



A Life in Three Worlds: Family Letters Between Canada and the Netherlands in the 1950s, Part One

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Like a number of Canadians, in 2015 I became active in the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program, to bring families from war-torn Syria to a new and safe country. This prompted in me a curiosity about the dynamics of immigration and socialization in a globalized world. Two questions that especially fascinated me were how and with what results recent immigrants stayed in contact with their homeland, and how they negotiated the seismic shift from a familiar world to the culture and ways of their new country. "We speak every day by WhatsApp to our family in Damascus, when the internet isn't down," an older Syrian explained. To this the younger generation adds countless hours on Facebook and other social media, connecting with extensive networks of friends, family, and contacts. While it is still too early to know how this relative ease of communication has influenced the acculturation process that is one of the stated goals of private sponsorship, I wondered if there is any insight to be gained from a past immigrant experience.

My question led me to my basement, which holds boxes containing the correspondence between my mother and my grandmother that started in March 1950, when we emigrated from the Netherlands to the Millbrook/Peterborough area in Ontario, and ended in September 1954 following the death in close succession of my mother's parents. Before her own death in 2009, my mother reread all 354 letters and carefully arranged them in chronological order, anticipating that one day they would be read by someone familiar with the Dutch language. When belatedly I took up that task, I realized what a treasure they contained of everyday life in a close-knit but physically separated family. Week after week, they connected a kindly matriarch with her emigrant daughter, who as a wife and mother of three young children desperately needed the reassurance of the beloved world she had left behind.

Extensive scholarly and personal literature already exists on the Dutch immigrant experience of the 1950s.¹ It mostly focuses on immigration from an economic point of view, with people uprooting themselves in the hope of bettering their material lives, and then examines the extent of their success. What has been less studied is how immigrants deal with the actual experience of uprooting from a familiar life. As historian David Gerber has noted in a wide-ranging examination of

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the personal correspondence of nineteenth-century British immigrants to North America, those who emigrate risk a radical rupture of the self, of their understanding of who they are. Relationships, especially family relationships, are integral to how we know ourselves. Before the telephone and the internet, letter writing was the way immigrants in a new and unfamiliar environment maintained the personal relationships that were so important to their identity.² For my Syrian friends, their postings on social media are a way of composing their new life in a strange country through an exchange with those who knew them “back home”. So too, in an earlier period, immigrant letters, to quote Gerber, “are a transnational phenomenon, a unique cultural location in which correspondents may form a relationship that uses state postal systems to transcend national boundaries”.³

The many letters between my mother, Margaretha Helena de Klerk Van Die, and her mother, Johanna Duyser de Klerk, illustrate the formation of such a relationship when a familiar world has been ruptured by emigration. I will refer to the two women as “Lena” (pronounced “Layna”, the name by which she was commonly addressed) and “her mother” or if needed for clarity, “mother de Klerk”. Writing weekly and saving all of the other’s letters, they left behind a two-way conversation rare in archival collections. Both members of the Dutch lower middle class, neither had more than an elementary education, but in penmanship that was elegant and remarkably alike, both wrote easily and intimately. Invariably they began by setting the domestic context of their writing, the receipt of the most recent letter, and from there the conversation began. One topic would lead to another with little attention to transitions or logical coherence. What mattered was sharing the week’s accumulation of thoughts and experiences, and addressing the necessary points in the letter just received. Thus, in each were interlaced thoughts and information about the family and local events in a cherished society left behind, as well as the challenges and experiences in a new and unfamiliar one. The far-flung and different worlds of mother and daughter were soon also connected to a third—that of recent Dutch immigrants—most of whom were gathered in the Christian Reformed Church in Bowmanville and, after 1951, in Peterborough. In order to understand how those three worlds shaped the correspondence a little background is needed.

Family and home loomed large in Lena’s world as a young girl and also after her marriage in 1943 to Wim (Willem) Van Die. Lena was the sixth of nine surviving children of Johanna Duyser and Pieter de Klerk, a substantial *tuinder* (market gardener) in the town of Zwijndrecht, about 20 kilometres south of Rotterdam. Since at least 1600, horticulture had been a major livelihood in the Zwijndrecht area, first to meet the needs of the city of Dordrecht and nearby Rotterdam and since the nineteenth century for food export, especially to Germany and Britain. Lena’s two older brothers supported their young families by working with their father; the three younger brothers, with the encouragement of their mother, who highly valued education, had resisted. Attending only night school, all three achieved professional credentials, in secondary school teaching, engineering, and international credit insurance respectively. The two youngest and their families would emigrate to South Africa in 1951 and 1957. Of the four daughters, the oldest was unmarried and lived at home; the other three had married and all lived within easy access of their ancestral home and visited often, thanks to the ubiquitous bicycle and the efficient Dutch railway system.

The de Klerk family’s close ties also found expression in the exchange of a monthly round robin letter. Known as *de rondzendbrief*, shortened to *rzb*, the letter took the form of a small handsewn booklet of some ten pages where each member or their spouse apprised the others of family news, views on church and politics, and book titles to be recommended for reading and discussion. Started by the youngest son shortly before his marriage in 1948, it followed Lena to Canada, and her two brothers who emigrated to South Africa. Aware of a more critical readership, Lena more self-consciously focused on the Canadian experience than in her weekly letters to her parents. The *rzb* continued until 1980 and through circuitous ways came to me in Canada, remaining unread until the writing of this article.

Both types of letters strongly reflect the family’s upbringing and values. These combined the socialization of a strict Reformed Protestant religion with the hardworking ethos of commercial gardening and its dependency on the fluctuations of weather and market demand. A strong sense of responsibility, civic duty, and loyalty to family and country defined most of the population of the town of Zwijndrecht, young and old, who gathered two or three times each Sunday in its dominant church, the *Gereformeerde kerk*. A bookish family, the de Klerks were drawn to periodicals and books written from

An Online CIHS Annual General Meeting

The 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be especially significant: a proposed change of presidency; and a meeting whose “feel” will be set by Canada’s response to the Covid-19 virus.

The virtual meeting will take place on Thursday, 22 October at 7 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time) using Zoom. We will conduct a trial run at the same hour on Tuesday, 20 October.

Members who plan to participate in the AGM should confirm their participation via e-mail to info@cihs-shic.ca and provide their name and e-mail address. This will allow us to admit only members to the online meeting. Please send your confirmation by Monday, 5 October.

Members will soon receive a CIHS newsletter containing the AGM agenda and annual reports. Shortly before the AGM we will send out instructions on Zoom participation. Until then, stay well and “stay negative”!

the *Gereformeerd* faith perspective. Some of the sons read heavy theological tomes; the daughters enjoyed novels and children's literature in which lives were challenged, yet through perseverance experienced redemption. Music was another shared pastime, as friends and family sang sacred and patriotic songs around the family organ. As with most of Zwijndrecht's upright Protestant families, the de Klerk network extended far beyond the home thanks to active participation in church life and choral, debating, and youth societies. These were central to the denomination's religious culture and they made the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (GKN) a distinct world within the wider Dutch society. Although its membership represented only 9.7 percent of the Dutch population in 1947, compared to the total Protestant population of 43.5 percent, its influence far exceeded its proportion.⁴



The de Klerk family, Zwijndrecht, Holland, 1950. Lena and Wim are at the far right in the front and middle rows. (Courtesy of the author)

This culture was carried to Canada by roughly 31 percent of the 143,300 Dutch immigrants who came between 1948 and 1962, and it shaped the correspondence of mother and daughter de Klerk, both as a continuation of the world left behind and as an expectation of the world that awaited. In 1948, Wim and Lena, both in their early thirties, started seriously to consider emigration, but it was not until early 1950 that medical clearance finally came through for the couple and their three pre-school age children, Margrietje (Marguerite), Pieter (Peter), and Hannie

(Joanne). Their reasons for leaving did not make it into the correspondence but can be recalled from various conversations. The youngest brother of thirteen siblings, Wim Van Die was part of a restless generation whose career prospects had been thwarted first by the Great Depression and then by the Nazi occupation. While hiding on an uncle's farm to escape being drafted into Germany's war industry, he was attracted by the independence farm life offered and by the possibilities of emigration. Aware of his dissatisfaction, it was Lena who, despite her strong family ties, persuaded him to carry through. She feared the outbreak of war between Russia and Western Europe following the Berlin blockade and airlift, but she was also attracted by the prospect of adventure. "I've always hoped that some day I would land elsewhere," she once mused to her siblings to account for having emigrated, "It's not that I don't dearly love Holland or my family, that's something I'm becoming even more aware of now, but I believe that you are born with the impulse."



Departure to Canada: L-R: Margrietje (Marguerite), Wim, Pieter (Peter), Lena, and Hannie (Joanne). Holland, 1950. (Courtesy of the author)

On 3 February 1950, the couple received official approval from the *Stichting Landverhuizing Nederland* to emigrate to Canada. They then used their entire savings to pay the not-insignificant sum of f.5669 to book their passage and have their household goods packed, crated, and shipped to Owen Sound, their destination.

