History of Immigration to Toronto Since the Second World War: From Toronto "the Good" to Toronto "the World in a City"

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INTRODUCTION

In 1999, a Canadian Immigration Museum was inaugurated at Pier 21 in Halifax. It stands as a testament to the historic contribution of immigrants to Canadian society. The sight is well chosen. For more than forty years, tens of thousands of European immigrants disembarked from passenger ships and first set foot on Canadian soil at Pier 21. Unsure of what awaited them, the new arrivals were processed by immigration authorities and left Pier 21 to begin new lives in Canada.

The museum at Pier 21 honours Canada's immigration past. In several ways it is also a measure of how much immigration has changed since the processing facilities at Pier 21 were finally closed in 1971. Pier 21 looked eastward across the Atlantic toward Europe. By 1971, most immigrants no longer came to Canada from Europe. In fact, the majority of those entering from Europe dipped below 50 percent for the first time. Since then, that percentage has fallen further. What is more, Pier 21 was designed to process immigrants arriving by ship. By 1971, the vast majority of immigrants were arriving by air and only a relative few landed in Halifax. The single most important port of immigrant entry into Canada was Toronto's Pearson International Airport. Not only did immigrants land in Toronto, but unlike the vast majority of those who arrived in Halifax, Toronto was also a final destination. It has become home to almost half of all immigrants arriving in Canada.

Understandably, for Toronto, now Canada's largest city, this raises important issues about services to immigrants and refugees, the relationship of immigration policy to urban planning, the place of immigrants in shaping the city's culture and institutions, and

whether it is possible for a city like Toronto to foster accommodation and integration of immigrants from a pluralism of origins while avoiding the scourge of racism.

Even as Toronto and its surrounding suburban ring continue to wrestle with these matters, there can be no doubt that immigration is reshaping the city's self-perception. Indeed, Toronto boosters like to point out that the United Nations has proclaimed Toronto to be the most multicultural city in the world. No small accolade, this point of municipal pride distinguishes Toronto from its sister North American cities. But for all the back-slapping hullabaloo, the UN proclamation is an urban myth—but a myth so pervasive that, as if working by the dictum that some events are so real it doesn't matter that they never happened, Torontonians seem to have willed it into functioning reality.

By any measure Toronto is an incredibly multicultural city. A snapshot of Toronto as it enters the millennium would reveal a sprawling urban complex of approximately 4 million people. It is one of the world's major immigration-receiving areas. According to the 1996 Canadian census, while just over 17 percent of all Canadians were born outside of Canada, that figure rises to an unprecedented 42 percent of those in Toronto who were born outside Canada. Indeed, almost three-quarters of all household heads in Toronto were either born outside of Canada or have at least one parent who was. And that inflow of immigration has come from every corner of the globe.

Toronto, a once parochial, Protestant backwash of a town—the Ulster of the North— where the Sunday blue laws, draconian liquor legislation, and the Orange Order held sway, now trades on its cultural diversity as a draw for tourists. More than one hundred languages are spoken in this city. Many children born in Toronto enter primary schools each year requiring remedial English classes. Included in the greater Toronto multiethnic mix are an estimated 450,000 Chinese, 400,000 Italians, and 250,000 Afro-Canadians— the largest component of whom are of Caribbean background, although a separate and distinct infusion of Somalis, Ethiopians, and other Africans is currently taking place. There are 200,000 Jews and large and growing populations from the Indian subcontinent, Greece, Portugal, Poland, Vietnam, Hispanic America, and peoples of Slavic origin to name but a few.

The Protestant majority is long gone. Toronto now has a Catholic plurality, and there are more Muslims in Toronto than Presbyterians. Furthermore, Toronto is no longer the almost exclusively white city it was only a generation ago. As the city ushers in the millennium, a major proportion, if not the majority, of those living in Toronto will be people of colour. And with the federal government attempting to move annual immigration numbers to near 1 percent of the total population, more than triple the per capita American immigration level, neither the numbers nor the diversity show any sign of lessening. Compared with the Toronto of tomorrow, the Toronto of today may be recalled as a city of relative cultural homogeneity.

Though Toronto is Canada's leading immigrant-receiving centre, Toronto officials have neither a hands-on role in immigrant selection nor a seat at the federal table where immigration policy is discussed. In Canada, immigration policy and administration is a

constitutional responsibility of the federal government worked out in consultation with the provinces. Cities are officially kept at arm's length from policy discussion of immigration. But while Toronto does not have a constitutional voice in determining immigration policy, immigration policy determines much about Toronto. With Toronto as the destination of choice for so many immigrants, immigration has become a singular force shaping and reshaping Toronto's streetscape, residential housing construction patterns, neighbourhood continuity, and delivery of municipal services including education and health care.

To appreciate fully the impact of immigration on Toronto, it is important to understand the history of Canadian immigration policy and how that policy has played itself out in Toronto. It is also important to understand how immigration fits into the mindset of government, business, the larger Canadian community, and immigrants, themselves. It is important to acknowledge that while the receiving society has an agenda when it comes to immigration, so do immigrants, and the expectations of the state and those of immigrants may not dovetail. For example, as the federal government's duty to regulate entry of immigrants into Canada, it establishes criteria for admission based on the perceived best interests of Canada. What government may see as a legitimate admission prerequisite designed to shelter Canada from the social and economic burden of unwanted arrivals, may seem to prospective immigrants as just another obstacle. How the interests of the state and the often separate and distinct interests of individual immigrants play off one another is also part of Toronto's immigration story, a story deeply rooted in the past.

Toronto's Immigrant Past

If Toronto is presently one of the world's major immigrant-receiving cities, this was not always so. On a visit to Toronto during the First World War, Rupert Brooke allowed that Toronto was "all right. The only depressing thing is that it will always be what it is, only larger, and that no Canadian city can be anything better or different." What was there about the Toronto that Brooke visited that left him convinced it could not or would not change? At the time Toronto envisioned itself a stolid guardian of British Protestant ascendancy, values, and traditions. What Brooke saw was a gray backwash of British imperial imagination. Whether guardian or backwash, Toronto allowed little or no room for urban-bound immigrants. That is not to say that Toronto, like other major Canadian cities of the day—Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver—did not have significant enclaves of immigrants, or "foreigners" as they were commonly labeled. On the contrary, in the years before the Second World War, each had its foreign neighbourhoods. Best known are Mordecai Richler's Main in Montreal, Vancouver's Chinatown, the now-legendary Winnipeg North End, and Toronto's Kensington Market. Each of these immigrant settlement areas had its own particular tone and texture, even its own neighbourhood identity, institutions, and sense of how it fit into the larger urban social and economic complex. But each of these different immigrant neighbourhoods was also regarded by the mainstream as an area apart—located in the city but not really an organic part of its urban core. Many mainstream Toronto residents hoped their city would be no more than a temporary way station for foreigners who would quickly move on, on to rural

Canada or the United States. But if foreigners insisted on staying, mainstream Torontonians hoped that they would know their place. In effect this "place" kept immigrants in the social and economic shadows, relegated to that corner of the larger urban landscape reserved for the immigrant underbelly of the urban labour force, doing jobs that "real" Canadians preferred not to do.

Thus, while there were immigrants in pre–Second World War Toronto, this is a far cry from claiming that Toronto was a city of immigrants in the way urban geographers and historians might talk about American cities like New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, New Orleans, Galveston, or Los Angeles. Going back to well before the turn of the nineteenth century, as the American agricultural frontier was being aggressively depleted of new land, and the burgeoning, urban-based industrial sector demonstrated an almost insatiable appetite for cheap labour, Americans came to regard cities, especially in the industrial northeast, as contact points between immigrant workers and domestic capital. Cities were where unskilled and semiskilled immigrants stoked the furnaces of American growth in the decades following the American Civil War.

Canada and Toronto were different. From Confederation through the turn of the century and beyond, Canada had no passable equivalent to New York or Chicago. For the most part, Canadian cities—with notable exceptions like Hamilton, Ontario and Sydney, Nova Scotia—were less industrial hubs than regional administrative and commercial centres feeding off an agricultural or extractive industry hinterland. In Toronto few could envision any good coming from immigrants piling up in their city, especially those of a non-Anglo Saxon lineage. It is true that, at the national level, immigration officials actively sought out immigrants, but Canadian immigration policy deliberately and systematically endeavoured to stream non-British or -American immigrants away from cities into nonurban and labour-intensive industries like railway construction, mining, lumbering, and, most particularly, farming. Indeed, until well after the First World War, farming and the wealth it generated was regarded as not just the bedrock of Canadian economic and social development but the very raison d'阽 re for encouraging large-scale immigration—immigration of agriculturists.

But farming was hardly an easy life. The unforgiving Canadian climate, unstable markets for farm produce, and marginal lands unyielding to the plow too often drained immigrant muscle, resources, and hopes. As a result, in spite of hard work, it was not unusual for farm incomes to fall far short of that necessary to sustain a family on the land. Conditions were often so difficult that in the years before the turn of the century, tens of thousands of immigrant farmers and Canadian-born agriculturists alike, unable to find alternative employment, took refuge in factory jobs or sought more congenial lands in the United States. So pronounced was the outflow of population to the United States that one wag claimed Canada's story was foretold in the Bible: "It begins in Lamentations and ends in Exodus."

This changed with the dawn of the twentieth century. The completion of the first Canadian transcontinental railway, built with borrowed capital and cheap imported labour, opened the vast Canadian prairie northwest to expansive agricultural settlement. And the

time was right. A seemingly unquenchable European market for Canadian raw materials and agricultural products, especially grains, coincided with a major population upheaval in Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe cutting millions loose to seek new homes in the new world. The result was unprecedented Canadian economic expansion propped up by a huge wave of immigration that government streamed onto labour-consumptive extractive industries, such as mining and lumbering and, most of all, settled into the vast expanse of agricultural lands in western Canada. Wheat was king and from the government's point of view, immigration afforded an opportunity not to be missed—a chance to further economic and population growth by settling farmers without land in a land without farmers.

