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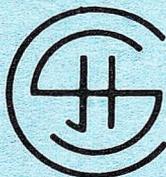
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NUMBER 1

	PAGE
FRED TISCHLER Canada, The Middle East and the Arab-Israeli Conflict	1
DAVID H. GOLDBERG Interest Groups and Foreign Policy Making: Canada and Palestine, 1946-1948	26
BEN KAYFETZ The Toronto Yiddish Press	39
BOOK REVIEW Irving Abella and Harold Troper: <i>None Is Too Many</i>	55
Reviewed by Robert Bothwell	

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Canada, The Middle East, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

FRED TISCHLER

Résumé

L'auteur de ce document a fait une recherche qu'il présenta dans ce Journal afin de clarifier l'attitude du Canada par rapport au Moyen-orient et au conflit israélo-arabe.

Nous nous permettons de donner quelques extraits significatifs et des plus révélateurs, relatifs à l'attitude adoptée par trois Premiers Ministres du Canada nommément: Mackenzie King, Lester B. Pearson et Pierre-Elliot Trudeau, afin d'illustrer la nature quelque peu complexe des rapports entretenus. Ce ne sont là que des extraits et pour bien saisir le tout il faudrait lire le document au complet pour pouvoir s'en faire une idée claire et précise.

* * * * *

La politique du Canada au Moyen-Orient peut se diviser en trois phases distinctes, dominées par trois grand hommes politiques très différents, respectivement: les Très Hon. Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Lester Pearson et William Lyon Mackenzie King.

Avant 1948, pendant le règne de Mackenzie King, le Canada ne portait aucun intérêt au Moyen-orient, la seule politique dans ce domaine fut l'appui inconditionnel envers toutes les mesures prises par la Grande-Bretagne dans cette région du monde.

Pendant la règne de Lester B. Pearson, la politique du Canada au Moyen-orient fut guidée par l'engagement de Pearson auprès des Nations-unies et l'assurance à l'effet qu'une instance internationale mette sur pied une force capable d'assurer la promotion de la stabilité et de la paix dans le monde. Pour Pearson le conflit israélo-arabe était un test pour les Nations-unies, test dont le succès pourrait dépendre pour l'organisation. Pearson était cependant tout aussi préoccupé à l'effet que les dissensions du Moyen-orient ne permettent ni de miner l'alliance du Bloc occidental, ni de donner lieu à une confrontation de puissances surarmées.

Avant même que Trudeau n'accède aux rênes du pouvoir, le changement de

la seconde politique majeure du Canada au Moyen-orient avait déjà été amorcé.

Trudeau, après la guerre de 1967, pensa que la politique étrangère du Canada ne devait pas reposer sur les tendances altruistes nébuleuses mais bien plutôt sur l'intérêt personnel de la nation.

L'expansion des intérêts du Canada au Moyen-orient ainsi que certains changements des réalités politiques de la région, ont abouti à des modifications de la position du Canada envers le conflit israélo-arabe.

Depuis 1967, le gouvernement du Canada a graduellement perçu les Palestiniens comme "réfugiés" puis comme "Peuple" dont les "droits" et aspirations doivent être satisfaits.

Depuis 1948, chaque gouvernement du Canada a été ferme dans son appui envers le droit d'Israël d'exister en paix et en sécurité.

Le fait que le Canada ait toujours tenté d'être objectif et constructif dans son approche à l'égard du conflit israélo-arabe est reconnu et apprécié à travers tout le Moyen-orient.

Le Canada a toujours été perçu comme une force pour le réalisme, le compris et la conciliation.

In the cataloguing of countries that have been interested and involved in the Middle East, Canada is usually overlooked, or at best relegated to the status of a minor player. There has yet to be written a comprehensive historical analysis of Canada's role and relations in the Middle East.

Prior to the conclusion of World War II, Canada's interest in Palestine and the Middle East was minimal. Although Canada officially applauded the Balfour Declaration upon its publication in 1917, this did not connote any commitment to Zionism or to the creation of a Jewish State.¹ Endorsement of the Declaration was based on a traditional unwavering Canadian support for Great Britain's foreign policy. Throughout the Mandatory period, Canada continued to back British policies in Palestine. As Great Britain became more hostile to Zionism, so too did Canada's Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs William Lyon Mackenzie King — whose views on foreign policy went unchallenged in government. Yet, simply because Canada supported the British in their Palestine policy did not mean that as a member of the Commonwealth it accepted any responsibility for the mandate. In the words of a senior official in the Department of External Affairs:

"While I agree that Canada shares with numerous other countries a remote and serious re-

sponsibility for mandated territories including Palestine, I do not agree that Canada accepted any legal responsibility as a part of the British Empire. The Mandate was taken by the U.K. and was not assumed by Canada.”²

With Mackenzie King’s relinquishment of the External Affairs portfolio to Louis St. Laurent in 1947, and the subsequent accession of Lester Pearson to the position of Undersecretary of State for External Affairs, Canada quickly took on an active role in the fledgling United Nations and, as a consequence, in the deliberations over Palestine.³ In addition to leading the Canadian Delegation to the April 1947 U.N. General Assembly Special Session on Palestine, Pearson was elected chairman of the “Political and Security Committee” which was responsible for establishing the “United Nations Special Committee on Palestine;” (UNSCOP). Comprised of representatives from eleven nations, including Justice Ivan Rand of Canada, UNSCOP was commissioned to formulate a plan for the future of the strife-torn Holy Land.

Despite Rand’s support for the partitioning of Palestine and internationalisation of Jerusalem as recommended by most UNSCOP members, the Canadian Government withheld its endorsement of the scheme until it became clear that the UNSCOP majority proposal alone could gain the necessary backing in the General Assembly.⁴ Underlying Canada’s eventual support for the plan however, was a strong perception that only partition had a chance of success in solving the Palestine dilemma. Partition, stated St. Laurent, was:

“ . . . the least unsatisfactory of alternatives which had at one time or another been considered as the least unjust and least impracticable solution to a problem where honorable members must realize justice and practicality are so difficult to reconcile or even discover.”⁵

In keeping with St. Laurent’s emphasis on “practicability,” the Canadian delegation at the U.N. vigorously pressed for the inclusion of concrete provisions for the implementation of partition into the final draft of the UNSCOP proposal.

On May 20, 1948, the Provisional Government of Israel requested recognition by the government of Canada. Mackenzie King, who was less than sympathetic to either Zionism or Jewish concerns in general, did not respond. Great Britain had earlier requested that all Commonwealth members refrain from recognizing Israel, and Mackenzie King was not about to oppose his British friends over a matter that meant so little to him.⁶ However, when the retiring Mackenzie King was succeeded by St. Laurent in the autumn of 1948, the way was clear for granting Israel the recognition it sought. The new Prime Minister immediately appointed Pearson Minister of External Affairs, and he in turn quickly announced Canada’s de facto recognition of the Jewish State. On December 24, 1948, speaking in the House of Commons Pearson read:

“The Canadian Government has today informed the Provisional Government of Israel that the Canadian Government recognizes de facto the State of Israel in Palestine and that it also recognizes de facto the authority of the Provisional Government of Israel. The State of Israel has, in the opinion of the Canadian Government given satisfactory proof that it complies with the essential condition of Statehood. These essential conditions are generally recognized to be external independence and effective internal government within a reasonably defined territory.”⁷

Several months later, on May 11, 1949, Canada also extended de jure recognition to the new State when it voted for Israeli membership in the United Nations. At the same time, eager to support any U.N. initiatives, Canada volunteered the services of a group of military officers to participate on the “United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization” (UNTSO) in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Subsequently, in 1950 a Canadian, General Kennedy, was appointed director of the “United Nations Relief and Works Agency” (UNRWA), and in 1954 another Canadian, General Burns, was placed in charge of UNTSO.

At the U.N. Pearson also repeatedly urged direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, while calling for a solution to the conflict based on minor modifications to the 1949 armistice lines. The Palestine refugees, in his opinion, should be resettled in the surrounding Arab countries since it had become unfeasible for them to return to their old homes. The resettlement of the refugees could be achieved with the aid of massive international financial support which would include a substantial contribution from Israel. Pearson conceded that in such cases as family reunification, limited numbers of refugees should be permitted to return to Israel if they so desired.⁸

When the Jerusalem issue once again came before the U.N., Canada withdrew its support for the city’s internationalization. Pearson argued that the concept of internationalization had become obsolete, not taking into account that the current situation was drastically different from that of November 1947 when the plan was first approved. With Jerusalem divided, and neither the Israelis nor the Arabs favoring its internationalization, any attempt to impose a U.N. regime on the city would be against the will of those most directly concerned and thus could only be accomplished by “heavy financial, administrative and military obligations” on the part of the United Nations.⁹ Pearson warned that by disregarding the:

“... real needs and genuine aspirations of the people who live in the Jerusalem area the result may be to endanger the very Holy Places whose position is our greatest concern.”¹⁰

Instead suggested Pearson, considering that the original basis for recommending the internationalization of Jerusalem was largely to safeguard the

Holy Places, the U.N. should limit its demands to some form of jurisdiction over only these sites. This more circumscribed mandate, Pearson believed, would stand a stronger chance of gaining the acceptance of the Israelis and Arabs, while satisfying the U.N.'s prime objectives regarding Jerusalem. This "pragmatic" approach came to characterize Canadian efforts to resolve Middle Eastern problems. As has so often been the case however, reality had little bearing on U.N. voting, and Canada's proposal, supported by several other western nations, was turned down and the internationalization scheme upheld.¹¹

As interest in the Arab-Israeli conflict within the U.N. subsided, and relative stability settled on the Middle East, Canada's concern with the region waned. Lester Pearson, who controlled Canadian foreign policy for two decades starting in 1948, with the exception of the Diefenbaker interlude, generally only took an interest in the area during times of crisis. Development of bilateral relations with the emerging nations of the Middle East was simply not a priority in Canadian foreign policy. Up until the mid-1960's Canada established merely three embassies in the region. In fact, it was only through Canada's self-appointed role as mediator and conciliator that it first set up diplomatic relations with countries in the Middle East. Wanting to have direct contact with those on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict while endeavoring to appear impartial, Canada simultaneously established its first two Middle East embassies in Cairo and Tel Aviv during 1954.¹² The following year a third embassy was opened in Beirut. Canada's neglect of bilateral relations in the Middle East during the 1950's however, was not always quietly accepted by the Arab States. Towards the end of the decade Iraq, Morocco and Algeria all requested the exchange of ambassadors with Canada.

Despite Canada's support for partition and Israel's right to exist, Canadian diplomats have always been highly regarded throughout the Middle East.¹³ Canada, unlike many other western nations, was never a colonial power — a fact appreciated in the Arab world.¹⁴ The Arabs also welcomed what they viewed as Canada's impartiality. Commented former premier of Iraq Abdul-Karim Kassem:

"Canada has no interests in Iraq and we trust you as an independent neutral."¹⁵

Kassem's foreign minister, Hashim Jawad, urged Canada to accept the role of intermediary in discussions between Iraq and the West. The 1956 Suez Crisis especially impressed Arabs with Canada's ability as an effective and impartial mediator.¹⁶

In the spring of 1956, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Abba Eban informed

American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that Israel was in desperate need of F86 jet fighters to defend itself against an increasingly powerful and threatening Egypt. Concerned by the shifting balance of power in the Middle East caused by the influx of Soviet Bloc arms in Egypt, but preferring not to needlessly jeopardize the U.S.'s position in the Arab world, Dulles secretly asked the Canadian government to provide Israel with a Squadron of F86's.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, Canadian officials were incensed at Dulles' self-centered policy. Canadian anger at the American Secretary of State's request is reflected in a statement by St. Laurent:

“We do not feel that when other western nations were not prepared to join in that responsibility [of ensuring a military balance] it should be left to the Government of Canada which has not the immediate interests in the areas which other western powers have.”¹⁸

Nevertheless, the Canadian Government did recognize that action had to be taken to redress the arms imbalance. Thus in September of 1956 Canada reluctantly approved the sale of the aircraft, though the deal was made contingent upon an American announcement that it had the U.S.'s blessing. The outbreak of war in October 1956 however, prompted Canada to halt shipment of the F86's and subsequently cancel the sale.¹⁹

Even before the controversial F86 “sale”, Canada had been a purveyor of limited amounts of small armaments to the Middle East. During 1954 and 1955 Canada supplied Israel with two million dollars worth of military equipment. Pearson justified the arms sales to Israel by cautioning that:

“. . . one of the most dangerous features of this situation [the rising tensions in the Middle East] is the feeling that Israel, the feeling on the part of Israel that nobody is prepared to help her, while the Communist states are prepared to help the Arab states. That feeling might become so intense in Israel that it might even provoke a preventative action and I think we should try to remove that feeling.”²⁰

In January of 1956 Pearson rebutted Conservative party demands for an arms embargo to the Middle East, explaining that as a consequence of such a short sighted policy:

“. . . Israel would have been completely powerless to defend her very existence, unless she had agreed in desperation to throw herself into the arms of the communist suppliers. If it had suited their purpose, and for a price — and it would have been a high price — the Moscow government which controlled these suppliers would have been quite happy to arrange such a deal.”²¹

During the spring of 1955, inquiries were made by Egypt into the possibility of purchasing several F86 jets and fifteen Harvard training airplanes from Canada. The request for the F86's was flatly turned down, and after some deliberation the Harvards were refused as well. While no one questioned the Gov-

ernment's decision to deny Egypt the fighter aircraft, the refusal to sell the Harvards did stir some opposition. It was argued that the Harvards were not offensive weapons and that by not furnishing them Canada would alienate Egypt, as well as undermine Arab confidence in Canada's impartiality. Heeding this criticism, the government reversed its decision and agreed to sell Egypt the Harvards.²²

Apart from a mild concern over the growing Middle East arms imbalance, Canada initially displayed little concern over the developments leading up to the 1956 war. When President Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in July of 1956, in contrast to the panic that swept certain other western capitals, there was little reaction in Ottawa. On August 3, 1956 Canada's Minister of Defense commented in the House of Commons that the problem was:

"... primarily a European matter . . . not a matter which particularly concerns Canada. We have no oil there. We don't use the Canal for shipping."²³

Canada expressed little disappointment in not being among the twenty-four countries invited to attend the August 1956 London Conference convened to discuss the Suez Canal issue.²⁴ Though the Canadian Government endorsed the conference's conclusions and proposals, it also urged Great Britain to take the matter to the U.N. rather than resort to the use of force. However, as sharp differences emerged between the U.S. and Great Britain, Canada became increasingly distraught. Finally, when the war broke out and threatened to undermine the Western alliance and develop into a superpower confrontation, Canada acted decisively.

