

Sex and Politics

--A British View

London

A book which casts a clinical eye on the hidden drives and sexuality of British politicians caused mingled anger and amusement in Parliamentary circles recently.

Members snorted or snarled over the book by Leo Abse, a flamboyant Labor Member of Parliament who argues that "psychology in depth" is needed to scrutinize the private worlds of those who rule democracies.

Entitled "Private Member," the book speaks of the "evident celibacy" of Prime Minister Edward Heath and says that because of this Heath reacts to events with a "dangerously over-determined aggressiveness, carrying his masculine identity on his sleeve."

The book also attributes Heath's strong pro-European motivation to psy-

chological influences. He did not want to cling to Britain but felt safer sailing into the European unknown.

JEALOUS

Opposition leader Harold Wilson, says Abse, sees jealous threats where none exist, has limitless ambitions and is an incessant talker.

Of rightwing conservative Enoch Powell, the book recalls that Powell had declared his wish to be a monk and says that "men more comfortable and confident in their sexuality do not yearn to escape to celibacy."

One of Abse's Labor colleagues, Will Hamling, said the book was "barmy" — crazy.

WOMEN

And women members bridled at Abse's contention that their low necklines and sleeveless dresses — "worn by women far too old, big, tall or fat" — offered a droll

display of nudity in the House of Commons.

The book cites modern analytical psychology contending that elements of infantile sexuality, excluded from adult life, may shape character traits.

Abse said he believes the Middle East war underlined his argument that private lives of politicians should come under closer scrutiny.

"In the whole of America," he said, "everyone is asking whether the fact that the world has come to the brink of global war is due to objective conditions or to the emotional instability of certain world leaders."

Abse, 56, a Member of Parliament for 15 years has promoted reforms in the fields of divorce, homosexuality and family planning.

Reuters