

CURRENTS

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IMMIGRATION AND RACISM

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Nielsen
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Refugees and
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The Urban Alliance on Race Relations formed in July 1975 "to promote a stable and healthy multiracial environment in the community," is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers from all sectors of the community.

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations is an educational agency and an advocate and intermediary for the visible minorities. It works toward encouraging better race relations, increased understanding and awareness among our multicultural, multi-racial population through programmes of education directed at both the private and public sectors of the community. It is also focusing its efforts on the institutions of our society including educational systems, employment, government, media, legislation, police, social service agencies and human services, in order to reduce patterns of discrimination and inequality of opportunity which may exist within these institutions.

The work of the organization is carried out through working committees such as: Educational Institutions; Legislation; Media; Law Enforcement.

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Immigration and Racism

Immigration is an unpopular and emotional topic. The very word conjures up images of restriction, repression, discrimination, bureaucratic bungling and the exploitation of our charitable and compassionate instincts.

Rarely do we think of immigration as a positive and essential force in Canada's economic, demographic, social and cultural growth and development. And rarely do we think of immigration policy and practice in terms of non-discrimination, justice, and equal opportunity for all regardless of race, religion or nationality.

This prevailing negativism towards immigration may seem contradictory and awkwardly embarrassing when Canada has just been internationally recognized for its generosity to immigrants and refugees by being awarded the Nansen prize.

At a time when we may be encouraged to sit back in self-congratulation for being humanitarian, it might seem churlish to comment critically on public attitudes and public policies towards immigration.

Creators, Not Parasites, Of Economic Growth

Canada's immigration policy, historically, has always been determined first, by economic factors. Yet, the bureaucratic fusion of Employment and Immigration together with the Unemployment Insurance Commission is clearly indicative of the continuing pattern of shaping immigration policy solely according to employment rates. It is surely time that policy and practice should no longer be dictated by these old myths surrounding the relationship between immigration levels and employment levels. It is about time that our Government, the media, and other major institutions take a rigorous pro-active responsibility for demolishing the tired myths, the false fear and loathing, towards immigration, and demonstrate the vital impor-

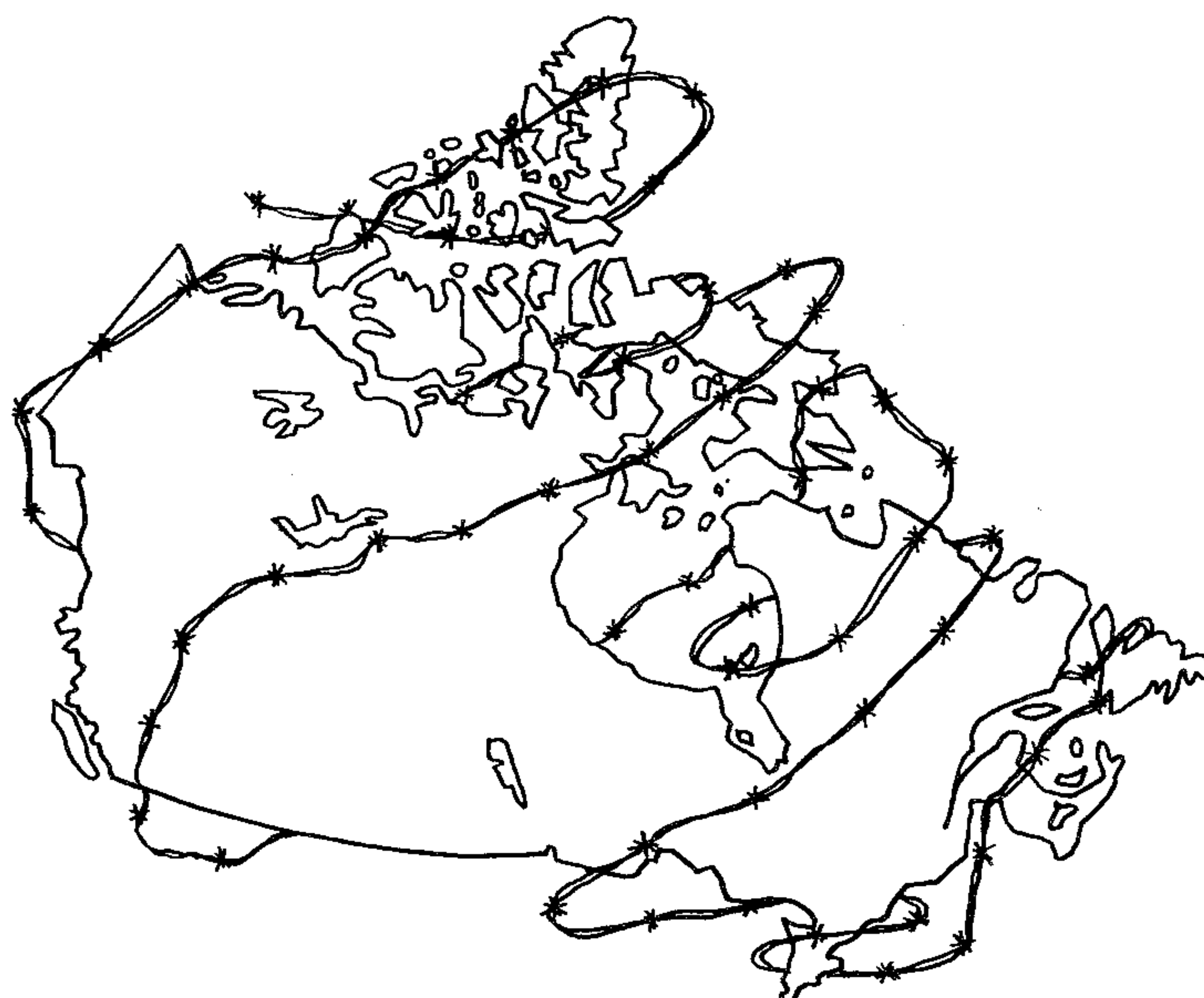
tance to the past and future development of Canada.

Racial Preferences

Secondly, Canadian immigration policy has historically always been determined by racial preferences. Despite the 1967 regulations that supposedly heralded the end of racial discrimination in immigration policy, David Sangha's article clearly shows that we are still a long way from anything that could be regarded as non-racist in both intent and impact. In addition, one might note the public attitudes expressed in response to the recent arrival of 155 Tamils to the shores of Newfoundland appeared to reflect an unwelcoming strain of racism.

Refugees

The arrival of the 155 Tamils in such dramatic fashion has also highlighted for Canada a rather tardy realization of the new, more urgent realities of global migration patterns in the 1980's. The first two articles of this issue of *Currents* clearly warn that Canada can no longer afford to be comfortably cocooned in the backwaters of world affairs, disinclined to recognize or grapple with its responsibilities towards the global refugee crisis.



Immigrant Literature

In attaining a fuller understanding of the issue of immigration however, one needs more than an analysis of the global context, the detailed regulations of policy, or the statistics of immigration. We need to know and understand the perceptions and experiences of the individual immigrant — of the stranger trying to fit into an alien geography and culture. We need the personal as well as the informational knowledge.

"We're all immigrants here", Margaret Atwood has said, suggesting that the immigrant experience is a central theme of all writing in Canada. One of the best sources of understanding the nature of Canadian society is 'immigrant literature'. The book reviews in this issue of *Currents* are an acknowledgement of this fact and a reminder that one of the functions of art is to make us more conscious of ourselves and of our world.

The immigrants of today come to Canada to escape from war, persecution and poverty. They come to Canada in search of freedom, security and prosperity. These are of course the very same reasons that immigrants have been coming to Canada for over 200 years. The only difference today is that most of them are non-white.

Tim Rees

Immigration to The Year 2000: A Canadian Perspective

Gerry Weiner

I believe immigration is becoming one of the most important issues facing us on this planet. Since accepting my post as Minister of State for Immigration I have become sensitized to the importance of this issue. One has only to look at some recent events to illustrate this: the response of the French government to terrorist acts by placing visa requirements on most countries of the world; the most recent attempt to secure passage of a comprehensive immigration bill in the U.S.; and the arrival in August off the shores of Newfoundland, of boatloads of Sri Lankans seeking a home in Canada. These events illustrate the impact that migration is having today on many countries of the world.

In this article, however, I would like to reflect with you on my perceptions of tomorrow and beyond, at least to the end of the century. First, by reviewing some demographic facts that underlie our future challenges to plan and manage migration in the world; secondly, by focussing on the planning tools currently in place in Canada which allow us to have a more flexible, longer-term vision of the role of migration in our development; and thirdly, by indicating how we are moving to link our immigration planning more closely to demographic issues in the longer term. Finally, I would like to outline to you my views on how these migration issues are converging in developed countries in similar ways. It seems clear to me that, during the next 15 years, we will need to develop an international framework

if we are to achieve success in managing and controlling these large and growing movements of peoples. This framework must facilitate a collective approach to these problems while continuing to recognize the sovereignty of each nation-state.

World Population Change: The Migration Context

The world population is estimated to have reached 5 billion this year and is expected to grow by at least another billion by the year 2000. Currently, about 2.7 billion live in the developing world (excluding China); of these people, 41% or 1.1 billion are under age 15. Most of these children will be of labour-force age in the next 15 years; many will migrate to local urban areas; others will choose to migrate to other countries.

At the same time as the developing world struggles to absorb growth in its labour force, new births will add another one billion people to total size in the next 15 years (again excluding China). The number of urban agglomerates of more than five million inhabitants (there are 23 at present) may double between now and the end of the century. Virtually all new agglomerations seem likely to emerge in the developing countries. The continuing push of rural migration to urban centres no longer prepared or capable to handle such migration may induce migrants to emigrate to more prosperous urban-industrialized centres outside the country.

The conditions lead me to believe that we are currently living in the "Golden Age" with respect to migration policy. The challenges which these global population changes will bring to us over the next 15 years will be enormous; they will require new approaches and new forms of institutions if we are to continue to have planned and controlled movements of people.

At the same time as we foresee this potential demographic exodus of unique proportions compared to any mass migration in history, a demographic implosion is being faced by most developed countries. Fertility rates below the replacement level have become the norm. Canada is no exception; for the past 15 years, we have had below replacement fertility reaching our current level of 1.65. While demographic growth in Canada will probably continue for most of this century, population decline will be inevitable early in the 21st century unless fertility increases or we use immigration more actively to sustain or increase our population size.

So, while the developing world struggles to accommodate growth in the next 15 years, we in the developed world face equally challenging questions centred on demographic implosion. With a certain inevitability, post-industrial societies are witnessing their own reduction in total global population size. Their economic growth, which has been predicted on population expansion, can no longer be viewed as a given. Can our societies adjust to declining population growth and remain healthy? Should we be prepared to let our total population fall? Are members of the public prepared to accept fertility or immigration policies intended to prevent population decline? The answers to these questions are not easy. But the inexorable demographic change which we are witnessing will surely force us to look at them seriously in the next 15 years.

**This article by the Hon. Gerry Weiner, Minister of State (Immigration) was first presented as a speech to the Georgetown Leadership Seminar, Washington, D.C.*

Planning Immigration to Canada: Flexibility and Vision

Canada is a country of immigrants. For over 100 years Canada has used immigration as a program to promote social and economic development. Our first immigration act was passed in 1869; the most recent act was passed in 1977 and implemented in 1978. In this Act, for the first time, 10 objectives of immigration policy are set out.

These provide for non-discriminatory admission policies, the reunification of close relatives, the necessity to fulfill our international legal obligations with respect to refugees, and the role of immigration in fostering economic development, to name a few. These objectives illustrate the multi-dimensional impact of immigration on Canadian life and our use of the program to promote social and economic objectives.

Although the objectives of the Act are clear, their achievement is facilitated through a flexible planning system which allows the government to adjust the intake of legal immigration to Canada according to social and economic conditions inside Canada and international events. Shortly, Canada will be receiving the Nansen Medal from the UNHCR in recognition of our international efforts on behalf of refugees. I am extremely proud of our recent record in this important area of migration and believe that we will continue to show strong leadership in this field as we move towards the year 2000.

Since World War II, Canada has accepted over 5.3 million immigrants. No wonder that our 1981 census indicated 16% of the total Canadian population was foreign-born. I believe that the multicultural character of most of our major cities is welcomed by an increasing number of Canadians.

I could continue at some length on the importance of developing an open planning system for legal migration at the same time that proper controls are instituted to assure the public that we can continue to manage and select our immigrants. I believe that we have one of the most open planning systems in

the world which could well serve as a model to others. For example, we have

- Annual consultations with provinces, non-governmental organizations, academics, and others prior to announcing future immigration levels;
- Comprehensive planning by immigration component to meet the needs of family, refugee, and economic immigrants; and
- Settlement programs for immigrants which provide access to basic settlement services for those most in need, and a Citizenship Act which permits citizenship after three years of landing.

Canada's Demographic Future and Immigration

Canada has a long tradition which links the immigration program to national development. Many predecessors of mine have, at various times, taken the opportunity to make an explicit linkage between immigration and demographic growth in policy statements, white papers and green papers. The current legislation requires that I table a forward-looking report to Parliament each fall announcing future levels of immigration. In doing so, I am obliged under our Act to indicate the demographic considerations that were taken into account in the determination of the level.