At the outset of the 1956 war, Prime Minister St. Laurent gave Pearson a free hand to diffuse the crisis, while promising to "cover him" at home.²⁵ Unwilling to adopt a position in opposition to either its North American or European allies, Canada abstained on the U.S. resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire, a total embargo on arms to the region, and a unilateral withdrawal of all foreign troops from Egypt.²⁶ Pearson hoped to provide Canada's two closest friends with a less undignified retreat from the quagmire they had embroiled themselves in. That Great Britain and France should be publicly humiliated and internationally isolated was unacceptable to Pearson and many other Canadians who felt strong historical and emotional bonds with the two European nations. A second reason for Canada's abstention was that the resolution contained no provisions for a simultaneous effort to bring about a lasting peace. Explained Pearson:

"I regret use of military force in the circumstances which we have been discussing but I regret also that there was no more time, before a vote had to be taken, for consideration of the best way to bring about the end of cease fire which will have enduring and beneficial results."²⁷

On November 2, 1956 Pearson proposed the formation of a United Nations force which he hoped would bring a measure of stability along the borders between Israel and Egypt. At the same time Pearson warned that the force must not be seen as a substitute for peace. Unless the resultant atmosphere of tranquility was utilized to negotiate an overall settlement war would inevitably erupt again. The United States supported the concept of such an entity and was pleased to have Canada assume the central role in its formation so as not to raise Soviet objections that the U.S. was simply creating the peace-keeping force in order to establish its own forces in the Middle East under the flag of the U.N.²⁸ Pearson quickly succeeded in bringing about the creation of the “United Nations Emergency Force” (UNEF), with Canada supplying its largest contingent and first commander, General Burns. Unfortunately however, as Pearson had feared, there was no accompanying movements towards peace. Still Pearson’s accomplishment in establishing the UNEF was far from trivial as the force did foster regional stability and a calm along the Egyptian-Israeli frontier that endured for more than a decade.

Israeli concern over naval freedom in the Straits of Tiran presented a problem that Pearson addressed with his characteristic ingenuity and energy. Israel refused to withdraw from Sharm el-Sheikh, which overlooks the entrance to the Gulf of Aquaba, without some assurance that its right to free passage through the Straits would be protected. According to a formula devised by Pearson, the U.S., Great Britain, France, together with as many maritime powers as could be mustered would pledge to uphold Israel’s right, under Article 51 of the United Nation’s Charter, to unmolested passage through the Straits of Tiran. Pearson had originally hoped to gain U.N. endorsement for his plan but failed due to opposition from the Soviet Block and many Third World nations. Nevertheless, after having received guarantees from the major western maritime powers, Israel accepted the Pearson plan and relinquished Sharm el-Sheikh to the UNEF.

How had Canada, a minor world power been able to become such a strong force in resolving the Suez Crisis? To a large extent, the situation dictated that Canada assume the role it did. Canada alone combined close and friendly ties with all three western powers involved, with a reputation for impartiality in both Israel and Egypt. Yet, this would have proved meaningless had Canada not been represented by a man with the vision, dedication, and abilities of Lester Pearson.²⁹

Apart from its opposition in 1956 to the British and French assault on Egypt, Canada under Pearson was generally consistent in its support of western posi-

tions on the Middle East. When the General Assembly voted to have the Algerian question brought before the U.N. in 1957, Canada sided with France in opposition to the decision. In the Canadian government's opinion as articulated by Pearson, strife in Algeria was an internal French matter:

"I can only say that we opposed, and regret this unfortunate decision to inscribe on the agenda a question which under the Charter falls so clearly within the domestic jurisdiction of France. Decisions of this kind in our view only harm the United Nations without advancing the cause of freedom and self-government in whose name they were made."³⁰

The next Middle Eastern upheaval to occupy the attention of Canadian diplomats was the troubled situation in Lebanon during 1958. On May 27 of that year the government of Lebanon levelled charges in the Security Council that the United Arab Republic was subversively interfering in Lebanese affairs. To investigate these accusations the Security Council set up the "United Nation's Observer Group in Lebanon" (UNOGIL) which included a group of Canadian officers. Following the revolt in Iraq, Lebanese President Chamoun, fearful of the uprising's repercussions in Lebanon, appealed to Eisenhower to send troops to Lebanon in hopes of stabilizing the situation. Soon thereafter, King Hussein of Jordan, harboring parallel concerns, issued a similar entreaty to Great Britain. Both Western powers responded quickly, with American marines landing on the shores of Lebanon on July 15, 1958, and British soldiers arriving in the Hashemite Kingdom two days later. Canada supported the U.S. and British actions on the basis that the troops were only deployed temporarily in order to restore regional stability and to allow the United Nations adequate time to ensure the preservation of Lebanese and Jordanian independence.³¹

As in 1956, Canada opposed a resolution, this time by the USSR, for a simple unilateral withdrawal of troops from Lebanon and Jordan. Together with Norway, Canada drafted an alternative resolution calling for the withdrawal of U.S. and British troops coupled with the establishment of a framework for the maintenance of peace in the region. While this resolution was being debated, several Arab states came up with a resolution of their own that was similar to the Canadian-Norwegian one, and probably inspired by it.³² Satisfied that the new resolution met its basic objectives, Canada withdrew its proposal and voted for the Arab one. In fact, the Canadians actually preferred the Arab resolution because it resulted from the efforts of the parties most directly concerned.³³

Canada's first expansion of diplomatic representation in the Middle East since the opening of the Beirut embassy came about rather circuitously. In the mid-1960's the Canadian government initiated an international assistance program that was designed as "an outward looking expression of the bilingual character of Canada."³⁴ The government was seeking to demonstrate its

heightened sensitivity to the French component of the Canadian national make-up by placing a priority on strengthening Canadian ties with French speaking societies abroad. In the Middle East the program involved the provision of development aid to the countries of French North Africa. It was in this manner that Canada forged its first substantive limits with the Magreb thereby laying the foundations for the full diplomatic relations that were subsequently established with Tunisia in 1966 and with Algeria and Morocco in the early 1970's. Assistance to North Africa was channelled through the "Canadian International Development Agency" (CIDA) and included support for the development of agriculture, fisheries, public health, education and communications.

The events surrounding the Six Day War of June 1967 were a major jolt to Canadian policy in the Middle East and Canadian foreign policy in general. On May 16, 1967 President Nasser demanded that the UNEF be withdrawn from Gaza, and Sinai including Sharm el-Sheikh. In a move that made the outburst of war virtually certain, U.N. Secretary General U. Thant acquiesced to Nasser's dictate. Egypt then promptly massed its forces along the frontiers with Israel and blockaded the Straits of Tiran. Pearson had vehemently opposed U Thant's decision to remove the UNEF without first bringing the matter before the United Nations. The Canadian Prime Minister argues that since the UNEF was set up by the entire General Assembly, it could not be disbanded by the demands of only one U.N. member. The General Assembly alone could make such a decision.

Despite Canadian attempts to ease tension in the weeks before the war, Pearson's enthusiasm and effectiveness as a mediator had declined. Nasser had become increasingly hostile towards Canada which he came to view as being pro-Israeli and a messenger-boy of the Western powers.³⁵ Yet, because Canada's allies were unified in an attempt to reverse the escalating crisis, there was no special incentive for Canada to intervene as was the case during the 1956 War. In spite of this, it was the joint initiative of Canada and Denmark that led to the convening of the Security Council on May 24, 1967, to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Middle East.

Otherwise, Canada was content to play a limited role by supporting the efforts of the Western Powers to prevent the outbreak of war. Following the lead of Great Britain, the Canadian government sent an assurance to Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol that Canada would support any U.N. measures to guarantee Israel's right of passage through the Straits of Tiran. Since it was obvious to all that the United Nations would not act, this was equivalent to a proclamation that Canada was unwilling to do anything.³⁶ It was also a flagrant reversal of Canada's 1957 pledge to act in concert with other maritime powers outside the

jurisdiction of the U.N. At one point, Canada indicated that it “may give a ship or two” toward Lyndon Johnson’s “Operation Regatta” — the proposed international flotilla that the U.S. hoped would reopen the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Parrotting Great Britain once again, on May 28 Canada backed down, notifying the U.S. that Canada would not join “Operation Regatta.” Consequently, Johnson informed Israel that his administration would not act alone and that the U.S. had abandoned its efforts to open the Straits.³⁷ Pearson’s fragile 1956-1957 agreements had come unravelled when tested for the first time, and to no one’s surprise on June 4 war broke out.

Immediately after the war, on June 9, Pearson brought forward in the House of Commons a six-point plan which he felt could provide the basis for a lasting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The Prime Minister called for “certain withdrawals” of Israeli forces, accompanied by negotiations to achieve an overall peace agreement.³⁸ International waterways must remain open to all countries, with any disputes over the waters referred to the International Court of Justice. In addition, passage of ships from any country through the Suez Canal should be enforced by the Security Council. To preserve and monitor the peace, suggested Pearson, a U.N. presence and a demilitarized zone should be established on either side of the border. Lastly, renewed efforts should be undertaken to solve the refugee problem.

Pearson’s principles for peace were largely incorporated into the Security Council’s Resolution 242 which Canada, as a member of the Security Council at the time, played a prominent role drafting.³⁹ Once endorsed by the U.N., resolution 242 became the touchstone of Canadian policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict and has continued as such, with certain modifications, up until today. Essentially, Resolution 242 called for a withdrawal from territories occupied during the June war, the right of every state in the region to peace and security, freedom of navigation in all international waters, and a solution to the refugee problem.⁴⁰ To demonstrate its convictions to the inadmissibility of acquiring territories by force as specified in Resolution 242, the Government of Canada has formulated strict guidelines for travel by Canadian officials in the occupied areas.

The development that finally caused a dramatic shift in Canada’s Middle East policy was the election in 1968 of Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister. Against a backdrop of disillusionment with the U.N.’s role in the period before the Six Day War, immediately after taking office the Trudeau government undertook a major review of Canada’s foreign policy.⁴¹ Trudeau, who expressed reservations about Canada’s traditional role as an “honest broker” and peace-keeper in international disputes, believed that foreign policy must serve domes-

tic interests. Predictably, the conclusions of the the foreign policy review reflected the Trudeau viewpoint.⁴² The report recommended that Canada reduce its role in the United Nations while expanding its development assistance programs and bilateral relations with the countries of the Third World.

Another policy of Trudeau's that had indirectly begun to discourage commitment to U.N. peace-keeping in the Middle East was the Prime Minister's campaign to sharply reduce defense spending. By participating in U.N. peace-keeping, Canada's shrinking armed forces were being severely overextended. As a result, support for peace-keeping both in the army and the Department of Defense, traditionally bastions of support for the United Nations, also began to erode. Still, Canada has yet to withdraw from its peace-keeping duties and there is no indication that it is about to do so.

At first, Trudeau's foreign policy shift had little impact on Canada's relations with countries in the Middle East. Paradoxically, the October War of 1973, which propelled Canada back into a peace-keeping role, also finally triggered Canada's new diplomatic thrust in the Middle East.⁴³ Within days of the cease-fire, Canada received a request to serve on a renewed peace-keeping force. With Canada's western allies frantic over the Arab oil embargo, international economic stability threatened, and the prospect of superpower conflict ominously high, the Canadian government realized that it could not remain an impassive and unconcerned bystander.⁴⁴ Yet, with the memory of the events of May and June 1967 still fresh, the Canadian government demanded that certain conditions be met before it agreed to join the rejuvenated UNEF and the newly created "United Nations Disengagement Observer Force" (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights. To prevent the recurrence of the UNEF's 1967 demise, the peace-keeping forces and Canada's participation in them had to be acceptable to all the parties upon whose territories they would be deployed, but responsible only to the United Nations. Canada's commitment to the force would not be open ended, with continued participation contingent upon there being "reasonable expectations that the parties will negotiate a settlement."⁴⁵ Finally, it was demanded that more precise and equitable financial arrangements be made so that Canada, unlike in the past, would not have to bear an excessive load. When all these criteria appeared to be adequately met, Canada acquiesced to participation in UNEF II and UNDOF, in which it once again supplied the largest contingents. The reluctance and skepticism with which Canada accepted its renewed peace-keeping role is evident in an address by Minister of External Affairs Allen MacEachen to the UN General Assembly:

"I would be less than candid if I did not admit Canadians are today less inclined to accept in an unquestioning way the burdens of participation. Their concern springs mainly from

the fact that peacekeeping endeavors often seem to do no more than perpetuate an uneasy status quo. If United Nation's peacekeeping activity is to be finally effective, it must be accompanied by a parallel effort on the political level, especially by the parties most directly concerned, to convert the temporary peace that a peacekeeping force is asked to maintain into something more durable. If this is not done, and if those who contribute to peacekeeping roles are faced with indefinite prolongation of their hazardous tasks, I am afraid governments will be less inclined to respond to future requests for troops.⁴⁶

The Canadian government was pleasantly surprised with the progress of the negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. MacEachen welcomed the extension of the U.N. peacekeeping mandates and pledged that as long as the UNEF II and UNDOF:

“... can continue to provide a measure of stability between Israel and its neighbors and can help to establish and maintain a climate in which substantive negotiations can take place. Canada fully intends to maintain its contribution.”⁴⁷

Immediately following the October War the expansion of bilateral relations in the Arab World became a major priority of Trudeau's foreign policy. Although the government had decided to broaden its diplomatic representation in the Arab World before the October War, the war and its repercussions greatly accelerated the process.⁴⁸ In December 1973 it was announced that full diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia would be established, and soon thereafter similar announcements were made with reference to Bahrein, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq.

Underlying Canada's campaign to increase its diplomatic representation in the Arab World were certain strong economic considerations. During the early 1970's Canada was experiencing a trade deficit which prompted increased efforts to expand exports. The wealthy countries of the Middle East provided excellent markets for Canadian goods and services.⁴⁹ Apart from the export of foodstuffs and manufactured items, Canada has been particularly successful in the export of skilled services including engineering, telecommunications, management consulting, oil drilling and banking. Trade with the Arab world rose tenfold between 1969 and 1974, and has been rising steadily since. Canadian sales to Israel quadrupled between 1970 and 1975 reaching a total of sixty million dollars in the latter year.⁵⁰ Between 1971 and 1975 Canadian exports to Iran increased on the average of 75% a year. Trade with Iran however, levelled off after 1975 as discontent with the Shah's modernization program forced budget cutbacks. Since the fall of the Shah, Canadian contacts with Iran, both economic and diplomatic, have suffered as Canada, being “a stooge of the Great Satan to the South” has become somewhat unpopular in the new Islamic Republic. Though Canada has aggressively encouraged trade with the Middle East it has not sought Middle Eastern capital investment with Canada. With

both the government and the public in Canada growing increasingly nationalistic, foreign ownership has become frowned upon.⁵¹

In doing business with the Arab world the Canadian government was confronted with the problem of how to respond to the boycott imposed by numerous Arab countries after the 1973 war — a dilemma that had both economic and domestic political repercussions. The boycott blacklisted goods produced in Israel as well as companies dealing with the Jewish State. In addition, it prohibited firms doing business in the Arab world from dealing with blacklisted firms in their own country. On occasion, Arab purchasers also demanded assurances from their Canadian trading partners that they did not employ “Zionists” in senior positions.⁵² Over one hundred Canadian companies have been boycotted by the Arab States.⁵³

Many Canadians, outraged at what they saw as economic blackmail and tampering with their freedoms by foreign powers, demanded Government action to combat the boycott. The business community, on the other hand, did not want its burgeoning trade in the Middle East jeopardized by any government measures that might be viewed as hostile by the Arabs. Several Arab governments had in fact warned that any legislation designed to counteract the boycott would be regarded an “anti-Arab,” and would result in a serious deterioration of economic and diplomatic relations between Canada and the Arab world.⁵⁴

The government remained silent on the Arab boycott until May 8, 1975 when Trudeau attacked the boycott in the House of Commons declaring that:

“This type of practice is alien to everything the government stands for and, indeed, to what in general, Canadian ethics stand for.”⁵⁵

