



# Canada's Immigrants, Heroes and Countrymen

Volume II

Robin Arthur  
Sam M. Bayat





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and Countrymen  
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## FOREWORD

Canada is and will continue to be a nation of immigrants. It recognizes the fact that Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism and that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity. Most people think of immigration only as the movement of people, but it's more. It's about people in search of a dream; it's about the challenge of integrating into a new society. This book is about the road maps that some newcomers have taken. It's about where they have been, what they have done along that road and where they are today.

These stories of first generation immigrants are an account of how these new Canadians have achieved success in the transition process and in the course of becoming Canadians in heart and mind. These are stories of how newcomers have overcome tragedy and setbacks and become successful in their goals. And in the words of most of them, it is all about the challenge of change.

We all need role models and Canadian immigrants, more than anyone else, need to learn from the challenges and battles of other immigrants. Hopefully, by reading these stories, more newcomers will be inspired and others will realize that immigration is more than just the movement of people. I also hope that these stories will inspire prospective immigrants to take up the Canadian challenge.

Our promise is to continue searching, across Canada, for first generation immigrant stories and to write about their challenges and successes in this country. Our purpose is to use these stories to inspire other newcomers and to show the world that in Canada one actually realizes one's dream and that Canadian society welcomes everyone's dream.

Sam M. Bayat

## CHAPTER 1

### The Challenge of Change

It's been said in so many splendid ways. The writer V.S. Naipaul who moved from Trinidad to rural England, spoke of the transition as the "enigma of arrival." Nino Ricci, a Canadian novelist, whose parents came to Canada leaving their home in northern Italy, and who tells his story in this book, says that without a point of departure there can be no arrival.

When Ricci was writing his first novel, he says he was somewhat surprised to find himself going back for his material to that very first visit to his parents' home in northern Italy. "That first novel ended with a sea journey aboard a ship called Saturnia; and now in retrospect it almost seems to me that my real passage to Canada came exactly in that fictive voyage, at the point when I had finally been able to fully imagine the place I needed to set out from, since without a point of departure there could be no arrival."

Others have likened emigration to the trauma of changing one's religion. And yet some others call this sense of nationalism the bane of the twenty first century. Tetsuro Shigematsu, a famous TV broadcaster in Vancouver told the authors of this book: "This sense of nationalism is blind sentiment and has nothing to do with right or wrong. I am Japanese genetically, but not Japanese at all. The Japanese wouldn't include me in their definition of the Japanese identity. So what is this thing about identity? I cherish being Canadian, but we keep that to ourselves. This notion of dying for one's country is truly the scourge of this century. This is political nationalism."

That truly is the challenge of change for people landing on

### *Canada's Immigrants, Heroes and Countrymen.*

their feet in Canada. It's about leaving roots and adopting another country. It's about appearing Chinese but feeling very Canadian. It's about raising your hand at a citizenship ceremony and swearing allegiance to the Queen, when once you swore allegiance to the soil whose son you were. It's about respecting another set of values, while you keep your own, appearing to integrate and become socially inclusive, while feeling alone in a crowd. It's about coping with a new way of working, talking, praying or doing business. Canadians find themselves at that crossroad today. That is the challenge. In the end, getting into the workplace and making life work would seem like applesauce five years down the road.

So, how do Canada's newcomers connect with this new milieu. Canada is a country of immigrants and almost everyone recognizes the fact that whether one got to this country three hundred years ago or three months ago, we all came to these shores for the same reasons, whether that be poverty from the era of potato famines, political repression during the world wars and today's civil strife or the need for a better sense of life.

This country's early history may have been scarred by stories of land-grabbing, prejudiced treaties with the First Nations peoples, ugly Anglo-French battles and, up until the middle of the twentieth century, the perpetuation of race-driven legislation. The segregation of Chinese schools, the isolation of its citizens of Japanese descent after the bombing of Pearl Harbour during World War II or the infamous "continuous journey" regulation to bar East Indian emigration to Canada are some of those many scars. But Canadians cannot be hung on a guilt cross forever. Canada has made amends.

With a Charter that guarantees rights and freedoms to all Canadians today, regardless of race or faith, Canada is truly becoming a template for the model state. It's political role on the world stage and its commitment to be a peacekeeper, rather than an aggressor - the majority of Canadians voted against going to war in Iraq - make it stand out from the comity of nations. It has thrown its weight behind UN conventions that have addressed the problems of war-displaced refugees and is a champion of human rights.

But fitting one's hand into this glove is not an onus that's thrust on Canada's newcomers alone. The country's policy makers recognize that immigration is about economics, but it also has a sense that multiculturalism is a work in progress. There must be a sense of our common humanity, despite our diversity and therefore in step with this new vision, our city planners have been invited into the process of creating multicultural cities.

The importance of religion as a dimension of diversity has been increasing and the need for concomitant research or policy capacity to address many of the issues that arise from religious diversity is getting pointed, as ideological differences related to religious principles may prove more intractable than the racial divide. In the aftermath of the 9/11 crisis, the "clash of civilizations" hypothesis of American political scientist Samuel Huntington had re-emerged. In the United States and Canada, popular discourse had come to accept a direct linkage between religion - especially Islam - and terrorism. Critics argued that Islam had been unfairly singled out ignoring other manifestations of terrorism including the Air India bombing, the Oklahoma City bombing, the troubles in Northern Ireland and India. Nevertheless, the common view that religion and terrorism are connected became harder to dislocate.

The arrest of Maher Arar, a Canadian of Syrian descent, by the US government, and his subsequent despatch to Syria where he was tortured, opened a storm of debate in this country about the need for a balance between liberty and state security. The clamour by human rights groups in Canada worked its way up to have Arar ultimately released and brought back to Canada and a public enquiry is now underway. So, indeed, Canada recognizes the new challenge that it's up against and that religious diversity is intrinsically part of the package that multiculturalism brings. That is why in Canada today there are as many as 200 mosques, several temples and synagogues.

And yet, our cities are peaceable – gang wars and riots are uncommon. Some might argue that this is an artificial peace. Other critics say that because people congregate among their own, multiculturalism does not unite, it divides. But multiculturalism is only a celebration of Canada's diversity and the many festivals that are hosted in the summer in Toronto, Calgary or Winnipeg

represent backdrops against which individuals can participate in the so-called politics of identity. Thus an event such as Folklorama may be considered a symbolic site (*Paul Bramadat*) where people of ethnic communities articulate a particular account of themselves in the on-going and increasingly open-ended narrative of Canadian identity.

There is every reason for our city planners to be preoccupied with the fact that newcomers gravitate towards the bigger cities of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. The automatic assumption would be that people go to where the jobs are. But research appears not to endorse that view and suggests that familial ties are a greater priority of newcomers to Canada. Population analysts speak of these residential concentrations as immigrant enclaves and some even say that the key social inclusion issue is poverty. But to say that "most" immigrants live in enclaves (*Daniel Heibert*) is wrong. Some groups have not formed enclaves at all. Others contain a mixture of individuals living inside and outside enclaves. Nonetheless, these news issues are now being examined. Why have these patterns emerged? Is residential concentration caused by exclusion from the mainstream or a conscious choice on the part of ethno-cultural groups to create separate communities.

These issues are, in fact, the engaging focus of immigration conferences that are being hosted in the cities of Canada lately. The need for the host community to become more welcoming societies and the importance of social and political inclusion of all citizens as outlined in our Charter are preoccupying demographers.

As for the other social question - are Canadians racist - the short answer is that the overwhelming majority is not. Firstly, at an official level, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guard against any discrimination on the basis of race, or faith or sexual orientation and the Canadian Human Rights Commission acts as the watchdog of those rights. Nonetheless, it would not be the absolute truth to say that racism does not exist in Canada. In subtle ways it does. And in the workplace it could be systemic.

Subsequent to 9/11, one saw a ripple effect in some Canadian cities as hate literature went around. In Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital sometime ago a doctor was caught alone in an elevator with a man. He remarked on her Saudi Arabian background and



insulted her. British Columbia Muslims have been trying for a couple of years to silence what they call the "grotesque" anti-Jewish views of radical Vancouver cleric Sheik Younus Kathrada who has been making vitriolic attacks on Jews and Christians at the Dar Al Madinah mosque in East Vancouver. Last April, Montreal witnessed another hate crime. The library of Montreal's United Talmud Torahs School was set ablaze and anti-Semitic leaflets were found scattered on the scene.

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CCRF) has notified the Mayor of Toronto of discrimination across race in its nightclubs and has called for the suspension of licences of nightclubs that exclude patrons on the basis of race. The *Toronto Star* has been running stories about young Black males being stopped by police more often than others. In Halifax, the ruling in favour of star boxer Kirk Johnson who complained that he was unduly stopped by police several times because he was Black says something about racing profiling in our society.

Mohammed Elmasry, a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Toronto sometime ago was at the center of a media blitz over his comments made on the Michael Coren show when he said: "All Israelis above the age of 18 are legitimate targets of attack." His comments outraged the Canadian Jewish Congress. But he maintained that every adult Israeli is part of the country's army and are not innocent. "If they are part of the population, they are part of the army," he said. Elmasry later apologized saying he was quoted out of context and said that he did not believe that innocents should be targeted anywhere.

The first couple of years for any newcomer to Canada is the acid test. The average observer is likely to define the challenge as one of getting into the workplace, because issues about Canadian experience, the competing standards of foreign credentials, the problems with equivalency assessment act as deterrents. But it's about cracking the nut with some determination.

Pradeep Kharé, currently the Director General of Environment Canada for the Ontario region and who tells his story in this book says: "But the journey to this point has been treacherous, bumpy and full of failures. After winning a scholarship from Imperial Oil in 1972, I quit my job in Bombay and travelled to Canada as a

student to the University of Saskatchewan to do my master's degree. Although I was at the top of my chemical engineering graduating class in India, as a new arrival to Canada, I had to constantly fight the stereotypical notions about immigrants.

"Going by the adage that you cannot influence the winds but you can certainly adjust your sails, I was able to overcome those disappointments and setbacks by sticking to the long-term goal of fully integrating into Canadian society and reaching my career potential. I quickly realized that in order to succeed in Canada, I would have to learn the so-called "soft skills" such as communication, leadership, strategic thinking, team approach, flexibility and innovation. I also discovered quickly that the majority of Canadians are extremely helpful, compassionate, accommodating and genuinely interested in helping underprivileged people like me. I aligned myself with such people, ignoring the "racist" minority, and learned tremendously about the values and culture of our mainstream society. This was key to my success in Canada."

It's all about change. But the challenge that ultimately becomes the acid test is the decision to become Canadian and to feel it in your bones.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Immigration is an opportunity that Canada must seize**

It's obvious that economic globalization is keeping policy makers in developed nations on their guard because it's easy to miss the bus in international competitiveness. The world around us is moving at a dizzy pace. The flow of knowledge, information, goods and people has changed the context and environment in many economic spheres. That's essentially the connection with immigration policy and why the challenges of creating multicultural cities that are structured for social inclusion, religious diversity, and the burgeoning of vibrant labour markets are being confronted head on. Canada is in the throes of this big debate.

If public opinion polls are to be believed, (*Biles and Burstein*) the majority of Canadians agree that Canada should continue to be a country that welcomes newcomers and accept the ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic diversity that comes in tow. Consequently, the appropriate questions to ask about immigration are not whether we should have it, but instead, how many immigrants should Canada accept, how should we choose them and, most importantly, how should we ensure that integration takes place.

Of course, there is a minority opinion as well. It's been said, for example, that Canadians have enough to do with the basic problem of the French and English duality without enshrining the whole world's diversity within our history and borders and that one

cannot sustain some unity of purpose and a sense of a whole community if we project a league of national cultures within one framework. But unity of purpose, the majority argue, comes from our common humanity regardless of the diversity of our cultures. And it is within that common humanity that Canada can discover its national identity.

As a nation of immigrants, one needs to understand what makes Canada the country it is. The average Canadian on the street knows very little about immigration - what he knows comes from the media and the media, unfortunately, knows very little about immigration. The common view on the street is that immigration is about Canada's altruism. But it's not. Instead, it's about economic sustainability. At the current economic pace, Canada has to grow its population by, at least, one per cent every year to keep economic consumption on the ball, create investment, boost the tax base and meet skills shortages in the knowledge-based economy and that means welcoming about 300,000 immigrants. But our current annual immigration welcomes only about 225,000 newcomers which is equivalent to 0.7 per cent of Canada's population.

The economic connection with immigration is now being increasingly talked about in Canada's smaller provinces. Atlantic Canada, which includes the provinces of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, accounts for only a fraction of Canada's total planned immigration. Indeed, burdened with a high ageing factor, the region lacks the skilled workforce it needs to be competitive in the world market place. The indigenous population growth is negative and any growth is through net immigration. A lowering of the numerical growth in population will impact on its economic consumption as well as on its tax base. So, immigration is really all about economics and can become the prime opportunity.

But in today's world, immigration is a two-way street (*Siddique 2003*). They want to come here, because we want them here. We do not do anything for altruistic reasons, but because we are looking for talent and enterprise. So we need to create a new relationship of equals. But the fact is that there is a profound relationship between the state of the economy and attitudes

towards immigration. The whine about immigrants taking away jobs from Canadians and being a burden on the welfare system becomes more pointed in times of recession. The two claims, anyway, are contradictory because immigrants cannot be taking away jobs and become a burden on the welfare system at the same time.

So in some parts of Canada we don't seem to be doing well with immigrants. The image of a lawyer, engineer or doctor driving a taxi is almost burnt into our national consciousness. These are problems that are being addressed. But it's taking a lifetime to correct them. Canada has been criticized for seducing immigrants abroad and abandoning them at home. The criticism is directed at our failure to settle immigrants into jobs through speedy foreign credentials recognition and equivalency programs. If immigration is not about Canada's altruism but about the country's economic sustainability, the challenges of settlement ought not to become the job descriptions of immigrant settlement agencies. It must become part of the national agenda. It should include and involve all Canadians, all our institutions and our public.

If the real test of settlement (*Ratna Omidvar 2003*) is not language skills but active participation in our democratic institutions, then we have to examine the capacity and ability of democratic Canada to successfully facilitate this participation.

The good news is that Canada is seizing that moment.

There is a new impetus in the way provincial governments are making immigration a priority for economic sustainability. Three or four years ago Manitoba was doing well to get in the order of 4,000 immigrants a year (*Tom Denton 2004*) but in 2003 Manitoba received 6,500. It's now targeting 10,000 a year and expects to get there soon. Manitoba's focus is on its provincial nominee program, but it's also bringing in the workers, the people, the families, the province needs. Whereas the federal rules require that the applicant scores 67 points, Manitoba requires 55 points.

The first Atlantic Mayors Immigration Conference kicked off in May 2005 at the World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax and this is unprecedented in the region reflecting the new thinking by demographers across the world that cities and communities

have a role in developing multicultural societies for economic growth.

The initiative by Atlantic Mayors reflects our recognition of the importance of immigration to long-term economic sustainability and of the need to fill the voids in trades and professional sectors, said Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly. But this new thinking of the city and community as catalysts in economic growth sets aside the erstwhile top-down paradigm of governance. Ottawa may set the parameters for national policy, but creating the environments and the infrastructure in which diversity can thrive is a job for city planners and communities.

Historically, the image of the city has gone from the city beautiful, (*Sohail Inayatullah 2005*) focused on parklands, clean streets to the city ecological. But ever since the 1964 New York World Fair a different image of the city has become dominant. This is the high-tech city, or what one now calls the smart-city. The city that senses and thinks, that can monitor the needs of its citizens - when trees are about to interfere with power lines, when criminals are about to loot a store.

Geneva has taken a different tack. Once a classical, traditionally white Euro city, in the last thirty years, it has transformed beyond belief. The city looks multicultural with cafes lined with African, middle-eastern, Italian, Indian and fast food restaurants. Public life is community life with dozens of cultures mixing. While most Swiss consider Geneva an aberration, others have made peace with multiculturalism by moving to the other side of the river, the traditional unicultural side. But ultimately there will be no other side of the river. The only hope will be a multicultural city. Thus, along with the smart city as a guiding image of the future, comes the multicultural city.

But what is a multicultural city? First it means city spaces are not segregated by race or gender, one should not be able to identify an ethnic area, or at least not see it in a negative way. Second, citizens should feel they are part of the city, that they are not discriminated against, especially by those in authority. But a multicultural city is also about incorporating other ways of knowing, of creating a complex and chaotic model of space such that the city does not necessarily match the values of only one



culture - mosques with temples with banks, city design not only done by trained city planners but as well by *feng shui* experts, searching for the energy lines.

These are, in fact, the guiding lines of city planners in Canada, who are grappling with some of the challenges that diversity brings along with opportunity. The need for social inclusion as a way of creating the climate in which social capital can germinate as well as pre-empting the mushrooming of ghettos of people of like cultures, has fuelled debate across Canada.

A second reality with which city planners are challenged is religious diversity. Indeed, consistent with recent changes in immigration, there has been a significant increase in the number of people that identify with non-Christian religions. But it's not about how we share our values, that's important, (*Burstein 2005*) but how we live side by side. We need to discover how public policy can transform social conflict into social integration in a way that it will boost productivity. Perhaps we need to speak to religious leaders about how we can create harmony, tolerance and social cohesion.

The importance of religion as a dimension of diversity has been increasing without the development of concomitant research or policy capacity to address many of the issues that arise from religious diversity. This is deeply troubling, as ultimately, ideological differences related to religious principles may prove more intractable than the racial divide which presently concerns policymakers.

The third challenge comes from the labour market's capacity, or the lack of it, to make the immigrant's transition to the workplace a speedy one. The core issue is about the substantial decline in the entry wages of new immigrant workers, (*Biles and Burstein*) including those selected for labour market reasons. Whereas skilled immigrants arriving before 1980 had been exceeding Canadian income norms immediately upon entry, immigrants arriving after 1980 were starting at a very significant deficit.

The issue of immigrant economic performance and of Canada's integration capacity is closely linked – but that means that Canada should be looking for an immigration policy that is

able to support the social and economic adjustments that will ensure Canada's international competitiveness. The cardinal factor here is the fact that immigration policy and labour market policy are inexorably linked. In the emerging knowledge-based economy, immigration will play a key role in providing the quality of human capital.

It would appear that an increasing component of the decline in earnings is statistically attributable to where immigrants originate. Nobody is comfortable with this state of affairs. Among the explanations that have been put forward are racism associated with the changing composition of immigrants in the early eighties, moving from a Eurocentric composition to a global one, an inability by employers to evaluate foreign credentials resulting in a substantial discounting of foreign skills and communication problems experienced by non-English or French speaking immigrants in adapting to the new, knowledge based economy. All seem plausible.

But whatever the reason or reasons, something will need to be done and, indeed, in a number of areas, policy adjustments have begun.

## CHAPTER 3

### The multicultural cities of the future

One of the core aspects of population policy in the twenty first century is that of producing a more balanced geographic distribution of immigrants, ending the hegemony of large cities. But in Canada, immigrants predominantly settle in the three largest cities of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver (MTV) forcing planners to evolve a strategy for the regionalization of immigration.

As of May 2004, 5.4 million people or 18.4 per cent of Canada's population were born outside of Canada. In recent years, this country has been welcoming anywhere from 210,000 to 225,000 people and at least 70 per cent of our newcomers settle in MTV.

Indeed, policy makers have legitimate reasons to be more preoccupied by the uneven distribution of immigrants across the country (*Chantal Goyette*) and are therefore looking for strategies to encourage immigrants to settle in places other than the three largest cities. If one looks at the benefits for immigrants, the premise would be that immigrants are doing better economically in the larger cities, specifically because they have more opportunities to find a job with a good income in these areas. But the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) provides two economic indicators based on average employment earnings and the incidence of Employment Insurance and makes an interesting observation.

Of all immigrant groups, those living in Montreal, according

to the IMDB, had the lowest average employment earnings, followed by residents of Vancouver. Surprisingly, of all immigrants, those living in non-CMAs (Census Metropolitan Areas) and have been living in the country for 14 years or less had the highest average of employment earnings. The results support the view that the most important reason for settling in MTV is not the greater economic benefit, but instead the opportunity of support from familial ties.

The data also shows that while Toronto has the lowest rate of EI (Employment Insurance), Montreal has the highest.

In 2001 almost 622,000 people born outside Canada were living in Montreal (*Martha Justus*) representing 18 per cent of the city's population. Asian born immigrants in Montreal who came in the 1990s were more likely to be from the Middle East and West Asia. In addition, about 18 per cent of the 1990s immigrants in Montreal was from Africa, Haiti, China, Algeria, France and Lebanon. The city is home to 85 per cent of Canada's immigrants from Haiti and to 76 per cent of immigrants from Morocco, while Toronto is home to 77 per cent of Jamaicans, 80 per cent of Guyanese and 80 per cent of Sri Lankans living in Canada. Most immigrants from Taiwan and Fiji live in Vancouver.

In the same census year, slightly more than two million people born outside Canada were living in Toronto, representing 44 per cent of Toronto's population and almost 739,000 people born outside Canada were resident in Vancouver, accounting for 38 per cent of the city's population. The most common country of birth in Vancouver was China, accounting for 20 per cent of these arrivals. The city is also a favourite of Fijians, Malaysians, South Koreans, South Africans and Iranians.

The demographic trend is similar in Calgary where about 200,000 residents are foreign born, accounting for 21 per cent of its total population. Calgary's foreign born population, historically, came from British Isles, the United States and Europe, but the top source countries today are China, the Philippines and India. More recently, Afghanistan and the Russian federation have accounted for significant arrivals.

Thus two levels of planning are on the go almost in tandem.



The first seeks to achieve a balanced geographical distribution of immigrants across the ten provinces of Canada and the second is working towards creating multicultural infrastructures in the cities. What the latter seeks to do is create an infrastructure that welcomes religious diversity, promotes social inclusion and pre-empt the mushrooming of ghettos and, at the same time, construct social and cultural environments in which people of all cultures can coexist.

Winnipeg's Folklorama is one of the largest, most successful and oldest of these events. Similar festivals include Toronto's Metro Toronto International Caravan, Edmonton's Heritage Days and London's Panorama. While Folklorama was once a one-week event, it has expanded during the past year to two weeks and is organized around approximately forty-five pavilions located throughout the city.

It has become untenable to think of ethnic identity (*Paul Bramadat*) as a "thing" which is brought intact from some other place. Most importantly, identity emerges on the streets, in the subways and in the schools and office buildings of our cities. Ethnic festivals represent backdrops against which individuals can participate in the so-called politics of identity. Thus an event such as Folklorama may be considered a symbolic site where people of ethnic communities articulate a particular account of themselves in the on-going and increasingly open-ended narrative of Canadian identity. The point is simply that the festival can represent an important narrative touchstone in the ways people define themselves and allow groups to construct a fuller self-image for a public that might harbour negative stereotypes of these groups.

These niceties, of course, have been criticized as something that promotes an uncanny peace. Canadian cities have not witnessed significant rioting involving ethnic gangs, for example. On the busy streets of Toronto, people carom and collide quite easily. But is that calm shallow? Does multiculturalism divide people, because it calls on immigrants to cling to their roots. The superficiality of the current mood may well be connected to the fact that while public schools may promote certain values such as

multiculturalism, they frequently do not promote a deep awareness of the kinds of controversial issues that may later become the hot button topics in civic discourse, (*Paul Bramadat*) such as female genital mutilation, the carrying of kirpans in public contexts, religious and political extremism and the marriage of same sex couples.

In the city of Vancouver, which has a population of 700,000, the majority of residents are from a non-English-speaking background. The profound changes to the urban social fabric have thus taken place in the past 20 years or so. The challenge of integrating immigrant populations (*Leone Sandercock*) is the leading policy challenge for Canada's largest cities as becoming a multicultural city and society means more than constructing ethnic restaurants or citizenship legislation. It requires the active construction of new ways of living together, new forms of spatial and social belonging.

The building of new communities is a long-term process, during which fears and anxieties cannot be ignored or dismissed. There are fears on the part of the host society, of loss of identity and a familiar way of life: outsiders are perceived as a threat to a cherished way of life and traditions. Conversely, there are anxieties and fears, on the part of newcomers, about acceptance, belonging, security and loss of their traditions and familiar way of living.

It's just as well that the City of Vancouver has developed a series of policy responses to its diverse population, including the hiring of multicultural planners within the City Planning Department and the establishment of a multicultural outreach program. In 2003 the Department published a compilation of key social indicators based on StatsCan's 2001 census data. The results provide several challenges for future planning.

In Vancouver's growing population, English is the mother tongue of less than half of Vancouver's population and Chinese is the mother tongue of more than one-quarter of the population. Notably there is a large population of working poor in Vancouver (*Baldwin Wong*) and many people live below the poverty line. The city's social indicators show a concentration of some

immigrant groups in certain areas of the city. What is the implication of this clustering? Are some groups more socially segregated than others? The recent statistics also indicated that there is an increasing wage gap between immigrant and non-immigrant populations. What key factors influence immigrants' choices of housing areas?

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside has a rich and conflicted ethnocultural history (*McCann and Kathy Coyne*) that is evident to the present day. The area is traditional Aboriginal territory and, for close to a century, served as a point of entry for many new immigrants coming to work in the industrial sector. Chinatown is the historical heart of the Chinese community in British Columbia, a history that includes the Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1907 Anti-Asiatic riot and the wholesale internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II.

Throughout the 1990s, the Downtown Eastside experienced a deepening of poverty compounded by changing patterns in drug use and a corresponding health epidemic among drug users, affecting the ethnocultural community in many ways. There was a public perception that Latino men were involved in the drug trade. Shop owners and Chinatown argued that these changes caused a major decline in business.

In 1997, the City of Vancouver responded to the emerging crisis with a plan for strategic action and that resulted in the implementation of the Downtown Eastside Crime Prevention/Revitalization Project.

The project has now been completed and preliminary evaluation data suggests there has been a change in the understanding of the drug issues by ethnic groups. Chinatown has supported the development of an arts endowment for the low-income community. Aboriginal residents are involved in regular healing circles. The Latino community has regular culture-based programs and is connected to other community services. A strong leadership is emerging among the ethnocultural community and represents a significant increase in youth involvement.

Furthermore, another initiative, The Diversity/Vancouver Project now provides the residents of Greater Vancouver with the

opportunity to engage in an informed public dialogue about diversity (*McCann*) and to explore ways of working together. It was launched in February 2004 and includes Short TV spots aimed at engaging the general public in an ongoing dialogue; community events involving residents from all parts of Greater Vancouver, one-day workshops on diversity and a Diversity/Vancouver Website designed to ensure that the discussion will continue after February 2004

Montreal, a multicultural metropolis, attracts 88 per cent of the immigrants settling in Quebec. An impressive list of events contribute to Montreal's cultural vitality such as the Nuits d'Afrique, the Montreal Jewish Film Festival and the Festival du Monde Arabe. The new library in the Parc Extension neighbourhood has recently acquired a multilingual collection (70,000 documents, including 10,000 in 10 languages). The City of Quebec is also working on a project to build a multicultural center which will serve as a meeting place for the various ethnic communities.

Edmonton's McDougal School Neighbourhood probably provides another best practice model in social diversity. On summer evenings, several mothers, born in Cambodia, (*Michael Phair*) with their babies and toddlers, come to the neighbourhood school playground, sit on the grass, nurse their babies and talk amongst themselves. A little farther, one may see a small group of men and women, Vietnamese and Chinese talking while their children play and a couple of women from Eritrea join them. In Canada, in city upon city, it is in local neighborhoods that the social diversity of Canadians becomes a reality.

Social inclusion focuses on "closing the distance" between diverse groups and the larger society, by removing exclusionary conditions and providing access to resources and participation. Last spring, when the McDougal School was threatened with closure, this neighborhood challenged the school board. The neighborhood insisted on public meetings with translation services, information bulletins in different languages and an opportunity to express their opinions on the school and playground and its central importance to the neighborhood.



With a renewed interest in Canada's cities and much talk of a new deal to revitalize urban centers, city planners realize that much of this revitalization must occur at the neighborhood level within diverse populations, shaping municipal policies and programs for communities like the McDougal neighborhood.

Calgary's population has increased by approximately 250,000 people in the last fifteen years. In a city of almost one million residents, this influx presents significant challenges to the city's real estate developers. The city has responded by developing several recreation centers (*Tirone and Legg*) hoping to integrate newcomers and long-time residents. One example is the Rotary Challenger Park built in the northeast where the city's largest percentage of new Canadians resides. Furthermore, this inspires in newcomers a sense of belonging where they have few ties.

From GreekTown to Chinatown, from the India Bazaar to Little Italy, Toronto's communities are abundant with restaurants, (*Pam McConnell*) delis, markets and bazaars. The diversity of the neighborhoods is celebrated year-round through local festivals that recognize local identities. The City's unique Access and Equity Grant Program provides seed money to emerging community organizations helping them serve isolated and disconnected new communities.

Toronto's Regent Park is one of the largest public housing complexes in Canada and one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the city. Indeed, working in various languages and using a variety of approaches ensured that the diversity of the community was acknowledged when the new neighborhood was envisioned. Toronto has included diversity principles in a wide variety of planning documents such as the Strategic Plan and the Official Plan.

While the early 1990s saw a rise in hate crimes, the City and the community have since become actively vigilant, working closely with the dedicated Hate Crime Unit in the Toronto Police Service. And through a systematic study of census data, the City has identified 89 racialized communities experiencing significant disadvantages.



*Greek dance at the annual summer Greek festival in Halifax*

## CHAPTER 4

### Religious diversity: A new reality

When Canada introduced the security Bill C-36 on the heels of 9/11, there was a storm of debate from libertarians and human rights advocates who spoke about the need for a balance between human rights on the one hand and state security on the other. But public debate had, at the time, come to accept a direct linkage between religion, especially Islam, and terrorism. Indeed, critics argued the fact that Islam was being unfairly singled out, but the common view that religion and terrorism are connected became hard to dislocate. In that milieu, several other notions of the future of multicultural cities came under close scrutiny and religious diversity was one of them.

That the management of cultural diversity is now becoming the challenge of municipal administration (*Annick Germain*) is not surprising given the roles of people of immigrant origin in metropolitan populations. What is surprising is the reaction to one component of cultural diversity - religious diversity.

In the Montreal area, where increasingly diversified immigration is commonplace, the establishment of places of worship associated with cultural minorities seems to have taken municipal officials by surprise both in the downtown core and in the suburbs. Some officials have even declared a moratorium to give themselves time to review their zoning regulations or to seek the intervention of courts or the government. As a result in many municipalities the construction of new places of worship is not automatically allowed and must follow an often complex and

highly political process of special permits.

While population analysts see common ground in the fact that immigration is a bundle of opportunities, one sees challenges as well. Meyer Burstein, an international consultant and the founder of the Metropolis Project - a think tank on population growth and immigration - was urging delegates at a conference in Halifax earlier this year to examine newer approaches to multiculturalism. "It's not about how we share our values, that's important, but how we live side by side," he said. "We need to discover how public policy can transform social conflict into social integration in a way that it will boost productivity. "Perhaps we need to speak to religious leaders about how we can create harmony, tolerance and social cohesion."

Burstein was speaking on the need for balance between human rights and state security. He made the point that the connection between immigration and international terrorism cannot be easily disentangled, but talked about the need for more pragmatic ways to deal with security. He said policing and biometric measures are counter productive. It is important to create trust between public agencies, police and security agencies and minorities.

Multicultural policy is founded on the recognition (*Taylor 1994*) of individual citizens who are invested with both constitutional and Charter rights and freedoms, not the least being the freedom of religion. No less significant, it recognizes that individuals exist within communities whose diverse languages, religions and cultures warrant public recognition and support. Such recognition has encouraged new immigrants to band together to form religious communities and institutions. The result is that Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, Eastern Orthodox, Mennonites, Coptics and others have joined together to create places of worship and social life.

In the eighteenth or nineteenth century, the patterns of religious institution and community were vastly different and Eurocentric and included French and Irish Catholics, Scotch Presbyterians, English Methodists, German Lutherans and Anabaptists from many parts of Europe (*Bruckner, 1993*;



O'Toole, 1996). As these immigrants left their homelands, they formed "ethnic" and religious communities, built churches and schools and economies in their new country. Belief and belonging in the Canadian landscape, as O'Toole suggests, seemed to be one and the same. Nonetheless, Canadian colonial and post-colonial history was a story of religious and ethnic difference.

But the names of the religions taking root in Canada in the twenty-first century (*Paul Bowlby*) are different from those in the nineteenth. It is now Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs who are, or have been, the immigrants building religious and community institutions.

Canadian society has never incorporated the constitutional view of the separation of religion and the state. Nor has it imitated, in its constitutions, the British model of an established church. In the absence of both of those options, recognition of the historic contribution of members of churches and synagogues to the formation of Canadian society and its public institutions opens up for view the authentic precedents on which we can build the future of a multicultural Canadian society.

The bedrock of that future may be illustrated in how religious diversity in this country is given authentic recognition. As the diversity of ethnic communities and their religious institutions flourish, they will contribute to the on-going debates about our collective future and our shared citizenship.

But it's important to note that religious diversity is a relatively new challenge in Canada as immigration did not truly begin to diversify until about thirty years ago. The length of time people have been immigrating to a community (*Germain*) and the community's volume of immigration are often preconditions to build a place of worship. Montreal's religious landscape has, for many years, included more than just Catholic and Protestant churches. But what has changed is the fact that the volume of immigration has had an impact on the urban landscape where approximately thirty five per cent of the 800 worship centres on Montreal Island are associated with specific immigrant or ethno-religious groups. There has also been a rise in Eastern, non-Christian religions such as Islam, Sikhism and Buddhism and a

considerable increase in churches associated with Reform Protestantism, which draws both immigrants and native-born Canadians.

In terms of space, many small communities, have established themselves in industrial parks and unused commercial zones, if not in the privacy of residences. There has also been an increase in bigger and more visible mega projects. The fact that visible minorities frequent these worship centres obviously accentuates the phenomenon. The point being made is that because worship centres are being built away from the downtown core, they are no longer neighbourhood facilities, as parish churches were and since the communities are scattered through the metropolitan area and because land is scarce and expensive, worship centres increasingly operate regionally and, consequently, often have neighbours who do not share their religious conviction.

In Quebec, any place of worship is exempt from property taxes and this means that for municipalities, worship centres translate into a loss of revenue. This does not present a problem in difficult economic times or when land is not scarce. However, when the economy begins to grow, municipalities tend to give preference to a high-tech firm rather than a Hindu temple when they develop their industrial parks. It is no coincidence that many issues surrounding the building of places of worship have created controversies and resulted in delicate political compromises. In conclusion, religious diversity, poses quite a challenge to municipalities.

But the management of religious diversity increasingly raises the issue of the nature of public space (must it be neutral to be inclusive? Is a neutral public space possible or desirable?) in the face of both a rise in discussions on secularism and the desire of some communities to further assert themselves as contributors to the city.

Canada today has no official church and the government is officially committed to religious pluralism, although in some fields Christian influence remains. The population is predominantly Catholic and Protestant – at least 72 per cent according to StatsCanada's 2001 census. The other religious

groups listed in the census are Christian Orthodox 1.6 per cent; other Christians 2.6 per cent; Muslims 2.0 per cent; Jews 1.1 per cent; Buddhists 1.0 per cent; Hindus 1.0 per cent; and Sikhs 0.9 per cent.

The non-Christians in Canada are more concentrated in the metropolitan cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa. A possible exception is Judaism, which has long been a notable minority even in smaller centres. The increasing immigration from Asia, the Middle East and Africa has created growing Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, and Hindu communities.

There are almost 300,000 Hindus in Canada listed in the 2001 census, of which two thirds live in Toronto. The first Indian immigrants began to arrive at the turn of the twentieth century and an interest in emigrating to this country developed after Indian troops passed through Canada in 1897 on their way home from Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in London. In 1902, Indian troops again passed through Canada for the coronation of Edward VII.

But the actual immigration of Indians to Canada began in 1903, when a few Sikhs landed in Vancouver and later about 5,159 by 1908. These newcomers mostly worked as loggers and in lumber camps. Nonetheless, the important event in Indian-Canadian history is the Komagata Maru incident. The laws of Canada at the time were designed to keep out people of Asian descent and one of those was the "Continuous Passage" regulation that deemed entry into Canada possible only through a direct route from the point of origin. The continuous-journey regulation and subsequent barriers to East Indian immigration did not go unchallenged.

On 23 May 1914, 376 East Indians arrived in Vancouver harbour on board the Komagata Maru, a Japanese tramp steamer leased by a wealthy Sikh merchant and former labour contractor from Hong Kong, Gurdit Singh Sarhali. The steamer met with an unmitigated hostile reception. A week later the case of Munshi Singh, a young Sikh farmer, was heard and he was ruled inadmissible on the grounds that he had violated three Orders in Council, in particular the continuous-journey regulation. When

the B.C. Court of Appeal upheld the refusal of a lower court to order his release, the way was paved for Munshi Singh and all the remaining passengers to be deported. The steamer then sailed to India, having left behind just a handful of passengers, previous residents of British Columbia who had been allowed to land by the federal government. Sikh political pressure finally persuaded the federal government to pass an Order in Council in 1919 allowing "British Hindus residing in Canada" to bring their wives and children to this country. The infamous continuous-journey regulation remained in effect, however, until 1947.

Then in 1967, the first attempt was made for a religious assembly of Hindus in Toronto. The Hindu Prasna Samaj opened in a leased space of a Christian church at Queen Street West, where Hindus gathered to pray. The Hindus even today gather for the Samaj tradition on Fern Avenue in Toronto.

Vancouver's first gurdwara (Sikh temple), built by the Khalsa Diwan Society, opened in 1908. Famous gurdwaras include the Nanak Sar Gursikh Temple in Richmond. The main religious event is the Baisakhi procession in South Vancouver organized by the Ross Street Gurdwara, built in 1969. Since 1994 the Sikhs in Surrey have an annual procession from the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple to mark Miri Piri. The Satnam Education Society of B.C. started the Khalsa School in Vancouver in 1986 and opened a branch in Surrey in 1992.

The Hindus have several temples, including the Vishva Hindu Parishad Temple in Burnaby, which was built in 1973, the Hare Krishna Temple in Burnaby and the Mahalakhshmi Temple in Vancouver.

Canada has a small but growing Muslim population. The 2001 census reports the Muslim population to be 580,000 strong accounting for about 2.0 per cent of the country's population. There are two distinct streams of Muslim immigration to Canada – one is that of skilled professionals and the other is that of refugees. In the 1980s, Canada provided refuge for many of those fleeing the Lebanese civil war. In the 1990s, the largest source countries were from the African continent, especially Somalia, the Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia – the countries engulfed in civil

strife - as well as from the Muslim enclaves of Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo.