Last fall, the federal government announced a new immigration program which would see levels increased from 94,000 in 1985 to 115,000 to 125,000 in 1987. One of the key factors which led to the decision to increase immigration was a growing concern about the prospects of demographic decline in Canada at or shortly after the turn of the century. Our projections indicated that if immigration was not increased from its recent low levels (we've averaged about 140,000 annually over the past 40 years) and if fertility did not increase, we would reach a maximum population of about 28 million and then begin to decline slowly. A growing number of interest groups and academics have expressed concern about this demographic prospect. The government's announcement recognized that the new pro-

gram would not prevent decline, but only delay it. We had, nevertheless, included a concern for the next generation rather than the current one in the rationale to increase levels.

Canada does not have a demographic policy. In this way, we are not dissimilar from most developed countries. But last May the government initiated a three year study of Canada's demographic future. The review of demography and its implications for economic and social policy will be centred in the Department of National Health and Welfare and will look as far ahead as 2025 to see how possible changes in the size, structure, and distribution of the population of Canada might affect our future social and economic life. Immigration will play an important part in this review as the longer-term benefits and costs of immigration to and emigration from Canada will be assessed.

It is hard to be a soothsayer about demographic policy development in developed countries over the next 15 years. Most of us have got by with a fragmented, and in some cases non-existent, policy approach up to now. One wonders, however, how much longer this can continue. The combination of continuing extremely low fertility rates and increasing pressures for people to migrate to industrialized countries is probably going to make many of us develop explicit demographic policies by the end of the century. In Canada, we are embarking upon a journey which may see the framework for such a policy by the end of this decade. If this does occur, it will greatly aid in our immigration levels determination in the 1990s as we look ahead to the turn of the century.

Given the diversity of developed nations' approaches to demographic policy, it is difficult to predict how things will turn out. I am, however, somewhat taken by an analysis made by Dr. Leon Bouvier just prior to the 1984 World Population Conference. In his assessment, Dr. Bouvier suggested that post-industrial societies such as ours would become service and information societies with total fertility between 1.4 and 1.7. Since a 2.1 equivalent rate ensures replacement, the remaining deficit would be contri-

buted by active immigration policies to ensure stationary sizes. If this does come to pass, it will require some fundamental transformation in attitudes about immigration in many developed countries, especially those in the Old World. Nevertheless, a recent article in *The Economist* suggests that, based on current demographic trends, an appreciation of the important role of immigration in European population development may not seem so out of place by the end of the century.

While I have chosen to stress the importance of demographic policy as a guiding element in immigration planning, I recognize it cannot be a panacea. It will probably never be possible to define an optimum population size or distribution; it may be more preferable to adjust to shifts in the age structure rather than to try to adjust the age structure; public sensitivities will always provide limits on what may seem desirable from a planning perspective. Nonetheless, I believe that the challenges we will be facing over the next 15 years will be greatly facilitated if demographic planning does become institutionalized. But this alone will not be enough — we must also reach out in a direct way to build international bridges in support of a more managed and controlled approach to the future people flows on the globe.

Converging Policy Perspectives: The Need for an International Framework

No one country, no one immigration program or demographic policy will, in itself, be sufficient to deal with the migration challenges we will face over the next 15 years. Currently, it is estimated that some 70-80 million people are on the move around the world: about 10-15 million of these are refugees. During this decade, a series of incidents has led to conditions which have driven people from their homelands. In addition, a growing number of economic migrants have been impatiently waiting for economic improvement and have decided to move to where that improvement exists. Most of them are moving from south to north and we are under no illusion that this will diminish in the

future given the demographic trends I have outlined.

In Canada, the most recent manifestation of this movement has been the challenge to our procedures for refugee determination within the country. Currently, we are preparing legislation to improve our refugee determination process. But each passing day sees increasing numbers of applicants arriving at our borders without documentation or with falsified papers to claim refugee status. Many of them have come via developed countries where they find opportunity denied. We are going to design a system to protect bona-fide refugees in a fair and expedient way. But most will probably not qualify: where will they go? Will they continue to remain in orbit in a stateless limbo? How will they be returned? These kinds of questions cannot be answered by individual nations alone. We now recognize that a more international approach must be taken towards this large and increasing flow of migrants. Canada is participating actively in the O.E.C.D. and the U.N.H.C.R. to develop these approaches. For this task, we have developed a framework which reflects the following factors:

1) Policy Convergence

International migration trends and conditions are converging; they should lead to development of more common approaches among developed countries.

2) Sovereignty

The global movements of people now foreseen for the rest of this century will challenge our fundamental concepts of sovereignty as reflected in immigration law and practice. Nations can no longer act as individual gatekeepers who try to build a higher and higher wall.

Instead, we will have to acknowledge that co-operative action will require, in part, the protection and settlement of some of these migrants and the return of others.

3) Economic Role of Immigration

It would appear that the future economic role of immigration will need to be more macro-economic and longer-term in outlook, instead of being tied to short-term labour short-

ages. Regardless of how immigrants are selected, recognition will need to be given to the permanence of this kind of migration.

4) Social Role of Immigration

The volumes of immigrants desired over time will need to reflect an assessment of longer-term social, economic and demographic needs. Most developed countries will find it a major challenge to stabilize their population sizes in view of declining fertility. Immigration will, to the extent desired, be generally able to contribute significantly to these demographic needs.

5) Control of Immigration

Immigration policy must be balanced. We must devise positive programs for accepting more immigrants to meet social and economic needs while, at the same time, contain what will be large and growing migration pressures. The latter, if continued on a separate national basis, will make entry easier for migrants as they will continue to find techniques for gaining access to the most vulnerable countries, and at the same time, will destroy public support for immigration.

6) Accommodating New Migrants

Most developed countries will be receiving and selecting immigrants in the future and we will need to do this in an open way with full consultation and participation of our citizens. Our future societies will be more pluralistic and the task of policy-makers will be to maximize the contribution of immigrants through proper settlement programs. Legislation will be needed, in some cases, to permit permanent residence and to protect the rights of these migrants. The changes that our societies will undergo must be undertaken in moderate, controlled ways that are supported by the public and which emphasize the positive contributions of immigrants to national development.

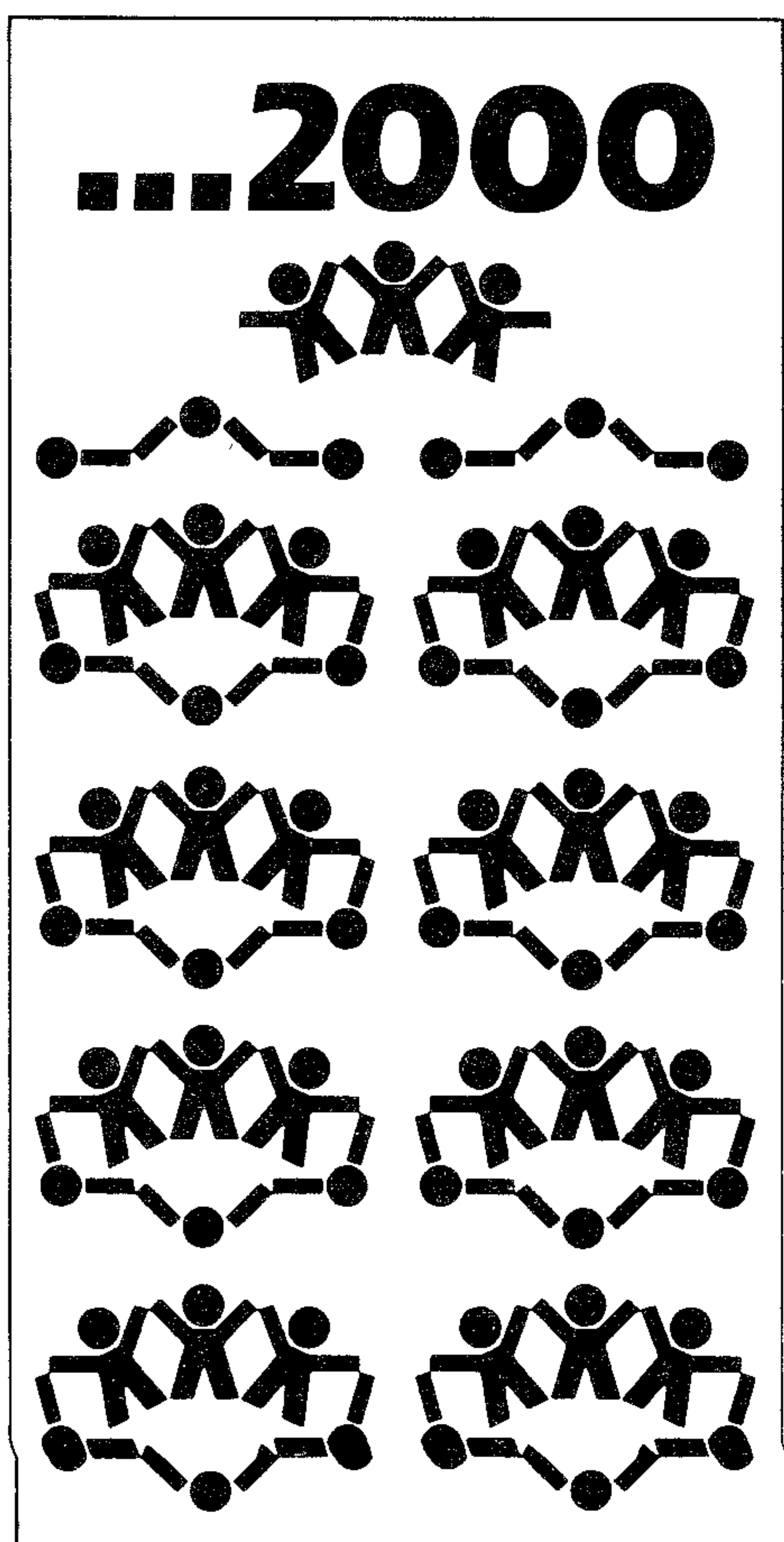
7) Responsibility to the Sending Country

We know that, given current and projected world population growth, emigration is not, in most instances, a solution to development constraints. Recent evidence does suggest, however, that in the short term, remittances can help the sending country and that emigration can ease social and political

pressures. But it is obvious that longer-term development solutions must focus on providing an environment which creates an incentive to remain in the sending countries.

Conclusion

A fundamental transformation is under way in migration issues in developed countries which will, in part, require new collective institutional responses as we look ahead to the 21st century. National governments will need planning instruments which will provide for flexibility and a longer-term outlook in immigration policy-making. A fundamental component of the new approach should be the development of demographic policy which recognizes the important role of immigration to developed countries. Finally, there must be greater recognition of the shared concerns that we are all facing and with this, a much greater emphasis on international dialogue to find common approaches to these converging issues.



The Nielsen Task Force Fraud

Howard Adelman

The Nielsen Task Force Study Team Report on Citizenship, Labour and Immigration holds major implications for the future of Canada. Formulated earlier this year, the Report is representative of the Federal Government's policy intentions and as such, has serious implications for prospective immigrants and refugees hoping to come to this country. The possibility exists that the Report may well fix the objectives, substance and tone of the government's immigration policy formulations for the balance of its term in office. The following is a critique of some of the key issues and recommendations of the Nielsen Task Force.

The Task Force on Program Review ostensibly was set up to propose methods of eliminating waste and inefficiencies in overlapping, ineffective and redundant federal government programs. Darcy McKeough, a former Ontario treasurer and a senior member of the Nielsen Task Force, described the purpose pithily in a Saturday morning C.B.C. radio interview: "The key question was whether we are getting value for our money, \$1.00 of benefit for one hundred cents spent."

I had looked forward to reading a report on inefficiencies and waste in the area of immigration and refugee programs. I was curious to learn if any of the results and recommendations for improvement made by myself and my academic colleagues in past reports and studies had been adopted. I regret to say, there is no evidence they were even read. If the Task Force had even decided to examine the existing system themselves without the benefit of past studies, this might have been a helpful, though wasteful, procedure.

Misrepresentation

The Study Team Report on Citizenship, Labour and Immigration, dealing in particular with the assessment of immigration and refugee programs, is not only a waste of money, but an out and out fraud, a deception, something which totally fails to fulfill the claims and representations made on behalf of the Task Force. It is not a report on "Improved Program Delivery", as its authors purport. It is simply a call for a

new philosophy on immigration and refugee assistance. And it blandishes its opinions ignorant of the research in the field, basing its case on factual errors, distorted history, misrepresentations, misuse of English, illogical self-contradictory argument and false premises.

Darcy McKeough said that the method of reviewing government programs entailed stating their existing objectives, analyzing the methods for achieving those objectives, asking how well the job is being done, and proposing various options for improvements. The report I read ascribed its own objectives, called its opinions analyses and, ironically, in its one and only reference to a previous study, quoted an authoritative evaluation which determined that the programs were "well managed". Instead of offering a set of options for improvements, the report makes its own programmatic recommendations which revealed the abysmal ignorance of the authors, not only of the relevant research, but of the whole immigration and refugee field.