Three weeks later, the de Klerk family gathered for a formal photo of the parents with their five sons and four daughters and partners. Lena made frequent reference to the family photograph in her correspondence with her parents, for it became a treasured bond with the family she had left behind. A contemporary photograph of Lena and Wim and their children played a similar role for her mother, who often wrote how she missed the children and, looking at their photo, would sometimes talk to them. She would also pore over the many snapshots sent from Canada with a magnifying glass, and comment in detail on the children's changed circumstances and appearance.

The journey to Canada began on Friday, 3 March 1950 in Zwijndrecht. Traveling by train, the couple and their three children were waved out at various points en route by relatives, friends, and an entire kindergarten class. That same evening Lena recalled the day's events in her first letter home, writing on pages torn from a little notebook in their hotel room in Paris. They had already made acquaintances among fellow travelers, and in what would become a familiar pattern, she mentioned each family's hometown and religious denomination. The reality of the rupture with a familiar world began to take hold the next day at the



Lena Van Die wrote on the back of this photograph, "This is the historic truck that met us at our arrival at the Millbrook train station." (Courtesy of the author)

port of Le Havre where they boarded the S.S. *Samaria*, a former British troop ship. Its unfamiliar English menu added to the seasickness that almost immediately hit her, but this did not deter her from beginning a second letter to her family. A microcosm of post-war Europe's restless population, her fellow passengers included around 150 Dutch, and "Ukrainians, Russians, Italians, some Greeks, and Jews with long beards, real Rabbis". A few close contacts would be made on the *Samaria*, with one large *Gereformeerde* family to be settled in Sarnia, becoming lifelong friends through regular mail contact and several visits.

In her third letter, sent on 17 March from their new home, she began with the train journey from Pier 21 in Halifax. That year saw an unusually heavy snowfall, and as someone who loved rugged nature but had had little exposure, she enthusiastically described the landscape en route "like Christmas and New Year's cards with everywhere snow-covered pine trees". The Canadian landscape never ceased to enthrall her and appeared regularly when she described the more positive sides of the immigration experience. The more negative side quickly became apparent when they reached their destination, which during the ocean voyage had been changed from Owen Sound to the totally unknown village of Millbrook.

Ed. Note: this article will be continued in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Notes

¹ To cite just a few, Maxine Brandis, *Land for Our Sons* (London: Hurst & Blackett 1958) and her daughter, Marianne Brandis, *Frontiers and Sanctuaries: A Woman's Life in Holland and Canada* (Montreal/Kingston: MQUP 2006) offer insight into the tensions experienced by a privileged upper-middle class woman as she encountered the challenges and complexities of life in northern British Columbia. In a more sweeping survey, Herman Ganzevoort in *A Bittersweet Land: The Dutch Experience in Canada, 1890-1980* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart 1988) is no less reticent on the ambivalent experience of immigration as he details its evolving political and economic contexts. Immigration is both a personal and shared experience, as Albert VanderMey illustrates in the wealth of stories and photographs collected in his massive *To All Our Children: The Story of the Postwar Dutch Immigration to Canada* (Jordan Station, Ontario: Paideia Press 1983). Anne van Arragon Hutten in *Uprooted: Dutch Immigrant children in Canada 1947-59* (Kentville, N.S.: North Mountain Press 2001) has offered a candid and wide-ranging analysis of how, for better and for worse, migration affected the identity of a generation of children under the age of nineteen.

² David A. Gerber, *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants in North America* (New York: New York University Press 2006).

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

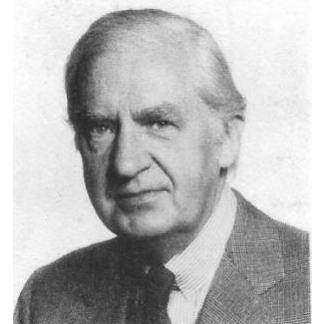
⁴ For a popular analysis of this religious denomination in the Netherlands see Agnes Amelink, *De Gereformeerden* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 2003) and in Canada, *De Gerformeerden Overzee: Protestants-Christelijke Landverhuizers in Noord-Amerika* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 2006).

Vic Meilus: A Gentleman of the Service

Kurt F. Jensen with James Bissett, Robert Shalka, and Michael Molloy

In late July of this year, a brief news story mentioned the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig (now Gdańsk), Poland and an elderly German who had been convicted of complicity to murder 5,000 persons there during World War II. For a few of us, the mere mention of Stutthof sparked an immediate reaction because one of our former colleagues and friends, Vitus (Vic) Meilus, had been a prisoner in Stutthof. We think it is important for the Society to remember him, as he was renowned in the immigration foreign service and had a significant impact on us in our careers in the 1960s and 1970s.

Vic was born in Lithuania on 14 April 1913 into a relatively wealthy family. His father played a role in Lithuania's quest for independence following World War I. Vic was the personification of the polished cosmopolitan European aristocrat whom one only encounters in period movies today. He was a linguist—speaking Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, German, Swedish, Spanish, and English, plus a smattering of Japanese. No one recalls whether he spoke French, but he was close friends with the French consul general in Stuttgart, with whom he conversed in Polish.



Vitus (Vic) Meilus

Vic's family, and that of his wife, Elizabeth Vosylius, were part of the Lithuanian "intelligentsia" in the final days of the Czarist Empire. His early childhood was spent in Moscow, where the family was evacuated during World War I. His father became a member of Lithuania's parliament after independence and was one of the drafters of its constitution. Elizabeth's father was the head of the national bank. Vic took a degree in economics at the University of Kaunas and worked before World War II for a large textile manufacturer.

Following the invasion of Poland in World War II, Lithuania was forced to accept Soviet garrisons and install a “friendly” government, and in 1940 it succumbed to complete Soviet dominance. Deportations to Siberia followed. Some of Vic’s family went to Siberia, but we cannot recall whether this was during the war or after—perhaps both.

Vic narrowly escaped arrest by the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in 1941 when he was apprehended while visiting friends. Because his name was not on the arrest list, he was permitted to leave. Even so, he was probably on another such list, for after the war the NKVD actively sought to arrest him as a known opponent. Things for Lithuania did not improve with the arrival of the Germans later that year, and he became active in the production and dissemination of anti-German pamphlets.

Vic was arrested by the Gestapo at an unknown date. He said that they were after his father, who had the same name, but because his father was not home, they settled for him and sent him to Stutthof. More than once while he was there, he thought he was going to die from dysentery, typhus, or malnourishment. He survived but had at least one major abdominal surgery later in Sweden because of the harsh treatment. In the late 1970s, when I briefly went to Poland to work, Vic asked me to obtain a photograph of a plaque with his name on it that was on display at Stutthof. Regrettably, I never got there.

With the end of the war approaching, the Stutthof prisoners departed for Germany on a death march. “Keep up or be shot” was the German approach. As people fell by the wayside, Vic and a Norwegian fellow-prisoner worked their way to the front of the column and slowed the pace to save those they could. After reaching the Baltic coast, the prisoners were loaded on a ship with a makeshift raft tied behind. Vic was on that raft. Seeing British aircraft approaching and fearing an attack, the prisoners cut the rope between the raft and the ship, which was indeed bombed and sunk the following day. The raft, without any power, drifted with the currents.

Recollections differ slightly at this point. I recall Vic saying survivors landed in Germany and he and others made it to Denmark just as the war ended; from there he rowed to Sweden to escape the possibility of being returned to Soviet control. Robert Shalka recalls that he was transferred by the Red Cross to Sweden for treatment. A barge with Stutthof prisoners was towed to Denmark and many were transferred to Sweden, but it is unknown whether Vic was on that barge.

Elizabeth, his wife, and their daughter were reunited with Vic in Sweden with the help of the Red Cross. Their tenure in Sweden was precarious since the Swedes were under intense pressure to return “Soviets” to the homeland. Vic and his family left for Canada either in late 1948 or 1949. His first job was selling draperies at Eaton’s department store in Toronto. He joined the immigration department in 1957 as a settlement officer. In 1962 he was posted to Cologne as an information officer, and in 1965 he was assigned to Tokyo, where he trained Mike Molloy. A posting to Madrid followed Tokyo.

After a brief stint back in Ottawa, in 1973 Vic was posted to Stockholm, which had area responsibility for Finland at the time. There, he was my first boss. I recall him excitedly telephoning me one weekend to say he was making an urgent liaison trip to Helsinki because his brother, now a senior Soviet agricultural official, would be visiting there. The two brothers managed to meet under the watchful eyes of a young KGB officer who kindly guided Vic on how many goods he could buy for his brother without risk of confiscation on return.