The name most associated with this peak period of Canadian immigration is Clifford Sifton, Canada's aggressive Minister of the Interior. Sifton revitalised Canada's immigration recruitment program. Priority remained fixed on promotion of the immigration of farm families. But, initially, this was not the only criterion for preferred admission. Unabashedly colonial, the government defined those from outside the British Isles as "foreign" and, blatantly North American, it excluded white, English-speaking American immigrants from this category. In their source-country preference, Sifton and the Canadian government were as racist in their thinking as the culture of their times. Canadian immigration policy remained as racially selective as it was economically self-serving.

With an insatiable demand for agricultural labour and workers to expand industrial sectors, yet confounded by a shortfall in the number of "preferred" settlers, Sifton and his immigration authorities set aside their racial concerns—at least as far as Euro-ethnics were concerned. In the search for more and more agricultural and bush workers, Sifton reluctantly agreed to seek other European agricultural settlers in a descending order of ethnic or racial preference. At the top remained British and white American agriculturalists followed closely by Northern and Western Europeans. Then came Eastern Europeans—the fabled peasants in sheep-skin coats. Closer to the bottom of the list came those who, in both the public and government's minds, were less assimilable and less desirable. This group was made up largely of Southern Europeans. Slotted in at the very bottom were Asians, Blacks, and Eastern European Jews, who showed little inclination for farming. The government was initially unsure of how to deflect urban-oriented Eastern European Jews from Canadian shores while beating the bushes for other Eastern Europeans. That would take time to work out. But it was clear what to do about Asians and Blacks. Laws were passed and immigration regulations strictly enforced that tightly controlled Asian immigration and effectively barred Blacks from Canada.

Government programs encouraging agricultural immigration worked. Between the turn of the century and the First World War, Canada soaked up immigrants. While immigration into Canada never reached the absolute numbers that entered the United States, the ratio of foreign-born to Canadian-born was far higher. These non-English- or non-French-speaking settlers, most arriving in family units, gradually filled the geoeconomic niches reserved for them in prairie agriculture or wage labour on the rugged mining and lumbering frontier. But there was an air of impermanence among many who bypassed

agriculture and slid directly into wage labour. Canadian statistics do not differentiate between immigrants and migrants, and many of those who came to Canada, particularly Southern European men and some Eastern Europeans as well, were, in reality, less immigrants than temporary workers, sojourners who regarded Canada not as a permanent home but as a place of employment. Their ultimate goal was to find work, save money, and return home with enough capital to satisfy a home-based economic agenda—pay off the family's debt, assemble the dowry necessary to marry off an older sister, buy land, or, if the family already had land, buy more of it. And as satellites of distant family or village economies, these migrants felt little need to learn English, involve themselves with the affairs of the larger community, or venture beyond their own particular job-residence axis. It did not even particularly matter to most whether they were working in Canada or the United States, so long as they could work and save more money than they spent. Indeed, it was common for these migrants, birds of passage, to swing back and forth across the border in their relentless search for wage labour. As a result, many regarded the American-Canadian border as less a demarcation between national societies than a nuisance. Macedonian migrants, for example, spoke not about Canada or the United States but about upper and lower America.

In the end, while many of the labourers, primarily men, who came to Canada as sojourners went home, others, originally expecting to return to family and village, stayed. Separated from home by distance, time, opportunity, or war, many gradually revised their priorities and set down new roots. They married Canadian women or sent home for wives. In so doing, they cast their lot with Canada in the hope of building new lives for themselves and their families.

Whether they originally came to Canada as immigrants or migrants, they helped fuel Canadian economic expansion. They also raised social anxiety. For many English-speaking Canadians, the continuing influx of strange peoples speaking strange languages—people until recently loyal to foreign kings, czars, and kaisers—who prayed to alien gods and seemed so distant and indifferent to Canadian values raised fears that these "foreigners" might never be assimilated into Canadian society. They would always be the strangers, perhaps dangerous strangers, in our midst. French-Canadian leaders had a different, almost diametrically opposite, fear. They worried that these "foreigners" would indeed assimilate and assimilate into English-speaking society. They would then tip the national political and demographic balance even further in favour of *les anglais.* But many English- and French-Canadian leaders were at least agreed on one thing. Immigration was a boon to the economy and, in balancing economic benefits against social costs, so long as these "foreigners" were content to remain in the rural hinterland and continued to play the subservient economic and social role reserved for them, immigration should continue.

Many immigrants were not content to play this game. To the unease of mainstream Canadians, the number of "foreigners" leeching out of rural areas into waiting jobs in Canadian cities, including Toronto, increased. As immigrant numbers in Toronto rose, so did anti-immigrant sentiment. Why were there immigrants working in Toronto at all? Wasn't there an unspoken agreement between immigration boosters and the urban polity

that "foreigners" would stay put in rural Canada? Yes. But, the prosperity that opened Canada's western agricultural, mining, and lumbering frontier and attracted so many immigrants to Canada in the first place also spurred industrial development and an enlarged job market in cities like Toronto. Immigration policy might still trumpet agricultural settlement as a national priority, but it was not long before new immigrants were joined by older immigrants or their Canadian-born children in abandoning the isolation of the bush or escaping the vagaries and insecurities of life on the land in favour of wage labour in cities. Immigrants ricocheted into Toronto where the men found jobs in the expanding urban economy—paving streets, laying trolley tracks, labouring in the expanding textile factories, and tunnelling the sewer systems—while the women worked as household domestics, took in boarders, or performed piecework.

Immigration Restriction

Regardless of how willingly immigrants, men and women, filled waiting jobs in Toronto and other Canadian cities, by the early 1920s there was no overcoming a growing mainstream urban mindset that regarded immigrants in the city as a threat. Many Toronto gatekeepers accused immigration of hastening the onset of municipal blight, political corruption, and miscegenationist race suicide that they associated with cities south of the border. The signs seemed to be there. Weren't "foreigners" crowding Toronto slums in seeming defiance of Canadian immigration policy? And didn't "foreigners," largely Catholics and Jews, cleave to their old-world ways and one another—showing precious little inclination to assimilate? While it was one thing if they were content to spend their lives in sweat labour, it was another to find some starting to compete, and successfully so, with skilled, native-born artisans and small businesspeople. And what about the children of immigrants? They might be untutored in Canadian ways, but with universal and compulsory school legislation, they were in the classroom, and the brightest among them were demanding access to universities, professions, and the political arena. No, if these "foreigners" did not know their place—and it wasn't Toronto—they should be denied Canadian admission.

As urban xenophobia in Toronto and other cities ratcheted upward, it was impossible for the federal government to ignore demands for immigration restriction. By the mid-1920s, Canadian immigration laws and regulations were revised to restrict immigrant entry into Canada along racial and ethnic lines. Rules against Asian admission were already tight. Now the admission of Eastern Europeans was made much more difficult and the immigration door was slammed shut on Southern Europeans and all Jews irrespective of country of origin, except those few who might come to Canada from the United Kingdom or the United States.

Following the economic collapse of 1929, with mass unemployment in urban Canada and a withering away of farm income, any residual appreciation for immigrants, such as the market for immigrant labour, evaporated. The door was sealed. Immigration officials who had once competed with other countries for immigrants now stood vigil against any breach of the Canadian wall of restriction. So difficult was it to enter Canada that during the 1930s and 1940s, Canada had arguably the worst record of all possible receiving

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states in the admission of refugees from Nazi Germany. Even immigrants already in Canada were not safe from anti-immigration hostility. Domestically, the pointed stick of racism seldom dug so deep as it did with the internment of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War.

Postwar Immigration Policy

The Second World War and its aftermath also proved a critical watershed in the history of immigration generally and immigration into Toronto in particular. While many policy planners initially feared that the war's end would throw Canada back into the job-hungry economic depression of the 1930s, the opposite occurred. A surprisingly smooth transition from wartime to peacetime production found a new urban industrial base, the product of massive wartime industrial investment, retooling to satisfy pent-up consumer demand—consumer goods and services denied Canadians not just since the beginning of the war but since the onset of the Depression that preceded it. In addition, a huge export market quickly opened up as Western Europe began a massive postwar reconstruction. Rather than a shortage of jobs, within a year or so after the end of the war, Canada faced a surging demand for labour. Labour-intensive industry, much of it in and around cities like Toronto, demanded that Canada's immigration doors be reopened. Before long Canada was back in the immigrant importation business.

In truth, however, when immigration was first reopened, the government sought to hold the line against wholesale immigration of non-British or non-Western Europeans. Prime Minister Mackenzie King reflected the national mood when he observed that "the people of Canada do not wish to make a fundamental alteration in the character of their population through mass immigration." Discrimination and ethnic selectivity in immigration would remain. "Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting the persons whom we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a 'fundamental human right' of any alien to enter Canada. It is a privilege. It is a matter of domestic policy." And Ottawa's mood was none too congenial to the notion of renewed immigration by those regarded as least likely to fit in. Immigration officials who still understood their duty as guarding the Canadian gate against all comers were certainly unsympathetic to any liberalisation when it came to Asians and Southern and Eastern European groups against whom immigration barriers had been carefully erected in the first place. Immigration officials, who could not see beyond their hierarchy of ethnic preference, asked what would be gained from filling any short-term labour gap if it meant a permanent infusion of Jews and Slavs—those who stood at the front of Europe's exit line.

The public seemed to agree. Just over a year after the guns fell quiet in Europe, a public opinion poll found that Canadians would rather see recently defeated Germans allowed into Canada than Eastern and Southern Europeans, and Jews in particular. Only the Japanese fared worse. Thus, even a grudging willingness to reopen immigration in late 1947 was very much predicated on holding to the ethnically and racially based immigration priorities of the 1920s.

Renewed Immigration

The British, Americans, and Northern Europeans, particularly Dutch immigrants, were actively courted. Legislated bars against Asians remained in place and administrative tinkering assured that Southern and Eastern Europeans, especially Jews, would find it difficult to get into Canada. The government of Ontario was so concerned to get the "right" type of immigrant that it flexed its jurisdictional muscle in immigration matters and inaugurated a highly publicised airlift of British families into the province. When British currency regulations threatened to choke off the flow of applicants, special transportation tariffs were negotiated to stimulate the inflow. When currency regulations similarly hobbled the immigration of other "desirable" Western European groups, particularly the Dutch, the federal government intervened. In 1948, a three-year bilateral agreement was signed with the Netherlands to ensure the smooth transplant of approximately 15,000 Dutch farmers and farm workers, family units, to Canada, many taking up farming immediately north of Toronto.