The majority of Canadian Muslims are in the province of Ontario. The Toronto region is home to many Muslims, especially in Scarborough. Ottawa has one of Ontario's oldest Muslim populations and is an especially important centre for Lebanese Muslims. Other Canadian metropolitan areas also have substantial Muslim populations including Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. It is important to note that Canadian society has an appreciable level of tolerance and acceptance of its diverse cultures and faith communities and its Charter of Rights guards against any intolerance or religious prejudice and discrimination on those grounds. Unlike the French ban on the *Hijab* (head scarf), for example, Canadian Muslims are free to wear them and there is respect and acceptance of the Ramadan traditions of fasting and abstinence.

The first Islamic presence in Canada was recorded in the 1871 census which found 13 Muslims among the population. The first Canadian Mosque was constructed in Edmonton in 1938, when there were only about 700 Muslims in the country. The years after World War II saw a swift increase in the Muslim population, but in the 1981 census the population was still below a hundred thousand.

Today there are over 200 mosques across the country. The Al-Rashid Mosque in Edmonton (*Janhevich and Ibrahim*) built by Lebanese immigrants, is now recognized as a historical site at the Fort Edmonton Park. With time, many Canadian Muslim groups have been formed including the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, the Council of American Islamic Relations Canada and the Canadian Islamic Congress.

There is also a small, growing Buddhist community in Canada. Their early immigration to Canada began with the arrival of Chinese laborers in the territories during the nineteenth century, but later the dramatic shift in Canadian immigration policy in the seventies saw a massive influx of immigrants from China, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, and Southeast Asia, the countries with strong Buddhist demographics. In addition, the immense

popularity of the Dalai Lama put Buddhism in the forefront of Canadian spirituality. Many non-Asian Canadians embraced Buddhism (in various traditions) and have become leaders in their respective groups. Canadian Buddhism is dominated primarily by the Tibetan, Zen, and Theravada schools.

Although immigration to Canada between 1919 and 1925 was largely restricted to newcomers from Canada's traditional source countries, there were two notable exceptions. One involved the Russian Mennonites, the other, Jews. Even though the Department of Immigration and Colonization was generally hostile to the idea of admitting Jews, placing various impediments in their way, approximately 40,000 Jews did succeed in entering this country during the interwar period, most being admitted by special permit. Among these Jews were 200 war orphans. In 1923, the Canadian government agreed to admit 5,000 Jewish refugees who had fled from Russia to Romania between 1918 and 1920 and had subsequently been ordered to leave their adopted country.

During the economic depression of the 1930s, the federal government strove hard to seal off Canada not only to prospective immigrants but also to refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, particularly Jewish refugees. Ottawa's restrictive legislation reflected the general Canadian view that immigrants threatened scarce jobs in an economy that in 1933 saw almost one-quarter of the labour force unemployed.

Among those barred from entering Canada during the 1930s were thousands of desperate refugees, many of them Jews fleeing persecution at the hands of the Nazis. Thousands of the Jews who managed to escape the Nazi tide sought refuge in Canada, but by and large their appeals were ignored. Anti-Semitism, at the time, was rife throughout Canada, where, in some places, Jews could not hold particular jobs, own property, or stay in certain hotels.





*The foundation stone being laid for the construction of a mosque in Halifax*



*A Jewish synagogue in Nova Scotia*



## CHAPTER 5

### Social and political inclusion

The results of the Canadian Heritage Ethnic Diversity Survey indicate (*Tirone and Legg*) that we have yet to find a way for newcomers who identify with minority ethnic and racial groups to feel included in everyday community life. It turned out that 36 per cent of respondents indicated they had experienced discrimination. Further results indicated that 50 per cent of Blacks, 43 per cent of Japanese and 35 per cent of South Asians reported having experienced discrimination, occurring mostly in the workplace, in stores, on the street and when dealing with the courts or the police.

Frequently, commentators suggest (*Howard Duncan*) that the key social inclusion issue is poverty. They argue that a society is more inclusive in inverse proportion to its poverty levels. Statistically breaking down poverty according to racial or ethnic groupings can lead us to conclude that a society might be excluding members of specific groups, thus setting up a division of "us" and "them" along ethnic or racial lines. This leads some to link social exclusion and racism - discussion of social cohesion, social inclusion and their relatives often become discussions of racism.

In the 1990s, Canadian researchers began to consider another dimension of immigrant and ethnic enclaves. Intrigued by the conclusions of scholars on segregation in the US, they wondered whether residential concentrations of immigrants or visible minorities are associated with poverty in Canadian cities.

It is argued (*Kazemipur and Halli 2000*) that there is a "new poverty" in Canada that is concentrated in selected neighborhoods that are often associated with Aboriginal or recently settled immigrant populations. They believe that emerging ghettos may precipitate a culture of poverty wherein residents see no means of improving their livelihood and instead become passive recipients of the welfare state.

Many population analysts believe (*Stoffman 2002*) that the tendency for immigrants to settle in the largest cities of Canada is a major problem both economically and politically. Others are more explicit (*Collacott 2002*) and say that there are increasing concentrations of people from the same cultural and linguistic background in Canadian metropolitan areas, not frequently with significant levels of poverty, because of their relative lack of marketable skills of English and French language proficiency. Further one speculates that these ghettos trap residents and their children into long term poverty and might even lead to social conflict that could culminate in the kind of race riots seen in the US and UK.

Enclaves of certain ethnic groups, who have taken the most advantage of family reunification rules, (*Diane Francis*) have formed in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver and these groups have little reason to assimilate. "If they don't assimilate they cannot achieve. Many don't learn English. Their attitudes are often impediments to social advancement. The labour mismatch and low education levels of most entrants, is why it is less likely now for the performance of immigrant children to improve in the future. Most will live in economic ethnic ghettos for generations and remain members of their underclass."

But to say that "most" immigrants live in enclaves (*Daniel Heibert*) is wrong. Some groups have not formed enclaves at all. Others contain a mixture of individuals living inside and outside enclaves. Why have these patterns emerged? Is residential concentration caused by exclusion from the mainstream or a conscious choice on the part of ethno-cultural groups to create separate communities.

In the Vancouver survey, nearly 40 per cent of the immigrants

who landed in Canada since 1991 stated that they experienced problems entering the labour market. Half that number believe that their difficulties are the result of discrimination. Little wonder that some immigrants feel compelled to live near people of their own kind, seeking support and cultural acceptance.

Let's pause a moment (*Howard Duncan*) to ask why a society should want to promote social inclusion, especially to people who come to the society as immigrants? Assume that the good life is a thing of scarcity. Under this assumption, one might think that a rational society would be inclusive only of its members and exclude those who were not among its members, those such as immigrants.

We can find the beginnings of a robust answer in social capital theory. Social capital is a public good that resides in the relationships between members of a society and the institutions of a society: government bodies, police, business organizations, political organizations. Social capital facilitates the development of individual human capital and trust forms the most fundamental basis of social capital. In summary, social capital is the basis of a society's prosperity and well being and thereby grounds the possibility of a good life. In other words, social inclusion generates increased social capital and social exclusion reduces social capital, reduces the level of trust required for a vibrant economy and a well-functioning society.

The participation of Canadians has been enshrined (*Biles and Tolley*) as a basic component of democracy in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. But despite that, Canada has not yet arrived at a state where all Canadians have a seat at the tables where critical decisions are made. In the political arena, newcomers are numerically under-represented: foreign born Canadians occupy 14 per cent of the House of Commons' seats, even though they make up 18 per cent of the population. Currently there are 37 elected officials who are newcomers and who hold office at the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government within the boundaries of the city of Ottawa. There are seven federal members of parliament, eight MLAs and 21 city councilors and one Mayor. But that said, visible minorities are

yet (*Karen Bird*) only a little better than one-third of the way to being proportionately represented within the local governments of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. This raises questions about social and political inclusion in Canada.

But there are, nonetheless, a few glimmers of hope. In Ottawa's last municipal election, there were six visible minority candidates, including one for mayor. Additionally, in the most recent election for the French Public School Board, the Somali community organized and ran candidates between the 2000 and 2003 municipal elections. Similarly, Muslims in Ottawa have begun to organize and plan to run candidates at every level of government in upcoming elections.

As is so often the case elsewhere, it has taken negative experiences to bring a heterogeneous community together. The aftermath of the terrorist attacks has been a catalyst as has the persistence of racial profiling and security provisions. This has led to the unprecedented upswing in political activity in the Muslim community. Dr. Monia Mazigh, the wife of Maher Arar, last year sought and won the nomination of the New Democratic Party in the federal riding of Ottawa South. Arar is a Canadian citizen of Syrian descent who was stopped at New York on his way to Montreal, interrogated and later dispatched to Syria where he was tortured before being flown back to Canada.

We know with certainty that newcomers and minorities care that their communities are present in elected offices. For example, when hate and bias activity spiked after 9/11, Muslim Canadians looked to Parliament's only two Muslim representatives for guidance (*Biles and Ibrahim 2001*). Similarly when the recent spate of anti-Semitism broke out in Toronto, Jewish Canadians turned to elected representatives from their community to address this heinous behavior.

## CHAPTER 6

### Policing in a multicultural society

Over the last decade, the police have come under fire from allegations of racial bias and although there is great debate on whether or not racism has touched the cornerstone of the Canadian criminal justice system, there is consensus among academics and justice officials that the perception of bias is widespread. Indeed survey research consistently reveals that the majority of Canada's minority residents perceive discrimination in policing.

Statistics on race, ethnicity and crime are rarely collected and disseminated in Canada. However, the information available suggests that some visible minority groups are greatly over-represented in the criminal justice system. Although black people, for example, make up only two per cent of the Canadian population, they represent six per cent of those held in federal penitentiaries (Wortley 1999). The federal incarceration rate for black Canadians (146 per 100,000) is almost five times higher than the rate for whites which is 31 per 100,000. This over-representation is even greater in Ontario.

Indeed, community activists, defence lawyers and academics have frequently argued that both the police and the courts discriminate against aboriginal peoples, blacks and other visible minorities (Foster 1996; Henry 1994).

Dudley Laws, an immigrant from Jamaica and whose life story is told in the second part of this book says it's disturbing to see thousands of young, vibrant Black youth in federal and provincial jails. "Crime is a result of conditions not created by

Blacks. By not including the Black community and not providing alternatives to crime and by focusing on incarceration rather than prevention, we raise the crime rate," he says.

In response to the 1988 shooting of Lester Donaldson during an incident with five police officers, Laws founded the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC) to serve as a watchdog of police brutality against Blacks. He too was charged by Toronto's police once for smuggling immigrants across the Canada border and later for sexual assault, but says he has triumphed over every case charged against him – these cases were later dismissed.

In Halifax, Black Canadian boxer Kirk Johnson, last year filed a complaint, with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, of harassment by the police. The Commission weighed the evidence, found a *prima facie* case was made out and referred the complaint to a board of inquiry. The courts finally ruled in Johnson's favour.

But criminal justice officials insist that the system is colour blind. In response to these allegations, civilian oversight of the police was proposed as one method for correcting this perception of discrimination, improving the relationship between the police and the community and increasing accountability within the criminal justice system. But studies on civilian review of the police have pointed to obstacles to reform, the police subculture being one of them.

In the late 80s, most police jurisdictions in Canada (Valerie J. Pruegger) shifted from an enforcement model to a community responsive service model, in response to a number of issues including an emerging focus on race relations, allegations of police discrimination, and public disillusionment. Community policing is an attempt to move away from an isolated and detached model where police rarely interact with the community except in response to a complaint, to one where the police are seen to be part of the community in which they serve.

The key components of community policing include : First, a decentralization of decision-making consistency in the assignment of police officers to the same beat for extended



periods of time. Second, a wider conception of the role of law enforcement. Third, a focus on healthy communities. Fourth, the assumption of an equal and productive partnership. Fifth, a proactive strategy to address crime in the community

This breaking down of an "us vs. them" mentality and a complaints-driven service can result in a new sense of partnership in keeping the community safe: a proactive service geared to prevention rather than just enforcement. Police response to crime is more reflective of and responsive to community needs through the community policing model. And while many police services continue to predicate rewards and promotions on enforcement outcomes, some are now including community service and cultural competence objectives in their performance appraisals.

However, the move to creating partnerships between police and the community does not come without resistance.

A number of internal and external barriers exist to developing community policing or police/community partnership models. One of the main barriers can be resistance and resentment from police officers who see it as an erosion of their powers and their ability to act with relative autonomy and anonymity. This may lead to open resistance and can be observed in comments such as "we are not social workers" or "this is not 'real' policing". Many police officers are vested in their roles as crime fighters, warriors against crime, and cherish an image of the tough law enforcer. Traditionally recruitment procedures and the organizational culture of police *forces* have reinforced this image.

The community policing focus on *service* rather than *enforcement* makes many police personnel nervous and often those who work in more service-oriented divisions are seen as "kiddie-cops" rather than "real cops". To those who wish to advance through the ranks, this disparagement of community service can create real limitations to their careers. Rewards are often assigned to enforcement rather than community or social outcomes.

However, the numerous advantages of community policing warrant considering making this shift. These include increasing

trust in the community, providing a better range and allocation of resources, developing proactive strategies to addressing crime, and identifying and resolving disputes before they escalate. A final clear advantage is that the move to community policing requires a new set of skills for police officers.

This has led to increased education standards, an increased level of professionalism, and a wider pool of candidates from which to draw. Many police services are recruiting the best and brightest from our universities, and from non-traditional groups in the community, e.g., Aboriginal, Asian, South Asian, etc. This allows police services to better reflect the community in which they serve and enhances their ability to form effective partnerships. It opens the lines of communications with groups that may have a tendency to distrust members of law enforcement agencies. While there are many barriers still to overcome, Canada's police services have come a long way towards becoming open, culturally competent *partners* in our communities.

Lessons have been learned across the country that highlight how police and communities can learn from both positive *and* negative interactions, and move ahead to forge a stronger relationship. Numerous reports and citizens complaints over the years have focused on systemic discrimination in the justice system, including police services. High profile cases that allege racially motivated police brutality or racial profiling only increase the levels of distrust between the police and the communities in which they serve. Many police services across the country have responded with a number of innovative models and best practices highlighting police and community partnerships and demonstrating a more inclusive approach to policing.

However, more effort is needed to integrate policies and practices throughout police organizations in areas such as organizational culture; policy and staff development; evaluation; training and education; and recruitment to promotion practices. Community policing requires a complete shift in institutional policy, practices, and reward systems. If the community policing model is not reflected in the occupational sub-culture and

conveyed through strong commitment from the top down, it is doomed to fail.

Nor is community policing a one-way street. Community members have to take an active interest in working with their police services, be willing to dismantle misconceptions and prejudices to enter a new partnership, and hold the police accountable for fulfilling their end of this partnership.

We have seen that in an increasingly diverse society, there is a need to better reflect and represent all our communities including those that have been traditionally marginalized. Failure to do so can lead to accusations of racism, negative media attention, and poor relationships with the communities police services are mandated to serve and protect. The three levels of government need to encourage police services and communities to work together to build safer and stronger communities through national strategies, standards and the provision of adequate resources.

It's just as well that the Halifax Regional Police is now looking for people of diverse cultures to join the Chief's Diversity Advisory Committee (CDAC). The initiative comes on the heels of a needs assessment report on the current policy on anti-racism education and diversity training in the police force, says Sgt Donald MacLean of the HRP. The mandate of the CDAC is to offer advice from a community perspective and serve as a knowledge base to the Chief of Police on emerging issues related to diversity. "We may not always know what the community wants, or we may lack the knowledge of customs among some diverse communities. But we must have the capacity to ask," he says.

## CHAPTER 7

### Atlantic Canada in new bid to boost immigration

Halifax hosted the first Atlantic Mayors Immigration Conference at the World Trade and Convention Centre in May this year and this was unprecedented in the region, reflecting the new thinking by demographers across the world that cities and communities have a role in developing multicultural societies for economic growth.

The initiative by Atlantic Mayors reflects our recognition of the importance of immigration to long-term economic sustainability and of the need to fill the voids in trades and professional sectors, said Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly. The strategic difference this time he said was that the conference was addressing grassroots so that our communities attract, retain and grow with the immigration process at all levels. The importance of city councils taking up the initiative is that now immigration could become a reality on the ground, he said. This must be reflected in our staff hiring within the police force, fire departments, school boards and at the municipal departments.

Mayor Kelly said newcomers bring skills and new economic opportunities, but our societies have to be inclusive, provide jobs and integrate with an appreciation of different cultures and religions.

This new thinking of the city and community as catalysts in economic growth sets aside the erstwhile top-down paradigm of governance. Ottawa may set the parameters for national policy,

but creating the environments and the infrastructure in which diversity can thrive is a job for city planners and communities.

How we respond to the challenges of immigration, diversity and population change (*Brian Lee Crowley*) will literally determine whether we as a society live or die. A dramatic statement? No doubt. But no less true for that. Atlantic Canadians are struggling to renew their society. We have failed to attract even a fraction of our "share" of immigrants. The number of Atlantic Canadians within the Canadian population has declined relatively for many years and is starting to decline absolutely. So when we raise the challenge of immigration, of diversity and of multiculturalism, we are asking first and foremost what it is *about us* that we cannot attract newcomers, nor keep more than a third of those who do come.

It's a foregone conclusion that growing immigration is a sure sign of economic and cultural dynamism. But in 2001, Nova Scotia got only about two thirds of one percent of the immigration to Canada, New Brunswick, one third of one percent, Newfoundland 16 one hundredths of one percent, and PEI five one hundredths of one percent.

Indeed, governments can make a difference. But immigration is not merely an affair of governments. "It depends at least as much on each one of us and our values, as it does on any government policy. That's why the key question is not "Why don't they come?", but rather "Do we really, in our hearts, *want* them to come?" says Brian Lee Crowley, President of AIMS (Atlantic Institute for Market Studies)

"Lots of people will tell you that, while immigration is all very well and good for Toronto and Vancouver, it's not right for this region, which has a serious unemployment problem," he says. "While they don't put it this way, they really believe that opportunity is a zero sum game, that if someone comes here and does well, it has been at the expense of someone else who was already here."

This belief couldn't be more wrong. Most of the industrialized world faces very significant labour shortages today and in the future. That, and not unemployment, is our chief public

policy challenge. Atlantic Canada is no exception. Most industries, including the fishery, are either facing today or forecasting, significant challenges finding workers in the near future.

The region's labour shortage is real; it is driven by poorly designed social programmes and a mismatch between the skills that workers possess and those that employers need. For this region to prosper, it must be possible to recruit workers who bring needed skills that are in short supply to the region.

But how do we get them to come, these precious immigrants? The key is not an immigration policy but a prosperity policy. Doing what is right for Atlantic Canadians will also be the right thing for attracting immigrants, including a reduced tax burden, a culture of education, a lightening of the regulatory burden, including newcomers' access to many regulated professions. Attracting highly skilled immigrants will also both help to fill skills gaps while generating economic activity that can help employ those currently unemployed or underemployed in this region.

Immigration is not chiefly a matter of jurisdiction, but of people and therefore of the heart. Immigrants are people who uproot themselves from their homes in search of a better life, or else are forced from their home and must make a new life for themselves against their wishes.

Thus immigrants tend to congregate in specific cities. People don't move to places they've never heard of, so one of the most powerful attractions for immigrants is whether there are people like them in a new community — people who have prospered there. Being made to feel wanted and welcome is thus the strongest pro-immigration policy there is. "So in order for immigration to move outside the big cities, we need to foster immigrant communities, and not just individual immigrants," Crowley suggests.

But there will be a vital haven that only migration from the rest of Canada and immigration from the rest of the world will provide. Just to get a reasonable share of the scarce immigrants we need will require more than just negotiating the right



intergovernmental agreements. We must recognise that immigrants seek opportunity above all else.

On another note, the emerging focus on race relations has forced a paradigm shift in policing, moving from an enforcement model to a community responsive service model. "If the community policing model is not reflected in the occupational sub-culture and conveyed through strong commitment from the top down, it is doomed to fail," says Valerie Pruegger, a cross-cultural organizational psychologist.

"We have seen that in an increasingly diverse society, there is a need to better reflect and represent all our communities including those that have been traditionally marginalized," she says. "Failure to do so can lead to accusations of racism, negative media attention, and poor relationships with the communities police services are mandated to serve and protect." Mayor Kelly says the change in attitude and approach is already evident. "One can see a determined bid to make the recruitment inclusive of people of diverse cultures," he says.

### **A paradigm shift in Nova Scotia**

There is a sea-change in the way people look at diversity in the province of Nova Scotia. A paradigm shift is taking place and the management of diversity is becoming a shared challenge. Once upon a time, there was a sense that anybody who spoke with an accent went to the local Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), but today there is hardly anyone who is not touched by immigration.

Claudette Legault, the settlement agency's executive director, says immigrants are now on the radar screens. "It's not one table, but many now. The corporate sector wants to know how they can be inclusive. When the phone rings, it could be a call from the health department, NovaKnowledge or a private sector employer wanting to connect with newcomers or with newcomer information. It has become a shared challenge."

But the numbers on landings have not gone up. Ever since

1995, when landing peaked at about 3,500, the count has been falling and was about 1,600 last year. Indeed, secondary migration is on the rise and part of that has to do with the changing environment. Newcomers are migrating to Nova Scotia from BC and Ontario, probably because they feel more safe in Halifax.

It's just as well that last summer, the provincial government released its "*Framework for Immigration*" document and held consultations with some 45 community groups to determine whether or not Nova Scotians think of immigration as a desirable strategy for economic sustainability and the over-riding answer was a positive one. The subsequent field surveys sought to determine the reasons for provincial outmigration and considered the fact that perhaps Nova Scotians ought to be more welcoming as a society. But this is a welcoming province with friendly communities. Unfortunately, being friendly is not enough – immigrants want to feel included.

"We have to break the old boy club," says Legault. "New immigrants are very educated, but their access to the labour market is a big challenge. Employers do not want to take risks if they are not sure the credentials are of the same high standards as Canada's. It sometimes has to do with doing business like we always have." But then Legault accepts that sometimes it could also be a case of discrimination when an immigrant and a Canadian are competing for a job with the same credentials and the job goes to the Canadian applicant. "There is definitely some discrimination in the workplace, but one cannot put a finger on it. So the challenge is how do we make the workplace more inclusive," she says. Inclusion should involve bringing newcomers into policy debate, in health, in policing and municipal affairs, perhaps into the political arena as well.

The big hurdle to getting newcomers into the workplace has to do with problems associated with foreign credentials recognition, a debate that's been on-going for many years. But one can see some movement in that area. A new mentor program designed to assess clinical skills of international medical graduates (IMG) was launched by the College of Physicians and

Surgeons in Halifax on May 17. Likewise an effort is being made to assess the credentials of engineers. The province is at a point where regulatory bodies are writing the career pathways and road maps and formulating a credentials recognition process that's fair and affordable.

### **Sea-change in the demographics of New Brunswick**

The stakes are different but the problems are the same in Moncton. "Getting people into the workplace is the big challenge," says Rosemary Pellerin, the Executive Director of the Multicultural Association of Greater Moncton (MAGMA).

Pellerin, who has been with MAGMA for about ten years says there is a sea-change in the growing diversity there. At one time, the settlement agency served no more than two or three refugees per year, but now it serves more than one hundred newcomers annually. What is changing now is the fact that many people from the Congo are tending to settle in Moncton. They speak French and can therefore easily integrate. Besides, familial ties in the community are bringing more Congolese to Moncton and retention of immigrants is as high as 95 per cent.

The agency has some of the regular programs hosted by most of the immigrant settlement organizations including the language program LINC, French as a second language, as well as an employment placement program. MAGMA's employment counsellors keep talking to employers at the university, community college and others in the private sector, but are not able to place professionals where they would want to be. It's probably only a matter of time. There is already a sense that the credentials assessment bureau will be setting up an office in the Maritimes opening the way to speedier credentials recognition and a smoother transition for newcomers into the workplace. Pellerin says that there is a sense, too, that diversity management is becoming a shared challenge in Moncton as well. The agency takes calls from hotels, malls and fast-food chains which ask for

newcomer skills. But at the professional level it does not happen.

Moncton is welcoming and friendly. This is not to suggest that there is no racism or discrimination in the workplace, but at least one does not hear of racist incidents reported in the media. Newcomers, instead report being overwhelmed with friendly assistance from Canadians in New Brunswick.

### **Newcomers feel included in Newfoundland**

When the doors of the Association for New Canadians (ANC) in Newfoundland first opened in 1979, the settlement agency operated out of a two-room office and with a couple of part-time employees. But the need for immigrant services has substantially grown and the organization has had to settle anywhere from 100 to 3,000 refugees on an annual basis.

ANC's mandate is to empower newcomers with the skills and knowledge necessary to contribute to society and its settlement services essentially seek to provide inclusion and integration supports.

Typically this is done through the HOST-friendship program, the AXIS employment program, enhanced language training and a variety of youth and health programs. It has even acquired two properties under the Federal Surplus Housing Initiative to accommodate newly arrived immigrants.

Bridget Foster, ANC's executive director says that credentials recognition is a road block to most newcomers, but that is an issue that's being addressed with some urgency. "Newcomers are generally hard working people, many very qualified. But we give them a firm understanding that it's important for all to compete in the workplace," she says. "It must not be automatically assumed that when an immigrant has lost the opportunity of a job that discrimination was the cause. It could just be that someone else was more qualified."

A core part of ANC's work today involves partnership



development – the organization engages federal and provincial partners as well as NGOs and community agencies in some of its work. Essentially, the agency engages in partnerships with private sector employers so as to address skills shortages. The agency has even set up the Coordinating Committee on Newcomer Integration (CCNI) a federal, provincial and NGO committee to identify and address issues affecting newcomers, promote immigration and inclusion.

Newcomers say they feel included in Newfoundland and rarely do people attribute the loss of a privilege to an act of discrimination. Overall, there is a sense that diversity is necessary for economic sustainability and Newfoundland now has a department which is working on an Immigration Strategy for the province.

## CHAPTER 8

### Emigration out of Africa

Since the early nineties, the world has witnessed some of the worst crimes against humanity in Africa. The genocide in Rwanda, the civil war in the Sudan and the virtual eradication of Black Africans by the Janjawid in its western region, Darfur, the strife in Liberia and now the worst humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has seen millions die and several more millions flee their homeland, some taking refuge in refugee camps across their borders and some seeking refuge in countries like Canada.

So it's not as if Africa's chronic problems have only to do with feeding itself - something that was symptomatic of the continent's famines and droughts in the eighties. As many Africans in Canada agree, it has to do with the greed of warlords and the lack of leadership in Africa. Not even a famine that threatened millions in Ethiopia satiated the hunger for blood as it went to war with its neighbour Eritrea. Getachew Woldeyesus, who fled Ethiopia, tells of the terror he had witnessed, in this book.

In Sierra Leone, the nightmare of terror, mutilation of children, the skinning of opponents went unabated for eight years before rebel leader Foday Sankoh was captured. John Oppon speaks about his flight out of Sierra Leone in this Chapter. In Somalia, the trauma of civil war drove its people to neighbouring Kenya for refuge.

In Sudan, although a fragile agreement is keeping the peace since January 2005, a country has to be rebuilt from scratch in its

southern region. Jacob Deng who lives in Halifax tells of the horror of war and of life in refugee camps and says that throughout his flight out of Sudan as a young lad of seven he had lived on the raw fat of wild animals, shrubs and leaves and had squeezed water out of wet mud in the dry river beds. Canada has welcomed hundred of Sudanese refugees to its shores – many of them in Calgary.

Nigeria's civil war between 1966 and 1970 drove thousands of its countrymen into neighbouring Ghana. Dr. Godwin Eni who fled Nigeria in the crossfire of civil war came to Saskatchewan with a bullet lodged in his arm. In this book Dr. Eni comments on Africa's dependence of western largesse as the primary cause for a failure to develop.

"In my view, the most critical problem in Africa today is dependence on foreign largesse," he says. "Civil war in Africa is primarily the result of competition for the control of government, which is encouraged by foreign economic powers. As a result, Africa experiences what I call "organized confusion" that leads to exploitation. Western nations take sides in the civil wars according to their policy expectations and economic interests. From Belgian Congo to Sierra Leone, all African wars since the thrust for independence from colonialism have western connections. As a result, there is poverty and underdevelopment," he says.

### **Nigerian doctor escapes with bullet in arm but suffers racial bruise in Saskatchewan**

**T**he Nigeria-Biafra war appeared to be ending in the Seventies and one could see enormous suffering among the defeated Ibo population of Eastern Nigeria. The country was ruled by military dictatorship at the time and foreign travel was, naturally, restricted especially for the elitists: university professors, professionals, former civilian politicians and those who fought on the Biafran side. There were military roadblocks at

every major highway especially in the Eastern region and the capital city of Lagos. Many of the Ibos living outside of their homeland were in hiding.

Dr. Godwin Eni was discreet about his movements but was fortunate to have some protection from two prominent non-Ibo professors at the University of Ibadan as well as a policewoman. "I was the first Nigerian physiotherapist trained at the University of Ibadan and my professors, therefore, appeared to feel somewhat of an obligation to protect me," he says. "But they did not always succeed."

The political environment was tense: political party activities were banned. A few civilians were appointed to participate in government but the overall political authority rested with the Supreme Military Council. The military governed the four regions of Nigeria. There was severe devastation in the Biafran region. The property of many Ibos in the non-Ibo regions of Nigeria were confiscated or appropriated by the military or civilians from the other tribes. The Biafran currency was banned by the military thereby rendering the region unsustainable economically. As a result of the displacement of towns and villages in the Eastern Region, many children starved or they were malnourished. Overall, there was gloom and despair across the Biafra region.

Dr. Eni, a physiotherapist at University Hospital, was on the black list of professionals who were barred from travelling abroad. And to compound things, there were roadblocks on major highways, rampant harassment of the population by soldiers and many instances of brutality. "But I decided I had to flee Nigeria," he says. "The two professors from the university of Ibadan made it possible. They pulled their weight to obtain my Nigerian passport and smuggle me through the Ikeja airport enroute to London, England. The passenger airplane of the British Overseas Airways Corporation [BOAC] was delayed at the tarmac in order to get me on board."

Dr. Eni arrived in Montreal on October 6, 1970 with a bullet lodged in his armpit and 50 Pounds Sterling in his pocket. It was the time when the FLQ - the terrorist group - had kidnapped the

British Trade Commissioner in Montreal. The mood outside the airport was tense with military tanks on alert. Three days later he arrived in Saskatoon and took up assignment at the University Hospital.

The experience with his very first patient, Mrs Phillips, was an unforgettable one, he says. "I was assigned to provide her with breathing exercises and vasodilatation," Dr. Eni

says. "But at my very sight, the lady screamed and yelled so loudly that the nurses rushed to her bedside. I was very disturbed to know later that she had never seen a Black man, having been raised in a rural town on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border."

Dr. Eni says he felt humiliated and inferior. He told the Head of Rehabilitation Medicine, Dr. Hunt, that he was returning to Nigeria. Dr. Hunt was genuinely apologetic, he says.

The Nigerian physiotherapist could have had success doors open to him anywhere in Nigeria, but not as a member of the Ibo tribe at that time. He had suffered arrest and indignities as an Ibo living and working in a non-Ibo region of the country. When in hiding he lived in fear for his life. He had a handsome job as a physiotherapist at the University Hospital in Ibadan. But the constant fear for his safety coupled with the fact that he did not speak the language of the region kept him in jeopardy.

Nonetheless, he returned to Nigeria in 1972 as a lecturer at the University of Ife in Western Nigeria, when one of his mentors, who had also provided him protection, was appointed the Dean of the new Faculty of Health Professions at the



University.

"He was partly responsible for my leaving the country to pursue graduate studies in physiotherapy at the University Hospital, Saskatoon, but now wanted me to assist him in establishing physiotherapy studies at the University," Dr. Eni says. "I was glad to return to Nigeria having endured cultural isolation in cold Saskatoon. I thought that the country had progressed politically and that some degree of order and stability had returned to the regions. But I quickly realized that my expectations were premature. The soldiers were still harassing the people of the Eastern region. I could not travel freely even to my home region without considerable fear for my safety. There were more police and military roadblocks on every major road. I had regular nightmares. As a result, and under those conditions, I returned to Canada."

Although there were no serious incidents of discrimination in hospitals similar to his experience with Mrs. Philips, he says there were subtle manifestations of racism he encountered over the years. "These manifestations occurred primarily among educated people and colleagues," he says. "On one occasion, an apartment for rent was suddenly rented out when I showed up as a potential tenant. The same apartment became available one hour later when my Caucasian wife enquired about a vacancy."

On another occasion, Dr. Eni says a man tried to impress his friends at a local bar in Toronto by making him - and a Black colleague - a job offer. The job was to load boxes in a truck at a warehouse where he worked as a supervisor. "After enquiring about our countries of origin, he straightaway assumed that we were at the bottom of some barrel and in need of his benevolence. He made a few remarks about the need for "you people" pulling "yourselves" up by the bootstrap and commented about the trouble blacks were causing in the United States. He suggested that we may not fit into Canadian society and made several jokes about blacks and Africa to the amusement of his friends. We sat patiently not knowing what else he was going to do as he drank more alcohol. As we began to leave, he wrote down his telephone number and requested that we call him the following day for the



job.”

But as fate would have it, several weeks later, Dr. Eni was booked to assess a baby with “happy puppet syndrome” at the Children’s Psychiatric Research Hospital [CPRI], London, Ontario, where he worked as the Head of the Physiotherapy Department. His Ghanaian colleague also worked at the institution as a Paediatrician. Dr. Eni says that accompanying the baby was the same man whom they had met at the bar. “He recognized me and became subdued,” he says. “He was uncertain as he enquired whether I had a brother or twin. I said no and reminded him of his job offer. I informed him that my friend, the other Black man was a Paediatrician who was also scheduled to assess his child the following day. I am not sure as to the extent that this encounter changed his racist perspective.”

Other racist incidents were subtle in nature especially in the workplace, Dr. Eni says, where bureaucrats appeared to satisfy the human rights provisions in the processing of people and papers while surreptitiously discriminating against specific groups. “This appears to be the pattern in many organizations that are conscious of human rights provisions but at the same time willing to subvert it through adherence to process and procedures,” he says.

On another occasion, he says, a student applicant had made a racist remark to fellow applicants in his presence about racial minorities and the need to limit their enrolment in the program and faculty, not aware that he was the director of graduate studies and chair of the admissions committee. He said he wondered whether Blacks, Chinese and other Asian applicants were sufficiently “Canadian” and rational enough to assimilate the knowledge and rigor associated with graduate studies in health services planning and administration. He was astonished to encounter Dr. Eni as Program Director later in the day.

Making a point that he is never too happy to discuss his achievements, Dr. Eni says that as a pioneer in his field, he had laid the foundations for physiotherapy education in Nigeria. He introduced community-based education for parents of children and adolescents with mental and physical handicaps in South

Western Ontario. Rather than depend on physiotherapists at institutions to provide ongoing treatment for the children, he developed a scheme whereby parents were taught the basic approaches for ongoing home care on a consistent basis thus leading to greater improvements in physical care and reduced levels of muscle contraction.

“I introduced a very useful treatment approach in Saskatoon, namely the Neuromuscular Facilitation Technique or PNF, with significant results in communities,” he says. “I met my wife during this period. She was the head of a facility and was impressed with my level of success with the treatment technique. It is my understanding that the community-based education approach I originated in South Western Ontario continued in that jurisdiction for many years.”

As an academic and program head, Dr. Eni restructured the curriculum of the Master of Science graduate program in health services planning and administration at the University of British Columbia and made it relevant to field practice. “It was a very challenging period for the program. As a result, in 1992, I implemented a new field-based, degree program [Master of Health Administration – MHA], which translated theory into practice with a project rather than a thesis format,” he says.

Internationally, he has consulted on Government and non-Government primary health care and child immunization programs in several countries in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. His report for the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat was accepted by the 56 member nations. “The groundwork that my colleagues and I laid, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, led to the establishment of a health administration-training program in the Ukraine,” he says.

“In my view, my greatest contribution in the health care field was the treatment and management of children with poliomyelitis at the University Hospital Ibadan, Nigeria. With little or no equipment, I devised different ways to treat the children with muscle contraction. It laid the foundation for the subsequent care and empathy that guided my professional life and the mentorship I have provided to patients and students of all racial backgrounds.

Dr. Eni has also spent a great deal of volunteer time in the service of the community. He was a founding member of the Black Educators Association of British Columbia under the leadership of Professor Vincent D'Oyley. The goal was primarily to provide a mentoring avenue for young Black youth, especially boys, who appeared disinterested in furthering their education. In 1988, he founded the Nigerian Cultural Association of British Columbia to provide a "home away from home" or a cultural base for new and visiting Nigerians. The association was instrumental in providing accommodation and advice to Nigerian students and immigrants during the early years. He and his wife have made their home available to several dozen Africans who were new to Vancouver during the initial weeks of their arrival in Vancouver. In 1989, he was one of the founding members of the Multicultural Health Committee.

As President of Vancouver Multicultural Society [VMS], he has been active in the promotion of anti-racism, cross-cultural understanding and harmony through public education. VMS is the oldest non-profit agency in British Columbia established to promote multiculturalism, anti-racism and human rights in the province. As President, he has in the past year, presented at the annual conference of the Consortium of Parents Advisory Councils of British Columbia, Okanagan University College, Canadian Unity Council, University of British Columbia, the trade union C.U.P.E., Ethics for Breakfast Society, John Oliver Secondary School, Richmond High School and Canada Revenue Agency among others. He is a participant at many policy dialogues organized by the provincial government ministries, ethno-cultural organizations and interfaith religious groups.

He is also the Vice President of two provincial organizations, namely the British Columbia Citizenship Council [BCCS] and the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia [AMSSA]. A Chair of the Community Health Committee of the Vancouver Regional Health Board, he led the effort that established the first Community Health Centre in the City of Vancouver, the Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre.

Commenting on a sense of identity, Dr. Eni says, he is proud of his two nationalities: Nigerian and Canadian. "The former gives me a cultural base and a certain sense of self that provides me with a unique identity and cultural appreciation in a multicultural environment. The latter provides me with a unique sense of belonging to the best country in the world where all cultures meet and live together in harmony, peacefully and in safety.

"Being Canadian in today's world is an asset that must be protected for it offers everyone the opportunity to grow, prosper, and contribute effort without threat, apprehension and violation of personal sense of self. The guarantees provided in the Constitution, Human Rights code, and the Multiculturalism Act are examples to the world at large of how we as human beings can live and prosper together regardless of military strength.