While in Stockholm, Vic was sent to Santiago to assist with the Chilean refugee movement, and there he helped a number of Latin American socialists escape imprisonment and possible death, a fate that he had endured so many years earlier. While we were posted together in Stockholm, as the generous officer-in-charge that he was, Vic also organized memorable summer temporary duty assignments for me to London, Brussels, and Warsaw.

Vic’s final posting was to Stuttgart in 1976. There he guided Robert Shalka and shared with him a fascination with the history of World War II. Upon retirement, Vic and Elizabeth became “snowbirds”, commuting between Toronto and Pompano Beach in Florida. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Vic reclaimed some of his family’s property in Lithuania and died there on his farm in 1998.

Vic Meilus embodied old world charm and manners. He was a kind, gracious, and very considerate man who embraced the young officers who worked for him over the years and taught them not only the technical skills of immigration selection but also the humanitarian side of the work. He was strong yet gentle, always seeking to assist his staff. We are better people for having known him.

Popular Response to the Boat People

Kurt F. Jensen

Kurt F. Jensen is a member of the CIHS Board. His early career was spent in the Immigration foreign service before he switched to the political stream at the then Department of Foreign Affairs.

One of the largest influxes of refugees in Canadian history came from Indochina, as the regimes in South Vietnam and neighbouring countries toppled in the late 1970s. Reaction to the boat people, babies snatched from collapsing and abandoned orphanages, and extended families seeking to come together has coalesced in the Canadian collective consciousness into a vision of a nation united in helping its fellow man.

But are these images and recollections the whole truth?

More than 40 years have passed since Canadians formed hundreds of sponsorship groups in church basements, community halls, and around kitchen tables to bring more than 60,000 Indochinese refugees to Canada.¹ The fleeing refugees' stories were horrific. Piracy, rape, and death at sea were common. The act of escaping often cost an extended family all the wealth that it could raise. Refugees died at sea in the tens of thousands. Conditions in refugee camps were harsh. Cruel actions of adjacent countries, such as towing refugee boats out to sea to let the refugees fend for themselves, bereft of water and food and slowly sinking and drowning added another dark chapter to the story.

Today Canadians view the Indochina refugee movement largely in terms of the refugees' achievements and of pride in everyone having come together at all levels of society to make this refugee movement such an astounding success.

There is, however, another aspect to this story. When Michael Molloy, Peter Duschinsky, Robert Shalka, and I wrote *Running on Empty*, we intended to include a chapter on the Canadian people's response to and acceptance of this large influx of people in need. We could never make the chapter work, and it was eventually dropped.

Media coverage of Canada's commitment to assisting Indochinese refugees was initially neutral and reflective of government statements and decisions.² The 1978 incident of the *Hai Hong*,³ a ship with about 2,000 refugees from Vietnam aboard, inspired a complete shift in the Canadian media's response. The story had all the elements for dramatic coverage: greed, corruption, and human tragedy. A photograph of Immigration's Ian Hamilton descending the ship's gangplank holding a small child grabbed the public's attention.⁴

But in letters to the editor published in Canadian newspapers, one saw public opposition to the refugee movement. These letters often questioned Canadian assistance "to support these poor souls who felt they could not stay in a Vietnam freed from U.S. domination (and atrocities)."⁵ One writer contrasted the boat people's acceptance in Canada with the "obstacles" put in the way of refugees from Chile;⁶ in fact, these letters regularly reflected an unfavourable comparison between the treatment of Indochinese and of Chilean refugees.⁷ When the story of General Dang Van Quang's presence⁸ in Canada surfaced, a letter writer compared Canada's lenient treatment of Vietnamese with "innocent Chileans ... subjected to punishing examinations in the past."⁹

[There is a] growing backlash of opposition to Canada's acceptance of refugees.... Out of a total of 50 letters dealing with the plight of the boat people in the past two weeks, 28 either expressed approval of Canada's plan to adopt 50,000 refugees by next year or called for higher quotas. But the remaining 22 were strongly opposed. And the proportion of disapprovals appears to be rising.¹⁰

The media and letter-writers were generally positive about Canada's decision to accept 600 refugees from the *Hai Hong*,¹¹ although at least one writer could not understand why Canada was accepting the refugees when so many Canadians remained unemployed. The newspaper appended a comment to that letter stating, "Oddly, most of the Vietnamese find jobs and are productive citizens."¹² By early 1979, letters to the editor responded more generously to the Indochinese refugees, extolling their grit in overcoming horrendous adversity.¹³ The absence of negative views was striking.

In contrast, public opinion polls regularly conducted for the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission between 1979 and 1980 tell a more negative story: at no time did a majority of Canadians support accepting a large number of Indochinese refugees. In February 1979, the government announced that 5,000 Indochinese refugees would be accepted. A Gallop poll¹⁴ showed that a majority, or 52 percent, of persons polled thought the number was too high. Only 7 percent thought the figure was too low, while 37 percent thought the number appropriate.¹⁵ The next Gallup poll was taken in early July 1979, following the federal government's announcement that 50,000 Indochinese refugees would be accepted by 1980. It showed 49 percent in favour and 38 percent against the historic intake. Fully 57 percent of respondents in Quebec gave a positive response.¹⁶

More polls followed in quick succession as the Indochinese refugee movement gained momentum. The July 1979 Gallup poll's 49 percent favourable response would prove to be the most positive. Polls taken in August, September, and October 1979 were more negative: approximately 52 percent of those polled thought that Canada was accepting too many Indochinese refugees, while only 36 to 37 per cent thought the target of 50,000 persons was appropriate.¹⁷ A Gallup poll released in May 1980 showed 29 percent approved the "entry of additional refugees" if private sponsorships were found, while 63 percent, nearly two thirds of the population, "disapproved" of an expansion of the target.¹⁸

Successive Canadian governments continued to support bringing Indochinese refugees to Canada, with both Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments being active and sharing pride of place in the national effort.

The substantial public opposition is now only a historical footnote, forgotten by most. This is unfortunate. We must know and understand our history.

Notes

¹ 74,000 in total when including the arrivals prior to the movement of the boat people.

² *Globe and Mail*, 5 May 1975: "Andras hopes for new law covering refugees", and 31 May 1975: "Most refugees 'fine people', Andras says".

³ The plight of the refugees aboard the doomed freighter *Hai Hong* was the catalyst for an outpouring of very positive human-interest media stories about the hardships experienced by the refugees and the challenges of arriving and settling in a new land.³ [CIHS. Rene Pappone media clipping collection.]

⁴ CIHS. Rene Pappone media clipping collection.

⁵ *Globe and Mail*, 12 May 1975: "Vietnamese refugees", signed Jerry Spiegel, Hamilton.

⁶ *Ibid*, and *Globe and Mail*, 19 May 1975: "Refugees", signed Michael Riordon, Toronto.

⁷ *Edmonton Journal*, 18 August 1979. Letter signed D. Lehman, Regina.

⁸ An alleged notorious drug smuggler.

⁹ *Globe and Mail*, 3 June 1975: "Immigration policy", signed Ann T. Buttrick, Toronto.

¹⁰ *Montreal Gazette*, 28 July 1978, p. 8.

¹¹ CIHS. Rene Pappone media clipping collection.

¹² *Toronto Sun*, 3 December 1978. Letter signed Paul Lalonde.

¹³ *Globe and Mail*. 4 July 1979 and 16 July 1979. Several letters.

¹⁴ Library and Archives Canada (LAC). File 8700-1. Pt. Indochina General, Public Opinion Survey. Message EXTOTT UNS 0445, 2 March 1979

¹⁵ LAC. File 8700-1. Pt.1. Indochina General, Public Opinion Survey. Message EXTOTT UNS 0445, 3 March 1979.

¹⁶ CIHS. *Summary of Employment and Immigration Indochinese Refugee Newsletters – July 16, 1979-February 14, 1980 – Public Affairs Division*. Vol. 1, No. 5 – August 15, 1979; and, Howard Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees* (Regina: L.A. Weigl Educational Associates Ltd., 1982), p. 1.

¹⁷ Howard Adelman, *Canada and the Indochinese Refugees* (Regina: L.A. Weigl Educational Associates Ltd., 1982), p. 1.

¹⁸ LAC. Vol. 1836. File 8700-1 pt. 3. *Gallup Report*. May 21, 1980.

The Berlin Mission: The American Who Resisted Nazi Germany from Within by Richard Breitman.

PublicAffairs, 2019. 336 pages

Book Review by Roy Christensen

Roy Christensen worked for the Delegation of the European Union to Canada for nearly 35 years, the last 20 as press officer. He has published over 200 articles relating to his work and his interests.

The Berlin Mission is about Raymond Geist, an American visa officer assigned to Berlin from 1929 to 1939. Working for the U.S. State Department, he had a hand in issuing visas to Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. He served at a time when there were strict U.S. immigration quotas and thousands of people wanted to get out of Germany, particularly after January 1933, when Hitler came to power. Little did Geist know what he was in for when he arrived in Berlin. His long posting was during an extremely dark period, but he would do more than just bear witness to it.