Absolute Rights or Qualified Rights

At the very beginning of the Report on Immigration and Citizenship, in a section erroneously called "Description", the ideological position of the authors is made clear. The report states:

"The Immigration Act of 1978 (they mean the 1976 Act which

was proclaimed in 1978) was based on the fundamental proposition that it is Canada's absolute and sovereign right to determine who to admit as an immigrant and who shall become a Canadian citizen." (p. 18)

It was that very same Act which gave up an older philosophy of absolute control over determining who could stay in Canada. Furthermore, though the Act spells out the rights of refugees who are lawfully in Canada to remain in Canada (4.2), it does imply that unless such persons are a security risk or have criminal records, they would automatically have the right to become citizens in due course. This means that Canada's absolute and sovereign right to determine who to admit and permit to become a Canadian citizen was qualified by signing the International Refugee Convention and the incorporation of its provisions into domestic legislation.

In fact, in the beginning statement of Objectives enshrined in the Act, Canadian immigration policy and the rules and regulations made under the 1976 Act require the fulfillment of "Canada's international legal obligations with respect to refugees." Clause 3(g) does not restrict those obligations to Convention Refugees, a specific small subclass of refugees for whom actual individual threats of persecution can be established. The Immigration Act goes even further; as well as including within our immigration policy international legal obligations with respect to *all* and not just Convention Refugees, the Act also extends our immigration obligations to displaced persons.

The Report does not provide one shred of evidence to support its claim for absolute control, and ignores all the evidence and research arguing that claims for absolute control over immigration are remnants of older discarded premises rather than the intention of the 1976 Act. In fact, section 4, subsection 2 of the Act specifically qualifies that absolute rights by stating that, unless another Act of Parliament takes away such rights, Convention refugees, with some exceptions for those who are security risks or who

have serious criminal records, have the *right* to remain in Canada. It is not just a Canadian responsibility to allow them to stay.

Objectives

The Report goes on to specifically limit the Objectives of the Act to Canadian self-interest by stating that "the Act provides a framework intended to permit the government to shape the immigration movement to Canada's best interests."

In actual fact, the Act does no such thing. The Act specifically spells out the promotion of international understanding, the international legal obligations delineated above, and the obligation of promoting international order and justice.

Even domestic considerations are not restricted to self interest. The Act specifically requires that immigration policy "facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives abroad." The Report would not allow parents under 60 to be reunited with their children. Such a policy has nothing to do with programs which are inefficient or overlapping, but with the promotion of a policy which in my estimation would not only be callous and inhumane, but would be illegal as well, running directly contrary to the humane objectives promoting family reunification in the 1976 Immigration Act.

The Report provides no evidence to support its claim that Canadian immigration policy is based on self-interest. In fact, the Report goes on to contradict the assertion that the philosophical premise of the Act was based strictly on Canadian self-interest and absolute control, by accurately stating that the Act sets out "a *balanced* (my italics) set of objectives relating to economic, social, demographic, family reunification, refugee and other humanitarian goals as well as the health, security, and well-being of Canadians."

The Report's proposals do not tell us how, more effectively, to achieve these objectives; they undermine the humanitarian refugee and family reunification goals. While barely mentioning demographic objectives, the

recommendations would, in fact, undermine any objective of using immigration at least to maintain our population base if not increase it. The proposals put forth would not only be socially disruptive, but, ironically, would be economically costly and detrimental to Canada as well.

The 1976 Act struck a balance between self-interest and humanitarianism, between sovereign control and international and humanitarian obligations to respect the rights of refugees. The Report, by contrast, opts for imbalance by minimizing humanitarian responsibilities and the rights of refugees. One feels thrust back to a period in which exercising self-interest and absolute control meant that Canada had one of the worst humanitarian records in a world already infamous for its cold indifference. Rather than Canada having, "a long tradition of accepting refugees and the displaced" as the Report misleadingly states, Canada took in fewer Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany before, during and even immediately after the war. (Read Abella and Troper, *None Is Too Many*.)

Yet this Report reads into the 1976 Act the very objectives that the Act was intended to bury, an overwhelming self-interested ideology. The Report does not ask what the program's objectives are and if the programs are effective in achieving them. It states what it *believes* the objectives should be and then projects them onto Canadian legislation.

Ignorance

The Report states that one of the broad themes dominating the Report was the belief (which, by the way, has nothing to do with efficiency and overlapping programs) that, "Who we bring is more important than how many people we bring." This is a plausible position — quality is more important than quantity — but it is a contentious thesis requiring evidence to support it; it is not a self-evident truth. The government has examined and has published a series of reports based on academic research which concludes the very opposite; namely, that the most appropriate approach to

immigration is not labour-based, but rather one which is oriented to at least maintaining and hopefully increasing our population to provide for the economic future of Canada. Immigration must be increased significantly. Otherwise our population will decline and Canada cannot afford a population decline.

Perhaps the academics and scholars are wrong and the authors of this Report are correct. But they could provide some, even a little bit of evidence, to support their position, or at least show why the evidence offered and arguments used by the scholars are inaccurate, inadequate or even misleading. The Report gives no indication that its authors are even aware of these studies which were paid for by and large with government funds. That is waste. When a Report ignores the results of research already paid for by the government in favour of opinion based on ignorance (in the literal sense of the term), the money spent on the Report (over \$3,500,000 as I heard it) is wasted.

Obviously, immigration, to fulfill a demographic objective, should be selective. But the Task Force recommends "higher numbers of more selected immigrants", that is, more than the 12,000 to 18,000 in this category, and thus far fewer immigrants, ignoring completely the demographic objectives of our immigration policy specifically set out in legislation. Furthermore, some of the recommendations of the Report would be economically counterproductive.

For example, the Report recommends excluding from family sponsorship "children" of working age, and recommends lowering the age for eligibility from 21 to 18. Ironically, this might have been a relevant policy ten or fifteen years ago when that age group of immigrants was competing with the baby-boomers and compounding the problem of short-term employment competition. But the results of research indicate that introducing more obstacles to young immigrants now that the baby-boomers are in their twenties and thirties, would decrease the numbers of the very people we should be trying to attract,

particularly those who would have a network of family support. In fact, Professor David Foot of the University of Toronto suggests that we raise the age of sponsorship, not decrease it, by one year each year for the next period of immigration to offset the boom and bust of the baby cycle.

The Bogey of Competition for Employment

The Report ignores research data. It also stirs up bogeymen in the guise of analysis. For example, in its description of the 1984 immigration inflow, from the accurate assertion that about 2,500 of that year's 88,000 immigrants entered to find jobs for which Canadian workers could not be found, the Report concludes that,

"The remaining immigrants entering the labour force were, in varying degrees, competing with Canadian workers."

This is not analysis. It is a statement of a very misleading conclusion. Furthermore, since the authors recommend removing the requirement of a pre-arranged job, they merely advocate that immigrants competing for jobs be better educated.

However, the flaws in the analysis are far more serious. The authors presume that there are a static number of jobs; for every immigrant and refugee obtaining a job against a competing Canadian, there is one more unemployed Canadian. Though there are some economic studies of the displacement effect of immigrants which oppose additional immigration on these grounds (S. Star in an article in *Canadian Public Policy*, 1975), other studies note the role of immigrants as a stimulant to demand, generating more employment in turn. In addition, studies which focus on the short term increase in unemployment usually assume no difference between domestic and imported labour, and that domestic labour would fill the jobs immigrants take up. The experience with seasonal migration or temporary worker programs and other research seems to belie such assumptions.

There are other factors which influence the creation and competition for jobs such as the difference between

immigrant and domestic consumption patterns. The research of William Marr and Doug McCready of the School of Business and Economics of Wilfrid Laurier University indicate clearly that immigrants spend a significantly higher proportion of their income on food, shelter, household furnishings, clothing and transportation. If a much higher proportion of income is spent on domestically produced products and services, immigrant spending patterns would create more Canadian jobs than non-immigrant consumption patterns.

If one adds factors into the equation such as the fact that immigrants also bring with them human and cultural capital which is of value to Canada, the simplistic notion of simply focussing on short term employment competition is totally misleading, and in any case has little if anything to do with government inefficiency and a great deal to do with the fundamental premises of immigration policy.

Achievement

But then the Report contradicts itself. After first implying that the immigrants will take jobs from Canadians, it goes on to assert the contrary — that we are taking in a bunch of people who will become dependent on welfare. While the Report states that one fifth of immigrants are deliberately selected for what they can contribute to Canada, (though in another part of the Report the figure is only 14%) and many of those not selected will make a valuable contribution, the Report emphasizes that, "It is inevitable (by what divine decree, pray tell!) that a much larger percentage of them, being much less qualified, will have great difficulty" (p. 19). No evidence is provided to support the conclusion that those not deliberately selected are less qualified, nor do the authors state that for which they are less qualified. Some studies indicate higher levels of skills than are found in the same proportion of domestic born, and that a higher percentage of the succeeding generation of immigrants attend institutions of higher learning than the children of those born in Canada, confounding the old belief that the longest esta-

blished groups would have the greatest socio-economic achievements. The 1984 study of Professors Kalbach, Lanphier, Rhyne and Richmond concluded that, "the second generation (of immigrants) achieved levels of education, occupation and income above expectations and usually above that of their counterparts in the 'third-plus' generation."

They do not seem to know the research and evidence that indicates that the pattern of job-targeted immigration was a failure (again see Professor David Foot's older studies), and that those who immigrated to Canada for specific jobs and who were subsequently laid off when an economic downturn arrived, were, understandably, the most resentful and had the greatest difficulty in adapting.

The Bogey of Welfarism — Misuse of Language

The Report also misuses the English language. For example, it continually refers to the indigent immigrants (mainly federally sponsored refugees) who are *dependent* on welfare. But *dependent* means "unable to do without that support". Overwhelmingly the refugees quickly become independent. They are not dependent in the proper meaning of that term because they rely temporarily on government assistance only while they establish a basis for self-support. Furthermore, within a relatively short time, through taxes and additions to our gross national productivity, they quickly repay the initial *investment* in their resettlement costs — which the Report calls welfare — and thereafter the Canadian economy realizes a net gain.

Privatizing Sponsorship

The Report not only ignores evidence that would refute its beliefs, but some fundamental facts it cites are dead wrong. For example, the Report states, "Among the 15,000 refugees and other designated classes,....about 4,000 were sponsored by the private sector (largely church) organization *at no cost* (my italics) to the federal government" (p. 19). Privately sponsored refugees do cost the government money. As the Report acknowledges

later, the government advances funds for transportation. The government pays for health benefits until the refugees become self-supporting. Programs for language training are available to private as well as to government sponsored refugees.

Such blatant errors as well as significant omissions indicate the willingness of the authors to adapt the facts to suit whatever case they want to make rather than undertake a detached objective analysis. The Report sets out an agenda for privatizing refugee sponsorship by recommending, "a new partnership with the private sector in immigrant adjustment".

The Report's authors either do not know or do not acknowledge that a partnership, however tenuous and weak, already exists. Furthermore, this Report directly threatens that partnership's continuation. As one who has worked extremely hard to nurture and develop that partnership through my actions as well as research, I am keenly aware that the partnership was built *against* the suspicion that the government would use the commitment of the private sector to forego its own responsibilities. The partnership was forged by gradually replacing the previous distrust and mutual suspicion.



The government had to reiterate over and over again that private sector involvement would *enhance* and not substitute for the government commitment. This Report belies that commitment. The voluntary involvement of those assisting the government in the fulfillment of its international obligations is threatened by the government's sponsorship of this Report.

Pseudo History

To support its case and reinforce the distortions, we are provided with pseudo historical recapitulations. The Report states that, "The federal government, in the late 1970s, announced that it would 'sponsor' a refugee for each

refugee 'sponsored' by private sector groups. Over time, federal sponsorship has risen to about 10,000 yearly, while private sponsorship has remained essentially static at about 4,000 annually" (p. 22).

What, in fact, happened? The 1976 Immigration Act (proclaimed in 1978) for the first time made a provision for private sponsorship. There was a clear, expressed, and repeated commitment that such sponsorship would be in addition to the government commitment. Ron Atkey, Minister of Employment and Immigration in the Clarke Tory government, in a bold, courageous and innovative move, proposed to increase the number of refugees the government would sponsor *over and above* the 8,000 the government already planned to sponsor from South-East Asia. It offered to sponsor one additional refugee for every refugee the private sector sponsored to a maximum of 50,000. There was no limit on the private sector, just a ceiling on the matching formula. The government would end up sponsoring 29,000 refugees if the private sector sponsored at least 21,000 refugees.

The Report not only ignores the circumstances and conditions of the matching formula, but conveniently ignores or is ignorant of what happened when the government reneged on its commitment. Because the private sector was so responsive to the challenge, and funds were desperately needed to assist Cambodian refugees abroad, the government stopped sponsoring at the 21,000 level instead of fulfilling its commitment of 29,000 without consulting its partners in the private sector. That act of betrayal would have lost the trust of the private sector had that government not fallen (for other reasons) and had the new government not fulfilled the original commitment.

Since that period, the government commitment has not *risen* to 10,000 as the Report states; it has fallen, though in the last two years, the government, however cautiously and gently, has begun to reverse this trend. After the year of betrayal, private sponsorship initially declined, although it then rose to a steady state of about 4,000 per year.

