

**Canadian Jewish Efforts to Lobby for Israel in 1967**

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The 1967 Arab Israeli War, also known as the Six-Day War, occurred between June 5 to June 10, 1967. Israel engaged in combat against a coalition of Arab nations that included Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The conflict erupted after growing hostilities between Israel and its Arab neighbors over territorial disputes, blockades, and military buildups along the borders. These tensions built on the fact the Arab nations had denied Israel's existence from its beginning in 1948.<sup>1</sup> While Canada attentively observed the developments in the Middle East as a member of the global community, its participation as a player in the breakout of war was far less significant compared to superpowers like the Soviet Union or the United States. As a third party between Israel and Palestine, Canada took a neutral stance.

Canada's direct involvement with Israel went back to 1956, when Canada had been involved in the Middle East for diplomatic, humanitarian, and military reasons.<sup>2</sup> The Suez Crisis led to the founding of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), and there was a dramatic shift in Canadian foreign policy in their engagement in the Middle East. Due to the UNEF peacekeeping mission initiated by Canada, Canada had an official military presence.<sup>3</sup> In May 1967 however, as tensions rose, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt requested the Canadian members of the UN Emergency Force leave Sinai. This was a major event as it demonstrated that Canada was attempting to maintain neutrality in the conflict.<sup>4</sup> However, as the federal government attempted to remain neutral in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, Canadian Jews worried about the potential outcome of war in Israel. Canada's neutrality and its reluctance to take a side,

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<sup>1</sup> Kay, Zachariah. *The Diplomacy of Impartiality: Canada and Israel, 1958-1968*. Waterloo ON, CA: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010. Pp. 55- 58.

<sup>2</sup> Mondal, Kamaran M. K. *Canada's Foreign Policy and the Arab-Israel Conflict*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021. p 1

<sup>3</sup> Mondal, Kamaran p 42

<sup>4</sup> Chohan, Muhammad Anwar. 1985. "The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East (1945-67)". *Pakistan Horizon* 38 (3). Pakistan Institute of International Affairs: 12-32

to Canadian Jews, felt catastrophic in terms of the nascent Jewish nation's survival.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Canadian Jewish community demonstrated staunch support for the young Jewish state. To learn what the Canadian Jewish communities did to try to protect Israel, this essay will explore the rhetoric used by Canadian Jewish organizations in their lobbying for the Israeli cause.

In 1919, the Canadian Jewish community established the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) to serve as the primary organization advocating for the rights of Jews and Jewish communities in Canada. In due time the organization came to advocate for the State of Israel too. The CJC played a crucial role in revealing the Canadian Jewish response to the Arab Israeli war. The CJC utilized a three-pronged rhetorical strategy in its efforts to lobby Canadian government officials to throw its support behind Israel in the build up to, and the few days during the 1967 war. Firstly, the CJC used anti-Nazi tropes as a means of convincing the Canadian government to take the Israeli side. The CJC used shame, which it felt the Canadian government might feel about having a less than pristine record of allyship to the Jews during the Holocaust, and emphasized the threat of another potential Jewish bloodbath to achieve its lobbying goals. Second, the CJC used the United Nations (UN) Charter to justify the position of Israel in an international context. Finally, the CJC brought up Canada's core values in the international stage to lobby for Israel, with the aim of using the language of morality and “Canadian” values to pressure the Canadian government into action.

The Canadian Jewish community was, of course, extremely sympathetic towards Israel during the Six Day War. It was understandable to use the anti-Nazi trope to convince the

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<sup>5</sup> Tulchinsky, Gerald. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, p 432-433