Despite the Prime Minister’s bold words, the government was slow to take any follow-up action. During a tour of the Middle East by MacEachen in 1976, the External Affairs Minister never once brought up the boycott question in his extensive discussions on economic matters with Arab leaders.⁵⁶ It was not until January 21, 1977 that the government acted by publishing a set of guidelines ostensibly intended to curb compliance with the boycott. According to the guidelines, government aid and services would be denied to firms guilty of abiding by those aspects of the boycott deemed unacceptable. In addition, the names of offending firms would be published. Trudeau defended the guidelines as adequate, arguing that in conducting business in the Arab world government assistance was often crucial. Instituting stricter anti-boycott legislation, as the Americans had done, would undermine Canada’s relations with the Arab world. When it was pointed out that the U.S. had not suffered appreciably as a result of its strong anti-boycott measures, the government countered that Canadian firms were much more vulnerable than their American counterparts.⁵⁷

On December 15, 1978 the government finally introduced a piece of anti-boycott legislation — Bill C-32. Basically, Bill C-32 was a restatement of the earlier guidelines plus an additional clause that would impose limited fines on companies complying with the boycott. Donald Jamison, who by that time had replaced MacEachen as Minister of External Affairs, upheld the proposed bill by contending that more stringent anti-boycott legislation would simply “multiply bureaucracy.”⁵⁸ Curiously, the bill never received a second reading and Parliament was dissolved before it could be voted upon. In the elections that followed, Pierre Trudeau’s Liberals were tossed out of office, with Bill C-32 meeting the same fate as the government that drafted it. Almost from the outset, Trudeau’s government had been widely accused of cowardice and hypocrisy, even from within its own ranks, for its handling of the Arab boycott issue.⁵⁹

Another result of the October War was that the question of the Palestinians emerged as arguably the most prominent issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Owing to both domestic political considerations and Canada’s expanding ties with the Arab world, this was an extremely sensitive matter, but one that could not be ignored. Prior to 1973, Canada acknowledged only the individual rights of the Palestinians. Since the drafting of Resolution 242 Canada held that the Palestinian question was inseparable from all the other aspects of the conflict, and should therefore only be addressed in the context of an overall settlement. To separate the Palestinian problem would be to undermine Resolution 242. Even after the October War Minister of External Affairs Mitchell Sharp stressed that:

“Canada has supported Resolution 242 since its adoption in 1967. Our adherence has been total but strictly limited to the terms of the resolution itself and we have always refused to add anything to it or subtract anything from it that were not immediately apparent from the wording.”⁶⁰

Several weeks later Sharp’s successor MacEachen added that his government would oppose:

“. . . any action that would tend to emphasize one aspect to the exclusion of other equally valid principles. This applies, of course, to the Palestinian issue, as to all others involved. While important, and indeed fundamental, to the Arab-Israeli dispute, this issue evidently cannot be resolved separately and without consideration for other elements of the problem. We should be opposed to any unilateral actions that could be prejudicial to the comprehensive negotiated settlement that is being sought.”⁶¹

Almost immediately thereafter this position began to shift. By 1974 Canada had come to support the collective rights of the Palestinians and Palestinian participation in any negotiations for an overall settlement to the Arab-Israeli con-

flict. The dilemma of who should represent the Palestinians, in MacEachen's opinion, was a matter to be determined by all the parties to the conflict, including Israel:

"Canada. . . [refuses] to prejudge both whether the P.L.O. should be one of, or the only representative of the Palestinians. In other words, we refused to judge whether it should be one of the representatives, whether it should be represented at all . . ." ⁶²

However as MacEachen continued, he may have betrayed his leanings on this matter:

"It is true that at the Rebat summit conference the Arab countries, apparently with the concurrence of the King of Jordan, accepted the P.L.O. as, in their view, the appropriate representative of the Palestinian people. That of course, is a new factor in the situation." ⁶³

Speaking at the General Assembly, the head of Canada's delegation Dr. Saul F. Rae went further in stating that the P.L.O. was a legitimate representative of the Palestinians, though perhaps not the only one. ⁶⁴

In May 1974 Canada voted in favor of extending observer status to the P.L.O. in the World Health Organization. Several months later, Canada abstained on a vote to grant the P.L.O. the same status in the "United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization" (UNESCO). Once again on November 22 Canada abstained in the voting for Resolution 3236 which granted the P.L.O. observer status within all U.N. organs including the General Assembly. While in agreement that the Palestinians should be represented in any discussions affecting their interests, this could be achieved Dr. Rae stated "without departing from established procedures." ⁶⁵ Participation in the U.N. General Assembly, as laid down in the organization's Charter reminded Dr Rae, is restricted to delegations representing sovereign states or associations of a sovereign states. In explaining why he did not vote against the resolution Rae remarked that:

"Canada is fully in accord with the view that any enduring peaceful settlement must take account of the legitimate interests of the Palestinians . . . Canada will not oppose any legitimate step intended to ensure that full voice is allowed to the Palestinian people." ⁶⁶

Rae then went on to expand upon why his government refused to support the resolution:

"Canada cannot support a resolution which ignores the existence of Israel and its role as an essential party in any search for an eventual negotiated peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. In this context the resolution makes no reference to the principles enunciated in Resolution 242 which Canada continues to believe provides a valid and available framework for such a settlement. Further, there is no mention of the requirement for negotiations among the parties directly involved in this dispute as called for by Security Council Resolution 338, which Canada believes is the only way in which the Arab-Israeli conflict can even-

tually be resolved.’⁶⁷

Canada’s abstention on Resolution 3236, and the reasoning behind it, became representative of Canada’s voting in the U.N. on matters dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinians. Canada did however, strongly condemn the U.N. resolution of November 10, 1975 which referred to Israel as “the racist regime in occupied Palestine” and described Zionism as “a form of racialism and racial discrimination.”⁶⁸ MacEachen explained his delegations repeated abstentions by the principle of “partial acceptability.” “Partially acceptable” resolutions were one which contained clauses opposed by Canada along with at least one element that was in keeping with Canadian views.⁶⁹

The catalyst that jettisoned the Palestinian question to the forefront of Canadian domestic politics was the scheduled holding of two U.N. conferences in Canada; the U.N. Conference on Crime set for September 1975 in Toronto, and the U.N. Habitat Conference to be held in Vancouver during May and June of 1976. As official observers in the United Nations, the P.L.O. was automatically invited by the U.N. to participate in both conferences. Canada however, had agreed to host the conferences before the P.L.O. had attained its official status in the U.N. The government had thus gotten itself embroiled in an emotionally charged, unwanted and unwinnable domestic debate over whether to admit the P.L.O. delegations into the country to attend the conferences.

Soon after the U.N. decision to grant the P.L.O. observer status, a broad range of Canadian organizations mobilized substantial opposition to admitting P.L.O. representatives into Canada. That the first Conference was on the theme of crime made the thought of P.L.O. attendance especially repellent to many Canadians. It was argued that since according to Canadian legal definitions the P.L.O. was a terrorist organization, by law its members had to be barred entry into the country.⁷⁰ Within Parliament, a strong all-party consensus emerged embracing this view.

Hoping to salvage the conference with a minimum of political damage to the government, the Department of External Affairs suggested that only those members of the P.L.O. who were known terrorists be refused entry into Canada. Subsequently, on July 18, 1978 MacEachen requested that the U.N. postpone the Crime Conference for one year, apparently hoping that the delay would dampen protest and thereby permit the conference to proceed with a minimum of opposition. In explaining the request MacEachen stated:

“We were all aware of the public outcry for or against the admission to Canada for this congress, of observers from the Palestine Liberation Organization . . . We could not ignore the risk of public disorders . . . But in the final analysis, two factors dominated in our discussions. The first was the inevitable intrusion of unrelated political considerations into the

proceedings of the Congress. The second was the re-escalation of violence in the Middle East and subsequently into the Congress itself.’⁷¹

MacEachen’s reasoning was vague and convoluted to say the least. Even if one accepted his rationale, there was little reason to believe that a delay of one year would appreciably alter the situation.⁷²

In any case, irritated by the public opposition and government vacillation, the U.N. transferred the Crime Conference to Geneva. The Habitat Conference however, proceeded according to plan the following year with the P.L.O. represented. Ultimately, the government’s ambiguous position throughout this episode left persons on both sides of the issue dissatisfied and bitter. Ironically, as Canada was attempting to reduce its role in the Arab-Israeli dispute, matters related to the conflict such as the Arab boycott and the P.L.O. had come to play a prominent role in domestic politics.

As mentioned earlier, in January of 1976 MacEachen made a tour of several Middle Eastern countries. The mission was hoped to demonstrate Canada’s new more ‘even handed’ approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, strengthen bilateral contacts in the region, and to repair any possible damage done to existing relations caused by the recent controversy in Canada over the P.L.O.⁷³ Throughout his trip, which included stops in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq and Israel, MacEachen was pleased to find that his government’s Middle East policy was deemed acceptable by all those with whom he conferred.⁷⁴ During discussions with Arab officials, MacEachen also discovered that improved relations with the Arab world were not dependent upon Canada’s adopting a more pro-Arab position in the Middle East conflict. Arab leaders manifested little concern with Canada’s stand on the P.L.O., and did not pressure MacEachen to recognize the organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

The 1979 federal election provided perhaps the most dramatic case of the Middle East intruding upon Canadian politics. On April 25, 1974 Progressive Conservative leader Joe Clark unexpectedly issued a press release stating that if elected, his government would recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and hence move the Canadian Embassy from Tel Aviv to the Holy City. The timing of his announcement, Clark piously asserted, was determined not by election considerations but rather by the recently concluded peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. To have done so earlier:

‘. . . might have complicated the Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations. Thankfully those difficult negotiations have now borne fruit.’⁷⁵

According to Clark:

“This historic peace event opens the way for Canada to take positive initiatives in the Middle East. One such initiative would be recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel with free access to its holy places provided to all faiths. As a symbol of this recognition, my government would be prepared to move the Canadian Embassy from Tel Aviv to the western part of Jerusalem, which has been part of Israel since the creation of the country in 1948.

“This is not to be construed as the taking of sides in the Arab-Israeli negotiations, respecting the West Bank, the Palestinians, or the broader terms of a comprehensive peace settlement between all countries in the Middle East. Rather this foreign policy initiative is only a recognition of the demographic and legal realities of Jerusalem in 1949 . . .”⁷⁶

Clark was immediately attacked by the other political parties for what they saw as a naked attempt to attract Jewish voters. Clark had in fact, been urged by his campaign manager and three Conservative Party candidates in heavily Jewish Toronto ridings to make the announcement. Yet, though political concerns certainly played a part in the decision, it would appear that Clark was genuinely convinced the embassy move was the morally correct thing to do.⁷⁷ With his limited knowledge of the Middle East, and foreign policy matters in general, the young Tory leader apparently did not appreciate the potential repercussions of his pledge. Had Clark been defeated, the announced embassy transfer would have become a mere election footnote. Instead however, Clark achieved a slim victory, with his campaign promise quickly coming to threaten the close Canadian relations with the Arab World that the Liberals had built up over the preceding decade. Paradoxically, Clark’s controversial promise made no discernible impact on Jewish voting patterns.⁷⁸

Anxious to demonstrate that he would make good on his election pledges, a few days after becoming Prime Minister, on June 5, 1979 Joe Clark forcefully reiterated his resolve to move Canada’s embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Almost instantaneously, the befuddled Prime Minister was bombarded from many corners by advice, entreaties, warnings, and threats to reverse his stand on the embassy. The U.S. government quickly conveyed its displeasure with Canada’s new policy in Jerusalem. Nine angry Arab ambassadors converged on the offices of both Clark and his Minister of External Affairs Flora McDonald, presaging dire consequences if Canada carried out its proposed embassy move. Several Arab countries actually threatened to break diplomatic relations and imposed economic sanctions. The P.L.O. called the Tory policy “an act of aggression.”⁷⁹ Forecasting enormous damage to Canada’s economy if the embassy switch went ahead, the Canadian business community exerted strong pressure on the government to back down. Both the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Trade and Commerce were unhappy with the proposed move, and even in his own party Clark lacked any wide support on this issue.⁸⁰ Clearly, within a week of having achieved office, the new

government was floundering over its leader's unfortunate election promise.

It soon became apparent to Clark and his government that the only way to extricate themselves from the embassy quagmire was a complete policy reversal.⁸¹ On June 23, 1979, the Prime Minister appointed Robert Stanfield to lead a Canadian mission to the Middle East:

“ . . . to examine ways and means of implementing the Government's policy on Jerusalem in a manner that will be compatible with efforts to achieve such a [comprehensive] peace.”⁸²

Stanfield was also instructed to conduct a review of Canada's bilateral ties in the Middle East, and to formulate recommendations on how these relations could best be enhanced.

By the very nature of Stanfield's assignment it was obvious that Clark had already decided to rescind his embassy pledge. The Stanfield mission was merely a subterfuge to facilitate a dignified retreat. Stanfield was not commissioned to simply advise the government on how best to implement its Jerusalem policy, but rather to come up with a formula for implementation that would contribute to the peace process. It took no great insight into the Middle East to know that such a duality was absurd. By siding with Israel on an issue so vital to the Arabs as Jerusalem, it would have become impossible for Canada to make any contribution toward the achievement of a peace settlement. The Stanfield mission was likewise unnecessary to ascertain that Canada's relations with the Arab world could only be hurt by the embassy move.

To no one's surprise, when Stanfield submitted his interim report on October 26, 1979 it contained a strong recommendation that Canada not transfer its Tel Aviv embassy to Jerusalem.⁸³ Stanfield explained that for several reasons, some obvious, others dubious, the embassy move would undermine the peace process. Though the final report was not due until the following year, on October 29 Clark curtly announced in the House of Commons that:

“The government accepts the recommendations that no action be taken on the change of the Canadian embassy until the status of Jerusalem is clarified within a comprehensive agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbors.”⁸⁴

Clark's quick acceptance of the report, and his brief statement in announcing it, betrayed his impatience to place the entire costly affair behind him. Recalling the episode Clark confessed that:

“I underestimated the degree to which Canada is exposed when we take a position that is unpopular with certain powerful countries in the world.”⁸⁵

Stanfield's final report was submitted on February 20, 1980. Although on

the question of Jerusalem the Stanfield mission was little more than a charade, it did have one constructive aspect. The Stanfield report provided the first comprehensive review of Canada's policy in the Middle East and offered numerous useful suggestions as to how Canada could improve its bilateral relations in the area. Like Trudeau's government before him, Stanfield lauded Resolution 242 as still the best basis for peace, while criticising it for not fully taking into account the rights of the Palestinians. Stanfield however, went further than the Liberals in recommending that Canada support the establishment of a Palestinian homeland and broaden its contacts with the P.L.O., which he described as having an "important leadership role amongst Palestinians."⁸⁶

Assessing the impact of the embassy controversy and the Stanfield mission is problematic, especially since the Clark government was replaced by the Trudeau Liberals before Stanfield's report was even produced. There is little doubt that the embassy issue was a political fiasco for Clark's government, undermining public confidence in its ability to rule, and contributing to the Tory's subsequent election loss. It seems unlikely that there was any long-term damage to Canada's standing in the Arab world beyond perhaps a slight residual leeriness on the part of certain Arab governments of future Canadian involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. Yet even this the Stanfield mission probably went a long way to offset. Stanfield's pronouncements on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinians were much closer to the Arab position than those of any previous Canadian government.

