

but a model for all the others in its professionalism and skill. This tribute was from an official of the Department of External Affairs at an open conference on pressure groups in 1982 organized by the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Other authorities detailed the monetary and informational resources at the disposal of the C-IC, the rapid communications network linking almost all Canadian Jews, and the intelligent, seemingly cooperative approach to politicians and officials adopted by the C-IC staff. One reported that they are in daily communication with relevant External Affairs officials, and they can on occasion provide information on Middle East developments more rapidly than can Canadian diplomats serving abroad. The C-IC works closely with the Israeli embassy and organized Jewry in other countries, especially the United States. Despite its resources and skill, however, the C-IC could not exercise its considerable influence over Canada's policies without the basic sympathy, or indifference, of the Canadian public and the opportunism, or ignorance, of Canadian politicians.

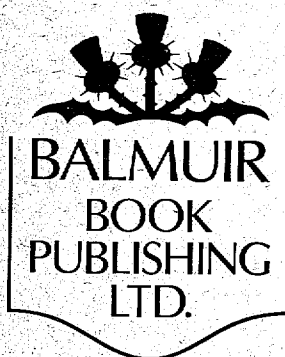
The parties probably exaggerate the significance of the Jewish vote. In several Toronto and Montreal seats that vote varies between fifteen and twenty-five percent. Even where smaller, it may be decisive in a close vote. It is less clear, however, that the Jewish vote can be swung in its entirety on a foreign policy issue. And Canadians of Arab origin are more numerous than is popularly supposed; Arabic is now the third language in Ottawa and non-Arab Moslems, such as Pakistanis, tend to identify with their coreligionists in the Arab-Israeli dispute. The Arab community is faction-ridden and poorly-organized. Compared to Canadian Jewry, its lobbying is pathetically amateurish. Some Arab-Canadians, including many of the Lebanese Christians, are not even sympathetic to the cause of the Palestinians. The second generation Moslem-Canadians, however, tend not only to be more attuned to the Canadian political culture but also more committed to political action. It appears significant that whereas Joe Clark may have secured one or two seats in Toronto with his 1979 Jerusalem promise, the only seat won by the Liberals west of Manitoba was one in Vancouver containing a large number of Pakistani immigrants. Professional analysts tend to agree that attempts to gain seats by exploiting views on the Middle East are almost certain to be futile.

Canadian politics supervenes

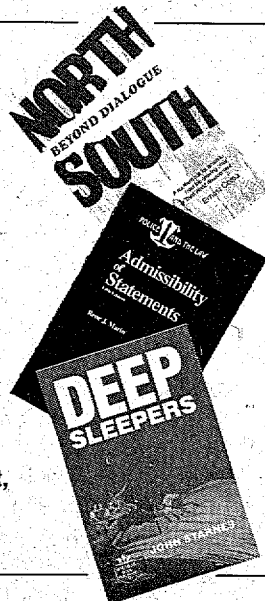
The Jerusalem issue was not an instance of C-IC initiative or pressure. The Committee was greatly concerned about Jews in Russia, and anti-boycott legislation, but only a minority believed it would be wise to lobby for the Embassy move. Rather Clark's promise was a blatant attempt by a politician to gain the votes of an ethnic minority, and many Jews resented it. Clark himself believed that opportunism and principle coincided — that the gesture would not only win votes but improve the consistency of Canada's Middle East policy. We had long proclaimed our support for Israel, he thought, without ever doing a thing to demonstrate it. Anyone in the UN, or the Department of External Affairs, could have told him that the precise opposite was closer to the truth — we had been proclaiming our objectivity but acting in a pro-Israel manner.

Clark's ignorance of the Middle East, and opportunism, are widely shared by Canadian politicians and account in large part for their susceptibility to pressure from the Zionist lobby. As of summer 1982, however, attitudes appear to be changing. More MPs from all parties are critical of Israeli policies, especially its brutal attempt to destroy the PLO in Lebanon, and object to the bias in Canada's official posture. A loosely-structured group of parliamentarians, academics, ex-diplomats, journalists and other Canadians is beginning to provide the government with an alternative to the C-IC as a source of information on the Middle East, and of policy advice. Prime Minister Trudeau reacted with exceptional harshness to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and one of his three external affairs ministers, Pierre DeBané, indicated that the Cabinet would consider sanctions. This possibility was quickly rejected, however, by Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan whose characteristic concern for human rights and the underdog appears not to extend to Palestinians; nor does he worry about being perceived as subservient to Washington — almost the contrary.

On the other hand, public outrage at the excesses of the Begin government, a sentiment apparently shared by many Jewish Canadians, seemed likely to accelerate the slow evolution towards a more balanced and effective Middle East policy, one in line with the wise recommendations found in the 1980 report to the Clark government by Robert Stanfield. □



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