative rather than political feedback could be valuable. Canadian Provinces were able to identify certain departments and activities which caused undue volumes of enquiries, and to remedy the administrative deficiencies disclosed. Costs per telephone enquiry proved surprisingly low. Other admin- istrative improvements, such as compilation of informative handbooks for the public were actuated (Cherns, 1980; 54-55).

Outreach developments in Australia followed the Canadian pattern, in the establishment of the Australian Department of the Media in late 1972, an "instant government" creation of the Federal Labour government which had just assumed office after a long exclusion. Cherns (1979; 36-44) gives an account of its organisation and development, which included the establishment of telephone enquiry services. These dis- appeared with the Department in the dissolution of the government in 1975. The climate of Australian politics did not let any vestige of the Department of the Media remain. But as with the Canadian Provinces, the Australian States developed enquiry services while avoiding the political con- troversy of comprehensive government information services. The highly concentrated Australian urban populations and the heavy inflow of immigrants from Southern Europe into Melbourne particularly were creating new types of information needs - indeed some States were ahead of the federal government in providing them. By the end of the 1970's, of the five major States (excluding the Northern Territories and Tasmania) only Queensland, with a notably reactionary govern- ment, was without active telephone enquiry services,

combined with other information activities. Victoria had
developed an information handbook for its immigrants -
Migrants' Melbourne - which was a model of its kind, associated
with a Community Services Centre. Australian circumstances
lend themselves to highly localised developments by State
governments.

The states of South and South-eastern Europe have poorly
developed and mostly formally bureaucratic forms of informa-
tion transfer between government and public, outside the
routines of contact between government and media. So far as
there are organised government information services they
provide for the needs of government rather than public, though
Italy has a considerable output of official publishing, based
on data from public sources, directed at the media and a
variety of "cultural" and educated publics. General standards
of education in these areas are not high, and in Italy par-
ticularly state organisation is confused by a multiplicity
of virtually autonomous government authorities. Alberani,
in Johansson (ed. 1984; 107-49) gives a bibliographic
account of the confusion of official publishing. There is
neither access nor outreach legislation or activity. The
one-party, Soviet-dominated states of Eastern Europe hardly
enter this kind of consideration.

In Western Europe varied patterns of access, and some
outreach activities have developed. C.S.D. (1979) and
Cherns (1979) give details. The Scandinavian states, with
small populations, strong local organisation and systems of
government which provide for prolonged consideration of
legislation by consensus rather than conflict, have all
adopted forms of access legislation - indeed Sweden, where
access rights have been entrenched in the constitution since
1766 is the world's example, though Denmark's and Norway's
legislation dates only from 1970. These states have felt no
need of outreach activities, though they all took steps in
the 1970's to improve the quality and coverage of their
government information organisations. Communal divisions in
Belgium have impeded the development of more than formal
official information organisation, and there is no demand
for access organisation. Nor have any such needs been felt

in the highly devolved cantonal government of Switzerland.
Developments of any significance have been confined to the
Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, France and
the United Kingdom, and take no common forms. The European
Communities and European Parliament have had no impact in
these directions. Elsewhere,Finland and Austria have adopted
access legislation.

The Federal German Republic has adopted very limited
access legislation. Its official publishing is poorly organ-
ised for public access, and complicated by the federal con-
stitution. But the Federal Government has an important Press
and Information Office, and a Parliamentary Information Centre
has been active since 1972. A Federal Centre for Political
Education provides a significant output to broadcast media
and in published material, but in terms of civic education
rather than specific information from government. A feature
of federal organisation with information functions is ex-
tensive and largely indiscriminate free distribution of in-
formation material about government activity and legislation.
This approaches a haphazard and unspecifically targeted form
of outreach on government criteria rather than expressed
public need or selectivity. The system has been under re-
view.

In the Netherlands access pressures which began in the
1960's "...as a result of the general increase in the public's
wish to get a better grip on the opaque machinery of govern-
ment" (C.S.D., 1979; 39) resulted in access legislation in
1978, encouraging release of more information by government,
but stopping short of recourse to the courts. There is,
however, a well-developed information system in government,
meeting individual requests, which substitutes for more
positive forms of outreach.