government to take the Israeli side, the trauma of the Nazi genocidal devastation was still fresh for world Jewry. Also, many Jews in Canada at the time were already leaning towards Zionism before the 1967 Arab Israeli War. With the lobbying efforts from organizations like the CJC, they won over Jews who had never supported Israel before, including many former anti-Zionists to their cause. According to historian Harold Troper, “even Jews with no previous attachment to Israel, including many previous anti-Zionists, were drawn to Israel’s side.”<sup>6</sup> Troper further argued that Israel's safety was in some way necessary for their (Jewish Canadians) own safety.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of how well-protected they were in Canada, if Israel failed to survive, Canadian Jews felt their brethren would die.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, CJC’s support could be seen weeks before the actual war broke out, as it seemed that most Jewish communities across Canada had been affected by the possibility of a war.<sup>9</sup> For example, from the comments of Max Brent, a Jewish individual who requested help from the CJC, using an anti-Nazi tone, he claimed that “the very existence of the State of Israel is in peril and likewise the lives of another two million Jews. Nasser’s policy statement that any war with Israel would be a war to crush her completely – never to rise again.”<sup>10</sup> Brent stressed the imminent hostility arising from Arab nations, such as Nasser's determination to annihilate this young nation.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Brent highlighted the ubiquitous anti-Israel propaganda that was in Arab mass media and compared it with Nazi Germany's propaganda, thus Brent called on foreign forces to engage to keep their commitments to protect

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<sup>6</sup> Troper, Harold. *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016 p.127

<sup>7</sup> Troper p33

<sup>8</sup> Troper, p 127

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Ontario Jewish Archive A, JCRC, MG 8/S, 1967, box 31, file 77C: *Max Brent to Sir*, 28 May 1967.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

Israel and avert its possible annihilation.<sup>12</sup> The existence of all Jews, including those who lived in Israel, was dangling by a thread for the second time in a generation since the Nazi war against the Jews.<sup>13</sup> This was the evidence that the Canadian Jewish community used to lobby for the survival of Israel and these would eventually turn into rallies and conferences when further demands were made to persuade the Canadian government to act to save Israel and abandon neutrality.

Anti-Nazi tropes were also utilized by Stuart Rosenberg, an influential Rabbi and active community leader. In a telegram he wrote directly to Prime Minister Pearson, Rosenberg applauded Pearson's continuing efforts to uphold moral law in international relations and exhorted him in this way:

Each day Canadian role becomes more crucial in meeting (Pearson) Nasser's threats of force, (as Nobel peace prize winner) we look to you to establish the rule of law in the middle-east and prevent belligerent Arab nationalism from triggering world war, Hitler's survivors depend upon Canadian support and leadership.<sup>14</sup>

From Rosenberg's point of view, Israel's survival in the 67 war was the indication of the Holocaust not happening again.

The theme of Nazism was, in fact, used continuously, and not just by the most well-known Jewish organization, the CJC. Other Jewish groups, foremost among them the Federated Zionist Organization of Canada (FZSC), played significant roles in lobbying the Canadian government; they deployed rhetoric about Nazism as well. Through a combination of advocacy and political

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> CJA-Series CB, June 21, 1967-Box 10-Israel Crisis- *Beth Tzedec Congregation*- File 2064

pressure, the CJC raised the question of the dangers of Hitler-like persecution. The overarching concern was the possibility of a catastrophe in the Jewish State, occurring not long after the Holocaust. One result of the tragedy of the Holocaust was the UN charter, which guaranteed the rights of all ethnicity. The CJC invoked the UN charter and challenged Canada's core values of protecting human rights and international peace.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, according to the CJC, the Jewish community in Canada had a strong stake in the outcome of the 1967 war. Considering the impending war, Canadian Jews themselves fretted that they were too weak to create a strong advocacy plan to sway the Canadian government. The most notable failure of Jewish lobbying would be Canada's response to the tragedies of Kristallnacht in 1938 initiated by the Nazis, the CJC coordinate demonstrations as well as meetings with government officials. They pleaded for a more relaxed immigration policy for Jews in Europe to take refuge in Canada.<sup>16</sup> However, the lobbying failed since the Canadian government back then was not friendly towards the Jews. According to historians Abella and Troper, "no more Jewish refugees would be admitted to Canada "lest it might foment an anti-Semitic problem . . . and [create] a new problem." Thus, after months of wrestling with the question of Jewish refugees, the cabinet had at long last found an answer: keep them out."<sup>17</sup> Strong organization became vital to create a united Jewish front after years of discrimination from the state.