If labour-intensive industry was generally pleased by the government's building commitment to immigration, it was less pleased with restrictions on importing cheap labour from outside the government's narrow ethnic circle of acceptability. Pleading that it must have access to a continuing supply of imported labour willing to assume low-wage and low-status positions rejected by "preferred" immigrants and native-born Canadians alike, business warned that the economic boom was in jeopardy. They pressed Ottawa to skim off the cream of the almost one-million-strong labour pool languishing in the Displaced Persons camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy before other labour-short nations—including the United States and Australia—beat Canada to the punch. Largely as a result of this pressure, the federal government gradually began to sift through these camps for "acceptable" settlers while carefully monitoring the public mood at home for any negative reaction to the arrival of Displaced Persons.

Most Displaced Persons were former citizens of Eastern European states who refused repatriation back to countries now dominated by the Soviet Union. Others were Jews, a tattered remnant of Europe's prewar Jewish community who somehow survived the Holocaust. Hoping to rebuild lives shattered by the war, many men and some women accepted Canada's calculated kindness and signed on to work in prescribed industrial, service sector, or domestic jobs as the price of Canadian admission. One should not confuse Canada's intake of displaced Europeans with the United Way. This was a labour importation scheme, plain and simple. There can be little doubt that if there were no Canadian labour shortages, few Displaced Persons would have been admitted into Canada and certainly as few Jews or other Eastern Europeans. Sorting through the existing and available European labour pool, when possible, immigration preference was given to refugees from the Baltic republics—highly prized by immigration authorities and employers as hardworking "Nordic types." Only as jobs remained unfilled did government cautiously agree to lift barriers against Jewish and Slavic settlers.

In addition to its racial and ethnic reservations about reopening immigration, the government had another domestic reason for a slow approach to immigration. Throughout the 1950s, government immigration and policy planners expected the economic bubble to burst and demand for labour to subside. Again they were wrong.

What is more, while demand for labour continued, especially in and around booming urban centres like Toronto, Canada was not the only immigration game in town. Labour shortages in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere forced Canadian officials to continually scramble for their share of a shrinking pool. It was not long before candidates who might previously have been rejected as undesirable became valued prospects. In the face of the continuing demands of a robust economy, remaining barriers to Jews and Slavic immigrants slipped away, especially for family of those already in Canada and those with skills demanded by labour-starved Canadian industries.

By the time the Displaced Persons admission program ended, tens of thousands of new immigrants had resettled in Canada—many in Toronto, home to more Displaced Persons per capita than any other Canadian city—and aggressive immigration recruitment in Europe remained the order of the day. The old backwater of Ottawa bureaucracy, the Immigration Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, was revitalised and, reflecting its new profile, in the 1950s was upgraded within a new Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Old-school restrictionist immigration officers were also replaced by a new breed of proimmigration personnel. Canada was finally back in the immigrant importation business and Toronto was a major immigration destination.

An Urban-Friendly Immigration Policy

As part of its newly adopted and activist mandate, the new immigration bureaucracy set about preparing a new immigration law. The existing legislation had been enacted before the First World War and, with its emphasis on agricultural settlement, it was a stretch to make the new industrial and urban labour recruitment priorities fit within its parameters. Recognising this, the government in 1952 passed a new immigration act designed to attract a continuing stream of industrial and urban-bound immigrants without casting an ethnic or racial immigration net beyond Europe's borders. The subtext of the 1952 legislation might have been drawn from the prime minister's 1947 caution against immigration undermining the social structure of Canadian society. Affirming what had long been Canadian immigration policy, the 1952 Act allowed the minister of immigration and his officials sweeping powers to set such regulations as they felt necessary to enforce the Act. At the discretion of the minister, individuals or groups might be rejected on account of nationality, geographic origin, peculiarity of custom, unsuitability to the climate, or—the omnibus provision—inability "to become assimilated." In effect this meant continuing some sort of hierarchy among applicants of European origin and an almost total ban of non-whites, especially Asians.

Furthermore, in keeping with the deepening cold-war climate of the day, security checks were required of would-be immigrants. Security personnel, working under the umbrella of the RCMP, functioned as something of a separate estate. A veil of secrecy was drawn over their activities and procedures. Canada's cold-war gatekeepers focused on the Communist threat. But many non-Communists and even anti-Communists on the left— trade unionists, socialists, social democrats—were also denied entry. Individuals barred from Canada on security grounds had few avenues of appeal and often were not even told the true cause of their rejection. Unfortunately, while standing guard against Communists,

Canada allowed or abetted the entry of others whose Second World War records should have set off alarms in Ottawa, but didn't. Most were not even questioned about a Nazi past. But even if there might have been reason to suspect individuals of having a Nazi history or pro-Nazi sympathies, in the eyes of Canadian security authorities, they had the virtue of being proven anti-Communists.

At least there was positive change in one area. Throughout the 1950s, ethnically biased selectivity gradually receded, at least as far as Euro-ethnics were concerned. Quite likely Euro-ethnic immigration was fired by a combination of a continuing heavy demand for labour and a surprising level of comfort that Canadians, particularly in cities, seemed to have with the new immigration. So long as the economy remained buoyant and immigration was regarded as essential to keep the economy moving forward, immigration was tolerated if not welcomed. Even the wall of restriction against people of colour showed a first tiny crack. Responding to a reconfigured British Commonwealth—as former British colonial holdings achieved independence—and hoping to gain an economic toehold in the developing world, in 1951 Canada set aside a small but, nonetheless, symbolically important immigrant quota for its non-white Commonwealth partners, India, Pakistan, and Ceylon. If the actual numbers of non-whites admitted to Canada were small, the symbolism of government-sanctioned admission of even a small group of non-white immigrants should not be minimised.

The question for government was whether the economy would remain strong enough to absorb still more immigration. To the surprise of many economists and immigration officials, who warned that the Canadian economy would cool and unemployment rise, through the 1950s and into the early 1960s, the Canadian economy generally remained strong as did the labour market. In Toronto jobs in labour-intensive industries experienced a pressing need for immigrant workers to service a massive boom in residential housing construction and in expanding the urban infrastructure. Where would the necessary immigrant labour force come from? There weren't that many options. As prosperity gradually returned to Northern and Western Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the pool of those applying to emigrate from Northern and Western Europe gradually dried up. The Displaced Persons camps were emptied of all but hard-core cases. The lowering of the Iron Curtain locked Eastern Europeans in place. Yet none in government could conceive of recruiting immigrants from the non-white world.

The Italian Model

With business interests forever warning that continued prosperity was at stake and pressing for more and more labour, immigration officials had little choice but to expand their focus to include Europe's southern rim. Labour-intensive industries were particularly interested in Italy and other Mediterranean countries where population increase and land dislocation sapped the absorptive capacity of still war-ravaged local economies. The result was an unskilled, rural labour pool that could easily be redirected to waiting employment in Canada. After some hesitation, the government agreed. Restrictions against the admission of Italians, recently barred as former enemy aliens,

were lifted and, with security personnel on guard against Communist infiltration, immigration offices were opened in Italy.

Ottawa may at first have hoped to attract the more "Germanic" northern Italians, but almost immediately southern Italians dominated the immigrant flow. By the mid-1960s, Italian immigration climbed into the hundreds of thousands. In the industrial heartland of southern Ontario and urban Canada more generally, Italian labourers, many former agricultural workers from the rural farm villages dotting central and southern Italy, soon became a mainstay of the thriving construction industry, much as Slavic immigrants had been to the breaking of prairie sod and Jews had been to needle trades.

So extensive was the influx of Italians that in the 1950s, Canada's Italian-origin population grew threefold from approximately 150,000 to 450,000. Toronto received the lion's share of these new arrivals. Indeed, almost half of all Canadians of Italian origin soon lived in Toronto, and, unlike the Italian migration of the prewar, there were comparatively fewer sojourners among them. The postwar Italian immigration largely comprised of permanent settlers arriving in family units or, if the male head of household was the first to migrate, he often made reunification with family still in Italy a first priority.

Unschooled in urban ways, most Italian immigrants to Toronto located in residential working-class pockets along major public transportation arteries and took up lower-status manual, but often unionised, labouring jobs, particularly in construction and related industrial sectors. For many immigrants from Italy, residential property acquisition and organising chain migration to ensure reunification with kin were twin priorities. Home ownership and a widening circle of kin also supported the integrative process. Family often took in relatives and together the extended family formed a social and economic unit pooling capital and resources, networking for jobs, caring for one another's children, sharing information, and serving as a secure base of personal interaction and emotional strength. As the numbers of Italians in Toronto increased, so did their institutional presence. Italian grocery stores, caf閦, food wholesalers, newspapers, parishes, and social clubs gave Italian neighbourhoods a distinctive flavour and streetscape.

Other immigrant groups followed suit. Even as Italian immigration continued, Greeks, Portuguese, and the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula began arriving in Toronto in large numbers. Each group was unique in its historical self-definition, cultural traditions, institutional organization, and economic priorities; but each also adopted many of the same family-based economic and social integrative strategies so characteristic of postwar Italian immigrants.

Dealing With The New Pluralism

Immigrant resourcefulness and integrative patterns were hardly noticed by federal government officials. Their priorities were elsewhere. With bureaucratic tunnel vision, many persisted in regarding immigration as little more than the importation of labour to capital, workers to jobs. However, the impact of this immigration on the Toronto urban

landscape and mindset was far more than economic. In Toronto postwar immigrants gradually reshaped urban life and attitudes. Whether Southern or Eastern Europeans, these immigrants redressed the city's religious balance, gradually undermining the long-standing Protestant hegemony while invigorating existing Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish communities in Toronto. They also brought with them a richness of cultural form and diversity of social expression that Toronto had never previously seen.

At first Toronto wore this cosmopolitanism like a new and somewhat uncomfortable pair of shoes. Mainstream Torontonians understood that immigration played into the city's growth but felt pinched and off balance by the changes immigration brought to the world around them. Feeling the city they had known begin to slip away, some were cautious about stepping into an ethnically pluralist future. In the late 1950s, Toronto police descended on picnicking Italians for having a glass of wine in a public park—let alone for allowing their children take a sip. Municipal health authorities were suspicious of new European-style caf閦 that violated city ordinances by serving food at sidewalk tables. And what could they make of the smells and tastes of foods so alien to what most Torontonians were used to? Even espresso coffee smacked a little too much of the exotic, maybe even the subversive.