"I am passionate about the two nationalities, more so for Canada than for Nigeria at this time. The civil war and successive military governments in Nigeria have created enormous challenges for the country that may take generations to remedy. Corruption, greed, religious violence and violations of human rights appear to retard the effort towards achieving an acceptable democratic society. Perhaps, Nigeria is on the path to positive progress. Perhaps Canada must be vigilant of threats to the glue that holds it together, culturally and politically.

Making a point about Africa's real problems, Dr. Eni says, he believes the challenges of Africa today, as before, are created by foreign or outside factors. "First, colonialism created dependency on the continent. Second, the ascription of inferiority to African human beings resulting from slavery has left a gaping psychological hole in the African psyche, which says that all things foreign are necessarily better. Third, I do not think that generalized development in Africa is conducive to the well being of economically powerful nations of the G-7.

"After all, it is through the exploitation of poorer countries that rich nations enhance the lifestyle of their citizens. Nigeria is the World's sixth largest oil producing nation. Why have powerful western countries condoned and sometimes sustained



the corruption of the elite in that country while seeming to be against it? A developed Nigeria will be conscious of its natural resources and would tend to seek equitable compensation for exploitation. That would mean higher oil prices, which is anathema to Western nations. Therefore, the status quo is sustained in order to achieve low prices. This scenario is repeated in every developing country. If malaria is a western epidemic, certainly, all efforts would have been made to find a cure just as Aids is receiving serious pharmaceutical and research attention in North America and Europe.

"In my view, the most critical problem in Africa today is dependence on foreign largesse. Civil war in Africa is primarily the result of competition for the control of government, which is encouraged by foreign economic powers. As a result, Africa experiences what I call "organized confusion" that leads to exploitation. There were tribal wars in Africa as in Europe. However, the parties found a way to live together on the continent. The difference is that western economic interests take sides in the civil wars according to their policy expectations and economic interests.

"From Belgian Congo to Sierra Leone, all African wars since the thrust to independence from colonialism have western connections. As a result, there is poverty, health problems, and underdevelopment based on a culture of dependence on western nations. Many African intellectuals have been forced to flee or contribute their effort elsewhere. It is not so much a matter of failure to develop; it is primarily a matter of dependency on foreign economic interests which has little affection for African development. This is demonstrated by the meagre economic aid, contextual loans from the World Bank, and support for the greedy in those nations willing to maintain the status quo to the detriment of their people.

"This is why Canada stands tall among nations for its lack of territorial ambition and adherence to human rights, equity and justice. However, Canada, as a western nation is always under the shadow of the United States and must balance its policies to avoid the economic wrath of the elephant," he says.

## **Peace in Sudan beckons one of its sons in Calgary**

**I**n the heat of the Sudan civil war, Martin Yak says the country's security apparatus was persistently suspicious of a Fifth Column supporting rebels in the south and he was a victim. Yak says the harassment by security agents was persistent. "I was arrested on university campus and detained for a couple of months."

Yak says he had a large following of university students that engaged in intellectual debate and sometimes these debates would include Muslim students. "They somehow were not comfortable with my views and said I was a threat to their religion and to their culture and this had once led to clashes between Muslims and Christians," he says. "Once again I was arrested along with 42 other students and after my release I was dismissed from university."

Yak stayed away from university campus for five years thereafter. He ultimately completed his Bachelors as an external student at the University of Juba in the south of Sudan in 1990.

It's ironic that when he wanted to leave the Sudan and could not because of an expired travel document, he was provided one by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, who was aware of Yak's involvement in the 1987 clashes which blacklisted him. "This man renewed my passport and gave me a visa to Egypt. I could not travel to an African country, because the government would assume that I

**Yak, who now serves as the Chairman of the SPLM/A's Calgary chapter says there are SPLM/A chapters all over Canada, who keep in touch with the leadership and mobilize people through conventions**

would be working with rebels," he says.

In Egypt, Yak worked with Oxfam, getting kids off the street. During that term in Egypt, he was appointed Secretary General of the SPLM/A (Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army) for Egypt and Middle East Chapters. Four and half years later Yak applied to the UN refugee agency and got approved by Canada. He arrived in Calgary in December 1995.

"Almost immediately, I found a small community of Sudanese and we integrated," he says. "Later, other Sudanese in Canada, having learnt of my arrival in Calgary, began to pour into the province and now Alberta has the largest Sudanese community in Canada with about 7,500 people settled there." Yak, who now serves as the Chairman of the SPLM/A's Calgary chapter says there are SPLM/A chapters all over Canada, who keep in touch with the leadership and mobilize people through conventions and so on.

Yak says there are about 10,000 UN troops monitoring the recently signed peace agreement between the North and the South of Sudan. "This peace is sustainable," he says. "Dr. John Garang, the chairman of the SPLM/A will be Sudan's Vice President."

It would be natural for Yak to feel the urge to go back to the Sudan now that there is peace. So he's negotiating with Canada's foreign affairs department about a possible trip to that country. "If I am seen by Canada as working with a corrupt government and one which violates human rights, I will be stripped of my Canadian citizenship," he says. "But I do not see a corrupt government in the South. Our people have suffered long enough, two million lives have been lost."

Yak got a Diploma in Security from Calgary's Hilltop Security Academy and works for a security organization. But he says that while there is no blatant racism in the province, there definitely is discrimination in the workplace. "If I have to do a decent job, I may have to go back to the Sudan," he says.

### **Ethiopian in Regina says he does not believe war with Eritrea was fair.**

Ethiopia after Emperor Haille Selassie, fell into military hands when Mengistu Haile Marian seized power and ran a brutal and totalitarian government in the 1980s. In desperation and with the determination to overthrow the government, students took to the streets and Getachew Woldeyesus joined those protests as well.

"So along with other student protesters, I was arrested," he says. "But later, while a few protesters were killed, I was released." Woldeyesus says that when the regime had conducted their investigations, they came up with lists of student protesters who deserved to die and others who could be released on condition that they get rehabilitated in Marxist schools and undergo intense labour. He was made to dig trenches all day.

But when the war with Eritrea began to intensify, student protesters were being conscripted again and sent to the front lines. "I did not believe in that war," says Woldeyesus. "There was indiscriminate bombing of civilian homes and there was death and destruction everywhere. Besides, I also believed the Eritreans had a right to self determination." Although Woldeyesus was born in Ethiopia, his parents are Eritrean.

So, in order to avoid the conscription, he fled to Sudan with the assistance of a friend, who connected him with border smugglers. "I traveled to a town called Gonder and from there I was smuggled into Sudan," he says. In Khartoum, he stayed with an aunt who ultimately sent him to Italy.

Woldeyesus lived in Rome for four years doing nothing. He was sponsored by the Vatican along with hundreds of other refugees and was looked after by the churches. Finally in Rome, he applied for refugee status to the United Nations refugee agency and was accepted by Canada. He came to Saskatchewan in 1985.

"But Canada was another journey for me," he says. "In Saskatchewan, I was completely lost. The weather was terrifying,



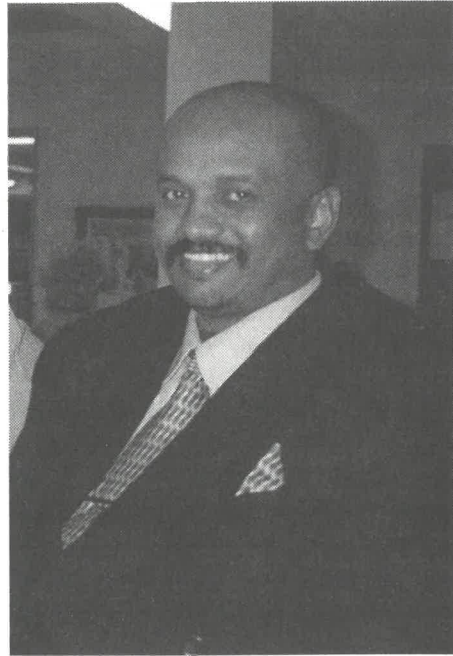
there was nobody there from my community and there was a dreadful sense of isolation. I was not familiar with the systems. I was missing home and friends and overall there was a sense of confusion - within me - of not knowing what to do."

Then his first job came along. Woldeyesus began work for the Regina Open Door Society (RODS) as a bus

driver, while he continued to pursue university studies and finally graduated as a Community Development Worker. RODS is an immigrant settlement agency.

Commenting on experiencing racism, Woldeyesus says going to university was an eye-opener. "At the university level, one had to be twice as good as any Canadian-born to be accepted. The professors were hard on us. There were lots of barriers while pursuing my education," he says. "I may not experience it in the workplace, but I can see it happen to others. There is a sense among employers, for example, that an engineer from another country is not good enough, so engineers initially start life in Saskatchewan driving taxis."

Now 20 years down the road since setting foot in Canada, Woldeyesus feels a sense of comfort. He has his sister and brother with him and life's treating him well. "I am very loyal to Canada and feel very Canadian," he says. "That's why I differ from others who believe Canada must do more for Canadians rather than bother about the world's problems."



Harking back to Africa and its real problems, Woldeyesus says: "Africa's problem is that it lacks leadership. In most African countries, the leadership is obsessed with their own interests. The lack of leadership creates conflict and conflict creates poverty and war destroys everything. The governments in Africa first build military might even before addressing social issues."

The Regina Open Door Society, where Woldeyesus is a Community Development Worker, serves the needs of some 250 government-sponsored refugees every year and is involved in the settlement of some 1,500 other immigrants. The agency's programs include settlement, employment counseling and initial health screening of newcomers at an in-house clinic and the settlement of youth in schools. It's now even working on a program for the homeless.

#### **Pastor has harrowing experience before uniting with family in Prince Edward Island**

**P**astor John Oppon, amid the crossfire of guns in Sierra Leone, quickly dispatched his family to Gambia and stayed back to look after his flock. But things took a turn for the worse.

When rebels began fighting the government of Tejan Kabbah in the early nineties, Pastor Oppon was in the United States. "But in 1997 when the rebels over-ran the government in Freetown in a coup-d'état, I sent the family away to Gambia and I stayed back to oversee the running of the churches," he says.

Sierra Leone's rebels led by Foday Sankoh were fighting to take power from Kabbah's government but as Pastor Oppon says, along the way, the Western interest in the country's diamonds, got Sankoh involved in the violent control of diamond mining and the diamond trade which ultimately saw brutal killings of thousands of Sierra Leoneans and the torching of villages.



Almost four months after his family fled to Gambia, Pastor Oppon says some friends came home to urge him to chair an upcoming conference, keen to draw him on their side and get the backing of the churches and their following. He consented and the conference got on to a successful start. But on the third day, he says, conference organizers took him to the national radio station and coerced him into making declarations of patronage. "While the program was on air they said to me, Pastor Oppon, is it not the work of God that power has been transferred from a Muslim regime to the new rebel government?"

He says, he refused to endorse their suggestions. "I said no," he says. "We do not know the ways of God."

But that night, conference organizers told him his life was no more safe in Freetown and that he should flee. The pastor says that on January 6, 1999, rebels came to his home, seized him and took him away into the forests from where they were conducting their violent operations. He spent three months there before one of the rebels in sympathy helped him escape to a remote Kenyan town, Forretariah. "I went in there and registered as a refugee," he says.

Pastor Oppon had thus separated from the family and it was almost five years before a reunion took place in a far away land. The pastor says that while he was in Forretariah, one of his friends traveled to the Gambia and met with his wife. "He told her that I was alive and said that I would soon reunite. When he got back to told me all about his meeting with my wife. But when he went back once again, she was gone. He got to know that

**The pastor says that on January 6, 1999, rebels came to his home, seized him and took him away into the forests from where they were conducting their violent operations. He spent three months there before one of the rebels in sympathy helped him escape to a remote Kenyan town, Forretariah.**

her refugee application to the United Nations refugee agency had been accepted and that she flew to Canada with the children," Pastor Oppon says. "Thankfully he had a telephone contact and I was able to make the connection with my wife and ultimately come to Canada with the help of a church on Prince Edward Island"

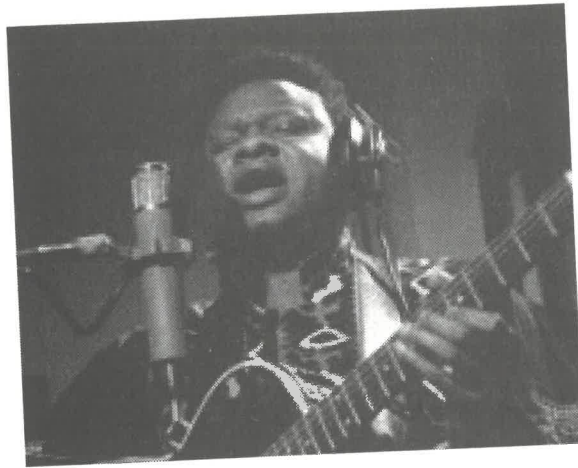
But although for many, the gates of heaven open upon arrival in Canada, the pastor says he is not quite happy, although he feels very safe on the Island. "I have not been able to get in the door of one of the church ministries," he says. "Neither have I been able to secure a job." He says one of the reasons for that is that he is Black. The other is, perhaps, that he belongs to the Pentecostal church which is somewhat different from the mainstream churches.

The pastor is hoping a good shepherd will come along. "My wife had to go through hell to get a job. As any refugee, she could not produce the credentials potential employers were seeking. Those were destroyed during the war. But things worked out in the end," he says. "She requalified at a high cost to us."

### **Guinea's talented song writer fuses the many sounds of Africa**

Alpha Yaya Diallo, a guitarist and talented song writer, left Guinea for many reasons. But the important one was to secure freedom of the spirit. "Guinea is yet not free. I was successful in the music industry in Guinea, but I felt stifled because I could not write and sing the songs I wanted to," he says. "There were political assassinations at the time and my own uncle Suleiman Diallo was captured and killed on trumped up charges of wanting to overthrow the government."

It was just as well, that he moved to Holland, after high school, and worked with a music group that soon did tours of Europe, the USA and Canada. Having arrived in Canada, he



decided to call it home.

Alpha's music is unto its own. Having traveled the four provinces of Guinea with his physician father, he had early in life absorbed the diverse music of the country and

later travels across Africa influenced his style, making his music a fusion of the different sounds of Africa. He says he's liked the music of Western guitarists like Eric Clapton and Mark Knopfer and says there is sometimes a connection between the music of the West and East – just as one recognizes some strains in Irish music that's akin to the Phulani music of Guinea.

Alpha has been writing his own songs and composing his own music. "My songs bring out the sense of hope among Africans, the need to share love with the loveless as well as songs which speak out against Africa's politics," he says. His fifth CD "Tjama" which means "People" was released in March this year. The songs speak of the victims of politics. In an earlier CD titled "Journey", Alpha's songs advocated for freedom for women in Africa.

In Canada, Alpha has been traveling across the country performing at several music and jazz festivals and was performing lately in May at the Ottawa Jazz Festival.

"But although I have won two Junos and six other awards, I feel somewhat marginalized," Alpha says. "I am not too happy at the way Canada's music industry treats immigrant musicians – the industry thinks of our music as marginalized music. Thus with that kind of backing, one is not going to see opportunity to sign major labels or even to play with greater musicians. The trend is to concentrate on only a couple of styles of music," he says.

Alpha's CD "African Guitar Summit" was nominated for the Juno awards which was held in Winnipeg in April this year.

Alpha feels very strongly about roots. "I go back to Guinea every once in a while to feel refreshed. I am a Canadian and proud of that fact. Canada has given me so much of opportunity. But I cannot deny my African roots or my African identity. "As a guitar player, I can never see myself composing Rock or the Blues, because I am African."

Although for now, the pursuit will be music, ten years from now may see him in politics. "I find politics very interesting. But for now, I'll stick to music," he says.

### **Sudanese woman makes a new beginning in Calgary, after tragedy in South Africa**

Prissy Wai Wai's world had crashed when she lost her husband in a car crash in Malawi, southern Africa, where he had a United Nations job. Waiwai had three children by then and the prospect of raising her three children without him was daunting.

The challenge was greater because Waiwai is from the south of the Sudan which was at the time seriously embroiled in civil war. "I had lost most of my relatives in the war and did not know where those, who were alive, could be. So I really had no family. The home country was in ruins and I was alone in the world with the only assets being my children," she says.

So naturally Waiwai turned to the UN refugee agency, UNHCR and later made a new beginning in Canada, settling down in the province of Calgary in Alberta.

"The struggle all along is about getting into the system in Canada," says Waiwai. "In Malawi, I was independent. My husband was a diplomat and life was good. But I lost all status the day he died. In Canada, unfortunately I had to depend on the government. I found that degrading."



But Waiwai says she humbled herself, doing whatever it took to send her kids to school so that some day they might become achievers.

That said, Waiwai got her first and current job within weeks of arrival at the medical clinic of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Service (CCIS) agency, where she serves as a Health Support Coordinator. It's a clinic with a health program that serves all government-sponsored refugees in Calgary. The program does general health screening, linking clients with CCIS councillors, if necessary. Waiwai has a Bachelor's degree in Community Development and Communications.

Waiwai says she has felt discriminated in Calgary although racism is very subtle there. "You cannot see it, but you feel it in the actions of people who appear to treat you differently from others of mainstream culture. I have also had a problem with my accent. Often I have been pushed to write the words I speak," she says. "But that said, Canadian society is friendly."

She says all along she has tried to treat people equally, always tolerant to other faiths. Likewise, Waiwai says she would like others to treat people as equal human beings, not in accordance with their colour, rank or background.

"What I have learnt in Canada is that one needs to truly work hard and that when you do, one will find many great friends who are supportive and will provide a hand to lighten your burden along the road of life."



## **Ghana's accomplished pianist torn between home and Canada**

Toria Aidoo's father was a politician in Ghana and among the first ministers in the Nkrumah government. But when Nkrumah was shifting government policy towards the left, he opposed him in parliament. That signalled the beginning of the end of his political career – he lost his job in government, was jailed, tortured and declared a political detainee.

A couple of years later the military overthrew Nkrumah and life in Ghana became worse for those who cherished freedom. Toria's mother, at the time, was running a successful school and so had wanted her daughter to get an education degree. It's just as well, she travelled to Canada and got her degree in education. Toria could have returned to mom and dad with a spanking, new degree, had she not met with Kwamena, a microbiologist and research fellow at the University of Alberta, whom she married.

Kwamena was looking to return to Ghana at some point. There was a sense of having to share what you have with your country, Toria says. In Ghana, it is said, it takes a village to educate a child. Kwamena therefore always felt the obligation of going back. "In Canada, no matter how hard you work, there is no sense of fulfilment," she says. "That was Kwamena's feeling. At home one felt recognized as a contributing fellow of society. The bonds at home are much stronger."

But Toria wanted the best of both worlds. And so this dilemma of whether to up and go continued for many years. And Citizenship and Immigration Canada didn't make the decision any easier. Although Toria got her degree in education in Canada, she still could not score the passing mark of 70 points mandatory to qualify for landed immigrant status. So she was twice declined.

The Aidoo's packed bag and baggage and went home to Ghana choosing to make a difference in one's home country. But things had changed. "Ghana at that time was on an economic and political decline" Toria says. "They didn't treat you well. I felt I deserved better. So back I came to Canada in 1994 and this time



around qualified for landed immigrant status."

Toria is an accomplished pianist, has a private music studio and gives a couple of recitals a year in Halifax. "But I was brought up in a colonial time, so I sang in choirs and orchestras but did not get a sense of traditional music," she says. Now she's doing her Master's thesis in educational administration and is hoping to write a thesis as well on African drumming. "I realize now that music is my vehicle to change people's lives."

On a social level, she volunteers for the African Canadian Women's Association and manages the children's program. "These children feel a sense of displacement and lowered self-esteem and we deal with those issues," she says.

But it's going to be music that's going to take her further afield. "At this time, my soul is seeking to bring other races to the table and with music surmount the barriers that separate us," she says. "When you see something that's wrong and you cannot do anything about it...try touching someone's heart with music."

### **Angolan wins Humanitarian Recipient Award**

**E**dward Matwawana, whose name is like music to the ears, flew back to Halifax from Alberta last year where he was honoured with the Humanitarian Recipient Award. This was part of the Canadian National Griot Awards, which has been created to recognize the achievement of Black Canadians as well as



develop self-esteem among youth of Black heritage.

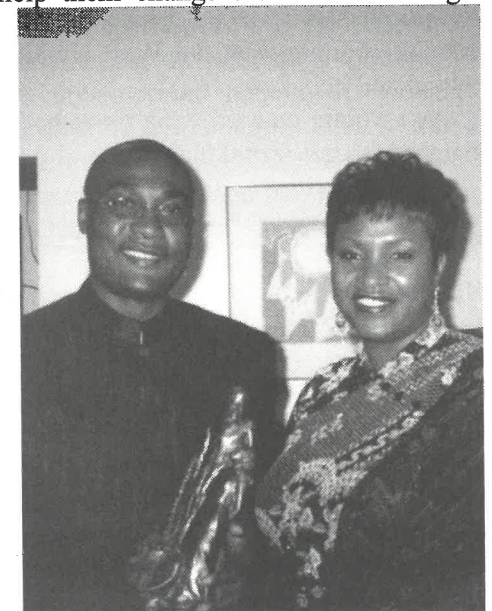
Matwawana, who founded the band Afro-Musica, to correct, through music and song, the wrong notions of Africa and Africans in the West, lived the first part of his life as a refugee, fleeing war in the Congo and later in Angola. The son of a pastor whose mission is tied to the peace and reconciliation work of the Canadian Baptist organization, Matwawana is currently steering and developing the Second Chance Program at the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Education and Development (CEED) in Halifax. It's a program that provides mentorship and support to disenfranchised youth in trouble with the law.

"The assumption at CEED is that young offenders have entrepreneurial talents that have been misdirected," says Matwawana. "Stealing, for example, requires you to plan and execute with some determination and an understanding that you would either succeed or fail. That is entrepreneurship, misdirected."

He says that out of the many scores of young offenders that have been mentored at CEED last year, only three have gone back to jail. The goal is to help them change their world through creating a new environment, where they think of work rather than crime when the chips are down, he says.

So, while Matwawana has his parents and wife and family to thank for his achievements, he says CEED has been a factor in this. It was the organization that nominated him for the awards.

Although John



Matwawana, his father, fled the Congo and Angola earlier for fear of being kidnapped, Edward followed him to Canada in 1983 and studied at the Atlantic Baptist University in Moncton and then got his degree in sociology and psychology at Acadia university where he met his wife Celena who migrated to Canada from Bermuda.

Now, apart from focusing energies on struggling youth, Matwana has developed alliances with the East Coast music industry and co-founded the African Nova Scotian Music Association. In doing so he has been able to introduce young Blacks to the Junos. His own band, Afro-Musica, had released its new CD "Kongo Connexion" last year. Although most of the group's songs are sung in African languages, some songs such as "Give us Freedom" and "Shake Away" have choruses in English and refer to the unfortunate colonization of Africa and the repression of its people.

As president of the African Heritage Foundation, he has been fundraising to ship medical and school supplies to Sierra Leone and last year he was steering a campaign to build a school in rural Ghana, hoping this will have a domino effect and result in schools mushrooming across rural Africa. "If things have to change in Africa, change must be driven by Africans," he says. "Africans from the continent in the West should feel responsible and look behind and help."

As a young man growing up at home, he says, we were taught that true leaders spend their energies nurturing other leaders.

### **Nigerian youth in PEI says succeeding in Canada sometimes means denying who you are**

**I**fo Ikede emigrated out of Nigeria with the family in 1989 when his father, a veterinary pathologist, got a job at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI). Ikede initially did engineering at UPEI and later came to the Technical University of Nova Scotia. He was researching technical solutions that could be employed in remote regions of the world. "The idea was to provide internet,

telephone and cable TV solutions to the remotest parts of Africa," he says. And for Ikede, the idea gained some momentum when Ottawa, in fact, talked about connecting people in the remote regions of Canada with internet solutions. He's getting somewhere with that already. He's looking to do a project in Tobago and Trinidad, trying to provide affordable internet access to remote communities there.

But the call to return to Nigeria is a strong one, he says. "I'm not at home in this country – and I am not made welcome either. There is a lot of talk about multiculturalism and tolerance – a word I despise, because I want to be respected as a human being and not merely tolerated."

Ikede says people have preconceived notions of Africans. "That's why I see people following me at stores. That's why I cannot rent a home once I show up at the superintendent's office. That is why I am always stopped by police and interrogated when I'm driving. I see police harassing kids on Gottingen and Creighton street all the time. I don't feel safe calling the police," he says.

He also makes the point that one does not see diversity in the positions of power - in the legislature, for example. In the police force, there are a negligible few Blacks and Natives. "If this region of Canada was welcoming, one would see a greater spread of diversity. One is encouraged to assimilate, but that's possible only among Eurocentric cultures," he says. He thinks of our governing structure as a dictatorship in the guise of democracy. "If that's not true, the tar ponds in Sydney - where the

**Ikede says people have preconceived notions of Africans. "That's why I see people following me at stores. That's why I cannot rent a home once I show up at the superintendent's office. That is why I am always stopped by police and interrogated when I'm driving. I don't feel safe calling the police," he says.**



marginalized live - would have been cleared long ago. That's environmental racism. One can see that as well on Gottingen street which has become the city's dump."

Ikede is a Christian by birth. "But the version of Christianity I've seen in the West is different from the spirituality at home," he says. "The Church in the West is judgmental. Thus, I do not carry the label with me. Likewise, I do not believe our peacekeeping forces should be trained to kill. Our peacekeeping funds are going to further destruction while children in this country go hungry. We have the infrastructure, the food and yet the poverty."

It's very obvious that Ikede is not going to feel at home in Canada until he sees our societies change from his perspective. In order to succeed in Canada, he says, it may sometimes mean denying who you are - denying your identity. But, of course, Ikede realizes there are problems everywhere - no society is exempt. "There are problems everywhere, indeed. But with some there are myths and elsewhere there's truth. I like to be on the side of truth."

But in the end, few can deny a measure of gratitude to Canada. "Of course I am grateful to be in Canada," he says. "Don't get me wrong. But at the same time, I am ashamed."

### **Ugandan flees Idi Amin's regime, sets up million dollar IT business in Canada**

**M**ario DeMello has had to break barriers and remove the road blocks on his way out of Uganda and on the way up to where he is today. When Uganda's late dictator Idi Amin determined that all Asians would leave his country within 90 days, DeMello was a boy of 22. With the rest of the family in other parts of the world, D'Mello had to sneak out, so to speak, all alone. His UN passport counted for nothing on the streets of

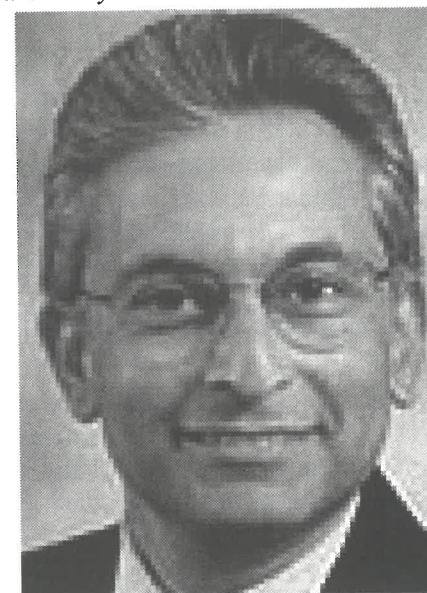
Uganda, patrolled by soldiers, nor the fact that UN statutes do not allow regimes to expel its citizens.

But DeMello fled Uganda with a couple of home-grown secrets. The Canadian consular office in Kampala at the time, flew out some 300 people who met the basic criteria and an Air Canada jet flew him down to Montreal where he got used clothing and a government loan that he paid back almost as soon as he was in a job.

DeMello chose to come to Halifax and not Calgary and Saint John where he had had a sister and brother residing. It's an adage the immigrant learns quickly: *Go to where the jobs are*. Bizzare as this may sound today, the jobs for DeMello at the time were in Halifax where he was made three offers - all at the same time - and he chose to grab the one from Maritime Life.

One would think that the principal barrier for an immigrant is the English language. But that's a stereotype. The hangover of British colonialism in Uganda filtered through the school curriculum and even the social environment and so English was the least of DeMello's problems. But new environments challenge the newcomer to quickly integrate or get out. "Sport was the catalyst in my case," says DeMello. "Sport breaks down barriers. People on the field judge you not by your background but by your abilities." Thus as part of teams in field hockey, cricket and soft ball, he found a bunch of friends.

But DeMello says the people who made him feel at home were people at Maritime Life. An invitation to a Christmas dinner, to a hockey game and to a drink at the pub are some of his





dear erstwhile memories. Nonetheless, life is about moving on and when he figured he could make more money out on his own, he put his self-taught programming skills to the grind and set up business. DeMello says there were ups and downs with a client going bankrupt and so he moved back and forth into jobs until in 1986 he launched DDA Computer Consultants Limited with business partner Patrick d'Entremont. "It's been great since then," he says.

DDA's focus is customer software development – the software specialists write computer programs for companies – but it also provides internet solutions, everything from designing a basic web site to providing e-commerce solutions. DeMello says the company does a couple of million dollars worth of business. "Right now, we're even building strategic alliances – and have a new contract with a large cruise organization in the US," he says.

DeMello says he has stumbled over racist slurs. "But when this would happen, my Canadian friends felt more slighted than I and I would have to calm them down." He says he would tell him that discrimination happens everywhere, but with every generation society improves, especially by way of tolerance.

"Canadian born business people should make a greater effort to know immigrant entrepreneurs," DeMello says. "Who is better qualified to open doors in other countries than the person who just arrived from that country? Besides, the more people you know from different cultures, the more respect you have for the world," he says. "And you're a richer person for it."

### **Sudan refugee determined to change course for young children**

**J**acob Deng, knows what it is to lose hope, see a brother shot, flee from a country at age seven, live on roots and leaves and trade tobacco for goats to pay for schooling. He came to Canada after a long ordeal and a youth that was troubled with misfortune. "Canada may be a great country and I am very grateful to it, but this is not the real world," he says.

It's that notion that's urging him to change the lives of people in his own country. "There can be no peace without education for its people," Deng says.

Deng's project "Wings of Hope" is an ambitious one and envisages the building of schools for war-affected children. "That is because it is through education that results of any peaceful settlement to the current conflict in the Sudan will be achieved holistically," he says.

Deng left home at the age of seven with some 200,000 other boys who were being threatened with death by militias from northern Sudan. He had by then lost his father and mother, six brothers and a couple of nephews in the civil war.

The Sudan has been ravaged by war since 1983 and over two million lives have already been lost. Deng says that since 1988, Arab militias from the north have been seeking to eliminate young boys in the south of the country, rich with oil resources and largely Christian. Their invasions into the south, he says, has either involved murder, rape, the destruction of villages or the taking into slavery of young boys.

Deng had trekked to Ethiopia, living on roots and leaves and hunting wild animals, steaming mud from dry river beds for water. Then in a refugee camp in Ethiopia, Deng began school, under tree shades which served as classrooms and mud floors which served as blackboards. But with strife in Africa looming large across the continent, he trekked across the border into Kenya during the war in Ethiopia. Deng says, it took a lot of determination to make his way through schools without money and without food.

When he could no longer study in Kenya's boarding school because of the lack of money, he walked back to Sudan, risking life and was even once picked up by rebel militia to serve as a child soldier. But weaving his way out of trouble, Deng says he finally got to Sudan, traded his school bag for tobacco and then traded tobacco for goats and hitch-hiked his way back to Kenya to begin schooling again richer by 3,500 Kenyan shillings.

Later help from UNICEF and UN officials brightened Deng's days somewhat and in later years life changed after a

meeting with a Canadian First Secretary. Deng's ambitious project for the construction of schools in remote rural villages of the Sudan is already getting some support from business organizations. He is making presentations to different audiences in the Province and is seeking to register a Charity organization that would make fundraising possible.

It's just the beginning of an ambitious project but as Deng says. "This is an unshakeable project and I am an unshakeable man,"



## CHAPTER 9

### Emigration out of Asia Pacific

It's almost like a tale of two cities. Those were the bad times and those were the good times. Social chaos and the terror of warlords, widespread opium addiction and severe poverty dominated the last decade of the nineteenth century in China and marked a low point in its two thousand years of recorded history. But in tandem, there was the exciting discovery of gold in California and in Canada work had begun on the Canadian Pacific Railways. So the Chinese came, they saw and they settled.

Wilfred Laurier's government in 1896 had disapproved of the immigration of Asians and subsequently introduced discriminatory legislation, but Chinese arrivals on the West Coast continued to increase and by 1921 there were about 40,000 Chinese in Canada.

Alfred Lee, the grandson of Ngoon Lee, who came to Canada in 1903 says the first Chinese to set foot in the Maritimes was Fong Choy who came in 1890. Choy set up a laundry, later a restaurant and then moved to Newfoundland before settling down in Bermuda.

Mary Mohammed's mother, Mrs Ling was sold to a wealthy Canadian family in the last decade of the nineteenth century by some two old women in China who promised her candy if she went away with them. She was put on board a ship and brought to Vancouver at the age of eleven. Mary tells her story in this book.

Chinese men, other than merchants, missionaries or diplomats were unwelcome in Canada. Mrs Ling's husband came to Canada

in 1900 on a cargo ship and paid the mandatory head tax imposed on all Chinese immigrants at the time. Chinese merchants at the time would bring poor Chinese girls, on the pretext of they being adopted daughters, to work as their maids and somehow some would be traded. Many of them were ill-treated. The Chinese at the time went to segregated schools.

*Under the Willow Tree* a documentary produced by Canada's National Film Board, poignantly tells the story of the early life of the Chinese in Canada through the mouths of their grandchildren and depicts the hardship of settlement. It documents the worst of Chinese memories in Canada. The Chinese Exclusion Act, proclaimed on Dominion Day 1923, halted their immigration, separated families and forced an exodus of about 10,000 Chinese out of Canada.

The early immigration of Chinese, Japanese and Indians to Canada's shores at the turn of the century had created a strong anti-Asian antipathy among native Canadian groups and in many ways these developments conspired to push the government toward making immigration policy more restrictive and discriminatory. As a consequence riots broke out in Vancouver in 1907. The riots, if anything, were a burst of anger smouldering in BC's Asian communities. A giant anti-Asian parade staged on the streets of Vancouver to protest Asian immigration to Canada had ignited the rampage.

Much antipathy was already brewing after reports confirmed that the Grand Trunk Pacific had plans to import thousands of Japanese to work on the railway's western leg. Consequently, Canadians began to view the Japanese as threats to their cultural integrity. The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 brought a new dimension to this growing hatred. BC's white residents regarded the Japanese as aggressive, loyal first to Japan and eager to further their country's expansionist goals.

In an attempt to stem the rising immigrant tide, the Trades and Labour Council formed the Asiatic Exclusive League which organized that giant parade to protest. A stone thrown at them from a Chinese store provoked the riots which resulted in extensive damage to buildings. In the aftermath of the riots, the

Laurier government placated the BC government as well as Japan - but in order to appease white British Columbians, it told the Japanese government to limit emigration of its citizens to Canada.

The abnormally large numbers of Asian arrivals were through Hawaii. So, legislation was put in place to ban immigration by way of Hawaii as well as to prohibit companies from importing contract labour. Mackenzie King, the Labour Minister in Laurier's government also sought to stem the immigrant tide from India. This was done by way of an amendment to the Immigration Act. The amendment introduced what came to be known as the "Continuous Journey Regulation" under which potential immigrants would be required to travel to Canada by continuous passage from their country of origin. Since no shipping company operated a direct service from India to Canadian shores, this ingenious legislation served to ban all immigration from India.

The first wave of Japanese immigrants, called Issei, arrived between 1877 and 1928. The Issei were invariably young and came from poor and overcrowded fishing and farming villages. The early immigrants, veterans of the Canadian Army from the First World War and the Canadian-born children suffered the harsh bruises of a racist society and were subject to massive discriminatory legislation, which meant being excluded from employment in specific industrial sectors and trades.

During World War 1, opponents of Asian immigration in BC argued that Japanese children were a threat to the health and progress of white children and should be removed from schools. Later, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, Canada invoked the War Measures Act and stripped Japanese-Canadians of their civil rights. The government ordered their removal from the West Coast and in the following year about 20,000 Japanese Canadians were despatched to internment camps.

Novelist Joy Kogowa, born to Japanese Canadian parents in 1935, poignantly tells the story in her novel *Obasan*, which is a portrayal of the Japanese-Canadian evacuation, internment and dispersal during World War II when Canada was at war with Japan. When in 1942 the whole coast of BC was cleared of



anyone of Japanese descent, Kogowa was put on a train and shipped to Slocan where she lived in a dingy hut. Today, in Toronto, she works to restore the damaged pride of a people immensely loyal to a country that betrayed them.

David Suzuki (1936) who through his radio and TV programs introduced scientific concepts to the people of Canada, suffered the same humility as did author Shizuye Takashima (1928) who like Suzuki, although born of Canadian-born parents, was interned in camps.

The Japanese who migrated to Canada in the last couple of decades do not necessarily relate to this erstwhile history of the early Japanese in Canada. Tetsuro Shigematsu, a famous television and radio host in Vancouver says: "I feel myself in opposition to my situation. While living in Japan, I never felt more proud to be Canadian." In Canada, he says, he is often reminded that he is Japanese, but that this has more to do with people's perception of him rather than his own.

Shigematsu says nationalism is a bane of the twenty first century. "It's blind sentiment and has nothing to do with right or wrong," he says. "I am Japanese genetically, but not Japanese at all. The Japanese wouldn't include me in their definition of the Japanese identity. So what is this thing about identity."

In the 1980s the community focused much of its energy lobbying for the redress of war-time wrongs which the federal government acknowledged and made good through compensations to those deprived of rights and freedoms in Canada during World War II. Japanese Canadians today are marginally represented in Canada's political life. Japanese architect Raymond Moriyama has international fame as do writers and poets Roy Miki, Joy Kogawa and Rick Shiomi.

Canadian missionaries had begun pastoral work in the historic Hamgyong province of Korea in 1898. But there was little Korean immigration to Canada prior to World War II. If anything, the Korean war which sent northerners fleeing toward the south as refugees, may have resulted in some emigration. By about 1967 formal diplomatic relations had also been established with Korea. The 1996 census of Canada recorded a total of

66,655 people claiming Korean ancestry – the majority of Koreans, however, reside in Ontario.

In Toronto one can see a Korean small business neighbourhood on Bloor Street West where Korean restaurants, bakeries, gift shops and travel agencies have mushroomed. In tandem, Korean conglomerates have set up branch offices in Canada, the most notable being Hyundai and Samsung, while three Korean banks – Korea Exchange, Chohung and Hanil credit unions have set up operations as well. The *Korea Times Daily*, *New Korea Times* and *Korea News* are the three most prominent Korean newspapers in Canada, but there are also Korean language broadcasting stations that can be found in the larger settlement areas. The churches (United and Presbyterian) are central to Korean community life. But, of course, there are also a substantial number of Roman Catholics and Buddhists – devoted adherents of Korea's dominant religion.