Furthermore, the CJC issued a caution to the government against Nazism by drawing comparisons between Canadian neutrality and the Allies' appeasement of Hitler on the eve of World War II, underscoring the dire consequences that flowed from this appeasement to

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<sup>15</sup> Bialystok, Franklin. *Faces in the Crowd: The Jews of Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. p 258, 284

<sup>16</sup> Abella, Irving M., and Harold Martin Troper. *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. University of Toronto Press, 2012. p39-44

<sup>17</sup> Abella, Irving p47

Europe's Jews, it warned Canada about their lack of action. According to the Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute of the United States; "It must be said that one captures the mood of Canadian public opinion by recalling that compromise on principles in the dismal past let [*sic*] to the Munich victories of Hitlerism."<sup>18</sup> The CJC's tone tried to create unison between Canadian Jews and non-Jews. Later, the Canadian Jewish Congress demanded that Canada act swiftly to avoid repeating the scenario in which it would be too late to intervene on behalf of Israel. Most importantly, to avoid Israel being the geopolitical pawn of the powerful nations.<sup>19</sup>

Other Jewish leaders appealed to the ghost and legacy of Hitler in their lobbying efforts too. As tensions rose and signs of war emerged in the region in June 1967, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) called on Diaspora Zionist groups and communities to act right away to defend Israel from serious threat. With the aid of political organizations, labor unions, non-Jewish professional associations, and religious organizations, among many others, the WJC pushed for widespread public displays of solidarity through rallies and protests.<sup>20</sup> In a memo to Jewish leaders across the globe, the WJC leaders encouraged Jews to express their views to their respective governments and to work towards obtaining the support of local political groups, leaders, and lawmakers. WJC leaders placed emphasis on the importance of maintaining positive public interest, influencing public opinion towards the security of Israel, and combating Arab Nazi propaganda by working with governments and the public for the dissemination of information resources.<sup>21</sup> The WJC also urged Jewish groups from the national to local level to

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives- Series ZA-1967- Box 4-File 39-StraitsTiran Submission to the Honourable Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs 1 June 1967

<sup>20</sup> "IsraelCrisis, Programme of Action adopted by the European Executive of the World Jewish Congress at its meeting in Milan 28/29 May 1967." CB-Box 10- 2064. Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives, Montreal.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

support emergency aid and promote other private and public initiatives to support Israel.<sup>22</sup> Since Canadian Jews were deeply committed to defending Israel, their response was to perform support-related actions like lobbying with officials, protesting, and raising awareness.<sup>23</sup>

Following the rise of tensions in Israel, on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1967, the CJC and the FZSC organized a public conference at Montreal's Mount Royal Hotel. Here, the CJC used the United Nations (UN) Charter to assure Israel's position in an international context. Outside the hotel, approximately 15,000 people demonstrated in support for Israel. There were many speakers, including Rabbi S.M. Zambrowsky, and Samuel Bronfman, the president of the CJC.<sup>24</sup> The Jewish community made strong and passionate arguments to support the idea that Canada should support Israel.<sup>25</sup> In addition to advocating its unlimited support for Israel's people and the Israeli state, the CJC denounced terrorism and aggression from Syria and its neighbors, especially the United Arab Republic. Israel had the right to defend against hostile activities.<sup>26</sup> They also noted that peace within the Middle East would suit the core values of the UN charter.<sup>27</sup> The Montreal Jewish Community thanked the Canadian government for its dedication to safeguarding these values of the UN Charter. They also agreed with the Canadian prime minister, Lester Pearson's remark welcoming Israeli President Zalman Shazar to Canada. The community wholeheartedly supported the Prime Minister's claim that Israel had the right to exist in peace and security. The community also appreciated the Prime Minister's support for travel freedom in the Gulf of

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> Tulchinskyp 432-433

<sup>24</sup> Inter-Office Information Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives-1967- IOI-3149- *Expression of Solidarity with Israel*- 26--May-1967

<sup>25</sup> Inter-Office Information Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives-1967- IOI- Series S-Box 3150 File 0542a-*Expression of Solidarity with and support of Israel*-2-June-1967

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*



Arabia and the Hon. Paul Martin Sr, Secretary of State for External Affairs for his efforts to keep the region stable.<sup>28</sup> The tone of this Montreal public conference overall called on the federal government of Canada to take all appropriate steps to prevent the United Arab Republic from interfering with international shipping lanes in the Gulf of Aqaba as it was blatantly against international law.<sup>29</sup>