In dealing with his host country, Geist knew when to be aggressive and when to use more gentle methods. He was not afraid; he knew he was speaking on behalf of the United States and would therefore fearlessly challenge the Nazis when they abused Americans in Germany. Still, to be effective, Geist had to have a working relationship with high Nazi officials, on occasion dealing with Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, Hermann Goering, and Werner Best. His position thus called for courage, nerves of steel, and the ability to maintain a fine balancing act. It helped that Geist, who spoke fluent German, had a deep understanding of the German mind as well as German history and culture, due both to his studies and to his family background.

Raymond Geist was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1885. His paternal grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from Germany after that country's political upheavals in 1848. Geist studied German among other subjects and received a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1918. Prior to that, during the First World War, he worked as a translator for the U.S. Navy. He made a good impression and accompanied the American delegation to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference as a translator. He was then sent to Vienna to be food commissioner, responsible for providing meals to 100,000 malnourished children. In 1921, he applied to enter the U.S. Consular Service, was accepted, and was subsequently posted to Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Alexandria. In 1929 he was sent to Berlin as vice-consul and spent ten years in Germany. He rose through the ranks but was too good and useful to be posted to another mission.

In a feature article in *The New York Times Magazine* of July 1939¹, Otto Tolischus, *New York Times* reporter in Berlin since 1933, wrote that personifying the "august" U.S. government, Geist had become the best-known American official in Germany. Indispensable, he was even made acting head of mission at one point but was never made head of mission or ambassador. In this way Geist's story is rather sad, as he was never given the status or rank his skill and competence merited.

Through his German contacts, Geist accumulated vital information about what was really happening in Germany in the early 1930s and about the future course of the German government. Once Hitler became Chancellor on 30 January 1933, Geist started to write a series of economic reports. His reports became increasingly political because he was able to obtain information that was not readily available. Geist was also one of the few who had actually read *Mein Kampf*. Monitoring daily events and cultivating his contacts, Geist was in no doubt about which direction Nazi Germany was headed. Breitman claims that Geist was among the first to sound the alarm about Hitler's plans for world domination and genocide.

In the summer of 1938, after the annexation of Austria, Geist helped to prepare the international Évian Conference. An initiative of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, it was convened to address the issue of German Jewish refugees wishing to leave the Reich. The conference was a failure, as only the Dominican Republic was willing to take in more Jewish refugees.

In his work, Geist not only had to deal with Nazis, but also the U.S. State Department, which is a key part of Breitman's story. In a way, *The Berlin Mission* deals with antisemitism in both Germany and the United States in the 1930s. But instead of dealing with German and American politics and policies, the book tells the story through a visa officer's perspective. Professor Rafael Medoff, director of the Institute for Holocaust Studies in Washington says that with President Roosevelt's consent, the administration deliberately suppressed European immigration far below the limits set by U.S. law.² In a 2011 M.A. thesis for City University of New York, Barbara Bailin claims that Geist was an anti-Semite.³ Breitman, with a Ph.D. from Harvard, has written several books dealing with aspects of the Holocaust, among them *FDR and the Jews* and *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution*. Nowhere in *The Berlin Mission* does Breitman hint that Geist was anti-Semitic.

He points out that the State Department's concern was that immigrants would become public charges. With millions of Americans already unemployed, the plight of foreigners was not of great concern. The State Department therefore suggested that only applicants with U.S. relatives be admitted. The Berlin mission argued that ten percent of the German quota should be reserved for applicants without family in the U.S., as there were many who would undoubtedly become exemplary citizens and benefit the country. German applicants with no family in the U.S. were told that they were now defined as potential public charges and advised to withdraw their applications. Geist found a way to keep the hopes of some of these would-be immigrants alive, allowing them to apply informally without paying the application fee. Geist's system functioned like a waiting list. In this way he found a way around the restrictive U.S. immigration policy. As well, Geist secured exit visas and found host families in the U.S. for hundreds of unaccompanied Jewish children.

Breitman concludes that "as a participant in a restrictive American immigration system, Geist was not a hero at all, but rather someone who did his job and who failed to back up his conscience with loud public protest. All the same, Geist's accomplishments show that refraining from public display of moral indignation sometimes could do genuine good".⁴

Breitman also deals with Geist's homosexuality, which Geist succeeded in hiding from the Germans, homosexuality being a crime in Nazi Germany. Geist's German partner accompanied him back to the United States in 1939.

In 1954, the Federal Republic of Germany awarded Geist the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit. Present at the ceremony was a former German judge who was forced to retire in 1933 and who Geist had helped immigrate to the United States. His presence symbolized Geist's rescue work in Berlin.

The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation has recognized Raymond Geist as a Diplomat Saviour for being a Holocaust rescuer. Unlike Wallenberg, who undertook rescue activities late in the Holocaust, Geist was a loyal foreign service officer who tried to help Jews and others get out of Germany before it really started.

The Berlin Mission is a moving and chilling book that deals with a person caught up in some dramatic and historic events in the first half of the twentieth century. The book is well written, easy to read, and difficult to put down.

Notes

¹Tolischus, Otto. "Trouble-Shooter in Berlin", *The New York Times*, 23 July 1939.

https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1939/07/23/113357579.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0 Accessed 06 August 2020.

² Medoff, Rafael. "Einstein TV series distorts Jewish refugee issue", *The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies* website. <http://new.wymaninstitute.org/2019/07/einstein-tv-series-distorts-jewish-refugee-issue/> Accessed 06 August 2020.

³ Bailin, Barbara. "The Influence of Anti-Semitism on United States Immigration Policy: With Respect to German Jews during 1933-1939", Master of Arts Thesis, City University of New York, 10 May 2011.

https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1261&context=cc_etds_theses Accessed 06 August 2020.

⁴ Breitman, Richard. *The Berlin Mission: The American Who Resisted Nazi Germany from Within*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2019. p. 244.

Bulletin Index

Our thanks again to the Knowledge Management, Research and Evaluation group at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada for the latest update to our online Bulletin index. It is now current to the June 2020 edition. The CIHS greatly appreciates this effort.

Official Canadian Immigration Primary Source Materials

Robert Shalka

Dr. Shalka is a member of the Board of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society. He joined the Immigration Foreign Service in 1974 and served overseas in Stuttgart, Bangkok, Moscow, Singapore, Kyiv, Riyadh, Bonn and Berlin and completed various headquarters assignments. He retired in 2010. He has Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Alberta and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, all in history.

Following the successful completion of *Running on Empty: Canada and the Indochinese Refugees 1975-1980*, I thought it might be useful to provide an abbreviated overview of official Government of Canada primary source materials used in that and other projects. These primary source materials concerning immigration policies and programs are available through Library and Archives Canada (LAC), the Library of Parliament and elsewhere. A wealth of unmined material awaits the serious researcher.

A more complete version of this article appears on the Canadian Immigration Historical Society's website¹.

This introduction to official primary sources describes what is available "online" and materials that are accessible in their original paper form or on microfilm. They comprise documentation generated by government officials in reporting, policy formulation, and program delivery. Personal memoirs and media accounts are also important, but are not covered here.

Library and Archives Canada ²

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is the primary repository of documents from Canada's federal government departments responsible for immigration from 1867 onwards. Information is included in online databases, microfilm and paper files. For access to these online and other resources, consult the LAC website.

LAC Databases: Individuals

Popular interest in genealogy has prompted LAC to digitize many of its holdings about individuals. They are found in online databases, most of which are "searchable" by key words. They include:

- Census of Canada 1871-1921. Held every 10 years. The database is searchable by name and covers all provinces and territories.

- Census of the Northwestern and Prairie Provinces 1906, 1916, and 1926. A supplementary census was held midway between the Census of Canada. Its purpose was to track the growth of the “new provinces”, i.e. Alberta and Saskatchewan as well as Manitoba. The data base is searchable by name.
- Naturalization and Citizenship 1915-1946 and 1947-1951. The names and places of residence of persons naturalized or granted citizenship during the above periods were published annually in the *Canada Gazette*. Entries are available in a searchable data base. Naturalizations prior to 1915 were the responsibility of provincial courts. Most immigrants from outside the British Empire became naturalized, as British subject status was a prerequisite to receiving final title to a homestead.
- Home Children 1869-1932. Lists of names as well as records of sending organizations.
- Immigrants at Grosse Ile Quarantine Station 1832-1937.
- Immigrants from China 1885-1949. Covers the period when Chinese immigration was curtailed.
- Immigrants from the Russian Empire 1898-1922. Microfilmed index cards of Russian subjects registered at imperial Russian consulates.
- Immigrants to Canada: Porters and Domestic 1899-1949. Database of African American men brought to Canada to work on passenger trains as well as women destined to domestic employment.
- Passenger Lists and Border Entries 1925-1935: Nominal lists.
- Passenger Lists 1865-1922. Microfilms of the original passenger lists or manifests of individuals arriving in Canada by ship. The names of individual passengers (immigrants, visitors, returning Canadians, or persons in transit to the United States) are not indexed. To find an individual name, one should have any combination of the name of the ship, port and date of arrival.
- Border Entries: From 1908.
- Ukrainian Immigrants to Canada 1891-1930: Privately compiled lists of Ukrainian surnames.
- Western Canada Land Grants 1870-1930. A searchable database of “homesteads” filed, and titles granted, on Dominion lands open for settlement in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the railway belt of British Columbia. Does not include Hudson Bay, Canadian Pacific Railway, or school lands. The database does not continue after 1930, when Dominion lands were belatedly transferred to the provinces. Provincial archives have information on subsequent land grants.