The Boat People, as the fleeing south Vietnamese were called, looked to Canada and the United States for refuge when in 1975, the communist North went to war with the South. In tandem, the Khmer Rouge- the Communist Party of Cambodia, had unleashed a reign of terror between 1975 and 1978 led by Pol Pot. Vietnam ended that reign when it invaded Cambodia, but in turn provoked a war with China. As hostilities mounted, some 700,000 ethnic Chinese from the North fled the country between 1978 and 1982. Canada accepted approximately 77,000 of these refugees, most of whom had endured several days in small, leaky boats, prey to vicious pirate attacks, before ending up in squalid camps in Thailand and Malaysia.

Terry Nguyen who tells his story in this book says there were Thai pirates out there at sea, waiting to attack boat passengers and take their possessions. "We were attacked seven times," he says. "These guys in boats were encircling our boat on the high seas. Then when they had boarded our boat, they flashed their guns, ripped up pieces of baggage and took away their spoils. When they had finished, another group of pirates would come along."

Vietnamese Canadians have spread out across Canada. The



new arrivals have set up enterprises including restaurants and food processing companies while many are herbalists and acupuncture specialists. The community has created strong group support systems in order to propitiate a national culture in exile through a combination of student societies, professional, religious and political organizations. Buddhism and Christianity are the two major religions of the Vietnamese. The Buddhist temples are central to their community life.



*The Vancouver Riots in 1907 damaged public property*



*Mr. Ling who came to Canada in 1900 delivers his farm produce to residents of Gottingen in Halifax*



## **Bakery entrepreneur says parents were among earliest Chinese to land in Vancouver**

**M**ary Mohammed of Mary's Bread Basket fame in Halifax, looks back on life today and says she has no regrets. "The world is a beautiful place. I feel free as a bird and life has been good to me." Mary obviously counts her blessings by the flowers that bloom. "Sometimes, unpleasant memories resurrect themselves," she says. "But I quickly dispel them."

Mrs Ling, her mother was sold to a wealthy Vancouver family by some two old women in China who promised her candy if she went away with them. Ling later told Mary, her daughter, that she always cried in her little years wanting to know more about her family.

She came to Vancouver when she was barely 11. The host family did not send her to school. Apparently, Mrs Ling did the domestic chores for the Canadian family who got her married, later, to Mr. Ling who came to Canada in 1900 on a cargo ship and paid the mandatory head tax imposed on all Chinese immigrants at the time. The Lings were married in 1918 and came to New Glasgow soon after.

In a long drawn chat at her house in Halifax, Mary told one of the authors of this book some poignant stories about growing up Chinese.

"The single Chinese men who would visit our home and have meals with us never treated me well. They were good to my brother but caustic in the things they would say to me. They always told me I was no good. The custom was to favour boys who would ultimately become more productive. They excluded me from the Chinese lessons. But my mom loved me dearly and so I grew up a happy child," Mary says.

She says schooling was traumatic too. "We were not allowed to speak English at home and at school it was only an English-speaking environment and everything felt so foreign to me. I was

mortified of the teachers, although they were good to me and assigned a few peers to look after me."

Mary talks of her encounter with racism as a matter of fact. She says a friend in school once called her home, but her mother who appeared at the door slammed the door shut on her. The following day her friend came crying to her saying she could not play with Mary because she was Chinese. "I was confused. I did not know what was wrong about being Chinese," she

says. "Apparently we were supposed to be the scary creatures of the world, pictured in cartoons with pigtails, slanted eyes and eating rats."

The fact of being Chinese, she says, was something that she was reminded of again and again. "When I was interviewed for a job at a store, the manager tried to fondle me and I resisted that," she says. "I was later told I could not get the job because I was Chinese." Mary says she felt the same discrimination when a property developer hesitated to sell her a plot, not sure if the neighbours would approve of her.

But looking back, Mary likes to laugh at some of the other events in her life. Father was once taken to court, she says, for possession of a tonic. "The police were looking for opium in our house and when they found this clay pot, they broke it up and the potion fell to the floor. Assuming this was opium, father was dragged to court," she says laughing aloud. Mary says that was Chinese tonic, made from white-tipped deer tails, several snakes, Chinese herbs, red dates, seal penis, gin, hop and pieces of crow.

In 1955, Mary got married to the late Mo Mohammed, a scientist at the Naval Research Department, where she worked as





well. Mo was a Trinidadian of Indian descent. Together they had three boys and a girl.

Although Mary accepts that her values of honesty and hard work are akin to the values of any Canadian, she says she feels very Chinese and is very Chinese at heart. "Unfortunately, when I married Mo, the Chinese people were prejudiced and ostracized my family, saying I was a disgrace to the Chinese." Mary says that action hurt, because, in those early days her mother did everything for Chinese newcomers to settle in.

Mary's Bread Basket, for which she is famous today, was opened in 1983 and although she says it's been a struggle all through, the bakery has won awards from the *Coast Reader's* Poll for the best cinnamon buns for the last six years. But Mary realizes that man does not live on bread alone. She lives on every ounce of joy that life brings her.

### **Hotel entrepreneur's father paid race-prejudiced head tax to come to Canada in 1923**

**D**ow and Dan Fong's father came to Campbellton in New Brunswick in 1923 after paying a head tax through his nose. This was the mandatory tax of \$500 imposed by racist-driven legislation that sought to bar the Chinese from entering Canada.

The senior Fong came, nonetheless, with his wife, made a modest investment in Canada Café the same year, dispensed petrol out of a gas tank to people in the community and rented out two of the three cars in his possession. "One of the three cars," says Dan, "always needed fixing."

Dow and Dan, born in Canada, were brought up during the depression years and, like everybody else then, saw difficult times. They were obviously among the first few Chinese to set

foot in New Brunswick - the others engaged only in the laundry business. The Lee family is known to have opened the first laundry on Lower Water Street in Halifax.

Dow says going to school was fun - despite the name calling - and recalls the rhyme: "Ching Ching Chinaman, sitting on a fence. Trying to make a dollar with 15 cents." The boys went to The Acadian School which, Dow says, taught three grades in one classroom.

By 1940, Dow's half-brother Quon had opened Bon Ton Café on the corner of Barrington and Sackville street in Halifax and that was to set the trend for several new business ventures in the future. When Dow was out of high school, he joined the navy, becoming the first Chinese to enroll in the services this side of Canada. Dan, of course was exempted from naval school and instead, studied engineering, becoming the second Chinese to graduate from Nova Scotia Tech, after Chuck Lee.

Dan says Lee could not get a job as an engineer, because of obvious discrimination, and so did translations and interpreting for a living. "Of course, I was discriminated against too. So I left for the United States and worked for Boeing until I retired."

The Fong's today are better known for their Garden View



*Dow Fong with the first batch of naval cadets of diverse cultures in the region*

restaurant in Dartmouth. The Spring Garden road branch had to come down to make place for the city's development plans. It had opened on Spring Garden Road in 1944, competing at the time with restaurants like the Green Lantern and the Cameo.

"That was a time when people sat down for elegant dining. After that there was the invasion of the fast food chains that put us out of style. Fast food has affected fine dining restaurants like ours," says Dow, who since leaving the navy worked as a chef for the family-owned Garden View restaurant. "But people are drawn to cultural food and that is why it's business as usual for the Garden View," he says. Dow's son, Greg, now manages the restaurant.

But nationhood is an accident of birth as some contend and Dow and Dan say they do not feel rooted in China. Dan does not speak Chinese. "Sometimes, you feel you don't fit in your own culture," says Dow. "We don't hang out much with the Chinese – I mix with likeminded people. We don't speak the language and our lifestyles are different," he says. "The Chinese – distinguished by their regions – are a little like the Irish, the Welsh and the Scots: they do not get along," says Dan.

He says Sr. Fong was broadminded. "Unlike other Chinese families in Canada at the time, he wanted us to speak English at home. 'When in Rome, do as the Romans,' he would say," says Dan. "As a consequence, other Chinese people would call us 'uncivilized.'"

### **Chinese astronaut says he feels very Canadian, not rooted in China**

**C**aptain Terry Wong has been flying high in Canada and could soon make a debut in space. But his father who first made a landing in Toronto had his feet firmly on the ground. He had begun life in Canada as a dishwasher in a Toronto restaurant.

He lived in the restaurant's basement never able to catch those winks of sleep because the restaurant boys would fly down the stairs every now and then to pick up supplies. He went to night school to study English and work his way up.

His wife joined him from China only later. She had to escape communist rule anyway. Ms

Wong was from the economic middle class of the province and she and her sister were made to witness executions of wealthy people as a way of deterring them from creating wealth.

Captain Wong was raised in small town Thornbury in Ontario. "Growing up Chinese never affected me," he says. "I never experienced racism. There must have been a time when someone hollered out to me, saying 'hey Chinese boy', but I never took that personally. Canada will always have a special place in my heart."

One of the many challenges that confront an immigrant who uproots himself from the home country and moves to another, where everything is like another planet, is his sense of identity and his loyalties to his roots. But Captain Wong says he has had no identity crisis. "I consider myself Canadian. I do not feel rooted in China. Mom and dad never discussed China with me. You see when you have been made to witness executions, you do not speak well of that country," he says.

Captain Wong first took off the ground as a teenager, obtaining his pilot's license when he was 17. No more than four years later he was a commercial pilot flying for Collingwood





Airways. He received his Bachelor of Aeronautical and Mechanical Engineering from McGill in 1989 and in the same year joined the Canadian forces as a pilot. By 1993, Captain Wong was an instructor pilot on the Canadair CT-114 Tutor Jet at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, where he also completed his Masters in Engineering.

Captain Wong was part of Canada's six-astronaut team competing for the X-Prize, which was launched to jumpstart the space travel industry. He is now currently involved in designing and training for the launch of the space vehicle in 2006.

He says he has experienced up to 9G in a centrifuge and was a test subject for the CF-18 Hornet at Cold Lake Alberta to determine the effects of negative G loading, prior to positive G loading on a human's ability to maintain consciousness. As Captain Wong explains, gravity in a space aircraft quadruples the pilot's body weight causing the heart to beat faster. But he was able to spin at 9G in a centrifuge without passing out.

Currently, while preparing for the launch of the space vehicle, he's taking people through centrifuge training, teaching students to land on water with a simulator.

But the best part about knowing Captain Wong is that he's afraid of height and afraid of water. "Dad had taught me two things," he says. "Courage is not the absence of fear, but the realization that there are more important things; and that the brave may not live forever, but the cautious do not live at all."

### **Vietnamese family trades life-threatening sea ordeal to come to Canada**

When the communists took power in Vietnam in 1975, boats crammed with fleeing Vietnamese were taking off routinely and Terry Nguyen's father chose to take the leap on one of them in August 1979. At the time, there were Chinese agents faking identity papers and so the Nguyens filed their papers as

Chinese residents whose departure from Vietnam was, in fact, facilitated by the Vietnamese government.

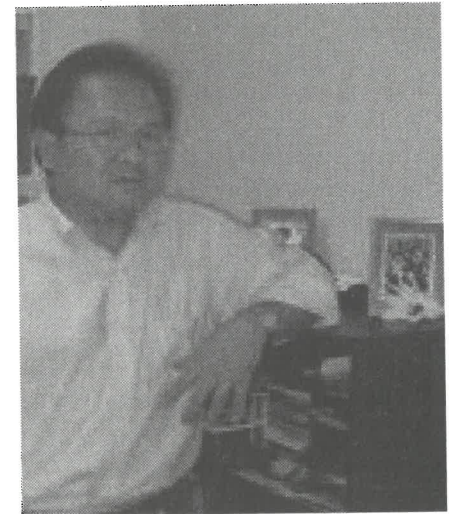
Nguyen and the family were taking a boat to Malaysia, but the road to the island where a boat could be boarded was monitored. "We could have been caught and jailed," says Terry Nguyen, who was about 20 years at the time. "This was a 24-metre boat on which 523 Vietnamese were fleeing. Then it got worse once we were in international waters."

Nguyen says there were Thai pirates out there at sea, waiting to attack boat passengers and take their possessions. "We were attacked seven times," he says. "These guys in boats were encircling our boat on the high seas. Then when they had boarded our boat, they flashed their guns, ripped up pieces of baggage and took away their spoils. When they had finished, another group of pirates would come along."

The last batch of pirates finally stole the boat engine. "We kept floating in the middle of the sea. We looked for birds for the comfort of knowing we were close to shore but there were none. The Nguyens were at sea for five days and on the last couple of days lived without food or water. "Ironically, the last group of pirates who saw we were desperate and with no possessions threw us some food from their boats," Nguyen said. Ultimately this boat was rescued by a German ship.

Looking back, Nguyen says "Freedom is not free, That's what we had to trade for freedom." When in the refugee camp in Malaysia, a Canadian officer convinced the Nguyens that Canada was a better destination than the United States. Thus later the family settled in Truro beginning a new life in a new world.

"We would cycle to work," says Nguyen. "But the kids who





would cycle alongside us out of curiosity, would sometimes spit at us and for a long time we ignored that," he says. Nguyen believes the times are a changing but even today when things go wrong, racism surfaces, he says. "I've heard people say the Vietnamese grow pot and become prosperous. That denigrates an entire society. That's incorrect."

At the time Nguyen worked for Polymer International and went to university. In Halifax he did a few semesters in engineering at Saint Mary's University and later despite opposition from his parents, married his wife. Now Nguyen is a computer analyst at IMP International. But he remembers the hard times even in Canada. "At a point in time, I delivered pizza, drove a taxi and washed dishes in three different jobs in order to pay back my student loans and feed the family. I worked from 6:00 in the morning to 2:00 in the night and I did this for two years.

"My life has all along been full of challenges," Nguyen says, his eyes turning somewhat moist. A couple of years ago, while the family was travelling back from Montreal, a major accident caused the car to overturn and in that flash of a moment, Nguyen lost his youngest son.

"I almost died. I was in induced coma for almost three weeks. But after the death of my son, life is no more the same again," Nguyen says. "Now every day I spend a couple of hours with mom and dad who are well into their eighties and I visit my son's grave every day as well to spend sometime with him. I find giving him that quality time everyday, gives me a comforting feeling as well."

### **Vancouver's top broadcaster says nationalism is bane of this century.**

**A**t a point in time, the senior Shigematsu had decided that the sun had come to set on the British empire and that it was time to leave England. He was looking for the space – that would



see him fulfill his dream and aspirations, says his son Tetsuro. So he quit his job at the *BBC* and came to Canada.

Although Shigematsu started out as a playwright, he initially trained as a painter working with some of the best artists in the country and completed his BFA at Concordia. Then he took after his father and turned to broadcasting. He is now a famous Canadian radio broadcaster and comedian and the current host of *CBC* Radio One's afternoon series *The Roundup* in British Columbia. Shigematsu is a storyteller and has brought an inimitable wit and style to the program.

He has done excellent comedy roles at the Winnipeg Comedy Festival and on *CBC* Radio's *Madly Off in All Directions*. He's currently working on his first feature film "*Yellow Sella*" which he says is an "angry ethnic comedy." Shigematsu also founded *Hot Sauce Posse* which in his words is "Canada's only full-colour sketch comedy troupe." It's a group of like-minded people who share some irreverent sensibilities and through humour, expose racial stereotypes and break the existing taboos.

Shigematsu sounds white, but looks very Japanese and it would be natural to ask him what was growing up Japanese in Canada like. But Shigematsu says he has experienced no identity turmoil. "I feel myself in opposition to my situation. While living

in Japan, I never felt more proud to be Canadian". In Canada, he says he is often reminded that he is Japanese, but this has more to do with people's perception of him rather than his own.

Shigematsu says nationalism is a bane of the twenty first century. "It's blind sentiment and has nothing to do with right or wrong," he says. "I am Japanese genetically, but not Japanese at all. The Japanese wouldn't include me in their definition of the Japanese identity. So what is this thing about identity."

In Canada you see a lack of overt flag-raising nationalism, he says, and that is how it ought to be. I cherish being Canadian, but we keep that to ourselves. This notion of dying for one's country is truly the scourge of this century. This is political nationalism. In many ways, Shigematsu may be right – looking back in history you see that most wars have been fought in the name of nationhood, if not religion.

Shigematsu has experienced racism in Canada and says he could point out explicit racism. But I don't worry for myself. I find it hard to recall them. I don't roll those incidents in my mind. But he says that he is, instead, more conscious of this on a social level. "The media is racist and it's very easy to stereotype people by the images one puts up on screen or in the columns of a newspaper. That's what I am hyper-conscious about."

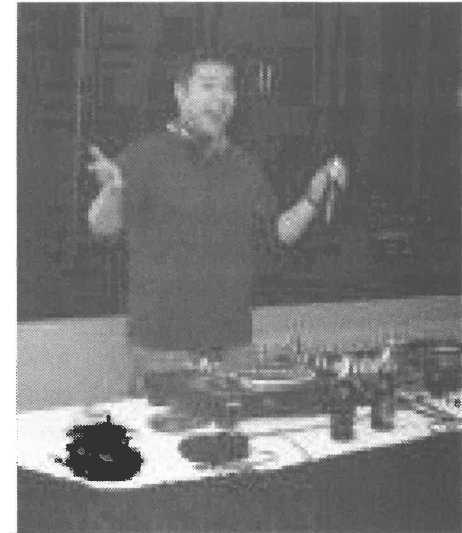
Shigematsu's wife is of Iranian descent and shows him how to live the good life.

### Author dwells on conflict of growing up Chinese in white societies

Terry Woo's parents came to Canada back in 1968. The two of them had earlier moved to Hong Kong after the civil war, and to Taiwan for tertiary education. But later Mr. Woo senior was looking to do graduate studies in Chemical engineering and so turned to Canada, where he finally did his

Masters at Waterloo and a PhD at McMaster in Toronto.

Woo, who calls himself Ter, says his memories of growing up in Canada are a bunch too many to recount. "My favourite one was that my dad bought this hot silver Mustang, but as a baby, I kicked the passenger side seat so much that they had to trade it in for a monstrous green Impala."



Growing up Chinese in Canada wasn't particularly easy, Ter says. "Dad got his first job out of school in Chemical Valley down in Sarnia. There weren't many Asians there at the time, and I was bullied at school. Those experiences really shaped my passion and politics, and I worked out a lot of ghosts in writing *Banana Boys*."

People with a recognizable diverse culture, may have had some difficult times growing up in towns of Canada where there was little diversity. But even as an adult, when one begins to give clarity to his sense of identity and roots, one sees conflict develop there. So it was natural to ask Ter how do you feel about your roots, given that you got rooted in Canada as a young boy but were distinctly different in appearance from the mainstream. Are you connected with Chinese roots and culture? Or do you feel absolutely Canadian?

"I used to be cynical believing I was neither Asian nor Canadian," he says. "Both sides have given me grief, so why bother? That sort of stuff. But as time went on, I became more comfortable with the tensions both sides exerted. I like to think of myself as a *Banana* - yellow on the outside, white on the inside."

"These days, I'm passionate about the idea of an Asian



Canadian identity. It's neither East nor West, but it is what it is." Ter is author of the book "*Banana Boys*" which dwells on the conflict of growing up Chinese in white societies.

"The banana allusion to describe the Chinese identity in white communities, is not a flattering term, and not used as such by both sides," Ter says. "Other Asians in particular use it somewhat contemptuously. But I see the title of my book as a recapturing of the term." He says it's a little like how African Americans reclaimed the "n" word, this one only more cheeky, less radical. "Once again, it's neither East nor West, but it's simply what I am."

Ter's next book also continues to delve into ethnic themes. "But I see it more about relationships (man and woman), power, and neurochemistry. That sounds vague and ambitious, but do keep in mind it's a work in progress," he says.

It's always a good idea to ask writers and thinkers about solutions to the world's problems. How do newcomers to Canada, for example, feel about this country's current social policies affecting our tomorrows. Given that we live in a dangerous world, where does one think the roots of the problems lie?

Ter says he generally likes the way Canadian social policies are headed. "It makes me think about how prescient Trudeau was about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That almost makes me want to forgive him for the debt."

"Sadly, however, I don't see the progressive strides in Canada's policies making a dent on the world. I see Canada falling by the wayside in the world order, and eventually being engulfed in the chaos to come."

Ter says he thinks the root of the problem is merely nature. "Not even human nature - just nature. Systems rise and systems fall. We've been on the decline curve for a while now, and there's nowhere to go but apart. The challenge, I think, is making sure the technology we've developed (nuclear, for instance) doesn't exceed our capacity as human beings for survival. We think we're above the limitations and vagaries of nature because we've created cars, factories, Nintendo. But we're not."

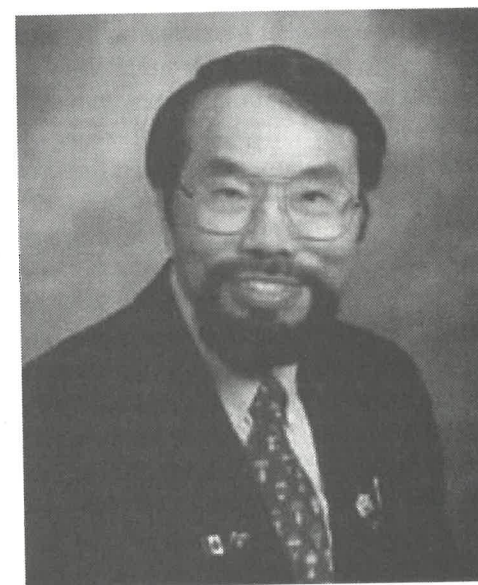
## **Vietnamese refugee is making a difference in Alberta's politics**

**W**ayne Cao has been in Canadian politics since 1997 when he was first elected to the legislative assembly of Alberta from the Calgary Fort riding.

An engineer by training, Cao had fled his native home in Vietnam when the government of South Vietnam fell at the end of April 1975. He made his way to the United States as a refugee and spent some time in Los Angeles before coming to Toronto where he was welcomed under the Canadian refugee settlement program. Then after a brief tenure with Shell Canada in Toronto he took a transfer to the Calgary branch.

An active community activist, today, Cao sits on various committees – from life long learning and employment standards regulations review boards to diversity leadership councils. He has worked to bring legislative reform on many issues including the minimum wage increase, employment standards for domestic workers, medical benefits for severely handicapped people, assistance programs for vulnerable people, seniors, low-income earners, and new immigrants. Cao even introduced legislation to create the official song of Alberta, a historic emblem for Alberta.

Canada's national anthem is sung in the two official languages, English and French, but





Cao says he had advocated for the singing of the anthem in the other languages of the many peoples who make up Canada, so that those who are not familiar with English and French may, regardless, feel a sense of belonging to the new homeland, which is Canada.

A man widely travelled, Cao worked for Shell petroleum company for twenty years before plunging into politics. While in politics, Cao gives his time to several causes - Calgary community TV where he advises on cultural shows; Meals-for-Homeless and Inn-from-the-Cold - as well as fundraises for charity events.

It's just as well that Cao was sometime ago awarded the Queen Jubilee Medal. But his work has also been recognized by other organizations including the Hart Foundation, The Love of Children Society, Friends of Elliston Park Society, the Ogden Senior Association, Fort Calgary Historic Foundation, Hoysun Association, Millican-Ogden Association, Calgary Minor Soccer Association, Chinese Music Development Society and the Filipino, Indian and Hispanic community organizations.

Cao has even represented Alberta and led Alberta/Canadian groups to national and international conferences.

A sports buff, musician and martial arts enthusiast, Cao says he tries to live life to the full. "I try not to get mired in thoughts about erstwhile national roots. I am Canadian and feel Canadian. I appreciate the differences I see in cultures and religions and I never take a narrow attitude on these issues," he says.

### **Tiananmen Square protester gives Prince Edward Islanders a taste of China**

**S**hi Hwei Liu was in university when the demonstrations had kicked off on Tiananmen Square and Chinese students were pushing for democratic reform. As many know, the Chinese



*Mrs Liu outside their restaurant in PEI*

government came down brutally on demonstrators and crushed the movement.

Liu says that at the time, he was volunteering for the cause, buying food for demonstrators and transporting it to the Square. But he says, university teachers were told to investigate and list the people that demonstrated and he was marked. "The police in plainclothes came to my house searching for me," he says. "Thankfully I was not home. My mom asked them to come another time." Liu knew he had to flee for his life.

Liu's father had previously worked with the US army in Burma for sometime as translator. And the Chinese government had been looking over his shoulder, then, suspicious that he could be spying for the United States. So he was moved to Hanan province. But it was just as well, says Liu. "He had friends in Thailand and so he and I fled across the border." Liu and his father spent some 12 years in Thailand as refugees.

Life was nomadic in Thailand, Liu says. "The Thais were suspicious of us. Some were looking at ways to steal from us. I worked at restaurants for brief periods and then moved on because Thai employers were reluctant to employ Chinese refugees. With a good part of his youth spent fleeing from governments and people, he finally applied to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Canada accepted Liu, his wife

and his father and they made a landing on Prince Edward Island on December 4, 2002.

But for anyone surmounting the challenges of fleeing a communist government, surviving through December's cold weather was no big deal. Other barriers had to be crossed first. So the Lius studied English at Holland College.

Now Liu runs a small restaurant – the *Thai Food and Dim Sum Palace* in Charlottetown. But getting there wasn't easy. The banks wouldn't finance a loan until he was able to prove some work experience. So Liu initially took up a job at a restaurant. Eventually he got \$13,000 from a bank and some more from a credit card company.

"At least for now this is fine," Liu says. "I make enough to pay back my loans, car loan installments and insurance, the rents and leave aside something for food." But Liu's problem is keeping the pot burning during winter, when he says the Island has little economic activity. "In summer you could work yourself to death, but in winter, everything is dead," he says. "That's why people leave the Island. In fact the winters are so bad that's its pushed even my dad away. He's gone to better weather in Vancouver."

Liu's wife who is a nurse, drew a handsome salary at a major hospital in Thailand. But she's not going to get into that kind of workplace for a while, until she clears some Canadian examinations. So for now, she's a dishwasher at another restaurant on the Island.

But the Lius are not complaining too much. "The people in PEI are very, very friendly and very kind," he says. "It's good for now."

Liu's mom and some siblings are still in China and the family keep contact over the phone. "But if this business does better, I will bring mom to Canada," Liu says. "I can see a future here."

## CHAPTER 10

### Emigration out of South East Asia

Soon after the Vancouver riots of 1907 – a rampage provoked by an anti-Asian parade staged on the streets of Vancouver to protest Asian immigration to Canada – Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour and a future Prime Minister, banned immigration by way of Hawaii, limited the admission of Japanese newcomers and even suggested that immigration from India should be discouraged. In response to King's recommendations, the Laurier government made an important amendment to the Immigration Act.

This amendment which came into effect in 1908 was the "continuous journey regulation" which meant that would be immigrants would have to travel to Canada by continuous passage. But since no shipping companies provided direct service from India to a port in Canada, the ingenious regulation served to ban all Indian immigration to this country. But as is well-known, the 376 passengers aboard the ship called the Komagata Maru which challenged the regulation and entered Vancouver were denied the right to disembark and finally deported.

The first Indians to have come to this country were troops who were returning home via Canada from London after attending Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897. Later in 1904, several more Sikhs immigrated to Canada and found work in lumber mills and logging camps. But there was opposition to their presence by Canadians. The School Boards held the view that Asians neither could nor should be assimilated. At about that



time, several provinces passed statutes restricting the settlement of Asians. The law even forbade Asians from voting.

Canadian immigration law has come a long way since. The Immigration Act of 1976 tore down the erstwhile race-based piece of legislation. Consequently, about a million immigrants came to Canada in the first half of the nineties according to the 1996 census. The switch in emphasis to occupation and skills, instead of race, has brought more people from Asia rather than Europe as was the case 30 years ago.

Today's new immigrants come from Hong Kong China, India, Pakistan, The Philippines, Iran and Sri Lanka, while traditional sources of immigrants such as Europe are giving way to Latin America and Africa. Today at least 750,000 people living in Canada can trace their cultural roots to South Asia, including present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Emigrants from India represent a highly skilled workforce of IT professionals, doctors and engineers as well as academics who have energized Canada's universities, the civil service, hospitals, and high-tech industries. Despite some setbacks, Indo-Canadians, as a group, have an average income approximately equal to the Canadian average.

Many political candidates of Indian heritage have successfully run at the provincial and federal levels. British Columbia politicians, Herb Dhaliwal, M.P. and former Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and Conservative Party member, Gurmant Grewal have served at the federal level. Conservative Party MPs Deepak Obhrai and Rahim Jaffer represent ridings in Alberta. In Ontario Gurbax Malhi has served the federal riding of Malton as a Liberal Party M.P. British Columbia has four MLAs of Indian heritage including Sindi Hawkins, Moe Sihota, Harry Lali, and Ujjal Dosanjh who, as leader of British Columbia's NDP, became Premier of British Columbia in February 2000- the first Indo-Canadian to hold that office in Canada. The Hon. Dosanj is now a cabinet minister in Prime Minister Paul Martin's government.

Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism - all have adherents within Canada's Indian population. In Ontario, some 50 temples serve the needs of

Hindus. Sikh *gurdwaras*, notably in British Columbia and Ontario, are central to their community development. Among the expanding Muslim communities in Canada are the Ismailis who have built a network of social institutions and who are linked to the Aga Khan and his institutions. The first mosque in Canada was erected in Edmonton in 1938. But by the 1980s mosques were found all across Canada.

Sri Lankan immigration to Canada began after the Second World War and more significantly after Canada revised its immigration policy in 1967 making skills and not race the criteria. In the 1996 Canadian census, 31,435 individuals indicated that they were of Sri Lankan heritage. It is likely that this figure is made up primarily of the Island's two dominant groups, the Sinhalese and Burghers. As well, 30,065 individuals declared themselves in census reports to be of Tamil origin - a third group that is fighting for independence. The exodus of the Burghers out of Sri Lanka began when English as the official language was dethroned and the Burghers felt marginalized as a result.

The Sinhalese, mostly English educated, too, came in search of employment and social opportunities. But since the decade of the 80s, the Tamil insurgency and their campaign for independence in Sri Lanka had created bloody civil strife and forced an exodus of both genuine and economic refugees. Canada responded to the crisis by creating a special Tamil refugee settlement program in 1989 and admitted them in.

Nearly all Sinhalese, Burgher and Tamil immigrants in Canada have settled in urban areas, especially Ontario, although smaller concentrations of Sri Lankans are contributing to the growth of urban communities in Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia. The early immigrants have continued in professional, technical, or managerial positions in Canada, whereas most of the post-1983 arrivals set up small businesses. Among Sri Lankan Canadians, the poet and writer Michael Ondaatje is probably the most well known. He has helped put Canadian literature on the world map and given it international acclaim.

Afghanistan's political troubles took a turn for the worse in the April 1978 coup when Afghani communists overthrew



President Daoud. The regime began a revolutionary policy of modernization, but in the process alienated every segment of the Afghan people and consequently Muslim-led tribal rebellions broke out all over the country. When it was clear that the new regime had lost control, the Soviet Union invaded in December 1979 opening up yet another saga of guerrilla rebellion across the 29 provinces. Under Iranian influence, the Islamic factor grew in importance in the resistance.

But by 1988, the new Soviet leadership retracted from almost all of its Breznev-era military commitments in the Third World and in April that year signed agreements in Geneva committing to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. Even as the Soviet forces were folding up and beating a retreat home, the communist government of Dr. Najibullah continued to stay in power. But trouble was brewing as the sixteen or more Islamic parties training in Pakistan poured into Afghanistan, formed alliances and fought for reins of power. The Mujahedeen leader Rahbani finally seized power but his reign was short lived. The Taliban ultimately wrested control from the Mujahedeen, taking Afghanistan down the road to misery.

The Taliban introduced severe religious fundamentalism which became the nation's political ethos. Ahmed Samin, an Afghan refugee in Canada says : "Men and women were whipped on the streets, if stringent regulations concerning the wearing of the *pardah* by women or the growing of a beard by the men were not obeyed. The women, he says, were barred from schools and universities as well as from seeking work. They were chastised if their window drapes were drawn open.

Just as well Afghanistan's elitist and educated chose to leave. The US consulate, at the time, was looking for educated Afghans wanting to immigrate to the United States. In those years at least 2.5 million people sought refugee status in Iran and Pakistan, while others turned to Russia and Tajikistan. Many also came to Canada.

Dr. Abdul Jabbar Temor, a neurologist, who now resides in Prince Edward Island, became a refugee overnight. He had travelled to Tajikistan for tertiary studies and was seeking

admission to a medical college in Moscow. When he learnt that those fees were too exorbitant and he would never afford to study in Moscow he flew to Taskent with his family to take a flight home to Kabul. That night all flights to Tashkent were suspended. The government of Najibullah had fallen. His life would have been in peril, if ever he returned home by road.

What did all this cost Afghanistan? Nearly one million dead, 535,000 disabled veterans, 700,000 widows and orphans and a refugee exodus of 5.9 million people to Pakistan, Iran and the West including one million children born in camps.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre's twin towers on September 11 got Afghanistan broiled in greater misery. The Taliban refused to hand over suspected terrorist Osama Bin Laden, who was charged with masterminding the terror attacks on the US, and forced a war on terrorism by the US and allies and an invasion of Afghanistan. But now with an elected democratic government, led by Ahmed Karzai, which is attempting to pick up the pieces and transform the political ethos of the country, a measure of peace and political order has returned to Afghanistan.

The fact is that the greater part of the misery of the third world comes not from poverty, population growth, low resource, violence or famine. The misery is rooted in illiteracy. It's a vicious cycle: a low literacy threshold upstages family planning, forces unbridled migration from villages to cities, lowers employment, breeds poverty which promotes violence, which brings misery and so on. With an average life expectancy of about 40 years, a staggering mortality rate of 25.7 percent for children under five years old, and a illiteracy rate of 64 percent, Afghanistan ranks among the most destitute, war-weary countries in the world in terms of human development, according to an analysis by the United Nations Development Programme.



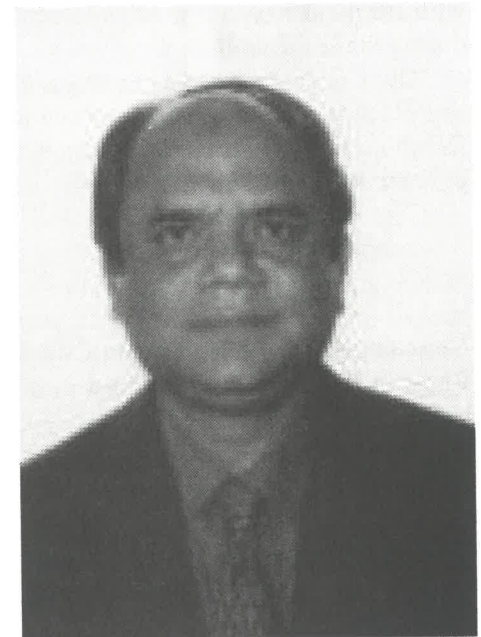
*Sikhs aboard the Komatgata Maru*

### **Lawyer flees after threats for wanting to set up human rights office in Bangladesh**

**K**handekar Haque's grandfather was a landlord, but regardless he was raised in poverty because his grandfather discriminated in the way he had distributed his land among his sons. "I saw my father cry because he could not give us three meals and the sight of his crying had a lasting impact on me," Haque says. "Then later when I saw religious leaders discriminate among weaker groups of people and enslave these people with no access to justice, I had determined then that I would seek a career in law."

But that must have been serious determination, because Haque found it hard to extricate himself from poverty. He says even at the college level, he was studying by moonlight until some scholarships opened the way for him to study law at university.

Haque, who was born and educated in Bangladesh says the elitist at the time were hypocrites. "When I was promoted to Deputy Director of the Institute of Law and International Affairs, other lawyers made me feel like an untouchable. "They balked at my credentials because I was raised in a village," he says. But regardless, Haque pursued his goal of setting up the first Human Rights





Commission in Bangladesh and worked closely with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP and the UN refugee agency.

But in 2002 the ruling BNP (Bangladesh National Party) closed down his office and arrested him. "The resident UN official stayed silent," he says. "I wrote to Kofi Annan but got no replies. I was fighting for minority rights," he says. Haque says Bangladesh lacks democratic institutions. "There is no accountability - justice is bought in the lower courts and the police are downright corrupt. The BNP were worried about being made accountable to the Human Rights Commission and therefore shut it down," he says.

After that Haque's life was threatened and so he fled one night taking a flight to London while airport staff turned a blind eye, by arrangement, to his appearance on the Black List.

Haque is in Toronto today and has just been granted refugee status. But while he has applied for family visas, the horror stories keep coming in. Haque's house in Bangladesh was broken into recently, his wife was threatened with rape if she did not part with her heirloom of gold ornaments and his son was gagged during the break-in by a gang.

"But Canada is a great country and I can now live in hope," he says. Haque runs a paralegal service in Toronto in order to make a living until such time as he can sit for re-qualifying exams and practice law once again.

#### **Neurologist from Afghanistan does not lose nerve delivering Pizza in Prince Edward Island**

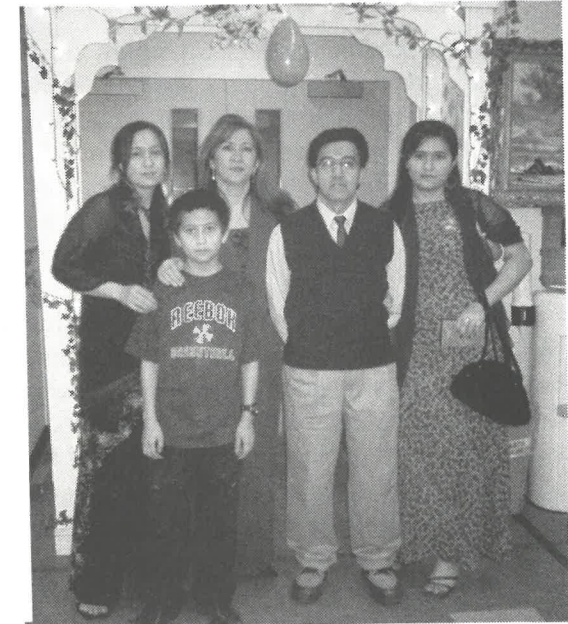
**D**r. Abdul Jabbar Temor, is a neurologist who studied medicine in Afghanistan and later in Tashkent. But in Prince Edward Island, while he completes some Canadian examinations, he's making a living making pizza deliveries.