CJC also served another purpose when Bronfman utilized the rally to express the Montreal Jewish community's strong support for the endangered State of Israel.<sup>30</sup> Bronfman/CJC's rhetoric strategically raised these points to garner lobbying efforts and support from Article 1 where he mentioned the 1945 United Nations Charter who first emphasized the importance of international peace and security, fostering goodwill between states and solving disputes together.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, the article urged all nations to respect each other's sovereignty and abandon war as a measure of resolving conflict.<sup>32</sup> According to Bronfman, Canada would lose its integrity as an ethical country, if it failed to use its power to deter aggression from the Arab States. This was a clever tactic to create resonance and sympathy for the Jews as Bronfman's tone did not only apply to just Jews, but to non-Jewish Canadians. 'What would the average Canadian do if they were in such a desperate situation?' It was the question he put into their minds. Although Montreal was one of the epicenters for Jewish lobbying and advocacy in Canada, Jews throughout the rest of Canada had demonstrated their feelings for Israel too. This included Winnipeg's Jewish

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<sup>28</sup> ibid

<sup>29</sup> ibid

<sup>30</sup> ibid

<sup>31</sup> Charter of the United Nations : *Together with the Statute of the International Court of Justice*. Washington: [United States Government Printing Office], 1945.

<sup>32</sup> ibid

community, who also organized for the Israeli cause. The Western chapters of CJC and the FFZSC collaborated to host a demonstration at the Rosh Pina Synagogue in Winnipeg on May 29, which was named itself after the northern most Mediterranean Sea location in Israel. Over 1,300 individuals came to this 1967 demonstration. During the rally, the synagogue's Rabbi, I. E. Witty and Mr. Gordon Johnson, a politician from the Liberal Party of Manitoba, gave statements that demonstrated support for Israel.<sup>33</sup> In order to discuss the emergency campaign, the leadership of the Winnipeg Jewish community met on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1967. The Western Regional Council approved the declaration that endorsed Israel on June 1. At the same meeting, the Council of Rabbis of Greater Winnipeg named Rabbi I. E. Witty the representative of the council. The Council declared that "in association with Canadian Jewish Congress, religious affairs Committee, sent a telegram to the Prime Minister of Canada, urging continuous support of Israel".<sup>34</sup> Since more Jewish groups throughout the entirety of Canada were articulating their demands directly to the Prime Minister, the voices of Canadians pressured Ottawa to change its position to the Middle East Crisis in 1967.

With the situation escalating during late May and early June, Ottawa backed a British and American request to establish a naval force to protect Israeli trade.<sup>35</sup> In this section, the CJC used morality to pressure the Canadian government by advocating for Israel on the international stage while referencing Canada's core principles. Prime Minister Lester Pearson and US President Lyndon B. Johnson were in total agreement over preserving the privilege of having access to the

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<sup>33</sup> Inter-Office Information Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives - 1967 -- IOI-Serie PR-file 0491-*Expression of Solidarity with Israel*-9-June-1967

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Engler, Yves. *Canada and Israel : Building Apartheid*. Toronto Black Point, N.S: Fernwood Pub., 2010. Ch. 4 P 35

Gulf of Aqaba. With Canada seemingly happy for Israel to use the Gulf of Aqaba, Egypt began to view Canada as a menace, which resulted in the removal of Canadian troops and demonstrations outside the Canadian Cabinet office in Egypt. Nasser's answer to his question was that Ottawa was biased in support of Israel and a puppet of US imperialism who wanted to use Israel to dominant the Arab countries.<sup>36</sup> Judging by Nasser's unyielding attitude, it indicated that tensions between Israel and the Arab Union worsened. It put Israel into a more precarious circumstance, meaning that Canada had the moral duty to act and safeguard Israel.