And when would these "foreigners" learn to be like "us"? It was not uncommon for immigrants speaking their mother tongue in the street or on public transit to be made to feel out of place and told to "Speak white!" Teachers and school administrators, thinking they were liberating immigrant children from narrow, old-world parochialism or protecting them from schoolyard bullies, took liberties with many an immigrant child's most personal possession—his or her name. Gabriella became Gail, Luigi became Louis, Olga became Alice, and Hershel became Harold. All the while some in the press and several local politicians warned against the evils of immigrant overcrowding, ghettoisation, and crime. But not all. Slowly at first, Torontonians became more comfortable with the new foods, polyphony of languages, and neighbourhoods that immigrant presence brought in its wake. And for some, comfort gradually turned to pride in Toronto's new-found cosmopolitan image.

What became of the bedrock of vitriolic and politically acidic xenophobia that so dominated Canadian and Torontonian thinking only a few years earlier? What of that mainstream certitude that, almost as a sacred trust, Toronto must stand guard over British values in North America? How was it that, in less than one generation, Toronto's public face shifted from defence of Anglo-conformity to a celebration of the mosaic? Put simply, by the late 1960s, the past was cut loose, undermined both by the onslaught of city-bound immigration and the mediating force of government awakened to political power increasingly in the hands of a new and pluralist urban electorate made up more and more of immigrants and their children. If it would take time for its importance to soak in, the election of Nathan Phillips, a Jew and a child of immigrants, as the first mayor of the 1960s, Toronto was a telling barometer of the changes immigration was having on the municipal polity and represented something of a civic revolution of mind.

Redefining Citizenship

The revolution was of many parts but may be said to have had its genesis in the late 1940s, with the redefining of community through the introduction of a distinct and separate Canadian citizenship. Little remembered today is the fact that, until 1947, there was legally no such thing as Canadian citizenship. Holding true to the mythical imperial connection, those living in Canada were designated as British subjects resident of Canada, not Canadians. Pressure for change began in the postwar, and the name most associated with that change was Paul Martin. Toward the end of the war, he was appointed Secretary of State. In his autobiography, he later claimed to have previously flirted with the notion of a unique and distinct Canadian citizenship, but his total conversion to the necessity of a separate Canadian citizenship came during an official visit to recently liberated Europe in 1945. While in France he asked to visit the Canadian military cemetery at Dieppe. Walking amid the rows of graves, some still fresh with wooden markers, he reported being deeply moved by the incredible diversity of names found among the Canadian fallen—names that spoke to the pluralism of origins even then making up Canadian society. As Martin later wrote, "Of whatever origin, these men were Canadians." They had fought and died for Canada. They deserved to be remembered as Canadians. In their memory, Martin claimed, he championed the creation of a Canadian citizenship.

Without negating Martin's contribution, it should be acknowledged that other factors also prodded the government toward instituting a separate Canadian citizenship. Certainly, there was desire to build on pride at Canada's major contribution to the allied war effort—distinct from that of Britain—but there was also a desire by Ottawa to carve out an independent place for Canada in the postwar United Nations and in the family of nations. An independent Canadian voice would be well served by a separate Canadian citizenship. On the domestic level it was hoped that Canadian citizenship would become a focal point for a national unity that all—Canadian born and immigrant, French and English speaking—could share.

The January 1, 1947 adoption of Canadian citizenship turned out to be far more than simple postwar patriotic puffery or flag-waving sentimentalism. By rejecting the notion of layered citizenship, a citizenship of degrees, Canada pronounced itself inclusive. Henceforth, individual Canadian citizens were promised that, under law, all would be regarded as the same, irrespective of whether they were Canadian or foreign born, regardless of heritage, religion, national origin, or any proprietary claim that a group might make to being more Canadian than another. If it would take time for reality to match rhetoric, and with postwar immigration just building steam, the introduction of an inclusive Canadian citizenship paved the way for all subsequent human rights initiatives so important to immigrants to Canada.

Human Rights Legislation

A Canadian human rights revolution was underway. The inauguration of a distinct and separate Canadian citizenship was but the first step in a major expansion of human rights legislation in Canada. If anything, the implementation of Canadian citizenship raised expectations about even more openness in civic society, about equality of access to public institutions never before allowed for all Canadians and gave teeth to the demand for

legislated equality before the law. This human rights agenda was soon being pressed by a coalition of organised labour, liberal churches, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and older Canadian ethnic communities who had embraced the Canadian war effort, sent their children off to fight, and, in the aftermath of war, refused to ever again accept second-class status for themselves or their children. Alive with expectations raised by Canadian citizenship, the coalition was also swept along by other contributing forces: revulsion at the racial excesses of Nazism; a popularisation of the new social sciences and consequent academic-led assault on social Darwinist and eugenic thinking; a growing sense of dysfunctionality with the former prevailing Anglocentric, urban-Canadian worldview, now rendered an anachronism by the erosion of colonialism and the British imperial dream—a spillover from the nascent Black civil rights struggle in the United States and, of major importance, a recognition that it was necessary for civic society to clear away encumbrances to the smooth social, economic, and political integration of immigrants then moving into cities like Toronto.

Canadian human rights activists pushed for tough legal protections against racial, religious, or ethnic discrimination. If few believed social attitudes could change overnight, all worked to ensure that the law would. And the law did. In the first decade after the war, Canadian provinces followed Saskatchewan's lead and enacted fair employment and accommodation legislation barring discrimination on account of race, religion, or country of origin. In the international forum, Canada's signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights added symbolic urgency to the new Canadian human rights agenda. Canadian courts were soon responding to the more progressive spirit of the day by using their powers to expand society's human rights thrust.

This rolling embrace of a singular citizenship and the legal guarantees of human rights for all Canadians mirrored a new spirit in urban-Canadian thinking. It even remade language. Immigrants were no longer foreigners. They were "New Canadians." And, for that matter, they were no longer in cities such as Toronto by sufferance. They were there by right and, now, by right of law. It was also only a matter of time before the domestic human rights upheaval impacted Canadian immigration legislation and administration.

In Toronto, where immigrants were most thick on the ground, the revitalisation of the notion of citizenship and human rights reinforced the realisation that yesterday's immigrants and their children were becoming be tomorrow's tax payers and voting public. Urban politicians, previously leery of "foreigners," now reached out to New Canadians. Immigrant communities were soon pressing their concerns at City Hall. Boards of education, long home to assimilationist if not nativist assumptions about the place of immigrants and their children in Canadian society, were being forced to reinvent themselves on an open and inclusive model. Expression of racism in the public domain shifted from being normative to antisocial behaviour to a legally punishable violation of community-wide standards. Toronto's urban polity had changed.

Hungarian Refugees

And immigration showed no sign of slowing. While Southern Europeans continued to dominate the European immigrant stream entering Canada throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, the cold war spun off a sudden immigration flow from Central Europe with the 1956 Hungarian refugee crisis. When the Soviets crushed the Hungarian uprising, they unleashed a flood of refugees westward into Austria. This first major European refugee crisis of the cold war came at a fortuitous moment for Canada. Canada's economy was still strong and the plight of exiled Hungarian "freedom fighters" moved Canadians. But at first Ottawa was cautious. Canadian security personnel warned that the Soviets might salt this refugee movement with secret agents seeking entry into unsuspecting western countries. The government, for its part, seemed less concerned with Communists than with costs. Unlike the earlier Displaced Persons movement in which labour-intensive industry, ethnic communities, and families shouldered much of the financial burden, any Hungarian resettlement program promised to be largely Ottawa's responsibility.

As the government dithered, public sympathy and media pressure grew. The public demanded that Canada take a lead in welcoming victims of Soviet aggression, while the press of all political stripes savaged the government for its inaction. Finally, withering under pressure, the cabinet cut a path through immigration red tape. Normal immigration procedures, including pre-embarkation medical and security checks, were sidestepped or postponed until after arrival in Canada. The Minister of Immigration hurried to Vienna. Hard on his heels came immigration teams assigned to scoop up the best of the well-educated and highly motivated Hungarian refugees before other countries got them.

The Hungarian refugee resettlement program ran remarkably well in spite of its lurching start and an unpreparedness on the part of education and social service officials to deal with the influx. In Toronto, after some initial confusion, government officials at all levels joined forces with nongovernmental organisations to help settle the new arrivals. And in the end, Canada did well by doing good. The refugee resettlement program brought almost 37,000 Hungarians to Canada, Toronto soon becoming home the largest Hungarian community in the country. Many of these refugees were established professionals who, once they received orientation and English-language training, gradually found employment in retail, commercial, or white-collar sectors. But, successful as this refugee resettlement exercise was, it was hardly a routine immigration program. Immigration officials regarded it as a one-time initiative, a singular exception to the procedural guidelines guarded by immigration officials. Time would prove them wrong.

The *White Paper*

During the early 1960s, after almost two decades of virtually uninterrupted growth, Canada's economy began to weaken. With insistent "I-told-you-so" admonitions from many economists and government planners that Canada now faced a major industrial burnout, demand for new immigrant labour nosedived. Toronto's economy flagged as did the rest of the national economy, and federal immigrant recruitment was curtailed. Immigration numbers soon fell by half. Even as the number of immigrant arrivals dropped off, some officials, convinced that the immigrant absorptive capacity of the

Canadian economy had been reached, if not exceeded, called for a permanent cap on immigration. Responding to the chorus of nay sayers, Ottawa commissioned a review of Canadian immigration with an eye toward a major redirection in immigration priorities.