Dr. Temor first worked in a military hospital in Kandahar city, after completing his medical studies at the K a b u l Government Medical Institute. But getting a transfer back to Kabul was almost impossible because the government couldn't find another doctor to replace him in Khandahar. So, Dr. Temor finally resigned and applied to a medical college in Tajikistan to continue studies in neurology. Russia was the automatic choice then with President Najibullah's communist government in power at the time.

Dr. Temor had moved to Tajikistan with the family by then. And it was just as well. Upon completion of his studies in neurology, he was looking for admission to a medical university in Moscow, but his studies there was going to cost him an arm and a leg and so he chose to return home to Afghanistan. "I moved my family to Tashkent to take a flight to Kabul and while we were waiting for the aircraft to arrive, we were told all flights into Kabul were suspended. The government of President Najibullah had fallen and the opposition Mujahideen had taken over," Dr. Temor says.

Dr. Temor was a government employee at the time and was regarded, thus, as a government party man. That meant his life would be in peril if he chose to return home by road. Consequently, overnight, he had become a refugee.

So Dr. Temor stayed back in Tashkent with the family. He





spent the next four years studying at the Institute of Culture in Tashkent precisely to qualify for a resident visa. But four years later when the growing requests for admissions from Afghans could not be accommodated, the government shut down the Institute of Culture and the Temors continued to reside in Tashkent illegally, until, of course, he set up a joint venture business with a brother-in-law in Turkey and another partner in Uzbekistan.

"We did a trading business, importing carpets and leather from Turkey and exporting them to Afghanistan and Uzbekistan," he says. "This was good for a while, but business has its ups and downs and so we closed down this joint venture. Later I opened a store and traded in electronic appliances," Dr. Temor says.

At about that time, the Temors applied to the United Nations for refugee status, when a UN office had opened in Tashkent. But it closed down as soon as it opened, Dr. Temor says. "And it was only some six years later when it reopened, that we were able to apply again and in January 2004 we got our visas to Canada."

On Prince Edward Island, Dr. Temor spent the first few months studying English at Holland College. He says he's taken his medical credentials to the health ministry on the Island but has been advised to begin Canadian medical studies. "Well, I plan to do that at some point," he says. "But for now, I'm gainfully employed. I am a driver at Dominoes Pizza."

Dr. Timor isn't complaining. "We have a couple of Afghani and Pakistani families on the Island, so we're not lonely," he says. "There is even a small Muslim community."

He says he has never felt discriminated since arrival. "The politics of the government is very good and does not promote racism," he says. "Ninety five per cent of the people are very kind." But then, on second thoughts, Dr. Temor says: "Some feel somewhat apprehensive, when they realize we are Afghans," he says.

"Canadians have watched the killing of people and the beating of women on the streets on television. So I know why they feel fear when they see an Afghani" he says. Dr. Temor recounts an incident at a store when a Canadian turned to ask him where he

came from. "I said I come from Afghanistan and he jokingly said to me: So I hope you won't kill me."

"I know that was said jokingly," Dr. Temor says. "The man apologized later."

### **Indian businessman in Montreal is member of the prestigious Queen's Privy Council**

**B**aljit Singh Chadha says the most important decision in his life – the move to Canada – was not made by himself. It was made for him. He left his home in Mumbai to do an MBA at the University of Western Ontario in 1973 and has never regretted it. Why would he?

In 2003 Chadha was appointed a member of the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC) by former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and in accordance with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) Act he was sworn as member of the Queen's Privy Council of Canada.

The SIRC is composed of five people from the Queen's Privy Council to oversee the operations of the CSIS and provides an



telecommunications and introduced the electronic telephone systems there. Unfortunately or perhaps just as well, Grewal and the family left Liberia when the civil war began and foreigners were being evacuated.

"Having witnessed the civil war in which 10 per cent of the population was killed, I realized how proud I must be to be a Canadian." The man who Opposition Leader, Stephen Harper, once called the *Iron man of Canada's parliament*, says he is proud of his Indian heritage but that his loyalties are to Canada.

Speaking of having felt discriminated, Grewal says, discrimination happens in every society. "I do not take that personally."

### Indian engineer plays role in shaping British Columbia's public policy

**P**radeep Kharé immigrated to Canada from India in 1972, and has lived and worked in eight cities across the country. He is widely respected for his skills in strategic planning, public policy, organizational development and resource management. He is married to Chitra and they live in Toronto with their two children.

As many newcomers later confess, prejudice is really about



ignorance and a limited world view and therefore one way to deal with it is to ignore it and move on. "Quite clearly 80 per cent of Canadians are very accommodating," Kharé says.

Kharé is currently the Director General of Environment Canada for the Ontario region and reports to the Deputy Minister. But prior to this assignment, he was Assistant Deputy Minister with the BC government, responsible for Immigration, Multiculturalism and Aboriginal programs and had the unique opportunity to play a major role in shaping provincial policies "It is an honour, a sense of pride, huge accomplishment and indeed, a privilege to be trusted and allowed, as an immigrant, to have such a pivotal role in shaping British Columbia's and to some extent Canada's future through sound public policy," he says.

In his role as deputy minister for immigration in the province of British Columbia, Kharé says he was instrumental in some policy changes. "Thousands of young people come to the province on student visas. These people have the prerequisites to qualify for immigration, which is age, level of education and language ability. But yet, they were being sent home to apply from their own countries." Kharé says his ministry negotiated with Ottawa on this and a policy change came about.

He says he also led the negotiating team on the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and was instrumental in introducing the student component to the PNP. In another instance, he says he introduced legislation to halt fraud in the processing of family class applicants.

The recognition of foreign credentials is something that has balked immigration officials. But Kharé says that his ministry formed a partnership with the Association of Professional Engineers in order to study policy issues and determine who are victims of the system. As a consequence, he says, foreign students with engineering credentials began to be accommodated.

Kharé holds a Master's degree in Chemical Engineering and has 28 years experience in the private and public sector in several provinces. He has previously served as Deputy Commissioner for the Oil and Gas Commission of British Columbia and has sat on the Board of Directors for the Commission overseeing all aspects



of oil and gas development in the Province.

Speaking about identity and loyalties, Kharé admits his loyalties are to Canada but says that they are not mutually exclusive. "I

still feel connected to India because I have family there.

"But the journey to this point has been treacherous, bumpy and full of failures," he says. "After winning a scholarship from Imperial Oil in 1972, I quit my job in Bombay and travelled to Canada as a student to the University of Saskatchewan to do my master's degree. Although I was at the top of my chemical engineering graduating class in India, as a new arrival to Canada, I had to constantly fight the stereotypical notions about immigrants."

Kharé says he went through tough financial times as a student but never sought welfare assistance. "I would frequently walk three miles to the university in 40 degrees below zero weather across the Saskatchewan River Bridge just to save a quarter in bus fare."

"In Smithers, BC, I was refused a house rental because the landlord felt that people from India were "dirty, smelly and destructive," he says. Kharé says when he had moved to Smithers from Toronto some many years ago, he was looking to rent an apartment in this largely Dutch settlement. He had signed agreements with the property agent but at that point hit a road block. The landlord, upon reviewing the agreements and determining his Indian descent turned down the application. "But I phoned the landlord and we met and I said to him: Just as you



find Indian curries offensive, I find the beef you eat offensive. It's a cultural thing." The Hindu Brahmins of India are largely vegetarians and many do not eat beef because the cow is regarded as a sacred animal. Kharé says it was a good ending. "When he got to know me better, the prejudice was gone. I had corrected some ignorance."

But Kharé was a determined man and guided by the adage that you cannot influence the winds but you can certainly adjust your sails, he was able to overcome those disappointments and setbacks by sticking to the long-term goal of fully integrating into Canadian society and reaching his career potential. "I quickly realized that in order to succeed in Canada, I would have to learn the so-called "soft skills" such as communication, leadership, strategic thinking, team approach, flexibility and innovation.

"I also discovered quickly that the majority of Canadians are extremely helpful, compassionate, accommodating and genuinely interested in helping under-privileged people like me. I aligned myself with such people, ignoring the "racist" minority, and learned tremendously about the values and cultures of the mainstream society. This was key to my success in Canada.

"A major contributor to my success is my wife Chitra's support throughout our stay in Canada. We have lived and worked in eight cities across Canada and have seen Canadian society from east to west, from north to south, from large cities to small towns and from relatively mono-cultural to multicultural communities. Chitra has been a key supporter in my career enhancement and social integration and has cheerfully moved with me and our two children every time there was a better opportunity. This was a great developmental process, professionally, socially and culturally for our family. We understand the subtle cultural differences within various parts of Canada and now have some true friends right across the country.

"My parents are also a critical factor in this success story. Their positive reinforcement at every stage, the values and beliefs instilled in me from childhood and the sacrifices that they made to allow me to get the best education and opportunities are just a few of the many things that they did for me. They own a lion's share

of my success."

Khare says that ten years since settling down in Canada and feeling reasonably secure, he decided to give something back to Canada. "Chitra and I have participated in community activities such as scouts, soccer coaching and volunteering at schools, charity groups and multicultural events. I have also devoted considerable volunteer time to professional activities by serving with the Association of Professional Engineers, with the community college advisory boards and with provincial, national and international water quality organizations. In the latter role, I had the privilege of doing extensive volunteer work in India and other Asian countries to assist them with their water quality issues. These activities have had the benefit of creating friendships with people with similar values across the world," he says.

It has been a very productive and satisfying 30 years in Canada for Khare and his family. "Canada has been very good to me and my family and in return we have given a lot back to Canada through employment and volunteerism. Never has any member of my family had the need to derive any benefit from the social programs"

### **Malaysian Sikh wins fight to include the turban in the RCMP's uniform**

**B**altej Dhillon, a Sikh by faith, pursued a relentless campaign with Canada's RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) some years ago, over the wearing of the turban and the sporting of a beard, which at the time did not conform with the law enforcement authority's policy on uniform. "The RCMP recruitment officer asked me if I would be willing to remove my turban and shave my beard and I said that I would not and that to compromise my faith would be to compromise everything I

believed in and I couldn't and wouldn't do that," says Dhillon.

The turban is the required headdress for practicing Sikhs who have unshorn long hair, which is a requirement of the faith. "It is entrenched in both our religious philosophies and scriptures as well as an important part of our culture and traditions," he says.



Having made his point with the RCMP, he then waited for about ten months while the Solicitor General at the time deliberated on the recommendations made by the Commissioner of the RCMP to treat the turban as acceptable uniform. A storm of controversy over the issue began to take shape across the country, he says, but in August 1990, the recommendations were accepted and he was offered a position in the RCMP.

Dhillon was born in Malaysia in 1966. He had lost his father when he was at high school and so chose to immigrate to Canada after his brother who was already settled here. Growing up in Canada, he says, was not without those occasional racist slights from peers at school.

He says there were times when he was called names as he would walk home from school and other times when eggs were thrown at his house which was in a predominantly white neighborhood. "I don't brush aside these things. In the last twenty years in Canada I have seen these things change for the better and I notice the ignorance is greater in areas where the local public has not been exposed to multiculturalism or other ethnic groups. So for me it is a matter of educating others about the differences in cultures."

Dhillon says that all of this has not hindered his professional



career. "I have proven myself time and again and the fact that within fourteen years of service I have been promoted to the rank of Sergeant speaks for itself."

Commenting on his sense of roots and identity and how he is able to connect his sense of roots with his Canadian identity, he says: "I used to feel that I was a Sikh first and then a Canadian, but since the decision by the RCMP to accept me with my faith and my traditions, I feel that I am both a Sikh and a Canadian at the same time," he says. "I did not have to compromise my faith to serve Canada and Canada acknowledged my presence and right to serve as well as preserve my faith."

Dhillon is a polygraph examiner and assists investigators by administering polygraphs to individuals who are suspected of committing a crime. The crime types range from a simple theft to murder. He also assists in providing new and junior officers guidance with regards to investigations and interviewing both witnesses and suspects. "I am charged with ensuring that investigations are pursued diligently when the polygraph is utilized," he says.

He has two daughters Onkar and Rasna and lives in Surrey, British Columbia. In recognition of his work in the community, he was nominated for and awarded the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal in 2003.

### **Afghan refugees say humanity transcends the divisiveness of religion**

**M**ohammed Vazir Akhi, came to Canada 20 years ago from Afghanistan, during the Russian invasion of his country. "The communists confiscated all my land and threw me in jail," he says. "When I got out, leaving Afghanistan was the only hope." Akhi fled Herat to Iran across the boarder in the dead of night traveling through sinuous paths and avoiding the main streets. While he left with his wife, a son and two daughters, his elder son, Kabir, now in the United States, left with his wife, four



children and three sisters.

"But Iran does not host refugees. Its government orders you to get out whenever it pleases them," says Akhi, now 80 and retired and who lives with his wife in London, Ontario.

Of course, driven out of Iran, Akhi sought refuge from the United Nations in Germany and while there, got the support of a church in Halifax and the sponsorship of the Nestman family. Having settled down, doing a business in carpets, Akhi later moved from Halifax to London, Ontario. But Afghanistan's problems weren't over when the Russians retreated. The turmoil spread chaos, Islamic parties and warlords fought for control until the dreaded Taliban seized power.

"The Taliban are wild ....fundamentalists who chop the wrists of people they dislike and beat women in the streets. My daughter and grandchildren – all girls – were still in Afghanistan at the time and it was urgent that they got out," he said.

A little over three years ago, Abdul Qadir Heravi, his son-in-law, daughter Shafigh and grand-daughters Samira, Soraia, Mitra and Feraiva fled Afghanistan to Cuba where they got refuge and finally came to Halifax in February two years ago.

Samira, who has a job at Wendy's, says the family is happy to be in Canada. "In Afghanistan one had lost hope for the future. We are a family of girls and with the distorted ideology of the

Taliban, what hope would there be for us," she says.

But what does Samira think about integrating into a largely Christian society? "Oh, that's not a problem," she says. "Christians are believers. And anyway, what's religion without humanity?" She was making the point that the friendship, comfort and support the Nestman family has given her family, transcends the divisiveness of religion. "Our family in Ontario calls us every day. But the help and support we have got from the Nestmans are greater," she says. "Whatever you see in this house is theirs."

Mr. Akhi, breaks his composure for a while. "My religion says the best people are those who help others and the worst people are those who harm others," he says. Heravi interrupts at this stage: "Can you compare the evil of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (who professes to be a true Muslim) with the goodness of the Nestmans," he says. Akhi talked about the divisiveness of Muslims. "Pakistan is Afghanistan's biggest problem," he says. "It has always thought of making it one of its provinces. On the other hand, in Afghanistan we have serious discrimination between the Pushtoon and Tajik tribes. We had one good man, Ahmed Masood Shah, who Arab militants shot, while approaching him in the guise of reporters," he says.

Akhi said: "Islam tells us not to kill. But that's exactly what we are doing to each other. Young people are told paradise is across the wall – become martyrs and get there. And yet we know that no one has seen paradise."

### **Juillard school pianist, composer, makes Halifax debut**

**D**inuk Wijeratne's arrival in Halifax is going to be music to the ears. Last summer he was busy checking out cars and computers, connecting phones and light bulbs and talking to his mom about the house that would have to become home to a grand piano.

Sri-Lankan born, Dinuk is a graduate from the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and has a Masters in

composition from the prestigious Juillard in Manhattan. Although he had begun piano lessons at the age of nine, the call to music came only three years later when in the silence of his home in Dubai he listened to Mozart. "I didn't think anyone was capable of putting sounds together to create that musical experience," he says. "I think it's his concept of economy and melody that jolted me."

As a resident of Dubai, where a Western classical music culture was virtually non-existent, Dinuk was out on his own. "Harmony and counterpoint, for example, was never taught properly to me as a child and it resulted in my developing my own style from fairly early on," he says. He composed his first piece of musical score at about the age of fourteen.

Later he auditioned and was accepted into the Royal Northern College of Music to do joint performance and composition and, from then on, life became a journey of discoveries.

Eventually, Dinuk dropped first study piano lessons and worked with mentors such as Tony Gilbert, Paul Newland and Robin Walker. "The diversity of styles between all three was really wide ranging and, as a result, enabled me to develop a much more personal style," he says. Later he progressed into jazz improvisation and collaborated with visiting artists such as Victor Mendoza, Tim Garland and John Dankworth.

In 2001, he was invited by noted American composer John Corigliano to join his studio at New York's Juilliard School,





from which Dinuk recently received his Masters Degree. Now he's currently completing his training in orchestral conducting at the Mannes School.

His music and collaborative work embrace the great diversity of his international background and influences. Dinuk currently has been writing music for commissions. But of course he likes to speak about a more challenging composition he's done lately for the new Juillard Ensemble. The piece "*About Sankhara*" is a chamber concerto and was performed at the Lincoln Center in New York last year.

He is getting increasingly engaged in the synthesis of Western and Eastern musical elements and "*About Sankhara*" reflects that.

Dinuk is looking to Canada, "which is so culturally awake" to take him further afield. But he says he couldn't have come this far without his mother's boundless love and energy – the emotional support and everything one needs to find balance in life.

Vino, his mother, an accomplished ballet teacher, has conducted London's Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) examinations in Dubai since 1988 and has taught the RAD syllabus for about 21 years.

## CHAPTER 11

### West European emigration in the twentieth century

Until well into the nineteen seventies, immigration to Canada was Eurocentric. The French and British took possession of the northern parts of Canada in 1605, and although several other European countries were represented in the colony, the English, Irish and Scots were the major settlers.

But closer to our time, Western European immigration to Canada was driven by The Great Depression of the 1930s. During these years of economic devastation and widespread unemployment, the federal government strove hard to seal off Canada not only to prospective immigrants but also to refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, particularly Jewish refugees. There can be no doubt that Ottawa's restrictive legislation reflected the general Canadian attitude towards immigration, for Canadians across the country took the view that immigrants threatened scarce jobs in an economy that in 1933 saw almost one-quarter of the labour force unemployed.

Among those barred from entering Canada during the 1930s were thousands of desperate refugees. The persecution of the Jews was particularly savage, especially after the German invasion of Austria in March 1938. Thousands of the Jews who managed to escape Nazi brutality, mainly from Poland and Hungary sought refuge in Canada.

Marianne Ferguson, who lives in Halifax, came to Canada fleeing from the Nazis at the age of six - even before the war had broken out - and had already experienced some of the horrific

repression against Jews in Danzig which is now Poland. In her story told in this book, she says: "The times were traumatic. The Nazi party was visible in Danzig. We had to be looking over our shoulders all the time. Jews were hunted like animals. When our people were taken to concentration camps, all that their families ever looked forward to were the ashes which would come home in envelopes."

But by and large the appeals of Jewish refugees were ignored in this country. Anti-Semitism was rife throughout Canada at the time, where, in some places, Jews could not hold particular jobs, own property, or stay in certain hotels. It was most strident in Quebec.

At the base of German immigration to Canada were those brave men and women who travelled across the Atlantic from Europe to colonial Halifax in September 1750 on the ship *Anne*. Among those thousands of passengers invariably were new settlers for Nova Scotia. One such immigrant who obtained his naturalization papers on May 16, 1871 in Halifax was Julius Sievert from Filehne in Prussia. He quickly established himself as a tobacconist in the downtown Halifax.

But it was in the aftermath of the Second World War that a new wave of German immigrants arrived in Canada. Halifax as the major eastern railway terminus was the favoured port for immigrant vessels and it was from here that newcomers could travel by rail to western Canada. Furthermore the basis for the renewed presence of the Jewish community came through migration from Germany and adjoining territories.

Between the wars, 97,000 German-speaking immigrants came to Canada from Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. Farmers and agricultural workers settled in the vicinity of older German settlements on the Prairies. A smaller number of artisans, labourers, and shopkeepers moved on to British Columbia. The arrivals included many German-speaking refugees from Romania, Yugoslavia, and the former Austria-Hungary.

The 1996 Canadian census recorded the presence of 2,757,140 people of German descent living in Canada. Among the German scientists of distinction, is Gerhard Herzberg, a

physicist, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1971.

In public life, at least two of the Fathers of Confederation – Charles Fisher of Fredericton and William Henry Steeves of Saint John – were of German origin. The Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, of mixed German and Scottish descent, was Prime Minister of Canada from 1957 to 1963. As well, the Right Honourable Edward Schreyer was to serve as Canada's Governor General from 1979 to 1984.

The Canadian government, during Clifford Sifton's tenure (1896-1905) sought to limit the immigration of Italians, who he thought were ill-fitted for enterprise. Most were peasants or farmers, small landowners, and rural day labourers from the impoverished south. From among those who arrived in Canada, thousands went to work to build Canada's railways. Others worked in mines where demand for labour was very high. Some 3,000 Italians arrived in Montréal in 1904, and two years later, when construction of the trunk lines of the Grand Trunk Pacific railways began in earnest, there was a further dramatic increase in the numbers of Italians coming to Canada.

Russian settlement in Canada began in the nineteenth century when the Doukobors - a Christian peasant sect, persecuted and harassed by the Tzarist authorities fled their homelands. According to many accounts, it was Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian novelist who used his fame to help the Doukobors emigrate. The first batch arrived in the 1890s and settled in the Prince Albert and Yorktown areas of Saskatchewan. In the Ukraine, at the time, changing conditions had threatened the peace and prosperity of the Mennonites and as a result a third of the Russian Mennonites emigrated. But the Doukhobors resisted compliance with the state. They refused to take the oath of allegiance, register births and marriages and neither would they allow their children to be educated in the public system.

By all accounts, the first recorded Greek presence in North America is that of Juan Da Fuca or Yannis Phokas, a Greek mariner who surveyed the British Columbia coast in 1592 in the service of the Spanish monarch. But it was not until the nineteenth century when Canada's railways lines were being



developed that significant Greek emigration to Canada began. By 1931, almost 10,000 Greeks had settled in Canada, mostly in Montreal and Toronto. But Greece went through a period of turmoil in the Forties. In 1940 Italian Fascists under Mussolini attacked it through Albania. A year later the German Nazis overran it and remained there until 1944. Thus, by around 1950, hundreds of Greeks who could get out, left their homeland for Australia, the US and Canada.

Later, ongoing poverty and a series of repressive military dictatorships dug in. Greece's interference in Cyprus caused Turkey to invade the island in 1974 and war almost broke out between Greece and Turkey. It was then that Greek immigration peaked - the vast majority came to work in factories, restaurants, and maintenance. By 1996 the census reported 203,000 Greeks in Canada. Greeks have tended to settle in large cities. The large settlements in Montreal and Toronto have resulted in concentrations of small businesses such as "*kafenions*" or coffee shops which bring the community together. Indeed, the Orthodox Church is quite at the heart of all that is Greek in spirit. As one Greek resident in Halifax observes: "The Church is our religion, our culture, our language and our country" There are, at least, 40 Greek parishes in Canada.

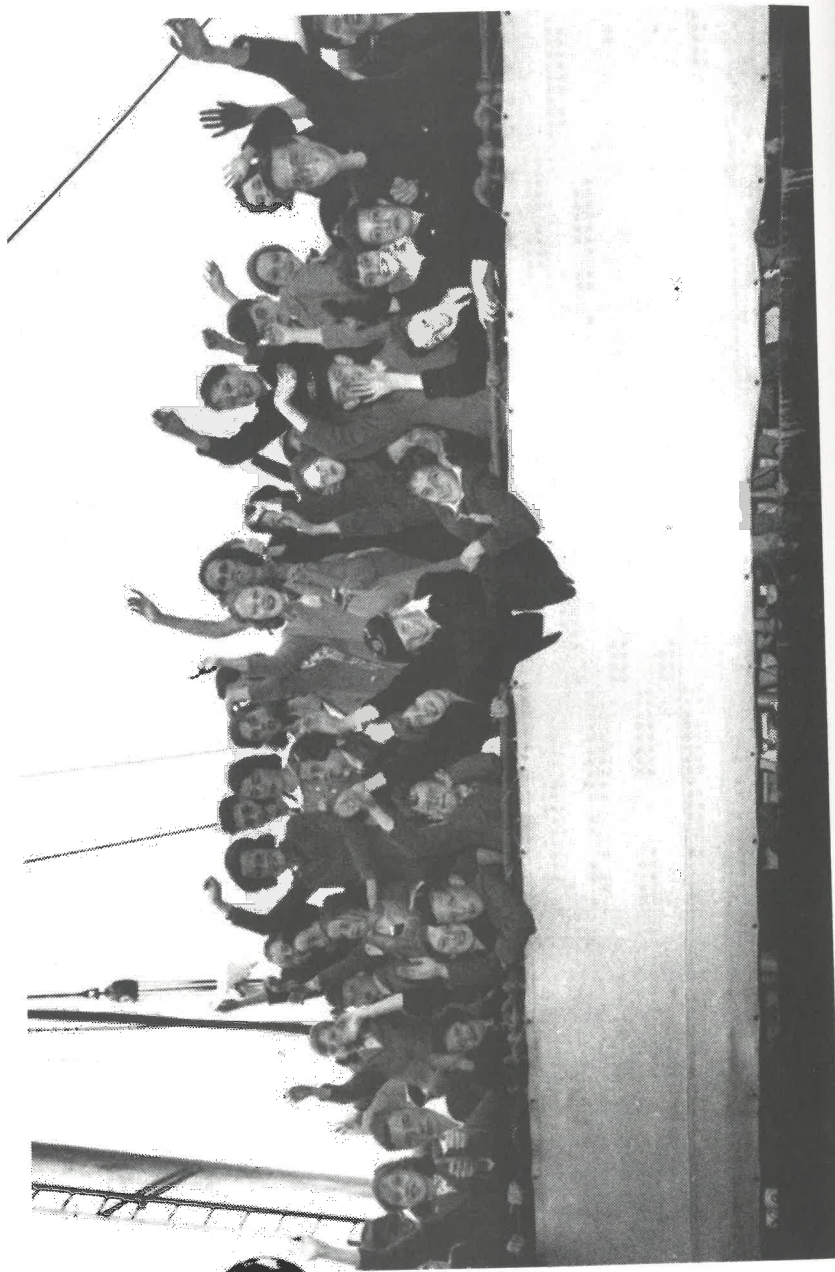
Greeks have taken a spot in public life as well. In 1999 Toronto had five individuals of Greek descent on City Council. In Quebec, Greek heritage candidates from the NDP, Liberals, and Conservatives have attempted to win seats in the Quebec legislature. At the federal level Eleni Bakopanos, a Liberal from Montreal, has served in the last two Chrétien governments. Likewise, Greek Canadians from Ontario, such as Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis and Conservative MP Gus Mitges, have successfully served in Ottawa.

Most post-war Polish migrants were political refugees from a Communist regime. While the Depression slowed the movement of Poles into Canada, during the Second World War almost 1,000 Polish engineers, technicians, and other skilled refugees came to Canada and contributed to the war effort. After the war, ex-soldiers, who had served with the Allies, entered Canada on the

strength of one-year contracts to work on beet farms, in factories and hospitals, and as domestics and railway builders.

The Poles have always organized their societies along cooperative lines. When the banks were reluctant to advance funds to immigrants with meagre jobs, parishes and secular bodies across Canada created credit unions. The first, St. Stanislaus Credit Union, was organized in Toronto in 1945. The 1996 census counted 786,735 people of Polish origin in Canada.

Over one million people left Portugal for Brazil between 1886 and 1950. But it was not until the Canadian and Portuguese governments signed labour contract agreements to supply railway construction and agricultural workers after World War II that Canada became a popular option for Portuguese immigrants for the first three decades following the war. In the 1996 census it was estimated that as many as 335,110 people of Portuguese heritage lived in Canada.



British war evacuees arriving in Halifax

### Russian flees communist repression, going places with his violin in Canada

Eugene Draw is introducing a new vigorous style to the violin and one that lends itself not so much to the concert hall as it does to the street. "I tend to look at music philosophically – think of music with an idea in it. My music may not be stimulating for the ears but it engages in storytelling," he says.

That said, Eugene, who discovered the violin upon coming to Canada from his home in Moscow, has performed at the President's Palace in Prague and will be going back to Russia in the summer to play at the Russian Jazz Festival.

Eugene is the son of an eminent Psychologist whose work in Russia wasn't quite appreciated by its erstwhile communist regime. "At the time, alcoholics would be placed in working camps, where they would not rehabilitate but get worse," says Eugene. "The communist party was against rehabilitation, and instead exploited alcoholics by extracting free labour at camps. My father did not approve of that. He instead introduced dance and beauty treatments as counseling techniques for people in self-destructive modes and thus became a threat to the communists."

Eugene says the Russian newspaper *Pravda* – a government mouthpiece at the time – had run a story on his father's gentle treatments of alcoholics and drug addicts and criticized him severely. "At the time, a negative story in *Pravda* automatically suggested that imprisonment or even execution was imminent," Eugene says. "But my father was influential and had international contacts and so set up the first private clinic in the Soviet Union, treating drug abuse and mental disorders."

But when the communist harassment had begun – his mother was barred from touring with the ballet company she worked with. As change was evolving with Perestroika and Glasnost, gangs emerged through the cracks in the system, there were bandits on the loose and there was also an attempt to kidnap Eugene. Thus for protection, he traveled around for sometime



with a bodyguard.

Eugene's dad thus took the painful decision of leaving home. But apparently there are no regrets today. He now runs a drama-dance therapy program and the family is putting their talents together for a new production – a rock and opera musical – which will be released in September this year.

Commenting on the experience of living with communism, Draw says Canada's youth speak of the ideology as a great ideal. "But I keep telling them that the theory and the practical are vastly different. You cannot automatically assume that all want to feel equal. To strive for something is part of being human. The kids in Canada don't understand that."

Look at Cambodia, he says, and you see how many have perished in the realization of that ideal.

### **Italian novelist says there can be no arrival without a point of departure**

**N**ino Ricci, one of Canada's prominent novelists, came to this country by what, he says, was that most traumatic of emigrations: birth. But Ricci's parents, leaving their home in northern Italy in 1954, came aboard the well-appointed passenger liner *Saturnia* and cruised into Halifax Pier 21. "To



hear them tell it they had the time of their lives on the crossing – dining and dancing and living it up, giving the lie to those images that we were all raised by the poor immigrant masses stumbling out of the darkened holds of rat-infested, cholera-infected death ships," he says.

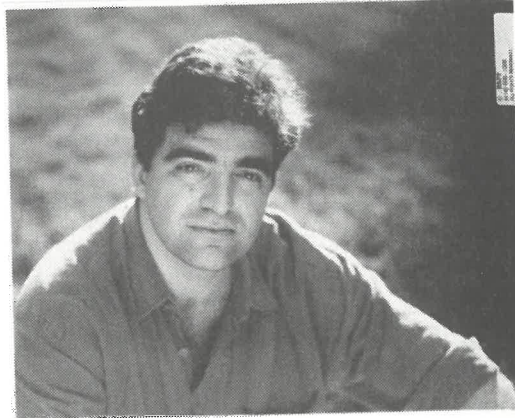
Canada's flat fields had greeted their arrival pleasantly. But coming from Italy, where even the doghouses had walls of foot-thick stone, Ricci says his father and mother were made somewhat concerned by the rickety wooden shacks that seemed to form the primary residences here. "As it happened, my parents' first home in Canada, in the small farming town of Leamington, Ontario, was not so far removed from those rickety outhouses. Set off the barn of a farmer who had sponsored them for their first year of work here, it was essentially a refurbished chicken coop," he says. "A couple of my brothers were born there, and afterwards an uncle of mine, Uncle Luigi, subsequently took it over, and stayed on for the next thirty years working at the local Heinz factory and living the bachelor life before finally returning to Italy to the wife and son he'd left behind there."

Ricci makes an excellent observation about the fact that there can be no arrival without departure. "I had not quite understood then this dual-sidedness of immigration, how there was always an absent reference point that the present stood against, and that could make the present's nuts-and-bolts everydayness and permanence suddenly appear the merest shadow," he says.

But while growing up in Canada, Ricci began to sense the fact that his very Italian upbringing and custom and tradition at home always stood in contrast to everything Canadian. "When I started school, however, a lot of what we did suddenly began to seem not so normal. There was the home-made bread my mother used for our sandwiches, thick-crust, spongy stuff that she'd fashioned baking pans for, from those same all-purpose Unico tins and that did not resemble in the least the white, perfect, store-bought bread of the other kids; there was the patched, old-fashioned, hand-me-down look of our clothes. It was as if I too had set out on a ship and arrived in another country, where people did things differently, so that suddenly everything about my own little

domain, the closed autonomous world I'd been raised in until then, seemed makeshift and shabby and low.

"This, then, perhaps, was my true passage to Canada, out of innocence and sameness into



difference, and like any child I did not like the experience of difference one bit, and sought every means to mitigate it. Thus all things Italian became anathema, and the two worlds I lived in, at home and at school, were kept cleanly separate and distinct, so that the former should not in any way compromise my standing in the latter. In this way I sailed more or less happily toward assimilation, which seemed the good and proper course for someone of my clearly questionable origins.

But when in the summer of 1971 he travelled to Italy as a young lad of 12, the trip transformed some of his home-grown notions; "From an Italianness that had meant shabby clothes and spongy bread I discovered one that included instead such marvels as the Colosseum and Saint Mark's Square, which even the callow twelve-year-old I was then could not help but be impressed by."

So how does one feel about national roots? Ricci says that like many Canadians, he thinks, he is a bit suspicious of nationalism and a bit leary of defining oneself in terms of national roots. "Any sort of nationalist definition always runs into all kinds of issues of specificity. In my own case, I grew up the child of Italian immigrants, but a very specific sort of Italian immigrant - ones who had come from the Molise region of Italy, for instance, which was probably more defining for my parents than the fact that they were Italian, and ones who settled in a rural environment here in Canada, which actually made their

experience quite distinctive amongst Italian immigrants to Canada, the vast majority of whom settled in cities.

"I spent eight years in the Catholic school system in Canada, but the Catholicism I was exposed to there was probably quite different from the Catholicism my parents were exposed to in Italy, and also quite different from the pre-Vatican II Catholicism my oldest sister would have been exposed to in the same school system. The town I grew up in was very close to the American border, which meant the media and cultural forces we were exposed to were overwhelmingly American, which also greatly influenced my outlook on the world.

"So in the midst of all these influences, and these are a small fraction of the kinds of influences any person could cite, it became hard to speak in a meaningful way of "national roots." I suppose I would say I am the sum of all my influences, of which the fact that I grew up in Canada, and that I was the child of immigrants from a southern Italian peasant background, are more significant ones. I don't think I would describe the identity thus formed as an "international" one, really, since that would belie the specific nature of the sorts of influences I am talking about."

In the last few years Ricci has released two books: *"Lives of the Saints"* and *"Testament"*. "My interests as a writer are quite wide-ranging," he says. "Broadly speaking, I guess, my main interest, probably like that of most writers, is to attempt to get to the bottom of what it means to be human. I have explored that question in various times and settings, ranging from a mountain village in Italy in the year 1960, to rural south western Ontario in the 70s. I tend sometimes to rely on what I know best - drawing, for instance, on both my Canadian roots and my Italian ones - but at other times give free rein to my imagination."

Ricci says when he was writing his first novel, he was somewhat surprised to find himself going back for his material to that first visit to his parents' home in northern Italy. "Apparently they had lodged themselves much more deeply in my psyche than I had imagined; and the story they eventually gave rise to, came upon me practically unawares, so that characters and settings and scenes sprang out of me almost fully formed, as if they had



simply been awaiting the moment that I would set them free. Curiously, there was almost nothing in the book of the tourist's Italy I had been so enamoured of as a child, and that indeed I had continued to love; rather it was the world of stables and flies that my imagination had been fired by, as if the more sophisticated Italy of monuments and automatic water faucets had been merely the back door for my entry into my own proper Italy.

That first novel ended with a sea journey aboard a ship called *Saturnia*; and now in retrospect it almost seems to me that my real passage to Canada came exactly in that fictive voyage, at the point when I had finally been able to fully imagine the place I needed to set out from, since without a point of departure there could be no arrival."

### **Polish economist feels like an international citizen, never missed home**

Alexandra McCallum, the executive director of the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS) is looking to go forward on several projects connected with pluralistic societies and may make a beginning with town hall meetings across the province to spread the word that "multiculturalism is a work in progress."

McCallum came to Canada in 1973 from Poland. It was those years when Poland was ruled by a communist regime that made travel outside eastern blocks very difficult. She was an exchange student in the Soviet Union at the time, but had her eyes focused on the world outside the communist block.

Just as well, when she had finished with her Masters in Economics, McCallum came touring to Canada but ended up doing her Masters in Economics at York University. Then later when she travelled to Vancouver, she met her husband Don and later began to raise her son Neil.

"In Toronto, at the time, multiculturalism was fast evolving and I definitely benefited from it," McCallum says. I never felt excluded, I got involved in community work, served as head of a Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and was Chair of

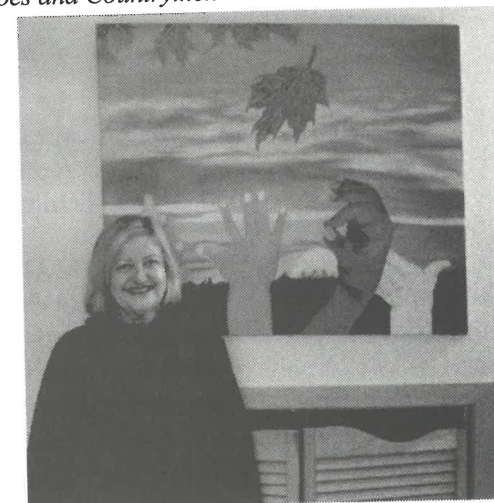
Block Parents in the city of Toronto." On a professional level, McCallum served as Executive Assistant to the municipal alderman for 12 years and later as Councillor for North Toronto.

That was a good learning experience, she says. "I learnt more about who I am as a person and took responsibility very seriously. I got a definite sense of right and wrong and I would stand up for what was right no matter how unpopular it would make me."

An average immigrant battles with identity and notions of nationhood and it's those inner conflicts that sometimes act as a barrier to settlement. But McCallum says she feels like an international citizen and has never missed home.

Harking back to home, she says with some sadness: "My father was a survivor of a concentration camp in Stuttof (near Gdansk) during World War II. I have his diaries but I cannot read them because those memories are too painful." But then, that is why she says she feels strongly about social justice, today. "How can some people decide that others are not worthy and kill them for their race or beliefs?"

Prior to coming to Halifax, McCallum first settled in Prince Edward Island where she and her husband Don ran a motel – the *Singing Sands Inn*. While on the Island, McCallum served as the executive director of its Multicultural Council.



"But in PEI, it takes a long time to affect change, because there isn't the critical mass in the demography," she says. "Introducing employment equity had to be a very slow process." However, it was then that she represented PEI at the UN conference on Racism which was held in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

McCallum's first challenge at MANS will be the upcoming multicultural festival. But before that she's looking to go forward with the Cultural Competency Training program which seeks to develop and promote cultural sensitivity in the workplace. In tandem, she says she is looking to expand the Youth Against Racism (YAR) program and take it across the province because that is where it's needed most. "But most of all, I am going to be working hard to generate greater involvement from the ethnic groups and their associations so that they truly become like partners in MANS through inclusion," she says.