In addition, the CJC continued to use morality to lobby the Canadian government by advocating for Israel on the international stage and referencing Canada's core values. By mid-June, the CJC had stepped up its lobbying efforts to meet with government officials, and sent letters to Lester Pearson and Paul Martin Sr. In the first letter, there was an apparent attempt to persuade Ottawa by using a tone that matched Canada's neutral Middle Eastern policy. The letter highlighted Prime Minister Pearson's strong endorsement of "support for continued freedom of passage for Israel in the Gulf of Aqaba... to safeguard Middle East peace."<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the CJC exerted pressure on the Canadian government to uphold Canada's allegiance to the 1957 agreement of the seventeen nations and to defend Israel's right to free passage via the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, it urged Canada to follow the British example and work with the Maritime Nations to safeguard the declaration that the Gulf of Aqaba was an international waterway and that major powers would be responsible for maintaining global

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<sup>36</sup> Engler, Yves. Ch. 4 P 149

<sup>37</sup> Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives-- 1967-CB-Box 10- 2064 *Submission to the Honourable Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs* 1 June 1967

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*

maritime freedom.<sup>39</sup> The CJC asked the Canadian government to take the hardline approach and uphold international law, believing there could be no room for negotiation in this situation for Middle Eastern peacekeeping.<sup>40</sup>

In their letter sent to Paul Martin, CJC took a similar tone, first thanking Ottawa for fulfilling the wishes of Jews in Canada, for defending Israel, and maintaining Israel's passage through the Gulf of Aqaba as well as stabilizing the Middle East.<sup>41</sup> This however, offered more substantial arguments as to why Canada should do more by laying out two important reasons. Firstly, King Faisal's hostility towards Israel and accusing Israel of having aggressive intentions by noting its resistance to withdraw from the Tiran Island. Although Saudi Arabia did not actively participate in the conflict in June 1967, it had stationed a strengthened Saudi Army brigade in Jordan.<sup>42</sup> According to Madawi Al-Rasheed, a "Saudi brigade of 3000 soldiers was sent to southern Jordan during the war. It was deployed far from the front, but close enough to the capital to support King Husayn."<sup>43</sup> This was Saudi's precautional move in of facing against Israeli forces in the event of future Arab-Israeli hostilities.<sup>44</sup> Since the entirety of the Arab league were unfriendly towards Israel, it argued that maintaining neutrality or being slow to act at this time would only help the Arab governments in their repeated desire to obliterate Israel.<sup>45</sup> Secondly, any measures used to harm Israel's "security, strangling its economy and interfering

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

<sup>41</sup> Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives- Series ZA-1967- Box 4-File 39-*StraitsTiran Submission to the Honourable Paul Martin Secretary of State for External Affairs* 1 June 1967

<sup>42</sup> United States Department of State. "Telegram From the Consulate General in Dhahran to the Department of State." Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute . United States : United States Department of State, February 1969. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/113365.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Rasheed, Madawi. *A History of Saudi Arabia*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511993510.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*

with its shipping is not a matter of neutrality but a positive action on behalf of the Arab states.”<sup>46</sup>

The second letter expressed a more obvious and explicit call for quick Canadian policy change.

To further maximize the progress of the lobbying through moral pressure, on June 6, 1967, a committee of Jewish leaders, led by Sam Bronfman, put forward its voices from the Canadian Jewish community directly to Prime Minister Pearson during a meeting in Ottawa about the current Middle East circumstance, at which they laid out their fundamental concerns about the survival of Israel. Along with the Prime Minister, the meeting attendees included the Zionist Organization of Canada and its immediate past presidents, Lawrence Freiman, Michael Garber, and Sol Kanee.<sup>47</sup> As a result of the talks between Bronfman and his colleagues and Prime Minister Pearson, Pearson presented a scheme for a resolution in the Canadian Parliament, which he presented on June 8, after a cease-fire had been announced in the Middle East. A peace agreement that restored the pre-conflict order was also part of Pearson’s plan. Pearson also urged Israel to negotiate the return of the conquered land, under the scrutiny of the UN Security Council.<sup>48</sup> The other agreement was that Israel must be allowed to use the Suez Canal, as the Security Council had always stipulated. In return, the Gulf of Aqaba would stay free from Israeli and foreign cargo heading to Eilat.<sup>49</sup> Historical context is important to understand the bases for the fears of the Israeli people, which was why the morality agenda was often brought up when lobbying. For example, if Canada failed to support Israel in the War, and Israel were to fall, then there would be a lack of security for Jewish Canadians. It made supporting Israel during the 1967