The United Kingdom has made gestures towards access
legislation and the reform of sections of its Official
Secrets Act which a series of contentious prosecutions have
brought into the limelight, and public (and judicial) dis-
favour. Further progress awaits a more sympathetic govern-
ment. The history and the officially argued pros and cons

are, however, set out in a Green Paper (Cmnd 7520) which is an interesting example of the operation of our basic hypotheses in its presentation of the government view. Leigh (1980) and Michael (1982) give popularised but comprehensive accounts of the ambience of official secrecy and moves towards more open government.

Outreach services in the United Kingdom are non-governmental and mainly problem-solving rather than purely informative, in Citizens' Advice Bureaux and similar organisations, with some funding from central or local government. Apart from the accessibility of departmental office networks at which official information can be obtained, often in printed form, the United Kingdom government prefers to work through such services. Overt and direct political communication with the public is rare enough to be remarked: e.g. in recent years incumbent governments have organised house-to-house distribution of pamphlets specially commissioned to present the various cases in connection with referenda on entry into the Common Market (1975) and devolution of government powers to Scotland and Wales (1979). These questions cut across normal party lines and conflicted with the traditional doctrines of collective cabinet responsibility; the Labour government cabinet was deeply divided on the first, beyond the normal possibilities of resignation of dissenting members (Beloff and Peele, 1980; 25). Such occasions are rare enough to provoke no opposition from the British media to what might have been seen as government propaganda, and government took care to avoid that accusation. But apart from the constitutional issues involved the incidents have an interest in the light of Siebert's suggestion of direct government communication with the public in competition with the media.

In the Documentation Française France has developed a unique government service with outreach aspects, whose origins reach back to 1942. What must be the most intellectual statement about government information ever to have come from a government organisation, <u>La Documentation et l'Édition d'État</u> (1973) expresses a positive philosophy of government and public information. Detached from the political

involvements and origins which confused Information Canada
a generation later, it links the power of computerised in-
formation-processing in modern government to what we have
described as government's information potential and to the
public right to information, the responsibility of the state
to inform, the need to inhibit information monoply by the
state and to prevent abuse of information power by those in
a position to manipulate sources and to "prefabricate"
decision (i.e. to manufacture consent). This philosophy is
given expression in an organisation - La Documentation
Française - superimposed on the normal government apparatus
of departmental publishing and information, with an output
of documents and specialised library facilities which pro-
vide the informed citizen and "official circles" with a
complete background on current political, social and econo-
mic problems. In the nature of its outputs this organisation
caters for an intellectual and political elite, a tacit
recognition that the philosophy of government information
expressed is largely confined to the fairly narrow range
of the politically aware. But the expressed aims of ob-
jectivity and impartiality, as a service of the state re-
flecting neither individual nor corporate interests, and
not an instrument of propaganda, have met with remarkable
success. The impartiality of the organisation and its out-
puts has never been questioned, notwithstanding its formal
position under the Prime Minister's Office. The price is
an understandable disinclination to deal with current contro-
versial topics.

A more popularly based form of outreach, comparable
with other outreach productions, comes from another organi-
sation within the Prime Minister's Office and directed at
information within the administration rather than outside -
the Service d'Information et de Diffusion. In 1978 it
published through the Documentation Française the most com-
prehensive guide to the public on their administrative and
personal contacts with the state to be found in Europe or
elsewhere. The success of this publication (<u>Le Guide de
vos Droits et Démarches</u>) as a best seller marks not only
its qualities but the extent of felt public need for the
information.

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A peculiarity in adoption of access legislation in France, contrary to all experience elsewhere, was its origin in internal government pressures, in a bureaucracy notorious for its restrictions and secrecy. The Documentation Française was intimately involved in this administrative revolution, though access is monitored by the Conseil d'État rather than the courts (Loi N° 78-753, 17 July 1978, chap.1; Décret N° 78-1136, 6 December 1978). A United Kingdom report remarks with faint surprise:

> "...there does not appear to have been a sustained campaign...against administrative secrecy..............There were pressures from several interested groups for more openness in government but the adoption by the National Assembly of the new law in July 1978, with a chapter added on provisions for access came somewhat unexpectedly" (C.S.D., 1979; 36-37).

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