### **Danjig Jew who fled at age six recounts horrors of Nazi repression**

Marianne Ferguson broke down twice while she told her story to some 150 young people at the Halifax West High School earlier this year. She was part of the Speaker's Bureau on the "Passages to Canada" program – an initiative launched in order to share with Canadians the challenge that most newcomers confront on their way to Canada.

Ferguson had come to Canada fleeing from the Nazis at the age of six, but even before the war had broken out, had already experienced some of the horrific repression against Jews in Danjig which is now Poland. Danjig was a corridor between Poland and Germany at the time. "A beautiful place that was," she says. "We had a farm of strawberries, plums and peaches. On Sundays we went swimming in the Baltic Sea. But all this came

to an end when Hitler came to power."

Ferguson says that although this was only the beginning of World War II, the times were traumatic. "The Nazi party was visible in Danjig. We had to be looking over our shoulders all the time. Jews were hunted like animals," she said. "When our people were taken to concentration camps, all that their families ever looked forward to were the ashes which would come home in envelopes."

She says she vividly remembers the time when, walking down to school, a man unleashed a dog to attack her, saying: "Go... get her." A milk man came to her rescue - he stopped the dog's advance and gave her a ride on his wagon. "But I think the man may have been killed later for his kindness to a Jew," Ferguson says. "He was German and of course there were some good Germans at the time too."

Later things got worse. The Jews were barred from the beaches and restaurants ran notices that said: "Jews not allowed," she says. "One was never sure when leaving home, if one would return at all. So my parents decided to get out. Those that stayed back died in the holocaust."

Marianne's family arrived in Canada in 1939, having been approved as farmers. Marianne's father bought a farm in Melford, (Hants County) and immediately got down to filing sponsorship papers for the extended family. But by the time the papers got to Hamburg, the last ship had left the port on September 1, when Hitler marched into Poland and declared war. "The Gestapo finally seized our people," she says. "Then the Red





Cross told us that these people were gassed in the ovens in Aushwich."

Looking back, Ferguson says what this experience has taught us is that we must strive to get along with each other. "That's how I try to live my life today. I bear no grudges against Germans and have no animosity," she says. "That's also especially because today's Germans have nothing to do with yesterday's holocaust."

In Canada, Marianne's family was welcomed everywhere. "I had no discrimination problems in school, although we know that for some time then, Jews were barred from some clubs and universities allocated quotas for Jews seeking admission to law and medical colleges."

The Fergusons did travel to Europe sometime ago, but did not venture to enter Poland, because the communists were in charge in that post-war era. "But having started out in Canada young, there isn't that longing to see Danzig again," Marianne says.

"Unfortunately, history does not teach us enough," she says. "Ethnic cleansing is still going on in the Sudan...and elsewhere."

### **British chemistry teacher now campaigns for his Fair World Project**

**D**r. John Courtneidge is a chemistry researcher who, prior to coming to Canada for permanent settlement, had taken up an assignment with the National Research Centre in Ottawa.

When he had completed his undergrad studies at Bristol, he taught chemistry and by the age of twenty five was head of the department of chemistry at Eltham Green School. But as Courtneidge explains, order at Eltham Green was maintained through violence. He says part of his job description included caning students who were sent to him by the department. "I actually did that without revulsion at the time," he says. "That

was the time when I realized the social contract between children and society blew to smithereens." And so he gave up education as a career and went on to do his Ph.D and post-doctoral research in Chemistry and later lectured at the University College, London.

Courtneidge somehow connects social and political conditions to developments in his own personal life. The Thatcher revolution of the Eighties, he says, was a time when in the words of her chancellor, unemployment was a price worth paying. "Thatcher used it as a means of social control. The best way to control populations is to create shortage and let societies fight for control of it, in the same way as capitalism uses money as scarcity," he says. In short, what Courtneidge is saying is that government funding for university research shrunk enormously and so he was out of a job.

But just as well, he went out and bought up a nursery and garden centre in Suffolk and did famously well. Somehow, that became a turning point and the focus of "The Fair World Project" he is advocating for.

"The experience of running a profit-making business made me realize that this isn't the way to run life. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"

Consequently, Courtneidge came to Ottawa and took up an assignment at NRC. "I remember getting to work the first day," he says. "It was raining cats and dogs and only then had I realized that I had left my umbrella back in England."

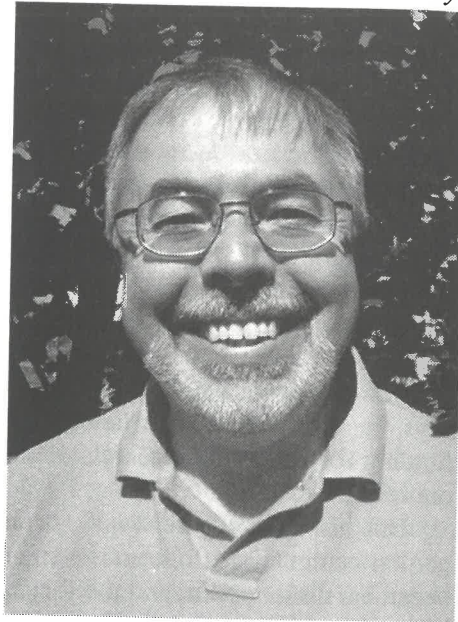
When he returned to England, Courtneidge had to deal with a divorce – which he says was a product of the environment. "Britain had the highest rate of divorce in Western Europe at the time and it all had to do with the widening gap between the rich and poor, a factor through which flow child abuse, violence, and increase in school drop-outs and so on," he says. He speaks of this as the Gini co-efficient, drawing parallels to the homicide rate in the United States which is highest when the rich-poor gap is widest.

There are five factors he says which interplay to create the gap between the rich and poor, namely: theft, rent, interest, dividends and unequal pay for work done.

Courtneidge took his ideas to what he calls the Global Table (an association of 900 people) in London and documented a seven-point plan for the Fair World Project, from which, an offshoot, the Global Justice Movement evolved. "The best idea brought to the Global Table was that there ought to be worker cooperatives rather than stakeholder corporations," he says.

Consequently, the British Co-op Movement has grown, in part, as a result of the Fair World Project. Today the UN estimates that a third of the world's population earns its income from cooperatives. His point of view today is that the creation of currency as interest-bearing debt and credit out of nothing is the problem.

He has been advocating for national banks to be run like libraries, just as the JAK banks in Sweden and Denmark operate on an interest-free basis. Courtneidge says that two years ago, as a consequence of The Fair World Project, a motion was tabled in the British House of Commons which called on the Bank of England, which is publicly owned, to be given the commission to create non-debt based, interest-free credit each year and that the new money be used for social purposes. This is something the NDP, in Canada, introduced in its manifesto.



### **Algerian film maker leaves France, does humanitarian work in India, teaches Vanautu natives to fish**

John Versteeg has tried to capture a lot of life on film...but could not have ventured so far without a sense of curiosity and without first-hand experience of the horrors of civil strife.

Versteeg was born in Algeria to a French mother and Dutch father who later moved the family to Morocco. "My father was a Major in the army – so like you would expect, I grew accustomed to seeing a tank in my backyard, barbed wire around the house and a German Shepherd trained to kill," he says. "I would even keep a knife in my back pocket to protect myself."

But by 1958, Versteeg left for Paris to pursue film making and photography, "although my father thought that was as good as picking up garbage for a career." He worked for the movie division of the French army and was based in Baden, Germany, but six years later he beat tracks back to Paris and took up a job as a news photographer.

Nonetheless, all along, Versteeg was affected by the images of war and his work even as a news photographer in Paris ceased to interest him. There was the urge to explore and with it the determination to leave France.

"There may have been a dilemma about leaving France," says Versteeg. "But what really ties you to a country? My heritage may have been French...but my roots were in Morocco...my parents divorced as soon as I set foot in Paris. So in many ways, my recollections of France was that of a tourist: you remember the taxi driver, the personal encounters and so on." Thus, when he stumbled upon an advertisement in *Paris-Match* magazine calling for volunteers for humanitarian relief work in India, Versteeg left for Calcutta and worked on a program that involved distributing food in some of the city's slums.

But Versteeg says that on a spiritual level he was questioning some things. "I wanted to make a fair and studied judgement of what I was doing and so wanted to leave for Europe, once again. The system was difficult to challenge."



It was in the Indian state of Bihar, that Versteeg met with a Canadian – Dr. Lotta Hitschmanova, the founder of the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada – and



an interest in coming to this country developed. It wasn't long before the *Ottawa Journal* signed him up and he and his wife Elizabeth settled in happily – with a measure of luxury, even a harbour craft to boot.

But Versteeg says: “We had become the very people we had judged in a negative way for living the life of the rich.” So later he travelled to Nova Scotia for love of this ocean playground, gave up photography, bought a fishing boat and for the next ten years made a living out of fishing. In those years, Versteeg travelled to China and came back with a point of view on what racism can do to communities and what bombs had done to Vietnam. “It’s so easy to drop bombs on people when politicians present them as faceless masses,” he says.

Later in Dartmouth, Versteeg started Impact Videographic Services and consequently launched Global Video Inc., producing documentaries. His many documentaries include “*Peggy’s Cove: Its People, Its Beauty, Its History*”; *Thunder in the Sky* which was about the 1917 Halifax explosion and the *Auswitch Connection*, among others. The Gambia Project won Versteeg an Award of Excellence at that year’s Atlantic Film Festival. His documentary on the streets of Calcutta, “*Beyond Charity*” told real life stories – of a German banker volunteering on the city’s streets and a Nova Scotia nurse working in a clinic at Mother Teresa’s home for the destitute. In Canada, ATV bought rights to the film.

But Versteeg was not into film making for the money,

apparently. “I declined offers to produce documentaries which were morally questionable assignments,” he says, preferring not to elaborate.

When in 1982, CUSO’s office in Nova Scotia said it was looking for fishermen to develop new fishing technology in the South Pacific island of Vanuatu, Versteeg left home, leaving behind everything he had achieved and set up residence there. “I was the first white man on that island at the time,” he says.

Vanuatu is an archipelago of islands lying 2,500 km northeast of Sydney, Australia. It has a total land mass of about 13,000 sq. km and the islands range in topography from towering volcanic cones to others covered in dense rainforest. “It was in Vanuatu – a land very primitive at the time, with not even a radio to keep in touch with the world and inhabited by a people to whom the notion of money and profits, of supplying clients with planeloads of fish was a fairy tale – that I began work, training natives in new fishing technologies,” says Versteeg.

Today, he isn’t looking back on the adventure. He’s looking forward to new challenges.

## CHAPTER 12

### Emigration out of Eastern Europe

The visible newcomers to Canada out of Eastern Europe since the 1990s, are the Bosnians, Croatians, Serbs and the Albanian Kosovars, who in the last decade, confronted with Slobodan Milosevic's mighty ambitions for a greater Serbia and the consequent war in the Balkans, had to flee their countries.

Tanja Krajcinovic recalls those moments in this book. "It was sometime in August 95, when a great exodus of Serbs from Croatia had begun. They were pouring into Bosnia, trying to move forward into Serbia. There was chaos as people began to flee in different directions. When the shooting started, my brother was at school, so I fetched him and fled the city to a village where my mother was keeping house. There we waited for about a week, waiting for tragedy to strike. Then it did some eight days later. A neighboring village was burnt down and that was a signal for us to leave."

The war in the Balkans was fought along ethnic lines in the early nineties and was obviously triggered by Bosnia opting for independence from the former Yugoslavia. The 1990 elections in Bosnia resulted in a governing coalition of three ethnically-based parties generally corresponding to the three major ethnic groups. Muslims and Croats in the governing coalition favoured independence for Bosnia-Herzegovina, while most Bosnian Serbs did not.

In a referendum shortly thereafter, over 63 percent of Bosnians chose independence, meeting the criteria for recognition

set forth by the U.S. and the EU several months earlier.

In the spring of 1992, after its offensive in Croatia had ground to a stalemate, Serbia launched a war of aggression against Bosnia. The nationalist Bosnian Serb political party, proxies of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, had removed its members from the government. In March Serbian paramilitary forces, reinforced by the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav National Army, began a campaign of terror in eastern Bosnia. In that time more than 200,000 Bosnians were killed.

Tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslim women, many of them only girls, were raped. More than two million Bosnians became refugees or were in internal exile. Canada, like the other two refugee welcoming countries, opened its doors to war displaced people from the Balkan war.

On the heels of the Bosnian war, hostilities surfaced in the province of Kosovo. Milosevic was determined to amalgamate the minority Albanian community within the Serb federation and sought to do this by amending Yugoslavia's constitution. The Albanians put up resistance to Serb aggression and when Kosovo became a battle ground, NATO intervened and a bombing campaign ultimately brought all sides to the conflict to discuss peace.

The war had forced thousands to flee to neighbouring countries for temporary refuge where they lived in refugee camps until, of course, countries like Canada and the United States welcomed them to our shores. While refugees from the former Yugoslavia have settled across Canada, many of the Kosovars were resettled in Halifax.

But invasion and occupation and subsequently war had dogged Eastern Europe even during the first half of the twentieth century. In 1918, at the end of the first World War, the Austro-Hungarian empire had fallen and Czechoslovakia was formed. Political descent over the Czech nation's destiny within the Austro-Hungarian empire as well as poverty had forced the movement of Czech immigrants to Canada.

Most of the early Czech immigrants to Canada settled on the prairies in southeastern Saskatchewan and in 1900, a few Czech



families who came via the United States founded Prague (Viching) in Alberta. The first urban settlements to receive prewar Czech immigrants were Edmonton, Kingston, and Windsor, while Toronto drew only a small transient group of Czechs at this time. The first Slovaks came in the early 1870s drawn by work opportunities in the coal mines and steel mills of the United States. But ten years later, many of these same immigrants moved into western Canada, drawn by the prospect of obtaining free homesteads while others hoped to earn a better living in the coal fields of Alberta.

In 1885 a group of Slovaks and Hungarians from Pennsylvania established settlements in the farming districts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. But in time, many began the trek eastward to other small urban communities in northern Ontario.

Between the wars (1920 and 1940) Romanians, Slovaks, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles and Ukrainians were among those interned in camps in Western Canada. The political air in their European homelands had obviously contributed to some ideological polarization among European ethnic groups. The political ideology, however, that most worried the Canadian government was communism. It was strongest among Ukrainians and Jews who had been radicalised before the war. Later, growing class consciousness of immigrant workers in the 1930s found expression in left wing activity - although those who participated in left-wing activism faced the threat of arrest and deportation.

While a small percentage of the Czechs who began coming to Canada at the time were farmers, the vast majority of post-war arrivals came to the cities, particularly to Montreal, which quickly replaced Winnipeg as the largest Czech settlement area in Canada until World War II. In 1938 Nazi Germany invaded Czechoslovakia and annexed it. As a consequence, many refugees fled to Canada. Among them was businessman Thomas J. Bata who relocated staff from the Bata shoe factories in Moravia to this country.

But Czechoslovakia had its share of troubles once again after 1957 when a Stalinization process had begun: the secret police infused terror, many Czechs were thrown into jail and

collectivization of land got underway. On August 24, 1968 Czechoslovakia's democratic structure had been completely shattered by the Soviets and the Czechs remained suppressed under communist rule for another 20 years. In 1968 almost 12,000 Czechs emigrated.

The post World War II Hungarian immigrants that came to Canada set up several organizations, including the World Federation of Hungarian Veterans (W.F.H.V.) and the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie Veterans' Benevolent Association. The Széchenyi Society, a Calgary-based group, was created to establish Hungarian credit courses. The Hungarian Helicon Society was founded in 1952 to preserve, explain, and promote the thousand year old cultural and historical heritage of the Hungarian nation.

The Hungarian Revolution in October of 1956 provoked a strong response from Hungarian Canadians which resulted in the establishment of the Hungarian Canadian Relief Fund in Toronto and creation of a blood bank. The Legion for Freedom was formed in response to hundreds of pleas received by relief organizers for the formation of an international brigade to aid Hungary. But in November 1956, the Hungarian Revolution was crushed. Some 200,000 Hungarians fled their homeland during the Revolution. Canadian immigration officials responded pragmatically to applications from Hungarian refugees. Those fleeing the Revolution represented the brightest and best of Hungary's urban population. In total, approximately 37,000 Hungarian refugees were admitted to Canada following the 1956 Revolution.

Hungarians have contributed to the study of medicine in Canada. Dr. Paul Rékai and Dr. John Rékai founded Central Hospital, the first multilingual hospital in Toronto, whereas Dr. Hans Selye in Montreal pioneered the study of the effects of stress upon health.

Alex Domokos, who lives in Winnipeg, was born in Szabadka, Yugoslavia in 1921, but while still an infant was smuggled across the border to Hungary, where the family settled down. That was when Hungary, under a treaty gave up its claims

to Yugoslavia. His story, told in this book, goes on to talk about his years in prison when he was captured by the Russians in the siege of Budapest during World War II. Domokos was released six years later, but had to flee Hungary in 1956 when the revolution he was fighting was brutally crushed by the Russians.

Croatian voyagers are reported to have accompanied the fur trade and joined the Cariboo gold rush of the 1850s as well as the Yukon rush of 1898. A group of miners made their way from the United States to Vancouver Island and at about the same time, Croatians established settlements around the Fraser River salmon grounds and got integrated into the Canadian fishing industry.

The pre-war movement of Croatians to Canada had resulted in settlements across several regions of Canada including British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. They worked in mines, forests and factories. By 1910, Croatians were migrating to Winnipeg from the United States. But Croatian miners also sought opportunities in the new mines in both northern Ontario and Quebec. In the Atlantic provinces, by the mid-1920s, Croatians had settled in New Waterford, Reserve Mines, Stellarton, and Sydney in Nova Scotia.

In striving to survive the oppression of invading powers, some four million Croatians have left their home over the years - many migrated to Canada - and estimates reveal that there are about 250,000 Canadians of Croatian descent. The most significant periods of Croatian migration to Canada were immediately after the two world wars. Thus today there are Croatian communities in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and Montreal. The first Croatian Catholic church was established in Windsor, Ontario, in 1950. Other parishes and missions were located in Toronto, Mississauga, Hamilton, Sault Ste. Marie, Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver.

Croatians have played an important role in many sectors of this country's development. Early Croatian migrant workers helped build the transcontinental railroad and develop Canada's mining, forestry, agriculture, and fishing industries. During the interwar period, many became diligent factory workers in Canada's growing industrial sector. The third generation has

enjoyed considerable upward mobility, building careers in the service, industrial, private, and professional sectors of Canadian society.

Among other non-British settlers to arrive in Canada at the early part of the twentieth century were Macedonians—people from the Balkan mountains at the time part of the Turkish empire. The first Macedonians were driven by a search for opportunity and by the varying degrees of expulsion, political and socio-economic. They are reported to have lived almost a completely isolated existence in neighborhoods around their church, stores, and boarding houses.

The mass departure of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia continued in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Greek Civil War (1946-49). The 1950s witnessed the arrival of about 2,000 Macedonian refugee children to Canada. Significant exodus from Vardar Macedonia (now the Republic of Macedonia), or from towns and cities, began in the post-Depression years and gained momentum in the postwar period.

### **Hungarian war veteran in Winnipeg says Canada made him feel like a human being**

**A**lex Domokos was born in Szabadka, Yugoslavia in 1921, but while still an infant was smuggled across the border to Hungary, where the family settled down. That was when Hungary under a treaty gave up its claims to Yugoslavia.

Domokos went to military college for a higher education as would the elitist of the time, he says. But while he was looking to join the police force as a young graduate, World War II broke out and he was conscripted to front-line duty in the Gendarmery. He says that barely two months after he married, he was captured by the Russians during the siege of Budapest and spent the next six



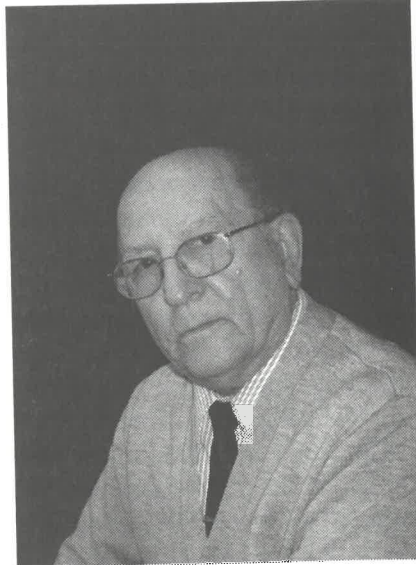
years as a prisoner of war in Russia, helping to rebuild the war-ravaged country.

But Domokos says that it was during his captivity in the work camps that he discovered his talent for story writing. "There was no writing paper or pencils in the cells, so I had to memorize my stories and I would tell these stories to prisoners and bring them out of their despair." He says desperation in the cells was virtually killing the human spirit - many imprisoned indefinitely saw no hope for themselves and that resulted in hundreds of suicides.

"In order to cheer up fellow inmates, I began writing stories on empty cement bags and on some evenings I would host what began to be called the *"Domokos Evening Show."* Unfortunately none of his writing in the cells could have been secured.

Domokos also studied wood carving while in the camps and put his talent to work in the huge reconstruction works underway in Voronyezs. Later he was fortunate to meet with a professional ceramic engineer who introduced him to the more delicate secrets of mould making and casting. Thus by the end of his captivity, he was commissioned by a Russian architect to make statues, cast in concrete, to decorate city parks and playgrounds. In 1951, Domokos was finally repatriated to Hungary.

In the run up to the Hungarian revolution of 1956 which was mounted to free itself from Russian domination, Domokos says the huge housing shortage forced communists to deport the non-loyalists to the hinterland. But six years after their marriage, Mrs Domokos traveled to another township to deliver their first child so as not to link her with Hungarian deportees at the time. But



when Hungary's revolution was crushed and Domokos and his wife who were in Budapest at the time fled Hungary for Austria, their one-year old daughter left in the care of grandparents in another town had to stay behind. The borders were closing and only the minefields were open.

Domokos says the agony of the six-year separation before being united with the child in Canada as well as his "prisoner-of-war" years and the three years of deportation from Budapest, urged him to write the autobiography *"The Price of Freedom"* which will be released in the fall this year.

Looking back, Domokos says: "What's home? I cannot deny my roots. But indeed, to Canada I have an obligation. It was in Canada that for the first time I felt like a decent human being. Under German and later Russian occupation we always felt like unworthy people."

### **Serb refugee witnesses war, says identity has no relation with geography of birth**

Tanja Krajcinovic broke down in tears when she was telling the story of her life in the former Yugoslavia. "I lived in Croatia, but did not have Croatian citizenship because I was of Serbian descent, so ever since I can remember I have had an identity problem," she says.

Then sometime in August 95, there was a great exodus of Serbs from Croatia. They were pouring into Bosnia, trying to move forward into Serbia while creating a refugee crisis of gargantuan proportions. "There was chaos as people began to flee in different directions. When the shooting started, my brother was at school, so I fetched him and fled the city to a village where my mother was keeping house. There we waited for about a week, waiting for tragedy to strike. Then it did some eight days later. A

neighboring village was burnt down and that was a signal for us to leave."

Tanja left with her mother and brother and an uncle and aunt who had become second parents to them after the death of her father. They took a ride on a neighbour's truck and the only belongings that traveled with them were some comforters and photographs. "The routes to take were dicey," she says. "There were soldiers conscripting young men into the army and we had to hide our brother from their gaze lest he would have been forced into battle. We were looking to cross into Bosnia for a while so as to return some time later. On the way we saw people fleeing on bicycles, on foot, on horse drawn carriages.

"Then as we entered Bosnia, we were overwhelmed with the sight of refugees everywhere. There were people calling out names to identify relatives – women anxious about the men conscripted at the border. Sooner than later it was obvious that we would never be able to get back to Croatia, so we traveled to Belgrade, navigating our way through Bosnia to avoid the zones of conflict. While there were people on the roads offering bread to the hungry we also saw people making money hand over fist selling gas."

Once in Belgrade, the Krajcinovics met up with relatives who looked after them for the next seven months while Canada was processing their refugee papers. "There were thousands of people queuing up at the Canadian embassy, but we were lucky to be processed early."

But why did Tanja break down when speaking? When the



Krajcinovics decided to file their refugee papers they thought it was wise to file as mother and children rather than include uncle and aunt at the same time, which could have caused a delay since men were being processed to determine their role in the war.

So while Tanja, her mother Danica and brother Nikica were approved and travelled to Canada in March 1996, every attempt subsequently to bring her uncle and aunt has failed. "Canadian officials are unable to see the reality of this relationship in which my uncle has been a father's role model for me for as long as I can remember. Unfortunately, while we got a second chance at life, it is with this important relationship missing," she says.

Tanja is a graduate of the Maritime School of Social Work and says she wants to spend her life working with refugees and immigrant youth. "Only a refugee understands post-traumatic issues triggered by the sight of violence, bloodshed and crime," she says. Nikica works with Irving, driving long-haul trucks and mother Danica works with the Radisson Hotel.

Looking back, Tanja says history plays a big role in war. The Balkans and Europe have been in constant turmoil because history tends to live with people and people do not forget the past too easily because the hurt from conflict is passed down to generations. "In the Balkans today, a Bosnian is unlikely to marry a Catholic and a Serb is unlikely to marry a Croatian. The lessons learnt are too strong."

Tanja says even in Canada today what she struggles with is her identity. But she has learnt that her identity does not have to cling to the geography of birth but to the beliefs, love and value systems that make her what she is.

### **Bosnian leaves flamboyant lifestyle and settles for peace in New Brunswick**

**K**asim Hadzic, was a Bosnian Muslim refugee in Croatia when he got the call from his brother-in-law in Saint John, New Brunswick, inviting him to visit Canada. "At the time we



*Emigration out of Eastern Europe*

thought the war would be over soon and we would return to Bosnia, but that was not to be," says Hadzic.

Even before the war had begun, one could see signs of conflict, Hadzic says. "We lived in the Serb-dominated areas and things were getting gloomy. The Muslims were losing jobs everywhere. I was manager of a large chemical firm at the time and worked through the initial years of the war travelling throughout the region," he says. "I tried never to engage in political discussions and I socialized with everybody in Serbia."

Hadzic recalls, ruminating over the past, a very flamboyant lifestyle in Bosnia in the seventies and eighties. A company car, cottage, free medicals, paid vacations were part of the package, he says. "But then we had to leave all this behind and flee as the war intensified." The flight was a journey that took them first to Serbia, then to Hungary, on to Austria because there was no direct route to Croatia because of the cross-fire of war. Finally from Austria, Hadzic and the family got to Slovenia and with the assistance of a friend, crossed the border to Croatia.

While in New Brunswick, Hadzic was urged to apply for refugee status, spurred by the immigration minister's remarks to the media that Bosnians and Croats visiting Canada at the time would be given refugee status, all things being equal. And so it was that the Hadzics made Canada their new home.

But not without some share of the teething problems of settlement. Almost as soon as he was ready to settle down, Hadzic's brother-in-law, a doctor, was ready to take up assignment in Texas. "We knew absolutely no English," he says.



*Canada's Immigrants, Heroes and Countrymen*

"But then came a friend, a lady from the former Yugoslavia working for the hospital in Saint John. She taught us English in her spare time, she admitted the children to school, took us to the immigration offices – in short, we would have been lost without her," he says.

Likewise, he says they met up with a family from Croatia and they became friends instantly. The man had a business in ceramic tiles and Hadzic joined him. Like many others, Hadzic was saying that the compassion and friendliness of Canadians was giving him hope. "We worked hard at our English, went to school at the YMCA, my wife washed dishes in a restaurant."

Hadzic says this with a lump in his throat. "I once had a chauffeur in my country and here I was doing a job in the cleaning business. But lots of friendly people made life easy for us. I will never forget the friendly actions of our new friends."

Today Hadzic manages a property business, servicing at least 60 apartments, while his wife works for a greenhouse.

He says he did go back to Bosnia sometime after the war, but did not feel like it was home. The city's population of 180,000 had doubled. The Muslim population has shrunk. The Muslims in Croatia had moved to Sarajevo.

"I am not a practicing Muslim," Hadzic asserts. "I have never been to a mosque in my life. Instead I worked with the communist system, because allegiance to the communists was important to secure a good job." He says most of the Muslims in Bosnia never practiced the faith. "It was a normal thing there to drink and nobody ever talked about religion."

But then the automatic next question would be why then did a war on religious lines break out. Why were Muslims targeted? "Interesting question," says Hadzic. "The short answer is that Milosevic had dreams of a Greater Serbia. There were Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia. How can you build a Greater Serbia, unless you first make Serbs supreme. Thus the war," he says.

Looking back on settlement years, Hadzic says he has never experienced racism in Canada. "Someone asking me where I come from, after hearing me speak, is a normal thing. It's not racism."

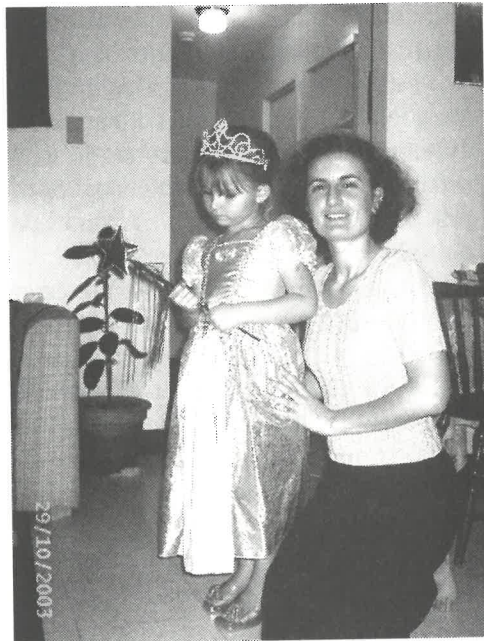
### **Kosovar refugee looks back on past as a dream**

**I**lira Mertezi, born and raised in Kosovo got married at seventeen, but almost as soon as the war had begun, lost her husband, who was killed when a grenade hit their home. Mertezi was seven months pregnant at the time.

It's a tradition among the Kosovars that a wife who has been widowed should leave the child in the care of the husband's family. That's when she ran into trouble. Her husband's family said they would not accept the child because they thought the child was not their son's. Her own family was worrying about the stigma of raising a child, found unacceptable by its society. "Why would you want to destroy a career raising this child in these circumstances," her father had said, urging her to give the child up for adoption.

Ilira was young, but old enough to hold on to her conviction. She moved to Albania with the idea that she would leave her baby there, but realized later her emotions wouldn't let her give up the baby. So when her dad had fixed May 6, 1999 to be the date when she would sign adoption papers with another couple, she left home again and lived in a refugee camp in Albania where fleeing Kosovars were taking refuge.

"Looking back, it all seems like a dream," she says. "While spending two years in those camps, I applied to Canada for



refugee status and got it. Then I wrote to dad. I said to him: 'You think I gave up much for my baby, but instead it's my baby that's given me so much. I'm moving to Canada.'

Ilira's father was not exactly happy with the news. In Albania, at the time, agents would woo young women promising them immigration opportunities and then force them into prostitution, she says. "Dad was worried about that prospect and so came to see me in Albania, expecting to see me in trouble," she says.

She moved to Canada with her daughter Gentiana, 22 months at the time and settled in Halifax. Although Ilira speaks English almost fluently three and half years since landing in this country, she says she came here with "zero knowledge of English." The secret is not to give up, she says. "Life changes, some one will rescue you. I was losing a child because of people's gossip. I did not give up. Today I am free and without a worry."

Although Ilira is a trained nurse, she says she chose not to pursue nursing in Canada and, instead, did a dental assistant's course. "I don't have a job, but I'll get one someday. That's no big deal," she says.

"But Canada has to get some things right. Taxes are killing us, so at least it must fix health. And, when newcomers get here, put them in jobs quickly. A doctor is a doctor, an engineer is an engineer, no matter where he has studied. If I claim to be a nurse, I should be able to give an injection, clean a wound. My English does not have to be perfect for that."



## CHAPTER 13

### Emigration out of South America

The Latin American calendar is dotted with celebratory days which commemorate the battles against Spain and France at the turn of the nineteenth century. *Patriot's Day* in the Dominican Republic celebrates the birth in 1814 of Juan Pablo Duarte who fought the battle against Spain. *Cinco de Mayo* marks the defeat of French forces in the Mexican city of Puebla in 1862. *Battala de las Pedras* commemorates Uruguay's victory over the Spanish army. *The Battle of Boyaca Day* celebrates the victory of South American insurgents over Spanish forces in 1819 in Colombia. *10 du Octubre* hails the proclamation in 1868 by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes of the right of all Cubans to fight for freedom from Spain.

But since independence, the region has witnessed turbulent times, military dictatorships and communist regimes. It was a time of political upheaval in Paraguay and Bolivia, the heyday of the Cuban revolution in the Sixties, military dictatorship in Argentina and Peru, the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende and civil war in Central America. The political and economic decline in South America in the last four decades drove hundreds of thousands of Spanish-speaking Latin Americans to seek refuge in the United States and Canada.

In the seventies, Chile replaced its democratically elected president with a military dictator. Virginia Jaraguei tells the story of her flight to Canada in 1974 when Augusto Pinochet grabbed power from Allende's government in a military coup. She says her father, who taught at a Catholic university and mother who volunteered for a project that addressed the needs of poor women,

were seen to be pro-Allende citizens and were thus watched closely. "So dad went into hiding and mom was subjected to intensive interrogation," she says. "We had to find refuge somewhere in order to avoid torture. So while mom was talking to various embassies, Canada responded first. It was timely, because Pinochet later imprisoned and killed many university academics and the country's elitist." The subsequent years until 1990 were marked by a reign of terror, arrests, disappearances and repression of political dissidents.

Likewise, Uruguay had lost its grip on free government after dictatorship got a foothold in 1973. Indeed, at about the same time, dictatorships got deeply entrenched in the body politic in Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, although there is evidence of political growth there today.

When the civil war broke out in El Salvador in 1980, Mirna Hernandez, who tells her story in this book, was only two years old. In later years she was told how one morning the soldiers came to her house and shot her father as the family watched helplessly. "They threatened to come again and assassinate my mother. My father was a peasant and the government's view was that peasants were communists," she says.

So Mirna's mom took her children with her and fled to the mountains where other El Salvadorans were gathering. "At that time, I believe, helicopters were bombing towns and there were soldiers and death squads everywhere," Mirna says. "We spent five months in the mountains and then fled to the Honduras where the UN refugee agency had set up camps. That camp was attacked several times and hundreds lost their lives there."

Peru and Colombia had made some progress toward democracy, but corruption and social ills have almost knocked it apart. Alberta Fujimori, the Japanese-Peruvian, set up a corrupt government taking the economy to chaos and in Colombia the reign of terror unleashed by drug lords on the streets of Bogota have cracked the fragile democratic structure.

Luis Fernando Ribes, a practicing physician in Colombia had to give up everything and flee with his wife, a physician too, and his young baby. "That's because Colombia is no more safe," he

says. "The Canadian embassy there recognizes the fact that everybody resident in the country is a possible refugee." Ribes now lives in New Brunswick and tells his story in this book.

The guerrillas have been fighting the government for the last fifteen years and embroiled in the communist ideological war of the rebels is the illicit drug trade. "Drugs bring in the money and money corrupts," says Ribes. He says the fear for his life was spurred by the widespread suspicion that people are working for the other side of the conflict. So while the murders and shootings go on, Colombians are fleeing across the borders.

Canada did not turn a blind eye to the human rights abuses that forced thousands of Latin Americans to flee their countries. While some migrated to neighbouring states including Cuba, some others migrated to Soviet bloc countries and yet some others to Canada. Ottawa had by then implemented a special immigration program for Chilean refugees. In total, about 7,000 Chileans are reported to have made their way into Canada.

Indeed, in some other Latin American countries – Guatemala for example, Canadians walked the extra mile to set up solidarity networks and lobby their governments on justice issues.

The political instability and terrorist group activity in Argentina in the seventies also brought waves of Argentines to Canada swelling their immigration numbers to about a thousand every year. The 1996 census put the count of people claiming Argentine ancestry to 7,115. While the greatest concentration of Argentines is in Ontario and Quebec, there are also smaller communities in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

Although those that came in the early seventies took up jobs as electricians, mechanics and construction workers, the Argentine community in Ottawa, Montreal or Vancouver today is composed of professionals – university professors, scholars, physicians, architects, engineers – as well as entrepreneurs. Perhaps the most famous Argentine in Canada is Sergio Marchi who came to this country as a young boy in 1959. Almost 25 years later he was elected to parliament and was appointed cabinet minister in Jean Chrétien's government in 1993. In his last ministerial portfolio Marchi served as Canada's foreign

minister and is currently the country's Ambassador to the World Trade Organization.

Since the Nineties, Canada's relations with Latin America has assumed another dimension as a result of trade groupings. In 1989, it became a full member of the Organization of American States (OAS) – an intergovernmental organization formed to promote economic cooperation. In 1994 it signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which opened trade doors to Mexico. Two years later it signed a similar agreement with Chile investing billions of dollars in that country. In 1998, it hosted a regional conference on international migration issues.

Although Mexico's political culture was not visited by military dictatorships, one party rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party dominated its history for clearly seventy years. That party stronghold was finally broken a few years ago when Vicente Fox breezed into power. Just as well, Mexicans made tracks to Canada in a significant way only in the seventies. That was a time when professional cadres and students seeking admission to Canadian universities were emigrating out of Mexico city, Puebla, Guadalajara, San Luis Potosi, and Acapulco in search of better economic opportunities. According to the 1996 census, there were at that time 23,295 people of Mexican descent in Canada.

Mexicans can be found across the spectrum of economic life in Canada as professionals, entrepreneurs, manufacturers, or construction and agricultural workers. But while they have keenly sought to integrate with mainstream Canadian society, Mexicans hold fast to their heritage. The proliferation of Mexican restaurants truly reflects that observation.

In the second half of the last century, Canada has pursued economic cooperation with Brazil as well and joint ventures have since been established. But because Brazilians cherish family ties, emigration out of Brazil was limited until the crises of the Eighties. Middle class Brazilians then turned to Canada for a better life and most of them settled in Ontario, where the significant Portuguese community became catalysts in their integration, providing linguistic familiarity and jobs for the once



colonized Portuguese-speaking Brazilian immigrants. Today the Brazilian Carnival Ball is a prestige event on the social calendar in Toronto and Brazilian music is promoted through the many mushrooming bands.