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<sup>46</sup> ibid

<sup>47</sup> Inter-Office Information Alex Dworkin Canadian Jewish Archives 167- IOI- Series S-File 0543-*Conference With Prime Minister on Situation in Israel*-16-June-1967

<sup>48</sup> ibid

<sup>49</sup> ibid

War a necessity since Israelis were aware in the first place that an Israeli state had not existed for thousands of years before 1948. Scholars David Taras and David Goldberg argued that Jews across Canada saw Israel as a source of optimism since they were living as outcasts among their community who lacked their own nation. It met a strong need to fit in to society, and some people also considered Israel as a haven if, for some reason,<sup>50</sup> another attempt at Jewish genocide were to take place.<sup>51</sup> Adding to the significance of the Jewish state, Taras and Goldberg also suggested that Israel had religious importance. Canadian Jews had a long-standing religious attachment to the biblical land of Israel as the home of the patriarchs. Both authors said,

Because of these influences, a deep reservoir of sentiment, much of it as yet unharnessed in terms of philanthropic or political expression, had been built up. What had emerged among Canada's Jews was the conviction that what happened to Israel affected them and was important in their live.<sup>52</sup>

As a result, the birth of the State of Israel in 1948 plus the potential survival of Israel in 1967 symbolized a restoration of the Jewish Holy Land. Taras and Goldberg wrote that, one thing that contributed

to the strong attachment of Canadian Jews to Israel was the significance that Israel had as a religious symbol for the observant. Israel was the land of Abraham and Isaac as much as it was a modern state. As such, it represented a return to places that were sacred in Judaism, a linking of Jewish festivals to their origins in the Palestinian seasons, and a fulfillment of the Torah's promise of return.<sup>53</sup>

Since Israel was very important to Canadian Jews, Canada should intervene in the name of morality to protect Canada's core values.

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<sup>50</sup> Taras, David, and David Goldberg. *The Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Montreal, CA: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.p.45

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*

<sup>52</sup> Taras, David, and David Goldberg.p 46

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*

In terms of the value and significance of this research, some secondary sources like Allan Levine's book, *Seeking the Fabled City*, concentrated on the fear and panic of the Jews. Levine suggested "Rabbi Plaut observed that Jews were consumed with fears and anxieties, and even the toughest among them were moved to tears...as though the throat was holding the community was being held by the throat."<sup>54</sup> The focus of this paper was more on the specifics of the political tactic rather than on the emotional response, such as Rosenberg telling Pearson to step in and "uphold moral law in international relations."<sup>55</sup>

One of the more observable tactics that Jewish leaders used to get Ottawa to act was Rabbi Zambrowsky's attempt to put pressure on "good" Canada to defend the Jews from the "evil" Arabs. In this case, Nasser was determined to wipe out the Jews by saying that

our armed forces are ready for war. The Gulf of Aqaba belongs to Egypt. There is no way that we will allow Israeli ships to pass through. The Jews are threatening war. We tell them hello and welcome.... [W]e are ready for war. But there is no way we will give up our rights to the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>56</sup>

This was deemed to be antisemitic by Zambrowsky from the tone of Nasser's statements. Hence Zambrowsky called Nasser the new Hitler, and he remarked that "the policy of political expediency, conspiracy, silence and appeasement on the part of the free world and friendly governments are responsible for bringing the Middle East to the brink of war."<sup>57</sup> Very similarly the rhetoric was the fact that the anti-Nazi agenda was brought out often. A quote from Max Brent when he was in Israel said "the 'hate' program that I have heard this week, are full of the

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<sup>54</sup> Levine, Allan Gerald. *Seeking the Fabled City : the Canadian Jewish Experience*. Hardcover edition. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2018.Ch.22 p 312

<sup>55</sup>CJA-Series CB, June 21, 1967-Box 10-Israel Crisis- *Beth Tzedec Congregation*- File 2064

<sup>56</sup> —Kalama al-Ra\_ is Jamal \_Abd al-Nasir Athna\_a Ziyarathu li-Markaz al-Qiyada al-Mutaqaddim liQuwat al-Jawwi,1 (Address by President Gamal Abdel Nasser during his visit to the Air Force Command Center), GANDA, 22 May 1967