LAC Databases: Documents

Collections of other federal government documents digitized and placed online, some with search capabilities. The most significant are:

- Cabinet Conclusions 1944-1979. The official record of decisions reached at meetings of Cabinet. Each decision usually refers to the pertinent Cabinet document circulated in advance to Cabinet members. Cabinet documents themselves are not available online and must be accessed separately from LAC. The database includes a key word search (e.g. entering “immigration” will provide a list of Cabinet meetings when the topic was discussed, and a decision reached or deferred). Cabinet conclusions from 1980 are still retained by the Privy Council Office but can be accessed through the federal Access to Information Request Service upon payment of a nominal fee. Requests can be submitted online. For more information, please refer to the Privy Council Office website.³
- Orders-in-Council 1867-1924. The “key word” searchable database includes images of documents for the period 1867-1916. Subsequent entries provide only the title. Materials include items pertaining to immigration.
- Canada Gazette 1841-1997. LAC has a full run of “Canada’s Newspaper” online which includes many items of immigration interest. The search tool is not user friendly.

LAC: Other Holdings, Not Digitized

Departmental records preserved on microfilm or in “paper files” and available only at LAC. Information on access and finding aids can be found on its [website](#).⁴ The following Record Groups (RG) contain the most significant Government of Canada holdings on immigration:

- [RG17-Agriculture 1867-1893](#). Immigration was part of the Agriculture Department in the early years after Confederation.
- [RG25-External Affairs](#). The Finding Guide refers to files relating to the administration of immigration posts overseas. Canadian diplomatic missions also submitted reports to Canada on matters of immigration interest.
- [RG26-Citizenship and Immigration from 1865](#).
- [RG76-Immigration](#). The major collection of documents.
- [RG118-Employment and Immigration Administration and Policy post-1945](#).

Non-Library and Archives Canada Primary Sources

Library of Parliament: [Canadian Parliamentary Historical Resources](#)⁵

- [A complete collection of Senate and House of Commons public records 1867-1995](#). It comprises debates, journals, committees, bills, votes and proceedings as well as some House of Commons sessional papers. It includes oral questions, statements and debates on immigration.
- [Minutes and committee reports](#) are also significant, e.g., the House of Commons Select Standing Committee on Agriculture and Colonization held hearings on immigration in 1928 and collected over 800 pages of testimony before producing a report. The Senate Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour held a series of hearings from 1947 which prefigured changes to Canada’s immigration and refugee policies leading to the 1952 Immigration Act.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

- [Annual Reports 1867-1954](#). An incomplete digitized collection of annual reports produced by departments responsible for immigration held by IRCC. These holdings have been made available to the author and are held in anticipation of their transfer to the CIHS website. These annual reports are also available from LAC but have not been put online.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

- [Documents on Canadian External Relations 1908 to 1963](#)⁶
- An online version of 29 bound volumes of selected “diplomatic documents” which includes materials on immigration and refugee matters. Example: the 1938 volume covers the European refugee crisis and Canada’s participation in the Évian Conference.

Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21⁷

The digital holdings of Canada’s national museum of immigration include

- copies of immigration legislation, regulations with supplementary analyses by staff and others.
- personal accounts of immigrants, articles on various topics related to immigration, and photo collections.

Conclusion

This information is not intended as an exclusive guide to official Canadian federal government primary source materials on immigration; rather it is an overview pointing the way to further research about the evolution of Canadian immigration policies and programs from 1867. A more complete version of this article appears under the Research tab of the Canadian Immigration Historical Society’s website.

Notes

¹ www.cihs-shic.ca/research

² www.bac-lac.gc.ca

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council.html>

⁴ www.bac-lac.gc.ca

⁵ www.parl.canadiana.ca

⁶ <http://gac.canadiana.ca/view/ooe.b1603413E>

⁷ <https://pier21.ca>

Letter to the Editor

Re: "The Long Wait for Freedom: The Karen Refugee Movement 2006-2007" (Bulletin 93, June 2020)

A great article and reminiscent of my time in Bangkok dealing with Indochinese refugees from 1978 to 1980. The descriptions of the camps brought it all back! One big difference was that we had the benefit of excellent paved highways which facilitated travel from Bangkok to the camps along the borders with Laos and Cambodia, a legacy of earlier U.S. aid programs. Rail and air were also options. Back then, the provinces along the border with Burma were considered the "back of beyond" and it seems not much has changed. An interesting and informative read! Well done!

Bob Shalka

Invitation to Join a New Organization: The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum (CFSAF)

If you are a retired Canadian government employee who:

- worked overseas at a Canadian mission or in the area of international relations, and
- worked in GAC, EAITC, EAC, DFAIT, DFATD, CIDA, CIC, IRCC or any variations thereof, and at whatever group and level (AS, FS, PM, SCY, CR, etc.)

you would be most welcome to join The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum. The group, which will call itself "the Forum", intends to be as inclusive as it can be.

The Forum's draft objectives are:

- to facilitate communications and exchanges between its members on matters of common interest;
- to offer them opportunities to share their expertise and work experience on projects; and
- to raise the awareness of Canadians to the importance of international issues for themselves and Canada.

A few CIHS members are working on setting up the Forum, and have asked that we publicise it. As part of the community of retirees described above, the organizers hope that it is a good fit for some of CIHS's membership. For more information about the Forum or how to join, please email Daniel Livermore and Gérald Cossette via edit.forum99@gmail.com.

Invitation à rejoindre une nouvelle organisation : Le Forum des anciens du service extérieur canadien (FASEC)

Si vous êtes un employé retraité du gouvernement canadien, qui :

- a travaillé à l'étranger dans une mission canadienne ou dans le domaine des relations internationales, et
- a travaillé au sein du AECIC, l'AEC, le MAECI, le MAECD, l'ACDI, le CIC, l'IRCC, ou de toute variante de ceux-ci, et à tous les groupes et niveaux (AS, FS, PM, SCY, CR, etc.)

vous seriez les bienvenus de vous joindre au Forum des anciens du service extérieur canadien. Le groupe, qui s'appellera «le Forum», entend être aussi inclusif que possible.

Les projets d'objectifs du Forum sont les suivants:

- à faciliter les communications et les échanges entre ses membres sur des questions d'intérêt commun ;
- à leur offrir des occasions de partager leurs expertise et expérience de travail sur des projets ; et
- à sensibiliser les Canadiens sur l'importance des enjeux internationaux pour eux et le Canada.

Quelques membres de la SHIC travaillent à la mise en place du Forum et nous ont demandé de le faire connaître. Faisant partie de la communauté de retraités décrite ci-dessus, les organisateurs espèrent que cela pourrait convenir à certains membres du SHIC. Pour plus d'informations sur le Forum ou comment y adhérer, veuillez envoyer un courriel à Daniel Livermore et Gérald Cossette via edit.forum99@gmail.com.

Donation to Pier 21

Gerry Maffre

Our colleague, Gordon Cheeseman, asked the Society to propose a donation of some of his career memorabilia to the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. CIHS followed through, and the museum has now received the following items:

- Pins for the department (CIC) and its Enforcement and International Service groups.
- A uniform shoulder patch.
- A reflective vest worn by immigration officers in, for example, crowd control situations or when boarding ships in the 1980s. It was also worn when on field activities with local and armed peace officers.
- An investigator's notebook. These came into being when immigration officers attended a Peace Officer Training Program at the RCMP Depot Division in Regina. The notebook had the relevant arrest warnings and extracts from the Immigration Act. Proper note taking was part of the program curriculum.
- A folding magnifying glass with the "Canada" wordmark. Canada's adoption of this inexpensive tool prompted other countries to follow suit. Magnifying glasses were used by immigration control officers for close examination of Canadian visas and passports of people seeking entry to Canada, to help weed out counterfeit documents. They were also given to airline staff to help them detect fraudulent documents held by Canada-bound passengers. As to their origin, similar glasses were used in the linen trade to count threads per square inch. Coincidentally, Bulletin editor Diane Burrows in her early NHQ days had to source these for the program.

We are always ready to respond to your questions about the safe disbursement of program and career memorabilia.



Profile

Gordon Cheeseman has provided this information about his professional life.