A *White Paper on Immigration* was released in 1966. The policy document attempted to walk a tightrope between still-vocal proimmigration lobbyists and a growing body of immigration opponents. For immigration advocates the *White Paper* was infused with the liberal rhetoric of the day and called for a complete overhaul of Canadian immigration law, regulations, and procedures, including a final purge of every last hint of racial or ethnic discrimination. While this was hailed as a long-overdue reform, some immigration advocates viewed other *White Paper* policy recommendations with alarm. Perhaps reflecting the larger 1960s public debate on optimum population size, the *White Paper* questioned the long-term wisdom of taking in so many job-hungry immigrants in the prime of their fertility cycle. Although far from the Malthusian warnings of an earlier day and certainly not endorsing then-fashionable zero population growth, the *White Paper*'s recommendations offered a blueprint for capping immigration numbers. This stirred up a hornet's nest. Particularly controversial was the *White Paper*'s plan for tightening regulations on family reunification, which accounted for almost half of all immigration entries into Canada, in favour of more skilled, independent immigrants. The *White Paper* recommended that landed immigrants, those not yet citizens, be restricted to sponsoring only immediate dependants, the closest of family, while Canadian citizens only be allowed to sponsor those relatives who satisfied the educational and occupational qualifications in place for the admission of independent immigrants. If implemented, these moves would sharply restrict the possibility of sponsoring family, especially by former Southern European immigrants.

Perhaps still unaware of the depth of controversy brewing over the family reunification issue, cabinet referred the *White Paper* to the Parliamentary Committee on Immigration for public input and discussion. The Committee soon got an earful. Ethnic leaders, particularly in Toronto, now home to large and increasingly resourceful postwar immigrant and ethnic communities, mobilised against any narrowing of family sponsorship. They warned politicians that enraged ethnic voters would neither forgive nor forget any political party that slammed the door on their kith and kin. Toronto church and labour groups also joined those demanding a broadening—not a narrowing—of family reunification provisions of immigration regulations. Members of parliament from Toronto, especially those from immigrant-heavy ridings, who feared that campaign contributions and ethnic votes would go elsewhere, waded in on the side of family sponsorship.

Ducking the political buckshot, the federal government set aside the proposed changes, at least as recommended in the *White Paper*. Instead, Ottawa tinkered with the regulations. The list of those family members entitled to enter Canada as first-degree relatives was narrowed. But, at the same time, a new class of immigrant, a nominated class, was announced. Nominated immigrants, primarily nondependent family of those in Canada, who seemed likely to integrate well, were given priority in immigration processing. Their Canadian sponsor or nominator was also shorn of some of the legal and fiscal liability

assumed in the case of sponsorship of immediate family. As a result, family migration was not curtailed. It was restructured and, to some degree, expanded. For years to come the largest single subset of immigrants arriving in Toronto would continue to be family- or other-sponsored categories.

There was another and conceivably more significant impact of the sponsorship battle. By forcing the government to retreat, a newly empowered urban immigrant and ethnic constituency, largely based in Toronto, served notice of its coming of age in Canadian political life. But was this particular political victory an aberration, a one-time, single-issue success by a coalition of disparate ethnic groups? In the wake of the *White Paper* debate, political commentators began discussing a fundamental and far-reaching shift in urban politics. In Toronto yesterday's immigrants were emerging as political, social, and economic powerbrokers in their own right—a non-English and non-French origin "third force."

From Ethnic To Racial Pluralism

Getting beyond issues of family reunification, several other *White Paper* recommendations were implemented, including the final expunging of racial and ethnic barriers to Canadian entry. A few years earlier, in 1962, and in line with human rights initiatives at the provincial and federal levels, cabinet approved lifting racial and ethnic restrictions in the processing of independent applicants. However, the government stopped short of universalising the policy change. To assuage pubic concern, especially in British Columbia, about any sudden influx of dependent Chinese or other Asians, racial restrictions remained in place for Asian family reunification cases.

Even if the direction of public policy seemed clear, de facto racial and ethnic discrimination lingered for a time under an administrative guise. The resources of the immigration bureaucracy were almost exclusively concentrated in areas of traditional immigrant preference: the United Kingdom, the United States, and Western Europe. By contrast, few on-site immigration services were available, and little immigration promotion money was spent in the developing world. In 1960, for example, Canada operated 27 immigration offices outside of North America. Twenty-four were in Europe and three in Asia (one of which was in Israel). There was not one in all of Black Africa, the Caribbean, or South America. But change would not be denied. Acting on one of the key *White Paper* recommendations, in 1967, any and all vestiges of racial and ethnic discrimination were finally and officially eradicated from Canadian immigration regulations and procedures, including all sponsored and nominated immigration. The privilege of applying to bring family was extended to all Canadian citizens and landed immigrants alike, including family from the developing world.

Canada's network of immigration offices abroad was gradually expanded. In 1963, a Canadian immigration office was opened in Egypt; in 1967, in Japan; in 1968, in Lebanon, the Philippians, the West Indies, and Pakistan. As part of the package in which Ottawa restructured family reunification regulations and ended racial and ethnic preferences, Ottawa also overhauled the procedures by which independent immigration

applicants were admitted into Canada. Again, without enacting new legislation, the government both reined in the discretionary powers of immigration officials to reject an applicant and brought immigration admissions more into line with domestic economic fluctuations. A point system, as it came to be known, was instituted to calibrate the desirability of each independent applicant. Simply stated, points were granted each applicant for specific skills, background, or Canadian connections. In addition to education and employment experience, points were assigned for character, market demand for skills, English- and French-language proficiency, age, proposed Canadian destination, and prearranged employment. Should Canadian economic conditions or skill demands change, the point system could be quickly adjusted to reflect these new priorities. While the interviewing immigration officer still influenced approvals, the approved system was now more governed by the iron laws of mathematics rather than the vagaries of subjective assessment. Some argued that a point system that rewarded education, professional status, and English- or French-language skills disadvantaged most potential applicants from the developing world; but few would charge that the kind of bedrock racism so inherent in the previous selection system was still operative.

Refugees

By affirming universality in its immigration policy, Canada took a big step toward further routinising immigration procedures. But in another area, the issue of refugee policy, there were still no standard procedures. If there was a policy at all it seemed one of noncommitment. As had been the case with Displaced Persons and Hungarian refugees, Canada's response to refugees, those with a well-founded fear of persecution, remained largely ad hoc. Even with Canada's high-profile role at the United Nations, and after its 1969 signing of the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, for most of the next decade, Canada made no legislative commitment to guarantee sanctuary for those seeking asylum. Indeed, the Displaced Persons and Hungarian episodes, which brought so many immigrants into Toronto, were understood by government as exceptional cases, outside normal Canadian immigration activity.

Another such exception came in 1968. The end of the Prague Spring unleashed a flood of Czechoslovakian refugees westward in what seemed a repeat of the Hungarian exodus a decade earlier. But this time there was no Canadian stalling. Moved by a mixture of humanitarianism, cold-war posturing, and the opportunity to enhance Canada's human capital, Ottawa moved quickly to gather up its share of the new homeless. With the Canadian economy on the mend and a pool of well-educated and available immigrants to be picked over, Canadian immigration teams swung into action. Not even the usually cautious Canadian security service raised strong objections to the Czech resettlement scheme. In short order, immigration authorities set aside regular immigration procedures to bring approximately twelve thousand Czech refugees into Canada. Again, Toronto became the premier destination of disproportionate numbers of these new arrivals.

The fortuitous mixture of altruism and economic self-interest, which drove the Canadian resettlement effort in the case of Czech refugees, did have limits and, like the refugee problem itself, these limits also appear to be grounded in politics. Refugee advocates

repeatedly attacked the government for favouring refugees from Communist or other high-profile and unpopular regimes over victims of equally repressive, right-wing persecution. The charge was not without merit. For example, there was a glaring discrepancy between in the government's response to Ugandan Asian refugees expelled by Idi Amin in 1972 and Chilean refugees from the 1973 right-wing coup d'閨 at against Salvador Allende's democratically elected, left-wing government. In the case of the approximately fifty thousand Asians with British passports expelled from Uganda, the British, fearing a domestic backlash against the sudden influx of so many Asians, appealed to Canada and other countries for assistance. Canada responded in the affirmative. Just as it was folding down its Czech resettlement program, and as if to underscore the nonracial thrust of revamped Canadian immigration practise, authorities quickly admitted about 5,600 Ugandan Asians who, it was judged, could do well in Canada.

The Ugandan program stands in sharp contrast to the Chilean experience a year later. The Canadian government may have come to overlook race but not ideology. When it came to Chileans, immigration and security personnel saw red. After the fall of Allende's socialist government in an American-supported coup, Canada, protective of major Canadian investment in Chile, was among the first to recognise the new Pinochet regime. The Pinochet government may have been hospitable to Canadian investment but was less so to those it had recently ousted from power. Arrests, "disappearances," and political repression were the order of the day. Canadian officials regarded this reign of political terror as a regrettable, but internal, problem of postcoup Chilean political adjustment, and it would have remained so were it not for a small group of terrified Chileans who refused to leave the Canadian Embassy in Santiago and begged for political asylum in Canada. Ironically, while Chilean authorities respected the right to sanctuary in the embassy, Canada did not. As External Affairs officials and embassy staff scrambled to dislodge the unwelcome guests, in Canada, a vocal lobby group including high-profile academics and labour leaders coalesced under the umbrella of the Canadian Council of Churches to pressure Ottawa into accepting significant numbers of Chileans facing torture or imprisonment for their political views.

Contrast with Ugandan Asian refugees or with the earlier Czech and Hungarian resettlement programs is unavoidable. The Chileans did not fare nearly so well. Perhaps uneasy about accepting any large group of potentially left-leaning immigrants or concerned about a negative American or Chilean government reaction, Canada proceeded with deliberate caution—too much caution in the eyes of some. While, by special arrangement with Chilean authorities, many of those camped in the embassy were allowed to leave for Canada, Canadian immigration authorities did not rush to process other applications. Just the opposite. There was a reluctance to waive immigration regulations and, in spite of continuing pressure from prorefugee advocates, immigration officials were slow setting up shop in Chile. Two years after the fall of Allende and, in the face of continuing international protests at the wholesale abuse of civil liberties or worse by the Pinochet regime, less than 2,000 Chileans were processed for entry into Canada, the lion's share coming to Toronto. Many of those who finally gained permission to come to Canada were educated, white-collar professionals, who, under

other circumstances, might well have been granted entry into Canada as independent immigrants. This is not to argue that Chilean refugees were any more or less deserving of admission to Canada on humanitarian grounds than Ugandan Asians. But it does underscore that there was more to Canadian refugee policy than humanitarian concern. If humanitarian concern might sometimes take second place to economic self-interest, economic self-interest could also take second place to political considerations.