Privatizing Refugee Sponsorship

The Report ignores the existence of the current partnership and offers proposals which in their unilateral character as well as content would destroy that partnership. The Report deforms the historical foundation and is blind to the tenuous nature of that partnership. However, the authors at least seem to be aware of one of the conclusions of our research, although neither our nor any other scholarship in the field is acknowledged. The Report restates one recommendation of our study comparing private and public government sponsorship. "The private sector is better able to aid individual adaptation and integration than the federal government, and can do so at lower real cost" (p. 22). (The cost to the private sector was actually 55.4% less than government costs.) The Report continues, "it (the private sector) utilized, on a voluntary basis, energy and expertise which would require large sums to purchase." In fact, the savings mostly came from four sources: donated furniture, donated clothing, lower housing costs and earlier job placement using the network of contacts of the private sector. There were also flaws in private sponsorship, the existence of which the Report conveniently ignores. As well, no attention is paid to the other recommendations for building the partnership and offsetting the weaknesses of the private sector.

Thus, though we are pleased our results are being utilized, we are dismayed when they are taken out of context. Their misuse in the Report seriously threatens a partnership many have worked hard and long to build which would help the government save money while *maintaining* and increasing our humanitarian commitments.

The Task Force recommends, "ceasing direct sponsorship of refugees; instead it (the government) should combine with the private sector to provide 50 per cent of the cost of a major private sector refugee sponsorship program." The form of this recommendation (not the idea of matching the private sector dollar for dollar)

would effectively eliminate the refugee sponsorship program altogether. If that is the route the authors believe the government should follow, let them openly state their position, while clearly acknowledging that such recommendations have nothing to do with government efficiency and everything to do with their own ideology of *absolute*, narrow and short-sighted self-interest.

All the studies have shown that the partnership only works if there is a pre-existing fundamental government commitment, which is needed to respond adequately to the crisis character of refugee movements. Savings can be made, but only if the private sector is assured that a significant portion of those savings will be used to help others or improve the help already being provided. The savings won't be made, the partnership won't work, if it is used as a means to abrogate direct government responsibility in the area. The authors of the Report deliberately chose or were kept ignorant of the conditions and qualification required to make such savings.

Lies and False Juxtaposition

If unjustified projections of objectives onto Canadian legislation, illogical and false conclusions, misrepresentation of facts, distortions of history, misuse of language and abysmal ignorance of research results are not a sufficient list of sins, the Report engages in a form of lying made famous by Nixon: the juxtaposition of two statements which, while each true in itself, creates a clear impression which is a lie.

The Report states, "By 1984, there were a significant but unknown number of persons in the country without permanent legal status. Twenty thousand were seeking it through the refugee claims system" (p. 19). It is true that there are an unknown number of illegal immigrants in Canada. It is true that there are twenty thousand refugee claimants seeking to obtain permanent legal status as refugees. But someone who seeks refugee status, though lacking legal status, is not thereby an illegal alien as the juxtaposition implies. The Report suggests all refugee claim-

ants belong to the category of illegal immigrants, a false implication reinforced by the discussion which follows dealing with preventing illegal entry or removing persons in Canada without legal status.

Refugee Status Determination

The Task Force wants measures introduced "whereby *all* (my italics) future refugee determination takes place abroad rather than in Canada", where the refugee would not be protected by domestic requirements to ensure fairness in proceedings, aside from the fact that such limitations would contravene our international and legal and more obligations.

The Task Force Report states that, "The inflow of refugee claimants is currently rising at a rate of close to 8,000 yearly compared with a processing capacity of about 1,000 cases yearly on the part of the Immigration Appeal Board." The *rate* of refugee claims is not *rising* at the rate of 8,000 per year. The *acceleration* of claims may have even declined to zero. The actual rate has probably stabilized at about 9,000 claims. Perhaps the authors meant to say the number of claims has risen to 8,000 per year, a very different assertion than claiming that the rate of increase is 8,000 per year. Furthermore, contrasting the capacity of the Immigration Appeal Board (the IAB) to hear claims — a current capacity of 1,000 — to the figure of 8,000, is extremely misleading because the IAB hears appeals. The relevant body is the Refugee Status Advisory Committee (RSAC) which has an inadequate current capacity to handle about 5,000 hearings per year.

A number of the claims made are illegitimate. Most reports, including the Plaut Report (1985), which the Task Force cites but does not seem to understand, have made recommendations to speed up the process and reduce the backlog and, thereby, eliminate most of the benefits of filing an illegitimate claim. The Task Force makes its own set of recommendations which are at odds with those in the Plaut Report without making clear why it found the Plaut recommendations to be inadequate. It proposes to

apply visa requirements to most countries from which we receive visitors. This would, of course, not stop those with false passports coming from countries such as Germany where no one suggests that a visa be required.

Secondly, only those in "hot flight" (the authors have added their own new terminology to the refugee lexicon), that is those boarding a plane directly for Canada, would be eligible to claim refugee status within Canada. By these standards, probably the only source of potentially legitimate inland claimants would be Lima, Peru. (This makes sense since the authors want all refugee claims to originate abroad.) In addition, the measures would still allow those who left Portugal (one of the largest current sources of illegitimate claims) who managed to obtain visas to make a refugee claim.

Aside from ignoring the sound management principle of not using a sledgehammer to deal with a problem that could be solved with a fly swatter, the proposed method would not succeed in damning a significant source of illegitimate claimants just because successive governments have lacked the political will to resolve this problem and have allowed the system to fall apart. At the same time, most genuine refugees would be denied access to Canada's inland claims procedure. A general visa requirement would not improve Canada's ability to fulfill its obligations under the refugee convention and our international interest in and commitment to international burden sharing. As well, a virtually universal visa requirement would be very costly, quite aside from the fact that it would likely do serious damage to our bilateral relations with many countries.

Designated Classes

Not satisfied with proposals which would virtually eliminate the opportunity for an inland claim for most legitimate refugees without eliminating a costly source of abuse, the report would require "designated class" refugees to meet the same standards as a convention refugee. This, of course, destroys the whole point of the designated class category which explicitly

recognizes that most refugees do not meet the very narrow requirements of the Convention. For example, most Jews fleeing Nazi Germany in the late thirties probably would not qualify as convention refugees. The whole point of the designated class category is to allow the government to determine that all those fleeing a specific country or set of countries are refugees, though not necessarily convention refugees, in that they can *prove* that **individually** they are targets for persecution. The Designated Class category eliminates the need for the costly procedure of determining an individual's eligibility. By defining one category in terms of the other, the whole objective of the differentiation is destroyed. One can only conclude that the Task Force was profoundly ignorant of some of the problems and programs it was studying.

However, I think the distortions and omissions are deliberate. For after admitting that Canadians have a great deal of sympathy for genuine refugees and wish to assist in their resettlement, the authors are dominated by the theme that, "Aside from true convention refugees (as if these were the only genuine ones, and for whom the authors would, in any case severely restrict access to the inland claims procedure) and immediate families, there is no reason to continue admitting what appears to be a significant proportion of persons who face real difficulties in adapting." The reasons are patently obvious — our humanitarianism, our international interests, the explicit objectives of our legislation, and most of all, our self-interest. Although almost all immigrants, including refugees, have difficulty in adapting (and who would not?), overwhelmingly they and their children make a very positive contribution to Canada as have immigrants in the past. I am sure that if the forefathers of our Prime Minister were part of the uneducated peasantry who left Ireland during the potato famine of the nineteenth century — a significant source of our present population — they too would have encountered difficulties in adapting to a country far, far less able to assist in their resettlement. And virtually no one proposes to even open

our doors at the present time to those who are merely fleeing their home country because of economic hardship.

A Window Into The Future

I am not writing this critique to close the window on new possibilities, which was the charge Nielsen levelled against his critics in Parliament. I have been committed for a long time in my actions and in my research to assisting the government in delivering better programs in this area at less cost. The fact is the Task Force Report that I have now studied is the product of men wearing ideological blinkers who do not seem to comprehend the vast history of the programs or their present purposes, let alone provide an opening for new possibilities. Either the individual members of the Task Force were selected because of their prior ideological commitments, thus abrogating the principle of objectivity so crucial to the credibility and reliability of such studies, or the Task Force was so structured that its members were kept in ignorance of the expert reports and expertise that was freely available.

What I fear is that the Report signals something far more ominous — a government which determines policy by bias and prejudice and not by knowledge and analysis. If that is indeed the case, then the government should not have wasted the three to four million dollars in a farcical exercise on efficiency. The government should merely cut off all support for research that, through objectivity, might undermine the opinions of ideologues. This is more cost effective than ignoring the research it has paid for already, as the Task Force seems to do. We should follow the path of the Khmer Rouge and simply place over Ottawa a huge poster:

"Ignorance is Bliss".

Howard Adelman is Professor of Philosophy, York University and founder of the Refugee Documentation Project.

Canadian Immigration Policy and Practice: A Systemic Perspective

David Sangha

Laws and regulations governing immigration have historically proven to be one of the major bones of contention between visible minorities and the Canadian state. These criticisms were given their largest airing in recent history during the hearings of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society.¹ In response to concerns raised by this Committee through its report *"Equality Now!"*, Employment and Immigration Canada has announced two major initiatives; one dealing with a cross cultural training program while the other deals with research on the adaptability of family class immigrants vis-a-vis independent immigrants.²

While further research and training programs are undoubtedly welcome, it is submitted here that, in and of themselves, these are an inadequate and superficial response to the forms of discrimination faced by visible minorities in attempting to obtain equitable treatment by Canada's immigration system. The development of a meaningful reform agenda will only arise from a more thorough consideration of present day models of discrimination (and more particularly, systemic discrimination), and the implications of these models for policy reform.

Evolving Concepts of Discrimination

Drawing on a wealth of judicial decisions and earlier writing on the subject, Tarnopolsky described three distinct stages of development in the legal interpretation of what constitutes

discrimination. These were: intentional discrimination, differential treatment and systemic discrimination.³

During the first stage, a finding of discrimination was based on the presence of evidence that there was conscious intent on the part of the accused to discriminate against the victims according to some prohibited ground (i.e. race). During the next stage of the expansion of the concept, discrimination was seen to exist in situations where individuals who held similar qualifications were treated differently due to some discernible characteristic. In such cases, evidence of the evil intent of the accused was no longer absolutely necessary to prove guilt.

The latest stage in attempting to conceptually define discrimination is referred to as systemic discrimination. The concern here is not exclusively focussed on tracking down evilly intentioned individuals or simply ensuring equal treatment. Instead, discrimination is seen to occur in any and in every situation where policies and practices of an organization have a negative impact or effect upon an identifiable group.

Application to Immigration Policy

In reviewing the wealth of material regarding the various forms of discrimination inherent in Canada's immigration system, one can easily find evidence of all three models of discrimination.

Examples of intentional discrimination are clearly evident in past

immigration legislation, such as the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, the "continuous journey" regulation of 1908, and s.38 ss(c) 36 of the 1910 Immigration Act which allowed the government by way of Order In Council to designate any characteristic, including race, as being undesirable.⁴ The passing of the 1978 Immigration Act, with its inclusion of a non-discrimination objective, marked the end of such open, intentional racism.

Present immigration policies and practices exhibit forms of differential treatment and systemic discrimination. The most obvious form of differential treatment is easily gleaned from a consideration of how and where overseas immigration processing resources are allocated. It is interesting to note, for example, that while the United States accounts for approximately 8.3% of Canada's total immigration flow, it has 12 Canadian visa offices on its soil. By comparison, India which accounts for approximately 7.9% of the immigration flow, has only one. The United Kingdom, which accounts for a negligible portion of Canada's total immigration, has five immigration centres. Elsewhere, it has been noted that immigration centres in Third World countries are often understaffed in comparison to "white" source countries. The practical effect of these two factors is that family class immigration applicants from Third World countries often experience delays of three to four years.⁵

In discussing the issue of discrimination in immigration practices with immigration lawyers and visible minority representatives, one quickly becomes aware of another level of obstacles. Many aspects of immigration legislation allow a great deal of discretionary power to immigration officials. For example, Section 19 (h), (the 'not genuine' section) allows an immigration official to bar a potential immigrant from entering Canada simply because, in their opinion, the person does not appear to be genuinely interested in permanently settling in Canada. These types of wide-open sections of the Act, it is often alleged, are used disproportionately against prospective non-white immigrants.

This selective enforcement problem is further exacerbated by the limited acknowledgement of individual rights and due process inherent in the Immigration Act and its interpretation by the courts.

No empirical proof is presently available to support the assertion that these discretionary powers are used to screen out visible minority applicants. The author attempted a small scale study, in which thirty transcripts from the Immigration Appeal Board were chosen at random. Eleven of these involved immigrants from white source countries. Virtually all of these transcripts involved allegations of criminal conduct on the part of the prospective immigrants. Of the nineteen non-white immigrant transcripts, seventeen involved discretionary judgements by immigration officials regarding such issues as the genuineness of the documentary proof of the relation to the immigrant's sponsor, or allegations of marriages of convenience.⁶

Several years ago, Professor Allan Green conducted a study of the efficiency of overseas immigration posts in the United Kingdom, Italy and Asia. On the basis of his evidence, he concluded that screening procedures in Asian posts were much more intensive.⁷

A Reform Agenda

A detailed consideration of the reforms needed in Canada's immigration system would require several papers to adequately discuss the issue. What is attempted here is to merely map out some general directions based on a systemic approach.