<sup>57</sup> CJC- Series CB Box 10-ZionistNewsReports-The Gazette-2064A

ingredients that were in daily usage in Nazi Germany and the anti-Israel, Zionist and Imperialist chant.”<sup>58</sup>

What Brent remarked had revealed something very dangerous, and it was the fact the readers were able to discover that blatant antisemitism was still very common across Canada and the world even though the horrific Holocaust ended not too long ago. Brent’s case subsequently raised the question of how much impact the Canadian Jews truly had on the Canadian government. It appeared that the social status of Canadian Jews had gradually improved over the years, when Prime Minister Mackenzie King was in power during the 1940s, he had hatred towards Jews as well as being a Hitler sympathizer. According to King, he said “the man as I sat and talked with him was that he is really one who truly loves his fellow – men, and his country, and would make any sacrifice for their good.”<sup>59</sup> As time progressed, the social status of Jews were better during the Pearson era in the 1960s, in comparison to King, Pearson openly met with the Head of State of Israel whose Jewish state was in a desperate state. The rise of Jewish status in Canada was down to the persistent pressure from the Jewish communities. One obvious proof would be Samuel Bronfman receiving a letter from the Canadian External Affairs stating that the government would intervene if required. Furthermore, the work and achievements of the CJC with the Canadian government in 1967 was an important historical moment in terms of the continuity of respect and dignity given to Canadian Jews from 1967.

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<sup>58</sup> Ontario Jewish Archive A, JCRC, MG 8/S, 1967, box 31, file 77C: *Max Brent to Sir*, 28 May 1967.

<sup>59</sup> King Mackenzie, William Lyon. *Diary of W.L Mackenzie King*. Vol.15, p.1. 1935 - 1938. 27 June 1937. Canadian Library and Archives.



In comparison to Canadian Jews, American Jews had done much the same by using the fears of Nazism as their rhetoric in lobbying. However, American Jews had to face a problem which their Canadian counterparts did not have, which was a loss of popularity because of the United State's involvement in the Vietnam War. Due to this war and the resulting rise in anti-interventionist sentiment, many liberal scholarly groups, who had previously been fond supporters for Israel, changed their stances. It made the Jews in America stigmatized in the media and universities as war interventionists when Israel became the dominant aggressor after their victory.<sup>60</sup> In that matter, it meant that the rhetoric and the fear made by the CJC on Israel was overly exaggerated since it was unlikely that a second Holocaust would occur once again.

To conclude, given that Nazism and antisemitism were still a prevalent issue in the 1960s, twenty years after the collapse of Nazism, it could potentially pose a major risk to Israel's survival. Due to the dangers, the CJC had legitimate reasons to advocate for Israel given that Canadian neutrality put Israel's survival in jeopardy. It also referenced the Nazi manifesto, the UN Charter, and Canada's basic principles in the international stage; thus, Jews had a good cause to be suspicious of Canada's neutrality. Before Canada direct involvement in 1956, Canada was one of the numerous countries in the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). It opted for the partition of the British Mandate of Palestine which turned into a place where Jews and Muslims could coexist and try to remain neutral between both sides.<sup>61</sup> Many argued that neutrality could maintain peace by finding egalitarianism between two sides in a conflict, thus Lester B. Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts during the Suez

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<sup>60</sup> Goldberg, J. J. (Jonathan Jeremy). *Jewish Power : Inside the American Jewish Establishment*. New York Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1996.p138

<sup>61</sup> Mondal, Kamaran ch2 p49

Crisis.<sup>62</sup> This all sounded nice and Utopian, however, neutrality may have aggressive and negative effects. Being neutral might send the impression that ‘we don't back you, we're keeping out of it, and you should take responsibility for the results.’ In the case of Canadian Jews, the CJC suggested that Canadian neutrality would only benefit the Arab Nations in terms of blockading Israel, such a strategy would make the situation incredibly dangerous. A strong argument can be made that the Holocaust was caused by many countries remaining neutral and turning a blind eye during and after the Second World War in terms of world history and the Jews.

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<sup>62</sup> Mc Kercher, Asa, and Galen Roger Perras. 2017. *Mike's World : Lester B. Pearson and Canadian External Affairs*. Vancouver: UBC Press. <https://search-ebshost-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1584227&site=ehost-live>.

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