Though the governing Liberals have not adopted an official position on the Stanfield report, they do regard it as a "useful document."⁸⁷ Since returning to power the Trudeau government has not noticeably departed from its previous Middle East policy. One "new initiative" taken by the Liberals was their decision not to proceed with any anti-boycott legislation. The 1977 guidelines they claimed had proved sufficiently effective on their own. Considering that the name of a single offender has yet to be published, the government was either correct in this contention, or it has been lax in enforcing the guidelines. In view of the Liberals' hesitating efforts to combat the Arab boycott since it was first imposed, the truth is probably closer to the latter. It has been suggested by a senior official in the Middle East Division of Canada's Department of External Affairs that the Liberals may have been influenced in their decision not to reintroduce anti-boycott legislation by the section in Stanfield's report dealing with the Arab boycott.⁸⁸ While not openly opposing the passing of an anti-boycott bill, Stanfield cautioned that such legislation would undermine Canadian relations in the Arab world, and as a consequence, cause severe damage to Canada's economy.

Although Trudeau's achievements are often deprecated, there is no denying that he brought profound changes in Canada's policy towards the Middle East. Trudeau's term as Prime Minister constitutes a unique phase in Canada's policy in the region. In fact Canada's Middle East policy can be divided into three such distinct phases, dominated by three very different men — Pierre Trudeau, Lester Pearson, and William Lyon Mackenzie King. Though none of these men constantly wielded power over Canadian foreign policy during their respective eras, the influence and ideas of each was pervasive and continuous.

Prior to 1948, during the Mackenzie King years, Canada had no interest in the Middle East, its only policy towards the area being the unquestioning support of Great Britain in everything it did there. To Pearson, Mackenzie King's insular world view was an anathema. Throughout the Pearson years, Canada's policy on the Middle East was guided by Pearson's undying commitment to the U.N., and to ensuring that the international body develop into a force for promoting stability and peace throughout the world. Since the Middle East was a perpetual hub of conflict it became a central focus of Pearson's attention. It might be said that during the Pearson years, Canada had a policy on the Middle East rather than in the Middle East.⁸⁹ For Pearson, the Arab-Israeli conflict was a test case for the United Nations upon which the success of the organization could depend. Pearson was equally concerned however, that Middle Eastern strife neither be allowed to undermine the western alliance, nor develop into a superpower confrontation.

Even before Trudeau came to power in 1968, Canada's second major Middle East policy shift had already begun. The failure of the United Nations to act decisively to prevent war from breaking out in 1967 provoked serious questions in Canada about the efficacy of the U.N. and Canada's previously unequivocal support for it. Trudeau, who shared this skepticism, believed Canada's foreign policy should not be based on nebulous altruistic tendencies, but rather upon national self-interest. Realizing the enormous economic potential of the Middle East, Trudeau embarked upon an ambitious and eminently successful campaign to expand bilateral relations with the countries of the region. While still never shirking U.N. requests for Canadian participation in peacekeeping activities, Canada's consent is no longer unconditional and at times only grudgingly given.

Expanding Canadian interests in the Middle East, coupled with changing political realities in the region, have led to modifications in Canada's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict. While not reducing its support for the legitimacy and security of Israel, Canada has become more circumspect about adopting positions that might be upsetting to the Arabs. Since 1967 the Canadian govern-

ment has gradually gone from viewing the Palestinians as “refugees” to recognizing them as a “people” whose “rights” and aspirations must be satisfied. Resolution 242, which was supported exclusively and wholeheartedly in 1967, is now seen merely as a “useful” but incomplete framework for peace because of its inadequate reference to the Palestinian question.

Though Canada’s policy in the Middle East differed fundamentally under Pearson and Trudeau, there is also an underlying current of continuity between the two periods. Since 1948 every Canadian government has been firm in its support of Israel’s right to exist in peace and security. Yet despite this, Canada has generally been as highly regarded in the Arab World as in Israel. This is no small achievement considering the intensity of emotion on either side of the conflict, and how few other nations have been able to retain the good will of both Arabs and Israelis. That Canada has always tried to be objective and constructive in its approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict is recognized and appreciated throughout the Middle East.

Canadians have cause to be relatively proud of Canada’s record in the Middle East. Their government has generously provided both humanitarian and development aid to the area. Canada has always been a force for realism, compromise, and conciliation, and its contribution to U.N. peacekeeping has been unsurpassed. Though somewhat belatedly, the government of Canada has forged strong and warm relations with most countries in the Middle East and successfully encouraged Canadians to take advantage of the ever expanding markets for goods and services in the region. Thus, while aiding in the development of the Middle East, Canada itself has been strengthened. With Canadian ties continuing to proliferate, it seems inevitable that this symbiosis based on shared interests, friendship, and mutual respect can only be further enhanced.

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Interest Groups and Foreign Policy Making: Canada and Palestine, 1946-1948

DAVID H. GOLDBERG

Résumé

L'étude des influences nationales envers les organismes chargés de la politique étrangère relève de l'art aux Etats-Unis.

Toute une génération d'érudits Américains s'est consacrée non seulement à l'analyse du fonctionnement des institutions officielles du gouvernement, mais elle a également fait l'analyse des moyens par lesquels ces institutions ainsi qu'un nombre sans fin d'autres organismes moins officiels, publics et privés, (particulièrement les groupes d'intérêt) ont des interactions, et bien souvent entrent en conflit lors de la procédure visant à établir une politique étrangère américaine.

Jusqu'à présent, on peut dire que l'intérêt de la nation canadienne en regard des problèmes relatifs aux affaires étrangères s'avère être tout au plus à peine marqué.

L'érudition des Canadiens semble ne mener nulle part si on la compare au degré de perfectionnement de son voisin américain dans l'étude des influences nationales sur la réalisation de politique étrangère.

Il semble qu'il y ait une pauvreté de travaux d'érudits allant au-delà de ces tentatives d'ordre plutôt descriptif et qui plongent dans les eaux troubles de l'influence du groupe d'intérêt national dans la réalisation des décisions canadiennes en politique étrangère.

Nulle part ailleurs ces différences d'analyses du groupe d'activité ne sont mises plus en évidence que lors de la réalisation de la politique étrangère tant canadienne qu'américaine envers le Moyen-orient.

Les auteurs Américains William Quandt et Robert Trice soulignent avec insistance l'influence importante que les groupes d'intérêts américains — tant pro-Israël que pro-Arabe — ont eu sur la réalisation de décisions politiques des U.S.A. au cours des années antérieures remontant jusqu'à l'appui du gouvernement Truman pour un plan de partage de 1947 et la reconnaissance capitale de l'état naissant d'Israël.

Cet article vise dans un premier pas à faire le développement d'une analyse systématique de l'influence d'un groupe d'intérêt sur la politique canadienne au

Moyen-orient, analyse politique comparable à celle faite aux Etats-Unis. La période visée dans cette analyse porte sur les années relatives au partage et à la reconnaissance de l'état d'Israël au cours des années 1946 à 1948, et sur en examen des tentatives d'un groupe d'intérêt cherchant à influencer ce partage et cette reconnaissance.

The study of domestic influences upon foreign policy-making has become something of an art in the United States. A cursory glance at the library shelves will illustrate, as the American academic and onetime policy advisor Roger Hilsman has noted, that interest in foreign policy decision-making is "rooted deeply in the political and organizational processes" of the American political culture.¹

A whole generation of American scholars has devoted itself to analysis of not only the functioning of the formal institutions of government, but also the ways in which these institutions and countless other less formal public and private bodies (including, and especially, interest groups) interact, and often collide, in the process of making American foreign policy.

To what extent is it possible to apply Hilsman's axiom to the Canadian scene? To this point, Canadian public interest in external issues would appear to be at best 'occasional'², and Canadian scholarship seems to come nowhere near the level of sophistication of its American counterpart in the study of domestic influences upon the making of foreign policy. To be sure, one must note the existence of several excellent analyses of the formal mechanisms of foreign policy making in the Canadian system — such names as Eayrs, Lyon, Thomson and Swanson, and Stairs come immediately to mind — but there appears to exist a dearth of scholarly works which go beyond these rather descriptive efforts and which delve into the murky waters of domestic interest group influence upon the making of Canadian foreign policy decisions.

Nowhere are these differences in analyses of group activity more in evidence than in the making of Canadian and American foreign policy for the Middle East.

On the American side, scholars such as William Quandt and Robert Trice have analyzed in rather full detail the plethora of interests and influences, both public and private, one must contend with in attempting to study the formulation of US policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both authors note with particular emphasis the substantial influence which American interest groups —

both pro-Israel and pro-Arab — have had upon the making of U.S. policy decisions over the years, going back to the Truman Administration's support for the U.N. partition plan of 1947 and the subsequent recognition of the incipient State of Israel.

This article — entailing an examination of interest group attempts to influence Canadian policy toward partition and recognition in the 1946-1948 period — is intended as a first-step toward the development of a systematic analysis of interest group influence on Canadian Middle East policy comparable to that found in the United States.

An analysis of interest group influence in the making of Canadian policy towards the Middle East is appropriate for several reasons. First, given the relative success of American groups in influencing US policy for the Middle East, an analysis of Canadian pressure group activity with regard to the same region would appear consistent with an attempt to compare interest group influence in the presidential and parliamentary systems. Second, the Middle East is far from alien to Canada's international experience. Through its traditionally very strong involvement in UN peacekeeping operations, Canada has in one form or another been involved in the Middle East for most of the generation following the Second World War. Third, the Middle East, and in particular the Arab oil-producing Middle East, has been one of the major beneficiaries of a fairly distinct shift in Canadian foreign policy during the 1970s in the direction of those foreign relations which will best fulfill the needs of Canada's domestic environment.⁴ And finally, an analysis of this sort will provide us with an opportunity to empirically verify or invalidate Peter Dobell's charge of a traditional Canadian governmental bias in favour of Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has been largely motivated by the activities of a powerful 'Jewish lobby' in Canada.

It is . . . an important factor in Canada's international posture that it has constantly shown more sympathy for Israeli than for Arab positions in the Middle East conflict . . . the well-organized Jewish lobby in Canada has pressed relentlessly for support of Israel . . . The remarkable influence of Canadian Jews comes less from their numbers — almost 175,000 in 1961 — than from their wealth, their financial support of the Liberal party, their superb organization, and their concentration in the large cities which vote Liberal . . .⁵

We make no judgement at this point, but will allow Mr. Dobell's contention to guide much of our analysis of interest group activity in the making of Canadian policy with regard to our case study. While we will not likely be able to arrive at any general over-riding conclusions regarding the making of foreign policy, an analysis of this sort will likely provide us with knowledge of some of the basic structural, institutional, political and cultural incentives and constraints

to interest group influence upon the making of foreign policy in Canada.

Canadian governmental involvement in the Middle East, for all practical purposes, began on April 2, 1947, when Britain 'formally and without warning', referred to the U.N. the question of its mandate in Palestine (which had been granted to Britain by the League of Nations following the First World War). Given Canada's important 'middle power' role in the early post-World War Two period, she was bound to become involved in this issue. Such involvement, says Lester Pearson, was quite upsetting to the government of William Lyon Mackenzie King, for it forced the reticent Prime Minister to take a stand on an issue he had up until then adroitly avoided.⁶

Mr. King's cautiousness was based in large part upon a fear of undue haste; of an escalation of Arab-Jewish violence; of a confrontation between British, American, and Soviet interests; and especially of committing Canadian resources (and potentially, lives) to an area where Canada had no direct interests.⁷ However, the course of events, and Canada's growing international responsibilities, began to overtake this cautious attitude.

At the U.N. Lester Pearson — who had succeeded Norman Robertson as Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs in September 1946 at the same time as Mr. King had passed the External Affairs portfolio on to Mr. St. Laurent — was selected Chairman of the General Assembly's Special Session on Palestine. With Mr. Pearson as Canada's primary representative to the Palestine issue, it was all but inevitable that the policy of 'careful functionalism' advocated in Cabinet by Mr. King was to be circumvented.⁸ For, as Pearson readily admits in his memoirs, he felt a special religious attachment to the issue which perhaps went far beyond practical political considerations.⁹ This deep personal sentiment and the high profile taken by Supreme Court Justice Ivan C. Rand — Canada's representative to the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) — in the formulation of the majority report recommending the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state with an economic union, did not in the least please the Prime Minister.

Despite the pleas of Mr. Pearson and others within the DEA, such as Escott Reid and Hume Wrong, and despite some fairly strong opposition within Cabinet, the government, and Parliament¹⁰, the Cabinet, under intense personal pressures from Mr. King, fell in behind the Prime Minister on the limited Canadian acceptance of the U.N. partition plan, and the subsequent delay in Canada's recognition of the nascent State of Israel.

On 20 May 1948 the provisional government of Israel requested recognition from the Canadian government. Unlike the Truman Administration in the United States — which, in a literal footrace with the Soviet Union, had been

very quick to grant such recognition within minutes of the end of the British mandate of 14 May — Canada under Mackenzie King was once again exceedingly cautious. It was only with the full retirement of Mackenzie King in mid-November 1948, and with the ascension of Pearson to the position of Secretary of State for External Affairs, that the Canadian policy on both conflict resolution and recognition in the Middle East became less tied to the Mackenzie King (and British) position.

In late November 1948 the Israeli government applied for admission to the U.N. This request was supported by both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., but was opposed by Britain. Still in the process of reshaping its policy, Canada under St. Laurent abstained on the vote; which subsequently failed to pass. However, says Pearson, by that time the new Canadian government had determined that the situation had become stable enough, and the government of Israel had shown itself secure enough, to permit some measure of 'de facto' Canadian recognition. Such recognition was granted on 24 December 1948 and was followed by 'de jure' recognition on 11 May 1949.¹¹

Hence, this first episode of Canada's involvement in the Arab-Israel conflict had come to an end, but not without charges from much of the Arab world and those of the pro-Arab position that the Canadian government had been excessively pro-Israeli in its policy orientation — largely as a consequence of extensive political pressure applied by Jewish and pro-Zionist pressure groups in Canada. In order to evaluate the validity of these charges, it is necessary that we analyze the activities of two pressure groups of the day — the pro-Israel and pro-Arab lobbies in Canada. We will here be borrowing to a large degree from Zachariah Kay's study of Canadian policy toward the Palestine issue up to the recognition of Israel (as well as his earlier study of the relations between the Canadian press and Palestine from 1939-1948).¹²

To begin, Kay notes the existence, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, of a vibrant and growing Jewish community of Canada, which tended to be pro-Zionist in orientation (to the extent that Zionism was anything beyond a rather ambiguous form of religious nationalism). As the concept of Zionism developed into a viable movement of Jewish national regeneration, so did Canadian Jewry's interest in Zionism tend to grow. However, prior to the early 1940s and the events in Europe, Canadian Jewish pressure on government remained minimal, as did Canadian governmental interest in Jewish and Zionist issues.

It was only in the last days of World War Two, as the true extent of the Nazi Holocaust became apparent, that the Canadian people — Jewish and otherwise — really began to think in practical terms of a national political homeland in

Palestine for the Jews, as promised by the British government in the Balfour Declaration.