Multiculturalism

By the early 1970s, three separate but interrelated phenomena combined to reshape the immigrant experience in Canada and in Toronto in particular—multiculturalism as federal policy, a major shift in immigration demographics, and a downturn in the economy. With immigration continuing to expand the mosaic of peoples who constituted urban Canada, in 1971, the federal government announced its support for a policy of multiculturalism. The policy symbolically recognised the positive and enduring impact of immigration on Canadian society and set forward a pluralist model for nation building. While observers at the time and since have debated the complex of political pressures that nudged the Liberal government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau toward adopting a multiculturalism policy, there is no doubt but that the policy, as articulated by government, suggested a radical reconstruction of Canadian cultural definitions. It eschewed formal recognition of any overriding or primary national cultural tradition. In so doing the multicultural policy statement affirmed English and French as the two official national languages but rejected biculturalism—a notion of Canada as a product of the nation-building efforts of two charter groups, the English (British) and French, in which these two groups retain a proprietary right to determine the boundaries of Canadian identity and a custodial prerogative to preserve the primacy of their respective cultural heritages. Instead, multiculturalism espoused respect for diversity and acceptance of pluralism as the true and only basis of an inclusive Canadian identity.

In another context it might be interesting to speculate as to whether multiculturalism was good policy, or, for that matter, how and whether it made any appreciable difference in the lives of individual Canadians. But, for this discussion, what is most important is that the Canadian government, with wide provincial support in English-speaking Canada, was conceding that no overriding national cultural consensus had taken root through more than one hundred years of national development. As the policy statement asserted, "there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly." The government declared that the binding force in the Canadian social compact would henceforth be articulated as a function of mutual respect rooted in cultural diversity, the same cultural diversity that was now the reality of the urban Canadian street. And nowhere was that more apparent than in the Greater Toronto Area.

While multiculturalism has recently been under attack as a detriment to the development of a singular and bonding Canadian identity and a diversion from more pressing issues—ignoring issues of racial and economic disparity in favour of funding folk dancing in church basements—at the time multiculturalism struck a positive chord, particularly in

urban, English-speaking Canada. Whatever else multiculturalism did or did not do, it symbolically rounded the circle begun with the implementation of a separate and distinct Canadian citizenship. If multiculturalism was not the Magna Carta for group rights that some ethnic activists had hoped for and their detractors had feared, it was a clear statement to Canadians of all backgrounds that individual or group cultural affinity exercised in accord with Canadian law was neither antithetical to the common good nor should it be allowed to encumber citizen participation in the civic society. Stripped of its policy rhetoric and political puffery, for many Canadians in the early 1970s, multiculturalism simply translated as "live and let live."

In retrospect it is easy, maybe even fashionable, to be cynical about official multiculturalism, and it is certainly appropriate to chastise politicians for attempting, without much success, to spin multiculturalism into a vote-buying device. It is also true that, for some, multicultural rhetoric rang hollow in the face of ongoing economic disparities or human rights abuses. And it is all too easy to find gaps in the net of Canadian human rights protections, especially as they relate to racial discrimination affecting immigrants and refugees. And few would claim that the lot of immigrants and refugees in urban Canada is anything close to problem free. Not by a long shot. But it is also true that multiculturalism as government policy made a difference. Canadian urban experience is now an immigrant and ethnic experience and, equally important, accepted as such in spite of the fact that less than a generation ago, the very idea of urban-bound immigration—let alone immigration of non-Europeans—would have been rejected outright. Any government in the past that would have advocated large-scale, urban-bound immigration would have been driven from office by the wrath of voters. That Canadians, generally, and Torontonians, in particular, have increasingly come to accept as a given that their society is one in which pluralism, for all its challenges, is a reality and equality an important social goal is significant. For all its flaws, multiculturalism has helped frame that view.

The *Green Paper*

Multiculturalism was not the only public policy initiative to impact public attitude toward pluralism in the 1970s. There was a shift in immigration policy, itself. From the early 1950s to the late 1970s, immigration authorities laboured under the 1952 Immigration Act. Of course, the 1952 legislation had been amended a number of times and the immigration regulations that shaped day-to-day immigration operations were forever being reviewed. But the Canada of the 1970s was a much different place than that of the early 1950s. The social and economic priorities that shaped the 1952 legislation were no more. Certainly the 1952 law, designed to attract a large pool of unskilled agricultural workers for extractive industries, seemed out of place in one of the most urban and technologically advanced western states. Indeed, revisions to the old legislation, including abandoning racial and ethnic discrimination and adopting a point system, represented efforts to bridge the gulf-yawning gap between 1952, when the legislation was enacted, and the social and economic reality of the 1970s. But there was a difference between papering over the flaws in the 1952 legislation and designing a new act. To successfully meet the demands imposed by changing domestic and international world

markets, government again hoped to finesse immigration away from domination by family reunification and toward a policy that encouraged the immigration of those with immediately employable skills and capital-productive potential. Along with new immigration priorities, new thinking was required. A change in immigration law was overdue.

Prior to tabling new legislation, in September, 1973, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration announced that a federal commission would undertake yet another major review of Canadian immigration policy, which would, in turn, be subject to public debate. But if the review was timely, the public debate misfired. After almost 18 months of study and hearings, collecting expert testimony, and weighing suggestions for reform of immigration law and procedures, in late 1974, the Commission issued its four-volume *Report of the Canadian Immigration and Population Study*. Described more as a discussion paper than a blueprint for the future, the *Green Paper on Immigration*, as the report was commonly known, posited a number of recommendations that the Commission hoped would engage wide and thoughtful public debate.

There was wide public debate but not all of it proved thoughtful. Some dismissed the *Green Paper* recommendations as little more than a retread of existing practise. To the surprise of no one, the *Green Paper* affirmed the need for a hand-in-glove relationship between immigration and labour supply. But, in opposition to the earlier *White Paper*, the 1974 document called for very tightly controlled population growth through increased immigration. Acknowledging that without sustained population growth, particularly by those in their wealth-generating years, the *Green Paper* warned that the declining Canadian fertility rate and low mortality rate could hasten a time when the number of those generating wealth would be outstripped by those requiring support. The commission posited that "the number of immigrants Canada admits may progressively become, not only the main determinant of eventual population size, but also the chief factor responsible for the pace at which growth occurs."

On the other hand, the *Green Paper* advised that the dual problems of runaway urbanisation and slippage in the percentage of francophones in the population were also a direct result of immigration. Thus, the *Green Paper* recommended that Canada should both raise the skills bar for immigrants and cut back on the admission of family-class immigrants while encouraging immigrants to settle in areas of designated need rather than allowing immigrants to amass in Canadian cities, particularly the Greater Toronto Area.

Unfortunately for the commission, 1974 could not have been a worse time for thoughtful debate of the *Green Paper* recommendations. Just as the a parliamentary committee geared up to hold hearings on the recommendations, the Canadian economy went into a tailspin triggered by the 1973 Mideast oil embargo. With economists talking about stagflation in the face of a steep rise in unemployment and a sharp jump in interest rates, discussion of immigration among ethnic, business, and labour leaders in the media and the academy were almost drowned out by the clamour of finger pointing over Canada's faltering economy and fear mongering that immigrants were poaching jobs from "real"

Canadians. Few seemed prepared to entertain the argument that immigration was important to national population renewal or that immigration created jobs. So long as there were so many unemployed in Canada unable to find jobs, many, including former immigrants threatened with job loss, saw little good in allowing job-hungry immigrants into Canada.

But was this spike in anti-immigration sentiment just a reflection of a poor economy? Some immigration advocates felt that the talk about jobs and Canada's economic carrying capacity was little more than thinly veiled racism. Charging that any upward adjustment of the immigration skills bar, restriction on sponsorship or family reunification, or demand that immigrants be streamed into designated areas was a transparently crude attempt to reinstitute a country preference and ethnic or racial selectivity, many ethnic leaders cried foul. If some ethnic leaders were overstating the case, they were not entirely wrong. Home-grown racists, lurking beyond the margins of respectable discourse, needed no prodding to denounce growing immigration of nonwhites. If their racist ranting found few receptive ears, it was no secret that racial and ethnic composition of immigration was changing. Following the removal of racial selection criteria and the opening of immigration offices in areas of nontraditional Canadian immigration, the admission of persons of colour, visible minorities, most from the developing world, increased. In 1967, shortly after Canadian immigration operations were upgraded in Asia and the Caribbean, less than 15 percent of immigrants into Canada were of African or Asian descent. In the early 1970s, however, economic pressures in both the Caribbean and South Asia caused some to grab at the chance to relocate abroad. By 1975, even as the *Green Paper* debate raged, members of visible minorities constituted the majority of immigrants entering Canada each year. Ethnic pluralism, which was already the hallmark of urban centres like Toronto, was gradually being paralleled by racial pluralism.

New Legislation

In 1976, the clamour over the *Green Paper* gradually subsided, but with the economy still sluggish, the government was prepared to wait no longer. It pressed ahead with its own immigration agenda, including new legislation. The preamble to the Immigration Bill submitted to Parliament in 1976 promised a new vision of immigration. With Canada going through economic rough times, the Bill reaffirmed the close tie between immigration and Canada's economic needs. But the Bill's preamble also reflected heightened concern for the welfare of individual immigrants and, for example, pledged the government's continuing commitment to family reunification. For some, though, the government's word sounded tinny. Despite the progressive tone, when it came to delivering on family reunification, generosity of heart seemed to have worn thin. In practise, to be eligible for reunification with kin in Canada, aside from a spouse or dependent child under ten, the new legislation gave priority admission to family members who satisfied government personnel that their education, employment record, or skills were an immediate asset to Canada. This was hardly an open door.