Gord Cheeseman is known to most readers as the former Director of Intelligence at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, where he and his talented staff modernized the collection and analysis of information related to the illegal movement of people. They also initiated a wide range of effective responses, including support to the airline industry, interdiction exercises (Operation Shortstop), legislative changes, and the rationale for the permanent overseas deployment of officers dedicated to control functions.

Cheeseman worked in five regions as a border and airport officer, investigator, supervisor, case presenting officer, adjudicator, and regional chief of enforcement. At NHQ he managed the development of the first national training programs and then moved to the Intelligence function.

He left CIC in 1997 to build a successful consulting business dealing with migration control, secure documents, and border management. The U.S. departments of Justice and Homeland Security and many other international police and immigration services were clients for over 20 years; Cheeseman calculates that he flew over the family cottage on the St. Lawrence more than a thousand times. After 9/11, the focus changed to counter-terrorism, using many of the same basic skills to identify high-risk individuals. Cheeseman enjoyed his work immensely and sends his best to all.

Working for Canada in London, U.K.

Doug Dunnington

Doug Dunnington served as a visa officer in Manila and London, after which he had several assignments at immigration headquarters. He then returned to the Kitchener-Waterloo area, where he worked first at the Canada Employment Centre and then the Canada Immigration Centre. In 1998, he left the federal government and ran his own immigration consulting business for the next 20 years.

A lovely day greeted Barbara, me, three-year-old Jill, and one-year-old Kelly when we arrived at Heathrow Airport, mid-October 1971. Our friends from training, Warren and Marilyn Major, greeted us warmly and drove us to Dolphin Square, an apartment hotel. Unfortunately, our reservations had been mixed up and we had only a one-bedroom suite. As a result, the girls had to sleep holding Mom's hand for the first few nights.

Living accommodation in a world-class city like London was problematic, and finding a suitable home required many hours on subways, trains, and buses. Fortunately, in Bexleyheath (in southeast Greater London), we found a lovely house that was being redecorated. As we were going to give the landlord a four-year lease, I was able to convince him to let Barb choose the paint, wallpaper, and flooring, as well as all the furniture. The commute was still awfully long. To get to work, I walked for 20 minutes to the Bexleyheath railway station, took a 25-minute train to Charing Cross Station and a 15-minute bus ride to Grosvenor Street, and finally walked for 10 minutes to the office. Eventually we bought an Austin 1300 for personal use.

London was one of our largest visa offices, and the processing officers were divided into two teams of seven officers each. I was in the Red Team and soon took my place doing paper-screening (an initial review of applications for permanent residence) and then interviewing applicants of pretty well every stripe. We averaged about 12 interviews per day. We were not allowed to waive selection interviews, although we often thought they were unnecessary because the U.K. provided advanced training in skilled trades that the Canadian labour market valued.

After several months, I was promoted to "Manpower Recruitment Officer" and was charged with dealing directly with Canadian employers interested in skilled and professional U.K. applicants. Often they phoned me directly. I told them that we would advertise in the appropriate newspaper, preselect the applicants for them, and send the documents to Canada for them to decide if they wanted to interview the applicant. If they did, we set up a schedule with our other U.K. offices, arranged hotels, and expedited immigrant visas for the successful applicants. If employers were interested in our service, they had to secure a clearance order from a Canada Manpower Centre and give it a \$5,000 deposit for advertising.

Prospective immigrants covered the gamut of personnel needed by the Canadian labour market: mainly skilled trades from every sector, but also nurses, psychiatrists, engineers, quantity surveyors, and mining specialists.

My responsibilities included liaison with U.K. universities and my duties were two-fold. The first was to make U.K. graduates aware of Canadian labour market needs. The second—and for me just as important—was to contact Canadian university students enrolled in British schools and make them aware of employment opportunities back home. It was an official program titled "Operation Retrieval" under the auspices of Canada Manpower, but visa officers administered it. Carrying out my duties required me to visit universities and give presentations about Canadian labour market opportunities to both British and Canadian audiences. What a great job!

Another highlight occurred when Barb and I, along with the Commonwealth Secretariat, hosted a reception at the high commission to which all Canadian students were invited. By the smiles on their faces and their sincere thanks, we knew the students were delighted to be there. The Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace was another highlight. Apart from actually seeing the royals close-by, we had the best English tea and strawberry tarts ever!



Canadian Visa Offices Abroad: Fifty Years of Service Part Four, 1980-1989

Gerry Maffre, Raphael Girard, Diane Burrows, and Robert Shalka

This is the fourth in a series of compilations of the locations of Canadian immigration and visa offices abroad in the 1980s. The listing draws on the [Global Affairs Digital Library](#) holdings of *Canadian Representatives Abroad*. An asterisk after a city name means that the visa office was still open in 1990.

Visa offices were identified because either the officers' names were known to us or a separate street address for the visa office was provided. Over the span of the decade, Canada had 71 visa offices in total, although not all were open for that entire period. Visa offices provided immigration services in 54 host countries and itinerant services in almost 120 other countries. This decade saw more officers being accredited to two different offices. This trend is indicated in the table by the phrase "Work shared with...". The authors thank colleague Anne Arnott for checking the list of offices.

The decade was, again, one of significant developments that determined the locations of Canada's visa offices. Global issues of irregular migration, displaced people, and refugee claimants arriving at borders—and not just Canada's—were prominent. Canada made greater and more systematic efforts abroad to detect and deter improperly documented travellers. Instability in the Middle East sparked frequent and continuous realignments of office area responsibilities. The dates of those changes make it appear that some offices were open and closed in the same year, which is entirely possible. Refugee application processing out of the Southeast Asia camps continued throughout this decade.

Immigration control emerged as a major issue in the mid-1980s in Canada, with the 1985 Supreme Court [decision](#) in the *Singh vs. Minister of Employment and Immigration case*, the 1986 arrival of Tamil refugee claimants [off Newfoundland and Labrador](#), and the arrival of Sikh claimants [off the Nova Scotia coast in 1987](#). These events led to [new immigration legislation](#) to provide a higher standard of due process in the refugee determination system (Bill C-55) and new measures to better control irregular migration (Bill C-84). The legislation also led to the [creation of the Immigration and Refugee Board](#), which provided oral hearings for refugee claimants. The government also started an administrative review of the refugee claims backlog in 1986 to take pressure off the refugee determination system, but this exercise served only to attract a new wave of refugee claims and had to be repeated once the new refugee determination system came into effect in 1989.

In 1986, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Jean-Pierre Hocké, presented the [Nansen Medal](#) to the "people of Canada". The award recognized Canada's work in helping to alleviate the situation of refugees around the world. It was the first time the medal was awarded to an entire nation.

Reorganization of the immigration program delivery function took place in 1981: the organization its associated personnel were transferred from Employment and Immigration Canada to the Department of External Affairs as part of a larger consolidation of Canada's foreign policy and operations. This change greatly simplified the budgeting process for establishing new points of immigration service abroad. Nothing is permanent: the function and officers returned to Employment and Immigration Canada in 1992, just one of the many organizational changes the immigration program has gone through since Confederation.

The face of Canada's newcomers was changing. The number of offices expanded, serving more and more countries. Increasing numbers of citizens from Asia, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the Middle East migrated to Canada, and more and more countries' nationals were required to obtain a visitor visa if they wanted to come to Canada temporarily. The decade saw some 1.26 million newcomers to Canada.

VISA OFFICE LOCATION	DATES OF OPERATION	OTHER COUNTRIES SERVED, NOTES
AFRICA		
Cairo*, Egypt	1980-1989	Sudan (1980-1989); Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia (1986-1987); United Arab Emirates, Arab Republic of Yemen, Democratic Republic of Yemen (1986-1987).
Abidjan*, Ivory Coast	1980-1989	Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia,

VISA OFFICE LOCATION	DATES OF OPERATION	OTHER COUNTRIES SERVED, NOTES
		Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo (1980-1989); Upper Volta (1980-1983); Equatorial Guinea (1983-1989); Burkina-Faso, People's Republic of Congo, Zaire (1984-1989); Angola, Benin, São Tomé and Príncipe (1985-1989).
Nairobi*, Kenya	1980-1989	Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Uganda (1980-1989); Congo (1980-1983); Zaire (1980-1983).
Rabat*, Morocco	1985-1989	Algeria, Tunisia (1985-1989).
Pretoria*, South Africa	1980-1989	Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland (1981-1989).
AMERICAS		
United States of America		
Washington*	1983-1989	Liaison & reporting office and later in decade full-service visa office.
Atlanta*	1980-1989	
Boston*	1980-1989	
Buffalo*	1980-1989	
Chicago*	1980-1989	
Detroit*	1980-1989	
Los Angeles*	1980-1989	
Minneapolis*	1980-1989	
New York City*	1980-1989	Bermuda (1980-1989).
San Francisco*	1980-1989	
Seattle*	1980-1989	
Buenos Aires*, Argentina	1980-1989	Uruguay (1980-1989); Brazil (1980-1987); Paraguay (1980-1986).
Bridgetown*, Barbados	1980-1989	Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Antigua & Barbuda (1980-1989); St. Kitts and Nevis (1985-1989).
Sao Paulo*, Brazil	1988-1989	
Santiago*, Chile	1980-1989	Bolivia, Peru (1980-1983); Paraguay (1987-1989).
Bogota*, Colombia	1980-1989	Ecuador, Netherlands Antilles, Venezuela (1980-1989).