By the 1946-1948 period the pro-Israel community in Canada had become for the most part embodied in several organizations: the Canadian Jewish Congress, the United Zionist Council of Canada (U.Z.C.), The Canadian Zionist Federation (C.Z.F.), the Zionist Organization of Canada (Z.O.C.), the non-Jewish Canadian-Palestine Committee (C-P.C.), the Canadian Council of Clergymen. Representatives of the chief activists of these groups — those of the U.Z.C. and the C-P.C., in particular — along with representatives of the Arab Office and the Canadian-Arab Friendship League, were invited to make separate representations before the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs in July of 1946. Thus, the interest groups did not lack in representation before members of Parliament; although, says Kay, the mandate of this committee was so narrow as to make it quite impotent and without influence upon the government.¹³

With the passage of the question of the future of the Palestine mandate from British to U.N. hands in April 1947, and the subsequent UNSCOP investigation and partition recommendation, the Arab and Jewish interest groups in Canada tended to dramatically increase their activities vis-a-vis the government. However, the Arab side — given its rather small Canadian constituency; its poor organizational skills; its tendency to engage in highly confrontational activities (both within Parliamentary committee and in the general community as a whole); and a certain Canadian ignorance of the Arab culture — tended to be limited in its persuasive capacities.¹⁴

Yet, says Kay, the Canadian Arab community had four elements in its favour: a pro-Arab expert in DEA (Miss Elizabeth MacCallum); public reaction to Jewish terrorist activities against British mandatory officials; a British government friendly with the Arabs; and anti-semitic sentiment militating against the Jews.¹⁵

We must note that the pro-Zionist community had a fair degree of access to many of the top political and bureaucratic decision-makers, including St. Laurent, Secretary of State Paul Martin, Minister of Finance (and then Justice) Ilsley, and the Prime Minister himself. In the *Mackenzie King Record*, is to be found a description of the meeting of King and St. Laurent with the Jewish Agency representative in New York (and later Israel's Foreign Minister) Moshe Sharett, in April of 1948. Mr. King wrote that he found Sharett to be 'frank and pleasant', and that 'I was immensely taken with his manner and appearance; an exceptionally fine advocate'.¹⁶

One of the main vehicles through which the pro-Zionist interest groups were

able to reach the Prime Minister was through its association with various Jewish and pro-Jewish MPs and Senators, such as the then Jewish Liberal MP for Spadina (now Senator) David Croll, Senator Arthur Roebuck, and J. A. Bradette, Chairman of the House External Affairs Committee. Sometimes these contacts were helpful, sometimes less so. An example of the latter was Croll's request in early 1948 that the Prime Minister meet with Dr. Nachum Goldmann, one of the key leaders of the World Zionist Federation. Wrote King of this proposed meeting:

' . . . was glad that St. Laurent agreed it would be unwise for me to see Goldmann which would only lead to the press asserting there was some relationship between our Government and the Jews, and this at a time when the Chairman of the Security Council at New York was an appointee of our Government . . .'¹⁷

Thus, Jewish and non-Jewish pro-Zionist groups had uneven success in their approaches to the Liberal government under Mr. King. While they apparently did not lack access to formal makers of political decisions, the lobbyists were unable to change their views. For, as Presthus has noted in summarizing pressure group activity in Canada, it is not only access into the system which presents the major problem for Canadian lobbyists, but the difficulty of achieving their goals *despite* the opportunity to be heard.¹⁸ A pressure group may, through its resources, contacts, and public campaigns be able to reach the upper echelons of decision-making, but this is quite inefficacious if the key decision-maker is adamant and unyielding in his position and is able to maintain control over the behaviour of other decision-makers. Such would appear to be the case in the 1946-1948 Palestine issue, as the Zionist groups had access to Cabinet but were met by the immovable attitude of Prime Minister Mackenzie King.

However, this is far from the end of the story, for, as interest group theory suggests, if one avenue of governmental influence shuts down or is lost, the successful group will move on to the next. In this case, the Zionist groups, seeing all of their efforts to convince the seemingly inflexible Mackenzie King going for naught, turned their attention to that element of the policy process which appeared to be both vital in the decision-making process *and* more amenable to their position. Hence, the attention shifted to DEA in general, and its contingent at the U.N. in particular. And, as the central figure in this Canadian contingent, Lester Pearson became the central focus of most Canadian pro-Zionist interest group activities.

A whole body of literature on this period in Canadian diplomacy has arisen, and much of it has centered on the apparent political biases of Lester Pearson. Tareq Ismael charges that during the U.N. debate on partition Mr. Pearson was unquestionably supportive of the pro-Zionist position, and claims that "for his

efforts, Mr. Pearson was 'dubbed by Canadian Zionists as the Balfour of Canada'.¹⁹ Numerous others have made similar comments about the behaviour of Mr. Pearson in the partition debate.

Peter Stursberg, in his oral history of Pearson and what came to be known as the age of 'Pearsonian diplomacy'²⁰, devotes several pages to an analysis of this very issue. Stursberg cites Pearson's son Geoffrey as saying that he felt that his father "was fairly neutral about that issue. He wasn't committed to a state of Palestine, although he felt he knew a lot of the background . . . I think he was genuinely impartial."²¹ The younger Pearson does admit, however, that his father "supported very strongly the new State of Israel once it was on the map and never wavered in that support."²² In his memoirs, Lester Pearson himself appears to lend credence to this claim when he writes that "I have never wavered in my view that a solution to the problem was impossible without the recognition of a Jewish state in some form in Palestine."²³

Taking Mr. Pearson's words at their face value, one might ask three basic questions. First, to what extent was Mr. Pearson's supposed bias in favour of the State of Israel a reflection of his own Zionist tendencies or of his commitment to the decisions of the U.N.? Second, did Canadian Zionist pressure groups recognize Pearson's apparent bias and were they able to exploit it? And finally, how successful were the various groups in influencing both Mr. Pearson's position at the UN and the decisions taken by the Cabinet in Ottawa? In answering these questions, we will have brought our discussion full circle, and be able to look once again at Peter Dobell's charge of the existence and strength of a Canadian Jewish lobby.

On the first question, we can of course never be sure where the one stopped and the other began. But, Mr. Pearson's involvement in the U.N. resolution of the Suez crisis — which included an international 'smack on the wrist' for Israel, the forced pull-back of Israeli forces from the Sinai desert and the imposition of a U.N. peace-keeping force which the Israelis had nothing but distrust for from the outset — and Pearson's failure as Prime Minister to act in defence of Israeli interests as the diplomatic and military crisis of May-June 1967 reached a head²⁴ — would appear to provide some considerable evidence upon which one might infer that Pearson's support for the partition and the creation of the State of Israel was based less on his personal feeling for the concept of a Jewish state than on his deep and abiding belief that the new international system structured upon the principles of the U.N. charter could only survive if the nations of the world were to live by its decisions — in this case, the decision to partition the Palestine mandate into separate Jewish and Arab entities.

In terms of the second question; the evidence seems clear that, for whatever

reason, Pearson had, through his words and actions in the U.N., indicated a certain bias in favour of partition and creation of the Jewish state — and in so doing, made himself the object of considerable Canadian (and international) Zionist attention.

Miss Elizabeth MacCallum, the Arabist in DEA whom Zachariah Kay viewed as a factor working in the favour of the Arab cause in Canada, has noted that the Jewish Agency went out of its way to win Pearson to its cause, and that Moshe Sharett “waited on him almost every day.”²⁵ As Stursberg suggests, much of the disproportionate amount of Jewish lobby pressure upon Pearson and the rest at the U.N. may be more a reflection of the weaknesses of the Canadian Arab movement’s organizational skills than of the predominance of pro-Zionist influence.²⁶ And finally, on the issue of the real influence of the Jewish lobby on Pearson, Stursberg provides this comment:

Certainly, the Arabs felt that he (Pearson) was on the Jewish side and, years later, they were to tell Tommy Burns how Pearson puts his arms around Ben Gurion when he greeted him at the United Nations, although the General . . . supposed that *he could not have done anything else if Ben Gurion had clasped him to his bosom . . .*²⁷

We have for the most part already answered the third of our questions; that being the extent to which the pro-Zionist groups were able to influence both Pearson’s behaviour in the U.N. and the policy decisions of the Canadian government.

Even if we accept the argument put forth by Tareq Ismael that Pearson was Zionist in orientation, and that he had, at times, ‘acting in a personal capacity rather than in the name of his government’, pushed very hard in the U.N. for partition²⁸, what does this tell us about the influence of the Jewish lobby in Canada? The proof, as the saying goes, is in the pudding. Despite the attempts of the pro-Zionist interest groups to influence both Pearson and the Canadian government, the Cabinet, under Mackenzie King’s firm hand, remained fundamentally opposed to partition — accepting it, says Pearson, “only after we were convinced that there was no possibility of an agreement between Britain, the U.S.A., and the U.S.S.R. which might make possible any other solution”²⁹ — and delayed, *for a full year*, ‘de jure’ Canadian recognition of the State of Israel. And, furthermore, while one might argue that Canadian ‘de facto’ recognition — coming as it did shortly after the retirement of Mackenzie King and the ascension of Pearson to the position of Minister of External Affairs — might be a manifestation of Pearson’s (and St. Laurent’s) pro-Zionist tendencies, we would contend that the strength of this argument is weakened when one recognizes (a) that Canada, under St. Laurent, had abstained from accepting Israel’s request for admission to the U.N.; and (b) that, as Pearson notes, Canada’s rec-

ognition of Israel was accomplished “with no demure from London.”³⁰

Furthermore, while certainly not in any way denying the attempts by Canadian Jewish and non-Jewish groups to influence Canadian bureaucratic and political decision-makers, we do reject the contention that these groups were, as George Ignatieff suggests, able to marshal their political weight to produce successful results, as had their counterparts in the United States.

‘I remember Brooke Claxton saying to me once when we were in doubt how to vote. ‘Don’t forget George, I don’t mind how you vote but’, he said, ‘Don’t forget that I have no Arabs in my constituency and I have I’ve forgotten how many hundred Jews’ . . .”³¹

While surely not to appear naive and to deny that many Canadian politicians (especially Liberal cabinet members and advisors) were aware of such political considerations, we must again return to our ‘proof is in the pudding’ metaphor: if the Cabinet was so impressed by the political need to satisfy Jewish voters, then why did it fight partition and hold out on recognition? The answer seems clear. On the 1946-1948 case, at least, Peter Dobell and others have seriously overestimated the capacity of the Canadian Jewish community, acting as a unified interest group, to influence the making of Canadian foreign policy for the Middle East.

Conclusions:

What general comments might then be made about the interaction of the various pro-Israel pressure groups and the Canadian government in the hectic 1946-1948 period? In terms of interest group theory, we might turn briefly to William Stanbury’s three aspects on analysis: **TIMING**, **TARGETS**, and **VEHICLES**.³² In terms of timing, it seems that the various pro-Zionist interest groups had a fairly well developed idea of how the Canadian policy-making process operated. They appear to have begun their inputs into the system early, and to have planted the seed of their interests throughout the process. They did not lack access to the major domains of decision making, including the Prime Minister’s office. While, granted, as was the case with Mr. King’s decision not to meet with World Zionist Federation leader Nachum Goldmann, this access was not always complete, there is little evidence that key decision makers deliberately avoided representatives of the pro-Israel groups.

Similarly, the Zionist groups appear to have selected the proper targets for their attention. Early in the process, they readily took up the offer to make representations before the House of Commons External Affairs Committee. They did so, it seems, not with any illusion about the important role played by this committee in the formulation of foreign policy, but as a way of making sure that their arguments were heard by M.P.s and, hopefully, by the general public. Despite a clear attempt to court Parliamentary committee members, individual M.P.s, and members of the press, there was a clear understanding that the bulk of the Zionist groups’ resources must be targeted at the real centres of power,

the upper bureaucracy and the Cabinet. As we have seen, these groups were fairly successful in gaining entree into the upper echelons, but were rather unsuccessful in stimulating a change in policy attitude there. Not to be deterred, the Zionists, following interest group theory, sought influence within another area of the foreign policy bureaucracy: this time the Canadian delegation at the United Nations.

In discussing the aspect of “vehicles”, it is important to recognize the role which many of the pro-Zionist activists envisioned for themselves. On the one hand, they were surely there to make the case for partition of Palestine and for the recognition of the State of Israel as loudly and as vociferously as possible. We might therefore see them as ‘issue-oriented’ pressure groups as Paul Pross defines them.³³

On the other hand, it was of equal if not greater importance to these groups to legitimize themselves to the Canadian government and people, and in so doing, to legitimize the State of Israel. In this sense, we might see many of these groups as ‘institutional’ pressure groups in the making. It was, of course, important to these groups that the Canadian government support partition and recognize Israel, but it would seem that their representatives also had a longer-term series of goals in mind — those associated with legitimacy and relations with the Canadian government on a wide-range of Israel-related issues. In so doing, these groups appear to have lived by Paul Pross’ basic maxim of successful institutional group philosophy: that “it is better to return to bargain another day than to risk the ‘credibility’ of the organization in the eyes of those groups whose decisions may in the future make or break the group and its client.”³⁴

Hence, while surely intent on employing those vehicles which would effectively keep the Zionist view before the Canadian public, press and government — and on taking such actions required to ensure that the non-Zionist Mackenzie King government did not become pro-Arab in policy orientation — the major Canadian Jewish and Zionist pressure groups went to great pains to demonstrate to the Canadian government that, while they *did* seek a change in governmental policy direction, *they were not attempting to undermine the prevailing Canadian status quo*. By engaging in what might generally be viewed as ‘consensual’ and ‘accommodative’ relations with the Canadian government, the Zionist groups, while surely not convincing the Mackenzie King government to alter its basic policy position, were to a significant extent able to ‘legitimize’ their activities. This legitimizing effort was made even easier by the tendency on the part of the Canadian Arab pressure groups to take a more ‘conflictual’ and uncompromising stance in their representations before

Cabinet and Parliamentary committees. In this sense, then, we might see in the initial failure of the Zionist groups to influence Canadian policy in the 1946-1948 period the seed for future fruitful relations between the Canadian government and Israel-related interest groups.

FOOTNOTES

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7. Stein (b), *op. cit.*, p. 272.
8. For a complete description of the difference in foreign policy orientation between the King-Robertson team and the St. Laurent-Pearson battery, see J. L. Granatstein's biography of Norman Robertson, entitled *A Man Of Influence*, pp. 205-206.
For a complete analysis of the men who made up Canada's external affairs department in this period, see Granatstein's recently published *Ottawa Men*.
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The Toronto Yiddish Press

BEN KAYFETZ*

Résumé

Dans ce document, M. Ben Kayfetz, fort bien connu pour son excellent travail au Congrès Juif de Toronto (C.J.T.) et pour ses activités communautaires, se penche aujourd'hui, à 55 ans d'intervalle donc, sur un thème qu'il développa lors de la réunion en juin 1982 de la Société d'histoire juive du Canada et des Sociétés savants à Ottawa. Ainsi que l'auteur le signale: "mes propos sur la presse juive de Toronto ne doivent pas être considérés comme étude définitive du sujet, bien au contraire. Ce ne sont que des observations qui remontent à mon enfance et au fait que j'ai été en contact avec les périodiques juifs de l'époque à Toronto." Un long développement et enchaînement de remarques et propos s'ensuivent et constituent la teneur de ce document précieux et unique en fait. Unique parce qu'il semblerait que ce soit la première étude du genre publiée au Journal, unique également car ce sont des souvenirs d'une enfance, d'une ville, d'un contexte social politique et géographique, unique aussi et enfin car ce sont des souvenirs personnels qui se rattachent tantôt aux fêtes, tantôt au Cheder (l'école) tantôt aux personnes qui ont marqué son enfance, adolescence, etc . . . Le parcours de ce document nous fait donc découvrir l'auteur mais surtout et avant tout **l'homme** qui sommeillait au travers de ces nombreuses années.