The Bill also broke new ground in other areas. For the first time immigration authorities began working with a form of quota system. In consultation with the provinces, Ottawa

established a yearly target for the number of immigrants of various categories it hoped to admit the following year. The Canadian immigration target, more a guideline allowing provinces and urban municipalities to plan for immigrant arrivals than a fixed commitment, could be shifted up or down depending on prevailing conditions at home and abroad. It was hoped that by agreeing on a target figure, including that for refugees and family sponsorships, the resources necessary for the smooth integration of immigrants would be in place as they arrived. As a general rule, in recent years the immigration target has been set at about 1 percent of the total Canadian population each year or, by the late 1990s, about 300,000 immigrants per year. On a per capita basis, the 1 percent target is almost three times the immigration rate of the United States.

Unfortunately, the federal-provincial consultation process was not always smooth. The issue was not so much numbers of immigrants but numbers of dollars. Who was going to put up the money to pay for immigrant-related services? For the Greater Toronto Area, magnet to almost half of all immigrants entering Canada, the often fractious debates between federal and provincial officials over who would cover what costs and for how long was critical. After all it is the city and its agencies, together with the province that deliver the essential grass-roots services immigrants need, and it is the municipal property tax base that is often stretched to provide them. Yet Toronto was not officially part of these consultations. No doubt federal and provincial officials who discussed immigration options were well briefed on the special needs of the Toronto immigration catchment area. But being briefed and prioritizing Toronto's needs in immigration planning were not one and the same. Consequently, Toronto politicians, public servants, social agency officials, and ethnic leaders complained of shortfalls in resources necessary to adequately serve the needs of new arrivals. Stretched to the limit, Toronto service providers seemed always to be waiting for a cheque from either the federal or provincial levels, which, when it came, was seldom enough.

Business-Class Immigrants

The new immigration act also eased entry for a new class of immigrant, business-class immigrants. Business-class immigrants are divided into several categories—including entrepreneur and investor classes. As part of their admissions process, would-be, entrepreneur-class immigrants were required to submit a business plan to Canadian authorities that offered promise of employing a number of Canadians, and investor-class immigrants had to show a net worth of $500,000 and be ready to invest half of that in a job-creating project. While there were those who attacked the business-immigrant scheme as little more than "Canadian citizenship for sale," it is important to remember that government never confused immigration with charity. Whatever the individual agenda of the immigrant, government immigration has always been regarded as a vehicle serving national economic development. From this perspective, how does juggling the immigration point system to favour those who will best serve Canadian economic and business expansion meaningfully differ from the previous ingathering of immigrants who promised to prime the national economic pump with raw muscle?

In the years after the business category was initiated, entrepreneurial immigration jumped by 600 percent and Canada became a favourite destination for capital in flight. Among those business-class immigrants who came to Canada before 1997 were many from Hong Kong. With the then-impending Chinese takeover of the British colony, many Hong Kong businesspeople, looking for a safe harbour for family and money, welcomed opportunities offered for capital investment in Canada, particularly Vancouver and Toronto. Swelling the previously small Toronto Chinese community and including immigrants from mainland China, Taiwan, and the Chinese diaspora, the Chinese now constitute the largest ethnic community in the Greater Toronto Area, almost half a million strong.

For independent immigrants, those not blessed with a pool of available capital to invest or a sponsoring Canadian family, getting into Canada might prove more difficult. Under immigration regulations as applied during the early 1980s, those with more modest resources and no family sponsor could find it difficult to enter Canada unless they had a job waiting for them. This was not easy to arrange. Before offering employment to a would-be immigrant, a prospective employer had to convince immigration officials that no satisfactory Canadian candidate was available or willing to take the job.

Refugee Policy

In one area the new Immigration Act did offer an international humanitarian commitment from Canada. That was the issue of refugees. Of course, Canada had previously accepted refugees—Displaced Persons, Hungarians, Czechoslovakians, Ugandan Asians, Chileans—but they had always been regarded as special cases admitted by special permission, exceptions to the normal and administrative routine of Canadian immigration procedure. Under the new immigration legislation, for the first time, Canada agreed that those who were "displaced or persecuted," who, as defined by the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees as having "a well-founded fear of persecution," were declared a class eligible for admission to Canada even though as individuals or as a group they might not meet Canada's usual selection standards.

But what did this mean in reality? With a world increasingly awash in refugees, and the end of one refugee crisis all too often the beginning of the next, officials in Ottawa struggled to institute a policy that would replace the ad hoc response to refugees that characterised the previous decades. In practise, as part of its annual immigration consultation with the provinces, the government set aside a specified number of refugee admissions as part of the total number of immigrants whom Canada expected to admit during the coming year. The cost of refugee integration would be covered by the government but with provision for private groups to sponsor refugees. It was expected that refugees, in the main, would be selected and processed abroad from among those who had already been judged by international refugee officials to fit within the Convention definition. However, Canada reserved for itself the prerogative of expanding the definition or designating specific groups as special cases eligible for Canadian admission as refugees, even though they might not technically fit the Convention definition. In addition, while Canada did not envision itself as a first haven for refugees—

the first country a refugee might reach after leaving his or her home country—Canada allowed for the possibility of individuals or groups arriving in Canada to make one inland claim to refugee status. This internal route demanded Canada establish domestic procedures for determining the legitimacy of individual refugee claims.

The new Immigration Act's refugee provisions, which came into effect in 1978, were quickly put to the test during the Vietnamese "boat people" crisis. Stirred by press and television reports of desperate refugees fleeing Vietnam in tiny boats, sometimes hardly more than a raft, the strength of prorefugee sympathy in Canada took Ottawa by surprise. While some in government and among the larger civic society may have harboured private doubts about the wisdom of Canada accepting a large body of "boat people," influential public and media demand for action grew. Moved by compassion, many across Canada applied to sponsor the arrival and settlement of Vietnamese refugees under the refugee sponsorship provisions of the new legislation. Ottawa responded to these sponsorship groups with both humanity and dispatch. The government promised to match private sponsorships refugee for refugee. By the end of 1980, the government agreed to the admission of more than sixty thousand Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotians, and ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia in a blend of government and private sponsorship programs unique in Canadian history. By the time this refugee crisis subsided, Canada was distinguished by having the highest per capita "boat people" resettlement of any country. Toronto soon became home to the largest number of Southeast Asian refugee arrivals, adding yet another layer to the city's remarkable ethnic and racial mix.

Since the "boat people" episode, refugee admissions have continued to be an important, if often controversial, part of Canada's immigration program. In 1980, at the height of the "boat people" crisis, slightly more than 28 percent of all immigrants admitted to Canada were refugees. During the subsequent ten years, the percentage hovered between 14 and 20 percent. But the core of the controversy regarding refugees had little to do with the number of refugees admitted to Canada. That number moved up or down on a year-by-year basis depending on federal negotiations with the provinces and the state of international refugee supply. The problem for government, and the source of much heated public and media debate, was the issue of inland applicants, those who, instead of being selected and processed abroad by Canadian authorities and, if acceptable, granted Canadian admission, entered Canada one way or another and claimed refugee status once in the country. Canada did not pick them. They picked Canada. And they arrived Canada in unexpected numbers. While Canadian immigration regulations made provision for inland refugee claims, it was not long before the number of those claims clogged the domestic Canadian refugee determination process. It sometimes took months or even a year or more before a claim was heard and a decision rendered. And until each claimant was individually assessed and either granted refugee status or not, the legal status of these people remained in limbo.

If the refugee backlog was a national problem, it was most problematic in Toronto. In Toronto, where so many refugee claimants settled as they awaited their hearings, questions as to the municipality's responsibilities to the refugees remained to be answered. Were they entitled to social assistance or municipal housing? If not, who

would pay their living expenses until their status was decided? What about educating refugee children? Were children of refugee claimants entitled to be in public school before refugee status was decided? Again, who would pay the costs—the federal government, the province, the municipal ratepayer, individual refugee claimants? Would claimants be allowed to work? And what would become of those eventually judged not to be refugees? Would they be sent home? Easier said than done. By making a refugee claim in Canada, a claimant was asserting that he or she had been persecuted at home. True or not, after making such a claim how would claimants denied refugee status in Canada be received if deported back to their home country?

Beyond political and economic issues there was a sense among some Canadians that Canada was being hoodwinked. As the line of inland asylum seekers grew, fears of system overload were complicated by reports of unscrupulous refugee consultants and travel agents abetting fraudulent refugee claimants who had no "well-founded fear of persecution." The press was rife with discussion of claimants taking advantage of lax Canadian refugee procedures to jump the immigration queue or otherwise bypass regular immigration procedures. It was not long before government critics, perhaps quietly supported by immigration officials who felt shackled by current procedures, called for tightened refugee regulations. For some the issue of refugees might also have been clouded by whispered fears over the growing presence of visible minorities in Canadian cities. In 1985, non-European immigration topped 60 percent. And while most Canadians continued to reject racism, growing awareness of the changing ethnographic face of Canada, especially urban Canada, cannot be denied.

The courts answered one question in 1985. In *Singh v. Minister of Employment and Immigration*, the Supreme Court ruled that once in Canada, refugee claimants, like all others in Canada, are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Specifically, the court held that any government attempt to bypass its own regulations for refugee claimant hearings violated the Charter. If the government wanted to speed up the determination process it had to change the regulations while keeping within the framework of the Charter. Better still, from the government's point of view, it would welcome mechanisms to stem the flow of refugee claimants before they could get to Canada and receive protection by the Charter.

Even as the government considered options for tightening Canadian inland refugee procedures, the issue heated up again. Two ships illegally stranded their respective refugee cargoes on Canadian shores in the dead of night—155 Tamils in Newfoundland in 1986 and 174 Sikhs in Nova Scotia in 1987. Refugee claims were not unknown in Newfoundland. Gander Airport, a regular refuelling stop for flights between Eastern European and Cuba, was often witness to passengers requesting asylum in Canada. Nevertheless, the arrival of the Tamils was a surprise and the Canadian public and media responded as much with curiosity as with concern. The landing of the Sikhs a year later was another thing again. Public attention became riveted on the refugee issue as the government hinted that boatloads of additional refugees might be on their way to Canada. Despite the protest of prorefugee advocates, who warned against overreacting, Parliament was recalled and passed legislation threatening, among other things, sanctions against

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anyone who aided those illegally entering Canada for the purpose of making a refugee claim. The legislation also tightened regulations by, for example, denying refugee status to individuals who had passed though another country, such as the United States, where a refugee claim might have been made. This move alone could sharply curtail the number of Latin American claimants who might be eligible for Canadian consideration.