It is clearly evident that further monitoring systems need to be set in place in order to ensure that problem areas can be clearly identified and dealt with. For example, Canadian immigration officials proudly provide figures showing the rising percentage of the total immigrant flow coming from non-traditional source countries as clear evidence that discrimination is not a factor in present day immigration procedures.⁸ It is regrettable that they cannot presently provide comparative figures on the success ratio of immigration applicants (that is, the number

of applications received divided by the number of applicants approved) from various countries. For example, what is the proportion of non-white versus white family class applicants which are rejected? It is also presently impossible to compare what is causing the rejection of applicants at various overseas posts. This type of information can and must be demanded by groups advocating for change in order that systematic screens be routed out of the present system. The lack of such information makes it difficult to pinpoint the areas most in need of reform. It is also important to note that without proper monitoring mechanisms, the definition of problems is left in the hands of the bureaucracy concerned.

From the discussion in the previous section, two areas of Canada's immigration system are in need of immediate attention. First, overseas immigration processing resources (both in terms of offices and staffing) must be reallocated towards non-white source countries in order to address the interminable delays experienced by prospective immigrants from these countries. Secondly, a thorough review of the Canadian Immigration Act, accompanying regulations and its use 'in the field' should be conducted to ensure a closer adherence to the spirit of the 'fundamental principles of justice' underlying the Charter of Rights. In any such review, the unnecessarily wide discretionary powers afforded to immigration officials should become the subject of close scrutiny and change.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has highlighted the deep-seated nature of discrimination in the provision of immigration services to visible minority communities. In order to address present inequities, it is suggested that concerned groups and individuals begin to move towards a systemic view of both the causes of the present inequitable situation and the reforms needed to address it.

Dave Sangha is an MSW student at the University of B.C.'s School of Social Work. He is also active in the race relations field in Vancouver.

Footnotes

1. It is instructive to note that of the eight submissions made to the Special Parliamentary Committee by the eight member organizations of the Committee for Racial Justice (the largest umbrella organization of organizations in B.C. working in the race relations field), all eight included extensive comments on immigration practices.
2. Government of Canada, *Responses of the Government of Canada to 'Equality Now!'* p.12.
3. Tarnopolsky, Walter, *Discrimination and the Law*. Toronto: Richard De Boo Ltd., 1982.
4. A much more detailed consideration of racism in past immigration policies is included in the Law Union's *The Immigrant's Handbook*, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1981. pp. 16-30.
5. The preceding figures were taken from the Canadian Bar Association Immigration Sub-section's submission to the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Equality Rights (Issue No. 11:66-76).
6. A smaller version of this study is referred to in the major paper listed at the end of this paper.
7. Green, Allan, *Immigration and the Post War Canadian Economy*, Toronto: McMillan & Co., 1976, pp. 53-54.
8. See, for example, Government of Canada, *Responses of the Government of Canada to 'Equality Now!'* 1984, pp. 12-13.

This paper is a condensed version of one of the chapters in Sangha's major paper "Systemic Inequality in the Provision of Public Services to Visible Minorities". Copies of this paper are deposited with the UBC School of Social Work Library and the library of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

Should The Victim of Racial Discrimination Complain?

Tim Rees

Racial discrimination is prohibited in Canada. The fundamental rights and freedoms that Canada holds to as a liberal democracy includes the commitment to full and equal participation of all citizens in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the country. They include the commitments to equality of access, to equality of opportunity, and to the equality of all cultures.

These principles have been encoded in various public policies at both the federal and provincial levels. At the same time, societal abhorrence to racial discrimination is reflected in various legislative forms including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, labour codes and human rights acts.

However, to suggest that the barriers to racial equality in Canada have disappeared is to deny reality. The rights of racial minorities have not been fully secured. The practice of racial discrimination continues to flourish in all facets of Canadian life. While some of the overt manifestations of racism may have diminished, the barriers experienced by racial minorities in our economic, educational, political, legal and cultural institutions appear to be as pervasive and intractable today as they have ever been.

Given the ideals upon which Canadian society stands, it would clearly appear incumbent upon the victim of racial discrimination to complain, and to complain loudly. And if the situation is not satisfactorily resolved, the victim is encouraged to seek assistance from those public institutions — the Canadian Human Rights Commission and all the provincial human rights commissions — that

have been created specifically to protect minorities and defend the victims of discrimination.

Punishing the Victim

So what happens when the victim of racial discrimination does complain?

In a survey of 199 employees in the Metropolitan Toronto area in 1985,¹ Billingsley and Muszynski found that almost all (96%) of the 138 Non-White complaints reported during their interviews were concerned with some type of perceived racially discriminatory behaviour on the part of Whites.

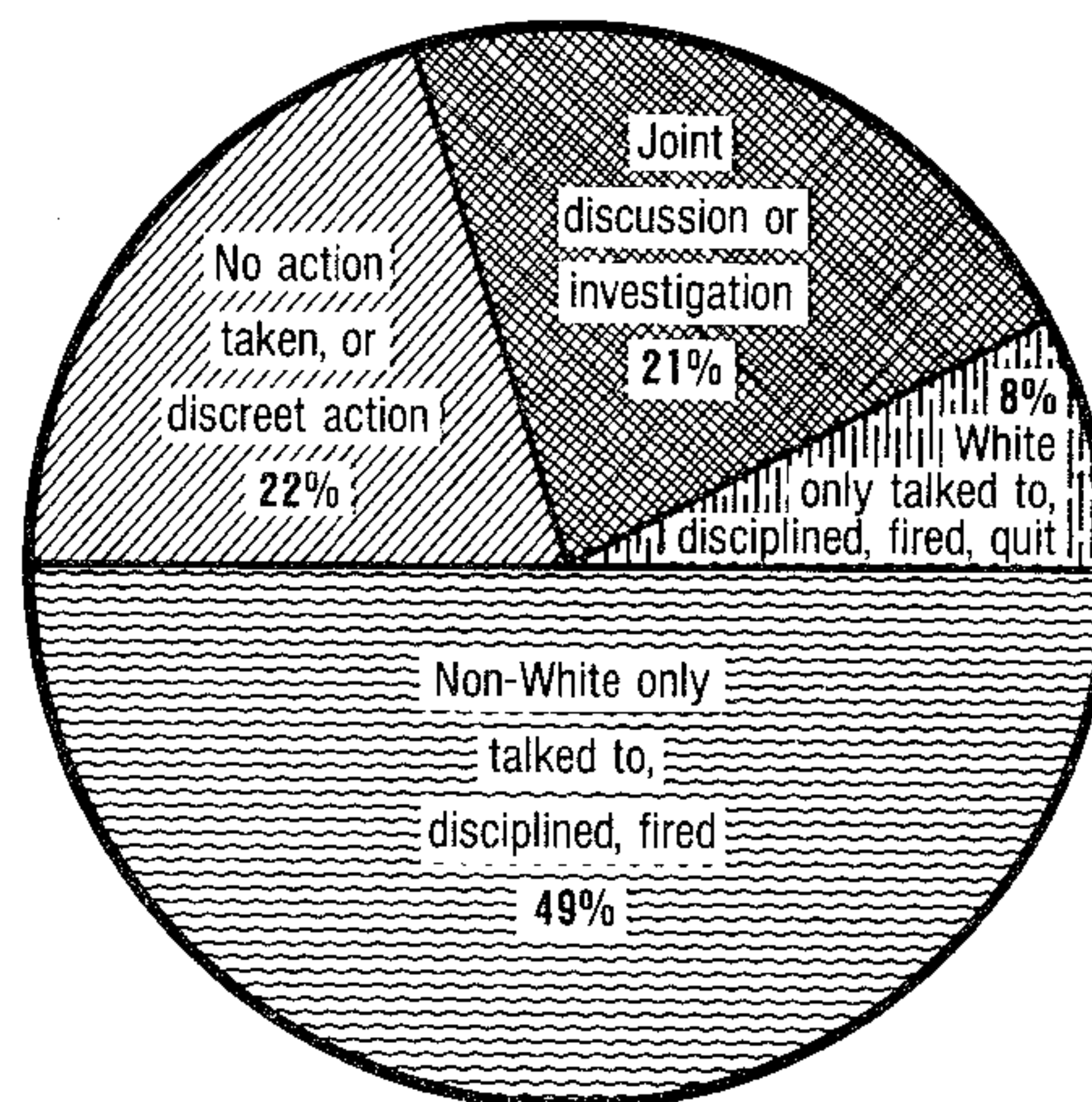
In 22 per cent of the cases handled within the organization, management saw the complaint as minor or unfounded and took no action, or took discreet action not directly involving either party. Only eight per cent actually resulted in management disciplining the White subject(s) of the complaint, and 21 per cent were handled through an investigation and/or joint discussion openly involving all parties.

In an astonishing 49 per cent of Non-White complaints brought to management's attention, it was the Non-White complainant who was disciplined, fired or quit as a result of management's response. In 68 per cent of cases handled in this fashion, Non-White complainants were dissatisfied enough with management responses to seek redress from a union or human rights body.

Billingsley and Muszynski also found that the sanctions against Non-Whites do not necessarily end with the complainant. Eleven per cent of the largely White management group claimed that to avoid future Non-

White complaints or "troublemakers", they would exclude Non-Whites from consideration for employment.

Management Handling of Non-White Complaints About Whites²



In another study undertaken by Wilson Head on the "Attitudes and Perceptions of Minority and Majority Group Health Care Workers", it was found that one of the major difficulties in initiating the study was the fear of being interviewed.

"On numerous occasions, a Black nurse or other health care worker would agree to being interviewed only to change her mind later. The usual reason was fear of being reprimanded or even fired if she participated in the study".³

Human Rights Commissions

Billingsley and Muszynski also confirmed the low probability that a race-based complainant made by a Non-White to an outside organization* will be resolved in the complainant's favour. Of the 56 complaints for which the outcome was reported in their study, 82 per cent were either withdrawn by the complainant or determined unfounded by the investigating organization. This figure corresponds closely with the Canadian Human Rights Commission 1983 Annual Report (page 38). Of 91 cases on grounds of race or colour submitted for decision in 1983, 81 per cent were dismissed or discontinued, while 19 per cent were settled, sent to conciliation or tribunal.

Data from the Canadian Human Rights Commission also indicates that complaints based on race are dismissed at higher rates than those involving gender or physical disabilities. In attempting to understand the higher dismissal rate for race-related cases, a recently unpublished study examining 184 cases found that the C.H.R.C. uses different investigative procedures. A "comparative" analysis is used for gender and other issues, and an assessment and documentation of the respondent's organization is essential. A "sequential" analysis on the other hand is used in race cases and involves the events of the one person complaining and the response of the organization to the complaint.

Another recent study for the Canadian Human Rights Commission⁴ addressing the same issue, concluded that cases involving race tended to be resolved in an ad-hoc fashion. Conclusions that pointed to discrimination were usually avoided and instead references were often made to interpersonal conflicts.

The Victim is Guilty

It is of interest in this context to note the experience of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. While this voluntary organization neither promotes itself, nor is equipped to counsel or work with individual cases of racism, it has nevertheless regularly received, throughout its existence, requests for assistance from such victims. Until recently it was felt adequate to direct them to the appropriate Human Rights Commission. Now however, the Urban Alliance is receiving an increasing number of requests for assistance from those who laid complaints of racial discrimination with the appropriate Human Rights Commission and received absolutely no satisfaction. The impressionistic evidence from the Urban Alliance on Race Relations suggests that the trauma of suffering racial discrimination is nothing compared to the trauma experienced in fruitlessly pursuing the complaint through the incredibly time-consuming, cumbersome and unproductive procedures of the Human Rights Commission.

The victim of racial discrimination has discovered the government institution specifically established to protect and defend him/her does no such thing. The continuing existence of such dysfunctional bureaucracies can only encourage minorities to believe that the ideals of our liberal democracy are a charade. The existence of Human Rights Commissions are not there for minorities, but are a facade for the White majority to hide behind.

Should the victims of racial discrimination continue to be encouraged to pursue the 'normal channels'? Should the victim knowingly be encouraged to undergo what has increasingly become literally years of frustration in unsuccessfully seeking justice? The evidence clearly indicates that those who have the temerity and courage to object to racial discrimination, invariably invite personal pain

and humiliation as well as professional and economic ruin.

* In almost all cases, the organization named was a human rights commission. Four cases were resolved through unions and one was heard by the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Footnotes

1. Billingsley, B. and Muszynski, L. No Discrimination Here? Toronto Employers and the Multi-Racial Workforce. *Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto*, 1985.
2. Ibid.
3. Head, W. An Exploratory Study of Attitudes and Perceptions of Minority and Majority Group Health Care Workers. *Ontario Human Rights Commission*, 1986.
4. Reeves, W. and Frideres, J., "The Resolution of Complaints Based on Race and Origins" in N. Nevite and Kornberg's *Minorities and the Canadian State*, Toronto: Mosaic Press, 1985.

Guilty Appointments

Serving on the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

The following statement was submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Rights on October 21 by representatives of a number of major national organizations including: Women's Legal Education & Action Fund (LEAF), Coalition of Provincial Organisations of the Handicapped (COPHO), La Ligue des droits et libertes, Canadian Labour Congress, National Association of Women & the Law (NAWL), Canadian Ethno-Cultural Council, Canadian Jewish Congress, Canadian Association for Community Living, Canadian Human Rights Reporter, Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, Action-Travail des Femmes, National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Canadian Human Rights Advocate.

We are asking you, as a matter of critical urgency, to take up the question of appointments made to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Panel.