My remarks on the Jewish press in Toronto must not be mistaken for any kind of definitive study. They are only my highly subjective, very personal, very imperfectly recalled observations based on my casual exposure to the Jewish periodicals of that city since childhood, going back some 55 years.

My first experience was with the *Hebrew Journal* which, despite its name —

*Mr. Kayfetz presented this highly personal and thoroughly irreverent paper at the June, 1982 meeting of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society, Learned Societies' Conference, Ottawa, Ont. It is not intended as a piece of scholarly historical research, although the author's long experience and unique talents give him a special insight into the fabric of the Toronto Jewish Community.

and that was not the only paradox or contradiction about the paper — was not in Hebrew but Yiddish. Why did it use the name “Hebrew”? Possibly back in 1911 or thereabouts when the paper was established the feeling was still prevalent in certain circles that the word Jewish was too stark a word and “Hebrew” was perceived as more “polite” and genteel. But the name persisted, though in Yiddish it was never anything else nor could it have been but *Der Yiddisher Zhurnal*. It came out six days a week, every day but Saturday, and filled the needs of the immigrant population of the 1920’s and 1930’s and even the 1940’s and 1950’s. In my own case at *cheder* my Hebrew teacher spent a few minutes with me every day going over the *Neies Bei Unz in Shtot* section which was a precis of the local general news: a story involving a Jewish pedlar who was arrested, a theft here, a violent robbery or hold-up there, all culled from the metropolitan downtown press. This daily once-over gave me a personal intimacy with the Yiddish press which has never left me to this day. There was a story that circulated in Toronto and it was similarly told in New York about the *Tog* and the *Forverts*: How did the Daily Star learn on Monday, a full day in advance, of the news reports that the *Zhurnal* was to publish the next day? (In New York they substituted the N. Y. *Times* for the *Star* but the story was identical). And since I’ve mentioned the *Forverts* it should be said that in all its history the *Journal* had to withstand the stiff competition of the three (and earlier four) Yiddish New York dailies which were on sale the same day and it is probably certain that when the *Morgen Journal* and *Tageblatt* and *Tog* were going, their combined circulation in Toronto was far greater than that of the *Zhurnal*. This is something the *Globe*, the *Telegram* and the *Star* never had to put up with yet the amazing thing is that the *Zhurnal* survived as long as it did — up to the 1960’s. It lasted 20 years longer than similar Yiddish dailies in cities in the USA with much larger Jewish populations. I refer to the *Courier* of Chicago, and the daily Yiddish papers in Cincinnati, Boston, Philadelphia and Cleveland, which expired in the early 1940’s. For the most part, I know this: in the 1950’s there were no Yiddish dailies anywhere in the USA outside of New York City while in Canada, the *Adler* in Montreal and the *Journal* in Toronto, were still going, not thriving admittedly, yet appearing six days a week. How the *Journal* managed was a mystery that only Shmuel Meyer Shapiro knew the answer to.

What kind of person was Shapiro? He was a virile looking individual of leonine appearance with a luxurious mane of hair that had only begun to show a few gray strands after he turned 70. He was from Mozir in White Russia and therefore a Litvak which put him into a minority position in Toronto where the preponderant majority of Jews were from Poland. But this never diminished him in his influence or his activity. Like the proverbial Litvak he was a skeptic;

more — he was a cynic — a hard-boiled cynic. As the editor of a *Klall Yisroel* newspaper he managed to be all things to all men: he was a card carrying Conservative and also an active proponent of the Histadrut and the trade union movement in Israel and therefore close to Labor Zionism. Being a Tory never stopped him from supporting Liberal candidates for office though one of his permanent proteges was Nathan Phillips all through the latter's 30 year aldermanic career. Shapiro had a black list of persons and agencies who never were to be mentioned in the columns of the paper. What these were I never knew, though I was told of it by an associate.

I do know that Shapiro had a group of "angels" he would turn to when the paper needed an infusion of money or when the creditors were threatening and getting impatient. Among these were Ben Sadowski of Toronto, who likely never looked into the paper but agreed that it should exist, and Sam Bronfman of Montreal, who didn't give without sometimes subjecting Shapiro to a little sharp needling. There were other *gvirim*, I'm sure, who were part of this rescue team and some day a historian should disclose who they were if it should still be possible to get the information. One of them at one time was Melech Grafstein of London, Ontario who was the landlord of the property at 542 Dundas Street West. Those of you who remember Max Grafstein recall him as an eccentric but a successful businessman who saw himself as a publisher, a Metzenat as it's called, a patron of the Jewish arts, of literature, the drama and publishing and culture *bichlall*. As a result of a serious altercation, Grafstein removed his patronage from the paper, and within a few months Shapiro and the *Journal* moved out to new quarters at College Street at Lippincott, just near Bathurst with the tremendous expense of moving the heavy presses and equipment. 542 Dundas Street became a jobbers' warehouse like all the other stores in the block and that period in the history of the *Journal* was over. The paper was only to last 10 years or so in the new location.

Shapiro was a consummate cynic though there were certain causes he was not cynical about, such as the Histadrut and the Congress. He was one of those who, like Archie Bennett, whom he called Ahrtche Bennett (as was the correct Yiddish diminutive of Aharon), were believers in the ideology of Congress, that Congress was the soul of the Jewish "masses", that only it could keep together the integrity of the Jewish people. One group in Jewish life for whom he made no secret of his dislike were the Agudists. In fact there was one distinguished rabbi in the city whose affiliation I did not even associate with the Agudas Israel until I heard Shapiro denounce him once as an *Agudah'nik* (note the derogatory suffix).

Shapiro once commissioned my colleague Nachman Shemen (though this

was before he was my colleague) to do a history of the Orthodox Jewish community in Toronto which Shemen did after considerable research. A fund-raising dinner was held but because the money raised didn't measure up to expectations, Shapiro scuttled the entire project even though the special supplement had already been printed. The copies were stashed in a cellar somewhere, they were never circulated and eventually were lost. Fortunately Mr. Shemen retained a copy and the text wasn't lost to posterity.

Shapiro gathered around him a number of writers of talent and ability. There was Moishe Fogel who had a column in the paper each day. There was Itzchok Feigelman who wrote feuilletons in the European manner. There was Nachman Shemen who wrote under his own name and various *noms de plume* such as Nachmani, N. Boimel, Ben Zalman. This, by the way, must be one of the few cases where a writer's original name becomes one of his pseudonyms. The other writers also had their pseudonyms: Feigelman was understandably Tzipori, S. A. Abella would send in reports on the Hapoel Hamizrachi movement. In later years there were Bernard Wind and Jacob Beller, both of them, incidentally, Galitzianer (Beller would bitterly complain to me of Shapiro though I could never judge who was right, though Shapiro tended to play the autocrat). I could tell many stories about Wind who, after studying medicine and living in the States is at present in Winnipeg where up to its demise he edited the *Yiddish Vort*, a weekly. I still correspond with these two. Beller, now in his 80's, lives in Israel. Much of his life was spent in Argentina and he would write correspondences about South American countries for the *Globe and Mail* after yours truly would translate them. There was one year particularly rich in the usual Latin American coups d'état or revolutions and Beller always had an article ready from his wide repertoire on any given Latin American land, whether it was Peru, Brazil or Equador.

Most of these writers doubled as Hebrew teachers at the same time they were employed as writers, or had been teachers previously. This was true of Wind, Shemen, Fogel and in the latter category, of Beller and Moshe Frank.

Before Shapiro was Rhinewine, who came from Mezritch in Russian Poland, a man who before his untimely death at 44 in 1931, managed to do some original research on Canadian Jewish history including the story of Ezekiel Hart. It's a typical story of how rigid party lines were in those days that in 1930 when Sam Factor ran for Parliament in what was later to be Spadina riding and the *Journal* supported him, he was ostracized by the socialist party he belonged to, as he was guilty of supporting a bourgeois, a capitalist candidate. Paradoxically, Rhinewine, who had come from the ranks of the Socialist Territorialists was the author of a book on "Eretz Yisroel in Jewish Literature". Ter-

ritorialists were people who were perceived to look elsewhere than to Palestine for the Jewish solution.

Before Rhinewine's death, there was a breach in the ranks, a quarrel between him and Shapiro, the details of which I am not familiar, and it led eventually to a new Yiddish publication, a weekly named *Kanader Neies* which was published and edited by Maurice Goldstick and his sister Mrs. Dorothy Dworkin. This was not sold across the counter, but was distributed as an insert with the weekend edition of the New York Yiddish papers of which Mrs. Dworkin was the distributing agent. This was able to appeal to both major ideological elements in the Jewish community and performed the uncommon feat of being both pro-Bundist and pro-Zionist at the same time. Pro-Bundist, because Mrs. Dworkin continued the tradition of her late husband Henry Dworkin who was active in the Socialist movement, and Zionist because her brother Maurice Goldstick who edited the weekly was a devoted Zionist. Both ideologies had in common a fervid anti-Communism. Those who didn't see eye to eye with the paper called it the "mamzerel". Why? Because like a *mamzer* it was *untergevorfn* i.e., it was tossed in gratis with the New York papers. Its life span, as I calculate, was 20 years, from 1935 to about 1955, four or five years before Maurice Goldstick's death.

There was also a third Yiddish paper in Toronto that I recall though it was officially considered a New York paper, even if the advertising and much of the writing and editing stemmed from Toronto, where it was printed. This was the *Proletarisher Gedank*, the organ of a very small minority group in the multi-coloured spectrum of Zionism, the left Poale Zion. We have a bound set of a year's copies for 1933-34 at the CJC office in Toronto where the spelling is in the Soviet style with Hebrew words spelled out phonetically though half-way through the set the spelling reverts to the traditional orthography. And the ideology reflected this split personality: the Soviet Union was praised for its socialist achievement but the *Yevsekess*, the Jewish Communists, both there and here in Canada, were denounced in unequivocal terms.

And there was a class-conscious article denouncing the about-to-be-recognized Canadian Jewish Congress as a tool of the Jewish exploiting bourgeoisie. Only a decade later these same men, the Max Federmans and Harry Simons and Moishe Menachovskys were very much part of the Canadian Jewish Congress and were its most loyal supporters.

The Jewish or rather Yiddish-speaking Communist movement in Toronto has a long history of having a press organ. More than any other grouping within the diversified Jewish community they would feel the need of a separate organ. They were so distinctly different in their ideology from all the other factions

that they couldn't expect what they'd consider as fair treatment in a general "Klall Yisroel" publication, so they always had their own paper. Besides which they needed their own organ for political reasons.

Their first paper was called, appropriately, *Der Kamf* (The Struggle) and its first editor was Philip Halpern. He died in 1932. My grandfather's tombstone is a few steps away from the U.J.P.O. cemetery section and it's fascinating to read the inscription on the tombstones of their stalwarts — including Philip Halpern's. The inscriptions are in Yiddish, not the traditional Hebrew: sometimes they take the form of long poems and are full of dedication to the cause of improved humanity, the ideal of the proletariat, a classless society, a "sheneren morgen", the world revolution, etc. echoes of the slogans of bygone days.

In 1939 when the Stalin-Hitler pact was in operation and the party was illegal the name was changed to *Der Veg*. And after the war, when the Party was respectable, at least for a few years, the name *Vocheblatt* was adopted — a rather colourless name without the militancy or challenge of the *Kamf*. The editors included Sam Lipshitz (who left the Party after the 1956 revelations). The long-time editor who stuck with the U.J.P.O. was Joshua Gershman and when his health failed about two or three years ago, the paper stopped publishing. It was not, of course, self-sustaining. Gershman himself would take a Canada-wide trip once or twice a year to raise funds to keep it going. The contributors and co-editors included the cartoonist Avrom Yanofsky (who also wrote), Harry Guralnick, Joe Salsberg (until his departure from the party) and Sholem Shtern of Montreal, the noted poet. Nathan Cohen, later to become the noted theatre critic, was editor of its English page in the late 1940's. The most interesting series I recall reading was that written by Joe Salsberg in 1956 in six or eight instalments detailing his various visits to the Soviet Union and how they led to his eventual renunciation of his former links.

I myself had an amusing experience which I will share with you. It was in 1956. I was then on the staff of Canadian Jewish Congress and had just returned from a trip to Winnipeg. Shortly afterwards there appeared an article by Gershman making his periodic commentary on the news. First there was the ritual denunciation of Max Federman, the traitor, the tool of the bosses, the labour renegade, besides whom there is no one lower. This was nothing new. Max Federman had been considered public enemy #1 by them since the crowbar-wielding days on Spadina Avenue.*

But this attack was different. Someone had been found who was even lower

*Mr. Federman was a labour organizer, active in the fur trade unions who was always notably and vocally anti-communist.

than Federman — and these were the exact words used: *S'iz do eyner vos er iz nideriker fun Federman* (There is someone who is even lower than Federman!) I read on impatiently to see who this unspeakable wretch could be. And there it was, in large bold type.

Un dos iz Ben Cheifetz! It was me he was writing about!

There followed a denunciation of me coupled with a real off-beat far-out interpretation of why I had been sent by my Canadian Jewish Congress masters to Winnipeg, presumably to change the community's mind on the issue of West Germany's rearmament — something that had nothing to do with my assignment and on which if I had been asked personally I would have the same view as the *Vocheblatt* i.e. I was opposed to it!

From that point on I had the edge on Max Federman whenever I saw him — I was proud of my distinction — to be lower than Federman was no mean achievement as I assured him!

Before I leave the *Hebrew Journal* let me say something about its English page, a feature it acquired at some point in the late 1930's. Its first editor was the late Moses Frank whom we'll meet later in relation to the *Jewish Standard*. He was a man of many talents and of many languages; at home in Russian, Yiddish, Hebrew and English and who wrote professionally in at least three of these four. Like Shmuel Meyer Shapiro he was from Belorussia and a Litvak but a totally different person in temperament. He was primarily a Hebrew writer and it was in that language that he probably preferred to write. He graduated from the Ontario College of Education and had a high school teacher's diploma but Jewish teachers were not being hired in those days. He was principal of the Brunswick Avenue Talmud Torah, the city's best regarded Hebrew school. He had also been an ill-paid executive-secretary at the Canadian Jewish Congress in those days when the salary was from \$10 to \$15 a week out of which you also paid the stenographer. He was also for a while up to 1937 publisher-editor of the *Jewish Standard*. And the last of these *parnossehs* before he left Canada, and by no means the most glorious of them was when he was editor — the first I believe — of the English page of the *Journal*. He also wrote a column along the side of page commenting on the day's news.

When he went to the States I would see his name in the *Forverts* to which he contributed reviews of Hebrew books and articles of a general nature. And I saw his name as well in *Hadoar*, the Hebrew weekly and much later in the Gabriel Cohen's *National Jewish Post* at which time he held a P.R. job with the city of Haifa. (His son Reuven Frank, now 61, is president of the NBC-TV News Corporation, a leading member of the Eastern News Establishment that Spiro Agnew so vigorously attacked some years ago). Moses Frank and his wife died

in a car accident while visiting Montreal in 1977.

It's not generally known that he used to be a Torontonian but the next holder of this English page editorship was the distinguished David Rome, later to become the noted archivist, historian and librarian that he is today. This was after he left Vancouver but before he settled in Montreal where he was to achieve his true level of accomplishment. David Rome served from January 1940 to November 1942.