VISA OFFICE LOCATION	DATES OF OPERATION	OTHER COUNTRIES SERVED, NOTES
San José*, Costa Rica	1980-1989	El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama (1984-1989); Honduras (1988-1989).
Guatemala City*, Guatemala	1980-1989	Honduras (1984-1987).
Georgetown*, Guyana	1984-1989	Suriname (1984-1989).
Kingston*, Jamaica	1980-1989	Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Turks and Caicos (1980-1989); Belize (1984-1989).
Port au Prince*, Haiti	1980-1989	Dominican Republic (1983-1989).
Mexico City*, Mexico	1980-1989	Cuba (1980-1989); Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize (1980-1983).
Lima*, Peru	1984-1989	Bolivia (1984-1989).
Port of Spain*, Trinidad and Tobago	1980-1989	Guyana, Suriname (1980-1983).
ASIA – PACIFIC		
Sydney*, Australia	1980-1989	Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea (1980-1989); Solomon Islands (1983-1989); Vanuatu (1984-1989).
Dhaka, Bangladesh	1985-1988	Myanmar (1985-1988).
Hong Kong*	1980-1989	China, Macao (1980-1989).
New Delhi*, India	1980-1989	Nepal (1980-1989); Bangladesh (1980-1984 and 1989); Sri Lanka (1980-1983 and 1989).
Tokyo*, Japan	1980-1989	
Kuala Lumpur*, Malaysia	1988-1989	
Islamabad*, Pakistan	1980-1989	Afghanistan (1980-1981).
Manila*, Philippines	1980-1989	
Singapore*	1980-1989	Brunei (1981-1989); Indonesia (1980-1989); Malaysia (1980-1988). In 1980, visa officers posted to Singapore were listed by their diplomatic rank in the directory, followed by “(Refugee Affairs)” rather than “(Immigration)”. Officers present in Singapore at the time recall that it was perhaps to assuage the Government of Singapore’s concerns about the emigration of its nationals (and this at a time when Indochinese refugees were the office’s main focus).
Seoul*, South Korea	1984-1989	

VISA OFFICE LOCATION	DATES OF OPERATION	OTHER COUNTRIES SERVED, NOTES
Colombo*, Sri Lanka	1984-1989	Shared work with New Delhi 1988-1989.
Bangkok*, Thailand	1980-1989	Laos, Vietnam (1980-1989); Myanmar (1980-1984 and 1989).
EUROPE		
Vienna*, Austria	1980-1989	Czechoslovakia (1981-1989).
Brussels*, Belgium	1980-1989	Luxembourg (1980-1989).
France		
Paris*	1980-1989	
Marseille	1980-1986	Algeria, Tunisia (1980-1986).
Bonn, Germany	1980-1989	
Athens*, Greece	1980-1989	
Budapest*, Hungary	1980-1989	
Dublin, Ireland	1980-1989	Shared work with The Hague (1989).
Italy		
Rome*	1980-1989	Libya, Malta (1980-1989).
Milan	1980-1986	
The Hague*, Netherlands	1980-1989	
Warsaw*, Poland	1980-1989	German Democratic Republic (1986-1989).
Lisbon*, Portugal	1980-1989	Spain (1981-1983 and 1986).
Moscow*, Russia	1980-1989	
Belgrade*, Serbia	1980-1989	Albania (1987-1989); Bulgaria, Romania (1980-1989); Turkey (1980-1986).
Madrid*, Spain	1980, 1984-1985, 1987-1989	
Stockholm*, Sweden	1980-1989	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway (1980-1989).
Switzerland		
Berne*	1980-1989	
Geneva*	1980-1989	Reporting position.

VISA OFFICE LOCATION	DATES OF OPERATION	OTHER COUNTRIES SERVED, NOTES
United Kingdom		
London*	1980-1989	
Birmingham	1980-1983	
Glasgow	1980-1984	
MIDDLE EAST		
Tel Aviv*, Israel	1989-1989	Cyprus (1980-1989).
Amman, Jordan	1984	Lebanon, Syria (1984).
Kuwait City*, Kuwait	1980-1985 and 1988-1989	Shared work with Damascus in 1989. Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (all 1980-1985 and 1988-1989).
	1983-1985	Arab Republic of Yemen, Democratic Republic of Yemen (all 1983-1985 and 1988-1989).
Beirut, Lebanon	1980-1983	Iraq (1980); Jordan (1980-1984); Syria (1980-1983).
Damascus*, Syria	1985-1989	Jordan (1985-1989); Iran (1989). Shared workload with Damascus in 1989 for Iraq, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates.
Ankara*, Turkey	1987-1989	

*An asterisk after a city name in the table indicates that the visa office was still open in 1990. Readers are invited to signal any errors or omissions in this table to info@cihs-shic.ca.

In Memoriam

Casey, Ljiljana (Lily)

17 May 1945 – 4 September 2020

Lily Casey's [obituary](#) appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* on 12 September 2020 and a complete tribute to Lily, written by her husband, Brian Casey, is available [here](#).

Remembered by Raphael Girard and Ian Rankin

Although foreign service spouses are inescapably involved in supporting the programs their partner is paid to deliver, Lily Casey's contribution to Canada's immigration and refugee resettlement activities went far beyond simply helping her husband Brian in his many postings in Canada and abroad. Lily was a proud Serb and a loyal Canadian civil servant. She and Brian were a perfect team who, throughout their careers, brought out the best in each other.

Lily burst upon the immigration world one sunny winter morning in Belgrade in 1970, answering an ad from a desperately understaffed visa office looking for clerical help to cope with its burgeoning clientele of immigrants and visitors taking advantage of newly created facilities to travel to Canada. Although she had considerable office experience, she knew her typing skills would not pass muster. She appeared at the interview with her left hand in a cast, explaining that a skiing accident the previous weekend would prevent her from taking the typing test. Her poise, intelligence, fluent English, and employment record, however, convinced the selectors to take a chance on her typing ability and she started work the next day. What a fortuitous decision that was! Lily had been a rising Yugoslav basketball star. She used those team skills to

ensure an efficient visa office in a divided country. She also educated new foreign service officers and others on the many things they did not know. In succeeding years, Lily would apply what she learned on the job in several immigration support functions in Canada and abroad, bringing credit to the program and to the offices where she worked and winning the affection of many of her colleagues for her skills and effectiveness.

None of the jobs she did so well—whether in Ottawa, Moscow, or elsewhere—was more important than the key role she played in Belgrade in the early 1990s. She helped to deliver a complex immigration program to a clientele that included victims of the war that followed the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation. She was in the visa office's first line at the reception counter, charged with identifying priority clients among the hundreds who appeared at the embassy daily. The local knowledge she was able to share with rotational officers was critical to their determining who among the thousands of people displaced by war should benefit from Canada's assistance.

Whether it was as a hostess overwhelming welcomed guests with traditional Serbian hospitality or as a receptionist reassuring a mixed-nationality couple, the most vulnerable victims of resurgent nationalism in the Balkans, Lily put people at ease. She was a remarkably positive and effective person in a time of civil strife. She will be fondly remembered by many colleagues and clients as an outstanding example of the public servant that she was.

Donaghy, Gregory (Greg)

8 September 1961 – 1 July 2020

Remembered by Michael Molloy

Gregory (Greg) Owen Donaghy died peacefully on 1 July 2020 at the Ottawa Heart Institute, a week after suffering a heart attack. Greg leaves behind Mary, his wife of nearly 28 years, and his children, Katherine (Katie), Michael, and Stephen. Born in London, England, of Irish parents, Greg arrived in Toronto at a young age. He embraced his Canadian identity when he strapped on his first pair of skates, but he never forgot his Irish heritage. Greg received his BA from the University of Toronto (1986), his MA from Carleton University (1989), and his PhD from the University of Waterloo (1998). After a long and illustrious career as a federal government historian, Greg retired in the spring of 2019 as head of the historical section of Global Affairs Canada. A prolific writer, he published *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963-1968*, followed by *Grit: The Life and Politics of Paul Martin Sr.*, which was a finalist for the 2015 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing, and co-authored *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume III: Innovation and Adaptation, 1968-1984*. He was recognized for his accomplishments in 2012, when he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Over the years CIHS turned to Greg in his capacity as Global Affairs Canada's Chief Historian for assistance in tracking down information relating to work we were doing. He was always interested in and supportive of our activities. Greg's full obituary appeared in *The Globe and Mail* 4-8 July 2020.