We believe those appointments have been made in a highly improper manner which discredits the whole system for protection of human rights at the federal level.

Human Rights Tribunals make the law in human rights in Canada. They are quasi-judicial bodies and have, for example, developed the whole area of protection for women against sexual harassment and the area of reasonable accommodation for person with a disability.

We will not sit idly by while hard-earned human rights protection for women, minorities and persons with a disability is systematically sabotaged.

The Federal Court of Appeal in the MacBain case said last October that there must be "no apprehension of bias" on the part of Tribunals and that their independence must be safeguarded.

Appointments to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Panel should be made on the basis of expertise and competence in the human rights area. Appointees should be unimpeachable in terms of their independence and integrity. The process should be open

and based on clear criteria of competence.

Instead, the new Tribunal Panel appointments (made in April and September this year) emerged from a closed political process. Both the criteria for making these appointments and how these individuals came to be selected have been kept secret.

The vast majority of the appointees have no recognizable credentials in the human rights field. A large number, however, identify themselves as supporters of the Progressive Conservative party. Others gave substantial donations to the Progressive Conservative Party. For example, Daniel H. Tingley, Tribunal appointee from Westmount, gave \$1,166 to the Progressive Conservative Party in 1984 and \$1,000 in 1985. Ronald Lou-Poy, Tribunal appointee from Victoria, gave \$2,300 in 1985.

Others on the Tribunal list are recognized by people from their regions as active workers for the Progressive Conservative Party. For example, Manny Sonnenschein is known as a long-time fund-raiser for the Party in Saskatoon.

Peter A. Ross who recently dismissed a woman's complaint of sex discrimination, saying that the woman was not discriminated against personally but only because she was a woman, was a candidate for the Conservative Party.

Gerald John Kambeitz has been appointed by the government in its enthusiasm twice — both as Canadian Human Rights Commissioner and as Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Panel member. He has no known credentials in human rights. The only reason for his appointment appears to be that he has made donations to the Progressive Conservative Party.

We believe the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal appointments represent a savage and unethical attack on the human rights protection of women, minorities and persons with a disability in Canada.

Human Rights Tribunals are supposed to be entirely independent. They have responsibility for dealing with discrimination in employment and services in all areas that come under federal jurisdiction, such as

banks, Bell Canada, airlines, C.P., C.N., etc.

They also are responsible for hearing cases against the federal government itself. When appointees lack credentials in the human rights area and appear to have been appointed on the basis of their support for the Conservative Party, how can a person who files a complaint against the federal government have confidence that they will receive a fair hearing?

The prime responsibility of the Standing Committee on Human Rights is to monitor the Canadian Human Rights Act. We call upon you to act at this critical moment when the whole integrity of the Canadian Human Rights Act is in jeopardy.

We believe —

- the appointment process used by the government was highly improper
- the interference by the Minister of Justice in stopping the Tribunal office from giving the résumés of appointees to the Human Rights Committee was improper
- the action of the Tribunal office in following orders from the Minister's office and sending the résumés to the Minister was wrong and improper

We are asking, as an urgent priority matter, that the Human Rights Committee immediately

- 1) investigate this serious abuse of the human rights process
- 2) call appointees before you, as you are authorized to do, for questioning as to their competence in the human rights area
- 3) call major organisations knowledgeable in the human rights field to put forward their views as to a proper appointment process
- 4) make a report to the House of Commons within four weeks with recommendations as to a proper appointment process

Unless you undertake these actions, we believe the credibility of the Canadian Human Rights Act will be irrecoverably damaged.

CURRENTS

READINGS IN RACE RELATIONS

BACK ISSUES WHICH CAN BE ORDERED

1. Volume 1, No. 2 (Spring 1983)
Minorities in the
Media \$6.00
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Visible Minorities: Invisible (A
Content Analysis of Submis-
sions to the Special Committee
on the Participation of Visible
Minorities in Canadian Society
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Between the Mosaic and the Melting Pot: Chronicling the Immigrant Experience in Canada and the U.S.

Michèle DuCharme

North America has a lengthy and proven history of prejudice and discrimination towards immigrants and refugees. Yet rather than concentrate on the necessity of becoming more sensitive and responsive to the needs and problems encountered by new arrivals, the tendency has been to regard racism as merely part of the immigrant initiation process. The struggles of the immigrant and minority experience have too often been glorified as part of North American mythology. As a result, a genuine appreciation and understanding of the difficulties and injustices faced by new arrivals, particularly those who are non-white, has still to be attained.

The first step in presenting the issues of such powderkeg topics as immigration is either to communicate them in an appropriate and realistic manner or not at all. Unfortunately, the attainment of this seemingly obvious goal has eluded us so far. Much of what has already been written on racism has been clouded by the sacrosanct notion that multiculturalism is the cure-all to overcoming our differences and discriminatory practices. But the acknowledgement of culture has not been sufficient in ensuring the integration of the new immigrant into Canadian society, nor has it served to accelerate the process of adjustment or equal access. Thus writing about the "immigrant experience" takes on an added importance as perhaps the only means of sensitizing us to the difficulties which the immigrant is undergoing.

The methodology of communicating this body of emotionally charged facts is therefore of critical importance if it is to contribute, as it should, to informing and improving immigration, immigrant integration and other social policies and practices. One approach is through oral history, in which "living documents" can be used to gather impressions, opinions, and attitudes. Standard reports and studies, as valuable as they may be, too often lack the human dimension which is an essential ingredient to understanding the range of circumstances inherent in the immigrant experience.

Previously, the immigrant's story tended to remain unrecorded due to lack of opportunity, literary skill, inclination, leisure time or knowledge of the English language. Now however, oral history has been hailed as a fundamental and sometimes primary research tool in the study of immigrant communities. Generally speaking, it is a technique for collecting information based upon the personal experiences of individual participants or witnesses of particular events. At its best, oral history can provide a detailed and informative account of a person's feelings, values and encounters. Yet despite the popularity of oral history, it takes particular skill to pull the pieces together in such a way as to enlighten the reader and direct future behaviour and action.

Unfortunately, this does not always occur as shown by the authors' treatment of the materials in the three

books under review. While each work can be classified as an oral history in one way—an examination of the immigrant and minority experience by letting first-person accounts tell the story—the impact and usefulness of the books varies considerably depending on the philosophical framework used.

In *Rivers Have Sources, Trees Have Roots* for example, authors Brand and Bhaggiyadatta interviewed over a hundred people from the Native, Black, Chinese and South Asian communities across Canada and recorded their experiences with racism in various facets of their lives. The bulk of the book is comprised of the transcripts of these interviews which are organized according to recurring themes — childhood, family, work, culture and fighting racism. Each chapter is prefaced with introductory comments by the authors which reinforces the underlying theme throughout the book: the victimization of non-whites by whites. Brand and Bhaggiyadatta have also included their own individual experiences as immigrant battling racism along with the other interviews.

George Bonavia's contribution, *Immigrants We Read About*, approaches the subject matter much differently. Whereas Brand and Bhaggiyadatta categorized their work as "anti-racist literature", Bonavia's book is a tribute to multiculturalism. The author sees Canada "as a kaleidoscope reflecting the fascinating patterns of many cultures" and has structured his book accordingly. Each of the 220 life stories highlighting individual immigrant experiences and contributions fold onto the next like the changing pieces of coloured glass in the kaleidoscope itself. Unfortunately, these stories may make pretty pictures when assembled together but they obscure the reality of racism and inequality which also forms a part of our history.

Like Brand and Bhaggiyadatta, Bonavia includes his own experiences as an immigrant in Canada but from the point of view of one who has "made it". The book also includes a brief history of immigration to Canada which contains some glaring omissions. There is no mention of the

Blacks who settled in Nova Scotia or who came into Ontario through the Underground Railway; no reference to the Japanese-Canadians who were interned during the Second World War; and no data pertaining to the Third World immigrants who entered the country in the post war years. A suggested list of books and films about immigrants completes the book and provides its only redeeming feature.

The Tarnished Door by Pulitzer Prize winner John Crewdson, stands apart from the strident, angry cries of the disadvantaged and the land of milk and honey myths in the first two books. Subtitled "The New Immigrants and the Transformation of America", Crewdson's book is an eye-witness account of the world of the illegal immigrant and an expose of the ineptitude, corruption and brutality which flourishes in the American immigration department. The author takes us with him as he follows the harrowing personal journeys of the Cubans in Key West, the Haitians in Miami, the Mexicans in the Arizona desert and the Hispanics in the barrios of Los Angeles — all new immigrants in limbo. Their stories are representative of the more than one million undocumented workers arriving annually in the U.S. who are fleeing war, poverty and/or overpopulation.

Crewdson did not record these experiences with the aid of a tape recorder but rather through the eyes of a trained reporter. His participant/observer technique results in a hard-hitting yet sensitive account of who will live in America and who will not; of how they will live and what they must face at the hands of Immigration and Naturalization Services officials.

Rivers Have Sources, Trees Have Roots: Speaking of Racism, Dionne Brand and Krisantha Sri Bhaggiyadatta, Cross-Cultural Communication Centre, 1986.

The authors have attempted to fill a gap which they have perceived exists in the documentation of racism by providing an opportunity "for people of colour to be heard in their own voices".

Unfortunately, the insights and the power of these collective voices is swallowed up by the diatribe on white supremacy. The message that Canada and all its white citizens are cold, hostile and racist whether they are "actively or individually engaged in racist acts" or not is repeated, ad nauseum, from one page to the next. This occurs to the detriment of the provocative questions which arise from some of the interviews.

The fact that the majority of non-whites interviewed had not previously discussed the racist incidents which they experienced, even with members of their own families, is but one example of an area which begs further research. However, there is no time here for analysis. The objective seems to lie in cramming in as many negative incidents between whites and non-whites as space will allow. But to what avail? Since the book is directed as people of colour, those who read it as members of the 'dominant culture' will soon find their urge to understand and help in the fight for equality deflated.

Rivers Have Sources, Trees Have Roots is a pessimistic and non-productive way of attacking racism in Canadian society. Designed to act as a call to arms for the disadvantaged, the book takes great pains to differentiate itself from previous studies undertaken on racism by "experts" whose efforts are more or less dismissed as inadequate. Yet despite claims as "a call to organize and mobilize for change", it offers no solutions, suggestions or glimmers of hope for the future. Regretfully, the overriding message which one takes away from these interviews and the accompanying text is more anti-white than anti-racist. The end result is a perpetuation of the very "us against them" attitudes which it purports to condemn. To accept such an isolationist stance is to pose some disturbing questions for the future of race relations work in this country.

Immigrants We Read About, George Bonavia, International Productions, 1986.

George Bonavia's life story is the stuff dreams are made of — the classic

tale of the immigrant who comes to a new country, works hard and makes good. A journalist and broadcaster in his native country of Malta, Bonavia was fortunate enough to find work in his field when he emigrated to Canada. His career here has been a fruitful one, during which he has been an editor, publisher, writer, customs officer, immigration officer and the recipient of several ethnocultural awards. Even his surname, roughly translated, means "good life".

Yet the success stories of George Bonavia and the other immigrants he has chosen to include in his book have a fairy tale like quality to them. What about the immigrant who doesn't live happily ever after? Where are the newcomers to this country who are trained professionals but are forced to take on menial jobs to support their families? Where are the stories of those who didn't make it — who sit alone on crowded streetcars or endure racist slurs and attacks? Where is the reality behind the immigrant experience?

In his uncontrollable zeal to promote the merits of multiculturalism, Bonavia has chosen to ignore the darker side of immigration. He believes that all we really need to recognize "the Canadian dream of unified greatness" is an honest pride in our diversified heritage. In short, the shelves are already overflowing with books such as Bonavia's. No matter how well-intentioned they may be, they are neither instructive nor helpful, and may even act as a further hindrance to any future gains toward equality.

The Tarnished Door: The New Immigrants and the Transformation of America, John Crewdson, Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1983.

John Crewdson initially wrote this book for two reasons: to find out why the new immigrants were coming to the U.S. and to try to gauge their impact on America in the late twentieth century. In the course of his more than three years of investigation and writing about immigration, he uncovered a third reason: to expose the Immigration and Naturalization Ser-

vices (INS) as the most inept, most mismanaged and most corrupt of all the federal agencies in Washington.

What he eventually found out ends up spellbinding the reader. Reading his book is similar to the feeling one gets at a horror movie — no matter how repulsed you are, you can't leave without finding out what's around the corner. Given the nature of the subject matter, there isn't long to wait.

The most virulent racist action in the American immigration system takes place among the Border Patrol officials, the guards of the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Anyone who has ever condemned the incompetence and racist practices of Canadian immigration officials should grab a copy of **The Tarnished Door** and start reading.

With approximately six of every ten illegal immigrants entering the United States coming from Mexico each year, it is the brown-skinned immigrant who has become the victim of some of the most appalling instances of state-supported racial harassment and violence. The Border officials even have their own lingo to refer to these people south of the border whom they view as the "lowest form of life". The older agents call the Mexicans "wets"; the younger ones invented the term "tonks" — the sound that a night stick makes when it connects with a Mexican's skull. But racial slurs are child's play compared with the tactics employed to obtain a confession for false claim of citizenship. U.S. citizens are not required to carry documents attesting to their status, so in order to prove whether an alien is telling the truth or not, a number of inhumane methods are used.