David Rome was followed by Ben Lappin who held it the next year when he, like David Rome, was called by Canadian Jewish Congress in Toronto which by this time was in a position to pay a living salary to its staff. Ben stayed with Congress, went back to school, returned to the CJC, became a social work professor at the University of Toronto and is now head of the social work department at Bar Ilan University in Israel.

The next editor I recall is a Rabbi Goodman who wrote under the nom de plume of Ben Tuvim. And in between was Leo Hayman, younger brother to Julius Hayman.

The *Journal*, I must admit, never had the prestige that its Montreal counterpart the *Eagle* enjoyed. Israel Rabinowitz, the *Adler* editor, was a much wider known figure in the world of Jewish culture than Shapiro and I stress the word "Jewish" rather than "Yiddish", for Rabinovitch was an authority on Jewish music. The *Journal* didn't gather around itself a literary coterie comparable to a Melech Ravitch, a B. G. Sack, a I. J. Segal, and the many other notable names including, by the way, the early Conrad Bercovici. But that probably is reflective of the gap that then existed between the two cities and the two Jewish communities. The *Journal* never pretended to be anything more than what it was — a provincial daily serving the needs and interests of a very local public.

What was doing in the meantime on the English-language side of the ledger? Not very much, I am constrained to say, at least not until 1930. The *Canadian Jewish Review* had been founded in 1922 in Toronto by George and Florence Friedlander Cohen, two emigres from across the border in Buffalo, N.Y. This was a publication that gave great attention to genteel "social notes", comings and goings to the Catskills, the Adirondacks and the Laurentians to completely detailed description of what the bride wore at a socially prominent wedding (I clearly recall a recurring phrase: "pulled in at the bodice"), to who held the baby boy at the *briss* and — most of all — to who it was that poured the tea at any given reception (cocktail parties were out as this was still under Prohibition). So much so, that to this day there is a standing, if stale, joke "If I pour the tea will you be sure to put in into the Jewish Review" even though the *Review* has been defunct for many years.

I recall in particular one social note that tells it all — the perfect picture of what a social scientist would call not “upward” but “lateral mobility”. It read like this:

Mrs. A. Nussbaum and her daughter Elaine have moved their residence from 12 St. Andrew Street to 26 Leonard Avenue.

The street number and family name have been changed but the street names are those actually mentioned in the social note. Those of you who are familiar with the geography of the old Ward Four South area in Toronto will get the message. The move is from the address in the old Jewish quarter to another, three or four blocks distant — and equally unfashionable.

After a while when Ontario had introduced the government supervised sale of liquor but still did not permit its commercial advertising, the *Review* then moved its main office from Toronto to Montreal to obtain a better chance of getting its share of advertising revenue — which, incidentally, many much more affluent periodicals also did. It was after this a two-city weekly, establishing a precedent which has been followed today by the *Canadian Jewish News*.

Florence Friedlander Cohen was known by her initials as FFC. The masthead bore a little doggerel poem:

Sometimes when people censure me
I tell them without rancour
For what it costs me to be free
I could have had an anchor

Which may leave the impression that she was a fighting, crusading journalist. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A year could go by — sometimes longer — with no editorial whatsoever. When she did get sufficiently riled up she could pen a vigorous paragraph — but it happened rarely.

The *Review* did not pursue much of an editorial policy in Jewish politics. What it did subscribe to was a mild non-Zionism, even extending sometimes to anti-Zionism, reflecting perhaps the middle class, culturally assimilated, older U.S.A. generation and “classical Reform” background of its founders. You have to keep in mind that non-Zionism was quite acceptable in those days. The American Jewish Committee and its leadership, the Louis Marshalls and the Sulzbergers, the American Jewish Establishment in general, were all non-Zionists. B’nai B’rith was non-Zionist; most of the Reform rabbis were non-Zionist including Rabbi Eisendrath who came to Holy Blossom in 1929 and who contributed a column each week to the *Review*.

Another point — the front page of the *Canadian Jewish Review* rarely if ever

had carried any Canadian Jewish news. It was all culled from the pages of the *New York Times* listing the benefactions or the deaths of various American Jewish philanthropists. The only Canadian news I recall it featuring was when the noted physician Dr. I Rabinowitch delivered his notorious anti-Zionist address to the Canadian Club in Montreal in 1946.

Well, 1929 was the turning point. The attack on the Jews at the Wailing Wall and in Hebron that year put the entire Jewish world in turmoil. In Toronto, however, Rabbi Eisendrath reprimanded the Zionists who in some way were held responsible for the attacks and this was reflected in his column in the *Review*.

The Zionists, led by Mrs. Rose Dunkelman, were terribly frustrated. There was nowhere that the Zionist point of view could be put forward in the English language to reach the English-speaking Jews and the general non-Jewish Canadian public.

What did she do? She started her own paper, and in 1930 begins the history of the *Jewish Standard*.

The man who was brought in to be the voice of Zionism in Toronto was truly a remarkable figure, someone who was larger than life and was destined to play a larger role in world Jewry and Zionism: Meyer Weisgal. He had been serving as editor of "The New Palestine", organ of the Zionist Organization of America where he was continually getting into trouble for exceeding his budget and making extravagant payments to highly paid writers like Winston Churchill and David Lloyd George.

He most assuredly made an impact on Toronto and on Toronto Jewish journalism in the very short period of two years that he lived in the city. He continued his practice of inviting world famous writers and in the next few years the *Jewish Standard* ran original commissioned articles by such noted celebrities as Dorothy Thompson, Pierre Van Paassen, Winston Churchill. He used his Z.O.A. contacts to get writers like Louis Lipsky, Felix Frankfurter, Nahum Sokolow, and Menachem Ussishkin.

Weisgal was not yet the right hand man to Chaim Weismann that he was to become but he was already a defender of his ideas. I recall a two-page spread in the *Standard* with a large portrait of Vladimir Jabotinsky on one side and one of Chaim Weismann on the other — two men who held opposing views on the way Zionist politics and diplomacy were to be directed. The article upholding Jabotinsky was written by Archie Bennet and the article defending Weismann was by Meyer Weisgal. I recall Weisgal once addressing a Young Judaea assembly which I attended. He made some remark mentioning the impact Herzl had made upon him. I immediately assumed he had been contemporary to Herzl and has seen him — after all he was a member of the "older" generation, possi-

bly about 50. I was 13 or 14 and anyone over 30 was a “senior citizen”. It was years later that I realized that Weisgal was only 30 when he spoke to us and was himself a child of ten when Herzl died.

Weisgal in two short years had put the Jewish *Standard* on the world Jewish map attracting the ablest, most popular writers. It was truly an international journal of the highest level which happened to be published in Toronto.

But it wasn't meant to last. The Depression of the 1930's and Weisgal's free hand with money were two mutually incompatible factors. Eventually — he tells the story in his memoirs — Mrs. Dunkelman confided in him that the cupboard was bare and he left Toronto to do other things. He became the organizer and impressario for a Jewish pageant at the Chicago World Fair of 1933 where he made his reputation as a showman. Later he was to make a reputation as a master fund-raiser for the Weizmann Institute of Science.

After that the *Standard* steadily went down-hill. There was a Meyer Steinglass who was editor but of whom I had no personal experience. The ownership went through many vicissitudes and changeovers in the five years between 1932 and 1937. It was sold to non-Jewish publishing firms — J. Laird Thompson, the Age Publishing Company on Willcocks Street and for a while it was one of the Maclean-Hunter stable of periodicals. It then fell into the hands of Moses Z. Frank whom we mentioned earlier. Frank was a good editor but not as good a businessman. In 1937 Julius Hayman, then 30 years old, a newcomer from Winnipeg who had been its business manager and had started a rival periodical, the *Jewish Sentinel*, bought the *Standard* from Frank for under \$1000 and finally brought stability to the publication as its editor-publisher for the next 45 years, which double position he still holds.

In 1941 I was employed by the *Jewish Standard*. This was well after Julius Hayman had obtained control. My job was a melange of advertising salesman, article writer, proofreader, and sub-editor. I did everything but the printing. On one occasion I “borrowed” an article from another periodical, in the best tradition of Anglo-Jewish journalism but in my lack of experience I neglected to ask permission of the author or provide him with an honorarium. Whereupon Mr. Hayman received a threatening communication from the author, a certain Alfred Werner, a recent refugee from Germany who probably needed the money. But did he need as much as \$500, which was what he demanded?

I was quite alarmed as this situation was new to me and I was concerned about how the publisher would extricate himself.

But Mr. Hayman was very cool. He waited a few weeks until Mr. Werner, too, cooled off somewhat. Then he sent him a cheque for \$5.00. We never heard again from Mr. Werner.

I was reminded of this incident within the last year when I noted in the JTA of the death of Alfred Werner who in the meantime had developed an excellent reputation as a writer specializing in the field of Jewish art.

At the risk of revealing my own disorganization I'll beg your indulgence to go back to the Yiddish press and deal with a figure I unaccountably omitted — I mean Gershon Pomerantz. Before Gershon Pomerantz undertook the editorship of the *Hebrew Journal* which he did in its last two years as a regularly appearing daily newspaper he had already experimented in seven careers. Since coming to Toronto about 1930 he had conducted a Yiddish lending library, been an insurance agent, been employed by Canadian Jewish Congress as secretary to its "Peoples Division", owned a printing business, had been a publisher of Yiddish books by distinguished authors like Leivik and Opatoshu and during all these livelihoods had "untergezindikt mit'n pen" i.e. had written Yiddish poetry which appeared in various anthologies. He also contributed essays to the *Freie Arbeter Shtimme* in New York under the pseudonym of A. Sokolover. After all these abortive attempts at a livelihood he went into building contracting and for a brief period was actually a *g'vir*. Though always interested in Yiddish he had always disdained the local daily in that language and once when I saw him buying one, in some embarrassment he explained that he bought it only for the particular paper.

At one time he confided in me that he was planning to publish an English language Jewish paper — a weekly. He had the name chosen — "The Jewish Nation" and had gone as far as a dummy front page which he showed me. This was in his printing period when he possessed the machinery to do it. But nothing came of it.

Eventually he became editor of the paper he had professed to disdain and as a *zetter*, a linotype operator (another one of his *parnosses*), he would type-set the editorials right into the hot type. He had a thoroughly good time: denouncing and criticising right and left, re-printing his literary criticism and poems and reviews and putting out the entire paper himself. He even modernized the spelling, bringing the Journal up-to-date in its old age. But eventually ill-health caught up to him and he had to give up. He, by the way, had a mop of hair — a *tchuprina* — that was more luxuriant than Shapiro's.

There was a long period through the 1940's and 1950's when Toronto had no English language Jewish weekly. The *Jewish Standard* was at various times a monthly and a fortnightly but never a weekly, The *Review* had moved to Montreal. It was in 1960, when M.J. Nurenberger switched languages, that we enter the current period.

A very important personality of the Jewish press in Toronto — or for that

matter in all of Canada — has so far been overlooked. I refer to Archie Bennet, olov hasholom, and the omission is strange for two reasons: (a) he towered so tall over so many others and (b) I had made mention of his name twice earlier in the paper in relation to other matters, yet that did not remind or impell me to talk of him as a journalist. The reason isn't hard to find. Archie was so many other things and wore so many other *hitlech* (I daren't say *yarmulkas* because of his well known anti-yarmulka campaign of the 1960's). * He was first and foremost a community leader, he was a major businessman, though many didn't realize it — he and his brothers pioneered in the building of shopping centres or plazas in Canada back in the 1950's — and only after all this was he a journalist, who played at it as it were and dabbled with his column. Well, that may be the way some of us perceived it but not the way he saw it. The ballot for the election of Toronto delegates to the first assembly of the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1919 identified all the candidates by their occupation. And what do you think he was tagged as? As a journalist of course and probably very proudly. I think what he most dearly wanted to be in this world, next to teaching philosophy at Queens, was a working full-time journalist. Archie was probably the first bilingual Jewish journalist Canada had. He used to contribute to *Kanader Adler* when his friend A. A. Roback was editor and he wrote ponderous essays on Old English literature i.e. the Anglo-Saxon epics, probably the only time in history this subject was ever dealt with in that language. Also he was the first truly national journalist we had in the East. Being raised in Kingston he was open to both Toronto and Montreal. He wrote for the old Jewish *Times* of Montreal, the Jewish *Chronicle* of Montreal, the Jewish *Review* both when it was in Toronto and Montreal in the last 25 years or so of his writing, for the Jewish *Standard* of Toronto. As a young man in the summer intervals from Queens he was editor of the Canadian Jewish *Times* in Montreal so he was not merely an amateur dabbler when he dubbed himself a "journalist" on that Congress ballot. In his prime, Archie Benett's writing style was much more interesting than his speaking style. One could enjoy his writing more than his speaking. For one thing, his wit shone through his writing much more lucidly. His speaking suffered from an unfortunate muffled mumble which was very irritating and which more than once aroused an audience to protest — even to take up the chorus *Nit Genudyet* in the tune of *Ay — ochnyet* the Volga Boat Song. He loved to play with words, to build little verbal castles in the air with language, to invent and coin words, to wind phrases up and down, and in and out of an imaginary labyrinth and his satiric jousts were delightful. Some day an enterprising editor or publisher will collect his columns — the best of his columns — and put them together in book form. They will form a fascinating picture of Canadian Jewry

* Discussed later in the paper

as Archie saw it from the second to the seventh decade of this century. And he was never without a column. All the time from 1912 to only several years before his passing in 1981 he was never without a vehicle to express himself — and we are the richer for it.

What did he write about? He wrote about the *landmanshaftn* and the sick benefit societies which used to dot the Jewish horizon. He wrote about his friends Moses and Louis Gelber, always making the point in a patronizing but kindly fashion that after all one must remember they were Galitzianer. He carried on his anti-yarmulka campaign, not *cholila* that he was against the yarmulka *per se* or was anti religious. What he vigorously opposed was the tyranny and regimentation in the new post-war congregations, the imposing of the *yarmulka only* rule, the ban against the fedora, the derby, or the peak cap for which he saw no sanction in Torah or *halacha*. He wrote about Sam Kronick and Sam's still living partner-in-charity Willy Agranove. He wrote about Communism, about Zionism, about Weismann, about Jabotinsky, about his contemporaries Ben Sadowski and Irving Oelbaum, Mike Garber and Sam Bronfman, about the Canadian Jewish Congress and the philosophy of Congress. He and S.M. Shapiro were the most ardent exponents of this philosophy of a Jewish populism that arose during and after the World War I. He wrote about Herzl, Stephen Wise and Chayim Greenberg. But above all he wrote about Reuben Braibin who in his Montreal years gathered around him a group of *talmidim* and *chassidim*, an intellectual *coterie*. It was an experience that was Archie's own personal renaissance and *risorgimento* wrapped into one. Archie never forgot or let his readers forget his debt to this intellectual leader and inspirer. And this too was directly linked to the Jewish press, as it was as editor of the *Kanader Adler* that Brainin owed his presence in Montreal and Canada. This, I suppose, is encroaching on the territory of David Rome but since Archie was in the main a Toronto figure, a part of it belongs to my domain in this paper.