The proposed changes in refugee regulations produced a firestorm of debate both in and out of Parliament. Some charged that the government's hidden agenda was again not so much control of refugee admissions as an attempt to curtail non-white arrivals in Canada. Others argued that the government legislation contained provisions that again flew in the face of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Nevertheless, the changes were approved.

This was not the end of Canada's effort to control the flow of inland refugee claimants. In 1992, in the midst of the sharpest economic slump since the 1930s, the government introduced yet another package of major revisions to the Immigration Act that it hoped might further choke off the flow of refugees entering Canada. Prorefugee lobbyists forced government to withdraw several more draconian provisions of its proposed immigration legislation, but the essential features of the package passed through Parliament in December, 1992. Pending legal challenges that might be raised against the legislation, it became still more difficult for refugee claimants to reach Canada and make inland refugee claims.

In spite of legislative and regulatory changes, refugees continued to arrive, and Canadian immigration and refugee policy continued to be a political hot potato. In the federal election of 1993, the Reform Party, using tactics that some in the media charged bordered on racist, turned immigrant and refugee policy into an election issue. While it is hard to know how much playing on concerns of out-of-control immigration helped the Reform Party, Reform came from almost nowhere to be only one seat short of forming the official opposition. A measure of how immigration and refugee issues registered in Toronto, where pluralism is a fact of life, the Reform Party came out of the election sum zero in the city and its suburbs. But if the Reform Party was frozen out of Toronto, its willingness to incite public anxiety over immigration as a political tool and its suddenly powerful voice in Ottawa could not help but give pause to those in Toronto who look to Ottawa for leadership and financial assistance in addressing municipal immigration and intergroup issues.

In 1999, with Reform now the official opposition and Canada's refugee policy still a flashpoint of controversy, yet another refugee crisis exploded. Late in the summer of 1999 almost four hundred illegal Chinese migrants were apprehended while smuggling themselves into Canada aboard three small and dangerously overcrowded vessels. The vessels' crews were arrested and charged with various violations of the Canadian criminal code. The migrants faced an equally uncertain future. Once in Canadian custody, most of the migrants claimed to be refugees fleeing persecution in China. In accord with established Canadian immigration procedures, as soon as an individual made a refugee claim on Canadian soil, a review process was set in motion designed to determine the

legitimacy of the claim. While there was talk of fast-tracking the refugee determination process for these migrants, the process promised to be difficult and lengthy. It also promised to be controversial. But in the end, claimants who would eventually satisfy officials that they indeed had a well-founded fear of persecution in China would be granted refugee status and allowed to legally stay in Canada. Those whose claims were rejected would be vulnerable to deportation back to China.

With the review process under way, some of the Chinese migrants were released from custody pending their hearings before a refugee review panel and warned not to work without a special permit. Unable to work legally and without financial resources, most of the refugee claimants required public support until their claims should be decided. A number of those released were reported to have disappeared, likely secreted across the American border and headed for Toronto, and some on to New York City's world of sweat labour reserved for illegal immigrants.

The media proved generally unsympathetic to the migrants but no more so than many Canadians. If radio talk shows and letters to the editor were in any way reflective of the public mind, then the Chinese migrants sparked widespread Canadian anger, not just at the migrants for attempting to smuggle themselves into Canada but also against the government for its seeming laxity in dealing with those who enter Canada illegally. Many resented that Canada's sovereignty had been violated, fearing that Canadian immigration and refugee regulations were little more than a sieve permitting almost anyone to slip into Canada. No other country, some charged, would stand for this kind of wholesale violation of its borders. If these illegal Chinese migrants were allowed to remain, they warned, Canada would become an international laughing stock. And to make matters worse, weren't Canadian tax dollars paying the bills to feed, house, and clothe these migrants, let alone pay for all the legal and administrative overhead involved in processing their refugee claims? Some argued that many needy Canadians were being denied assistance while undeserving foreigners, illegal immigrants, were quick to get government handouts.

As summer gave way to autumn, controversy subsided. Media and public attention focused elsewhere. The potential for immigration and refugee issues to again explode in the public eye remains.

Toronto-Bound Immigrants

In Toronto in late 1990, thousands of inland refugee claimants awaited hearings, and many immigrants found it difficult to access affordable housing, employment matching their skill levels or experience, and language training. Policy debate on immigration continued as did immigration. Indeed, as the Canadian economy turned the corner for the better, the flow of immigration into Canada and the Greater Toronto Area in particular showed no signs of slowing. The measure of that immigration is not just its continuity but also its diversity and impact—an impact that not even the most far-seeing policy planner of an earlier era could have predicted. Toronto, the hub of Canadian economic development, has been a draw for immigrants. This is unlikely to change. Toronto's Pearson International Airport has remained the major port of arrival for immigrants into

Canada. And many immigrants have stuck very close to that port of arrival. Numbers have continued to tell a story. Almost 40 percent of all those living in Toronto were born outside of Canada. The foreign born, together with their Canadian-born children, now constitute a majority of the city's residents, a majority of the urban polity. Almost three-quarters of immigrants moving to Toronto in recent years have been of non-ethno-European origin and most of them are in or just shy of their birthing cycle.

Accordingly, immigration has not only transformed community definitions, but urban space as well. Since the Second World War, Toronto has given way to a rich montage of ethnic villages, an urban complex where variegated ethnic and racial core zones nuzzle up against one another in an overlapping pattern that stretches from the inner city well into the outer suburban ring. These villages may be characterized by vast stretches of single-family homes or, in recent years, vertical villages, high-rise developments dominated by one or another ethnic or racial community. These villages are commonly replete with ethnic shopping, business, and cultural areas, where any one of many home languages or dialects coexist alongside English. Here one can find a sometimes uneasy middle ground between adopted mainstream Canadian ways and an effort to withstand the forces of homogenization. And at the cutting edge of discourse between the immigrant's memories of the old country and hopes for the new, there are the worlds of children and the inflow of popular culture, the impact of the marketplace and often painful realization that change, sometimes unwelcome change, is the inevitable price exacted for survival in the new urban home.

What of interethnic and interracial tension in Toronto? For all the potential for intergroup conflict in Toronto's cultural and racial mix, and in spite of the media-influenced outburst witnessed when Chinese migrants landed in British Columbia in the late summer of 1999, it might be argued that the level of public civility in Toronto remains remarkably high. This is not to say that there are not areas of interracial or interethnic tension. There are many. Some tensions swirl around a growing distance between the city and the Ontario hinterland, a distance shaped at least in part by different visions of what has become of Toronto after several decades of large-scale immigration. While Toronto has publicly boasted of being a cosmopolitan and pluralist city, a multicultural if not transnational city, this vision has held little or no appeal to those who distrust it as a crude and alien space, home to foreigners and foreign ways, distant to their orderly sense of what and who is a Canadian.

Other immigration-related tensions are found much closer to home. As a new immigrant community begins to move into a more established neighbourhood, shifting the existing racial or ethnic balance, turf wars sometimes result. This phenomenon is as much a feature of Toronto's suburban ring as it is of the inner city. For example, in Toronto's suburban northeast corridor, part of the up-market 905 region, a sizable infusion of often well-heeled Hong Kong immigrants in the early 1990s alarmed some in the previously dominant community. Struggle sometimes ensued over high-profile community anchors. When several large neighbourhood shopping centers adopted an all-Chinese language format, some non-Chinese speakers were angered. Controversy also dogged new arrivals who purchased "tear down" homes on large lots and built what came to be called

"monster homes." Charges of Chinese neighbourhood busting were met with counter charges of anti-Chinese racism.

Closer to the city core, there have been confrontations and even shootings involving police and youth, particularly Black youth and so-called Asian youth gangs. Sometimes problems have been one-on-one and may have seemed trivial—but have been vexing nonetheless. Recently, two Toronto neighbours settled a much-publicized dispute over the smell of ethnic cooking. One neighbour sued the other over what were claimed to be disagreeable cooling odors vented out of the kitchen of the other. While the problem was eventually resolved by an agreement to extend and redirect the problem vent, the whole affair was played out on a canvas of intergroup misunderstanding.

With so much possibility for ethnic- and racial-based confusion, municipal officials in Toronto continue to wrestle with ways and means of adapting municipal services to accommodate the pluralist reality. For example, in order to stay on top of Toronto's shifting demographic reality, the police have had to rethink their role and public profile. Among other things this is precipitating a process of more vigorous police race-sensitivity training and an accelerated minority hiring program. The police have not been alone. Other street-level services—the courts, nongovernmental organizations, and social welfare agencies such as children's aid societies, hospitals, and schools—have also attempted to offer culturally and racially sensitive services. But this is not as easy as it seems. It may be possible to offer multilingual services or even make agency staff more reflective of the demographics of the larger civic society. But how far should public agencies and services bend to accommodate the different cultural norms, values, gender relations, religious beliefs, and family structures reflected in so diverse a community? Should ethnic or racial groups be encouraged to organize services to serve their own? If so, at whose expense?

Adding to concern in the late 1990s, the government of Ontario downloaded the cost of many public programs onto municipalities and, in the case of Toronto, began syphoning educational dollars out of the city's schools to support schools in the more distant suburban and rural ring. Toronto, relying on its property tax base, found it increasingly difficult to sustain adequate level of services without driving up taxes to impossible levels. Faced with less money, the public sector had been forced to make triage-like decisions about competing needs. Services essential to immigrant integration have not escaped the block. In Toronto schools, for example, English-as-a-second-language programs for children were severely cut back and those for adult learners eliminated almost completely. Low-end rentals disappeared just as legal aid for refugee claimants was being cut back. Meanwhile, immigrant and refugee arrivals continued. The implications of downloading by federal and provincial governments and a consequent downsizing in community-based services for the long-term integration and economic health of new arrivals to Toronto has yet to be seen.

For all these problems and potential for tension, nothing so defined Toronto at the millennium as has cultural and racial pluralism. But it remains a pluralism of

contradictions. Some might say Toronto loves pluralism but is uneasy about immigrants. If this is a contradiction, it is one Torontonians seem destined to live with.

ENDNOTES

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