For example, if an illegal immigrant has managed to make it past the Border Patrol's watchful eye, there is always the "neighbourhood raids" of the INS to fear. Crewdson reports that "almost every day in any big city INS vans can be seen pulling up to bus stops, homes, businesses, even playgrounds, disgorging armed agents who stop and question any passerby with brown skin, and the raids are not always carried out with great regard for the law." Many of these supposed

'illegal aliens', who are subjected to flashlights shone on them in bed, or have armed men climbing in their windows and barging into their houses without permission or warrants, are, of course, legal American citizens. Under the Reagan administration, these raids have actually been stepped up.

In the same breath, we learn that these people are in fact the 'lucky ones' because at the very least, if you have been beaten, arrested or murdered, you have escaped the modern day slave trade in illegal alien workers. Slavery is alive and well in the 1980's in the American south-east. From Florida to Idaho, from Virginia to Arkansas and across to North Carolina, illegal immigrants, penniless and desperate for work, may be brought into the country "on consignment" by alien smugglers. They may be held captive on farms or in old dilapidated houses until an employer is found who will pay their "transportation fee". In the meantime, the illegal immigrant continues to work yet does not receive a cent — he or she is saddled with

paying off a steadily rising debt which will always be out of reach. Crewdson discovered that the potential profits to be made in the people-moving business are staggering; for example, an average-sized ring moving 500 illegal immigrants a week across the border can easily gross \$12 million a year.

It quickly becomes obvious that anyone writing about such forceful material has to have an excellent grasp of the subject. With so many horrific, real-life incidents to relay, the danger exists that the reader will become numbed by the impact and tune out. However, Crewdson's finesse as a reporter saves the book from becoming too overbearing. By interspersing the human dramas with documented evidence, (much of it gathered from nameless government officials), Crewdson has written an explosive piece of work. **The Tarnished Door** should be read not only by American and Canadian policy-makers but also by anyone who has ever envied the land of the free and the home of the brave.

The Urban Alliance releases another publication:

A Bibliography on Race Relations

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations has compiled two bibliographies on race relations which provide a comprehensive reference list of periodicals as well as books on the topic. The purpose of these bibliographies is to provide an in-depth collection of up-to-date materials on the subject of race relations to the public. The set of bibliographies has been divided into two volumes: the first is a 300 page book reference list and the second is a 200 page journal reference list. The subject areas which are represented include: Education, Employment, Policing, Housing, Community Services, Mass Media and Race Relations. With over 1,500 references cited, we believe that these two documents, many of which are annotated, will be an invaluable resource to public and private institutions and agencies, especially libraries. They should also be most helpful to academics, students, professionals and volunteers, and are available for \$20 set.



Songs of an Immigrant:

The Poetry of Rienzi Crusz

Arun P. Mukherjee

It is often claimed that we are all immigrants to this land and that all Canadian literature is immigrant literature, "a mourning of homes left and things lost."¹ Such broad generalizations, however, fail to take into account cultural and racial differences among various immigrant groups and the impact of these differences on creative expression. Nor do they differentiate between the literature of the second or third generation ethnic and that of the ethnic who has arrived on these shores very recently. And such differences are not insubstantial. The problems faced by "visible" ethnics are not simply those of a traumatic severing from their past as in the case of "invisible" ethnics who do not markedly stand out from the rest of the population.² Furthermore, the new arrival, unlike the native-born ethnic, is bound to be preoccupied with finding his or her own sense of identity rather than with exploring "genealogy" or with "ancestor-seeking."³

Rienzi Crusz's poetry is a good indication of how important these differences are. His poetry is an assertion of his difference. Crusz, a Sri Lankan who came to Canada in 1965, had his first collection of poems, *Flesh and Thorn*, published in 1974.⁴ The second collection, *Elephant and Ice*, came out in 1980.⁵ He is about to publish a third collection called *Singing Against the Wind*.⁶ His poems have also been published in several national and international journals and he is the recipient of a number of awards.

Like Yeats, he has created his own mythology and rhetoric because the available conventions of Anglo-Canadian poetry do not serve his

needs. It is this act of self-creation that makes his poetry so interesting. Like so many other Third World Calibans who must perforce speak Prospero's tongue, Crusz wrestles with its inadequacies in order to communicate with the world from the vantage point of his otherness.

Crusz wears his otherness on his shoulder. There are frequent references to his skin colour in his poetry:

*Dark I am,
and darkly do I sing
with mucus
in my throat*

(EAI, p. 90)

In another poem he speaks of his "black tongue" (SAW), an acute image for his separateness. Elsewhere he calls himself a "crow" (EAI, p. 53), a black bird whose frequent recurrence in Crusz's work reminds one of several West Indian poets.

This self-definition makes us feel that we are in a new territory here. The comfortable sense of tradition which a mainstream poet enjoys in his relationship with the readers from a similar cultural background, and which performs half of our labour for us — familiar allusions, a shared past, binding conventions — is unavailable to Crusz for it, being alien, will only falsify his meaning. We see Crusz doing a tight-rope walk: speaking honestly in his unfamiliar "black tongue" but trying to be careful at the same time so as not to lapse into complete obscurity or nostalgia, traps immigrant writers can so easily fall into.

Certainly, there are times when the tight rope gets the better of Crusz. He does occasionally become clumsily nostalgic and also indulges in exoticism. His poetry is full of evocations of

the beauty of Sri Lanka. Many of these descriptions are no more than exuberant word-painting. However, at his best, Crusz incorporates these lovely vignettes of Sri Lanka into an overall symbolic structure. Several of his poems are built around a comparison-contrast structure in which his Sri Lankan past becomes a means of scrutinizing his life in Canada. The poem entitled "Conversations with God About My Whereabouts" is a good example of his strategy:

*True, I have almost forgotten
the terraced symmetries
of the rice-paddy lands.
How the gods underfoot
churned in time
a golden bowl of rice.
A loss of aesthetics, perhaps.
But I am perfect now.
They have crushed the ears of corn
to feed my belly
white slice by slice
and all imperfections die
with One-A-Day and
vitamin B complex.*

(EAI, p. 93)

The poem juxtaposes the poet's antithetical experiences of Sri Lanka and Canada over several stanzas in which Sri Lanka seems to symbolize a life lived close to the land while Canada is associated with the bounties provided by the machine. However, as we discover in the last two stanzas, Crusz is not interested in reiterating the dualism so popular in modern Canadian poetry: organic versus mechanical, natural versus industrial. In fact, the final stanza parodies these verities:

*I AM perfect now.
A brown laughing face
in the snow,
not the white skull
for the flies
in Ceylon's deadly sun.*

(EAI, p. 95)

When one comes across these stark images of death after the earlier, paradisaical descriptions of Sri Lanka, one realizes that the poet has tricked the reader deliberately. Knowing that the reader will read the poem as a nostalgic recall of his idyllic life in the mother country — a typical theme in immigrant literature — Crusz at first

leads us on and then, in the last five lines, springs his surprise, forcing us to reappraise not only the meaning of the poem itself but our penchant for stock dualisms as readers.

The last five lines create several ironies. On the one hand, the poem seems to be parodying the poet's own nostalgia that generated the earlier stanzas. On the other, it could still imply a subtle criticism of the western way of life which, when it removes all "imperfections," also evades a coming to terms with the ultimate imperfection: death. Finally, the poem also seems to be suggesting that the environment created by advanced technology need not be hostile to human spirit, despite the conventional wisdom of poetry. In fact, in the poem's ecology, it is paradisaical nature which turns killer.

Poems like "Conversations with God About My Whereabouts" are a good indication of the strategies an immigrant poet must adopt to successfully integrate the two modes of his or her existence. Perhaps no native-born Canadian poet has to constantly struggle with these dualities. Crusz's choice of titles itself indicates the magnitude of his struggle. The first two titles, namely **Flesh and Thorn** and **Elephant and Ice**, bring together two antithetical elements while the latest one, **Singing Against the Wind**, emphasizes the isolation the poet feels in an environment that remains alien to his sensibility.

Outsiders

This sense of being an outsider, of not belonging to the charmed inner circle, results in a poetic stance that speaks in understatement and mild ironic thrusts rather than the impassioned hectoring which a Layton or an Atwood might feel no qualms about because of their positions of authority. I find it interesting here that Crusz rarely used the pronoun "we" in its inclusive sense, a rhetorical device which allows the user to speak for the entire society. This difference, it would seem, is a characteristic response of the writers coming from minority or marginalized groups. Myrna Kostash, a Ukrainian-Canadian writer who spoke

as a panelist on "Hyphenated Canadians: The Question of Consciousness" at a conference on "Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada" defined it well:

A negative feature of my book that some people picked up was the defensiveness of tone and a tendency to overstate my case. I can see how that could be interpreted as an ethnic characteristic, a sort of ghetto reaction, but it could also just as easily apply to the fact that I'm a Canadian vis à vis the American empire....Similarly, is the defensiveness I show in writing about Two Hills a female characteristic...? I am a female voice in a wilderness of masculine supremacy, so in the end, I don't know. But this generalized condition of somehow being an outsider, of being a down and outer, does come through.⁷

This difference between the tonalities of the outsider and the insider in any particular society is an intriguing one and literary critics need to become more aware of its consequences for the overall pattern of a work. The outsider, as Myrna Kostash points out, can never be sure of the right tone to adopt. If she is defensive and tending towards overstatement, Crusz's reaction is just the opposite. Unlike several other South Asian-Canadian poets⁸ who might at times appear to be almost hysterical, Crusz constantly hedges behind understatement, even when a scream might seem to be a more natural response. And instead of making any direct observations on the host society, he structures his poems as journeys of the self: the self as it undergoes transformations in the new environment becomes a means of judging unobtrusively. Another related aspect of his approach is that the poems, instead of communicating with the reader on some topic of mutual interest, make statements about how difficult communication is, given the differences between the readers and the poet:

*It would have been somewhat different
in green Sri Lanka, where I touched
the sun's fire daily
with my warm finger tips.
I wouldn't have hesitated
to call you a bastard
and for emphasis, might have even
thrown in the four-letter word.
(SAW, "In The Idiom of the Sun")*

Racism

The effort at softening a rather unpalatable message is very characteristic of Crusz. Even on the question of racism, a very important theme for several South Asian writers in Canada and one which provokes extreme poetic anger from many of them, Crusz's response is couched in understatement. This is how the poet describes his encounter with racists on a Toronto street:

*Who, brown and strolling
down a Toronto street
came up against these black vinyl
jackets
with mouth hurling their PAKI PAKI
words like knives;
Froze, then quickly thawed to his
notebook:
"Color of offenders' eyes:
hazel, blue, blue.
Hair: All long, like Jesus,
down the nape.
Estimated educational background:
T.V.'s "Police Story",
Starring Angie Dickinson.
Home Address: Paradise Blvd., Toronto
Possible motives: kicks
So much poetry in the trajectory
of crow sounds".
(SAW, "The Sun Man's Poetic
Five Ways")*

This composure in the face of extreme provocation is characteristic of Crusz. "(W)ords like knives" and "Froze" are the only two indications in the stanza of the pain and fear caused by racial attitudes. The poetic act of containment also suggest the price which the brown-skinned immigrant pays for maintaining a dignified front. The feelings of hate and anger must

somehow be transmuted into laughter if one wants to function in the day-to-day world:

*When hate wears
a white mud mask,
and dances in rituals
of living death,
he holds out a golden hand
marinated in the sun,
a Jesus heart plucked
From some ancient Calvary.*

(EAI, p. 35)

I find it interesting here that Crusz, instead of directly accusing the victimizer, personified hate, thereby sublimating his anger, a posture which some South Asian poets reject in favour of spilling out their outrage. Both responses, of course, are resorted to by the visible minorities.

Third World Solidarity

Congruent with his response to racism is Crusz's response to colonialism, another important theme in the work of South Asian poets in Canada. Some of them lash out at what they consider to be the complacency and the insularity of Canadian society in this regard. Many of Crusz's allusions are picked from non-Western literary and cultural traditions and may appear obscure to an unprepared reader. However, this obscurity in the South Asian poet stems from his decision to remain honest to his experience. It demands that the reader do some home work of his or her own.

A related aspect of Crusz's poetry, and one that he shares with other South-Asian Canadian poets, is the use of references to artists and art forms of the Third World. This, again, is a poetic act that declares Crusz's sense of solidarity with the people of the Third World. "At Chalkie's Calypso Tent", he pays tribute to the Calypso artists of Port-of-Spain and attempts to communicate their rhythms and satiric thrusts:

*And bald Smiley,
champion of the poor,
your 'Economy song'
came through so clear,
a solution for the arse
which could do well with water
instead of British toilet paper.*

(EAI, p. 73)

Thus, the main referents in Crusz's poetry are from his Third World background. He is trying to communicate, through the use of these unfamiliar images, allusions, rhythms and structures, what it is to be an immigrant and a non-white in a society that is so dissimilar from that of one's origin. His "Immigrant's Song" (EAI, p. 49) is not only an attempt to come to terms with his own past, it is also a heroic statement of poetic independence. While to his South Asian readers Crusz brings consolations of a fellow immigrant who understands and gives voice to their reality and their loss, to other Canadians he brings a beneficial encounter with otherness,⁹ an insight into other ways of perceiving the world.