### **Jamaican welder forms Black Action Defence committee to monitor police brutality**

**D**udley Laws began life as a welder in his home country, Jamaica. But he has spent the greater part of his life in England and Canada welding together people of African descent, working for upliftment and empowerment of Black youth, advocating for reform in the criminal justice system and against police brutality.

Laws left Kingston in 1955 for England on a boat that sailed for 19 days before he set foot on dry land at Dover. In London, he upgraded his skills as a welder but soon connected with marginalized communities, helping out immigrants from Jamaica and other parts of the world find homes and work. "The Englishman at the time knew less of us than we knew of them and so in a sense we felt like strangers in England," Laws says. "On the other hand, those who lived in the Caribbean were familiar with class distinctions between Blacks and Englishmen. While local Jamaicans worked in plantations or cleaned the streets, Englishmen lived the highflying lifestyle employing chauffeurs and yard boys," he says.

So Laws saw the need for change. He got involved with the Standing Conference on West Indians and founded the Brixton Neighborhood Association – both of these organizations were created to combat racism and discrimination against people of African descent. "The celebration of the independence days of various African countries and welcoming parties gave newcomers a sense of belonging and a connection to their cultural heritage,"

Laws observes.

But Laws takes no credit for the change that slowly evolved. "The collective effort of individuals that led to the formation of organizations, clubs, employment clinics created a transformation in English society between 1955 and 1965," he says. "We saw Black nurses in hospitals, our people were employed in transportation and some Blacks even got into the political arena."

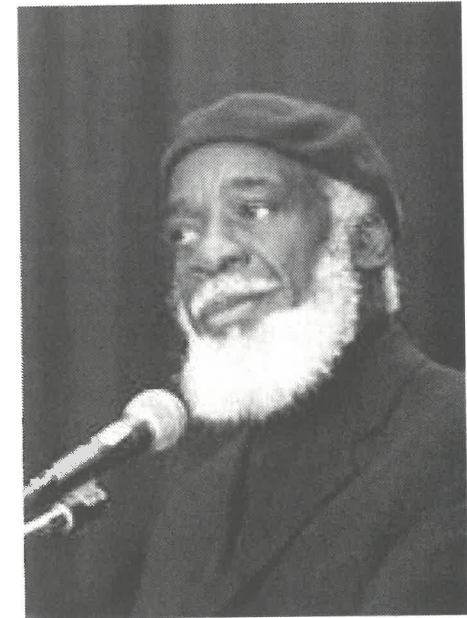
In 1965 Laws left England to come to Canada. "I came for no specific reason – I suppose I wanted to broaden my experience," he says. "I don't know if it was worth it really, because I had to start all over again."

Two days upon arrival in Canada in 1965, Laws began work with Dufferin Material and Construction as a welder. But within a month since settling down, he connected with organizations, clubs and churches where Jamaicans and other people of African descent met. Sometime later, he was nominated Executive Director of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) which later became the UAIA (Universal African Improvement Association)

In time Laws implemented several programs including sewing and keyboard classes for women who were maids in Canada as well as formed the Black Inmates and Friends Assembly (BIFA) in the federal prisons.

"We would organize cultural events in prisons, take speakers, counselors and church ministers to jails to motivate inmates."

Laws says it's disturbing to see thousands of young, vibrant



Black youth in federal and provincial jails. "Crime is a result of conditions not created by Blacks. By not including the Black community, and not providing alternatives to crime and by focusing on incarceration rather than prevention, we raise the crime rate," he says. Laws goes somewhat further in that observation to say it's not clear who is bringing those drugs and guns to the Black community. "It almost appears like some deliberate action," he says.

Laws says the Toronto police force has an operating budget of \$670 million dollars per year. "We don't get even a fraction of that for youth counseling and job training programs for Blacks. In response to the 1988 shooting of Lester Donaldson during an incident with five police officers, Laws founded the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC) to serve as a watchdog of police brutality against Blacks.

Laws has been charged by Toronto's police once for smuggling immigrants across the Canada border and later for sexual assault. But he says he has triumphed over every case charged against him – these cases were later dismissed. "Once you speak out against police, you are subjected to this kind of harassment," he says.

Laws who has won several awards including the Bob Marley Memorial Award and the Canadian Black Achievement Award says he shall pursue his work with youth in Toronto especially in the areas of youth counselling, conflict resolution and reform of the criminal justice system "in order to create a gentler society for people."

"We all have a distinct culture and history as peoples of the world and I have a responsibility to the human race," he says. "I am Canadian but I am proud of my African heritage. If we lose our identity, we will lose some part of our humanity."

## **Ontario minister of Jamaican heritage was banker with heart who profited the community**

**T**he Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, while already an industry consultant in Jamaica urged her husband to uproot and move to Canada so that the sons may forge ahead with the education opportunities this country would give them. "Although we were fairly well off, it wasn't easy settling down in those initial years," Chambers says. "There were restrictions on the amount of money one could take out of Jamaica at the time."

But Chambers quickly landed a job with Scotiabank and got to the top of the stairs in the career rung, with a posting as Sr. Vice President, directing automation projects for the bank and supervising its operations in other regions of the world. But, all along, Chambers was involved with communities and was just as well profiled in the media, once, as the banker with heart who profits the community.

She's been an ardent advocate for social responsibility, education, healthcare, and the advancement of women and minorities. So when she retired from Scotiabank in December 2002 she turned to politics and was elected Member of Provincial Parliament for the Scarborough riding the following year.

She served on the Board of the United Way of Greater Toronto for seven years and on the Board of the United Way of Canada for almost six years. "As past chair of the UWC, I think I helped to expand the collaboration between the 123 chapters of the organization, introduced transparency in the operations and provided it direction," Chambers says. The United Way of Canada is focused on improving lives and building community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective actions. It responds to a broad range of human needs on a national scale.

But Chambers says that her most prized community service was the work done for a taskforce on Student Financial Support, while she served as Governor of the University of Toronto for about nine years. Her work on the taskforce contributed to a



policy, which even today guarantees that no student will be unable to study at the University of Toronto because of inadequate financial resources.

Looking back she sees a major connection between her work at the University of Toronto and her mandate today as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for the Province of Ontario. "The portfolio fits just right," she says. Among Chambers' most recent awards are the Golden Jubilee Medal of Queen Elizabeth the Second, the Toronto Canada Day Achievement Award and the Prime Minister of Jamaica's Medal of Appreciation, all of which crown some of her work with communities.

"I find that it's quite possible to be Jamaican-Canadian," she says, commenting on how a sense of roots can coexist with a sense of being Canadian. "At all times we knew we would never turn back to Jamaica. Canada was too good for us. But we also love Jamaica and work to promote Jamaican causes," she says.

It's sometimes possible that a person of colour would feel a sense of discrimination at some point. But like many others, Chambers says, she's not quite sure if she has felt discriminated. "I must have encountered some inappropriate comments or empty remarks, but that's about all," she says. "As a Black woman, Roman Catholic and successful career banker, there were several factors distinguishing me, but race was not necessarily one of them."

The barriers people face sometimes hamper the ability to forge ahead. But Chambers says she worked relentlessly, not for the sake of success, but in order to give her best to anything she



did. Looking back, it has all paid off, she says. "Our sons Chris and Sam, for whom we came to Canada, do us proud."

### **Chilean refugee turns to film to bridge gaps between immigrants and mainstream Canadians**

Now even film makers are working on immigration. After the successful screening of her film "*Sanctuary*", Virginia Jauregui Parkinson, is embarking on another documentary: "*Hidden Tears – the Immigrant Experience in Nova Scotia.*"

*Sanctuary* was the story of Sanja Pecelj – the Bosnian refugee who was given refuge in a church in Halifax while she was fighting her case for refugee status on grounds that she would be tortured if returned home. "When I heard of Sanja's predicament, I connected with her and we quickly bonded," Parkinson says. "Then I worked on *Sanctuary* for three months before we had a Premiere showing at the Marquee in April 2004. The documentary

was screened twice on Cable channels and copies can be found at the Spring Garden Road library in Halifax.

In "*Hidden Tears*" Parkinson tells the story of six immigrant women from different cultures and with experiences



policy, which even today guarantees that no student will be unable to study at the University of Toronto because of inadequate financial resources.

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of their own as well as gets a perspective from the man on the street. The story line she says revolves around the challenges of leaving the home country, making the transition work, fighting barriers to settlement, getting into the workplace and adjusting to another culture.

But the motivation to do the film is to bridge gaps in understanding between immigrants and mainstream Canadians. "I want people to wake up to reality," she says. "One saw so much of the good side of humanity after the tsunami tragedy. But why does it have to take a tragedy to make people human?" The documentaries are produced by a camera crew and Parkinson directs most of her work.

Parkinson's parents came to Canada in 1974 during the military coup when Augusto Pinochet grabbed power from Allende's government. She says her father, who taught at a Catholic university and mother who volunteered for a project that addressed the needs of poor women, were seen to be pro-government citizens and were thus blacklisted. "So dad went into hiding and mom was subjected to intensive interrogation," Parkinson says. "We had to find refuge somewhere in order to avoid torture. So while mom was talking to various embassies, Canada responded first," she says. "It was timely, because Pinochet later imprisoned many university academics and the country's elitist."

Carlos Jauregui, her father, was a grandmaster at Chess, Parkinson says, who beat Bobby Fischer at a Chess tournament in Chile in 1959.

Although the family moved into workplaces quickly, Parkinson who was ten years at the time remembers the culture shock, the severe weather and the language barriers which made settlement for her somewhat daunting. But life changes and soon there was light at the other end of the tunnel. In 1992, upon their retirement, the Jaureguis went back to Chile, while Parkinson made Halifax her home, did her Bachelor of Recreation and Administration at Dal and raised three children.

**El Salvadoran, who witnessed ugliness of war, would see brothers being shot in nightmares.**

When the civil war broke out in El Salvadore in 1980, Mirna Hernandez was only two years old. So she had to be told the story again and again in later years of how one morning the soldiers came to her house and shot her father as the family watched helplessly, then threatened to come again and assassinate her mother. "My father was a peasant," Mirna says. "And the government's view was that peasants were communists."

So Mirna's mom took her children with her and fled to the mountains where other El Salvadorans were gathering. "At that time, I believe, helicopters were bombing towns and there were soldiers and death squads everywhere," Mirna says. "We spent five months in the mountains and then fled to the Honduras where the UN refugee agency had set up camps. That camp, because it was on the border, was attacked several times and hundreds lost their lives there."

It was dangerous living there, Mirna says. "So mom moved us further into the Honduras and into Mesa Grande," she says. "I vividly remember life in that camp. It was out there in the wilderness. And all of us had lost hope of going back some day. Our lands, our



homes, our relatives were snatched away from us. I remember a cousin's husband being shot by Honduras police on trumped up charges that he was farming outside the camp."

In those camps, the young were taught to survive not succeed. In other words they were taught to sew, farm, make tools, because if one's guardians were to die, one would be out on one's own.

In that very camp, Mirna's mom was once again threatened by guerrillas, who thought she was spying for the government. "They came with machetes and pierced them through the wooden walls of our home. They destroyed our kitchen, pissed and defecated there and then abandoned it," Mirna says. "Mom asked us to pray fervently, because the time had come for us to die." But not quite.

The United Nations finally got them out of the camp and when they were brought to Honduras' capital, they got to know that their brothers who were fighting on the side of the guerrillas were ultimately killed. Their visas to Canada came some weeks later.

Looking back Mirna says: "I don't like to dwell on the past. But sometimes, when you look back you find your strength." She had a late start with schooling in Canada and had much catching up to do. "When in school I would often fall asleep and get visions of my brothers being shot and nightmares of the ugliness of war. Then the kids would throw papers at me to wake me up," she says.

Now Mirna works as program assistant with the Atlantic Community Economic Development Institute (ACEDI). This is a Cooperative that carries out research and asset mapping activities designed to build sustainable communities. Its work is especially focused on low-income groups - First Nations people, African Canadians and marginalized rural communities in Atlantic Canada and overseas.

But Mirna's mom chose to return to El Salvadore two years ago. "She felt isolated and lonely here. She wanted to go back to her neighbours, her garden, her food. She could not adjust to this western individualism."

## **Colombian doctor who fled from guerrillas, plans to requalify as physician in Newfoundland**

**L**uis Fernando Ribes, a practicing physician in Colombia had to give up everything and flee with his wife, a physician too, and his young baby. "That's because Colombia is no more safe," he says. "The Canadian embassy there recognizes the fact that everybody resident in the country is a possible refugee."

The guerrillas have been fighting the government for the last 15 years and embroiled in the communist ideological war of the rebels is the illicit drug trade. "Drugs bring in the money and money corrupts," says Ribes. He says the fear for his life is based on the widespread suspicion that people are working for the other side of the conflict. So while the murders and shootings go on, Colombians are fleeing across the borders. Ribes says that people in the hinterland, especially, are the ones whose lives are not safe.

"I was threatened so I presented my case to the Canadian embassy there asking for refugee status and about six months later my application was approved," he says. Ribes has settled down in Newfoundland, at least for the time being.

But it's not as if Ribes and his wife are going to put on their white coats, sling a stethoscope around their necks and begin examining patients at a clinic in Saint John, rightaway. "Right now, I am studying English at the Newcomers Association. In order to knock doors, any kind anywhere, I must first strengthen my English. It's really the starting point," he says.

It's a common sight to see immigrant doctors in Canada managing convenience stores...even work as drivers for pizza delivery. But that's because doctors, like engineers have to requalify - not because of Canada's disregard for the medical or engineering standards set elsewhere but because the practice of medicine or engineering or law must conform to national priorities and systems already in place.

"I plan to requalify," says Ribes. "But it's going to cost me at several stages - assessment, the writing of exams, the application



for a medical practitioner's license and so on. This could take a few years."

But across Canada, the recognition of foreign credentials is being addressed with some urgency. In Halifax, for example, Dalhousie University and the College of Physicians have taken the initiative to set up an Assessment Centre for Physicians. The professional regulatory bodies are at a point where they are actually writing out the career pathways and roadmaps. This, in many ways, at least provides newcomer doctors and engineers, some hope. There is a movement across the country to make these processes more fair and affordable.

In the meantime, Ribes is adjusting to social issues in Canada. He says he has never really felt discriminated. "It is a welcoming society, very friendly. If you sense a feeling of discrimination, it has probably got to do with language problems," he says.

Ribes says that it's natural that one would see some protectionism in the hiring process. "If a newcomer with the same qualifications as a Canadian-born applicant were to apply for the same job, the Canadian would be hired. That's protectionism," he says.

But it's not as if this cannot go unchallenged. The Human Rights Commission in every province acts as a watchdog on discrimination of this kind and employers are being challenged to defend what can possibly be a prejudiced decision.



## CHAPTER 14

### Emigration out of the Middle East

The politics of the Middle East was dominated by totalitarian governments in the twentieth century and political repression and ideological dominance have characterised the national ethos of the Arab world since. So, while there may have been a trickle of Lebanese immigration to Canada in the late eighteen hundreds, when military skirmishes had begun in 1841 between the Druze and Christians, Arabs fleeing political strife, persecution and war, truly began in the second half of the 1990s, initially marked by the flight of Palestinian refugees from their homeland in 1955 following the Israeli-Arab war of 1948 and later with Lebanese fleeing the civil war which broke out in 1975.

The Lebanese civil war goes back to the 1940s when exiled Palestinians welcomed into Lebanon, strengthened their militant base there, prompting an aggressive response from Israel. Consequently, Syrian troops moved into Lebanon making it a hotbed of violence, pitting Muslims against Christians.

But in the last couple of decades, the Middle East has been torched by increased violence. The repression of Kurds in southern Turkey and Northern Iraq, the Iranian revolution and the overthrow of Shah Mohamed Reza Pahlavi, the Palestinian uprising, the Iran-Iraq war and finally the Gulf war after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 were major contributors to the exodus of Arab families. The Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) was spurred by religious schisms, border disputes, and political differences.

Iraq launched the war to consolidate its rising power in

the Arab world and replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state. Iraq and Iran had engaged in border clashes for many years and had revived the dormant Shatt al Arab waterway dispute in 1979. The Iraqis also perceived revolutionary Iran's Islamic agenda as threatening pan-Arabism. Ayatollah Khomeini, bitter over his expulsion from Iraq in 1977 after fifteen years in An Najaf, vowed to avenge Shia victims of Baathist repression.

The Iran-Iraq war lasted nearly eight years, from September of 1980 until August of 1988. It ended when Iran accepted United Nations Security Council Resolution 598, leading to the August 20, 1988 cease-fire. Casualty figures are not accurate, though estimates suggest there were more than one and a half million war and war-related casualties - perhaps as many as a million people died, many more were wounded, and millions were made refugees. Currently, there are three million Iranian refugees awaiting asylum.

Kurds, like a sea of humanity, made a silent exodus out of Iraq at the time and a forced entry into Turkey. The Kurds who have been fighting for a homeland - despite recognition by the UN as a sovereign nation - have been scattered across Southern Turkey, Northern Iraq, Syria and Iran - and there are about four million of them.

The sweet smell of freedom in Canada must have been irresistible to the people of Iran in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution of 1978-1979 which toppled the government of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. Initially the trickle was from military personnel and supporters of the old regime. The Iran-Iraq War and both religious and political repression subsequently provided the impetus for the middle class and the Baha'is, the largest religious minority in Iran, to follow in their footsteps. The imposition of the *hijab* (veiling) as mandatory female attire and the general marginalization of women forced those who did not share these values to leave Iran and many chose Canada.

The 1996 census listed 64,405 Iranians in Canada, many of whom live primarily in Canada's largest cities. The earliest immigrants from Iran quickly joined the professional ranks as medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, nurses, and dentists. Those who came later chose to set up businesses, focusing on the creation

of construction companies, restaurants, bakeries, dry-cleaning shops, grocery stores, repair shops, and computer stores.

Outside the Levant, significant Arab emigration into Canada began only after World War II. President Abdul Nasser's government and his revolution of 1952 which introduced communist social policy may have hastened the exodus of young Arab Islamists out of Egypt in the Sixties. The Fulbright Grants at the time beckoned young Arabs to the United States - many of whom began studies at Indiana University. In tandem Islamic organizations mushroomed and those included the Muslim Students Association and the Islamic Society of North America. In time, organizations evolved out of professional bodies and some of them today include the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers, the Islamic Medical Association and other advocacy groups lobbying against the discrimination of Muslims.

Mohammed Elmasry, who lives in Toronto, came to Canada on a scholarship to complete graduate studies in 1968 as well as pursue his Masters and PhD and realized his ambitions by 1974. Elmasry, who was raised in Egypt, now teaches electrical and computer engineering and digital integrated circuit design. His work has taken him to other parts of the world, including the United States, Europe and Kuwait, the oil rich emirate in the Persian Gulf. "But Canada is the best of them all - even superseding my home country," he says.

But Iraqi repression of its people prior to the invasion by US and allied forces in 2003 had also driven out thousands of Iraqi elitists and academics, many escaping from jails. Hani Al Abeidy, who lives in Winnipeg and tells his story in this book, came to Canada in 1997. As a young man, he was seeking to change the face of Iraq and through political activism was talking about unifying the country, giving minorities a role and preaching respect for all faiths. That could not have endured too long under the watchful eyes of the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein. Abeidy was blacklisted and was forced into exile.



## **Iraqi in Winnipeg was looking to reform his country and society through political activism**

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He left Iraq at the age of 17 disguised as a soldier in order to cross the border. His attempts to cross into Turkey and later Iran were foiled and he finally entered Saudi Arabia.

Abeidy and a group of other Iraqis who had crossed into the Saudi kingdom were transferred to a town inhabited by refugees. "These were not like refugee camps, these towns were well built, but the Saudis treated us badly because of our secular and socialist ideas," Abeidy says. He says, he is Muslim by birth but a humanist in practice. After two years of residence in Saudi Arabia – and some time spent elsewhere and which is a strictly guarded secret, he applied for refugee status to the United Nations along with some 200 other Iraqis.

"Destiny has played a good role in my life,"

**But the irony is that when Abeidy went back to Iraq last year to see his people, he found it a different world from the one he had left behind. "It's a little like the native experience in Canada. I felt a kind of alienation," he says.**

Abeidy says. "As a young man I was heavily burdened with a life's mission. That mission which was to spread the message to the world that Iraqis were living in misery is being realized now. I show photos of the massacre of Kurds as part of my crusade. I've talked about how our lives are governed by religion and politics in my speeches at universities in Canada."

Abeidy is obviously happy to see the iron curtain lifted as Iraqis emerge triumphant out of that one huge jail that Iraq symbolized. "Unfortunately some blood had to be spilled for the greater good," he says.

But he says he's also happy to see that the Americans cannot do as they like in Iraq. "There is an Iraqi voice – that's evident – and that is comforting."

Commenting on whether or not he is happy in Canada, Abeidy says: "I am thankful to Canada, but I do not know how you define happiness. I grew up with struggle, jumping from one country to another. I was not escaping from poverty or hunger – but to realize a dream."

But the irony is that when Abeidy went back to Iraq last year to see his people, he found it a different world from the one he had left behind. "It's a little like the native experience in Canada. I felt a kind of alienation," he says.

Abeidy works for the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council in Winnipeg, where as a Counsellor his job is to facilitate settlement. "I find it extremely rewarding. If my work can bring a smile on someone's face, I am doing my part for the human race," he says.

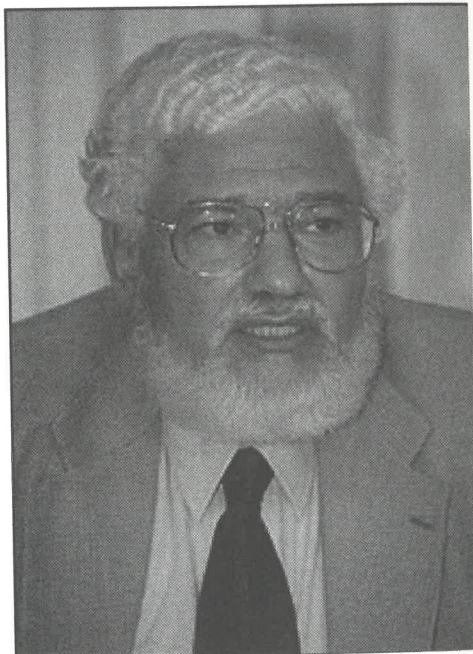
In the future, he is looking to get involved more and more into Iraqi politics. "That is because I still live with my dream. When I travelled back home last year, I did not only focus on family. I worry for Iraq as a nation. Indeed I have a great appreciation for Canada. It's my second home. But he says he does not want to endorse the adage: "Once you find acquaintances, you forget your friends."

## **Egyptian professor in Toronto angers Jews, saying all Israelis above 18 are legitimate targets**

**M**ohammed Elmasry came to Canada on a scholarship to complete graduate studies in 1968 as well as pursue his Masters and PhD and realized his ambitions by 1974. Elmasry now teaches electrical and computer engineering and digital integrated circuit design. He has taught for 30 years, has published some 500 journals and a dozen text books on the subject. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering and a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

Elmasry did not contemplate going home because, by then he was married to a Canadian and had begun to raise a family with four children. "So my Canadian roots are well established. I have a greater stake in Canadian life than in my Egyptian roots," he says.

His work has taken him to other parts of the world, including the United States, Europe and Kuwait, the oil rich emirate in the Persian Gulf. "But Canada is the best of them all – even superceding my home country," he says. Elmasry says Canada balances out the fast pace of the United States, the conservatism of life in Switzerland and the absence of



civil liberties and personal freedom in countries of the Middle East including Kuwait and his home country, Egypt.

Elmasry was at the center of a media blitz on his comments made on the Michael Coren show sometime ago when he said: "All Israelis above the age of 18 are legitimate targets of attack." His comments outraged the Canadian Jewish Congress. CJC President Ed Morgan remarked: "The very notion of anybody endorsing the killing of civilians is beyond what we as Canadians are used to hearing." But Elmasry maintained that every adult Israeli is part of the country's army and they are not innocent if they are part of the population which is part of the army.

But talking to *Touch BASE*, the publishers of this book, Elmasry says in hindsight, that it was, in the first place, a mistake to appear on Coren's show and to discuss the topic of terrorism. "There is no formal definition of terrorism. So I answered his question without qualifying my statements. I was struggling to differentiate between military attacks and armed resistance. Every armed resistance is a military attack and every terrorist attack is armed resistance. It is a political definition," he says.

Elmasry says unfortunately he did not articulate or state his position well enough. "I should be more careful in the future." He says he does not believe targeting civilians is right. "I've been speaking on social justice issues. I should have been given the benefit of the doubt. The words were put in my mouth. I walked into this media frenzy. Now nothing I can say can correct that situation. The media took advantage of that."

But Elmasry also walked into another controversy later on the topic "Islam and Democracy", saying he believes the two are compatible, if you define democracy in the way political books do. He concedes that nowhere in the Islamic world is there any semblance of real democracy. But he says it is unfair to compare democratic practice in Muslim countries with democracy in the West. The Muslim countries are not as developed.

Only 10 per cent of British males had the right to vote in 1800s, he says, making the point that democracy evolves with development. "Compare Saudi Arabia with England in the 1800s. In the US, the first woman in Congress appeared in 1924."

Elmasry does not believe that Israel and Palestinians are close



to making peace despite the recent accord. "You need a paradigm shift if you want to see peace," he says. "Peace has to be built upon justice. The Palestinians have been under occupation for 36 years. There are cantons of Palestinian ghettos in the West Bank and Gaza. Moving out of these towns are a tactical move – necessary but not sufficient.

"Unless Palestinians feel equal and have sovereignty as a nation, there will be no peace."

### **Dr. Monia Mazigh, nominated Canadian heroine of the year**

The deportation of Canadian citizen Maher Arar to Syria by the US government in 2002 and his subsequent torture there has put a new spin on national security and civil liberties. A public enquiry into his deportation is underway costing the Canadian taxpayer some \$135 million, but at the centre of this campaign for uncovering the truth is Arar's wife, Dr. Monia Mazigh.

Dr. Mazigh became a passionate advocate for human rights in 2002 when Arar was deported and it was she who mounted the campaign to bring him home. "I could not allow his fate to be decided by others," she says. "Besides, I felt strongly that each of us must take responsibility for the preservation of our rights. When Arar was deported I wanted to know what he was accused of. I spoke to the media, to MPs and held vigils. Then in 2003 he was released without being charged," she said.

Arar was stopped at New York airport on his way to Montreal and was interrogated for his association with Abdullah Almalki, who allegedly trained in Afghanistan and is reported to have had ties with the terrorist group Al Queda.

Dr. Mazigh makes the point strongly that Canadians must be vigilant and tirelessly call for accountability from the government. The public enquiry that is underway is not a victory in itself, she says. It's just the beginning of the process of accountability. "This public enquiry is not being made public in totality. My husband

and his lawyer are not privy to some "secret evidence", in the interest of national security," she says. Dr. Mazigh realizes that this enquiry is being undertaken at an exorbitant cost to the Canadian taxpayer. But she says it's probably costing more to hide the truth. She also admits she does not know the truth because sections on documents are being kept out of the public eye, she claims.

Making a point about the speedy passing of the Security Bill C-36, which in the interest of security could become an invasion of privacy and human rights, she says: "Canada should guard against adopting the policies of countries we condemn for their violations of human rights. Bill C-36 undermines due process. It started with Maher Arar, with whom will it end? We want to feel secure not at the expense of people's rights."

Quoting reports in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, Dr. Mazigh says there is a notion that some US lawyers are specializing in torture by proxy. "Some people have begun to accept this idea of light torture," she says. "When the US holds someone suspect, that individual is sent out to countries that organize torture. My husband was a victim but he survived to tell his story."

In a speech delivered at a conference in Canada, Dr. Mazigh said this public enquiry was becoming a secret investigation. "And to think that this is not affecting you is dangerous," she said. "As Canadians we must export our values. It can have a lasting impact on other nations. In keeping with our Charter of Rights, we must speak with one voice on torture."

Alexa McDonough, former leader of the New Democratic Party, rose in the House of Commons, last year, to laud Dr. Mazigh: "We pay tribute to this remarkable woman," she said. "She has inspired Canadians with an awareness of what happens when the rights of citizens are trampled in the name of national security. We are all deeply indebted to Mazigh."

McDonough, who championed the Arar case in Parliament, said in an interview: "Monia is a communicator's dream: she's highly intelligent and focused. She has an intensity about her. She has a sense of humour. She's humble and unassuming." A lawyer is quoted as saying: "This woman belongs on the benches of the Supreme Court of Canada. She has a wisdom beyond her years,

and an impeccable sense of justice and how it is supposed to work."

But Dr. Mazigh, 34, is a Ph.D. in financial economics from McGill University, who has taken time off to raise her two children, daughter Baraa and son Houd.



Never an activist, she was a private person until she got a phone call, while holidaying in her native Tunisia, from her mother in Ottawa, that Arar had been detained in New York. "As for my children, I was upset seeing them growing up without their father. And I worried about their future, that they were going to be treated in the same manner as their father. I did not want them to be treated like second-class citizens. I did not want them to be accused or suspected of being terrorists because of their origin, because they are Muslims and they bear a name that has an Arabic sound."

In an interview with Haroon Siddiqui, former editor of the *Toronto Sun*, Dr. Mazigh said: "No, I did not pray any more or read any more of the Qur'an. I've to be honest with you. I am a normal person — I pray, I fast. But I had many spiritual discussions with myself. I felt closer to my Creator."

Commenting on her worst moment, Dr. Mazigh says: "Every day was very bad. But nothing seemed to me worse than seeing my husband's rights being deprived. I was very upset, angry and very concerned when I didn't see any action. I never heard of a Canadian being deported to Ireland because he is of Irish descent. To me, it was about due process. A Canadian citizen travelling on a Canadian passport must be treated according to Canadian values."

### **Young journalist says that after 9/11 she had a love-hate feeling for her Islamic name**

Susan's father, Ahmed Mirawdaly, was born in a wealthy family in Iraq. But wanting his independence, he walked out of home, worked at nights and paid for his education. Apparently he was a bright student and got a scholarship from a university in Romania where he completed a PhD in agriculture and got married to Susan's mother Ann. Miradawly is of Kurdish descent and while in Bucharest worked to promote the Kurdish cause.

Susan has grown up experiencing the clash of cultures and of faiths. Mirawdaly was a Muslim by birth and Ann, an orthodox Christian. While Mirawdaly subscribes to no religion and has all along been critical of the walls that exists between faiths, he cares about his morals, says Susan. But the traditions of the Romanians and the Iraqis are vastly different and she grew up watching the inner conflict.

"Dad has always felt like a foreigner in Canada, because he has had a hard time in this country," she says. "He has done odd jobs despite holding a PhD."

When Susan was growing up she had to contend with close-knit Kurdish relatives and while she went to school with white friends felt peer pressure to revolt against the traits of her father's culture. "I began to see it as theirs and not mine. On the other hand, I would go to Church with mom and at other times would be somewhat confused about why a copy of the Koran was sitting on our shelf. Dad would prefer to sit on the floor when eating his supper and mom thought of that as nomadic. These were some of the conflicts I lived with," she says.

But Susan looked at life differently as she grew up, recognizing that she was lucky to experience a diverse background. But then September 11 had a fallout as well. "All of a sudden, I became an expert on the Middle East for my peers because of my last name which, legally, is Mohammad. "People wanted to know how I felt about Americans dying on account of the destruction of the towers.



My name soon became an identity problem."

But Susan says that today she reconciles with reality. "I've taken my father's view that what matters is how you behave with others and the mark you make in the world. What religion you practice does not matter," she says. "I don't want to put too much importance on my last name and give myself an identity with it. I have a love and hate relationship with that name, anyway."

Susan's doing a degree in journalism at King's College. She says she changed her mind about career choices about a thousand times. "But the things that had influenced me most towards journalism was those Kurdish protest meetings my father took me to, the speech writing I got exposed to, the Memorial for Halabja victims I was present at when reporters came in for a story. In the way things were covered, I saw a reporter's job as being an honourable one. I liked the fact that reporters have a licence to ask questions. I like people stories. I find journalism intriguing and frightening at the same time."

In learning from several cultures and getting to choose what you think best, Susan says she has been able to develop her own outlook and is not bound by one. On the other hand she says: "I try not to plan too much. I've learnt that when you have everything, it can all come apart. So I like to feel free to feel the wind."



## **Iraqi artist's abstract paintings conjure up memories of his childhood**

**W**hy anyone would flee Iraq is no secret. Qahtan Ibrahim is an artist and throughout his studies at university was repressed by the country's erstwhile regime. He says a close friend, a professor of art, who refused to conform to Baathist ideology just disappeared one night as he was drinking coffee with friends. "But it was not until secret service agents invaded my own art shop and tore down everything there that I realized the urgent need to flee," says Ibrahim.

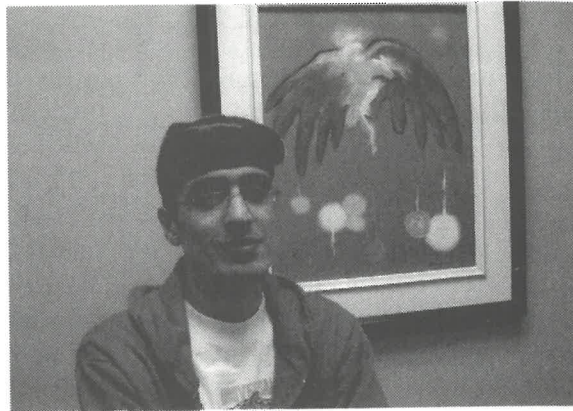
"There was great corruption at the time in Iraq and some money had to exchange hands to get my name off the banned lists. Thus I paid my way out of Iraq and fled to Jordan," he says. Of course, Qahtan left behind his mother and sisters. But that was what they wanted for him – a world in which he could think and work freely. Today, looking back, Ibrahim wonders, if Canadian winters and Canadian lifestyle would be something his mother would easily cope with.

In Jordan, Ibrahim worked at an art gallery for a couple of years and even staged some three exhibitions that were critical of the Iraqi regime, portraying Saddam's destruction of Iraqi history and the repression by Baathists. But there were limits to freedom in Jordan, he says, and therefore he later applied for a visa to Indonesia – a temporary destination that would serve as a stopping point to free countries. "But I got stuck there for three years and failed two attempts to flee by boat to Australia," he says.

Finally Ibrahim met with the UN refugee agency and after a security check was accepted by the Canadian embassy. "I was ecstatic. I felt like I was walking in the clouds," he remembers. Making that point, he says, since the war with Iran which broke out in the early 80s, Iraqis have woken up every morning to see destruction somewhere or the other. "So Canada was like heaven when it adopted me."

He says he has never been discriminated against since his arrival in Canada. "This is a multicultural country and nobody

bothers about another's religion. That's how it ought to be. "When Saddam was a common enemy of Iraqis, Muslims and Christians lived like friends," he says. "Today,



Iraq is losing its opportunity to rebuild with the kidnapping madness that's going on."

Ibrahim has a Bachelor's degree, but wants to move further afield, doing more in the art form while making Canada his home. While in Iraq, he had taught art to youth and represented studios and galleries in public presentations.

In some of his work, Ibrahim uses fictile material to form dimensional shapes on which he carves several drawings and symbols as a manifestation of the pastoral life of Iraq. "Through my work I try to conjure unconscious memories of childhood in my life," he says. His drawings portray snapshots of history through symbols. In one of his works he carves the shape of the sun and moon in a dreamy atmosphere of hope and beauty.

Ibrahim knows it's not going to be easy making a living with art. But he isn't thinking about that for now. "It's the smell of freedom – a cherished dream in Iraq – that I am working on," he says.

### **Iran has large youth population, needs larger playing ground says Iranian dramatist in Halifax**

**S**hahin Sayadi was somewhat thrown out of balance when asked what brought him to Canada. "Well, I don't know," he says. "The family thought it was better that I go someplace where there

is no war. I was 21 at the time."

Sayadi, was raised in Iran. But people his age, at the time, got hit by the revolution, the war. The universities were in shambles – closed for a couple of years – and so there was not much of an option for the young man. But what's more important is that Sayadi lost his father on the first day of the Iran-Iraq war when Iraq dropped its bombs on Abadan. He was among the first 21 victims.

At the time, people were leaving Iran with fake passports, because there was no easy way of getting a visa to Canada or the US legitimately, Sayadi says. "But I flew to Montreal on a legal passport and upon landing asked for refugee status and got it." That was in February 1986. Sayadi arrived wearing shorts and a T-shirt and braved the winter. He took a bus to Toronto, met with people at Welcome House, an immigrant settlement agency, and began to settle down – studying some English and picking up odd jobs. His first job was putting out fliers for a restaurant.

But all along, Sayadi was working towards something closest to his heart. Well almost. The theatre industry is what he loves most after Maggie Stewart, his Canadian-born wife, whom he met at Dalhousie where he began a four year degree course in theatre in 1995. But Sayadi brushes away any suggestion that a Muslim-Christian or Iranian-Canadian marriage would not have been approved by his family.

"There wasn't that kind of teaching in my family. My mother is progressive in thought. Her father gave his daughters as much or more freedom that he gave his boys," he says. And Sayadi also dismisses the fact that inter-cultural marriages run into heavy weather. "Every society has its good side and its bad...so there's no big deal. I see that Canadians in Halifax have a respect for elders and that's one of the areas where I find similarities with our custom."

Sayadi's interest in drama is, in fact, an extension of the drama tradition started by his father and mother who had managed a theatre company in Iran.

Onelight Theatre is Sayadi's company. In the last couple of months the company has staged at least two plays: an adaptation of *Medea* which is a Greek and Persian myth as well as George



Buchner's *Woyzeck*, which got rave reviews from the media. The plays are staged at The Crib which shares the Persian Bazaar store facility on Gottingen Street.

It was really a case of the tail wagging the dog, Sayadi says. "The facility at Gottingen was too large and I would have to go back to driving a cab to pay its rent. So I set up Persian Bazaar in part of the premises and now its paying for rents and some," he says.

Sayadi works with Don Ferington, his music composer and a team of about 10 people including the stage cast. In October last year, Sayadi also staged an adaptation of Shakespeaere's *Macbeth* - Lady MacPunch, and was working to release another later - Clyde A. Wray's *"Everybody Ain't a Hero."*

Sayadi has political opinions. Philosophically, I believe in chaos, he says. "Within that framework, one would like to see people accept other schools of thought. I believe in change too. The change evolving in Iran is a positive one. It's opening up to the outside world."

"Whether western culture invades Iran or not is not the issue. It's a good thing when societies can compare notes. Iran has a very large youth population and that is why they need a larger playing ground," Sayadi says. "I can foresee a democratic structure evolving in Iran soon. It's up in the air. The system of government will change. The economy is being wasted. We have to start from zero"

Sayadi knows that change requires a revolution. "I am a child



of revolution. But what we must not forget is that if we want a democratic structure, our actions should be democratic. If we want a revolution to work we must take care of the process, not take any measures as a means to the end."

