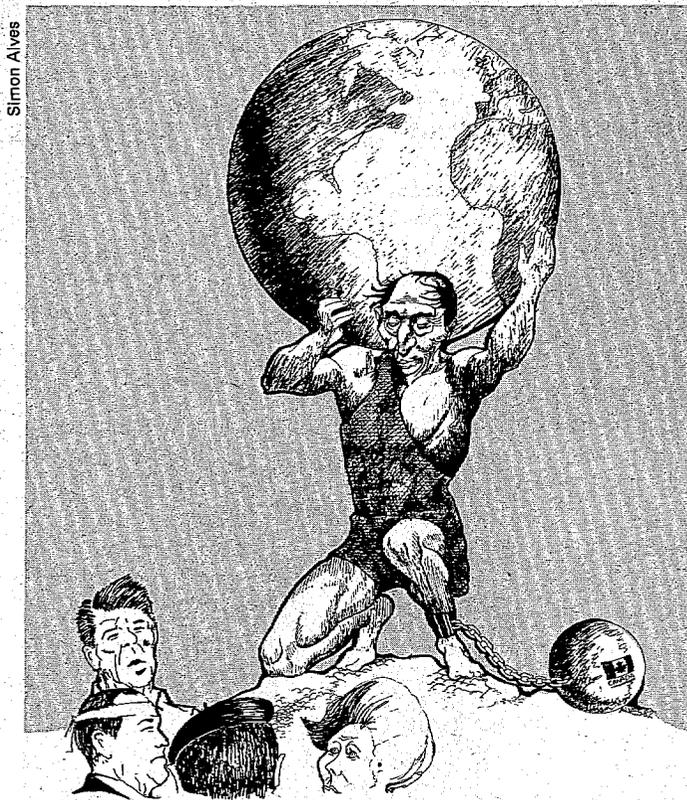


## Frustrations of a "Minor Prophet"

idea behind it was the same as other Summits: to isolate the leaders from their staffs and help them to "get together." Informality was an essential element of that meeting and, judging from what we know of Pierre Trudeau's personality, one may expect that the Guadeloupe formula is his preferred one. Unfortunately Canada is not part of the club of superpowers and Trudeau was not invited.

From Montebello to Guadeloupe, there is one ingre-



dent Trudeau is interested in: the "chemistry." This word, frequently heard in background briefings by officials after the meeting of leaders, is synonymous with success. This "chemistry" means two leaders do understand each other better and can probe beyond their differences. It is that "chemistry" which made Camp David a reality. It took this special ingredient — Begin and Sadat getting along very well — before the drafters could start to work on the accord. This "chemistry" explains too why relations between Pierre Trudeau and Ronald Reagan are much better than the formal relations between the two governments, officials and ministers. This is probably why Pierre Trudeau, who is more at ease in exchanging ideas than in arguing over legal texts, does prefer the Montebello formula. Incidentally, it may also explain why Pierre Trudeau usually obtains better results over an informal lunch at 24 Sussex Drive than in a crowded and public federal-provincial conference.

### The "Minor Prophet"

Canada is not a superpower and expresses no interest in playing a major role on the international scene. "We have no influence there," one can hear very often in the

corridors of the Lester B. Pearson building. At times, it means "We have no interest." But for Trudeau, not leading a superpower should not be a handicap. The Prime Minister said recently, in Yugoslavia, that "Canada believes in the importance of ideas and values as influencing the events in the world, rather than in armies and the nuclear forces of the superpowers." This is an assertion that fits Pierre Trudeau more than it does Canada, and it may explain why he is sometimes so frustrated by Summits. The presence of Ronald Reagan — a man who certainly believes in military power more than in the importance of ideas — has not reconciled Pierre Trudeau with international conferences. And the NATO forum is not a place where ideas and values are welcomed.

Thus, there is a question many Canadians ask themselves each time Pierre Trudeau leaves the country for a long tour abroad: "Why are we spending so much time — and money — to participate in conferences where we have — Trudeau admits — so little influence?" There is a sacred principle in diplomacy — which incidentally may explain the success of so many embassy receptions — which is: "It is better to be there than not to be." It is not a matter of influencing others but a matter of gathering information which, in turn, will help Canada to cope with others' actions. Then, there is also some domestic benefit — even political — for Pierre Trudeau and the Liberal Party, to be seen with leaders of the world. To underline this (a contrario) one only need recall the damage Joe Clark suffered by appearing to fail in his first world tour.

At any Summit he attends, Pierre Trudeau tries to show that "ideas and values may influence events in the world." Unfortunately, Pierre Trudeau is seen as a "Minor Prophet" by his colleagues. For example, the day after the Versailles Summit, the international edition of the *Herald Tribune* ran a cartoon with Trudeau as a teddy bear in the hands of Ronald Reagan. This is the way Europeans see Canada: a plaything for the American eagle.

So one concludes that either Pierre Trudeau is leading the wrong country, or Canada is pursuing the wrong policy. For in gatherings where superpowers — and Canada — attend, "armies and nuclear forces" will always overcome "ideas and values."

Last spring, Trudeau praised Yugoslavia for leading "a group of nations which can look objectively, without having political hangups against one side or the other . . ." It is obvious that the position of Yugoslavia is more comfortable than that of Canada. Trudeau — if not Canada — has no "political hangup" either. But Canada is seen as following others while Yugoslavia takes the lead of the non-aligned countries. There is little doubt that in a Summit of non-aligned countries, Trudeau would be seen the way he is among the big nations — as a very respected leader. But is it not his problem that Canada does not want to be a leader? That is, Canada does not want to sit at the appropriate forum. Not willing "to have any influence there," may be seen as a silent complicity by other countries — thus the cartoonist's vision of Reagan's teddy bear. So, unless he can change that fundamental premise of Canada's foreign policy, Trudeau will remain frustrated with Summitry. □