There were various other personalities marginally linked with the Toronto Jewish press. The late Cantor Nathan Stolnitz would come to me to translate his writings into a passable English for eventual publication in a book on Jewish Music and Cantorial Neguna in which the author's photo would invariably appear in the company of a Koussevitsky or a Richard Tucker or a Leibeke Waldman or a Pintchik or one or another of the chazzanic celebrities or even a Bobby Breen. There was Israel Plattner who couldn't let a word escape his lips without a pun, a quip, a play on words, generally betwixt English and Yiddish. Plattner and Stolnitz both contributed to the *Journal*, Plattner also doing the oc-

casional poetic effort. Plattner suffered from the illusion that the only obstacle preventing him from achieving the success of a George Kaufman, a Lerner and Loew or any other lyric writer for the Broadway musical comedy stage was the lack of a proper translator. He had had it from Yankev Kalich himself, no less a person than Molly Picon's husband, that if his *chochmess** were put into English, he'd be the toast of Broadway. Plattner died blind with diabetes and confined to a wheelchair at the Baycrest Hospital where I would visit him, but to the end he never gave up his playing with words and his toying with language. Alan Jarvis, for instance, the head of the Canadian Art establishment, was one of his targets for not recognizing the merit of Plattner's wife who was and is a sculptress. Jarvis died in an alcoholic stupor but Plattner forecast this years before it happened. How do I know this? Because Plattner always referred to Jarvis as Jarvisky because of his drinking habits.

One contributor to the Toronto Yiddish press came to my acquaintance in a most unusual way without my having the slightest idea he was a Yiddish poet and in a milieu far removed from the usual ambience of the literateurs. He was a street car conductor whose base was the TTC car barns at Roncesvalles and Queen Street overlooking Sunnyside and I was the newsboy on that corner where my older brother had the corner concession. I knew he was a man who was well read as he would talk to me from time to time about Bernard Shaw and would nod knowingly. The other goyishe TTC conductors and motormen held him in great awe as a man who could handle several languages including French which he had acquired in Montreal.

Years later I came across his name S. Nepom in an anthology of Canadian Yiddish poems and I discovered he wrote for the *Adler*, the *Journal* and the leftist *Kampf*. His tombstone is located in the U.J.P.O. section of the Dawes Rd *beis-oilem*.

I once read a poem of his about a newsboy standing in the rain entitled "Der Newsboi". Aha — this might be me? I thought. But no. It must have been an earlier newsboy as the book's date was 1920, when I was three years old.

One of my favorite stories is about a certain Yiddish journalist. He called once insisting I come to see him in the *Journal* office — on the second day of Sukkos, when Shapiro would be sure not to be there. What did he want? Here's the story.

He was quite satisfied with his job at the *Journal* and had no complaint about the pay. His second job teaching at one of the Hebrew schools was also satisfactory. What, then, did he want? What he wanted was for me to try to find him a

* words of wisdom

third job.

This made no sense to me and I asked how could he possibly handle a third job and if he was satisfied with the other two what did he need the extra money for — was he in serious debt?

Cholilo, not at all.

At the *Hebrew Journal* he had a certain quota of articles, columns and reports to prepare. Because he wrote with such great ease and speed (flink-keit was the word he uses) he was finished well ahead of time. The Hebrew teaching job also didn't take up much of his time (I should have added he was and still is a bachelor). As a result time lay heavily on his hands. And what did he do? He was attracted to the *ferdlach*, the horses, where inevitably he would lose all the money he gained from his two jobs.

So what he, therefore, wanted was a job that would enable him to fill up his surplus time and keep him from the temptation of running to the horse races and thereby keeping his income from running out.

Not that he was particularly interested in hard work. The work ethic wasn't necessarily for him. He even specified the kind of job I was to obtain for him: a factory inspector where he would drop in occasionally, leisurely, and casually and the proprietor would provide him with a free bottle of schnappes for good will purposes. Needless to say such a job never materialized.

When this writer left Toronto it was, believe it or not, to proceed to Switzerland where he had been accepted as a medical student. He was then 38. His plan was to study one year then return to North America for a year to earn enough tuition by Hebrew teaching to cover his fees for the following year. At that rate he would have acquired a medical degree by the age of 50. Needless to say, nothing came of this after the first year.

Despite the rhetoric of the Yiddishists, the Yiddish press in Canada is receding into the past and the Anglo-Jewish press in English is now more of an impersonal nation wide operation with all that bigness brings with it — both the assets and the liabilities. I'm rather pleased looking back at it that I was around in the era when it was still a business for individuals, and when the rugged individual was still very visible. Don't misunderstand what I am saying. I'm not looking back nostalgically to a better day of the past. The public, I am sure, is better served today, but while it lasted, it was enjoyable.

Book Review

NONE IS TOO MANY

By Irving Abella and Harold Troper, Toronto,
Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982, pp. xvi, 336, illus., ISBN 0-919630-31-6.

Reviewed by Robert Bothwell

Résumé

Pour les Juifs condamnés revenant d'Auschwitz, le Canada a une signification particulière.

Ce fut le nom donné aux baraquements du camp où l'alimentation, les vêtements, l'or, les diamants, les bijoux, ainsi que d'autres biens pris aux prisonniers furent entreposés. Cela représentait la vie, le luxe et le salut. C'était un jardin d'Eden en Enfer. Cela tenait également de l'inaccessible.

En effet, les baraquements à Auschwitz symbolisaient ce que le Canada représentait pour tous les Juifs d'Europe depuis les années 1930 jusqu'aux années 1940, soit un paradis vaste, riche, abondant et plein de vie, mais hors de portée, un paradis totalement inaccessible. Pourquoi le Canada fut-il fermé aux Juifs d'Europe? tel est le sujet dont Irving Abella et Harold Troper, auteurs de ce livre traitent. C'est une histoire qui est le mieux résumée dans les propos d'un fonctionnaire senior Canadien anonyme, à qui, lorsque des journalistes, lors d'une discussion au cours d'une randonnée au début de l'année 1945, lui posèrent la question suivante: "Combien de Juifs pensez-vous seront autorisés à entrer au Canada après la Guerre? Il répondit: "Aucun". Sa réponse spontanée semblait réfléchir les points de vues qui prévalaient chez un certain nombre de ses citoyens: "Aucun" déclara-t-il, "c'est déjà bien trop".

Over the past four or five years, Canadians have begun to learn something new and unpleasant about their history and, in particular, about their history during the Second World War. Fighting German nazism and Italian fascism and Japanese imperialism, Canadians seldom paused, at the time or later, to consider whether their own country was doing as much as it might to uphold the values its politicians proclaimed and its propagandists trumpeted. A first

breach in the edifice of self-satisfaction was made by reflections on the treatment received by Canada's Japanese when, as the result of popular hysteria, they were deported from the west coast and their property confiscated to the benefit of their former neighbours. Later, Eric Koch's moving book, *Deemed Suspect*, argued that the treatment accorded anti-Nazi, and particularly Jewish, refugees interned in Canada during the war was considerably less than polite or sympathetic. Koch pointed a finger at Canada's immigration service, and particularly at the director of the Immigration Branch, F.C. Blair.

Two young Toronto historians, Irving Abella and Harold Troper, have taken up where Koch left off. Their book, *None is Too Many*, deals with attempts made between 1933 and 1948 to persuade the government of Canada to open its doors and admit Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution. The attempts were almost uniformly unsuccessful. For this, many reasons can be ascribed. Canada, like other western democracies, was suffering from the effects of the Great Depression. As the authors point out, other depression-struck countries found themselves able to admit refugees; although the depression aggravated anti-immigrant pressure; it does not by itself serve as an adequate explanation for Canada's indifference to the plight of the persecuted. As the authors show, there is reason to characterize Canadian society as, in some degree, anti-semitic; but this was true of other western countries as well. And lacking precise measurements of public opinion on this and other subjects during the 1930s, we are unlikely ever wholly to be able to assess how broadly, or how deeply, Canadian society was afflicted by the anti-semitic disease.

As so often in history, a unique combination of circumstances made immigration a particularly acute political topic in Canada during the 1930s and 1940s. Besides the malaise of economic ruin and xenophobia that afflicted so many countries during that unhappy time, Canadians also had to cope with a divided society, precariously balanced on the edge of racial discord between English and French-Canadians. Sitting on top was Mackenzie King's Liberal government, preoccupied with a host of problems from the bankruptcy of western provincial governments to the likelihood of a Second World War. As King and his ministers grappled with these major preoccupations, it seemed important not to allow less immediate concerns to rock the boat. Among these less immediate concerns was the plight of the Jews of Europe. That, by itself, would have guaranteed that the government would do little. It chose, however, to do less. In Quebec, the provincial Liberals were swept out of office in a series of scandals in 1935-6. Indignant crowds gathered in front of the provincial legislature to hiss the departing Liberals and, as *Le Devoir* informed its readers, "les Juifs". The Liberals in Ottawa responded by panicking. It was true that most

Jews were Liberals; but they must strenuously show that not all Liberals were Jews. To say that an arm's length situation resulted would be to understate the matter.

It is not that the politicians in power in Ottawa were themselves anti-semites; by the standards of their time they were not. But it was a situation made to order for an anti-semite to exploit, and one did. F.C. Blair, who first entered our literature in *Deemed Suspect*, was the civil servant in charge of immigration. Blair "deemed suspect" literally all Jews, and he was determined to keep them out of Canada. He had the immigration regulations to invoke in behalf of this cause; and when the politicians sitting above him experienced twinges of conscience he had only to wait for their fear of the political consequences of a liberal policy to take its toll. Blair knew he was right; the politicians were uncertain. Nor could the Canadian Jewish community bring much pressure to bear in the other direction. Jews were marginal voters in all but a few parts of Canada. Controlling only three parliamentary seats, they could not hope to swing an election or to outweigh, say, the loss of French-Canadian support that French-Canadian cabinet ministers so much feared.

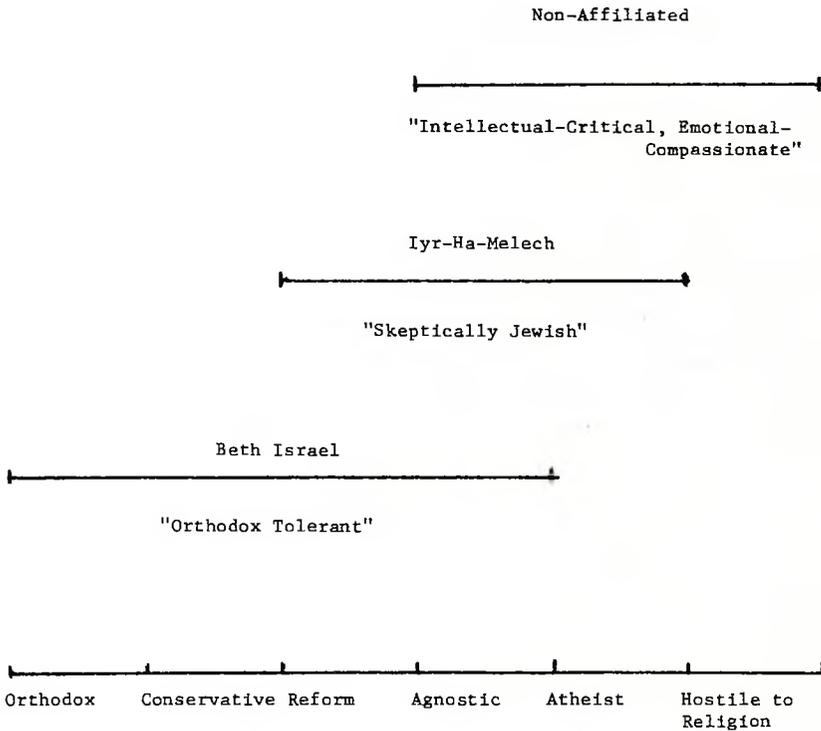
As Abella and Troper painstakingly recreate one occasion after another in which Blair successfully barred the door, the evidence of official unconcern and political amorality mounts. Blair, typically, made no attempt to sanitize his files on his departure from the civil service in 1943 — superannuated and full of honours; presumably he was confident that the record would speak on his behalf. But as a horrified observer wrote in 1940, "the day will come when Immigration will be under debate, and then the Ottawa Immigration Service shall be judged by its records. For us it will not be unimportant to have these records at our fingertips. They shall then find us as their bad conscience." The record has indeed spoken, through Troper and Abella's book. The result should be carefully read and pondered by every Canadian interested in his or her country's history — or its future.

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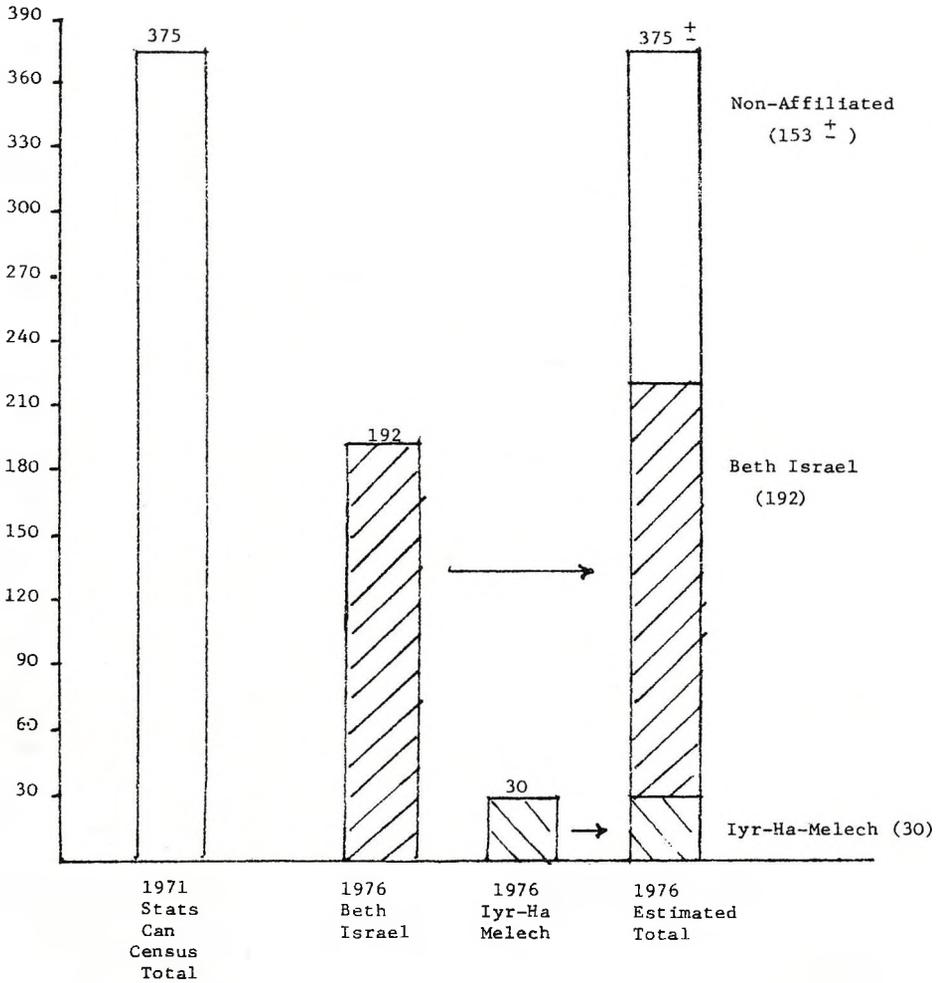
The following graphs are being reprinted in their correct form to dispel any confusion the former ones may have produced. They appeared in *"The Jews of Kingston: A Comparative Study of Organized and Non-Affiliated Jews"* by Marion Meyer (Fall, 1982). The Editor apologizes for this error.

The Jews of Kingston

Continuum of Religious Attitudes



The Jews of Kingston
 Probable Composition (Adults)
 1976



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