Silent Canadian Literature

It is unfortunate that the work of poets like Crusz has not received more critical attention. It is high time that the mainstream, as it is called, took note of these voices from the outer periphery of Canadian life. Things as they stand now are pretty hegemonic. For example, Margaret Atwood's *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English* (1982) includes only two minority writers. However, ethnicity is not a major theme in either Michael Ondaatje's or Pier Giorgio Di Cicco's cited works. Canadian Literature curricula at the universities are equally blank when it comes to the contributions of immigrant writers in general and non-white writers in particular. Such neglect is highly unfortunate for it encourages a rather narrow, ethnocentric view of literature — and, ultimately, of society itself — insensitive to unfamiliar voices and incestuously self-enclosed. The loss is especially deplorable in the case of immigrant writers from the Third World, writers who have been exposed to non-Western traditions of writing. Their poetry, if heard, could spark new areas of critical inquiry: the relationship of the poet to his tradition, the nature of differences between traditions, the culture-bound nature of poetic language and symbolism, and the nature of a poet's relationship with his audience. These, of course, are matters of technique. The voices of the

coloured immigrant poets are important also because they report on Canadian society from a vantage point that is not available to a well-adjusted, native-born, "invisible" Canadian. They make their poetry out of what I would like to call the areas of silence in Canadian writing.

Arun P. Mukherjee is Assistant Professor, Humanities, York University.

Footnotes

- ¹ Margaret Atwood, "Introduction," *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English*, ed. Margaret Atwood (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. xxxi.
- ² Editorial, "On Visibility," *Canadian Literature*, 95 (Winter 1982), 2-3, 4, 5.
- ³ Robert Kroetsch, Tamara J. Palmer and Beverly J. Rasporich, "Editorial: Ethnicity and Canadian Literature," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 14, i (1982), iii.
- ⁴ Rienzi Crusz, *Flesh and Thorn* (Stratford, Ontario: The Padeloup Press, 1974).
- ⁵ Crusz, *Elephant and Ice* (Erin, Ontario: The Porcupine's Quill, 1980). Hereafter cited in the article as EAI.
- ⁶ Crusz, *Singing Against the Wind*. To be published by The Porcupine's Quill. Quotations from the collection cited herein are from an unpaginated manuscript kindly supplied to this writer by Mr. Crusz. References in the text are identified by the title of the poem preceded by SAW.
- ⁷ Myrna Kostash quoted in *Identifications: Ethnicity and the Writer in Canada*, ed. Jars Balan (Edmonton: The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, The University of Alberta, 1982), p. 151.
- ⁸ The term "South Asian" refers to people with origins in Indian, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.
- ⁹ I have attempted a fuller exploration of the South Asian-Canadian poets' encounters with "otherness" in: "Two Responses to Otherness: The Poetry of Michael Ondaatje and Cyril Dabydeen," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (Critical Issue, 1985), forthcoming; "South Asian Poetry in Canada," *World Literature Written in English* (forthcoming); "Sri Lankan Poets in Canada," *Toronto South Asian Review* (Fall 1984); and, "Critical Imperialism: The Need for New Critical Standards in Commonwealth Literature," a paper presented at the Learned Conference, Guelph, June 1984.

No-Name People

Nine Men Who Laughed, Austin Clarke, Penguin 1986.

What do we really know of the needs and ambitions of the immigrant? What do we really know of the barriers and the struggles to survive and succeed in Canada? White Canadians who are inclined to look at immigration in terms of numbers, subterfuge and heritage festivals know nothing of the hardships, isolation and racism which newcomers to this country must invariably face. Enter the latest collection of short stories by Austin Clarke.

Nine Men Who Laughed stands as a rebuttal to the gaps in our knowledge concerning the immigrant experience and takes a clear biting look at the multicultural mirage which envelops us, yet does not touch us equally or with the same degree of relevance. Thanks to blaring front-page headlines and tired misconceptions of job-hungry hoards, immigration has become little more than a numbers game. With an over-emphasis on quotas and levels, immigration is a dehumanizing means of processing, restricting, allotting and determining numbers of bodies instead of the welfare of human beings.

In an effort to show a more accurate portrayal, Clarke has focussed on the struggles and "unspoken segregation" inherent in the black immigrant experience, thereby providing us with the lie to the myths and the truth to the realities. Here is an opportunity not to be missed; the chance to appreciate how the system can better meet the needs of immigrants, especially black immigrants, is an insight we can never absorb from studies.

However, despite the title of the book, **Nine Men Who Laughed** is not meant to entertain but rather to provoke and challenge the reader. Each story is exciting, powerful and rich with feeling, yet painfully hard to finish. The entire book is a paradox of masterful writing and disturbing con-

tent, a combination which compels the reader to keep on reading in spite of him/herself.

Clarke uses his Bajan background as well as his own experiences as an immigrant to their fullest extent, alternating between lulling the reader through the pages on waves of calypsonian dialect and then jarring us awake with an anguished vision of reality. As each story unfolds, we see the multicultural fabric which is supposed to hold our society together begin to unravel.

The popular notion of Canadians celebrating our differences does not hold up when compared with Clarke's portrayal of the detached and isolated world within which his "Wessindian" characters exist. The majority of the characters in these stories do not have names because they are not perceived as individuals in Canadian society.

Instead, it is the collective status of 'immigrant' which becomes their primary characteristic, and cuts across personal thoughts, feelings, ambitions, rights and cultural ancestry. For example, "A Short Acquaintance" features a West Indian bank teller who equates herself with the no-name product in which she wraps her daily lunch of nuts and apples: "No-name brands for no-name me!"

With this loss of identity comes anger, fear, resentment, frustration and sometimes hatred. To overcome these feelings and survive in this society, the crutch that Clarke offers is laughter, a device he calls "the weapon of fools". However, the laughter which emanates throughout these stories is contemptuous rather than natural, an attempt to allay self-doubts and to ward off hostility.

The black man on his way to his first job interview in five years "... stood looking at himself, laughing, and seeing only a part of his body in the punishing reflection the glass threw back at him". Although he desperately wants and needs a job, he can only

laugh off the inevitable realization that he will not succeed in getting one. Likewise, the black woman sitting alone on the crowded subway on a seat made for two, sees the blur of white faces standing around her and smiles at the ludicrousness of the situation even in the face of "personal injury". These two characters are reduced to laughing at reality because the effort to accommodate is so consuming that one forgets the need to fight for equal footing in favour of survival. As one reads further along in the book, it quickly becomes apparent that the government's policy of multiculturalism is little more than a dated joke and has no impact on the daily life of an individual black in Toronto.

Thus, in order to better understand and appreciate the human consequences of immigration upon Canadian society, it is essential that the works of authors such as Austin Clarke and Bharati Mukherjee merit the same high status as those of Margaret Atwood or Margaret Laurence. It is totally erroneous and narrow-minded to label 'immigrant literature' as merely sugar-coated, romanticized tales of the world left behind. The stories in **Nine Men Who Laughed** are anything but self-indulgent. Honest, direct and hard-hitting, they are most definitely centred in reality. You may not like what you read, but you can't help but learn from it. This is literature of world-class quality and should be mandatory reading for any school's English curriculum, as well as for anyone who reads *Currents*.

As the novel is looked to more and more often as a major source of comprehension and insight, it will only make common sense to save a space on the bookshelf beside the reports and the studies for books such as Clarke's. After all, how often are you afforded the luxury of reading stories about your work in race relations?

Michèle DuCharme

Within The Seams of the Dominant Culture

Darkness, Bharati Mukherjee, Penguin 1985.

We are often accused of becoming mere readers of reports, reviews, studies and statistics full of second-hand ideas and spurious knowledge. Too frequently, we deprive ourselves of the sheer pleasure and enjoyment of art. And too often, we are unable to appreciate or understand that finally it is only through the artist's imaginative, perceptive response to the world that we, denied this special vision, can find our best chance of truly understanding and coming to terms with many of society's ills. The poet, the writer, the painter, the sculptor do not just look, they see and in seeing they can convey to us through their art what it is truly like.

Bharati Mukherjee's stories in her book **Darkness** take us effortlessly and with great literary skill into the world of the Asian immigrant in Canada and the United States. The stories are immensely enjoyable and beautifully written. Dramatic, sad, funny and tender. The Indian personality and character is delineated and illuminated with immense understanding and affection.

Canada is not portrayed with such affection. We are shown in these stories the new disintegrating influence at work — the cruel immensity of North American affluence and materialism. And Canada is shown as a country that is hostile to its citizens who had been born in "hot, moist continents like Asia".

While not unlike the "laughter of fools" of Austin Clarke's West Indian immigrants, Mukherjee uses a mordant and self-protective irony in describing her characters' pain. The use of irony allows both detachment and superiority over the struggles to belong.

Interestingly, Bharati Mukherjee distinguishes between her negative experience as an expatriate in Canada, and her positive commitment as an immigrant in the United States. One of the key passages is in the author's preface. The wisdom in this passage is that it has something to say to all of us, who for whatever reason, wonder who we really are and where indeed do we belong. She talks about being "adrift in the new world, wondering if they would ever belong. If you have to wonder, if you keep looking for signs, if you wait — surrendering little bits of a reluctant self every year clutching the souvenirs of an ever retreating past — you'll never belong anywhere".

These are stories of broken identities and discarded languages, and the

will to bond oneself to a new community, against the ever-present fear of failure and betrayal. Bharati Mukherjee's characters are sadly adrift in their new world, and through her vision, our entry into that kind of world is made. Not many of us escape the search for identity, or the longing to know that at the end of the day we rest where we belong. In that sense, we must all share the pain and bewilderment of the immigrant.

These beautiful stories are a pleasure to read just for themselves. But one has also gained a greater insight into a human condition — the immigrants, the wanderers, who are so prevalent in our time and in such urgent need of being seen with vision and imagination.

June Rees

History's cruelest legacy to us is the problem of race. We are all heirs to tribal identities, tribal conquests, defeats and victories back through the ages of man. Even religions, for the most part, have tended to divide "us" against "them." It is amazing the human race is still so numerous on the earth when you consider all the suspicion bred into it.

Still, at least since World War II, the consciousness of vast numbers of people has been raised and, however slowly, the cause of equality has made an advance greater than the magnitude of the problem allows us to perceive.

It is vital to keep up this momentum, which at the present moment has subsided before its next new wave. If there is an Achilles heel for the West, it is surely race. It cannot be allowed to bring down democratic hopes. We know we can do better because we have done better.

A bad legacy is just that; we need not be ruled by it. People can change; we know it because we have seen it happen. But the support for change must not weaken from Government, from the laws, from every group in society.

Arthur Miller

Canadian Visible Minorities and the "Third World"

While past issues of *Currents* have focussed on the media and education, I find no references to the importance of the ways in which the "Third World" is portrayed in the media — ways which encourage mainstream Canadian prejudices and racism.

In the five months from October 1984 to February 1985, over \$35 million poured out of individual Canadian pockets in response to media images of starving children, women and men in Africa. Canadians again demonstrated that they continue to be one of the world's most charitable people in donating money to help alleviate suffering.

However, from a visible minority perspective, we need to ask who makes these appeals to Canadians for money. These appeals have a significant impact on Canadian perceptions of the South (also called the Third World) and by extension affect mainstream Canadian views about immigrants and citizens perceived as originally from the South — Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean — Canada's visible minorities.

Practically all the faces on Canadian television appealing for money and interpreting what was going on in Africa were white. Few if any of the Canadian agencies appealing for money have senior staff from a Canadian visible minority community. None of these agencies appear to have publicly asked for the participation of Canada's visible minority community — estimated at two million people — in presenting or interpreting what was going on in Africa. Nor, for example, to my knowledge was the Canadian Filipino or the Canadian Haitian community publicly consulted in interpreting events in their former homelands.

This near-total ignoring of Canada's visible minority community of nearly two million people in media stories and fundraising for the South continues to be repeated — Southern

Africa, Korea, India, the Middle East. Why are Canadian citizens or their relatives with close connections to these countries and regions not working for concerned mainstream agencies and not interviewed by the Canadian media?

There are several answers to this question, some having to do with the reluctance of the visible minority community, many newly arrived in Canada, to speak out about issues and events in their former homelands. However, it can be argued that continuing to let whites interpret these issues and events, or at best Third World politicians who do not understand Canadians, encourages racism and prejudice towards non-whites in Canada.

The perception of most Canadian whites that the "Third World" is poor and incapable of looking after itself is continually reinforced. The media too frequently interpret Third World leaders as corrupt. Many Third World people are portrayed as uneducated and even "uncivilized". Canadians are encouraged to have pity on these "poor people" and to give money.

It is time that Canada's visible minority community recognize that such presentation of the South can only hurt our future. We must insist that the Canadian visible minority community be adequately represented at senior staff levels of all public and non-governmental agencies providing information and perspectives on the South to Canadians. We must closely monitor the media, especially the electronic media, to identify biases and insist, where appropriate, that Canadian visible minority voices be heard and seen as effective, eloquent and positive images of Africa, Haiti or India, for example, or most recently of Sri Lanka. Visible minority people in Canada should fight stereotyping of all peoples of the South, if Canada is to continue welcoming, without increases

in prejudice and racism, an increasing number of immigrants.

Tony Lovink
Public Affairs Consultant
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In the next issue:

**Native People in Canada:
A Forgotten Minority**