### **Palestinian businessman does not miss the wood for the trees**

When the September 11 crisis caused a ripple effect in Canada and a few Arabs became victims of vandalism, Terry (Tareq) Saleh, Past President of Julimar Lumber observed: "Why should it rebound on us? We came to Canada precisely to run away from terrorism."

Saleh was born in Jerusalem in the early nineteen fifties and grew up as a peasant. But one day, Israeli bombing of his neighbourhood just forced him to flee and he walked to Jordan. But growing up in a region embroiled in war and conflict, Saleh was looking for change. "I wanted to raise my children in peaceful environs and what could have been better than Canada," he says.

As Saleh realizes today, success has no city, no home. Julimar Lumber, the company he set up in 1993 soon posted sales revenues of USD12 million or more and had employed at least 65 people - working to meet higher targets. In 1998 the company was ranked at 85 in the survey of the Top 101 companies in



Atlantic Canada by *Atlantic Progress* magazine, two years after winning the provincial Export Achievement Award.

A couple of years ago, Saleh launched the first liquidation centre in Halifax where brand new, brand merchandise was sold at throw away prices.

"The Middle East crisis has always been a worrying factor," he says. As the crisis deepens there, with casualties reported almost everyday (speaking prior to the new peace initiative launched between Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas), Saleh says he's convinced the violence and killing of innocent civilians are not the answer to the problem. "The only way towards achieving peace is through dialogue and recognizing each others rights. "I think Jews and Arabs can live together. Unfortunately, for as long as the Far Right in Israel does not even recognize the rights of Palestinians, I can't foresee peace," he says.

Saleh is doing his bit to narrow the gaps in understanding between Arabs and Canadians. "The churches and some levels of government are doing a good job of restoring some face the Arabs had lost after September 11. There is hope," he says.

### **No more politics swears Kurdish refugee in New Brunswick**

**G**eskeem Weabury's big mistake was to get involved in politics. So he fled Iran via the back door to Pakistan where he claimed refugee status through the United Nations refugee agency and got accepted by Canada in 1990.

"The four years in Pakistan were like hell," says Weabury who is of Kurdish descent. "I was being closely watched and some of my colleagues were even shot at when we were at UN offices for consultations." But it was in Pakistan that he studied some English and since settling down in Saint John, New Brunswick, he picked it up quickly.

Weabury, who appears to have buried the past and resolved not to get mired in politics again says he has had no problem

integrating with Canadian society. He is married to a Canadian born wife and has two children he loves. "There is no real racism in Canada," he says. "It all depends on how well and willingly you integrate and participate in society. People are curious when they see people who are different from their own. That's very natural. That's not discrimination. On the other hand, there is discrimination everywhere."

He now owns several businesses. "I sell cars. I have a car parts and body repair shop. I own a convenience store. But of course I came to Canada with only \$20 in my pocket. It's all about hard work. Immigrants work hard," he says. He says the banks did not cooperate then and neither now. "It appears it has to do with my background." But then Canada has been talking about economic growth and Weabury says that financial conservatism in the smaller provinces is not going to achieve that unless their policies are designed to be pragmatic. "In Toronto, I could make five times the money I am making here in New Brunswick," he says. "Toronto is more diverse and therefore more vibrant."

Weabury says his wife's family served as his bankers. "I borrowed from my wife's parents who were my bankers and paid back my loans," he says

While he admits, he has no interest in politics anymore, he says he does keenly watch developments which improve the status of Kurds. There are at least 12 million Kurds in Iran, and several million in Turkey, Iraq, Syria. "It's nationality imposed on us," he says. Having said that Weabury also confesses he has no urge to go home. "This is home," he says. "Although I cannot deny that I was born there."

Commenting on Canada's social policies, Weabury says: "This is a great country. It's social policies, even the government's debate on the rights of gays and lesbians is a reflection of democracy at work and a respect for human rights," he says. But for Weabury it's democracy at home as well. In an inter-racial marriage, there is bound to be a collision of cultures, he says. "In my culture, the man is the boss in any marriage, but not so in Canadian society. So it requires work and great compromise."



**Baha'i at helm of immigrant settlement agency in Calgary calls refugees Canada's heroes.**

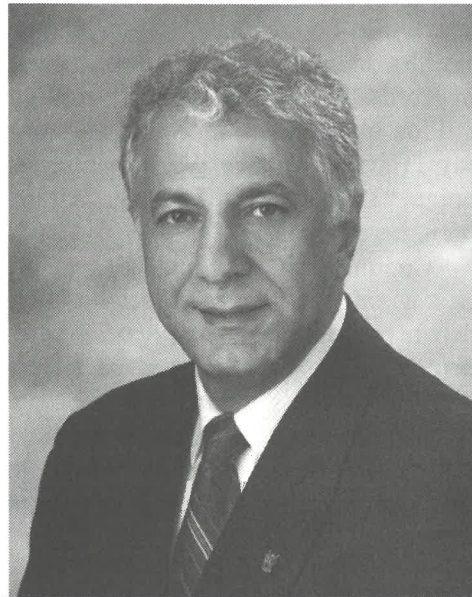
After the Iranian revolution, Fariborz Birjandian fled Iran and went into Pakistan and applied for refugee status. "The escape was traumatic," he says. "The escape route with my wife, mother and children was through desert and the mountains of Baluchistan and all along we were trusting tribal people on the way we did not know."

A day in the life of a refugee could feel like a thousand years and Birjandian says it was about 15 months before his application to the UN refugee agency was accepted and the family was able to fly to Canada.

"Settling in Canada was quite challenging. But we owe Canada big time. My mom prays for Canada every day, so do I and ever since we've been trying to be good citizens."

Birjandian was making the point that only when you put yourself in the shoes of so many people vulnerable to civil war, strife and repression in their countries and when you realize how little some countries care about human rights that you recognize Canada's greatness.

"I do not apologize for what I believe in," he says. "It's easy to take these rights for granted in Canada. But it's precisely these rights that give people hope — living in the knowledge that there are societies that respect humankind — that there is light at the end of the tunnel."



In Alberta, Birjandian has, since arrival in 1988 worked for the refugee cause and his work has been recognized with the Queen's Jubilee Gold Medal and the Citizenship Citation Award. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) which has some seven chapters in Calgary staffed by 150 people and at least 800 volunteers serving some 8,000 refugees and immigrants in the province.

Birjandian says that in the course of his work with CCIS, he has seen the suffering that people endure. "Think of people deprived of schooling, the Afghanis who have lost so much, these refugees are Canada's heroes. All of these people come to Canada with dreams, people invest their life's savings to come to Canada, take up menial jobs in order to start a new life."

Calgary has been getting increasingly diverse since the nineties and that's evident from the fact that the staffing at their municipalities and police departments is beginning to reflect the emergence of a new pluralism. Birjandian says Calgary's society is pragmatic and that is why the immigrant retention rates are higher now. He says the Sudanese population alone has grown to about 8,000 people in the province.

"There is occasional reporting of racism," he says. "But the important thing is to look at progress and keep working at it. Racism can be found everywhere, in every society. Calgary recognizes the fact that if diversity is managed well, it's a gold mine."

## CHAPTER 15

### Canada's first immigrants

The reports of Viking voyages around AD 1000 are a divergence from the emphasis on French and British explorers in Canadian history. The Germans, Italians, Portuguese, the Slavs and Greeks and even the Chinese figure in exploration reports. A German named Tyrkier, was reportedly part of the Viking expedition of AD 1001 and archaeological finds at L'Anse aux Meadows in Newfoundland appear to confirm that fact. Furthermore two German skippers, Diedrich Pining and Hans Pothorst – in the Danish service, may have rediscovered Newfoundland and Labrador between 1471 and 1480 and a German who was on Sir Humphrey Gilbert's expedition is reported to have set foot in Newfoundland in 1583.

The Italians also claim that Verazzano originally of Florence, explored the coast of Nova Scotia in 1524 and provided some new insights. The Portuguese point to considerable activity in the North Atlantic in the Fifteenth century, when Diogo de Terri's expedition in 1452 is said to have provided information for Christopher Columbus. Poles and Croats claim to have participated in early explorations. A Pole is said to have discovered Labrador in 1476.

The Chinese tell tales of Buddhist monks who sailed from China on rafts and went ashore in AD 458 establishing settlements in Vancouver in 499. The Greeks and the Spanish tell of a visit to the West Coast by Juan de Fuca, who was Greek by birth but was navigating for the Spanish navy in 1592.

Although the French and the British took possession of the northern parts of Canada, establishing the first settlements in 1605, many countries nonetheless were represented in the colony,

including those in Europe, China and Africa. The English (especially prisoners and refugees from New England), Irish and Scots were the most numerous.

Africans had settled from the early seventeenth century. The first African to have been brought to New France directly from Madagascar in Africa was Olivier le Jeune. He is reported to have died a free man in 1654. Blacks came with early settlers and later in groups either as fugitives or as free men. In 1793 Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, who opposed slavery introduced a bill in the assembly for its gradual abolition and by 1860 there may have been as many as 40,000 blacks in Canada.

The earliest evidence of European exploration can be seen from Norse runes - the stone carvings - found in the south east corner of Nova Scotia. This settlement is thought to have occurred about 950 A.D when the Viking voyages brought Norsemen to the region. The settlement of Leif Ericsson at Vinland in 1001 is evidenced at L'Anse aux Meadows, north of Newfoundland.

Almost five hundred years later, John Cabot became the first European to discover North America. He made two voyages between 1497 and 1498 and his landfall was reported to be a stone's throw away from Leif Ericsson's settlement. Cabot will be remembered because he was the first man to discover and tell about the mainland of North America. England claimed all of North America because Cabot had discovered it for her before the French and Spanish. But nobody knows where exactly Cabot landed. It could have been Newfoundland or Cape Breton.

The Italians and Portuguese were among the other European settlers that travelled to the continent before the British and French laid claim to North America. In 1524, Giovanni da Verrazzano, an Italian mariner is reported to have come to Newfoundland and applied the name Arcadia to the site of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. In 1520 Joao Alvarez Fagundes, a Portuguese navigator, sailed along the south coast of Newfoundland and into the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and began a settlement at Ingush in Cape Breton.

Nova Scotia reports the second oldest permanent settlement in North America at Annapolis Royal. The fur traders in France had to be persuaded to settle in the strange wilderness that



North America was at the beginning of Sixteenth century. The King of France believed that if French settlements were made, he would have a stronger claim to the country and so in 1600 he promised trading rights to a group if they would take settlers to live in America. Consequently, the sole right to trade in Acadia was given to a French nobleman named Sieur de Monts. In exchange for this right, De Monts and his company were to bring out settlers to live on his lands and priests to convert Indians to Christianity. In 1604 De Monts, Champlain, Poutrincourt and some others crossed the Atlantic into Acadia - the name given to the Maritimes.

The first one hundred years of the Irish presence in Nova Scotia are reported to have been ones of great courage and achievement for a "warm-hearted people who came in poverty." The arrival of the ship Hector at Pictou in 1773 marked the beginning of a fairly sustained period of Scottish immigration, which lasted - at least in Cape Breton - until the mid-nineteenth century. The Scottish presence in Nova Scotia eventually meant a challenge to the English-Anglican hierarchy. Those who came during the eighteenth century were mainly voluntary immigrants seeking to improve upon the economic conditions they knew in Scotland.

### **Canada's first great wave of immigration**

Canada's first great wave of European immigration followed a lacklustre period in its immigration history. Despite the best efforts of Sir John A. Macdonald's Conservative government to attract newcomers, large-scale immigration failed to become a reality in the first three decades after Confederation in 1867. Canada's immigration prospects only started to look up in the 1890s. Fortunately for Canada, the reinvigorated economy coincided with a population explosion in Europe and a rapidly dwindling supply of good free land in the United States. Then, too, there was the election of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal government in 1896, which immediately launched an aggressive campaign to encourage settlement of the West.

### **Clifford Sifton and his policies**

The principal planner and promoter of the campaign for western settlement was Clifford Sifton, who was determined to fill the empty Prairies with suitable farmers as rapidly as possible. Having always been a provincial booster, the new Minister had unbounded confidence in the West. Furthermore, he was firmly convinced that massive agricultural immigration was the key to Canadian prosperity. He then simplified the regulations of the Dominion Lands Act, the 1872 piece of legislation that granted a quarter section of free land (160 acres or 64.7 hectares) to any settler 21 years of age or older who paid a ten-dollar registration fee, lived on his quarter section for three years, cultivated 30 acres (12.1 hectares), and built a permanent dwelling.

In his quest for suitable agriculturalists to farm the West, however, Clifford Sifton stressed new fields for recruiting immigrants. One of these was the United States.

Estimates indicate that between 1901 and 1914, over 750,000 immigrants entered Canada from the United States.

### **No welcome mat for Black Africans**

When it came to prospective American settlers, the Immigration Branch solicited only white farmers. No attempt was made to recruit black agriculturalists, for they were widely regarded as being cursed with the burden of their African ancestry. In its attempts to exclude black settlers, the Immigration Branch undoubtedly reflected public opinion in the West and elsewhere in Canada. Thousands of free black people had been among the Loyalists who had settled in Nova Scotia in 1783. Later, runaway slaves from the United States had obtained refuge in Canada. On learning that anti-black sentiment in the newly created state of Oklahoma threatened to drive a large migration of black

Americans north to the Edmonton area, the citizens of Alberta's capital mounted a strong protest against the immigration of blacks. The anti-black backlash in Western Canada played directly into the hands of Immigration Branch officials who wanted to see the Canadian border closed to black immigration. Accordingly, in 1911 these officials took unprecedented steps to have Canada acquire an exclusion ordinance against black settlers.

### **The Ukrainians**

In his urgent search for farm labourers, the new Minister was prepared to admit agriculturalists from places other than Great Britain, the United States, and northern Europe, long the preferred suppliers of immigrants for Canada. The vast majority of English-speaking Canadians deplored the idea of Canada's admitting "illiterate Slavs in overwhelming numbers."

Nevertheless, by dint of his forceful personality, status, and determination, Sifton managed to proceed with his controversial plan. The Ukrainians were by far the largest group to immigrate to Canada from eastern and central Europe in these years. Between 1891, when the first wave of Ukrainian immigrants came to Canada, and the outbreak of the First World War, approximately 170,000 Ukrainians settled in this country, attracted by the offer of free land, a sense of space, and an opportunity to make a living in a free and open society.

For the most part, these Ukrainian newcomers were small farmers and labourers from Galicia and Bukovina who were fleeing oppressive social and economic conditions in their homeland. Commonly called Galicians, they headed for those parts of the West that provided meadow, water, wood, and, if possible, contact with pioneers who spoke their language. As a result, large numbers of Ukrainians settled in the Prairie provinces, from south eastern Manitoba through central Saskatchewan to the Rocky Mountain foothills west of Edmonton.

### **The Germans**

Among the thousands of immigrants who homesteaded on the Prairies in these years were settlers of German origin. Most came not from the German Empire, but from the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian empires and the Balkan countries, where German colonies had been established in the eighteenth century. The growing class of landless workers and a dearth of factory jobs also spurred the exodus. From the 1890s until the outbreak of the First World War, approximately 35,000 Germans settled in Manitoba, representing 7.5 percent of that province's total population. Most settlements in Saskatchewan broke down along denominational lines.

At the base of German immigration to Canada were those brave men and women who travelled across the Atlantic from Europe to colonial Halifax in September 1750 on the ship *Anne*. The authorities housed and employed the new settlers for three years in Halifax and Dartmouth until the majority were removed to found Lunenburg town in 1753. There, in Lunenburg, they took to boat building and fishing. In 1995 their legacy was honoured when UNESCO declared Lunenburg a World Heritage Site.

The German settlers, many of them Mennonites, that came between 1792 and 1837 sought not only free land but also religious freedom and exemption from military service. They founded communities in the Niagara district and also contributed to the growth and industrial development of the Grand River settlement.

### **The Italians**

Canada did not actively seek Italian immigrants in this period because Clifford Sifton considered Italians ill-fitted for pioneering. Most were peasants or sharecroppers, small landowners, and rural day labourers from the impoverished southern regions of Italy, where they had wrested a living from a harsh environment and struggled against an exploitative socio-



economic order.

From among those who arrived in Canada, thousands went to work for this country's railways. Others found employment in the mining industry, where there was a demand for intensive labour. Some 3,000 Italians arrived in Montréal in 1904, and two years later, when construction of the trunk lines of the Grand Trunk Pacific, the Canadian Northern, and the National Transcontinental railways began in earnest, there was a further dramatic increase in the numbers of Italians coming to Canada.

### **The Russians**

The first great wave of European immigration to Canada included the first Russians to settle in the country. They were Doukhobors, members of a peasant sect whose pacifism and communal lifestyle had invited Czarist authorities to mount a campaign of brutal persecution and harassment against them. Fortunately for the Doukhobors, their plight aroused the sympathy of Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian novelist, who used his fame to help them to emigrate. In late January 1899, the first of five parties of Doukhobors, numbering over 7,500 people, settled in the Prince Albert and Yorkton areas in what is now the province of Saskatchewan.

The Doukhobors, however, refused to have any dealings with the state. They refused to take the oath of allegiance, and they would not register births, marriages, and deaths; neither would they allow their children to be educated in the public system. These were widened by the actions of an extremist group, the Sons of Freedom, who liberated cattle, burnt property, and refused to till the land. Order was finally restored by the Doukhobors' spiritual leader Peter Veregin.

After arriving in the Northwest Territories in 1903, he quickly set about reorganizing the sect members into a prosperous farming community and keeping the Sons of Freedom under control. In 1908, Veregin purchased a large tract of land in British Columbia (the oath of allegiance was not a requirement in that province), organized the Doukhobors as the Christian Community

of Universal Brotherhood, and established community villages in the province.

### **The British**

Although there were relatively few good agriculturalists left to court in the "mother country," the Canadian government continued to promote immigration from the United Kingdom, principally because English Canadians took it for granted that their federal government would do everything possible to retain the British character of the country. Most British newcomers in this pre-war period emigrated to Canada in hopes of finding a higher standard of living and freedom from the rigidities of the hallowed British class system.

Included in the ranks of these non-sponsored immigrants were not only people of modest means but also individuals with substantial funds who would often invest in large-scale ranching or farming ventures in Western Canada. The great influx from Britain in these years also included poor immigrants who had been assisted by charitable organizations wanting to rid the United Kingdom of paupers and help them make a fresh start in the colonies. One of the many philanthropic agencies involved in this endeavour was the Salvation Army, which was established in Canada in 1882.

### **The Japanese**

As British Columbia faced the Pacific Ocean, it drew many of its non-British newcomers from Asia, including Japan. Japanese immigrants did not begin arriving in appreciable numbers until 1900. By 1914, however, only 10,000 Japanese had settled in the whole of Canada, by far the largest number in British Columbia.

The first wave of Japanese immigrants, called Issei, arrived between 1877 and 1928. Prior to 1907, most Japanese settlers were young men. In that year, at Canada's insistence, Japan limited the number of males who could emigrate to this country to 400 a year, thereby becoming the only nation to

specifically control the movement of its people to Canada.

The Issei were invariably young and came from poor and overcrowded fishing and farming villages on the islands of Honshu and Kyushu. Most settled in or near Vancouver and Victoria, in fishing villages and pulp towns along the Pacific coast, and on farms in the Fraser Valley.

### **The Sikhs**

The first immigrants from India came to Vancouver and Victoria in 1904. Although British Columbia did its best to discourage non-white immigrants from Asia, barring them from the professions and denying them the right to vote, among other measures, some 5,000 immigrants from India had journeyed to the province by the end of 1907. Of these, the overwhelming majority were Sikhs.

The first Sikhs arrived in the province in 1904, having learned about its beauties and advantages from a detachment of Sikh soldiers who had returned home from London by way of Canada after attending Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Most of these early Sikh immigrants found work in the province's lumber mills and logging camps.

In 1999, a postage stamp was issued to commemorate the contributions that Sikh Canadians had made in the building of Canada. Among those present at the unveiling ceremony was Herb Dhaliwal, then the Minister of National Revenue, whose Sikh grandfather had come to Canada in 1906.

### **Changing direction**

No sooner had Frank Oliver become Minister of the Interior than he set about making immigration policy more restrictive. Two Acts capped his legislative program, the first being the Immigration Act of 1906 and the second being the Immigration Act of 1910.

### **The Immigration Act of 1906**

Besides defining "an immigrant," this Act barred a broad spectrum of individuals and increased the government's power to deport certain classes of immigrants. It also decreed the amount of "landing money" immigrants needed to have in their possession on arrival and provided for the establishment of controls along the Canada-United States border. There had been laws since 1869 prohibiting certain kinds of immigration and since 1889 allowing designated classes of immigrants to be returned whence they came. The 1906 Act differed in degree, significantly increasing the number of categories of prohibited immigrants and officially sanctioning the deportation of undesirable newcomers.

The proposed Act inspired considerable debate in the House of Commons, much of it concerning the definition of an immigrant and the provision for a head tax on immigrants: a tax to be paid by each immigrant on being admitted to Canada. Sweeping aside all the technicalities, though, this parliamentary discussion revealed two basic views about the general direction that immigration should take.

Among those who felt that immigration barriers should be raised was the provincial chief of the Conservatives, Frederick Monk, who thought that Canada should emulate the example of the United States and impose a head tax on immigrants. By contrast, W.M. German, the Liberal member from Welland, lobbied for an open-door policy. Not surprisingly, German's stance on immigration found favour with Canadian industrialists, who lobbied for a continuous stream of immigrants willing to work long hours for low pay.

### **The Immigration Act of 1910**

The second milestone in restrictive immigration legislation was reached in 1910. The Immigration Act of 1910, unlike the 1906 Act, conferred on the Cabinet the authority to exclude "immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the



climate or requirements of Canada." The Act also strengthened the government's power to deport individuals, such as anarchists, on the grounds of political and moral instability.

In its determination to discourage the entry of certain categories of people, the government introduced still other measures. It passed an order-in council, for example, requiring immigrants of Asian origin to have \$200 in cash at the time of landing, a formidable sum in those days when it is realized that in 1910, the average production worker in Canada took home only \$417 in annual wages.

### **The Vancouver Riot of 1907**

In the course of promoting British and American immigration, Frank Oliver moved further along the path of selective immigration. Several developments conspired to push him in this direction, one being the Vancouver Riot of September 1907. The riot, which resulted in extensive damage to buildings occupied by Orientals, was precipitated by a rock hurled by a youngster through the window of a Chinese store following a giant anti-Asian parade.

Although the rampage ignited spontaneously, it had complex origins. The riot's principal roots lay deep in an anti-Asian sentiment that had been smouldering for years in British Columbia. This racial antipathy reached new heights in 1907 when it was reported that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was planning to import thousands of Japanese labourers to work on the completion of the railway's western leg. To add to the tension, over 2,300 Japanese arrived in the province in July alone, far more than had been anticipated.

With Japanese immigration soaring to unprecedented levels, the perception grew among West Coast whites that the Japanese had become the leading Oriental threat to their province's cultural integrity. The Japanese, like the Chinese, had always been regarded as inassimilable, but after Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1905) the Japanese image took on an even more frightening dimension.

As alarm mounted over the Japanese influx, hysterical comment about the Japanese "invasion" appeared in the daily press. Accompanying these expressed fears were demands by the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council for measures to stem the rising immigrant tide. Not content to work within the political process alone, the council formed the Asiatic Exclusion League. The league subsequently broke all ties with the Trades and Labour Council and staged the anti-Asian parade that preceded the Vancouver Riot of 1907.

Following the riot, the Laurier government found itself in the seemingly untenable position of having to placate British Columbia and Japan simultaneously. The solution lay in compromise. In response to British Columbia's insistent demands that Asian immigration be halted, Ottawa negotiated an agreement with Japan whereby Japan would voluntarily limit the emigration of Japanese to Canada to 400 a year.

Once the Japanese claims were settled, Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour and a future Prime Minister, sought to determine the origins of the recent Oriental influx. In his report, he attributed the abnormally large numbers to high immigration from Hawaii and to the activities of immigration companies based in Canada. King concluded that immigration by way of Hawaii should be banned, that companies should be prohibited from importing contract labour, and that Ottawa should severely limit the admission of Japanese newcomers. He also implied that immigration from India should be discouraged.

In response to King's findings, the Laurier government made an important amendment to the Immigration Act. This amendment, which came into effect in 1908, was known as the "continuous-journey regulation." Under this regulation, all would-be immigrants were required to travel to Canada by continuous passage from their country of origin or citizenship on a through-ticket purchased in that country. Since no shipping company provided direct service from India to Canada, this ingenious device served to ban all Indian immigration. It also closed the door on the Hawaii route for Japanese immigration.

### **The Komagata Maru incident**

The continuous-journey regulation and subsequent barriers to East Indian immigration did not go unchallenged. The most dramatic challenge occurred on 23 May 1914, when 376 East Indians (22 were returning Canadian residents) arrived in Vancouver harbour on board the *Komagata Maru*, a Japanese tramp steamer hired by a wealthy Sikh merchant and former labour contractor from Hong Kong, Gurdit Singh Sarhali. The steamer met with an unmitigatedly hostile reception. A week later the case of Munshi Singh, a young Sikh farmer, was heard and he was ruled inadmissible on the grounds that he had violated three Orders in Council, in particular the continuous-journey regulation.

When the B.C. Court of Appeal upheld the refusal of a lower court to order his release, the way was paved for Munshi Singh and all the remaining passengers to be deported. The steamer then sailed to India, having left behind just a handful of passengers, previous residents of British Columbia who had been allowed to land by the federal government. Sikh political pressure finally persuaded the federal government to pass an Order in Council in 1919 allowing "British Hindus residing in Canada" to bring their wives and children to this country. The detested continuous-journey regulation remained in effect, however, until 1947.

### **The First World War and foreign-born Canadians**

Besides slowing down the movement of newcomers to Canada, the First World War created difficulties for many foreign-born Canadians. Germans, who had previously ranked high on the list of desirable immigrants, were not the only ones to suffer. Deemed enemy aliens because they had once been citizens of Germany or of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians, Poles, and Ukrainians also experienced hardship as a result of the war. Unsubstantiated rumours of imminent invasions of Canada by large forces of German-

Americans increased Canadian anxiety about foreigners in their midst. This uneasiness was further heightened by an incautious statement made by a Winnipeg prelate, Bishop Nykyta Budka. On 27 July 1914, while the world anxiously awaited Austria's response to the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the bishop urged his Ukrainian parishioners to remember their duty to the Austro-Hungarian Empire if war should occur and to hasten to the defence of the threatened fatherland.

### **Jewish immigration**

Although immigration to Canada between 1919 and 1925 was largely restricted to newcomers from Canada's traditional source countries, there were two notable exceptions. One involved the Russian Mennonites, the other, Jews. Even though the Department of Immigration and Colonization was generally hostile to the idea of admitting Jews, placing various impediments in their way, approximately 40,000 Jews did succeed in entering this country during the interwar period, most being admitted by special permit. Among these Jews were 200 war orphans. In 1923, the Canadian government agreed to admit 5,000 Jewish refugees who had fled from Russia to Romania between 1918 and 1920 and had subsequently been ordered to leave their adopted country.

If the Railway Agreement of 1925 led to a surge in the influx of newcomers from continental Europe, the Great Depression of the 1930s succeeded in choking off almost all immigration to Canada. During these years of economic devastation and widespread unemployment, the federal government strove hard to seal off Canada not only to prospective immigrants but also to refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, particularly Jewish refugees. There can be no doubt that Ottawa's restrictive legislation reflected the general Canadian attitude towards immigration, for Canadians across the country took the view that immigrants threatened scarce jobs in an economy that in 1933 saw almost one-quarter of the labour force unemployed.

Among those barred from entering Canada during the



1930s were thousands of desperate refugees, many of them Jews fleeing persecution at the hands of the Nazis. The persecution of the Jews was particularly savage, especially after the German invasion of Austria in March 1938. Thousands of the Jews who managed to escape the Nazi tide sought refuge in Canada, but by and large their appeals were ignored. Anti-Semitism was rife throughout Canada, where, in some places, Jews could not hold particular jobs, own property, or stay in certain hotels. It was most strident in Quebec.

### **Champions of the oppressed**

As dismal as this picture appears, there were in fact many Canadians who opposed the government's policy and wanted to see immigration barriers lowered. In addition to members of pro-refugee organizations and leading spokespeople for the Jewish community, they included prominent members of the Protestant churches, newspaper editors and commentators in English-speaking Canada, and members of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, particularly its leader, M.J. Coldwell. Foremost among the non-sectarian refugee lobbies was the Canadian National Committee on Refugees.

### **Post-war rise in immigration**

The Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947 coincided with a post-war rise in immigration. Notable among the new arrivals to Canadian shores in the early post-war period were British war brides who had married members of Canada's fighting forces. During and after the war, some 48,000 of them arrived in this country.

To its credit, Canada decided to admit displaced persons even before the international community had reached an agreement on the permanent resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Europe's homeless. Nearly 250,000 displaced persons and other refugees were admitted to Canada between 1947 and 1962.

Of the 165,000 refugees who entered this country between 1947 and 1953, Poles comprised the largest group. In descending order of numerical strength were Ukrainians, Germans and Austrians, Jews, Latvians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Czechs, Dutch, and Russians.

All told, these groups comprised 86 percent of the Europeans allowed to enter Canada in this period.

### **A further liberalization of immigration policy**

The government, in June 1950, issued an Order in Council that replaced all former Orders in Council and amendments with respect to immigration; retained the preference for British, Irish, French, and American immigrants and widened the admissible classes of European immigrants to include any healthy applicant of good character who had skills needed in Canada and who could easily integrate into Canadian society. Later in the year regulations were changed to allow the entry of additional categories of Asians. In a further move, the government took German immigrants off the enemy-alien list - Italian immigrants had been removed from the list in 1947 - as a result, Germans joined swelling numbers of Italians in applying for admission to Canada.

### **The 1952 Immigration Act**

A long-awaited new Immigration Act, the first since 1910 was finally enacted by Parliament in 1952. One of the Act's most significant provisions vested a large degree of uncontrolled discretionary power in the Minister and his or her officials. Jack Pickersgill was one Minister who employed the Act compassionately and to good purpose. On different occasions he waived immigration regulations and approved the admission, under minister's permit, of epileptics whose condition could be controlled by drugs, tubercular cases, and people who had a previous history of mental illness, provided these cases posed no

danger to the community and were adequately sponsored.

### **Refugees from Palestine**

When Pickersgill was at the helm of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada took the bold step of admitting some Palestinian Arabs, driven from their homeland by the Israeli-Arab war of 1948. In 1955, when the idea for the scheme was conceived, over 900,000 Palestinian refugees were living in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Gaza. The resettlement of these refugees abroad was nothing if not a politically explosive issue in the Middle East. By participating in the operation Canada risked incurring the wrath of Arabs, who might charge that it was part of a Zionist plot to remove Palestinian refugees from the care they received from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and deprive them of their right to return to Palestine.

Nevertheless, in 1955, a young official at the Canadian legation in Beirut, Lebanon, where UNRRA had its headquarters, approached the agency and obtained its co-operation in arranging for a selection of Palestinian refugees to be interviewed by a Canadian immigration team.

In sharp contrast to the attention given its admission of the Palestinian refugees, Canada's admission of close to 38,000 Hungarian refugees in 1956 attracted a great deal of coverage over the years. This country's response to the desperate situation of the Hungarian refugees represents one of the few times in Canadian history when Canadians have whole-heartedly welcomed immigrants. In fact, of all the states that accepted Hungarian refugees for permanent resettlement, none surpassed Canada in its generosity. They can be attributed directly to the pressure created by the Canadian public, whose sympathies were aroused by the plight of over 200,000 Hungarians fleeing their homeland after Russian tanks brutally crushed the Hungarian uprising in 1956.

### **The new wave of immigrants**

Unlike the newcomers in the earlier boom period of Canadian immigration (1900--1914), those who arrived in the late 1940s and 1950s were a more heterogeneous body, with a greater diversity of skills, training, and occupations. By 1957, the year that marked the end of the post-war boom period in Canadian immigration, Canada, which now included Newfoundland, boasted a population of 16.6 million and ranked as a major industrial nation, with manufacturing providing its major source of income and employment. It was therefore the urbanized and industrialized provinces - Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia - that benefited most from immigration. Now the majority of new arrivals came from continental Europe, especially Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands.

During the boom period, 1947--1957, immigration restrictions were gradually eased to admit not only unsponsored refugees and displaced persons but ordinary immigrants from a growing number of countries. The nominal credit for banishing racism from Canada's immigration policy belongs to the Progressive Conservatives, who toppled the Grits in the federal election of 10 June 1957 after a 22-year absence from the government benches. Perhaps because of the Progressive Conservatives' reluctance to take decisive action on immigration issues, the uninfluential Citizenship and Immigration portfolio was assigned in May 1958 to Ellen Fairclough.

During her term as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ellen Fairclough oversaw a steady improvement in the operation and procedures of the Immigration Service. Measured against this and her other accomplishments, however, was one of even greater significance - the long-overdue and radical reform that virtually abolished the "White Canada" immigration policy.



### **Canada abolishes its racist immigration policy**

The reform was introduced to the public on 19 January 1962 when Ellen Fairclough tabled new regulations in the House that virtually eliminated racial discrimination as a major feature of Canada's immigration policy. Henceforth any unsponsored immigrants who had the requisite education, skill, or other qualifications were to be considered suitable for admission, irrespective of colour, race, or national origin, provided they had a specific job waiting for them in Canada, were not criminals or terrorists, and did not suffer from a disease that endangered public health.

Only one vestige of true discrimination remained and that was the provision that allowed European immigrants and immigrants from the Americas to sponsor a wider range of relatives. This clause would be removed five years later, however, in the immigration regulations of 1967. When the new regulations were implemented on 1 February 1962, Canada became the first of the three large receiving countries in international migration - the other two being the United States and Australia - to dismantle its discriminatory immigration policy.

The new regulations tabled by Fairclough in the House of Commons before she left the Department of Citizenship and Immigration were foreshadowed by John Diefenbaker's cherished Canadian Bill of Rights (1960). Since the Bill of Rights had rejected discrimination by reason of race, colour, national origin, religion, or sex, the federal government could no longer justify selecting immigrants on the basis of race or national origin. Moreover, the long-standing discriminatory provisions now seemed anachronistic and untenable in an era when provincial governments were legislating against discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and origin in such areas as employment, education, and accommodation.

### **The points system**

By far the most significant development in immigration policy in these years, however, was the introduction of the points system, a method designed to eliminate caprice and prejudice in the selection of independent immigrants. In the points system, immigration officers assign points up to a fixed maximum in each of several categories, such as education, employment opportunities in Canada, age, the individual's personal characteristics, and degree of fluency in English or French.

The points system was incorporated into new immigration regulations that went into effect in 1967. Other features of these regulations included the elimination of discrimination based on nationality or race from all classes of immigrants and the creation of a special provision that allowed visitors to apply for immigrant status while in Canada. Closely related to this last provision was the passage of the Immigration Appeal Board Act (1967), which set up a new and fully independent appeal board. Anyone who had been ordered deported could appeal to the board, no matter what his or her status was under the Immigration Act.

During the first four years of Pierre Trudeau's administration, from 1968 to 1972, Ministers of Manpower and Immigration came and went with unseemly frequency. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister paved the way for a dramatic and sorely needed overhaul of Canadian immigration policy when he appointed Robert Andras Minister of Manpower and Immigration in November 1972. Robert Andras was convinced that Canada would only obtain a decent Immigration Act when an answer was found to the basic question "Why do we have immigration to this country?"

In his quest to find answers to this fundamental question, the Minister invited the provinces and any interested organizations to submit briefs. He also commissioned a study to provide a factual background to policy issues and furnish policy options. The green paper was intended to provoke discussion, and indeed, after its tabling in the House of Commons in February

1975, it unleashed an unprecedented nation-wide debate on immigration policy. Subsequently, a Special Joint Senate- House of Commons Committee was struck to stage public hearings on the controversial paper.

After holding 50 public hearings in 21 cities across Canada and reviewing more than 1,400 briefs submitted to it, the hard-working committee produced a report whose recommendations formed the basis of a new Immigration Act.

### **The Immigration Act, 1976**

The Immigration Act, the cornerstone of present-day immigration policy, was enacted in 1976 and came into force in 1978. It broke new ground by spelling out the fundamental principles and objectives of Canadian immigration policy. Included among these are the promotion of Canada's demographic, economic, cultural, and social goals; family reunification; the fulfilment of Canada's international obligations in relation to the United Nations Convention (1951) and its 1967 Protocol relating to refugees, which Canada had signed in 1969; non-discrimination in immigration policy; and cooperation between all levels of government and the voluntary sector in the settlement of immigrants in Canadian society.

The Act recognizes four basic categories of individuals eligible for landed-immigrant status: (1) family class, which includes the immediate family and dependent children, as well as parents and grandparents over 60, or if widowed or incapable of earning a livelihood, under 60; (2) humanitarian class, which includes (a) refugees as defined in the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to refugees and (b) persecuted and displaced persons who do not qualify as refugees under the rigid UN definition but who are members of a specially designated class created by the Cabinet for humanitarian reasons; (3) independent class, which comprises applicants who apply for landed-immigrant status on their own initiative and are selected on the basis of the points system; and (4) assisted relatives, that is, more distant relatives who are sponsored by a family member in

Canada and who meet some of the selection criteria of the independent class.

The 1976 Immigration Act received almost unanimous support from all parties in the House. The changes set in motion by the abolition of Canada's racist immigration policy and the introduction of the points system did not take long to become apparent. In 1966, almost 87 percent of Canada's immigrants had been of European origin, while only four years later 50 percent came from quite different regions of the world: the West Indies, Guyana, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, the Philippines, and Indochina.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, newcomers would emigrate from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, or Latin America and they would settle in Vancouver, the Toronto area, and the greater Montréal region. To even the casual observer, it was obvious that visible ethnic and racial minorities were becoming a significant part of Canada's social fabric. By contrast, other parts of the country, such as the four Atlantic provinces, remained virtually untouched by this immigration.

Canada's immigration policy has always had to adapt to the emerging socio-political conditions at home as well as abroad. After it removed racial and geographical discrimination from its immigration policy and belatedly signed the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, refugees from outside Europe could apply for and frequently gain admission to this country.

In 1971 and 1972 Canada admitted some 228 Tibetans. Along with their fellow countrymen, these refugees had fled their homeland after China occupied it in 1959. Led by their Dalai Lama or spiritual leader, they had sought sanctuary in Nepal, but they were not welcome there.



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