St-Vincent, Lucien "Roger" Joseph Hector

27 January 1922 – 14 July 2020

Remembered by Mike Molloy

I first met Roger St-Vincent in the fall of 1968 while my fellow trainee Doug Dunnington and I were checking files and signing visas in a broom closet in the Canadian embassy in Vienna. The meeting took place a few weeks after the Soviets had rolled into Czechoslovakia and crushed the Prague Spring and with it the hopes of millions of Eastern Europeans for a kinder, gentler brand of communism. Dave Bullock brought Roger around and explained that Roger, on leave from his posting in Jamaica, had dropped in to volunteer. He would be booking refugees on charter flights and we were to give the completed files directly to him. Four years later, Roger was my boss in Beirut. When he was instructed to go to Uganda to process Asians being expelled by Idi Amin, I went with him and thus began a lifelong friendship. The following paragraphs are based on notes in a sealed envelope that Roger gave me many years ago.

Roger was born in Montreal in 1922, the seventh of 12 children in a working-class family. At the age of 18, right out of high school, he volunteered to join the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) on 11 November 1940 (he liked the light blue colour of the uniform). He opted for flight training in Ontario to improve his English. Roger received his pilot's wings on 7 November 1941 and shipped out of Halifax for Liverpool on 9 December 1941, aboard the USS *California*. Passengers and crew heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour the first night out. At Bournemouth the newly arrived Canadian airmen were inspected by High Commissioner Vincent Massey and 16-year-old Princess Elizabeth. Roger

trained as a fighter aircraft pilot, and for lack of an opening in a fighter squadron in England, he sailed to West Africa, landing at Freetown, Sierra Leone and proceeding to Sekundi-Takoradi, Ghana. From Ghana, Roger and five other pilots flew Hurricane fighter planes across the widest part of Africa to Cairo. There he joined Royal Air Force (RAF) squadrons and in October 1942 participated in the campaign in which General Montgomery's Eighth Army expelled Rommel's army from Africa. In 1943, he was hospitalized for a month in Palestine following an airplane crash. From North Africa, in early 1944 he was sent to Cyprus, then Palestine, and lastly to Beirut, where he assisted the French authorities. At one point his job was to fly a stripped-down Spitfire to its maximum height to gather weather data. He returned to Canada in January 1945 and was to serve in the Far East, but the war ended. He was assigned to the RAF's Missing and Research Inquiry based in The Hague, the Netherlands, whose purpose was to identify airmen shot down during the war and buried in graves as "unknown". He was discharged from the RCAF in September 1947 as a flight lieutenant.

On his return to Canada, Roger joined the Department of Mines and Resources and worked as an immigration inspector at the border crossing at Lacolle, Quebec. In January 1948, he drove a former RCAF friend working at Dorval airport to Ottawa for an interview for service in Germany with Commissioner of Immigration G.G. Gordon. Mr. Gordon asked to speak to Roger. This conversation led to Roger's being posted to the Canadian Government Immigration Mission (CGIM) at Karlsruhe, Germany, to process displaced persons. For three years, Roger was part of a selection team with a doctor and a security officer interviewing displaced people in the International Refugee Organization (IRO) refugee camps in the French, British, and American zones of Occupied Germany and Austria. After that, he was the officer-in-charge of operations in Austria from January to September 1951. (See his article on the CGIM in *CIHS Bulletin* 52.)

In October 1951, he married Maria Schultz, an Italian citizen born in Slovenia, Yugoslavia, the daughter of parents born in Austria. Maria spoke neither English nor French, and they communicated in German. Roger and Maria moved to Montreal in 1952. His duties involved interviewing applicants applying for relatives to join them in Canada. He also served in Quebec City and Pointe-au-Père examining immigrants arriving by ship.

On 2 September 1957, Roger was assigned to Rome to be in charge of immigration operations, and he remained there until 1961, when he returned for another assignment in Montreal. In June 1963 he was posted to Paris and within the year he was back in Rome, where he remained until 1967. Roger was particularly proud of finding a building under construction, arranging for it to be acquired by Canada, and designing and equipping "the best visa office in Europe". Some 150,000 Italians came to Canada during his two Rome postings.

In September 1967, Roger was assigned to a new area office in Kingston, Jamaica, where, with one additional officer, he was responsible for applications from 18 countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. One year he was away from Kingston for 144 working days. While on leave in Slovenia in July 1968, he went to Vienna, where he was recruited to assist with the Czechoslovakian refugee movement, coordinating transportation of refugees to Canada.

Roger was assigned to Beirut in 1970, at a time when incidents between rival militias were frequent. With four visa officers, Roger was responsible for immigration applications from 34 countries stretching from Iran to the border of South Africa.

In August 1972, Roger led the team sent to Kampala, Uganda, to process South Asians ordered out of Uganda by dictator Idi Amin. Canada had no facilities in Kampala, but within five days Roger established an office and acquired furniture, telephones, and telex lines. Roger's team of 35 Canadians and local volunteers accepted and documented 6,000 Asians, of whom 4,351 flew to Canada on 31 charter flights to Canadian Forces Base Longue-Pointe in Montreal. He received a letter of thanks from Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, a cash award, and, many years later, a Queen's Jubilee Medal for his stellar performance. (See Roger's impressive account of the operation in *Seven Crested Cranes*).



Working in Uganda, 1972. L-R: Dr. Marcel Piché (Head of the Kampala medical team) and Roger St-Vincent. (Courtesy: Manpower and Immigration Canada)

After a short stint as district administrator in Toronto, Roger became Immigration's security coordinator for the 1976 Montreal Olympics. As the memory of the Israeli athletes in Munich (which occurred the day the Kampala operation opened its doors) was fresh, this was an important assignment involving close liaison with Canadian and international athletic and security officials. In preparation, Roger attended major sports events in New Zealand and Iran,

gathering the names of legitimate sports officials and athletes as part of the security screening preparations. Happily, the Montreal Olympics came off without a hitch.

His next posting was to the temporary Canadian immigration office in Limassol, Cyprus, dealing with Lebanese who were displaced by Lebanon’s civil war and were sponsored by relatives in Canada. Roger took the decision to reopen the embassy in Beirut. After the ambassador’s apartment was destroyed and the ambassador was recalled to Canada, Roger was chargé d'affaires for seven months.

He was transferred to Belgrade in February 1979, but he asked to terminate that assignment because of his wife’s poor health. They returned to Montreal in August 1981, and he was made director of European immigration operations. With his wife’s continuing poor health, he resigned effective the end of that year. Ten years after his retirement, in July 1991 when Maria’s health had improved, they moved to Slovenia. When Maria passed away, Roger returned to Montreal and took annual trips to Slovenia and Australia (to visit his daughter) until well into his 80s.

Roger was proud that he drew his pension for more years than he served in the government. In retirement he was acclaimed at events celebrating the Ugandan-Asian operation (CIHS *Bulletins* 18 and 44). At Senator Mobina Jaffer’s instigation—herself a Ugandan-Asian accepted by Canada—the Queen’s Jubilee Medal was added to Roger’s impressive rack of World War II medals. Roger recorded his long and eventful life in a lavishly illustrated, self-published autobiography, *A Very Fortunate Life*. Carleton University’s History Department, impressed by the wealth of historical information contained in the book, had it scanned and made available on line.

Roger was a member of what the Americans call “the Greatest Generation”—resolute in war, constructive, and compassionate in peace. His colleagues admired him for his competence, passion for service, and willingness to take on hard and sometimes dangerous challenges with courage and determination. These are not rare qualities among the veterans who staffed the immigration department from the 1940s to the 1980s. What set Roger apart was that fighter pilot panache he never lost, his *joie de vivre*, and the fact that, unique among his contemporaries, he not only participated in history, he recorded it.

CIHS thanks its corporate members - IRCC, P2P and Pier 21 - for their significant support as well as its life and annual members. All these contributions allow us to pursue our objectives and activities.

<p>The Canadian Immigration Historical Society (www.CIHS-SHIC.ca) is a non-profit corporation registered as a charitable organization under the Income Tax Act.</p>	<p>The society’s goals are: - to support, encourage and promote research into the history of Canadian immigration and to foster the collection and dissemination of that history, and - to stimulate interest in and further the appreciation and understanding of the influence of immigration on Canada’s development and position in the world.</p>	<p>President - Michael J. Molloy; Vice-President - Anne Arnott; Treasurer - Raph Girard; Secretary – Robert Orr; Editor – Diane Burrows; Members at large - Brian Casey, Roy Christensen, Valerie de Montigny, Peter Duschinsky, Dawn Edlund, Charlene Elgee, Kurt Jensen, Gerry Maffre (Communications), Ian Rankin, and Robert Shalka Member emeritus - J.B. “Joe” Bissett IRCC Representative - Randy Orr Webmaster: Winnerjit Rathor; Website translations: Michel Sleiman</p>
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